

District Review Report

Adams-Cheshire Regional School District



Review conducted February 23-26, 2015

Center for District and School Accountability

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and
Secondary Education

Organization of this Report

Adams-Cheshire RSD District Review Overview	1
Adams-Cheshire RSD District Review Findings	6
Adams-Cheshire RSD District Review Recommendations	25
Appendix A: Review Team, Activities, Schedule, Site Visit	35
Appendix B: Enrollment, Performance, Expenditures	37
Appendix C: Instructional Inventory	49

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148-4906
Phone 781-338-3000 TTY: N.E.T. Replay 800-439-2370
www.doe.mass.edu



This document was prepared by the
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.
Commissioner
Published June 2015

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, an affirmative action employer, is committed to ensuring that all of its programs and facilities are accessible to all members of the public. We do not discriminate on the basis of age, color, disability, national origin, race, religion, sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation. Inquiries about the Department's compliance with Title IX and other civil rights laws may be directed to the Human Resources Director, 75 Pleasant St., Malden, MA 02148-4906. Phone: 781-338-6105.

© 2015 Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Permission is hereby granted to copy any or all parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes. Please credit the "Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education."

This document printed on recycled paper

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148-4906
Phone 781-338-3000 TTY: N.E.T. Relay 800-439-2370
www.doe.mass.edu



Adams-Cheshire RSD District Review Overview

Purpose

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

Districts reviewed in the 2014-2015 school year include districts classified into Level 2, Level 3, or Level 4 of ESE's framework for district accountability and assistance. Review reports may be used by ESE and the district to establish priority for assistance and make resource allocation decisions.

Methodology

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

Site Visit

The site visit to the Adams-Cheshire Regional School District was conducted from February 23-26, 2015. The site visit included 30.75 hours of interviews and focus groups with approximately 75 stakeholders, including school committee members, district administrators, school staff, students, and teachers' association representatives. The review team conducted 2 focus groups with 12 elementary school teachers and 4 middle and high school teachers.

A list of review team members, information about review activities, and the site visit schedule are in Appendix A, and Appendix B provides information about enrollment, student performance, and expenditures. The team observed classroom instructional practice in 41 classrooms in 3 schools. The team collected data using an instructional inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards-based teaching. This data is contained in Appendix C.

District Profile

Adams and Cheshire have town administrator forms of government and the chair of the school committee is elected. There are seven members of the school committee, three from Cheshire and four from Adams; they meet at least monthly and often more frequently.

The current superintendent has been in the position since 2012 and in the district for 10.5 years; before her appointment she had served as the principal of the district's C.T. Plunkett Elementary School. The district leadership team includes the superintendent, the director of special services, the Title I director/literacy coach, and the three principals; the business manager and the technology manager participate as needed. Central office positions have been mostly stable in number over the past five years. The district has three principals leading three schools; the high school principal was appointed in 2014, and is the third principal since 2012. The one other school administrator, an assistant principal, is not a member of a bargaining unit. In 2013-2014 there were 94.7 teachers in the district.

The district was reconfigured in 2012 with the opening of a new middle/high school, grades 6-12. During the construction, students and staff in grades 6-12 were relocated to multiple facilities. High school classes were moved to the Memorial Middle School; grades 7 and 8 students attended classes in the leased Notre Dame Elementary School (Adams), and Adams grade 6 students were assigned to the C.T. Plunkett School in Adams. Before 2012, grade 6 students in Adams had attended the Memorial Middle School (now closed) and grade 6 students in Cheshire had attended the Cheshire Elementary School.

As of October 2014, 1,352 students were enrolled in the district's 3 schools:

**Table 1: Adams-Cheshire Regional School District
Schools, Type, Grades Served, and Enrollment*, 2014-2015**

School Name	School Type	Grades Served	Enrollment
Cheshire Elementary School	ES	PK-5	223
C.T. Plunkett Elementary School	ES	K-5	467
Hoosac Valley Middle & High School	MS/HS	6-12	662
Totals	3 schools	PK-12	1,352
*As of October 1, 2014			

Between 2011 and 2015 overall student enrollment decreased by 10 percent, from 1,503 in 2011 to 1,352 in 2015. Enrollment figures by race/ethnicity and high-needs populations (i.e., students with disabilities, students from low-income families, and English language learners (ELLs) and former ELLs) as compared with the state are provided in Tables B1a and B1b in Appendix B.

Total in-district per-pupil expenditures were higher than the median in-district per pupil expenditures for 51 K-12 districts of similar size (1,000-1,999 students) in fiscal year 2013: \$13,488 as compared with \$12,506 (see [District Analysis and Review Tool Detail: Staffing & Finance](#)). Actual net school spending has been above what is required by the Chapter 70 state education aid program, as shown in Table B8 in Appendix B.

Student Performance

Adams-Cheshire is a Level 3 district because all three of its schools are in Level 3 for being among the lowest performing 20 percent of schools relative to other schools in their grade span.

- Cheshire Elementary is in the 18th percentile of elementary schools and is in Level 3 with cumulative Progressive Performance Index (PPI) of 55 for all students and 68 for high-needs students; the target is 75.
- Plunkett Elementary is in the 5th percentile of elementary schools and is in Level 3 with a cumulative PPI of 30 for all students and 39 for high-needs students; the target is 75.
 - Plunkett Elementary School's students with disabilities and students from low-income families are among the lowest performing 20 percent of subgroups.
- Hoosac Valley Middle & High School is in the 16th percentile of middle-high schools and is in Level 3 with a cumulative PPI of 48 for all students and 45 for high-needs students; the target is 75.
 - Hoosac Valley Middle & High School also has low MCAS participation for students with disabilities.

The district did not reach its 2014 Composite Performance Index (CPI) targets for ELA, math, and science.

- ELA CPI was 79.6 in 2014, below the district's target of 88.4.
- Math CPI was 67.3 in 2014, below the district's target of 80.1.
- Science CPI was 67.6 in 2014, below the district's target of 79.0.

ELA proficiency rates were below the state for the district as a whole and in every tested grade by 10 percentage points or more, except for in the 10th grade. ELA performance varied by elementary school.

- ELA proficiency rates for all students in the district decreased by 9 percentage points from 61 percent in 2011 to 52 percent in 2014, 17 percentage points below the state rate of 69 percent.

- ELA proficiency rates were below the state rate by 27 percentage points in the 5th grade, by 21 percentage points in the 4th grade, by 16 percentage points in the 3rd and 7th grades, and by 13 and 10 percentage points in the 6th and 8th grades, respectively.
 - Between 2011 and 2014 ELA proficiency rates decreased by 15 percentage points in the 5th grade, by 13 percentage points in the 3rd grade, and by 7 to 11 percentage points in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades.
- 10th grade ELA proficiency rates increased by 3 percentage points from 89 percent in 2011 to 92 percent in 2014, 2 percentage points above the state rate of 90 percent.
- The ELA proficiency rate at Cheshire Elementary was 52 percent in 2014, 20 percentage points higher than the 32 percent rate at Plunkett Elementary.
 - ELA proficiency rates at Cheshire Elementary increased by 5 percentage points, from 47 percent in 2011 to 52 percent in 2014.
 - ELA proficiency rates at Plunkett Elementary decreased by 18 percentage points, from 50 percent in 2011 to 32 percent in 2014.

Math proficiency rates were below the state rate in the district as a whole and in each tested grade by 11 percentage points or more. Math performance varied by elementary school.

- Math proficiency rates for all students in the district decreased by 7 percentage points from 44 percent in 2011 to 37 percent in 2014, below the state rate of 60 percent.
- Math proficiency rates in the district were below the state rate by 38 percentage points in the 6th grade, by 20 to 23 percentage points in the 4th, 5th, and 7th grades, and by 11 to 18 percentage points in the 3rd, 8th, and 10th grades.
 - Between 2011 and 2014 math proficiency rates decreased by 28 percentage points in the 6th grade, by 13 and 10 percentage points in the 7th and 8th grades, respectively, and by 3 percentage points in the 3rd grade.
- Between 2011 and 2014 math proficiency rates increased by 11 percentage points in the 4th grade and by 3 percentage points in the 10th grade.
- The math proficiency rate at Cheshire Elementary was 58 percent in 2014, 25 percentage points higher than the 33 percent rate at Plunkett Elementary.
 - Math proficiency rates at Cheshire Elementary increased by 17 percentage points, from 41 percent in 2011 to 58 percent in 2014.
 - Math proficiency rates at Plunkett Elementary decreased by 9 percentage points, from 42 percent in 2011 to 33 percent in 2014.

Science proficiency rates were below the state rate for each tested grade and in the district as whole.

- 5th grade science proficiency rates decreased by 10 percentage points from 33 percent in 2011 to 23 percent in 2014, 30 percentage points below the state rate of 53 percent.
- 8th grade science proficiency rates decreased by 5 percentage points from 27 percent in 2011 to 22 percent in 2014, 20 percentage points below the state rate of 42 percent.
- 10th grade science proficiency rates were 55 percent in 2011 and 57 percent in 2014, 14 percentage points below the state rate of 71 percent.

Adams-Cheshire students' growth on the MCAS assessments on average is slower than that of their academic peers statewide in ELA and in mathematics.

- On the 2014 MCAS assessments, the districtwide median student growth percentile (SGP) for ELA was 35.0; the state median SGP was 50.0.
 - ELA median SGP fell below 40.0 in the 4th grade (median SGP of 23.0), in the 5th grade (30.5), in the 6th grade (38.5), in the 10th grade (37.0), and at Cheshire Elementary (39.0) and Plunkett Elementary (21.0).
- On the 2014 MCAS assessments, the districtwide median student growth percentile (SGP) for mathematics was 38.5; the state median SGP was 50.0.
 - Math median SGP was above 60.0 at Cheshire Elementary (median SGP of 62.0).
 - Math median SGP fell below 40.0 in the 4th grade (27.0), 6th grade (16.0), 10th grade (32.0), and at Plunkett Elementary (34.0) and Hoosac Valley High (38).

Adams-Cheshire reached the 2014 four year cohort graduation target of 80.0 and the five year cohort graduation target of 85.0 percent.¹

- The four year cohort graduation rate increased from 75.9 percent in 2011 to 81.8 percent in 2014, below the state rate of 86.1 percent.
- The five year cohort graduation rate was 87.9 percent in 2010 and 84.2 percent in 2013, below the state rate of 87.7percent.
- The annual dropout rate for Adams-Cheshire was 2.1 percent in 2011 and 2.5 percent in 2014, above the statewide rate of 2.0 percent.

¹ 2014 graduation targets are 80 percent for the four year and 85 percent for the five year cohort graduation rates and refer to the 2013 four year cohort graduation rate and 2012 five year cohort graduation rates.

Adams-Cheshire RSD District Review Findings

Strengths

Leadership and Governance

- 1. Since the opening of the Hoosac Valley Middle & High School in 2012 after a substantial renovation and construction project that necessitated multiple relocations of students and educators, staff and students have been working together to more effectively meet the needs of students.**
 - A.** On February 13, 2015, the district received its final grant payment of \$1,549,040 from the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) representing the state's obligation of \$27,985,159 toward the \$40,561,000 construction project.
 - B.** During the construction of the Hoosac Valley Middle & High School, students and staff were relocated to three different facilities.
 1. Adams grade 6 students were assigned to Plunkett Elementary School; grade 6 students in Cheshire remained at Cheshire Elementary School. Grades 7 and 8 attended school at Notre Dame Elementary School under a lease, and high school classes were held at the recently closed Memorial Middle School.
 - C.** With the opening of the Hoosac Valley Middle & High School in September 2012, the district now had a complete 6 to 12 educational unit.
 - D.** Teachers noted that the building project had slowed leadership initiatives, but there was now an improvement; they said that with grades 6 to 12 housed in one building, there was greater vertical alignment of curriculum.

Impact: The construction and opening of the Hoosac Valley Middle & High School has meant that staff and students in grades 6-12 are all together in an attractive, well-planned educational facility designed to promote learning. A cohesive school staff can better focus on improving instruction and increasing student achievement.

Curriculum and Instruction

- 2. The district has begun to implement a research based literacy model K-5, designed to improve student ELA achievement.**
 - A.** Interviews and a document review showed that the district established a partnership with Bay State Reading Institute (BSRI) in June of 2014 to focus on improving literacy skills in both elementary schools in an effort to address low student achievement.

1. BSRI was vetted by the superintendent, the literacy coach, and teachers who visited districts that were currently implementing the BSRI literacy program and seeing results.
 2. The team was told that during the summer of 2014, BSRI offered a course at the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts to approximately 20 elementary teachers from the Cheshire and Plunkett elementary schools.
 - a. The district gave in-service credit to teachers participating in the program.
 - b. School leaders told the team that teachers in the summer program had a “jumpstart” to implement the BSRI literacy program in the fall of 2014.
 3. Interviewees reported that at the start of the 2014-2015 school year, coaches from BSRI provided teachers with two full days of professional development to implement the BSRI model. Interviewees said that BSRI coaches would offer an additional two full days at the end of the 2014-2015 school year.
 4. Teachers and school leaders told the team that BSRI had a prescribed set of eligibility requirements for the program. As a result, the district added the Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GRADE) to their elementary assessment matrix, which included Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) and DAZE assessments for reading comprehension.
- B.** The BSRI literacy model, which uses researched-based pedagogy including ongoing coaching and support for teachers, frequent data analysis, and differentiated instruction for students, is viewed as a “culture change” for literacy instruction in the district.
1. The team was told that the district’s literacy director and the .5 literacy specialist are providing ongoing support to teachers by going into classrooms and modeling lessons to support the full implementation of the BSRI model.
 - a. The literacy director and the .5 literacy specialist and elementary principals meet monthly with BSRI coaches to further support the full implementation of the program.
 - i. Interviewees reported that BSRI coaches also meet with struggling teachers or groups of teachers, as needed.
 - b. The literacy director and the .5 literacy specialist also provide classroom support for the district’s reading program (*Reading Street*, Scott Foresman).
 - c. School leaders reported that BSRI and ELA have been the focus of professional development for elementary teachers.
 2. Teachers and school leaders told the team that the BSRI model focuses on data. Students are grouped according to DIBELS scores and comprehensions scores; weekly benchmark

assessments are administered. Grade-level teachers have data meetings and talk about observed strengths.

- a. BSRI monitors data in formal grade-level team meetings, which take place three times a year.
3. Teachers reported that the BSRI model provides teachers with professional development geared toward differentiated instruction. All elementary classrooms have reading groups, each with specific goals. Classrooms are arranged with centers to accommodate each goal.
 - a. As required by the BSRI model, most ELA classrooms have a focus wall prominently displaying the reading unit's standards aligned to the *2011 Frameworks*, objectives, strategies, spelling words, essential questions of the unit, genre, writing skills, conventions and literacy terms. Team members noted focus walls in their classroom observations.
4. Interviewees told the team that the teaching staff has a "strong buy-in" to the program and reported that they can see the positive impact that monitoring student progress has on student motivation.

Impact: By acting intentionally in selecting a researched-based literacy model K-5 and by providing resources for the full implementation of the model, the district is ensuring effective instruction for its elementary students. Further, elementary teachers are developing a common understanding of high-quality, evidence-based instruction and are being provided ongoing coaching and support.

Financial and Asset Management

3. Budget development and administration is cooperative and transparent, and the business office is appropriately staffed.

- A. Interviews with town administrators and elected and appointed officials from both Adams and Cheshire elicited positive comments about communication with the school district as well as a belief that the budgetary information includes good explanations, and that the process is conducted in a spirit of collaboration by all of the parties involved.
- B. Town representatives told the team that they supported the school construction and renovation project and viewed school and municipal expenditures and budgetary requests as a whole, rather than competitively between the towns and the school district. Simultaneously, they said that they recognized that both the regional school district and the two towns are in a difficult financial situation.
- C. Principals said that although they recognized that the result of the annual budget building process was essentially a level services budget they were kept informed through their bi-weekly

cabinet meetings. They told the team that during the school year they had autonomy to request line item transfers.

- D. A review of job descriptions (dated June 13, 2013) for the four members of the business office showed that the descriptions reflect a comprehensive perspective on all aspects of the financial operation.

Impact: Harmony and transparency in the exercise of the fiscal responsibilities of the district ensures that the community is adequately informed about spending for education. As the district continues to work on a tight budget, securing the necessary resources, and fortified with this spirit of cooperation, the prospect of improving student performance is greatly enhanced.

Challenges and Areas for Growth

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

Leadership and Governance

- 4. **Within the district, there is a perception that the number of students facing challenges outside of school is substantial, that this particular population is increasing, and that these students have gaps in content knowledge and special needs requiring support. The district has neither sufficiently analyzed subgroup data to confirm this perception nor established effective policies, procedures, and protocols to respond to the needs of these students.**
 - A. In identifying challenges to the school district, a member of the school committee referred to an increase in the homeless population.
 - B. Administrators and program leaders noted increasing challenges for students, including poverty as well as family situations leading to involvement with the Department of Children and Families (DCF). They said that many students arrived with gaps in content knowledge and/or with behavioral or learning issues or disabilities, and that the district was trying to address these.
 - 1. Interviewees told the team that 14 students were classified as homeless in 2013-2014 and 6 students as of February, 2015. They told the team that for these students, they attempted to "provide stability with school," provided transportation, and in some cases set up special tutoring. The district's homeless coordinator mentioned working to find out what resources are available from various community agencies.

- C. A review of the 2014-2019 District Improvement Plan (DIP) and the two 2014-2015 School Improvement Plans (SIPs) as well as other documents provided by the district showed that they do not include statements of goals and objectives that identify the specific student populations as having specific needs that require attention and special services. ²As noted later in this report, the district does not have districtwide data teams to review and analyze K-12 student performance data (see the Assessment finding below).
- D. According to ESE data, ELA proficiency rates for all students in the district decreased by 9 percentage points from 61 percent in 2011 to 52 percent in 2014, 17 percentage points below the state rate of 69 percent. Math proficiency rates for all students in the district decreased by 7 percentage points from 44 percent in 2011 to 37 percent in 2014, below the state rate of 60 percent. Science proficiency rates for all students in the district decreased by 6 percentage points from 36 percent in 2011 to 30 percent in 2014, below the state rate of 55 percent.
 - 1. Adams-Cheshire students' growth on the MCAS assessments on average is slower than that of their academic peers statewide in ELA and in mathematics.

Impact: When the district perceives that a particular group of students has gaps in knowledge and special needs requiring support, but misses the opportunity to test the validity of its perception and to develop strategic improvement plans to address their needs, student achievement is unlikely to improve. Further, some groups of students may be deprived of some essential services and of differentiated instruction in their classrooms. Without regular analysis of the data around subgroup student performance, the district may be relying on unreliable data or anecdotal evidence in determining the factors contributing to several years' of declining student performance districtwide, hindering its ability to address these factors.

Curriculum and Instruction

The team observed 41 classes throughout the district: 9 at the high school, 10 at the middle school, and 22 at the 2 elementary schools. The team observed 17 ELA classes, 14 mathematics classes, and 10 classes in other subject areas. Among the classes observed were 6 special education classes. The observations were approximately 20 minutes in length. All review team members collected data using ESE's instructional inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards-based teaching.

² According to ESE's Office for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, under the McKinney Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act of 2002, districts are required to have a school committee policy on the education of homeless students and a homeless education liaison.

5. The district does not have sufficient pre-K-12 curriculum leadership to ensure the consistent development, alignment, and effective delivery of the district's curricula. It has not established structures to ensure the continued improvement of the curriculum. At the elementary level there has been insufficient attention to the implementation of the new math program.

A. There is no dedicated districtwide position responsible for curriculum oversight.

1. The superintendent and school leaders described the need for a districtwide curriculum coordinator. The superintendent told the team that the district was in "desperate need" of a K-12 curriculum coordinator.
 - a. The superintendent noted that for the past three budget sessions she has requested a curriculum coordinator, but the request is taken out of the budget because of budgetary constraints.
2. The team was told that the K-5 literacy director, who also oversees Title I, works closely with teachers to ensure that the ELA curriculum (*Reading Street*, Scott Foresman) and the BSRI literacy model are being implemented (See the Curriculum and Instruction Strength Finding above).
3. There is no designated person overseeing the implementation of the K-5 math curriculum. While interviewees reported that the literacy director has given some oversight to math and science at the elementary level, her role has multiple other responsibilities. School leaders reported that the focus in the district has been on the ELA curriculum.
 - a. Teachers told the team that no one is making sure that math is taught for a 90-minute block, K-5. There are no math coaches. Teachers rely on one another for support in implementing the curriculum.
 - b. School leaders reported that vertical alignment between the K-5 math program (*enVisions*, Scott Foresman) and *Math Connects* (McGraw Hill) used in grade 6 has not been completed.

B. Responsibility for the coordination of the curriculum is diffuse, resulting in an absence of consistency districtwide about curricular expectations.

1. When teachers were asked to name the curriculum leader for the district, for the elementary level they named the literacy director then the principals as the curriculum leaders.
2. For the middle/ high school level, teachers named the assistant principal as the curriculum leader; the newly appointed principal told the team that he is developing skills in curriculum leadership. Teachers said that team leaders also serve as curriculum leaders.

3. The district relies heavily on teachers who teach full time to serve as “assessment team” leaders at the elementary level. They work before and after school on curriculum development, including adaptations for the ELA and math programs.
 - a. Interviewees told the team that each grade level has an assessment team leader. Leaders meet monthly with the literacy director and then share curriculum information with teachers. In addition, both schools have monthly grade-level meetings led by the assessment team leaders. Agendas and minutes are kept and information is shared with administration. However, teachers are not required to attend these grade-level meetings and when they do attend, they are paid a stipend.
 - b. Teachers told the team that monthly grade-level meetings, where curriculum is discussed, help to keep them “on the same page.”
 4. Subject team leaders in grades 6-12 help to coordinate and align the curriculum.
 - a. Team leaders meet once a month after school with teachers in their departments to work on curriculum, but curriculum work is done individually. Teachers reported that team leaders in ELA, math, science and social studies at the middle/high school level, all full-time teachers, are not part of the school’s leadership team.
 - b. When the team asked teachers to describe oversight for curriculum writing, teachers stated that there was little discussion or follow up after the work was done. They also reported that they were not told about what needed to be included in their curriculum documents.
 5. While interviewees described alignment to the *2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks* as 90 percent complete, there is a range in the quality and completeness of documentation to support alignment.
 - a. The team’s review of the district’s written curriculum documents indicated a range in completeness, quality, and format. Most curriculum maps do not include fully developed units with written standards, objectives, resources, and instructional strategies to reach all learners. In most cases, formative and summative assessments were not developed. Some maps consist of topics and units in texts that have been aligned to the 2011 standards.
 - b. The team was told that the District and School Assistance Center (DSAC-Berkshires Team) worked with ELA teachers in grades 6-12 during the summer of 2014 to align and document the curriculum. Interviewees told the team that although the work was productive, it has not continued. The team’s review of these units showed that they follow the same components as ESE model units, but are in various stages of completion.
- C. The district recognizes that additional work needs to be done to fully develop the curriculum.

1. School leaders and teachers K-5 noted that while the crosswalks of the 2011 standards with the ELA and math programs are complete, the next step is to address instructional strategies and resources. At the middle/high school level, teachers reported that the alignment of the standards to units is complete, but work needs to be done to address missing resources, strategies, and materials.

Impact: Without sufficient curriculum leadership to provide oversight to the process of curriculum development, implementation, and review, the district cannot ensure that teachers are making consistent or effective use of high-quality, aligned, documented, and cohesive curriculum materials. Without a fully documented curriculum, the district cannot ensure that the taught curriculum is aligned to the *2011 Frameworks* or is aligned vertically between grades and horizontally between levels in the district, thereby hindering the district's ability to ensure that all students have access to their grade-level curricula.

6. The district has not developed a consistent, districtwide, commonly understood model of high-quality teaching and learning practices. In observed classrooms, practice in key areas was inconsistent.

A. Instructional expectations vary within and between levels in the district.

1. At the elementary level, school leaders and teachers told the team that there has been a strong focus on ELA instruction, specifically the faithful adoption of the BSRI model. Teachers reported that literacy instruction has been dominant with math instruction having a lesser focus.
 - a. Interviewees reported that the instructional model for ELA consisted of small-group, differentiated instruction with students rotating to reading centers, with nearly all classrooms having a focus wall for ELA instruction.
 - b. In most elementary math classrooms, the team observed whole-group, direct instruction. However, the team was told that teachers use both small- and whole-group instruction for math.
2. When asked about instructional expectations at the middle- and high-school levels, teachers and school leaders noted that at the start of the 2014-2015 school year all teachers were expected to use a "Do Now" at the start of class and have an agenda posted along with objectives and a closing activity. The team was told that school leaders and teachers were poised to begin introducing elements of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in the English department in grades 6-12 in the spring of 2015.

B. In observed classes, teaching practices that set clear learning objectives aligned to the standards, promote rigorous learning experiences, and support modifications necessary to reach all learners were not consistent across schools and between levels in the district.

1. The practice of communicating learning objectives was most consistent at the middle/high school level. The team observed clear and consistent evidence of clear posted or stated learning objectives aligned to the *2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks* (#8) in 67 percent of high-school classes, in 60 percent of middle-school classes, and in 36 percent of elementary classes.
 - a. The team found that most lessons did not use instructional strategies that were aligned to the objectives of the lesson. The team observed teachers clearly and consistently using appropriate instructional strategies well matched to the learning objective(s) and content (#9) in 51 percent of classes observed districtwide.
2. The team observed lessons that clearly and consistently reflected rigor and high expectations (#7) in 41 percent of elementary classes, in 20 percent of middle-school classes, and in 56 percent of high-school classes. The team found clear and consistent evidence that students were engaged in challenging and rigorous academic tasks (#17) in 37 percent of classrooms districtwide.
 - a. Observed examples of rigor and high learning expectations included: A well-planned ELA elementary class where all the students were in groups and purposefully engaged; a “Do Now” supporting the objectives of the lesson; students working collaboratively to complete a challenging physics lab; students working in pairs to solve challenging math problems; and a teacher requiring all students to justify their answers in a high-school math class.
 - b. Practices observed that did not support rigor and high expectations included: objectives of the lesson at the start of class that were not reviewed with the students; identical worksheets completed by all students in a grade 1 math class; the reviewing of math problems without explanations and with a focus on correct answers only; an absence of “bell to bell” teaching; lost instructional time in transitions; a focus on “what” (as opposed to how/why) questions in math; an absence of opportunities for students to voice their opinions or ask questions; and instruction that was teacher led/teacher dominated.
 - c. There was a low incidence of providing students with opportunities to use higher-order thinking skills in challenging learning experiences districtwide. Students were engaged in rigorous tasks that required inquiry, exploration, application, analysis, synthesis, and/or evaluation of knowledge or concepts (#11) in only 32 percent of classes observed districtwide.
 - i. Examples of higher-order thinking observed by the team included: students analyzing symbolism in poetry, and students analyzing the impact of current wars and making comparisons to the impact of the Revolutionary War.

- ii. Dominant teacher voice lessened opportunities for students to engage in higher-order thinking. For example, in one class, a teacher posed a question that required analysis and evaluation. However, the question was answered by the teacher, eliminating the opportunity for students to develop their own analysis and evaluation. The team observed few opportunities for students to explore their thinking together in structures such as “turn and talk.”
 - 3. The team was more likely to see differentiation and modifications to reach all learners at the elementary level in ELA. In most other classes observed, students all appeared to be working on the same tasks. The team observed teachers clearly and consistently use appropriate modifications for English language learners and students with disabilities (#10) in 50 percent of elementary classes, in 20 percent of middle-school classes, and in 22 percent of high-school classes.
 - a. The team observed literacy-rich classrooms that had multiple resources to support students’ diverse learning needs (#5) in 39 percent of classrooms districtwide. Literacy-rich and well-resourced classrooms contained visuals, posters, focus walls for ELA and math, laptops, listening stations, classroom libraries, math manipulatives, and document cameras or interactive white boards. The team found fewer of the resources that would enable teachers to meet students’ diverse learning needs in grades 6-12.
- C. Teachers and students made limited use of technology as a tool for learning.
- 1. Although technology was available in most classrooms in the form of interactive white boards or document cameras, the team observed teachers clearly and consistently using available technology to support instruction and enhance learning (#16) in only 22 percent of classrooms districtwide. The team found students used technology to support their learning in only 12 percent of classrooms districtwide.
 - a. While there was a low incidence of the use of available technology by teachers, the team observed some examples of technology integrated to support learning. For example, in one class, the teacher projected a spreadsheet to track students’ responses; in another class, an interactive white board was used to show a video clip; and in a science class calculations for science lab were done on an interactive white board.
 - b. According to 2014 TELL MASS Survey results, 75 percent of middle- and high-school teachers who responded (n=32) expressed the need for professional development in integrating technology into instruction to teach their students more effectively.

Impact: While the district has introduced a researched-based literacy model at the K-5 level, there is an absence of a districtwide instructional focus in other content areas and at other levels. Without sufficient differentiation of instruction, the district cannot ensure that all its students have equitable access to the curriculum. Finally, when students have limited opportunities to engage in higher-order

thinking skills and limited access to technology to enhance their learning, they are not being adequately prepared for college and career.

Assessment

7. The district does not have consistent districtwide processes or practices to collect, analyze, and disseminate student academic and other pertinent data to inform program decisions, to identify the learning needs of special populations, and to evaluate programs and services.

- A.** The district does not have districtwide policies and practices that ensure regular collection, analysis, and dissemination of data.
1. There is no districtwide data team that analyzes and disseminates PK-12 student performance data to ensure that all stakeholders receive accurate and high-quality information.
 2. Interviewees told the team that the middle/high school does not have a formal assessment team that reviews and analyzes data schoolwide. Formal MCAS analysis is “just starting” in grades 6-12, and is inconsistent among these grades.
 - a. Administrators and teachers said that although the middle/high school has informally reviewed MCAS data in the past, administrative turnover has had a negative impact on this process. Interviewees said that a further impediment was the involvement for 2 years of teachers in grades 6-12 in the NEASC accreditation process where faculty meeting time was devoted to completing the accreditation self-study and other requirements.
 - b. Administrators and teachers told the team that the high school looks at data at faculty meetings and that they recently were provided with access to Edwin. However, high-school teachers noted that they have not had much training about how to use Edwin, nor do they have time available to do the work.
 - c. Interviewees said that the middle school has the opportunity to use its common planning time for data analysis, although there is not a dedicated time or group of teachers responsible for data analysis for middle-school grades.
 3. At the two elementary schools a key feature of BSRI is the systematic collection, analysis, and dissemination of reading data. Formal data teams meet three times each year to review data. Formal and Informal data meetings are also held with each principal.
 4. In addition, at the elementary level, a K-5 “assessment team” is in place but teachers and leaders told the team that its name is a “misnomer,” because the name does not convey what the team does. Interviewees told the review team that assessment team meetings

focus on curriculum, monitoring student progress, and discussions about student issues. The assessment team is composed of the special education teachers, the principal, the literacy coach, the principal, and grade-level representatives.

5. The district has participated in limited DSAC data training; interviewees said that they found DSAC training to be particularly helpful at the secondary level. The district had begun participation in ANet (Achievement Network) at the DSAC's recommendation, but no longer participates in ANet.
- B.** While the district is beginning to analyze data to drive decision-making in some areas, it has not used data to identify, analyze, and address the factors that are responsible for the steady decline in student achievement in ELA, math, and science throughout the district since 2010.³
1. While nearly all teachers and school leaders stated their concerns about the needs of specific sub-groups of students and their low performance on MCAS tests, the team did not find any evidence of the disaggregation and analysis of systemwide data to identify patterns and trends among all students. And the district does not have a process to evaluate programs and interventions to determine their effectiveness in raising student achievement.
 2. Data has been used to inform some program decisions; however, mechanisms are not in place to evaluate the impact of programs on student performance.
 - a. At the middle/high school, when analysis of MCAS data at a DSAC end-of-summer 2014 workshop pointed to the need for changes in grade 6 math, the enrichment teacher assignment was changed from full-time ELA, to one-half ELA and one-half math. A STEM class was also added to the grade 6 exploratory program to show students that math “is fun and important in their daily lives.” Interviewees told the review team that additional changes, such as ensuring that more than one teacher teaches math at a grade level, were planned for the future.
 - b. The district has used data to guide the selection of some programs. For example, based on BSRI data the district added a new program (Lexia) to improve nonsense-word fluency, and changed the practice of individual exploratory reading to reading for a purpose with a partner.
- C.** The district does not use a districtwide data management program to collect, sort, and analyze data. The superintendent told the team “data is in many places” and said that there is not one place where all the data is stored.
1. According to information provided by the district, teachers formally collect data from multiple sources including GOLD in K (introduced in 2014), DIBELS (2004) PK-5, DIBELS Math

³ See the Student Performance section above, tables 2a-c in Appendix C, and [District Profile for the Adams-Cheshire Regional School District](#).

(2015), and GRADE (2014) K-5. Teachers in grades 1-5 administer weekly tests from their Scott-Foresman reading and *Envision* math texts.

- a. Interviewees told the team that all elementary school teachers have access to this data, as do principals and the Title I director.
2. Middle/high school teachers have begun to use Edwin to develop formative assessments and to analyze MCAS data. They also use the MMS data management platform.
 - a. Parents said that students' grades are not always current and that "quite a few teachers" are not using the MMS parent portal.
3. The district is also piloting two performance tracking programs in some grades: MobyMax and Track My Progress.
4. School leaders and teachers told the team that portfolios of student assessment data are maintained for students and travel to the middle school with the students. However, some teachers told the team that they had not been aware of this practice.

Impact: When there are varied processes and practices to gather, sort, and analyze data it is difficult for leaders and teachers to identify patterns and trends that could lead to changes in curriculum, instruction, and programs. Also, leaders and teachers do not have the tools or training necessary to identify and address factors that may be contributing to declining student achievement and decisions about educational programs cannot be based on real-time student performance.

Human Resources and Professional Development

- 8. The district's written observations and evaluations of teachers and administrators are descriptive rather than informative and do not adequately promote individual growth. District-determined measures (DDMs) have been identified but educators do not seem to have a shared understanding of their purpose and use.**

The district provided the team with 29 randomly selected teacher observations and evaluations from the end of the 2013-2014 school year and first half of the 2014-2015 school year. The team also reviewed seven administrator evaluations and the superintendent's goals binder. The only evidence binder reviewed by the team was the one maintained by the superintendent.

- A.** In general, the folders reviewed contained most of the components required in the new educator evaluation system. Interviewees told the team that three factors interfered with the completion of timely evaluations in recent years: the NEASC review in grades 6-12, the relocation of staff during the school construction, and changes in administrative leadership.

1. All teachers with professional status were on one- or two-year self-directed growth plans and teachers without professional status were on developing educator plans. One teacher was on a one-year improvement plan.
 - a. Evaluation forms reviewed were current, with documents dated 2014 or 2015. One administrator folder also contained a 2013-2014 evaluation.
 - b. Signatures were missing on 13 teacher forms.
 - c. Some folders contained write-ups of walkthroughs, some contained unannounced observations, and a few contained formative evaluations.
 - d. Four folders contained self-assessments.
 - e. The district uses a paper system and observation and evaluation information is not stored electronically.
 - i. The middle/high school assistant principal told the team that he has begun to use an e-tablet to record observations electronically; the elementary principals use a paper system.
- B.** In general, educator evaluations were descriptive rather than instructive.
 1. For write-ups of walkthroughs and informal observations, evaluators frequently used a checklist of behaviors observed. Seven of the twenty-nine write-ups were instructive, where evaluators provided comments that showed the impact of instructional strategies; the remaining described activities in the classroom.
 2. Seven write-ups also provided suggestions that could improve instruction or student learning.
 3. Most teacher and administrator goals were written using SMART goals (specific and strategic; measureable; action oriented; rigorous, realistic, and results focused; and timed and tracked), with reference to student performance data and measurable outcomes. A few were not specific; for example, one goal read, “will improve performance,” and another goal was “[to] improve their ability.”
 4. School leaders expressed the opinion that the new evaluation process “would not produce the results needed fast enough.” However, in the evaluations reviewed by the team, the feedback that evaluators provided educators did not convey a sense of urgency or provide concrete strategies for improving student performance.
 5. According to 2014 TELL Mass survey results, 50 percent of middle/high school teachers who responded⁴ disagreed with the statement that they receive feedback that can help them

⁴ Data was not available for the elementary schools.

improve their teaching. And 68 percent indicated that they needed professional development in “closing the achievement gap” to teach students more effectively. (No data is available for the elementary schools.)

6. The superintendent told the team that principals are “frustrated” with the educator evaluation system because there are not enough evaluators. She said, for example, that in the school where there are 24 classroom teachers, 5 special subject teachers, a dean, 4 special education teachers, and a counselor, the dean of students (an association member) is permitted to evaluate teachers of special subjects.⁵
- C. The district has identified its DDMs and an extension was granted from ESE’s Center for Educator Effectiveness for a small group of K-12 courses/staff outside core classes. Teachers do not seem to have a shared understanding of the purpose and use of DDMs.
1. Teachers said that training has been limited. A DDM committee is in place and plans for DDM PD later in the school year were listed on the PD calendar; however, at the time of the visit, further PD days were reported to be jeopardized because of the number of weather-related school cancellations.
 2. Interviewees told the team that they were not informed at first that DDMs would be part of their evaluations; they were to be used to inform instruction and to “close the achievement gap.” The superintendent told the team that teachers were nervous about “write-ups and how the student outcomes data will impact their evaluations.” She said that she had told teachers that the scores of “transient” students would not be included in teachers’ data. When asked by the team if this practice was permitted she told the team that it was in the language of the educator evaluation plan submitted to ESE for review.
 - a. A review of the DDM Implementation Plan submitted to ESE’s Center for Educator Effectiveness in June 2014 showed that the plan was silent on this subject.
 3. In the interest of providing a complete picture of teacher performance and allowing all students an equal opportunity to demonstrate growth, ESE strongly discourages excluding the scores of particular groups of students from educators’ student impact ratings.⁶

Impact: Without strong evidence-based supervision processes to monitor and support teachers to meet instructional and program expectations based on high standards of performance, the district will

⁵ A study conducted by SRI International on the implementation of educator evaluation in Massachusetts found that in the 2013-2014 school year, 31.5 percent of Massachusetts principals were responsible for evaluating 21-30 educators; 25.4 percent of principals were responsible for evaluating more than 40 educators.

⁶ According to ESE’s Center for Educator Effectiveness, the educator evaluation model collective bargaining language includes a provision that requires students to be present for at least 90 percent of the instructional time before their scores are included as evidence of educator impact (Section 22 (C), beginning on p. 6). This is model contract language offered as guidance and not a matter of state policy. Districts locally bargain the specific provisions related to student attribution.

struggle to improve student achievement. When teachers and administrators receive primarily informative or descriptive feedback on performance, growth in educator practice is left to chance and is not linked to district goals. Without clearly delineated areas for growth, professional development programs become a collection of activities not strategically linked to educator improvement. Because the district has not adequately trained its teachers in the use of DDMs, it is missing a powerful opportunity to use data to improve instruction and raise student achievement. Without the scores of all students included in educators' student impact ratings, the district has an incomplete picture of teacher performance and student growth.

9. The district is in the beginning stages of developing and planning a high-quality professional development program.

- A.** Interviews and a document review showed that four professional development surveys for 2015-2016 were sent to the faculty and staff, using Survey Monkey.
 - 1. Survey questions were not linked to district priorities and needs, and were not based on long-term planning and analysis of student achievement data and assessment of instructional practices.
 - a. A review of the survey questions for each of the surveys developed and sent revealed limited differentiation in questions and topics between levels, teachers, and paraprofessionals.
- B.** As of this academic year, 2014-2015, there is a districtwide professional development committee in place that includes representatives from all levels of the administration, faculty, and staff. There are approximately 30 members.
 - 1. The district has allocated time for professional development; four full days, some of which fall before and after students enter, and monthly half-days are available during the school year.
 - 2. The district coordinates its professional development calendar days with partners in Berkshire County, including the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts' Readiness Center, to share resources.
- C.** The district provides mentors to appropriate staff.
- D.** The district has begun to provide job-embedded learning at the elementary level, K-5, through the use of literacy coaches and BSRI personnel.
- E.** While the district has developed an ambitious professional development action plan for 2014-2015, it is unclear how the goals and objectives will be met and evaluated. In this plan, evaluation is mentioned: "Professional development and structures for collaboration will be evaluated for their effect on improving student achievement." However, the plan does not include specifics about how this will be accomplished.

Impact: Because the professional development program is in the beginning stages of development and planning, the district cannot yet provide “a coherent set of learning experiences that is systematic, purposeful and structured over a sustained period of time for all district professionals that will result in improved teacher practice and improved student outcomes,” as defined in ESE’s *The Massachusetts Standards for Professional Development*.

Student Support

10. The district does not have a coordinated tiered system of both academic and non-academic supports for all students. There has been a persistent decline in student achievement for all students and for students in the high-needs subgroup since 2011.

- A. In 2013-2014 (latest available ESE data⁷), the proportion of high-needs students⁸ was 52.7 percent in the district, compared with 48.8 percent in districts statewide.
- B. ELA, math, and science proficiency rates for all students, as well as for high- needs students, have consistently declined in recent years.
 - 1. Between 2011 and 2014 the percentage of students in the district scoring proficient or advanced in MCAS in ELA, mathematics, and science declined for all students and for high-needs students. The scores of all students declined 9 percentage points in ELA, 7 percentage points in mathematics, and 6 percentage points in science over this period. The scores of high-needs students declined 9 percentage points in ELA, 6 percentage points in mathematics, and 7 percentage points in science over this period.
- C. While there are programs and supports in place, the district does not have systems, structured time, and sufficient staff to identify and monitor high-risk students and to plan and provide effective interventions and monitor their effectiveness.
 - 1. Although interviews and a document review showed many academic and non-academic services and interventions available to all students, the delivery of the services and interventions are uncoordinated and vary in depth of implementation from level to level.
 - a. At the elementary level the newly adopted Bay State Reading Initiative (BSRI) provides a structure, process, and targeted interventions for frequent data analysis, differentiated instruction for students, and coaching support for teachers in the area of ELA. BSRI is the vehicle for the delivery of a limited tiered instructional model in ELA.

⁷ Because of changes in free-lunch policies in some districts the population of students from low-income families and high-needs students has not yet been calculated for the 2014-2015 school year.

⁸ The high-needs subgroup 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 (ELLs) and former ELL students, or students from low-income families.

- i. As noted above, the elementary schools have “assessment teams” that formally meet twice a month and are used to discuss and review student progress among other topics such as curriculum. There are also formal BSRI Data Teams that formally meet three times a year to monitor and review student progress and to inform instruction in ELA.
 - ii. The team was told that behavioral referrals have decreased since the implementation of the BSRI model at the elementary level.
 - b. The middle school instituted an enrichment class that provides academic support for identified students and offers an after-school math program for identified sixth graders that meets three times a week.
2. Building Based Teams (BBTs) are in place districtwide and are in different stages of implementation to respond to the academic, social, emotional, and behavioral needs of identified students.
 - a. Interviewees told the team that there are three levels of BBTs available and used when needed in all schools in the district: BBT1, BBT2, and BBT3.
 - i. The initial meeting, BBT1, does not usually involve students’ parents, and is the first step in the development of intervention strategies/supports that are monitored for a 4-6 week period.
 - ii. BBTs 2 and 3 include students’ parents, in addition to appropriate and available school personnel, and are used when the students are not progressing with the supports/interventions in place from the first BBT meeting.
 - iii. Sense of Urgency Meetings and/or BBT 4 are also used when a student is not making adequate progress after interventions and supports have been in place through the first two BBT meetings.
3. At the elementary level there are formalized structures with the newly adopted BSRI program, and designated times for teachers to meet and review student progress to inform instruction.
4. The middle school teachers have common planning time three times per week and work as teams to discuss and review student performance. The high school does not have common planning time or a structure in place for faculty and staff to discuss and review student performance, and develop and monitor targeted interventions and supports. The teachers at the high school informally meet with the guidance counselor and/or student adjustment counselor before or after school and during lunch. The principal, assistant principal and dean of students, along with the two guidance counselors and two student adjustment counselors at the middle and high school, oversee the case management of students brought to the BBTs.

5. This academic year the district began using a limited tiered system of instruction as required by the BSRI program at the elementary level.

- a. The tiered system is only in place in the K-5 ELA classrooms.
- D.** In observed classrooms, teachers clearly and consistently used appropriate modifications for English language learners and students with disabilities (# 10) in 50 percent of the elementary classrooms visited, in 20 percent of the middle school classrooms, and in 22 percent of the high school classrooms visited.

Impact: The absence of a coordinated, tiered system of support, both for academic and non-academic needs, has had a significant impact on the education of all students as evidenced by the consistent decline in student performance in ELA, mathematics, and science by all students and by high-needs students in recent years.

Adams-Cheshire RSD District Review Recommendations

Leadership and Governance

- 1. In order to address the perception that the number of students facing challenges outside of school is substantial and increasing, the district should urgently analyze a range of data to identify individual students and groups of students in need of greater support. It should develop and implement comprehensive policies, procedures, and protocols to respond to the needs of these students.**
 - A.** Under the leadership of the superintendent, a working group with wide representation should analyze student performance and other data and revise the District and School Improvement Plans to address the diverse needs of students in the district.
 - B.** The district should work with sending districts to help identify any gaps in content knowledge and to determine the specific needs of students.
 - C.** The district should continue its efforts to provide academic services and other forms of support for its homeless students.

Recommended resources:

- ESE's *District Analysis and Review Tool (DART)* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/dart/>) is organized by the District Standards and can help district leaders see where similar districts in the state are showing progress in specific areas to identify possible best practice.
- The *Massachusetts Definition of College and Career Readiness* (<http://www.mass.edu/library/documents/2013College&CareerReadinessDefinition.pdf>) is a set of learning competencies, intellectual capacities and experiences essential for all students to become lifelong learners; positive contributors to their families, workplaces and communities; and successfully engaged citizens of a global 21st century. This could be a helpful resource as the district articulates its vision and goals.
- *Massachusetts Transfer Goals* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/model/MATransferGoals.pdf>) are long range goals that students should work toward over the course of their PK-12 academic experience. They were written to provide an explicit connection between the standards-based Model Curriculum Units and Massachusetts' definition of College and Career Readiness. They are not recommended for use as a checklist, evaluation tool, or as an assessment tool, but they could be a helpful resource for the district as it articulates a vision and engages in long-term planning.
- ESE's *Planning for Success* tools (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/success/>) support the improvement planning process by spotlighting practices, characteristics, and behaviors that

support effective planning and implementation and meet existing state requirements for improvement planning.

Benefits: By developing a data-informed approach to addressing the needs of all students, the district will ensure differentiation of instruction, equitable access to the curriculum, and essential support for individual student needs.

Curriculum and Instruction

2. The district should establish a multi-year collaborative process to ensure the continued development, review, alignment, and effective delivery of curricula. To do so, the district needs to have a districtwide leadership position with responsibility for the oversight of curriculum development and implementation.

A. Such a districtwide leadership position is necessary to oversee and coordinate critical activities.

1. The district curriculum director or curriculum coordinator should work closely with the literacy coach and other district and school leaders to provide direction for curriculum development and review and to ensure consistent, effective instruction districtwide.

B. The curriculum process should be based on valid research and analysis of state and district common assessment data, and should involve professional staff including teachers and special educators.

1. The district should develop a timeline for when curricula in each discipline K-12 will be regularly reviewed and updated, identify participants, and dedicate time (within and among schools) for this ongoing work.

a. The plan should include regular meetings to align the curriculum horizontally (across schools) and vertically (between grade levels).

2. It is recommended that subject areas be prioritized in the review cycle to ensure timely and responsive review and revision based on data analysis and state revisions. The district is encouraged to establish data teams by level to assist in the process of data analysis.

3. The multi-year plan should be posted to the district curriculum website and shared with faculty.

C. The district should identify resources including time during and/or after school, summer work, professional development, and compensation if appropriate, that would be routinely needed to support this work at all levels.

- D.** Practices should be established to ensure that curriculum materials are regularly reviewed and monitored for effectiveness and currency.
1. Practices might include systematic review of lesson plans and regular collaborative discussions by level and discipline of what materials work well and which materials needs revision or replacement, including textbooks.

Recommended resources:

- *Creating Curriculum Units at the Local Level* (http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/model/mcu_guide.pdf) is a valuable tool for professional study groups engaging in curriculum development.
- *Creating Model Curriculum Units* (<http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLTuqmiQ9ssquWrLjKc9h5h2cSpDVZqe6t>) includes videos about developing essential questions, establishing goals, creating embedded performance assessments, designing lesson plans, selecting high-quality materials, and evaluating the curriculum unit.
- *Sample curriculum maps* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/model/maps/default.html>) contain many examples of curriculum maps in core content areas from elementary grades through high school that support consistent implementation of the Massachusetts Frameworks.
- *ESE's Quality Review Rubrics* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/model/rubrics/>) can support the analysis and improvement of curriculum units.

Benefits: Curriculum leadership will help to guarantee a fully documented and faithfully implemented curriculum aligned to the 2011 Curriculum Frameworks and calibrated across schools and between levels in the district. Districtwide, teachers and other staff members will make use of aligned, documented, and cohesive curriculum materials that guarantee equal access to high-quality learning for all students and enable them to be college and career ready.

3. The district should identify and communicate a shared instructional model and support teachers in its implementation.

- A.** A representative group of district leaders, school leaders, and teachers, with the guidance of a district-level curriculum leader (see previous recommendation), should collaboratively define the characteristics of high-quality teaching and learning practices.
1. Key instructional practices should be prioritized as the district's non-negotiables.
- B.** Once a model of instructional practice is identified and defined, district administrators should develop a plan for sharing instructional expectations with staff. Using faculty meetings, grade-level, department meetings, common planning time, and/or professional development days, the district is encouraged to discuss ideas and strategies from the instructional model.

- C. The administrative team is also encouraged to conduct non-evaluative walkthroughs in pairs/small groups, to generalize and share feedback about trends observed, and to discuss improvement strategies regularly with teachers.
- D. The district should build upon its BSRI literacy model to differentiate instruction in math at the elementary level and to consider other practices that may be applicable at the secondary level.
- E. The district should support teacher leadership and growth by creating opportunities for exemplary teachers to have responsibility for instructional leadership and mentoring.
- F. Teachers should be provided with appropriate guidance and feedback as they implement the model.
 - 1. Professional development should focus on elements of the instructional model.
 - 2. The district should consider adding support in the form of instructional coaches to provide embedded professional development for teachers.
 - 3. Principals, as instructional leaders, should ensure that teachers have the information and support necessary to meet the district's expectations for instruction.
 - 4. Teachers should receive frequent, helpful feedback that helps them to continually improve their instruction (see Human Resources and Professional Development recommendation below).

Recommended resources:

- *Learning Walkthrough Implementation Guide* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/dart/walk/ImplementationGuide.pdf>) is an excellent resource to support classroom observations and discussions of teaching and learning.
- Appendix 4, *Characteristics of Standards-Based Teaching and Learning: Continuum of Practice* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/dart/walk/04.0.pdf>) is a framework that provides a common language or reference point for looking at teaching and learning.

Benefits: Implementation of this recommendation will support a districtwide common understanding of high-quality teaching and learning practices. This will provide a common language that will facilitate more focused feedback and professional development. A district that prioritizes high-quality instruction for all students creates and sustains a culture of continuous improvement, resulting in professional growth and increased student achievement.

Assessment

4. The district should develop uniform and integrated policies, structures, and practices for the continuous collection, analysis, and dissemination of student performance from all data sources.

- A.** The superintendent, principals and program leaders, in collaboration with teachers, should develop specific strategies, timelines, and clear expectations for the use of data districtwide.
 - 1. Building on the practices in place at the elementary level and emerging in grade 6, the district should establish systematic, consistent processes for the analysis and use of assessment data.
 - a. Common K-5 and 6-12 protocols to facilitate data collection, dissemination, and use should be developed; these protocols should include ELA, mathematics, and science.
 - 2. The district should ensure that educators at all levels use data strategically to inform instruction, ongoing curriculum revision, program evaluation, and the educator evaluation system.
 - a. The district should continue its work identifying and using DDMs, and develop the processes by which teachers will be trained and supported in their use as a tool to improve teaching and learning.
 - 3. The district should begin the disaggregation of data to identify patterns and trends in student subgroup performance; particular attention should be paid to identifying curriculum and instruction strategies that support equitable access to high-quality curriculum for students at risk.
- B.** Ongoing, targeted training in the collection, analysis, and use of student performance data should be provided for staff in each school, grade level, and subject area.
 - 1. Training should include, for appropriate staff, the development of skills to use EWIS (Early Warning Indicator System) and Edwin Analytics to inform strategies that meet the needs of all students.
 - 2. The district's leaders and teachers should review how existing committee and grade-level meetings are used; these could provide opportunities for more frequent and routine data analysis to improve response time to student performance data.
- C.** Convenient, timely access to student performance data as well as other relevant academic data, as appropriate, should be provided to parents and families so that they can be kept informed in order to support students' progress.
- D.** District and school leaders should systematically incorporate student assessment results and other pertinent data into all aspects of policy, prioritization, and decision making, including

budget development, district and school improvement plans, and the evaluation of educational programs and services.

Recommended resources:

- ESE's Assessment Literacy Self-Assessment and Gap Analysis Tool (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/ddm/webinar/PartI-GapAnalysis.pdf>) is intended to support districts in understanding where their educators fit overall on a continuum of assessment literacy. After determining where the district as a whole generally falls on the continuum, the district can determine potential next steps.
- *District Data Team Toolkit* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/ucd/ddtt/toolkit.pdf>) is a set of resources to help a district establish, grow, and maintain a culture of inquiry and data use through a District Data Team.
- The *Edwin Analytics* web page (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edwin/analytics/>) includes links to a Getting Started Guide, as well as a video tutorial series.
- *District-Determined Measures* (<http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLTuqmiQ9ssquEalxpfpzD6qG9zxvPWl0c>) is a series of videos featuring different aspects of the development and use of District-Determined Measures (DDMs).

Benefits: Implementation of these recommendations will bring clarity and consistency to the district's use of data for decision-making. It will enable the district to prioritize its needs, and sharpen its focus so that it can provide all students, including high-needs learners, with greatly improved learning opportunities and academic outcomes. It will more fully communicate the district's needs to the community. It will help district leaders and teachers to understand and provide professional development for the analysis and use of data to improve instructional skills and raise student achievement. It will help all stakeholders to evaluate programs, texts, and services.

Human Resources and Professional Development

5. The district should develop policies and practices to effectively promote the culture of growth-oriented collaborative supervision and evidence-based evaluation that is the basic goal of the educator evaluation framework.

- A.** The district should, in collaboration with the teachers' association, review its current supervisory policies, practices, and expectations to ensure that the quantity and quality of evaluation feedback, both written and verbal, is enhanced.
 1. Evaluators should serve as instructional coaches/mentors to educators, to engage them in an ongoing, performance-based, collaborative dialogue, thereby providing them with formal

and informal feedback, guidance, and support that is continuous, frequent, and focused on specific professional practices and skills.

2. The district should identify opportunities for evaluators to calibrate expectations, grounded in the Standards of Effective Teaching and Administrative Leadership Practice. The district should also support and monitor the skills and practices of principals and supervisors to ensure that they are regularly providing all staff with high-quality instructional feedback that is timely, informative, instructive, and capable of promoting individual growth and overall effectiveness.
 - a. Administrators should receive ongoing training to enhance their capacity to observe and analyze instruction and to provide feedback focused directly on professional practice, growth, and student achievement.
- B.** The district should establish, in collaboration with the teachers' association, an educator evaluation quality assurance committee to oversee the implementation of the educator evaluation system and to identify problems and generate constructive solutions.
 1. The committee should review the workload of evaluators to determine whether this is a factor that is interfering with the quality of implementation. If so, possible solutions could include:
 - a. Leveraging district-office staff and other school-based leaders to support principals in conducting observations and serving as primary evaluators;
 - b. The Peer Assistance and Review model, in which teachers can conduct peer observations or help colleagues with goal-setting.
- C.** The DDM committee should prioritize the establishment of a formal process and structure through which teachers and curriculum leaders can work together to develop and implement a comprehensive set of DDMs that meet all ESE expectations, guidelines, and timetables.
 1. The committee should ensure that all students' data is included in determining Student Impact Ratings Appropriate DDMs will allow all students an equal opportunity to demonstrate growth.
- D.** Similarly, a collaborative structure and process should be established to plan for the use of student feedback in the educator evaluation process.
- E.** The professional development committee is encouraged to create leadership opportunities for teachers and provide a formal structure for collaboration by teachers and administrators in the planning, design, and implementation of professional development programs and support services.

Recommended resources:

- ESE's *District-Determined Measures* web page (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/ddm/>) provides a wealth of information, implementation resources, and other materials to support the development and use of DDMs.
- *Rating Educator Performance* (www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/implementation/RatingEdPerformance.pdf) is a guide to assist educators and evaluators in the determination of Summative Performance Ratings.
- *Rating Educator Impact: The Student Impact Rating* (www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/ddm/EducatorImpact.pdf) is a guide to assist educators and evaluators in the determination of Student Impact Ratings.
- *Quick Reference Guide: Student and Staff Feedback* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/QRG-Feedback.pdf>) includes an overview, resource links, and FAQ related to student and staff feedback.
- Other relevant resources will be available in summer 2015 (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/communications/>), including:
 - A report on ESE's Professional Learning Network for Supporting Evaluator Capacity that describes the PLN districts' strategies for improving the capacity of their evaluators
 - Case studies from ESE's Teacher Leadership Professional Learning Network (one of these will describe an approach to Peer Assisted Review)

Benefits: By providing educators with clear, specific, and instructive feedback for improved practice *and* impact on student learning, the district will promote student learning, growth, and academic achievement. Positive and clear communication from district leadership to educators about the purposes and uses of the DDMs will increase teacher buy-in to the DDM process.

6. The district should further clarify its approach to professional development.

- A. The Professional Development Committee should revise the district's professional development (PD) plan.
 1. The plan should be aligned with the DIP and the district's instructional model (see the Curriculum and Instruction recommendation above). It should outline and document a set of learning experiences for its educators that is systematic, sustained, and aligned with district goals.
 2. The plan should identify specific PD needs indicated by student performance data and trends from classroom observations, determine how they might be met, and recommend adjustments in PD practices to meet them.

3. The plan should include goals focused on improving teacher practice and student outcomes, as well as specific strategies, timelines, and evaluation mechanisms.

B. The district should continue to develop partnerships in the community to share resources.

Recommended resources:

- *The Massachusetts Standards for Professional Development* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/pd/standards.pdf>) describe, identify, and characterize what high-quality learning experiences should look like for educators.
- *Quick Reference Guide: Educator Evaluation & Professional Development* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/QRG-ProfessionalDevelopment.pdf>) describes how educator evaluation and professional development can be used as mutually reinforcing systems to improve educator practice and student outcomes.
- *The Relationship between High Quality Professional Development and Educator Evaluation* (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-aDxtEDncg&list=PLTuqmiQ9ssqtEmOcWkDEHPKBqRvurebm&index=1>) is a video presentation that includes examples from real districts.

Benefits from implementing this recommendation will include a clearer understanding of the district's expectations about professional development, and the development of a system that prioritizes student learning, supports teachers as lifelong learners, and helps to implement best practices throughout the district. A high-quality professional development program coupled with time and resources already available in the district will likely lead to educator growth and improved student achievement.

Student Support

7. The district should develop a tiered system of support, both for academic and non-academic needs, so all students can attain higher levels of academic achievement.

- A.** District leaders should work collaboratively with teachers, staff, and other stakeholders to improve practices with the goal of full integration and continuity of support services.
1. The district should analyze student performance data from multiple sources over time to better understand the causes for declining achievement, to provide more focused student support, and to plan improvement in programs and service delivery.
 2. All teaching and support staff should receive high-quality professional development in effectively using differentiation and accommodations to create classrooms where all students have equal access to high-quality curriculum.

Recommended resources:

- The *Massachusetts Tiered System of Support (MTSS)* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/apas/mtss/>) is a blueprint for school improvement that focuses on systems, structures and supports across the district, school, and classroom to meet the academic and non-academic needs of all students.

MTSS Self-Assessment Overview (includes links to the MTSS Self-Assessment tool and *How to Complete the MTSS Self-Assessment*): <http://www.doe.mass.edu/apas/mtss/sa/default.html>

- ESE's *Early Warning Indicator System* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edwin/analytics/ewis.html>) is a tool to provide information to districts about the likelihood that their students will reach key academic goals. Districts can use the tool in conjunction with other data and sources of information to better target student supports and interventions and to examine school-level patterns over time in order to address systemic issues that may impede students' ability to meet academic goals.

Benefits: by implementing this recommendation the district will be better able to understand and respond to the factors that are contributing to underperformance by students. This will help ensure that the district improves programs and practices so that all students have equal access to high-quality instruction that meets their individual needs.

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

Review Team Members

The review was conducted from February 23-26, 2015, by the following team of independent ESE consultants.

1. Owen Conway, leadership and governance, and financial and asset management
2. Sue Kelly, curriculum and instruction
3. Christine Brandt, assessment and human resources, *review team coordinator*
4. Maria Iglesias, student support and professional development
5. Kevin Daly, scribe

District Review Activities

The following activities were conducted during the review:

The team conducted interviews with the following financial personnel: the business manager and the assistant to the business manager.

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

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

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

The team visited the following schools: Hoosac Valley Middle High School (grades 6-12) C.T. Plunkett Elementary School (K-5), and Cheshire Elementary School (PK-5).

During school visits, the team conducted interviews with 3 principals and focus groups with 12 elementary school teachers, and 4 middle and high school teachers.

The team observed 41 classes in the district: 9 at the high school, 10 at the middle school, and 22 at the 2 elementary schools.

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

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

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

Site Visit Schedule

Monday 02/23/2015	Tuesday 02/24/2015	Wednesday 02/25/2015	Thursday 02/26/2015
Orientation with district leaders and principals; interviews with district staff and principals; document reviews; review of personnel files; interview with teachers' association; meeting with DSAC representative and visits to the Hoosac Valley Middle & High School (HVMHS) for classroom observations.	Interviews with district staff and principals; interviews with town or city personnel; review of personnel files; teacher focus groups; parent focus group; and visits to HVMHS for classroom observations.	Interviews with school leaders; interviews with school committee members; visits to HVMHS and the C.T. Plunkett and Cheshire elementary schools for classroom observations.	Interviews with school leaders; follow-up interviews; district review team meeting; visits to HVMHS and the C.T. Plunkett and Cheshire elementary schools for classroom observations; emerging themes meeting with district leaders, DSAC representatives, and principals.

Appendix B: Enrollment, Performance, Expenditures

Table B1a: Adams-Cheshire RSD
2014-2015 Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity

Student Group	District	Percent of Total	State	Percent of Total
African-American	54	4.0%	83,556	8.7%
Asian	9	0.7%	60,050	6.3%
Hispanic	22	1.6%	171,036	17.9%
Native American	7	0.5%	2,238	0.2%
White	1,253	92.7%	608,453	63.7%
Native Hawaiian	3	0.2%	930	0.1%
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	4	0.3%	29,581	3.1%
All Students	1,352	100.0%	955,844	100.0%

Note: As of October 1, 2014

Table B1b: Adams-Cheshire RSD
2014-2015 Student Enrollment by High-Needs Populations⁹

Student Groups	District			State		
	N	Percent of High Needs	Percent of District	N	Percent of High Needs	Percent of State
Students w/ disabilities	298	--	22.0%	165,060	--	17.1%
Low Income	--	--	--	--	--	--
ELLs and Former ELLs	5	--	0.4%	81,146	--	8.5%
All high needs students	--	--	--	--	--	--

Notes: As of October 1, 2014. District and state numbers and percentages for students with disabilities and high needs students are calculated including students in out-of-district placements. Total district enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 1,353; total state enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 966,391.

⁹ Because of changes in free-lunch policies in some districts the population of students from low-income families and high-needs students has not yet been calculated for the 2014-2015 school year.

Table B2a: Adams-Cheshire RSD
English Language Arts Performance, 2011-2014

Grade and Measure		Number Included (2014)	Spring MCAS Year					Gains and Declines	
			2011	2012	2013	2014	State 2014	4-Year Trend	2 Year Trend
3	CPI	98	82.9	84.3	81.6	78.8	82.6	-4.1	-2.8
	P+	98	54.0%	51.0%	50.0%	41.0%	57.0%	-13.0%	-9.0%
4	CPI	116	70.3	71.1	64.3	66.8	79.1	-3.5	2.5
	P+	116	31.0%	33.0%	30.0%	33.0%	54.0%	2.0%	3.0%
	SGP	107	35	36	24	23	49	-12	-1
5	CPI	106	80.8	77	76.7	71.5	84.5	-9.3	-5.2
	P+	106	52.0%	46.0%	48.0%	37.0%	64.0%	-15.0%	-11.0%
	SGP	98	42	46	44	30.5	50	-11.5	-13.5
6	CPI	111	84.3	82.1	78.9	80.2	85.8	-4.1	1.3
	P+	111	62.0%	58.0%	56.0%	55.0%	68.0%	-7.0%	-1.0%
	SGP	104	56	53	46.5	38.5	50	-17.5	-8
7	CPI	113	88.8	81.7	83.6	81	88.3	-7.8	-2.6
	P+	113	64.0%	57.0%	57.0%	56.0%	72.0%	-8.0%	-1.0%
	SGP	107	48	33.5	41	43	50	-5	2
8	CPI	106	91.6	91.2	82.6	88.9	90.2	-2.7	6.3
	P+	106	80.0%	77.0%	61.0%	69.0%	79.0%	-11.0%	8.0%
	SGP	105	63.5	47	32	41	50	-22.5	9
10	CPI	65	96.1	94.6	97.6	98.1	96	2	0.5
	P+	65	89.0%	86.0%	90.0%	92.0%	90.0%	3.0%	2.0%
	SGP	56	45.5	64	55	37	50	-8.5	-18
All	CPI	715	84.5	83	80.5	79.6	86.7	-4.9	-0.9
	P+	715	61.0%	58.0%	56.0%	52.0%	69.0%	-9.0%	-4.0%
	SGP	577	48	44	39	35	50	-13	-4

Notes: The number of students included in CPI and percent *Proficient* or *Advanced* (P+) calculations may differ from the number of students included in median SGP calculations. A median SGP is not calculated for students in grade 3 because they are participating in MCAS tests for the first time.

**Table B2b: Adams-Cheshire RSD
Mathematics Performance, 2011-2014**

Grade and Measure		Number Included (2014)	Spring MCAS Year					Gains and Declines	
			2011	2012	2013	2014	State 2014	4-Year Trend	2 Year Trend
3	CPI	65	82.1	81.3	81.8	80.4	85.1	-1.7	-1.4
	P+	65	58.0%	59.0%	63.0%	55.0%	68.0%	-3.0%	-8.0%
4	CPI	116	63.7	68.9	61.1	70.3	79.6	6.6	9.2
	P+	116	18.0%	28.0%	11.0%	29.0%	52.0%	11.0%	18.0%
	SGP	107	20	32	19	27	50	7	8
5	CPI	106	69.2	65.4	71.4	67.2	80.4	-2	-4.2
	P+	106	41.0%	34.0%	42.0%	41.0%	61.0%	0.0%	-1.0%
	SGP	101	48	52	46	56	50	8	10
6	CPI	111	76	76.4	63.5	58.3	80.2	-17.7	-5.2
	P+	111	50.0%	49.0%	36.0%	22.0%	60.0%	-28.0%	-14.0%
	SGP	104	48	59.5	35	16	50	-32	-19
7	CPI	113	72.3	72.3	66	55.3	72.5	-17	-10.7
	P+	113	41.0%	39.0%	34.0%	28.0%	50.0%	-13.0%	-6.0%
	SGP	108	55	58.5	48	42	50	-13	-6
8	CPI	106	72	66.9	64.7	68.4	74.7	-3.6	3.7
	P+	106	44.0%	34.0%	30.0%	34.0%	52.0%	-10.0%	4.0%
	SGP	105	60.5	44	31	54	50	-6.5	23
10	CPI	65	84.1	88.4	89	83.8	90	-0.3	-5.2
	P+	65	65.0%	76.0%	76.0%	68.0%	79.0%	3.0%	-8.0%
	SGP	59	17.5	45.5	32	32	50	14.5	0
All	CPI	682	73.5	73.7	70.8	67.3	80.3	-6.2	-3.5
	P+	682	44.0%	45.0%	41.0%	37.0%	60.0%	-7.0%	-4.0%
	SGP	584	41	47	33	38.5	50	-2.5	5.5

Notes: The number of students included in CPI and percent *Proficient* or *Advanced* (P+) calculations may differ from the number of students included in median SGP calculations. A median SGP is not calculated for students in grade 3 because they are participating in MCAS tests for the first time.

Table B2c: Adams-Cheshire RSD
Science and Technology/Engineering Performance, 2011-2014

Grade and Measure		Number Included (2014)	Spring MCAS Year					Gains and Declines	
			2011	2012	2013	2014	State 2014	4-Year Trend	2 Year Trend
5	CPI	106	67.8	66.9	65.9	61.1	79	-6.7	-4.8
	P+	106	33.0%	29.0%	27.0%	23.0%	53.0%	-10.0%	-4.0%
8	CPI	106	68.2	60.6	60.9	63.9	72.4	-4.3	3
	P+	106	27.0%	23.0%	21.0%	22.0%	42.0%	-5.0%	1.0%
10	CPI	60	84.3	87.4	84.2	85.8	87.9	1.5	1.6
	P+	60	55.0%	68.0%	55.0%	57.0%	71.0%	2.0%	2.0%
All	CPI	272	72	70.2	69.3	67.6	79.6	-4.4	-1.7
	P+	272	36.0%	37.0%	33.0%	30.0%	55.0%	-6.0%	-3.0%

Notes: P+ = percent *Proficient* or *Advanced*. Students participate in STE MCAS tests in grades 5, 8, and 10 only. Median SGPs are not calculated for STE.

Table B3a: Adams-Cheshire RSD
English Language Arts (All Grades)
Performance for Selected Subgroups Compared to State, 2011-2014

Group and Measure			Number Included (2014)	Spring MCAS Year				Gains and Declines	
				2011	2012	2013	2014	4 Year Trend	2-Year Trend
High Needs	District	CPI	413	78.7	76.6	72.6	72.3	-6.4	-0.3
		P+	413	49.0%	44.0%	41.0%	40.0%	-9.0%	-1.0%
		SGP	314	43	39.5	35	32	-11	-3
	State	CPI	241,069	77	76.5	76.8	77.1	0.1	0.3
		P+	241,069	48.0%	48.0%	48.0%	50.0%	2.0%	2.0%
		SGP	183,766	46	46	47	47	1	0
Low Income	District	CPI	368	80.4	77.5	74.3	72.9	-7.5	-1.4
		P+	368	52.0%	46.0%	43.0%	41.0%	-11.0%	-2.0%
		SGP	279	44	39.5	36	31	-13	-5
	State	CPI	189,662	77.1	76.7	77.2	77.5	0.4	0.3
		P+	189,662	49.0%	50.0%	50.0%	51.0%	2.0%	1.0%
		SGP	145,621	46	45	47	47	1	0
Students w/ disabilities	District	CPI	162	64.2	62.3	56	58	-6.2	2
		P+	162	26.0%	19.0%	16.0%	17.0%	-9.0%	1.0%
		SGP	121	41	35.5	29.5	29	-12	-0.5
	State	CPI	90,777	68.3	67.3	66.8	66.6	-1.7	-0.2
		P+	90,777	30.0%	31.0%	30.0%	31.0%	1.0%	1.0%
		SGP	66,688	42	43	43	43	1	0
English language learners or Former ELLs	District	CPI	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
		P+	6	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
		SGP	4	--	--	--	--	--	--
	State	CPI	47,477	66.2	66.2	67.4	67.8	1.6	0.4
		P+	47,477	33.0%	34.0%	35.0%	36.0%	3.0%	1.0%
		SGP	32,239	50	51	53	54	4	1
All students	District	CPI	715	84.5	83	80.5	79.6	-4.9	-0.9
		P+	715	61.0%	58.0%	56.0%	52.0%	-9.0%	-4.0%
		SGP	577	48	44	39	35	-13	-4
	State	CPI	488,744	87.2	86.7	86.8	86.7	-0.5	-0.1
		P+	488,744	69.0%	69.0%	69.0%	69.0%	0.0%	0.0%
		SGP	390,904	50	50	51	50	0	-1

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

**Table B3b: Adams-Cheshire RSD
Mathematics (All Grades)
Performance for Selected Subgroups Compared to State, 2011-2014**

Group and Measure			Number Included (2014)	Spring MCAS Year				Gains and Declines	
				2011	2012	2013	2014	4 Year Trend	2-Year Trend
High Needs	District	CPI	389	66.3	67.6	61	59.5	-6.8	-1.5
		P+	389	32.0%	36.0%	27.0%	26.0%	-6.0%	-1.0%
		SGP	321	37	48	27	37	0	10
	State	CPI	241,896	67.1	67	68.6	68.4	1.3	-0.2
		P+	241,896	37.0%	37.0%	40.0%	40.0%	3.0%	0.0%
		SGP	184,937	46	46	46	47	1	1
Low Income	District	CPI	348	68.3	68.9	62.8	60.7	-7.6	-2.1
		P+	348	34.0%	38.0%	29.0%	27.0%	-7.0%	-2.0%
		SGP	286	37	48	28	36.5	-0.5	8.5
	State	CPI	190,183	67.3	67.3	69	68.8	1.5	-0.2
		P+	190,183	38.0%	38.0%	41.0%	41.0%	3.0%	0.0%
		SGP	146,536	46	45	46	47	1	1
Students w/ disabilities	District	CPI	152	49.6	49.6	43.4	42.3	-7.3	-1.1
		P+	152	11.0%	10.0%	6.0%	9.0%	-2.0%	3.0%
		SGP	124	27	44	20	39	12	19
	State	CPI	91,181	57.7	56.9	57.4	57.1	-0.6	-0.3
		P+	91,181	22.0%	21.0%	22.0%	22.0%	0.0%	0.0%
		SGP	67,155	43	43	42	43	0	1
English language learners or Former ELLs	District	CPI	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
		P+	4	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
		SGP	4	--	--	--	--	--	--
	State	CPI	47,847	62	61.6	63.9	63.8	1.8	-0.1
		P+	47,847	32.0%	32.0%	35.0%	36.0%	4.0%	1.0%
		SGP	32,607	52	52	53	52	0	-1
All students	District	CPI	682	73.5	73.7	70.8	67.3	-6.2	-3.5
		P+	682	44.0%	45.0%	41.0%	37.0%	-7.0%	-4.0%
		SGP	584	41	47	33	38.5	-2.5	5.5
	State	CPI	490,288	79.9	79.9	80.8	80.3	0.4	-0.5
		P+	490,288	58.0%	59.0%	61.0%	60.0%	2.0%	-1.0%
		SGP	392,953	50	50	51	50	0	-1

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

**Table B3c: Adams-Cheshire RSD
Science and Technology/Engineering (All Grades)
Performance for Selected Subgroups Compared to State, 2011-2014**

Group and Measure			Number Included (2014)	Spring MCAS Year				Gains and Declines	
				2011	2012	2013	2014	4 Year Trend	2-Year Trend
High Needs	District	CPI	158	64.7	64.2	57.2	60.8	-3.9	3.6
		P+	158	25.0%	28.0%	16.0%	18.0%	-7.0%	2.0%
	State	CPI	100,582	63.8	65	66.4	67.3	3.5	0.9
		P+	100,582	28.0%	31.0%	31.0%	33.0%	5.0%	2.0%
Low Income	District	CPI	141	66.5	66.7	57.7	60.8	-5.7	3.1
		P+	141	27.0%	31.0%	16.0%	18.0%	-9.0%	2.0%
	State	CPI	79,199	62.8	64.5	66.1	66.8	4	0.7
		P+	79,199	28.0%	31.0%	32.0%	33.0%	5.0%	1.0%
Students w/ disabilities	District	CPI	60	52.6	44.1	44.3	47.5	-5.1	3.2
		P+	60	10.0%	5.0%	6.0%	3.0%	-7.0%	-3.0%
	State	CPI	38,628	59.2	58.7	59.8	60.1	0.9	0.3
		P+	38,628	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	22.0%	2.0%	2.0%
English language learners or Former ELLs	District	CPI	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
		P+	1	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	State	CPI	16,871	50.3	51.4	54	54	3.7	0
		P+	16,871	15.0%	17.0%	19.0%	18.0%	3.0%	-1.0%
All students	District	CPI	272	72	70.2	69.3	67.6	-4.4	-1.7
		P+	272	36.0%	37.0%	33.0%	30.0%	-6.0%	-3.0%
	State	CPI	211,440	77.6	78.6	79	79.6	2	0.6
		P+	211,440	52.0%	54.0%	53.0%	55.0%	3.0%	2.0%

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

**Table B4: Adams-Cheshire RSD
Annual Grade 9-12 Dropout Rates, 2011-2014**

	School Year Ending				Change 2011-2014		Change 2013-2014		State (2014)
	2011	2012	2013	2014	Percentage Points	Percent	Percentage Points	Percent	
All students	2.1%	2.7%	2.7%	2.5%	0.4	19.0%	-0.2	-7.4%	2.0%

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

Table B5a: Adams-Cheshire RSD
Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates, 2011-2014

Group	Number Included (2014)	School Year Ending				Change 2011-2014		Change 2013-2014		State (2014)
		2011	2012	2013	2014	Percentage Points	Percent Change	Percentage Points	Percent Change	
High needs	50	52.1%	71.4%	69.1%	68.0%	15.9	30.5%	-1.1	-1.6%	76.5%
Low income	48	55.6%	73.0%	69.4%	70.8%	15.2	27.3%	1.4	2.0%	75.5%
Students w/ disabilities	17	37.5%	61.5%	71.4%	58.8%	21.3	56.8%	-12.6	-17.6%	69.1%
English language learners or Former ELLs	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	63.9%
All students	99	75.9%	87.5%	81.2%	81.8%	5.9	7.8%	0.6	0.7%	86.1%

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

Table B5b: Adams-Cheshire RSD
Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates, 2010-2013

Group	Number Included (2013)	School Year Ending				Change 2010-2013		Change 2012-2013		State (2013)
		2010	2011	2012	2013	Percentage Points	Percent Change	Percentage Points	Percent Change	
High needs	55	70.0%	58.3%	83.3%	74.5%	4.5	6.4%	-8.8	-10.6%	79.2%
Low income	49	64.7%	60.0%	86.5%	75.5%	10.8	16.7%	-11.0	-12.7%	78.3%
Students w/ disabilities	21	57.9%	43.8%	69.2%	81.0%	23.1	39.9%	11.8	17.1%	72.9%
English language learners or Former ELLs	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	70.9%
All students	101	87.9%	82.1%	92.0%	84.2%	-3.7	-4.2%	-7.8	-8.5%	87.7%

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

**Table B6: Adams-Cheshire RSD
Attendance Rates, 2011-2014**

Group	School Year Ending				Change 2011-2014		Change 2013-2014		State (2014)
	2011	2012	2013	2014	Percentage Points	Percent Change	Percentage Points	Percent Change	
All students	94.7%	95.2%	94.3%	94.4%	-0.3	-0.3%	0.1	0.1%	94.9%

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

**Table B7: Adams-Cheshire RSD
Suspension Rates, 2011-2014**

Group	School Year Ending				Change 2011-2014		Change 2013-2014		State (2014)
	2011	2012	2013	2014	Percentage Points	Percent Change	Percentage Points	Percent Change	
In-School Suspension Rate	5.0%	2.9%	0.6%	4.1%	-0.9	-18.0%	3.5	583.3%	2.1%
Out-of-School Suspension Rate	8.3%	5.6%	3.4%	2.4%	-5.9	-71.1%	-1.0	-29.4%	3.9%

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

**Table B8: Adams-Cheshire RSD
Expenditures, Chapter 70 State Aid, and Net School Spending
Fiscal Years 2012–2014**

	FY12		FY13		FY14	
	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual
Expenditures						
From school committee budget	\$17,681,528	\$36,308,358	\$18,045,406	\$27,853,973	\$17,877,141	\$17,710,693
From revolving funds and grants	--	\$30,929,890	--	\$12,123,491	--	\$2,572,520
Total expenditures	--	\$67,238,248	--	\$39,977,464	--	\$20,283,213
Chapter 70 aid to education program						
Chapter 70 state aid*	--	\$9,835,636	--	\$10,049,743		\$10,085,868
Required local contribution	--	\$4,653,780	--	\$4,798,921		\$4,882,095
Required net school spending**	--	\$14,489,416	--	\$14,848,664	--	\$14,967,963
Actual net school spending	--	\$15,356,283	--	\$16,323,445	--	\$16,256,696
Over/under required (\$)	--	\$866,867	--	\$1,474,781	--	\$1,288,733
Over/under required (%)	--	6.0	--	9.9	--	8.6

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

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

Sources: FY12, FY13, and FY14 District End-of-Year Reports; Chapter 70 Program information on ESE website.

Data retrieved March 3, 2015

**Table B9: Adams-Cheshire RSD
Expenditures Per In-District Pupil
Fiscal Years 2011-2013**

Expenditure Category	2011	2012	2013
Administration	\$399	\$402	\$516
Instructional leadership (district and school)	\$609	\$641	\$692
Teachers	\$4,448	\$4,774	\$4,824
Other teaching services	\$889	\$992	\$1,128
Professional development	\$101	\$108	\$116
Instructional materials, equipment and technology	\$170	\$103	\$404
Guidance, counseling and testing services	\$261	\$299	\$362
Pupil services	\$1,233	\$1,357	\$1,488
Operations and maintenance	\$1,011	\$934	\$889
Insurance, retirement and other fixed costs	\$3,039	\$2,755	\$3,030
Total expenditures per in-district pupil	\$12,161	\$12,363	\$13,448

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

Appendix C: Instructional Inventory

Learning Environment & Teaching	By Grade Span	Evidence		
		None	Partial	Clear & Consistent
		(0)	(1)	(2)
1. Tone of interactions between teacher and students and among students is positive & respectful.	ES	0%	0%	100%
	MS	10%	10%	80%
	HS	0%	0%	100%
	Total #	1	1	39
	Total %	2%	2%	95%
2. Behavioral standards are clearly communicated and disruptions, if present, are managed effectively & equitably.	ES	18%	5%	77%
	MS	10%	20%	70%
	HS	0%	44%	56%
	Total #	5	7	29
	Total %	12%	17%	71%
3. The physical arrangement of the classroom ensures a positive learning environment and provides all students with access to learning activities.	ES	0%	5%	95%
	MS	0%	30%	70%
	HS	0%	0%	100%
	Total #	0	4	37
	Total %	0%	10%	90%
4. Classroom rituals and routines promote transitions with minimal loss of instructional time.	ES	14%	14%	73%
	MS	20%	20%	60%
	HS	11%	22%	67%
	Total #	6	7	28
	Total %	15%	17%	68%
5. Multiple resources are available to meet all students' diverse learning needs.	ES	41%	9%	50%
	MS	40%	50%	10%
	HS	44%	11%	44%
	Total #	17	8	16
	Total %	41%	20%	39%
6. The teacher demonstrates knowledge of subject and content.	ES	5%	5%	91%
	MS	10%	20%	70%
	HS	0%	0%	100%
	Total #	2	3	36
	Total %	5%	7%	88%
7. The teacher plans and implements a lesson that reflects rigor and high expectations.	ES	23%	36%	41%
	MS	50%	30%	20%
	HS	11%	33%	56%
	Total #	11	14	16
	Total %	27%	34%	39%

Teaching	By Grade Span	Evidence		
		None	Partial	Clear & Consistent
		(0)	(1)	(2)
8. The teacher communicates clear learning objective(s) aligned to the <i>2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks</i> .	ES	59%	5%	36%
	MS	40%	0%	60%
	HS	33%	0%	67%
	Total #	20	1	20
	Total %	49%	2%	49%
9. The teacher uses appropriate instructional strategies well matched to learning objective (s) and content.	ES	36%	14%	50%
	MS	40%	10%	50%
	HS	22%	22%	56%
	Total #	14	6	21
	Total %	34%	15%	51%
10. The teacher uses appropriate modifications for English language learners and students with disabilities such as explicit language objective(s); direct instruction in vocabulary; presentation of content at multiple levels of complexity; and, differentiation of content, process, and/or products.	ES	50%	0%	50%
	MS	70%	10%	20%
	HS	33%	44%	22%
	Total #	21	5	15
	Total %	51%	12%	37%
11. The teacher provides opportunities for students to engage in higher order thinking such as use of inquiry, exploration, application, analysis, synthesis, and/or evaluation of knowledge or concepts (Bloom's Taxonomy).	ES	36%	23%	41%
	MS	30%	50%	20%
	HS	44%	33%	22%
	Total #	15	13	13
	Total %	37%	32%	32%
12. The teacher uses questioning techniques that require thoughtful responses that demonstrate understanding.	ES	18%	14%	68%
	MS	50%	10%	40%
	HS	56%	0%	44%
	Total #	14	4	23
	Total %	34%	10%	56%
13. The teacher implements teaching strategies that promote a safe learning environment where students give opinions, make judgments, explore and investigate ideas.	ES	14%	14%	73%
	MS	50%	10%	40%
	HS	11%	11%	78%
	Total #	9	5	27
	Total %	22%	12%	66%
14. The teacher paces the lesson to match content and meet students' learning needs.	ES	18%	18%	64%
	MS	50%	20%	30%
	HS	33%	33%	33%
	Total #	12	9	20
	Total %	29%	22%	49%
15. The teacher conducts frequent formative assessments to check for understanding and inform instruction.	ES	36%	27%	36%
	MS	40%	20%	40%
	HS	33%	0%	67%
	Total #	15	8	18
	Total %	37%	20%	44%
16. The teacher makes use of available technology to support instruction and enhance learning.	ES	73%	9%	18%
	MS	70%	20%	10%
	HS	33%	22%	44%
	Total #	26	6	9
	Total %	63%	15%	22%

Learning	By Grade Span	Evidence		
		None	Partial	Clear & Consistent
		(0)	(1)	(2)
17. Students are engaged in challenging academic tasks.	ES	27%	27%	45%
	MS	40%	40%	20%
	HS	11%	56%	33%
	Total #	11	15	15
	Total %	27%	37%	37%
18. Students articulate their thinking verbally or in writing.	ES	27%	9%	64%
	MS	40%	20%	40%
	HS	33%	33%	33%
	Total #	13	7	21
	Total %	32%	17%	51%
19. Students inquire, explore, apply, analyze, synthesize and/or evaluate knowledge or concepts (Bloom's Taxonomy).	ES	41%	9%	50%
	MS	50%	30%	20%
	HS	44%	22%	33%
	Total #	18	7	16
	Total %	44%	17%	39%
20. Students elaborate about content and ideas when responding to questions.	ES	45%	5%	50%
	MS	50%	40%	10%
	HS	56%	11%	33%
	Total #	20	6	15
	Total %	49%	15%	37%
21. Students make connections to prior knowledge, or real world experience, or can apply knowledge and understanding to other subjects.	ES	32%	0%	68%
	MS	60%	20%	20%
	HS	67%	0%	33%
	Total #	19	2	20
	Total %	46%	5%	49%
22. Students use technology as a tool for learning and/or understanding.	ES	73%	9%	18%
	MS	100%	0%	0%
	HS	89%	0%	11%
	Total #	34	2	5
	Total %	83%	5%	12%
23. Students assume responsibility for their own learning whether individually, in pairs, or in groups.	ES	23%	14%	64%
	MS	40%	30%	30%
	HS	22%	0%	78%
	Total #	11	6	24
	Total %	27%	15%	59%
24. Student work demonstrates high quality and can serve as exemplars.	ES	73%	9%	18%
	MS	90%	0%	10%
	HS	56%	22%	22%
	Total #	30	4	7
	Total %	73%	10%	17%