



## **North Andover Public Schools District Review**

---

Review conducted January 18-24, 2011



This document was prepared on behalf of the Center for District and School Accountability of the  
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  
Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.  
Commissioner

**Date of report completion: September 2012**

**Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Members**

Ms. Maura Banta, Chair, Melrose  
Ms. Beverly Holmes, Vice Chair, Springfield  
Dr. Vanessa Calderón-Rosado, Milton  
Mr. Ryan Casey, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Franklin  
Ms. Harneen Chernow, Jamaica Plain  
Mr. Gerald Chertavian, Cambridge  
Dr. Jeff Howard, Reading  
Ms. Ruth Kaplan, Brookline  
Dr. Dana Mohler-Faria, Bridgewater  
Mr. Paul Reville, Secretary of Education, Worcester  
Mr. David Roach, Sutton

Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D., Commissioner and Secretary to the Board

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, an affirmative action employer, is committed to ensuring that all of its programs and facilities are accessible to all members of the public.

We do not discriminate on the basis of age, color, disability, national origin, race, religion, sex or sexual orientation.

Inquiries regarding the Department's compliance with Title IX and other civil rights laws may be directed to the Human Resources Director, 75 Pleasant St., Malden, MA 02148 781-338-6105.

© 2012 Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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

*This document printed on recycled paper*

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



## Table of Contents

---

<b>Overview of Level 3 District Reviews .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Purpose .....	1
Methodology .....	1
<b>North Andover Public Schools .....</b>	<b>2</b>
District Profile .....	2
Findings .....	4
Leadership and Governance .....	4
Curriculum and Instruction .....	7
Assessment.....	11
Human Resources and Professional Development .....	13
Student Support .....	19
Financial and Asset Management.....	22
Recommendations.....	24
<b>Appendix A: Review Team Members.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Appendix B: Review Activities and Site Visit Schedule.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Appendix C: Student Achievement Data 2008-2010.....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Appendix D: Finding and Recommendation Statements.....</b>	<b>37</b>

# Overview of Level 3 District Reviews

---

## ***Purpose***

The Center for District and School Accountability (CDSA) in the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) conducts district reviews under Chapter 15, Section 55A of the Massachusetts General Laws. This review is focused on “districts whose students achieve at low levels either in absolute terms or relative to districts that educate similar populations.” Districts subject to review in the 2010-2011 school year include districts in Level 3<sup>1</sup> of ESE’s framework for district accountability and assistance in each of the state’s six regions: Greater Boston, Berkshires, Northeast, Southeast, Central, and Pioneer Valley. The districts with the lowest aggregate performance and least movement in Composite Performance Index (CPI) in their regions were chosen from among those districts that were not exempt under Chapter 15, Section 55A, because another comprehensive review had been completed or was scheduled to take place within nine months of the planned reviews.

## ***Methodology***

To focus the analysis, reviews collect evidence for each of the six district standards: **Leadership and Governance, Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment, Human Resources and Professional Development, Student Support, and Financial and Asset Management**. The reviews seek to identify those systems and practices that may be impeding rapid improvement as well as those that are most likely to be contributing to positive results. Team members preview selected district documents and ESE data and reports before conducting a two-day site visit in the district and a two-day site visit to schools. The team consists of independent consultants with expertise in each of the standards.

---

<sup>1</sup> In other words, as Level 3 is now defined, districts with one or more schools that score in the lowest 20 percent statewide of schools serving common grade levels pursuant to 603 CMR 2.05(2)(a).

# North Andover Public Schools

---

The site visit to the North Andover Public Schools was conducted from January 18-January 24, 2011; a day was added as a result of a snow cancellation. The site visit included visits to the following district schools: Atkinson Elementary (K-5), Franklin Elementary (K-5), Kittredge Elementary (K-5), Sargent Elementary (K-5), Thomson Elementary (K-5), North Andover Middle School (6-8), and North Andover High School (9-12). Further information about the review and the site visit schedule can be found in Appendix B; information about the members of the review team can be found in Appendix A. Appendix C contains student achievement data for 2008-2010, and Appendix D has the finding and recommendation statements from this report.

## ***District Profile<sup>2</sup>***

North Andover is located in Essex County, approximately 24 miles north of Boston. It is governed by an open town meeting form of government, a five-member board of selectmen, and a town manager. The school committee has five members. The North Andover Public Schools consist of five elementary schools serving students in kindergarten through grade 5; one middle school, grades 6 through 8; and one high school, grades 9 through 12. A preschool is located at one of the elementary schools. Student enrollment for 2010-2011 was 4,638. Total per-pupil expenditures rose every year between 2007 and 2010, from \$9,661 in 2007 to \$10,479 in 2008 to \$10,949 in 2009 to \$11,277 in 2010. In 2010, the four-year graduation rate was 95.7 percent, 13.6 percentage points higher than the state rate. The student-to-arts-teacher ratio improved significantly from 640:1 in 2008 to 290:1 in 2009, falling again slightly in 2010, to 282:1.

Following two years of an interim superintendent, the superintendent at the time of the review was appointed for the 2009-2010 school year<sup>3</sup>; he fostered a districtwide culture of transparency and focus on improving student achievement. The leadership team consists of the superintendent, one assistant superintendent, a business manager, a director of special education, the high school and middle school principals and five building-based elementary principals, one supervising principal of literacy, and an Early Childhood program director. While one leadership team member has been in the district more than 25 years, most had been in North Andover fewer than 6.5 years at the time of the site visit.

Enrollment and mobility rates have remained stable from 2006-2010. In 2008-2009 the elementary schools were re-districted because of overcrowding in some schools. Two elementary schools, the Atkinson and the Thomson, are Title I schools, and in October 2010 reported percentages of students from low-income families of 23 percent and 26 percent. Throughout the district, 56 students (1.2 percent) were classified as having limited English proficiency in 2011.

---

<sup>2</sup> Data derived from ESE's website, ESE's Education Data Warehouse, or other ESE sources.

<sup>3</sup> The superintendent referred to here and throughout this report retired on July 1, 2012, and was replaced by the former assistant superintendent.

From 2007 to 2010, 82 percent of school-aged residents were enrolled in the North Andover Public Schools.

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

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity	Number	Percent of Total	Selected Populations	Number	Percent of Total
African-American	72	1.6	First Language not English	291	6.3
Asian	322	6.9	Limited English Proficient	56	1.2
Hispanic or Latino	287	6.2	Low-income	547	11.8
Native American	12	0.3	Special Education*	637	13.5
White	3,863	83.3	Free Lunch	401	8.6
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	25	0.5	Reduced-price lunch	146	3.1
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	57	1.2	Total enrollment	4,638	100.0

\* Special education number and percentage (only) are calculated including students in out-of-district placements.

Source: School/District Profiles on ESE website and other ESE data

The local appropriation to the North Andover Public Schools budget for fiscal year 2011 was \$36,984,522, up slightly from the appropriation for fiscal year 2010 of \$36,761,749. School-related expenditures by the town were estimated at \$14,805,245 for fiscal year 2011, up from the estimate for fiscal year 2010 of \$13,803,651. In fiscal year 2010, the total amount of actual school-related expenditures, including expenditures by the district (\$36,452,746), expenditures by the town (\$14,836,759), and expenditures from other sources such as grants (\$6,669,657), was \$57,959,162. Actual net school spending in fiscal year 2010 was \$44,311,533.

## ***Findings***

### **Leadership and Governance**

**The appointment of a permanent superintendent in 2009<sup>4</sup> led to collaboration both inside and outside of the district, the development of a meaningful District Improvement Plan (DIP), a revamped and transparent budget process, and the promotion of a culture of high expectations for all students.**

Information gathered during the site visit in meetings with school committee members, principals, staff, parents, and town officials indicated that the superintendent, serving his second year in 2010-2011, had brought a sense of stability to the district. All groups interviewed stated that he encouraged the advancement of programs started before his arrival, spearheaded a number of his own initiatives, cooperatively developed a DIP, and encouraged a participatory form of district governance. The superintendent told the review team that upon his arrival in the district he conducted a survey and interviewed a group of both school and non-school individuals for their input about the district's needs. Armed with this information the superintendent was able to devise an entry plan, determining what the areas of greatest need were and how best to address them.

Under the superintendent's leadership the district developed a DIP that contained a mission statement, goals and objectives, and action plans and timelines, and that emphasized the importance of data analysis and accountability. Evident throughout the document was the commitment of the district to provide the necessary resources for all students and the expectation that all students, teachers, and administrators reach for excellence. The DIP was detailed and linked directly to instruction and student achievement. The three-year plan had input from staff, parents, and community members and was adopted by the school committee.

The DIP had five major areas: staff and learning growth, financial performance, student learning and performance growth, planning and support services, and communication and stakeholder satisfaction. The plan was regularly reviewed by the leadership team and the school committee, and changes made when deemed necessary by district leaders

With the exception of one elementary school, each school had a school-council-generated School Improvement Plan (SIP) that mirrored the DIP and also had school goals and objectives addressing each school's needs. At the time of the review the district was creating a uniform template for SIPs to be used by all schools in 2011-2012. All of the plans included areas in need of improvement as determined by the use of data, those responsible for implementation, and specific timelines. Each principal provides the school committee with a report on the school's status and accomplishments every year at a school committee meeting.

The superintendent had worked diligently to improve the relationship between the town and the school district. Under his leadership the website was completely redesigned. He met monthly

---

<sup>4</sup> As noted above, this superintendent retired on July 1, 2012, and was replaced by the former assistant superintendent.

with school Parent-Teacher Organizations (PTOs) and presented videos about the school district on the local television channel. School committee members and town officials stated that the superintendent increased the transparency of the school district within the community and that this has resulted in a better understanding of the district and its needs.

The superintendent and the business manager, who came to the district at the same time, worked in close collaboration to address issues with the budget practices that were in place upon their arrival in the district. While the actual basics of building the budget at the grass roots level were already in place, proposed budgets were not distributed for discussion. The process now includes this step. Principals and other administrators bring their requests to the school committee and give presentations on critical needs that have been identified. The critical needs list is voted on by the leadership team before its presentation for final approval. The budget is based on per-pupil costs, and additional requests must be approved. Budget discussions, including opportunities for comments by members of the public, were noted in most school committee minutes reviewed by the team.

At the end of his first year the superintendent provided the community with a 35-page report entitled “Performance Report 2010,” in which he reviewed the areas of the five goals within the DIP, addressed the key objectives and their measures, and reported on how the district was progressing. Information highlighting district MCAS, Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), and Advanced Placement (AP) test results was also provided.

The superintendent continued the tradition of having an administrative retreat during which plans, assessment data, and student achievement are discussed and a blueprint for the upcoming school year is designed. All administrators were involved, and, when warranted, school committee members, teachers’ union representatives, and other groups were asked to take part in the retreat to ensure that the district was unified in its mission and plans.

The establishment of a shared mission and expectations and the creation of an effective and well-communicated DIP enabled the district’s leaders to develop and promote a climate of high expectations for student achievement among all stakeholders. It is the team’s judgment that the superintendent’s entry plan, the creation of a DIP, his work on the relationship with the town and collaboration within the district, his improvement of the budget process, and his reporting to the community produced a high level of transparency and an increased sense of trust among all stakeholders.

**The school committee understands and carries out its role and responsibilities with respect to setting policy, overseeing the budget, and evaluating the superintendent.**

The review team interviewed four of the five North Andover School Committee members and read meeting minutes from the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years. According to interviewees, new members learned about the role of the school committee in policy-making through consultation with an external expert and the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC). The school committee has revised and updated the policy manual in communication with administrators, staff, parents, and the community. Under the current procedure, policies are developed by appointed subcommittees and reviewed twice by the school



committee in first and second readings before adoption. The committee submits new policies such as the policy against bullying to appropriate regulatory agencies in a timely manner. In addition, a member of the committee has begun to establish an annual calendar to ensure that policies are updated regularly and sequentially. The policy manual is available on the district website and in print for parent and citizen review.

The school committee has also formed subcommittees on budget, technology (consolidated with the town), athletics, and other areas, and these subcommittees provide the entire committee with regular updates. The school committee recently adopted a 24 to 48 hour interval for posting meeting minutes on the district website in order to increase the timeliness of communication with the community.

In interviews school committee members told the review team that the newly adopted DIP and the SIPs are controlling documents. They explained that they review the DIP regularly to determine district progress toward accomplishment of the goals and whether the proposed timelines are being met. Interviewees also stated that while some SIPs were consistent with the DIP, others needed to be adjusted to demonstrate how data would be used to improve curricula and increase student achievement.

The school committee maintains its focus on student achievement in its role overseeing the budget; according to interviewees, the committee questions administrators about budget requests during preliminary discussions, and then asks principals for details about particular line items and their implications for student achievement. It also participates on town committees related to the budget. See finding under Financial and Asset Management below.

The school committee and superintendent establish goals based on the DIP. These goals are used to evaluate the superintendent annually. The goal areas include policy and governance, planning and assessment, instructional leadership, organizational management, communications and community relations, and professionalism. The review team examined the June 2010 evaluation of the superintendent by the school committee. In this evaluation, committee members praised the superintendent for having the ability to assess factors affecting student achievement, serving as an agent of change for needed improvement, and ensuring that curriculum design, instructional strategies, and learning environments maximize student learning. A new evaluation tool was established for the 2010-2011 school year, and the school committee was to present the superintendent with an addendum in the near future.

School committee members are well-informed and knowledgeable about their responsibilities, guided by District and School Improvement Plan goals, and committed to increasing student achievement. The ability and commitment of the school committee to work with the superintendent, administrative team, and town officials have opened lines of communication and helped create community support for the continuous improvement of all district schools.

## Curriculum and Instruction

**While the district is making progress in completing aligned, standards-based documented curricula in all core subject areas in grades 6 through 12, at the time of the review only ELA and writing were in final documented form in kindergarten through grade 5, and the district did not have documented curriculum review procedures.**

According to a review of sample documents provided by the district, the components of the curricula for grade 6 through 12 English, science, mathematics, social studies, and world languages include essential standards, benchmarks, performance indicators, essential vocabulary, lists of resources, and pacing charts. According to the assistant superintendent, school leaders, and teachers and a review of documents, the district's essential standards are aligned to the state frameworks. Interviewees told the review team that the development of common assessments in all curricular areas at all grade levels is a major district initiative. All interviewees said that this initiative is contributing to improved horizontal and vertical alignment in grades 6 through 12. Academic coordinators in grades 6 through 8 and department heads in grades 9 through 12 provide teachers with information about the curriculum.

The middle school academic coordinators and high school department heads are responsible for monitoring, reviewing, developing, and documenting the curriculum in grades 6 through 12. High school and middle school staff told the review team that they occasionally work together to examine gaps and overlaps, especially at the juncture between grades 8 and 9. The high school and middle school principals stated that teachers work in grade level teams to check for gaps and overlaps based on a review of student performance data. Teachers told the review team that the development of common assessments has helped them identify curricular weaknesses.

At the elementary level, the review team examined well-documented ELA and writing curricula and a draft science curriculum entitled NA Public Schools Grade K-5 Science, Technology, and Engineering Curriculum Guide, and found that they were aligned to the state frameworks. According to the assistant superintendent, a committee formed in 2010-2011 was beginning to update the mathematics curriculum, and social studies was to be addressed next. According to teachers and school leaders, teachers participate in curriculum design and documentation.

The elementary ELA curriculum, revised in August 2010, is overseen by a full-time district supervising principal of literacy. The review team found that this curriculum is informative and well developed, consisting of essential standards, benchmarks, performance indicators, essential vocabulary, assessment information, and resources. Teachers commented on the value of having this in place to give them guidance and direction on the district's goals and content standards. The district uses the Pearson *Reading Street* text series and 6 Trait Writing standards throughout the elementary schools.

All teachers at the elementary level use the *Houghton Mifflin Mathematics* and *FOSS* science programs. As stated previously, at the time of the review the science curriculum was in draft and the mathematics curriculum was under development by a committee. According to elementary

teachers, information about the curriculum is provided to teachers by building-based principals, the district literacy principal, and grade level colleagues.

District leaders told the review team that the school committee has established a five-year cycle for curriculum review related to textbook adoption. The review team found that curriculum is reviewed, but that there were no documented districtwide curriculum review procedures.

The supervising principal of literacy, the five elementary principals, and teachers serving on subject-specific committees share responsibility for monitoring, reviewing, developing, and documenting the curriculum in kindergarten through grade 5. Elementary teachers and principals told the review team that there was too little time set aside for teachers in all of the elementary schools to work collaboratively on the curriculum, and common meeting times were not consistently provided in each school for teachers to work jointly on the curriculum. In fact, one school had no scheduled common planning time. In interviews, elementary principals said that there was limited opportunity to supervise curriculum implementation given the number of their administrative responsibilities and the fact that there was only one administrator in each school. Whereas middle and high school teachers told the review team that they were supported in curriculum implementation by the middle school academic coordinators and high school department heads, elementary level teachers said that colleagues were their main source of support in implementing the curriculum, except in ELA and writing where the literacy principal takes a key role.

In grades 6 through 12, content-area leaders are facilitating improvement and documentation of the curriculum. Consequently, the curricula were nearly fully developed, were documented, and were aligned to the state frameworks at the high and middle school levels. At the elementary level the process depends on principals and teachers and is progressing at a slower pace with limited oversight by the principals and the assistant superintendent. Only the ELA and writing curricula were fully developed, aligned, and documented. As a result, the district cannot yet guarantee consistently delivered, continuously improving elementary curricula in mathematics, science, and social studies.

While the district is making progress in this area, the team found that there was insufficient curriculum documentation, support, and oversight at the elementary level, except in literacy. The absence of a formal and documented process for curriculum review districtwide and incomplete curriculum guides in kindergarten through grade 5 jeopardize alignment of the taught curriculum to the state frameworks, vertical and horizontal articulation, and consistent and effective delivery of standard content by all teachers.

**Instruction throughout the district reflects a range of effective practices. Instruction is differentiated, aligned with students' developmental and learning needs, based on high expectations, and delivered in a respectful and supportive climate.**

The review team visited 53 district classrooms: 12 at the high school, 12 at the middle school, and 29 at the elementary school level. Team members rated a set of 14 characteristics of classroom organization and instructional design and delivery according to whether they observed no evidence, partial evidence, or solid evidence of a characteristic.

In all 53 classrooms the team found that the classroom climate was characterized by respectful behaviors, routines, tone, and discourse. And evidence of the district's initiative in improving school climate was found in all of the schools with posters and projects from either the Building Respectful Communities (BRC) program or the Respect, Achievement, Inclusion, Service, and Empathy (RAISE) program. Student and teacher interactions at all levels were respectful and supportive of each other's learning. For example, an elementary student said that he liked a classmate's composition and asked him to read it aloud, and a middle school student validated another's thinking, saying, "I think it's kind of like what [he] said . . .," and then built upon his classmate's arguments. Students in the observed classes listened attentively to the teacher and each other. The team found evidence of the use of effective teaching strategies in most of the observed classes. Some teachers made special efforts to include students with background or language differences. For example, in describing the setting of a literary selection, one elementary teacher asked whether a student had observed the sunset while visiting his grandfather in Colombia. Teachers linked new concepts to students' prior knowledge and experiences in 27 of the 29 elementary level and 20 of the 24 middle and high school level classes observed (93 and 83 percent respectively).<sup>5</sup> For example when the teacher asked students to connect their study of mineral samples to what they already knew, a student offered that he had gone to a fossil museum while visiting his grandparents in South America. The review team found that middle and high school teachers routinely connected new concepts to prior learning either explicitly by noting links to earlier lessons or by prompting students to make the links themselves through questioning.

In nearly all of the observed classes teachers presented content appropriate to students' developmental and English proficiency levels. Teachers also used strategies to engage students needing support. Teachers at all levels used graphic organizers for written language. A review of displayed work showed that students were allowed to demonstrate mastery in a variety of ways.

Learning objectives for the day's lessons phrased in clear, student-friendly language were posted in 10 of the 12 high school classes observed (83 percent). The posting of objectives was less consistent at the elementary and middle school levels: Learning objectives were posted in 16 of the 29 elementary level and 7 of the 12 middle school classes observed (55 percent and 58 percent respectively).

Teachers used developmentally appropriate strategies to encompass a range of student learning levels and backgrounds. For example, a grade 4 teacher reviewed prime numbers by having students provide clues to each other in a lively competition. In a grade 1 class, students acted out parts of a story, and in a grade 11 and 12 English class, students responded to writing prompts matched to their language proficiency levels, and expectations were varied.

Teachers used a broad range of teaching techniques in 23 of the 29 elementary level, 7 of the 12 middle school level, and 10 of the 12 high school level classes observed (79 percent, 58 percent, and 83 percent respectively). Whole group instruction was typically followed by small group

---

<sup>5</sup> Numbers and percentages of observed classes in this finding indicate numbers and percentages where either partial or solid evidence of a characteristic was observed.

work. Occasionally a second adult in the room assisted the other students while the teacher instructed a small group, but in most classes students worked productively in pairs or independently. Teachers at all levels used skillful questioning as an on-the-spot assessment to determine whether to resolve confusion, or move on. For example, when a middle school mathematics teacher reviewing linear equations concluded that the students were struggling with the steps for solving a particular problem, she asked a struggling student to come to the board so that she could walk through the steps with the student and the rest of the class.

Teachers used questioning and activities to encourage higher-level thinking (application, analysis, synthesis, or evaluation) in 17 of the 29 elementary level, 7 of the 12 middle school level, and all 12 of the high school level classes observed (59, 58, and 100 percent respectively). In a grade 5 class, students articulated their thinking with fully developed ideas on writing maps. In most classes observed by the review team, teachers expressed their expectations for high-level work explicitly. For example, one elementary teacher told students that she was looking for “clear, well-written algorithms,” and another prompted students to use correct mathematics vocabulary by reminding them of the “the 5<sup>th</sup> grade way of saying prime.”

Teachers did not accept simple factual responses, and requested students to elaborate and explain their reasoning. For example, a grade 8 teacher asked students why a particular strategy for solving an equation would not be the first choice, and a middle school science teacher asked students to “tell a story” by relating an experiment to what they already knew and explaining the relationship. In a grade 11 inter-disciplinary social studies and English class students were developing a thesis on philosophy and reform, using primary sources for a team-created exhibition. In a grade 10 honors English class, teams of students were completing Beowulf tapestries based on nine specific requirements. These projects were to be presented to the entire class and rated with a rubric.

Teachers used on-the-spot formative assessments in 27 of the 29 elementary level classes, 11 of the 12 middle school classes, and all 12 of the high school level classes observed (93, 92, and 100 percent respectively). The review team observed numerous instances of teachers checking for understanding in the classes observed at all levels. As discussed previously, teachers used good questioning techniques, and they did not call exclusively on volunteers. Teachers persisted with struggling learners, probing to identify their confusion and helping them to work toward understanding. This was particularly evident in teacher/student conferences during writing activities at the elementary level. Middle and high school teachers used selected homework problem checks to make sure that students understood the concepts. In multiple instances observed by the review team, teachers scanned the class, to determine how well students understood a concept, and identified and addressed any confusion or misconceptions.

The review team observed effective pacing of instruction to ensure the participation of all students in 51 of the 53 classes (96 percent), with good wait time, active outreach to students, and progressive cues to encourage full participation.

The review team found use of time prompts, established routines, and smooth transitions at the elementary level throughout the district. Teachers made efforts to keep students abreast of the

class upon their return from support services or extra help sessions. For example, a grade 4 teacher told the class that they needed to fill in teammates who had been out of the room because “that’s what good teammates do.” With older students, teachers began classes on time and proceeded smoothly through activities, and students were observed to be cooperative and engaged. In a grade 6 English and social studies class observed by the review team the co-teachers collaborated effectively to maximize student learning time. A grade 8 teacher reviewed a representative sample of four homework problems and quickly moved on to the new lesson when she was satisfied that the students understood the concepts. In another class, the teacher asked students to compare their homework responses with a partner, and share any disagreements with the class. One observer noted that the teacher of an advanced science class presented complex ideas in a methodical and calm manner.

Students were engaged in inquiry, exploration, or problem solving in pairs or small groups in 21 of the 29 elementary level, 6 of the 12 middle school level, and 9 of the 12 high school level classes observed (72, 50, and 75 percent respectively). At the elementary level, paired and small group work usually followed a whole-class presentation by the teacher. Students were accustomed to working with partners and transitioned quickly without disruption. When the review team observed opportunities for paired or small group work in grades 6-12 there were clear expectations for what students were to learn and do.

The district’s effective instructional practices have helped students attain high levels of achievement, evidenced by the district’s strong performance on the MCAS tests and high graduation rates. Teachers have a wide repertoire of instructional strategies enabling them to address a range of learning styles and to provide the conditions necessary to raise the achievement levels of all students.

## **Assessment**

**The district has begun to establish a standards-based system with grade level common interim assessments and scoring rubrics. The district is collecting, disseminating, and analyzing student assessment data in all schools; however, the procedures are not fully documented, systematic, and consistent.**

According to principals, department heads, and academic coordinators, the assistant superintendent has led most district data collection, analysis, and dissemination initiatives. In interviews with the review team, the assistant superintendent discussed a three-year plan for developing content and performance standards, selecting assessments, and analyzing and using the results to improve student achievement. As outlined in a district document entitled Establishing a Standards-Based Education System, the plan is designed to establish essential standards (What should students know and be able to do?), a system of grade level common, interim assessments with scoring rubrics (How will we know students have acquired the intended knowledge and skills?), and a pyramid of interventions (How will we respond when students aren’t learning?).

According to interviewees and documentation, the plan was underway, but at various stages of implementation and completion. The assistant superintendent told the review team that not all content areas were at the same level of development, but it was evident in interviews with teachers, leaders, and school committee members that the comprehensive use of assessment data now drives school improvement.

The review team found that at the elementary level, student portfolios including assessment data are sent to the receiving teachers as the students are promoted from grade to grade. At the high school, a comprehensive form entitled North Andover Student Achievement Profile (NASAP) contains students' academic records, assessments, and course grades. District leaders stated that North Andover plans to extend the use of the profile into the middle and elementary schools. At the time of the review, however, teachers did not have access to consistent, user-friendly, districtwide and school-based reports on student achievement and other data.

At the high school, the Preliminary Student Achievement Test (PSAT), Student Achievement Test (SAT), ACT, and the National German Proficiency Test are administered, and common assessments are under development in all departments and are in use where completed.

At the middle school, for grades 6 through 8, the Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GRADE) and the Group Mathematics Assessment Diagnosis Evaluation (GMADE) are administered in the fall and spring and common assessments are administered in ELA, writing, and social studies.

At the elementary level, the GRADE is administered twice each year in grades 1-4 and once in grade 5, and the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy (DIBELS) is administered three times annually in kindergarten through grade 2. According to documentation and interviews the district also administers the common assessments of the *Reading Street* program, including benchmark and end-of-year tests, mathematics tests and quizzes based on the Houghton Mifflin series, science assessments based on the *FOSS* program, and (three times a year) common writing prompts.

Principals, program leaders, and teachers described common procedures for analyzing data at the high and middle schools. At the high school, the principal, department chairs, and representatives of the guidance and special education departments analyze data and share the results with the teachers. At the middle school, the principal, academic coordinators, reading teachers, and staff engage in a similar procedure. In interviews with the review team, school leaders stated that while each of the five elementary schools collects and disseminates data, there is little coordination among them and there are no standard procedures. Teachers stated that teachers analyze data and modify instruction and curricula at grade level meetings, although the opportunities to meet vary by school.

District leaders used the Thomson Elementary School to exemplify effective analysis of school-based data to improve student achievement. In 2010, the performance of Thomson students on the MCAS tests improved significantly both in the aggregate and for subgroups. District leaders attributed this improvement to a number of interventions resulting from analysis of student performance data. Because the population of students from low-income families at Thomson has

risen in recent years, the school needed to address a more diverse learning population.<sup>6</sup> In response, Thomson leaders increased formative assessment data collection, embedded released MCAS test items in units of study, and increased the number of special education tutors. The school provided substitutes to allow teachers to work directly with a consultant twice-monthly on best practices, problem-solving, and use of a common language to characterize instruction. Teachers delivered jointly developed mathematics anchor lessons, and students keep math journals. Before- and after-school programs provide remedial mathematics and ELA instruction to assist struggling students. The school also follows a “learning from one” protocol where the work of one student and a teacher’s instructional choices are studied over time as a way of understanding the impact of instructional decisions.

District leaders told the review team about other decisions informed by data analysis. For example, based on an analysis of MCAS test results two Title I elementary schools increased support services in mathematics, and a reading consultant was brought in to improve special education student reading achievement; the middle school added a reading class in 2010-2011 giving students from low-income families priority. An analysis of student MCAS test performance also resulted in the introduction of SuccessMaker software at the middle school and at two elementary schools. Leaders described the recent adoption of the *Reading Street* program and development and standardization of the writing program at the elementary level as major program changes resulting from data analysis.

The district has partially implemented a plan for establishing standards, administering and interpreting the results of assessments, and providing support for students who are not meeting expectations. The review team found that many and varied grade level and subject area assessments are administered regularly to monitor and improve student achievement. Lack of centralized, documented policies and procedures for data analysis impedes the systematic identification of patterns and trends in order to ensure continuous improvement in student achievement. Inconsistent assessment and data analysis policies and procedures, especially at the elementary level, weaken the district’s ability to identify and address factors that hinder student achievement.

## **Human Resources and Professional Development**

**The district’s evaluation practices for teachers and administrators before 2011 were not consistent, frequent enough, or sufficiently useful to help educators grow as professionals or to ensure accountability.**

According to interviews and a review of district documents, including all administrator evaluations and a random sample of teacher evaluations, the district’s past evaluation practices for both teachers and administrators were not in compliance with 603 CMR 35.00.<sup>7</sup> In particular,

---

<sup>6</sup> The percentage of low-income students at Thomson rose from 7.4 percent in 2004, to 11.8 percent in 2005, 14.1 percent in 2006, 18.0 percent in 2007, 21.2 percent in 2008, 23.6 percent in 2009, and 25.8 percent in 2010.

<sup>7</sup> As then in force. The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education voted on June 28, 2011, to replace the regulations at 603 CMR 35.00 with new regulations on the Evaluation of Educators.



the district had not complied with the requirement in 603 CMR 35.06<sup>8</sup> to evaluate all administrators and teachers without professional status at least annually, and to evaluate teachers with professional status at least once every two years, in order to help them to improve student achievement.

The review team examined a random sample of 40 teacher personnel files. Of the 40 files reviewed, 9 were of teachers with non-professional status. Five files reviewed did not contain any written observations, and only 20 contained timely evaluations. Some of the evaluations reviewed were aligned to the Principles of Effective Teaching, but most were not. All but one of the 35 evaluations reviewed were informative, meaning that they included references to practice rather than simply a description of circumstances encountered during the review,<sup>9</sup> but only 8 were instructive, meaning that they included comments intended to improve instruction. None of the evaluations reviewed provided recommendations for specific professional development. The teacher personnel files reviewed provided evidence that all teachers were either appropriately certified or awaiting responses to certification applications from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Similarly, although the superintendent was evaluated annually, the review team found that the district's administrator evaluation practices did not comply with 603 CMR 35.06<sup>10</sup> and the terms of the administrators' contracts requiring that the superintendent evaluate the performance of all administrators annually in accordance with the Principles of Effective Administrative Leadership. The review team examined 16 administrator personnel files. The superintendent's evaluation was timely. Of the remaining 15 administrator files reviewed, only 4 contained evaluations, all of which dated back multiple years; 11 files did not contain any evaluations at all.

Failure to complete the evaluations required by 603 CMR 35.00, as found at the time of the review for half of the randomly selected teachers and all of the administrators other than the superintendent, undoubtedly had a negative impact on the district's ability to improve the quality of practice by its staff and thus improve student achievement.

**In 2011 the district made substantial progress in improving the content and timeliness of evaluations, with new procedures for evaluating administrators and teachers, and work underway to develop a new system to track the completion of evaluations.**

In interviews with district personnel, review team members were informed that evaluation was a primary focus of the superintendent. Toward that end the superintendent had established evaluation of administrators as one of his goals and had informed principals that completion of teacher evaluations in a timely manner was to be clearly understood as one of their primary goals.

---

<sup>8</sup> As it read before the new regulations. See previous footnote.

<sup>9</sup> More specifically, "informative" means that the evaluation is factual and cites instructional details such as methodology, pedagogy, or instruction of subject-based knowledge that is aligned with the state curriculum frameworks.

<sup>10</sup> See first two footnotes in this finding.

### *New Administrator Evaluation Process*

The superintendent at the time of the review acknowledged that he had not completed evaluations of administrators. As a remedy, he had created an “Evaluation Document for Principals and Administrators,” which prescribed a new administrator evaluation process. This five-part document, intended to be implemented in the 2010-2011 school year, addresses the areas of student performance and growth; staff performance and growth; educational planning; financial performance; and stakeholder satisfaction.

According to the document, administrators were to schedule discussions covering these areas with the chief operating officer, the assistant superintendent, the director of special education, and the superintendent, and were to receive a one-page written summary of the discussions as a baseline evaluation. Administrators were then to set one goal for each of the five areas for the 2010-2011 school year, and these goals were to be used as the basis of their 2010-2011 evaluation.

### *New Teacher Supervision and Evaluation Program*

At the time of the review the district had a newly negotiated and ratified four-year Teacher Supervision and Evaluation Program, which was to be implemented in September 2011. The goal of this new supervision and evaluation program is to improve teaching and learning. A description of the four year-long phases of the supervision and evaluation process follows.

Phase One, Comprehensive Evaluation, is for teachers with and without professional teacher status. The Comprehensive Evaluation phase is characterized by multiple observations performed by the evaluator followed by a post-observation conference. Teachers with professional teacher status are to be observed for a minimum of 90 minutes (including full-length observations and walkthroughs) during the school year. Half of the observations must be completed by January 15<sup>th</sup>, and the remaining half by April 15<sup>th</sup>. A final conference is to be conducted by May 15<sup>th</sup>, and the written summative evaluation completed by June 1<sup>st</sup>. Teachers with non-professional teacher status are to be observed for a minimum of 150 minutes (including full-length observations and walkthroughs) during the school year. The evaluator must complete 45 minutes of observation by December 15<sup>th</sup>, and 90 minutes by March 15<sup>th</sup>. Teachers must complete the Teacher Accomplishment Form for their evaluator by April 15<sup>th</sup>. Evaluators must complete the teacher evaluations by June 1<sup>st</sup>.

Walkthroughs are performed by evaluators in order to support and promote the development of teacher reflection. Walkthroughs are unscheduled visits by school administrators that last less than ten minutes. Walkthroughs lasting more than five minutes require written feedback. Walkthroughs may be used as a data source only if conducted by the teacher’s designated supervisor and documented with a Walk-Through Observation Sheet provided to the teacher within 24 hours of the visit. The Walk-Through Observation Sheet has three basic questions: “What is the teacher doing?” “What are students doing?” “What questions do you have about what you are observing?” Additionally, the evaluator is required to pose a reflective question to which the teacher is expected to respond. The document is to be signed and dated by both the teacher and the evaluator.

Phases Two through Four are for teachers with professional teacher status. Phase Two, Individual Choice for Professional Growth, is characterized by professional development activities selected by the teacher and linked with activities from the Comprehensive Evaluation. Such activities as piloting of programs, pursuing graduate study, participation on curriculum design teams, or participation in action research projects may be encouraged by the evaluator.

Phase Three, Focused Evaluation, is a year in which professional status teachers work on mutually agreed upon categories from the evaluation criteria. Informal visits and post conferences between the teacher and the evaluator provide the data for this work. The focus is intended to be a continuation of the work in Phases One and Two. A pre-conference is held by October 15<sup>th</sup> to determine the activities for the year. Informal class visits using the walk-through protocol are made throughout the year. The Focused Evaluation Final Report is completed by the evaluator by June 1<sup>st</sup>. Interviewees told the review team that the Focused Evaluation Final Report was specifically designed and intended to be the summative evaluation for teachers in Phase (year) Three of the evaluation process, so as to bring the district's evaluation procedures into compliance with 603 CMR 35.06, requiring the evaluation of professional status teachers at least once every two years.

Phase Four, the Collaborative Year, is designed to provide professional status teachers opportunities for individual choice and professional growth, including collaboration with at least one colleague. The focus is on working to increase communication, sharing, collegiality, and teamwork. The professional growth plan may be related to the Comprehensive Evaluation, or to a teacher's interest in enhancing professional growth and performance on district initiatives. The teacher-developed plan should reflect the categories from the evaluation criteria and includes mutually agreed upon goals and action steps, measurable indicators, and a timeline. The plan must be set by October 15<sup>th</sup>, and the final report submitted by June 1<sup>st</sup>. Examples of professional growth activities include video self-analysis, research, course work, curriculum design, reflective journaling, portfolios, peer coaching, participation in a study group with peers, pilot programs, teaching a professional development course, co-teaching, mentoring and supporting new teachers, and curriculum review.

The superintendent had recently assigned responsibility for tracking the completion of evaluations to the Human Resource Department, which was in the process of establishing a tracking system with Budget Sense software during the review team's visit.

### *Conclusion*

At the time of the review the district had taken significant steps to improve personnel evaluation through creation of the Evaluation Document for Principals and Administrators for use in 2010-2011, the scheduled implementation of the newly negotiated and ratified Teacher Supervision and Evaluation Program in September 2011, and assignment of the responsibility for tracking evaluations to the Human Resources Department using Budget Sense software. The district has made progress in the area of supervision and evaluation that will help it as it aligns its evaluation systems with the new Educator Evaluation Framework and continues its work toward continuous improvement of administrator and teacher practice.

**The district's professional development program is comprehensive, encompassing professional learning during and after the school day, and linked to its supervision and evaluation program.**

The district's professional development program design, activities, and use of time are directly linked to district leaders' perception of what constitutes professional learning. The program promotes reflection and is based upon provision of activities that are continuous and ongoing, linked to student work, collaborative, research-based, content-focused, and contextualized in daily work. In interviews, district leaders told the review team that the districtwide understanding of what is considered professional development was evolving; the review team confirmed this in interviews with teacher focus groups. The review team found that the narrow view that professional development is restricted to release days, in-service activities, and formal coursework was beginning to shift to a more inclusive and global view that professional development includes the time spent on all professional learning activities.

Both teachers and leaders told the review team that many teachers still held the belief that professional development was restricted primarily to the four full and six half days set aside in the fiscal year 2011 professional development calendar and coursework that they took. District leaders told review team members that they were trying to shift to a more comprehensive perspective on professional development that encompasses all of the time related to the improvement of instruction including evaluations, walkthroughs, formal and informal reflections, and professional discussions about student performance. Toward this end, the district's new Teacher Supervision and Evaluation Program incorporates professional development in all four phases. District leaders added that teachers learn in different ways and benefit from variety. This was the basis of the differentiated four-phase approach in the new supervision and evaluation agreement described in the previous finding.

Professional development activities included in the teacher supervision and evaluation program in North Andover focus on working to increase communication, sharing, collegiality, and teamwork with colleagues. In addition to the formal observations and summative evaluations, professional development activities include piloting of programs, pursuing graduate study, participation on curriculum design teams, and participation in action research projects. Other examples of professional development include video self-analysis, research, course work, curriculum design, reflective journaling, portfolios, peer coaching, participation in a study group with peers, pilot programs, teaching a professional development course, co-teaching, mentoring and support of new teachers, and curriculum review.

In the district's Professional Development Catalogue dated November 11, 2010, the district listed a variety of offerings for staff during professional development days. The offerings were categorized in the catalogue under content or pedagogy to assist teachers in meeting re-certification goals. Teachers are assisted in tracking their professional development progress through the use of the My Learning Plan software. District leaders told the review team that they have adequate resources for professional development.

By defining and designing its professional development program to be one that is comprehensive and deliberately linked with its vision of supervision and evaluation, the district's administration has increased its capacity to bring about continual improvement in teacher and student performance.

**The district's mentoring practices are built on a model in which one mentor works with a number of new teachers in a school. The mentoring program policies and practices are undocumented, and the program is not evaluated for effectiveness.**

In interviews, district administrators stated that the mentoring, teacher supervision and evaluation, and professional development programs were purposefully designed to be collaborative and embedded in teachers' daily instructional activities. District leaders said that rather than developing a mentoring program model of one teacher to one mentor, the district linked mentoring to teacher supervision and evaluation and professional development, with a single focus for all three—a collaborative approach to looking at student work. The mentoring staff consists of three mentors at the high school, three at the middle school, and one each at the five elementary schools. Mentors received training in a full-year course to become effective mentors.

According to district administrators, the mentoring program is composed of two basic aspects. The first was described by administrators as "Teaching 101" and consists of information to assist teachers with school-based routines. The second aspect and primary focus of the mentoring program is to help new teachers collaboratively develop a way of looking at student work to improve instruction. New teachers meet at least monthly with mentors to share common concerns and refine their techniques of looking at student work. Additional informal meetings take place at other times throughout the year, either individually or with a group of colleagues.

New teachers are provided a mentoring handbook on a thumb drive. The handbook was developed after year-long work with a consultant; however, interviewees said that the mentoring program itself had not been formalized or documented in writing at the time of the review, and it had not been evaluated to determine its effectiveness.

Purposeful linking of mentoring, teacher supervision and evaluation, and professional development practices in the district strengthen the district's focus on student work to improve instruction. The mentoring program has not been documented to ensure that activities, mentoring policies, and practices are consistent during the year and from year to year, and the program has not been evaluated to determine its effectiveness and identify any aspects in need of improvement.

## Student Support

**The district has established a substantial number of initiatives to monitor and improve achievement for all of its students, while particularly targeting underperforming subgroups.**

The DIP lists as a goal for 2010-2012 to “[r]aise the achievement levels for all students and close the achievement gap for those students in underperforming subgroups.” To that end, the district has instituted a significant number of academic supports for students throughout the district. Interviews with teachers and school leaders clearly indicated that the district has an effective system for identifying all students who are not performing at grade level.

### *Elementary Schools*

Elementary teachers and school leaders from the five district elementary schools cited numerous strategies for identifying students not performing at grade level. In addition to teacher analysis of student work, DIBELS assessments are administered three times a year while benchmark assessments from *Reading Street* (the district’s elementary reading series) are administered every six weeks. Elementary teachers also cited additional assessments: GRADE administered in the fall and spring<sup>11</sup>, GMADE administered once a year, and a common writing assessment administered three times a year. Teachers and school leaders told the review team that there is a strong focus on looking closely at test results and targeting instructional goals based on the disaggregated data.

In addition to describing the use of the data available to identify students who are not at grade level, elementary teachers and school leaders reported that Student Assistance Teams (SATs) consisting of guidance counselors and general education teachers identify students who may be at risk and select the appropriate Response to Intervention (RTI) steps. Interventions include classroom instructional strategies and tutoring support. At the Atkinson and Thomson elementary schools, where there is a higher incidence of English language learners (ELLs) and students from low-income families, teachers and school leaders stated that “brainstorming meetings” at each grade level are held to “flag students” and determine what further steps can be taken to improve each student’s achievement. Teachers and school leaders stated that all elementary students receive 90 minutes of literacy and 60 minutes of mathematics instruction daily, and listed numerous interventions to improve student achievement at the elementary level. Many of these interventions are in place in the two schools with higher English language learner and low-income populations.

The district has a literacy principal whose role is to monitor and support teachers in all five elementary schools in implementing the newly adopted Pearson *Reading Street* and *My Sidewalks* programs. The latter program focuses on students requiring more intensive literacy intervention. Teachers use the RTI model of tiered instruction with differentiated learning techniques. Reading tutors provide additional support and intervention for students who perform

---

<sup>11</sup> According to the matrix of assessments the district submitted to the review team, the GRADE is administered in October and May to grades 1-4 and in June to grade 5.

below expectation on the DIBELS. As a result of analyzing reading assessment data for special education students at the Thomson School, teachers and school leaders said, a reading consultant was hired to work with teachers on improving the reading achievement of special education students. Teachers in focus groups and school leaders said that additional, Title-I-funded support in both mathematics and reading is provided at the Thomson and Atkinson schools.

Teachers told the review team that extensive collaboration takes place with teachers “sharing information and sharing students” in several grades at the Atkinson School. Franklin School teachers said that by teaming they have designed a “flexi-math grouping,” using a tiered model to group students in four ways allowing for more intensive instruction for students in need of intervention. Teachers and school leaders said that a Title-I-funded breakfast program including academic support is available at both the Atkinson and Thomson elementary schools. Thirty percent of the students in each school are eligible for Title I services in mathematics and reading. The parent liaison in each school contacted every parent to explain the purpose of the program and encourage participation. Teachers and school leaders at both the Atkinson and Thomson schools offer after-school homework clubs that provide additional academic support.

The district offers full-day tuition kindergarten (\$3000 with a sliding scale set for low-income families) at all of its schools with the option for students to leave after a half-day. Sixty-two percent of kindergarten students were enrolled in full-day kindergarten in the district in 2009-2010 as compared to the state rate of 78 percent.<sup>12</sup> In 2010-2011, there were 15 district kindergarten classes, including an integrated kindergarten at the Atkinson School where five students diagnosed on the autism spectrum participated in the afternoon session. In addition, at the Atkinson campus, the North Andover Education Center has begun to offer a pre-kindergarten program.

### *Middle School*

At the middle school, teachers and school leaders cited numerous strategies for identifying students not performing at grade level. SATs are in place to help identify students who are not performing at grade level and to discuss student accommodations needed for additional support. With the introduction of a new “waterfall schedule” with one hour blocks, teachers and school leaders told the review team there are an additional fifteen minutes for ELA and mathematics instruction. They explained that interventions are team-based with a strong emphasis on differentiated instruction and co-teaching models. Grade 6 includes four co-taught teams, with one special educator and one paraprofessional assigned to each team along with the regular education teachers. There are four teams in grade 7 and grade 8 with one co-taught team at each grade level and a special educator and paraprofessional assigned to each co-taught class. A reading specialist and a team-based intervention teacher give additional support to students who are not working at grade level. A schedule is posted on grade level team websites for morning and afternoon extra help.

---

<sup>12</sup> See the District Analysis and Review Tool for Districts for North Andover, context tab, available at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/dart>.

### *High School*

In interviews, teachers and school leaders at the high school stated that they use analysis of MCAS data and student work rubrics to identify students at risk. An SAT is in place to identify students who are not on grade level or are at risk and to develop intervention strategies. Teachers and school leaders stated that the high school received a grant to assist with MCAS remediation for juniors and seniors who did not pass the MCAS tests. Although there is no co-teaching model at the high school, teachers and school leaders told the review team that special education teachers use a push-in model to support students. There is no scheduled common planning time for this model; however, department chairs said that the new trimester schedule provides some morning teacher meeting time. Teachers and school leaders also reported that a peer tutoring program is in place to support struggling students. Operated by the school's National Honor Society, the program gives students additional support from Monday through Thursday after school. The Student Advisory Group, which was in its second year at the high school in 2010-2011, meets for 40 minutes each week. Teachers are assigned from 12 to 15 students who remain with the teacher advisor for all four years, with the goal of team and relationship building.

### *Conclusion*

The district and its teachers have established enough programs, interventions, and other supports to ensure that academic support is available for all students in the district. The quality and variety of initiatives in place at all levels have helped to create the conditions required to raise the achievement of all students.

### **The district has a variety of specialized programs for students with disabilities that minimize their separation from their peers.**

According to interviews with teachers and school leaders and documents posted on the North Andover Public Schools website, the district has developed specialized programs that allow students in special education to be integrated with grade level peers for part of their school day. For example, the Sargent Elementary school offers an intensive special needs program integrating students with disabilities with their peers for social interaction. Sargent also offers a multiple-support program for students with intensive physical and developmental disabilities and a therapeutic intervention program (TIP) that allows students access to the general education curriculum in an inclusionary model. Both the high school and the middle school offer a life skills program providing academic and vocational training. The high school "focus program" provides supplementary support for at-risk students. The district also provides programs for students with pervasive developmental disabilities or autism at Franklin Elementary School and the middle school.

The creation of integrated programs within the district minimizes the separation of students receiving special education services from the mainstream of school activity; it also results in savings for the district against the costs of external programs.



**The district has provided effective support in the form of the alternative Scarlet Knights Academy for high school students at risk of dropping out of school.**

The review team found that the district has a sound alternative program to support the academic achievement of students at risk of dropping out of school. In interviews, teachers and school leaders said that the Scarlet Knights Academy began as an initiative of the high school guidance department. The community supported the initiative and it came into existence in 2007 as the result of an override.

The Scarlet Knights Academy offers at-risk students the opportunity to attend classes from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. According to information posted on the district's website, the students enrolled in the Academy must meet the graduation requirements for North Andover High School students, must pass the ELA, mathematics, and science MCAS tests, and also must participate in a work/study program or volunteer at least 10 hours per week. With a focus on the needs of individual students and accountability, the program enables the students enrolled to earn a North Andover High School diploma. In interviews with the review team, teachers, school leaders, and school committee members described the success of the program and pointed to the high graduation rate of its students. School leaders and teachers stated that the current enrollment for the Scarlet Knights Academy was 39 students.

North Andover has provided an effective intervention for students at risk of dropping out of school. According to ESE data, the district dropout rate, already favorably low, declined from 0.5 percent in 2009 to 0.2 percent in 2010. In 2010 North Andover had a four-year cohort graduation rate of 95.7 percent as compared to the state rate of 82.1 percent and as compared to the district's rate in 2006 of 87.7 percent.

## **Financial and Asset Management**

**The North Andover School Committee takes an active role in the development of the budget both within the district and in collaboration with town officials.**

According to interviewees, the school committee takes an active role in the development of the district budget. School committee members stated that they maintain a focus on student achievement during the entire process, which includes preparation, revision, and explanation of the budget at the annual town meeting. The review team's examination of school committee minutes, interviews with town officials, and interviews with the business manager and superintendent confirmed the active involvement of the school committee.

The school committee reviews budget requests for the entire district, and all administrators present their individual budgets during school committee meetings. First, the committee questions administrators about their requests in preliminary budget discussions. In the next round of discussions, school committee members stated that they ask principals to describe in detail why a particular line item is necessary, what data supports the need, and what the implications will be for student achievement.

According to interviewees, the school committee now has representation on the town's budget communication and revenue fixed costs committees. These committees include members of the board of selectmen and finance committee and the town manager, as well as the superintendent and school business manager.

The revenue fixed cost committee conducts periodic meetings throughout the budget period to develop and review seven-year trends and projected revenues, municipal and school expenditure trends and budgets, as well as Net School Spending trends and school department capital improvement project allocations. Town officials, school committee members, and school district administrators described the budget communications committee as the vehicle for determining the final proposed budget. The town manager, selectmen, finance committee, school committee and school administration conduct discussions and share information during the several months before the May Town Meeting in an effort to arrive at a consensus budget for all departments. These deliberations are intended to foster a more orderly budget process. Town officials and school committee members have begun meeting to discuss ways of collaborating on essential functions. The town and schools have consolidated the technology program and are considering combining other departments and programs, such as building maintenance and repair, to realize additional cost savings.

The active role it takes within the district and its collaboration with town officials allow the school committee to align budget allocations with district goals and priorities, to keep itself well-informed about district needs and initiatives, and to communicate the information it gains to the town officials with budgetary responsibilities as well as members of the wider community.

## **Recommendations**

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

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

### **Leadership and Governance**

**The district should continue to provide strong collaborative leadership focused on a common mission, driven by student achievement data, and transparent in its policies and procedures.**

In collaboration with the school committee and the leadership team, the superintendent at the time of the review had developed effective policies and procedures reflected in an effective District Improvement Plan focused on improving the performance of all students. The review team found embedded within the document the commitment of the district to provide the resources for all students and require administrators, teachers, and students to reach for excellence. Structures are in place to hold all parties accountable, and where appropriate, to share the results with the community.

School committee practices reflect the district's commitment to establish policies and procedures driven by student achievement data and designed to promote public confidence and build community support and financial commitment. The systems and practices put into place since the appointment of a permanent superintendent in 2009 have improved the district's ability to raise student achievement in its lowest-performing schools. Continued collaboration among all stakeholders will strengthen the foundation for continuous improvement throughout the district.

### **Curriculum and Instruction**

**The district should continue its plans to review and document the elementary mathematics and science curricula. Elementary social studies should be added to the district's plan. A complete curriculum review process should be developed and documented at all levels.**

District and school leaders share a vision of the importance of developing and documenting a standards-based curriculum with linked assessments. At the time of the review, while the district was making good strides at the middle and high school levels and in ELA and writing at the elementary level, it had not yet fully reviewed or documented curricula in all subject areas at the elementary level. A mathematics curriculum committee had begun to meet and a draft science curriculum was in place. The documentation of elementary social studies curriculum had not yet begun, nor was it scheduled. The review team found that the amount of teacher meeting time dedicated to curriculum work at the elementary level was insufficient and common meeting time

was not available in all schools. And it found that the documented curriculum review process consisted almost entirely of a schedule for the renewal of textbooks.

Fully documented curricula in all core subject areas will ensure a uniformly challenging, engaging, and high quality educational program for all district elementary students. An excellent model of curriculum documentation is already in place at the elementary level in ELA and writing. Teachers commented on the value of having this in place to guide them, and to provide clear direction about the district's goals and content standards. Documenting the district's full curriculum review process at all levels will ensure that the resulting curricular documents are of uniformly high quality and responsive to teacher and student needs, and it will provide the district with a blueprint for future curricular review notwithstanding teacher or leadership changes.

**The district should begin to look at models that support the elementary principals and enable them to provide consistent curricular leadership across the district.**

In addition to the absence of documented procedures and policies in curriculum review, the review team found that insufficient principal time and support had an impact on the district's capacity to provide consistent high-quality curricular content at the elementary level.

The responsibility for monitoring, reviewing, developing, and documenting the curriculum is distributed among the supervising principal of literacy, five elementary principals, and teachers serving on subject-specific committees. Elementary principals charged with ensuring fidelity of implementation of the curriculum told the review team that their opportunities to supervise curriculum implementation were very limited because of their other responsibilities and because there was only one administrator in each school. While middle and high school teachers said that they were provided with curricular guidance and support, elementary teachers said that they were mainly dependent on each other for support, except in ELA and writing where they had support from the literacy principal.

In addition to the absence of a documented process for curriculum review, absence of sufficient curriculum support in each elementary school is a constraint on providing consistent, high-quality, uniform elementary curricula at the elementary level. A model that supports the principals in meeting this key responsibility should be adopted in order to provide ways for curricular expertise and monitoring to be developed, shared, and implemented across all five schools, in coordination with the middle school.

## **Assessment**

**As part of its establishment of a standards-based education program, the district should improve its documentation of assessment policies, practices, and procedures and develop a system for user-friendly and timely dissemination of student performance data.**

At the time of the review although assessment practices were developing, they were inconsistent in the district. Teachers did not yet have access to consistent, user-friendly, districtwide and

school-based reports on student achievement and other relevant data. The student profiles that had recently been developed, as well as the portfolios at the elementary level, constituted a start in this process. However, because assessment information was not consistently gathered, centralized, and accessible electronically, analysis of patterns and trends over time and across grade levels, particularly at the elementary school, could not be readily accomplished.

Interviews with school leaders indicated that the five elementary schools were collecting and disseminating data at the school level, but there was little coordination among the schools and there were no districtwide policies or procedures for these functions at the elementary level. Teachers stated that grade level teachers analyzed the data and modified instructional practices and curriculum at grade level meetings, though the opportunities to meet varied by school.

Communication and continuity of practice were occurring more regularly at the middle and high schools because of the structure of the leadership there, which included academic coordinators at the middle school and content area department heads at the high school.

The documentation of policies and procedures, and the development of accessible districtwide and disaggregated data will support the district's ability to disaggregate and analyze student performance data over time. In addition, it may help to provide continuity when teacher or leadership changes occur. Finally, it will support all teachers and district leaders in meeting one of the district's three main goals in establishing a standards-based system, answering the question, "How will we know students have acquired the intended knowledge and skills?"

## **Human Resources and Professional Development**

**As it aligns its evaluation system with the state's new educator evaluation model, the district should ensure that all educators have meaningful professional practice and student learning goals and consistent, timely feedback, and that professional development is aligned with the evaluation system.**

At the time of its visit the review team found that the district had taken significant steps toward improving its evaluation systems for teachers and administrators and its monitoring of completed evaluations.<sup>13</sup>

The new educator evaluation model provides opportunities for school districts to develop and implement:

---

<sup>13</sup> An Evaluation Document for Principals and Administrators had been developed for use in 2010-2011, implementation of a newly negotiated and ratified Teacher Supervision and Evaluation Program was scheduled for September 2011, and the superintendent had assigned the responsibility for tracking evaluations to the Human Resources Department, which was in the process of establishing a tracking system using Budget Sense software. Previously, evaluations for many teachers had not been timely; most of those reviewed by the team did not include comments intended to improve instruction, and none of those reviewed had recommendations for specific professional development. None of the administrator personnel files reviewed except for the superintendent's had timely evaluations.

- Professional development for evaluators;
- Training to develop meaningful professional practice and student learning goals;
- Systems to ensure
  - that evaluators have the time and support to carry out the new system with fidelity and
  - that district and school goals are aligned with administrator goals
- Professional development for educators that prioritizes educator needs identified through the goal-setting and evaluation process.

Taking advantage of these opportunities will continue the progress the district had made at the time of the review in using personnel evaluation to work toward continuous improvement of administrator and teacher practice.

**The district should document and evaluate the effectiveness of its mentoring program.**

Purposeful linking of mentoring, teacher supervision and evaluation, and professional development practices in the district strengthen the district's focus on student work to improve instruction. Under the district model, one mentor works with a group of new teachers in each school. New teachers are provided basic information about routines and procedures and meet with their mentors throughout the year at least monthly.

The capacity to deliver an effective mentoring program is somewhat limited, however, because there is no written program description and no provision for evaluating the efficacy of the program for mentors and new teachers. The review team recommends documentation of the mentoring program to ensure that the activities, policies, and practices are consistent during the year and from year to year. Written policies and procedures to guide current and future administrators and teachers will help to ensure program quality, continuity, clarity, and sustainability. Evaluation of the program will ensure that it is of the highest quality and meets the needs of new and beginning teachers.

## Appendix A: Review Team Members

---

The review of the North Andover Public Schools was conducted from January 18-24, 2011, by the following team of educators, independent consultants to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Rena Shea, Leadership and Governance

Christine Brandt, Curriculum and Instruction, review team coordinator

Josephine Napolitano, Assessment

Dr. William Contreras, Human Resources and Professional Development

Suzanne Kelly, Student Support

Dr. Wilfrid J. Savoie, Financial and Asset Management

## Appendix B: Review Activities and Site Visit Schedule

---

### District Review Activities

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

- The review team conducted interviews with the following North Andover financial personnel: Town manager, Selectman Chair, and town accountant/budget officer.
- The review team conducted interviews with the following members of the North Andover School Committee: Chair, Vice-Chair, and two members.
- The review team conducted interviews with the following representatives of the North Andover's teachers' union: President and Vice-President.
- The review team conducted interviews and focus groups with the following representatives from the North Andover's Public Schools central office administration: superintendent, assistant superintendent, business manager, director of special education, supervising principal of literacy, director of human resources, supervisor of accounts, and accounts payable.
- The review team visited the following schools in the North Andover Public Schools: Atkinson Elementary (K-5), Franklin Elementary (K-5), Kittredge Elementary (K-5), Sargent Elementary (K-5), Thomson Elementary (K-5), North Andover Middle School (6-8), and North Andover High School (9-12)
- During school visits, the review team conducted interviews with school principals, teachers, assistant principals, department heads, academic coordinators, Title 1 director, and director of guidance.
  - The review team conducted 53 classroom visits for different grade levels and subjects across the seven schools visited.
- The review team reviewed the following documents provided by ESE:
  - District profile data
  - District Analysis and Review Tool (DART)
  - Data from the Education Data Warehouse (EDW)
  - Latest Coordinated Program Review (CPR) Report and any follow-up Mid-cycle Report
  - Most recent New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) report
  - Any District or School Accountability Report produced by Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA) or ESE in the past three years



- Teachers' contract, including the teacher evaluation tool
- Reports on licensure and highly qualified status
- Long-term enrollment trends
- End-of-year financial report for the district for 2010
- List of the district's federal and state grants
- Municipal profile
- The review team reviewed the following documents at the district and school levels (provided by the district or schools):
  - Organization chart
  - District Improvement Plan
  - School Improvement Plans
  - School committee policy manual
  - School committee minutes for the past year
  - Most recent budget proposal with accompanying narrative or presentation; and most recent approved budget
  - Selected curriculum guide overviews
  - Selected K-12 ELA, mathematics, and science curriculum documents
  - High school program of studies
  - Copies of data analyses/reports used in schools
  - Descriptions of student support programs
  - Student and Family Handbooks
  - Faculty Handbook
  - Professional Development Plan and current program/schedule/courses
  - The district's newly negotiated and ratified four-year *Teacher Supervision and Evaluation Program* document
  - Teacher certification and qualification information
  - Evaluation tools for central office administrators and principals
  - Classroom observation tools not used in the teacher evaluation process
  - Job descriptions for central office staff
  - Teacher attendance data
  - All administrator evaluations and certifications

- Randomly selected teacher personnel files
- Performance Report 2010

## Site Visit Schedule

The following is the schedule for the onsite portion of the district review of the North Andover Public Schools, conducted from January 18-24, 2011.

Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Monday
January 18 Orientation with district leaders and principals; interviews with district staff and principals; review of documents; review of personnel files	January 19 Interviews with district staff and principals; school visits at Franklin, Kittredge, classroom observations; teacher focus groups, meeting with town personnel	January 20 School visits at Thomson, Atkinson, Middle and High Schools, interviews with school leaders and district staff; classroom observations; school committee interviews; interview with teachers' association representatives; focus group with parents	January 24 School visits at Sargent, interviews with school leaders; classroom observations; follow-up interviews; team meeting; emerging themes meeting with district leaders and principals

## Appendix C: Student Achievement Data 2008-2010

---

**Table C1: 2010 North Andover and State  
Composite Performance Index (CPI) and Median Student Growth Percentile (SGP)  
by Selected Subgroups, for ELA**

	North Andover		State	
	CPI	<i>Median SGP</i>	CPI	<i>Median SGP</i>
<b>All Students (2,546)</b>	91.5	50	86.9	50
Asian (167)	94.5	62.5	89.8	59
African American/Black (33)	84.8	45	76.6	46
Hispanic/Latino (147)	80.1	49.5	73.6	47
White (2,149)	92.3	49	90.5	50
ELL (24)	58.3	---	59.8	50
FLEP (34)	83.8	50.5	80.1	55
Special Education (363)	68.9	37	67.3	41
Low Income (291)	78.4	47	76.5	46

Note: 1. Numbers in parentheses are the numbers of students included for the purpose of calculating the CPI. Numbers included for the calculation of the median SGP are different.

2. Median SGP is calculated for grades 4-8 and 10 and is only reported for groups of 20 or more students.

Source: School/District Profiles on ESE website

**Table C2: 2010 North Andover and State  
Composite Performance Index (CPI) and Median Student Growth Percentile (SGP)  
by Selected Subgroups, for Mathematics**

	North Andover		State	
	CPI	<i>Median SGP</i>	CPI	<i>Median SGP</i>
<b>All Students (2,550)</b>	84.9	52	79.9	50
Asian (167)	92.7	64	89	62
African American/Black (33)	72	48	65.1	48
Hispanic/Latino (148)	66	44	63.9	47
White (2,151)	85.8	51	84.1	50
ELL (24)	60.4	---	56.2	53
FLEP (35)	75.7	52.5	73.3	55
Special Education (362)	58.1	44	57.5	43
Low Income (294)	66.1	43	67.1	47

Note: 1. Numbers in parentheses are the numbers of students included for the purpose of calculating the CPI. Numbers included for the calculation of the median SGP are different.

2. Median SGP is calculated for grades 4-8 and 10 and is only reported for groups of 20 or more students.

Source: School/District Profiles on ESE website

**Table C3: 2008-2010 North Andover Proficiency Rates,  
with Median Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs), compared to State:  
by Grade  
ELA**

	2008		2009		2010	
Grade	Percent Proficient or Advanced	<i>Median SGP</i>	Percent Proficient or Advanced	<i>Median SGP</i>	Percent Proficient or Advanced	<i>Median SGP</i>
Grade 3—District	71	NA*	68	NA*	73	NA*
Grade 3—State	56	NA*	57	NA*	63	NA*
Grade 4—District	54	47	62	50	58	43
Grade 4—State	49	48	53	50	54	50
Grade 5—District	71	56	65	42	74	49.5
Grade 5—State	61	51	63	50	63	50
Grade 6—District	83	59	76	58	77	61
Grade 6—State	67	50	66	50	69	50
Grade 7— District	80	51	79	43	84	51
Grade 7— State	69	50	70	50	72	50
Grade 8— District	86	44	88	54	89	50
Grade 8— State	75	49	78	50	78	50
Grade 10— District	86	NA*	89	47	88	46
Grade 10— State	74	NA*	81	50	78	50
All Grades— District	76	50.5	75	49	77	50
All Grades—State	64	50	67	50	68	50

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

\*NA: Grade 3 students do not have SGPs because they are taking MCAS tests for the first time.

Source: School/District Profiles on ESE website

**Table C4: 2008-2010 North Andover Proficiency Rates,  
with Median Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs), compared to State:  
by Grade  
Mathematics**

	2008		2009		2010	
Grade	Percent Proficient or Advanced	<i>Median SGP</i>	Percent Proficient or Advanced	<i>Median SGP</i>	Percent Proficient or Advanced	<i>Median SGP</i>
Grade 3—District	71	NA*	66	NA*	70	NA*
Grade 3—State	61	NA*	60	NA*	65	NA*
Grade 4—District	51	45	52	50	50	48.5
Grade 4—State	49	49	48	50	48	49
Grade 5—District	62	62	55	50	61	52
Grade 5—State	52	51	54	50	55	50
Grade 6—District	71	51.5	70	60	69	67
Grade 6—State	56	50	57	50	59	50
Grade 7— District	65	43	60	49	65	44.5
Grade 7— State	47	50	49	50	53	50
Grade 8— District	67	48	60	40	61	52
Grade 8— State	49	51	48	50	51	51
Grade 10— District	81	NA*	84	39	82	43
Grade 10— State	72	NA*	75	50	75	50
All Grades— District	66	49	63	48	65	52
All Grades—State	55	50	55	50	59	50

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

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

Source: School/District Profiles on ESE website

## Appendix D: Finding and Recommendation Statements

---

### ***Finding Statements:***

#### **Leadership**

1. The appointment of a permanent superintendent in 2009<sup>14</sup> led to collaboration both inside and outside of the district, the development of a meaningful District Improvement Plan (DIP), a revamped and transparent budget process, and the promotion of a culture of high expectations for all students.
2. The school committee understands and carries out its role and responsibilities with respect to setting policy, overseeing the budget, and evaluating the superintendent.

#### **Curriculum and Instruction**

3. While the district is making progress in completing aligned, standards-based documented curricula in all core subject areas in grades 6 through 12, at the time of the review only ELA and writing were in final documented form in kindergarten through grade 5, and the district did not have documented curriculum review procedures.
4. Instruction throughout the district reflects a range of effective practices. Instruction is differentiated, aligned with students' developmental and learning needs, based on high expectations, and delivered in a respectful and supportive climate.

#### **Assessment**

5. The district has begun to establish a standards-based system with grade level common interim assessments and scoring rubrics. The district is collecting, disseminating, and analyzing student assessment data in all schools; however, the procedures are not fully documented, systematic, and consistent.

#### **Human Resources and Professional Development**

6. The district's evaluation practices for teachers and administrators before 2011 were not consistent, frequent enough, or sufficiently useful to help educators grow as professionals or to ensure accountability.
7. In 2011 the district made substantial progress in improving the content and timeliness of evaluations, with new procedures for evaluating administrators and teachers, and work underway to develop a new system to track the completion of evaluations.

---

<sup>14</sup>This superintendent retired on July 1, 2012, and was replaced by the former assistant superintendent.



8. The district's professional development program is comprehensive, encompassing professional learning during and after the school day, and linked to its supervision and evaluation program.
9. The district's mentoring practices are built on a model in which one mentor works with a number of new teachers in a school. The mentoring program policies and practices are undocumented, and the program is not evaluated for effectiveness.

### **Student Support**

10. The district has established a substantial number of initiatives to monitor and improve achievement for all of its students, while particularly targeting underperforming subgroups.
11. The district has a variety of specialized programs for students with disabilities that minimize their separation from their peers.
12. The district has provided effective support in the form of the alternative Scarlet Knights Academy for high school students at risk of dropping out of school.

### **Financial and Asset Management**

13. The North Andover School Committee takes an active role in the development of the budget both within the district and in collaboration with town officials.

## ***Recommendation Statements:***

### **Leadership and Governance**

1. The district should continue to provide strong collaborative leadership focused on a common mission, driven by student achievement data, and transparent in its policies and procedures.

### **Curriculum and Instruction**

2. The district should continue its plans to review and document the elementary mathematics and science curricula. Elementary social studies should be added to the district's plan. A complete curriculum review process should be developed and documented at all levels.
3. The district should begin to look at models that support the elementary principals and enable them to provide consistent curricular leadership across the district.

### **Assessment**

4. As part of its establishment of a standards-based education program, the district should improve its documentation of assessment policies, practices and procedures and develop a system for user-friendly and timely dissemination of student performance data.

### **Human Resources and Professional Development**

5. As it aligns its evaluation system with the state's new educator evaluation model, the district should ensure that all educators have meaningful professional practice and student learning goals and consistent, timely feedback, and that professional development is aligned with the evaluation system.
6. The district should document and evaluate the effectiveness of its mentoring program.