District Review Report

North Brookfield Public Schools

Review conducted January 5-8, 2015

Center for District and School Accountability

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Organization of this Report

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North Brookfield District Review Overview

Purpose

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

Districts reviewed in the 2014-2015 school year include districts classified into Level 2, Level 3, or Level 4 of ESE's framework for district accountability and assistance. Review reports may be used by ESE and the district to establish priority for assistance and make resource allocation decisions.

Methodology

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

Site Visit

The site visit to the North Brookfield Public Schools was conducted from January 5-8, 2015. The site visit included 27.5 hours of interviews and focus groups with approximately 50 stakeholders, including school committee members, district administrators, school staff, students, and teachers' association representatives. The review team conducted two focus groups with 22 elementary school teachers, and 18 middle/high school teachers. A list of review team members, information about review activities, and the site visit schedule are in Appendix A, and Appendix B provides information about enrollment, student performance, and expenditures. The team observed classroom instructional practice in 39 classrooms in 2 schools. The team collected data using an instructional inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards-based teaching. This data is contained in Appendix C.

District Profile

The North Brookfield Public Schools has a town council form of government and the chair of the school committee is elected. There are five members of the school committee and they meet monthly.

The current superintendent has been in the position since July 1, 2014. The district leadership team includes the high school principal, the elementary school principal, the director of pupil services, the director of technology, and the facilities director. Central office positions have been stable in number over the past five years. The district has two principals leading two schools. There are no other school administrators. There were 43 teachers in the district in the 2013-2014 school year.

In the 2014-2015 school year, 573 students were enrolled in the district's 2 schools:

Table 1: North Brookfield Public Schools
Schools, Type, Grades Served, and Enrollment*, 2014-2015

School Name	School Type	Grades Served	Enrollment
North Brookfield Elementary School	ES	PK-6	341
North Brookfield Junior/Senior High School	MS/HS	7-12	232
Totals	**2 schools**	**PK-12**	**573**
*As of October 1, 2014			

Between 2010 and 2015 overall student enrollment decreased] by 8.6 percent. Enrollment figures by race/ethnicity and high needs populations (i.e., students with disabilities, students from low-income families, and English language learners (ELLs) and former ELLs) as compared with the state are provided in Tables B1a and B1b in Appendix B.

Total in-district per-pupil expenditures were lower than the median in-district per pupil expenditures for 10 K-12 districts of similar size (less than 1,000 pupils) in fiscal year 2013: $12,542 as compared with $14,215 (see District Analysis and Review Tool Detail: Staffing & Finance). Actual net school spending has been above what is required by the Chapter 70 state education aid program, as shown in Table B8 in Appendix B.

Student Performance

North Brookfield is a Level 2 district because North Brookfield Elementary and North Brookfield Middle/High are in Level 2 for not meeting their gap narrowing targets.

- North Brookfield Elementary is in the 24th percentile of elementary schools with a cumulative Progressive Performance Index (PPI) of 64 for all students and 53 for high needs students; the target is 75.

- North Brookfield Middle/High is in the 26th percentile of high schools and is in Level 2 with a cumulative PPI of 55 for all students and 49 for high needs students; the target is 75.

The district did not reach its 2014 Composite Performance Index (CPI) targets for ELA, math, and science.

- ELA CPI was 84.6 in 2014, below the district's target of 89.8.

- Math CPI was 74.9 in 2014, below the district's target of 80.8.

- Science CPI was 75.0 in 2014, below the district's target of 80.4.

ELA proficiency rates were below the state rates for the district as a whole and for every tested grade except for the 4th and 6th grades, which were equal to the state. Between 2011 and 2014 there were notable declines in ELA proficiency rates in the 3rd, 4th, and 8th grades.

- ELA proficiency rates for all students in the district declined from 68 percent in 2011 to 62 percent in 2014, below the state rate of 69 percent.

- ELA proficiency rates were below the state rate by 14 to 15 percentage points in the 3rd, 7th, and 8th grades and by 5 and 1 percentage points in the 5th and 10th grades, respectively.

  - Between 2011 and 2014 ELA proficiency rates declined by 20 percentage points in the 8th grade, by 19 percentage points in the 3rd grade, and by 11 percentage points in the 4th grade.

- ELA proficiency rates between 2011 and 2014 improved by 6 percentage points in the 7th grade, and by 4 percentage points in the 6th grade.

Math proficiency rates were below the state rates in the district as a whole and in every tested grade except the 6th grade.

- Math proficiency rates for all students in the district were 49 percent in 2011 and 50 percent in 2014, below the state rate of 60 percent.

- Math proficiency rates in the district were below the state rate in 3rd and 10th grades by 22 and 18 percentage points, respectively, by 15 and 14 percentage points in the 5th and 8th grades, respectively, and by 5 and 4 percentage points in the 4th and 7th grades, respectively.

    o Between 2011 and 2014 math proficiency rates decreased by 10 percentage points in the 3rd grade, and by 2 and 4 percentage points in the 6th and 10th grades, respectively.

- The 6th grade math proficiency rate was 66 percent, 6 percentage points above the state rate of 60 percent.

    o Between 2011 and 2014 math proficiency rates improved by 12 percentage points in the 7th grade, by 6 percentage points in the 4th grade, and by 2 percentage point in the 5th grade.

Science proficiency rates were below the state rates in the 5th, 8th, and 10th grades.

- 5th grade science proficiency rates improved from 34 percent in 2011 to 41 percent in 2014, 12 percentage points below the state rate of 53 percent.

- 8th grade science proficiency rates declined from 29 percent in 2011 to 18 percent in 2014, 24 percentage points below the state rate of 42 percent.

- 10th grade science proficiency rates declined from 82 percent in 2011 to 69 percent in 2014, 2 percentage points below the state rate of 71 percent.

North Brookfield students' growth on the MCAS assessments on average is slower than that of their academic peers statewide.

- On the 2014 MCAS assessments, the district-wide median student growth percentile (SGP) for English language arts was 41; for mathematics, it was 46.

- Median student growth in 2014 fell below 40 in 7th grade English language arts (median SGP of 26), 7th grade math (37), and 8th grade math (31).

North Brookfield reached the 2014 four year cohort graduation target of 80.0 and the five year cohort graduation target of 85.0 percent.[1]

- The four year cohort graduation rate declined by 4.3 percentage points, from 92.5 percent in 2010 to 88.2 percent in 2014, slightly above the state rate of 86.1 percent.

- The five year cohort graduation rate improved by 2.4 percentage points, from 84.8 percent in 2009 to 87.2 percent in 2013, but below the state rate of 87.7 percent for the 2013 cohort.

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[1] 2014 graduation targets are 80 percent for the four year and 85 percent for the five year cohort graduation rates and refer to the 2014 four year cohort graduation rate and 2013 five year cohort graduation rates.

- The annual dropout rate for North Brookfield since 2009 has been below the state rate and was 0.7 percent in 2014, below the statewide rate of 2.2 percent.

North Brookfield Public Schools District Review Findings

Strengths

Leadership and Governance

1. **District leadership has implemented an extensive and collaborative process for identifying key areas for improvement and has begun to plan and initiate strategies with a focus on instruction and curriculum alignment.**

   A. The new superintendent developed preliminary goals with the consultation of her leadership team.

      1. The superintendent presented her goals to the school committee at the October 6, 2014, meeting. Goals included the development of an entry plan, the reduction of choice-out students, and the improvement of student learning.

         a. The entry plan, as part of the new superintendent's induction program, is in process. Interviews with stakeholders and a review of documents have been completed. Preliminary priorities have been identified as curriculum alignment and instructional improvement. The superintendent said that final conclusions await the recommendations from this district review.

         b. At the time of the onsite review, a community-wide World Café was planned for January 31, 2015. The World Café meeting would involve representatives from every stakeholder group to discuss the community's desires and goals for the schools. One focus would be to return students to North Brookfield from school choice districts.

         c. Pursuant to the goal of improving student learning, a number of initiatives have been put in place to support curriculum alignment and instructional improvement. The high school is using professional development time to align curriculum to state frameworks. The elementary school has adopted the Fountas & Pinnell balanced literacy program and is piloting Engage New York Math. The district has identified three priority instructional best practices for review during walkthroughs and observations: clear communication of learning objectives, active learning, and the use of formative assessments to check for understanding and inform instruction.

      2. Leadership team members reported involvement with the planning and implementation of goals.

         a. The leadership team, consisting of the high school principal, the elementary school principal, the director of pupil services, the facilities director, and the director of technology, meets bi-weekly. Agendas include review of goals and discussion of initiatives.

b. A review of agendas this school year showed that the meetings have focused on providing and receiving feedback to further develop administrator skill sets and promote instructional improvements.

B. The superintendent said that this planning process (preliminary goals, entry plan, World Café) will result in the development of a comprehensive, multi-year District Improvement Plan (DIP) and subsequent School Improvement Plans (SIPs) that will drive the work of the district.

1. The superintendent and representatives of the World Café process will develop the DIP.

2. All SIPs will be required to be aligned with the DIP.

C. The new superintendent is establishing relationships and coalitions to build support for continued improvement in the district.

1. The new superintendent collaborates with the school committee and town officials.

a. The board of selectmen and the school committee reported that the new superintendent communicates often and effectively.

i. Communication to the school committee has been enhanced through Friday memos outlining weekly happenings and through an open review and discussion of student achievement data.

ii. Communication with the board of selectmen and the finance committee has taken place in response to budget issues and requests.

b. There are regular meetings and informal meetings about important school and town issues.

2. With the World Café district leadership is building a cross community coalition of individuals to help define the kind of schools the community desires and expects.

Impact: Improved communication and coalition building with district leaders and staff, town officials, and community members will likely build trust in and commitment to the district's improvement goals.

Curriculum and Instruction

2. District leaders address instructional strengths and challenges through the active monitoring of instruction.

A. The superintendent told the review team that she has set an initial priority of improving instruction and has taken some early steps to communicate and act upon that priority.

1. Planned in-service activities for elementary teachers this school year include an initial focus on posting and addressing learning objectives, differentiating instruction, and developing higher-order thinking skills in lessons.

2. The superintendent conducts classroom walkthroughs with principals to calibrate their observation and evaluation skills and learn more about the caliber of teaching in both schools.

3. A review of teacher feedback documents showed that the superintendent provided detailed feedback to at least a dozen teachers after lesson observations during the first three months of the current school year. Examples of the superintendent's feedback to teachers provide evidence of thorough and thoughtful feedback:

   a. "The activity I saw today was a great example of formative assessment. The use of the exit ticket will help inform you about what the students may be confused about and how you can adjust your next lesson to address those areas that may need additional teaching."

   b. "I enjoyed seeing how you delivered the lesson on making inferences today. I thought it was effective when you explained that it is okay if two students don't make the same inference … that there is no right answer. I was also impressed with the language the students used (schema) and that they were able to define what it meant."

B. In addition to other leadership responsibilities, the principals, in alignment with the identified instructional priorities, regularly monitor classroom instruction and provide staff with constructive feedback.

   1. Principals have led and are scheduled to lead workshops on the topics of backward design of curriculum, curriculum and assessment, and the new balanced literacy initiative.

   2. The principals conduct four walkthroughs for each teacher each year and provide detailed informative and constructive written feedback, particularly on the three recently identified instructional priorities: clear communication of student-friendly learning objectives; the use of formative assessments to check for understanding and inform instruction; and active learning.

   3. Staff members reported that the principals' feedback has been prompt and helpful. An example of the principals' feedback to teachers follows:

      a. "I was glad to see that you had learning objectives posted in the classroom. The second one on the Earth's climate I thought to be well worded and easily understood. The first LO [learning objective] on geographical vocabulary was a bit less specific and maybe a

little confusing. An alternative might be: 'I can state the definition of...' and then list the specific words you expected them to know at the end of the lesson."

C. The teaching staff has responded favorably to the administrators' active monitoring of instruction.

    a. Teachers stated: "The principal's feedback has been very helpful," "The superintendent has been in my classroom . . . the first time ever," and "[The feedback] made me think about my effectiveness as a teacher."

    b. A teachers' association representative told the review team that the instructional feedback was "the best I'd received in 20 years."

Impact: The superintendent's and principals' priority of improving instruction will likely contribute to improved teaching and learning. The active monitoring of instruction by the principals can increase the staff's ability to address a wider spectrum of student learning styles and contribute to improved student achievement.

3. In a majority of observed classrooms, review team members found the learning environment to be conducive to learning. Interactions between teachers and students were positive and respectful and behavioral standards were well established.

A. The team observed 39 classes throughout the district: 15 at the middle-high school, and 24 at the elementary school. The team observed 18 ELA classes, 11 mathematics classes, 3 science classes, and 7 classes in other subject areas. The observations were approximately 20 minutes in length. All review team members collected data using ESE's instructional inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards-based teaching. This data is presented in Appendix C only by characteristic and school type and is not aggregated to the district level.[2] In observed classrooms review team members found clear and consistent evidence of a number of preconditions for effective learning.

    1. Review team members noted a positive and respectful tone of interactions between students and teachers and among students (#1) in 100 percent of elementary and secondary school classrooms.

    2. Review team members found clear and consistent evidence that behavioral standards are clearly communicated and disruptions, if present, are managed effectively and equitably (#2) in 96 percent of elementary classrooms and in 80 percent of secondary school classrooms.

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[2] This is because of the need to observe some K-6 classrooms twice in order to see both ELA and mathematics lessons. Combining the data from both schools would disproportionately skew the aggregate data because of the multiple observations in some K-6 classrooms.

a. In a grade 3 classroom, a behavior pledge and classroom rules were prominently posted. A poster asked, "What does it mean to be a good partner?"

b. In a grade 2 classroom, rules were posted and the students were observed reciting a student good behavior pledge at the start of the day immediately after the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag: "To respect self and others, to do my best work and try my best."

B. Observation data showed clear and consistent evidence that classroom rituals and routines promoted transitions with minimal loss of instructional time (#4) in 100 percent of observed elementary classrooms and in 79 percent of secondary classrooms.

Impact: In a respectful and well-managed classroom, students and teachers can focus on learning and teaching. These behavioral attributes are prerequisites for good student learning and can contribute to students' focus and engagement in academic work.

Assessment

4. **The new superintendent models good practices for the analysis and use of data at the district level.**

   A. The new superintendent has begun to regularly present a variety of useful data and other information to the school committee and other stakeholders. She told the review team that she plans to gather multiple forms of data and other information to guide her entry plan as well as to inform the forthcoming District and School Improvement plans.

      1. The superintendent has undertaken a review of student achievement data, teacher and student attendance data, District and School Improvement Plans, special education enrollment, NEASC reports, the high school program of studies, curriculum, policy, evaluation documents, the athletic and extracurricular programs, the early childhood program, special education files, and the district's Coordinated Program Review. Additional data and information for her review include contracts, financial documents, and student and teacher handbooks.

      2. The superintendent said that after analyzing the above information, she plans to share her findings with administrators and the school committee to inform her entry plan and to identify goals and strategies for District and School Improvement Plans.

      3. In addition, the superintendent said that she planned to seek information and feedback from community and other school groups at a January 31, 2015, World Café meeting.

   B. The superintendent has presented 2014 MCAS results to the school committee, district and school leaders, and grade-level teachers.

1. A document review showed that the superintendent presented a detailed analysis of MCAS results to the school committee in the fall 2014. The presentation compared multiple MCAS results and data from the district with the state average results and with nine comparable districts. The presentation also focused on "next steps" to reduce the proficiency gaps. [3]

2. The superintendent shared MCAS results with teachers in August 2014 and at the start of the 2014-2015 school year. This included providing teachers with MCAS results for students for the past and coming academic years. Teachers in a focus group noted that they received an email about accessing MCAS results for 2014 and received more MCAS information this year than in previous years.

C. School committee members noted that this year they received information and data not previously seen.

1. School committee members noted receiving a lot of financial data for budget updating and planning and other information about special education placements, school choice, and AP enrollment as well as a more detailed report on 2014 MCAS results.

Impact: By establishing a transparent and informative practice in the analysis and use of data, the superintendent models good data literacy for the school community. This also contributes to creating a more thoughtful and data-informed district culture. With a more thorough analysis of achievement data and other information, stakeholders such as the school committee, parents, school leaders, and teachers can better understand the progress and status of the district and its needs. This can also serve the district well as a new mission, vision, and improvement plans are developed at the district and school levels.

5. **Under the leadership and guidance of the new principal, the elementary school is in the very early stages of developing a more systematic and thoughtful approach to ELA assessments. In addition, the elementary school has begun to clearly link literacy resources, instruction, and assessment.**

A. Because the elementary principal believes literacy is most important, he re-introduced the balanced literacy initiative[4] at the school and added the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System (BAS) to assess reading skills and help define reading groups K-6.

1. In response to students' underperformance in reading skills in the early grades, the principal has focused on the balanced literacy initiative K-2, although all elementary classrooms are implementing it.

2. The Title I reading specialist and reading tutors administered the BAS to all K-6 students in the fall 2014, posted color-coded BAS scores on Google Docs, and shared the results with teachers.

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[3] The nine comparison districts were defined by ESE's DART data as Adams-Cheshire, Avon, Gateway, Hull, Mohawk Trail, Narragansett, Pioneer Valley, Ralph C. Mahar, and Spencer-East Brookfield.
[4] In a focus group, elementary teachers noted that Readers Workshop, a balanced literacy program, had been used several years ago for one year.

3. Based on the BAS results, classroom teachers have grouped their students by reading level.

4. K-1 students who tested below benchmark in the fall BAS have recently been re-tested to measure progress and to help adjust instruction.

B. Other formative literacy assessments are used at the school.

1. K-2 teachers also use formative assessments from Fundations to assess early reading skills.

2. Teachers continue to use the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) to screen for fluency and the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) with struggling students. However, interviewees stated that the BAS gives much more detailed information about students' reading comprehension and other literacy skills than DIBELS, which only screens for fluency.

C. The use of balanced literacy and of the Fountas & Pinnell BAS is developing.

1. Teachers in a focus group agreed that the use of balanced literacy, BAS, and DIBELS was "huge this year" and was very helpful in providing new and deeper information to measure and monitor students' reading skill development, to screen students to form reading groups, and to guide literacy instruction.

2. The superintendent noted that although the principal was guiding the teachers in the new balanced literacy program and BAS, teachers still needed more professional development.

D. To meet the critical need for a sufficient supply of leveled readers, the PTO donated $1,400 this year and the principal will include $10,000 for additional books in the fiscal year 2016 budget.

Impact: By using the balanced literacy initiative and the BAS assessment system, the elementary school has begun to demonstrate a commitment to high expectations and data-based decision-making in its literacy program. With sufficient support through adequate resources, sufficient leveled readers, and embedded professional development, literacy instruction will likely improve and can focus more effectively on students' diverse learning needs. The ultimate beneficiaries will be students who will have the opportunity to attain stronger literacy skills and achievement.

Human Resources and Professional Development

6. **Under the leadership of the new superintendent, the district is implementing the educator evaluation system in a thoughtful and productive manner.**

A. A review of personnel files for 20 teachers and 7 administrators selected randomly from across the district showed that until the current year the new educator evaluation system had not been consistently implemented.

1. In the past, only the formative and summative evaluations completed by the high school principal were complete, informative, and instructive in promoting professional growth and development.

2. Each 2013-2014 elementary teacher summative evaluation reviewed by the team included no descriptive, informative, or instructive comments about teaching performance.

3. Teachers in a focus group said that they had not received any feedback on observations in the 2013-2014 school year.

B. A document review showed that in the current school year, the procedure has progressed as negotiated with attention given to detailed written feedback to teachers to make the process more helpful and constructive.

1**.** All teachers' student learning and professional practice SMART goals were completed on time and met the definition of SMART (specific and strategic, measureable; action-oriented; rigorous, realistic, and results-focused; and timed, and tracked) goals. Each goal included action steps, benchmarks, and evidence to indicate goal completion and success.

   a. All elementary teachers had identified one of two sets of SMART goals that had been defined by the principal in introducing the new balanced literacy program and BAS assessments and the need to develop curriculum aligned to the 2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. See the second Assessment Strength finding above.

2**.** SMART goals for the administrative team were also complete and pertinent. These included student learning and professional practice goals and---in the case of the high school principal---school improvement goals. The superintendent had set two district improvement goals, a student learning goal, and a professional practice goal. All administrative goals fit the definition of SMART goals and provided sufficient detail to address a number of needed improvement initiatives such as setting instructional priorities and the goal setting and improvement planning required to move the district forward.

3. Elementary lesson observation documents identified an observation focus as well as several indicators from the educator evaluation rubric addressed in the observation. The principal's detailed comments noted what the teacher and students said and did during the observation. Written feedback often offered suggestions and recommendations for improvement.

4. High school formative and summative evaluations detailed the progress teachers were making toward meeting their individual student learning goals and professional practice goals based on evidence. Summative evaluations provided ratings for each of the four educator evaluation standards of effective teaching with annotated commentary.

C. A document review showed that the superintendent's formative evaluations for administrators for the 2014-2015 school year provided useful and detailed feedback on leadership skills and responsibilities.

1. Formative documentation was thoughtful and thorough. It provided insight into administrator strengths on topics such as the substance and tone they used during observed meetings with specific teachers.

D. The principals and the superintendent conduct walkthroughs both individually and together and each provides informative, teacher-specific feedback within a few days.

1. The superintendent noted that the principals used the educator evaluation indicators of effective teaching practice as instructional practice skills to observe when conducting walkthroughs.

2. The review team was told that both the principals and the superintendent were very visible in classrooms. Teachers stated that this was the first time that a superintendent had observed their classes.

3. The superintendent discussed the principals' walkthrough documentation with them to calibrate observations of what they considered to be good teaching and the content of the feedback.

E. Teachers stated that the evaluation process this year was helpful and constructive.

1. Elementary teachers reported that the educator evaluation process used this year was "great." Teachers said that the new principal had clarified both his responsibilities and the teachers' responsibilities for evaluations. Teachers stated that they all had been observed at least once and about one-third, a second time. All elementary teachers said that they had received written feedback shortly after the observation.

2. Secondary teachers stated that the educator evaluation system has been important for improving performance and made them think about their effectiveness as teachers. They said that they liked the fact that they set their own goals and that the principal meets with them to review goals and observations.

3. A teachers' association representative said that the implementation of the educator evaluation system has been "thorough, and the quality of the feedback, excellent."

Impact: The leadership team has made an effective beginning this school year to use the educator evaluation process as an opportunity to improve teaching practice, as it was intended. Leaders have paid attention to calibrating observation documentation to ensure both consistency and a high standard for relevance, detail, and useful and instructive information to improve teaching practice and ultimately student achievement. Feedback is timely and focused and appreciated by teachers as helping them to grow as professionals. The thoughtful attention to providing informative and constructive formative and

summative evaluations can ensure that the educator evaluation system is a positive lever for improving instructional practice. This can then lead to meaningful improvement in teaching and learning in North Brookfield.

Student Support

7. **The district has increased its efforts to provide more information about the schools to parents and the wider community in order to strengthen its relationship with families and garner additional support.**

   A. The district uses a variety of media to reach out to parents and provide information to the community.

      1. The principals use automatic phone calls, social media, monthly or weekly newsletters, photo stories, email blasts, and blogs to inform parents and the public.

      2. Principals have encouraged teachers to develop more interactive teacher websites and many have done so. Parents told the review team that they were pleased with teachers' rapid email responses to inquiries about their child's performance.

      3. Parents said that the elementary principal attends every PTO meeting and tries to schedule events at different times in order to accommodate a variety of family schedules.

      4. School committee members expressed the opinion that the superintendent is committed to providing regular information to the local newspaper per agreement with the school committee. Two such articles were in the news during the week of the review.

      5. School committee members told the team that the superintendent provided the school committee and through cable television the community with the most detailed report on MCAS results that they had received in recent years. She also gives the school committee a weekly update.

   B. The district is reaching out to parents for input and to further develop school/family relationships.

      1. The superintendent has scheduled a World Café to garner community input to set priorities for the District Improvement Plan (DIP). She has invited parents, teachers, the teachers' association, selectmen, and other community members to the forum. When the DIP is written, the superintendent plans to monitor progress and send a quarterly report to the school committee as well as to post the DIP on the district's website for the public.

   C. The district has been trying to bring more family and community members into the schools through a variety of initiatives including adult education programs. Although interviewees reported that these initiatives have not been as successful as desired, the district continues to

explore more options such as the TREPS program where students develop entrepreneurship skills.

Impact: The district's concerted effort to reach out to involve parents as well as to serve and inform the community is an important step in garnering good will and support for its mission. Good communication requires persistence, and family engagement is not easily achieved. However, over time, these efforts should result in an improved relationship with the community and possible new resources for education.

Financial and Asset Management

8. **In The district has looked for additional support for educational programs.**

   A. The district has developed a successful grant process.

      1. In addition to receiving entitlement grants, the district has received a number of competitive grants totaling $646,138, including:

         a. $525,000 from the Carol White Federal Physical Education Program (PEP Grant) for outdoor education programs and

         b. $96,750 from the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center for high school STEM equipment for the development of a Chapter 74 engineering program.

      2. Additional grants have been submitted and are pending.

   B. The PTOs have supported the schools through raising funds for core education programs.

      1. Leveled readers have been purchased by the PTO at a cost of $1,400 for the balanced literacy program at the elementary school.

      2. The PTO raised $15,000 to help fund and sustain the music program.

Impact: By reaching out to grant programs and the parent community the district has supplemented budget resources and provided and sustained important programs for students.

Challenges and Areas for Growth

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

Leadership and Governance

9. **In recent years there has been significant turnover in district leadership. There is no dedicated districtwide position responsible for oversight of curriculum, instruction, and assessment.**

   A. Interviewees told the review team that in the past ten years there have been six superintendents, including two interims, four or five principals at the high school, and four principals at the elementary school.

   B. District leaders reported that leadership positions have been consolidated or eliminated leaving no person having sole responsibility for oversight of curriculum, instruction, and assessment in the district. The review team was told that the superintendent and two principals lead the district; the district does not have an assistant superintendent, a licensed business manager, or a director of curriculum. There are no coaches, no teacher leaders, and no assistant principals.

      1. This has led to a heavy reliance on principals to set and communicate standards for good instruction and to initiate, monitor, and evaluate all activities related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment---in addition to their numerous other key responsibilities at their respective schools.

      2. District leaders and teaching staff told the team that ongoing assessments are not consistently implemented and analyzed in depth.

   C. Teachers in several focus groups expressed the view that the loss of so many faculty members and the continuous change in leadership has been a problem.

   D. Because of time limitations, the leadership team is challenged to improve the ability of staff to implement ambitious plans for improvement.

      1. School leaders reported that there has not been sufficient built-in time for curriculum alignment and professional development has not been adequate.

      2. Teachers said that although the process has begun, adequate time has not been available to fully align the curriculum to state frameworks.

Impact: Significant turnover in district leadership and the absence of dedicated leadership for curriculum, instruction, and assessment have hampered the district in moving forward with needed educational improvements.

Curriculum and Instruction

10. **District leadership has identified several instructional characteristics important to improving teaching and learning: clear communication of learning objectives, the use of formative assessments to check for understanding and inform instruction, and active learning. Classroom observation data indicated that the quality of instruction was inconsistent and did not demonstrate mastery implementation of these district instructional priorities.**

The team observed 39 classes throughout the district: 15 at the middle-high school and 24 at the elementary school. The team observed 18 ELA classes, 11 mathematics classes, 3 science classes, and 8 classes in other subject areas. The observations were approximately 20 minutes in length. All review team members collected data using ESE's instructional inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards-based teaching. This data is presented in Appendix C by characteristic and school type and is not aggregated for the district as a whole.[5]

    A. Clear and consistent evidence of clear learning objectives aligned to the *2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks* (#8) was noted in 54 percent of the observed elementary classrooms and 40 percent of the observed middle and high school classrooms. Examples of posted learning objectives included:

        1. In a grade 1 math classroom, "I can count to 20. I can solve a number story. I can draw a picture of the problem."

        2. In a grade 6 classroom, "I can identify pronouns and antecedents. I can read with expression."

        3. In a grade 9-10 classroom for students with special needs, "I will be able to add fractions and mixed numbers and put the answer into the simplest form."

    B. Clear and consistent evidence of the use of frequent formative assessments to check for understanding and inform instruction (#15) was found in 54 percent of observed elementary and in 47 percent of observed secondary classrooms. Good examples of this strategy included:

        1. After an activity, kindergarten students constructed "I can…" statements. The students then gave thumbs-up (or not) for, "I can match animals and words; I can find the first sound in the monsters game."

        2. In a grade 3 ELA lesson, students were asked to use vocabulary words in a sentence.

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[5] This is because of the need to observe some K-6 classrooms twice in order to see both ELA and mathematics lessons. Combining the data from both schools would disproportionately skew the data because of the multiple observations in some K-6 classrooms.

3. In a high school American literature lesson, the teacher and students engaged in a lively and thoughtful question-answer session on symbolism with the teacher and students consistently reinforcing the vocabulary used to analyze literary texts such as personification, character development, time, and mortality.

C. Active learning is characterized by student engagement in activities such as discussions, group work, collaborative problem solving, or the use of simulations to promote exploration, analysis, and evaluation of content. However, many observed lessons were targeted to the whole class and were teacher centered with students not sufficiently engaged or responding to questions with one- or two-word answers. Student-centered lessons amplified by multiple student voices were not frequently observed. Good examples of active learning included:

1. In a grade 3 ELA lesson, students worked in pairs to read a non-fiction article and collaboratively discussed and then responded to comprehension questions in writing.

2. In a grade 8 mathematics class, students participated in group problem solving within a three-minute time limit to determine the differences in "rates."

D. In many observed lessons, there were missed opportunities to actively engage students in the lesson objectives and content through technology, to encourage students to apply ideas and concepts to real world experiences, and to ask higher-order questions.

1. Teachers clearly and consistently used available technology to support teaching and enhance learning (#16) in only 17 percent of observed elementary lessons and in 60 percent of observed middle and high school lessons.

2. In addition, students clearly and consistently used technology as a tool for learning and/or understanding (#22) in only 21 percent of elementary lessons---most frequently for an assessment such as MobyMax. Secondary school students made use of technology as a tool for learning and/or understanding in only 7 percent of observed lessons, most often, by using a calculator in math class.

3. Teachers clearly and consistently used questioning techniques that require thoughtful responses that demonstrate understanding (#12) in 54 percent of observed elementary lessons and in 60 percent of middle and high school lessons. Yet, students elaborated about lesson content and ideas when responding to questions (#20) in 48 percent of observed elementary lessons and in 47 percent of observed middle and high school lessons. However, students articulated their thinking verbally or in writing (#18) in 74 percent of observed elementary lessons and in 67 percent of observed middle and high school lessons.

4. Students clearly and consistently inquired, explored, applied, analyzed, synthesized and/or evaluated knowledge or concepts (#19) in 43 percent of observed elementary lessons and in 60 percent of observed middle and high school lessons.

5. Observers noted clear and consistent evidence that students make connections to prior knowledge, or real world experience, or can apply knowledge and understanding to other subjects (# 21) in 26 percent of elementary classes and in 33 percent of middle and high school classes.

Impact: Without clear communication of learning objectives, frequent use of formative assessments to check for understanding and inform instruction, and the consistent use of active learning strategies as well as other characteristics of good teaching and learning, the district cannot ensure that all students are receiving the rigorous classroom instruction that improves achievement.

11. **The district is challenged to ensure that all ELA and math curricula are aligned with the *2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks*.   Curriculum is not aligned horizontally or vertically in the district.**

   A. The elementary school does not have documented ELA or mathematics curricula aligned to the *2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks*.

      1. The superintendent, the elementary school principal, and elementary teachers told the team that no ELA and mathematics curricula fully aligned to the *2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks* existed before the current school year. Teachers used a variety of materials and resources from grade to grade.

      2. When asked to name the district's greatest challenge, student support staff reported "not having a consistent curriculum" and "not having a schoolwide curriculum."

      3. Elementary teachers said that a main concern was having a mathematics scope and sequence for K-6.

   B. The new elementary school principal introduced a balanced literacy ELA program and began to "pilot" a new mathematics program, Engage New York. Almost all grade levels are now using these new programs.

      1. Fountas & Pinnell's balanced literacy program and Engage New York Math are being used in most elementary classrooms.

      2. There has not been curriculum review or oversight to ensure full alignment of these programs to the *2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks*. District leaders and teachers told the team that the district recognizes that this is work to be done.

   C. The superintendent identified a key goal to bring more collaboration to the elementary school to ensure more horizontal and vertical alignment of curriculum and instruction.

      1. Elementary and secondary teachers noted that they did not have formal time set aside to determine the degree of horizontal consistency or check for vertical continuity of content.

2. Vertical alignment discussions have not taken place between the elementary school and the secondary school. Elementary teachers said that vertical alignment discussion between the elementary and secondary schools takes place only between special education teachers.

D. Although some secondary teachers had begun to align their lessons and curriculum to the Common Core, now all middle and high school teachers are developing unit plans aligned to the *2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks*.

1. The two unit plans provided to the review team (Honors Algebra II and American Literature) included the following components: learning expectations, time frame, essential questions, learning objectives, Common Core standards, instructional strategies, resources and assessments. Most other units are still in development.

2. The principal is responsible for curricular and instructional leadership and has prescribed the unit components.

3. Secondary teachers are responsible for creating the unit plan for the courses they teach. Each course contains multiple unit plans. Since most courses are singletons taught by one teacher, there has been little teacher collaboration in curriculum development. The principal provides feedback and eventually approves each unit plan.

4. Vertical alignment discussions during unit plan development take place informally or do not exist.

5. Some secondary teachers stated that it is difficult to write the unit plans alone and that an absence of time is a concern for some instructors who teach three or four different courses.

Impact: Aligned curricula provide planned sequences of instruction that help students follow a pathway of study that ensures the sequential development of students' knowledge, skills, and understandings. The absence of curricula and materials aligned to the *2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks* has resulted in many substantial teaching and learning challenges for the district. At the secondary level, in particular, the absence of a more collaborative process of curriculum development risks gaps and redundancies in the curriculum for a content area. Without aligned and fully developed curricula the vertical continuity and horizontal consistency of student learning experiences cannot be guaranteed and students do not have access to their grade-level curricula.

Assessment

12. **A balanced and comprehensive system of formative, summative, and benchmark assessments in core academic subjects has not been developed districtwide.**

   A. The elementary assessment system is not fully formed. Teachers implement core academic programs without guidance from coherent, documented curriculum maps or curriculum units that include multiple assessment formats to monitor and measure student achievement.

      1. Although the elementary school has initiated a benchmark assessment system for literacy this year, there is not an equivalent benchmark assessment for mathematics.

      2. The review team was told that without math benchmarks, some teachers had to create their own assessments and others were seeking other assessment resources online and elsewhere.

      3. Teachers stated that some try to collaborate with grade-level colleagues to write tests because the Engage New York Math end-of-unit assessments require a great deal of preparation. Teachers noted they struggle with the new program, as do students, because it includes strategies and vocabulary that students have not studied in the past.

   B. Other K-6 core academic programs and assessment systems are not fully formed.

      1. Teachers noted that there is no uniform elementary writing program, although some teachers use Writing Traits. Although most teachers use rubrics to assess writing, interviewees stated that different teachers use different rubrics and expectations for good writing may differ from grade to grade at the elementary level.

      2. The elementary science program is mainly taught as a component of ELA through non-fiction readings, often using *Scholastic News*. The district has not developed a science curriculum with accompanying assessments.

   C. The assessment system at the secondary level is becoming more balanced and comprehensive. Given the small size of the middle-high school, most assessments are classroom specific or teacher specific because either most courses are singletons or one teacher teaches all sections of a course.

      1. As teachers have developed new curriculum units aligned to the *2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks*, they have also identified multiple assessment formats for the unit. A document review showed that assessment is one of the key components in the unit template developed by the principal.

         a. The expectation for new unit design is backward design, which starts with assessments and clarity about what should students know and be able to do.

     b. The principal has set specific expectations about the inclusion of specific and varied assessments in the new curriculum units. As one teacher stated, "He doesn't want to simply see the word 'test' in our unit plan and he supports the use of performance-based and alternative assessments."

2. Teachers described a variety of formative and summative assessments in use.

     a. Interviewees who teach core subjects described end-of-unit assessments, quizzes, book reports, term papers, research papers, oral presentations, the use of varied media, science lab reports, and a few formative pre-assessments.

     b. Some assessments prepare students for MCAS tests by replicating MCAS-type questions or formats.

     c. Some assessments might be differentiated by the variety of students in class because it is not unusual to have college prep and honors students in the same classroom.

3. The middle-high school also has mid-year and final exams. However, in the rare incident in which two teachers teach the same course, there is no expectation that a common mid-year or final will be given to students. Interviewees stated that common assessments are rarely given.

     a. Data or results from mid-year and final exams are not shared or discussed with others but are mainly used for grading purposes.

4. A schoolwide writing rubric is in the early stages of implementation at the high school. It is used in ELA and social studies, but not used to assess writing in science. A writing rubric has also been developed for grades 6-8 but used only in grades 7-8.

5. The high school has 21st Century Learning Expectations with accompanying rubrics for assessment. These were developed in preparation for the 2011 NEASC accreditation visit. Interviewees said that they are difficult to assess and are not discussed. Only the students see the results.

D. Planned formative assessments are emerging as a priority at both schools, but are still under-developed districtwide.

1. Teachers stated that some do a good job with formative assessments while others "do their own thing," noting insufficient formal training districtwide.

2. A leader noted that there had been some professional development in formative assessments by Ribas Associates at the elementary level. While elementary teachers have begun to use techniques such as exit tickets and dip-sticking for on-the-spot formative assessments, more in-depth formative assessments other than literacy benchmarks are not used in instructional practice in other subjects.

3. Interviewees noted that the secondary principal encourages the use of formative assessments, which he confirmed. A document review showed that this was also referenced in the NEASC letter about the school's two-year progress report. Teachers described the routine and useful implementation of exit tickets and "half-time" tickets that informed them about what students understood and what needed re-teaching. Secondary teachers stated that there had been professional development on how to use these formative assessments.

Impact: Until an aligned curriculum with multiple assessment formats for all core subjects is in place in every classroom at both schools, teachers and leaders will not have access to the full array of data and information needed to guide instruction, to inform remedial and enrichment decisions, and to help students achieve at higher levels.

13. **The district does not have a systematic approach to identifying, collecting, analyzing, and using data and other information at the school and classroom levels to improve teaching and learning.**

   A. There has been no organized process or group to enable a thoughtful and collaborative analysis and use of data.

   1. Interviewees described professional development to learn to analyze achievement data as "spotty" and noted that teachers had not had much training to learn to use data.

   2. The district attempted to establish a data team in the 2013-2014 school year.

      a. Interviewees noted that a group of teachers from the middle-high school had participated in brief professional development to learn how to use EDWIN analytics and initiate a data team, but the effort was unsuccessful.

   3. The new superintendent stated that there was a need to talk about how to use data, that many teachers did not know what data they needed or how to use data for improvement.

   B. At the elementary school, the use of data analysis to improve instruction and to better understand and communicate student achievement is emerging.

   1. Analyzing BAS and DIBELS results has begun to help classroom teachers focus on explicit data to monitor and measure reading comprehension and fluency and to guide grouping for reading instruction.

   2. Review team members were told that the district did not have benchmark assessments for mathematics and teachers did not collect and analyze math data as they did for ELA.

3. When data is analyzed at the elementary level, it is mainly examined at the individual student level. Analysis of disaggregated data by subgroup is limited to that done by special education teachers.

C. At the secondary level, individual teachers take responsibility to collect and analyze student data. In interviews, they noted how data analysis was not done in depth or as part of a reflective, collaborative, inquiry-based process to better understand student achievement and to improve teaching within departments or in specific skill areas such as writing across the curriculum.

1. Secondary teachers noted that they were in contact with colleagues about individual students' progress based on observations in academic support classes but did not engage in a systematic review of achievement data.

2. When asked about analyzing student performance data, one interviewee said that some teachers did it on their own and that the district did not have a group or department that took a broader look at student achievement data.

3. Although copies of the mid-term and final exams are given to the principal, the results from these exams are not analyzed and discussed. The results of the twice-a-year assessments of the high school's 21st Century Learning Expectations are not shared or discussed.

4. Teachers noted that there had been a presentation of MCAS data at the beginning of the year but there had not been a coherent analysis and discussion of MCAS results. However, the principal does discuss MCAS results with individual teachers.

D. The emerging use of formative assessments has guided some teachers in instructional decision-making; however, some teachers have been challenged to incorporate formative assessments into their instruction.

1. When the review team asked about formative assessments at the elementary school, interviewees said that the use of formative assessments was inconsistent and uneven in quality, and that there had been little sustained training or follow-up in learning to use formative assessments.

2. Interviewees stated that there had been professional development about formative assessments at the secondary school. Teachers found that planned formative assessments such as exit tickets and think-pair-share were very useful in understanding what students had understood in the lesson. The principal has also given helpful suggestions to teachers about the use of formative assessments.

3. Review team members noted clear and consistent evidence of the use of formative assessments (#15) in 13 of 24 (or 54 percent) of observed elementary school classrooms and in 7 of 15 (or 47 percent) of observed secondary classrooms.

E. The district's student information system, i-Pass, provides teachers access to limited data; teachers cannot access multiple forms of student achievement data, demographic data, behavioral data, and ESE's EDWIN analytics.

Impact: The schools are currently operating without a systematic approach to use data for improvement. Teachers at both schools have had limited training to identify, collect, and analyze student achievement data and do not have access to multiple forms of data that could help improve teaching and learning.

Human Resources and Professional Development

14. **The district does not have a cohesive, ongoing professional development program aligned to teacher needs and district/school improvement goals, and followed up with appropriate coaching or support. The district is in the beginning stages of making professional development more coherent.**

    A. The calendar of professional development (PD) activities scheduled for the district's release days does not represent a cohesive plan that addresses the district's PD needs.

    1. The superintendent told the team that the current District Improvement Plan (DIP), from a previous administration, does not focus on improving instruction or student learning and has not guided decisions about PD activities. The superintendent said that she intended to develop a new DIP and subsequent School Improvement Plans and aligned PD.

    2. The superintendent told the team that the district does not have a focused PD plan. She has established a Professional Development Committee this school year. Teachers said that the committee has met three times and has distributed a survey to teachers.

    3. This year, the district has engaged Ribas Associates to present three sessions with elementary teachers on learning objectives, differentiation, and higher-order thinking skills.

    B. Student achievement data has not traditionally been used as a source of information to strategically design PD priorities.

    1. Principals and teachers stated that there has not been a successful data team or group of educators focusing on analyzing and sharing student performance data. Teachers told the team that the district has not provided them with sufficient PD in data analysis.

    2. The district has paid for teachers to access external PD that they believed would be useful.

    3. When asked about input into PD, elementary teachers noted that it has been mostly informal, adding that the new principal asked them what they thought and the new superintendent had sent out a survey looking for feedback.

C. There is limited use of grade-level and departmental common planning time for sustained collaboration or job-embedded PD to improve instructional practice.

1. Teachers said that common planning time for the purposes of determining horizontal consistency and vertical continuity of content material and instructional strategies is informal or does not exist.

2. Teachers reported that although a successful "Showcase" of best practices was presented in the previous year, formalized instances of teachers sharing effective strategies do not regularly take place.

3. The superintendent identified the need to bring collaboration to the elementary school.

4. Grades 5 and 6 teachers who were asked to pilot the new Engage New York mathematics program reported that the district's implementation did not include a protocol, formal evaluation process, or accompanying PD.

5. Most meeting time at the secondary school is dedicated to individual teachers developing curriculum units. There is no curriculum review, revision, or development process in place at the elementary school.

D. There are limited meaningful opportunities to develop teacher leaders in the district.

1. There are no assistant principals or subject-level department heads at the secondary level and no grade-level teacher-leaders or coaches at the elementary level.

2. There are no literacy or math coaches or other teacher leaders at the elementary school. The new principal asked for volunteers to participate on a school leadership team during the site visit.

3. The district has a mentoring program for new teachers. The superintendent is currently responsible for the mentoring program and has drafted revisions to the mentoring handbook.

Impact: Without professional development programs and services based on district and school improvement priorities, information about staff needs, student achievement data, and assessment of instructional practices and programs, the district cannot adequately foster educator growth and leadership and improved student achievement.

Student Support

15. **Instructional practices in many of the district's regular education classrooms do not adequately support the needs of diverse learners or make the best use of resources. A full spectrum of tiered academic services is not available to students who need extra support.**

   A. Observations by the review team showed a low incidence of strategies that make the classroom more accessible to students who need accommodations and rich verbal or experiential learning, or learn better by doing rather than by listening or reading.

   1. In 43 percent of observed elementary classrooms and in 47 percent of observed secondary classrooms, the review team saw clear and consistent evidence of teachers using appropriate modifications for students with disabilities, such as direct instruction in vocabulary, presentation of content at multiple levels of complexity or differentiation of content, process, or products (#10).

      a. Review team members observed group work in class, but frequently all groups were doing the same activity or passing through the same series of activities.

   2. In 75 percent of observed elementary classes and in 40 percent of observed secondary classes, multiple resources were clearly and consistently available to meet all students' diverse learning needs.

   B. In the recent past, the district has offered limited professional development on differentiated instruction; new curriculum at the middle-high school is not required to include strategies for differentiation. During the current school year, the district has contracted with an outside provider, Ribas Associates, to provide sessions on differentiating instruction, developing higher-order thinking skills, and writing learning objectives.

   C. Faculty and administrators acknowledged that teachers of the same elementary grade level often do not frequently work together to provide resources for grouping and regrouping of students for the purpose of differentiating instruction.

   D. The district does not have a systematic and complete approach to providing interventions.

   1. The district has student assistance teams in place at both the elementary and secondary schools.

   2. Although the intervention process at the elementary level appears to have adequate supervision and follow up because in-class intervention are monitored by the teachers and brought back to the school-based team, interviewees reported that some students take academic support classes. Interviewees did not clearly link those classes to specific interventions, time periods, subject matter, and so on.

3. Special education teachers who deliver or supervise some intervention services are not usually able to attend curriculum meetings at the high school. At the elementary school, special education teachers do not have planning time with grade-level teachers to coordinate services.

4. The district has some staffing for delivering Tier 2 services.

   a. At the elementary level, the school has a .7 Title I teacher and two Title I tutors who this year provide more direct literacy services to all students. Special education teachers and paraprofessionals may take regular education students for extra help while supporting students with disabilities who need similar services.

   b. At all levels, a school psychologist is available for consultation and for group sessions. The adjustment counselor also sees both regular education students and students with disabilities.

   c. The secondary school has initiated three academic support periods, two for regular education students and one inclusion academic support. An occasional student who needs MCAS remediation is paired with a teacher who works with the individual after school. During directed study time,[6] students may be pulled out for group sessions with the psychologist.

5. Material resources for Tier 2 include the Fundations literacy program and Read Naturally, a software program to develop reading fluency. They are used to support both regular education students and students with disabilities. MobyMax math software can also be used in both environments but is less frequently used by teachers.

E. The district has limited data with which to identify students in need of Tier 2 services, particularly for systematic academic support.

   1. Identification of students in need of help has not been based on the analysis of data. Interviewees reported that little data is available and the teachers have received little training in its use. As a result, referrals have not generally been made, and the impact of interventions has not generally been measured, with strong assessment information.

      a. Teachers said that they looked at student data "holistically" and did not analyze the performance of student subgroups. Others said that, in the absence of other data, teachers identify individual students in need of assistance.

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[6] Directed study is a half-hour period at the end of every school day at the secondary level. Students are assigned to a particular teacher who is also their advisory teacher. Students may use this time to make up tests and quizzes, do homework, or visit a teacher or student tutor for extra help.   The psychologist can hold some group sessions at this time. In order to make this time more productive, it is also used in combination with after-school teacher time once every three weeks for teachers' curriculum study groups.

      b. Interviewees told the team that some literacy assessment data has recently been available at the elementary level, but similar assessment data and support for math does not exist.

            i. With the introduction this year of a balanced literacy program, the elementary school has used the Fountas and Pinnell BAS for formative assessment of K-6 literacy skills and K-1 students have already been tested a second time.

      c. Teachers were clearly and consistently observed conducting frequent formative assessments to check for understanding and inform instruction in 54 percent of elementary classrooms and in 47 percent of secondary classrooms.

F. Interviewees said that the district has limited resources for Tier 2 support.

    1. Districtwide, but particularly at the secondary level, interviewees frequently mentioned extra help before or after school or use of the directed study as the usual method of providing assistance. While teachers may offer some instruction during directed study, students also do homework, make up quizzes, and visit guidance---activities not typically associated with formal interventions.

Impact: Without teachers who are fully trained in strategies to reach all learners and who work systematically with each other to group students for effective learning and to coordinate services, it is difficult for students in general education to reach their full potential. Good assessment information and follow up are critical to effective intervention practices. Without a comprehensive, coordinated set of interventions, the district risks providing students with interventions based on their availability rather than on the degree to which they meet individual students' needs.

16. Students with disabilities who receive instruction in an inclusion or partial inclusion setting may not receive full access to the curriculum. Some students with disabilities are not able to access a full system of support within the district.

A. Students with disabilities are often removed from the regular classroom to receive services.

    1. When Tier 2 services are administered to regular education students at the same time as students with disabilities, all of those children may be moved to a separate room. This practice is called "reverse inclusion" in the district.

      a. Staff said that there was a "lot of pullout and some inclusion."

    2. Teachers and administrators said that at grade levels, students with disabilities were clustered in one classroom and not instructed in the most inclusionary setting possible.

      a. At the elementary school, each grade has one inclusion classroom and one classroom that do not have any students with disabilities.

3. Although some observers saw students in separate classrooms receiving instruction that mirrored the regular curriculum, interviewees and observers said that, in other special education classrooms, the instruction did not appear to provide appropriate support or was not sufficiently challenging.

B. Special education teachers are not able to participate in curriculum meetings with the regular education staff unless they can find coverage.

C. The district has services for students on the autism spectrum through grade 4 but no in-district transition program or services through high school other than resource rooms for students with multiple disabilities.

Impact: When students with disabilities are not educated in the most rigorous, educationally appropriate environment and provided access to the full curriculum, they do not have equal access to a high-quality education that readies them for college and career.

17. **The district is not providing clear expectations for student attendance or follow-through practices to make sure students stay in school. This has contributed to consistently high rates of chronic absence in grades 10, 11, and 12 in recent years.**

A. Chronic absence is defined as the percentage of students that are absent for ten or more days in a school year.

1. According to ESE data, in the 2013-2014 school year, the rates of chronic absence for grades 10, 11, and 12 were 18 percent, 26.5 percent, and 15.2 percent, respectively.

2. The rates of chronic absence at the high school were 23.8 percent in 2011-2012, 27.8 percent in 2012-2013, and 23.6 percent in 2013-2014.

3. The rate of chronic absence in grades 4 and 8 in 2013-2014 was also elevated at 9.3 percent.

B. The high school student handbook limits the penalty for unexcused absence of more than five days per quarter to loss of participation credit; there is no loss of graduation credit.

C. Interviewees said that the school committee does not have a policy on attendance.

D. Interviews and a document review showed that the district has some credit recovery options for those who have failed courses.

1. The district offers a summer course for students who have failed English as long as their failing grade did not fall below 55 percent.

a. The school also accepts summer school credits from schools in other districts although the student's family must provide transportation.

2. Students may replace lost credits by completing a School-to-Work program. They must find employment and document 180 days on the job to the school.

3. The high school also offers an online program, Adventa, although it is not widely used.

4. Students may re-take the failed course the following year.

Impact: Many students in North Brookfield are missing too much instructional time. The more students come to school, the more likely they are to be academically successful.

Financial and Asset Management

18. **Because of its small size and reduced resources, the district is challenged to find the most effective allocation of resources to accomplish ambitious improvement goals.**

    A. The district spends below the median for districts of similar size and below the state average.

       1. Total in-district per-pupil spending was lower than the median in-district per-pupil spending for 10 K-12 districts of similar size (<1,000 students) for fiscal year 2013: $12,542 compared with the median of $14,215.

       2. In fiscal year 2014 the percentage of net school spending (NSS) above requirement was 8.3 percent, less than the state average, which is about 15 percent above the NSS requirement.

    B. There is a capital plan but interviewees said that the town is challenged to accommodate all the needs.

    C. Teachers and administrators reported the need for more materials to support student learning.

    D. Staffing losses have burdened administrators.

       1. Leadership positions have been consolidated or eliminated resulting in no assistant principals coaches, or department heads as well as no licensed business manager or person having dedicated responsibility for oversight of curriculum, instruction, assessment and professional development across the district. (See the Leadership and Governance Challenge finding above.)

       2. The superintendent and the two principals have taken on leadership responsibility for curriculum, instruction, and assessment in addition to other responsibilities associated with their positions.

       3. Teachers reported concerns related to loss of staff.

Impact: Reduced resources have impeded the district from moving forward with important initiatives and programs to improve student achievement.

North Brookfield Public Schools District Review
Recommendations

Leadership and Governance /Financial and Asset Management

1. **As part of the development of the new District Improvement Plan that will drive improvement efforts, the district should ensure that decisions about the allocation of resources are based on student performance data and district and school priorities.**

   A. The district should continue the process of developing a District Improvement Plan and School Improvement Plans.

   B. The district should design the 2015-2016 budget to allocate resources to support the priorities of the new District Improvement Plan. This may mean the reallocation of resources from current programs.

      1. The budget document should communicate district and school goals and objectives---and the ways in which the budget is aligned to them---to all stakeholders.

   C. The district should continue to seek other sources of revenue including plans and strategies to bring back choice-out students and students currently in out-of-district placements, as appropriate.

Recommended resources:

- ESE's *Planning for Success* tools (http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/success/) support the improvement planning process by spotlighting practices, characteristics, and behaviors that support effective planning and implementation and meet existing state requirements for improvement planning.

- School Finance Statistical Comparisons (http://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/statistics/): comparisons of per-pupil expenditure, long-term enrollment, teacher salaries, and special education direct expenditure trends.

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

Benefits: Allocation of resources in accordance with student needs and district and school priorities will help meet the challenges of the district's small size and reduced resources. Communication in the budget document of goals and objectives and the budget's alignment to them will help the entire community understand the needs in the district that are driving the budget---and may lead to stronger support for improvement initiatives.

Curriculum and Instruction

2. **The district should develop a coherent and aligned system of curriculum, instruction, and assessment and further articulate and support its instructional priorities. The district's forthcoming DIP, SIPs, and professional development planning should be based on this system.**

   A. The district should ensure that all ELA and math K-12 curricula or curriculum units are documented and aligned in a timely way with the *2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks*. Teachers should work collaboratively to accomplish this.

      1. Curriculum should be vertically aligned across grade levels and schools and horizontally aligned to literacy anchor standards and other power standards identified by the district.

      2. Curriculum development and documentation should include assessment design as an integral component of the process from the initial stages.

      3. The new superintendent should consider requesting assistance from her 14 fellow superintendents who participate in the Southern Worcester County Educational Collaborative (SWCEC). Member districts may be willing to share their curriculum maps and aligned curricula to provide a template/model to create district-specific curricula. The SWCEC may also have other helpful resources.

   B. The district should support teacher leadership and growth by providing opportunities for teachers to have responsibility for instructional leadership and mentoring.

   C. The district should further articulate the district's instructional priorities; design assessment strategies that promote student understanding, student engagement, rigor, and higher-order thinking skills; and support teachers in their implementation.

      1. Administrators should continue to monitor classroom instruction and provide timely, constructive feedback.

   D. Correspondingly, these practices should form the core of the DIP and SIPs and be fostered by the district's professional development planning and programming.

Recommended resources:

- ESE's *Common Core State Standards Initiative* web page (http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/commoncore/) includes links to several resources designed to support the transition to the *2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks*, which incorporate the Common Core.

- *Creating Curriculum Units at the Local Level* (http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/model/mcu_guide.pdf) is a guidance document that can serve as a resource for professional study groups, as a reference for anyone wanting to engage in

curriculum development, or simply as a way to gain a better understanding of the process used to develop Massachusetts' Model Curriculum Units.

- *Creating Model Curriculum Units* (http://youtu.be/rzpeLQMKLKc?list=PLTuqmiQ9ssquWrLjKc9h5h2cSpDVZqe6t) is a series of videos that captures the collaboration and deep thinking by curriculum design teams. Topics include developing essential questions, establishing goals, creating embedded performance assessments, designing lesson plans, selecting high-quality materials, and evaluating curriculum units.

- *The Model Curriculum Unit and Lesson Plan Template* (http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/model/MCUtemplate.pdf) includes *Understanding by Design* elements.

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

- *Curriculum Mapping: Raising the Rigor of Teaching and Learning* (http://www.doe.mass.edu/CandI/model/maps/CurriculumMaps.pdf) is a presentation that provides definitions of curriculum mapping, examples of model maps, and descriptions of curriculum mapping processes.

- Sample curriculum maps (http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/model/maps/default.html) were designed to assist schools and districts with making sense of students' learning experiences over time, ensuring a viable and guaranteed curriculum, establishing learning targets, and aligning curriculum to ensure a consistent implementation of the MA Frameworks.

Benefits of implementing this recommendation would include updated and clearly articulated alignment of K-12 curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices. This will help to ensure that all students will have equal access to a high-quality education that promotes higher levels of achievement and prepares them for college and career.

Assessment

3. **As the district continues to develop curricula in core academic subjects, it should ensure that a broad range of formative, summative, and benchmark assessments are developed and included in curricula. The district should ensure that data analyses are regularly used systemwide to guide decision-making for curricular and instructional improvements, professional development, and supervision.**

   A. The district should ensure that a comprehensive, balanced set of assessments are administered and analyzed in all subjects at all grade levels.

   B. The district should develop uniform and integrated policies, structures, and practices, needed for the continuous collection, analysis, and dissemination of student performance and other

data K-12. This should include specific strategies, timelines, and clear expectations for all schools, grade levels, and subject areas in the district.

C. Targeted and sustained professional development should be provided for all staff in the development of valid and reliable student assessments, including District Determined Measures (DDMs). Ongoing training in the collection, analysis, and use of student performance data should be provided in every school, grade level, and content area.

D. The district should ensure that teachers at all elementary grade levels and in each high school department have regularly scheduled common planning time to collaborate.

1. School leaders and teachers should set expectations and norms for common planning time.

    a. One possible approach is forming professional learning communities (PLCs).

2. Teachers should collaboratively analyze and discuss assessment data to fine-tune curriculum and plan instruction for individuals and groups.

E. Data presentations and discussions should become a routine component of communication in the district. District and school leaders should use data to provide updates on improvement initiatives, highlight teaching and learning successes, and identify areas of concern.

F. The district should ensure that professional staff are provided convenient, real-time access to student performance data, as well as to other relevant academic and demographic data, as appropriate.

Recommended resources:

*   ESE's *Assessment Literacy Self-Assessment and Gap Analysis Tool* (http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/ddm/webinar/PartI-GapAnalysis.pdf) is intended to support districts in understanding where their educators fit overall on a continuum of assessment literacy. After determining where the district as a whole generally falls on the continuum, districts can determine potential next steps.

*   The *PLC Expansion Project* website (http://plcexpansionproject.weebly.com/) is designed to support schools and districts in their efforts to establish and sustain cultures that promote Professional Learning Communities.

Benefits: Implementing this recommendation will mean a significantly expanded ability to continuously monitor student academic progress and to accurately measure student achievement, which will lead to improved instruction and student support services, enhanced curriculum, and better informed educational policy and decision making. In addition, the district will become better able to meet the increasing data demands of educator evaluation as well as to identify and develop professional development programs and services. Ultimately, the district will provide all students with greatly improved learning opportunities and academic outcomes.

Human Resources and Professional Development

4. The district should create and implement a professional development plan aligned to district improvement initiatives.

    A. The district should outline and document a set of learning experiences for its educators that is systematic, sustained, and aligned.

        1. Working with the recently formed Professional Development Committee (PDC), district leaders should create a professional development plan for the district that is aligned with the District Improvement Plan and the district's instructional priorities (see the Leadership and Governance and Curriculum and Instruction recommendations above).

            a. As part of the plan, the PDC should identify professional development needs, determine how they might be met, and recommend adjustments in professional development practices to meet them.

        2. The plan should address needs indicated by student performance data and trends from classroom observations. It should include goals focused on improving teacher practice and student outcomes.

    B. Professional development requires a long-term commitment by administrators and embedded support structures, such as facilitated team meetings, to convey and promote a common understanding of instructional practices expected from all educators.

Recommended resources:

- The *Massachusetts Standards for Professional Development* (http://www.doe.mass.edu/pd/standards.pdf) describe, identify, and characterize what high quality learning experiences should look like for educators.

- ESE's *Professional Development Self- Assessment Guidebook* (http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/sss/dsac/pd/PDProviderGuide.pdf) provides tools for analyzing professional development offerings' alignment with the Massachusetts High-Quality Professional Development Standards, the Educator Evaluation Framework, and the Standards and Indicators of Effective Practice.

- *Quick Reference Guide: Educator Evaluation & Professional Development* (http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/QRG-ProfessionalDevelopment.pdf) describes how educator evaluation and professional development can be used as mutually reinforcing systems to improve educator practice and student outcomes.

- *The Relationship between High Quality Professional Development and Educator Evaluation* (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-

[aDxtEDncg&list=PLTuqmiQ9ssqt9EmOcWkDEHPKBqRvurebm&index=1](https://...)) is a video presentation that includes examples from real districts.

Benefits: Developing a professional development plan that is data driven and guided by district improvement efforts and includes expected learning experiences for educators and student achievement outcomes will help move the district toward high-quality professional development. A high-quality professional development program coupled with the time and resources already available in the district will likely raise the quality of education for all students and encourage the professional growth of educators.

Student Support

5. **District leaders, teachers, and staff should work collaboratively to improve practices and programs so that they are more effective in supporting and improving learning for all students.**

   A. District leaders should work collaboratively with teachers to improve practices with the goal of full integration and continuity of support services.

      1. District leaders should analyze student performance data from multiple sources over time to better target student support and to plan improvements.

      2. All teaching and support staff should receive focused professional development in effectively using differentiation and accommodations to create classrooms where all students have equal access to high-quality curriculum.

Recommended resources:

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

   o MTSS *Self-Assessment Overview* (includes links to the MTSS Self-Assessment tool and How to Complete the MTSS Self-Assessment): http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/sss/mtss/sa/default.html

- ESE's Early Warning Indicator System (http://www.doe.mass.edu/edwin/analytics/ewis.html) is a tool to provide information to districts about the likelihood that their students will reach key academic goals. Districts can use the tool in conjunction with other data and sources of information to better target student supports and interventions and to examine school-level patterns over time in order to address systemic issues that may impede students' ability to meet academic goals.

Benefits: By implementing this recommendation, the district will improve programs and practices so that all students have equal access to high-quality instruction that meets their individual needs.

6. **The district should ensure that students with disabilities are taught in the most inclusive, educationally appropriate environment.**

    A. Students who are in full inclusion should spend all of their time in the regular education classroom. They should receive instruction and support from regular education teachers, special education teachers, or paraprofessionals, individually or in groups while in the regular education classroom.

    B. The district should ensure that special education teachers and paraprofessionals are able to participate in curriculum meetings and teacher planning time so that they can assist students with disabilities to access the regular curriculum. They should also receive professional development on curriculum and other topics with regular education teachers for the purpose of preparing all educators to deliver the district curriculum.

    C. The special education department should ensure that students with special needs receive a continuum of services from entry through exit in the district.

Benefits: by implementing this recommendation, the district will give students with disabilities equal access to a high-quality curriculum and prepare them for college and career.

7. **The district and school committee should make clear that regular attendance is expected and the norm. It should establish an attendance policy to improve students' attendance, particularly at the secondary level.**

    A. The district should establish an attendance policy so that students are expected to be in school daily. Absence for any reason should not total more than 10 days per year.

    B. The district should identify someone in each school to be charged with tracking student attendance and communicating with parents, including sending the first notice about absence.

        1. The designated person should notify parents when their children are in danger of not receiving credit.

    C. Credit recovery options should be based on academic options that are reasonable replacements for the curriculum or instruction time lost.

    D. The district should consider providing more opportunities for active, hands-on coursework that would better meet the needs of students with diverse learning styles and interests.

Recommended resources:

- The *Contextual Learning Portal* (http://resources21.org/cl/default.asp) is a searchable collection of contextual learning projects. Contextual learning projects engage students in academic work applied to a context related to their lives, communities, workplaces or the wider world.

- *Service Learning Promising Practices* (http://www.doe.mass.edu/csl/practices.aspx) are activities, projects, strategies, and approaches that have been shown to be effective through experience and have led to positive outcomes for youth. ESE's *Service Learning Resources* web page (http://www.doe.mass.edu/csl/info.html) includes links to websites, publications, and project ideas.

- *Youth Voices - How High Schools can Respond to the Needs of Students and Help Prevent Dropouts* (http://www.doe.mass.edu/ccr/YouthFocusGroup.pdf) is a report based on youth focus groups across the Commonwealth who shared their insight about what they liked most and least about school; why students drop out; and how schools should be improved.

Benefits: An attendance policy with clear guidelines and reasonable credit recovery options should improve attendance, enhance student learning, and prepare students for postsecondary and workplace expectations.

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

Review Team Members

The review was conducted from January 5-8, 2015, by the following team of independent ESE consultants.

1. Sally Dias, Ed. D., leadership and governance, financial and asset management

2. Peter McGinn, Ed. D., curriculum and instruction, professional development

3. Linda L. Greyser, Ed. D., assessment, human resources, *review team coordinator*

4. Kathy Lopez-Natale, Ph. D., human resources and student support

District Review Activities

The following activities were conducted during the review:

The team conducted interviews with the following financial personnel: superintendent's financial and confidential secretary, town treasurer, town accountant.

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

The review team conducted interviews with the following representatives of the teachers' association: president, vice chair, professional rights and responsibilities chair, treasurer, and secretary.

The team conducted interviews/focus groups with the following central office administrators: superintendent, director of pupil services, and facilities director.

The team visited the following schools: North Brookfield Elementary School (PK-6) and North Brookfield Junior/Senior High School (grades 7-12).

During school visits, the team conducted interviews with two principals and focus groups with 22 elementary school teachers and 18 middle and high school teachers.

The team observed 39 classes in the district: 15 at the junior/senior high school and 24 at the elementary school.

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

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

o   Data on the district's staffing and finances.

- o Published educational reports on the district by ESE, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), and the former Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA).

- o District documents such as district and school improvement plans, school committee policies, curriculum documents, summaries of student assessments, job descriptions, collective bargaining agreements, evaluation tools for staff, handbooks, school schedules, and the district's end-of-year financial reports.

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

Site Visit Schedule

Monday 01/05/2015	Tuesday 01/06/2015	Wednesday 01/07/2015	Thursday 01/08/2015
Orientation with district leaders and principals; interviews with district staff and principals; document reviews; interview with teachers' association representatives.	Interviews with district staff and principals; interview with town officials; review of personnel files; teacher focus groups.	Interviews with district and school leaders; parent focus group; interviews with school committee members; visit to North Brookfield Junior/Senior High School for classroom observations.	Interviews with school leaders; follow-up interviews; district review team meeting; visit to North Brookfield Elementary School for classroom observations; emerging themes meeting with district leaders and principals.

Appendix B: Enrollment, Performance, Expenditures

Table B1a: North Brookfield Public Schools
2014-2015 Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity

Student Group	District	Percent of Total	State	Percent of Total
African-American	5	0.9%	83,556	8.7%
Asian	3	0.5%	60,050	6.3%
Hispanic	32	5.6%	171,036	17.9%
Native American	--	--	2,238	0.2%
White	509	88.8%	608,453	63.7%
Native Hawaiian	--	--	930	0.1%
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	24	4.2%	29,581	3.1%
All Students	573	100.0%	955,844	100.0%

Note: As of October 1, 2015

Table B1b: North Brookfield Public Schools
2014-2015 Student Enrollment by High Needs Populations

Student Groups	District			State		
	N	Percent of High Needs	Percent of District	N	Percent of High Needs	Percent of State
Students w/ disabilities	105	--	18.2%	165,060	--	17.1%
Low Income	--	--	--	--	--	--
ELLs and Former ELLs	--	--	--	81,146	--	8.5%
All high needs students	--	--	--	--	--	--

Notes: As of October 1, 2014. District and state numbers and percentages for students with disabilities and high needs students are calculated including students in out-of-district placements. Total district enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 578; total state enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 966,391.

Table B2a: North Brookfield Public Schools
English Language Arts Performance, 2011-2014

Grade and Measure		Number Included (2014)	Spring MCAS Year					Gains and Declines	
			2011	2012	2013	2014	State 2014	4-Year Trend	2 Year Trend
3	CPI	48	83.8	85.4	91	78.6	82.6	-5.2	-12.4
	P+	48	61.0%	66.0%	70.0%	42.0%	57.0%	-19.0%	-28.0%
4	CPI	52	86.7	77.3	85	81.7	79.1	-5	-3.3
	P+	52	65.0%	52.0%	58.0%	54.0%	54.0%	-11.0%	-4.0%
	SGP	51	61	32	44	41	49	-20	-3
5	CPI	41	78.5	80.8	82.9	83.5	84.5	5	0.6
	P+	41	58.0%	54.0%	61.0%	59.0%	64.0%	1.0%	-2.0%
	SGP	36	35	24	38	40	50	5	2
6	CPI	53	85.9	85.9	87.5	86.8	85.8	0.9	-0.7
	P+	53	64.0%	65.0%	67.0%	68.0%	68.0%	4.0%	1.0%
	SGP	50	55.5	49	52	49	50	-6.5	-3
7	CPI	48	81.3	87.8	80.1	84.4	88.3	3.1	4.3
	P+	48	52.0%	77.0%	55.0%	58.0%	72.0%	6.0%	3.0%
	SGP	44	13	39	36.5	26	50	13	-10.5
8	CPI	40	92.1	90.4	90.1	83.1	90.2	-9	-7
	P+	40	85.0%	77.0%	76.0%	65.0%	79.0%	-20.0%	-11.0%
	SGP	39	72.5	49	37	48	50	-24.5	11
10	CPI	44	98.1	97.1	98.5	94.3	96	-3.8	-4.2
	P+	44	93.0%	94.0%	94.0%	89.0%	90.0%	-4.0%	-5.0%
	SGP	38	46	45	42	41.5	50	-4.5	-0.5
All	CPI	326	86.4	85.7	87.5	84.6	86.7	-1.8	-2.9
	P+	326	68.0%	68.0%	68.0%	62.0%	69.0%	-6.0%	-6.0%
	SGP	258	46	40	41	41	50	-5	0

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

Table B2b: North Brookfield Public Schools
Mathematics Performance, 2011-2014

Grade and Measure		Number Included (2014)	Spring MCAS Year					Gains and Declines	
			2011	2012	2013	2014	State 2014	4-Year Trend	2 Year Trend
3	CPI	48	81	74.4	80.7	71.9	85.1	-9.1	-8.8
	P+	48	56.0%	50.0%	55.0%	46.0%	68.0%	-10.0%	-9.0%
4	CPI	51	75.5	71.3	76.2	76.5	79.6	1	0.3
	P+	51	41.0%	41.0%	45.0%	47.0%	52.0%	6.0%	2.0%
	SGP	50	37	32.5	42	55	50	18	13
5	CPI	41	67	76	78.7	76.8	80.4	9.8	-1.9
	P+	41	44.0%	56.0%	63.0%	46.0%	61.0%	2.0%	-17.0%
	SGP	38	27	50	54	50	50	23	-4
6	CPI	53	83.6	83.7	80.8	81.6	80.2	-2	0.8
	P+	53	68.0%	67.0%	65.0%	66.0%	60.0%	-2.0%	1.0%
	SGP	50	76	82	59	50	50	-26	-9
7	CPI	48	60.2	73	65.3	68.2	72.5	8	2.9
	P+	48	34.0%	46.0%	41.0%	46.0%	50.0%	12.0%	5.0%
	SGP	44	38	36	42.5	37	50	-1	-5.5
8	CPI	40	71.2	64.7	87.5	64.4	74.7	-6.8	-23.1
	P+	40	38.0%	39.0%	71.0%	38.0%	52.0%	0.0%	-33.0%
	SGP	39	44	47	79	31	50	-13	-48
10	CPI	44	85	90.7	86	83.5	90	-1.5	-2.5
	P+	44	65.0%	80.0%	74.0%	61.0%	79.0%	-4.0%	-13.0%
	SGP	37	45	48.5	41.5	43	50	-2	1.5
All	CPI	325	74.5	75.6	79	74.9	80.3	0.4	-4.1
	P+	325	49.0%	53.0%	59.0%	50.0%	60.0%	1.0%	-9.0%
	SGP	258	42.5	47	55	46	50	3.5	-9

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

Table B2c: North Brookfield Public Schools
Science and Technology/Engineering Performance, 2011-2014

Grade and Measure		Number Included (2014)	Spring MCAS Year					Gains and Declines	
			2011	2012	2013	2014	State 2014	4-Year Trend	2 Year Trend
5	CPI	41	68.5	75.5	71.3	76.2	79	7.7	4.9
	P+	41	34.0%	49.0%	33.0%	41.0%	53.0%	7.0%	8.0%
8	CPI	40	67.8	62.7	68.4	60.6	72.4	-7.2	-7.8
	P+	40	29.0%	16.0%	34.0%	18.0%	42.0%	-11.0%	-16.0%
10	CPI	36	91.7	95.2	89.3	89.6	87.9	-2.1	0.3
	P+	36	82.0%	85.0%	71.0%	69.0%	71.0%	-13.0%	-2.0%
All	CPI	117	73.9	74.4	74.6	75	79.6	1.1	0.4
	P+	117	44.0%	43.0%	43.0%	42.0%	55.0%	-2.0%	-1.0%

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

Table B3a: North Brookfield Public Schools
English Language Arts (All Grades)
Performance for Selected Subgroups Compared to State, 2011-2014

Group and Measure			Number Included (2014)	Spring MCAS Year				Gains and Declines	
				2011	2012	2013	2014	4 Year Trend	2-Year Trend
High Needs	District	CPI	160	75.7	79.3	79.5	75.6	-0.1	-3.9
		P+	160	48.0%	57.0%	49.0%	45.0%	-3.0%	-4.0%
		SGP	117	46	35	38	36	-10	-2
	State	CPI	241,069	77	76.5	76.8	77.1	0.1	0.3
		P+	241,069	48.0%	48.0%	48.0%	50.0%	2.0%	2.0%
		SGP	183,766	46	46	47	47	1	0
Low Income	District	CPI	133	80.5	83	82.1	79.3	-1.2	-2.8
		P+	133	57.0%	63.0%	53.0%	50.0%	-7.0%	-3.0%
		SGP	98	53.5	43	38.5	33.5	-20	-5
	State	CPI	189,662	77.1	76.7	77.2	77.5	0.4	0.3
		P+	189,662	49.0%	50.0%	50.0%	51.0%	2.0%	1.0%
		SGP	145,621	46	45	47	47	1	0
Students w/ disabilities	District	CPI	66	57.8	54.3	59.5	59.5	1.7	0
		P+	66	21.0%	17.0%	18.0%	21.0%	0.0%	3.0%
		SGP	44	29	18	34.5	40.5	11.5	6
	State	CPI	90,777	68.3	67.3	66.8	66.6	-1.7	-0.2
		P+	90,777	30.0%	31.0%	30.0%	31.0%	1.0%	1.0%
		SGP	66,688	42	43	43	43	1	0
English language learners or Former ELLs	District	CPI	0	--	--	--	--	--	--
		P+	0	--	--	--	--	--	--
		SGP	0	--	--	--	--	--	--
	State	CPI	47,477	66.2	66.2	67.4	67.8	1.6	0.4
		P+	47,477	33.0%	34.0%	35.0%	36.0%	3.0%	1.0%
		SGP	32,239	50	51	53	54	4	1
All students	District	CPI	326	86.4	85.7	87.5	84.6	-1.8	-2.9
		P+	326	68.0%	68.0%	68.0%	62.0%	-6.0%	-6.0%
		SGP	258	46	40	41	41	-5	0
	State	CPI	488,744	87.2	86.7	86.8	86.7	-0.5	-0.1
		P+	488,744	69.0%	69.0%	69.0%	69.0%	0.0%	0.0%
		SGP	390,904	50	50	51	50	0	-1

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

Table B3b: North Brookfield Public Schools
Mathematics (All Grades)
Performance for Selected Subgroups Compared to State, 2011-2014

Group and Measure			Number Included (2014)	Spring MCAS Year				Gains and Declines	
				2011	2012	2013	2014	4 Year Trend	2-Year Trend
High Needs	District	CPI	159	64.2	63.1	67.8	63.5	-0.7	-4.3
		P+	159	34.0%	35.0%	42.0%	33.0%	-1.0%	-9.0%
		SGP	117	41	41	49	42	1	-7
	State	CPI	241,896	67.1	67	68.6	68.4	1.3	-0.2
		P+	241,896	37.0%	37.0%	40.0%	40.0%	3.0%	0.0%
		SGP	184,937	46	46	46	47	1	1
Low Income	District	CPI	132	70.6	68.3	71.6	68	-2.6	-3.6
		P+	132	41.0%	40.0%	47.0%	37.0%	-4.0%	-10.0%
		SGP	97	45	43	53	42	-3	-11
	State	CPI	190,183	67.3	67.3	69	68.8	1.5	-0.2
		P+	190,183	38.0%	38.0%	41.0%	41.0%	3.0%	0.0%
		SGP	146,536	46	45	46	47	1	1
Students w/ disabilities	District	CPI	65	41.2	38.5	43.3	43.8	2.6	0.5
		P+	65	12.0%	8.0%	10.0%	14.0%	2.0%	4.0%
		SGP	45	31	18	37.5	42	11	4.5
	State	CPI	91,181	57.7	56.9	57.4	57.1	-0.6	-0.3
		P+	91,181	22.0%	21.0%	22.0%	22.0%	0.0%	0.0%
		SGP	67,155	43	43	42	43	0	1
English language learners or Former ELLs	District	CPI	0	--	--	--	--	--	--
		P+	0	--	--	--	--	--	--
		SGP	0	--	--	--	--	--	--
	State	CPI	47,847	62	61.6	63.9	63.8	1.8	-0.1
		P+	47,847	32.0%	32.0%	35.0%	36.0%	4.0%	1.0%
		SGP	32,607	52	52	53	52	0	-1
All students	District	CPI	325	74.5	75.6	79	74.9	0.4	-4.1
		P+	325	49.0%	53.0%	59.0%	50.0%	1.0%	-9.0%
		SGP	258	42.5	47	55	46	3.5	-9
	State	CPI	490,288	79.9	79.9	80.8	80.3	0.4	-0.5
		P+	490,288	58.0%	59.0%	61.0%	60.0%	2.0%	-1.0%
		SGP	392,953	50	50	51	50	0	-1

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

Table B3c: North Brookfield Public Schools
Science and Technology/Engineering (All Grades)
Performance for Selected Subgroups Compared to State, 2011-2014

Group and Measure			Number Included (2014)	Spring MCAS Year				Gains and Declines	
				2011	2012	2013	2014	4 Year Trend	2-Year Trend
High Needs	District	CPI	58	62.3	64.1	63.7	65.5	3.2	1.8
		P+	58	30.0%	24.0%	22.0%	28.0%	-2.0%	6.0%
	State	CPI	100,582	63.8	65	66.4	67.3	3.5	0.9
		P+	100,582	28.0%	31.0%	31.0%	33.0%	5.0%	2.0%
Low Income	District	CPI	45	69.4	66	66.9	71.1	1.7	4.2
		P+	45	38.0%	26.0%	25.0%	31.0%	-7.0%	6.0%
	State	CPI	79,199	62.8	64.5	66.1	66.8	4	0.7
		P+	79,199	28.0%	31.0%	32.0%	33.0%	5.0%	1.0%
Students w/ disabilities	District	CPI	25	45.2	45	50	50	4.8	0
		P+	25	14.0%	7.0%	5.0%	12.0%	-2.0%	7.0%
	State	CPI	3,8628	59.2	58.7	59.8	60.1	0.9	0.3
		P+	38,628	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	22.0%	2.0%	2.0%
English language learners or Former ELLs	District	CPI	0	--	--	--	--	--	--
		P+	0	--	--	--	--	--	--
	State	CPI	16,871	50.3	51.4	54	54	3.7	0
		P+	16,871	15.0%	17.0%	19.0%	18.0%	3.0%	-1.0%
All students	District	CPI	117	73.9	74.4	74.6	75	1.1	0.4
		P+	117	44.0%	43.0%	43.0%	42.0%	-2.0%	-1.0%
	State	CPI	211,440	77.6	78.6	79	79.6	2	0.6
		P+	211,440	52.0%	54.0%	53.0%	55.0%	3.0%	2.0%

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

Table B4: North Brookfield Public Schools
Annual Grade 9-12 Dropout Rates, 2011-2014

	School Year Ending				Change 2010-2013		Change 2012-2013		State (2014)
	2011	2012	2013	2014	Percentage Points	Percent	Percentage Points	Percent	
All students	2.5%	0.7%	2.1%	0.7%	-1.8	-72.0%	-1.4	-66.7%	2.0%

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

Table B5a: North Brookfield Public Schools
Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates, 2011-2014

Group	Number Included (2014)	School Year Ending				Change 2011-2014		Change 2013-2014		State (2014)
		2011	2012	2013	2014	Percentage Points	Percent Change	Percentage Points	Percent Change	
High needs	13	81.5%	87.0%	75.0%	76.9%	-4.6	-5.6%	1.9	2.5%	76.5%
Low income	10	85.7%	85.7%	73.3%	70.0%	-15.7	-18.3%	-3.3	-4.5%	75.5%
Students w/ disabilities	--	70.0%	--	83.3%	--	--	--	--	--	69.1%
English language learners or Former ELLs	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	63.9%
All students	34	88.9%	87.5%	84.6%	88.2%	-0.7	-0.8%	3.6	4.3%	86.1%

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

Table B5b: North Brookfield Public Schools
Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates, 2010-2013

Group	Number Included (2013)	School Year Ending				Change 2010-2013		Change 2012-2013		State (2013)
		2010	2011	2012	2013	Percentage Points	Percent Change	Percentage Points	Percent Change	
High needs	16	83.3%	81.5%	91.3%	75.0%	-8.3	-10.0%	-16.3	-17.9%	79.2%
Low income	15	81.8%	85.7%	90.5%	73.3%	-8.5	-10.4%	-17.2	-19.0%	78.3%
Students w/ disabilities	6	--	70.0%	--	83.3%	--	--	--	--	72.9%
English language learners or Former ELLs	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	70.9%
All students	39	92.5%	88.9%	92.5%	87.2%	-5.3	-5.7%	-5.3	-5.7%	87.7%

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

Table B6: North Brookfield Public Schools

Attendance Rates, 2011-2014

Group	School Year Ending				Change 2011-2014		Change 2013-2014		State (2014)
	2011	2012	2013	2014	Percentage Points	Percent Change	Percentage Points	Percent Change	
All students	95.0%	95.3%	95.0%	95.2%	0.2	0.2%	0.2	0.2%	94.9%

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

Table B7: North Brookfield Public Schools

Suspension Rates, 2010-2013

Group	School Year Ending				Change 2011-2014		Change 2013-2014		State (2014)
	2011	2012	2013	2014	Percentage Points	Percent Change	Percentage Points	Percent Change	
In-School Suspension Rate	7.0%	3.6%	0.7%	1.8%	-5.2	-74.3%	1.1	157.1%	2.1%
Out-of-School Suspension Rate	4.0%	4.2%	2.1%	1.2%	-2.8	-70.0%	-0.9	-42.9%	3.9%

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

Table B8: North Brookfield Public Schools

Expenditures, Chapter 70 State Aid, and Net School Spending Fiscal Years 2012–2014

	FY12		FY13		FY14	
	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual
Expenditures						
From local appropriations for schools:						
By school committee	$5,385,718	$5,501,367	$5,503,835	$5,503,835	$5,618,838	$5,624,591
By municipality	$2,985,294	$3,045,184	$2,883,775	$3,031,635	$2,981,387	$3,285,563
Total from local appropriations	$8,371,012	$8,546,551	$8,387,610	$8,535,470	$8,600,225	$8,910,154
From revolving funds and grants	--	$1,216,492	--	$913,031	--	$1,148,130
Total expenditures	--	$9,763,043	--	$9,448,501	--	$10,058,284
Chapter 70 aid to education program						
Chapter 70 state aid*	--	$4,129,763	--	$4,155,363	--	$4,171,238
Required local contribution	--	$2,543,410	--	$2,658,631	--	$2,707,976
Required net school spending**	--	$6,673,173	--	$6,813,994	--	$6,879,214
Actual net school spending	--	$6,975,296	--	$7,225,839	--	$7,447,461
Over/under required ($)	--	$302,123	--	$411,845	--	$568,247
Over/under required (%)	--	4.5	--	6.0	--	8.3

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

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

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

Data retrieved October 14, 2014, and January 12, 2015

Table B9: North Brookfield Public Schools
Expenditures Per In-District Pupil
Fiscal Years 2011-2013

Expenditure Category	2011	2012	2013
Administration	$613	$625	$669
Instructional leadership (district and school)	$552	$647	$807
Teachers	$4,571	$5,101	$4,809
Other teaching services	$875	$550	$995
Professional development	$189	$161	$148
Instructional materials, equipment and technology	$362	$432	$225
Guidance, counseling and testing services	$340	$369	$332
Pupil services	$1,223	$1,086	$901
Operations and maintenance	$1,122	$1,276	$1,236
Insurance, retirement and other fixed costs	$2,652	$2,679	$2,419
Total expenditures per in-district pupil	$12,498	$12,924	$12,542

Sources: Per-pupil expenditure reports on ESE website

Appendix C: Instructional Inventory

Learning Environment	By Grade Span	Evidence		
		None	Partial	Clear & Consistent
		(0)	**(1)**	**(2)**
1. Tone of interactions between teacher and students and among students is positive & respectful.	ES	0%	0%	100%
	MS			
	HS	0	0	100
	Total #			
	Total %			
2. Behavioral standards are clearly communicated and disruptions, if present, are managed effectively & equitably.	ES	0	4	96
	MS			
	HS	13	7	80
	Total #			
	Total %			
3. The physical arrangement of the classroom ensures a positive learning environment and provides all students with access to learning activities.	ES	0	4	96
	MS			
	HS	13	0	87
	Total #			
	Total %			
4. Classroom rituals and routines promote transitions with minimal loss of instructional time.	ES	0	0	100
	MS			
	HS	14	7	79
	Total #			
	Total %			
5. Multiple resources are available to meet all students' diverse learning needs.	ES	0	25	75
	MS			
	HS	40	20	40
	Total #			
	Total %			
6. The teacher demonstrates knowledge of subject and content.	ES	0	21	79
	MS			
	HS	0	27	73
	Total #			
	Total %			
7. The teacher plans and implements a lesson that reflects rigor and high expectations.	ES	29	46	25
	MS			
	HS	27	27	47
	Total #			
	Total %			

Teaching	By Grade Span	Evidence		
		None	Partial	Clear & Consistent
		(0)	(1)	(2)
8. The teacher communicates clear learning objective(s) aligned to the *2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks*.	ES	38%	8%	54%
	MS			
	HS	40	20	40
	Total #			
	Total %			
9. The teacher uses appropriate instructional strategies well matched to learning objective (s) and content.	ES	4	38	58
	MS			
	HS	13	40	47
	Total #			
	Total %			
10. The teacher uses appropriate modifications for English language learners and students with disabilities such as explicit language objective(s); direct instruction in vocabulary; presentation of content at multiple levels of complexity; and, differentiation of content, process, and/or products.	ES	52	4	43
	MS			
	HS	60	0	40
	Total #			
	Total %			
11. The teacher provides opportunities for students to engage in higher order thinking such as use of inquiry, exploration, application, analysis, synthesis, and/or evaluation of knowledge or concepts (Bloom's Taxonomy).	ES	42	8	50
	MS			
	HS	20	13	67
	Total #			
	Total %			
12. The teacher uses questioning techniques that require thoughtful responses that demonstrate understanding.	ES	13	33	54
	MS			
	HS	20	20	60
	Total #			
	Total %			
13. The teacher implements teaching strategies that promote a safe learning environment where students give opinions, make judgments, explore and investigate ideas.	ES	0	5	95
	MS			
	HS	0	20	80
	Total #			
	Total %			
14. The teacher paces the lesson to match content and meet students' learning needs.	ES	8	21	71
	MS			
	HS	13	40	47
	Total #			
	Total %			
15. The teacher conducts frequent formative assessments to check for understanding and inform instruction.	ES	25	21	54
	MS			
	HS	40	13	47
	Total #			
	Total %			
16. The teacher makes use of available technology to support instruction and enhance learning.	ES	74	9	17
	MS			
	HS	40	0	60
	Total #			
	Total %			

Learning	By Grade Span	Evidence		
		None	Partial	Clear & Consistent
		(0)	(1)	(2)
17. Students are engaged in challenging academic tasks.	ES	21%	33%	46%
	MS			
	HS	20	20	60
	Total #			
	Total %			
18. Students articulate their thinking verbally or in writing.	ES	13	13	74
	MS			
	HS	20	13	67
	Total #			
	Total %			
19. Students inquire, explore, apply, analyze, synthesize and/or evaluate knowledge or concepts (Bloom's Taxonomy).	ES	35	22	43
	MS			
	HS	40	0	60
	Total #			
	Total %			
20. Students elaborate about content and ideas when responding to questions.	ES	26	26	48
	MS			
	HS	47	7	47
	Total #			
	Total %			
21. Students make connections to prior knowledge, or real world experience, or can apply knowledge and understanding to other subjects.	ES	61	13	26
	MS			
	HS	53	13	33
	Total #			
	Total %			
22. Students use technology as a tool for learning and/or understanding.	ES	79	0	21
	MS			
	HS	80	13	7
	Total #			
	Total %			
23. Students assume responsibility for their own learning whether individually, in pairs, or in groups.	ES	8	8	83
	MS			
	HS	13	20	67
	Total #			
	Total %			
24. Student work demonstrates high quality and can serve as exemplars.	ES	67	21	13
	MS			
	HS	60	13	27
	Total #			
	Total %			