



Fairhaven Public Schools

Review of District Systems and Practices Addressing the Differentiated Needs of Low-Income Students

Review conducted March 14-17, 2011

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Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Table of Contents

Overview of Differentiated Needs Reviews: Low-Income Students.....	1
Purpose	1
Selection of Districts	1
Key Questions	2
Methodology	3
Fairhaven Public Schools.....	4
District Profile	4
Findings	7
Key Question 1: To what extent are the following conditions for school effectiveness in place at the school where the performance of low-income students has substantially improved?	7
Key Question 2: How do the district's systems for support and intervention affect the school where the performance of low-income students has substantially improved?	16
Recommendations.....	28
Appendix A: Review Team Members.....	32
Appendix B: Review Activities and Site Visit Schedule.....	33
Appendix C: Student Achievement Data 2008-2010.....	37
Appendix D: Finding and Recommendation Statements.....	42

Overview of Differentiated Needs Reviews: Low-Income Students

Purpose

The Center for District and School Accountability (CDSA) in the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) is undertaking a series of reviews of school districts to determine how well district systems and practices support groups of students for whom there is a significant proficiency gap. (“Proficiency gap” is defined as a measure of the shortfall in academic performance by an identifiable population group relative to an appropriate standard held for all.)¹ The reviews focus in turn on how district systems and practices affect each of four groups of students: students with disabilities, English language learners, low-income students (defined as students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch), and students who are members of racial minorities. Spring 2011 reviews aim to identify district and school factors contributing to improvement in achievement for students living in poverty (low-income students) in selected schools, to provide recommendations for improvement on district and school levels to maintain or accelerate the improvement in student achievement, and to promote the dissemination of promising practices among Massachusetts public schools. This review complies with the requirement of Chapter 15, Section 55A to conduct district reviews and is part of ESE’s program to recognize schools as “distinguished schools” under section 1117(b) of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which allows states to use Title I funds to reward schools that are narrowing proficiency gaps. Exemplary district and school practices identified through the reviews will be described in a report summarizing this set of reviews.

Selection of Districts

ESE identified 28 Title I schools in 18 districts where the performance of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch has recently improved. These districts had Title I schools which substantially narrowed proficiency gaps for these low-income students over a two-year period: schools where the performance of low-income students improved from 2008 to 2009 and from 2009 to 2010 in English language arts or mathematics both in terms of low-income students’ Composite Performance Index (increased CPI in the same subject both years and a gain over the two years of at least 5 points) and in terms of the percentage of low-income students scoring Proficient or Advanced (at least one percentage point gained in the same subject each year).² As

¹The term “proficiency gap,” originally coined by Jeff Howard, a member of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, was adopted in 2010 by the Board’s Proficiency Gap Task Force. BESE Proficiency Gap Taskforce. April 2010. *A Roadmap to Closing the Proficiency Gap*.

²To be considered, a school had to be a Title I school and had to have been recognized as a 2010-2011 Commendation School (for narrowing proficiency gaps, high growth, or exiting NCLB accountability status). In addition to having an increase in CPI and proficiency rate in English language arts or mathematics both years, the school could not have experienced a decline in CPI or proficiency rate either year in either subject; had to meet the

a result of having these “gap-closer” schools, districts from this group were invited to participate in this set of reviews aimed at identifying district and school practices associated with stronger performance for low-income students.

Key Questions

Two key questions guide the work of the review team.

Key Question 1. To what extent are the following conditions for school effectiveness in place at the school where the performance of low-income students has substantially improved?

1. School Leadership (CSE #2): *Each school takes action to attract, develop, and retain an effective school leadership team that obtains staff commitment to improving student learning and implements a well-designed strategy for accomplishing a clearly defined mission and set of goals, in part by leveraging resources. Each school leadership team a) ensures staff understanding of and commitment to the school’s mission and strategies, b) supports teacher leadership and a collaborative learning culture, c) uses supervision and evaluation practices that assist teacher development, and d) focuses staff time and resources on instructional improvement and student learning through effective management of operations and use of data for improvement planning and management.*

2. Consistent Delivery of an Aligned Curriculum (CSE #3): *Each school’s taught curricula a) are aligned to state curriculum frameworks and to the MCAS performance level descriptions, and b) are also aligned vertically (between grades) and horizontally (across classrooms at the same grade level and across sections of the same course).*

3. Effective Instruction (CSE #4): *Instructional practices are based on evidence from a body of high quality research and on high expectations for all students and include use of appropriate research-based reading and mathematics programs. It also ensures that instruction focuses on clear objectives, uses appropriate educational materials, and includes a) a range of strategies, technologies, and supplemental materials aligned with students’ developmental levels and learning needs; b) instructional practices and activities that build a respectful climate and enable students to assume increasing responsibility for their own learning; and c) use of class time that maximizes student learning. Each school staff has a common understanding of high-quality evidence-based instruction and a system for monitoring instructional practice.*

4. Tiered Instruction and Adequate Learning Time (CSE #8): *Each school schedule is designed to provide adequate learning time for all students in core subjects. For students not yet on track to proficiency in English language arts or mathematics, the district ensures that each school provides additional time and support for individualized instruction through tiered instruction, a data-driven approach to prevention, early detection, and support for students who experience*

2010 AYP participation rate and attendance or graduation rate requirements; and had to have had at least 40 low-income students tested each year from 2007-2008 through 2009-2010.

learning or behavioral challenges, including but not limited to students with disabilities and English language learners.

5. Social and Emotional Support (CSE #9): Each school creates a safe school environment and makes effective use of a system for addressing the social, emotional, and health needs of its students that reflects the behavioral health and public schools framework.³ Students' needs are met in part through a) the provision of coordinated student support services and universal breakfast (if eligible); b) the implementation of a systems approach to establishing a productive social culture that minimizes problem behavior for all students; and c) the use of consistent schoolwide attendance and discipline practices and effective classroom management techniques that enable students to assume increasing responsibility for their own behavior and learning.

Key Question 2. How do the district's systems for support and intervention affect the school where the performance of low-income students has substantially improved?

Methodology

To focus the analysis, reviews explore six areas: **Leadership and Governance, Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment, Human Resources and Professional Development, Student Support, and Financial and Asset Management.** The reviews seek to identify those systems and practices that are most likely to be contributing to positive results, as well as those that may be impeding rapid improvement. Reviews are evidence-based and data-driven. A four-to-six-member review team, usually six-member, previews selected documents and ESE data and reports before conducting a four-day site visit in the district, spending about two to three days in the central office and one to two days conducting school visits. The team consists of independent consultants with expertise in each of the six areas listed above.

³ The behavioral health and public schools framework was developed by the Task Force on Behavioral Health and Public Schools pursuant to c. 321, s. 19, of the Massachusetts Acts of 2008.

Fairhaven Public Schools

The site visit to the Fairhaven Public Schools was conducted from March 14-March 17, 2011. The site visit included visits to the following district schools: Fairhaven High School (grades 9-12), Hastings Middle School (grades 6-8), East Fairhaven Elementary (pre-kindergarten through grade 5), Rogers Elementary (kindergarten through grade 5), and Wood Elementary (kindergarten through grade 5). The East Fairhaven School was identified as a “gap-closer” for its low-income students, as described above. Further information about the review and the site visit schedule can be found in Appendix B; information about the members of the review team can be found in Appendix A. Appendix C contains information about student performance from 2008-2010. Appendix D contains finding and recommendation statements.

District Profile⁴

The town of Fairhaven, located on Buzzard’s Bay in Bristol County, is governed by a Board of Selectman, Executive Secretary, and Representative Town Meeting form of municipal government. The School Committee is composed of six members. Fairhaven has five schools serving pre-kindergarten through grade 12. These are: Fairhaven High School (grades 9-12), Hastings Middle School (grades 6-8), East Fairhaven Elementary (pre-kindergarten through grade 5), Rogers Elementary (kindergarten through grade 5), and Wood Elementary (kindergarten through grade 5). Fairhaven is also part of the Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical school district.

Total district enrollment in 2011 is 1984. Enrollment at each school is: Fairhaven High School (615), Hastings Middle School (480), East Fairhaven Elementary (429), Rogers (226), and Wood (234).

The current superintendent has been in the position since July 1, 2005, the beginning of the 2006 school year. The district leadership team consists of the five school principals, the special education director, and the business manager. According to a district report on school staffing, 2009-2010, the district at one time had a director of instructional services but that position was eliminated in 2010. The district re-organized its elementary schools when one new school replaced two aging schools in 2007.

⁴ Data derived from ESE’s website, ESE’s Education Data Warehouse, or other ESE sources.

Table 1 shows Fairhaven student enrollment by race/ethnicity and selected populations.

**Table 1: 2010-2011 Fairhaven Student Enrollment
by Race/Ethnicity & Selected Populations**

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity	Number	Percent of Total	Selected Populations	Number	Percent of Total
African-American	20	1.0	First Language not English	35	1.8
Asian	25	1.3	Limited English Proficient	9	0.5
Hispanic or Latino	48	2.4	Low-income	594	29.9
Native American	9	0.5	Special Education	312	15.6
White	1,854	93.4	Free Lunch	410	20.7
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	2	0.1	Reduced-price lunch	184	9.3
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	26	1.3	Total enrollment	1,984	100.0

Source: School/District Profiles on ESE website

As Table 2 shows, the percent of students from low-income families varies from 26 percent at East Fairhaven Elementary to 33 percent at Hastings Middle School.

**Table 2: 2010-2011 Comparison of State, District, and All District Schools
by Selected Populations (in Percentages except for Total Enrollment)**

	Total Enrollment	Low-Income Students			Limited English Proficient Students	Special Education Students
		All	Eligible for Free Lunch	Eligible for Reduced- Price Lunch		
State	955,563	34.2	29.1	5.1	7.1	955,563
Fairhaven	1,984	29.9	20.7	9.3	0.5	1,984
Fairhaven High School	429	30.8	23.1	7.7	0.0	429
Hastings Middle School	615	33.0	22.3	10.7	0.3	615
East Fairhaven	480	26.0	16.9	9.2	0.2	480
Rogers	234	29.5	20.5	9.0	0.4	234
Wood	226	28.8	19.9	8.8	2.2	226

Source: School/District Profiles on ESE website

The local appropriation to the Fairhaven Public Schools budget for fiscal year 2011 was \$16,996,613, up slightly from the appropriation for fiscal year 2010 of \$16,452,674. School-related expenditures by the Fairhaven were estimated at \$4,058,058 for fiscal year 2011, up slightly from the estimate for fiscal year 2010 of \$4,005,016. In fiscal year 2010, the total amount of actual school-related expenditures, including expenditures by the district (\$16,446,827), expenditures by Fairhaven (\$3,412,621), and expenditures from other sources such as grants (\$3,055,595), was \$22,915,043. Actual net school spending in fiscal year 2010 was \$18,171,922.

Findings

Key Question 1: To what extent are the following conditions for school effectiveness in place at the school where the performance of low-income students has substantially improved?

- **school leadership;**
- **curriculum;**
- **instruction;**
- **tiered instruction and adequate learning time; and**
- **social/emotional support**

The school leadership of East Fairhaven Elementary School (EFES) has successfully developed a whole-school strategy with a constellation of interventions to raise student achievement.

The leadership team at EFES has developed an educational vision shared by the teachers and staff with the common goal of promoting the achievement of all students. In interviews with the review team, administrators and teachers stated the belief that all children can and will learn. The review team's classroom observations provided evidence that this belief permeates the school.

The principal is knowledgeable of the areas of curriculum, instruction, assessment and the supervision and evaluation of school personnel. In developing the school's philosophy, the principal stated that she based her actions on her fundamental belief that all children can learn and her experience in curriculum, instruction, and the analysis of student performance data. When the Oxford Elementary School merged with the East Fairhaven Elementary School upon the completion of the present school facility in 2006, the student population doubled, yet the administrative staff continued to consist of only a principal and a teaching assistant principal. The principal successfully demonstrated to district administrators the need for a guidance counselor to provide both additional resources for students and administrative assistance. An administrative team composed of the principal, assistant principal, and guidance counselor has created a culture where student needs are primary.

EFES is a full-inclusion school. Administrators and teachers told the review team that at the time of the merger, the two schools differed in philosophy about the inclusion of special education students in regular education classes, and teachers' experiences with inclusion varied. Through community building, the administration helped to foster a belief in full inclusion. The administration reinforced this belief by instituting a pilot program in the first year and providing teachers the resources to include special education students successfully in their classrooms. Support staff are deployed in classrooms and small group settings in order to provide a range of instructional strategies to raise student achievement in ELA and mathematics. The principal is able to deploy staff to support special education students in every classroom. There were multiple adults in nearly every classroom observed by the review team. According to interviews

and observations, the instructional model appears to be seamless: Observers often had difficulty distinguishing among the regular classroom teachers, special educators and special education paraprofessionals working in the classrooms. According to observations and interviews, all students are taught the regular grade level curriculum.

The leadership team has marshaled resources to provision classrooms adequately. Classroom observations and interviews with teachers and administrators substantiated that printed materials and technology are abundant. In addition, the leadership at the school has built a schedule that supports teachers with common planning time. Teachers and administrators stated that the analysis of data plays an important part in informing and adapting classroom instruction.

The principal is a strong advocate for the school and has been successful in securing the resources to enhance student performance within the system's budget development process. First among these resources was the guidance counselor position which had not been part of the original plan for the school.

The school also enjoys strong support from parents. In interviews with the review team, parents expressed approval of the school's approach to students. Parents also stated that they were involved in school activities and satisfied with their children's education.

A constellation of improvements and supports at EFES, rather than any one intervention, has contributed to an overall increase in student achievement, especially for students from low-income families. The dedication and creative problem-solving of the school leadership team have also contributed to this increase in student achievement.

The school has structures to ensure consistent implementation, alignment, and effective delivery of the ELA and mathematics curricula. The science and social studies curricula were undocumented. The curricula of these two domains were developed by individual teachers using the state curriculum frameworks and embedded in the literacy program.

The school's ELA curriculum is guided by the 2010 District Literacy Action Plan (DLAP) which is overseen by the district intervention coordinator. The district intervention coordinator was a former teacher and assistant principal at EFES who maintained an office in the school while fulfilling this one-year, 2010-2011 school year position. The EFES principal and a grade 2 teacher also served on the DLAP team which was charged with matching assessments to existing benchmarks, including literacy skills in mathematics, science, and social studies, and strengthening research-based instructional practices in vocabulary development.

According to documents and interviews, the ELA and mathematics curricula at EFES are correlated with the state curriculum frameworks and horizontally and vertically aligned within the school. At the time of the review, the school and district had no formal curriculum documents for science and social studies. According to teachers, school leaders, and instructional coaches, the science and social studies curricula were taught through the literacy curriculum and teachers designed science and social studies lessons based on the state's new content-area framework. In interviews, some district elementary teachers and coaches of teaching and learning expressed concern about meeting the state's standards in these content areas, particularly in the upper

elementary grades. While teachers understood and were supportive of the district's focus on literacy, they said that the reliance on literature to teach science and social studies could hinder the development of the cognitive skills required in science as well as appropriate technical content reading skills.

Two teachers from EFES served as teaching and learning coaches and were part of a six-member district team that supports the curriculum at each school. The team met weekly unless there was a school-based meeting, and was led by one of the elementary principals assigned to elementary curriculum supervision. The coaches interviewed by the review team said that their focus in 2010-2011 was on the ELA curriculum, aligning the benchmarks, and developing common assessments at each grade level. In interviews, teaching and learning coaches said that their role in 2010-2011 had been primarily to serve as committee members working on literacy curricular issues through the DLAP, rather than working more directly with classroom teachers on other curricular or instructional issues.

The principal monitors the curriculum at EFES, although the district at the time of the review had assigned another full-time elementary principal to guide the review of the district's ELA program through grade 6 at the middle school. According to interviewees, there was no equivalent monitoring of the other content areas in kindergarten through grade 6. EFES teachers said that they supported each other's curricular needs and that the principal also provided resources and support. The principal told the review team that she asks teachers, "What is going to help you?" and looks to provide the necessary resources. She cited Reading A-Z as a recent example of a reading resource purchased to support the ELA curriculum. In interviews, teachers said that they have common meeting time each day and grade level meetings twice each month to review student performance data. They added that these meetings also provide an opportunity to discuss curriculum gaps and overlaps and to make adjustments in pacing and instruction, such as through re-teaching. Common meeting times are not provided in all of the district's schools.

EFES teachers and the principal told the review team that teachers have the freedom and are encouraged to adapt the curriculum to meet students' needs. The review team was told that there had been a shift from a stricter, more structured approach of implementing the curriculum under earlier district leadership. She said that she expected teachers to be creative, and there was an emphasis on group and project-based work. EFES teachers told the review team that the use of technology to deliver the curriculum had increased as a benefit of the new facility.

The review team found that the EFES is guided by a comprehensive district plan in literacy and an aligned mathematics curriculum. The school has structures to ensure that teachers are able to deliver these curricular programs consistently. All of this has likely contributed to improved student performance in ELA and mathematics. An absence of documentation of the core curricular areas of science and social studies and the requirement to deliver all instruction in these areas through the literacy program is a concern to some teachers and coaches, and may affect student preparedness and performance in the higher grades, particularly at the middle school.

EFES teachers collaborate to plan and deliver effective instruction and are skillful in differentiating instruction to meet the needs of all learners with support staff and co-teachers.

The review team observed a total of 13 classes in grades 1 through 5 at EFES: 7 ELA classes and 6 mathematics classes. The review team found solid evidence that instruction focused on clear objectives, included a range of strategies, helped students make links to prior knowledge, and made efficient use of class time.

In all but one observed classroom teachers posted or conveyed orally to students their clear learning objectives for the lesson. Some review team members observed teachers reminding students of the learning objective as they worked with small groups, while in most classrooms each lesson's objective was posted in student-friendly language on the board.

Teachers in 12 of the 13 classrooms linked academic concepts to students' prior knowledge and experience. For example, in a grade 1 classroom, the teacher said, "Last week we did a whole paper like this on estimation....we'll carry it one step forward." In a third grade classroom, the teacher guided students in a reading lesson by asking them for examples from their own lives. In two mathematics classes, the teachers asked students if they had suggestions for using different strategies learned earlier in order to solve new mathematics problems.

In all of the classrooms observed the review team found solid or partial evidence of presentation of content within the students' English language proficiency and developmental levels. A grade 1 teacher helped students get ready for work by saying, "Put on your thinking caps, close your eyes, and no peeking!" Many teachers previewed content specific vocabulary in mathematics and ELA and "word walls" were posted in all classrooms. All of the classrooms appeared to have a large supply of leveled readers, and some teachers provided wall charts showing students how to select an appropriate independent reading book.

Efficient use of class time was noted in 12 of the 13 classes observed. It was evident that teachers and support staff worked seamlessly and effectively within the classrooms and facilitated small group movement in and out of tasks with minimum disruptions. For example, in two mathematics classes with three adults, special education and classroom assistants worked with small groups who rotated among the teachers for instruction. The team observed students who were focused and on-task with each adult who worked with them. In all of the classrooms, teachers paced the lessons to ensure that all students were actively engaged.

The climate was characterized by respectful behaviors, routines, and discourse in all of the observed classes. One observer noted encouraging, cheerful, and respectful speech. Corrections were made gently with the intention of keeping students focused. When interrupted by a student one second grade teacher, asked the student to join her apart from the group and quietly said, "You need to hear what we are saying...." Teachers used humor and re-direction with their students, setting the expectation that learning was important and that students needed to take part in the activities.

In all 13 classes observed, teachers used a variety of instructional strategies such as whole class teacher-directed instruction, small groups with and without adult facilitation, and center-based or individual, self-directed activities. In some classes using small group strategies, reviewers found students exploring or problem-solving together. For example, in two grade 3 classes students worked together in literature circles with specific tasks to accomplish within their small groups.

The teacher expected students to engage in higher-order thinking, and asked questions that required analysis, synthesis, or evaluation in 12 of the 13 classes. After the students had practiced counting using a number chart, the teacher of a grade 1 class asked, “What is the number if I only ask for the 10s in the number 64?” In a grade 3 reading lesson, the teacher required students to provide evidence from the text to support their opinions. A grade 5 teacher asked students to deduce a “rule” from a list of spelling words, and a grade 3 teacher asked a group of students “What multiplication fact would have helped?”

In addition to questioning that challenged student thinking, there was also partial or solid evidence that students could articulate their thinking when asked in 12 of the 13 classes observed. For example in mathematics lessons teachers asked students to use correct mathematics terminology to explain why they had solved problems in the way that they had. In reading lessons the teachers asked students to justify an opinion based on textual evidence and sometimes simply to clarify why the class was doing a particular activity. For example when a teacher asked “Why are we doing daily oral language (DOL)?” a student responded “So when we write, we can make corrections.”

Evidence of the use of technology included students using computers during center time and students using an iPad in a grade 1 classroom. Teachers told the review team that the availability of computer-based learning such as Lexia was a resource used by all and helped students acquire basic skills.

The principal and teachers at EFES share high expectations that all students will learn and achieve and are committed to continuously improving their skills. In an interview, school student support staff stated that teachers will do anything they can to help students, and that their main focus was to do whatever needs to be done “to make the children successful students.” They described a staff that continuously looks at data and seeks to find the best methods for reaching and tapping into the abilities of all students. The principal said that twice monthly grade level meetings focused on “intervention, information, and the needs of the kids.”

The review team observed a structure for delivering classroom instruction that facilitated differentiation. Additional adults worked with students individually or in small groups in eight of the 13 classes observed. The review team also observed inclusion of students with significant special needs in two classrooms where instruction was provided by all of the adults. For example, in a grade 1 class a student with significant learning needs worked with the classroom teacher, a specialist, and the classroom assistant and participated in all of the learning activities using certain learning aides such as a slant board. In interviews, the principal said that between eight and ten teachers had completed a district program on differentiating instruction and she had

reviewed their course-related writing and homework and what they had implemented in their classrooms.

This combination of high expectations for students, skilled use of instructional support staff, and effective teaching practices observed throughout EFES have provided all students with mathematics and literacy skills that have contributed to improved student achievement.

The EFES schedule is designed to provide adequate learning time in ELA and mathematics.

As discussed in the student support finding in this report, the school has an effective system for identifying students who require additional support and provides tiered instruction through effective staff deployment. Assistants and Title 1 staff have helped to enable classroom teachers to deliver differentiated instruction and re-teach individuals and small groups when necessary.

In interviews with the review team, the principal and teachers explained that they have the flexibility to re-group students for mathematics instruction in grades 3, 4, and 5 in order to meet the needs of learning groups with multiple ability levels. As described by the teachers, this system is fluid and able to quickly respond to the changing needs of students identified through an analysis of student performance data. The school also has a dedicated block of time during the day for students who require interventions or enrichment. While this block has helped to meet students' learning needs in ELA and mathematics, in interviews some teachers voiced concern that it has decreased the time available for instruction in the other curricular areas.

EFES has provided a well-implemented tiered instructional model and adequate learning time for ELA and mathematics for students not yet on the track to proficiency. The focus on the two core curricular areas has ensured that all students are acquiring the skills necessary to access the curriculum. The adequacy of time to meet all of the requirements of the social studies and science frameworks appears sufficient based on the review team's examination of the school's classroom schedules; however, the review team was unable to ascertain student competency in these areas.

The support staff and classroom teachers at EFES have implemented a well-coordinated and thoughtfully executed academic and emotional support system that attends to and meets the needs of students.

According to documentation and interviews, three key resources at EFES are central to improving achievement for all learners: early intervention, adequate time to address the needs of struggling learners, and sufficient staff to carry out interventions.

As stated previously, grade level teachers at EFES have common planning time daily. During this time, teachers plan curriculum, discuss individual student needs, work on interventions, and collect and analyze data as a team. The student support staff at EFES described this system as flexible and quickly responsive when students are identified based on their performance on benchmark and other testing. Collaboration among classroom and support staff is routine and structured within the school day. Classroom teachers also meet with the school counselor at least twice monthly during their common planning time. In interviews, teachers said that this regular

hour-long time with the counselor is essential to their success as classroom teachers. The counselor provides critical insights about students, suggests behavioral modifications that teachers said actually work with the students, and when necessary, works directly with individual students. Correspondingly, the counselor told the review team that her time with classroom teachers and their insights are critical to her success in providing students appropriate behavioral, emotional, and academic support.

EFES has implemented a full inclusion model and at the time of the review had staff with the expertise and commitment to fully support this model. Serving the entire school, the support staff consisted of a full-time school counselor, a full-time school nurse, three full-time special education teachers, one and a half full-time equivalent Title I teachers, a part-time occupational therapist, and a part-time speech therapist. Every grade level had at least one full hour of ELA intervention during which all classrooms are organized in an inclusive model. All students learned in fluid and carefully constructed small and large groups, sometimes independently and sometimes with at least one member of the support team, such as a Title I teacher, a special education teacher in concert with the classroom teacher, or an experienced paraprofessional. Students were rarely withdrawn for this instruction; instead, they typically receive a variety of opportunities to learn the critical skills of their grade levels within their regular education classrooms.

In the classes observed by the review team teachers employed a variety of strategies in learning groups while focusing on the same skill and attended to the needs of each student. Teachers, administrators, parents and school committee members told the review team that all EFES staff believe in high achievement for all students. In interviews, many parents commented on the dedication of the teachers, stating that they try all methods to make sure that students learn at a high level. They added that teachers came early to school and work after school, often tutoring students well beyond the end of the school day.

For ELA, the school created the kind of inclusive grouping that worked for each student and the class as a whole with careful attention to student performance data and collaborative services. Title I teachers, special educators, as well as the school nurse and a counselor play a critical role in making inclusion successful. They work regularly and systematically with teachers at every grade level to refine the support that students receive in order to ensure a coordinated approach.

School staff also described a process whereby work within classes is coupled with a proactive and timely response to a variety of issues that students present. The school counselor and nurse start every school day by greeting students as they enter the building and identify any issues that may need to be addressed. They discuss these issues together and develop an immediate plan. According to interviewees, absences are immediately investigated and any pattern of prolonged absenteeism is quickly addressed by the nurse or school counselor depending upon the nature of the issue. According to 2010 ESE data, absenteeism and in and out of school suspension rates were very low at EFES. The EFES attendance rate was 95.8 percent for low-income students as compared to 96.1 percent for all students. There were no in- or out-of-school suspensions at

EFES as compared to a combined in and an in-school suspension rate of 6.6 percent and an out-of-school suspension rate of 6.4 percent for all district students.

According to interviewees, all EFES students are screened at kindergarten registration. Any identified emotional needs are discussed with the parents or guardians and in-school and out-of-school intervention plans are suggested. Students with identified emotional needs are monitored regularly throughout the year and in subsequent years to facilitate the planning of seamless support and intervention services. Parents told the review team that support team members are also highly responsive including the Title I teachers, the school nurse, and special education teachers.

In addition to addressing emerging needs, the school counselor and principal introduced a number of proactive school-wide character formation initiatives such as Peace Builder, designed to build a strong and respectful school community and to teach students how to take an active role and be a positive role model within the larger community. Parents said that their children used a common language to discuss social concerns throughout the grades of the school. The counselor, teachers, and parent volunteers, had developed a wide range of before, during, and after school activities. According to documentation and interviews, there are before school breakfast clubs, lunch clubs, and after school activities. The review team found a warm and engaging climate for learning. It was evident that students were respectful of each other, seemed to enjoy learning in a great variety of groupings, spoke to each other in pleasant tones and with appropriate language, and were able to learn independently by working on thoughtfully designed activities, with and without teacher supervision. The review team encountered no exceptions to this positive attitude and parents told the review team in interviews that their children loved coming to school and looked forward to learning.

The appropriateness, and sufficiency of support services and the effective scheduling and deployment of support services personnel have contributed to the academic and social success of all EFES students, including students from low-income families. In addition, the work of the principal, classroom teachers, and the entire support team have helped improve student achievement.

The supervision and evaluation process used by the principal at the EFES is effective in promoting professional growth of all of the teachers in the school to better meet the learning needs of all students.

The review team examined 37 randomly-selected teacher files during its visit and found that all of the evaluations were timely and aligned with the ESE Principles of Effective Teaching in force at the time of the review. Principals and supervisors identified teachers' strengths and needs through informative comments in the summative evaluations and more than half of the evaluations contained instructive comments identifying areas of pedagogy needing improvement. The files of 12 ESEF teachers were included in the sample of 37 examined by the review team. The evaluations of ESEF teachers contained particularly useful recommendations for improving instruction. The principal provided descriptive comments on the strengths of each teacher and also made instructive comments to improve pedagogy.

When asked by the review team how the supervisory process may have contributed to narrowing the achievement gap in her school, the principal stated clearly that her goal was to assist every teacher in her school to become a more effective instructor. Her method of supervision was to be present in every one of her classrooms every day and to give clear and forthright oral or written feedback to all staff. Teachers described the principal as a “go to person” and one who was very well aware of what was going on in the school and with the students. They said that she was present in their classrooms, talked to the students in class, and occasionally took over a class when a teacher had to attend a meeting. The EFES principal effectively executes a comprehensive supervisory model to inform teachers’ instruction. This process has contributed to students’ academic success.

Key Question 2: How do the district's systems for support and intervention affect the school where the performance of low-income students has substantially improved?

The district's systems for support and intervention meet the needs of students from low-income families by providing the overarching philosophy and parameters for initiatives designed to raise student achievement throughout the district.

The superintendent developed a school district improvement plan which sets broad goals for raising student achievement. This plan includes all of the systems in the district. Central to the plan is the teaching and learning system which includes the following goals: develop consistent district benchmarks; match appropriate assessments to existing benchmarks; collect and use systemic data; develop high school and middle school curriculum guides; create a resource section in the elementary ELA curriculum to provide core lessons across the district; verify vertical alignment of curriculum; establish consistent instructional routines for classes K-12; strengthen research-based vocabulary instructional practices; and develop a consistent process for data collection, analysis and RTI.

The district operates according to a team management model. The district plan reflects the collective thinking of the administrative council which consists of the principals, business manager, director of special education and the director of intervention services. In interviews with the review team, administrators spoke often about the collegiality of the council. They stated that the superintendent set a direction in the plan and gave individual principals wide latitude to accomplish the overarching district goal of improving student achievement in their schools.

Members of the school committee told the review team that the school committee approves the plan annually and uses it to guide their deliberations. Members of the committee expressed understanding of the plan and its importance in making financial decisions. They went on to describe some specific instances where the plan had provided guidance and direction. The replacement of two guidance counselors at the elementary level was one example. In this matter they stated that "they chose not to afford" a specialist position at EFES.

The leaders of the Fairhaven Educators' Association (FEA) told the review team that the systems for curriculum and instruction, supervision and evaluation and budget established by the administration have resulted in improvements in teaching and learning. They also credited the superintendent with securing funding for EFES, and the replacement of two guidance counselors. Although successor agreement to last year's one salary freeze was successfully approved during the fall of 2010, at the time of the review there appeared to be some strained relations between the FEA and the school committee and administration. Despite the strain both camps solidly support the district improvement plan.

The superintendent has reorganized district structures to meet the restriction of declining resources and the challenge of raising student achievement. For example, the high school

principal told the review team about replacement of the traditional department head structure with teaching and learning supervisors and coaches. This “work in progress” was supported by the high school principal. Administrators also described a newly established structure to articulate and monitor curriculum, instruction and assessment systemwide. Two principals monitor these areas in ELA and mathematics with one having responsibility for kindergarten through grade 6 and the other for grades 7 through 12. The scope of their responsibilities includes the middle school, overlapping the district’s organization pattern of kindergarten through grade 5, grades 6 through 8, and grades 9 through 12. In interviews with the review team, principals described mixed results with this model as the district prepares to deploy resources strategically to increase the achievement of the low-income and special education subgroups at the middle school in order to make AYP. In addition, the superintendent strategically transferred responsibility for the Title I program to the EFES principal.

The superintendent uses a needs-based budget process. Principals annually submit their needs early in the process. According to administrators, these requests are then analyzed for “goodness of fit” with the district’s plan and philosophy. Those requests that hold promise to further the district’s goal to raise student achievement are approved. According to the principals, there is much discussion with the superintendent about budget requests, and the superintendent said that he encourages strong advocacy from the principals.

As a result of the management practices in the district, human and financial resources are continually reassessed and redeployed in support of high achievement for all students. The district’s systems provide guidance, structures, and appropriate supports for low-income students.

The district has implemented an ambitious teaching and learning system to “ensure the consistent use, alignment, and effective delivery of the district’s curricula.” However, in the first year of a three-year implementation plan the system did not yet provide cohesive, well-articulated, and coordinated district curricular management.

In 2010-2011, the district developed a system and leadership structure to begin to align the curriculum, establish benchmarks, and develop benchmark assessments. As constituted as of the time of the review, the system requires numerous staff, some of whom have full-time teaching or school leadership roles, to share additional responsibilities.

Numerous staff participate in curriculum work: The high school has three supervisors of teaching and learning, three coaches, and several teacher leaders in the content areas. The supervisors have reduced teaching loads of three classes while the coaches and leaders have full teaching loads of five classes. The middle school has one supervisor of teaching and learning and four coaches. According to an interview, the supervisor oversees 12 teachers and has a teaching load reduced by one class. The coaches have full teaching loads. There are six teaching and learning coaches at the elementary level, all of whom have full teaching loads. One elementary principal, who also has the title “curriculum director” in some school documents, oversees the coaches.

According to the teaching and learning system, the principals “are the day-to-day decision-makers who oversee the use, alignment, consistency, and effectiveness of delivery of the

district's curriculum plan." There are six assistant principals, two at the elementary level and four at the middle and high schools. One elementary assistant principal also serves as the district intervention coordinator, a one-year position focused on implementation of the literacy action plan. There are five special education teaching and learning coaches. In interviews, the superintendent, principals, supervisors, coaches and teachers told the review team that there is no districtwide coordinator of curriculum and instruction. A district level assistant superintendent had been responsible for curriculum and instruction, but this position was eliminated for financial reasons. The document describing the teaching and learning system team lists four unfilled positions: director of curriculum K-6, director of curriculum 7-12, director of instructional practice and strategies K-6, and director of practices and strategies 7-12.

At the elementary level, the six elementary teaching and learning coaches have worked mainly on the ELA curriculum in 2010-2011. All have full teaching loads and they told the review team that they were unable to coach teachers in 2010-2011 because they were responsible for aligning the ELA curriculum and coordinating it with the district's literacy action plan. They did work with the grade level teams in each school.

Curriculum oversight at the middle school is shared between the high school principal and one elementary principal. The elementary principal is responsible for ELA in grade 6, and the high school principal is responsible for all other curricular areas in grades 7-12. In a former model high school department heads also oversaw middle school content areas, but this was determined to be ineffective and discontinued in 2009-2010. The supervisor of teaching and learning and the high school supervisors have similar functions and responsibilities.

The review team found the most cohesive coordination of curriculum and instruction in the district at the high school with its system of three supervisors who oversee all content areas, and work with the coaches and the content area leaders. However, content areas leaders and teachers' union representatives told the review team that little time was available for content area leaders to work with teachers on curriculum content. The principal informed the review team that the high school devoted 2010-2011 to preparing for the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) accreditation visit.

While the district has attempted to improve curriculum and instruction, inadequate staffing has resulted in uneven improvement, and in some cases, fragmentation. For example, the high school mathematics curriculum is aligned and has components such as maps, benchmarks, and common assessments, but according to principals the other high school curricular areas and the entire middle school curriculum are "not as far along." At the elementary level, teachers described a mathematics curriculum overdue for review with "old books" and little coordination among the elementary schools or articulation with the middle school. ELA alignment with the Common Core is well underway in kindergarten through grade 3 and in process through grade 6. Science is "much less developed" according to the elementary principal/curriculum coordinator and teachers in the upper elementary grades told the review team that science and social studies concepts were insufficiently taught under the current model of integration with literature.

Fragmentation is most evident at the middle school where the high school principal and an elementary principal share curriculum oversight and coordination.

The district provided the review team the documented district curriculum review cycle consisting of a time frame, areas for study/evaluation, curriculum review, instructional material review, implementation, and evaluation. In 2010-2011, science, art, and kindergarten through grade 5 ELA were scheduled for curriculum review and mathematics, music, and world languages were scheduled for instructional material review. The review team found that only the kindergarten through grade 5 (actually kindergarten through grade 6) ELA review was in process. When asked by the review team, teachers at the elementary level said there was no elementary curriculum review cycle. In addition, elementary coaches and teachers expressed concern about a dated mathematics curriculum last reviewed in 2007, postponement of the districtwide mathematics review, absence of follow-up on a mathematics pilot, and undocumented science and social studies curricula at the higher elementary grades.

It was evident to the review team that the district was making a solid attempt to meet all of its curricular goals through the new teaching and learning team structure. The goals, procedures, and timelines were not clear to all of the members of the school system, and the activities did not have cohesion and clear direction. Elementary level teachers were concerned about the sufficiency and timeliness of the district curriculum in science and social studies, and uncertain about adherence to the district's curriculum review calendar.

Mathematics proficiency rates for 2010 were substantially lower than state rates in grades 5 through 8, and 2010 science proficiency rates in grades 8 and 10 were also lower than state rates.

As stated in the previous finding, teachers and some principals expressed concern about the quality of the current mathematics curriculum, coordination among the elementary schools, and articulation at the juncture between grades 5 and 6. A review of 2010 student performance in mathematics on the MCAS test validates concern about 5th grade and the middle school grades: According to Table C2 in Appendix C, in 2010 district students' mathematics proficiency rates were higher than statewide rates in grades 3, 4, and 10 but ranged from 8 to 13 percentage points lower than statewide rates in grades 5, 6, 7 and 8. At the elementary level in particular, coaches and teachers expressed concern about the adequacy of providing science instruction through literature. They stated that it was difficult to find literature with sufficiently rigorous science content and that would develop the cognitive skills required in science. District science proficiency rates were low in the aggregate on the MCAS test, particularly at the middle school. According to 2010 ESE data for the district, 57 percent of Fairhaven's grade 5 students, 32 percent of its grade 8 students, and 60 percent of its grade 10 students were proficient in science, compared to 53 percent of state grade 5 students, 40 percent of state grade 8 students, and 65 percent of state grade 10 students.

The concerns expressed in interviews with the review team about the quality of the district mathematics curriculum are substantiated by the gaps with state proficiency rates in grades 5 through 8 on the 2010 MCAS mathematics test. According to interviews, the superintendent and

school leaders believe that improving the literacy skills of all students in the elementary grades will result in successful achievement in science and social studies in the later grades. However, the low proficiency rates in science on the 2010 MCAS test—lower than the state in grades 8 and 10—raise a question about the appropriateness and rigor of the current curriculum in meeting the needs of all students.

The district provided East Fairhaven Elementary School and the other district schools with a 2010-2011 Teaching and Learning Plan of Action which contained goals to improve pedagogy, but realization of the plan was jeopardized by the absence of central office staff to coordinate the implementation.

The district has already taken some key steps in the development of documents and strategies to improve instruction and learning for all students. According to a PowerPoint presentation on the Teaching and Learning Plan of Action made by the superintendent and provided to the review team, the plan states the following goal: “develop a comprehensive Fairhaven Public Schools Model of Instruction,” together with a sub goal to “develop a living, reference document that clearly defines Good Teaching and creates a common language of pedagogy for all educators in the district.”

Another document entitled Improving Pedagogical Practices sets forth some additional pedagogical goals and activities: It references a districtwide course entitled, “Instruction for All Students” as part of a goal to adopt a common language of instruction. It requires that the teaching and learning team train school staff on learning walk protocols following their own training, and data collection to focus professional growth. It also requires that all educators base their professional growth plans in years two and three on “sharing strengths and/or developing weaknesses” relative to the district’s model of instruction also entitled, Instruction for All Students.

According to the document, many of the responsibilities in the plan are to be carried out by members of the teaching and learning team, a group already charged with curriculum and assessment responsibilities. The plan, attempts to connect all of the key functions of teaching and learning within the district. It also describes the one-year position of district intervention coordinator stating that the coordinator will “guide the work of the district and the efforts of individual schools by connecting the initiatives of RTI, the district accommodation plan, and the District Literacy Action Plan into a document that is understood by staff, students, and all members of the school system and is fully and effectively implemented.” This role was fulfilled in 2010-2011 by a former assistant principal and teacher.

The review team commends the school for attending to all of the facets of instruction and student learning represented in the district Teaching and Learning Plan. The implementation, cohesiveness, and long-term sustainability of this ambitious plan are jeopardized by the large number of staff responsible for carrying it out in the absence of a district coordinator. While the district intervention coordinator is responsible for certain tasks, the position does not have the authority or scope of responsibility to coordinate the entire plan of action.

The district demonstrates growing awareness of the importance of using student assessment data to inform instructional and improve academic programs and services. It has undertaken initial steps, especially at the elementary level, to develop uniform processes for data collection, data analysis, and planning and implementing interventions in the schools.

The district's 2010-2011 Plan of Action or improvement plan focused attention on the need to make more and better use of academic and demographic data to improve student achievement. The specific objectives included: (a) development of districtwide, vertically and horizontally aligned, common benchmark assessments; (b) continuous collection and systematic use of student data; (c) utilizing data to focus professional growth; and (d) creation of consistent and well-defined districtwide policies and practices to collect, analyze, review, and report student assessment results. Because there were few formal district level structures, systems, and personnel to direct, coordinate, and support these initiatives at the time of the review, the work of developing enhanced assessment policies and practices had largely been left to the individual schools and their principals.

A kindergarten through grade 12 task force was created in 2010-2011 to develop specific recommendations to realize the broad assessment goals articulated in the district Plan of Action. The task force is facilitated by the district intervention coordinator, whose full-time role consists of numerous other curricular and instructional responsibilities. The coordinator is considered to be a member of, the superintendent's administrative council and attends the regular meetings.

According to interviews with school and district leaders and a review of documents including formal reports, and minutes of meetings, the task force was making progress in identifying and analyzing current needs and developing coordinated grade level, school level, and districtwide response proposals. For example, interviewees told the review team that the committee was considering recommendations for 2011-2012 including extending assessment with the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) to the middle school grades and introducing the Northwest Evaluation Association's online assessment program for data-based progress monitoring of both elementary and middle school students.

According to interviews with district, school, and curriculum leaders, student assessment policies and procedures appear to be most well-developed and effectively implemented at the elementary level. The review team found that elementary school improvement plan (SIP) goals were aligned with the goals in the district's Plan of Action with a primary focus on the development of enhanced data collection, analysis, and implementation protocols and strategies. Interviews with the three elementary school principals and a review of district documents confirmed that uniform data collection practices, consistent review policies, and common assessments have been collaboratively developed and administered to all students in kindergarten through grade 5.

Over the past several years, EFES has been making increasingly good and expanded use of student performance and demographic data to inform curriculum and improve instruction. According to interviewees, the process is still largely dependent on administrative leadership and direction because there has been little formal staff training. A variety of student performance

data is being continuously collected, monitored, and analyzed in kindergarten through grade 5. The district has a priority to develop an increasingly comprehensive assessment system and EFES has responded. For example, among the primary goals of EFES's 2010-2011 SIP was the scheduling of regular grade level "data meetings" to analyze assessment results and to make timely decisions about implementing instructional changes and/or interventions. Teachers and the principal confirmed that these meetings take place regularly.

Interviews with school leaders and staff and an examination of SIP implementation plans and the elementary level annual assessment calendar, provided detailed information about actions to achieve these goals. The district administers a battery of performance assessments at regular intervals throughout the year in order to continuously collect academic data and monitor student progress. The battery consists of both formative and summative ELA and mathematics assessments given to all students at targeted grade levels. In addition to MCAS testing, the district administers assessments such as Fluarty Speech and Language, Brigance, Lexia, and DIBELS. In addition the schools use the assessments from the Scott Foresman reading program and other commercial chapter and unit tests. Interviewees told the review team that the horizontally and vertically aligned benchmarks developed by the elementary schools are now measured by teacher-designed benchmark assessments. These common assessments are uniformly administered throughout the year.

According to interviews with EFES administrators and staff, the results of standardized student assessments, local benchmark testing, and other pertinent data are collected, disseminated to, and reviewed and analyzed by grade level teacher teams and student support/intervention specialists. Structural supports such as daily common planning time and administrator led regular grade level "data meetings" throughout the year promote the use of student performance results to identify individual learning needs, inform interventions, improve classroom instruction, and make appropriate curriculum modifications.

According to interviews and the review team's observations, the elementary schools were also beginning to use both aggregated and disaggregated data to support decision-making, prioritize goals, and modify and initiate programs and services. For example, elementary principals told the review team that on-going collection and careful analysis of student performance data had resulted in substantial modifications to the Scott Foresman reading program, revision of the ELA and mathematics common benchmark assessments, and the recent introduction of the Lexia Reading system in kindergarten through grade 3. Additional factors contributing to the effective use of assessment data included the development of kindergarten through grade 5 horizontally and vertically aligned reading and mathematics benchmarks measured by on-going common benchmark assessments; development of a balanced system of formative and summative assessments administered at regular intervals; and improved structures for staff collaboration.

EFES and the district's two other elementary schools, are making increasingly effective use of student performance data to enhance teaching practices, educational opportunities, support services, and learning outcomes for all students, including students from low-income families. The review team concurs with district leaders and teachers that the growing capacity to use data

as a diagnostic tool has led to improvements in classroom instruction, academic programs and services, and student achievement.

The district supports newly hired teachers with a comprehensive induction program.

Interviewees told the review team that the Fairhaven Public Schools induction program has been a supportive and effective program for many years and has promoted a sense of collegiality among the teachers in the district. All newly hired teachers in the district are assigned a mentor who has been teaching in the district for at least five years. Interviewees stated that there were more than twenty trained mentors in the district's schools. The district's comprehensive Mentoring/Induction Program Handbook states that the key elements to the program's success are maintaining a positive communication relationship between mentor and mentee throughout the year and assisting new teachers in developing and enhancing effective teaching skills. Time is allotted in the schedule to facilitate conferences between mentors and mentees. In a peer-to-peer observation model, mentees observe their mentors and mentors observe their mentees in the classroom several times during the year.

The district's induction program requires all new teachers to attend and participate in a full-day orientation at the beginning of the school year and to regularly attend scheduled in-service workshops conducted by the district's mentoring committee. Four such workshops were held during the 2009-2010 school year. The topics of the workshops included developing effective classroom management skills, improving writing across the curriculum, developing rubrics, how to best communicate with parents, conducting difficult parent conferences, and strategies for inclusion. New teachers often continue with their mentors for a second year.

The district induction program is effective and has acquainted newly-hired teachers with district and school norms and expectations. The induction program has helped new teachers expand and improve on their pedagogy, contributing to improved achievement of all students.

Opportunities for professional development are sufficient but could be expanded to build teacher skills in data analysis and mathematics instruction. The teachers' bargaining agreement that had recently been negotiated at the time of the review restored professional development time for teachers.

Fairhaven's per pupil expenditure for professional development was substantially below the statewide average and the average for comparable communities. Specifically, Fairhaven has allocated an average of \$125 per student in its budget for the last three years for professional development, while the statewide average was \$250 per student. Interviewees agreed that one of the main reasons for the low cost for professional development was the district's philosophy of using its own teachers and administrators as presenters whenever possible, and only occasionally relying upon external consultants. Fairhaven also consistently applied for and was awarded grants through the state or federal agencies with professional development components.

Despite spending less money than the statewide average on professional development, teachers told the review team that the district has provided ample professional development opportunities for them to improve their pedagogy. In focus groups at both the elementary and middle schools,

teachers stated that they were satisfied with the professional development opportunities made available to them and that these programs helped them to improve their instruction.

During the last two school years before the review, due to contractual issues, the district decreased the regularly scheduled release days from eight days to four days. On these days, four hours were devoted to professional development. The review team was informed, however, that this issue had been resolved by the signing of the new 2011-2013 teachers' bargaining agreement. A provision in the bargaining agreement substantially increases the time devoted to professional development for all staff and as a result, two full professional development days were to be added to the teacher work year starting with the 2011-2012 school year.

In addition to these districtwide days, teachers are contractually required to participate in a one-and-a-half hour session per month in their own schools. In interviews, principals stated that, although teachers appeared to be satisfied with the professional development program, two specific areas had not been given sufficient emphasis: in-depth data analysis and effective teaching of mathematics, particularly at the elementary level.

The professional development opportunities for the district's teachers and paraprofessionals included both district and school-based initiatives. Recently, the district offered professional development for all elementary teachers on response to intervention (RTI) and increasing the use of technology in the classroom. Middle school teachers participated in training on differentiating instruction and creating a literacy plan for their school. The high school principal told the review team that the high school staff had devoted almost all of its professional development time during the last two years to a comprehensive self-study in preparation for the NEASC accreditation visit scheduled for the fall of 2011 and there had therefore been fewer trainings related to district initiatives.

Other professional development topics during the last two years included: "using the Lexia reading program," "teaching handwriting through the Telian Lively Letters," "efficacy and rigor," "data-driven instruction," "understanding autism," and "revising grade-level benchmarks." Recently, the district contracted with an external consultant who has begun offering a series of Saturday sessions on improving pedagogical practices entitled, "Instruction for All Students."

The quality and breadth of the professional development program have provided teachers with many opportunities to expand their skills in meeting the needs of all learners; however, the review team concurs with the principals who indicated that there are areas where teachers could receive additional training, particularly as the district increases its use of data to improve teaching and learning.

The district has enabled the EFES principal to create a strong and cohesive student support system. At the time of the review there were no comparable support systems at the middle and high school levels.

The district demonstrated its support of EFES when it agreed to institute a guidance counselor position upon the opening of the school in 2007. According to all of those interviewed at EFES

this position has been critical to narrowing the achievement gap between low-income and non-low-income students at EFES.⁵

In addition, the district provided the school adequate staff, including paraprofessionals, special educators, Title I teachers and health care professionals to support and sustain the inclusion model and create a climate of wellness. The district also permits flexible use of support staff within and among the schools. According to the EFES principal, teachers and other staff are deployed according to the needs of the students and transfers of support staff have taken place. In addition, as discussed in Key Question 2's Leadership and Governance section above, the development of the budget from a needs perspective supports the principal in her efforts to obtain requisite staff and resources.

All interviewees stated that the position of EFES school counselor increased the availability of appropriate academic, emotional and social support for all EFES students and was one of the major factors contributing to narrowing the achievement gap between low-income and non-low-income students. There is no comparable role at the middle and high school levels and despite focused professional development the elementary level inclusion model has not taken root at the middle and high school levels.

According to interviews with administrators and support staff, while the middle and high school counselor to student ratios were equivalent to or more advantageous than the ratio at EFES, the middle and high school counselors have other responsibilities such as scheduling, creating class lists and supporting the transition from grade 5 to grade 6 in addition to providing the kind of emotional and social support that is one of the major strengths of the work of the support team at EFES. In interviews, the middle and high school support staff told the review team that there were fewer opportunities to serve in the capacity of social worker, and to act proactively to ensure that staff and parents help all students achieve their full potential.

According to interviewees, the middle school has instituted a number of after-school clubs and service learning opportunities to try to appeal to a wider range of students. Disciplinary referrals have steadily decreased in the last few years under a new assistant principal in charge of discipline. These structures, however, are not comparable to the proactive planning before, during, and after the school day at EFES in order to ensure that students' needs are identified and addressed.

District support has enabled EFES to have success in its efforts to meet the academic needs of all students, including students from low-income families. The programs, practices, and strategies that have made EFES successful are not consistently implemented in the other district elementary schools and not prevalent at the middle and high school levels. While the district supports the EFES principal and the school's team in narrowing the achievement gap between

⁵ In 2010, according to ESE data, the CPI gap between low-income and non-low-income students at EFES was no more than -5.0 CPI points in any grade for any subject, with the exception of the CPI gap for grade 3 in ELA, which was -9.6 points. In ELA at grade 5, the low-income subgroup's CPI surpassed that of the non-low-income students by +1.7 points (87.0 compared to 85.3). CPI gaps for the middle and high school grades were for the most part larger.

low-income and non-low-income students, the middle and high schools do not have the same support systems and structures.

The superintendent has personal credibility and a strong relationship with the community, and the general perception is that resources have been appropriately distributed, even with cutbacks in fiscal year 2010. However, fiscal information and planning systems are limited, affecting capacity for sound management.

The budget planning begins in November and the process continues until final approval by the school committee before the annual Town Meeting in May. At the representative Town Meeting, the executive secretary of the town presents the town budget and the superintendent presents the proposed district budget, which constitutes 50 percent of the town budget. The town has an elected town representative form of government, and the superintendent is a town representative.

Following a televised presentation to the school committee and a public hearing, the superintendent makes presentations to the selectmen, finance committee, precinct meetings, PTO boards, the town's economic study committee and other interested groups. All budget information is also made available on the district website and during school committee meetings.

According to the superintendent, the major focus of budget development in the past two years has been instruction. A manifestation of this appears to have been that when FY2010 funding levels required cutbacks of 20 school staff, they were made almost entirely in guidance, school adjustment counseling, and administration. In his report for FY2010, the superintendent described the impact of the cuts: "[the] adjustment counselor services over 400 students in the East Fairhaven Elementary School. There were no counseling services delivered by the district for over 400 students at the Wood and Rogers Elementary schools. As a result of the fiscal year 2010 reductions in services, two counselor positions and one director of guidance position were eliminated at the secondary level. There were additional cost savings by the elimination and/or restructuring of the academic coordinators (grades 6 through 12), district wide coordinator/director position and the elimination of the guidance department." This put a strain on providing an effective curriculum and instructional program for the district. Two counselors were reinstated with the approval of an \$113,000 budget increase at Town Meeting. However, the district's organization chart shows administrators performing multiple tasks; for example, the superintendent also serves as director of curriculum and director of human resources. The FY2011 budget was developed as a level service budget.

In interviews, the principals stated that their budgets were adequate to meet the needs of the students in improving student achievement. The district ensures that the principals make effective and strategic use of district and school resources and have sufficient budget authority to do so. Principals have access to their school budget with the use of the computerized accounting system, and may adjust school budgets with the approval of the business manager. In spite of the cutbacks, EFES parents said in interviews that they were very pleased with the operation of the school, except for needing a librarian, a position currently staffed by volunteers.

Several aspects of fiscal management were not up to standard. According to interviews with school committee members and a review of school committee meeting minutes, the school

committee does not receive periodic financial statements though it does receive an annual financial report on expenditures. The school committee does not approve state and federal grants. The district does not have a long-range financial plan based on anticipated revenue to the town. According to the business manager, the school system does not maintain an inventory of its assets.

The budget uses state code classifications, in alignment with the End of Year report to ESE, but does not include detailed line item information. Only a handful of state code totals are broken down at all. For instance, a single figure is given for school leadership, a category including school office staff, without detailing salaries for principals, assistant principals, and secretaries, or breaking the figure down by school (although the numbers of each type of personnel at each school are given). Interviews with several town or school district personnel indicated that the absence of this detailed information was a source of friction between town and district, and that there were difficulties in the communications between the two.

The town and the school system have different accounting systems. The town uses the MUNIS system while the school district uses Unifund. Payroll data for the school system is entered in the town's Harper Payroll System by the town payroll clerk.

There is no written agreement between the town and district for calculating municipal expenditures for the district. The executive secretary of the town submits data on municipal expenditures to the district business manager to include in the district's End of Year Report to ESE. When asked, both town officials and school leaders said that they did not perceive the need for a written agreement.

The town and school district do not have a five- year capital plan, but at the time of the review were considering a renovation and addition to the Rogers School or a new building at the site of the Wood School to replace both the Rogers and Wood schools.

The school system has a strong leader in its superintendent who is involved in many town activities and serves as a Town Meeting representative. He has a positive relationship with staff, union representatives, and the community overall, and school committee members told the review team that they were satisfied with the superintendent's leadership in the budget process. But the absence of detailed information in the district's budgets has led to some difficulties in relations with the town, works at cross purposes with the presentation of budget information to various groups and by various means, and prevents better understanding of expenses and allocation of funds. In addition, without review and discussion of periodic financial reports, the school committee is not performing one of its primary responsibilities, oversight of the budget.

Recommendations

Note on the delay of this report and the currency of these recommendations:

The finalization of this report has been delayed long past the time the Department recognizes would have been desirable. As a result, the priorities identified by the review team at the time of its site visit and embodied in the recommendations that follow may no longer be current, and the district may have identified new priorities in line with its current needs.

The Fairhaven district should consider replacing the current design, which has principals and others sharing responsibility for articulating and coordinating the curriculum, instruction, and assessment, with a centralized model of oversight.

Coordination and management of curriculum and instruction in the district is shared by two full-time principals supported by a number of supervisors, coaches, and subject leaders. There is no structure for coordinating assessment in the district.

A cohesive well-articulated curriculum requires a central district perspective. Only a district perspective can ensure that the curriculum is coordinated across the grade levels within content areas, and that content is articulated from kindergarten through grade 12. Because Fairhaven does not have centralized coordination of the curriculum, there are recognizable gaps, according to teachers, especially at the transition points in the system. Also of concern to the review team is the division of responsibility between two principals for core curriculum oversight at the middle school.

Instruction and assessment also require central coordination and articulation. Without oversight instructional and assessment practices may be inconsistent across the system. The goal of high achievement for all students is difficult to attain. In the absence of central oversight progress toward the goals may be limited to inconsistent school-based initiatives.

In a district that successfully operates using a team management approach, an absence of central oversight of curriculum, instruction and assessment is striking. While principals play an important role in their schools in these areas, it is unreasonable to expect them to also fulfill district level responsibilities. Instead, principals should have district level support for implementing curriculum and instructional and assessment practices. While the review team recognized the individual commitment and efforts of teachers, principals, and school leaders, it strongly recommends that the district adopt an administrative model that will provide more efficient and effective central oversight in the areas of curriculum, instruction, and assessment, leading to continued and improving achievement for all Fairhaven students.

The elementary schools are encouraged to continue their efforts to collect, analyze, and use academic and demographic data to inform curriculum and instruction and improve student achievement.

The district's three elementary schools in particular have made progress in developing an effective student assessment system. In the absence of formal districtwide support structures, the

elementary principals have accomplished much. Their combined efforts to create comprehensive and balanced student assessment programs, policies, and practices have been measurably effective and highly promising. The review team recognizes the progress they have made and encourages them to continue to develop increasingly efficient and comprehensive systems and procedures for the ongoing collection, analysis, and dissemination of assessment and other pertinent data to enhance learning opportunities and outcomes for all students.

The team strongly recommends that the district create a formal, unified kindergarten through grade 12 data system that will provide the leadership, support, and resources necessary to expand the promising assessment policies and practices already found in the district to all of Fairhaven schools.

Although the district's 2010-2011 Plan of Action contains general language calling for more and better use of assessment data to improve student achievement, it created no formal districtwide mechanism, coordinated system, designated leadership or targeted resources to support this goal. Instead it was essentially left to the individual schools and school leaders to determine how best to develop the strategies and provide the resources needed for implementation. In numerous interviews with the review team, principals and staff members throughout the district made it clear that as a consequence, student assessment policies and practices were largely building-based, fragmented, and dissimilar. There existed little programmatic coordination or consistency across the elementary, middle, and high school levels.

Further, all principals indicated that there was an absence of adequate and efficient systems by which to collect, compile, and readily access or disseminate assessment data, as well as inadequate professional development for teachers in data analysis methodologies.

The review team recommends that the district take concrete steps to create a comprehensive, centrally led, adequately resourced, and fully-aligned kindergarten through grade 12 assessment system. This administrative vehicle should have the capacity to develop, implement, and oversee specific and coordinated assessment policies, programs, and practices as well as the proper authority to ensure consistency across the district. Through it, the district should design clear and uniform expectations and responsibilities for the collection, consistent review, and dissemination of data, and be responsible for identifying appropriate professional development needs for staff.

A formal, districtwide, student assessment system through which integrated, carefully coordinated and aligned assessment programs, policies, and practices are established and monitored in kindergarten through grade 12 will result in benefits for all of Fairhaven's schools. The continuous collection and careful, uniform analysis of a wide range of student achievement and other relevant data will lead to enhanced classroom instruction, improved academic programs and services, and more reliable data for decision-making and goal development.

The district should explore ways that the model of providing academic, social and emotional support to students at EFES could be expanded to its other schools.

According to interviews with administrators and support staff, while the middle and high school counselor to student ratios are equivalent to or more advantageous than the ratio at EFES, the

middle and high school counselors have many other responsibilities such as scheduling, creating class lists and supporting the transition from grade 5 to grade 6 in addition to providing the kind of emotional and social support that is one of the major strengths of the work of the support team at EFES. In interviews, the middle and high school support staff told the review team that there were fewer opportunities to serve in the capacity of social worker, to act proactively, and to make sure that staff and parents helped all students achieve their full potential.

The review team also found that the inclusive classroom model at EFES had not taken root at the middle and high schools and that academic support was not as available or accessible to middle and high school students within their regular education classrooms.

Student achievement data indicates that in 2010 EFES had made great progress in narrowing the achievement gap between low-income and all students in both ELA and mathematics. (See Tables C3 and C4 in Appendix C.) According to ESE data, however, low-income students had not made comparable progress at the middle and high schools.

The review team recommends that Fairhaven review its middle and high school student support programs and consider adopting a version of the comprehensive, proactive support model established at EFES appropriate for middle and high school students. Improving those support systems will help to narrow the achievement gap for low-income students and raise student performance for all students.

The school committee should develop a program for due diligence in monitoring the school district's finances, the district should develop a more detailed budget format, and town and school officials should conduct a review of fiscal operations for improved efficiency.

The school committee's receipt of only an annual school financial report, rather than review and discussion of periodic reports, does not provide for the necessary oversight of the financial condition of the school district during the school year. The district's responsibility of exercising due diligence requires that the school committee receive timely financial reports that reflect the financial condition of the school district. In addition, the district should develop a more detailed budget format, and school and town officials should develop regular channels of communication to exchange financial information. The district can strengthen its budgetary process, which already has many positive aspects, and extend the positive relationship that currently exists among the members of the school system.

With the uncertainty of federal, state and local funds, town and school officials should review fiscal operations to improve efficiency of operations that could result in cost savings. School and town officials should prepare a five-year financial strategic plan that projects future revenue and expenditures, and also a five-year capital plan. The process should include community leaders, union leaders and other interested parties. Meetings should be held on a regular basis and televised for the public. The plan should include information on projected changes in enrollment and address possible consolidation of elementary schools. The town and district should consider partnership, collaborative, and regional approaches that might address needs in more cost-effective ways. Town and school officials should review the possible benefits of merging maintenance of buildings and grounds and snow removal. Combining functions of human

resources and technology systems should be explored to determine if it would result in efficiency and cost savings. The practicality of consolidating the two different town and school accounting systems should be reviewed. At a minimum, payroll processing by the district could be improved by having the school system enter the payroll data electronically into the town's payroll system.

Further steps the district can take include developing and maintaining an inventory of all school assets and developing a formal computerized preventive maintenance program to prolong the use of the school buildings and other capital assets.

Appendix A: Review Team Members

The review of the Fairhaven Public Schools was conducted from March 14-17, 2011, by the following team of educators, independent consultants to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Mag Giffune, Leadership and Governance

Christine Brandt, Curriculum and Instruction

Frank Sambuceti, Assessment

Bill Wassel, Human Resources and Professional Development

Sara Freedman, Student Support

Strat Dukakis, Financial and Asset Management

Appendix B: Review Activities and Site Visit Schedule

Review Activities

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

- The review team conducted interviews with the following Fairhaven financial personnel: executive secretary of the board of selectman, finance committee chairman.
- The review team conducted interviews with the following members of the Fairhaven School Committee: committee chair, five members.
- The review team conducted interviews with the following representatives of the Fairhaven: president, building representative.
- The review team conducted interviews and focus groups with the following representatives from the Fairhaven Public Schools central office administration: business manager, special needs chairperson, district intervention coordinator, district data specialist, and assistant to the superintendent.
- The review team visited the following school(s) in the Fairhaven Public Schools: Fairhaven High School (grades 9-12), Hastings Middle School (grades 6-8), East Fairhaven Elementary School (pre-kindergarten through grade 5), Rogers Elementary School (kindergarten through grade 5), and Wood Elementary School (kindergarten through grade 5).
 - During Fairhaven school visits, the review team conducted interviews with principals, support staff and focus groups with teachers and students.
 - During Fairhaven school visits, the review team also conducted 38 classroom visits for different grade levels and subjects.
- The review team reviewed the following documents provided by ESE:
 - District profile data
 - District Analysis and Review Tool (DART)
 - Data from the Education Data Warehouse (EDW)
 - Latest Coordinated Program Review (CPR) Report
 - Any District or School Accountability Report produced by Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA) or ESE in the past three years
 - Teacher's bargaining agreement, including the teacher evaluation tool
 - Reports on licensure and highly qualified status
 - Long-term enrollment trends
 - End-of-year financial report for the district for 2010

- List of the district's federal and state grants
- Municipal profile
- The review team reviewed the following documents at the district and school levels (provided by the district or schools):
 - Teaching and Learning System and Plan
 - Literacy Action Plan
 - School Improvement Plans
 - School committee policy manual
 - School committee minutes for the past year
 - Most recent budget proposal with accompanying narrative or presentation; and most recent approved budget
 - K-12 ELA, mathematics, and science curriculum documents
 - High school program of studies
 - Copies of data analyses/reports used in schools
 - Descriptions of student support programs
 - Program evaluations
 - Student and Family Handbooks
 - Faculty Handbook
 - Professional Development Plan and current program/schedule/courses
 - Teacher certification and qualification information
 - Teacher planning time schedules
 - Evaluation tools for central office administrators and principals
 - Classroom observation tools not used in the teacher evaluation process
 - Job descriptions for central office and school administrators
 - Teacher attendance data
 - All administrator evaluations and certifications
 - Randomly selected teacher personnel files
- The review team reviewed the following documents at the East Fairhaven Elementary School visited because it was identified as a “gap-closer” for low-income students:
 - School Improvement Plan
 - Calendar of formative and summative assessments for the school

- Copies of data analyses/reports used in the school
- Descriptions of student support programs at the school
- Student and Family Handbooks for the school
- Teacher planning time/meeting schedules at the school
- Classroom observation tools/learning walk tools used at the school

Site Visit Schedule

The following is the schedule for the onsite portion of the Differentiated Needs (Low-Income) Review of the Fairhaven Public Schools, conducted from March 14-17, 2011.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
March 14 Orientation with district leaders and principals; interviews with district staff and principals; review of documents.	March 15 Interviews with district staff and principals; review of personnel files; teacher focus groups; focus group with parents; interview with teachers' association.	March 16 Interviews with town or city personnel; school visits; interviews with school leaders; classroom observations; teacher team meetings; focus group with students; school committee interviews.	March 17 School visits); interviews with school leaders; classroom observations; teacher team meetings; follow-up interviews; team meeting; emerging themes meeting with district leaders and principal.

Appendix C: Student Achievement Data 2008-2010

**Table C1: 2008-2010 Fairhaven Public Schools Proficiency Rates,
with Median Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs), compared to State:
by Grade
ELA**

	2008		2009		2010	
Grade	Percent Proficient or Advanced	<i>Median SGP</i>	Percent Proficient or Advanced	<i>Median SGP</i>	Percent Proficient or Advanced	<i>Median SGP</i>
Grade 3—District	55	NA*	71	NA*	78	NA*
Grade 3—State	56	NA*	57	NA*	63	NA*
Grade 4—District	57	53	70	61	69	57
Grade 4—State	49	48	53	50	54	50
Grade 5—District	61	38	61	34	73	46
Grade 5—State	61	51	63	50	63	50
Grade 6—District	58	29	64	38	68	33.5
Grade 6—State	67	50	66	50	69	50
Grade 7— District	64	34	57	30	67	35
Grade 7— State	69	50	70	50	72	50
Grade 8— District	72	40	75	38	65	25.5
Grade 8— State	75	49	78	50	78	50
Grade 10— District	66	NA*	78	54	77	36
Grade 10— State	74	NA*	81	50	78	50
All Grades— District	61	39	68	41	71	39
All Grades—State	64	50	67	50	68	50

Note: The number of students included in the calculation of proficiency rate differs from the number of students included in the calculation of median SGP.

*NA: Grade 3 students do not have SGPs because they are taking MCAS tests for the first time. Median SGPs for grade 10 were not calculated until 2009.

Source: School/District Profiles on ESE website

**Table C2: 2008-2010 Fairhaven Public Schools Proficiency Rates,
with Median Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs), compared to State:
by Grade
Mathematics**

	2008		2009		2010	
Grade	Percent Proficient or Advanced	<i>Median SGP</i>	Percent Proficient or Advanced	<i>Median SGP</i>	Percent Proficient or Advanced	<i>Median SGP</i>
Grade 3—District	70	NA*	80	NA*	85	NA*
Grade 3—State	61	NA*	60	NA*	65	NA*
Grade 4—District	51	44	49	37	57	44
Grade 4—State	49	49	48	50	48	49
Grade 5—District	45	38	46	34.5	43	34
Grade 5—State	52	51	54	50	55	50
Grade 6—District	47	38	48	33	51	41
Grade 6—State	56	50	57	50	59	50
Grade 7— District	49	49	45	56	43	46
Grade 7— State	47	50	49	50	53	50
Grade 8— District	41	28	49	43	38	35
Grade 8— State	49	51	48	50	51	51
Grade 10— District	69	NA*	80	67	78	58
Grade 10— State	72	NA*	75	50	75	50
All Grades— District	53	40	56	44	55	43
All Grades—State	55	50	55	50	59	50

Note: The number of students included in the calculation of proficiency rate differs from the number of students included in the calculation of median SGP.

*NA: Grade 3 students do not have SGPs because they are taking MCAS tests for the first time. Median SGPs for grade 10 were not calculated until 2009.

Source: School/District Profiles on ESE website

**Table C3: Achievement Trends for Low-Income Students in
East Fairhaven Elementary School, Fairhaven Public Schools, and State,
Compared to All Students
ELA**

	2008			2009			2010		
	Percent Proficient or Advanced	CPI	<i>Median SGP</i>	Percent Proficient or Advanced	CPI	<i>Median SGP</i>	Percent Proficient or Advanced	CPI	<i>Median SGP</i>
State Low-Income Students	41	73.2	45.0	45	75.5	45.0	47	76.5	46.0
State All Students	64	85.2	50.0	67	86.5	50.0	68	86.9	50.0
District Low-Income Students	46	76.1	30.0	51	78.9	33.5	58	82.8	38.0
District All Students	61	84.6	39.0	68	86.8	41.0	71	88.7	39.0
East Fairhaven Low-Income Students	40	75.4	27.0	43	75.7	31.0	64	86.6	60.0
East Fairhaven All Students	51	81.5	28.0	60	84.0	37.5	69	89.2	50.0

Source: School/District Profiles on ESE website

**Table C4: Achievement Trends for Low-Income Students in
East Fairhaven Elementary School, Fairhaven Public Schools, and State,
Compared to All Students
Mathematics**

	2008			2009			2010		
	Percent Proficient or Advanced	CPI	<i>Median SGP</i>	Percent Proficient or Advanced	CPI	<i>Median SGP</i>	Percent Proficient or Advanced	CPI	<i>Median SGP</i>
State Low-Income Students	33	63.1	45.0	33	64.5	44.0	37	67.1	47.0
State All Students	55	77.7	50.0	55	78.5	50.0	59	79.9	50.0
District Low-Income Students	36	67.9	32.5	43	70.9	44.0	43	72.5	42.0
District All Students	53	77.6	40.0	56	79.1	44.0	55	79.5	43.0
East Fairhaven Low-Income Students	30	67.1	27.0	35	69.1	23.0	45	78.0	33.0
East Fairhaven All Students	43	75.0	27.0	50	77.6	32.0	53	81.1	31.0

Source: School/District Profiles on ESE website

**Table C5: Comparison by Grade of 2010 Proficiency Rates*
for Low-Income Students in East Fairhaven Elementary School,
Fairhaven Public Schools, and State
ELA**

Grade	East Fairhaven	Fairhaven	State
3	65 (14)	66 (33)	43
4	62 (21)	54 (41)	31
5	65 (23)	67 (45)	40
<p>Note: Numbers of low-income students (n) tested are given in parentheses for school and district.</p> <p>*Proficiency rates are the percentages of students scoring Proficient or Advanced on MCAS.</p> <p>Source: School/District Profiles on ESE website</p>			

**Table C6: Comparison by Grade of 2010 Proficiency Rates*
for Low-Income Students in East Fairhaven Elementary School,
Fairhaven Public Schools, and State
Mathematics**

Grade	East Fairhaven	Fairhaven	State
3	72 (14)	73 (34)	45
4	48 (21)	46 (41)	28
5	26 (23)	35 (45)	33
<p>Note: Numbers of low-income students (n) tested are given in parentheses for school and district.</p> <p>*Proficiency rates are the percentages of students scoring Proficient or Advanced on MCAS.</p> <p>Source: School/District Profiles on ESE website</p>			

Appendix D: Finding and Recommendation Statements

Finding Statements:

Key Question 1: To what extent are the conditions for school effectiveness in place at the school where the performance of low-income students has substantially improved?

1. The school leadership of East Fairhaven Elementary School (EFES) has successfully developed a whole-school strategy with a constellation of interventions to raise student achievement.
2. The school has structures to ensure consistent implementation, alignment, and effective delivery of the ELA and mathematics curricula. The science and social studies curricula were undocumented. The curricula of these two domains were developed by individual teachers using the state curriculum frameworks and embedded in the literacy program.
3. EFES teachers collaborate to plan and deliver effective instruction and are skillful in differentiating instruction to meet the needs of all learners with support staff and co-teachers.
4. The EFES schedule is designed to provide adequate learning time in ELA and mathematics.
5. The support staff and classroom teachers at EFES have implemented a well-coordinated and thoughtfully executed academic and emotional support system that attends to and meets the needs of students.
6. The supervision and evaluation process used by the principal at the EFES is effective in promoting professional growth of all of the teachers in the school to better meet the learning needs of all students.

Key Question 2: How do the district's systems for support and intervention affect the school where the performance of low-income students has substantially improved?

1. The district's systems for support and intervention meet the needs of students from low-income families by providing the overarching philosophy and parameters for initiatives designed to raise student achievement throughout the district.

2. The district has implemented an ambitious teaching and learning system to “ensure the consistent use, alignment, and effective delivery of the district’s curricula.” However, in the first year of a three-year implementation plan the system did not yet provide cohesive, well-articulated, and coordinated district curricular management.
3. Mathematics proficiency rates for 2010 were substantially lower than state rates in grades 5 through 8, and 2010 science proficiency rates in grades 8 and 10 were also lower than state rates.
4. The district provided East Fairhaven Elementary School and the other district schools with a 2010-2011 Teaching and Learning Plan of Action which contained goals to improve pedagogy, but realization of the plan was jeopardized by the absence of central office staff to coordinate the implementation.
5. The district demonstrates growing awareness of the importance of using student assessment data to inform instructional and improve academic programs and services. It has undertaken initial steps, especially at the elementary level, to develop uniform processes for data collection, data analysis, and planning and implementing interventions in the schools.
6. The district supports newly hired teachers with a comprehensive induction program.
7. Opportunities for professional development are sufficient but could be expanded to build teacher skills in data analysis and mathematics instruction. The teachers’ bargaining agreement that had recently been negotiated at the time of the review restored professional development time for teachers.
8. The district has enabled the EFES principal to create a strong and cohesive student support system. At the time of the review there were no comparable support systems at the middle and high school levels.
9. The superintendent has personal credibility and a strong relationship with the community, and the general perception is that resources have been appropriately distributed, even with cutbacks in fiscal year 2010. However, fiscal information and planning systems are limited, affecting capacity for sound management.

Recommendation Statements:

1. The Fairhaven district should consider replacing the current design, which has principals and others sharing responsibility for articulating and coordinating the curriculum, instruction, and assessment, with a centralized model of oversight.
2. The elementary schools are encouraged to continue their efforts to collect, analyze, and use academic and demographic data to inform curriculum and instruction and improve student achievement.
3. The team strongly recommends that the district create a formal, unified kindergarten through grade 12 data system that will provide the leadership, support, and resources necessary to expand the promising assessment policies and practices already found in the district to all of Fairhaven schools.
4. The district should explore ways that the model of providing academic, social and emotional support to students at EFES could be expanded to its other schools.
5. The school committee should develop a program for due diligence in monitoring the school district's finances, the district should develop a more detailed budget format, and town and school officials should conduct a review of fiscal operations for improved efficiency.