District Review Report

Leicester Public Schools

Review conducted November 18-21, 2013

Center for District and School Accountability

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Organization of this Report

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Leicester 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 2013-2014 school year include districts classified into Level 2 or Level 3 of ESE's framework for district accountability and assistance. Review reports may be used by ESE and the district to establish priority for assistance and make resource allocation decisions.

Methodology

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

Site Visit

The site visit to the Leicester Public Schools was conducted from November 18-21, 2013. The site visit included 31 hours of interviews and focus groups with approximately 70 stakeholders, including school committee members, district administrators, school staff, students, and teachers' association representatives. The review team conducted 3 focus groups with 8 elementary school teachers, 10 middle school teachers, and 12 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 57 classrooms in 4 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

Leicester has a town administrator form of government and the chair of the school committee is elected. The five members of the school committee are elected at large by the voters of the town of Leicester; they meet monthly.

The superintendent has been in the position since February 2013. The district central office leadership team includes: the superintendent, the director of finance and operations, the director of special education, the curriculum director and interim high school principal (a combined position for the 2013-2014 school year), and the technology/systems manager.

Central office positions have decreased in number over the past five years. The position of curriculum director was eliminated in 2008 and restored in 2012. When the search for a new high school principal in 2012 was unsuccessful, the curriculum director was appointed interim high school principal and was serving in both positions in 2013. A new search for a high school principal had been initiated at the time of the site visit. The position of facilities/maintenance manager was vacated by retirement in June 2013 and was not to be filled, according to administrators and school committee members.

The district has four principals leading four schools. There has been turnover among the principals: during the past five years, there have been four Leicester Middle School principals and three Memorial School principals. There are 6 other school administrators, including 3 assistant principals and the cafeteria manager. The Leicester and Auburn school districts together employ the cafeteria manager. There were 109 teachers in the district in 2012-2013.

For the 2013-2014 school year, 1,715 students were enrolled in the district's 4 schools:

Table 1: Leicester Public Schools
Schools, Type, Grades Served, and Enrollment

School Name	School Type	Grades Served	Enrollment
Leicester Primary School	ES	PK-2	434
Leicester Memorial School	ES	3-5	414
Leicester Middle School	MS	6-8	398
Leicester High School	HS	9-12	469
Totals	**4 schools**	**PK-12**	**1,715**
*As of October 1, 2013			

Between 2009 and 2013 overall student enrollment decreased by 8 percent. Enrollment figures by race/ethnicity and high needs populations (i.e., students with disabilities, students from low-income

families, and English language learners (ELLs) and former ELLs) as compared with the state are provided in Tables B1a and B1b in Appendix B.

Total in-district per-pupil expenditures were lower than the median in-district per-pupil expenditures for 49 K-12 districts of similar size (1,000 to 1,999 students) in fiscal year 2012: total in-district per-pupil expenditures were $10,307, compared with a median of $11,883 (see District Analysis and Review Tool Detail: Staffing & Finance). Actual net school spending has been over what is required by the Chapter 70 state education aid program, as shown in Table B8 in Appendix B.

In October 2013 town voters overwhelmingly rejected a $1.5 million Proposition 2 ½ override question.

Student Performance[1]

Leicester is a Level 2 district because its lowest performing school is a Level 2 school.

- Leicester Memorial, Leicester Middle, and Leicester High School are all Level 2 schools because in 2013 their cumulative Progress and Performance Index (PPI) for all students and/or high needs students[2] was below the target of 75 or their MCAS participation was below 94 percent for any group in any subject.

- The 2013 cumulative PPIs were 46 for all students and 47 for high needs students for Leicester Memorial, 52 for all students and 53 for high needs students for Leicester Middle, and 84 for all students and 86 for high needs students for Leicester High School.

- The 2013 cumulative PPI for the district was 50 for all students and 57 for high needs students, with the target again being 75.

Throughout the district, ELA CPIs and proficiency rates were lower in 2013 than in 2010. The differences between the 2010 and 2013 rates are most pronounced in the 3rd and 4th grades.

- The Composite Performance Index (CPI) in ELA for all district students was lower in 2013 (83.7) than in 2010 (86.7); the 2013 CPI was below the state CPI of 86.8. The percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced in English was 63 percent in 2013, lower than the 2010 rate of 67 percent, and lower than the state proficiency rate in 2013 of 69 percent.

- The largest differences between 2010 and 2013 CPI and proficiency were in grades 3 and 4 (at Leicester Memorial). In 2013 in grade 3 CPI was 5.7 points lower and the proficiency rate 9 percentage points lower than in 2010; in grade 4 CPI was 10.4 points lower and the proficiency

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[1] See also student performance tables in Appendix B.

[2] The high needs subgroup comprises students with disabilities, English language learners and former English language learners, and students from low income families.

rate 11 percentage points lower than in 2010. The district's grade 4 CPI now lags the state's by 13.9 points, and its grade 4 proficiency rate lags the state's by 23 percentage points.

Math CPIs and proficiency rates were lower in 2013 than in 2010 throughout the district. The differences between the 2010 and 2013 rates are most pronounced in the 3rd and 4th grades.

- Math CPI for all district students was 75.9 in 2013, 5.1 points lower than the 2010 CPI of 81.0, and lower than the state CPI in 2013 of 80.8. The percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced was 51 percent in 2013, 8 percentage points lower than the 2010 rate of 59 percent, and lower than the state proficiency rate in 2013 of 61 percent. Math median Student Growth Percentile (SGP) in 2013 was low at 39.

- The differences between the 2013 and 2010 CPI and the differences between the district's and the state's math proficiency rates were greatest in the 3rd and 4th grades (at Leicester Memorial). In 2013 the district's 3rd and 4th grade math proficiency rates were 16 and 21 percentage points below the state, respectively.

Although the district's overall science CPI and grade 8 science proficiency rate were slightly lower in 2013 than 2010, the district continues to perform at levels comparable to or well above the state in science and technology.

- Science CPI for all district students was lower in 2013 (82.9) than in 2010 (83.9), though the 2013 CPI was above the state CPI of 79. However, the percentage of all students scoring proficient or higher was higher in 2013 (60 percent) than in 2010 (58 percent), and the 2013 percentage was above the state proficiency rate of 53 percent.

- Like science proficiency in grade 10 (see below), science proficiency in grade 5 was higher in 2013 (63 percent) than in 2010 (60 percent), while in grade 8 it was lower in 2013 (38 percent) than in 2010 (42 percent); the 2013 grade 5 science proficiency rate was above the state proficiency rate by 12 points, while the 2013 grade 8 rate was one point below the state rate.

- High needs students' science CPI was 74.4 in 2013, compared to 66.4 for high needs students statewide, and their science proficiency rate was 42 percent, compared to 31 percent for the state subgroup. (See Table B3c in Appendix B.)

10th grade CPI and proficiency rates were higher in 2013 than in 2010 in ELA, math, and science.

- 10th grade ELA proficiency was 95 percent in 2013, 11 percentage points higher than the 2010 rate of 84 percent.

- 10th grade math proficiency was 83 percent in 2013, 5 percentage points higher than the 2010 rate of 78 percent.

- 10th grade science proficiency was 84 percent in 2013, 9 percentage points higher than the 2010 rate of 75 percent.

Leicester's four year and five year cohort graduation rates were higher for the last year for which data is available than three years before. The district surpassed the 2014 four year cohort and five year cohort graduation targets.[3]

- The four year cohort graduation rate improved from 81.8 percent in 2010 to 90.4 percent in 2011, then fell to 86.2 percent in 2012 and 85.0 percent in 2013, equal to the state rate in 2013 of 85.0 percent.

- The five year cohort graduation rate improved from 85.8 percent in 2009 to 87.2 percent in 2011 and 92.6 percent in 2011, then fell to 87.6 percent in 2012, slightly above the state rate in 2012 of 87.5 percent.

- The annual grade 9-12 dropout rate for Leicester was lower than the state rate in 2013, 1.3 percent as compared 2.2 percent statewide.

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[3] 2014 graduation targets are 80 percent for the four year and 85 percent for the five year cohort graduation rates; they refer to the 2013 four year cohort graduation rate and 2012 five year cohort graduation rates.

Leicester Public Schools District Review Findings

Strengths

Leadership and Governance

1. **The new Leicester superintendent has used a number of means to increase communication with stakeholders and has involved administrators and the school committee directly in district planning and budget development. According to school committee members and town officials, the superintendent has helped improve relationships.**

   A. The superintendent has involved school committee members directly in district planning and has kept them informed.

      1. School committee members said that the new superintendent had invited them to participate in district planning meetings. For example, school committee members were invited to participate in the Leicester Future Search and to serve on the Leicester Future Search Committee.

         a. The Leicester Future Search, which focused on creating "a common vision for the district's future," took place from May 31-June 1, 2013; it involved a broad cross section of stakeholders, including students, parents, school employees, municipal officials, business leaders, and those from the nonprofit and social services sector. The ratio of community members to staff was 2:1, according to the superintendent.

         b. The Leicester Future Search Committee helped develop the district's vision and mission statements and the three major goals (as described in the first Leadership and Governance challenge finding), which became a multi-year strategic plan and was approved by the entire school committee.

      2. School committee members told the review team that the superintendent updates them weekly on district activities.

      3. School committee members said that in the past principals had attended school committee meetings to answer questions about their schools, but they now present the MCAS test results for their schools to the school committee and explain the implications. The members said that this has increased their understanding of student performance.

      4. According to school committee members, while in the past they had not typically participated directly in the budget development process, the new superintendent had involved them in budget workshops that she conducted. School committee members said that the new superintendent also helped them to understand the relationship between budget expenditures and district goals.

B. The superintendent has involved administrators in district planning and established forums to communicate with them regularly.

1. The superintendent included district administrators in the development of the strategic plan and the district action plan through discussions at leadership team meetings.

2. Principals told the review team that the superintendent shares budget information with them completely and consults with them before making any necessary budget reductions.

3. According to interviews and a document review, the superintendent meets monthly with the leadership team and the administrative cabinet to discuss educational and managerial matters.

    a. The leadership team consists of the superintendent, director of special education, curriculum director, and the four principals and three assistant principals; it meets to discuss curricular and educational issues.

    b. The administrative cabinet consists of the superintendent, director of special education, director of finance and operations, technology/systems manager and the four principals; it meets to discuss operational issues.

C. The superintendent has increased communication with stakeholders through a number of means.

1. Parents said that they received communications via the all-call-system, email blasts, telephone calls, newsletters, and the district and school websites.

2. The superintendent told the review team that she also uses blogs and Twitter as means of communication.

D. Representatives of the Education Association of Leicester (EAL) spoke positively about their relationship with the superintendent.

1. EAL representatives told the review team that the EAL president and the superintendent meet regularly.

2. They added that collective bargaining agreement negotiations and the agreement to adopt the new model educator evaluation system had proceeded smoothly.

3. EAL representatives said that the superintendent had invited teachers to serve on the school councils and on committees such as Leicester Future Search, screening/hiring, technology, and curriculum.

E. Town officials and school committee members spoke of improved relationships.

1. The town administrator told the review team that he had formed a positive working relationship with the superintendent, adding that the superintendent had furnished clear, comprehensive, and detailed information about the school budget to the town boards.

2. A town official told the review team that the school committee's relationships with the board of selectmen and advisory committee were "on the mend."

3. School committee members said that the superintendent was primarily responsible for the improved relationships with the town, EAL, and the town administrator. School committee members added that her electronic communications with the larger community had helped to create greater support for the schools.

F. Both the town administrator and superintendent expressed the hope that the unprecedented level of collaboration at the "Convention of the Boards" that took place on November 20, 2013, would lead to a higher level of collaboration and cooperation. The convention was a joint meeting of the school committee, board of selectmen, finance advisory committee, superintendent, and town administrator to consider the fiscal year 2015 budget process, goals, additional revenues, and free cash.

Impact: Involving stakeholders in budget development and district planning and inviting staff to serve on various committees may result in a greater commitment to the school system. Improved communication and relationships with stakeholders such as town boards, town officials, and the teachers' association provide a clear view to the community of the direction that the district is taking and how it intends to attain its goals.

Assessment

2. **Leicester has developed a balanced system of formative and benchmark assessments in literacy and mathematics at the elementary level (K-5). Elementary teachers use the results to plan instruction, form fluid instructional groups based on common student needs, and monitor students' progress.**

   A. According to a review of documents and interviews with administrators and teachers, Leicester has developed a comprehensive battery of formative assessments in kindergarten through grade 5.

      1. Fluency is assessed with The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) Next 3 times annually in kindergarten through grade 5. Students making unsatisfactory progress are assessed at least eight times annually.

      2. Comprehension is assessed with the CORE Reading Maze Comprehension Test 3 times annually in grade 1 through grade 5. Students making unsatisfactory progress are assessed at least 6 times annually.

3. Written language is assessed with district rubrics aligned to the Common Core 4 times annually in grade 3 through grade 5. As part of this process, students develop, revise, and publish narrative, informative, opinion, and poetic pieces.

4. Computation is assessed with the aimsweb Math Computation Test (M-COMP) 3 times annually in grade 1 through grade 5 and mathematical concepts are assessed with the aimsweb Math Concepts Applications Test (M-CAP) 3 times annually in grade 2 through grade 5.

5. The district adopted the enVision Math Common Core program in 2013-2014. Mastery of the program's benchmarks will be assessed in grade 3 through grade 5 at 6 intervals this year (2013-2014) with the program's benchmark assessments. The intervals correspond with the units of the program.

B. According to administrators and elementary teachers, teachers use the results of formative assessments to plan and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction, to monitor student progress, and to form instructional groups based on common student needs.

1. Administrators told the review team that teachers at the Primary (pre-kindergarten through grade 2) and Memorial schools (grade 3 through grade 5) had been using formative assessments since 2007-2008.

2. Administrators and teachers said that the two schools had different approaches to administration and interpretation of the results of formative assessments.

   a. At the Primary School, Title I interventionists (ELA and mathematics teachers) administer the DIBELS, Maze, M-COMP, and M–CAP assessments to the students subject to assessment, interpret the results, and discuss the instructional implications with grade-level teachers at grade-level meetings.

   b. At the Memorial School, classroom teachers administer the DIBELS, Maze, M-COMP, and M–CAP assessments to their own students and submit a summary of the results to the school's Response to Intervention (RTI) committee, which is composed of teacher representatives, specialists, and administrators. The RTI committee subsequently forms appropriate instructional groups based on common student needs. According to administrators and teachers, students at a grade level are sometimes grouped by common need and each group is assigned to a grade-level teacher. At other times students are grouped by common needs within their own classrooms.

   c. Administrators told the review team that elementary teachers were proficient in interpreting and using formative assessment data, especially at the Memorial School. Memorial School teachers expressed an understanding of the instrumental value of the assessments and provided specific examples of how they had used the results to plan and evaluate the effectiveness of their instruction.

d. At the Primary and Memorial schools the review team observed interventionists and special educators instructing students both within and outside of the regular education classrooms and saw regular education teachers grouping students for customized and individualized instruction, especially during the daily 40 minute "What I Need" (WIN) period.

Impact: Through the systematic use of formative assessment, the district has the capacity to identify student strengths and needs and to plan and implement effective instruction at the elementary level. By addressing skill weaknesses and providing enrichment the district is poised both to improve individual student performance and to enable all students to achieve standards.

Human Resources and Professional Development

3. **In school year 2012-2013 the district made the implementation of the new model educator evaluation system a priority and piloted it for approximately half the teachers. In school year 2013-2014, the district is continuing the implementation for all teachers and administrators and is on target to fully implement the system.**

   A. All districts are required to implement a new educator evaluation system consistent with ESE's new system. As Leicester was not a participant in the Race to the Top grant program, implementation was not required until 2013-2014. Nevertheless, the district gave high priority to implementing the new educator evaluation system by moving forward in the 2012-2013 school year with the implementation without fully developed district and school improvement plans. A document review showed that the district gave prominence to the implementation of the system by including it as a strategy in the district and school draft improvement documents such as the district action plan and the draft high school improvement plan.

   B. The district and the Education Association of Leicester (EAL) negotiated an agreement to implement the ESE model educator evaluation system in school year 2012-2013 to replace the evaluation system previously used by the Leicester Public Schools. A document review showed that the Memorandum of Agreement was signed and dated March 12, 2012. This agreement was received by ESE's Office of Educator Preparation, Policy, and Leadership on August 29, 2012.

      1. Central office administrators told the review team that most aspects of the ESE model were adopted and that only the length of the classroom observations and the process of developing district determined measures (DDMs) were adapted.

      2. They also said that formative evaluations had been completed for half the teachers in 2012-2013, noting that summative evaluations had not been done, and that in 2013-2014 all

teachers were receiving formative assessments or formative evaluations[4] and some would be receiving summative evaluations at the end of the school year.

C. Document review showed that in October 2013 the district and the EAL entered into a further agreement about the frequency of classroom visits related to the new educator evaluation system.

1. The agreement established an evaluation committee consisting of educator representatives from each of the schools and representatives from administration. The committee will meet at least twice annually to monitor the evaluation process and work on DDMs. The superintendent said that three teachers and three administrators are on the committee.

D. Central office administrators and principals told the review team that primary evaluators and teachers received training beginning in the summer of 2012. Evaluator training began with a July 2012 retreat and continued at administrative team meetings during school year 2013. Teacher training began in August 2012 and continued until the review team's visit. All training was conducted by the director of curriculum.

1. A review of the schedule of workshops for teachers showed that 4 orientation sessions were held from August 2012 to October 1, 2012. Between October 2012 and October 11, 2013 19 additional hour-long workshops were held. An administrator said that workshops were planned on rating educator performance and rating the impact on students.

E. Primary evaluators and other administrators completed self-assessments and developed goals with the superintendent; these were generally aligned to the district's strategic plan, according to central office administrators and principals. Assistant principals submitted goals to the principal.

F. Teachers conducted self-assessments and developed goals. Because the district had multiple planning documents and school improvement plans were in draft, teachers aligned their goals to the exemplary and proficient standards in the ESE evaluation rubric, according to the director of curriculum.

1. The review team examined goal setting/self-evaluation forms, which included a student learning grade 3 team SMART goal to use guided practice, exemplars, and rubrics to set clear expectations for the quality of open response mathematics questions. Teachers in a focus group said that their principals and assistant principals had begun to work with them on developing student, team, and personal goals.

G. The review team reviewed documentation of a classroom walkthrough from a social studies class. The form included sections on strategies to ensure engagement, student engagement

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[4] Under the terminology of the new model evaluation system, educators on plans of one year or less receive a mid-cycle check called a "formative assessment"; educators on two-year plans receive a mid-cycle check at the end of the first year called a "formative evaluation."

level, instructional practices, frequency of check for understanding, and teacher and student instructional modes. The walkthrough lasted approximately 10 minutes and feedback was shared with the teacher who had signed the form electronically. Teachers in a focus group said that they received feedback within one to two days of a walkthrough.

H. In September 2013, the district submitted a DDM piloting plan to ESE. The plan included the required DDMs for the district: DDMs for K-3 literacy and mathematics (grade 2), middle grade mathematics (grade 8), high school writing to text (grade 10), and a traditionally non-tested grade/subject (kindergarten PE/Health).

1. The district was forming a DDM committee to implement the DDM plan submitted to ESE, according to administrators.

Impact: By beginning to implement the new educator evaluation system one year before it was required, the district has begun a new culture of evaluation and has established a foundation of adherence to ESE's new educator evaluation system. The successful collaboration between the district and EAL to implement new model educator evaluation policies and practices is a sound foundation for improving the quality of teaching and learning in the district. When fully aligned to the district professional development practices and district and school improvement plans, the new system can help the district make strides in improving the effectiveness of teachers and administrators.

Student Support

4. **At its two elementary schools the district has an effective process for identifying students in need of support and providing interventions based on data.**

A. The Primary School (PK-2) and the Memorial School (3-5) have a process for identifying students who are not performing at grade level that includes using common, consistently administered assessments.

1. Interviewees, including assistant principals, school psychologists, guidance counselors, and special educators, said that Teacher Assistance Teams (TATs) meet monthly or more frequently as needed in every school to discuss students who exhibit the need for extra support. TATs are composed of team leaders, teacher representatives from each grade, and the referring classroom teacher.

2. The superintendent said, and other interviewees confirmed, that K-5 students in need of academic support are identified through kindergarten screening, as well as through DIBELS, M-CAP, and M-COMP results.

3. Documents reviewed by the team showed that Title I students are selected for targeted support based on a variety of assessments including DIBELS, enVision Math benchmark assessments, M-CAP, and M-COMP.

B. At the Primary and Memorial schools there is scheduled time for interventions for students in need of support both in and out of class.

1. TATs make recommendations for both in-class modifications (Tier I) and additional support (Tier II) such as Title I, WIN, and RTI (Response to Intervention). The terms WIN and RTI are used interchangeably at the Memorial School.

    a. Multiple interviewees reported and documents confirmed that WIN (What I Need) time is a 30-minute block scheduled daily for each grade at the Primary and Memorial schools when students get "what they need" from a pool of staff that includes the classroom teacher, Title I tutors , coaches, and paraprofessionals.

2. The review team was told that TATs make recommendations mostly from the District Accommodation Plan (DCAP). The DCAP provides suggestions for classroom practices, assessment practices, and a checklist for making modifications in the classroom.

3. During classroom visits review team members observed groupings for reading and mathematics. Teachers from the Primary School said that they group students for reading based on common needs.

4. Interviewees also said that Tier I support in kindergarten through grade 5 is enhanced as the district moves toward more center-based instruction and an increase in the number of leveled books available to students.

5. Interviewees, including administrators and guidance counselors, said that Tier II support includes small group work during WIN time, Title I pull out, and in-class small group. Tier III support includes special education in kindergarten through grade 5 and additional after-school or summer Title I support.

6. Interviewees, including teachers, administrators, and coaches, said during multiple interviews that K- 5 teachers do their own progress monitoring using DIBELS and written language results.

C. The district is also attentive to students' non-academic growth and development at the two elementary schools.

1. Teachers reported that to support students' non-academic needs all teachers at the Primary School and grade 3 teachers at the Memorial School have been trained in the Responsive Classroom program.

2. Interventions for students' non-academic needs include lunch bunch and the de-escalation room at the Primary School.

Impact: Regular meetings of the Teacher Assistance Teams, the consistent use of commonly administered assessments, and the availability of resources such as the DCAP, WIN time, Title I,

classroom materials, and groupings aligned to student needs all help to ensure that elementary students are getting the support they need. This full range of processes, interventions, and practices is a valuable set of tools for improving student achievement.

5. **The district is providing clear expectations for student attendance and follow-through practices to make sure that students stay in school. The district facilitates transitions that take place each year at three grade junctures: second to third grade, fifth to sixth grade, and eighth to ninth grade.**

   A. The district attendance rate improved from 94.4 percent in 2007, slightly below the state rate of 94.6 percent, to 95.7 percent in 2013, almost a point above the state rate of 94.8 percent. Also, the percentage of students absent fewer than 10 days improved by 4 percentage points, from 68 percent in 2007 to 72 percent in 2013.

   B. The district has an attendance policy outlined in the student and family handbooks for all schools. Teachers and administrators have a process in place to address excessive absence in the middle school and high school.

      1. Documents examined by the review team showed that attendance expectations are clearly laid out for students and families annually in student handbooks.

      2. Interviewees, including assistant principals and school psychologists, reported that the special education, nurse, administrator, and guidance (SNAG) team at the middle school meets monthly to brainstorm and create solutions for student needs, including attendance. At the high school, the student in need (SIN) team meets monthly and focuses on attendance as well as on the behavioral and emotional needs of students.

      3. Interviewees described the middle school's series of responses to excessive absence as a letter of notification to parents, a meeting with parents to discuss the reasons for excessive absence and to develop improvement strategies, and academic probation in combination with a Children Requiring Assistance referral.

   C. The district has multiple programs to help ensure that students stay in school and some opportunities to recover students who drop out.

      1. Interviewees, including assistant principals and school psychologists, reported and documents confirmed that the high school has an advisory student, teacher, outreach mentoring program (STOMP) with a written curriculum. Each student is assigned an advisor for four years. Documents examined by the review team show that advisors have a STOMP guide filled with 18 weeks of activities to help keep students engaged in school. Among the rationales listed for STOMP in the teacher guidebook is, "Mentored youth are less likely to drop out of school."

      2. Documents review showed that the district has an alternative program called the Renaissance Program designed for students who are at risk of not succeeding in the

traditional high school setting. Teachers and coaches confirmed that the program targets students who are at risk of dropping out of school and provides group guidance with a focus on behavior modification. Interviewees said that the SIN team may recommend students to the Renaissance Program.

3. Review team members were told that the district offers credit recovery through night courses at the Worcester Public Schools. The team also was told that students may take two summer school courses to make up for credits lost during the school year.

D. There is systemic support for students transitioning from one school to another and attention to families who may be in transition.

1. The review team was told that the district helps to ease transitions from school to school with annual step-up days. At the end of second and fifth grades, students have an opportunity to visit their next school and meet with teachers. Parents are invited to accompany students moving to third grade.

2. Documents reviewed by the review team showed that the agenda for the 5th grade step-up day included courses that are offered in middle school, a sample student schedule, expectations for success, ways to get involved in extracurricular activities, as well as information about lockers and lunch.

3. Teachers and coaches said that entering high school students have freshmen orientation during the summer. Documents examined by the review team confirmed that a freshman orientation took place for the class of 2016. The orientation agenda included: how to access the high school website, how to identify guidance counselors, the school schedule, grading calculations, and graduation requirements.

4. Documents examined by the review team also showed that the district is attentive to the needs of homeless families or families in transition. A brochure published by the district gives families information about the McKinney Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act and provides a phone number and the name of a contact person in the district. The brochure also lists community resources that may help families gain access to food, housing, and medical services.

5. Also, interviewees including assistant principals and school psychologists said that the district maintains a 700-page database of resources and agencies which is designed to help families who are in transition or homeless.

Impact: Clearly outlined attendance polices and attention to students' behavioral and emotional needs are no doubt contributing to the improved attendance data for Leicester. The more students come to school the more likely they are to be academically successful.

The district's attention to transitions, such as transitions from school to school or family transitions, helps to prepare students for the next grade and eases families' anxiety, paving the way for improved student achievement.

Financial and Asset Management

6. **The new superintendent conducted a participatory budget development process resulting in a clear and comprehensive fiscal year 2014 budget document. When the override vote was proposed, the school department clearly laid out options for the community at three levels of reduction and prepared itself to act with contingency plans, although the consequences of proposed reductions were not explicitly connected to district and school goals. When the override vote failed, the district made the reductions it had projected, increasing the credibility of the school department.**

   A. Under the new superintendent, the budget development process included the school committee, district administrators, and town officials and resulted in a comprehensive and clear budget document.

      1. The new superintendent gave principals the opportunity to discuss and provide rationales for budget line items, budget reductions, and staffing needs during the budget process.

      2. Central office administrators presented budget reductions to the school committee finance sub-committee and to the full committee for review and approval.

      3. School committee members participated in budget workshops and public presentations intended to increase understanding of and involvement in the budget process.

      4. Town officials who attended school budget presentations praised the superintendent for the clarity and openness of these presentations.

      5. The fiscal year 2014 district annual school budget document provides clear and comprehensive financial information about the district.

         a. The fiscal year 2014 budget document includes a narrative with an historical perspective, a description of the budget development process, and a budget summary. The document also includes a print-out of a PowerPoint presentation with information about school and student performance, concerns about funding levels, cost comparisons, unfunded needs, significant budget drivers and the utilization of local appropriations and revolving funds.

         b. The fiscal year 2014 budget document provides for a three-year period and clearly shows where there are increases and decreases from the prior year.

B. Scenarios for the fiscal year 2014 school department budget are presented in detail by function for 4.33 percent, 2.50 percent, and zero percent increases although the consequences of the necessary reductions at reach level are not explicitly connected to district or school goals.

C. A document review showed that the budget reductions in the district's Budget Revision Plan dated October, 2013, after the failure of the override are the same as those set forth in its zero percent increase scenario, as outlined in the 2013/2014 Budget Scenarios document, dated May 1, 2013. When the override vote failed, the district actually made the reductions it had projected as necessary.

Impact: Beginning with fiscal year 2014, a participatory process for development of the annual budget and a clear and comprehensive budget document have contributed to a more collegial and inclusive budget process and an improved relationship between the school district and town officials. When the override vote failed, the district increased its credibility by making the same reductions it had projected as necessary.

Challenges and Areas for Growth

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

Leadership and Governance

7. **The district has a number of documents describing goals and plans, instead of a unified District Improvement Plan.**

   A. The Leicester Public Schools Strategic Plan is a one-page document that contains vision and mission statements, beliefs statements, and three goals. The three goals are to: (1) improve teaching and learning, across all grades and subject areas; (2) manage resources for improved efficiency, and (3) improve communication and collaboration.

      1. The Strategic Plan Goals and Initiatives document lists initiatives for each strategic plan goal.

      2. It was unclear from the documents what the dates of the above mentioned documents were and what dates they were intended to cover.

      3. The District Action Plan 2013-2014 is a one-year plan that identifies the strategic plan initiatives to be focused on in the 2013-2014 school year.

4. The Administrator Goal Alignment to Strategic Plan consists of statements of what district administrators are to do (key actions) in 2013-2014 to address each of the three goals, timelines for the accomplishment of these key actions, and evidence of the accomplishment of the key actions.

5. The Superintendent's Entry Plan Findings, July 2013, contains an Executive Summary, Detailed Discussions and Emerging Themes, and Conclusion and Next Steps.

Impact: Most of the information needed for a unified District Improvement Plan is located in different documents, but the multiple plans and goals in different documents results in a lack of clarity and focus. Lack of uniformity in describing district goals impedes coordinated planning with the district's schools.

8. **At the time of the review schools had not yet developed their School Improvement Plans.**

   A. Central office administrators and principals said that the School Improvement Plans for 2013-2014 were in preparation.

   1. The superintendent told the review team that the school councils were working with their principals to prepare the 2013-2014 School Improvement Plans and that she anticipated that they would be submitted to her by January 1, 2014.

   2. The principals told the review team and a document review confirmed that their School Improvement Plans were in various stages of development.

   3. Principals said that, in the absence of School Improvement Plans for 2013-2014, they aligned their goals by and large, to strategic plan goals, and reviewed them with the superintendent. Assistant principals also used the strategic plan as a reference and submitted their goals to their principals.

   4. According to central office administrators, principals and teachers, in the absence of School Improvement Plans, teachers aligned their goals to the standards in the ESE Educator Evaluation Rubric.

Impact: Without timely school improvement plans, teachers have little direction about what administrators want them concentrate on for the school year. This results in uncertainty about district and school priorities. It also causes a break in the through-line that begins with the strategic plan and continues through the district improvement plan, the school improvement plans and ultimately administrators' and teachers' professional practice and student learning goals. Without timely school improvement plans, teachers have less time to address their goals and the schools may not have the resources to implement the plans when these plans are developed outside of the budget cycle.

9. **A vacancy in the high school principal position and the elimination of the facilities/maintenance manager have burdened administrators.**

   A. The position of high school principal was vacated by a retirement at the end of the 2012-2013 school year.

      1. The superintendent described a screening and interviewing process for a new high school principal in 2012-2013. The finalist selected withdrew after a site visit was conducted.

      2. According to the superintendent, the search committee re-examined the pool of applicants and recommended that the superintendent re-advertise the position.

      3. The district decided not to re-advertise when the curriculum director, who had served as a high school principal in another district, volunteered to assume the position for the 2013-2014 school year in addition to her other responsibilities, which include the district's curriculum mapping initiative. According to central office administrators and school committee members, this was the best resolution given the time of the year.

      4. At the time of the review the curriculum director was serving in two demanding administrative positions.

      5. The position of dean of students was added to assist the interim high school principal, but was to be eliminated at the end of the calendar year as part of the reductions made necessary by the defeat of the override, according to administrators.

      6. The district instituted a new search for a high school principal during the time of the site visit.

   B. Because of financial constraints, the position of facilities/maintenance manager was eliminated at the end of June 2013.

      1. The superintendent said that the loss of this position has added to her responsibilities and to those of others. She said that the principals were burdened with management.

      2. The superintendent said that the district needed a facilities/maintenance manager and principals confirmed the need.

      3. The superintendent also expressed the need for a maintenance plan for the district and a capital improvement plan for the town. She mentioned that she wanted a study of the condition of the school buildings.

      4. When asked about the needs of the schools, school committee members cited infrastructure, capital improvements, and re-establishing a capital improvement plan as priorities.

Impact: The unsuccessful 2012-2013 search for a high school principal and the loss of the facilities/maintenance manager position have added to the duties of administrators and slowed progress in critical areas. Individuals serving in dual roles cannot fulfill all of the duties and responsibilities of both, which in this case include the district's high priority curriculum mapping initiative. Elimination of the position of facilities/maintenance manager may delay an assessment of school facilities and development of a plan to address identified needs.

Curriculum and Instruction

10. The district is in the process of developing curriculum maps. The maps vary in completeness and format and are not yet vertically aligned.

A. The review team examined a sample consisting of 35 maps for English Language Arts (ELA), mathematics, and science at various grade spans. The maps varied in completeness, details, and format.

   1. Many, but not all middle school maps (6-8) contained information about standards, mastery objectives, content, skills, and assessments.

   2. Most of the grades 3 through 5 maps did not have assessment details.

   3. The kindergarten through grade 2 maps were in a different format consisting of standards, mastery objectives, and content.

B. District leaders and teachers said that the maps were inconsistent in depth, detail, and quality.

   1. According to a district leader, the quality of the maps varied and the maps developed to date needed to be evaluated and revised for completeness.

   2. A curriculum leader estimated that only 45 to 50 percent of the maps were aligned to the 2011 Frameworks.

   3. The high school maps (9-12) were not aligned to the 2011 Frameworks, according to central office administrators.

   4. High school teachers said that the curriculum maps in the disciplines varied in depth.

   5. The consistency of the curriculum maps was a "work in progress" according to high school teachers. Central office administrators said that they were striving to "get maps consistent across the board."

C. The curriculum maps were not yet vertically aligned.

   1. Central office administrators said that curriculum maps were aligned horizontally. They went on to say that that the next phase of development work would focus on vertical alignment.

2. Teachers told the review team that the district intended to complete vertical alignment of the curriculum maps by the end of the 2013-2014 school year. They added that next professional development day in December 2013 would be devoted to vertical alignment.

D. Most of the curriculum maps did not contain information about assessments. Teachers told the review team that assessments would be added to the kindergarten through grade 5 maps during the December 2013 professional development day.

Impact: Without a complete set of curriculum maps aligned to the 2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, the district cannot ensure a curriculum for all students based on the standards. When curriculum maps vary in content, depth, and rigor, student learning may be inconsistent. Furthermore, the inefficiencies resulting from staff not putting their efforts in the same direction compromise the overall effectiveness of teachers' instruction.

11. **While the conditions for teaching and learning were appropriate in most observed classes, the use of effective instructional practices such as promoting higher-order thinking and varying strategies was inconsistent. The review team observed instances of excellent teaching practices and methods, but these were not common or typical.**

The team observed 57 classes throughout the Leicester school district: 15 at the high school, 13 at the middle school, 16 at the Memorial School, and 13 classrooms at the Primary School. The team observed 32 ELA, 18 mathematics, and 6 science lessons, as well as 1 substantially separate classroom for students enrolled in special education. 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. See Appendix C for data on the team's classroom observations.

A. The review team found clear and consistent evidence of appropriate conditions for teaching and learning in most observed classes.

1. In all observed classes interactions between teachers and students were positive and respectful.

2. In 92 percent of observed classes teachers clearly and consistently demonstrated knowledge of subject and content.

3. In 82 percent of observed classes reviewers found clear and consistent evidence that standards of behavior were established and disruptions, if any, were managed effectively.

4. In 96 percent of observed classes, the physical arrangement of the classroom clearly and consistently ensured that students had access to the learning activities.

5. In 82 percent of observed classes teachers clearly and consistently varied the instructional pace to address the complexity of content and to address students' learning needs.

B.   However**,** there was a low incidence of certain key instructional characteristics in observed classes.

1.   Opportunities for students to engage in higher-order thinking such as the use of inquiry, exploration, application, analysis, synthesis, and the evaluation of knowledge or concepts were observed clearly and consistently in 40 percent of the classes.

2.   There was clear and consistent evidence of teachers frequently checking for understanding and using formative assessments to adjust instruction in 53 percent of the classes.

3.   Use of technology to support instruction and enhance learning was observed clearly and consistently in very few classes. There was clear and consistent evidence of teachers using technology to support instruction in 26 percent of the observed classes and of students using technology for learning in 14 percent of the observed classes.

C.   Although these instances were not common or typical, the review team did observe instances of effective instructional practices exemplifying the characteristics described below.

1.   Rigorous lesson content and high expectations appropriately challenging students were evident in a grade 10 ELA class for students enrolled in special education. Students were asked to evaluate the influences of the Great Depression and to analyze how it shaped and motivated Harper Lee's characters, plot, setting, and themes.

2.   Student work of high quality demonstrating learning of challenging content was displayed in one middle school science classroom. Serving as exemplars for other students, the projects displayed included a mobile indicating the eight steps of the engineering design process and a poster depicting the six steps of how a text is initiated and the science behind how it travels to the individual receiving the message.

3.   Use of formative assessment to check for student understanding was evident in a grade 6 mathematics class when the teacher asked the class to think of one activity they could do tomorrow using ratios. After the students were dismissed the teacher read each of the suggestions aloud to the classroom aide with the intention of using some of the suggestions. This information about student learning provided the teacher with a sense of where she needed to focus the following day's instruction.

4.   Students were observed to be assuming responsibility for their learning while working individually or collaboratively on a grade 3 spelling review exercise. Students were allowed to choose a partner and select one of three games designed to reinforce or practice spelling words.

Impact: Leicester's students present a broad range of learning needs. Diverse learning styles cannot be addressed without the use of varied, high-quality instructional methods. An instructional repertoire that

does not have varied strategies, high expectations and challenging academic tasks, frequent checks for understanding, and use of technology is sure to miss opportunities for enriched learning.

Assessment

12. The district has not established a set of universal assessments that can be used to monitor and improve student performance at the secondary level (grades 6 through 12).

    A. The district's few universal assessments at the secondary level are used in combination with other data for placement purposes.

        1. The district administers the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills Mathematics subtests to students in the spring of grade 6 and the spring of grade 7. Administrators and teachers told the review team that the results are used in combination with mathematics grades, MCAS tests results, and mathematics teachers' recommendations to place eligible students in pre-algebra and algebra I. When administrators and teachers were asked, they said that this was the primary use of the Iowa results.

        2. The district administers ReadiStep to students in the fall of grade 8. This two-hour assessment produced by the College Entrance Examination Board consists of multiple choice questions intended to assess critical reading, writing, and mathematics skills. High school teachers and administrators told the review team that the results of the ReadiStep critical reading and writing components of the ReadiStep are used in combination with ELA grades, MCAS tests results, and ELA teacher recommendations to place students in college or honors-level grade 9 English. High school teachers and administrators said that in combination with course grades and teachers' recommendations ReadiStep results are also considered in recommending students for advanced placement courses. They added that guidance counselors use ReadiStep and PSAT results to predict SAT performance.

    B. Middle school teachers and lead teachers said that there were no common mid-terms or final examinations in grades 6 through 8, except in courses taught by one teacher.

    C. High school teachers and administrators said that there were no common mid-terms or finals at the high school except in history courses, mathematics courses, and courses in other disciplines taught by one teacher. They added that there was not a formal process for discussing the results and educational implications of the common mid-terms and finals that were given in history and mathematics courses.

Impact: Without a set of universal assessments the district is unable to monitor and support the academic progress of students at the secondary level. In addition, insufficient data about student performance at the secondary level constrains district planning and decision-making. The district has limited and incomplete student performance data to inform district and school improvement plans,

budget development, professional development, educator evaluation, and curriculum development and modification.

13. **Leicester does not have a system—including tools and leadership—for organized and sustained data analysis and use to improve educational results.**

    A. Central office administrators and principals told the review team that the district had some established practices, but did not have an organized system for formal and regular data analysis.

    B. Central office administrators, principals, and ad-hoc groups of teachers analyze MCAS tests results informally. The process does not have central direction, common features, or continuity.

        1. Administrators told the review team that the central office leadership team analyzes the MCAS tests results using an item analysis and other data from the ESE website. They said that the district had used TestWiz as a tool and the services of a consultant for MCAS tests analysis, but with the discontinuation of TestWiz and under financial pressure, since 2009 they have been reduced to using their limited internal resources. They added that the district was beginning to understand and use Edwin Analytics.

        2. Administrators told the review team that principals led informal discussions of the MCAS test results in their schools.

            a. The review team examined the worksheet for an analysis of the results of the 2012 grade 3 MCAS math test. The analysis was conducted at Leicester Primary School. The worksheet included entries for "Skill Area Addressed," "Leicester compared to the State," "Initial Impressions," "Possible Causes for Error," and "Requisite skills or vocabulary necessary in order to ensure future success."

            b. The review team also examined an item analysis and a review of proficiency for the 2013 grade 8 MCAS test in science, technology, and engineering. These results were discussed at a meeting at Leicester Middle School. The item analysis compared district with state performance on each item. The review of proficiency detailed the multiple-choice questions on which Leicester students scored lower than the average score for their state peers. It also compared district with state performance on the test's open-response questions.

            c. Elementary and middle school teachers said that there had been no follow-up to either of these sessions and cited as impediments absence of time and of the expertise required for a deeper analysis.

        3. The visiting team reviewed a presentation to the school committee by district principals on the 2013 MCAS test results at Leicester Middle School and Leicester High School. The presentation included lists of the "strengths and challenges" for each school and concluded

with a plan of action that included "Develop[ing] a process to analyze MCAS data" and "Us[ing] data to drive our curriculum, instruction and assessment."

4. The district does not have standard practices for the administration of assessments and interpretation of the results.

   a. At the Primary School, Title I Interventionists administer the district's formative and benchmark assessments, consult with classroom teachers on the results, and form fluid instructional groups. At the Memorial School classroom teachers administer these assessments and the school's RTI team interprets the results and forms fluid instructional groups.

   b. Staff expressed contrasting opinions about the administration of assessments by Title I Interventionists at the Primary School. For example, some interviewees expressed a concern that classroom teachers at the Primary School did not have direct knowledge of the performance of their students because they did not administer the assessments, adding that observation of students in a testing situation was a valuable source of information about students' learning styles, strengths, and needs. When the review team asked classroom teachers at the Primary School about this, they expressed the view that the results were less subjective and likely more valid because teachers did not administer the assessments to their own students.

   c. Interviewees told the review team that principals chose the manner of implementation of the testing programs in their schools.

C. The district has not conducted evaluations of programs and services, except as required for the receipt of Title I and special education grants.

   1. Central office administrators told the review team that the district did not have an established cycle for program evaluation and review.

   2. According to interviewees, the recent decision to eliminate a literacy coach position was not based on an evaluation of the effectiveness of the coaching program and the likely consequences of the position's loss, but was "simply budget-based."

D. The district does not have structures such as data teams to help to provide leadership in data management, interpretation, and use.

   1. Administrators said that the district data team disbanded in 2009 under financial pressures, adding that they hoped that the district curriculum design team might assume this responsibility.

Impact: Without the tools, structures, and leadership required for systematic data analysis, the district's efforts to determine the educational implications of assessments such as the MCAS tests are impeded.

In the absence of an infrastructure for data analysis and use, the district cannot make informed decisions about expanding, revising or terminating programs and services.

Human Resources and Professional Development

14. **The district professional development plan is not aligned to the goals in its various planning documents, teachers spoke of professional development as not linked and not sustained, and the district does not have a system for monitoring teachers' practice to determine the effectiveness of its professional development.**

   A. The district's professional development plan is not aligned to the district' strategic, action and draft school improvement plans and is not now systematically informed by student achievement data.

   B. A review of the professional development (PD) plan showed that the district has three full days and four half days for PD. PD also takes place during some faculty meetings and common planning time, according to central office administrators and principals. Interviewees said that curriculum mapping sessions take place during common planning time and mentioned mastery objectives as one of the topics discussed at faculty meetings.

      1. The PD plan for the 2013-2014 school year includes sessions on curriculum mapping, creating SMART goals related to SIPs, connecting curriculum maps to assessment data and instructional strategies, and creating common assessments to show evidence of learning.

      2. In October 2013 the district offered in partnership with the Auburn school district a regional PD day; this partnership, according to central office administrators and principals, enabled the district to offer "four times what we could on our own."

   C. Central office administrators, principals, and EAL representatives confirmed that, as provided for in the collective bargaining agreement, the district has a professional development committee composed of teachers and administrators. This committee has been in place for three years, according to interviewees.

      1. Central office administrators and principals told the review team that teachers originated the idea of a professional development committee because they wanted more input on professional development. They also said that the committee tries to select professional development topics of high interest to teachers.

         a. Surveys are used to determine teachers' professional development preferences.

   D. In the 2012 TELL Mass survey, the latest year for which TELL Mass data is available, 65 percent of district teachers (n=87) who responded to a question about their role in developing

professional development content said that they had a small role or no role in determining the content of in-service professional development programs.

1. According to the same survey, 65 percent of district teachers (n=92) who responded to a question about the adequacy of professional development time at the school level disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that an appropriate amount of time is provided for professional development.

E. During the review team's visit, teachers in one focus group spoke of PD as "little tidbits" with "little linkage," and as "not sustained." References to PD in the other two teacher focus groups were in large measure about course reimbursement and teacher-driven conference attendance.

F. The district does not have a non-evaluative walkthrough process that reviews the implementation of strategies learned through professional development to determine its effectiveness.

Impact: The absence of a system of sustained professional development that is targeted to the goals in district and school improvement plans limits the professional growth of teachers and administrators and hinders the district's ability to make effective progress toward its goals and improve student academic achievement.

Student Support

15. **At the secondary level (grades 6-12) there are limited opportunities for teachers to identify students in need of support using common assessments or for students to receive targeted, progress-monitored academic support.**

   A. The ongoing common assessments used in the middle school and high school to identify students at risk of failing a class are limited (see first Assessment challenge finding above).

   B. There is limited designated time during the school day or after school for students to receive targeted academic support that is monitored and assessed for impact.

   1. Review team members were told that middle grade students receive academic support during lunch and recess. When invited by a teacher, middle grade students may stay after school on Tuesdays to receive extra help. Students may also get help from peer tutors in or out of class.

   2. In interviews teachers and high school students talked about tutorial time during homeroom period when students may seek help from a teacher in any subject. The review team was told that tutorial time consists of a twenty-five minute block four times each week when

students can drop into another class; however, during tutorial time teachers have a class filled with students doing independent study.

3. Review team members were told that while high school students are not required to stay after school, they do stay and meet with teachers for extra help. In addition, a retired teacher tutors in mathematics after school.

Impact: The absence of common assessments and targeted academic support beyond grade 5 is leaving many struggling and at-risk students without support. Without a system for monitoring and responding to students' academic needs in grades 6-12, the district does not have sufficient ability to identify and serve students in need and help them achieve proficiency.

Financial and Asset Management

16. **While the budget process was participatory and resulted in a clear and comprehensive budget document, the funds allocated in the fiscal year 2014 annual budget were not explicitly linked with district priorities and goals.**

   A. District policy, adopted in June 2013, establishes a sound annual budget development process that accurately reflects the goals and objectives of the school system; however, at the time of the review team's visit, the district had not implemented this policy.

      1. According to district policy, the school committee is encouraged to engage in planning with staff and community that will achieve the greatest educational returns for the dollars expended.

      2. The fiscal year 2014 district annual school budget document does not clearly identify funds that are allocated for district priorities.

Impact: Although the review team found support in the district for an alignment of district and school goals and the annual budget, there is currently no explicit connection. When the annual budget is not linked to district and school priorities, the district's effectiveness in allocating and targeting limited resources is diminished.

Leicester Public Schools District Review Recommendations

Leadership and Governance

1. **Building on the District Action Plan and the Administrator Goal Alignment to Strategic Plan for 2013-2014, and drawing from the strategic plan, the district should develop a District Improvement Plan (DIP) that identifies the district's goals and the means of accomplishing those goals.**

    A. Using the three goals identified in the strategic plan, the superintendent with the assistance of her leadership team should develop a three-year DIP that provides direction for the district and serves as a foundation for school improvement plans (SIPs).

    B. The DIP should include activities/action steps identified to accomplish the district's key goals, person(s) responsible, deadlines, measure(s) for goal attainment, and resources needed.

    C. The superintendent should provide updates on the DIP to the school committee and other stakeholders, and should ensure that updates include progress toward each DIP goal.

    D. The superintendent and school committee should consider aligning some goals in the Superintendent's Educator Plan (as part of the district's new educator evaluation system) with DIP goals.

    Recommended resource:

    - *District Accelerated Improvement Planning - Guiding Principles for Effective Benchmarks* (http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/sss/turnaround/level4/AIP-GuidingPrinciples.pdf) describes different types of benchmarks to guide and measure district improvement efforts.

    Benefits: By developing a three-year DIP and providing updates on progress toward DIP goals, the district can ensure that all stakeholders understand the direction the district is headed, its strategies to achieve its goals, and the success of those strategies to date. This will help the district to fully reap the benefits of the considerable work it has invested in planning thus far.

2. **Each of the schools in Leicester should have a School Improvement Plan prepared by the principal with the assistance of the school council.**

    A. The SIPs should contain SMART goals (specific and strategic; measurable; action-oriented; rigorous, realistic, and results-focused; and timed and tracked) that are aligned to the goals in the DIP.

    B. SIPs should be submitted annually to the superintendent for approval. The timing of SIP development and submission should be such that the plans can begin to be implemented as early in the school year as possible.

C. The principal should report periodically to the superintendent, the staff, school council members, and parents on the progress made toward reaching the SIP goals.

D. As part of the implementation of the educator evaluation system principals should use their SIPs to inform their self-assessment and goal setting when creating their Educator Plans, and should use progress toward the SIP goals as evidence during implementation of the Educator Plans.

E. Teachers should consider aligning the goals in their Educator Plans with SIP goals. Team goals may be an appropriate opportunity to focus on addressing growth areas identified in the SIP.

Benefits: By developing SIPs in alignment with the DIP, and by using DIP and SIP goals as appropriate to inform educator goals, the district will ensure coordinated planning for improvement at the district, school, and classroom levels, and will demonstrate that stakeholders at all levels are concentrating on those priorities that the school committee and the superintendent have established. SIPs that are robust and are developed in a timely manner will serve as a roadmap for progress.

3. The school committee and superintendent should address the recent changes in leadership positions in the district.

A. When the new high school principal is in place, the position of curriculum director should return to a full-time position.

1. The curriculum director should focus on issues such as curriculum mapping, implementation of new programs, vertical alignment of curriculum, and formative and summative assessments. Typically, curriculum directors also provide input into the determination of professional development offerings and assist in writing grants.

2. The high school principal should oversee all the educational and operational activities at the school.

B. The school committee and superintendent should explore some ways to reallocate funds to restore either a full-time or part-time position of facilities/maintenance manager. One option for the committee and superintendent to investigate is a position shared between the school department and the town.

Benefits: Returning the curriculum director role to a full-time position and restoring the position of facilities/maintenance manager will speed up progress in critical areas of teaching and learning and enable administrators to focus on work appropriate to their expertise.

When the district has a full-time curriculum director and a full-time high school principal, it will be easier for all of the responsibilities associated with these roles to be carried out.

Having a facilities director (either full-time or part-time) will remove the facilities and maintenance responsibilities that are now added to the responsibilities of the superintendent and the principals. The

director can oversee the major maintenance plan that the district needs, supervise the custodial staff in the district, and assist with a feasibility study of the school buildings.

Curriculum and Instruction

4. **The district should continue its efforts to develop complete curriculum maps for all grade levels and subject areas. Also, the district should increase consistency by determining common elements and expectations for curriculum**.

   A. The curriculum director (see third Leadership and Governance recommendation above) should, with assistance from administrators and teachers, develop a long-term plan for curriculum development, alignment, and review.

      1. The long-term plan should prioritize subjects and grade levels for development based on such variables as the degree to which particular curriculum maps are completed, the current quality of curriculum, student performance data, and recent modifications to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.

      2. The curriculum plan should include timelines for specific curriculum work, by subject and grade level.

      3. The curriculum director should be responsible for providing the leadership necessary to develop and maintain an aligned, consistently delivered, and continuously improving curriculum in the district.

   B. The district should determine common elements and expectations for curriculum, to be modified as appropriate for particular subjects or grade levels.

   C. Groups of teachers should be convened by discipline to organize the curriculum vertically.

Recommended resources:

- ESE's *Model Curriculum Units* (http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/model/files.html) are exemplars that can be useful as the district continues to develop, align, and update curriculum. Supplemental presentations (http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/model/resources/) provide more information about the units.

- ESE's *Quality Review Rubrics* (http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/model/rubrics/) can support the analysis and improvement of curriculum units.

- *Model Curriculum Maps: Raising the Rigor of Teaching and Learning* (http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/model/maps/CurriculumMaps.pdf) is a presentation that provides definitions and examples of curriculum maps.

- ESE's *Common Core State Standards Initiative* web page (http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/commoncore/) provides links to several implementation resources for the 2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for ELA and math, which incorporate the Common Core. In particular, the PARCC Model Content Frameworks, the side-by-side comparison documents, and the presentation titled *Diving Deeper* might be useful as the district establishes a plan to develop and improve curricula.

- ESE's Science, Technology Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) web page, *Review of the Science and Technology/Engineering Framework, 2009-2016* (http://www.doe.mass.edu/STEM/review.html), provides links to information about the draft Revised Science and Technology/Engineering standards and related resources.

Benefits: Putting in place a plan to develop and continually improve curriculum will help to ensure that all students in the district have access to high-quality learning experiences. Curricular consistency and vertical alignment will prevent redundancy and gaps in content and will help to optimize available instructional time.

5. **Leicester should improve the quality of instruction by helping teachers**

- **use instructional strategies that promote higher-order thinking skills,**
- **frequently check for understanding during lessons, and**
- **use technology to support instruction.**

A. The district should identify and communicate expectations for high-quality instruction in all classrooms.

1. Expectations should include strategies that encourage higher order thinking.

2. Effective formative assessment strategies should also be used frequently in all classrooms so that instruction is continually informed by students' needs.

3. The district's expectations should also include the use of technology to support teaching and learning.

4. The professional development committee should consider targeted training on promising practices and strategies in these areas.

5. Principals should provide supervision and follow-up to ensure that the techniques and strategies are understood and implemented effectively.

6. Teachers who demonstrate effective use of such strategies should be given opportunities to share their practices through peer observations or other professional development initiatives.

Recommended resource:

- *Characteristics of Standards-Based Teaching and Learning: Continuum of Practice* (http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/dart/walk/04.0.pdf) is a framework that provides a common language or reference point for looking at teaching and learning. (It is part of ESE's *Learning Walkthrough Implementation Guide,* http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/dart/walk/ImplementationGuide.pdf.) In particular, the sections of the *Continuum* focusing on Instructional Design and Delivery and Student Ownership of Learning might be helpful as the district identifies the practices that should be required of all educators.

Benefits: When the instructional practices implemented throughout the district are based on rigor and high expectations for students, incorporate the use of technology to enhance learning, and are combined with an ongoing understanding of students' needs, all of Leicester's students will have an improved opportunity to learn to the best of their ability.

Assessment

6. **As a dimension of its curriculum mapping initiative, the district should institute a balanced, comprehensive assessment battery consisting of formative, benchmark, and summative assessments in all core subject areas in grades 6 through 12.**

   A. The district should adopt or develop common benchmark and summative assessments in all core subject areas in grades 6 through 12.

      1. The high school administers common mid-terms and finals in certain subjects. Under the direction of the principal, high school lead teachers might work with core subject area teachers to ensure that this practice is universal and consistent for all core subjects.

      2. Under the direction of the principal, middle school lead teachers might work with core subject area teachers at each grade level to develop common midterm and final examinations in all core subjects.

      3. Time and support should be provided for teachers to collaboratively analyze data from these assessments and to plan instruction based on the data.

      4. Perhaps as a part of its new DIP (see first Leadership and Governance recommendation above), the district should develop an action plan designating personnel and resources for the completion of this work in order to ensure appropriate support and accountability.

Benefits: By implementing this recommendation in conjunction with its curriculum mapping initiative, the district will ultimately have a comprehensive and balanced system of assessments in all core subjects to help teachers and administrators monitor student progress, differentiate and improve the

quality of instruction, inform curriculum revision, and identify interventions and enrichment activities that will benefit particular students.

7. **The district should provide leadership and procedures for systematic data collection, analysis, and dissemination. It should use data in evaluating programs and services and in decision-making.**

   A. The district should develop leadership structures such as a district data team and school-based data teams to enable the leadership team and teachers to systematically interpret assessment results and use them to improve teaching and learning.

   B. The district should continue to make use of data resources such as Edwin Analytics.

   C. The district should establish protocols to guide the interpretation and use of assessment results at the district and school levels, and should ensure that time and support are provided for regular follow-up on data analysis.

   D. The leadership team should use student achievement data to evaluate the effectiveness of the district's programs and services and to inform decisions about resource and personnel allocation. Student needs identified through an analysis of student performance data should help to determine budget priorities, professional development topics, and district and school improvement plan goals.

Recommended resource:

- The *ESE District Data Team Toolkit* (http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/ucd/ddtt/toolkit.pdf) is a resource intended to help districts establish, grow, and maintain a culture of inquiry and data use through a district data team.

Benefits: Systematic use of data from multiple sources will strengthen teaching and learning and district- and school-level planning. It will also enable the district to determine the effectiveness of programs and target limited resources to meet high priority student needs. Use of data as evidence can also aid in the presentation of the annual school budget, helping make clear the reasons for budget decisions.

Human Resources and Professional Development

8. **The professional development plan should be aligned with district and school improvement plans and be more systematically informed by student assessment data and teachers' needs.**

   A. The professional development committee should align the professional development plan to district and school improvement plan goals.

B.   Decisions about funding for professional development should be informed by the expertise and resources needed by administrators and teachers to achieve the goals and objectives included in district and school improvement plans.

C. Student assessment data, as well as data collected on teaching and learning as part of the educator evaluation system, should be considered when aligning the professional development plan to DIP and SIP goals and when allocating resources for professional development.

1.   The district should consider using data collected as part of the new educator evaluation system to provide differentiated professional development opportunities for teachers.

D. In developing the annual plan for professional development, the professional development committee should provide broad opportunities for input from teachers.

E. The district should consider the implementation of a non-evaluative classroom walkthrough process to review the implementation of strategies learned through professional development and to identify ways to follow up on previous professional development.

Recommended resource:

- ESE's *Learning Walkthrough Implementation Guide* (http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/dart/walk/ImplementationGuide.pdf) is intended to support instructional leaders in establishing a learning walkthrough process in a school or district. It is designed to provide guidance to those working in an established culture of collaboration as well as those who are just beginning to observe classrooms and discuss teaching and learning in a focused and actionable manner.

Benefits: Using student assessment data and teachers' needs to align professional development to district and school improvement plans and using walkthroughs to follow up will contribute to more sustained professional development, enhanced professional practice and growth, and accelerated progress toward district goals, while maximizing the resources used for professional development.

Student Support

9. **The district should develop a system to identify and respond to the needs of students in grades 6 through 12.**

A. The district should administer assessments in reading and mathematics at appropriate intervals to identify students in need of extra help and those who are ready for more challenging work. Measures such as course failures should also be reviewed periodically.

B. The district should provide targeted assistance for specific students in or out of class.

1. The district should take the steps necessary to designate a period of time during the school day for targeted support, similar to WIN time at the elementary schools.

2. Students' specific needs should be addressed for a designated period of time after school at the middle and high schools.

C. The district should maintain a system for monitoring student progress during interventions and making adjustments accordingly.

Recommended resources:

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

- The *MTSS Self-Assessment* (http://www.doe.mass.edu/mtss/sa/) is designed for schools/districts to use to assess their current status in each of the core MTSS components and to establish priorities.

Benefits: Implementing this recommendation will result in a continuum of academic support from kindergarten through grade 12. It will help to ensure more targeted interventions at the secondary level for students in need of extra help, as well as enrichment for students who are ready for it, and will promote improved student achievement.

Financial and Asset Management

10. **In accordance with district policy, Leicester should take steps to use its goals and priorities documents as the basis for budget discussions and explicitly align the annual budget with these priorities and goals.**

    A. The district's policy encourages incorporation of its priorities and goals in budget discussions.

    B. The annual budget document should include a section containing the priorities from the district planning documents together with the funding rationales.

Recommended resource:

- *Smart School Budgeting: Resources for Districts* (http://www.renniecenter.org/topics/smart_school_budgeting.html), a publication by the Massachusetts Association of School Business Officials and the Rennie Center, may be a helpful resource for developing an approach to performance budgeting.

Benefits: Implementing this recommendation will focus district budget discussions on the means of achieving district goals and priorities, which lends itself to an iterative negotiation between district and community; it will also better ground discussion of budget trade-offs .

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

Review Team Members

The review was conducted from November 18-21, 2013, by the following team of independent ESE consultants.

1. Dr. John Kulevich, leadership and governance

2. Dr. Peter McGinn, curriculum and instruction

3. Dr. James McAuliffe, assessment, review team coordinator

4. James Hearns, human resources and professional development

5. Lenora Jennings, student support

6. Dr. Wilfrid Savoie, financial and asset management

7. Melinda Long, ESE/CDSA staff member, also participated in the review team

District Review Activities

The following activities were conducted during the review:

The team conducted interviews with the following financial personnel: director of finance and operations, accounts payable clerk, payroll clerk, town administrator, and town accountant.

The team conducted interviews with the following members of the School Committee: chairperson, secretary, and one member.

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

The team conducted interviews/focus groups with the following central office administrators: superintendent, interim high school principal and curriculum director (a combined position), director of special education, director of finance and operations, Primary School principal, Memorial School principal, Middle School principal, and High School principal.

The team visited the following schools: Leicester Primary School (PK-2), Memorial School (grades 3-5), Leicester Middle School (grades 6-8), and Leicester High School (grades 9-12).

During school visits, the team conducted interviews with 4 principals and focus groups with 8 elementary school teachers, 10 middle school teachers, and 12 high school teachers.

The team observed 57 classes in the district: 15 at the high school, 13 the middle school, and 29 at the two elementary schools.

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

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

o Data on the district's staffing and finances.

o 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).

o 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.

o All completed program and administrator evaluations, and a random selection of completed teacher evaluations.

Site Visit Schedule

Monday 11/18/2013	Tuesday 11/19/2013	Wednesday 11/20/2013	Thursday 11/21/2013
Orientation with district leaders and principals; interviews with district staff and principals; document reviews; and interview with teachers' association.	Interviews with district staff and principals; review of personnel files; teacher focus groups; parent focus group; and visits to the Memorial School and the High School for classroom observations.	Interviews with town personnel; interviews with school leaders; interviews with school committee members; visits to the Primary School, the Memorial School, and the Middle School for classroom observations.	Interviews with school leaders; visits the Middle School and the High School for classroom observations; follow-up interviews; district review team meeting; emerging themes meeting with district leaders and principals.

Appendix B: Enrollment, Performance, Expenditures

Table B1a: Leicester Public Schools

2012-2013 Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity

Student Group	District	Percent of Total	State	Percent of Total
African-American	55	3.2%	81806	8.6%
Asian	37	2.2%	56517	5.9%
Hispanic	55	3.2%	156976	16.4%
Native America	7	0.4%	2292	0.2%
White	1534	89.4%	630150	66.0%
Native Hawaiian	--	--	1020	0.1%
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	27	1.6%	26012	2.7%
All Students	1715	100.0%	**954773**	**100.0%**

Note: As of October 1, 2012

Table B1b: Leicester Public Schools

2012-2013 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	290	41.1%	16.9%	163921	35.5%	17.2%
Low Income	504	71.4%	29.4%	353420	76.5%	37.0%
ELLs and Former ELLs	19	2.7%	1.1%	73217	15.8%	7.7%
All high needs students	706	100.0%	41.2%	462272	100.0%	48.4%

Notes: As of October 1, 2012. District and state numbers and percentages for students with disabilities and high needs students are calculated including students in out-of-district placements.

Table B2a: Leicester Public Schools
English Language Arts Performance, 2010-2013

Grade and Measure		Number Included (2013)	Spring MCAS Year					Gains and Declines	
			2010	2011	2012	2013	State 2013	4-Year Trend	2 Year Trend
3	CPI	157	85.2	82.9	78.3	79.5	83.3	-5.7	1.2
	P+	157	58.0%	60.0%	50.0%	49.0%	57.0%	-9.0%	-1.0%
4	CPI	118	75.4	69	77.2	65	78.9	-10.4	-12.2
	P+	118	41.0%	28.0%	52.0%	30.0%	53.0%	-11.0%	-22.0%
	SGP	117	33.5	28	41	26	49	-7.5	-15
5	CPI	140	85.1	88.8	80.8	84.8	84.7	-0.3	4
	P+	140	63.0%	69.0%	56.0%	66.0%	66.0%	3.0%	10.0%
	SGP	136	58	55	54.5	48.5	52	-9.5	-6
6	CPI	135	83.5	87.9	88.8	83	85.1	-0.5	-5.8
	P+	135	64.0%	71.0%	74.0%	64.0%	67.0%	0.0%	-10.0%
	SGP	129	43	47	58.5	47	52	4	-11.5
7	CPI	129	89.1	88.3	88.1	87	88.4	-2.1	-1.1
	P+	129	74.0%	70.0%	66.0%	67.0%	72.0%	-7.0%	1.0%
	SGP	119	39	50.5	44	39	48	0	-5
8	CPI	136	93.2	92.1	91.8	90.6	90.1	-2.6	-1.2
	P+	136	84.0%	81.0%	81.0%	76.0%	78.0%	-8.0%	-5.0%
	SGP	130	47.5	56	54	38	50	-9.5	-16
10	CPI	103	94.7	95	97.6	98.1	96.9	3.4	0.5
	P+	103	84.0%	87.0%	93.0%	95.0%	91.0%	11.0%	2.0%
	SGP	93	46.5	40	46	55	57	8.5	9
All	CPI	918	86.7	86.4	86.1	83.7	86.8	-3	-2.4
	P+	918	67.0%	67.0%	67.0%	63.0%	69.0%	-4.0%	-4.0%
	SGP	724	45	48	49	42.5	51	-2.5	-6.5

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

Table B2b: Leicester Public Schools
Mathematics Performance, 2010-2013

Grade and Measure		Number Included (2013)	Spring MCAS Year					Gains and Declines	
			2010	2011	2012	2013	State 2013	4-Year Trend	2 Year Trend
3	CPI	157	84.4	82.8	76.9	76	84.3	-8.4	-0.9
	P+	157	66.0%	61.0%	52.0%	50.0%	66.0%	-16.0%	-2.0%
4	CPI	118	73.9	74.6	77.2	64.8	80.2	-9.1	-12.4
	P+	118	36.0%	33.0%	44.0%	31.0%	52.0%	-5.0%	-13.0%
	SGP	117	30.5	39	45	28	54	-2.5	-17
5	CPI	140	75.2	79.5	79.3	80.5	80.6	5.3	1.2
	P+	140	54.0%	53.0%	56.0%	58.0%	61.0%	4.0%	2.0%
	SGP	135	48	50.5	62	57	54	9	-5
6	CPI	135	83	79.3	84.4	75.4	80.3	-7.6	-9
	P+	135	64.0%	56.0%	63.0%	51.0%	61.0%	-13.0%	-12.0%
	SGP	129	57	53	62	26	50	-31	-36
7	CPI	129	77.1	78	71.9	71.3	74.4	-5.8	-0.6
	P+	129	56.0%	58.0%	46.0%	40.0%	52.0%	-16.0%	-6.0%
	SGP	120	62	54.5	47	34	46	-28	-13
8	CPI	137	83.1	75.9	82.1	73.7	76	-9.4	-8.4
	P+	137	62.0%	57.0%	62.0%	50.0%	55.0%	-12.0%	-12.0%
	SGP	132	65.5	59	55	48	50	-17.5	-7
10	CPI	103	91	88.4	94.6	91.3	90.2	0.3	-3.3
	P+	103	78.0%	76.0%	86.0%	83.0%	80.0%	5.0%	-3.0%
	SGP	94	33	33	25	31.5	51	-1.5	6.5
All	CPI	919	81	79.7	80.7	75.9	80.8	-5.1	-4.8
	P+	919	59.0%	56.0%	58.0%	51.0%	61.0%	-8.0%	-7.0%
	SGP	727	50	49	52	39	51	-11	-13

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

Table B2c: Leicester Public Schools
Science and Technology/Engineering Performance, 2010-2013

Grade and Measure		Number Included (2013)	Spring MCAS Year					Gains and Declines	
			2010	2011	2012	2013	State 2013	4-Year Trend	2 Year Trend
5	CPI	140	85.3	84.2	83.8	84.8	78.5	-0.5	1
	P+	140	60.0%	56.0%	57.0%	63.0%	51.0%	3.0%	6.0%
8	CPI	136	78.2	72.7	79	72.8	71	-5.4	-6.2
	P+	136	42.0%	36.0%	51.0%	38.0%	39.0%	-4.0%	-13.0%
10	CPI	102	89.5	88	93.2	93.9	88	4.4	0.7
	P+	102	75.0%	73.0%	82.0%	84.0%	71.0%	9.0%	2.0%
All	CPI	378	83.9	81.4	84.9	82.9	79	-1	-2
	P+	378	58.0%	54.0%	63.0%	60.0%	53.0%	2.0%	-3.0%

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

Table B3a: Leicester Public Schools
English Language Arts (All Grades)
Performance for Selected Subgroups Compared to State, 2010-2013

Group and Measure			Number Included (2013)	Spring MCAS Year				Gains and Declines	
				2010	2011	2012	2013	4 Year Trend	2-Year Trend
High Needs	District	CPI	425	75.6	77.1	76.3	75.4	-0.2	-0.9
		P+	425	43.0%	47.0%	50.0%	48.0%	5.0%	-2.0%
		SGP	323	41	43	43	42	1	-1
	State	CPI	237163	76.1	77	76.5	76.8	0.7	0.3
		P+	237163	45.0%	48.0%	48.0%	48.0%	3.0%	0.0%
		SGP	180087	45	46	46	47	2	1
Low Income	District	CPI	326	79.3	79.5	79.7	79.1	-0.2	-0.6
		P+	326	50.0%	52.0%	56.0%	53.0%	3.0%	-3.0%
		SGP	256	44	41.5	44	41	-3	-3
	State	CPI	184999	76.5	77.1	76.7	77.2	0.7	0.5
		P+	184999	47.0%	49.0%	50.0%	50.0%	3.0%	0.0%
		SGP	141671	46	46	45	47	1	2
Students w/ disabilities	District	CPI	157	64.3	65.5	62.3	60.4	-3.9	-1.9
		P+	157	23.0%	26.0%	25.0%	27.0%	4.0%	2.0%
		SGP	111	35	43	39	37	2	-2
	State	CPI	88956	67.3	68.3	67.3	66.8	-0.5	-0.5
		P+	88956	28.0%	30.0%	31.0%	30.0%	2.0%	-1.0%
		SGP	64773	41	42	43	43	2	0
English language learners & Former ELLs	District	CPI	17	80.3	79.8	70.8	67.6	-12.7	-3.2
		P+	17	47.0%	46.0%	38.0%	41.0%	-6.0%	3.0%
		SGP	12	0	0	0	0	0	0
	State	CPI	46676	66.1	66.2	66.2	67.4	1.3	1.2
		P+	46676	32.0%	33.0%	34.0%	35.0%	3.0%	1.0%
		SGP	31672	51	50	51	53	2	2
All students	District	CPI	918	86.7	86.4	86.1	83.7	-3	-2.4
		P+	918	67.0%	67.0%	67.0%	63.0%	-4.0%	-4.0%
		SGP	724	45	48	49	42.5	-2.5	-6.5
	State	CPI	496175	86.9	87.2	86.7	86.8	-0.1	0.1
		P+	496175	68.0%	69.0%	69.0%	69.0%	1.0%	0.0%
		SGP	395568	50	50	50	51	1	1

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

Table B3b: Leicester Public Schools
Mathematics (All Grades)
Performance for Selected Subgroups Compared to State, 2010-2013

Group and Measure			Number Included (2013)	Spring MCAS Year				Gains and Declines	
				2010	2011	2012	2013	4 Year Trend	2-Year Trend
High Needs	District	CPI	424	67.3	67	68.6	65	-2.3	-3.6
		P+	424	36.0%	35.0%	38.0%	34.0%	-2.0%	-4.0%
		SGP	323	47	48	50	39	-8	-11
	State	CPI	237745	66.7	67.1	67	68.6	1.9	1.6
		P+	237745	36.0%	37.0%	37.0%	40.0%	4.0%	3.0%
		SGP	180866	46	46	46	46	0	0
Low Income	District	CPI	327	71.7	70.4	71.2	68	-3.7	-3.2
		P+	327	44.0%	40.0%	43.0%	37.0%	-7.0%	-6.0%
		SGP	258	48	48	48.5	37	-11	-11.5
	State	CPI	185392	67.1	67.3	67.3	69	1.9	1.7
		P+	185392	37.0%	38.0%	38.0%	41.0%	4.0%	3.0%
		SGP	142354	47	46	45	46	-1	1
Students w/ disabilities	District	CPI	156	53.1	53.4	54.1	50.2	-2.9	-3.9
		P+	156	15.0%	18.0%	18.0%	17.0%	2.0%	-1.0%
		SGP	109	42	51	51	42	0	-9
	State	CPI	89193	57.5	57.7	56.9	57.4	-0.1	0.5
		P+	89193	21.0%	22.0%	21.0%	22.0%	1.0%	1.0%
		SGP	65068	43	43	43	42	-1	-1
English language learners & Former ELLs	District	CPI	17	71.1	70.2	58.7	64.7	-6.4	6
		P+	17	53.0%	38.0%	22.0%	35.0%	-18.0%	13.0%
		SGP	12	0	0	0	0	0	0
	State	CPI	47046	61.5	62	61.6	63.9	2.4	2.3
		P+	47046	31.0%	32.0%	32.0%	35.0%	4.0%	3.0%
		SGP	31986	54	52	52	53	-1	1
All students	District	CPI	919	81	79.7	80.7	75.9	-5.1	-4.8
		P+	919	59.0%	56.0%	58.0%	51.0%	-8.0%	-7.0%
		SGP	727	50	49	52	39	-11	-13
	State	CPI	497090	79.9	79.9	79.9	80.8	0.9	0.9
		P+	497090	58.0%	58.0%	59.0%	61.0%	3.0%	2.0%
		SGP	396691	50	50	50	51	1	1

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

Table B3c: Leicester Public Schools
Science and Technology/Engineering (All Grades)
Performance for Selected Subgroups Compared to State, 2010-2013

Group and Measure			Number Included (2013)	Spring MCAS Year				Gains and Declines	
				2010	2011	2012	2013	4 Year Trend	2-Year Trend
High Needs	District	CPI	170	74.8	72.3	73.6	74.4	-0.4	0.8
		P+	170	37.0%	40.0%	42.0%	42.0%	5.0%	0.0%
	State	CPI	96902	64.3	63.8	65	66.4	2.1	1.4
		P+	96902	28.0%	28.0%	31.0%	31.0%	3.0%	0.0%
Low Income	District	CPI	129	79.5	75	76.7	75.6	-3.9	-1.1
		P+	129	45.0%	45.0%	48.0%	44.0%	-1.0%	-4.0%
	State	CPI	75485	63.6	62.8	64.5	66.1	2.5	1.6
		P+	75485	28.0%	28.0%	31.0%	32.0%	4.0%	1.0%
Students w/ disabilities	District	CPI	62	63.7	63.4	55	63.7	0	8.7
		P+	62	17.0%	25.0%	15.0%	26.0%	9.0%	11.0%
	State	CPI	37049	59	59.2	58.7	59.8	0.8	1.1
		P+	37049	19.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	1.0%	0.0%
English language learners & Former ELLs	District	CPI	6	0	0	70.5	0	0	-70.5
		P+	6	0.0%	0.0%	45.0%	0.0%	0.0%	-45.0%
	State	CPI	16179	51.8	50.3	51.4	54	2.2	2.6
		P+	16179	16.0%	15.0%	17.0%	19.0%	3.0%	2.0%
All students	District	CPI	378	83.9	81.4	84.9	82.9	-1	-2
		P+	378	58.0%	54.0%	63.0%	60.0%	2.0%	-3.0%
	State	CPI	209573	78.3	77.6	78.6	79	0.7	0.4
		P+	209573	52.0%	52.0%	54.0%	53.0%	1.0%	-1.0%

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

Table B4: Leicester Public Schools
Annual Grade 9-12 Dropout Rates, 2010-2013

	School Year Ending				Change 2010-2013		Change 2012-2013		State (2013)
	2010	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**Percentage Points**	**Percent**	**Percentage Points**	**Percent**	
All students	0.9	0.9	2.8	1.3	0.4	44.0%	-1.5	-53.6%	2.2

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

Table B5a: Leicester Public Schools
Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates, 2010-2013

Group	Number Included (2013)	School Year Ending				Change 2010-2013		Change 2012-2013		State (2013)
		2010	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**Percentage Points**	**Percent Change**	**Percentage Points**	**Percent Change**	
High needs	65	75.0%	84.9%	78.3%	80.0%	5.0%	6.7%	1.7%	2.2%	74.7%
Low income	49	71.8%	84.7%	85.7%	79.6%	7.8%	10.9%	-6.1%	-7.1%	73.6%
Students w/ disabilities	25	67.9%	81.5%	66.7%	64.0%	-3.9%	-5.7%	-2.7%	-4.0%	67.8%
English language learners & Former ELLs	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	63.5%
All students	133	81.8%	90.4%	86.2%	85.0%	3.2%	3.9%	-1.2%	-1.4%	85.0%

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

Table B5b: Leicester Public Schools
Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates, 2009-2012

Group	Number Included (2012)	School Year Ending				Change 2009-2012		Change 2011-2012		State (2012)
		2009	2010	2011	2012	Percentage Points	Percent Change	Percentage Points	Percent Change	
High needs	60	76.0%	88.3%	89.0%	80.0%	4.0%	5.3%	-9.0%	-10.1%	78.9%
Low income	42	80.6%	87.2%	89.8%	88.1%	7.5%	9.3%	-1.7%	-1.9%	77.5%
Students w/ disabilities	21	70.8%	85.7%	85.2%	66.7%	-4.1%	-5.8%	-18.5%	-21.7%	73.8%
English language learners & Former ELLs	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	68.5%
All students	145	85.8%	87.2%	92.6%	87.6%	1.8%	2.1%	-5.0%	-5.4%	87.5%

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

Table B6: Leicester Public Schools

Attendance Rates, 2010-2013

Group	School Year Ending				Change 2010-2013		Change 2012-2013		State (2013)
	2010	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**Percentage Points**	**Percent Change**	**Percentage Points**	**Percent Change**	
All students	95.4%	95.8%	95.8%	95.7%	0.3	0.3%	-0.1	-0.1%	94.8%

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

Table B7: Leicester Public Schools

Suspension Rates, 2010-2013

Group	School Year Ending				Change 2010-2013		Change 2012-2013		State (2013)
	2010	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**Percentage Points**	**Percent Change**	**Percentage Points**	**Percent Change**	
In-School Suspension Rate	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	0.8	--	0.8	--	2.2%
Out-of-School Suspension Rate	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%	2.0	--	2.0	--	4.3%

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

Table B8: Leicester Public Schools

Expenditures, Chapter 70 State Aid, and Net School Spending Fiscal Years 2011–2013

	FY11		FY12		FY13	
	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual
Expenditures						
From local appropriations for schools:						
By school committee	$16,312,949	$15,803,256	$15,349,690	$15,162,953	$15,846,852	$15,898,815
By municipality	$3,796,167	$3,745,694	$3,761,628	$4,323,609	$3,794,909	$3,868,432
Total from local appropriations	$20,109,116	$19,548,950	$19,111,318	$19,486,562	$19,641,761	$19,767,247
From revolving funds and grants	--	$2,907,067	--	$3,654,733	--	$2,817,952
Total expenditures	--	$22,456,017	--	$23,141,295	--	$22,585,199
Chapter 70 aid to education program						
Chapter 70 state aid*	--	$9,145,765	--	$9,381,227	--	$9,450,987
Required local contribution	--	$7,199,987	--	$7,378,547	--	$7,574,816
Required net school spending**	--	$16,345,752	--	$16,759,774	--	$17,025,803
Actual net school spending	--	$17,263,750	--	$16,785,610	--	$17,672,424
Over/under required ($)	--	$917,998	--	$25,836	--	$646,621
Over/under required (%)	--	5.6%	--	0.2%	--	3.8

*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: FY11, FY12 District End-of-Year Reports, Chapter 70 Program information on ESE website

Data retrieved November 19, 2013 and (FY13 actual) April 18, 2014

Table B9: Leicester Public Schools
Expenditures Per In-District Pupil
Fiscal Years 2010-2013

Expenditure Category	2010	2011	2012	2013
Administration	$460	$501	$538	$480
Instructional leadership (district and school)	$503	$491	$510	$586
Teachers	$4,195	$4,163	$4,447	$4,624
Other teaching services	$736	$636	$692	$683
Professional development	$75	$113	$129	$127
Instructional materials, equipment and technology	$216	$262	$144	$128
Guidance, counseling and testing services	$278	$294	$323	$328
Pupil services	$884	$1,078	$1,209	$1,167
Operations and maintenance	$793	$880	$825	$907
Insurance, retirement and other fixed costs	$1,462	$1,441	$1,489	$1,560
Total expenditures per in-district pupil	$9,602	$9,859	$10,307	$10,589

Sources: Per-pupil expenditure reports on ESE website

Appendix C: Instructional Inventory

Learning Environment	Grade Span	Evidence by Grade Span				Evidence Overall		
		None	Partial	Clear & Consistent		None	Partial	Clear & Consistent
		(0)	(1)	(2)		(0)	(1)	(2)
1. Tone of interactions between teacher and students and among students is positive and respectful.	**ES**	0	0	29	#	0	0	57
	MS	0	0	13	%	0	0	100
	HS	0	0	15	---	---	---	---
2. Behavioral standards are clearly communicated and disruptions, if present, are managed effectively and equitably.	**ES**	1	1	27	#	5	5	48
	MS	1	1	11	%	9	9	82
	HS	3	3	10	---	---	---	---
3. The physical arrangement of the classroom ensures a positive learning environment and provides all students with access to learning activities.	**ES**	0	0	29	#	1	1	55
	MS	0	0	13	%	2	2	96
	HS	1	1	13	---	---	---	---
4. Classroom rituals and routines promote transitions with minimal loss of instructional time	**ES**	2	3	24	#	7	3	47
	MS	2	0	11	%	12	5	83
	HS	3	0	12	---	---	---	---
5. Multiple resources are available to meet all students' diverse learning needs.	**ES**	10	5	14	#	25	7	25
	MS	8	2	3	%	44	12	44
	HS	7	0	8	---	---	---	---

(Please see next page)

Teaching	Grade Span	Evidence by Grade Span				Evidence Overall		
		None	Partial	Clear & Consistent		None	Partial	Clear & Consistent
		(0)	(1)	(2)		(0)	(1)	(2)
6. The teacher demonstrates knowledge of subject and content.	ES	1	1	27	#	2	2	53
	MS	1	1	11	%	4	4	92
	HS	0	0	15	---			
7. The teacher plans and implements a lesson that reflects rigor and high expectations.	ES	9	10	10	#	17	15	25
	MS	5	2	6	%	30	26	44
	HS	3	3	9	---	---	---	---
8. The teacher communicates clear learning objective(s) aligned to 2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. SEI/language objective(s) are included when applicable.	ES	14	7	8	#	20	9	28
	MS	4	2	7	%	35	16	49
	HS	2	0	`13	---	---	---	---
9. The teacher uses appropriate instructional strategies well matched to learning objective(s) and content.	ES	6	6	17	#	11	14	32
	MS	4	3	6	%	19	25	56
	HS	1	5	9	---	---	---	---
10. The teacher uses appropriate modifications for ELLs and students with disabilities such as explicit language objective(s); direct instruction in vocabulary; presentation of content at multiple levels of complexity; and, differentiation of content, process, and/or products.	ES	21	1	7	#	37	7	13
	MS	8	3	2	%	67	12	21
	HS	8	3	4	---	---	---	---
11. The teacher provides multiple opportunities for students' to engage in higher order thinking such as use of inquiry, exploration, application, analysis, synthesis, and/or evaluation of knowledge or concepts (Bloom's Taxonomy).	ES	16	3	10	#	25	10	22
	MS	6	3	4	%	44	18	38
	HS	3	4	8	---	---	---	---

(Please see next page)

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Teaching (continued)	Grade Span	Evidence by Grade Span				Evidence Overall		
		None	Partial	Clear & Consistent		None	Partial	Clear & Consistent
		(0)	(1)	(2)		(0)	(1)	(2)
12. The teacher uses questioning techniques that require thoughtful responses that demonstrate understanding.	ES	3	8	18	#	9	12	37
	MS	3	1	9	%	15	21	64
	HS	3	2	10	---			
13. The teacher implements teaching strategies that promote a learning environment where students can take risks --- for instance, where they can make predictions, make judgments and investigate.	ES	10	4	15	#	16	9	32
	MS	5	4	4	%	28	16	56
	HS	1	1	13	---	---	---	---
14. The teacher paces the lesson to match content and meet students' learning needs.	ES	3	3	23	#	5	5	47
	MS	1	0	12	%	9	9	82
	HS	1	2	12	---	---	---	---
15. The teacher conducts frequent formative assessments to check for understanding and inform instruction.	ES	9	4	16	#	15	12	30
	MS	5	2	6	%	26	21	53
	HS	1	6	8	---	---	---	---
16. The teacher makes use of available technology to support instruction and enhance learning.	ES	19	4	6	#	33	9	14
	MS	7	1	4	%	58	16	26
	HS	7	4	4	---	---	---	---

Learning	Grade Span	Evidence by Grade Span				Evidence Overall		
		None	Partial	Clear & Consistent		None	Partial	Clear & Consistent
		(0)	(1)	(2)		(0)	(1)	(2)
17. Students are engaged in challenging academic tasks.	ES	10	6	13	#	17	11	29
	MS	4	3	6	%	30	19	51
	HS	3	2	10	---	---	---	---
18. Students articulate their thinking orally or in writing.	ES	3	5	21	#	5	12	41
	MS	1	2	10	%	8	21	71
	HS	1	5	10	---			
19. Students inquire, explore, apply, analyze, synthesize and/or evaluate knowledge or concepts (Bloom's Taxonomy).	ES	18	3	8	#	26	8	23
	MS	5	3	5	%	46	14	40
	HS	3	2	10	---	---	---	---
20. Students elaborate about content and ideas when responding to questions.	ES	9	8	12	#	21	14	22
	MS	6	4	3	%	37	25	38
	HS	6	2	7	---	---	---	---
21. Students make connections to prior knowledge, or real world experiences, or can apply knowledge and understanding to other subjects.	ES	9	8	12	#	21	14	22
	MS	7	3	3	%	37	25	38
	HS	5	3	7	---	---	---	---
22. Students use technology as a tool for learning and/or understanding.	ES	26	0	3	#	47	2	8
	MS	11	1	1	%	82	4	14
	HS	10	1	4	---	---	---	---
23. Students assume responsibility for their own learning whether individually, in pairs, or in groups.	ES	3	4	22	#	5	8	44
	MS	1	4	8	%	9	14	77
	HS	1	0	14	---	---	---	---
24. Student work demonstrates high quality and can serve as exemplars.	ES	22	4	3	#	39	9	9
	MS	10	1	2	%	68	16	16
	HS	7	4	4	---	---	---	---