

# Comprehensive District Review Report



## Fall River Public Schools

Review conducted October 17-20, 2016

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Center for District and School Accountability

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and  
Secondary Education

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### Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148-4906

Phone 781-338-3000 TTY: N.E.T. Replay 800-439-2370

[www.doe.mass.edu](http://www.doe.mass.edu)



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

Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.  
Commissioner

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

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Fall River is experiencing a high degree of change at several organizational levels. In the two top district leadership roles, there is a new mayor, who chairs the school committee, and a new superintendent. At the school level, there has been a substantial turnover in principals; in 2016-2017, 6 of the 16 (37 percent) principals are new to the district. In response to a budget reduction in 2015-2016, the district cut 46 positions, including two key central office staff (professional development and instructional services). In 2016-2017, of the 707 teachers, 120 (17 percent) are new to the district. High absence of students and concern about teachers' absence further challenge the implementation of the district's improvement initiatives. Fall River has been a Level 4 district for over five years because in each of the last five years, one or more schools were classified as Level 4. Over the years, three schools moved out of Level 4 but two other schools moved into Level 4. Despite these conditions, district staff appear to be responsible educators, proud of their city, students, colleagues, and accomplishments.

### Strengths

The newly appointed superintendent and the school committee have begun to nurture and promote a culture of collaboration and shared responsibility for improving student achievement evidenced by early school committee meetings and goals for 2016-2017 developed during their August 2016 retreat. District assets that the new superintendent and the school committee can build on include a well-established process for review and revision of curriculum, multidisciplinary teams at every school that collect and analyze data, and promising practices at the elementary and middle schools to identify and provide support for struggling students. The district provides professional development and ongoing adult learning opportunities for its educators and there are developing district initiatives to improve student attendance. Finally, the team found that the district's budget development process is participatory and that the budget document is clear, comprehensive, and available on the district's website.

### Challenges and Areas for Growth

The new superintendent and school committee have several obstacles to overcome to create a successful and highly effective school district. In recent years, the city has not met net school spending requirements and has sometimes provided late supplementary funds. The district has experienced high turnover among principals and teachers. The district is also challenged by high student absence and teacher absence.

The district has an Accelerated Improvement Plan ("Focused Planning for Accelerated Student Learning"), 2016-2017 School Committee/Superintendent Goals, School Improvement Plans, and the District Technology Plan; it does not have a comprehensive, actionable strategic plan to guide the district's improvement initiatives although the new Superintendent acknowledged that such a plan is being developed. Additionally, district policies are dated, some going back to 1995 and there is no written schedule to revise and update school committee policies.

The district recently eliminated or reallocated two key district instructional positions (professional development and instructional services) adding to the responsibilities of administrators and principals. The district does not have a clearly articulated instructional model or a process for identifying best practices in schools.

In observed classrooms review team members observed a disparity among levels on several characteristics of effective instruction, including lessons designed to actively engage students, opportunities for critical thinking, student-centered learning, and most markedly, the differentiation of instruction and use of appropriate resources to meet the needs of all learners. Providing differentiated support to students, a characteristic of high-quality instruction, is a challenge for the district at the elementary- and high-school levels.

The district has not achieved consistency in implementing its educator evaluator system. The evaluations of principals and district administrators, including the superintendent, have not been completed regularly and in the case of school leaders have not been done. Also, district and school leaders have not taken any action to implement the more recent components of the state Educator Evaluation Framework, specifically student and staff feedback and common assessments of student learning to inform judgments about educator impact. Although the district provides opportunities for professional development and adult learning they are site-based and uncoordinated. The district does not have sufficiently strong centralized leadership to create a professional development model that focuses on specific district priorities.

The district has common and consistently used process to identify and provide support for students, but targeted support for struggling students is uneven and in some places informal. Attendance has been a critical issue in the district in recent years. Despite efforts to improve student attendance, 29.2 percent of students in Fall River were chronically absent in 2015-2016.

The city has not met net school spending requirements in the last three years and late appropriations have created difficulties in staffing schools and in providing educational programs. The district does not have a long-range capital plan that prioritizes building needs across all schools or a documented schedule for preventive maintenance.

## **Recommendations**

District leaders should continue their recent work together to maintain a stable leadership team, to plan with the city to meet net school spending obligations, and to replace delayed supplementary funding with a budgeting process that is more directly linked with district and school improvement planning. The city should fund the district at the required net school spending level early in the budget approval season so that schools can do their hiring for the upcoming school year in a timely way to obtain the best educators.

The team recommends that the district develop a strategic plan as the one document guiding the district's work and the school committee should develop and document procedures for reviewing and updating policies.

The district should identify an instructional model that defines best practice and then create a plan to communicate and share the model and support educators in its implementation. Similarly, the district should standardize the use of data and create a district data team to make best practices around the use of data common.

The team recommends that the district ensure that administrators receive evaluations that are timely and of high quality and develop systems for the collection and appropriate use of multiple sources of evidence to inform educators' evaluations. District leaders should ensure that all students are provided with sufficient opportunity for targeted support and those opportunities should be documented, communicated, and shared across the district. As the district continues to address staff and student attendance, the team recommends that the district review its current efforts, determine what further studies are needed to better understand causes for absence, and take new steps to improve attendance in the district.

The district should develop a capital plan for school renovations and repairs and prioritize and document routine maintenance for school buildings.

# Fall River Public Schools Comprehensive District Review

## Overview

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### **Purpose**

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

Districts reviewed in the 2016-2017 school year include districts classified into Level 2, Level 3, or Level 4 of ESE's framework for district accountability and assistance. Review reports may be used by ESE and the district to establish priority for assistance and make resource allocation decisions.

### **Methodology**

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

### **Site Visit**

The site visit to the Fall River Public Schools was conducted from October 17-20, 2016. The site visit included 29 hours of interviews and focus groups with approximately 117 stakeholders, including school committee members, district administrators, school staff, students, and teachers' association representatives. The review team conducted three focus groups with eight elementary-school teachers, five middle-school teachers, and zero high-school teachers.

A list of review team members, information about review activities, and the site visit schedule are in Appendix A, and Appendix B provides information about enrollment, student performance, and expenditures. The team observed classroom instructional practice in 170 classrooms in 16 schools. The team collected data using an instructional inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards-based teaching. This data is contained in Appendix C.

## District Profile

Fall River has a mayor-council form of government and the mayor is the chair of the school committee. The seven members of the school committee meet monthly.

The current superintendent has been in the position since July 1, 2016. The district leadership team includes the assistant superintendent/chief academic officer, the chief financial officer, the chief operating officer, the executive director of human resources, and the executive director of special education and student services. Central office positions have been decreasing in number over the past three years. The district has 16 principals leading 17 schools. There are 38 other school administrators, including vice principals, deans of teaching and learning, and directors of CVTE (Career Vocational Technical Education), fine arts, early childhood, English language learners, and physical education. In the 2015-2016 school year, there were 707.1 teachers in the district.

In the 2015-2016 school year, 10,123 students were enrolled in the district's 18 schools:

**Table 1: Fall River Public Schools  
Schools, Type, Grades Served, and Enrollment\*, 2015-2016**

School Name	School Type	Grades Served	Enrollment
North End Elementary School	ES	Pre-K-5	758
Letourneau Elementary School	ES	Pre-K-5	599
Spencer Borden Elementary School	ES	Pre-K-5	550
William S. Greene Elementary School	ES	Pre-K-5	754
Samuel Watson Elementary School	ES	K-5	291
Carlton M. Viveiros Elementary School	ES	K-5	676
Mary Fonseca Elementary School	ES	K-5	725
James Tansey Elementary School	ES	K-5	302
Henry Lord Community School	ESMS	Pre-K- 6	530
John J. Doran School	ESMS	Pre-K-8	557
Stone Day School	ESMS	1-8	35
Morton Middle School	MS	6-8	611
Matthew J. Kuss Middle School	MS	6-8	725
Talbot Innovation School	MS	6-8	573

School Name	School Type	Grades Served	Enrollment
Resiliency Middle School	MS	7-8	36
Resiliency Preparatory School	HS	9-12	160
Fall River Gateway to College @BCC	HS	9-12	30
B.M.C. Durfee High School	HS	9-12	2,211
<b>Totals</b>	<b>18 schools</b>	<b>Pre-K-12</b>	<b>10,123</b>
*As of October 1, 2015			

Between 2012 and 2016 overall student enrollment increased by 2.9 percent. Enrollment figures by race/ethnicity and high needs populations (i.e., students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, and English language learners (ELLs) and former ELLs) as compared with the state are provided in Tables B1a and B1b in Appendix B.

Total in-district per-pupil expenditures were lower than the median in-district per-pupil expenditures for 11 PK-12 districts of similar size (8,000-26,000 students) in fiscal year 2015: \$13,766 as compared with \$13,881 (see [District Analysis and Review Tool Detail: Staffing & Finance](#)). Actual net school spending has been below what is required by the Chapter 70 state education aid program, as shown in Table B6 in Appendix B.

## Student Performance

**Fall River is a Level 4 district because the Watson and Fonseca elementary schools were placed in Level 4 for being among the lowest achieving, least improving Level 3 schools.**

- Letourneau Elementary is a focus school because its students with disabilities, Hispanic/Latino students, and English language learners and former English language learners, are among the lowest performing 20 percent of subgroups.
- Talbot Middle is a focus school because its students with disabilities, Hispanic/Latino students, ELL and former ELL students, and high needs students are among the lowest performing 20 percent of subgroups.
- Morton Middle is a focus school because its students with disabilities are among the lowest performing 20 percent of subgroups.
- Durfee High is a focus school because its students with disabilities and high needs students are among the lowest performing 20 percent of subgroups and because it has persistently low graduation rates for students with disabilities and low assessment participation (less than 95 percent) for students with disabilities.



**Table 2: Fall River Public Schools  
District and School PPI, Percentile, and Level 2013–2016**

School	Group	Annual PPI				Cumulative PPI	School Percentile	Accountability Level
		2013	2014	2015	2016			
North End ES	All	75	105	120	40	81	69	2
	High Needs	75	90	110	35	73		
Viveiros ES	All	110	110	125	100	100	48	1
	High Needs	110	110	120	90	100		
Fonseca ES	All	70	85	65	45	62	5	4
	High Needs	70	85	85	40	66		
Letourneau ES	All	80	45	85	80	75	16	3
	High Needs	75	40	80	80	72		
Greene ES	All	90	55	55	50	57	27	2
	High Needs	75	55	55	55	57		
Spencer Borden ES	All	95	75	65	85	78	67	1
	High Needs	105	75	75	100	88		
Tansey ES	All	95	55	70	55	64	38	2
	High Needs	94	31	81	69	68		
Watson ES	All	35	80	65	85	73	11	4
	High Needs	30	75	75	85	75		
Henry Lord ESMS	All	--	--	--	75	--	--	--
	High Needs	--	--	--	75	--		
Doran ESMS	All	90	105	80	50	74	40	2
	High Needs	90	105	105	55	84		
Stone Day School ESMS	All	31	81	0	88	54	1	3
	High Needs	63	81	0	88	58		
Talbot MS	All	35	55	40	65	53	9	3
	High Needs	35	60	60	65	60		
Morton MS	All	40	80	75	40	59	18	3
	High Needs	35	90	90	40	65		
Kuss MS	All	70	80	50	50	58	46	2
	High Needs	70	70	70	45	60		
Resiliency MS	All	--	--	25	45	--	--	--
	High Needs	--	--	--	25	--		
Resiliency HS	All	--	50	--	--	--	--	--
	High Needs	--	--	--	--	--		
Gateway to College	All	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
	High Needs	--	--	--	--	--		
Durfee HS	All	75	43	79	36	54	9	3
	High Needs	61	39	50	39	45		
District	All	57	61	54	39	50	--	4
	High Needs	46	57	57	43	50		

**Between 2013 and 2016, in ELA the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced improved by 6 percentage points for all students, by 14 percentage points for ELL and former ELL students, and by 3 and 2 percentage points for high needs students and students with disabilities, respectively.**

**Table 3: Fall River Public Schools  
ELA Proficiency by Subgroup 2013–2016**

Group		2013	2014	2015	2016	4-Year Trend	Above/Below State 2014
All students	District	47%	50%	51%	53%	6	-19
	State	69%	69%	--	--	--	
High Needs	District	41%	44%	42%	44%	3	-6
	State	49%	50%	--	--	--	
Economically Disadvantaged	District	--	--	44%	47%	--	--
	State	--	--	--	--	--	
ELL and former ELL students	District	14%	19%	23%	28%	14	-17
	State	34%	36%	--	--	--	
Students with disabilities	District	13%	14%	14%	15%	2	-16
	State	29%	30%	--	--	--	

**Between 2013 and 2016, in math the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced improved by 5 percentage points for all students, by 9 percentage points for ELL and former ELL students, and by 3 percentage points for high needs students.**

**Table 4: Fall River Public Schools  
Math Proficiency by Subgroup 2013–2016**

Group		2013	2014	2015	2016	4-Year Trend	Above/Below State 2014
All students	District	38%	42%	44%	43%	5	-18
	State	61%	60%	--	--	--	
High Needs	District	32%	36%	36%	35%	3	-4
	State	40%	40%	--	--	--	
Economically Disadvantaged	District	--	--	38%	37%	--	--
	State	--	--	--	--	--	
ELL and former ELL students	District	14%	20%	25%	23%	9	-15
	State	35%	35%	--	--	--	
Students with disabilities	District	11%	10%	11%	11%	0	-13
	State	23%	23%	--	--	--	

Between 2013 and 2016, in science the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced improved by 2 percentage points for all students, by 8 percentage points for ELL and former ELL students, and by 3 percentage points for high needs students. In 2016 the district as a whole was 21 percentage points below the state rate and each subgroup that makes up the high needs population was below the state rate by 4 to 14 percentage points.

**Table 5: Fall River Public Schools  
Science Proficiency by Subgroup 2013–2016**

Group		2013	2014	2015	2016	4-Year Trend	Above/Below State 2016
All students	District	31%	37%	36%	33%	2	-21
	State	53%	55%	54%	54%	1	
High Needs	District	23%	30%	27%	26%	3	-5
	State	31%	33%	31%	31%	0	
Economically Disadvantaged	District	--	--	28%	28%	--	-4
	State	--	--	34%	32%	--	
ELL and former ELL students	District	5%	9%	10%	13%	8	-6
	State	19%	18%	19%	19%	0	
Students with disabilities	District	7%	8%	10%	7%	0	-14
	State	21%	21%	22%	21%	0	

The district did not reach its 2016 Composite Performance Index (CPI) targets in ELA, math, and science for any group except for economically disadvantaged students in ELA.

**Table 6: Fall River Public Schools  
2016 CPI and Targets by Subgroup**

Group	ELA			Math			Science		
	2016 CPI	2016 Target	Rating	2016 CPI	2016 Target	Rating	2016 CPI	2016 Target	Rating
All students	78.0	86.2	Improved Below Target	69.5	80.6	No Change	67.7	79.2	No Change
High Needs	73.4	84.1	Improved Below Target	64.4	78.4	No Change	63.1	76.7	Improved Below Target
Economically Disadvantaged <sup>1</sup>	74.7	75.8	On Target	65.6	68.9	No Change	64.3	66.5	Improved Below Target
ELLs	61.2	75.1	Improved Below Target	53.6	71.5	No Change	49.5	68.4	Improved Below Target
Students with disabilities	56.2	73.8	No Change	47.6	67.6	No Change	51.1	69.8	Improved Below Target

<sup>1</sup> The economically disadvantaged subgroup does not have a CPI target and rating because 2015 is the first year that a CPI was calculated for the economically disadvantaged group; this CPI will serve as a baseline for future years' CPI targets.

**Students' growth in ELA and math was moderate compared to their academic peers statewide for all students, high needs students, economically disadvantaged students, English language learners, and students with disabilities.**

**Table 7: Fall River Public Schools  
2016 Median ELA and Math SGP by Subgroup**

Group	2016 Median ELA SGP			2016 Median Math SGP		
	District	CPI Rating	Growth Level	District	CPI Rating	Growth Level
All students	51.0	On Target	Moderate	48.0	Below Target	Moderate
High Needs	50.0	Below Target	Moderate	48.0	Below Target	Moderate
Econ. Disad.	50.0	Below Target	Moderate	48.0	Below Target	Moderate
ELLs	54.0	On Target	Moderate	50.0	Below Target	Moderate
SWD	43.0	Below Target	Moderate	43.0	Below Target	Moderate

**In 2016 the district's out-of-school suspension rate was more than twice the state rate for all students and students with disabilities, and above the state rate for high needs students, economically disadvantaged students, and English language learners. The in-school suspension rate was more than twice the state rate for all students, students with disabilities, and English language learners, and above the state rate for high needs students and economically disadvantaged students.**

**Table 8: Fall River Public Schools  
Out-of-School and In-School Suspension Rates by Subgroup 2013–2016**

Group	Type of Suspension	2013	2014	2015	2016	State (2016)
High Needs	ISS	6.9	6.3	0.0	4.7	2.9%
	OSS	16.2	15.4	11.4	7.5	4.9%
Economically disadvantaged*	ISS	6.9	6.4	0.0	4.7	3.2%
	OSS	16.5	15.6	11.3	7.5	5.6%
ELLs	ISS	4.2	3.0	0.0	4.1	1.9%
	OSS	13.3	10.6	7.8	5.5	4.0%
Students with disabilities	ISS	9.8	8.1	0.0	7.2	3.5%
	OSS	22.3	21.5	18.3	12.6	5.9%
All Students	ISS	6.2	5.7	0.0	4.0	1.9%
	OSS	14.4	13.8	9.6	6.6	2.9%

\*Low income students' suspension rates used for 2013 and 2014

Between 2012 and 2015 the district's four-year cohort graduation rate improved by 1.4 percentage points for all students; by 0.8 to 1.7 percentage points for high needs students, low income students, and students with disabilities; and by 17.3 percentage points for English language learners. The district did not reach the four-year cohort graduation target for all students or for any of the subgroups that make up the high needs population.<sup>2</sup>

**Table 9: Fall River Public Schools  
Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Subgroup 2012–2015**

Group	Number Included (2015)	Cohort Year Ending				Change 2012-2015		Change 2014-2015		State (2015)
		2012	2013	2014	2015	Percentage Points	Percent Change	Percentage Points	Percent Change	
High needs	552	64.3%	68.6%	64.2%	65.8%	1.5	2.3%	1.6	2.5%	78.5%
Low income	539	64.2%	69.5%	65.1%	65.9%	1.7	2.6%	0.8	1.2%	78.2%
ELLs	44	44.1%	68.0%	40.7%	61.4%	17.3	39.2%	20.7	46.9%	64.0%
SWD	170	35.7%	47.5%	36.6%	36.5%	0.8	2.2%	-0.1	-0.3%	69.9%
All students	662	69.0%	73.0%	68.6%	70.4%	1.4	2.0%	1.8	2.6%	87.3%

Between 2011 and 2014 the district's five-year cohort graduation rate improved by 4.1 percentage points for students with disabilities; did not improve for all students, high needs students, and low income students; and declined by 10.6 percentage points for English language learners. The district did not reach the five-year cohort graduation target for all students or for any of the subgroups that make up the high needs population.<sup>3</sup>

**Table 10: Fall River Public Schools  
Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Subgroup 2011–2014**

Group	Number Included (2014)	Cohort Year Ending				Change 2011-2014		Change 2013-2014		State (2014)
		2011	2012	2013	2014	Percentage Points	Percent Change	Percentage Points	Percent Change	
High needs	533	68.3%	68.8%	71.9%	67.9%	-0.4	-0.6%	-4.0	-5.9%	80.3%
Low income	518	69.2%	68.8%	72.9%	68.9%	-0.3	-0.4%	-4.0	-5.8%	79.6%
ELLs	27	51.3%	52.9%	68.0%	40.7%	-10.6	-20.7%	-27.3	-53.2%	69.8%
SWD	164	38.0%	40.0%	50.3%	42.1%	4.1	10.8%	-8.2	-21.6%	73.5%
All students	624	72.6%	72.8%	75.7%	71.8%	-0.8	-1.1%	-3.9	-5.4%	88.5%

<sup>2</sup> The four-year cohort graduation rate target is 80 percent for each group and refers to the 2015 graduation rate. Low-income students did not receive a 2016 accountability rating because of the change to the economically disadvantaged measure.

<sup>3</sup> The five-year cohort graduation rate target is 85 percent for each group and refers to the 2014 graduation rate. Low-income students did not receive a 2016 accountability rating because of the change to the economically disadvantaged measure.

In 2015 the district's drop-out rate for all students and students with disabilities was more than twice the state rate, and the drop-out rate for high needs students and economically disadvantaged students was higher than the state drop-out rate. The drop-out rate for English language learners was similar to the state drop-out rate.

**Table 11: Fall River Public Schools  
Drop-Out Rates by Subgroup 2012–2015**

	2012	2013	2014	2015	State (2015)
High Needs	5.0	5.9	5.7	6.3	3.4%
Econ. Disad. <sup>4</sup>	4.8	5.7	5.3	5.4	3.3%
ELLs	2.9	0	5.2	5.8	5.7%
SWD	8.1	9.4	6.9	8.1	3.5%
All students	4.6	5.1	5.3	5.5	1.9%

### Grade and School Results

Between 2013 and 2016, ELA proficiency rates for all students improved by 6 percentage points and improved in each tested grade except the 10<sup>th</sup> grade.

- ELA proficiency rates improved by 9 and 8 percentage points in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades, respectively, by 6 and 5 percentage points in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades, respectively, and by 4 and 3 percentage points in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades, respectively.
- In the 10<sup>th</sup> grade ELA proficiency was 80 percent in 2013 and 79 percent in 2016, 12 percentage points below the state rate of 91 percent.

**Table 12: Fall River Public Schools  
ELA Percent Proficient or Advanced by Grade 2013–2016**

Grade	Number	2013	2014	2015	2016	State	4-Year Trend	2-Year Trend
3	895	34%	39%	38%	39%	--	5%	1%
4	814	36%	37%	38%	45%	--	9%	7%
5	866	47%	48%	52%	50%	--	3%	-2%
6	751	42%	48%	49%	50%	--	8%	1%
7	764	51%	51%	50%	57%	--	6%	7%
8	757	54%	60%	58%	58%	--	4%	0%
10	561	80%	78%	83%	79%	91%	-1%	-4%
All	5,408	47%	50%	51%	53%	--	6%	2%

<sup>4</sup> Low income students' drop-out rates used for drop-out rates for 2012 2013, and 2014 economically disadvantaged.

ELA proficiency rates ranged from 15 to 64 percent in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, from 32 to 70 percent in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade, from 31 to 72 percent in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade, from 42 to 59 percent in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, from 41 to 73 percent in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, from 9 to 71 percent in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and from 68 to 82 percent in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade.

**Table 13: Fall River Public Schools  
ELA Percent Proficient or Advanced by School and Grade 2015-2016**

School	3	4	5	6	7	8	10	Total
North End ES	64%	67%	72%	--	--	--	--	68%
Viveiros ES	50%	44%	63%	--	--	--	--	52%
Fonseca ES	32%	32%	46%	--	--	--	--	37%
Letourneau ES	29%	52%	39%	--	--	--	--	39%
Greene ES	32%	35%	42%	--	--	--	--	37%
Spencer Borden ES	61%	56%	57%	--	--	--	--	58%
Tansey ES	39%	70%	59%	--	--	--	--	55%
Watson ES	24%	37%	43%	--	--	--	--	35%
Henry Lord ESMS	24%	37%	31%	48%	49%	--	--	39%
Doran ESMS	15%	38%	49%	49%	61%	71%	--	45%
Stone Day School ESMS	--	--	--	--	--	9%	--	3%
Talbot MS	--	--	--	42%	41%	52%	--	45%
Morton MS	--	--	--	50%	73%	60%	--	61%
Kuss MS	--	--	--	59%	66%	71%	--	65%
Resiliency MS	--	--	--	--	--	21%	--	18%
Resiliency HS	--	--	--	--	--	--	68%	68%
Gateway to College HS	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Durfee HS	--	--	--	--	--	--	82%	82%
District Total	39%	45%	50%	50%	57%	58%	79%	53%
State	--	--	--	--	--	--	91%	--

Between 2013 and 2016 ELA proficiency rates improved by 5 to 17 percentage points in 7 of 8 elementary schools with reportable trend data, by 10 percentage points at Doran, the one elementary-middle school with reportable data, and by 9 and 2 percentage points at Morton and Kuss middle schools, respectively. ELA proficiency improved by 11 percentage points at Resiliency High and did not improve at Durfee High.

- ELA proficiency rates for high needs students improved in 6 of 8 elementary schools, at Doran elementary-middle school, and at one of the three middle schools with reportable trend data. ELA proficiency rates for high need students improved by 10 percentage points at Resiliency High and did not improve at Durfee High.
- ELA proficiency rates for English language learners improved in 6 of 7 elementary schools with reportable trend data, at Doran elementary-middle school, at all three middle schools with reportable trend data, and at Durfee High.
- ELA proficiency rates for students with disabilities improved in 5 of 8 elementary schools, at Doran elementary-middle school, at Morton and Kuss middle schools, and at Durfee High.

**Table 14: Fall River Public Schools  
ELA Proficient or Advanced by School and Subgroup 2013-2016**

	2013	2014	2015	2016	3- or 4-Year Trend
North End ES	55%	60%	67%	68%	13%
High Needs	43%	51%	57%	57%	14%
Econ. Disad.	--	--	60%	61%	--
ELLs	16%	25%	54%	38%	22%
SWD	16%	23%	24%	16%	0%
Viveiros ES	38%	39%	51%	52%	14%
High Needs	37%	38%	45%	48%	11%
Econ. Disad.	--	--	48%	50%	--
ELLs	23%	30%	39%	45%	22%
SWD	10%	13%	12%	14%	4%
Fonseca ES	32%	36%	39%	37%	5%
High Needs	29%	34%	35%	33%	4%
Econ. Disad.	--	--	37%	33%	--
ELLs	18%	23%	26%	20%	2%
SWD	0%	2%	7%	11%	11%
Letourneau ES	32%	31%	32%	39%	7%
High Needs	25%	25%	28%	32%	7%
Econ. Disad.	--	--	30%	32%	--
ELLs	9%	14%	8%	18%	9%
SWD	3%	11%	6%	14%	11%
Greene ES	42%	40%	38%	37%	-5%
High Needs	37%	35%	32%	31%	-6%
Econ. Disad.	--	--	35%	35%	--
ELLs	11%	7%	12%	16%	5%
SWD	13%	10%	1%	7%	-6%
Spencer Borden ES	55%	56%	47%	58%	3%
High Needs	47%	50%	31%	45%	-2%
Econ. Disad.	--	--	33%	46%	--
ELLs	10%	--	18%	25%	15%
SWD	18%	22%	13%	25%	7%
Tansey ES	50%	52%	56%	55%	5%
High Needs	38%	36%	44%	43%	5%
Econ. Disad.	--	--	48%	48%	--
ELLs	--	--	--	--	--
SWD	18%	4%	24%	10%	-8%
Watson ES	18%	23%	28%	35%	17%
High Needs	15%	20%	23%	33%	18%
Econ. Disad.	--	--	24%	35%	--
ELLs	11%	8%	0%	9%	-2%
SWD	0%	0%	0%	5%	5%
Henry Lord ESMS	--	--	28%	39%	--
High Needs	--	--	25%	35%	--
Econ. Disad.	--	--	25%	38%	--
ELLs	--	--	11%	33%	--
SWD	--	--	12%	3%	--
Doran ESMS	35%	43%	46%	45%	10%
High Needs	32%	41%	42%	41%	9%
Econ. Disad.	--	--	43%	43%	--



ELLs	16%	33%	37%	36%	20%
SWD	7%	9%	21%	19%	12%
Stone Day School ESMS	--	--	--	3%	--
High Needs	--	--	--	3%	--
Econ. Disad.	--	--	--	4%	--
ELLs	--	--	--	--	--
SWD	--	--	--	3%	--
Talbot MS	46%	47%	43%	45%	-1%
High Needs	39%	43%	37%	39%	0%
Econ. Disad.	--	--	40%	41%	--
ELLs	13%	9%	16%	19%	6%
SWD	13%	10%	6%	7%	-6%
Morton MS	52%	55%	60%	61%	9%
High Needs	44%	47%	49%	53%	9%
Econ. Disad.	--	--	55%	58%	--
ELLs	31%	8%	18%	33%	2%
SWD	13%	13%	14%	19%	6%
Kuss MS	63%	64%	62%	65%	2%
High Needs	55%	57%	51%	55%	0%
Econ. Disad.	--	--	54%	58%	--
ELLs	14%	19%	33%	39%	25%
SWD	11%	18%	11%	14%	3%
Resiliency MS	--	24%	17%	18%	--
High Needs	--	26%	13%	13%	--
Econ. Disad.	--	--	13%	12%	--
ELLs	--	--	--	--	--
SWD	--	--	0%	17%	--
Resiliency HS	57%	46%	65%	68%	11%
High Needs	57%	46%	54%	67%	10%
Econ. Disad.	--	--	50%	67%	--
ELLs	--	--	--	--	--
SWD	--	--	--	--	--
Gateway to College	--	--	--	--	--
High Needs	--	--	--	--	--
Econ. Disad.	--	--	--	--	--
ELLs	--	--	--	--	--
SWD	--	--	--	--	--
Durfee HS	83%	81%	84%	82%	-1%
High Needs	77%	75%	76%	74%	-3%
Econ. Disad.	--	--	81%	77%	--
ELLs	26%	36%	45%	45%	19%
SWD	42%	32%	43%	43%	1%

**Between 2013 and 2016 math proficiency rates for all students improved by 6 percentage points and improved in each tested grade except the 10<sup>th</sup> grade.**

- Math proficiency rates improved by 13 percentage points in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade, by 11 percentage points in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, by 5 percentage points in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, and by 4 percentage points in the 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grades.

- In the 10<sup>th</sup> grade math proficiency declined 10 percentage points from 57 percent in 2013 to 47 percent in 2016, 31 percentage points below the 2016 state rate of 78 percent.

**Table 15: Fall River Public Schools  
Math Percent Proficient or Advanced by Grade 2013-2016**

Grade	Number	2013	2014	2015	2016	4-Year Trend	2-Year Trend
3	894	44%	49%	55%	55%	11%	0%
4	811	30%	36%	36%	43%	13%	7%
5	876	43%	47%	50%	47%	4%	-3%
6	751	34%	43%	41%	39%	5%	-2%
7	764	27%	25%	36%	31%	4%	-5%
8	751	32%	37%	39%	36%	4%	-3%
10	571	57%	54%	57%	47%	-10%	-10%
All	5,418	37%	41%	44%	43%	6%	-1%

Math proficiency rates ranged from 10 to 80 percent in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, from 14 to 75 percent in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade, from 11 to 68 percent in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade, from 34 to 50 percent in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, from 15 to 44 percent in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, from 0 to 49 percent in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and from 10 to 52 percent in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade.

**Table 16: Fall River Public Schools  
Math Percent Proficient or Advanced by School and Grade 2015-2016**

School	3	4	5	6	7	8	10	Total
North End ES	74%	64%	62%	--	--	--	--	66%
Viveiros ES	70%	56%	57%	--	--	--	--	63%
Fonseca ES	46%	30%	37%	--	--	--	--	38%
Letourneau ES	51%	45%	35%	--	--	--	--	44%
Greene ES	51%	37%	62%	--	--	--	--	50%
Spencer Borden ES	80%	49%	68%	--	--	--	--	67%
Tansey ES	67%	75%	47%	--	--	--	--	62%
Watson ES	34%	32%	31%	--	--	--	--	33%
Henry Lord ES	10%	14%	11%	34%	15%	--	--	18%
Doran ES	33%	43%	35%	39%	28%	49%	--	37%
Stone Day School	--	--	--	--	--	0%	--	3%
Talbot MS	--	--	--	42%	17%	26%	--	28%
Morton MS	--	--	--	34%	43%	40%	--	39%
Kuss MS	--	--	--	50%	44%	49%	--	48%
Resiliency MS	--	--	--	--	--	0%	--	3%
Resiliency High	--	--	--	--	--	--	10%	10%
Gateway to College	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Durfee HS	--	--	--	--	--	--	52%	52%
District Total	55%	43%	47%	39%	31%	36%	47%	43%
State	--	--	--	--	--	--	73%	--

**Between 2013 and 2016 math proficiency rates improved by 4 to 26 percentage points in 8 out of 8 elementary schools with reportable trend data, by 4 percentage points at Doran the one elementary-middle school with reportable trend data, and by 5 and 11 percentage points at Talbot and Morton middle schools, respectively. Math proficiency declined by 8 percentage points at Durfee High and by 23 percentage points at Resiliency High.**

- Math proficiency rates for high needs students improved in 8 of 8 elementary schools with reportable trend data, at Doran elementary-middle school, and at two of the three middle schools with reportable trend data. Math proficiency rates for high need students declined by 8 percentage points at Durfee High and by 23 percentage points at Resiliency High.
- Math proficiency rates for English language learners improved in 7 of 7 elementary schools with reportable trend data, at Doran elementary-middle school, at Talbot and Kuss middle schools, and at Durfee High.
- Math proficiency rates for students with disabilities improved in 5 of 8 elementary schools, and declined in all the elementary-middle, middle, and high schools with reportable trend data.

**Table 17: Fall River Public Schools  
Math Percent Proficient or Advanced by School and Subgroup 2013-2016**

	2013	2014	2015	2016	3- or 4-Year Trend
North End ES	57%	63%	70%	66%	9%
High Needs	50%	54%	60%	57%	7%
Econ. Disad.	--	--	62%	59%	--
ELLs	26%	33%	58%	50%	24%
SWD	27%	30%	39%	34%	7%
Viveiros ES	41%	48%	58%	63%	22%
High Needs	40%	48%	56%	60%	20%
Econ. Disad.	--	--	58%	62%	--
ELLs	23%	56%	29%	59%	36%
SWD	16%	18%	30%	32%	16%
Fonseca ES	31%	35%	43%	38%	7%
High Needs	30%	34%	40%	34%	4%
Econ. Disad.	--	--	41%	35%	--
ELLs	21%	28%	29%	27%	6%
SWD	11%	6%	11%	16%	5%
Letourneau ES	30%	31%	40%	44%	14%
High Needs	26%	28%	37%	37%	11%
Econ. Disad.	--	--	36%	38%	--
ELLs	9%	17%	33%	25%	16%
SWD	6%	11%	19%	10%	4%
Greene ES	46%	47%	48%	50%	4%
High Needs	41%	42%	43%	47%	6%
Econ. Disad.	--	--	46%	48%	--
ELLs	16%	36%	33%	38%	22%
SWD	17%	13%	10%	14%	-3%
Spencer Borden ES	53%	54%	55%	67%	14%
High Needs	44%	44%	42%	54%	10%
Econ. Disad.	--	--	43%	56%	--
ELLs	20%	--	18%	50%	30%
SWD	18%	19%	25%	30%	12%
Tansey ES	57%	58%	59%	62%	5%
High Needs	47%	43%	36%	50%	3%

Eco Disad	--	--	44%	59%	--
ELLs	--	--	--	--	--
SPED	18%	4%	14%	10%	-8%
Watson ES	7%	19%	21%	33%	26%
High Needs	6%	18%	17%	33%	27%
Econ. Disad.	--	--	18%	34%	--
ELLs	6%	15%	0%	18%	12%
SWD	0%	4%	0%	0%	0%
Henry Lord ESMS	--	--	18%	18%	--
High Needs	--	--	17%	17%	--
Econ. Disad.	--	--	17%	19%	--
ELLs	--	--	18%	10%	--
SWD	--	--	5%	5%	--
Doran ESMS	33%	43%	42%	37%	4%
High Needs	32%	41%	38%	34%	2%
Econ. Disad.	--	--	40%	35%	--
ELLs	19%	38%	36%	36%	17%
SWD	13%	20%	19%	12%	-1%
Stone Day School ESMS	--	--	--	3%	--
High Needs	--	--	--	3%	--
Econ. Disad.	--	--	--	4%	--
ELLs	--	--	--	--	--
SWD	--	--	--	3%	--
Talbot MS	23%	24%	28%	28%	5%
High Needs	20%	21%	23%	25%	5%
Econ. Disad.	--	--	25%	26%	--
ELLs	9%	7%	7%	10%	1%
SWD	6%	3%	0%	4%	-2%
Morton MS	28%	35%	49%	39%	11%
High Needs	21%	30%	38%	30%	9%
Econ. Disad.	--	--	42%	32%	--
ELLs	31%	4%	21%	8%	-23%
SWD	10%	6%	5%	7%	-3%
Kuss MS	54%	51%	51%	48%	-6%
High Needs	44%	43%	41%	36%	-8%
Econ. Disad.	--	--	43%	39%	--
ELLs	14%	25%	27%	22%	8%
SWD	8%	5%	9%	5%	-3%
Resiliency MS	--	2%	0%	3%	--
High Needs	--	3%	0%	4%	--
Econ. Disad.	--	--	0%	0%	--
ELLs	--	--	--	--	--
SWD	--	--	--	9%	--
Resiliency HS	33%	27%	47%	10%	-23%
High Needs	33%	28%	36%	6%	-27%
Econ. Disad.	--	--	30%	6%	--
ELLs	--	--	--	--	--
SWD	--	--	--	--	--
Gateway to College HS	--	--	--	--	--
High Needs	--	--	--	--	--

Econ. Disad.	--	--	--	--	--
ELLs	--	--	--	--	--
SWD	--	--	--	--	--
Durfee HS	60%	58%	60%	52%	-8%
High Needs	52%	51%	46%	40%	-12%
Econ. Disad.	--	--	50%	45%	--
ELLs	4%	11%	32%	14%	10%
SWD	16%	15%	8%	6%	-10%

**Between 2013 and 2016 science proficiency rates improved by 2 percentage points in the district as a whole from 31 percent in 2013 to 33 percent in 2016, 21 percentage points below the 2016 state rate of 54 percent.**

- Grade 5 science proficiency rates increased by 3 percentage points from 28 percent in 2013 to 31 percent in 2016, 16 percentage points below the 2016 state rate of 47 percent.
- Grade 8 science proficiency rates increased by 6 percentage points from 19 percent in 2013 to 25 percent in 2016, 16 percentage points below the 2016 state rate of 41 percent.
- Grade 10 science proficiency rates decreased by 5 percentage points, from 53 percent in 2013 to 48 percent in 2016, 25 percentage points below the 2016 state rate of 73 percent.

**Table 18: Fall River Public Schools  
Science Percent Proficient or Advanced by Grade 2013-2016**

Grade	Number	2013	2014	2015	2016	State	4-Year Trend	2-Year Trend
5	876	28%	38%	37%	31%	47%	3%	-6%
8	748	19%	28%	25%	25%	41%	6%	0%
10	527	53%	48%	51%	48%	73%	-5%	-3%
All	2,151	31%	37%	36%	33%	54%	2%	-3%

**In 2016 science proficiency rates in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade ranged from 7 percent at Henry Lord elementary-middle school to 53 percent at Viveiros Elementary, and were below the state rate of 47 percent at 7 of the 10 schools with a 5<sup>th</sup> grade that had reportable trend data. In the 8<sup>th</sup> grade science proficiency ranged from 0 percent at Stone Day School to 35 percent at Kuss Middle and was below the state rate of 41 percent in all 6 schools with an 8<sup>th</sup> grade. In grade 10, science proficiency was 54 percent at Durfee High, 17 percent at Resiliency High, and 0 percent at Gateway to College, below the 2016 state rate of 73 percent.**

**Table 19: Fall River Public Schools  
Science Proficient or Advanced by School and Grade 2015-2016**

School	3	4	5	6	7	8	10	Total
North End ES	--	--	51%	--	--	--	--	51%
Viveiros ES	--	--	53%	--	--	--	--	53%
Fonseca ES	--	--	13%	--	--	--	--	13%

Letourneau ES	--	--	18%	--	--	--	--	18%
Greene ES	--	--	26%	--	--	--	--	26%
Spencer Borden ES	--	--	48%	--	--	--	--	48%
Tansey ES	--	--	33%	--	--	--	--	33%
Watson ES	--	--	20%	--	--	--	--	20%
Henry Lord ESMS	--	--	7%	--	--	--	--	7%
Doran ESMS	--	--	38%	--	--	15%	--	29%
Stone Day School ESMS	--	--	--	--	--	0%	--	0%
Talbot MS	--	--	--	--	--	17%	--	17%
Morton MS	--	--	--	--	--	30%	--	30%
Kuss MS	--	--	--	--	--	35%	--	35%
Resiliency MS	--	--	--	--	--	5%	--	5%
Resiliency HS	--	--	--	--	--	--	17%	17%
Gateway to College HS	--	--	--	--	--	--	0%	--
Durfee HS	--	--	--	--	--	--	54%	54%
District	--	--	31%	--	--	25%	48%	33%
State	--	--	47%	--	--	41%	73%	--

**Between 2013 and 2016 science proficiency rates improved by 8 to 16 percentage points in 4 out of 8 elementary schools with reportable trend data, by 22 percentage at Doran the one elementary-middle school with reportable trend data, and by 3 and 14 percentage points at Talbot and Morton middle schools, respectively. Science proficiency declined by 3 percentage points at Durfee.**

- Science proficiency rates for high needs students improved in 5 out 8 elementary schools with reportable data, at Doran ESMS and two of the three middle schools with reportable data. Science proficiency rates for high need students declined by 4 percentage points at Durfee High.
- Science proficiency rates for English language learners improved in 2 of 4 elementary schools with reportable trend data, at Doran elementary-middle school, at Talbot Middle, and at Durfee High.
- Science proficiency rates for students with disabilities improved at 2 of 7 elementary schools and at 2 of the 3 middle schools with reportable trend data, and declined at Durfee High.

**Table 20: Fall River Public Schools  
Science Percent Proficient or Advanced by School and Subgroup 2013–2016**

	2013	2014	2015	2016	3- or 4-Year Trend
North End ES	42%	53%	62%	51%	9%
High Needs	29%	41%	48%	40%	11%
Econ. Disad.	--	--	47%	44%	--
ELLs	--	--	--	--	0%
SWD	10%	21%	41%	8%	-2%
Viveiros ES	45%	45%	62%	53%	8%
High Needs	45%	45%	63%	45%	0%
Econ. Disad	--	--	66%	44%	--
ELLs	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
SWD	14%	13%	38%	13%	-1%
Fonseca ES	15%	29%	28%	13%	-2%
High Needs	12%	29%	26%	13%	1%
Econ. Disad.	--	--	28%	12%	--

ELLs	17%	10%	9%	19%	2%
SWD	0%	14%	7%	14%	14%
Letourneau ES	8%	24%	24%	18%	10%
High Needs	8%	20%	18%	16%	8%
Econ. Disad.	--	--	20%	15%	--
ELLs	0%	4%	0%	11%	11%
SWD	0%	6%	9%	8%	8%
Greene ES	27%	35%	37%	26%	-1%
High Needs	20%	29%	25%	22%	2%
Econ. Disad.	--	--	27%	24%	--
ELLs	--	10%	--	11%	--
SWD	11%	6%	0%	0%	-11%
Spencer Borden ES	65%	54%	54%	48%	-17%
High Needs	52%	48%	36%	39%	-13%
Econ. Disad.	--	--	38%	42%	--
ELLs	--	--	--	--	--
SWD	22%	10%	13%	17%	-5%
Tansey ES	36%	72%	33%	33%	-3%
High Needs	25%	57%	13%	21%	-4%
Econ. Disad.	--	--	17%	26%	--
ELLs	--	--	--	--	--
SWD	8%	--	0%	--	-8%
Watson ES	4%	21%	6%	20%	16%
High Needs	2%	11%	5%	24%	22%
Econ. Disad.	--	--	5%	25%	--
ELLs	--	--	--	--	--
SWD	0%	0%	0%	--	--
Henry Lord ESMS	--	--	11%	7%	--
High Needs	--	--	10%	5%	--
Econ Disad.	--	--	12%	6%	--
ELLs	--	--	--	--%	--
SWD	--	--	0%	0%	--
Doran ESMS	7%	23%	31%	29%	22%
High Needs	7%	20%	30%	27%	20%
Econ Disad.	--	--	29%	28%	--
ELLs	0%	21%	18%	23%	23%
SWD	--	24%	30%	6%	--
Stone Day School ESMS	--	--	--	0%	--
High Needs	--	--	--	0%	--
Econ. Disad.	--	--	--	--	--
ELLs	--	--	--	--	--
SWD	--	--	--	0%	--
Talbot MS	14%	20%	18%	17%	3%
High Needs	12%	18%	14%	16%	4%
Econ. Disad.	--	--	14%	17%	--
ELLs	0%	3%	4%	8%	8%
SWD	2%	2%	2%	0%	-2%
Morton MS	16%	28%	26%	30%	14%
High Needs	10%	24%	20%	23%	13%
Econ. Disad.	--	--	21%	25%	--

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ELLs	--	--	--	0%	--
SWD	3%	5%	7%	6%	3%
Kuss MS	39%	46%	40%	35%	-4%
High Needs	28%	36%	29%	26%	-2%
Econ. Disad.	--	--	30%	27%	--
ELLs	--	--	--	7%	--
SWD	6%	2%	7%	9%	3%
Resiliency MS	--	4%	8%	5%	--
High Needs	--	4%	10%	0%	--
Econ. Disad.	--	--	10%	0%	--
ELLs	--	--	--	--	--
SWD	--	--	--	--	--
Resiliency HS	--	0%	7%	17%	--
High Needs	--	0%	0%	20%	--
Econ. Disad.	--	--	0%	20%	--
ELLs	--	--	--	--	--
SWD	--	--	--	--	--
Gateway to College HS	--	--	--	--	--
High Needs	--	--	--	--	--
Econ. Disad.	--	--	--	--	--
ELLs	--	--	--	--	--
SWD	--	--	--	--	--
Durfee HS	57%	52%	53%	54%	-3%
High Needs	48%	43%	38%	44%	-4%
Econ. Disad.	--	--	42%	48%	--
ELLs	5%	9%	22%	20%	15%
SWD	13%	13%	9%	11%	-2%



## Leadership and Governance

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### ***Contextual Background***

Through a formal, comprehensive Entry Plan process, the new superintendent is investing a lot of time and effort to listening and learning from a wide circle of people. He told the review team that he intends to develop a strategic plan for the district. A new strategic planning process provides a rich opportunity to increase coherence among many present and future district initiatives and to develop a broader, multi-year perspective, in addition to the district's short-term focus on meeting annual accountability benchmarks for student achievement.

The new superintendent and the school committee are collaborating in positive ways, for example, jointly developing goals for the 2016-2017 school year. Interviewees told review team members that previous relationships between superintendents and school committee member were, at times "contentious." District and school leaders said that they approved and appreciated the current civil interactions between the superintendent and the school committee.

Since 2012 the district has been implementing a differentiated support model in its schools which are viewed as the units of change. School-based instructional support staff collaborate with and support principals and teachers to frequently analyze student data, adjust instructional strategies, and develop school-specific professional development. At the same time, the central office curriculum staff coordinate and support the different activities that school-based staff are performing. The elimination of key central office positions has compromised the ongoing implementation of the district's differentiated support model and effective coordination among school-based staff.

With concentrated and prolonged financial and technical assistance from the state department of education, the district has turned around two of its three low-performing, Level 4 schools---Kuss Middle School and Doran Community School. The district now has two elementary schools--- Watson and Fonseca---engaged in the Level 4 process. One of the district's central leadership challenges is increasing coherence among various initiatives which includes balancing school-based flexibility to differentiate with central coordination and support so that all students receive sufficient support to perform at high levels.

### **Strength Finding**

- 1. The new superintendent and the school committee have begun to develop a district culture of increased collaboration and shared responsibility for improved student achievement.**
  - A.** Interviews and a document review indicated that through meetings, school visits, and reviewing key documents, the superintendent is carrying out a comprehensive, well-designed Entry Plan process in order to "listen, learn, and build relationships" with school committee members, school and district staff, parents, students, municipal officials, and a broad base of community leaders and organizations.

- B.** On August 16, 2016, the superintendent and the school committee participated in a retreat to develop annual goals for 2016-2017 and to define workplace norms for communicating information and to discuss “how they behave and treat each other publicly.”
1. During their retreat, the superintendent and school committee reached consensus on the following goal areas: human capital strategy/teacher retention; multiple pathways for student success; budget design/zero-based budget; parent community engagement class/customer service; capital facilities master plan; and performance management dashboard.
  2. School committee members said that the committee would use these goals in evaluating the superintendent’s performance in 2016-2017.
- C.** The superintendent and school committee members told the review team that they are pleased with the collaborations that they have been developing since the retreat.
1. The superintendent stated that he and the school committee members “have a good relationship and we get along.”
  2. A school committee member observed that there is a “greater cooperative spirit “among the school committee, administration, the teachers’ association, and the clerical and custodial staff. He expressed the view that the superintendent respects the school committee and is receptive to members’ views and opinions.
  3. Another school committee member said that the superintendent communicates well with school committee members.
  4. In its August 24, 2016, editorial entitled, “Working cooperatively to improve Fall River Public Schools,” the *Herald News* editorial board wrote that developing the six goals, through a cooperative approach, was an important change from “the recent history when the district’s governance held city schools back in many ways---marred by conflicts between [school committee] members and the superintendent.” Furthermore, the editorial board stated that “it’s refreshing to see both the committee and the superintendent on the same page.”

**Impact:** By collaborating to develop common goals and to improve communication, the superintendent and the school committee are promoting the public confidence and community support needed to support the district in its continuous improvement efforts. The collaboration among the superintendent and the school committee members provide the community, especially the city’s youth, a positive example of how committed adults can work with one another to improve their city and schools.

## Challenges and Areas for Growth

**2. The district is facing serious challenges to its improvement initiatives: appropriations below net school spending requirements, delayed city funding, high turnover among principals and teachers, low attendance by students, and concern about teachers' attendance.**

- A.** In recent years, city appropriations to the district and its in-kind payments did not meet Net School Spending (NSS) requirements and were often allocated late, after the district's fiscal year started.
1. From fiscal years 2014 -2016, the city's appropriations to the district and its in-kind payments did not meet Net School Spending requirements with shortfalls each year, as follows:
    - a. Fiscal year 2014: \$3,386,579
    - b. Fiscal year 2015: \$2,205,457
    - c. Fiscal year 2016: \$1,366,144
  2. The city often delays appropriations to the district. For example, in order to meet fiscal year 2016 NSS requirements (for the 2015-2016 school year), in November 2016 the city planned to pay the district \$1.5 million from the city's free cash account.
    - a. In July 2016, the beginning of the 2016-2017 fiscal year, the school department did have this \$1.5 million to retain some of the 46 positions that were eliminated in the budget.
    - b. Interviewees said that late allocations of city funding also delay hiring teachers until the summer months, after many applicants have accepted positions in other school districts.
- B.** In recent years a high percentage of principals and teachers has turned over every year in the district.
1. According to ESE data, between 2012 and 2015, the principal retention rate in the district fluctuated from 76.5 percent in 2012 to 70.6 percent in 2013 to 70.6 in 2014 to 81.3 percent in 2015, compared with the state principal retention rate which fluctuated from 82.1 percent in 2012 to 82.7 percent in 2013 to 82.6 percent in 2014 to 82.3 percent in 2015.
    - a. At the end of the 2015-2016 school year, the district lost 6 principals.
    - b. The Kuss Middle School has had three principals in three years.
    - c. The Fonseca Elementary School has had five principals in nine years.
    - d. For the present group of 16 district principals, the median number of years at their current school is 1 year.

2. Between 2012 and 2015, the teacher retention rate steadily declined from 82 percent in 2012 to 80.5 percent in 2013 to 77 percent in 2014 to 76.4 percent in 2015, compared with the state teacher retention rate which fluctuated from 88.4 percent in 2012 to 88.5 percent in 2013 to 87.6 percent in 2014 to 86.8 percent in 2015.
    - a. For the 2016-2017 school year, the district hired approximately 120 new teachers. One out of every six teachers is new to the district.
  3. The 2016-2017 School Committee/Superintendent Goals include improving teacher retention but do not include increasing principals' retention.
- C. There are some district initiatives in place to improve student attendance in the district; planning documents provide limited focus on this challenge (See the Student Support Challenge finding below).
1. The Accelerated Improvement Plan (AIP) addresses decreasing chronic student absence.
    - a. The 2015-2017 AIP contains short-term and long-term outcomes for reducing students' chronic absence: Short-Term Outcome: "Mid-year % of chronically absent students decreases by 5%"; Long-Term Outcome: "Percent of students chronically absent (18 days or more) will decline by 10% for SY16."
  2. The 2016-2017 School Committee/Superintendent Goals do not include a goal for improving students' attendance.
- D. Teacher attendance is a concern in the district. (See Student Support Challenge finding below.)

**Impact:** Fiscal uncertainty, high turnover among principals and teachers, and high student absence are preventing the district from planning effectively, are slowing the district's improvement initiatives, and are compromising educational opportunities for the district's students.

**3. While the district has developed an Accelerated Improvement Plan (AIP), School Improvement Plans (SIPs), and the District Technology Plan, the district does not have a comprehensive, actionable strategic plan.**

- A. The district has an AIP ("Focused Planning for Accelerated Student Learning") and School Improvement Plans; however, it does not have a strategic plan with essential components to guide efforts to attain strategic goals.
1. Although the district has highlighted four strategic objectives, it has not designated staff with primary responsibilities for planning and implementing priorities. The district has not established timelines for completion of priorities.
  2. Objectives and activities in the AIP and SIPs are focused on improving student achievement. For example, the AIP's strategic objective 2 states: "Ensure success for all students through high quality, rigorous teaching and learning skills leading to high academic achievement."

3. The outcomes in the AIP and SIPs are short-term, measured by making one-year progress for specific instructional targets. For example:
    - a. “ELA MCAS data indicates a 10% increase in performance on non-fiction passages from SY14 to SY15.”
    - b. “District benchmarks show a 10% improvement when compared to previous year cohort [sic].”
  4. The AIP and the District Technology Plan are posted on the district’s web site. However, SIPs are not posted on each school’s web site.
- B.** The 2016-2017 School Committee/Superintendent Goals includes the development of two plans: a Capital Facilities Master Plan and a Human Resources Redesign Plan.
- C.** The superintendent told the review team that he anticipated working with the school committee and local stakeholders from January through June 2017 to develop a targeted, comprehensive, strategic plan coupled with coherent work plans that would describe not only what had to be done, but how it would be achieved.
1. The superintendent said that he wanted district planning documents to be “dynamic, light, nimble, and constantly changing.”

**Impact:** Without a complete and comprehensive strategic plan the district, schools, and community are unable to systematically implement, monitor, and refine continuous improvement efforts, and the district cannot ensure accountability for meeting improvement priorities.

**4. The district does not have a written process which indicates how and when policies and procedures are revised and updated.**

- A.** On the district’s web site, the section entitled “Policy and Procedures” lists 11 district policies and procedures, with the dates when the policies and procedures were approved.
1. The approval dates range from 2005 (for example, Homeless Education Policy and Procedures) to 2014 (for example, Wellness Policy, Bullying Prevention).
    - a. The Affirmative Action Policy, dated 2006, is a copy the city’s Affirmative Action Policy, dated May 30, 1995.
    - b. The Civil Rights Policy, dated 2006, is a copy of the city’s Civil Rights Policy, dated October 29, 1984.
  2. The Fall River Public Schools Policy Manual provides a general description of how the superintendent and the school committee design and implement a school district’s policies and procedures.

- a. Most district policies included in the Fall River Public Schools Policy Manual were originally approved December 13, 2010.
- B. The school committee does not have a policy subcommittee.
  - 1. The school committee has six subcommittees: evaluation/AIP; finance; grievances; facilities and operations; instructional/SPED; and parent community outreach.
  - 2. Posted on the school committee's section of the district's web site is a clear and detailed description of the roles and tasks of each subcommittee.
  - 3. The descriptions for each of the six subcommittees do not indicate which subcommittee (or subcommittees) reviews school district policies.
- B. A school committee member indicated that the committee revised policies "as needed," noting that the school committee does not have a schedule for reviewing and updating district policies.
- C. A school committee member stated that the new superintendent is beginning to identify policies and procedures that need updating.

**Impact:** The absence of a documented process for reviewing and updating policies and procedures compromises their effectiveness and efficiency. Without current policies and procedures, district staff might miss the opportunity to implement new mandates and regulations that support students' health and welfare and learning. Without written procedures for updating district policies, both district staff and citizens do not know or understand how and when policies and procedures are reviewed and updated.

## **Recommendations**

- 1. **The priority of district leaders should be continued efforts to bring stability to the district.**
  - A. The mayor and the superintendent should agree on a method for assigning education-related municipal costs to net school spending (NSS) and work together to plan to meet NSS obligations.
  - B. The practice of delayed city funding to meet net school spending requirements should be reexamined and replaced with a budgeting process that is more directly linked with district and school improvement planning.
  - C. The superintendent should convene a working group with wide representation to develop recommendations and action steps to continue efforts towards building a stable leadership team.
  - D. The district should survey stakeholders about student attendance, analyze attendance data, including disaggregated data, and other data sources, and develop SMART (Specific and Strategic; Measureable; Action-oriented; Rigorous, Realistic, and Results-focused; and Timed and Tracked) goals to improve students' attendance.

1. The district should review its initiatives to improve attendance and adjust efforts as needed.
  2. Although the district may excuse extended absence because of illness or hospitalization, it should rewrite its attendance policy outlined in its district handbook so that students are expected to be in school daily
  3. The policy should have clear guidelines, clarity of roles, consistent enforcement, and support for students at risk.
- E. The superintendent and the district's executive director of human resources should collaborate with teachers' association leaders to review the policy for personal days in the teachers' collective bargaining agreement and replace it with a policy that is more directly linked with district and school improvement initiatives.
- F. The district's planning documents should reflect recommendations and action steps related to the above recommendations.

**Benefits:** Improving students' achievement requires predictable resources and staff steadiness. By improving performance in the key areas of funding, retention, and attendance, district leaders will improve fundamental conditions and resources required for success. By restoring stability, city and school leaders will increase staff morale and the factors that contribute toward improving students' academic performance.

**2. The district should pursue its goal to develop a strategic plan, and align other planning documents with it.**

- A. Under the leadership of the superintendent, a working group with wide representation should analyze student performance and other data and develop a strategic plan.
1. It is critically important that this stakeholder group recognize, and be committed to, the role of the strategic plan in creating a blueprint for student success, achieving greater educator effectiveness, and strongly influencing each School Improvement Plan.
- B. In order to develop a more coherent planning system, the district should consider making proposed plans (e.g., Capital Facilities Master Plan and Human Resources Redesign Plan) components of the district's strategic plan, rather than designing new plans as stand-alone documents.
- C. The district has several resources to inform this, including the 2016-2017 School Committee/Superintendent Goals, the Accelerated Improvement Plan ("Focused Planning for Accelerated Student Learning"), the Technology Plan, and the city's list of prioritized projects including roofs and major repairs in schools.
- D. The strategic plan should include the district's mission, goals, and priorities for action.

1. The plan's goals should be SMART (Specific and Strategic; Measureable; Action Oriented; Rigorous, Realistic, and Results Focused; and Timed and Tracked.)
- E. The plan's performance goals for students should drive the development, implementation, and modification of the district's educational programs.
  1. School Improvement Plans should be created in alignment with the strategic plan and based on an analysis of student achievement data.
  2. The identified district and school priorities established in the improvement plans should be supported by appropriate allocation of resources that are clearly identified in the improvement plans and in the annual district budget.
  3. Professional development should be designed to support the strategic plan's initiatives and goals.
  4. The work of the district's data teams should be included in the strategic plan.
- F. The district should consider posting all planning documents on its web site.
  1. Each school should consider posting its current School Improvement Plan on its web site.
- G. The strategic plan should be used as a tool for continuous improvement.

**Benefits:** The strategic plan and aligned plans clarify and unify. They provide guidance and ensure that the district's work at each level is intentionally designed to accomplish the district's short- and long-term goals.

**Recommended resource:**

- *Every Student, Every Day: A Community Toolkit to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism* (<http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/chronicabsenteeism/toolkit.pdf>) is a set of Action Guides that provide information and resources to help ensure that all young people are in school every day and benefitting from coordinated systems of support.
3. **The superintendent and the school committee should develop written procedures for reviewing and updating district policies and procedures.**
    - A. After the school committee and the superintendent approve written procedures for updating policies and procedures, those procedures should be placed on the district's web site.
    - B. The school committee and the superintendent should consider developing a yearly schedule for reviewing school district policies and procedures.

**Benefits:** By clarifying procedures for reviewing and revising policies and procedures, the school committee and the superintendent will increase the district's efficiency. They will ensure that principals and teachers are carrying out current mandates and regulations that support students' health and



welfare and learning. Developing and implementing procedures for reviewing and updating policies and procedures provides staff and the community a positive image of a pro-active and transparent school committee.

## Curriculum and Instruction

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### ***Contextual Background***

The district has developed a network of educators who are responsible for the development, articulation, and implementation of curricula. In recent years the elimination of two key central office director positions (professional development and instructional services) has shifted the bulk of the work to school-based staff.

The district's chief academic officer, school administrators, and teacher leaders strategically placed in schools ensure content expertise and teacher support for implementation of curriculum maps. While horizontal articulation is managed through common planning time, grade-level, department and faculty meetings, vertical articulation remains a challenge among schools particularly in transitional grades. Curriculum and instructional support personnel are often deployed from higher performing schools to support schools with greater need. Teacher leader positions---literacy, math, and ESL coaches, dean of teaching and learning, department head, and redesign coach---vary by school based on data/school need.

Mathematics and English language arts maps are aligned with the 2011 Massachusetts frameworks and teacher leaders are currently facilitating updates based on student performance data and teacher feedback. The district has begun aligning existing curriculum maps with the 2016 science frameworks. ESL curriculum maps are also under development with plans to align these maps with the district's ELA curriculum and the WIDA language development standards. Two teachers have been trained to complete this work using the ESE model curriculum units as resources. All curriculum documents are comprehensive, modeled after the Understanding by Design mapping template, and include sheltered English immersion strategies.

There is strong alignment between the district's Accelerated Improvement Plan (AIP), School Improvement Plans, and educator evaluation goals. Strategic Objectives 1.2 and 1.3 of the AIP prioritize support for rigorous planning and delivery of consistent instructional expectations across the district and differentiated support to students based on identified academic need. Principals are the instructional leaders of their schools and identify target areas for professional development, instructional target areas, and learning walk "look fors." Teachers are expected to develop professional learning goals in alignment with school and district strategic goals. The district has provided the teacher leader positions to support best practices in schools and dedicated time has been scheduled so that administrators and teachers can collaborate about best practice. The district uses a variety of resources to inform best instructional practice with the workshop model, accountable talk, and complex questions identified most commonly across levels. Blended learning experiences are most noted in elementary- and middle-school classrooms and administrators plan to extend opportunities into the high school.

In observed classrooms review team members noted an inconsistent incidence among levels on several characteristics of high-quality instruction including lessons designed to actively engage students,

opportunities for critical thinking, student-centered learning, and most markedly, the differentiation of instruction and use of appropriate resources to meet the needs of all learners.

## Strength Finding

### **1. Amid changes in instructional leadership over the last several years at the school and district levels, the district has established and maintained an inclusive process for the ongoing review and revision of curriculum documents that is embedded in district practice.**

- A.** Interviews and a document review indicated that an established network for the coordination, oversight, and development of district curriculum maps is clearly understood among educators at all levels and is articulated in administrative and teacher leader job descriptions.
  - 1. The chief academic officer is responsible for the overall coordination and supervision of curriculum work. Under her leadership, this network is responsible for coordinating major curriculum realignments and ongoing review and revision.
  - 2. With the elimination of two central office director positions (professional development and instructional services) much oversight of this work has been delegated to principals and school teacher leaders; however, central office administration is available and works directly with school administrators as needed.
  - 3. School administrators are assigned content oversight based on their expertise and meet monthly with the central office administration to identify curriculum target areas in need of revision. These administrators then meet with their content teacher leaders to analyze school data and plan the revision work, necessary professional development, and any additional instructional supports for teachers.
- B.** The district provides dedicated time for curriculum work to be continuously developed, vetted, revised, and for teachers to be instructionally supported.
  - 1. This work is managed through scheduled common planning times including PLCs, department and team meetings, teacher cabinet meetings, dedicated school professional development, and workshops beyond the school day/calendar.
    - a. Elementary-school teachers participate in weekly PLC meetings with their school-based content teacher leaders and/or administrators.
    - b. Middle-school teachers have weekly curriculum meetings with their department heads as well as team and grade-level meetings.
    - c. High-school teachers attend weekly meetings in their content area and once a month meet by department. They have also used Saturday workshops to revise curriculum maps components including benchmark assessments.

- d. Full and half day professional development days and opportunities during the summer are available and used for district curriculum work.
- 2. Teacher leaders also use PLC, department, team and grade-level meetings to support classroom teachers to ensure that curriculum and instructional adjustments are effectively implemented in classrooms. Support may take the form of discussions, modeling of lessons, lesson study, and sharing teacher feedback with curriculum leadership to inform future work.
- C. The district uses a research-based template Understanding by Design as the foundation for the development of comprehensive curriculum documents which include sheltered English immersion strategies.

**Impact:** The district has designed an inclusive and data-driven process for the development and implementation of mathematics and English language arts curriculum maps and has set the stage for this work in other content areas. Provided the district can sustain this practice, students are likely to have greater access to consistent and high-quality, rigorous curriculum and support as they prepare for college and careers.

## Challenges and Areas for Growth

- 2. **The elimination of district instructional leadership positions and leadership turnover have placed additional responsibilities for teaching and learning on school and district personnel. Educators stated that a previously tight network for the improvement of teaching and learning has of necessity morphed into a distributive leadership model in schools.**
  - A. Interviews and a document review indicated that central office oversight of teaching and learning in the district has been reduced by two positions (director of instructional services and director of professional development) over the last three years.
    - 1. The duties of the chief academic officer (CAO) have expanded to oversight and coordination of curriculum development, instructional support and improvement, and professional development for the district; some of these responsibilities have been moved to the schools.
    - 2. School principals have taken on some of the responsibilities for coordination of curriculum and instructional work. Additionally, recent turnover in school leadership has increased the need for administrative mentoring and training by colleagues and central office for new staff.
    - 3. Teacher leaders have historically supported curriculum and instruction in their schools. The reduction in central office coordination has necessitated that they assume additional responsibilities to maintain continued support in these areas. Teacher leaders expressed the concern that they are spread too thinly, often using their own time to address necessary

work such as vertical articulation, and said that more instructional and content support personnel are needed to effectively meet district needs.

4. Educators at all levels said that there has been a loosening of previously tight and efficient networks for the support of teaching and learning.
- B.** The district has not identified a process for identifying effective school practices in teaching and learning so that these practices can be vetted, modeled, and implemented among and, as appropriate, across levels.
1. Some school-based instructional best practices are shared at administrative meetings. While school personnel are invited to observe these practices and bring strategies back to schools, the process for piloting and implementing these practices in schools has slowed down and schools are encouraged to implement at their own pace.
  2. The district often reallocates support personnel from a higher “capacity” school to one with a lesser “capacity” rating. While this practice is intended to place assets where needed, it may compromise the higher achieving school’s capacity by reducing the support that contributed to its improved level of performance.
- C.** The district has not established a clearly articulated model for effective instructional practice for all educators in the Fall River Public Schools.
1. District leaders and teachers use a variety of instructional models/resources to inform instructional best practice. Elements are pulled from each but common threads have not been identified among these resources to assist in defining a more comprehensive model of best practice and district non-negotiables.
    - a. Administrators and teacher leaders cited several resources used to frame instructional expectations noting their use may vary by level and content area. Examples of common resources include the Rigorous Planning Cycle (visual chart), blended learning experiences, the educator evaluation rubric, and Understanding by Design.
    - b. The SOTEL model (student centered, objectives, teacher as facilitator, engaging, learning outcomes), Context for Learning, New Perspectives, and Landscapes for Learning are some additional instructional resources available in the district.
  2. When asked to describe the district’s instructional model, district administrators and teacher leaders commonly identified the workshop model, accountable talk, and complex questions as components of that model. Other instructional expectations mentioned but not common included teacher as coach, students “grappling” with work, text-based questions, and use of the rigorous planning cycle (scaffold, objective, accountability, engagement, results).

- a. School administrators stated that best practice is often discussed at school and district leadership meetings as a means of building a common understanding of high-quality instruction; however, they said that each school determines its own priorities for the improvement of instruction. Newly hired principals are learning about district expectations for instruction through district and school-based discussions and trainings.
  - b. Increased rigor and a stronger understanding of Tier 1 strategies for differentiation of instruction is a commonly shared administrative focus for continued improvement across all levels.
3. One administrator described the district's instructional model as cultural and organic. Others reported that instruction looks different in each school because of different resources, including grants, and a distributive leadership model to address school needs. One administrator noted that "there is no one uniform way to teach in Fall River."
4. Learning walks to observe instructional trends and best practices have not been consistently implemented in the district nor is there a common district learning walk tool or rubric. Some schools have well-established practices that began with unpacking the teacher evaluation rubric and creating focused learning walk rubrics for continued professional growth. Other schools use learning walks as a tool for improvement but at the time of the onsite had not initiated them; others plan to use learning walks for the first time.

**Impact:** Without a shared model of instructional best practice, the district cannot guarantee high-quality research-based instruction and related supports that meets students' diverse learning needs and optimizes their college and career readiness.

- 3. In observed classrooms, the quality of instruction was inconsistent across levels, particularly in the areas of critical thinking, differentiation of instruction, and the use of appropriate resources to meet students' diverse learning needs. There was a consistently lower incidence of characteristics of effective instruction in observed classes at the high-school level.**

The team observed 170 classes throughout the district: 39 at the high schools, 43 at schools serving students in grades 6-8, and 88 at the elementary schools. The team observed 67 ELA classes, 63 mathematics classes, and 40 classes in other subject areas. Among the classes observed were 5 special education classes and 6 ELL classes. The observations were approximately 20 minutes in length. All review team members collected data using ESE's instructional inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards-based teaching. This data is presented in Appendix C.

- A. Focus Area #1: Learning Objectives and Instruction** Instructional practices that reflected elements of effective instructional design or promoted high expectations and rigor varied

among levels. In most observed classrooms teachers demonstrated knowledge of subject matter and content.

1. In observed classrooms reviewers saw moderate or strong evidence that teachers provided and referred to clear learning objectives (characteristic # 2) in 76 percent of elementary-school classes, in 83 percent of middle-school classes, and in 69 percent of high-school classes.
  - a. Teachers who provided clear objectives shared them orally with students throughout the lesson and many posted learning objectives in a prominent location in the room.
  - b. In some classrooms teachers did not refer to a clear learning objective but posted or provided students with a list of activities (agenda) that would be completed during class.
2. In 81 percent of classrooms overall, review team members observed moderate or strong evidence of lessons that reflected high expectations aligned to the learning objective(s) (characteristic #3). Moderate or strong evidence was observed in 87 percent of elementary-school classes, in 86 percent of middle-school classes, and in 64 percent of high-school classes.
  - a. For example, students in one classroom were challenged to use available materials to make a flood barrier for the principal's doghouse, test various materials for absorbency, and record results.
  - b. Conversely, lessons that did not reflect high expectations were whole class teacher-directed instruction that required limited student interaction. Class work was often characterized by lecture, low-level questioning, and teacher modeling followed by paper/pencil assignments.

**B. Focus Area #2: Student Engagement and Critical Thinking** Student-centered instruction that was engaging, promoted student discourse about content and ideas (accountable talk), and provided opportunities for students to connect to prior knowledge and engage in authentic application of new knowledge was observed at all levels. Review team members observed a lower incidence of lessons that reflected critical thinking at the elementary and high schools than at the middle schools-.

1. Reviewers found moderate or strong evidence that students were motivated and engaged in lessons (characteristic #5) in 81 percent of all observed classes. Moderate or strong evidence of student motivation and engagement was observed in 84 percent of elementary-school classes, in 86 percent of middle-school classes, and in 69 percent of high-school classes.
2. Review team members observed moderate or strong evidence of students participating in tasks that required the use and application of critical thinking (characteristic # 6) in 65

percent of elementary-school classes, in 81 percent of middle-school classes, and in 64 percent of high-school classes.

- a. An example of a class where students were encouraged to engage in critical thinking was observed in a grade 8 math class where students worked in small groups to derive a mathematical rule for multiplying powers. Groups had access to multiple resources and completed a ticket to leave as a quick assessment of learning.
  - b. In a class in which students were not provided sufficient opportunities to engage in critical thinking, the teacher posed questions to students lecture style on properties of numbers in a division problem. Most questions required yes or no responses and the teacher did not probe to extend student thinking. Students then completed a division worksheet.
3. Observers found moderate or strong evidence that students assumed responsibility for their own learning whether individually, in pairs, or in groups (characteristic # 7) in 80 percent of all classrooms. Moderate or strong evidence was observed in 82 percent of elementary-school classes, in 87 percent of middle-school classes, and in 66 percent of high-school classes.

**C. Focus Area #3: Differentiated Instruction and Classroom Culture** In most observed classes classroom climate was characterized by respectful behavior and tone and established routines and teachers used formative assessments to check for student understanding. Although the district has developed a process for identifying struggling students and providing differentiated support to students, observers found a lower incidence of teachers appropriately differentiating instruction so the lesson content is accessible for all learners at the elementary-school and high-school levels than at the middle-school level. Additionally, in observed classrooms there was a lower incidence of teachers using appropriate resources aligned to students' diverse learning needs at these levels than at the middle-school level.

1. In observed classrooms, review team members saw moderate or strong evidence of teachers appropriately differentiating instruction to ensure the lesson content was accessible for all learners (characteristic # 8) in 57 percent of elementary-school classes, in 84 percent of middle-school classes, and in 52 percent of high-school classes.
  - a. Teachers in these classrooms modified the learning product and/or process, designed groupings based on learning style or need, and provided visual, oral, and symbolic cues so students were better able to access curriculum.
2. In 67 percent of elementary, in 90 percent of middle-school, and in 61 percent of high-school classrooms teachers were observed using appropriate resources aligned to students' diverse learning needs (characteristic #9).



3. Educators at all levels expressed the need for additional resources and professional development and discourse to better understand and implement effective strategies for the differentiation of instruction.

**Impact:** The absence of a shared instructional model has resulted in a lack of clarity for teaching and learning expectations in the district. Without a shared definition of instructional expectations and related professional supports, the district cannot ensure that teachers consistently and effectively deliver research-based instruction that meets the diverse needs of students, optimizes their learning opportunities, and adequately prepares them for college and careers.

## **Recommendation**

1. **It is recommended that the district identify and articulate a district instructional model, communicate this to the full educational community, and support teachers in its implementation.**
  - A. The district should convene a representative group of teachers and administrators to define the characteristics of effective instruction.
    1. The district has several resources to support this: *Understanding by Design* (curriculum mapping resource), the district's educator evaluation rubric, the SOTEL model (Student centered, Objectives, Teacher as facilitator, Engaging, Learning outcomes), Rigorous Planning Cycle, and the workshop model.
    2. Key instructional practices should be prioritized as the district's non-negotiables.
  - B. Once a model of instructional practice is identified and defined, the district should develop a plan for sharing instructional expectations with staff.
    1. Using grade level, department, team, faculty meetings, PLCs, and/or professional development days, the district is encouraged to discuss ideas and strategies from the district's instructional model.
      - a. Teachers and administrators might consider watching videos of effective teaching and discussing instructional strategies.
      - b. District administrators should continue to encourage teachers to observe effective practice classrooms in their school and/or district.
  - C. The administrative team is encouraged to conduct non-evaluative walkthroughs, in pairs/small groups, to generalize and share feedback about trends observed, and to discuss improvement strategies regularly with teachers.
  - D. The review team recommends that the district develop an organizational chart of instructional leadership that articulates oversight and support responsibilities at the district and school levels.

- E. Teachers should be provided with appropriate guidance and feedback as they implement the model.
1. Job-embedded professional development should focus on elements of the instructional model, and especially on skills associated with critical thinking, differentiation, and the use of appropriate resources to meet students' diverse learning needs.
  2. Principals, as instructional leaders, should ensure that teachers have the information and support necessary to meet the district's expectation for instruction.

**Benefits:** By implementing this recommendation the district will set clear and articulated expectations for teachers and administrators for what defines best practices. This will provide a common language that will facilitate more focused feedback and professional development. A district that provides high-quality instruction for all students and ongoing professional supports for teachers and administrators creates and sustains a culture of continuous improvement, resulting in increased student achievement.

**Recommended resources:**

- Appendix 4, *Characteristics of Standards-Based Teaching and Learning: Continuum of Practice* (<http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/accountability/dart/walkthrough/continuum-practice.pdf>) is a framework that provides a common language or reference point for looking at teaching and learning.
- ESE's *Learning Walkthrough Implementation Guide* (<http://www.mass.gov/edu/government/departments-and-boards/ese/programs/accountability/tools-and-resources/district-analysis-review-and-assistance/learning-walkthrough-implementation-guide.html>) is a resource to support instructional leaders in establishing a learning walkthrough process in a school or district. It is designed to provide guidance to those working in an established culture of collaboration as well as those who are just beginning to observe classrooms and discuss teaching and learning in a focused and actionable manner. (The link above includes a presentation to introduce Learning Walkthroughs.)

## Assessment

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### ***Contextual Background***

The district developed benchmark assessments in English language arts and mathematics in 2006 and revises them continuously to ensure that they are predictive of state tests results. School-based data teams collect and analyze achievement, attendance, and disciplinary data, and some administer and interpret the results of school climate surveys. Data analysis informs school decisions about instruction, placement, interventions, and school improvement goals.

However, the range of data collection is incomplete: The district has not developed benchmark assessments in kindergarten through grade 8 science because the science curriculum is at a preliminary stage of development. In addition, the district has not identified common assessments to assess student learning, growth, or achievement and inform judgments about educator impact.

The district's ability to coordinate and standardize data use has been compromised by the loss of two key central office positions over the last three years. Since 2014, data use has been increasingly site based with only ad hoc district oversight. School teams differ in their understanding of the use and implications of data. Some school data teams conduct complete cycles of inquiry and action consisting of identifying an issue, diagnosing the causes, planning and taking action, and evaluating the results. The district has attempted to use exemplary teams as models for less proficient teams through occasional joint meetings and cross-observations, but these strategies have not raised practices overall.

### **Strength Finding**

- 1. All district schools have multidisciplinary teams that collect and analyze achievement, attendance, and disciplinary data in order to track student progress, inform instructional planning, provide interventions, and monitor the school's progress toward the accomplishment of the short and long-term goals established in their School Improvement Plans.**
  - A.** All district schools have an instructional leadership team that collects and analyzes student achievement data.
    1. The composition of the instructional leadership team differs by level.
      - a. At the elementary level, the team consists of the principal, vice principal(s), literacy and mathematics coaches, and interventionists. Two schools have deans of teaching and learning with expertise in either ELA or mathematics.
      - b. At the middle-school level, the team consists of the principal, vice principals, and the ELA and mathematics department heads.
      - c. At the high- school level, the team consists of the principal, vice principals, and the deans of teaching for ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies.

- B.** All schools have a social-emotional learning (SEL) team that collects and analyzes attendance, disciplinary, and school climate survey data. The SEL is composed of administrators and student support staff, such as adjustment counselors, guidance counselors, and the school nurse.
- C.** A document review and interviews with administrators indicated that all schools conduct six-to-eight week formative assessment cycles in ELA and mathematics using common instruments at each level.
  - 1. The ELA battery consists of the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) and benchmark assessments at the elementary-school level in kindergarten through grade 5; benchmark assessments at the middle-school level in grades 6 through 8; and term tests at the high-school level in grades 9 through 12.
  - 2. The mathematics battery consists of the Math ADD + VantageMR assessment at the elementary-school level in kindergarten through grade 2 and cumulative benchmark assessments in grades 3 through 5; unit benchmark assessments at the middle-school level in grades 6 through 8; and term tests at the high-school level in grades 9 through 12.
    - a. The benchmark assessments were locally developed by teachers and administrators based on released MCAS and PARCC test items.
  - 3. Administrators and teachers told the review team that the director of assessment provides the schools with reports of their benchmark assessment results in a timely manner using TestWiz technology. Principals said that the rapid turnaround increases the instrumental value of the results for teachers and students. All the reports are also accessible online.
- D.** Principals and teachers described how the results of the formative assessments are used to identify struggling students and provide them with interventions. These interventions often consist of modifications and accommodations provided by general education teachers and targeted instruction provided by interventionists and specialists within or outside of general education classrooms.
- E.** Teachers told the review team that they use the results of the benchmark assessments to inform their instructional planning and to compose fluid instructional groups based on common student needs. They said that they monitor student progress daily and more formally through an analysis of the results of the next cycle of benchmark assessments.
- F.** Administrators and teachers said that instructional leadership teams make decisions based on an analysis of the aggregate results of student assessments, including the MCAS tests. For example, based on an examination of open-response items, the elementary schools developed a standard writing process in grades 3 through 5, and the middle schools increased emphasis on vocabulary and grammar.
- G.** Principals and teachers told the review team that the SELs review attendance and disciplinary data in order to provide assistance to identified students. These interventions may include

meeting with an attendance officer to address the root causes of high absence, or meeting with the school adjustment counselor to resolve social-emotional developmental challenges.

1. Some schools have developed strategies to improve student attendance overall. For example, school leaders told the team that the Letourneau Elementary School has increased daily attendance by instituting an escort program known as the walking school bus. Through this approach school staff accompany students on a walking route to school, sometimes going from door to door to encourage students to join their peers.

- H. Principals told the review team that they base their School Improvement Plans on student achievement data and set both short- and long-term measurable goals. The review team confirmed that school improvement plans were data-driven. Improvement targets were usually expressed as incremental gains on benchmark and state testing.

**Impact:** Schools increase the likelihood of student success by using data to plan instruction; place students in appropriate settings; provide resources to address challenges that interfere with learning, such as absence and disciplinary infractions; and establish and regularly measure progress toward the attainment of school improvement goals.

## Challenges and Areas for Growth

- 2. Under current conditions, the district is not able to organize, coordinate, and standardize the assessment program. Data use is inconsistent in the district because the schools are at various levels of data proficiency.**

- A. Interviews and a review of documents indicated that two of the four central office instructional leadership positions have been eliminated or reallocated. The director of instructional services position was eliminated in 2014, and the funding for the director of professional development position was reallocated in 2015. Neither position has been filled, leaving the superintendent and assistant superintendent as the only central office instructional leaders.
1. Administrators told the review team that the professional development director was the district expert on the use of assessment data.
- B. Interviews and a review of the 2013 Focused Plan for Accelerated Student Learning indicated that a central office leader was assigned to each school to support the instructional leadership team in the development of the School Improvement Plan. Support was differentiated, enabling the central office partner to meet more frequently with the leadership teams in the schools with the greatest needs.
1. Central office partnerships were intended to make best practices in curriculum, instruction, and assessment more common.
  2. With the loss of two positions and the subsequent reallocation of responsibilities, one central office leader is now responsible for this function districtwide.

- C.** Central office administrators told the review team that until the 2016-2017 school year certain instructional leadership team members from the elementary-, middle-, and high-school levels representing the content areas of literacy, mathematics, and social-emotional learning had been meeting biweekly in vertical groups known as networks. Each group was facilitated by a central office representative with expertise in the content area.

  - 1. Administrators said that the district wanted to build a great schools culture by moving responsibility to the schools, but this depended on the viability of the network meetings which were intended to coordinate the curriculum and organize and standardize assessment practices.
  - 2. Central office administrators, department heads, and teachers told the review team that although the social-emotional learning network continues to meet regularly, the literacy and mathematics networks are meeting less frequently because there are fewer facilitators. They added that this has slowed the pace of progress.

    - a. Teachers and department heads described many ad hoc vertical planning meetings in literacy and mathematics held outside of school hours; however, these meetings are voluntary, irregular, and unreliable as a consistent means of coordination.
- D.** Central office administrators and principals said that the schools were mostly on their own in interpreting data, leaving the least data proficient schools at a disadvantage. The principals said that they always received support from the central office whenever they requested it, noting that the district no longer is able to provide continuous guidance and monitoring.

  - 1. Central office administrators and teachers cited schools they considered proficient in using data. Typically, these schools were led by principals who were trained in data analysis.
  - 2. The district has six new principals. Central office administrators told the review team that the new principals would likely have to learn about assessment practices from their own instructional leadership teams.
  - 3. Teachers and principals told the review team that some of the most data proficient teachers were among the 46 teachers who left the district at the end of the 2015-2016 school year. They added that without department heads and content area specialists in the schools, data analysis “would not be done.”
- E.** The district share data on progress and outcome measures efficiently.

  - 1. The 2016-2017 School Committee/Superintendent Goals include the development of a performance management dashboard to track and monitor strategic-plan progress and outcomes.

    - a. A data dashboard is an information management tool that visually tracks, analyzes, and displays key performance metrics and key data points to monitor the health of an

organization. The dashboard connects to many different data files and provides a common platform for monitoring and analyzing distinct sets of performance data.

**Impact:** Without strong central coordination of the assessment program, the district cannot implement its vision for data use; set and model expectations; manage data infrastructure and access; and set models for inquiry. The district has been unable to make best practices in data use consistent in order to improve teaching and learning throughout the district.

## **Recommendation**

### **1. The district should create a district data team to make best practices common and sustain the well-established culture of data use at the classroom and school levels.**

- A.** Led by a central office administrator, the district data team might consist of two representatives from the instructional leadership teams at each level and one principal or assistant principal from each level.
- B.** The district data team should facilitate data management, provide training and technical support for school-based data teams, and resolve issues with data use.
- C.** The district data team should develop written protocols on data management, data analysis, and the development of data-based action plans. These protocols would provide guidance to the school-based teams aimed as they develop practices for data use.
- D.** The district data team should encourage the school-based data teams to continue to develop and implement their own data analysis practices and report the outcomes to the district data team. The district data team should adopt and disseminate the best practices.
- E.** The district data team should monitor data use to ensure that data is used appropriately and effectively. The district data team should also conduct an evaluation of data use in the district and the district's schools and make recommendations for improving data use. It should use this information to make necessary adjustments to policies, technologies, data collection, assessments, and professional development.
- F.** The district data team should foster communication across schools and between district departments about how data is being used.
  - 1.** The district data team should provide opportunities for school-based data teams to share their inquiries and results in order to support learning and collaboration among the teachers in the district. These opportunities might include large events such as data fairs where instructional leadership teams present their work and findings. Teachers at grade level or subject area meetings across the district might also share practices in data use.

**Benefits:** The benefits of having a central district data team that supports and guides school-based data use include the communication of a common vision, goals, expectations, and procedures for data use,

resulting in a high level of data use throughout the schools in the district; expert support for district planning for professional development on data use, resulting in a consistent level of data literacy throughout the schools in the district; support for communication and collaboration across the district about data use; and the sharing of proven solutions and best practices of data use that benefit schools, staff, and students.

**Recommended resource:**

- ESE's *District Data Team Toolkit* (<http://www.mass.gov/edu/government/departments-and-boards/ese/programs/accountability/tools-and-resources/district-analysis-review-and-assistance/leadership-and-governance.html>) is a set of resources to help a district establish, grow, and maintain a culture of inquiry and data use through a District Data Team.



## Human Resources and Professional Development

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### ***Contextual Background***

A series of ESE reviews of the district conducted from 2002-2011 identified several chronic areas of concern related to human resources and professional development. Systems identified as seriously wanting included district policies and practices for the evaluation of professional staff, both faculty and administrators, including the superintendent. Specifically, the need for principals to function as effective instructional leaders was stressed. Reports advocated the need for principals to improve their skills and capacity in teaching and learning and to better manage their time in order to visit classrooms regularly. Further, the reallocation of principals' time was urged so that principals could focus their attention on observing, providing support and feedback, and engaging in the rigorous, continuous evaluation of their staff.

In response to these concerns, in its improvement planning the district prioritized the development and implementation of effective educator evaluation tools, practices, and procedures, as embodied in the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework, to provide the kind of consistent high-quality feedback that promotes professional growth. In 2013 a work group composed of teachers and administrators from all levels of Fall River Schools joined together to develop a new educator evaluation system for the district. That collaborative committee elected to adapt the state Educator Evaluation Framework. Further, it was determined that it would remain a standing work group in order to monitor and refine, as needed, the evaluation procedures, forms, and processes contained in the new system.

Evidence from the current review confirmed that---despite substantial principal turnover in recent years---in general, teachers' evaluations were timely and complete and the overall quality of teachers' evaluations was exceptionally high. Teachers' evaluations were comprehensive, detailed, and evidence based. Evaluations typically provided feedback for improved practice that was specific and actionable and recommendations with the capacity to improve classroom instruction and/or contribute to professional growth. However, the district has not achieved consistency in implementing its educator evaluation system. The evaluations of principals and district administrators, including the superintendent, have not been completed regularly and in the case of school leaders have not been done. A review of evaluative documentation showed that principal evaluations have been not written since the 2014-2015 school year.

The full implementation of the Educator Evaluation Framework requires that districts use an evaluation system that appropriately includes other sources of evidence in addition to direct observation and artifacts of practice, specifically student and staff feedback and common assessments of student learning. The district has not taken action to implement these more recent components of the Educator Evaluation Framework.

## Strength Finding

**1. The district appears committed to providing professional development programs for its staff that promote on-going adult learning opportunities and support educators at all stages of their professional careers.**

A. The district uses a decentralized model of professional development (PD) whereby decisions about the planning, organizing, and delivery of PD programs and activities are made primarily at the individual school level. Administrators and teachers reported that PD is both school based and job embedded. Structured common teacher planning time by grade level and content area is built into the weekly schedules of all schools and grade levels across the district. Further, the district calendar annually provides six full and five early release PD days that provide additional opportunities for teachers to meet and work together regularly in a variety of PD activities and programs.

1. Interviewees indicated that PD is generally collaborative and site based. Principals and staff work together in the planning, design, and implementation of PD programs and activities within their schools.
2. Administrators stated that there has been an increasing effort to collect and use student and educator data to inform PD planning. In general, needs/interests surveys, student assessment data, and observations of classroom practice are being used to varying degrees in most schools.
3. Interviewees reported that, in addition to soliciting teacher input in PD planning, many schools use electronic survey instruments to enable staff to submit evaluative feedback. They indicated that these assessments are used to improve PD planning and help ensure that intended goals are being met.
4. The district's 2015 and 2016 Accelerated Improvement Plans ("Focused Planning for Accelerated Student Learning") identify increased differentiation as goal of PD design and delivery. Principals reported that efforts are underway to move away from the "one size fits all" approach and to develop PD programming that is designed to be more closely aligned with the diverse professional needs of teachers at all stages of their careers.
5. Interviewees reported that the district provides a range of opportunities for teachers to assume leadership roles and positions. They gave as examples the Administrator Apprenticeship Program, instructional leadership teams, districtwide curriculum work groups, and opportunities for teachers to serve as presenters and trainers in school- level PD programming.
6. Teachers and administrators cited the district's Induction and Mentoring Model for its well-developed programs and activities designed to meet the unique needs of novice educators by providing them with strategic supports essential for their professional growth and

development. Interviewees noted that the district's mentoring program is directed by centralized and coordinated district leadership, in contrast to the decentralized PD model in place in the district.

**Impact:** The district demonstrates a genuine commitment to providing opportunities for educators to collaborate in on-going and purposeful ways and has begun to develop a culture of continuous professional growth and an increasing awareness of the shared responsibility for student learning. The creation of a professional learning community designed to systematically support educators at every career stage has the potential, if sustained and standardized, to build local ability, improve classroom instruction, and ultimately to provide significantly enhanced educational opportunities and increased academic achievement for all students.

## **Challenges and Areas for Growth**

### **2. The district has not achieved consistency in implementing its educator evaluation system. It has not taken action on the more recent components of the Educator Evaluation Framework that require the collection and use of multiple sources of evaluative evidence.**

- A.** Interviews and a review of evaluations indicated that evaluations of principals and district administrators, including the superintendent, have not been completed regularly and in the case of school leaders have not been done. Principal evaluations have not been written since the 2014-2015 school year.
  - 1. Principals acknowledged the need for additional and on-going training to enhance the consistency and quality of evaluative processes and products. They specifically cited the need to increase opportunities for evaluators to calibrate expectations and to improve the technical competencies of evaluators to systematically enhance the accuracy, fairness, and overall effectiveness of educator evaluation.
    - a. Interviewees indicated that this need has been exacerbated by the high turnover rate among the district's principals.
  - 2. Both principals and teachers expressed dissatisfaction and frustration with the inefficiencies of the educator evaluation process. They cited as most problematic the volume of evidence documentation, cumbersome redundancies, and the absence of a user friendly software system designed specifically to monitor, support, and facilitate the educator evaluation system.
- B.** As of the 2015-2016 school year the educator evaluation regulations (603 CMR 35.07) require all Massachusetts school districts to collect and use student feedback as evidence in the teacher evaluation process and staff feedback as evidence source in the administrator evaluation process. The district is currently out of compliance with this regulatory requirement.

1. Administrators and Fall River Educators' Association officials acknowledged that the district has not taken action to implement this component of the educator evaluation system, nor is it actively considering such an initiative.
- C. The educator evaluation regulations also require the identification of common assessments to assess student learning, growth, or achievement and inform judgments about educator impact. The district is also currently out of compliance with this regulatory requirement.
  1. Administrators and faculty indicated that common formative, summative, and benchmark assessments have been developed for many grade levels and content areas across the district.
  2. District and school leaders reported that formal action has not been taken to systematically collect and analyze student academic performance data and use it to inform judgments about educator impact on student learning as part of the evaluation process.
  3. ESE's Center for Instructional Support has provided districts with the option of developing an alternative pathway for evaluating educator impact. Districts interested in pursuing this alternative pathway were to submit their plan to the Center by June 2015 and the district was approved for an alternative pathway in August 2015.

**Impact:** The Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework is designed to promote educator growth and development while keeping student learning as its central focus. The full implementation of the state Framework requires, however, that districts use an educator evaluation system that appropriately includes multiple sources of evidence in addition to direct observations and artifacts of practice. Specifically, these include the systematic collection and use of student and staff feedback and multiple common assessments of student learning. Without moving forward with these key initiatives, the district reduces its ability to systematically promote the professional competencies of its staff and to significantly enhance learning opportunities, classroom instruction, and academic achievement for all the district's students.

3. **Professional development programming in the district is largely decentralized, site based, and uncoordinated. It is missing strong centralized leadership, comprehensive and coordinated planning, clear, measurable goals, and a direct and alignment with and sustained focus on district priorities.**
  - A. Interviews and a document review indicated that professional development (PD) in the district is not aligned with or informed by the core components of the *Massachusetts Standards for Professional Development*. The guiding principles of these standards ensure that professional development: (a) is intentional; (b) is a structured, comprehensive, and coordinated process; and (c) requires strong leadership. The following are among the most notable challenges of the district's PD program as measured against these standards.

1. Interviewees reported that the district does not currently have a director, designated leadership group, or steering committee to oversee the design and delivery of PD programs and services across the district.
  - a. The review team was told that in the past PD had been overseen by a district PD director and steering committee and said that the district had since adopted a decentralized, school-based model.
2. The district has not developed annual PD plan, goals, objectives or priorities by which to inform, guide, or measure the overall effectiveness of PD programming.
3. Because the district's PD programming is primarily site based it largely depends upon each principal to function as a de facto PD leader and to develop strategies and systems by which to design, deliver, and monitor PD programs and activities within their individual schools. Both administrators and teachers acknowledged that the quality, effectiveness, and degree of collaboration are uneven across the district.
4. Teachers reported that PD priorities and activities varied considerably from school to school, that the quality of programming depended largely on the experience and expertise of the building principal, and expressed the view that there was little formal alignment with or sustained focus on district priorities or strategic goals.
5. Interviewees noted the increased collection and use of student data and educator feedback to inform PD planning and said that there were no standard procedures or district expectations for doing so and that consequently, the quality, consistency, and overall effectiveness of these procedures varied greatly among the schools.
6. Although the district has developed an effective mentoring program for novice teachers, a similar formal mentoring or coaching program for new principals is not in place. School principals indicated the need for such a program, particularly given the high turnover rate among school administrators. They also expressed the desire for all principals to be provided with on-going PD designed to systematically develop and expand their leadership ability and supervisory and evaluative skills.

**Impact:** The effectiveness of the district's PD programming is limited by the absence of a well-defined and collaborative district leadership structure and of a comprehensive and fully articulated PD plan with clearly articulated goals strategically aligned with district priorities. By not developing a comprehensive, data driven, fully coordinated PD program that effectively supports teachers and educational leaders at all stages of their careers, including induction, the district limits its ability to enhance professional practice, to retain highly effective educators, to improve classroom instruction, to advance district goals and priorities, and to increase student achievement.

## Recommendations

1. **The district should fully and effectively implement all components of the state Educator Evaluation Framework to fulfill its responsibility to adhere to the state regulations. Prioritized attention should be given to ensuring that administrators receive evaluations that are timely and of consistently high quality and on developing systems for the collection and appropriate use of multiple sources of evidence to inform educators' evaluations.**
  - A. The district's standing educator evaluation committee should expand its efforts to ensure that all components of the administrative evaluation process, including the formative and summative evaluations of school principals and all other district administrators, are comprehensively improved.
    1. Additional and ongoing training should be provided for evaluators and administrators to improve the supervisory practices and evaluative skills of all administrators and evaluators.
  - B. In order to implement the requirements of the state educator evaluation regulations the district should develop and use multiple measures of student learning, growth, and achievement to inform judgments about educator impact and provide educators with meaningful feedback.
  - C. The committee should focus on opportunities to maximize the efficiency of the educator evaluation system by scrutinizing the amount of documentation that the district is requiring of educators and evaluators.

**Benefits:** The state's Educator Evaluation Framework is designed to provide teachers and administrators with the kinds of evidence based, growth oriented feedback and support needed to improve professional practice, expand competencies, and increase student achievement. The full and effective implementation of all components of the district's educator evaluation system will likely promote the professional growth of both teachers and leaders and--- through the use of multiple measures of student learning--- place student learning at the center of all district improvement efforts.

### Recommended resources:

- Educator Evaluation Implementation Surveys for Teachers ([www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/implementation/TeachersSurvey.pdf](http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/implementation/TeachersSurvey.pdf)) and Administrators ([www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/implementation/AdministratorsSurvey.pdf](http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/implementation/AdministratorsSurvey.pdf)) are designed to provide schools and districts with information about the status of their educator evaluation implementation. Information from these surveys can be used to target district resources and supports where most needed to strengthen implementation.
- *Quick Reference Guide: Student and Staff Feedback* ([www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/QRG-Feedback.pdf](http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/QRG-Feedback.pdf)) provides guidance on student and staff feedback, including requirements, principles for choosing feedback instruments, and related resources.

- ESE's *Student and Staff Feedback* web page (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/eval/feedback/>) includes model surveys, a training tool on student and staff feedback, a video series, and other resources.
- *Rating Educator Impact: The Student Impact Rating* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/eval/sir/RatingEducatorImpact.pdf>) is intended to be a useful guide for educators and evaluators in the determination of Student Impact Ratings that meet the regulatory requirements.
- ESE's *Developing Common Measures* web page (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/eval/sir/assessments.html>) includes several example common measures, a model development process, and a video featuring teachers describing how they developed common measures.
- *The MA Educator Evaluation Framework: Supporting Educator Impact on Student Learning* ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mqVKJ\\_miFM0&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mqVKJ_miFM0&feature=youtu.be)) is a video in which members of ESE's Teacher and Principal Advisory Cabinets describe the process of using district-determined common measures to facilitate meaningful dialogue about educator impact on student learning and ultimately arrive at a Student Impact Rating.

**2. The district should develop a professional development plan aligned with district goals and priorities.**

- A. The district outline and document a set of learning experiences for its educators that is systematic, sustained, and aligned. It should be guided and informed by the principles articulated in the *Massachusetts Standards for Professional Development*.
1. A designated joint committee composed of administrators, teacher representatives, and specialists, should create a professional development (PD) plan that is aligned with the strategic plan and the district's instructional model (see the Leadership and Governance and Instruction recommendations above).
    - a. As part of the plan, the committee should identify specific PD needs, determine how they might be met, and recommend adjustments to PD practices to meet them.
  2. The plan should address needs indicated by performance data and trends from classroom observations. It should include goals focused on improving teacher practice and student outcomes.
  3. Professional development requires a long-term commitment by administrators and embedded support structures, such as facilitated team meetings, to convey and promote a common understanding of instructional practice expected from all educators.

- B.** The district should consider expanding the scope of its Mentoring Program to better meet the needs of beginning and incoming teachers.

**Benefits:** The development of a districtwide PD plan that is driven by district improvement efforts and includes expected learning experiences for educators and student achievement outcomes will help move the district toward higher quality PD. A high-quality PD program coupled with the time and resources already available in the district will likely lead to improved student achievement. Expanded induction and mentoring programs and structures will do much to promote the growth of professional competencies and the overall effectiveness of teachers and principals. They will likely reinforce the district's continuing efforts to attract, recruit, and retain faculty and school leaders.

**Recommended resources:**

- *The Massachusetts Standards for Professional Development* ([www.doe.mass.edu/pd/standards.pdf](http://www.doe.mass.edu/pd/standards.pdf)) identify, describe, and characterize what high quality learning experiences should look like for educators.
- *ESE's Professional Development Self- Assessment Guidebook* ([www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ease/accountability/dsac/professional-development-self-assessment-guide.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ease/accountability/dsac/professional-development-self-assessment-guide.pdf)) provides tools for analyzing PD offerings' alignment with the MA Standards for Professional Development, the Educator Evaluation Framework, and the Standards and Indicators of Effective Practice.
- *The 2015 Guidelines for Induction & Mentoring Programs* ([www.doe.mass.edu/educators/mentor/guidelines.pdf](http://www.doe.mass.edu/educators/mentor/guidelines.pdf)), published in April 2015, provides updated information for how districts can develop, implement, and refine induction and mentoring programs for educators new to the profession, the district, and/or their roles.
- *Collecting Stakeholder Feedback on Induction and Mentoring Programs* ([www.doe.mass.edu/educators/mentor/StakeholderFeedback.pdf](http://www.doe.mass.edu/educators/mentor/StakeholderFeedback.pdf)) is a resource for districts to use when considering components of an induction and mentoring program for which they would like to solicit stakeholder feedback.



## Student Support

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### ***Contextual Background***

The district recognizes the challenges that it faces about the academic and non-academic development of students. Content specialists for ELA and mathematics have been placed in each school. Schools have coaches, interventionists, department heads, or deans of teaching and learning to guide grade-level or content teams in planning and instruction. Some content specialists also provide direct services to students.

The district uses some common practices used to identify and provide support for students. Although various interventions are provided to help struggling students, support is uneven across schools and depends upon resources available in that school. There is one alternative program for middle- and high-school students with a flexible schedule and some supports to meet student needs.

The district has taken steps to ensure that students and staff are safe in their schools. Building are locked, all students wear ID badges, and school resource officers are in middle and high schools. The local police have a presence in the high school.

One major challenge that the district continues to tackle is getting students to school regularly; according to ESE data, between 2012 and 2016 attendance in the district hovered around 91 percent. In 2015-2016, 29.2 percent of students in Fall River were chronically absent. The percentages of chronically absent students were as follows: 38.7 for grade 9; 39.2 for grade 10; 36.8 for grade 11; and 36.8 for grade 12.<sup>5</sup>

The district has a range of services for students with disabilities and for English language learners. Some programs are centralized for targeted support; for example, English language learner newcomers are assigned to elementary and middle schools where pull-out and push-in can smoothly take place. Additionally, classrooms for students with autism are in one K-8 school where continued services can be accessed for students in kindergarten through grade 2 and in grades 3-5 and 6-8. There is also a Therapeutic Day school for students in kindergarten through grade 8 who have emotional and behavioral disabilities. Most students with disabilities and English language learners are served through inclusion with co-teaching taking place throughout the district. This model is strengthened by the provision of common planning time for general education, English Language Learner, and special education teachers, where they can plan, modify, and scaffold lessons for special populations according to need.

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<sup>5</sup> These data reflect the percentage of students absent more than 10 percent of the days in membership.

## Strength Finding

### **1. The district has promising practices in the elementary and middle schools to identify and provide support for struggling students.**

- A.** Interviews and a document review indicated that the district provides guidance for identifying and providing support for struggling students, with common forms used primarily in the elementary schools.
  - 1. The Fall River Public School RtI Flow Chart has clearly written sample questions about student performance in yellow with guidance for using common forms to address concerns in blue.
    - a. The RtI process begins with the administration of benchmarks assessments. Teachers then complete a differentiation plan where Tier 1 instruction is documented including student groupings based on the results of benchmark assessments. These groupings are timed with start and end dates.
    - b. If teachers have concerns about a student's academic or non-academic achievement, they collaborate with math, ELA, and social-emotional learning experts and identify research-based interventions to be implemented for a period of time and progress monitored. Teachers may also meet with parents for their input and identify ways in which parents can help at home.
    - c. Teachers collaborate with school experts to assess the impact of the interventions. If a student is not making sufficient progress the intervention plan may be revised. If the student continues not to make sufficient progress, a referral is made to the RtI team.
    - d. The RtI team looks at all implemented interventions implemented, sample student work, assessment results, grades, and discipline and attendance data. The RtI team may adjust the plan or make a referral for a full evaluation.
- B.** Administrators and teachers across the district told the review team that common planning time (CPT) is scheduled weekly during the school day.
  - 1. Teachers at the elementary level meet for CPT to review benchmark data and create plans using common forms.
  - 2. Middle-school teachers also have CPT to discuss struggling students.
    - a. Interviewees reported that the RtI process at the middle schools is different than at the elementary schools. Teachers meet in clusters once a week and go over checkpoints including classroom progress, attendance, and benchmarks.
- C.** There are a variety of ways in which students receive support and interventions at the elementary- and middle-school levels.

1. Interviewees reported that interventions vary from school to school; they range from one-on-one to pull –out strategies.
2. Several elementary schools and one middle school are Expanded Learning Time (ELT) schools with additional time built into the schedule.
  - a. Viveiros and Silvia are ELT elementary schools. The team was told that students at the Silvia have interventions 3 times a week for 45 minutes.
  - b. Administrators reported that Kuss, an ELT middle school, has an intervention block for ELA and mathematics built into the schedule.
3. According to ESE data, three elementary schools (Watson, Greene, and Doran), two middle schools (Talbot and Morton), and Durfee High School are 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center schools, which have additional time for learning.
4. Interviewees reported that Title I resources provide after-school tutoring and transportation at the Greene and Fonseca elementary schools and at the Talbot middle school.

**Impact:** Having an academic support system grounded in commonly used forms and practices has created a culture of continuous improvement planning for student achievement at the elementary grades. CPT at the elementary and middle schools help ensure that teachers have a network of support and time to discuss and plan interventions for struggling students. The administration of benchmarks, CPT, the assignment of interventions, and the progress monitoring ensure that students are sufficiently supported and likely lead to improved student achievement.

## **Challenges and Areas for Growth**

2. **The district is hindered in its efforts to improve student achievement by the uneven supports available across schools.**
  - A. Interviews and a document review Interventions vary depending upon staff and grants in the schools.
    1. Teachers reported that some schools have an intervention block but implementation varies from school to school.
    2. Teachers said that Rtl is not always consistent.
    3. Parents’ response to the question about receiving support for their children when needed was mixed. One parent said there was no support, another expressed concern about the loss of one interventionist at her school this year leaving only one left to serve 800 students. Still another parent voiced concern that after-school help notices were not sent to everyone.
    4. The review team was told that some schools provide students more supports than others.

- a. Several schools in the district have Expanded Learning Time (ELT) which provides a longer school day with additional time for ELA and mathematics.
  - b. At several schools 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) grants provide for additional time for after-school support.
  - c. Title I school receive after-school support and late transportation.
  - d. The Borden and the Tansey schools do not receive ELT, 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC, or Title I resources but have planned interventions within their six-and-one-half-hour day.
5. High school students reported that when they need help they meet with teachers before or after school or during a free period.
  6. Administrators reported that while the district does not have formal interventions for high-school students, teachers are expected to provide interventions within the 74-minute workshop model lesson.

**Impact:** Without consistent and continuous targeted support for struggling students throughout the district students may not get the support they need and improvements may be limited.

**3. The district's policies and practices are not improving student attendance in the district. Teacher attendance is a concern in the district.**

**A.** Attendance rates in the district need improvement.

1. According to ESE data, in 2015-2016, the district attendance rate was 91.9 percent. Between 2012 and 2016, attendance rates in Fall River have hovered around 91 percent.
2. In 2015-2016, 53.4 percent of the students enrolled in the Fall River Public Schools were absent 10 or more days, compared to 30.4 percent of their peers statewide.
3. The district's rate of chronic absence was 29.2 percent, compared with the state rate of 12.3 percent. The percentages of chronically absent students in the district were as follows: 38.7 for grade 9; 39.2 for grade 10; 36.8 for grade 11; and 36.8 for grade 12. These data reflect the percentage of students absent more than 10 percent of the days in membership.

**B.** There are some district initiatives to promote student attendance in place.

1. In September 2014, the former superintendent and the Task Force on Absenteeism launched the "Empty Chair" campaign, which is designed to encourage families to send their children to school. The team observed an empty red chair and the question "*What are you doing to fill the empty chair?*" in every school. The team was told the chairs are strategically placed around the city.

- a. The team also was provided an accompanying “Empty Chair” brochure describing the importance of regular attendance and guidance about when it is appropriate for parents to keep children home. The brochures were available in Spanish and Portuguese.
  2. The team was told that the high school recently revised its attendance policy and some interviewees said they saw an eight percent drop in chronic absence in 2015-2016.
  3. Interviewees reported that students at the middle school are recognized for regular attendance.
  4. At the elementary level, some schools have begun a “walking school bus.” Teachers and administrators meet at a central location where a critical mass of students reside and walk with them to school, meeting and picking up others along the way.
  5. Attendance officers are assigned to schools and help with attendance interventions including home visits.
- C.** The *2016-2017 District Handbook for Pre-K to 12 School Students* states: “Regular and punctual attendance is essential for success in school.” The handbook states that parents are required to provide a written explanation for the absence and tardiness of a child and may be asked to provide a doctor’s note in cases of “chronic or irregular absence”; it also details actions steps in the case of five or more unexcused absences. The handbook does not describe consequences for frequent absence.
- D.** Teacher attendance in the district is a concern.
1. Administrators told the team that teachers’ attendance is a concern, specifically the use of personal days. They said that for the 707 teachers in the district, 275 personal days had already been approved as of the team’s onsite visit in mid-October.
    - a. The teachers’ Collective Bargaining Agreement states: “Teachers will be entitled to two (2) days’ leave of absence for personal, legal, business, household or family matters which require absence during school hours. Application for personal leave will be made at least twenty-four (24) hours before taking such a leave, except in the case of emergencies. The applicant for such leave will not be required to state the reason for taking such leave other than that he/she is taking it under this section, except that before and after a holiday a teacher may be required to document their need only to the Office of the Superintendent. Such absence shall not be deducted from the number of sick leave days to the credit of a teacher. Personal days will be accumulative at the rate of one (1) day per year.”
    - b. Administrators stated that the district has a very liberal personal days’ policy with no incentives for saving personal days.

- c. Interviewees reported that teachers get two personal days each year and they can carry one day over from year to year. They said that some teachers are choosing to take a vacation during days when school is open using five personal days.
2. The district does not have plans or initiatives in place to address teacher attendance.

**Impact:** Attendance is a critical factor in school success. Achieving and sustaining academic growth requires that students regularly attend school. Chronic absence is an early indicator for low achievement and dropping out of school. Frequent interruption of teaching likely interferes with sustained student learning and academic growth.

## Recommendations

1. **The district should enhance its systems of support to ensure that all students are provided with the opportunity to receive rigorous targeted interventions.**
  - A. The district should provide clearly defined leadership to ensure that consistent, sustained opportunities for support are available for struggling students K-12.
  - B. The district should document after-school help at each level and communicate regularly with families so that students and parents know how and where students can receive this support.
  - C. The district should consider creating an intervention block at the high school where struggling students can get help and support.

**Benefits:** Implementing this recommendation will ensure that all students are provided support designed to meet their identified needs, which will likely lead to increased student achievement.

### Recommended resource:

- The *Massachusetts Tiered System of Support (MTSS)* ([www.mass.gov/ese/mtss](http://www.mass.gov/ese/mtss)) is a blueprint for school improvement that focuses on systems, structures and supports across the district, school, and classroom to meet the academic and non-academic needs of all students. The MTSS website includes links to a self-assessment and a variety of helpful resources.

## Financial and Asset Management

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### ***Contextual Background***

The district's 2009 Recovery Plan and subsequent monitor's reports included several strategies to improve financial and asset management in the district; the district has implemented most of those strategies. A full-time Chief Financial Officer (CFO)<sup>6</sup> and a Chief Operations Officer (COO) oversee the financial management staff; staff communicate with the city auditor's office and other city officials about the district budget, bidding and contracts, payments to vendors, and salaried school employees, and warrants. Audits to review financial procedures have been completed. The district uses MUNIS, the same financial software as the city. The district has received technical assistance and grants from ESE for programs such as expanded learning time, summer programs, and school redesign. The school committee has adopted policies for fiscal management, including purchasing procedures, a budget calendar, transfers, and school committee approval of grants; the financial procedures in practice in the district are more stringent than required by state law and school committee policy, such as three quotes for purchases over \$500 and school committee approval of contracts over \$10,000 and bidding contracts over \$25,000. Strategies to improve collaboration with the city for the creation of the district budget and for the development of a capital improvement plan for schools are being developed.

In fiscal years 2014-2016 the city did not meet its obligation to fund the district at the required net school spending level. The city has limited resources, with a per capita average income of \$14,982 and excess levy capacity of only \$23,162 for fiscal year 2016, and its available funds for the schools are affected by increasing charter school and choice tuitions. Between 2014 and 2016 the district has had a stable enrollment of 10,123–10,319 students. The district's proposed level service budgets have not been funded by the city, and despite supplemental appropriations in the fall and spring of all three years the district's funding did not reach the required level.

The district's 17 school buildings were built between 1904 and 2013. With support from the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA), the city has built or renovated 10 schools since 2000 and it is considering major renovations or replacement of the high school. The district's maintenance expenditures are close to average for the state, and reviewers found the buildings generally clean and well maintained. The city and district do not have a long-range capital plan to prioritize, schedule, and fund building repairs or replacement; they have set a goal to prepare one in 2016-2017.

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<sup>6</sup> The CFO is assisted by a financial manager, bookkeepers, and clerical staff who perform the accounts payable and payroll duties of the district. The Chief Operations Officer (COO) supervises the custodial, maintenance, nutrition service, and transportation programs and personnel of the district.

## Strength Finding

**1. The district's budget development includes participation by stakeholders and it considers district priorities and the needs of schools and students. The resulting budget documentation is clear, comprehensive, and publicly available on the district's website.**

**A.** Principals and directors have opportunities to participate in the development and presentation of the budget.

1. A list of current staffing at each school is submitted to each principal and director to review for accuracy, and the finance office develops a level -service budget based on level staffing.
  - a. Principals and directors have been able to advocate with central office administrators for adjustments and reallocations in staffing and needs, such as additional staffing at the Lord school and a literacy person at the Borden. Principals reported they sometimes have been given resources, based on equity and need, but last year they asked for nothing because the district was making reductions. Administrators reported that the superintendent must approve budget requests.
  - b. Central administrators meet with principals and departments to review their budgets and needs.
2. Administrators and school committee members reported that principals present their budgets with needs and performance data to the school committee's finance subcommittee.

**B.** The needs of schools and students are a factor in budget development and reduction decisions.

1. Administrators gave examples of the allocation of resources to low-performing schools based on their needs, such as additional staffing, extended learning time, and school support staff.
  - a. In 2016 the district cut central office support and custodians but limited cutting school-based administration and support.
  - b. Examples of support for low-performing schools included four additional staff at the Lord Elementary School, extended learning time at the Watson Elementary School, and a vice principal, school psychologist, and department head at the Viveiros elementary School.
  - c. Administrators reported that in 2016 Level 4 schools were exempt from budget cuts.
  - d. Administrators stated that in previous years some needs at other schools, such as a literacy person, have been included in the budget, and the budget provides professional development addressing student needs.



2. Textbooks and materials are budgeted centrally so that they can be allocated according to needs and program initiatives.
  3. In its self-assessment submitted in advance of the site visit, the district rated budget development as “Well” described by the indicator “Budget development is driven by district and school plans; student outcomes data is used in both.” (Possible responses were Not at All Well, Somewhat Well, Well, and Very Well.)
  4. The superintendent and school committee have set a goal for 2016-2017 to develop a zero-based budget based on school needs.
- C. The documentation of the proposed budget and of subsequent revisions is comprehensive, clear, and available to the public as well as to the school committee and administrators.
1. The budget document is given to school committee members in binder form and is available to the public on the district’s website. School committee discussions are public, including a public hearing.
  2. The document is comprehensive, with a summary and narrative highlighting priorities for the district, a narrative and priorities for each school and department, trends and proposed budget for each budget line, details of current and proposed staffing for each cost center, and relevant achievement data.
    - a. Priorities include needs such as interventionists, coaches, and student support personnel.
  3. A similar document of proposed budget revisions highlights proposed reductions and other adjustments.
  4. The budget documents include staffing funded by grants and outside funds.
  5. In its self-assessment the district rated its budget documentation as “Well” described by several indicators.<sup>7</sup>
- D. The city and the superintendent are considering zero-based budgeting to better prioritize all school and city resources and to limit free cash turn backs.

**Impact:** The participation of administrators in developing and presenting the budget is crucial to identifying the needs of students and schools based on student achievement. Making the budget discussions and documents clear, comprehensive, transparent, and public make a strong case for school

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<sup>7</sup> a. The budget document and related formal presentation documents have clear and useful summaries as well as financial detail.

b. The budget summary includes narrative about key priorities and how they are supported financially.

c. The budget document includes all funds. (Grant amounts and expenditures may be estimated.)

programs and needs. They provide helpful information as town and school officials decide how to allocate resources.

## **Challenges and Areas for Growth**

### **2. The city's appropriations to the district and its in-kind payments did not meet net school spending requirements in the last three years.**

#### **A. The city's appropriations to the district and its in-kind payments did not meet net school spending requirements in fiscal years 2014, 2015, and 2016.**

1. From fiscal years 2014-2016, the city's appropriations to the district and its in-kind payments did not meet net school spending requirements with shortfalls each year, as follows:
  - a. Fiscal year 2014: \$3,386, 576
  - b. Fiscal year 2015: \$ 2,205, 457
  - c. Fiscal year 2016: \$ 1, 366,141
2. School and city administrators reported that in attempts to reduce the gap in the net school spending appropriations over the past three years the city provided additional appropriations from free cash in the fall and spring of approximately \$4 million in fiscal year 2015, \$2.6 million in fiscal year 2016, and \$1.5 million in fiscal year 2017. State Department of Revenue data indicated that the city's free cash of \$5,195,610 for fiscal year 2017 is enough to cover the gap in net school spending appropriations.
3. Chapter 70 state education aid for the city was \$105,744,811 for fiscal year 2016, enough to fund 79 percent of required net school spending.

#### **B. Interviewees noted a variety of reasons for the gap in funding.**

1. District and city administrators reported confusion and differences of opinion about how to apply the district and city's agreement on indirect costs, noting that two sections of the current agreement contradict each other.
  - a. These differences include areas such as the calculation of pensions, the inclusion of legal costs, and the uncertainties in costs of health insurance and workmen's compensation.
  - b. District and city administrators reported they are working to revise and clarify the agreement.
  - c. In its self-assessment submitted in advance of the onsite, the district rated assigning municipal charges for indirect costs as "Somewhat Well" described by the indicator "District and municipal leaders agree on a method for assigning education-related

municipal costs to net school spending.” (Possible responses were Not at All Well, Somewhat Well, Well, and Very Well.)

2. School and city administrators noted that escalating charter school and choice tuitions (from \$7.9 million in fiscal year 2013 to \$10.9 million in fiscal year 2015) contributed to pressures on available funds to fund the district.
  3. They reported that officials’ knowledge and understanding of areas such as reporting charter and choice tuitions and inaccurate budgets for health insurance costs affected their estimates and calculations of net school spending. For example, in fiscal year 2016 the costs of health insurance exceeded the original budget by over \$4 million. District leaders reported that \$2.6 million was “originally budgeted and reduced, as the funds were promised through supplemental appropriations from the city.”
  4. Administrators and city officials reported that negotiations over the allocation of funding to the district have been difficult and complicated; for example, health insurance costs were assigned to the school budget in fiscal year 2016, but taken back by the city in negotiations over school budget cuts with a new mayor in fiscal year 2017.
    - a. In its self-assessment the district rated its work with city officials to meet net school spending obligations as “Somewhat Well” described by the indicator “The district meets or exceeds net school spending. If the district does not meet net school spending, district and municipal leaders work together to plan to meet that requirement.”
    - b. In its self-assessment the district indicated its understanding of municipal officials’ approach to determining the district’s appropriation as “Not at all Well” described by the indicator “District leaders understand municipal leaders’ approach to determining the district’s appropriation.”
    - c. The new superintendent reported that he does not have regular meetings with the mayor, but said that he has met with him informally to begin building relationships with him and other city officials.
  5. There has been no active city finance committee to hold informal discussions on the school budget.
- C.** The underfunding of education in the district and the instabilities in the budget have affected educational programs and services in the district.
1. The superintendent reported that he has already had to freeze spending this year because some anticipated funding has not been appropriated and he needs to know where the district stands in the current budget.
  2. Administrators reported that because of budget cuts in 2016 the district lost 46 positions, extended learning time, and other services.

- a. The revised FY17 (May 2016) proposed school committee budget indicated cuts in teachers, administrative staff, and custodians, and as previously noted, more cuts followed after the city approved the school budget.
3. Administrators, teachers, and improvement plans described needs in the district because of budget cuts and limited funding, such as class size, co-teaching, counselors, technology infrastructure, and materials.
4. Supplementary funding comes in too late in the year to effectively fund educational programs; it has been used for technology and other expenses. For example, in fiscal year 2015 the district received a supplemental appropriation of \$4 million, and in fiscal year 2016 the city appropriated \$1.6 million in supplementary funding in September 2015, too late to reduce class size or meet other needs, and another \$1 million in spring 2016. In fiscal year 2017 the district expects supplementary funding of \$1.5 million in the fall, after school opens.
5. Administrators noted that because of uncertainties and cuts in the budget the district had to impose a hiring freeze and it could not hire teachers until July and August when many teachers has already accepted positions in other districts. School committee members reported that the high school opened last year with vacant math positions since some teachers had not been hired. Interviewees stated that many priorities have not been funded, such as smaller class sizes, co-teaching, interventionists, curriculum support, and adjustment counselors.

**Impact:** Years of funding below required net school spending and late supplementary funding have meant insufficient funding to ensure educationally sound programs and services for children.

**3. The city and district do not have a long-range capital plan for building repairs or replacement, and maintenance procedures are not documented.**

- A.** The city and district have taken steps to renovate and rebuild schools.
  1. According to Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) data, 10 of the district's school buildings have been built or renovated since 2000.
  2. The other seven school buildings in use date as far back as 1904.
  3. Administrators and city officials reported that the city is moving forward to renovate the high school or build a new one, and has authorized a \$1 million feasibility study.
    - a. MSBA data indicates that the high school dates to 1978.
    - b. The 2012 NEASC (New England Association of Schools and Colleges) study of the high school described the building as "tired" and identified HVAC systems, windows, roofs, and technology as near the end of their life cycles.

- c. Reviewers noted that the building has some excellent facilities for educating students, such as a planetarium, a swimming pool, and a field house. However, the building's concrete walls and open classrooms with curtains between rooms make for challenging acoustics.
  - d. City officials stated that the new high school would probably have to be approved by a debt exclusion vote, the first ever for the city.
- 4. According to a report in the *Fall River Herald*, the city and the district rebuilt the Westall School in 2015-2016, but have been unable to use it for education because of an absence of funding to open and staff it.<sup>8</sup>
- B. The city and the district do not have a long-range capital plan for school renovations and repairs.
  - 1. The 2011 ESE progress report for the district recommended that the district and the city collaborate on a long-range capital improvement plan for schools.
  - 2. Administrators and city officials reported that there is no up-to-date long-range capital plan identifying and prioritizing the needs of school facilities; the last plan was done in 1988. There is, however, a city list of prioritized projects including roofs and major repairs.
  - 3. The new superintendent and the school committee have included a long-range capital plan for the district as one of their proposed goals for fiscal year 2017.
  - 4. Administrators pointed out that repairs for the newer buildings cost more than those for the older buildings, and repairs are continually being identified.
- C. Administrators reported that the district does not have a documented schedule for preventive maintenance.

**Impact:** The district and city support for new and renovated schools has made state-of-the-art educational spaces and technology available to some students, contributing to their educational opportunities. However, the absence of long-range capital planning and of a schedule for routine maintenance inhibits the prioritization of needed school repair and renovation, postpones needed improvements in some schools, and means that a clean, safe, appropriate, and adequate learning environment is not available to all students and staff.

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<sup>8</sup> See article in the *Fall River Herald*, February 23, 2016.

## Recommendations

- 1. The city should fund the district at the required net school spending level, and it should do so at the time the city budget is approved in June in order to provide for proper planning and hiring for the upcoming school year.**
  - A.** The city and the district should base their budget development process during the spring on meeting the net school spending requirement.
    1. Finalizing the city and district agreement on indirect costs is essential to an accurate calculation of required net school spending.
    2. Accurate projections of several education related costs, including health insurance and charter school tuitions, are also necessary.
  - B.** The city should ensure that the net school spending requirement is met by the budget passed in June rather than relying on supplementary appropriations later in the year.
    1. A June appropriation sufficient to open and operate the schools is essential to preparing adequate staffing and programs for September.
    2. A reallocation of some city resources may be necessary to fully fund the schools in June.
    3. The city may need to appropriate extra funding in the current or upcoming year to cover the carryover for the unmet requirement from previous years, but once the carryover is covered budgeting for subsequent years should be easier.

**Benefits:** Implementing this recommendation will enable the city to meet the net school spending requirement and will mean predictable and stable funding available in June to properly recruit quality staff and open the schools in September.

### Recommended resource:

- ESE's *Chapter 70 Program* web page (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/chapter70/>) provides information, resources, and updates about the Chapter 70 program.
- 2. The district, in collaboration with the city, should pursue its goal to develop a capital facilities master plan, and it should consider documenting preventive maintenance requirements for district buildings and infrastructure.**
    - A.** The district and the city should base the capital plan on previous and ongoing reviews of all school building needs. The plan should include financial estimates of the costs involved, priorities for recommended renovations and major repairs, and a reasonable schedule for them.
      1. The proposed renovations for the high school should be among those considered.
      2. The district may wish to include technology infrastructure requirements as well.

**B.** A schedule of routine preventive maintenance needs for school buildings should be considered.

1. The schedule should refer to current and needed maintenance service contracts, including those for HVAC and other equipment, roofs, and grounds.

**Benefits:** Implementing this recommendation will mean sound planning practices that will ensure that clean, safe, appropriate, and adequate learning environments are available to all Fall Rivers' students and staff.

**Recommended resources:**

- ESE's *School Building Issues* web page (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/sbuilding/>) includes funding opportunities, guidelines, and resources related to school buildings.
- *Primer on Levy Limits/Proposition 2 ½* (<http://www.mass.gov/dor/docs/dls/publ/misc/levylimits.pdf>) is a guide from the Department of Revenue website designed to explain the basic provisions of Proposition 2 ½. The Primer focuses in particular on those aspects of the law that have been found to cause the most confusion, for example: the ways in which Proposition 2 ½ limits the property tax, how the levy limit is calculated, how an override differs from a debt exclusion or capital outlay expenditure exclusion, and how new growth works.
- *Planning Guide for Maintaining School Facilities* (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2003347>), from the National Center for Education Statistics, is intended to help school districts plan for efficient and effective operations. It addresses various topics, including conducting a facilities audit, planning and evaluating maintenance, and managing staff and contractors.
- *The Massachusetts School Checklist* (<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/environmental-health/exposure-topics/iaq/iaq-methods/the-mass-school-checklist.html>) is a list of the most important environmental health and safety issues for schools to address. It includes regulations and industry standards/guidelines related to elements on the checklist, as well as additional resources.
- The Green Ribbon Schools Award honors schools that are exemplary in reducing environmental impact and costs, improving the health and wellness of students and staff, and delivering effective environmental and sustainability education. The district might find several related resources useful, including Massachusetts' *Green Ribbon Schools Award Resource Guide* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/sbuilding/GreenRibbon/ResourcesGuide.pdf>) and the US Department of Education's *Green Strides* resource list (<http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/green-strides/resources.html>).
- MassEnergyInsight (<https://www.massenergyinsight.net/home>) is a free, web-based tool made available by the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources as part of the Massachusetts Green Communities Program. The tool is designed to help communities learn about and monitor energy use and related costs, plan energy efficiency programs, and communicate this information.

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

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### Review Team Members

The review was conducted from October 17-10, 2016, by the following team of independent ESE consultants.

1. Dr. James Caradonio, leadership and governance
2. Michele Kingsland-Smith, curriculum and instruction
3. Dr. James McAuliffe, assessment
4. Dr. Frank Sambuceti, human resources and professional development
5. Lenora Jennings, student support, *review team coordinator*
6. Dr. George Gearhart, financial and asset management
7. Dr. Charles Burnett, classroom observations only
8. Dr. Linda Denault, classroom observations only

### District Review Activities

The following activities were conducted during the review:

The team conducted interviews with the following financial personnel: chief financial officer, finance manager, city chief financial officer.

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

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

The team conducted interviews/focus groups with the following central office administrators: superintendent, assistant superintendent/chief academic officer, chief financial officer, chief operating officer, executive director of human resources, and the executive director of special education and student services.

The team visited the following schools: North End, Letourneau, Borden, and Greene (Pre-K-grade 5); Watson, Viveiros, Fonseca, and Tansey (kindergarten-grade 5); Lord, Doran and Stone, (kindergarten-grade 8); Morton, Kuss, and Talbot (grades 6-8); and Durfee and Resiliency high schools (grades 9-12).

During school visits, the team conducted interviews with 16 principals and focus groups with 8 elementary-school teachers, 5 middle-school teachers, and zero high-school teachers.



The team observed 170 classes in the district: 39 at the high schools, 43 at the schools serving grades 6-8, and 88 at the elementary schools.

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

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

## Site Visit Schedule

Monday 10/17/2016	Tuesday 10/18/2016	Wednesday 10/19/2016	Thursday 10/20/2016
Orientation with district leaders and principals; interviews with district staff and principals; document reviews; and visits to Tansey, Greene, Viveiros, Doran, Talbot, and Durfee for classroom observations.	Interviews with district staff and principals; review of personnel files; teacher focus groups; parent focus group; student focus group interview with the teachers' association and town officials; and visits to Stone, Fonseca, North End, Kuss, Greene, and Resiliency and Durfee for classroom observations.	Interviews with school leaders; interviews with school committee members; visits to Letourneau, Greene, Morton, Lord, Talbot, Fonseca, Watson, Viveiros, North End, and Durfee for classroom observations.	District review team meeting and final review of documents; visits to Watson, Durfee, Doran, Lord, Borden, and Morton for classroom observations; district wrap-up meeting with the superintendent.

## Appendix B: Enrollment, Performance, Expenditures

**Table B1a: Fall River Public Schools  
2015–2016 Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity**

Student Group	District	Percent of Total	State	Percent of Total
African-American	754	7.4%	83,481	8.8%
Asian	434	4.3%	61,584	6.5%
Hispanic	2,376	23.5%	176,873	18.6%
Native American	24	0.2%	2,179	0.2%
White	5,862	57.9%	597,502	62.7%
Native Hawaiian	6	0.1%	888	0.1%
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	667	6.6%	30,922	3.2%
<b>All Students</b>	<b>10,123</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>953,429</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Note: As of October 1, 2015

**Table B1b: Fall River Public Schools  
2015–2016 Student Enrollment by High Needs Populations**

Student Groups	District			State		
	N	Percent of High Needs	Percent of District	N	Percent of High Needs	Percent of State
Students w/ disabilities	1,942	27.2%	18.9%	165,559	39.4%	17.2%
Econ. Disad.	5,978	83.6%	59.1%	260,998	62.2%	27.4%
ELLs and Former ELLs	962	13.5%	9.5%	85,763	20.4%	9.0%
All high needs students	7,150	100.0%	69.7%	419,764	100.0%	43.5%

Notes: As of October 1, 2015. District and state numbers and percentages for students with disabilities and high needs students are calculated including students in out-of-district placements. Total district enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 10,265; total state enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 964,026.

**Table B2a: Fall River Public Schools  
English Language Arts Performance, 2013–2016**

Grade and Measure		Number Included (2016)	Spring MCAS Year					Gains and Declines	
			2013	2014	2015	2016	State (2016)	4-Year Trend	2-Year Trend
3	CPI	895	72.8	71.6	71.9	73.2	--	0.4	1.3
	P+	895	34%	39%	38%	39%	--	5%	1%
4	CPI	814	67.6	69.9	70.1	71.5	--	3.9	1.4
	P+	814	36%	37%	38%	45%	--	9%	7%
	SGP	722	49	51	52	59	--	10	7
5	CPI	866	74.1	76.9	78.2	78.3	--	4.2	0.1
	P+	866	47%	48%	52%	50%	--	3%	-2%
	SGP	770	52	51	52	47	--	-5	-5
6	CPI	751	71.4	75.3	75.2	75.0	--	3.6	-0.2
	P+	751	42%	48%	49%	50%	--	8%	1%
	SGP	629	44	52	47	39	--	-5	-8
7	CPI	764	78.1	77.3	76.8	80.1	--	2	3.3
	P+	764	51%	51%	50%	57%	--	6%	7%
	SGP	645	51	49.5	44	61	--	10	17
8	CPI	757	78.2	81.1	81.4	80.1	--	1.9	-1.3
	P+	757	54%	60%	58%	58%	--	4%	0%
	SGP	678	42	49	52	50	--	8	-2
10	CPI	561	92	90.6	92.8	92.2	96.7	0.2	-0.6
	P+	561	80%	78%	83%	79%	91%	-1%	-4%
	SGP	411	55	41	55.5	55	50.0	0	-0.5
All	CPI	5,408	75.5	76.9	77.2	77.9	--	2.4	0.7
	P+	5,408	47%	50%	51%	53%	--	6%	2%
	SGP	3,855	49	49	50	51	--	2	1

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

**Table B2b: Fall River Public Schools  
Mathematics Performance, 2013–2016**

Grade and Measure		Number Included (2016)	Spring MCAS Year					Gains and Declines	
			2013	2014	2015	2016	State (2016)	4-Year Trend	2-Year Trend
3	CPI	894	72	73.4	74.9	75.8	--	3.8	0.9
	P+	894	44%	49%	55%	55%	--	11%	0%
4	CPI	811	68.6	70.3	70.3	74.3	--	5.7	4
	P+	811	30%	36%	36%	43%	--	13%	7%
	SGP	721	57	53	55.5	62	--	5	6.5
5	CPI	876	68.7	72.2	74.6	71.9	--	3.2	-2.7
	P+	876	43%	47%	50%	47%	--	4%	-3%
	SGP	775	52	63.5	62	58	--	6	-4
6	CPI	751	63.6	68.5	67.2	67.8	--	4.2	0.6
	P+	751	34%	43%	41%	39%	--	5%	-2%
	SGP	628	43.5	56.5	53	50	--	6.5	-3
7	CPI	764	57.3	54	62.1	58.8	--	1.5	-3.3
	P+	764	27%	25%	36%	31%	--	4%	-5%
	SGP	644	44	49	52	45	--	1	-7
8	CPI	751	60.2	65.5	65.3	63.2	--	3	-2.1
	P+	751	32%	37%	39%	36%	--	4%	-3%
	SGP	675	35	64.5	63	40	--	5	-23
10	CPI	571	77.8	76.6	77.2	74.3	89.7	-3.5	-2.9
	P+	571	57%	54%	57%	47%	78%	-10%	-10%
	SGP	421	30.0	27.0	31.0	24.0	50%	-6.0	-7.0
All	CPI	5,418	66.5	68.5	70.1	69.5	--	3	-0.6
	P+	5,418	37%	41%	44%	43%	--	6%	-1%
	SGP	3,864	45	53	54	48	--	3	-6

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

**Table B2c: Fall River Public Schools  
Science and Technology/Engineering Performance, 2013–2016**

Grade and Measure		Number Included (2016)	Spring MCAS Year					Gains and Declines	
			2013	2014	2015	2016	State (2016)	4-Year Trend	2-Year Trend
5	CPI	876	63.9	69.9	71.6	67.8	76.4	3.9	-3.8
	P+	876	28%	38%	37%	31%	47%	3%	-6%
8	CPI	748	54.9	63.5	58.7	60.2	71.3	5.3	1.5
	P+	748	19%	28%	25%	25%	41%	6%	0%
10	CPI	527	77.9	77.4	78.0	78.0	88.9	0.1	0
	P+	527	53%	48%	51%	48%	73%	-5%	-3%
All	CPI	2,151	63.9	69.4	68.3	67.7	78.7	3.8	-0.6
	P+	2,151	31%	37%	36%	33%	54%	2%	-3%

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

**Table B3a: Fall River Public Schools  
English Language Arts (All Grades)  
Performance for Selected Subgroups Compared to State, 2013–2016**

Group and Measure			Number Included (2016)	Spring MCAS Year				Gains and Declines	
				2013	2014	2015	2016	4-Year Trend	2-Year Trend
High Needs	District	CPI	4,006	71.9	73.6	72.4	73.4	1.5	1
		P+	4,006	41%	44%	42%	44%	3%	2%
		SGP	2,762	48.0	49.0	48.0	50.0	2.0	2.0
	State	CPI	--	76.8	77.1	79.5	--	--	--
		P+	--	48%	50%	55%	--	--	--
		SGP	--	47.0	47.0	47.0	--	--	--
Econ. Disad.	District	CPI	3,590	--	--	73.6	74.6	74.6	1.0
		P+	3,590	--	--	44%	47%	47%	3%
		SGP	2,502	--	--	48.0	50.0	50.0	2.0
	State	CPI	--	--	--	80.9	--	--	--
		P+	--	--	--	59%	--	--	--
		SGP	--	--	--	47.0	--	--	--
Students w/ disabilities	District	CPI	1,200	55.2	55.0	56.5	56.1	0.9	-0.4
		P+	1,200	13%	14%	14%	15%	2%	1%
		SGP	729	42.0	42.0	39.0	43.0	1.0	4.0
	State	CPI	--	66.8	66.6	71.6	--	--	--
		P+	--	30%	31%	39%	--	--	--
		SGP	--	43.0	43.0	44.0	--	--	--
English language learners or Former ELLs	District	CPI	657	51.7	55.1	56.1	61.2	9.5	5.1
		P+	657	14%	19%	23%	28%	14%	5%
		SGP	423	50.5	51.5	54.0	54.0	3.5	0.0
	State	CPI	--	67.4	67.8	70.1	--	--	--
		P+	--	35%	36%	41%	--	--	--
		SGP	--	53.0	54.0	54.0	--	--	--
All students	District	CPI	5,408	75.5	76.9	77.2	77.9	2.4	0.7
		P+	5,408	47%	50%	51%	53%	6%	2%
		SGP	3,855	49.0	49.0	50.0	51.0	2.0	1.0
	State	CPI	--	86.8	86.7	89.3	--	--	--
		P+	--	69%	69%	75%	--	--	--
		SGP	--	51.0	50.0	50.0	--	--	--

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

**Table B3b: Fall River Public Schools**  
**Mathematics (All Grades)**  
**Performance for Selected Subgroups Compared to State, 2013–2016**

Group and Measure			Number Included (2016)	Spring MCAS Year				Gains and Declines	
				2013	2014	2015	2016	4-Year Trend	2-Year Trend
High Needs	District	CPI	4,016	62.5	65.0	65.0	64.4	1.9	-0.6
		P+	4,016	32%	36%	36%	35%	3%	-1%
		SGP	2,773	44.0	53.0	52.0	48.0	4.0	-4.0
	State	CPI	--	68.6	68.4	70.2	--	--	--
		P+	--	40%	40%	43%	--	--	--
		SGP	--	46	47	47	--	--	--
Economically Disadvantaged	District	CPI	3,592	--	--	66.1	65.6	65.6	-0.5
		P+	3,592	--	--	38%	37%	37%	-1%
		SGP	2,510	--	--	53.0	48.0	48.0	-5.0
	State	CPI	--	--	--	71.9	--	--	--
		P+	--	--	--	47.0%	--	--	--
		SGP	--	--	--	46	--	--	--
Students w/ disabilities	District	CPI	1,207	47.8	48.0	48.8	47.6	-0.2	-1.2
		P+	1,207	11%	10%	11%	11%	0%	0%
		SGP	738	39.0	43.0	44.0	43.0	4.0	-1.0
	State	CPI	--	57.4	57.1	60	--	--	--
		P+	--	22.0%	22.0%	27.0%	--	--	--
		SGP	--	42	43	44	--	--	--
English language learners or Former ELLs	District	CPI	665	47.1	49.5	54.6	53.6	6.5	-1.0
		P+	665	14%	20%	25%	23%	9%	-2%
		SGP	425	51.0	55.0	56.0	50.0	-1.0	-6.0
	State	CPI	--	63.9	63.8	64.4	--	--	--
		P+	--	35.0%	36.0%	37.0%	--	--	--
		SGP	--	53	52	50	--	--	--
All students	District	CPI	5,418	66.5	68.5	70.1	69.5	3.0	-0.6
		P+	5,418	37%	41%	44%	43%	6%	-1%
		SGP	3,864	45.0	53.0	54.0	48.0	3.0	-6.0
	State	CPI	--	80.8	80.3	83.1	--	--	--
		P+	--	61.0%	60.0%	66.0%	--	--	--
		SGP	--	51	50	50	--	--	--

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

**Table B3c: Fall River Public Schools  
Science and Technology/Engineering (All Grades)  
Performance for Selected Subgroups Compared to State, 2013–2016**

Group and Measure			Number Included (2016)	Spring MCAS Year				Gains and Declines	
				2013	2014	2015	2016	4-Year Trend	2-Year Trend
High Needs	District	CPI	1,568	59.3	65.4	62.5	63.1	3.8	0.6
		P+	1,568	23%	30%	26%	26%	3%	0%
	State	CPI	89,857	66.4	67.3	66.3	65.4	-1	-0.9
		P+	89,857	31%	33%	32%	31%	0%	-1%
Econ. Disadv.	District	CPI	1,402	--	--	63.4	64.3	64.3	0.9
		P+	1,402	--	--	28%	28%	28%	0%
	State	CPI	61,476	--	--	67.1	65.8	--	-1.3
		P+	61,476	--	--	33.0%	29%	--	-4%
Students w/ disabilities	District	CPI	472	47	50.7	50.7	51.1	4.1	0.4
		P+	472	7%	8%	10%	7%	0%	-3%
	State	CPI	38,109	59.8	60.1	60.2	59.7	-0.1	-0.5
		P+	38,109	20%	22%	22%	21%	1%	-1%
English language learners or Former ELLs	District	CPI	251	39.1	44.6	46.1	49.5	10.4	3.4
		P+	251	5%	9%	10%	14%	9%	4%
	State	CPI	18,594	54	54	53.9	54.1	0.1	0.2
		P+	18,594	19%	18%	18%	19%	0%	1%
All students	District	CPI	2,151	63.9	69.4	68.3	67.7	3.8	-0.6
		P+	2,151	31%	37%	36%	33%	2%	-3%
	State	CPI	208,262	79	79.6	79.4	78.7	-0.3	-0.7
		P+	208,262	53%	55%	54%	54%	1%	0%

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



**Table B4: Fall River Public Schools  
Annual Grade 9-12 Drop-Out Rates, 2012–2015**

Group	School Year Ending				Change 2012–2015		Change 2014–2015		State (2015)
	2012	2013	2014	2015	Percentage Points	Percent Change	Percentage Points	Percent Change	
High Needs	5.0	5.9	5.7	6.3	1.3	26%	0.6	11%	3.4
Econ. Disadv. <sup>9</sup>	4.8	5.7	5.3	5.4	--	--	--	--	3.3
Students w/ disabilities	8.1	9.4	6.9	8.1	0	0%	1.2	17%	3.5
ELL	2.9	0.0	5.2	5.8	2.9	100%	0.6	12%	5.7
All students	4.6	5.1	5.3	5.5	0.9	20%	0.2	4%	1.9

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

**Table B5: Fall River Public Schools  
Attendance Rates, 2013–2016**

Group	School Year Ending				Change 2013–2016		Change 2015–2016		State (2016)
	2013	2014	2015	2016	Percentage Points	Percent Change	Percentage Points	Percent Change	
All students	91.5%	91.6%	91.6%	91.8%	0.3	0.3%	0.2	0.2%	94.9%

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

<sup>9</sup> Low income numbers used for economically disadvantaged for 2012, 2013, 2014

**Table B6: Fall River Public Schools  
Expenditures, Chapter 70 State Aid, and Net School Spending Fiscal Years 2014–2016**

	FY14		FY15		FY16	
	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual
<b>Expenditures</b>						
From local appropriations for schools:						
By school committee	\$91,000,000	\$91,000,000	\$101,687,579	\$100,687,188	\$121,507,526	--
By municipality	\$48,655,067	\$46,214,521	\$49,793,789	\$47,073,922	\$32,971,428	--
Total from local appropriations	\$139,655,067	\$137,214,521	\$151,481,368	\$147,761,110	\$154,478,954	--
From revolving funds and grants	--	\$24,351,064	--	\$22,635,116	--	--
Total expenditures	--	\$161,565,585	--	\$170,396,226	--	--
<b>Chapter 70 aid to education program</b>						
Chapter 70 state aid*	--	\$100,236,570	--	\$102,929,032	--	\$105,744,811
Required local contribution	--	\$22,747,952	--	\$26,812,200	--	\$27,423,906
Required net school spending**	--	\$122,984,522	--	\$129,741,232	--	\$133,168,717
Actual net school spending	--	\$119,597,943	--	\$127,535,775	--	\$131,802,576
Over/under required (\$)	--	-\$3,386,579	--	-\$2,205,457	--	-\$1,366,144
Over/under required (%)	--	-2.8%	--	-1.7%	--	-1.0%

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

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

Sources: FY13, FY14, and FY15 District End-of-Year Reports, Chapter 70 Program information on ESE website

Data retrieved 11/4/16

**Table B7: Fall River Public Schools  
Expenditures Per In-District Pupil  
Fiscal Years 2013–2015**

<b>Expenditure Category</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
Administration	\$412	\$412	\$520
Instructional leadership (district and school)	\$774	\$873	\$964
Teachers	\$4,812	\$4,447	\$4,731
Other teaching services	\$772	\$839	\$842
Professional development	\$442	\$366	\$398
Instructional materials, equipment and technology	\$316	\$326	\$329
Guidance, counseling and testing services	\$360	\$381	\$417
Pupil services	\$1,165	\$1,424	\$1,553
Operations and maintenance	\$973	\$1,023	\$1,182
Insurance, retirement and other fixed costs	\$3,113	\$3,008	\$2,830
Total expenditures per in-district pupil	\$13,139	\$13,100	\$13,766

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

Note: Any discrepancy between expenditures and total is because of rounding.

## Appendix C: Instructional Inventory

<b>Focus Area #1: Learning Objectives &amp; Instruction</b>		Insufficient	Minimal	Moderate	Strong	Avg Number of points
		(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(0 to 3)
1. The teacher demonstrates knowledge of subject matter and content.	<b>ES</b>	1%	5%	39%	56%	2.5
	<b>MS</b>	0%	5%	7%	88%	2.8
	<b>HS</b>	3%	13%	31%	54%	2.4
	<b>Total #</b>	2	11	49	108	2.5
	<b>Total %</b>	1%	6%	29%	64%	
2. The teacher provides and refers to clear learning objective(s) in the lesson.	<b>ES</b>	6%	18%	41%	35%	2.1
	<b>MS</b>	2%	14%	16%	67%	2.5
	<b>HS</b>	5%	26%	28%	41%	2.1
	<b>Total #</b>	8	32	54	76	2.2
	<b>Total %</b>	5%	19%	32%	45%	
3. The teacher implements a lesson that reflects high expectations aligned to the learning objective (s).	<b>ES</b>	1%	13%	57%	30%	2.1
	<b>MS</b>	2%	12%	26%	60%	2.4
	<b>HS</b>	13%	23%	26%	38%	1.9
	<b>Total #</b>	7	25	71	67	2.2
	<b>Total %</b>	4%	15%	42%	39%	
4. The teacher uses appropriate instructional strategies well matched to the learning objective(s).	<b>ES</b>	1%	14%	51%	34%	2.2
	<b>MS</b>	2%	12%	21%	65%	2.5
	<b>HS</b>	10%	15%	31%	44%	2.1
	<b>Total #</b>	6	23	66	75	2.2
	<b>Total %</b>	4%	14%	39%	44%	
<b>Total Score For Focus Area #1</b>	<b>ES</b>	8	43	165	136	<b>8.9</b>
	<b>MS</b>	3	18	30	121	<b>10.3</b>
	<b>HS</b>	12	30	45	69	<b>8.4</b>
	<b>Total</b>	23	64	240	326	<b>9.1</b>

<b>Focus Area #2: Student Engagement &amp; Critical Thinking</b>		Insufficient	Minimal	Moderate	Strong	Avg Number of points
		(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(0 to 3)
5. Students are motivated and engaged in the lesson.	<b>ES</b>	2%	14%	42%	42%	2.2
	<b>MS</b>	2%	12%	37%	49%	2.3
	<b>HS</b>	5%	26%	38%	31%	1.9
	<b>Total #</b>	5	27	68	70	2.2
	<b>Total %</b>	3%	16%	40%	41%	
6. The teacher facilitates tasks that encourage students to develop and engage in critical thinking.	<b>ES</b>	5%	31%	40%	25%	1.9
	<b>MS</b>	7%	12%	23%	58%	2.3
	<b>HS</b>	8%	28%	23%	41%	2.0
	<b>Total #</b>	10	43	54	63	2.0
	<b>Total %</b>	6%	25%	32%	37%	
7. Students assume responsibility for their own learning whether individually, in pairs, or in groups.	<b>ES</b>	1%	17%	35%	47%	2.3
	<b>MS</b>	2%	12%	40%	47%	2.3
	<b>HS</b>	8%	26%	33%	33%	1.9
	<b>Total #</b>	5	30	61	74	2.2
	<b>Total %</b>	3%	18%	36%	44%	
<b>Total Score For Focus Area #2</b>	<b>ES</b>	7	54	103	100	<b>6.4</b>
	<b>MS</b>	5	15	43	66	<b>7.0</b>
	<b>HS</b>	8	31	37	41	<b>5.8</b>
	<b>Total</b>	20	100	183	207	<b>6.4</b>

<b>Focus Area #3: Differentiated Instruction &amp; Classroom Culture</b>		Insufficient	Minimal	Moderate	Strong	Avg Number of points
		(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(0 to 3)
8. The teacher appropriately differentiates instruction so the lesson content is accessible for all learners.	<b>ES</b>	10%	33%	39%	18%	1.6
	<b>MS</b>	7%	9%	21%	63%	2.4
	<b>HS</b>	13%	36%	21%	31%	1.7
	<b>Total #</b>	17	47	51	55	1.8
	<b>Total %</b>	10%	28%	30%	32%	
9. The teacher uses appropriate resources aligned to students' diverse learning needs. (e.g., technology, manipulatives, support personnel).	<b>ES</b>	6%	27%	43%	24%	1.9
	<b>MS</b>	7%	2%	23%	67%	2.5
	<b>HS</b>	13%	26%	28%	33%	1.8
	<b>Total #</b>	13	35	59	63	2.0
	<b>Total %</b>	8%	21%	35%	37%	
10. The classroom climate is characterized by respectful behavior, routines, tone, and discourse.	<b>ES</b>	2%	15%	33%	50%	2.3
	<b>MS</b>	5%	9%	21%	65%	2.5
	<b>HS</b>	10%	10%	33%	46%	2.2
	<b>Total #</b>	8	21	51	90	2.3
	<b>Total %</b>	5%	12%	30%	53%	
11. The teacher conducts appropriate formative assessments to check for understanding and provide feedback to students.	<b>ES</b>	7%	17%	40%	36%	2.1
	<b>MS</b>	7%	7%	21%	65%	2.4
	<b>HS</b>	3%	26%	28%	44%	2.1
	<b>Total #</b>	10	28	55	77	2.2
	<b>Total %</b>	6%	16%	32%	45%	
<b>Total Score For Focus Area #3</b>	<b>ES</b>	22	81	136	113	<b>7.9</b>
	<b>MS</b>	11	12	37	112	<b>9.8</b>
	<b>HS</b>	15	38	43	60	<b>7.8</b>
	<b>Total</b>	48	131	216	285	<b>8.3</b>