

District Review Report

Gloucester Public Schools

Review conducted December 7–10, 2015

Center for District and School Accountability

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and
Secondary Education

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Executive Summary

Strengths

District and school leaders have guided a number of improvement efforts using a thoughtful and clear set of priorities and initiatives. These include: more coherent and unified instructional programs and processes; the use of data to support and shape instruction and interventions as well as set policy, allocate resources, and deploy staff; research-based instructional practices; meeting the needs of individual students; and creating a culture of collaboration and collegiality. Districtwide, there is solid curricular and instructional leadership led by K-8 literacy and math coordinators and K-5 curriculum teams, interventionists, and coaches, consultants, and program leaders at the high school.

A coherent, systematic approach to the instructional core has gained traction at the elementary level partly with the support of the Bay State Reading Initiative (BSRI) to teach literacy and recently in 2014 with the implementation of a new mathematics program. The district credits BSRI for having established the use of data to monitor progress and make instructional and curricular decisions for literacy K-5. These experiences with data analysis have also influenced how teachers now use data in mathematics instruction K-5. At the elementary level, data literacy is embedded in the culture and in how teachers conduct their work. In observed classrooms at the elementary level, there were stronger instructional practices related to matching lesson strategies to lesson objectives, higher-order thinking, student engagement, and the use of formative assessments, among others.

Each secondary school has prioritized a unifying concept to support the academic program. At the middle school, an Innovation School, students participate in grade-level, project-based learning. At the high school, teachers have initiated and are spearheading an inquiry-based model of lesson design, using the Stripling Model of Inquiry.

Coherence has been a consideration in the district's development of consistent school-based teams to use data and information to identify students in need of academic support and intervention. The district views this as an ongoing process and continually seeks improved strategies and best practices to ensure that all students receive the attention and support that they need.

With new leadership in the business office, the district now can ensure that its financial systems are transparent and collaborative. School leaders participate in the budget process and the budget is developed to maximize available funding based on improvement needs and the analysis of achievement and other data. Communication with citizens and city leaders is open and takes place during bi-monthly meetings between the superintendent and city managers.

Challenges and Areas for Growth

Although the improvement priorities are clearly articulated at the district level and understood at the school levels, some school improvement plans are not well aligned with key district goals. In addition, the district is struggling with an outflow of choice students to neighboring school districts and the loss of more than \$1.6 million in tuition payments.

While there were examples of high-quality, standards-based instruction in the 38 observed lessons at the secondary level, the review team found a lower incidence of characteristics of high-quality, standards-based instruction in grades 6-12 than at the elementary level. In addition, although there is plentiful achievement data and student information at the secondary level, the use of data analysis to inform and guide decision-making in the academic program for grades 6-12 is not as systematic as it is at the elementary level. The district has not developed a coherent science education program at the elementary level.

A key challenge in human resources management surfaced in the review of a random sample of teachers' evaluations. Although the language for educator evaluation in the district's collective bargaining agreement (CBA) is closely aligned with the language contained in the state's model collective bargaining contract language, the district has not achieved consistency in the implementation of its educator evaluation system. For example, in some cases, evaluators are not observing teachers as many times as the district's CBA requires. In addition, teachers told the team that they find the evaluation system difficult and question whether it has improved their practice. And teachers' evaluations do not consistently include feedback designed to contribute to the professional growth of the educator.

Professional development (PD) planning has also not been structured to maximize professional growth. The district does not have a PD committee or plan and there is no mechanism to evaluate the effectiveness of PD activities. Although the district has developed intervention and support programs, retention and attendance are of concern at the high school and the district is struggling to develop a high-quality and systematic approach to addressing the needs of its English language learners (ELLs). With the recent influx of new ELLs, particularly this school year, the district is aware of the needs and has made a start; however, it has not put in place the systems, practices, dedicated learning spaces, and adequate trained ESL staff to work with these students.

Although the budget process is transparent, there is a "tradition" of uncertainty about funding and differences in the timing of budget planning between the schools and the city that have complicated budgeting. This uncertainty has led to a series of one-year teacher collective bargaining agreements, requiring energy and attention to be directed at negotiations yearly. In addition, since the city assumed responsibility for all school maintenance, there is an absence of clarity about how maintenance costs are determined. This also complicates budget development. Finally, the age and condition of many of the school buildings---particularly at the elementary level---is an issue. Most were built in the middle of the last century. One new elementary school is currently under construction and will be ready in the fall of

2016. The schools and the city have recently formed a committee to explore options for updating the school buildings.

Recommendations

The review team recommends that district leaders:

- Further develop, align, and coordinate planning between the district and school levels
- Develop an aligned science curriculum K-5
- Develop and support a higher level of consistency in effective standards-based instructional practices at the secondary level
- Set higher expectations and establish procedures for the analysis and use of data to guide decision-making at the middle and high schools
- Strengthen policies, practices, and procedures in the district's educator evaluation system to support educator development and enhance the overall effectiveness of its implementation
- Form a collaborative systemwide professional development committee to address PD needs that balance improvement goals and priorities at both the district and school levels
- Strengthen systems and practices that address the teaching of and learning needs of ELLs
- Revise the district's attendance policy to improve students' attendance and take appropriate steps to improve retention and chronic absence rates
- Come to agreement with city leaders on the short- and long-term educational priorities that will shape future budget development and address capital needs

Gloucester Public Schools District Review Overview

Purpose

Conducted under Chapter 15, Section 55A of the Massachusetts General Laws, district reviews support local school districts in establishing or strengthening a cycle of continuous improvement. Reviews consider carefully the effectiveness of 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 2015-2016 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 Gloucester Public Schools was conducted from December 7-10, 2015. The site visit included 31.5 hours of interviews and focus groups with approximately 80 stakeholders, including school committee members, district administrators, school staff, high school students, parents, and teachers' association representatives. The review team conducted 3 focus groups with 14 elementary-school teachers, 7 middle-school teachers, and 6 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 86 classrooms in 7 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

The district has a mayor-council form of government and the chair of the school committee is elected. The seven members of the school committee meet twice a month.

The current superintendent has been in the position since the 2012 school year. The district leadership team includes an assistant superintendent, business manager, special education director, K-8 literacy coordinator, and an interim K-8 math coordinator who is providing part-time service for a vacant full-time position. Central office positions have been increasing over the past year, with the addition of an interim part-time math coordinator and a full-time literacy position. The district has 7 principals leading 7 schools and a coordinator for the preschool. There are approximately 20 other school administrators, including assistant principals, deans of students, guidance counselors, school psychologists, adjustment counselors, and behavior specialists. In school year 2014-2015, there were 264.1 FTE teachers in the district.

In the 2015-2016 school year, 2,914 students are enrolled in the district's 8 schools:

**Table 1: Gloucester Public Schools
Schools, Type, Grades Served, and Enrollment*, 2015-2016**

School Name	School Type	Grades Served	Enrollment
Milton L. Fuller Elementary School	EES	PK	90
Beeman Memorial Elementary School	ES	K-5	338
East Gloucester Elementary School	ES	K-5	249
Plum Cove Elementary School	ES	K-5	206
Veterans' Memorial Elementary School	ES	K-5	233
West Parish Elementary School	ES	K-5	320
Ralph B. O'Maley Innovation Middle School	MS	6-8	613
Gloucester High School	HS	9-12	865
Totals	8 schools	PK-12	2,914
*As of October 1, 2015			

Between 2012 and 2016 overall student enrollment decreased by 5.7 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 higher than the median in-district per pupil expenditures for 46 K-12 districts of similar size (2,000-2,999 students) in fiscal year 2014: \$14,913 as compared with \$12,747 (see [District Analysis and Review Tool Detail: Staffing & Finance](#)). Actual net school spending has been above what is required by the Chapter 70 state education aid program, as shown in Table B6 in Appendix B.

Student Performance

District and Subgroup Results

Gloucester is a Level 2 district because Beeman Memorial, East Gloucester, Veterans Memorial, and O'Maley Middle are in Level 2 for not meeting their gap narrowing targets for all students and/or high needs students.

- Plum Cove was commended for high progress for narrowing proficiency gaps.
- West Parish had low assessment participation (less than 95 percent) for economically disadvantaged students and high needs students.

**Table 2: Gloucester Public Schools
District and School PPI, Percentile, and Level 2012–2015**

School	Group	Annual PPI				Cumulative PPI	School Percentile	Accountability Level
		2012	2013	2014	2015			
EES: Fuller	All	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
	High Needs	--	--	--	--	--		
ES: Beeman Memorial	All	40	85	30	110	74	28	2
	High Needs	25	100	30	110	76		
ES: East Gloucester	All	60	40	65	55	56	58	2
	High Needs	38	31	56	69	54		
ES: Plum Cove	All	75	60	80	110	88	78	1
	High Needs	13	50	75	125	84		
ES: Veterans' Memorial	All	60	100	80	70	78	25	2
	High Needs	50	94	44	88	72		
ES: West Parish	All	105	75	90	90	89	71	1
	High Needs	81	88	94	95	92		
MS: O'Maley Middle	All	65	75	40	45	52	32	2
	High Needs	60	75	30	30	42		
HS: Gloucester High	All	79	82	93	64	78	33	1
	High Needs	61	79	82	82	79		
District	All	79	61	57	61	61		2
	High Needs	68	54	57	57	57		

In 2015 Gloucester’s ELA Composite Performance Index (CPI) was higher than the state’s CPI for all students, high needs students, and for each subgroup that makes up the high needs population.

**Table 3: Gloucester Public Schools
ELA CPI by Subgroup 2012–2015**

Group		2012	2013	2014	2015	4-Year Trend	Above/Below State 2015
All students	District	87.0	87.1	85.3	87.7	0.7	0.9
	State	86.7	86.8	86.7	86.8	0.1	
High Needs	District	78.5	78.5	78.1	79.9	1.4	3.6
	State	76.5	76.8	77.1	76.3	-0.2	
Economically Disadvantaged	District	--	--	--	82.7	--	5.1
	State	--	--	--	77.6	--	
ELL and former ELL students	District	72.3	75.0	71.9	73.5	1.2	4.6
	State	66.2	67.4	67.8	68.9	2.7	
Students with disabilities	District	68.3	67.7	67.7	69.9	1.6	2.5
	State	67.3	66.8	66.6	67.4	0.1	

In 2015 Gloucester’s math CPI was higher than the state’s CPI for all students, high needs students, and for each subgroup that makes up the high needs population; between 2012 and 2015 Gloucester’s math CPI improved for each group with reportable trend data.

**Table 4: Gloucester Public Schools
Math CPI by Subgroup 2012–2015**

Group		2012	2013	2014	2015	4- Year Trend	Above/Below State 2015
All students	District	76.8	79.6	79.0	80.8	4.0	0.1
	State	79.9	80.8	80.3	80.7	0.8	
High Needs	District	65.6	69.2	69.5	70.9	5.3	3.0
	State	67.0	68.6	68.4	67.9	0.9	
Economically Disadvantaged	District	--	--	--	73.2	--	4.0
	State	--	--	--	69.2	--	
ELL and former ELL students	District	55.9	67.2	63.6	70.1	14.2	5.6
	State	61.6	63.9	63.8	64.5	2.9	
Students with disabilities	District	54.5	57.4	58.0	62.2	7.7	4.9
	State	56.9	57.4	57.1	57.3	0.4	

In 2015 Gloucester’s science CPI was lower than the state’s CPI for all students, high needs students, and for each subgroup with reportable data that makes up the high needs population.

**Table 5: Gloucester Public Schools
Science CPI by Subgroup 2012–2015**

Group		2012	2013	2014	2015	4- Year Trend	Above/Below State 2015
All students	District	77.7	77.2	78.7	76.4	-1.3	-3.0
	State	78.6	79.0	79.6	79.4	0.8	
High Needs	District	67.7	68.6	69.2	65.1	-2.6	-1.2
	State	65.0	66.4	67.3	66.3	1.3	
Economically Disadvantaged	District	--	--	--	65.5	--	-1.6
	State	--	--	--	67.1	--	
ELL and former ELL students	District	--	--	--	--	--	--
	State	51.4	54.0	54.0	53.9	2.5	
Students with disabilities	District	58.8	60.4	61.8	57.5	-1.3	-2.7
	State	58.7	59.8	60.1	60.2	1.5	

In 2015 the district reached its 2015 CPI target in math for English language learners; between 2014 and 2015 its CPI improved but remained below target for all students, high needs students, and students with disabilities in ELA and math.

**Table 6: Gloucester Public Schools
2015 CPI and Targets by Subgroup**

Group	ELA			Math			Science		
	2015 CPI	2015 Target	Rating	2015 CPI	2015 Target	Rating	2015 CPI	2015 Target	Rating
All students	87.7	91.3	Improved Below Target	80.8	83.7	Improved Below Target	76.4	84.2	No Change
High Needs	79.9	86.1	Improved Below Target	70.9	76.4	Improved Below Target	65.1	78.4	Declined
Economically Disadvantaged ¹	82.7	--	--	73.2	--	--	65.5	--	--
ELLs	73.5	82.1	Improved Below Target	70.1	71.0	On Target	--	--	--
Students with disabilities	69.9	78.9	Improved Below Target	62.2	69.9	Improved Below Target	57.5	72.7	Declined

¹ 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 high compared to their academic peers statewide for English language learners and moderate for all students, high needs students, and students with disabilities.

**Table 7: Gloucester Public Schools
2015 Median ELA and Math SGP by Subgroup**

Group	Median ELA SGP			Median Math SGP		
	District	State	Growth Level	District	State	Growth Level
All students	51.0	50.0	Moderate	54.0	50.0	Moderate
High Needs	48.0	47.0	Moderate	53.5	46.0	Moderate
Econ. Disad.	--	--	--	--	--	--
ELLs	68.0	53.0	High	69.0	51.0	High
SWD	42.0	43.0	Moderate	52.0	43.0	Moderate

Gloucester's out-of-school suspension and in-school suspension rates were lower than the state rates for all students, high needs students, and economically disadvantaged students and its in-school suspension rate was lower for students with disabilities.

**Table 8: Gloucester Public Schools
Out-of-School and In-School Suspensions by Subgroup 2013–2015**

Group	Type of Suspension	2013	2014	2015	State 2015
High Needs	OSS	3.9%	4.2%	4.0%	4.8%
	ISS	1.1%	0.8%	0.1%	2.7%
Economically disadvantaged*	OSS	4.3%	4.6%	3.5%	5.4%
	ISS	1.3%	0.9	0.2%	2.9%
Students with disabilities	OSS	5.2%	6.2%	6.4%	6.1%
	ISS	0.8%	1.4%	0.1%	3.4%
ELLs	OSS	--	--	--	3.8%
	ISS	--	--	--	1.8%
All Students	OSS	2.8%	2.8%	2.6%	2.9%
	ISS	0.7%	0.5%	0.1%	1.8%

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

Gloucester’s four-year cohort graduation rate was higher than the state rate by 4.3 percentage points for all students and by 7.2 to 11.1 percentage points for high needs students, low income students, and students with disabilities.

**Table 9: Gloucester Public Schools
Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates 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	139	74.4%	76.9%	82.4%	87.8%	13.4	18.0%	5.4	6.6%	78.5%
Low income	112	73.8%	78.8%	84.0%	89.3%	15.5	21.0%	5.3	6.3%	78.2%
SWD	70	69.7%	63.6%	70.2%	77.1%	7.4	10.6%	6.9	9.8%	69.9%
ELLs	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	64.0%
All students	237	86.1%	83.1%	89.5%	91.6%	5.5	6.4%	2.1	2.3%	87.3%

Gloucester’s five-year cohort graduation rate was higher than the state rate by 3.0 percentage points for all students and by 0.2 to 7.2 percentage points for high needs students, low income students, and students with disabilities.

**Table 10: Gloucester Public Schools
Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates 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	125	85.4%	79.1%	83.8%	85.6%	0.2	0.2%	1.8	2.1%	80.3%
Low income	106	84.8%	79.6%	85.4%	86.8%	2.0	2.4%	1.4	1.6%	79.6%
SWD	57	77.2%	75.8%	73.9%	73.7%	-3.5	-4.5%	-0.2	-0.3%	73.5%
ELLs	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	69.8%
All students	248	89.3%	89.0%	88.0%	91.5%	2.2	2.5%	3.5	4.0%	88.5%

Gloucester’s drop-out rate for all students and high needs students was similar to the state rate and lower for economically disadvantaged students and English language learners.

**Table 11: Gloucester Public Schools
Drop-out Rates by Subgroup 2012–2015²**

	2012	2013	2014	2015	State 2015
High Needs	4.4%	1.6%	4.4%	3.3%	3.4%
Econ. Disad.	4.4%	1.5%	4.3%	2.2%	3.4%
SWD	6.2%	1.3%	8.0%	4.4%	3.5%
ELLs	0.0%	10.0%	0.0%	5.0%	5.7%
All students	2.7%	1.4%	2.7%	2.0%	1.9%

Grade and School Results

Between 2012 and 2015 Gloucester’s ELA CPI improved and in 2015 was above the state ELA CPI for the district as a whole and in the 3rd, 4th, 5th and 10th grades.

- In 2015 ELA CPI was above the state CPI by 8.2 points in the 3rd grade, by 4.8 and 5.9 points in the 4th and 5th grades, respectively, and by 1.3 points in the 10th grade.
 - Between 2012 and 2015 math CPI increased by 11.6 points in the 5th grade, by 6.0 points in the 4th grade, and by 2.5 and 1.3 points in the 3rd and 10th grades, respectively.
- In 2015 ELA CPI was below the state CPI by 6.4 points in the 8th grade, by 5.2 points in the 6th grade, and by 1.7 points in the 7th grade.
 - Between 2012 and 2015 math CPI decreased by 6.5 points in the 7th grade, by 3.9 points in the 8th grade, and by 1.8 points in the 6th grade.

**Table 12: Gloucester Public Schools
ELA CPI by Grade 2012–2015**

Grade	Number	2012	2013	2014	2015	2015 State	4-Year Trend	2-Year Trend
3	234	88.2	86.6	82.4	90.7	82.5	2.5	8.3
4	215	76.6	80.2	76.8	82.6	77.8	6.0	5.8
5	240	81.3	84.0	88.3	92.9	87.0	11.6	4.6
6	187	83.2	81.3	80.0	81.4	86.6	-1.8	1.4
7	195	91.2	88.2	84.8	84.7	86.4	-6.5	-0.1
8	231	89.5	91.7	88.8	85.6	92.0	-3.9	-3.2
10	199	96.6	97.2	96.9	97.9	96.7	1.3	1.0
All	1,513	87.0	87.1	85.3	87.7	86.8	0.7	2.4

² The drop-out rates for low income students used for economically disadvantaged students in 2012, 2013, and 2014.

The percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations in ELA was above the state rate in each tested grade at East Gloucester, Plum Cove, and West Parish elementary schools, and in the 10th grade at Gloucester High.

**Table 13: Gloucester Public Schools
ELA Meeting or Exceeding Expectations by School and Grade 2014-2015³**

School	3	4	5	6	7	8	10	Total
EES: Fuller	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
ES: Beeman Memorial	75%	55%	72%	--	--	--	--	68%
ES: East Gloucester	68%	66%	73%	--	--	--	--	69%
ES: Plum Cove	65%	62%	87%	--	--	--	--	74%
ES: Veterans' Memorial	63%	45%	43%	--	--	--	--	51%
ES: West Parish	64%	74%	76%	--	--	--	--	71%
MS: O'Maley	--	--	--	50%	63%	49%	--	54%
HS: Gloucester High	--	--	--	--	--	--	94%	94%
District Total	67%	61%	72%	49%	62%	49%	94%	--
State	54%	57%	63%	60%	61%	64%	91%	--

Between 2012 and 2015 ELA CPI improved by 2.3 to 13.0 CPI points in all 5 elementary schools with reportable trend data, and by 0.9 CPI point at Gloucester High.

- ELA CPI for high needs students improved by 2.5 to 15.5 CPI points in 6 of 7 schools with reportable data.
- ELA CPI for students with disabilities improved by 4.0 to 24.6 CPI points in 4 of 5 schools with reportable data.

**Table 14: Gloucester Public Schools
ELA CPI by School and Subgroup 2012-2015**

	2012	2013	2014	2015	3- or 4-Year Trend
ESS: Fuller	--	--	--	--	--
ES: Beeman Memorial	77.7	80.5	77.6	90.7	13.0
High Needs	71.9	75.8	75.5	87.4	15.5
Economically disadvantaged	--	--	--	87.2	--
ELL and former ELL	75.0	70.0	72.5	--	--
Students with disabilities	53.6	55.6	60.4	78.2	24.6
ES: East Gloucester	87.1	86.8	84.9	89.4	2.3
High Needs	75.8	76.3	76.1	81.9	6.1
Economically disadvantaged	--	--	--	84.1	--
ELL and former ELL	--	--	--	--	--
Students with disabilities	55.0	59.6	56.3	--	--
ES: Plum Cove	84.5	86.7	85.0	90.7	6.2
High Needs	68.2	70.0	73.5	83.1	14.9
Economically disadvantaged	--	--	--	88.5	--
ELL and former ELL	--	--	--	--	--
Students with disabilities	58.3	60.9	59.4	--	--

³ 10th grade results are MCAS and refer to the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced.

ES: Veterans' Memorial	74.7	77.3	77.7	82.2	7.5
High Needs	69.9	73.6	75.0	79.6	9.7
Economically disadvantaged	--	--	--	81.9	--
ELL and former ELL	61.4	72.9	70.8	--	--
Students with disabilities	61.8	69.5	71.6	78.7	16.9
ES: West Parish	87.1	87.4	85.8	90.2	3.1
High Needs	77.1	78.9	78.3	81.4	4.3
Economically disadvantaged	--	--	--	85.3	--
ELL and former ELL	--	--	--	--	--
Students with disabilities	67.6	68.9	69.3	77.8	10.2
MS: O'Maley Middle	89.3	88.9	85.6	84.4	-4.9
High Needs	82.3	80.4	77.1	73.6	-8.7
Economically disadvantaged	84.1	81.9	78.9	78.0	-6.1
ELL and former ELL	--	--	--	--	--
Students with disabilities	73.8	68.7	64.6	57.8	-16.0
HS: Gloucester High	96.9	97.7	97.6	97.8	0.9
High Needs	93.0	95.0	95.8	95.5	2.5
Economically disadvantaged	94.1	95.8	97.5	96.8	2.7
ELL and former ELL	--	--	--	--	--
Students with disabilities	88.2	91.2	92.2	92.2	4.0

In 2015 Gloucester's math CPI was above the state CPI for the district as a whole and in the 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades; between 2012 and 2015 math CPI improved for the district as a whole and in each tested grade except the 6th and 7th grades.

- In 2015 math CPI was above the state CPI by 4.6 points in the 3rd grade, by 3.6 points in the 4th grade, and by 3.4 points in the 5th grade.
 - Between 2012 and 2015 math CPI increased by 10.1 points in the 5th grade, by 7.7 to 9.2 points in the 3rd, 4th, and 8th grades, and by 0.2 point in the 10th grade.
- In 2015 math CPI was below the state CPI by 6.2 points in the 6th grade and by 2.0 to 2.6 points in the 7th, 8th and 10th grades.
 - Between 2012 and 2015 math CPI decreased by 4.6 points in the 7th grade and by 1.7 points in the 6th grade.

**Table 15: Gloucester Public Schools
Math Composite Performance Index by Grade 2012-2015**

Grade	Number	2012	2013	2014	2015	2015 State	4-Year Trend	2-Year Trend
3	231	81.0	84.1	83.4	89.9	85.3	8.9	6.5
4	211	73.0	79.3	76.4	80.7	77.1	7.7	4.3
5	239	76.5	78.9	82.7	86.6	83.2	10.1	3.9
6	183	76.7	77.1	76.7	75.0	81.2	-1.7	-1.7
7	192	75.1	72.9	68.5	70.5	72.5	-4.6	2.0
8	225	66.3	75.5	77.8	75.5	78.1	9.2	-2.3
10	199	87.7	89.0	88.2	87.9	89.9	0.2	-0.3
All	1,513	76.8	79.6	79.0	80.8	80.7	4.0	1.8

The percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations in math was lower than the state rate in each tested grade at Veterans Memorial, O’Maley Middle, and Gloucester High and in two out of the three tested grades at Beeman Memorial and East Gloucester.

**Table 16: Gloucester Public Schools
Math Meeting or Exceeding Expectations by School and Grade 2014-2015⁴**

School	3	4	5	6	7	8	10	Total
EES: Fuller	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
ES: Beeman Memorial	64%	41%	42%	--	--	--	--	49%
ES: East Gloucester	66%	34%	50%	--	--	--	--	50%
ES: Plum Cove	62%	55%	77%	--	--	--	--	66%
ES: Veterans’ Memorial	38%	42%	30%	--	--	--	--	51%
ES: West Parish	53%	78%	58%	--	--	--	--	62%
MS: O’Maley	--	--	--	43%	37%	50%	--	44%
HS: Gloucester High	--	--	--	--	--	--	75%	75%
District Total	56%	50%	53%	43%	36%	50%	74%	--
State	55%	48%	55%	53%	45%	53%	79%	--

Between 2012 and 2015 math CPI improved in 4 of 5 elementary schools with reportable trend data: by 18.9 points at Beeman Memorial; by 7.7 to 7.8 points at Plum Cove, Veterans Memorial, and West Parish; and by 0.5 and 0.3 point, respectively, at O’Maley Middle and Gloucester High.

- Math CPI for high needs students improved by 0.6 to 23.4 CPI points in 6 of 7 schools with reportable data.
- Math CPI for students with disabilities improved by 2.9 to 32.1 CPI points in 4 of 5 schools with reportable data.

**Table 17: Gloucester Public Schools
Math CPI by School and Subgroup 2012-2015**

	2012	2013	2014	2015	3- or 4-Year Trend
ESS: Fuller	--	--	--	--	--
ES: Beeman Memorial	65.0	75.8	70.3	83.9	18.9
High Needs	56.3	69.9	66.0	79.7	23.4
Economically disadvantaged	--	--	--	79.1	--
ELL and former ELL	46.2	58.3	60.0	--	--
Students with disabilities	40.5	54.6	51.4	72.6	32.1
ES: East Gloucester	85.6	84.3	85.4	84.5	-1.1
High Needs	76.3	73.3	77.7	77.3	1.0
Economically disadvantaged	--	--	--	79.5	--
ELL and former ELL	--	--	--	--	--
Students with disabilities	58.0	56.7	61.6	--	--
ES: Plum Cove	83.2	82.2	86.5	90.9	7.7
High Needs	69.7	65.7	69.9	83.1	13.4
Economically disadvantaged	--	--	--	92.3	--
ELL and former ELL	--	--	--	--	--
Students with disabilities	56.7	54.7	51.5	--	--

⁴ 10th grade results are MCAS and refer to the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced.

ES: Veterans' Memorial	70.6	78.5	75.7	78.4	7.8
High Needs	67.6	76.8	72.4	74.7	7.1
Economically disadvantaged	--	--	--	74.6	--
ELL and former ELL	61.4	77.1	75.0	--	--
Students with disabilities	65.1	78.9	71.6	76.6	11.5
ES: West Parish	83.1	83.9	86.8	90.9	7.8
High Needs	74.0	74.4	80.7	85.7	11.7
Economically disadvantaged	--	--	--	86.4	--
ELL and former ELL	--	--	--	--	--
Students with disabilities	62.1	60.1	73.7	84.0	21.9
MS: O'Maley Middle	73.6	77.9	75.3	74.1	0.5
High Needs	61.6	66.3	63.8	60.4	-1.2
Economically disadvantaged	62.8	67.0	66.0	63.9	1.1
ELL and former ELL	--	--	--	--	--
Students with disabilities	48.4	54.9	47.6	45.2	-3.2
HS: Gloucester High	88.1	89.7	89.8	88.4	0.3
High Needs	78.0	79.7	83.4	78.6	0.6
Economically disadvantaged	--	--	--	83.8	--
ELL and former ELL	--	--	--	--	--
Students with disabilities	67.1	69.0	72.3	70.0	2.9

Between 2012 and 2015 science CPI in the 5th and 8th grades declined and in 2015 was below the state CPI. Between 2012 and 2015 science CPI in the 10th grade improved and in 2015 was above the state CPI.

- 5th grade science CPI declined 2.6 points, from 79.9 in 2012 to 77.3 in 2015, 0.9 point below the state CPI of 78.2.
- 8th grade science CPI was 65.8 in 2012 and 64.6 in 2015, 7.8 points below the 2015 state CPI of 72.4.
- 10th grade science CPI increased 4.0 points from 86.4 in 2012 to 90.4 in 2015, 2.2 points above the 2015 state CPI of 88.2.

**Table 18: Gloucester Public Schools
Science Composite Performance Index by Grade 2012-2015**

Grade	Number	2012	2013	2014	2015	2015 State	4-Year Trend	2-Year Trend
5	246	79.9	78.0	81.5	77.3	78.2	-2.6	-4.2
8	236	65.8	64.8	65.7	64.6	72.4	-1.2	-1.1
10	184	86.4	89.4	90.9	90.4	88.2	4.0	-0.5
All	666	77.7	77.2	78.7	76.4	79.4	-1.3	-2.3

Grade 5 science proficiency rates ranged from 24 percent to 83 percent and were below the state rate in 4 of the 5 elementary schools; the science proficiency rate was below the state rate by 9 percentage points in the 8th grade at O’Maley Middle School.

**Table 19: Gloucester Public Schools
Science Proficient or Advanced by School and Grade 2014-2015**

School	3	4	5	6	7	8	10	Total
EES: Fuller	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
ES: Beeman Memorial	--	--	28%	--	--	--	--	28%
ES: East Gloucester	--	--	44%	--	--	--	--	44%
ES: Plum Cove	--	--	83%	--	--	--	--	83%
ES: Veterans’ Memorial	--	--	24%	--	--	--	--	24%
ES: West Parish	--	--	49%	--	--	--	--	49%
MS: O’Maley	--	--	--	--	--	33%	--	33%
HS: Gloucester High	--	--	--	--	--	--	74%	74%
District Total	--	--	46%	--	--	32%	73%	49%
State	--	--	51%	--	--	42%	72%	54%

Between 2012 and 2015 science CPI declined by 0.6 to 14.4 CPI points in 5 of 7 schools with reportable trend data.

- Science CPI for high needs students declined by 0.5 to 12.0 CPI points in 4 of 7 schools with reportable data.
- Math CPI for students with disabilities improved by 6.6 to 15.5 CPI points in 4 of 5 schools with reportable data.

**Table 20: Gloucester Public Schools
Science CPI by School and Subgroup 2012-2015**

	2012	2013	2014	2015	3- or 4-Year Trend
ESS: Fuller	--	--	--	--	--
ES: Beeman Memorial	72.5	71.3	61.7	71.1	-1.4
High Needs	65.2	67.9	53.7	68.6	3.4
Economically disadvantaged	--	--	--	69.4	--
ELL and former ELL	--	--	--	--	--
Students with disabilities	51.9	--	47.9	63.6	11.7
ES: East Gloucester	90.0	80.8	92.9	75.6	-14.4
High Needs	77.9	69.3	86.8	65.9	-12.0
Economically disadvantaged	--	--	--	66.3	--
ELL and former ELL	--	--	--	--	--
Students with disabilities	67.5	52.1	--	--	--
ES: Plum Cove	90.0	86.6	90.0	92.6	2.6
High Needs	78.8	75.0	80.0	78.3	-0.5
Economically disadvantaged	--	--	--	--	--
ELL and former ELL	--	--	--	--	--
Students with disabilities	--	--	--	--	--

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ES: Veterans' Memorial	65.0	75.0	75.8	64.4	-0.6
High Needs	62.5	69.7	73.1	61.2	-1.3
Economically disadvantaged	--	--	--	61.4	--
ELL and former ELL	--	--	--	--	--
Students with disabilities	56.6	--	65.9	64.1	7.5
ES: West Parish	83.8	77.8	87.3	80.7	-3.1
High Needs	71.2	69.6	80.3	73.3	2.1
Economically disadvantaged	--	--	--	75.0	--
ELL and former ELL	--	--	--	--	--
Students with disabilities	53.6	55.0	75.0	69.1	15.5
MS: O'Maley Middle	66.9	66.4	66.8	65.4	-1.5
High Needs	56.8	58.2	54.0	50.9	-5.9
Economically disadvantaged	--	--	--	51.1	--
ELL and former ELL	--	--	37.5	--	--
Students with disabilities	49.0	58.3	44.2	39.0	-10.0
HS: Gloucester High	86.6	89.7	92.5	90.6	4.0
High Needs	79.6	83.2	88.6	82.7	3.1
Economically disadvantaged	--	--	--	84.9	--
ELL and former ELL	--	--	--	--	--
Students with disabilities	71.5	76.7	79.7	78.1	6.6

Leadership and Governance

Contextual Background

Under the superintendent's leadership, school staff are effectively addressing three strategic objectives cited in the District Improvement Plan (DIP): coherence and unification, use of data to guide decision-making, and professional culture and community. With a high degree of fidelity, the superintendent has led an instructional improvement process based on these key strategic objectives to increase student outcomes and promote staff participation and commitment to continuous improvement. By developing collaborative structures, fostering distributed leadership, and establishing routines for using data and developing curriculum, the superintendent has increased instructional coherence, collaboration, and collegiality among staff members. After several years of disciplined, steady and focused work, district educators and stakeholders are seeing desired improvements in student learning and achievement.

However, the DIP and the School Improvement Plans (SIPs) do not have the consistent alignment and coherence necessary to sustain the district's collegial, results-driven culture. And increased out-of-district school choice enrollments continue to erode funding and tend to lower public perceptions about the quality and desirability of the district's schools.

Strength Finding

- 1. With a high degree of focus, the superintendent has led an instructional improvement process based on several key strategic objectives for increasing student outcomes and staff participation and commitment.**
 - A.** Interviews and a review of planning documents indicated that the district's strategic objectives to significantly improve teaching and learning include the creation of a systemic approach to the work in the district, an emphasis on the use of data, and the continuous development of professional growth and dialogue about curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
 - B. A focus on unification and coherence.** This objective places a primary focus on high-priority, high-leverage goals at the three school levels. Consistent with this objective, school district staff ---principals, teachers, and support staff at all levels---have developed more coherent and unified instructional programs and processes.
 1. A school committee member stated that before the current superintendent's arrival in the summer 2011, curriculum was "a shotgun approach."
 2. The district has focused on aligning ELA and math curriculum to the 2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks (referred to in the district as "the Common Core") by creating pacing guides and curriculum maps. These are nearly complete.
 3. All five elementary schools use the same reading materials, *Reading Street* (Pearson), the same instructional approach (Bay State Reading Institute), and Empowering Writers.

4. All five elementary schools use *Math In Focus* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt), adopted in 2014.
5. O'Maley Middle School has increased instructional coherence through ongoing development of "project-based learning within an interdisciplinary/integrated curriculum framework."
6. High-school faculty have begun to implement the Stripling Model of Academic Inquiry, which provides "a common approach to inquiry-based learning across all subject areas."
7. During 2015-2016, district staff are establishing "uniform and consistent Child Study Team practices throughout the district."

C. An emphasis on the use of data. School district staff have increased the use of data to support and shape instruction.

1. In his 2014 annual evaluation, the superintendent listed the data sources that school staff use. These include MCAS Analyses, SAT scores, PSAT Scores, Advanced Placement scores and enrollments, GRADE and DIBELS for literacy, attendance data, discipline data, the results of the Walker Report on Special Education practices, the Coordinated Program Review (CPR), DSAC's MVAR, Curriculum Based Measurements (CBMs) in literacy and math, Learning Strategies Gold for pre-K and K, teacher surveys for feedback on a issues and topics, Behavior Youth Risk Survey data, Response to Intervention assessments, and special education assessments.
2. By school level, teachers have time allocated during the school day to analyze and use data to support instruction.
 - a. Elementary schools have "large data meetings" three times a year to look at assessment results, including GRADE and DIBELS. Between data meetings, teachers use DIBELS to monitor students' progress.
 - i. An interviewee noted that data meetings are very "open and honest" with a high level of accountability for individual educators to set performance targets for individual students.
 - b. At the secondary level, the superintendent has established expectations for middle- and high-school teachers to meet in collaborative groups at regularly scheduled times to analyze student performance data and adjust instructional practices and supports.
3. On the standard for data-informed decision-making, two of the six school committee members rated the superintendent's performance as "exemplary." Other committee members gave him a proficient rating.

- a. School committee members seemed well informed about the use of data for developing the budget and aware of the superintendent's priority to establish data-driven decision making in the district.
- D. A priority to develop a professional culture and strong learning community.** Through his collaborative and distributed leadership style, the superintendent has fostered and increased a culture of professional growth and dialogue about teaching and learning throughout the district.
1. When asked to list three accomplishments for which he was most proud, the superintendent listed two initiatives that both required and increased the active participation of teachers:
 - a. Implementation of *Math In Focus*, the district's new elementary math curriculum, required "everyone at the elementary level to agree to a new textbook adoption."
 - i. A staff person stated, "In math, teachers want to be part of the process, be part of the solution. There is focus, clarity, and coherence to make that happen."
 - b. O'Maley Middle School's Innovation School Plan received the required approval of two-thirds of the school's faculty.
 - i. One O'Maley faculty member stated, "We are all involved in the Innovation Plan. We have specific areas of focus such as accountability, technology, attendance, project-based learning, and SAILS [Service, Acceptance, Integrity, Leadership, and Success]."
 - ii. Another O'Maley faculty member said: "Trust has been pretty good here and now communication has improved through using technology."
 2. Teachers are increasingly taking on leadership roles.
 - a. The elementary schools have math leaders who coach other teachers.
 - b. At Beeman Memorial Elementary School, teachers participate in learning walks to observe their peers' classrooms.
 - c. High-school teachers initiated and are spearheading the integration of the Stripling Model of Academic Inquiry to promote more critical and analytical thinking and application of knowledge in high-school classrooms.
 - d. Teachers present workshops to their peers during Professional Development (PD) activities.
 - i. An administrator stated, "We needed to have teachers doing PD. Our Math PD is better because our teachers are experts and presenters."
 - ii. An interviewee said about PD at the middle school, "We teach each other here."

3. In the superintendent's 2014 evaluation, the school committee concluded, "Your positive relationships with staff and teachers helps garner an atmosphere of collaboration within focus groups, team meetings - all with the purpose of fostering student achievement. You have changed the prior top-down culture to a culture of collaboration with a significant increase in stakeholder's opinions and objectives."

Impact: By developing collaborative structures, fostering distributed leadership and establishing routines for using data and developing curriculum, the superintendent has increased both instructional coherence and collegiality among staff members. After several years of disciplined, steady and focused work, district educators and stakeholders are seeing a number of desired improvements in student learning and achievement.

Challenge Findings and Areas for Growth

2. The district's guiding documents, the District Improvement Plan (DIP) and the School Improvement Plans (SIPs), are not clearly aligned and are missing some elements of effective plans.

- A. A review of the district's planning documents indicated that the DIP contains some components of effective improvement plans.
 1. The DIP contains the following sections: Goal/Objective, Strategies and Action Steps, Responsibility, Timeline, Evidence of Effectiveness.
 - a. For each goal, the DIP has a section entitled Evidence of Effectiveness, which describes tangible outcomes. For example, "The district will develop a Handbook for Child Study Teams to be used in all schools." The DIP has 12 evidence statements.
 2. The DIP contains a vision and strategic objectives developed through data analysis.
 3. The DIP specifies detailed student performance goals.
 4. The DIP lists 10 goals, including a goal for developing District-Determined Measures (DDMs).
 5. The DIP specifies assessments and measurement tools to use to measure progress and when and how data will be reviewed during the year.
 6. The DIP is concise, clearly written, and has an executive summary section.
- B. The alignment between the DIP goals and the goals for the educator evaluation system (e.g., student learning and professional practice goals) is not evident.
- C. Processes and procedures for reporting progress toward DIP goals are not included.

- D. When asked to describe the district’s vision, most teachers who participated in the 3 focus groups (n=27) were not aware of the vision or seemed unsure about the DIP’s vision and districtwide goals.
- E. The SIPs are not aligned with the DIP.
 - 1. Some SIPs do not have a vision statement, an executive summary, or student performance goals.
 - 2. SIP goals are not aligned with the goals for the educator evaluation system (e.g., student learning and professional practice goals).
 - 3. The SIPs do not consistently include processes and timelines for reporting progress toward achieving the plans’ goals.
- F. The district has not established procedures for developing consistent and aligned SIPs.
 - 1. The superintendent told the team that district leaders do not meet to review and discuss planning guidelines and expectations.
 - a. The superintendent reported that he presents the DIP to principals at a leadership team meeting, usually in late February. The superintendent and the principals review the DIP and set a timeline for the development of the SIPs.
 - 2. The superintendent and central office administrators do not meet with principals to review the SIPs to ensure that they are aligned with the DIP.
 - a. The superintendent reported that district leaders met in the spring 2016 and said that they have been working to develop consistent and aligned 2016-2017 SIPs.

Impact: Unification and coherence are major strategic objectives for the school district. Without SIPs that are aligned with the DIP, district efforts for developing a collegial, results-driven learning and working environment are compromised. Also, the district, schools, and community are unable to systematically implement, monitor, and refine continuous, coordinated improvement initiatives and the district cannot ensure accountability for meeting improvement priorities.

3. The district has had financial challenges for several years in part because the number of students who leave the district through school choice has increased steadily.

- A. According to ESE data, in fiscal year 2015, 302 Gloucester-resident students enrolled in schools in neighboring school districts.
 - 1. In fiscal year 2015, Gloucester lost tuition fees of \$1,646,873 to other districts.
 - 2. The table below represents the losses of students and tuition for out-of-district school choice for fiscal year 2011 through fiscal year 2015.

**Table 21: Gloucester Public Schools
Losses in Enrollment and Tuition from
Out-of-District School Choice
Fiscal Year 2011 through Fiscal Year 2015**

Fiscal Year	Number of Out-of-District Choice Students	Choice-Out Tuition
2010-2011	232	\$1,248,765
2011-2012	240	\$1,277,481
2012-2013	260	\$1,403,810
2013-2014	292	\$1,616,710
2014-2015	302	\$1,646,873

Source: MA ESE School Choice Trends in Enrollment and Tuition

3. The district ranks 10th in the state for the total amount of choice-tuition funding lost to other districts.
- B.** The review team found widespread concern about students leaving the school district.
1. At an April 1, 2015, school committee meeting on the district’s fiscal year 2016 budget, citizens expressed their concerns about the “alarming increase in students choicing out.”
 2. A concerned citizen asked, “Where is the disconnect between all of these wonderful things that we have [in the district schools] and [the]hundreds of kids leaving every year?”
 3. The mayor indicated that she believes that people are saying negative things about Gloucester, which leads to students “choicing out.” She suggested doing a survey to find out why students are going elsewhere.
- C.** In response to community members’ questions and comments about school choice costs and enrollments, the superintendent conducted a survey about “choicing out” and wrote a “Question and Answer” document that provided detailed information about school choice costs and enrollments. The document cited five possible reasons why district parents enroll their children in neighboring districts.
1. Family residence is close to the other town.
 2. Belief that student will get a better education in other districts.
 3. The condition of the school buildings in Gloucester Public Schools.
 4. The desire for a high school and middle school that are smaller than the schools in Gloucester.
 5. A lingering, negative perception of the O’Maley Middle School and its history.

- D. A school committee member said: “We lose the kids at the grade transitions. We try to stem the flow,” noting “We need to hire a part-time PR person.”
- E. Gloucester has focused some staff time toward improving the schools’ image.
 - 1. The 2015-2016 District Improvement Plan contains a goal addressing communications and public relations and appropriate activities that the superintendent does (e.g., cable TV shows, press articles, and State of the Schools.)
 - 2. In each Gloucester school, a staff person, receiving a stipend to serve as the school’s publicist, develops articles about the positive activities at the school.

Impact: Increasing school choice enrollments continue to reduce the funding that the schools have to support all children’s education. Of equal importance, the increasing school choice enrollments appear to lower the public’s perceptions about the quality and desirability of the education that the schools are providing.

Recommendations

- 1. **District and school leaders should align goals in the School Improvement Plans (SIPs), as appropriate, with goals in the District Improvement Plan (DIP).**
 - A. The DIP’s performance goals for students should drive the development, implementation, and modification of the district’s educational programs.
 - 1. SIPs should be created in alignment with the DIP.
 - a. Principals should provide the superintendent, school committee, and staff with regular updates on progress toward SIP goals.
 - b. The principal should use the SIP to inform his/her self-assessment and goal setting process when creating the Educator Plan, and progress toward Educator Plan goals should be used as evidence during implementation.
 - B. The DIP should be used as a tool for continuous improvement.
 - 1. Professional development should be designed to support DIP initiatives and goals.
 - 2. The superintendent should periodically report to the school committee, staff, families, and community on progress toward achieving DIP goals.
 - 3. The district should establish procedures to review the DIP annually. Strategic activities and benchmarks should be adjusted when necessary to meet current conditions.

Benefits: Increasing the alignment and coherence between district and school improvement plans will improve communication of the district’s priorities and clarify roles and expectations for achieving the district’s short- and long-term goals. Through a more aligned planning process, school-based staff can

more clearly understand how they and other colleagues participate in and contribute to greater teacher effectiveness and improved student achievement.

2. The district should formally collect feedback from stakeholders to determine why families are leaving, analyze results, and make recommendations for change.

A. The district should collect school choice data and formally collect feedback (for example, through exit interviews) from stakeholders, including parents who have enrolled their children in other districts and parents who chose to keep their children in the district's schools.

1. The district should determine from which schools and grades students are "choicing out."
2. The district should collect feedback from a large enough number of families to understand the range of reasons why families are leaving the district.

B. District leaders should analyze results and formulate recommendations for change.

1. The district should inform stakeholders of planned changes.

Benefits: Implementing this recommendation will help the district to build on the work it has completed by identifying areas for improvement and will likely increase the public's awareness of the district's priorities and the many instructional improvements in the district's schools.

Curriculum and Instruction

Contextual Background

The district has cultivated a professional culture in which many staff members are focused on the quality of instruction and the fidelity of curriculum implementation in mathematics and English language arts. At each school level, academic programs have been made more coherent and cohesive, with a focus on research-based practices to promote higher student achievement. The district's culture creates an environment that increases the quality of student learning.

The review team visited 86 classrooms. In 48 elementary-school classrooms the team found moderate or strong evidence of many characteristics of standards-based teaching. Team members visited 38 secondary-school classrooms and noted moderate or strong evidence of only some standards-based teaching characteristics. Review team members found a lower incidence of several key characteristics of standards-based teaching in observed middle and high school classrooms. The lower incidence of these characteristics decreases the likelihood of students' academic success, particularly for high-needs students.

The district is not implementing or preparing to implement a coordinated and aligned elementary school science curriculum. The district's absence of preparation to integrate the 2016 Massachusetts Science and Technology/Engineering Standards is likely to result in additional years of less than ideal science education for Gloucester's elementary students.

Strength Findings

- 1. The district provides solid curricular and instructional leadership to support educators in improving the quality of instruction and the fidelity of curriculum implementation in English language arts and mathematics.**
 - A.** Interviews and a document review indicated that in the elementary schools sufficient leadership support, including coordinators, leaders, coaches, interventionists, and curriculum committees, contributes to improving instruction and the design and implementation of English language arts (ELA) and math curricula.
 1. A K-8 literacy coordinator, a full-time literacy coach in each elementary school, and a districtwide elementary literacy committee with representatives from each elementary school support curriculum and instruction in elementary ELA.
 - a. Elementary literacy coaches ensure vertical curriculum coherence and alignment. They support the implementation of the Bay State Reading Initiative (BSRI). The literacy coaches meet bi-weekly with the literacy coordinator.
 2. A K-8 mathematics coordinator, math interventionists in the 2 Title I elementary schools, and 2 math leaders in each elementary school (including special educators) support mathematics education.

- a. The two math leaders at each elementary school function as coaches. They support the implementation of *Math in Focus*, the new K-5 math program.
 - b. The math leaders work to ensure vertical curriculum coherence and alignment and have developed a pacing chart to guide instruction.
 - c. Title I math interventionists provide support at the Beeman Memorial and Veterans Memorial elementary schools.
 - d. District leaders reported that the district has added one math coach for the East Gloucester, Plum Cove, and West Parish schools.
- B.** At the middle school, K-8 coordinators for literacy and math, teacher-leaders, interventionists, an ELA consultant, and a newly formed committee contribute to improving instruction and implementation of curricula.
1. A review of an organizational chart provided by the assistant superintendent indicated that the K-8 literacy coordinator, an ELA consultant, and an ELA interventionist provide support for ELA at the middle school.
 - a. The middle school also has a writing consultant to support teachers for ELA and writing.
 2. The K-8 math coordinator, a math interventionist, and a newly formed math committee provide curricular and instructional support in mathematics at the middle school.
 - a. At the time of the onsite, the math committee was beginning to review new mathematics textbooks and programs options for adoption.
 - b. District leaders reported that the committee has since selected a new math textbook which will be implemented in September 2016.
- C.** At the high school, program leaders lead their departments in ELA and mathematics.
1. Program leaders in ELA and math convene departmental Professional Learning Community (PLCs) meetings 3 times in each 7-day cycle for 45 minutes.
 2. Program leaders told the review team that PLCs have focused on making curriculum maps more useful and user friendly and to better reflect the taught curriculum.

Impact: When many staff members are focused on the quality of instruction and the fidelity of curriculum implementation in English language arts and mathematics, the district ensures the implementation of more coherent and focused academic programs. Adequate curricular leadership provides teachers with the needed support and guidance to create and revise curriculum and assessments. With focused attention paid to both fidelity of curriculum implementation and

improvement of instructional practice, the district can ensure that all students have access to solid academic programs, which can help them succeed in school and beyond.

2. The middle and high schools are cultivating innovative academic programming such as project-based learning in grades 6-8 and a teacher-driven inquiry model of lesson design to promote differentiation, inquiry, and higher-order thinking in grades 9-12.

- A.** To address the middle school's image in the community in recent years, middle-school leaders and teachers have taken steps to strengthen the academic program, engage students more effectively in interdisciplinary learning, and improve school culture.
1. The school has identified itself as an Innovation School and engaged leaders and teachers in both developing and implementing an Innovation Plan.
 2. Key aspects of the plan include accountability, the use of technology, project-based learning (PBL), the SAILS initiative (Service, Acceptance, Integrity, Leadership and Success) and a recent decision this year to bring in a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) model to further strengthen school culture.
 3. Teachers described the Innovation Plan as one that is not static, but reviewed and renewed each year.
 4. Teachers noted that the plan and its implementation have made a positive impact in changing the nature of academic work, building a stronger school culture, and improving the school's image in the community.
- B.** At the high school, teachers have initiated an inquiry-based model for lesson design based on the Stripling Model of Inquiry. The model is designed to promote differentiation, higher-order thinking, deeper understanding, and the use and application of knowledge.
1. The Inquiry Model is a new initiative (2015) that is teacher led and developed.
 2. Members of the high-school Inquiry Team have recently been working with teacher colleagues to design lessons with levels of scaffolding to meet different learning needs and to promote differentiation and more critical thinking.

Impact: These innovative initiatives at the secondary level help students engage more in their work and promote higher levels of achievement. In addition, they help students develop more critical and analytical thinking skills, collaboration skills, and the ability to use and apply knowledge in new ways--- skills that will serve them well in their post-secondary activities at work, in careers, and in higher education.

3. In observed elementary school classrooms, review team members found a high incidence of many characteristics of high-quality standards-based teaching.

The team observed 86 classes throughout the district: 22 at the high school, 16 at the middle school, and 48 at the 5 elementary schools. The team observed 42 ELA classes, 29 mathematics classes, 9 science classes, and 6 in other subject areas. The observations were approximately 20 minutes in length. All review team members collected data using ESE’s instructional inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards-based teaching. The instructional inventory includes three areas of focus: *Learning Objectives and Instruction; Student Engagement & Critical Thinking; and Differentiated Instruction & Classroom Culture*. Observational data is compiled for each area of focus and by Gloucester’s grade levels---elementary, middle, and high school. The data is presented in Appendix C.

A. In observed elementary lessons, review team members found a high incidence of effective practices related to matching instructional strategies to lesson objectives.

1. In 88 percent of visited elementary classrooms observers saw teachers who demonstrated knowledge of subject matter by engaging most students in learning experiences that enabled the students to acquire complex knowledge and skills (43 percent strong evidence; 45 percent moderate evidence).
 - a. For example, in a grade 4 mathematics class, students worked in pairs to develop a graphic model of an equation in order to visualize math concepts.
2. In 66 percent of observed elementary lessons, lessons reflected high expectations linked to the learning objectives (27 percent strong evidence; 39 percent moderate evidence).
 - a. In a grade 3 ELA lesson, the teacher asked the students to explain the learning objective to the class, prompting them to describe the difference between providing information using general versus specific ideas and the use of opinion versus fact.
3. In 76 percent of visited elementary classrooms, observers found teachers using instructional strategies well matched to the learning objectives (33 percent strong evidence; 43 percent moderate evidence).
 - a. In a kindergarten literacy lesson, after the teacher read a picture book, students talked to each other in pairs about their experiences looking closely at nature.
 - b. In a grade 4 writing lesson, the class was introduced to the task of writing an “elaborate narrative describing a critical character” by responding to multiple questions about pictures of snakes.

B. Review team members observed a high incidence of high-quality instructional practices related to student engagement and critical thinking in elementary classrooms.

1. In 94 percent of observed K-5 classrooms, review team members found that students were motivated and engaged and actively participating in learning activities (42 percent strong evidence; 52 percent moderate evidence).
 - a. In a first grade ELA/social studies lesson about “the city,” students role-played portions of the story and then during a question-and-answer session they were directed to “think, turn and talk, rethink, then answer the question.”
 - b. In a grade 4 mathematics class, students eagerly took up the teacher’s challenge to come up with their own problems to illustrate 2-digit by 2-digit multiplication and partial products.
2. In 80 percent of observed elementary classrooms, review team members found students assuming responsibility for thinking and teachers facilitating student-led exploration and learning of content (33 percent strong evidence; 47 percent moderate evidence).
 - a. In a grade 3 classroom students were completing multiplication problems using mental math strategies. The teacher prompted the students saying, “I’m glad you’re thinking about the answer.” The teacher asked, “What are strategies Sally might have used to solve the problem?”
 - b. In a kindergarten mathematics lesson, the teacher alerted the students that she would be looking for friends to help correct her mistakes as they did in Writers Workshop.
- C.** In most observed elementary lessons, teachers used appropriate resources aligned to students’ diverse learning needs and conducted formative assessments to check for understanding.
 1. In 82 percent of observed classrooms, review team members noted appropriate available resources that were effectively used to meet students’ learning needs (31 percent strong evidence; 51 percent moderate evidence).
 - a. In one classroom students were using large sheets of chart paper, rulers, pencils, and crayons to represent graphic models of an equation.
 2. In 78 percent of observed elementary classrooms, review team members found teachers periodically checking for student understanding to adjust instruction and provide relevant feedback to students (35 percent strong evidence; 43 percent moderate evidence).
 - a. In an elementary math class, while students were working in pairs, the teacher moved from group to group checking for understanding and providing feedback.
- D.** In most visited elementary classes, review team members found classroom climate characterized by respectful behaviors, routines and discourse.

1. In 85 percent of observed elementary classrooms, review team members noted teachers using rituals and routines that created a positive intellectual environment where students could take academic risks (50 percent strong evidence; 35 percent moderate evidence).
 - a. In a kindergarten classroom, students volunteered to go before the class and point out misspelled words as a part of a Writers Workshop lesson.

Impact: Teachers who have strong content knowledge and use appropriate instructional strategies that are well matched to lesson objectives are more likely to increase student motivation and engagement in learning. The combination of motivated and engaged students and teachers who regularly use formative assessments to check for understanding increase the likelihood that students will acquire complex knowledge, skills, and understanding.

4. In observed secondary school classrooms, review team members found a high incidence of several characteristics of high-quality, standards-based teaching.

- A. In observed middle-school lessons, review team members noted that teachers demonstrated knowledge of subject matter and classroom climate was characterized by respectful behavior, routines, and discourse.
 1. In 94 percent of the visited middle-school classrooms, observers found teachers who demonstrated knowledge of subject matter by engaging most students in learning experiences that enabled the students to acquire complex knowledge and skills (25 percent strong evidence; 69 percent moderate evidence).
 - a. For example, in a grade 7 mathematics lesson, students seemed comfortable working in pairs and individually to complete a series of 6 worksheets in which math concepts became more and more challenging and seeking the teacher's help when needed.
 2. In 75 percent of visited middle-school classrooms observers found teachers using rituals, routines, and appropriate responses that created a positive intellectual environment where students took academic risks (44 percent strong evidence; 31 percent moderate evidence).
- B. Observers of the high school's classrooms noted in a high proportion of classes: teachers demonstrating knowledge of subject matter; motivated and engaged students; positive classroom climates; and the use of formative assessment techniques.
 1. In 81 percent of observed high-school classrooms observers found teachers who demonstrated knowledge of subject matter by engaging most students in learning experiences that enabled the students to acquire complex knowledge and skills (48 percent strong evidence; 33 percent moderate evidence).
 - a. In a high-school English class, students watched the movie "A Raisin in the Sun," and analyzed how complex characters develop over time, advance the plot, and develop the

theme. The first Essential Question asked students to reflect on how the play mirrored the social, educational, political, and economic climate of the 1950s. The second asked them to consider how the climate of the play illustrated the impact of race on African-Americans' quest for the "American Dream" in mid-century America.

2. In 77 percent of observed high-school classrooms, observers found that students were motivated, engaged, and actively participating in learning activities (29 percent strong evidence; 48 percent moderate evidence).
 - a. In a grade 12 English class, an observer described how students were engaged in a peer editing activity, reviewing their draft essays with one another and providing feedback.
3. In 81 percent of the visited high-school classrooms observers noted teachers using rituals, routines, and appropriate responses that created a positive intellectual environment where students took academic risks (43 percent strong evidence; 38 percent, moderate evidence).
4. In 70 percent of the visited classrooms observers found teachers periodically checking for student understanding to adjust instruction and provide relevant feedback to students (15 percent, strong evidence; 55 percent, moderate evidence).
 - a. In a high school ELA class, students working in groups of two to four used a rating sheet to peer edit their draft compositions. Student authors used peers' comments to revise their drafts. The teacher reviewed the comments from the peer editors before making her suggestions.

Impact: Learning environments and activities that cultivate student engagement and motivation are likely to result in deeper understanding and application of knowledge. Teachers who demonstrate knowledge of subject matter and who regularly check for student understanding for the purpose of making instructional adjustments enhance learning success for students.

Challenge Findings and Areas for Growth

5. In observed classrooms, secondary students were not consistently challenged with high, rigorous expectations for learning and higher-order thinking. Lessons did not consistently address students' individual and diverse learning needs.

- A.** Clear learning objectives that enabled students to make sense of the learning experience were missing in many observed secondary lessons.
 1. In only 43 percent of observed lessons in the high school did the teacher provide or refer to clear learning objectives (24 percent, strong evidence; 19 percent, moderate evidence).
 - a. In some instances an "agenda" was written on the board with a topic or task such as "friendship" or "solve the equation."

2. In only 48 percent of observed high-school classrooms did the teacher implement a lesson reflecting high expectations aligned to the learning objective (29 percent, strong evidence; 19 percent, moderate evidence).
 3. Many secondary lessons were teacher centered, with students taking cues from questions or following along or copying as the teacher solved an equation on the board or read aloud from a novel.
 - a. When lessons are teacher centered, some students, usually those most in need of support, do not engage as deeply in lesson activities. For example, in a grade 6 mathematics lesson, students watched the teacher solve word problems using multiplication and division with decimals. Not all students were attentive. Only some students showed eagerness to participate by responding to sequential questions on the procedure.
- B.** Students were encouraged to engage in tasks that required critical thinking, analysis, and application of new knowledge in 57 percent of high-school lessons and in 56 percent of middle-school lessons. (High school: 14 percent, strong evidence; 43 percent, moderate evidence. Middle school: 31 percent, strong evidence; 25 percent, moderate evidence).
1. An example of a class in which most students were engaged with tasks that require critical thinking, analysis, and application of new knowledge was a grade 7 math class, in which students were asked to consider what complex fractions represent and how they are used in unit rates.
- C.** Differentiation of instruction to meet the diverse learning needs of all students was observed in only 30 percent of visited high-school lessons and in only 37 percent of middle-school lessons. (High school: 5 percent, strong evidence; 25 percent, moderate evidence. Middle school: 6 percent, strong evidence, 31 percent, moderate evidence.)
1. Although differentiated instruction is a priority at the middle school, most observed middle-school lessons required all students to do the same activity at the same time.
- D.** Students assumed responsibility for their own learning whether individually, in pairs or in groups in 57 percent of observed high-school classrooms (14 percent, strong evidence; 43 percent, moderate evidence).
1. Frequently, teachers led whole-class activities in which all students did the same thing. For example, in a grade 9 geometry class students were sitting in groups of two or three, but worked independently to prove that a square is a quadrilateral. In some instances, students could have collaborated and discussed each of the properties in pairs or triads. In other instances, when students already had mastered the concept, they could have been engaged in a more challenging exercise.

Impact: While teacher-centered instruction may help some students who are struggling, it holds back those students who already understand and are ready to move to the next level or application of what they know and can do. Student learning is more readily achieved in situations where the intent of the instruction or experience is made clear before the lesson. Instruction that includes high expectations and opportunities for students to engage in critical thinking is more likely to result in greater and deeper learning. Learning experiences that anticipate and are designed with a breadth of student learning preferences in mind are more likely to increase academic success for diverse student populations.

6. The district does not have an aligned, coherently articulated, consistently delivered and continuously improving science curriculum at the elementary level.

- A. Interviews and a document review indicated that the district is not developing an elementary science curriculum aligned to the 2016 Massachusetts Science and Technology/Engineering Standards.⁵
1. The superintendent and other key instructional leaders referred to the district’s elementary school science curriculum as “laying fallow” and said “We’re waiting for the next generation standards to be approved by ESE.”⁶
 2. The district’s self assessment states that the K-5 science curriculum was completed in 2010 and “updates are awaiting the new standards.”
 3. The District Improvement Plan for 2015-2016 does not mention science in the plan’s strategic initiatives to achieve its strategic objectives.
 - a. The strategic curriculum mapping and alignment initiatives for 2015-2016 include: “Complete K-5 Writing Curriculum Maps in Math, Literacy and Writing.”
 4. District staff recently developed a standards-based report card for its elementary schools. One of the district’s curriculum developers said that the revised card was needed “so all pieces are focused, clear, and tightly interwoven.” The revised card does not include science standards.
 - a. The grade-level report cards include 15 to 25 ELA and math standards to be assessed.
 - b. The ELA and math standards listed in the report card are descriptive. For example, the grade 4 card includes standards such as “divides up to 4 digit dividends by 1 digit and interprets the remainder.” However, each grade’s science section contains the same

⁵ At the time of the review, the standards were in draft form. The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education voted January 26, 2016, to adopt the 2016 Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) Standards.

⁶ The superintendent reported that once the 2016 Massachusetts Science and Technology/Engineering Standards were approved on January 26, 2016, the district established an elementary science committee to study the new science standards and to identify a K-12 program aligned to the new standards. The superintendent also reported that the district has dedicated a section in the 2016-2017 DIP to science and plans to have an elementary science program in place for the 2017-2018 school year.

two descriptors: “participates in the discussion and activities” and “learns/understands content.”

- B.** A review of an organizational chart outlining curricular and instructional leadership indicated a disparity between the number of staff and sub committees who are set to review and revise ELA and math curricula and those dedicated to science curricula.
1. Math leaders include: a K-8 coordinator (part-time consultant); 1.5 FTE mathematics “interventionists” (funded by Title I); and 12 mathematics leaders (classroom teachers who worked on the pacing guides, provided Math in Focus implementation PD, and continue to offer ongoing collegial support).
 2. ELA leaders include the following full-time staff: a K- 8 coordinator; a literacy coach at each elementary school; and a literacy committee composed of one K-2 teacher and one teacher from grades 3- 5 from each elementary school.
 3. In science there is no staff such as those listed in 1 and 2 above.
- C.** The district’s elementary science curriculum is missing coherent, vertical articulation.
1. District-level curriculum staff said that there is no formal communication structure in place at the transitioning grades. When asked about the elementary science program, they said, “There are different things going on in the different schools.”
 2. Instructional coaches, math leaders, and program leaders told the team: “Elementary teachers decide on their own when to fit science into the day,” noting “There’s not a bridge built between grades 5 and 6.”
 3. When the same group of educators was asked whether standards of high-quality science instruction existed for elementary educators, they said: “Standards of good [science] instruction will vary among schools.”
- D.** Student performance data indicated that science is an area of challenge for Gloucester’s elementary students.
1. The district did not reach its 2015 Composite Performance Index (CPI) targets for ELA, math, and science.
 2. 2015 science proficiency rates were 5 and 10 percentage points below the 2015 state rates in grades 5 and 8, respectively, and 1 percentage point above the 2015 state rate in grade 10.
 3. The grade 5 science proficiency rates decreased 9 percentage points, from 55 percent in 2012 to 46 percent in 2015, 5 percentage points below the 2015 state rate of 51 percent.

Impact: Students arrive in grade 6 with disparate experiences, knowledge, and skills thus compromising what can be accomplished in that year. Students in grade 5 are not properly prepared for the MCAS science test. Student learning may be further compromised by the absence of articulation between the district's transition grades, 5 to 6 and 8 to 9. The absence of preparation to internalize and integrate the soon-to-be-adopted Revised Massachusetts Science and Technology Engineering Standards is likely to result in additional years of less than desirable science education for Gloucester's elementary students.

Recommendations

1. The district should complete as soon as possible a K-5 science curriculum based on the 2016 Massachusetts Science and Technology/Engineering Standards.

- A. The district should consider including science as an area of focus in district-level plans (e.g., the District Improvement Plan or Accelerated Improvement Plan), including setting SMART goals for student performance in science and establishing a plan for professional development related to science curriculum and instruction.
- B. The district should convene a working group with wide representation to conduct the curriculum development work.
 1. The district should communicate to teachers the plan for completing the curriculum.
 2. The development process should include frequent meetings between grade-level teams to ensure vertical coherence of curriculum.
 3. As it develops the curriculum, the district should consider the abundant opportunities that Gloucester's environment and history provide to extend learning beyond the schools' walls.
- C. The initial K-5 science curriculum documentation should be in the form of curriculum maps or pacing guides, and units and lesson plans should be added as soon as possible.
 1. The district's new curriculum should include objectives, timelines, formative and summative assessments, instructional resources, and instructional strategies that meet all learners' needs to ensure that teachers have access to a complete and comprehensive curriculum guide.

Benefits: The district's science educators at the secondary level will welcome well-prepared students into their classrooms and laboratories. A strong foundation of knowledge and skills will have a positive impact on what middle- and high-school students and teachers can achieve.

Recommended resources:

- *Characteristics of an Effective Standards-Based K-12 Science and Technology/Engineering Classroom* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/STEM/Standards-BasedClassroom.pdf>) is a reference for instructional

planning and observation, intended to support activities that advance standards-based educational practice, including formal study, dialogue and discussion, classroom observations, and other professional development activities.

- *Science and Technology/Engineering Concept and Skill Progressions* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/STEM/ste/default.html>) articulate possible ways for students to progress through levels of understanding of concepts.
- *Curriculum Mapping: Raising the Rigor of Teaching and Learning* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/Candi/model/maps/CurriculumMaps.pdf>) is a presentation that provides definitions of curriculum mapping, examples of model maps, and descriptions of curriculum mapping processes.
- *Sample curriculum maps* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/model/maps/default.html>) were designed to assist schools and districts with making sense of students' learning experiences over time, ensuring a viable and guaranteed curriculum, establishing learning targets, and aligning curriculum to ensure a consistent implementation of the MA Frameworks.

2. To improve instruction and ultimately student achievement at the middle and high schools, the district should further articulate the district's instructional model and support teachers in its implementation.

- A.** The district should ensure that instruction at the secondary schools consistently: provides clear, student-friendly learning objectives; sets high expectations for the quality of student work; requires students to think, write, and speak more critically and analytically; and accounts for differences in students' learning needs.
1. The district might use grade-level, faculty, and department meetings, common planning time, and professional development for this purpose.
 - a. One possible strategy for deep analysis of the instructional model is to use meeting time to watch videos of effective instructional strategies and then follow up with discussion. Teachers might also be invited to participate in walkthroughs and follow-up debriefing activities. Shared professional readings and subsequent discussions can also strengthen teachers' understanding of key instructional strategies.
 2. The district should continue to provide professional development to deepen educators' understanding of instructional strategies and district expectations.
 3. As the instructional model evolves, teachers should be encouraged to tailor it based on their students' learning styles and needs in order to engage all students in rigorous content.
- B.** The district should support teacher leadership and growth by creating opportunities for exemplary teachers to have responsibility for instructional leadership and mentoring.

Benefit: Implementing this recommendation will mean a common and deep understanding among teachers and administrators of what constitutes high-quality teaching. A teaching staff that implements these practices in instruction is better prepared to provide effective learning experiences for a diverse student population.

Recommended resource:

- 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.

Assessment

Contextual Background

District and school leaders set high expectations and model effective data analysis processes to guide decision-making. Multiple data sets and information provide guidance for policy decisions, improvement planning, monitoring and reporting on student progress, and allocating resources for staffing and programs.

Data use is also regularly and thoughtfully incorporated into the work of elementary schools, especially for ELA and mathematics. The assessment programs for ELA and mathematics are well balanced and provide both benchmark and summative results that teachers use faithfully in planning their work and in supporting students either in regular lessons or in interventions. The lessons learned from adopting the Bay State Reading Initiative and the widespread use of multiple forms of data meetings have instilled useful data analysis habits in elementary teachers and leaders. They have worked to transfer these skills in support of the adoption of the new K-5 mathematics program, *Math in Focus*.

While assessments at the middle and high schools show balance and in some cases creativity for project-based learning and inquiry, the analysis of data and the application of data analysis in teachers' work is not consistent across the district. Data is plentiful at the secondary schools. However, collaborative meetings are not often enough used to focus on achievement data and to address strengths and challenges in instruction, curriculum, and student achievement.

Strength Findings

- 1. District and school leaders have established and exhibit a high standard for data-based decision-making in the district. Leaders use multiple sets of data and other information to set goals and priorities, monitor and report on progress, and allocate resources for staffing and programs.**
 - A.** District and school leaders provide the school committee with a variety of data and other information to inform them of progress and challenges and to guide decision-making.
 1. School committee members said that they review assessment data, including MCAS and PARCC results, three times a year. They also see enrollment data, attendance data, and special education enrollment data and review and approve the District Improvement Plan (DIP) and the School Improvement Plans (SIPs).
 2. At a June 2015 meeting, leaders presented elementary school literacy data to update the committee on progress and achievements.
 - B.** Student achievement data and other information inform decisions for staffing, budgeting, planning, and policy.

1. School committee members indicated that the creation of the role of an ELA coordinator was based on the analysis of achievement data and the need for leadership in planning and monitoring the K-8 ELA program.
 2. School committee members said that in allocating resources, they consider goals and priorities identified in the District and School Improvement Plans.
 3. The superintendent described how enrollment data drove cuts in high school and middle school staffing to establish more justifiable class sizes.
 4. The superintendent also said that the co-teaching model, a “top priority” at the Beeman Memorial Elementary School, required sustained funding. The Beeman School is one of the district’s two Title I schools and was a Level 3 school until the 2014-2015 school year when its designation was changed to Level 2.
 5. Other budget decisions for staffing that are informed by data include a math tutor to work with the Title I teacher at the Beeman Memorial and Veterans Memorial elementary schools, additional special education teachers at Beeman Memorial, co-teaching at Veterans Memorial, and two ELL teachers. Additionally, the budget supports Chromebooks, the BSRI at the elementary level, the new elementary math initiative, and a recently formed subcommittee to look at middle-school math.
 6. The district also maintains attendance, discipline records, and report cards in the iPass system along with all student biographical information. This information is accessible to teachers and leaders and helps them better understand student profiles.
- C.** The superintendent told the review team that the school committee holds its meetings at different schools to get direct feedback from each school community. At these meetings, the committee often shares enrollment data.
1. Enrollment data now indicates that the concept of neighborhood schools is changing since more students are now located in the downtown area.
 2. District leaders said that this may have implications on the recent initiative to assess school building needs and how the committee analyzes data and makes decisions for future facilities planning.
- D.** A review of the DIP and the SIPs indicated a focused approach to the use of data to inform improvements to teaching and the curriculum in order to improve student achievement.
1. A strategic objective in the DIP is “to ensure that data management and analysis support and inform instruction.”

2. The DIP also identifies key data and how it will be used, such as implementation of district-determined measures (DDMs), MCAS analysis, and the analysis of local assessments such as DIBELS, GRADE, GMADE and various content-based benchmark assessments.
3. Using a variety of detail, the SIPs also point to how the analysis and use of assessment data can strengthen teaching and help promote higher student achievement.
 - a. For example, a goal in the O'Maley Middle School improvement plan emphasizes regular teacher team meetings to discuss and analyze student work and data to set high standards, assess student learning, and strengthen teaching.
 - b. The East Gloucester Elementary School's improvement plan addresses the analysis of PARCC results, informal and formal math assessments, DDMs, and data-driven decisions for intervention placement to improve students' math proficiency.

Impact: Data influences how the district reflects on its work and is used to facilitate sound planning to meet student and community needs. The district's use of data to inform the many decisions educators and the community face has contributed to a thoughtful and thorough continuous improvement effort.

2. At the elementary level, a data-driven culture and data literacy are evident in the ways educators talk about and conduct their work. Teachers use data analyses to inform decisions to improve teaching, learning, and the curriculum, especially in ELA and math.

- A. A review of documents, interviews, and lesson observations indicated balanced and comprehensive K-5 ELA and math assessments.
 1. Leaders and teachers described the range of benchmark, diagnostic, and summative assessments used to monitor student progress and measure student growth and achievement in both ELA and mathematics.
 2. The district's self-assessment also outlined the multiple measures in use.
 - a. K-5 literacy assessments include DIBELS Next (three times a year), GRADE (twice a year), baseline and unit tests accompanying the *Reading Street* program, writing rubrics used with the Empowering Writers program, Easy CBM assessments, and PARCC assessments.
 - b. K-5 math assessments include *Math in Focus* pre-tests and unit benchmark assessments, GMADE (twice a year), Easy CBM numbers and operations probe (kindergarten), and Easy CBM math benchmark (grades 1-5).
 3. In 78 percent of observed K-5 lessons, review team members noted evidence of the use of appropriate formative assessments to check for understanding and provide feedback to students (43 percent, moderate evidence; 35 percent, strong evidence).

4. The district has implemented a standards-based report card and can track students' mastery in developing the skills, knowledge, and understandings embedded in the 2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.
- B.** The superintendent and others credited the Bay State Reading Initiative (BSRI), which has been in the district for some time, for building a structure of data use and the strategy of close reading to improve both instruction and students' literacy skills.
1. Teachers told the team that the district provided considerable professional development with BSRI consultants to ensure fidelity to the BSRI model at all schools.
 2. The three highest performing elementary schools are gradually being released from the formality of the BSRI model, predicated on maintaining the structural components they have received from BSRI training, particularly the use of data.
 - a. Interviewees said that now teachers understand the model and can modify it.
- C.** At all elementary schools, weekly 45-minute common planning time (CPT) and three "large, scheduled data meetings" each year provide settings for teachers to discuss student achievement data.
1. At the large data meetings, grade-level teams, literacy coaches, special education teachers, and the principal use an established data protocol to review mainly literacy data; interviewees noted that they are improving the way that they look at math data. The teams also look at student profiles and divide students into small groups to set common improvement goals.
 2. Data analysis is used to group students for instruction and interventions and monitor student progress. Data analyses also inform discussions and decisions for instructional improvement and revisions to or fine-tuning of curriculum.
 3. Special education teachers and interventionists, if needed, are included in data meetings.
- D.** Interviewees said that the district is piloting several new assessments in 2015-2016 to determine whether these provide more useful and timely data.
1. Leaders noted that the district wanted to maximize the use of benchmark assessments in ELA and math. To do so, in 2015-2016, individual elementary schools are piloting either STAR assessments or NWEA's Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments or Easy CBM assessments to investigate whether or not these are more useful measures.
 - a. The district will continue to use DIBELS Next, but may replace GRADE and GMADE to better assess reading comprehension and math skills and conceptual understanding.

- E. Leaders and teachers are also focused on math assessments in 2015-2016 as they continue to learn to implement the new *Math in Focus* program (introduced in the 2014-2015 school year).
 - 1. Teachers are developing skills in using the technology component of *Math in Focus*, which provides individualized student assessment data to access the “reteach” option on the program’s *Think Central* platform.
- F. The elementary schools have used the district’s *A Closer Look*, a locally developed data analysis protocol, to analyze MCAS results and develop strategies to address challenges.
 - 1. The protocol provides a structure for teachers to better understand and document strengths, opportunities for improvement, root causes, and proficiency gaps, and then develop an action plan, including instructional strategies to address the challenge.
 - 2. The protocol requires teachers to determine how they will measure the impact of the action plan and identify potential roadblocks and other data sources as evidence of success.

Impact: At the elementary level, leaders and teachers have created a coherent and unified approach to consistently use multiple forms of assessments and assessment data to improve teaching and learning. Using effective data analysis practices, teachers appropriately group students for instruction so that lessons meet students’ diverse learning needs. Data analysis also guides placement of students in appropriate interventions and offers evidence of the effectiveness of those interventions. Teachers and leaders also use data to make informed decisions to adjust instruction and modify curriculum. With these well-established data-literate practices, the elementary schools are working to improve student achievement and demonstrate a well-developed, data-literate culture.

Challenge Finding and Areas for Growth

- 3. At the secondary level, there are inconsistent processes and practices to collect and analyze student achievement data to improve instruction, to revise curriculum, and to improve student achievement.**
 - A. Interviews and a document review indicated that the middle and high schools have a fairly well balanced and comprehensive assessment system.
 - 1. In addition to the PARCC assessments, middle-school students take common unit assessments in content areas, GRADE and GMADE diagnostic assessments twice a year, word generation pre-and post-tests, and multiple on-demand writing assessments evaluated using teacher-developed writing rubrics.
 - 2. In addition, middle-school students engage in interdisciplinary, collaborative project-based learning activities (PBLs) assessed using authentic performance tasks.
 - a. Grade 6 students participate in three PBLs a year: one on plants and gardening, one on sturgeon and fishing, and one on Gloucester history and community.

- b. Grade 7 students collaborate on a project focused on overcoming obstacles.
 - c. Grade 8 students work together on a human rights project.
 3. At the high school, in addition to MCAS, students take common unit assessments (usually teacher developed) in content areas for like courses. In some courses, students take pre- and post-tests. There are also common midterm and final exams for like courses. Teachers assess student writing in both ELA and social studies using a variety of shared, scaffolded, teacher-developed rubrics.⁷ A district leader noted that the writing rubrics needed some refinement.
 - a. Interviewees told the review team that writing assignments and assessments at the high school address the literacy anchor standards reflected in the 2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for organization, genres/types of writing, and punctuation---with an emphasis on improving critical thinking skills.
 4. Secondary teachers also use the district's *A Closer Look* protocol to review and discuss MCAS results.
- B.** When district leaders and classroom teachers were asked about the systems and practices in place to ensure the regular collection and analysis of assessment data at the high school, the responses indicated that while some high school departments engaged in a rigorous discussion of student data to guide their work, in other departments the use of data was not firmly embedded in practice.
 1. Although high school teachers uniformly described various common assessments and the availability of data, several interviewees indicated that only some departments analyzed data systematically and regularly.
 2. In one high school department, interviewees said that a large amount of Professional Learning Community (PLC) time is now spent gathering evidence for the educator evaluation system rather than collaboratively looking at student assessment results. Examples given were the time devoted to set learning goals and professional growth goals as well as to develop Moodle sites, district-determined measures (DDMs), and the various assessments and evaluations needed as artifacts. This was confirmed by another interviewee who characterized the time spent on uploading evidence as a "fixation" of the process [of evaluation].
 3. In another department, an interviewee described a variety of assessments and assessment data, but expressed concern about the absence of opportunity to share data with colleagues in other departments and with students, especially to support the grade 9 students experiencing difficult transitions to high school.

⁷ A teacher explained that as grade levels increased, the writing rubrics added more complex components to assess student writing.

4. Also noted in interviews was the absence of follow-through with some initiatives that engaged teachers in the use of data at the high school. For example, in one department, little time was spent on the analysis of results from midterm and final exams.
 5. The review team was told that administrators do not often check in with teachers to learn what initiatives teachers are engaged in during PLC meetings. However, principals do meet with program leaders and others responsible for curriculum and instructional leadership such as assistant principals at the middle school who may share information about PLC meetings.
 6. A district leader stated that depending on the program leader some departments were stronger than others in analyzing and using data, with math and ELA being particularly strong. Teachers confirmed this, noting that math and ELA were highly collaborative and faithfully met three times a week to look at data and discuss student work.
 7. Interviewees said that it was difficult to review data systematically at the high school because of the nature of “paper and pencil” assessments. Data conversations are therefore more informal within PLC teams.
- C.** At the middle school, similar inconsistencies were described in the use of data to inform decision-making for instructional and curricular improvement.
1. Some interviewees gave examples of departments working toward the goal of using data from common assessments to improve instruction, although they noted that timing was an issue. Teachers said that data was most valuable if it was discussed right away.
 2. Interviewees agreed that using common assessments was a goal at the middle school although currently not all grade levels do this consistently in all content areas.
 3. A member of one grade-level team noted that the team did not have a chance to look at data because they were constantly putting out fires. This team member said: “I would love to look at the data . . . but it just sits waiting for us,” adding, “We meet as a department once a month for an hour after school with no agenda, no direction.” The member also said that there was no department head to lead the meeting and sometimes the group focused on topics of little value to educational improvement.”
 4. A district leader said that the ability to take data from benchmark tests and be more purposeful in interpreting it and addressing student needs was not as well developed at the middle school as at other levels.
 5. An interviewee noted that although the school’s assistant principals were designated as curriculum leaders, they did not attend meetings and did not participate in data discussions.

6. In several middle-school departments, interviewees described an emphasis on curriculum, project-based learning, and developing common assignments without a strong focus on data analysis.
7. Some middle-school teachers described looking at student work either formally or informally, noting that this was not practiced across all content areas.

Impact: Limited processes and practices to review assessment results and identify patterns and trends that could lead to changes to instruction and curriculum hinder the ability of teachers and leaders to identify and address factors that may be contributing to or preventing improved achievement for all students.

Recommendation

1. District and school leaders should develop uniform and integrated policies, structures, and practices for the continuous collection, dissemination, and analysis of student performance and other data sources at the middle and high schools.

- A.** The superintendent, principals, program leaders, and teachers should collaboratively develop specific strategies, timelines, and clear expectations for the use of data at the secondary schools.
 1. Building on the practices in place at the elementary level, the district should establish systematic, consistent processes for the analysis and use of assessment data.
 - a. Leaders and teachers should develop protocols and allocate regularly scheduled time for the analysis and discussion of data, ensuring consistency in approach across departments and identifying additional meeting time as needed.
 - b. School leaders should ensure that meetings designated for data analysis and related planning (including PLC time and common planning time) have a clear structure and that administrators provide sufficient guidance and support.
- B.** Ongoing, focused training in the collection, analysis, and use of student performance data should be provided for staff in each school, grade level, and subject area.
 1. The district might consider the use of data teams at the middle and high schools to guide data analysis and the use of data.
 2. It might be helpful for staff members from different departments to share ideas about effective protocols for analyzing data, including structured processes for looking at student work.

Benefits from implementing this recommendation will include clarity and consistency in the district's use of data for decision making. More sophisticated and consistent data analysis will also help identify patterns and trends that could lead to changes in instruction and curriculum. Implementing this recommendation will help district leaders and teachers to strengthen the analysis and use of data to improve instructional skills and raise student achievement.

Recommended resources:

- ESE's *Assessment Literacy Self-Assessment and Gap Analysis Tool* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/eval/ddm/webinar/PartI-GapAnalysis.pdf>) is intended to support districts in understanding where their educators fit overall on a continuum of assessment literacy. After determining where the district as a whole generally falls on the continuum, districts can determine potential next steps.
- 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
- The *Edwin Analytics* web page (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edwin/analytics/>) includes links to a Getting Started Guide, as well as a video tutorial series.
- ESE's *Early Warning Indicator System* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edwin/analytics/ewis.html>) is a tool to provide information to districts about the likelihood that their students will reach key academic goals. Districts can use the tool in conjunction with other data and sources of information to better target student supports and interventions and to examine school-level patterns over time in order to address systemic issues that may impede students' ability to meet academic goals.
- The *Early Warning Implementation Guide* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edwin/analytics/2014ImplementationGuide.pdf>) provides information on how to use early warning data, including the Massachusetts Early Warning Indicator System (EWIS), to identify, diagnose, support and monitor students in grades 1-12. It offers educators an overview of EWIS and how to effectively use these data in conjunction with local data by following a six-step implementation cycle.

Human Resources and Professional Development

Contextual Background

The district has made an effort to improve human resources staffing and processes. The district has recently hired a new director of human resources to replace a clerical employee who had managed personnel matters. The assistant superintendent and the school principals perform professional development functions. And now school principals make hiring decisions for their own schools.

The district has differentiated how it uses its resources (staff, funding, and program priorities) by making staff and programmatic changes in areas of identified need to improve student achievement, particularly in support of English language learners and students with disabilities. A Title I elementary school that was Level 3 until the 2014-2015 school year has implemented a co-teaching model.

Several challenges with the implementation of the district's educator evaluation system became evident during the review. In some cases, evaluators are not observing classrooms of teachers without professional teacher status as frequently as the teachers' CBA requires. Also, evaluations do not consistently include specific, evidence-based feedback designed to contribute to the professional growth of the educator. Finally, the district does not have a professional development committee or a professional development plan aligned with district initiatives, and there is no mechanism to evaluate the effectiveness of professional development activities.

Strength Finding

1. The district allocates human and financial resources based on data and identified student needs.

- A.** The district hired a math tutor for the Beeman Memorial and Veteran's Memorial elementary schools, which are both Title I schools, and implemented a co-teaching model at Veteran's Memorial Elementary School, which had been a Level 3 school until the 2014-2015 school year when its designation was changed to Level 2.
- B.** In response to an increase of students needing special education and ELL services, Beeman Memorial Elementary School hired additional special education teachers, and the district hired two ELL teachers.
- C.** The district recently hired a human resources director at the central office to replace a clerical employee who had previously been assigned to that function.

Impact: The district's efforts to staff areas of great student need with enhanced resources likely means improved student performance. A human resources administrator, who participates in leadership team meetings, can focus administrative attention on issues relating to the human resources function.

Challenge Findings and Areas for Growth

2. The district has implemented its educator evaluation system that is aligned with current educator evaluation regulations, but it has not achieved consistency in the implementation or conducted it in such a way as to maximize effectiveness.

- A.** A document review indicated that the district adopted the state’s model collective bargaining contract language with only minor changes.
- B.** A review of 32 randomly selected teacher folders showed that 30 contained evidence of some of the components of educator evaluation, including self-assessment; goal setting; and formative and summative evaluations).⁸
 - 1. Six folders did not contain SMART goals (specific and strategic; measureable; action-oriented; rigorous, realistic, and results-focused; and timed and tracked). For example, one goal read “expand my role as a teacher” with no other specifics.
 - 2. Of the 32 formative and summative evaluations reviewed, 24 were informative and instructive⁹ and 8 were informative but did not include feedback designed to contribute to the professional growth of the educator. For example, one evaluation stated that the teacher “does an excellent job” and another that the teacher is “a valued member of the faculty”; these evaluations did not provide quality feedback to recognize or promote professional growth or to improve instructional practice.
- C.** The team reviewed the personnel folders of all 42 teachers without professional status who were not in their first year of teaching (Developing Educators in Years Two and Three) and 3 randomly selected teachers in their first year.
 - 1. Of the 45 folders reviewed, in the 2014-2015 school year only 16 teachers were observed as many times as the collective bargaining language required (that is, 4 times for those in Year 2 and 3 times for those in year 3).
 - a. However, all the middle-school teachers without professional status received the required number of observations in the 2014-2015 school year.

⁸ The random sampling of teachers’ folders included only four teachers without professional status who were in the district in 2014-2015 (Developing Educators in Years Two and Three) and who would have completed at least one full year of the evaluation cycle. When all four of those randomly selected teachers without professional status were found not to have had the full number of required announced and unannounced observations for that year, the review was expanded to include all 42 teachers in years two and three of Developing Educators Plans.

⁹ An informative evaluation is factual and cites instructional details such as methodology, pedagogy, Standards and Indicators of Effective Teaching Practice or instruction of subject-based knowledge that is aligned with the state curriculum frameworks. It does not commit to improvement strategies. An instructive evaluation includes comments intended to improve instruction.

2. Six teachers without professional status received only a summative evaluation in the 2014-2015 school year.
 3. At the time of the onsite in early December, 2015, 20 of the 45 folders of teachers without professional status did not contain evidence of an announced or unannounced observation for the 2015-2016 school year, even though the CBA states that the evaluator's first observation of the educator should be completed by November 15.
 - a. However, the folders of all of the middle-school teachers and teachers from two elementary schools had evidence of the required first observation.
- D.** Although administrators told the team that the educator evaluation system has improved collaboration, some teachers in several focus groups said that they found the educator evaluation system difficult to use and did not believe the evaluation protocols, as practiced, resulted in improved teaching and learning.
1. Some teachers said that they considered the education evaluation system something from which they "need to protect themselves."
 2. Some teachers expressed concern about the educator evaluation system. They were concerned that the system might result in a Reduction in Force, and believed that it was "far too much for everyone to handle with stakes that were far too high."
 3. Some teachers perceived a misunderstanding about the definition of the exemplary rating.
 4. Some teachers said that they did not think that educator evaluation was changing or informing their instructional practice.
 5. Elementary teachers acknowledged that teachers received timely feedback after observations, but told the review team that they found the process "cumbersome and time consuming," noting confusion among teachers over the requirements of educator evaluation.
 - a. Teachers reported that some principals, specifically at the elementary level, required teachers to write a reflection. Teachers said that evaluators were telling them that they were looking only at that document and not at their uploaded artifacts of evidence.
- E.** In June 2014 the district submitted to ESE's Center for Educator Effectiveness a DDM Implementation Plan for the 2014-2015 school year; Gloucester sought and was approved for extensions for more than half its grades and subjects.
1. District leaders told the team that the district is in the process of developing district-determined measures (DDMs) and is on track to complete them in all grades and subjects by the end of school year 2015-2016. They noted that in 2016-2017 the district will implement the Student Impact Rating and begin to use DDMs.

Impact: Without consistency in the implementation of the educator evaluation system and in the quality of feedback to teachers, the district is missing an opportunity to improve teachers' practice and to create a culture of growth-oriented supervision and evaluation in its schools.

3. The effectiveness of the district's professional development activities is diminished by the absence of centralized leadership and coordinated planning, of clearly articulated goals and objectives, of formal teacher collaboration, and of a direct and sustained focus on well-defined district priorities.

- A.** Beyond a calendar, the team found no evidence of an up-to-date district professional development (PD) plan; PD is largely school-based and determined by each principal.
1. A review of the professional development calendar for 2015-2016 indicated PD offerings in 2015-2016 on full PD days, on four early-release PD days (October 6, December 1, January 26, and April 5), and on school days when teachers are released from their classrooms to participate in PD.
 2. PD is being provided in 2015-2016 on new programs and initiatives. Examples are Empowering Writers at the elementary level, grade-level math unit reviews for the new math program K-5, PBIS roll-out at the middle school, differentiated instruction and technology integration at the middle school, and Stripling Inquiry Model training at Gloucester High School.
 3. The superintendent reported that the district has drafted a PD plan for 2016-2017 and district leaders expected the formal document to be completed after a leadership retreat in August 2016.
- B.** Some teachers reported that they have limited input into PD.
1. Elementary teachers acknowledged that coaches have conversations with the principals, but said that these conversations do not always inform professional development.
 2. Some middle-school teachers said that they do not have as much input into decisions about PD this year as they did in the past three years.
 3. At the high school, some teachers said that they do not think there is a common approach to participating in or implementing PD. However, other teachers acknowledged that the Inquiry Committee, which is planning the professional development for the high school in 2015-2016, includes representatives from each subject area.
- C.** The team found no evidence of a districtwide PD committee to plan PD based on district priorities, needs of educators, and student achievement data.
- D.** The team did not find evidence of a system in place to routinely evaluate the effectiveness of PD or to assess whether PD has resulted in improved instruction and student achievement.

1. Some teachers said that in the past teachers completed an evaluation form after PD, but that this has not been done for several years.
2. Some presenters receive feedback through exit tickets or ask teachers for verbal input at the end of PD offerings. Other feedback is given informally through conversations with teachers in hallways. In the high school, teachers reported that Survey Monkey is used to solicit feedback.

Impact: When district priorities, teacher input, student achievement data, and a districtwide assessment of the PD needs of teachers and of the effectiveness of PD programming do not form the basis for planning PD, the district may be missing opportunities to optimize PD programming and compromising its ability to help teachers to reach their professional goals and to advance student achievement.

Recommendations

- 1. To improve the implementation of the educator evaluation system and enhance its overall effectiveness, the district should address inconsistencies in policies, practices, and procedures and provide additional targeted training for teachers and administrators.**
 - A.** The district should consider the formation of a joint committee, composed equally of administrators and teacher representatives, which would meet regularly and serve as a formal mechanism to monitor the overall implementation of the educator evaluation system, to identify problems proactively, and to collaboratively develop appropriate and timely solutions.
 1. In particular, the joint committee should focus on opportunities to maximize the efficiency of the educator evaluation system by scrutinizing the amount of documentation that it is requiring of educators and evaluators.
 - B.** Additional and ongoing training for teachers and administrators should be provided to further support and promote the educator evaluation system. All administrators should receive targeted training in contemporary supervisory and evaluative practices in order to improve their professional judgment. This includes enhancing their abilities to observe and to analyze classroom instruction, and to provide specific evidence-based feedback to staff that can significantly improve teaching and expand professional competencies.
 - C.** The district should address teachers' concerns about the goals and purpose of the educator evaluation system.
 1. This could be done during the annual educator evaluation orientation required by section 6 of the educator evaluation language in Appendix B of the 2013-2015 collective bargaining agreement.

2. Specific concerns include the perceived relationship between educator evaluation and a reduction in force (RIF), the determination of ratings, and the quantity and types of evidence that should be provided as artifacts.

Benefits: Improved district monitoring and communication systems will enable the superintendent, his administrative team, and all key stakeholders to more effectively oversee and ensure the full and consistent implementation of the educator evaluation system. It will greatly enhance the likelihood that all the district's schools and educators will meet the professional expectations and well-defined timelines, steps, and stages articulated in the system. Additional and ongoing training will enhance the likelihood that the professional skills and judgment and overall effectiveness of teachers and administrators will continue to improve and that an authentic and collaborative culture of growth-oriented supervision and evaluation will result. Addressing teachers' concerns about educator evaluation likely will help clarify the goals and purposes of educator evaluation and build trust in the evaluation system as a tool for continuous improvement of teaching and learning.

Recommended resources:

- *ESE's Quick Reference Guide: Educator Evaluation Training* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/eval/resources/QRG-TrainingReqs.pdf>) describes the models and workshops that are designed for evaluators and non-evaluators. It might be helpful for the district to identify existing modules or workshops that would clarify information about the system, or to identify ways to complement these offerings.
 - *Identifying Meaningful Professional Development* (<https://youtu.be/zhuFioO8GbQ>) is a video in which Educators from three Massachusetts districts discuss the importance of targeted, meaningful professional development and the ways districts can use the evaluation process to identify the most effective PD supports for all educators.
2. **The district should establish processes to increase teacher input into its professional development program, and should align its professional development program with district improvement initiatives.**
 - A. District leaders should create a professional development (PD) committee to plan and oversee PD for the district.
 1. The committee should develop a district PD plan that is aligned with the District Improvement Plan.
 - a. As part of this effort, the committee should outline and document a set of learning experiences for its educators that is systematic, sustained, and aligned with district goals.
 2. The plan should identify specific PD needs, determine how they might be met, and recommend adjustments in PD practices to meet them.

3. The plan should address needs identified by student performance data and trends from classroom observations.
4. It should include goals focused on improving teacher practice and student outcomes.
 - a. The plan should also include mechanisms for gauging the effectiveness of PD.

Benefit: A district professional development committee and plan will maintain focus on identified district improvement goals and result in improved teacher effectiveness and higher student achievement.

Recommended resources:

- *Quick Reference Guide: Educator Evaluation & Professional Development* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/eval/resources/QRG-ProfessionalDevelopment.pdf>) describes how educator evaluation and professional development can be used as mutually reinforcing systems to improve educator practice and student outcomes.
- *The Massachusetts Standards for Professional Development* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/pd/standards.pdf>) describe, identify, and characterize what high-quality learning experiences for educators should look like.
- *ESE's Professional Development Self-Assessment Guidebook* (<http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ease/accountability/dsac/professional-development-self-assessment-guide.pdf>) provides tools for analyzing professional development offerings' alignment with the Massachusetts High-Quality Professional Development Standards, the Educator Evaluation Framework, and the Standards and Indicators of Effective Practice.

Student Support

Contextual Background

The district is in the process of implementing systems and practices for early identification of students in need of support. Through a variety of meeting formats at all school levels, teachers have opportunities to analyze student achievement data and look for performance trends. They have established Response to Intervention (RtI) processes at all elementary schools and are working to strengthen interventions in the middle and high schools. Several schools have developed co-teaching models whereby students frequently have access not only to the general education teacher but also to a specialist, securing a push-in model to apply interventions. Schools are also implementing Tiered Support Services (TSS) through Tier 2 and 3 pull-out models of interventions for at-risk students who need re-teaching, additional learning time, and/or alternate teaching strategies.

Differentiated instruction is a major goal; however, the district has not consistently reached this goal in all classrooms. Recently, there has been an influx of English language learners, which has created a sense of urgency to hire additional ELL staff and to examine more closely the needs of this student subgroup. It has also intensified the need for differentiation.

Retention and attendance are of concern at the high school. Although drop-out and suspension rates are low, the high school (a Level 1 school) is experiencing a high retention rate, especially for 9th graders. Chronic absence hovers between 24 and 26 percent in all grades, 9-12. Administrators believe the new attendance policy and newly hired attendance officer will eventually make a positive impact on chronic absence. An additional student indicator that caught the review team's attention was that 9 percent of graduating seniors indicated that they were uncertain about plans post high school. This data point led reviewers to question the strength of the district's college and career readiness programs and practices. Guidance counselors, school psychologists, and other support staff told the team that they are noticing an increase in trauma histories and are organizing to address social and emotional issues that are affecting academic performance and student well-being.

Strength Finding

- 1. The district has implemented systems and practices for the early identification of students in need of academic support. While providing timely interventions and support services, the district continues to search for additional best practices.**
 - A.** Elementary level staff members engage in a number of established meetings to discuss students' academic progress and determine needed services for at-risk students.
 1. Weekly student support groups meet to focus on all students who are falling behind. Attendees address any problems in the classrooms and determine how to address them.

2. Teachers participate in grade-level meetings to review achievement data, monitor students' progress, and make decisions about supports and interventions for students who are not reaching expected performance targets.
 - a. Interviewees told the review team that during grade-level meetings, teachers use benchmark results and progress monitoring data in math and literacy for all students to identify those who are performing below grade level.
 - b. At these collaborative meetings, teachers and specialists assign students to specific interventions. Teachers are asked to apply an intervention for at least six weeks. After such time, and depending upon the effectiveness of the intervention, during collaborative meetings teachers make additional adjustments about academic support.
 3. Each elementary school has organized a Child Study Team (CST) to review student achievement and academic needs. This team meets to give general education teachers and specialists an opportunity to analyze student performance.
 - a. Interviewees reported that the CST conducts a gap analysis to determine how subgroups, including students with disabilities and English language learners, are performing compared to all students.
 - b. A district administrator reported that a CST meeting could be the first step to a special education pre-referral process; however, special education leadership is working to ensure that CST is not perceived as just a pre-referral.
 4. Large data team meetings K-5 take place three times a year. (Data teams meet four times per year at Beeman Memorial.) The district has established specific protocols for these meetings to look at students' profiles and instructional groupings. Special education teachers and language specialists also attend these meetings.
 - a. At data meetings, just as at grade-level meetings, teachers assign students to a number of interventions, such as Lexia, Early Reading Intervention (ERI), and Foundations.
 - b. At three of the elementary schools, Title I teachers group students who need additional support.
 5. During common planning time (CPT), teachers often revisit student performance data in order to reconfigure intervention assignments and classroom learning groups. Interviewees reported that "there is a calculated formula to identify student progress and to predict growth."
- B.** Secondary level staff also meet to identify students in need of additional support services.

1. Teachers at O'Maley Middle School have interdisciplinary grade-level meetings and vertical-content meetings (grades 6-8) where teachers review student work to identify students in need of additional support.
 2. Student Review Time (SRT) at the middle school takes place once during a six-day cycle. SRT provides teachers the opportunity to talk about interventions, what to try, what not to try, what is working at different levels, and what needs to change.
 3. At middle-school department-level CPT meetings, teachers analyze formative data from benchmark tests and other sources. Departments meet to review student performance and discuss which instructional strategies to use.
 4. High-school Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) by department and grade level and Student Study Teams (SSTs) convene to discuss students who are not making progress or who are dropping in achievement.
 - a. Staff reported that in PLCs and SSTs, teachers offer suggestions and make decisions to ensure that everything possible has been done to support students.
- C.** As noted in the District Improvement Plan, the district is committed to effectively educating students by concentrating on their individual needs, identifying the barriers to achievement, and focusing on the means for removing those barriers.
1. District leaders and guidance staff reported that the superintendent and assistant superintendent are involved in child study practices to make sure that a tiered system of support is in place.
 2. In its self-assessment the district noted that the K-8 literacy coordinator consistently observes classrooms to identify best practices and areas of need.
- D.** The district continues to explore new differentiated intervention models to respond to diverse students' needs at both the elementary and secondary levels.
1. District administrators reported that specific interventions and times for intervention differ from school to school. Some schools combine students from same grade-level classrooms into small groups; others only provide interventions for students within a classroom.
 - a. Students receive 20 to 40 minutes of prescribed support during intervention blocks.
 - b. Interviewees reported that intervention groups consisting of two to four students were common.
 - c. Interviewees stated that the Response to Intervention (RtI) process is continually being refined. Staff members are concentrating on how students enter and exit grades and

schools. They reported looking at interventions and targeting which constructs are needed.

3. At Beeman Memorial and Veterans Memorial schools, staff reported following the established RtI model with a co-teaching approach for grades 1–5.
4. Elementary interventions are a combination of pull-out (supports take place outside a general education class) and push-in (supports take place within a general education class).
 - a. Staff reported that the Bay State Readers Initiative (BSRI) helped with the elementary Tier 2 intervention process.
4. Interviewees reported that teachers provide differentiated support to students at the “teacher’s table,” an RtI practice in the elementary schools.
5. Middle-school interventions are mostly pull-out. Students at the middle school who have failed a class also participate in an after-school, mandatory extended time twice a week.
6. The high school has created co-taught classes that emphasize literacy skills. Students who need extra help can receive it in class from a general education teacher or co-teaching partner, or a special education or ELL teacher.

Impact: The district has made a concerted effort to understand and respond to students’ diverse educational needs. Working closely with students to gain insight into their different learning patterns, strengths, and challenges can promote stronger academic performance. As district and school leaders and staff continue these efforts, the district will likely ensure a more coherent and unified system to support the learning of at-risk students.

Challenge Findings and Areas for Growth

2. **With a recent and unexpected increase in the numbers of its English language learners, the district is challenged to ensure adequate, qualified ESL staff and appropriate academic supports at all school levels to provide full access to the curriculum and academic programs for this growing subgroup.**
 - A. The district’s self-assessment noted an increase of 26 English language learners (ELLs), a 26 percent increase, from 99 in school year 2015 to 125 in school year 2016.
 1. Staff reported that the increased numbers of ELLs required an increase in the number of ESL instructors from 2.6 to 5.0.
 2. A district administrator said that the district is experiencing a shift, with ELLs unexpectedly increasing by 37 percent just within the month before the review.

3. A school committee member stated that although classroom space has not been a big issue in the past, the district is now challenged to find enough space to accommodate a growing number of ELLs.
- B.** District leaders understand the changes needed to respond to the growth in ELLs.
1. The assistant superintendent has now been made responsible for coordinating ELL programming.
 2. Interviewees reported that all principals have received appropriate Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) training and certifications and estimated that “50 percent or more” of teachers mostly at the elementary level have been trained, noting that the proportion might be as high as 80 percent.
 - a. Interviewees said that SEI was new for secondary teachers but not for elementary teachers because of a greater need for SEI K-5 in the past.
- C.** Schools at all levels are working to establish a unified way to adapt support to the needs of the increasing numbers of ELLs.
1. Elementary staff stated that in order to meet ESL requirements, they use a combination of pullout and push-in with students to ensure access to the curriculum and the life of the school.
 2. Middle school staff reported that they use mostly a pull-out model, in which ELLs take ESL in place of an elective.
 3. High-school administrators and staff reported that ELLs in College Prep 1 and 2 take ESL in place of an English class.
 - a. Staff expressed a desire to have more classroom supports in place for ELLs at the high school.
 - b. A teacher reported a small group of 12 ELLs at Levels 1 and 2 is being formed into an SEI social studies class at the high school, emphasizing that staff are continually making the changes necessary because of the increase in numbers of ELLs.
 4. Current and newly hired ESL teachers are working with general education teachers to create co-taught classes where they can provide scaffolding skills for students to build the literacy skills needed to read English.
 5. A teacher reported that the ELL schedule needs to be revised because it does not give ELLs sufficient time in pull-out sections.
 6. Differentiation of instruction so that the lesson content was accessible to all learners was observed in only 30 percent of visited high-school lessons and in only 37 percent of middle-

school lessons (High school: 5 percent, strong evidence; 25 percent, moderate evidence. Middle school: 6 percent, strong evidence; 31 percent, moderate evidence.).

Impact: The unexpected increase in ELLs has found the district limited in its preparation to educate these English language learners. Without the appropriate systems and practices in place to meet ELLs' learning and language needs (e.g., the presence of certified teaching staff, appropriate books and materials, necessary and adequate space for pull-out interventions, schedule adjustments, and instructional support for general education staff), the district is challenged to reach its goal of consistent growth and achievement for all students.

3. District and school policies and practices are not sufficiently improving a high retention rate in grade 9 and high chronic absence in grades 9-12, or providing sufficient support for students' continuous progress toward college and career readiness.

A. District and school policies and practices do not adequately address retention and its impact on progress from grade to grade in an expected timeframe.

1. According to ESE data, the grade 9 retention rate has increased steadily in recent years, from 7.1 in 2013 to 10.9 in 2014 to 11.6 in 2015.
 - a. A review of the student, faculty, and family handbook indicated students are placed in a homeroom depending on the number of credits they have earned toward graduation. Therefore, students are retained in a grade if they do not meet required credit accumulation for the next grade. The team did not find evidence of support services for retained students to ensure credit acquisition other than summer school credit recovery for a fee.
 - i. An administrator stated that retention rates are deceiving because students may appear to have been "retained" when actually they have not acquired the necessary credits to be officially promoted.

B. Attendance rates at the high school need improvement.

1. At 92.3 percent, 2015 student attendance for grades 11 and 12 was the highest in the school. Attendance was 91.2 percent for grade 9 and 91.3 percent for grade 10.
2. Chronic absence rates at the high school in 2015 were 24.5 percent for grade 9, 25.7 percent for grade 10, 24.1 percent for grade 11, and 26.0 percent for grade 12.¹⁰

C. High school policies do not encourage attendance.

1. The high school handbook states that 6 unexcused absences per quarter or 24 per year will result in loss of credit.

¹⁰ These data reflect the percentage of students absent more than 10 percent of the days in membership.

- a. As long as they can be validated, absences for medical appointments, prolonged illness, and four college visits do not count toward the total numbers of absences that trigger consequences.
 2. The Attendance Review Team can give students a reprieve from the consequences for high absence.
- D.** According to ESE 2015 data (the most recent available), 9 percent of graduating seniors indicated “Unknown” plans after high school.
1. The district’s college and career readiness support is limited.
 - a. The student, faculty, and family handbook states that in career counseling, students are encouraged to use the computer-based career planning tools available at the Guidance Center to develop a plan.
 - b. High-school students in a focus group indicated that in sophomore year, guidance staff visit English classes and show students how to use Naviance (an online system to match one’s major areas of interest and talent with colleges and jobs). Students said that after that, there is not much focus on plans.
 - c. Students indicated that if there were more opportunities to consider “student voice” in decision-making and problem solving at the high school, student attitudes about the importance of school might improve.
 - d. District leaders reported the following college and career readiness support:
 - introduction to Naviance, transition survey, personality survey, individual meetings to discuss interests and course planning (grade 9);
 - career interest profile, career cluster finder, career exploration project, resume’ building and goal setting, individual meetings to discuss interests and course planning (grade 10);
 - individual college and career planning meetings, presentations in English classes about transition planning, Junior Parent Night, Career and College Fair at the high school (grade 11); and
 - individual college and career planning meetings, meetings with college representatives, Senior Parent Night, and Financial Aid Night.
 - e. District leaders also reported that weekly bulletins and monthly newsletters are sent to students and parents throughout the year.

Impact: High retention rates in grade 9, high chronic absence in grades 9-12, and 9 percent of the graduating class indicating uncertainty about plans call into question how effectively the district and the high school engage students in academic work and help students prepare for life’s next steps. When

students are provided guidance and support as they explore career possibilities, they are more likely to be motivated and active in creating and reaching personal goals.

Recommendations

1. The district should continue to create and implement systems and practices to ensure that English language learners are provided with instruction and support that meets their needs.

- A. The district should provide clearly defined leadership, sufficient qualified teaching staff, appropriate placement and scheduling of classes with support interventions, and adequate resources.
 - 1. General education teachers should continue to pursue SEI training in order to achieve increased skills in how to effectively teach English language learners (ELLs).
 - 2. Schools should monitor the placement and scheduling of classes to ensure that ELLs are receiving appropriate instruction.
 - 3. Schools should consider ways to provide enhanced co-teaching models.
- B. Teachers at all grade levels and in all departments should use SEI teaching strategies and instructional practices in classrooms to ensure that all students have equal access to the general education, standards-based curriculum.
- C. All teaching and support staff should receive focused professional development in effectively using differentiation and accommodations to create classrooms where all students have equal access to high-quality curriculum.
- D. District leaders should regularly connect with city and state officials and community agencies to learn about ELLs and their families.
 - 1. The district should seek guidance and assistance for establishing partnerships for outreach and the development of strong, working relationships with families of ELLs.

Benefits: Implementing this recommendation will provide English language learners a more effective, well-planned program, which can lead to increased student achievement and help to ensure that the district provides all students with a high-quality education. This may also provide a smoother entrance of ELLs to the district and help students' academic progress and emotional well being.

Recommended resources:

- *The World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) English Language Development Standards Implementation Guide (Part I)* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/wida/Guidance-p1.pdf>)

provides general information about the WIDA ELD standards framework, expectations for district implementation, and available support.

- *RETELL: Extending the Learning* web page (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/retell/courses.html>) is a registry of SEI-related courses that have been reviewed and approved by the Department's Office of English Language Acquisition and Academic Achievement. These courses provide opportunities for educators to extend their learning and practice beyond the Sheltered English Instruction (SEI) Endorsement course.
- *Four ELL Case Studies of High Performing and Improving Boston Schools* (http://www.ccebos.org/ell_success.html) describe key themes at schools identified for their consistent, multi-year out-performance of like schools in ELL outcomes.
- *The English Learner Tool kit for State and Local Education Agencies* (<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/index.html>) is designed to help state and local education agencies to meet their legal obligations to English language learners (ELLs) and to provide ELLs with the support needed to attain English language proficiency while meeting college- and career- readiness standards. The tool kit includes such topics as identifying English language learners, evaluating the effectiveness of programs, and supporting limited English proficient parents. Each of its 10 chapters includes: (1) explanations of the civil rights and other legal obligations to ELLs; (2) checklists that can be used as self-monitoring tools; (3) sample tools that may be used or adapted for use to aid with compliance; and (4) free online resources that provide additional relevant information and assistance.
- *Taking Action for ELLs: Foundational Concepts* (<https://www.wida.us/index.aspx>; log-in required) is an online learning module designed for educators with a beginning level of awareness of WIDA English language development. The module covers three topics:
 - Building Awareness of Your ELLs
 - Use of Language for Academic Purposes
 - Integrating Content and Language

Educators are invited to use the module independently or collaboratively with colleagues.

- Title I Family Engagement materials (<http://www.mass.gov/edu/government/departments-and-boards/ese/programs/accountability/financial-support/title-i-and-other-federal-support-programs/title-i-part-a/program-design.html>) include policies, toolkits, research, presentations, and other resources.

2. The high school should revise its attendance policy to improve students' attendance. It should take appropriate steps to curb the high rate of retention in grade 9 and chronic absence in grades 9-12 and provide more guidance and support to students as they plan for life after high school.

- A.** Although the high school may excuse extended absence because of illness or hospitalization, it should rewrite its attendance policy so that students are expected to be in school daily and absence for any reason should not total more than 10 days per year.
1. The district should consider gathering input from students and families about the reasons for high absence rates and possible ways to address the challenge of students missing too much instruction.
- B.** School leaders and guidance staff should ensure that students are accumulating enough credits at the expected rate to move to the next grade.
1. The district should provide students ongoing guidance about which credits they need to be promoted to the next grade.
- C.** The high school should provide continuous guidance and support to students as they develop their post-secondary plans.

Benefits: By implementing this recommendation the district will lower retention, improve attendance, enhance learning, and better prepare students for college, work, and careers.

Recommended resources:

- *The Massachusetts Model for Comprehensive School Counseling* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/ssce/mscamodel.html>) is a standards-based model for school counseling outlining how school counseling programs can support student achievement and education reform objectives.
- The *Wraparound Replication Cookbook* (<https://sites.google.com/site/masswazcookbook/>) is a practical guide focused on improving academic performance by systematically addressing students' social emotional and non-academic needs. It is based on the experience of several Massachusetts districts, and is organized according to the following key strategy areas:
 - Addressing School Culture and the Social Emotional Aspects of Learning
 - Rethinking Systems for Identifying and Addressing Academic and Social Emotional Needs
 - Creating Focused Partnerships & Coalitions
- *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.

- The Individual Learning Plan (ILP) is a student-directed, multi-year, dynamic tool that maps academic plans, personal/social growth, and career development activities while taking into account the student's unique, self-defined interests, needs, and goals for the attainment of postsecondary success. The *Massachusetts Guide for Implementing Individual Learning Plans* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/ccr/initiatives/>) describes the ILP tool and provides guidance related to the ILP process.
- ESE offers several presentations related to College and Career Readiness (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/ccr/ccrta/>). Topics include the use of data, student transitions, and MassCore, among others.
- *Ninth Grade Counts* (<http://www.greatschoolspartnership.org/resources/ninth-grade-counts/>) is a resource to help high schools identify weaknesses in their ninth-grade programs, and then develop a purposeful, proactive plan to strengthen this critical educational transition. The guide is divided into three areas of focus:
 - Strengthening the Transition into High School
 - Strengthening the High School Transition for English Language Learners
 - Using Summer Bridge Programs to Strengthen the High School Transition

Financial and Asset Management

Contextual Background

A review of the Department of Revenue's At-A-Glance report for the City of Gloucester indicated that the city's 2012 per capita income was \$33,279 and its 2014 equalized valuation per capita was \$186,961. The city's fiscal year 2016 free cash balance is \$3,450,815 and its fiscal year 2014 stabilization fund balance was \$1,939,761.¹¹

Gloucester exceeded its Net School Spending (NSS) requirement by 32 percent in fiscal year 2015. Between fiscal year 2010 and 2015 the district's actual NSS grew from 14.6 percent above its required NSS to 32 percent above, an increase of close to 18 percentage points. Over the same period the district's foundation enrollment declined by close to 7 percent, from 3,588 to 3,348, and its Chapter 70 aid grew by just 1.2 percent, from \$6,080,047 to \$6,157,967. The district's choice-out enrollment grew from 181 students in fiscal year 2006 to 302 students in fiscal year 2015, a 67 percent increase. Gloucester is now paying \$1,643,777 in choice-out tuitions.

The district is opening a new elementary school in the fall of 2016, which it is funding without an override, using its bonding capacity and MSBA reimbursements. In addition to the new elementary school that will be coming on line, there are four other elementary schools in the district, one school dedicated to serving prekindergarten and kindergarten students, one middle school, and one high school.

Strength Findings

1. The district has a transparent and collaborative budget process.

A. School leaders are engaged in defining and funding budget priorities.

1. Administrators indicated that principals submit their funding requests based on a level-service-funded budget in December and work with central office staff to fulfill these requests in line with district priorities and within the scope of available funding.
 - a. The district is funding a number of initiatives aligned with district priorities and tailored to the needs of individual schools, including: a co-teaching intervention at Veterans Memorial Elementary; additional special education teachers at Beeman Memorial Elementary; the SAILS initiative (Service, Acceptance, Integrity, Leadership and Success) and project-based learning at O'Maley Middle School; and the district's 1:1 technology initiative.

¹¹ DOR At-A-Glance report for the City of Gloucester:
https://dls.gateway.dor.state.ma.us/DLSReports/DLSReportViewer.aspx?ReportName=At_A_Glance&ReportTitle=At%20A%20Glance

2. As part of the fiscal year 2016 budget process, the superintendent looked at class-size data and reduced staffing levels at the high school in order to fund other positions in the district.
- B.** The district funds its priorities to the greatest extent possible with public and private funds.
1. The district has a strong relationship with the Gloucester Education Foundation (GEF).
 - a. Between April 2014 and March 2015, GEF granted \$240,000 to the district to support a number of arts, STEM and literacy programs throughout the district.
 - b. The superintendent said that the GEF is less than a decade old and has become a stronger partner in the last two years.
 2. The school department holds a public hearing on its budget in April where district officials respond to questions from the public.
 3. The superintendent told the team that in the past, communication between the school department and the city was marked by disagreement, but the relationship has improved in the last ten years. City managers, including the superintendent, meet every two weeks. And though municipal and school leaders experience respectful push-back in some areas, they work together to resolve issues.
 - a. The school committee appoints one of its members to act as a liaison to the city council.

Impact: By supporting an open and collaborative budget process the district is getting input and buy-in from school leaders and community members in defining and funding district priorities.

2. The district's business office staff has clearly defined roles and responsibilities and implements processes consistently with an eye on making improvements.

- A.** The district is making improvements in its business office.
1. In July 2015, the district hired a new business manager, a CPA with a strong understanding of accounting systems.
 - a. The business manager told the team that one of his primary goals is implementing MUNIS, a more robust accounting and reporting system.
 2. The city is in the process of transitioning to a new accounting system, MUNIS.
 - a. MUNIS will enable the business office to move from processing paper forms to electronic processing of records.
- B.** The business office is implementing procedures consistently with an eye to improvement.
1. The district's payroll clerk oversees processing of the district's payroll in conjunction with the city, handling retroactive pay increases, stipends, substitute pay, and other variables.

2. The district also works with the city to procure goods and services in accordance with state law and local procedures.
3. Since the new business manager started he has been working to make more consistent use of a DPW ticketing system to open and resolve maintenance projects more quickly.
4. City officials said that they have confidence in the district's current business office systems.
5. The business office updates the superintendent and school committee on the district's budget and expenditures every two weeks. The business office prepares a summary report that district leaders, including principals, can access through Google Docs.
6. Principals have real-time access to their accounts and they can now see the full scope of their school budgets rather than just the discretionary portion.

Impact: Accurate and efficient handling of the district's business office functions supports the district's focus on delivering programs and services to children.

Challenge Findings and Areas for Growth

3. The district's budget process is complicated by uncertainty about funding, timing differences between the city and school department, and an absence of clarity about funding sources and how maintenance costs are determined.

- A.** School officials typically do not receive a final budget figure from the city until May or June, very late in the fiscal year.
 1. The district starts its budget planning process in December and presents its proposed budget to the school committee in February.
 2. The school committee holds a public hearing in April, but the school department typically does not receive a final budget figure from the city until May, and sometimes as late as June.
 3. In order to accommodate these timing differences, the school department creates three budget scenarios in case it needs to make cuts once the city council determines the final budget figure.
 4. The city starts its budget planning later than the school department, typically in January; but it gives guidance to the school department based on an expected budget increase from the prior fiscal year.
 5. The mayor gives the school committee a figure, but the city council appropriates funding after deliberation and consideration of all city departments.

6. Unknowns such as the amount of state aid, the regional vocational assessment, and the GIC (Group Insurance Commission) rates can hold up the announcement of a final number from the city.
 7. City officials indicated that over the years there has been limited understanding of school issues among city council members.
 - a. City officials said that council members generally support the schools, but they are not sure how to do it. There is not a lot of interaction between the school committee and the city council, but city officials said that they hope that with some new city council members who formerly served on the school committee, there will be more understanding of school department issues.
- B.** Because of uncertainty about the availability of funds, there is a long-term pattern of negotiating one-year teachers' collective bargaining agreements (CBAs).
1. The district recently settled a one-year CBA with the Gloucester Teacher's Association for a 1.5 percent salary increase.
 - a. School committee members said that uncertainty about long-term funding and the inability to agree on some work rules led the school committee and teachers' association to settle a one-year CBA.
 - b. Most often CBAs are negotiated for one year or association members work under the existing contract.
 - c. The district's prior contract ended in August 2015. This contract was originally intended to be a two-year agreement, but it was not signed until May 2014, effectively making it a one-year contract.¹²
 2. At the time of the onsite, teacher CBA negotiations were to start again in January, 2016.
- C.** The district has limited information on how the city determines maintenance costs performed by city employees and counted toward required net school spending.
1. The city's Department of Public Works (DPW) is responsible for maintaining the schools.
 2. The custodians, trades people, and grounds crews working in the schools or on school grounds are DPW employees.
 3. The DPW took over maintenance of the schools in fiscal year 2011 when the school department asked the city to assume this responsibility.
 4. In fiscal year 2010, the last year that the school department was responsible for school maintenance, total school-related maintenance expenditures were \$3,147,439. In fiscal

¹² See <http://educatorcontracts.doemass.org/view.aspx?recno=97>.

year 2015, with the DPW in charge, \$4,496,093 was expended on school-related maintenance, representing average annual growth of 8.5 percent.

5. Maintenance is a significant part of the agreement that the school department has with the city.
 - a. The city and school department have a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that covers custodians, plumbing work, HVAC, electrical work, and other maintenance needs.
 - b. City officials indicated that there is some tension between the city and the school department around the MOU, which they believe needs to be revisited to clarify the specific duties included, particularly with regard to the distinction between maintenance and capital improvement projects.
 6. At the end of the year, city officials give the school department the cost of providing maintenance with no detail about these costs.
 7. City officials said that the DPW tracks person hours and materials to determine these charges, which in fiscal year 2015 were \$4,496,093.
 8. The district's business manager indicated that he does not know the rates that the DPW charges for salaries or for materials.
 9. The district reported \$3,963,257 or 88 percent of maintenance costs on the fiscal year 2015 End of Year Report under one function code, Maintenance of Buildings (4220). Ironically, the district reported little or no spending under Custodial Services (4110), Heating of Buildings (4120), or Utility Services (4130), highlighting the fact that the DPW does not disaggregate these expenditures.
- D.** Interviewees said that the city and school department are taking steps toward developing a capital improvement plan.
- E.** The budget documents submitted by the school department to the school committee do not distinguish between funding sources, including general fund, grants, gifts, or revolving funds.

Impact: While the relationship between the school department and city officials has improved in recent years, annual delays in reaching agreement on a final budget figure make it difficult for the school department to plan for the upcoming school year, which can have a negative impact on improvement efforts and compromise public confidence in the schools. A pattern of one-year teacher collective bargaining agreements leads to uncertainty among the teaching staff and requires the teachers' association and the district to expend more time and resources on contract negotiations. Without understanding how the city is determining school-related maintenance costs the district cannot assess the quality of the services being delivered or ensure that only school-related costs are included in these numbers. In addition, the absence of detail about funding sources means that stakeholders do not know how the school department is using various funding sources to support its priorities.

4. The district is relying on old and outdated school buildings, particularly at the elementary school level.

A. Some elementary schools in the district are old and inadequate.

1. Reviewers noted that some of the elementary schools, particularly Veterans Memorial Elementary and East Gloucester Elementary, were run down and not well maintained.
2. Of 8 Gloucester school buildings listed on the Massachusetts School Building Authority website, two elementary schools are more than 70 years old, 2 are over 60 years old, and 2 are over 50 years old, as noted in Table 22 below.
 - a. In a 2010 assessment, three of the elementary schools were rated in “generally good” condition, two were rated in “fair to poor” condition, and one was rated in “poor” condition.

**Table 22: Gloucester Public Schools
Assessment of School Buildings
As of June 2010**

School	Grade Range	Square Footage	Number of Students	Year Built	Last Renovation Year	Condition of Systems
Beeman Memorial	Elementary (K-6)	41,361	333	1956	2008	Generally Good
East Gloucester	Elementary (K-6)	30,502	263	1948	2008	Fair to Poor
Milton L. Fuller	Elementary (K-6) (used for PK)	176,600	76	1965	N/A	Poor
Plum Cove School	Primary (K-4)	32,878	221	1966	2008	Generally Good
Veterans' Memorial	Elementary (K-6)	35,388	215	1956	2008	Generally Good
West Parish	Elementary (K-6)	41,420	360	1949	2007	Fair to Poor
Ralph B. O'Maley	Middle (5-8)	183,000	675	1973	N/A	Fair to Poor
Gloucester High	4 Year High School (9-12)	247,326	935	1938	1997	Fair to Poor

Sources: 2010 Massachusetts School Building Authority data and Edwin Analytics District Operations and Maintenance Report (FN316).

3. Teachers noted that the older elementary schools do not have sufficient bandwidth and infrastructure to support the classroom technology that students need to prepare them for secondary school and beyond.
- B.** Reviewers noted that the middle school and high school are better maintained, but are not without issues.
1. MSBA rated the condition of both the middle school and high school as “fair to poor.”
 2. The district is submitting an application to MSBA for a new roof for the high school.
 3. Recent problems with the high school’s indoor track mean that students cannot use the facility. Repairing the track could cost \$1 million.¹³
- C.** The school committee is now holding meetings at schools throughout the district to provide a forum for staff and families to identify building needs.
1. The district is working with an architectural firm to develop a building needs assessment and to study enrollment to support planning.
 - a. The current enrollment map shows that most students in the district are concentrated downtown, which is prompting the district to rethink the neighborhood school concept.
 2. City officials told the team that they recognize the acute need in some of the buildings and are working with the district to develop a capital improvement plan.
- D.** The district is building a new West Parish Elementary School, which is scheduled to open in the fall of 2016.
1. At the time of the review, the construction of West Parish Elementary was on time and under budget.
 2. The new West Parish will serve a similar number of students as the previous school.
 3. School committee members expressed some hope that opening the new West Parish Elementary School in the fall of 2016 would bring the building needs in the district into contrast and generate community support for the capital improvement plan.

Impact: Old, outdated buildings do not provide optimal conditions for teaching and learning.

¹³ Horgan, Sean, “Indoor track fix may run to \$1 million,” *Gloucester Times*, November 20, 2015. http://www.gloucestertimes.com/news/local_news/indoor-track-fix-may-run-to-million/article_ab5216b5-0f63-5467-b8b7-ad440d95a552.html?mode=print

Recommendation

1. City and school leaders should improve communication about day-to-day financial management issues as well as budget development to reduce tensions, to improve transparency, and to adopt a budget that can meet district and city objectives.

- A.** City and school leaders should agree on a vision for the city's schools.
 - 1. City and school leaders should set short-term and longer term educational goals to support this vision.
 - 2. City and school leaders should use their shared vision for the schools to inform funding priorities.
 - a. City and school leaders should continue to discuss enrollment, staffing data, and performance data to shape budget development and resource allocation.
- B.** City and school leaders should take steps to make the process of developing the school district's budget as transparent and predictable as possible.
 - 1. City and school leaders should work to develop longer and more predictable collective bargaining contracts with the district's instructional staff. The city and the school department should work together to achieve greater transparency in reporting maintenance costs.
 - a. Maintenance costs should be disaggregated by function.
 - b. DPW staff should regularly report time and materials expended in support of school maintenance projects.
 - 2. The school department should ensure that the budget documents that it presents to the school committee support budget development and regular reporting of expenditures.
 - a. Financial documents should disaggregate budgeted and expended funds by source, including federal and state grants, Circuit Breaker, school choice, gifts, and other revolving funds.
- C.** City and school leaders should come to agreement on a long-term capital improvement plan for the district.
 - 1. It is critically important that the city and the school department systematically address the long-standing issues with the school buildings, taking into consideration:
 - a. Housing patterns and enrollment projections
 - b. Options for allocating resources more strategically and efficiently

Benefit: A greater shared understanding between city and district officials about the challenges faced by the schools and the strategies being implemented to address these challenges will help to inform annual budget development and foster a stronger commitment to continuous improvement. Longer contracts will create more predictability in budget planning, free up time and resources currently spent in contract negotiations, and foster stability and goodwill among instructional and service staff. Improving the condition of the schools will better meet students' needs and improve the public's confidence in the direction that the district is taking. Such measures will require long-term commitment and effort by all involved.

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.
- The Rennie Center's *Smart School Budgeting* (http://www.renniecenter.org/topics/smart_school_budgeting.html; direct link: <http://www.renniecenter.org/research/SmartSchoolBudgeting.pdf>) is a summary of existing resources on school finance, budgeting, and reallocation.
- *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

Review Team Members

The review was conducted from December 7-10, 2015, by the following team of independent ESE consultants.

1. James Caradonio, Ed. D., leadership and governance
2. Peter McGinn, Ed. D. curriculum and instruction
3. Linda L. Greyser, Ed. D., assessment and *review team coordinator*
4. Ann Marie Stoica, J. D., human resources and professional development
5. Willette Johnson, student support
6. Rob O'Donnell, financial and asset management

District Review Activities

The following activities were conducted during the review:

The team conducted interviews with the following financial personnel: business manager, accounts and budget officer, payroll supervisor, City of Gloucester: chief administrative officer, treasurer, and city auditor.

The team conducted interviews with the following members of the school committee: chairman and one member.

The review team conducted interviews with the following representatives of the teachers' association: vice-president and two members of the executive board.

The team conducted interviews/focus groups with the following central office administrators: superintendent, assistant superintendent, business manager, special education director, literacy curriculum coordinator K-8, interim math coordinator K-8, and human resources director.

The team visited the following schools: Beeman Memorial Elementary School (K-5), East Gloucester Elementary School (K-5), Plum Cove Elementary School (K-5), Veterans' Memorial Elementary School (K-5), West Parish Elementary School (K-5), Ralph B. O'Maley Middle School (grades 6-8), and Gloucester High School (grades 9-12).

During school visits, the team conducted interviews with 7 principals and focus groups with 14 elementary-school teachers, 7 middle-school teachers, and 6 high-school teachers.

The team observed 86 classes in the district: 22 at the high school, 16 at the middle school, and 48 at the 5 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	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
12/07/2015	12/08/2015	12/09/2015	12/10/2015
Orientation with district leaders and principals; interviews with district staff and principals; document reviews; review of random sample of educator evaluation documents on TeachPoint.	Interviews with city personnel, district staff and principals; review of personnel files; high school student focus group; teacher focus groups; parent focus group; and visits to Plum Cove Elementary School and Veterans’ Memorial Elementary School for classroom observations.	Interviews with district and school leaders; interviews with school committee members; visits to Veterans’ Memorial Elementary School, O’Maley Middle School, and Gloucester High School for classroom observations.	Interviews with school leaders; interview with teachers’ association representatives; district review team meeting; visits to O’Maley Middle School, Gloucester High School, Beeman Memorial Elementary School, West Parish Elementary School, and East Gloucester Elementary School for classroom observations; emerging themes meeting with district leaders and principals.

Appendix B: Enrollment, Performance, Expenditures

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

Student Group	District	Percent of Total	State	Percent of Total
African-American	42	1.4%	83,481	8.8%
Asian	41	1.4%	61,584	6.5%
Hispanic	210	7.2%	176,873	18.6%
Native American	13	0.4%	2,179	0.2%
White	2,515	86.3%	597,502	62.7%
Native Hawaiian	16	0.5%	888	0.1%
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	77	2.6%	30,922	3.2%
All Students	2,914	100.0%	953,429	100.0%

Note: As of October 1, 2015

**Table B1b: Gloucester 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	717	48.0%	24.2%	165,559	39.4%	17.2%
Econ. Disad.	989	66.2%	33.9%	260,998	62.2%	27.4%
ELLs and Former ELLs	115	7.7%	3.9%	85,763	20.4%	9.0%
All high needs students	1,495	100.0%	50.5%	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 2,958; total state enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 964,026.

**Table B2a: Gloucester Public Schools
English Language Arts MCAS/PARCC Performance, 2012–2015**

Grade and Measure		Number Included (2015)	Spring MCAS/PARCC Year					Gains and Declines	
			2012	2013	2014	2015*	State (2015)	4-Year Trend	2-Year Trend
3	CPI	234	88.2	86.6	82.4	90.7	82.5	2.5	8.3
4	CPI	215	76.6	80.2	76.8	82.6	77.8	6.0	5.8
	SGP	204	41.0	44.0	41.0	59.0	50.0	18.0	18.0
5	CPI	240	81.3	84	88.3	92.9	87.0	11.6	4.6
	SGP	229	52.0	52.0	60.0	73.0	50.0	21.0	13.0
6	CPI	187	83.2	81.3	80.0	81.4	86.6	-1.8	1.4
	SGP	174	46.0	49.0	37.0	32.0	50.0	-14.0	-5.0
7	CPI	195	91.2	88.2	84.8	84.7	86.4	-6.5	-0.1
	SGP	182	43.5	55.5	54.0	59.0	50.0	15.5	5.0
8	CPI	231	89.5	91.7	88.8	85.6	92.0	-3.9	-3.2
	SGP	217	44.0	39.0	44.5	36.0	50.0	-8.0	-8.5
10	CPI	199	96.6	97.2	96.9	97.9	96.7	1.3	1.0
	SGP	167	52.0	51.0	47.0	47.0	51.0	-5.0	0.0
All	CPI	1,513	87.0	87.1	85.3	87.7	86.8	0.7	2.4
	SGP	1,179	48.0	49.0	46.0	51.0	50.0	3.0	5.0

Notes: The number of students included in CPI 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 statewide assessments for the first time.

* The PARCC Assessment was given in 2015 for grades 3 through 8. The MCAS assessment was given in 2012-2014 and in grade 10 in 2015.

**Table B2b: Gloucester Public Schools
English Language Arts MCAS Performance, 2011-2014**

Grade and Measure		Number Included (2014)	Spring MCAS Year					Gains and Declines	
			2011	2012	2013	2014	State 2014	4-Year Trend	2-Year Trend
3	P+	236	62%	66%	58%	54%	57%	-8	-4
4	P+	252	43%	52%	53%	45%	54%	2	-8
5	P+	210	66%	58%	65%	68%	64%	2	3
6	P+	206	74%	61%	59%	58%	68%	-16	-1
7	P+	238	65%	74%	69%	62%	72%	-3	-7
8	P+	236	78%	74%	80%	76%	79%	-2	-4
10	P+	217	83%	90%	92%	91%	90%	8	-1
All	P+	1595	67%	69%	68%	64%	69%	-3	-4

**Table B2c: Gloucester Public Schools
English Language Arts 2015 PARCC Performance Level**

Grade	N	Levels 4 & 5		Level 5		Level 4		Level 3		Level 2		Level 1	
		Dist.	State	Dist.	State	Dist.	State	Dist.	State	Dist.	State	Dist.	State
3	232	67%	54%	9%	7%	58%	47%	23%	22%	7%	14%	2%	10%
4	211	61%	57%	20%	15%	41%	42%	27%	25%	10%	12%	2%	5%
5	236	72%	63%	8%	8%	64%	55%	21%	23%	6%	10%	0%	4%
6	183	49%	60%	6%	12%	43%	48%	27%	25%	18%	11%	5%	4%
7	193	62%	61%	19%	21%	43%	40%	17%	22%	13%	11%	7%	6%
8	227	49%	64%	8%	16%	41%	48%	25%	20%	15%	10%	11%	5%

Levels 4 and 5: Met or Exceeded Expectations, Level 5: Exceeded Expectations, Level 4: Met Expectations; Level 3: Approached Expectations; Level 2: Partially Met Expectations; Level 1: Did Not Meet Expectations

**Table B2d: Gloucester Public Schools
Mathematics MCAS/PARCC Performance, 2012–2015**

Grade and Measure		Number Included (2015)	Spring MCAS/PARCC Year					Gains and Declines	
			2012	2013	2014	2015*	State (2015)	4-Year Trend	2-Year Trend
3	CPI	233	81.0	84.1	83.4	89.9	85.3	8.9	6.5
4	CPI	215	73.0	79.3	76.4	80.7	77.1	7.7	4.3
	SGP	205	48.0	52.0	45.0	60.0	50.0	12.0	15.0
5	CPI	243	76.5	78.9	82.7	86.6	83.2	10.1	3.9
	SGP	232	56.0	63.0	62.0	69.0	50.0	13.0	7.0
6	CPI	187	76.7	77.1	76.7	75.0	81.2	-1.7	-1.7
	SGP	174	56.0	52.0	50.5	43.0	50.0	-13.0	-7.5
7	CPI	194	75.1	72.9	68.5	70.5	72.5	-4.6	2.0
	SGP	183	55.0	55.0	54.0	56.0	50.0	1.0	2.0
8	CPI	229	66.3	75.5	77.8	75.5	78.1	9.2	-2.3
	SGP	216	63.0	54.0	78.0	55.0	50.0	-8.0	-23.0
10	CPI	199	87.7	89.0	88.2	87.9	89.9	0.2	-0.3
	SGP	167	51.0	48.0	63.0	44.0	50.0	-7.0	-19.0
All	CPI	1,513	76.8	79.6	79.0	80.8	80.7	4.0	1.8
	SGP	1,185	55.0	54.0	57.0	54.0	50.0	-1.0	-3.0

Notes: The number of students included in CPI 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 statewide assessments for the first time.

* The PARCC Assessment was given in 2015 for grades 3 through 8. The MCAS assessment was given in 2012-2014 and in grade 10 in 2015.

**Table B2e: Gloucester Public Schools
Mathematics MCAS Performance, 2011-2014**

Grade and Measure		Number Included (2014)	Spring MCAS Year					Gains and Declines	
			2011	2012	2013	2014	State 2014	4-Year Trend	2-Year Trend
3	P+	237	59%	55%	63%	61%	68%	2	-2
4	P+	254	40%	39%	47%	41%	52%	1	-6
5	P+	210	55%	53%	56%	60%	61%	5	4
6	P+	208	53%	51%	53%	50%	60%	-3	-3
7	P+	240	31%	50%	45%	42%	50%	11	-3
8	P+	238	41%	37%	53%	53%	52%	12	0
10	P+	219	76%	71%	77%	74%	79%	-2	-3
All	P+	1,606	50%	51%	57%	54%	60%	4	-3

**Table B2f: Gloucester Public Schools
Math 2015 PARCC Performance Level**

Grade	N	Levels 4 & 5		Level 5		Level 4		Level 3		Level 2		Level 1	
		Dist.	State	Dist.	State	Dist.	State	Dist.	State	Dist.	State	Dist.	State
3	231	56%	55%	7%	12%	49%	43%	30%	25%	11%	14%	3%	6%
4	211	50%	48%	8%	6%	43%	41%	34%	29%	13%	18%	3%	5%
5	239	53%	55%	9%	11%	44%	44%	33%	26%	13%	15%	2%	5%
6	183	43%	53%	5%	10%	38%	44%	31%	28%	21%	14%	4%	5%
7	192	36%	45%	6%	8%	31%	37%	40%	32%	18%	18%	6%	4%
8	225	50%	53%	8%	10%	42%	43%	22%	22%	17%	15%	11%	10%

Levels 4 and 5: Met or Exceeded Expectations, Level 5: Exceeded Expectations, Level 4: Met Expectations; Level 3: Approached Expectations; Level 2: Partially Met Expectations; Level 1: Did Not Meet Expectations

**Table B2g: Gloucester Public Schools
Science and Technology/Engineering MCAS Performance, 2012–2015**

Grade and Measure		Number Included (2015)	Spring MCAS Year					Gains and Declines	
			2012	2013	2014	2015	State (2015)	4-Year Trend	2-Year Trend
5	CPI	246	79.9	78	81.5	77.3	78.2	-2.6	-4.2
	P+	246	55%	49%	57%	46%	51%	-9%	-11%
8	CPI	236	65.8	64.8	65.7	64.6	72.4	-1.2	-1.1
	P+	236	30%	25%	27%	32%	42%	2%	5%
10	CPI	184	86.4	89.4	90.9	90.4	88.2	4	-0.5
	P+	184	63%	70%	76%	73%	72%	10%	-3%
All	CPI	666	77.7	77.2	78.7	76.4	79.4	-1.3	-2.3
	P+	666	50%	48%	52%	49%	54%	-1%	-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: Gloucester Public Schools
English Language Arts (All Grades)
Performance for Selected Subgroups Compared to State, 2012–2015**

Group and Measure		Number Included (2015)	Spring MCAS/PARCC Year				Gains and Declines		
			2012	2013	2014	2015*	4-Year Trend	2-Year Trend	
High Needs	District	CPI	794	78.5	78.5	78.1	79.9	1.4	1.8
		SGP	598	43.0	44.0	44.5	48.0	5.0	3.5
	State	CPI	220,963	76.5	76.8	77.1	76.3	-0.2	-0.8
		SGP	164,300	46.0	47.0	47.0	47.0	1.0	0.0
Econ. Disad.	District	CPI	584	--	--	--	82.7	--	--
		SGP	444	--	--	--	--	--	--
	State	CPI	151,741	--	--	--	77.6	--	--
		SGP	114,505	--	--	--	--	--	--
Students w/ disabilities	District	CPI	378	68.3	67.7	67.7	69.9	1.6	2.2
		SGP	273	43.0	41.0	44.5	42.0	-1.0	-2.5
	State	CPI	90,429	67.3	66.8	66.6	67.4	0.1	0.8
		SGP	65,886	43.0	43.0	43.0	43.0	0.0	0.0
English language learners or Former ELLs	District	CPI	66	72.3	75.0	71.9	73.5	1.2	1.6
		SGP	47	40.5	53.0	45.5	68.0	27.5	22.5
	State	CPI	49,639	66.2	67.4	67.8	68.9	2.7	1.1
		SGP	32,850	51.0	53.0	54.0	53.0	2.0	-1.0
All students	District	CPI	1,513	87.0	87.1	85.3	87.7	0.7	2.4
		SGP	1,179	48.0	49.0	46.0	51.0	3.0	5.0
	State	CPI	490,449	86.7	86.8	86.7	86.8	0.1	0.1
		SGP	386,631	50.0	51.0	50.0	50.0	0.0	0.0

Notes: The number of students included in CPI 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.

* The PARCC Assessment was given in 2015 for grades 3 through 8. The MCAS assessment was given in 2012-2014 and in grade 10 in 2015.

**Table B3b: Gloucester Public Schools
English Language Arts (All Grades)
Percentage of Selected Subgroups Scoring Proficient or Advanced on MCAS, 2011-2014**

Group	Number Included (2014)	Spring MCAS Year				Gains and Declines	
		2011	2012	2013	2014	4-Year Trend	2-Year Trend
High Needs	889	50%	50%	50%	49%	-1	-1
Low Income	696	55%	54%	53%	53%	-2	0
Students w/ disabilities	409	28%	31%	29%	28%	0	-1
ELL or Former ELLs	65	43%	39%	44%	35%	-8	-9
All Students	1,595	67%	69%	68%	64%	-3	-4

**Table B3c: Gloucester Public Schools
ELA Grades 3 to 8 by Group 2015 PARCC Performance Level**

Grade	N	Levels 4 & 5		Level 5		Level 4		Level 3		Level 2		Level 1	
		Dist.	State	Dist.	State	Dist.	State	Dist.	State	Dist.	State	Dist.	State
High Needs	674	44%	38%	5%	4%	39%	34%	29%	30%	19%	20%	8%	11%
Econ. Disad.	510	50%	41%	6%	5%	44%	36%	26%	30%	16%	19%	7%	11%
Students with disabilities	298	24%	21%	1%	2%	23%	20%	34%	30%	26%	29%	16%	20%
ELL	62	37%	31%	0%	3%	37%	28%	24%	30%	27%	24%	11%	15%
All	1,282	61%	60%	12%	13%	49%	47%	23%	23%	11%	12%	5%	6%

Levels 4 and 5: Met or Exceeded Expectations, Level 5: Exceeded Expectations, Level 4: Met Expectations; Level 3: Approached Expectations; Level 2: Partially Met Expectations; Level 1: Did Not Meet Expectations

**Table B3d: Gloucester Public Schools
Mathematics (All Grades)**

Performance for Selected Subgroups Compared to State, 2012–2015

Group and Measure			Number Included (2015)	Spring MCAS/PARCC Year				Gains and Declines	
				2012	2013	2014	2015*	4-Year Trend	2-Year Trend
High Needs	District	CPI	794	65.6	69.2	69.5	70.9	5.3	1.4
		SGP	604	51.0	53.0	54.0	53.5	2.5	-0.5
	State	CPI	221,202	67.0	68.6	68.4	67.9	0.9	-0.5
		SGP	165,003	46.0	46.0	47.0	46.0	0.0	-1.0
Economically Disadvantaged	District	CPI	583	--	--	--	73.2	--	--
		SGP	447	--	--	--	--	--	--
	State	CPI	151,816	--	--	--	69.2	--	--
		SGP	115,029	--	--	--	--	--	--
Students w/ disabilities	District	CPI	378	54.5	57.4	58.0	62.2	7.7	4.2
		SGP	277	39.0	47.0	50.0	52.0	13.0	2.0
	State	CPI	90,520	56.9	57.4	57.1	57.3	0.4	0.2
		SGP	66,285	43.0	42.0	43.0	43.0	0.0	0.0
English language learners or Former ELLs	District	CPI	67	55.9	67.2	63.6	70.1	14.2	6.5
		SGP	49	49.0	65.0	57.5	69.0	20.0	11.5
	State	CPI	49,969	61.6	63.9	63.8	64.5	2.9	0.7
		SGP	33,076	52.0	53.0	52.0	51.0	-1.0	-1.0
All students	District	CPI	1,513	76.8	79.6	79.0	80.8	4.0	1.8
		SGP	1,185	55.0	54.0	57.0	54.0	-1.0	-3.0
	State	CPI	490,466	79.9	80.8	80.3	80.7	0.8	0.4
		SGP	387,674	50.0	51.0	50.0	50.0	0.0	0.0

Notes: The number of students included in CPI 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.

* The PARCC Assessment was given in 2015 for grades 3 through 8. The MCAS assessment was given in 2012-2014 and in grade 10 in 2015.

**Table B3e: Gloucester Public Schools
Mathematics (All Grades)
Percentage of Selected Subgroups Scoring Proficient or Advanced on MCAS, 2011-2014**

Group	Number Included (2014)	Spring MCAS Year				Gains and Declines	
		2011	2012	2013	2014	4-Year Trend	2-Year Trend
Low Income	700	34%	33%	41%	40%	6	-1
Students w/ disabilities	414	20%	14%	19%	19%	-1	0
ELL or Former ELLs	68	15%	22%	31%	25%	10	-6
All Students	1,606	50%	51%	57%	54%	4	-3

**Table B3f: Gloucester Public Schools
Math Grades 3 to 8 by Group 2015 PARCC Performance Level**

Grade	N	Levels 4 & 5		Level 5		Level 4		Level 3		Level 2		Level 1	
		Dist.	State	Dist.	State	Dist.	State	Dist.	State	Dist.	State	Dist.	State
High Needs	673	32%	31%	2%	3%	30%	28%	35%	31%	24%	26%	9%	11%
Econ. Disad.	510	33%	33%	3%	3%	30%	30%	36%	31%	23%	25%	7%	11%
Students with disabilities	296	23%	17%	0%	2%	22%	16%	31%	28%	32%	35%	14%	20%
ELL	63	22%	30%	0%	4%	22%	26%	51%	30%	16%	27%	11%	13%
All	1,281	49%	52%	7%	10%	41%	43%	31%	27%	15%	16%	5%	6%

Levels 4 and 5: Met or Exceeded Expectations, Level 5: Exceeded Expectations, Level 4: Met Expectations; Level 3: Approached Expectations; Level 2: Partially Met Expectations; Level 1: Did Not Meet Expectations

**Table B3g: Gloucester Public Schools
Science and Technology/Engineering (All Grades)
Performance for Selected Subgroups Compared to State, 2012–2015**

Group and Measure		Number Included (2015)	Spring MCAS Year				Gains and Declines		
			2012	2013	2014	2015	4-Year Trend	2-Year Trend	
High Needs	District	CPI	332	67.7	68.6	69.2	65.1	-2.6	-4.1
		P+	332	33%	34%	36%	30%	-3	-6
	State	CPI	91,013	65	66.4	67.3	66.3	1.3	-1
		P+	91,013	31%	31%	33%	32%	1	-1
Econ. Disad.	District	CPI	246	--	--	--	65.5	--	--
		P+	246	--	--	--	32%	--	--
	State	CPI	62,345	--	--	--	67.1	--	--
		P+	62,345	--	--	--	33%	--	--
Students w/ disabilities	District	CPI	163	58.8	60.4	61.8	57.5	-1.3	-4.3
		P+	163	21%	20%	23%	17%	-4	-6
	State	CPI	38,520	58.7	59.8	60.1	60.2	1.5	0.1
		P+	38,520	20%	20%	22%	22%	2	0
English language learners or Former ELLs	District	CPI	25	60.5	62.0	54.2	56.0	-4.5	1.8
		P+	25	26%	28%	21%	20%	-6	-1
	State	CPI	17,516	51.4	54.0	54.0	53.9	2.5	-0.1
		P+	17,516	17%	19%	18%	18%	1	0
All students	District	CPI	666	77.7	77.2	78.7	76.4	-1.3	-2.3
		P+	666	50%	48%	52%	49%	-1	-3
	State	CPI	210,454	78.6	79.0	79.6	79.4	0.8	-0.2
		P+	210,454	54%	53%	55%	54%	0	-1

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: Gloucester 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	4.4%	1.6%	4.4%	3.3%	-1.1	-25.0%	-1.1	-25.0%	3.4%
Econ. Disad.	--	--	--	2.2%	--	--	--	--	3.3%
Students w/ disabilities	6.2%	1.3%	8.0%	5.1%	-1.1	-17.7%	-2.9	-36.3%	3.5%
ELL	0.0%	10.0%	0.0%	5.0%	5.0	--	5.0	--	5.7%
All students	2.7%	1.4%	2.7%	2.0%	-0.7	-25.9%	-0.7	-25.9%	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: Gloucester Public Schools
Attendance 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	
All students	93.3%	93.6%	94.0%	93.8%	0.5	0.5%	-0.2	-0.2%	94.7%

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

**Table B6: Gloucester Public Schools
Expenditures, Chapter 70 State Aid, and Net School Spending Fiscal Years 2012–2014**

	FY12		FY13		FY14	
	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual
Expenditures						
From local appropriations for schools:						
By school committee	\$33,703,173	\$34,109,654	\$35,398,748	\$35,823,071	\$36,998,748	\$37,304,924
By municipality	\$14,595,177	\$15,496,076	\$14,203,505	\$13,313,221	\$13,420,173	\$14,656,231
Total from local appropriations	\$48,298,350	\$49,605,730	\$49,602,253	\$49,136,292	\$50,418,921	\$51,961,155
From revolving funds and grants	--	\$5,380,501	--	\$4,895,881	--	\$4,846,239
Total expenditures	--	\$54,986,230	--	\$54,032,173	--	\$56,807,394
Chapter 70 aid to education program						
Chapter 70 state aid*	--	\$5,755,585	--	\$5,893,705	--	\$5,981,325
Required local contribution	--	\$29,773,120	--	\$30,509,144	--	\$31,184,657
Required net school spending**	--	\$35,528,705	--	\$36,402,849	--	\$37,165,982
Actual net school spending	--	\$41,867,969	--	\$42,726,750	--	\$44,833,829
Over/under required (\$)	--	\$6,339,264	--	\$6,323,901	--	\$7,667,846
Over/under required (%)	--	17.8%	--	17.4%	--	20.6%

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

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

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

Data retrieved 11/20/15

**Table B7: Gloucester Public Schools
Expenditures Per In-District Pupil
Fiscal Years 2012–2014**

Expenditure Category	2012	2013	2014
Administration	\$636	\$565	\$626
Instructional leadership (district and school)	\$821	\$840	\$855
Teachers	\$5,504	\$5,763	\$5,929
Other teaching services	\$1,038	\$1,091	\$1,200
Professional development	\$251	\$261	\$267
Instructional materials, equipment and technology	\$252	\$346	\$325
Guidance, counseling and testing services	\$328	\$326	\$341
Pupil services	\$906	\$1,008	\$975
Operations and maintenance	\$1,210	\$1,361	\$1,329
Insurance, retirement and other fixed costs	\$2,935	\$2,861	\$3,065
Total expenditures per in-district pupil	\$13,881	\$14,421	\$14,913

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

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

Appendix C: Instructional Inventory

		Insufficient	Minimal	Moderate	Strong	Avg Number of points
		(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(0 to 3)
Focus Area #1: Learning Objectives & Instruction						
1. The teacher demonstrates knowledge of subject matter and content.	ES	2%	10%	45%	43%	2.3
	MS	0%	6%	69%	25%	2.2
	HS	10%	10%	33%	48%	2.2
	Total #	3	8	40	35	2.2
	Total %	3%	9%	47%	41%	
2. The teacher provides and refers to clear learning objective(s) in the lesson.	ES	24%	16%	29%	31%	1.7
	MS	6%	31%	50%	13%	1.7
	HS	24%	33%	19%	24%	1.4
	Total #	18	20	26	22	1.6
	Total %	21%	23%	30%	26%	
3. The teacher implements a lesson that reflects high expectations aligned to the learning objective (s).	ES	4%	31%	39%	27%	1.9
	MS	13%	25%	31%	31%	1.8
	HS	19%	33%	19%	29%	1.6
	Total #	8	26	28	24	1.8
	Total %	9%	30%	33%	28%	
4. The teacher uses appropriate instructional strategies well matched to the learning objective(s).	ES	6%	18%	43%	33%	2.0
	MS	6%	31%	38%	25%	1.8
	HS	14%	24%	48%	14%	1.6
	Total #	7	19	37	23	1.9
	Total %	8%	22%	43%	27%	
Total Score For Focus Area #1	ES					7.8
	MS					7.5
	HS					6.8
	Total					7.5

		Insufficient	Minimal	Moderate	Strong	Avg Number of points	
		(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(0 to 3)	
Focus Area #2: Student Engagement & Critical Thinking							
	5. Students are motivated and engaged in the lesson.	ES	0%	6%	52%	42%	2.4
		MS	0%	38%	31%	31%	1.9
		HS	5%	19%	48%	29%	2.0
		Total #	1	13	40	31	2.2
	Total %	1%	15%	47%	36%		
6. The teacher facilitates tasks that encourage students to develop and engage in critical thinking.	ES	14%	20%	31%	35%	1.9	
	MS	0%	44%	25%	31%	1.9	
	HS	14%	29%	43%	14%	1.6	
	Total #	10	23	28	25	1.8	
	Total %	12%	27%	33%	29%		
7. Students assume responsibility for their own learning whether individually, in pairs, or in groups.	ES	0%	20%	47%	33%	2.1	
	MS	6%	31%	31%	31%	1.9	
	HS	5%	38%	43%	14%	1.7	
	Total #	2	23	37	24	2.0	
	Total %	2%	27%	43%	28%		
Total Score For Focus Area #2	ES					6.3	
	MS					5.7	
	HS					5.2	
	Total					5.9	

		Insufficient	Minimal	Moderate	Strong	Avg Number of points
		(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(0 to 3)
Focus Area #3: Differentiated Instruction & Classroom Culture						
8. The teacher appropriately differentiates instruction so the lesson content is accessible for all learners.	ES	10%	37%	37%	16%	1.6
	MS	25%	38%	31%	6%	1.2
	HS	30%	40%	25%	5%	1.1
	Total #	15	32	28	10	1.4
	Total %	18%	38%	33%	12%	
9. The teacher uses appropriate resources aligned to students' diverse learning needs. (e.g., technology, manipulatives, support personnel).	ES	10%	8%	51%	31%	2.0
	MS	13%	44%	31%	13%	1.4
	HS	15%	35%	30%	20%	1.6
	Total #	10	18	36	21	1.8
	Total %	12%	21%	42%	25%	
10. The classroom climate is characterized by respectful behavior, routines, tone, and discourse.	ES	4%	10%	35%	50%	2.3
	MS	6%	19%	31%	44%	2.1
	HS	5%	14%	38%	43%	2.2
	Total #	4	11	30	40	2.2
	Total %	5%	13%	35%	47%	
11. The teacher conducts appropriate formative assessments to check for understanding and provide feedback to students.	ES	10%	12%	43%	35%	2.0
	MS	6%	38%	44%	13%	1.6
	HS	15%	15%	55%	15%	1.7
	Total #	9	15	39	22	1.9
	Total %	11%	18%	46%	26%	
Total Score For Focus Area #3	ES					7.9
	MS					6.4
	HS					6.5
	Total					7.3