



Southeastern Regional Vocational Technical School District District Review Report

Review conducted January 14–17, 2013

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

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Published March 2013

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Southeastern Regional Vocational Technical School District

District Review Overview

Organization of Report

This report is organized into three main sections:

- **Overview**, with information about the review of the Southeastern Regional Vocational Technical School District—the purpose of the review, the methodology of the review, and the site visit—as well as a district profile and sections on student performance and appropriations and expenditures in the district.....page 1
- **Findings**, with sections describing district strengths and the district’s challenges and areas for growth.....page 7
- **Recommendations**, with suggestions for improvementpage 31

Appendices A, B, and C beginning on page 42 include information about the review team and the review, data on student enrollment and district expenditures, and data from the review team’s observations in district classes.

Purpose

The goal of district reviews conducted by the Center for District and School Accountability in the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) is to support districts in establishing or strengthening a cycle of continuous improvement. Reviews consider carefully the effectiveness, efficiency, and integration of systemwide functions using ESE’s six district standards: *Leadership and Governance, Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment, Human Resources and Professional Development, Student Support, and Financial and Asset Management*. The reviews seek to identify those systems and practices that may be impeding rapid improvement as well as those that are most likely to be contributing to positive results.

District reviews are conducted under Chapter 15, Section 55A of the Massachusetts General Laws and include reviews focused on “districts whose students achieve at low levels either in absolute terms or relative to districts that educate similar populations.” Districts subject to review in the 2012-2013 school year include districts that were in Level 3¹ of ESE’s framework for district accountability and assistance in

¹ Districts selected were in Level 3 in school year 2012-2013; they all had one or more schools scoring in the lowest 20 percent statewide of schools 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 regions were chosen from among those districts that were not exempt under Chapter 15, Section 55A, because another comprehensive review had been completed or was scheduled to take place within nine months of the planned reviews.

each of the state's six regions: Greater Boston, Berkshires, Northeast, Southeast, Central, and Pioneer Valley. Following the district review, ESE can use the report to consider giving the district priority for technical assistance and other resources through ESE's regional District and School Assistance Center or other units within the Department.

Methodology

To focus the analysis, reviews collect evidence for each of the six district standards (see above). The district review team consists of independent consultants with expertise in each of the district standards who review selected district documents and ESE data and reports for two days before conducting a four-day district visit that includes visits to various district schools. The team holds interviews and focus groups with such stakeholders as school committee members, teachers' association representatives, administrators, teachers, parents, and students. Team members also observe classes. The team then meets for two days to develop findings and recommendations before submitting the draft of their district review report to ESE. *It is important to note that 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 Southeastern Regional Vocational Technical School District was conducted from January 14–17, 2013. The site visit included 46.25 hours of interviews and focus groups with over 86 stakeholders ranging from school committee members to district administrators and school staff to students, parents, and teachers' association representatives. The review team conducted 1 focus group with 13 teachers representing both vocational and academic subjects.

The team also observed 70 classes at the school using ESE's instructional inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards-based teaching. Of the 70 classes observed, 38 were academic classes and 32 were vocational classes.

Further information about the review, the site visit schedule and the review team can be found in Appendix A. Appendix C contains the instructional inventory—the record of the team's observations in classrooms.

District Profile

Southeastern Regional Vocational Technical School District includes a regional vocational technical high school (the subject of this review) and a post-secondary technical institute. The regional vocational technical high school enrolls students from nine member communities: Brockton, East Bridgewater, Easton, Foxborough, Mansfield, Norton, Sharon, Stoughton, and West Bridgewater. A ten-member regional school committee consists of two members from Brockton (the largest and most urban of the member communities) and one from each of the other eight communities. The committee elects the chair. The committee typically meets once a month with more meetings held during budget preparation. Subcommittees meet more frequently.

The current superintendent has been in the position since 2009. The district leadership team includes the principal of the high school, the principal of the post-secondary school, a director of technology, a

business manager, and a facilities manager. Central office positions have been mostly stable over the past four years. There is also a school leadership team that includes an academic director, a vocational director, a vice principal for innovation academies, an administrative vice principal, a special education director, and a guidance director. In 2012, there were 116 teachers in the district.

Student enrollment at the vocational technical high school in 2011–2012 was 1,242 for grades 9–12.

Student population in the district has remained stable since 2008 with little variation from year to year or from the beginning to end of that period: 1,233 students in 2008, 1251 students in 2009, 1257 students in 2010, 1262 students in 2011, and 1242 students in 2012.

Student demographics for the 2011-2012 school year are much different from the state in most selected subgroups. As of 2011–2012, the proportion of white students is 57.5 percent, compared with 67 percent in the state, African-American/Black students make up 25.7 percent of enrollment, compared with 8.3 percent in the state, and Hispanic/Latino students make up 12.2 percent of enrollment, compared with 16.1 percent in the state. English language learners (ELLs) make up only 0.4 percent of the student population, compared with 7.3 percent in the state (although students whose first language is not English make up 18.7 percent of the total enrollment, compared with 16.7 percent in the state). The proportion of students with disabilities in-district is 24.5 percent, compared to 17 percent in the state, and the proportion of students from low-income families is 55.3 percent, compared to 35.2 percent statewide.

Total in-district per-pupil expenditures for Southeastern were higher in 2011 (\$19,116) than the median for vocational/agricultural districts of 1,000 students or more (\$17,739), and the district has met required net school spending in the years since fiscal year 2010, when it was slightly under.²

² See DART detail for Staffing and Finance, MedianPP and PerPupilSummary tabs, available at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/dart/default.html>. See Table 3 in Appendix B to this report for a breakdown of Southeastern’s in-district per-pupil expenditures from 2010-2012. See Table 2 in Appendix B for recent net school spending and other financial data.

Student Performance³

1. The Southeastern Regional Vocational Technical High School is in Level 3⁴ at the 15th percentile of high schools.

- a. The Southeastern Regional Vocational Technical High School is among the lowest performing 20 percent of high schools based on its four-year (2009-2012⁵) achievement and improvement trends relative to other high schools.⁶

2. The school is making progress toward narrowing proficiency gaps.

- a. The school is considered to be making progress toward narrowing proficiency gaps. This is because the 2012 Progress and Performance Index for all students and high needs⁷ students is 75 or greater. The cumulative Progress and Performance Index⁸⁹ is 93 for all students and 81 for high needs students. The cumulative Progress and Performance Index for reportable subgroups is: 86 (low income students), 83 (students with disabilities), 87 (African-American/Black students), and 95 (White students).

³ The information provided herein is derived from the Department's school and district profiles website at profiles.doe.mass.edu/ and the Department's District Analysis and Review Tools (DARTs) at www.doe.mass.edu/apa/dart/.

⁴ 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 school as a whole) may be experiencing poor outcomes for students with disabilities and/or are having compliance issues.

⁵ Findings are derived using data from the prior school year or the most recent year the data was reported by ESE.

⁶ 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.

⁷ 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).

⁸ The Progress and Performance Index 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 Progress and Performance Index based on improvement over a two-year period and a cumulative Progress and Performance Index between 0 and 100 based on four years of data. A district's, school's or subgroup's cumulative Progress and Performance Index is the average of its annual Progress and Performance Index scores over the most recent four year period, weighting recent years the most (1-2-3-4). A cumulative Progress and Performance Index is calculated for a group if it has at least three annual Progress and Performance Index scores. If a group is missing an annual Progress and Performance Index for one year, that year is left out of the weighting (e.g., 1-X-3-4). While a group's annual Progress and Performance Index can exceed 100 points, the cumulative Progress and Performance Index is always reported on a 100-point scale.

⁹ The cumulative Progress and Performance Index is a *criterion-referenced* measure of a school's performance relative to its own targets, irrespective of the performance of other schools. Conversely, school percentiles are *norm-referenced* because schools are being compared to other schools that serve the same or similar grades.

- 3. The school's 2012 English language arts (ELA) performance is low¹⁰ relative to other high schools and its growth¹¹ is moderate. The school exceeded its annual improvement targets for ELA.¹²**
- a. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the school demonstrated potentially meaningful¹³ gains. Most of the gains were attributed to its performance between 2011 and 2012.
 - b. For all reportable subgroups, the school earned extra credit toward its annual PPI for increasing the percentage of students scoring *Advanced* and for decreasing the percentage of students scoring *Warning/Failing* 10 percent or more between 2011 and 2012.
- 4. The school's 2012 mathematics performance is low relative to other high schools and its SGP is moderate. There were variations among performance measures. The school exceeded its annual improvement target for the Composite Performance Index (CPI) but did not meet its student growth percentile (SGP) target for mathematics.¹⁴**

¹⁰ 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 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 relative performance of groups in a particular subject for a given year. The CPI is divided into five equal groups with corresponding descriptions of "very high", "high", "moderate", "low" or "very low". These terms are for contextual purposes only and are not official ratings.

¹¹ Massachusetts uses student growth percentiles (SGP) 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 student 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 growth" if the median SGP of the group is between the 41st and 60th percentiles.

¹² For ELA trends in the aggregate and for selected subgroups, see the Curriculum tab in the Department's District Analysis and Review Tool (DART) for Schools: www.doe.mass.edu/apa/dart/default.html.

¹³ The following changes in measures of student 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). These figures are derived from annual changes observed historically at the school level. For example, a group that improved by 2.5 or more CPI points over a two-or four-year time period improved more than the average school. Caution should be exercised in drawing inferences from the data. For example, thresholds for meaningful change are based on observed changes at the school level, not at the subject, grade, or subgroup level. As such, changes are more likely to be potentially meaningful for larger groups of students. In addition, 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 four years is more likely to be meaningful than changes over two years. In this report, a statement of potentially meaningful change is only given when a district, school, grade level, or subgroup demonstrates at least three or more instances of declines or gains in the CPI, SGP, or percent *Proficient* or *Advanced* over the last four years, the most recent two years, or both. Any combination of gains and declines over these periods is treated as inconclusive.

¹⁴ For mathematics trends in the aggregate and for selected subgroups, see the Curriculum tab in the Department's District Analysis and Review Tool (DART) for Schools: www.doe.mass.edu/apa/dart/default.html.

- a. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the school demonstrated gains in the percentage of students scoring *Proficient* or *Advanced*. Gains between 2009 and 2012 accounted for most of this improvement.
 - b. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the school demonstrated gains in the CPI.
 - c. Between 2009 and 2012, the school demonstrated declines in the SGP.
 - d. For all reportable subgroups, the school earned extra credit toward its annual PPI for increasing the percentage of students scoring *Advanced* and for decreasing the percentage of students scoring *Warning/Failing* 10 percent or more between 2011 and 2012.
- 5. The school's 2012 science and technology/engineering (STE) performance was low relative to other high schools. The school exceeded its annual improvement target for STE.¹⁵**
- a. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the school demonstrated potentially meaningful gains. Gains between 2011 and 2012 accounted for most of this improvement.
 - b. For all reportable subgroups, the school earned extra credit toward its annual PPI for increasing the percentage of students scoring *Advanced* and for decreasing the percentage of students scoring *Warning/Failing* 10 percent or more between 2011 and 2012.
- 6. Over the most recent four year period, four-and five-year cohort graduation rates increased and the annual dropout rate decreased. Over the most recent two year period, the four-year cohort graduation rate decreased, the five-year cohort graduation rate increased, and the annual dropout rate increased.¹⁶¹⁷**
- a. Between 2008 and 2011, the four-year cohort graduation rate increased from 84.5 percent to 89.2 percent; between 2010 and 2011 it decreased from 89.6 percent to 89.2 percent.
 - b. Between 2007 and 2010, the five-year cohort graduation rate increased from 88.8 percent to 90.3 percent; between 2009 and 2010 it increased from 88.3 percent to 90.3 percent.
 - c. Between 2008 and 2011 the annual dropout rate decreased from 2.4 percent to 2.1 percent; between 2010 and 2011 it increased from 1.8 percent to 2.1 percent.

¹⁵ For STE trends in the aggregate and for selected subgroups, see the Curriculum tab in the Department's District Analysis and Review Tool (DART) for Schools: www.doe.mass.edu/apa/dart/default.html.

¹⁶ 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 or 95 percent for the five-year rate by the 2016-2017 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. A group is considered to be on target if it met the state's federally-approved annual targets in a given year for either the four-or five-year cohort graduation rate, whichever is higher.

¹⁷ For annual dropout and four-and five-year cohort graduation rate trends in the aggregate, see the Student Support tab in the Department's District Analysis and Review Tool (DART) for Schools: www.doe.mass.edu/apa/dart/default.html.

Review Findings

Strengths

Leadership

1. **School culture overall was positive, caring, safe, and respectful. Administrators and teachers showed care and dedication to students' welfare, educational growth, and personal development.**
 - a. There is an environment conducive to learning at the school.
 1. Interactions between students and teachers were respectful and positive in 93 percent of observed classrooms. (See Instructional Inventory results in Appendix C.)
 2. Ninety percent of classroom observations indicated that teachers are knowledgeable in their content areas.
 - b. Students experience a community of care in the school.
 1. Leaders and teachers consistently expressed a desire to do what is best for their students.
 2. Students said that they felt safe at school, "like in a small town where everyone gets to know you."
 3. Teachers and administrators noted a sensitive and thoughtful approach to identifying and supporting the needs of students and families during the school year, particularly during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays.

Impact: The knowledgeable staff and the respectful and supportive environment provide a solid foundation for giving students an excellent school experience.

Assessment

2. **The district provides information that has the potential to help teachers and leaders make data-based educational decisions; it collects, analyzes, and disseminates assessment data and other relevant information.**
 - a. The district disseminates MCAS results and Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) Lexile scores to all professional staff.
 1. A data specialist is responsible for the collection, organization, and dissemination of MCAS and SRI data to administrators and teachers.
 2. MCAS proficiency and growth data and SRI Lexiles are posted on SIS Net, an online student information system. Lexiles are posted three times a year for all students and twice more for at-risk students.

3. MCAS data is distributed to teachers on class lists and in several other data reports.
- b. Other assessment data and student information are available online to teachers and students.
 1. Students take several individualized assessments on computers and receive instant feedback often organized by knowledge, skill, or standard.
 2. Administrators and teachers can access online results from Study Island e-learning assessments, and from interventions such as Read 180, System 144 and Math Bridges as well as from My Access writing assignments and Accuplacer tests.
 3. Teachers receive class lists identifying students as high, medium or low risk. These were developed using ESE's Early Warning Indicator System (EWIS). Administrators, teachers, and students have online access to OSHA test results, career portfolios, employability exams, and national assessments such as Skills USA tests and other state and national competency and certification tests administered on computers.
 - c. The district uses Edline, a classroom-level website, to display and access student data and other information.
 1. Teachers use Edline to post classwork, homework, quiz and test scores, grades, and progress reports.
 2. Students and parents have access to appropriate information by logging on to the Edline website.
 - d. IEPs and other data about students with disabilities are shared electronically.
 - e. The guidance department prepares for each student a widely used, one-page Student Performance Profile, which includes MCAS results, Lexiles, grades, intervention scores, attendance records, and relevant notations of at-risk behavior.
 1. Students and teachers have access to Student Performance Profiles.
 2. During directed study periods and extended-day, to focus extra-help sessions, teachers access Student Performance Profiles and other data using SIS Net and Edline.
 - f. Throughout the year, the school committee receives multiple data presentations.
 1. Reports include MCAS proficiency data and student growth data, PSAT and SAT results, student achievement data by department, vocational competency data, graduation rates, drop-out rates, monthly attendance data, behavioral incident data, co-op placement data, Accuplacer results, and exploratory placement data.
 2. Several school committee members said that the committee often received too much data at once and as a result, the data was sometimes hard to follow and understand.
 - g. Each Vocational Advisory Committee receives a report that includes MCAS results, Lexiles, exploratory placement data, program and co-op enrollment data, updated certification data, and follow-up data on recent graduates.

- h. Data reports are distributed in a timely manner and display useful data. Presentations are clear, attractive, and user friendly.
- i. In the 2012 TELL Mass Survey, 88 percent of the district’s teachers agreed that leadership facilitates using data to improve student learning.¹⁸

Impact: Available data offers many opportunities to further analyze and use data to guide improvement planning, inform teaching and curriculum development, and allocate resources. Data is available at multiple levels to promote useful analysis: by school, by classroom, by academic subject, by vocational program, and by student.

Human Resources and Professional Development

3. The district uses its financial resources to hire very experienced teachers whenever possible, works to sustain employment stability for teachers and administrators, and has the resources to provide frequent professional development opportunities.

- a. The superintendent urges administrators to hire the best teacher candidates available regardless of salary cost. For the 2012–2013 academic year, two science and two math teachers were hired at the top of the salary schedule.
- b. The district seeks to maintain employment stability for teachers and administrators.
 - 1. The superintendent said that teachers and administrators are well paid with administrators receiving salaries in the six-figure range.
 - 2. The superintendent said that administrators are on three-year contracts that are renewed annually.
 - 3. According to interviews, in the past 3 years, a total of 8 positions have become vacant at an average of 2 to 3 vacancies per year, whereas 5 to 6 years before the review, 20 to 30 teachers were hired per year.¹⁹
 - 4. A mentoring program is provided for all newly hired teachers. Experienced teachers have a mentor for one year and inexperienced teachers have a mentor for two years. Mentors meet with their mentees 18 times per year—beginning in the summer. Mentors receive a stipend for their work.

¹⁸ TELL Mass is an anonymous statewide survey of school-based licensed educators to assess teaching conditions. Of Southeastern’s school-based educators 64.06 percent responded to the 2012 TELL Mass survey. Results can be found at <http://www.tellmass.org/reports/detailed.php?orgID=M0872>.

¹⁹ ESE’s [District Analysis and Review Tool \(DART\)](#), which uses numbers supplied by the district, shows a decrease in teacher turnover in recent years though with different numbers: in 2009, out of 109 teachers 19 turned over (17%); in 2010, out of 113 teachers 14 turned over (12%); in 2011, out of 118 teachers 14 turned over (11.9%); and in 2012 out of 118 teachers 9 turned over (8%). The state rates were 12% (2009), 11% (2010), 11.8% (2011), and 11.6% (2012).

5. A three and one-half day orientation program is provided for all newly hired teachers, beginning in July.
- c. The district provides ample funding and frequent opportunities for professional development.
1. In the budget and through a variety of grants, ample funds are available for professional development according to school leaders.
 2. A consultant has been hired to conduct professional development for the math department.
 3. According to representatives of the teachers' federation, teachers are encouraged to share what they have learned at conferences.
 4. Some teachers use common planning time to share best practices.
 5. Behavior specialists have provided professional development activities for vocational teachers.
 6. During one of the half-days earmarked for professional development, five teachers adept at My Access and Study Island provide professional development for colleagues.

Impact: Committing resources for competitive salaries and providing substantial opportunities for mentoring, orientation, and professional development promote the district's ability to attract and retain an experienced and highly qualified professional staff and to foster loyalty to the district.

4. The district places a premium on student and employee attendance.

- a. The importance of student attendance is stressed.
1. Students are required to be present 95 percent of the time.
 2. Strict policies and procedures about student attendance are in place.
 3. The school is in real-time contact with homes, using phone calls and home visits to discuss student absence.
 4. The 2006–2011 collective bargaining agreement (CBA) between the school committee and the teachers' federation provides a bonus tied to student attendance; in the current CBA a connection to staff attendance has been added.
 5. According to ESE data, student attendance rates were as follows: 95.6 percent in 2010; 95.9 percent in 2011; and 95.8 percent in 2012, higher than the state attendance rates in those years of 94.6, 94.7, and 94.9 percent.
- b. Financial incentives exist to encourage high rates of employee attendance.
1. School committee members said that the school committee believes in rewarding all employees for good attendance.
 2. The newly negotiated collective bargaining agreement between the school committee and the teachers' federation contains, at the request of the school committee, monetary incentives for high teacher attendance rates.

3. According to a district business office report, teacher use of sick leave for fiscal year 2011 was 5.47 percent; for fiscal year 2012, 4.57 percent.

Impact: The rarely interrupted presence of both teachers and learners promotes continuity of instruction, a significant ingredient for effective instruction and student achievement.

Student Support

5. The creation of the educational liaison model has enabled the special education department to provide robust student support and give direction to regular education teachers working with students with disabilities.

- a. Educational liaisons are the district's service providers responsible for monitoring the progress of students with disabilities. In addition, they provide direct services to students.
 1. Educational liaisons follow 20 to 24 students over the course of each six-day cycle, and are current with each student's classwork, homework, and test results.
 2. Educational liaisons use electronic data as well as student work and accommodation plans to support students in class.
- b. The use of electronic data, which reflects the reorganization of the special education department under its new director, has improved communication between special educators and regular educators as well as with parents.
 1. Information is shared between educational liaisons and regular education teachers electronically as well as during common planning time.
 2. Educational liaisons inform parents about their student's progress or needs through email and Edline.
- c. Access to student data allows the liaison to assist classroom teachers by recommending modifications and accommodations to individual student and whole-class instruction as well as by modeling that instruction.
 1. Educational liaisons use electronically available data, such as a student's READ 180 scores, Study Island results, SRI Lexile scores, class homework, and test results via SIS Net, as well as student performance profiles when monitoring students' progress and developing or modeling instructional modifications. The educational liaisons have also supported students in intervention initiatives such as READ 180 to remediate reading problems.

Impact: The support services provided through the educational liaison model increase special education students' access to and successful participation in the general curriculum and vocational curriculum of the school.

- The median student growth percentile (SGP) in ELA for students with disabilities increased from 43.0 in 2011 to 51.0 in 2012, compared with the state subgroup's median SGP of 45.0 in 2012.
- 6. The district offers a broad array of services to students that include connections to and networking with several community services and community outreach programs.**
- a. Project Reach, a Brockton-based program, supports behaviorally challenged students in the greater Southeastern Regional Vocational Technical School District community.
 1. Project Reach scaffolds employability skill sets and provides services to students with social/emotional issues, enabling them to have access to vocational programs.
 2. Students work with a clinical consultation team to work on employability skills. This has also helped the school enroll students from the community who participate in a graphic arts lab.
 3. In exchange for the school's services to these students, Project Reach makes two social workers and a doctor available to the school for consultation.
 - b. The guidance department started a Wellness Initiative to provide various support services for students.
 1. The High Point Treatment Center provides drug and alcohol treatment through private therapists coming to the school to work with students.
 2. Another agency, Health Imperative, works with students around sexual issues and counseling and provides services as needed, including teen pregnancy counseling and referrals.
 3. Local hospitals and social service agencies are also part of the school's resources, used as needed.
 - c. The ICE Program (Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment) from Bridgewater University supports students with significant cognitive challenges.
 1. Students are able to audit courses at the university that provide social training and transitional planning as well as networking with other students
 2. The school rotates the students' lab experiences through both culinary and early education. Some students work on parenting skills through the early education lab.
 - d. The Starr Mentor Program for incoming 9th graders is an example of a school-based outreach program.
 1. Volunteer staff are assigned as mentors to incoming 9th graders.
 2. Staff members are in touch with sending schools to become familiar with incoming students, and then host them at summer barbeques and orientation programs and mentor them through their first year at the school.

- e. Several community programs and service providers are now including the school in grant proposals; the school likewise writes in these community services in grant proposals in a show of mutual support of students in the area.

Impact: Community partnerships and networking provide an enhanced support system for all students, especially benefiting those students experiencing cognitive and behavioral challenges.

Financial and Asset Management

7. Budget development is open and transparent with opportunities for staff, school committee, and public input. The budget document includes line-by-line detail as well as summaries of proposed expenses and revenue sources with the exception of most grants and revolving funds.

- a. Teachers, lead teachers, directors and other administrators submit program needs and requests to the superintendent. Administrators, the chairman of the school committee's budget and finance subcommittee, and other interested school committee members jointly discuss all needs and requests before the superintendent submits his recommended budget to the school committee.
- b. The superintendent presents his proposed budget to the school committee publicly highlighting the process of its development, revenue sources, net school spending estimates, enrollment, a summary of proposed expenses compared to previous years, major increases and decreases, and local required spending and proposed assessments. He includes staff requests as well as his recommendations in the proposed budget. Documentation for the committee includes detailed staff requests along with the superintendent's recommendations by line item and a PowerPoint presentation with highlights of the proposed budget.
 - 1. Requests from departments or teachers are detailed for each line item.
 - 2. Proposed revenues include Chapter 70 and transportation aid, member town assessments, transfers from the Excess and Deficiency (E&D) account, and federal stimulus grants, but no other grants or revolving funds.
- c. The public, including staff, have the opportunity to raise concerns and priorities about the proposed budget at the school committee's public hearing.
 - 1. Of district teachers responding to the TELL Mass survey, a statewide survey of educators administered in spring 2012, 68 percent indicated that they had some level of input into the school budget (more than the state rate of 53 percent).
- d. The school committee and superintendent respond to public questions and concerns from the public hearing at the next meeting.
- e. Presentations by the superintendent and at least one school committee member are made to each town, including a PowerPoint presentation similar to that made to the school committee.

Impact: The open budget process and school officials' presentations to town officials have contributed to the towns' support of the school, and assessments have been approved unanimously.

- The budget has been unanimously approved by the nine member towns in part because of the transparency of presentations by school officials.

8. Financial controls include multiple layers of approvals and safeguards. Financial reports are provided regularly to the school committee and others. Business staff members are qualified and audits have found no instances of material weaknesses or non-compliance.

- a. Several authorities must approve requisitions: the supervisor, principal, business manager, and superintendent. Student activity accounts are managed according to Massachusetts Association of School Business Officials (MASBO) recommendations with checks signed by two administrators and independent books maintained by the treasurer. They are audited internally and an independent audit is done every three years, with one planned for 2013.
- b. The business manager submits a monthly report to the school committee that shows revenues, expenditures, and encumbrances to date—such as encumbered payroll, expenses on the renovation project, and revolving funds—compared with the budget. The treasurer’s report includes current payroll and operations expenses, the current cash balance, a reconciliation to the district’s bank accounts, and cash receipts for the month.
 1. The report summarizes expenditures for administration, instruction, school services, operations and maintenance, fixed charges and capital acquisitions. A line-by-line report is also included. Expenditures from revolving funds, but not grants, are included.
 2. Projected balances are provided for encumbered requisitions and payroll, but not for utilities and similar planned expenses.
- c. The business manager serves as the district procurement officer and has both business manager and MCPPO certifications. The facilities engineer is also MCPPO certified. Bids and contracts are done in accordance with MGL CHs 30B and 149.
- d. Audits have found no material weaknesses or instances of non-compliance. Of seven recommendations in recent management letters five have been completed and the other two are in process.

Impact: Careful controls of the district’s finances have kept spending within budget in recent years and the district has secured a reputation in its member towns for good financial management.

- The auditor noted that the district revenues exceeded budget by \$792,000 and expenses were under budget by \$933,000; the school committee voted \$564,000 of the surplus for a construction project.

9. The district has a capital plan and is in the midst of a \$34 million building renovation project that has not required an increase in assessments to the towns.

- a. The district is undergoing a major \$34 million renovation project including a new gym, a renovated and enlarged cafeteria and media center, a new early education center, improved science labs, some updated shops, ADA compliance, and fire suppression.
- b. The district's capital plan has been reviewed annually and includes work on the athletic track, shop equipment, scheduled vehicle replacements, mechanical and boiler replacement, roofs, sprinklers, motors, lighting, and a solar project. An update of the plan is expected after the building renovation project is complete.
- c. The building renovation project has been budgeted with no increase in assessments to member towns.
 1. MSBA covers 80 percent of the approved costs of the project and the remaining \$6.1 million is bonded.
 2. Savings in energy, maintenance, and capital budgets because of the renovations will be used to make principal and interest payments on the bond, with higher payments in the next few years when savings are greater.
- d. Per-pupil costs indicate above average investments in maintenance by the district.
 1. A preventive maintenance plan exists and has been submitted to the state along with the district's application for MSBA funding.
- e. The district has taken steps to decrease water use, especially waste water and energy use.
- f. Review team members observed a windmill that generates some electricity for the school.

Impact: The building is well maintained and the member towns have supported the renovation project. The district's renovated building will be an improved facility for its academic and vocational programs.

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

10. Leaders have not yet built with one another or with teachers a common understanding of what constitutes effective instruction at the school.

- a. Although the superintendent holds one-hour weekly leadership team meetings, those meetings are not specifically directed toward improvements in teaching and learning or creating a common understanding of what constitutes effective instruction.
 1. Written agendas are not prepared for weekly leadership meetings. Administrators discuss topics such as budget issues, buying computers, etc.; thus the agenda does not serve as a platform to plan or discuss important topics such as the elements of effective instruction and how to ensure its implementation in every classroom every day.
 2. Attendees at the superintendent's weekly leadership meetings include the principal of the high school, the principal of the post-secondary technical institute, the director of technology, the business manager, the facilities manager, and the superintendent's administrative assistant. The diversity of responsibilities of those present leads to agenda items related to operations and does not facilitate including discussions directed at improvements to teaching and learning or creating a common understanding of what constitutes effective instruction.
- b. Although there are one-hour, weekly, school-based leadership team meetings, those meetings are not specifically targeted to improvements in teaching and learning.
 1. Written agendas are not prepared for these weekly leadership team meetings. Leadership team members said that there is a lot of discussion "about housekeeping, the renovation, and kids in trouble." Thus, the agenda does not serve as a planning platform for needed discussions about teaching and learning topics.
 2. The principal and the directors and other teacher supervisors who conduct all teacher evaluations do not share a clear working definition of effective instruction. When the principal was asked what his administrators think effective instruction looks like, he relayed that he thought they would say that it looks like not giving up on students, assessing regularly, and contacting parents. The principal spoke of teaching styles rather than the elements of effective instruction, saying that different teaching styles were making a difference and his role was to support all kinds of teaching. When three supervisors were asked what high-quality instruction looks like, one replied, "Student engagement." Another said that she had asked the superintendent to put on the walkthrough form what they should be looking for in a classroom. A third said that they

had begun to talk about it a little when school started, but since then they had not, they had been putting out fires.

- c. Teachers, administrators, and students do not have a common understanding of what effective instruction looks like.
 1. Teachers in two different focus groups did not provide a definition of effective or high-quality instruction when asked.
 2. Students do not experience consistent expectations from teachers, saying what they did in class depended on the teacher.
 3. The team did not find any documentation that addressed what effective instruction should look like.
- d. The nature and quantity of feedback on instruction varies across the school.
 1. Mentors provide feedback to teachers new to the school using mentoring logs.
 2. Some teachers said that feedback was not often given except in a review year.
 3. Teachers also noted that administrators were “out and about” and came into classrooms but there was not much feedback.
 4. One administrator reported giving feedback to teachers by email and orally and described taking notes on an iPad using a “walkthrough program” designed by the superintendent. The program looks for student engagement, checking for understanding and the times at which the class begins and ends. Other administrators noted variations in the communication of feedback.

Impact: Because the district does not have a common articulated model for effective instruction, teachers and leaders do not have a shared definition from which to discuss the elements of instructional quality. Teachers do not have a model using components of effective instruction to guide lesson planning and implementation. Consequently, implementing consistently good teaching and providing robust feedback to teachers on their instruction and how to improve it prove problematic. As a result,

- The quality of instruction varies widely from class to class.
- Administrators, teachers, and students do not have a clear set of expectations for teaching and learning.
- Written and oral feedback to teachers from administrators varies widely both in the amount of feedback and in the nature, quality, and focus of the content of feedback.

11. Southeastern does not have a focused improvement plan or a school-based, ongoing systematic approach to decision-making and planning that is aligned with school improvement goals and priorities.

- a. There was not widespread involvement in developing the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and the budget was not linked with the SIP’s goals.

1. Teachers and leadership noted that teachers did not play a major role in developing the SIP, which was initially developed by administrators while attending a conference five years before the review.
 2. Though by contrast there was widespread input into the budget, there were no references in the budget documentation or budget presentation to the SIP's goals or any other district priorities.
- b. The SIP does not provide a detailed, up-to-date roadmap for improving student achievement, and there is no other up-to-date document that provides a common vision of what the school needs to do and how it needs to do it. There was an out-of-date strategic plan, not given to the review team, which the superintendent said that he planned to update and share with the school committee.
1. The SIP describes three areas for improvement: literacy, numeracy, and motivation and support, and lists a series of "performance indicators" with 2008–2009 baseline data and goals 2009–2010. The document has not been updated annually.
 2. The 2012 Update to the SIP, which is included in the 2011–2012 Annual Report, identifies goals and progress toward meeting them followed by data. It does not lay out a carefully crafted action plan to achieve those goals.
 3. Because the SIP is not currently understood by teachers to be the driving tool for improvement, teachers and administrators on the professional development committee do not develop the Professional Development Plan to firmly support attaining the goals and priorities of the SIP.
- c. Although there are one-hour, weekly, school-based leadership team meetings, those meetings are not specifically planned to include discussion of a systems approach to long-term problem solving aligned to improvement goals.
1. Because written agendas are not prepared for the weekly meetings, the agenda cannot serve as a planning vehicle for needed discussions to guide the long-term thinking and actions of the administrative team.
 2. Discussions at weekly meetings tend to focus on school management issues and operational topics rather than on issues of educational leadership.
 3. The leadership team has not developed a systematic way to focus important decisions at the school.
- d. There is a perception in the school that decisions are sometimes unilaterally made, and then subsequently changed.
1. The team did not find evidence of the leadership promoting participatory decision-making.
 2. Leadership team members acknowledged that they struggle with decision-making and need to discuss and plan more as a group.

3. The school does not have a formal mechanism, such as a student council, to solicit student opinions about new ideas, or about what works well and what does not work well from the students' perspective.
4. The school does not have mechanisms to discuss and come to agreement about what the components of a discipline plan and a behavioral management plan should be, and currently there are no clear guidelines.
5. Some teachers reported that they did not understand the variety and number of decisions made in the school. Representatives of the teachers' federation reported the perception that school-level decisions were often changed without explanation. For example, they said that the schedule has changed every year for the past few years and they often do not know about the changes until they arrive at school in September. According to the principal, the schedule went from a 10-day cycle, to a 5-day cycle, to a 4-day cycle, to a 6-day cycle.

Impact: Because directors and other teacher supervisors, teachers, and students often do not have a voice in decision-making, there is insufficient collaborative problem solving and decision-making.

- Teachers are confused about expectations from leaders.
- The work of administrators and teachers is not coordinated and focused through a SIP.
- The SIP is underused.
- School leaders' actions have insufficient focus.

12. The school does not have one primary educational leader setting standards for education through the important function of supervision and evaluation.

- a. Members of the school leadership team write formal evaluations of all teachers. The principal evaluates only administrators, not teachers.
- b. The principal does conduct walkthroughs; mostly providing positive feedback to teachers.
- c. Variations in evaluation documents demonstrated that the school does not have clear standards or guiding principles for conducting or writing teacher evaluations.

Impact: Teacher evaluation sets standards, makes explicit the expectations for teachers, and ensures a corps of effective teachers in the school. Without the evaluation process and the primary school leader together setting a standard for what an effective teacher evaluation should look like, the effects are as follows:

- Members of the school leadership team are left to deliver hard messages and have the most difficult conversations, as well as evaluating all teachers, without full principal leadership in this evaluation process.
- There is a great likelihood of supervision of inconsistent quality.
- Teachers are not assured of high-quality feedback and evaluation practices throughout the school.

- Leaders are missing the opportunity to ensure instructional improvement across the school.

Curriculum and Instruction

13. The academic and vocational curricula are aligned with state frameworks. Curriculum guides or curriculum maps that include all necessary components are not yet completed, and further curriculum development is planned. Curriculum implementation and alignment are lightly monitored.

- Academic curricula have been aligned with the current Massachusetts curriculum frameworks, and further curriculum development is planned.
 - Curriculum components such as suggested teaching strategies, resources, a balanced set of assessments, and model units have not yet been completed in all content areas.
 - The district has outlined a process and a timeline for curriculum review and revision.
 - The alignment of the biology curriculum is planned for June 2013.
- Vocational curricula are aligned with state vocational frameworks, and the vocational director indicated that the district is working on improving the quality of the vocational curricula currently in place. A vocational curriculum cannot be described as being truly current and reflective of local labor market conditions without annual review and validation of the second strand of the state frameworks, Technical Knowledge and Skills, with the program advisory committees. Teachers did not indicate that this was happening in all of the career majors.
- The curriculum is not regularly or uniformly monitored for content, pacing, or alignment in all courses of study.
 - Lesson plans for academic courses are submitted for the first cycle and then only new teachers or those whose lesson plans raised concerns continue to submit lesson plans for review.
 - Teachers said that they sometimes received feedback on their lesson plans.
 - Common skills and literary terms are taught in English using different novels. To ensure common skill development and therefore, cohesiveness for what is taught, there is an emphasis on students' use of e-learning assessments such as Study Island and My Access writing assignments.
 - History teachers use common planning time to do check-ins to monitor pacing and coverage; others noted a quick check-in during a 15-minute morning meeting.
 - When asked how the school ensured that the curriculum was followed, some teachers said that they gave mid-term and final examinations.

Impact: Missing components in the academic curricula and unsystematic monitoring of curriculum coverage and alignment mean that the district cannot ensure that curriculum content and

implementation are guaranteed and viable for all students. Without a complete and documented curriculum and without sufficient monitoring the school cannot ensure students have access to the full curriculum.

14. The school does not have a research-based instructional model, and leaders and teachers did not show a common understanding of the components of effective instruction. Feedback from classroom visits is inconsistently given.

- a. Administrators and teachers were not able to give a consistent explanation of what good teaching looks like or uniformly describe the components expected at the school for good teaching.
 1. Leaders and teachers could not articulate similar components of what constitutes good instruction at the school.
 2. The faculty does not systematically engage in conversations about good instructional practices.
 3. The SIP does not provide goals, guidance, or plans to improve instruction.
 4. Leaders said that leadership team meetings were more “nuts and bolts” than focused on academic topics.
- b. The school does not systematically track, monitor, analyze, and discuss data from classroom visits based on observed strengths and weaknesses and use that data to plan professional development to improve instructional practices.
 1. Administrators walk through classrooms but feedback targeted at improving instruction is not consistently given to teachers.
 2. Some administrators said that they give feedback regularly but not specifically targeted feedback.
 3. One administrator provides written feedback to new teachers seven or eight times a year while another admits being “not even close to that” and another commented about being “even more behind the curve....”
 4. One administrator is in classes daily and observes instruction using an iPad walkthrough form developed by the superintendent. The administrator provides oral feedback on minor issues and meets with teachers individually for more serious discussions.
 5. Teachers agreed that administrators were “out and about” but not much feedback was given.

Impact: The absence of a good instructional model, combined with the absence of a system for using data gathered in classroom visits, limits leaders’ ability to

- supervise teaching effectively and provide teachers with constructive oral and written feedback to promote more effective teaching practices, and
- provide teachers with professional development targeted to their observed needs.

15. The quality of instruction in observed classes was inconsistent, and teaching often did not challenge students.

- a. Observed instructional practices were inconsistent, did not regularly challenge students, and did not meaningfully promote higher-order thinking. (Please see Instructional Inventory results in Appendix C.)
 1. Thirty-nine percent of observed lessons clearly and consistently reflected rigor and high expectations.
 2. Fifty-two percent of observed lessons were paced to engage all students and promote understanding.
 3. Fifty-one percent of observed lessons did not provide clear evidence of learning objectives.
 4. The use of varied strategies matched to learning objectives and content was not clearly evident in 60 percent of observed lessons.
 5. Questioning techniques that required higher-order thinking were not clearly evident in 66 percent of the classes visited.
 6. Sixty percent of observed lessons had little or no evidence of students' articulating thinking or reasoning.
 7. Students were not asked to elaborate about content or ideas in 59 percent of the classrooms visited.
 8. The use of frequent formative assessments to check understanding and guide instruction was noted in 40 percent of the classrooms visited.
 9. A district leader voiced concern that the observations were conducted the week before midterms and may not be reflective of the normal routine.
- b. The district has procedures to identify students in need of remediation, but observed classroom instruction did not often address students' diverse learning needs.
 1. Students in need of extra support usually participate in remedial programs such as Math Strategies, Bridges, Read 180, System 44, and a 21st Century Literature course. These interventions are widely used at the school.
 2. In 72 percent of observed classrooms the review team did not find clear and consistent evidence that appropriate and varied strategies were implemented to meet students' diverse learning needs while in class.
 3. Teachers reported a lot of professional development on differentiated instruction in 2011–2012 but noted that differentiated instruction is mainly used in inclusion classrooms with co-teachers.
 4. Teachers noted insufficient support for English language learners or students with disabilities in vocational classes.

Impact: The insufficiently directed approach to teaching in the school, which has led to most observed classes not reflecting high expectations for students, engaging them in higher-order thinking, or meeting their diverse learning needs, limits students' opportunities to learn and think.

Assessment

16. Teachers administer formative, summative, and performance-based assessments that produce a large amount of data. Although some good practices are evident, the rigorous and reflective analysis and use of assessment data and other information to systematically guide all forms of decision-making are not yet consistently in place.

- a. Teachers described varied uses of formative, summative, and performance assessments.
 1. Some use formative assessments to inform teaching and re-teaching, group students, and provide remedial and enrichment opportunities. Clickers and white boards are sometimes used to administer formative assessments. In some shops, self-assessments are used formatively.
 2. Summative assessments are used to evaluate competency and determine national, state, and sometimes school-based certification for shops. Some summative assessments are performance based. Other summative assessments include common midterms and finals, chapter and unit tests, science lab reports, and project-based assessments in history classes and shops.
 3. Students in grades 9 and 10 compile shop portfolios. Grade 12 students produce a portfolio and a senior project to integrate and apply knowledge, skills, and understanding in their chosen shop.
 4. Grade 11 and 12 students complete a research paper related to their vocational area.
 5. My Access online writing assessments are frequently administered in both academic and vocational courses.
 6. Benchmark assessments in shops demonstrate progress in meeting competencies or standards for state and national certification. Benchmark assessments are new in the 2012–2013 school year in the academic program and are being given in Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II.
- b. Data is sometimes analyzed and used to inform decisions and guide improvement efforts.
 1. The principal meets with all teachers by subject and by shop during common planning time (CPT) to present and review trends in student growth data.
 2. End-of-year assessments use competency and certification data to measure attainment of SMART goals by shop.
 3. Placement tests determine ELA and mathematics placement for entering students.

4. In the new Innovation Academies, teachers use data to set SMART goals by grade to guide improvement efforts and to identify student weaknesses and reteach.
 5. The district carefully tracks shop enrollment data to make decisions about staffing and program retention.
 6. MCAS data is sometimes discussed at academic department meetings.
- c. Although teachers noted a need for more support in using data, the district does not have a data team or data coaches to build teachers' capacity to use data more effectively.
1. Of teachers responding to the TELL Mass survey conducted in March and April of 2012, 54 percent reported needing more professional development to use student assessments such as benchmark or formative assessments to teach students more effectively.
 2. Fifty percent of teachers responding reported needing more professional development to use data to drive decision-making.
 3. The district established and then disbanded a data team in the 2012 school year when a state grant for Level 3 districts ended. The team participated in ESE professional development to be able to help teachers to better understand and use data.
 4. One administrator said that the guidance "at-risk team" now functioned as the data team and noted that once students' low growth data was identified to a teacher, the teacher "would improve now that he knows," adding that there was no coaching for the teacher.
 5. The data support person, whose main responsibility is to analyze and disseminate MCAS and Lexile data, is the only data analysis specialist in the district.
- d. Only a few teachers reported using data constantly in department meetings.
1. Several educators referred to an overwhelming amount of data for teachers and leaders to manage; the amount of data was described by one as "... sipping water through a fire hose" and by another as "too much [data] overload."
 2. The review team did not find meeting agendas or minutes of leadership meetings or department meetings to provide evidence of the regular use of data for collaborative inquiry that would promote improvements to specific teaching and learning problems.
- e. The insufficient supply of state-of-the-art technology for teachers and students has made it difficult to ensure universal easy access to and analysis of data and other student information.
1. Teachers noted old computers and insufficient up-to-date computers; for example, there are 4 computers for 36 students in one shop, and 6 computers do not work and are needed for diagnostics in another shop.

2. In recognition of the above, the district has targeted one-half of teachers to receive new laptops in the 2012–2013 academic year and one-half to receive them in the 2013–2014 academic year.
 3. Students identified the school’s technological capacity as an issue in their academic study and shop work.
 4. The district has decided to purchase Chrome Books for entering students beginning in September 2013.
- f. Although leaders noted the use of data to set improvement goals, teachers expressed little awareness of School Improvement Plans and achievement data being used to identify and set school improvement goals and priorities. Likewise, teachers did not describe school improvement goals being linked to their own improvement goals.
1. The superintendent referred to using PSAT scores, growth data, SAT results, and attendance and behavioral data to set strategic goals and evaluate how well the school was doing.
 2. The principal noted that data “was woven into everything” the school did and cited the use of MCAS data, My Access, Lexiles, and employment data to identify students needing more support or adjustments to curriculum.
 3. Teachers reported low awareness of the School Improvement Plan.
 4. Teachers said that they did not participate in data-driven discussions to either identify or better understand school improvement goals and priorities.
- g. Some school committee members and leaders could demonstrate the link between student achievement data, goal setting, and data-driven decision-making.
1. Some school committee members noted using achievement data to set goals for the superintendent, while others noted that goals would be set in a February 2013 meeting.
 2. Some school committee members and the superintendent described using data to make policy and budgeting decisions such as extending the school day to provide additional support for struggling students and using low enrollment data to eliminate vocational programs or reduce staff.
 3. Other school committee members did not express familiarity with school improvement goals.
 4. In the 2012 Update to the School Improvement Plan, achievement data and other student indicators are cited to demonstrate progress in improving literacy, numeracy, and motivation and support.

Impact: Some evidence indicates awareness of and selected practices for using data for improvement; however, there is not yet a widespread, systematic, collaborative practice that indicates that the district uses data pervasively to drive decisions for continuous improvement.

- A few staff members can develop colleagues' capacity in data analysis and lead ongoing collaborative, data-driven discussions aimed at improving learning and teaching.
- The use of data to set and monitor improvement exists more at the administrative level than at the classroom level.
- Using data to measure attainment of improvement goals and tracking data trends to allocate resources (time, materials, and personnel) sometimes take place.

17. Common planning time for teachers has recently been established due to creative scheduling. The district has seen some success, but there is more work to be done to ensure maximum use of common planning time for continuous improvement initiatives.

- a. The time allocated for common planning time to use for professional conversations and data-driven collaborative inquiry is unequal across programs.
 1. Each day, academic departments have a double period of common planning time (CPT) and vocational teachers have one period of CPT. Department meetings take place during CPT once per six-day cycle.
 2. As a result, teachers and administrators in academic departments have twice as much CPT as those in vocational shops.
 3. Also because of the schedule, the principal has twice as much time to meet with academic teachers than with vocational teachers, meeting with each department during CPT every other cycle.
- b. Effective collaboration within and across departments to plan and discuss assessments and assessment data has sometimes taken place.
 1. Teachers have used common planning time to develop common midterms and finals and analyze test results.
 2. The use of writing prompts for My Access in both academic and vocational courses has encouraged collaboration between vocational and English teachers to co-write prompts, especially when students prepare research papers in grade 12.
 3. Some mathematics teachers and vocational teachers collaborate to develop MCAS-type mathematics problems for particular shops.
 4. The Innovation Academy, by design, facilitates collaboration and data-driven discussions about student progress and achievement because most academic and vocational teachers share the same student population.
 5. Some teachers reported using data constantly in department meetings, while others said that they did not look at data all the time and another noted that "we muddle[d] along with bring your own data."

- c. Teachers noted that although CPT has helped promote added collaboration, a more effective and purposeful use of CPT, professional development, and professional learning groups would strengthen their capacity to analyze and use data well.
 1. Teachers identified the need for more collaboration across vocational and academic departments and across the curriculum.
 2. Interviewees said that professional learning groups (PLGs) that were functioning in 2011–2012 no longer meet.
 3. Some teachers mentioned the need for more professional development to use technology-generated data well during CPT, particularly for Study Island, My Access, and Grade Quick. Others identified the availability of a refresher course for this purpose during half-day in-service.
 4. Some teachers met with colleagues during CPT, but others used it for breaks or mainly as an individual prep period.

Impact: The use of common planning time (CPT) is loosely structured. No systematic procedure exists to ensure that teachers and leaders regularly convene to collaboratively analyze and discuss data and other student information such as student work or other indicators. There are uneven expectations for teachers and leaders to meet during CPT to identify, analyze, and discuss data and other information to improve student achievement and professional practice. Some departments have substantially less time to meet than others. A culture of collaborative inquiry and a high performing data culture do not yet exist in the district.

Human Resources and Professional Development

18. The district is working to implement the new educator evaluation system in 2012-2013 as required for Race to the Top participants.

- a. As a participant in the Race to the Top grant program, the district is required to begin implementing a new educator evaluation system consistent with ESE's new system in 2012-2013. The expectation is that half of the Southeastern educators being evaluated in 2012-2013 will be evaluated using the new district system.
- b. After three years of difficult negotiations the school committee and the teachers' federation reached a draft agreement on a three-year collective bargaining agreement, which was accepted by the School Committee in September 2012, but had yet to be signed by the time of the review in January 2013. Negotiations were continuing over the implementation of a new educator evaluation system consistent with the state's new system.
 1. The district adopted ESE's Model Contract language with no modifications in September 2012.
 2. The principal described 2 full days of voluntary training to the teachers in August on educator evaluation which included the use of SMART Goals. Teachers' federation

representatives described the training on educator evaluation as “very brief.” Supervisors noted that educators who did not participate in the training but were being evaluated in the 2012-2013 school year were each provided with individual training on developing professional practice and student learning goals (one of the workshops for teachers prescribed by ESE).

3. The principal stated that teachers who were being evaluated this year had selected 3 goals, including one from the SIP (a school goal), one personal goal, and one departmental goal (team goal).
 4. Because the SIP is not current and did not involve widespread staff engagement, the review questions the usefulness of the SIP in ensuring alignment with departmental and individual educator evaluation goals.
 5. According to an interview with representatives of the teachers’ federation, a group from the federation was working on educator evaluation; there was not yet a form for the classroom observation component of the evaluation; and forms were to be put into the collective bargaining agreement.
- c. The district has created a customized on-line evaluation system that allows educators to input their goals, allows supervisors to review and give feedback on those goals, and organizes each component of the new educator evaluation system from start to completion, with the exception noted above--the classroom observation form is yet to be established.
 - d. After full agreement is reached on the implementation of the new system, evaluations can be completed for the approximately 50 teachers scheduled for evaluation in school year 2013.

Impact: Leaders and teachers to be evaluated this year have invested much time in developing and beginning to implement the new educator evaluation system. The one incomplete part of the system—the classroom observation component of the evaluation—is critically important for the district to fulfill its obligation to implement the new educator evaluation system in a way that supports educators in meeting clear expectations for effective classroom instruction.

19. The School Improvement Plan does not provide enough guidance to identify clear, schoolwide professional development goals and priorities.

- a. The role and influence of the School Improvement Plan vis-à-vis the Professional Development Plan activities are difficult to discern.
 1. Some interviewees did not see a relationship between the School Improvement Plan and professional development activities.
 2. Several key stakeholders were unaware of the goals contained in the School Improvement Plan. Thus, resource allocation for professional development is not linked to the School Improvement Plan.
 3. According to an interview with the professional development director and professional development committee members, when *Individual* professional development plans are developed, they are connected to school improvement goals.

Impact: Without clearly defined integration and alignment between goals in the School

Improvement Plan and professional development, an opportunity is lost to build a cohesive faculty clearly focused on achieving the goals of paramount importance to the district:

- Priorities fluctuate frequently.
- Schoolwide initiatives often become of secondary importance.
- Schoolwide professional development is not well focused.

Student Support

20. The absence of a behavior management system together with an inconsistently administered discipline policy has led to confusion, compromising the authority of adults in the school community and leaving students unclear about norms and guidelines.

- a. The school does not yet have a behavioral management program that provides a framework for decision-making, promotes social competencies, supports academic achievement, and guides both student and staff behavior.
 1. In many interviews, leadership suggested that the data on behavior indicated that there was a battle between maintaining discipline and managing behavior, between suspensions and behavior modification, but that, in any case, behavior needed to be addressed.
 2. In 2011 the school had an out-of-school suspension rate 5.7 percentage points above the state, 11.3 percent compared with 5.6 percent. In 2012, the school's out-of-school suspension rate was 13.8 percent, compared with the state's 5.4 percent, an 8.4 point difference.
 3. The superintendent said that suspending students was not the answer. One way the school is trying to reduce the number of suspensions is by asking teachers to handle discipline in their classrooms.
 4. A behavior modification program was identified as a priority and was started four years before the review, but has since been discontinued.
 5. Some teachers and administrators at the school have discussed a schoolwide tiered system of support, but the school has not implemented one.
- b. The school has a discipline policy found in both the student handbook and the staff handbook. It is inconsistently administered and leads to daily frustrations for teachers. Teachers' enforcement of the rules varies from classroom to classroom.
 1. Both teachers and administrators are aware that there is an inconsistent interpretation and enforcement of the discipline policy; however, they are unclear about who should address the problem— classroom teachers, the behavior management team, guidance, or the principal's office.
 2. Teachers said that they determined the consequences of infractions themselves in the absence of consistent enforcement of the rules. However, if they did not have a way to deal with the problem they sent the student to the behavior management team. One teacher, because of inconsistent enforcement of rules, found them impossible to

enforce and had given up on enforcing certain ones. Another teacher said that the school did not have a good system for dealing with discipline.

3. Teachers expressed frustration with the inconsistencies of the discipline process. They reported that there were “no clear rules and that they [were] not consistently enforced.” Also, teachers said that there was no strong enforcement” of what is in the handbook. However, in an acknowledgement of the quick crises intervention of the team, they noted that when a “teacher needs help NOW, our discipline people are right there.”
- c. Students comply with the rules of the school by responding to the particular teacher in front of them. This creates an ambiguous environment in which to develop self-regulating behavior and good attitudes for learning.
1. The students view the behavioral management team as where most discipline problem solving takes place— “really easy,” one student said. When asked whether discipline is fair and equitable, students responded, “Kids play around it a lot.”
 2. Although some teachers posted rules on classroom walls, review team members’ observations indicated that students were inconsistently adhering to those posted rules.
 3. A soon-to-be-published student newspaper article was to detail the inconsistencies among teachers in how infractions were enforced.

Impact: In the absence of a behavioral management program that addresses schoolwide, classroom, and individual student needs through broad prevention, targeted intervention, and development of self-discipline, it is hard to see how the district will respond to disruptive students without using exclusionary and punitive approaches. These approaches have limited value and in this school, produce inconsistent results.

- An unclear and inconsistently administered discipline policy results in confusion for both teachers and students about expectations for behavior in school.
- According to ESE data for 2010 through 2012, the school’s out-of-school suspension rates as well as its in-school suspension rates were above the state’s, sometimes substantially higher. From 2010 to 2012 the out-of-school suspension rate increased, while the in-school suspension rate decreased.²⁰

²⁰ Out-of-school suspension rates: 2010 (11.2% vs. 6.0%); 2011(11.3% vs. 5.6%); and 2012 (13.8% vs. 5.4%).
In-school suspension rates: 2010 (20.0% vs. 3.7%); 2011 (13.4% vs. 3.5%); and 2012 (5.3% vs. 3.4%).
(See [ESE's School/District Profiles](#)).

Review Recommendations

Leadership and Governance

1. The superintendent and principal should together develop a collaborative approach for all administrators and teachers to use to establish a definition of the elements of effective instruction that will be commonly accepted at the school. Administrators and teachers should then use the definition as they work to calibrate and improve instruction.

- a. The leadership team at the district and school level should examine a range of instructional best practices and provide teachers and administrators with information about effective instruction.
 1. The leadership team should prioritize offering a course outlining the essential elements of effective instruction to every teacher and administrator at the high school.
 2. Another source of information that can help Southeastern to clarify and refine its definition of effective instruction is ESE's *Conditions for School Effectiveness Research Guide* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/framework/level4/ConditionResearchGuide.pdf>). In particular, pages 30-35 provide a succinct description of research about specific instructional approaches.
- b. A group of teachers should then engage with the school leadership team to prioritize effective instructional techniques and plan how teachers will be supported to use those techniques, then monitored, and finally evaluated on their implementation.
- c. Administrators should come to agreement about what they will look for in classroom walkthroughs and observations and what kind of feedback they will provide to promote strong content knowledge and effective instruction. (These ideas are expanded in the Curriculum and Instruction recommendations below.)
 1. Some examples of what administrators might look for in walkthroughs and observations are included in ESE's *Characteristics of a Standards-Based Mathematics Classroom* (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).

Benefits to Southeastern from implementing this recommendation will include more consistency in the quality of classroom instruction and, consequently, higher student achievement.

2. The superintendent and principal should together develop an approach to systematic decision-making that includes administrators and teachers, using district and school leadership meetings and revised Strategic and School Improvement Plans.

- a. Agendas for leadership meetings at both the district and school level should be developed and circulated before each meeting. All leaders should be able to submit agenda items for consideration.
 1. Each agenda should address short- and long-term planning, particularly around aspects of improvements to teaching and learning.
 2. The superintendent should also engage the school committee in renewing the district's Strategic Plan and ensure that appropriate SIP goals are aligned with the Strategic Plan.
 3. The superintendent should ensure that an instructional leadership team is convened to discuss important issues about current challenges and progress in improving teaching and learning that should be supported at the central office level.
- b. The principal should form a school leadership team with representation from every department plus the school's academic and vocational leaders.
 1. It is the responsibility of the principal to promote participatory decision-making among professional staff in the school, for the purpose of developing educational policy. See G.L. c. 71, s. 59B.
 2. The principal should build the capacity of the school leadership team to make or inform evidence-based decisions to improve teaching, learning, and school climate in the school, with the principal maintaining the ability to make the final decision in areas authorized by the superintendent.
 3. The principal should consider hiring a facilitator for this team as it starts up.
 4. Having school leadership meetings include time for discussion about teaching and learning may necessitate longer meetings scheduled at a time different from that currently scheduled.
- c. Setting adequate time for school leadership team meetings is critical to the success of this process. A key activity of the school leadership team should be developing a draft of a workable and renewable SIP that includes both short-term and long-term goals, with some goals aligned to the district's Strategic Plan, which also requires updating.
 1. The school leadership team should set a limited number of school improvement priorities and goals for the year, to be included in the SIP.
 2. SIP goals should address improving student achievement and other important targets for student and professional growth and development. The SIP will identify the main focus of leaders' work for the year.
 3. The SIP should define how and when SIP goals will be measured and considered attained and what individuals or groups will be responsible for them, with timelines. Developing the final version of the SIP should involve consultation with various school stakeholders.

4. Updates to key stakeholders on progress in meeting SIP goals should take place at useful intervals throughout the school year.
5. At the end of each year, the SIP should be revisited to account for progress and to renew its provisions for the next cycle of improvement.

Benefits to Southeastern from implementing this recommendation will include setting clear educational priorities that have buy-in from all segments of the teaching and administrative staff as well as other stakeholders. This shared decision-making and improvement planning will empower staff throughout the school to work together in effective and consistent ways. It will give teachers and administrators together the opportunity to set a strong improvement focus for the school and discuss how each one can have an important role in raising student achievement.

3.The principal should take responsibility for and be actively engaged in the evaluation of teachers in order to set the standard for evaluation.

- a. Evaluation should be one of the primary activities of all supervisors, especially the principal.
- b. The principal should take responsibility for evaluating a group of professional status teachers each year as well as reading and signing off on all evaluations.
- c. The principal should conduct at least one formal observation for every teacher where there are indications of concern about the teacher’s instruction or content knowledge.
- d. The principal should do at least one formal observation of each teacher without professional status each year.
- e. The principal should discuss with supervisors his expectations for evaluations.
- f. The principal and the vocational and academic evaluators in the school should work with a consultant on how to write high-quality evaluations and how to conduct difficult conversations with teachers effectively.
 1. Educator evaluation resources related to training for evaluators and for teachers, as well as a list of approved training vendors, can be found on the ESE website at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/eval/training/>.

Benefits to Southeastern from implementing this recommendation will include clearer expectations for and more consistency in implementing effective teaching. Implementing it will also put the principal in his rightful role of chief evaluator in the school and the person who is ultimately responsible for the make-up and quality of the teaching staff. This is particularly important as the district implements its new educator evaluation system. Evaluation is one of the most powerful tools that a principal has to improve student achievement.

Curriculum and Instruction

4. The district should continue to develop an aligned, documented, and comprehensive curriculum for all content areas. The district should also develop curriculum leadership practices that ensure an effective and consistent use of curriculum materials so that all students have access to a curriculum that is comprehensive and rigorous.

- a. Although the district's process and timeline for curriculum review can improve already established curriculum, the district should focus on developing updated curriculum documents as soon as possible.
- b. In addition to being aligned with state frameworks, revised curriculum documents (guides/maps/syllabi) for each subject should include learning objectives, resources, instructional strategies, pacing guides, and measurable outcomes or assessments.
 1. ESE's Model Curriculum Units provide high-quality examples of these elements. The model units and a blank template can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/model/>.
- c. Curriculum documents can also be improved by the inclusion of materials and strategies that promote and develop students' thinking and reasoning skills, both orally and in writing, individually, in pairs, and in groups.
- d. Especially given the high proportion of students with disabilities in the district (25 percent compared with a state rate of 17 percent), curriculum materials can be improved by the inclusion of extensions and support materials for students. In other words, all curricula can include language-rich materials and instructional strategies—a practice that the district has begun by developing its writing prompts.
- e. The principal and the administrative team should develop a system and practices to ensure that curriculum materials are regularly monitored for effectiveness. Examples include systematic review of lesson plans, regular collaborative discussions of what materials work well and which materials need revision, and a plan for revisions that can be implemented promptly.
- f. School staff should make more focused use of student assessment data to identify curricular weaknesses. For example, they should evaluate specific curriculum materials by reference to student outcomes on various assessments including the e-learning tests and interventions such as Study Island, My Access, and Bridges. What common or specific weaknesses are observed and how can curriculum materials be improved to address those weaknesses?

Benefits to Southeastern from implementing this recommendation will be more comprehensive curricula and a more effective system to develop, manage, and monitor teaching materials. Curriculum will be more cohesive and more functional because it will better meet all students' diverse learning needs. A workable cycle of frequent curriculum improvement and renewal ensures that curricula are not static, but are developed and improved to meet students' needs as well as the evolving context and content of the subject.

5. To improve instruction and the achievement of all students, the district must develop a common understanding of the components of effective instruction and a system to monitor whether effective instructional practice is consistently implemented.

- a. As recommended under the first Leadership and Governance recommendation above, administrators and teachers should define what good instruction looks like at Southeastern:
 1. As noted above, participating in professional development focused on elements of effective instruction can prove useful to both administrators and teachers.
 2. In small- and large-group meetings, administrators and teachers can discuss ideas and strategies from professional development and instructional research (see Leadership and Governance recommendation above).
 3. Discussing effective strategies after watching videos of effective teaching can also be helpful.
 4. Useful resources include:
 - i. Characteristics of Standards-Based Teaching and Learning:
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sda/ucd/walk/>
 - ii. Research on Conditions of Effective Teaching:
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/framework/level4/ConditionResearchGuide.pdf>
 5. As a result of their participation in these and other activities, administrators and teachers will be able to identify the strategies that will form every teacher's repertoire of instructional tools.
 - i. Some will be required for all lessons and the use of others will be matched to students' individual and group needs and the context and content of the lesson or unit.
 - ii. Examples of components to be used in every lesson include: stating clear learning objectives at the beginning of all lessons, checking for understanding throughout the lesson, and using appropriate end-of-lesson practices such as a summary of or student reflection on key content, vocabulary, or ideas.
- b. Staff should then implement effective instruction as defined:
 1. Some of the new strategies should be prioritized to be implemented and discussed in the short term, with other strategies being at appropriate intervals.
 2. Teachers who struggle with the implementation of new strategies should receive internal support from leaders and peers, possibly in combination with external professional development.
 3. Staff should frequently observe and discuss exemplary teaching practice at school.
- c. Southeastern should develop a system for monitoring the implementation of effective instruction. The school should:
 1. Develop and share a fair walkthrough protocol, or use the one developed by the superintendent, for when leaders look for instructional trends across classrooms. A

useful resource for developing a walkthrough protocol is ESE's *Learning Walkthrough Implementation Guide* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/dart/walk/>). The guide is designed to support instructional leaders in establishing a Learning Walkthrough process in a school or district. A presentation that Southeastern leaders can use to introduce Learning Walkthroughs to staff and other stakeholders can be found at the same link.

2. Initially, conduct walkthroughs in groups of administrators and teachers to calibrate observations and note-taking and make the process public and open.
3. Decide how information gleaned from walkthroughs will be used to improve teaching. For example, without identifying teachers, examples of exemplary practice or strategies that need improvement might be shared in faculty or department meetings.
4. Ensure that every faculty or department meeting includes a discussion of one or more instructional practices, and, especially, take advantage of common planning time for this purpose.
5. The principal should discuss with supervisors the common qualities that they will all look for and document as they observe teaching and the nature and quantity of feedback to individual teachers that they will provide, and practice and critique giving high-quality feedback.

Benefits to Southeastern from implementing this recommendation will include clear expectations on the part of both teachers and administrators for what constitutes good teaching. Effective teaching will promote student engagement in lessons and increase student achievement. Effective teaching will empower students as learners and thinkers and problem-solvers. Effective teaching will also enable students to be explorers and creators of knowledge that they can use and apply. The key benefit of monitoring instructional practice, both through walkthroughs looking for trends and through supervision of individual teachers, is that by focusing on providing high-quality instruction to all students it creates and sustains a culture of continuous improvement at the school.

Assessment

6.To create a high-performing data culture and continuous improvement at the school, the district should develop a more systematic and collaborative process to collect, analyze, and use data.

Southeastern should:

- a. Organize for collaborative inquiry using data.
 1. Reinstitute a school data team and clearly define its role and responsibilities. ESE's District Data Team Toolkit (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/dart/ig.html>) – a resource to help a district establish, grow, and maintain a culture of inquiry and data use – can provide helpful guidance for this process.
 2. Provide professional development for data team members to gain the skills to identify, collect, analyze, and disseminate data and lead data-rich small group discussions focused on using data to improve teaching, curriculum, and student achievement.

3. Other sources of information about data use include: Kathryn Parker Boudett, Elizabeth A. City and Richard Murnane, *Data Wise: A Step-by-Step Guide to Using Assessment Results to Improve Teaching and Learning*, Harvard Education Press, 2010; Nancy Love, editor, *Using Data to Improve Learning for All: A Collaborative Inquiry Approach*, Corwin Press, A Sage Company, 2009; Nancy Love, Katherine E. Stiles, Susan Mundry, and Kathryn DiRanna, *The Data Coach's Guide to Improving Learning for all Students*, A joint publication of The Corwin Press, TERC, Research for Better Teaching and West Ed, 2008; and Victoria Bernhardt, *Data Analysis for Comprehensive Schoolwide Improvement 2nd*, Eye on Education, 2004.
 4. Take the steps necessary for some common planning time to be regularly and frequently designated for collaborative inquiry by department.
 5. Design and implement a structure and expectations for common planning time to ensure that this time is used to focus on data, curriculum, and instruction in an organized way.
- b. Consider visiting another school district using a collaborative inquiry approach.
 - c. Use evidence from achievement data and other student information in discussions of effective instructional practices to create a cycle of continuous improvement and a high-performing data culture.
 1. Ensure that teachers share a common language about data, assessment, and instruction. Discussions of the following questions, for example, will help teachers arrive at this common language:
 - i. What questions about curriculum, instruction, and assessment can be asked and answered using samples of student work or teacher work?
 - ii. What data can best be used to display achievement, progress, and trends in this particular department? How will it be collected, analyzed, and displayed?
 - d. Have each department use data to identify and discuss a single learning and teaching problem.
 1. Department staff should be explicit in identifying the learning problem and identify additional data needed, if any, to better understand it.
 2. Department members should discuss what they think is the root cause of the problem. Module 4 of the *District Data Team Toolkit* provides information and questions to help data teams to identify and explore root causes.
 - e. Have each department then develop an action plan detailing the knowledge, resources, and strategies the department will use to address the root cause.
 1. In developing it, department staff should arrive at answers to such questions as:
 - i. How can instruction be improved to better meet students learning styles and needs?
 - ii. What expertise is needed to change teaching practices?
 - iii. How can curriculum or teaching materials be adjusted, expanded, or enriched?

2. Department staff should also determine what the indicators will be that progress has been made and that the root cause has been successfully addressed. For example, these might include:
 - i. Data and evidence
 - ii. Changes in instructional practices
 - iii. Modifications to curriculum and development of teaching materials
 - iv. Changes in student work or attitudes toward learning
 - v. Changes in behaviors and norms
- f. Have each department then implement the action plan to address the student-learning problem.
- g. Have each department, as the last step in the cycle of continuous improvement, test/assess the results of the action plan and then begin the cycle again.

Benefits to Southeastern from implementing this recommendation include more effective use of data to revise curriculum and teaching materials, strengthen instructional practice, and improve student achievement. In addition, the school can create and sustain a professional learning community that focuses on and is successful in continuous improvement. Activities undertaken by a true professional learning community can also transform school culture.

Human Resources and Professional Development

7. The district should establish the elements of the classroom observation component of its new evaluation system, and these elements should align with clear expectations from the district about what constitutes effective instruction at Southeastern.

- a. In order to resolve any remaining educator evaluation issues as soon as possible, a petition seeking arbitration should be filed with the commissioner of elementary and secondary education in accordance with [G.L. c. 71, s. 38](#). In any case, the district should update ESE's Educator Policy, Preparation, and Leadership unit on the status of its educator evaluation negotiations.
- b. Failure to reach agreement on educator evaluation jeopardizes the district's continued participation in the Race to the Top (RTTT) program, including future disbursements of RTTT funds. Districts removed from the RTTT program will be expected to return all unspent funds to ESE.
- c. The district should also ensure all teachers are provided the ESE-developed training for evaluators and for teachers and specialized instructional support personnel as required by Chapter 131 of the Acts of 2012, passed by the Massachusetts legislature in June 2012. See the Quick Reference Guide for Educator Evaluation Training Requirements available at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/>.

- d. It should then ensure that in developing their professional practice goals, educators seek to attain to the levels of instructional mastery clarified in the classroom observation instrument that is established by the district.

Benefits from implementing an educator evaluation system consistent with the new Massachusetts system include alignment of district/school, team, and educator goals and the promotion of collaboration and continuous learning. When implemented well, such a system will be a powerful driver for improving instruction.

8. Professional development in the district should be aligned with the newly revised SIP (see second Leadership and Governance recommendation above), as well as with the needs of teachers identified by evaluations as the new evaluation system is put into practice.

- a. As the SIP is revised, the professional development necessary to advance the school’s goals and priorities should be identified.
- b. The professional development committee should then ensure that the identified professional development is planned for and carried out.
- c. As the district implements its new educator evaluation system, professional development should also be aligned with the educator needs identified by evaluations, with priority being given to professional development that will advance the goals and priorities of the school.
- d. The allocation of funds for professional development should also be aligned with school goals and priorities and the prioritized needs of educators identified through evaluations.

Benefits to Southeastern will include accelerated improvement of educator practice in a direction that will advance the attainment of the school’s goals and priorities while responding to the needs of educators.

Student Support

9. The school should use a collaborative approach to identify and implement a schoolwide behavioral management program that addresses both discipline and students’ social growth and development.

The review team recognizes that this is a school that cares deeply about its students, both academically and socially. For the most part, students have respectful interactions with teachers and staff. However, the daily inconsistencies of the behavioral expectations and rule enforcement are unnecessarily taxing the energies and good will of community members.

- a. The review team encourages the district—as it begins to investigate behavioral management approaches—to investigate and review the approaches and programs that are available and are widely in use across the state. The district should investigate and decide how to implement two universal approaches to schoolwide discipline:
 1. Schoolwide positive behavioral supports, systems that communicate and teach rules and function-based behavioral interventions.

2. Social emotional learning, which incorporates approaches that emphasize self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.
 3. Both approaches should include the following components: prevention-focused continuum of support, proactive instructional approaches to improving social behaviors, conceptually sound and empirically validated practices, and data-based decision making.
- b. The school's behavioral management program should include:
1. A systems approach to establishing a productive social culture that minimizes problem behavior on the part of all students and is research based and data driven.
 2. The use of clear schoolwide discipline practices that are consistently administered and enforced.
 3. The use of effective classroom management techniques and instructional approaches that increasingly enable students to assume responsibility for their own behavior and learning.
- c. Under the program, a small number of positively stated rules and expectations should be set, appropriate social behavior should be taught, the fulfillment of expectations and observation of rules should be monitored, and a rich schedule of positive reinforcement for appropriate social behavior should be provided.
- d. The team recommends that the school foster additional student involvement by establishing a school council or a student government.
1. This will help teach students civic responsibility.
 2. This will give students a voice and a presence in some school decision-making.
- e. The district leadership should review the new Massachusetts Tiered System of Support (MTSS) model from ESE (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/mtss/>) and discuss how it could be applied or adapted to meet the needs of students at Southeastern.
1. Leaders will find that the MTSS model includes key components of an effective behavioral management system, based on a pyramidal support system both for academic as well as social behaviors.
 2. The MTSS system is aligned with Massachusetts' district standards and indicators and provides the structure needed to develop the policies, practices, and procedures to successfully implement the model.
 3. The MTSS Self-Assessment (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/mtss/sa/>) is designed to help schools and districts to assess their current status in each of the core components in academic and non-academic domains, to establish priorities, and to develop a targeted action plan.

Benefits to Southeastern: A behavioral management system will bring clear expectations for learning and positive behavior while providing firm but fair discipline.

Finance and Asset Management

10. Budget documentation and the budget presentation should refer to the goals and priorities in the School Improvement Plan and the Strategic Plan; the allocation of funds, as well as the assignment of staff roles and the use of staff time, should reflect those goals and priorities.

- a. As part of ensuring that the School Improvement Plan and the Strategic Plan provide direction and focus for the school and district, goals and priorities from the plans should be included in the budget documentation and presentations, and funds should be allocated in accordance with them.
 1. As it allocates funds, the district should review the deployment of staff and the use of staff time
 2. Information and resources related to establishing budget priorities can be found in The Rennie Center's *Smart School Budgeting*:
[\(<http://www.renniecenter.org/research/SmartSchoolBudgeting.pdf>\)](http://www.renniecenter.org/research/SmartSchoolBudgeting.pdf).
- b. The proposed budget should provide the resources necessary to implement short- and long-range plans and any other major decisions for the district.
 1. Major initiatives of the district should reflect long-range planning and the priorities of the district, and the budget should support them.
 2. The construction project underway in the district is clearly a current priority, and the inclusion of district and MSBA funding for it in the budget documentation and presentations reassures the school committee and the public that the project is financially supported.

Benefits to Southeastern from implementing this recommendation include a clearer picture of the school's priorities and of the resources allocated for them, as well as alignment of district spending with the school's goals and priorities.

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

Review Team Members

The review of the Southeastern Regional Vocational Technical School District was conducted from January 14–17, 2013, by the following team of educators, independent consultants to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

1. Nadine Bonda, Ed. D., Leadership and Governance
2. Debbie DeCarlo, Curriculum and Instruction
3. Linda L. Greyser, Ed. D., Assessment, review team coordinator
4. Owen Conway, Ph. D., Human Resources and Professional Development
5. Mary Eirich, Student Support
6. George Gearhart, Ed. D., Financial and Asset Management

District Review Activities

The following activities were conducted during the review of the Southeastern Regional Vocational Technical School District.

- The review team conducted interviews with the following financial personnel: business manager, business official, treasurer, and the finance director/town accountant for one town. The review team conducted interviews with the following members of the school committee: chairman and five committee members.
- The review team conducted interviews with representatives of the Southeastern Regional Vocational Technical School District's teachers' federation: president/chair of negotiations, chair of negotiation team, interim vice-president, and three members.
- The review team conducted interviews/focus groups with representatives from the Southeastern Regional Vocational Technical School District's central office administration: superintendent, facilities manager. The review team visited the district's vocational-technical high school, grades 9-12.
- During the school visit, the review team conducted interviews with the principal, academic director, vocational director, special education director, guidance director, vice-principal for innovation, director of professional development, school psychologist, adjustment counselor, Title I director, ELL director, reading specialist, data support person, IT director. It conducted interviews with teacher-meeting facilitators for English, mathematics, science, and history and also met with eight vocational teachers representing cosmetology, design and visual communications, electronics, engineering, early education, HVAC, plumbing, legal and protective services. The team conducted a focus group with 13 academic and vocational teachers.
- The team observed 70 classes: 38 were academic classes, 32 were vocational shops.
- The review team analyzed multiple sets of data and reviewed numerous documents before and during the site visit, including:

- Data on student and school performance, including achievement and growth data and 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

The following is the schedule for the onsite portion of the district review of the Southeastern Regional Vocational Technical School District, conducted from January 4–17, 2013.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Orientation with district leaders and principal; interviews with district and school staff; review of documents and personnel files; interview with representatives of teachers’ federation.	Interviews with district and school leaders, school staff and representatives of teachers’ federation; classroom observations; review of personnel files; teacher focus group; parent focus group; interview with finance representative from one town.	Interviews with principal, school leaders and staff; classroom observations; school committee interviews.	Interviews with principal; classroom observations; follow-up interviews; team meeting; emerging themes meeting with district and school leaders and principal.

Appendix B: Enrollment and Expenditures

**Table 1: Southeastern Regional Vocational Technical School District
Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity & Selected Populations 2011-2012**

Selected Populations	Number	Percent of Total	Percent of State	Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity	Number	Percent of Total	Percent of State
Total enrollment	1,242	100.0	0.1	African-American/ Black	319	25.7	8.3
First Language not English	232	18.7	16.7	Asian	4	0.3	5.7
Limited English Proficient*	5	0.4	7.3	Hispanic/Latino	152	12.2	16.1
Students with Disabilities**	304	24.5	17.0	White	714	57.5	67.0
Low-income	687	55.3	35.2	Native American	0	0.0	0.0
Free Lunch	582	46.9	30.4	Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	0	0.0	0.0
Reduced-price lunch	105	8.5	4.8	Multi-Race, Not Hispanic or Latino	53	4.3	0.0
<p>*English language learners were formerly referred to as “limited English proficient” students. **Students with disabilities number and percentage (only) are calculated including students in out-of-district placements. Sources: School/District Profiles on ESE website and other ESE data</p>							

**Table 2: Southeastern Regional Vocational Technical School District
Expenditures, Chapter 70 State Aid, and Net School Spending
Fiscal Years 2011–2013**

	FY11		FY12		FY13
	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual	Estimated
Expenditures					
From school committee budget	20,437,639	20,480,305	21,399,145	21,382,157	22,052,133
From revolving funds and grants	---	4,749,367	---	9,564,421	---
Total expenditures	---	25,229,672	---	30,946,578	---
Chapter 70 aid to education program					
Chapter 70 state aid*	---	12,007,606	---	12,628,459	12,885,090
Required local contribution	---	6,893,871	---	7,163,181	7,253,938
Required net school spending**	---	18,901,477	---	19,791,640	20,139,028
Actual net school spending	---	18,916,463	---	19,797,909	20,415,528
Over/under required (\$)	---	14,986	---	6,269	276,500
Over/under required (%)	---	0.1	---	0.0	1.4
<p>*Chapter 70 state aid funds are deposited in the local general fund and spent as local appropriations.</p> <p>**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.</p> <p>Sources: FY11 and FY12 District End-of-Year Reports; Chapter 70 Program information on ESE website.</p>					

**Table 3: Expenditures per In-District Pupil:
Southeastern RVTSD, Fiscal Years 2010–2012**

Expenditure Category	2010	2011	2012
Administration	\$798	\$ 662	\$645
Instructional leadership (district and school)	\$2,113	\$2,231	\$2,279
Teachers	\$6,600	\$6,875	\$7,329
Other teaching services	\$565	\$731	\$660
Professional development	\$127	\$105	\$112
Instructional materials, equipment and technology	\$1,311	\$1,508	\$960
Guidance, counseling and testing services	\$514	\$519	\$600
Pupil services	\$2,006	\$1,853	\$2,223
Operations and maintenance	\$1,984	\$2,296	\$2,450
Insurance, retirement and other fixed costs	\$2,304	\$2,336	\$2,494
Total expenditures per in-district pupil	\$18,323	\$19,116	\$19,750
Sources: Per-pupil expenditure reports on ESE website			

Appendix C: Instructional Inventory

Southeastern Regional Vocational Technical School District

Total Classrooms Observed =70.

Vocational = 32, Academic = 38 [Math = 9, ELA = 12, Science = 9, History = 4, Read 180 = 3, Resource Room = 1]

Students = 991, Teachers = 78, Assistants = 9, ELL = 0, SPED = 2, RTI = 0

0=No Evidence	1=Partial Evidence	2=Clear and Consistent Evidence
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0	1	2	
Learning Environment			
1 1%	4 6%	65 93%	1. Interactions between teacher and students and among students are positive and respectful.
2 3%	10 14%	48 83%	2. Behavioral standards are clearly communicated and disruptions, if present, are managed effectively and equitably.
1 1%	4 6%	65 93%	3. Classroom procedures are established and maintained to create a safe physical environment and promote smooth transitions among all classroom activities.
28 40%	15 21%	27 39%	4. Lesson reflects rigor and high expectations.
11 16%	11 16%	48 68%	5. Classroom rituals, routines and appropriate interactions create a safe intellectual environment in which students take academic risks and most behaviors that interfere with learning are prevented.
13 19%	4 6%	43 75%	6. Multiple resources are available to meet students' diverse learning needs.
2 3%	5 7%	63 90%	7. The physical arrangement of the classroom ensures a positive learning environment and provides all students with access to learning activities.

Teaching			
4 6%	3 4%	63 90%	8. Demonstrates knowledge of subject and content.
36 51%	7 10%	27 39%	9. Communicates clear grade-appropriate learning objectives aligned to state standards. Applicable ELL language objectives are evident.
28 40%	14 20%	28 40%	10. Uses appropriate and varied strategies matched to learning objectives and content.
29 41%	9 13%	33 47%	11. Requires inquiry, exploration, application, analysis, synthesis, and/or evaluation of concepts individually, in pairs or in groups to demonstrate higher-order thinking. (circle observed skills)
33 47%	13 19%	24 34%	12. Uses varied questioning techniques that require/seek thoughtful responses and promote deeper understanding.
36 51%	15 21%	19 28%	13. Implements appropriate and varied strategies that meet students' diverse learning needs.
19 28%	14 20%	37 52%	14. Paces lesson to engage all students and promote understanding.
32 46%	10 14%	28 40%	15. Conducts frequent formative assessments to check for understanding and inform instruction.
27 39%	6 9%	37 52%	16. Makes use of technology to enhance learning.

Learning			
10 14%	13 19%	47 67%	17. Students are engaged in productive learning routines.
26 37%	17 24%	27# 39%	18. Students are engaged in challenging academic tasks.
15 21%	10 14%	45 65%	19. Students assume responsibility for their own learning.
35 50%	7 10%	28 40%	20. Students articulate their thinking or reasoning verbally or in writing either individually, in pairs or in groups.
41 59%	9 13%	20 29%	21. Students' responses to questions elaborate about content and ideas. (not expected for all responses)
25 36%	5 7%	40 57%	22. Students make connections to prior knowledge, real world experiences and other subject matter.
35 50%	3 4%	32 46%	23. Students use technology as a tool for learning and/or understanding.
41 59%	9 13%	20 29%	24. Student work demonstrates high quality and can serve as exemplars.