Review Protocol:
District Systems and Practices Addressing the Differentiated Needs of All Students

Spring 2009

Spring 2009 Reviews place emphasis on students with disabilities
Spring 2010 Reviews place emphasis on English language learners
Spring 2011 Reviews place emphasis on low-income students
Spring 2012 Reviews may consider racial and ethnic minorities

Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (ESE)
Division of Accountability, Partnership & Assistance
Center for School and District Accountability
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148

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Overview

Purpose:

The Center for School and District Accountability (SDA) in the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) is undertaking a series of reviews of school districts to determine how well district systems and practices support groups of students for whom an achievement gap exists. The reviews will focus in turn on how district systems and practices affect each of four groups of students: students with disabilities, English language learners, low-income students, and students who are members of racial minorities. The first set of reviews, to be conducted in May and June 2009, will be conducted in Agawam, Chelsea, Lexington, Quincy, Taunton, and Westwood, districts where data points to responsive and flexible school systems that are effective in supporting all learners, particularly students with disabilities, or where there is an interest in making these systems more effective.

Key Questions:

Three overarching key questions guide the work of the review team.

- **How do district and school leaders assume, communicate, and share responsibility for the achievement of all learners, especially those with disabilities?**
- **How does the district create greater capacity to support all learners?**
- **What technical assistance and monitoring activities from ESE are most useful to districts?**

Methodology:

To focus the analysis, the reviews will collect evidence in three critical domains: **(I) Leadership, (II) Curriculum Delivery, and (III) Human Resource Management and Professional Development.** The reviews will seek to identify those systems and practices that are most likely to be contributing to positive results, as well as those that may be impeding rapid improvement. Practices that are a part of these systems were identified from three sources: Educational Quality and Accountability standards, Program Quality Assurance Comprehensive Program Review criteria, and the 10 "essential conditions" in 603 CMR 2.03(6)(e). The three domains, organized by system with component practices, are detailed in Appendix F. Four team members will preview selected district documents and ESE data and reports before conducting a four-day site visit in the district. The four-member teams will consist of independent consultants with expertise in district and school leadership, governance, and financial management (to respond to domain I); curriculum, instruction, and assessment (to respond to domain II); human resource management and professional development (to respond to domain III); and special education (to collect evidence across all three domains; see indicators in italics under each domain in Appendix F).

Reports:

Reports will include a description of the **district context and background**, **demographic and student achievement data**, and **findings and recommendations** under the three domains.

The Review Process

Selection of districts:

- Districts were selected for participation in the 2009 differentiated needs reviews, focusing on students with disabilities, on the basis of
  - performance on the Coordinated Program Review and/or positive indicators showing MCAS test improvement; or
  - interest on the part of the district in having an evaluation of its support systems for diverse learners, especially students with disabilities.
- District participation in spring 2009 is voluntary to allow ESE to pilot a new process; reviews will be customized as requested to meet the district's needs.

Site visit team formation:

- At least four independent consultants will make up each team. One consultant will have expertise in district and school leadership, governance, and financial management (to respond to domain I); one in curriculum, instruction, and assessment (to respond to domain II); one in human resource management and professional development (to respond to domain III); and one in special education (to collect evidence across domains; see indicators in italics under each domain in Appendix F).

- **The required training dates for team members:**
  - **Monday, May 18 (on classroom observation: for team members who have not previously completed ESE training on the Learning Walk); and**
  - **Friday, May 22 (on the review protocol: for all team members).**

Preparation for the review: review of documents and preparation of questions:

Before the site visit, teams will review documents provided by the district and information on the district provided by ESE. This will help them prepare thoughtful questions for interviews and focus groups. On two days before each site visit, teams will meet at ESE to review documents, sort evidence and record it on Evidence Collection Sheets (to be provided by ESE), and prepare questions. Questions may be included on these sheets or prepared separately and attached. The Preliminary Evidence Collection Sheets and the questions are due to ESE and to the other team members before the first day of the site visit.

Site visits:

- District site visits will occur: **(A) May 26-29, (B) June 1-5, and (C) June 8-12**.
- Days 1 and 2 will focus on district interviews and document review.
- Days 3 and 4 will focus on school visits, classroom observations, teacher team meetings, and focus groups with teachers and parents.
- All team members should be available until June 30 to answer questions and give feedback on revisions to the reports.

The Department and site coordinators will work collaboratively with the district to establish a specific schedule for the review that meets the needs of the district and its schools, to the extent possible. What works for one district may not work for another.

The site visit will begin with an introductory meeting with key district leaders. At this meeting the leaders will provide the review team with an overview of their approach to meeting the needs of all learners. The site visit will culminate with a final meeting that will provide the district with an overview of the team's evidence and emerging themes from the visit.

During the site visit a series of interviews and/or focus groups will be conducted to gather information. Topics for interviews on the district level are listed on the Sample Site Visit Schedule, below, and questions are based on indicators within each evidence collection domain (see Appendix F). The purpose of interviews and focus groups at schools is to understand the impact of district systems on their staff, students, and parents.

The district liaison will work to establish an appropriate schedule for school visits and set up focus groups that are appropriately composed. The liaison should work with principals to schedule times for principal interviews and teacher team meetings. The school may choose to create a classroom observation schedule; in any case, some observations may be random.

As the site visit progresses, the review team may request follow-up interviews to ask questions that emerge after focus groups, classroom observations, etc. These follow-up interviews will be conducted with whoever the appropriate person is to answer the questions that have emerged. They will be the team's opportunity to make sure that the evidence it gathers is complete.

NOTE: *Focus groups should include no more than eight individuals to the extent possible. With the exception of meetings with leadership teams, supervising staff should not be scheduled in focus groups with those under their supervision.*

Sample Site Visit Schedule:

Time	Day 1	Day 2		Day 3	Day 4
7:30- 7:45 7:45- 8:30	**Team Arrival** **Introductory Meeting with District Leaders**	**Team meeting and Document Review**	7:30- 11:30	**School Visits:** **(Up to four schools, one team member per school)** Interviews with school leaders, beginning with the principal and site liaison Classroom observations Teacher team meetings	**School Visits:** **(Up to four schools, one team member per school)** Interviews with school leaders Classroom observations Teacher team meetings **Follow-up Interviews**
8:30- 9:45	**Interview with Superintendent** (I) Leadership (S) Special Education **Interview with Curriculum Director** (II) Curriculum (III) HR and PD	**Interview with Superintendent** (S) Special Education (I) Leadership **Interview with K-8 Curriculum Team** (II) Curriculum (III) HR and PD			
10:00- 11:15	**Interview with CFO and key team members** (I) Leadership (III) HR and PD **Interview with Special Education Director** (S) Special Education (II) Curriculum	**Interview with Human Resources Director and key team members** (III) HR and PD (S) Special Education **Document Review** (I) Leadership (II) Curriculum			
11:30-12:30: LUNCH AND TEAM MEETING					
12:30- 1:15	**Interview with Professional Development Director and key team members** (III) HR and PD (S) Special Education **Document Review** (I) Leadership (II) Curriculum	**Interview with Title I, McKinney Vento, Student Support, ELL Directors** (S) Special Education (I) Leadership **Document Review** (II) Curriculum (III) HR and PD	12:30- 3:00	**School Visits:** **(Up to four schools, one team member per school)** Interviews with school leaders Classroom observations Teacher team meetings	**Team Meeting**
1:30- 2:45	**Interview with Student Assessment and Program Eval.** (II) Curriculum (S) Special Education **Principal interviews** (I) Leadership (III) HR and PD	**Interview with 9-12 Department Heads** (II) Curriculum (III) HR and PD **Principal interviews** (I) Leadership (S) Special Education			
3-4	**Team Meeting**	**Team Meeting**	3-4	**Teacher and Parent Focus Groups (two team members each)**	**Final Meeting with District Leaders**

Review Team Activities during School Visits:

Interviews/ focus groups, etc.	Description	Approximate Time Needed
School leaders	School leaders include the principal and may also include key assistants (e.g., assistant principals, curriculum director and/or lead teachers).	**Up to 30 minutes** interview
Teacher focus group	Groups of teachers, typically representing all **grade levels,** make up focus groups.	**1 hour** (during non-instructional time)
Parent focus group	Groups of parents	**1 hour** (during non-instructional time)
Classroom visits	Classroom visits will be conducted throughout the school visit. Classroom visits are designed to understand instructional practices and improvement efforts across the school; they are not evaluations of individual teachers. More information is provided in Appendix D.	**20-30 minute blocks**
Teacher team meetings	The team will observe regularly scheduled teacher team meetings. Team members will ask questions only if invited to do so.	**Time TBD by school**

Evidence collection:
Using a researcher's perspective, the team will gather evidence from multiple sources among the data, documents, interviews, focus groups, observed teacher team meetings, and classroom visits. The evidence should be triangulated: it should come from more than one source. This ensures that the finding is based on sufficient evidence. It is important for team members to suspend their judgment about the district and its schools until after the evidence is triangulated. Notes of interviews, classroom observations, etc. should be objective; subjective notes are not useful. The team will look at the evidence collectively, as each team member has focused on a particular set of indicators within the domains. It is important for the team to check for mutual understanding by summarizing, restating, and asking follow-up questions, especially when evidence appears contradictory. The researcher is curious, not skeptical. The researcher endeavors to ensure accuracy and mutual understanding, not to discover a "gotcha." The evidence that the researcher has gathered may or may not contradict district perceptions of district conditions. In the event that such a contradiction presents itself, the review team member has the responsibility to share the evidence collected by the review team and ask the district for its interpretation. The team will endeavor to develop a shared understanding of diverging interpretations. If unable to do so, the team will at least be transparent in acknowledging the difference between district and team perspectives (on site as well as in relevant findings).

Analysis of evidence:
The team collectively analyzes the data gathered by each team member and makes connections among evidence gathered in each domain. The team considers the body of evidence in analyzing what impact the district's systems have on support for diverse learners. The team uses their professional judgment as to

the quality of district systems and practices and the likelihood that these systems and practices contribute to sustained and improving achievement levels among diverse learners.

Emerging themes:

From this analysis, the team develops emerging themes to share with the district at the end of Day 4. The themes are *not* equivalent to “findings.” The team has not yet had sufficient time to sort through all the evidence in each domain and consider the full analyses from each team member in order to determine the final set of findings which will appear in the written report. However, in order to ensure full transparency, in the closing meeting the site coordinator will share with the district what they have learned on site, and what the team is still sorting out. The site coordinator will attempt to ensure that there are no “surprises” in the written report.

Writing the Report

Development of findings and recommendations in the written report:

- At the end of the site visit, the review team shares emerging themes with the district; it uses these themes as a basis for preliminary findings.
- After the site visit, during its findings development meeting, the review team completes the analysis of information collected during the review and develops preliminary findings, at least one under each domain. It may begin to discuss possible recommendations at this meeting.
- Using the report template and report template guidance, each review team member takes responsibility for drafting the full text of a set of preliminary findings, based on all notes taken and evidence collected by the entire team during the site visit.
- Each team member brings hard copies of the full text of this set of preliminary findings to the Written Findings Review team meeting following the onsite review; before doing so, they should email their drafts to the SDA review team mailbox (sdareviewteam@doe.mass.edu). Each finding is refined with team feedback to ensure accuracy, consensus, and fulfillment of the standards for findings stated in the next section. Using the standards for recommendations two sections below, the team develops recommendations based on the findings.
  - Team members revise the drafts as agreed at the Written Findings Review team meeting, adding the recommendations; they email revised versions to the site coordinator by the time requested.
  - The site coordinator compiles members' drafts into one document before sending the report to the Department (at sdareviewteam@doe.mass.edu) and the team by the due date.
  - The Department reviews the draft and clarifies any questions with the site coordinator before sending it—without the recommendations—to the district to review for factual errors. (Team members should be available to the site coordinator through June 30 in case there are any questions about their parts of the reports.)
  - The Department finalizes the report, including the recommendations, and posts it on its website at http://www.doe.mass.edu/sda/review/district/.

Standards for findings:

- Finding statements should make a single point.
- The number of findings should be determined by the evidence; a rough guide might be three findings for each of the three evidence collection domains.
- Findings should be priority findings: that is, those that highlight a significant strength or weakness or those that are most important in relation to the key questions.
- Findings do not need to be listed in priority (rank) order. The strength of the language used in finding statements should be used to demonstrate significance/importance.
- There should be at least one finding in each of the following areas:
  - Student achievement
  - Leadership (Evidence Collection Domain I)
  - Curriculum delivery (Evidence Collection Domain II)
  - Human resources and professional development (Evidence Collection Domain III)

- **Finding statements** should identify key strengths and weaknesses, especially those that have had the greatest or least impact on the district's ability to address the differentiated needs of all students, especially students with disabilities.
- **Each finding statement is supported by an analysis describing the team's evidence, the impact of the finding, and the team's judgment.**
    - **Evidence** from multiple sources among the data, documents, interviews, focus groups, observed teacher team meetings, and classroom visits. **The analysis** should make connections among the different pieces of evidence used to support the finding statement.
    - **Impact** and significance of the finding for education in the district. The analysis should explain to the reader why this finding is important.
    - Professional **judgment.** The team's judgment as to the quality of district systems and practices and the likelihood that these systems and practices contribute to sustained and improving achievement levels among diverse learners.

Standards for recommendations:

- The review team develops preliminary recommendations based on the district's strengths and weaknesses and contextual factors identified by the preliminary findings.
- For each recommendation, the report will provide a brief explanation, describing the evidence leading to the recommendation and how next steps could build greater capacity to support all students' learning.
- Recommendations may be considered by the district:
    - as a possible way to build greater capacity to support all students' learning;
    - as validation for continuing its current systems and practices; or
    - as a further reason to adopt planned changes to those systems and practices.
- Recommendations may be used by the Department to inform the assistance and monitoring activities it will implement in the future to help districts build their capacity to support all students' learning.

Expectations for the Team and District

The review places a value on engaging the district in understanding its own systems and practices as they relate to serving the differentiated needs of all students. The process is evidence-based and designed to promote learning and improvement. Clear communication among the district, its schools, and the review team is essential to the process. All review team members have extensive experience in the area they are reviewing, are governed by a Code of Conduct (see Appendix C), are objective, and minimize disruption to teaching and learning.

Expectations for the site coordinator:

- Exhibit the highest professional standards and be responsible for ensuring that the team does so, as well.
- Ensure that all focus groups and classroom visits are attended and go smoothly and conduct a daily review of the schedule with the team.
- Take responsibility for facilitating all team meetings on site.
- Take responsibility for organizing the team, copies of team notes, and copies of team meeting notes.
- Maintain good channels of communication with the district and schools at all times.
- Keep district and school leaders informed of the team's progress and developing themes throughout the visit.
- Take appropriate actions to follow up on any questions by the team.
- Present the team's emerging themes to district leadership at the end of the visit.
- Write a section of the review report and oversee the writing of the entire report.

Expectations for team members:

- Before the site visit, read district and school documents and participate in document review and question preparation.
- Arrive punctually for all team meetings and appointments in the district. See outline of review team activities below.
- Participate fully and collegially on teams, take direction from the site coordinator, and make requests to the district through the site coordinator.
- Organize notes and additional evidence to share with other team members by the end of each site visit day.
- Complete Evidence Collection Sheets and draft findings before deadlines.
- Complete assigned section of report according to report template guidance.
- Participate in refining the draft of the report, ensuring that it contains sufficient evidence, is accurate, and reflects the consensus of the team.
- Abide by the Code of Conduct for Reviewers in Appendix C.
- Abide by the Guidelines for Classroom Visits (see Appendix D).

Outline of Review Team Activities:

Document Review and Question Development Team Meeting (Two days)	Site days in district (Four days)	Findings Development Team Meeting (One day)	Written Findings Review Team Meeting (One day)

Expectations for the district:

- Explain the purpose and process of the review to all staff.
- Before the site visit, send the documents requested and work with the site coordinator to finalize the schedule.
- Provide confidential team meeting space with access to a copier during each day on site.
- Provide a space for each interview (not the team room).
- Welcome the review team and recognize that its efforts are on behalf of its students.
- Work with the review team to ensure that the visit runs smoothly.
- Engage faculty and other stakeholders to reflect on district systems and practices and their impact.
- Provide the site coordinator with any additional documents requested.
- Maintain good communication with the site coordinator throughout the review, conveying any concerns or other feedback from staff.
- Respond frankly to the review team's developing themes and provide additional evidence when necessary.

Appendix A: Checklist of Data/Documents Provided by ESE

(including information previously submitted to ESE by the district)

Documents to be provided by ESE before the site visit	
1. District Profile Data	
2. Comprehensive Trend Analysis (new)	
3. Latest Coordinated Program Review Report and any follow-up Mid-cycle Report	
4. Any Educational Quality and Accountability Report	
5. Teacher's Contract 2009	
6. Staff Report (Highly Qualified)	
7. Long Term Enrollment Trends	
8. End-of-Year Report	
9. List of Federal and State Grants	
10. Municipal Profile	

Appendix B: District Task Checklist

This checklist may be used by the district to prepare for the review. As well as the documents the district is to provide for the review, it includes key tasks that should be completed before the site visit.
PLEASE NOTE:

- *Electronic documents are preferred if available.*
- *All documents requested in this list should be provided only if the district already has the materials on hand. This list is in* ***NO WAY*** *a request to create new documents or analyses; the review team is looking to understand the current systems and process that the district is using to meet the needs of all learners.*
- *If documents are on the district website please indicate. And if documents do not exist or can be made available only on site, please indicate.*

Documents to be provided by the district before the site visit	
1. Organization chart	
2. District Improvement Plan	
3. School Improvement Plans	
4. Curriculum Accommodation Plan (under G.L. c. 71, §38Q ½, to ensure students' needs are met in the general education classroom; may be part of a multi-year plan)	
5. School Committee Policy Manual (if readily available; otherwise to be viewed on site)	
6. Curriculum Guide	
7. High School Program of Studies	
8. Calendar of Formative and Summative Assessments	
9. Copies of data analyses/reports used in schools	
10. Descriptions of Student Support Programs	
11. Program Evaluations	
12. Student and Family Handbooks	
13. Faculty Handbook	
14. Professional Development Program/Schedule/Courses	
15. Teacher Planning Time/Meeting Schedules	
16. Teacher Evaluation Tool	
17. Classroom Observation Tools/Learning Walk Tools	
18. Job Descriptions (for central office and school administrators and instructional staff)	
19. Principal Evaluations	
20. Description of Special Education Eligibility Determination Process	
21. School Schedules	
To be arranged by the district before the site visit	
1. All administrators, faculty, and staff made aware of the visit and its purpose	
2. Private meeting space for review team secured during days in the district office	
3. Access to copier, printer, and internet provided	
4. Meeting space secured for district level interviews (different from team room)	
5. Lunch arrangements for the review team made (the team can reimburse)	
6. District prepared to provide documents requested on site	

Appendix C: Code of Conduct for Reviewers

1. **Carry out work with integrity**.
    a. Treat all those you meet with courtesy and sensitivity. Try to minimize stress.
    b. Allay anxiety through mutual respect and valuing opinions. Show an interest in what is said.
    c. Focus attention and questions on topics that will reveal how well students are learning.
    d. Assure confidentiality.

2. **Act in the best interests of students and staff.**
    a. Emphasize that students come first and are at the center of the review.
    b. As much as possible, minimize disruption to teaching and learning.
    c. Do not criticize the work of a teacher or anyone else involved with the school.
    d. Classroom visits are used only to understand instruction at the school. Classroom visits are not evaluations. Specific feedback and information about individual teachers will not be shared with any school personnel.
    e. All teacher interviews are anonymous. Only the superintendent will be identified by name; other individuals will be identified by position only, where appropriate, in both oral and written reports.
    f. Try to understand what leaders and teachers are doing and why.

3. **Base findings on evidence.**
    a. Findings must be robust, fully supported by evidence, and defensible and must inform the key questions.
    b. Findings must be reliable in that others would make the same finding from the same evidence.
    c. Be prepared to ask questions to establish whether a view is based on evidence. This applies, as well, to review team members' findings.
    d. Discussion with staff and review team members is part of the process to create a validated and reliable evidence base from which findings are made.

Appendix D: Guidelines for Classroom Visits

GENERAL GUIDANCE

Classroom visits are one source of information for the review team on instruction in the district. The team will visit a representative range of grade levels, focusing on core academic areas. It is expected that classrooms will be visited for no less than 20 minutes to allow the team to derive an understanding of the lesson and the classroom climate. Most visits will be scheduled, but unplanned visits may occur spontaneously as appropriate.

Classroom visits should reflect a typical experience for students and teachers. Teachers do not need to address the classroom visitor or provide an explanation of the lesson. The classroom visitor may walk around the classroom to review student work or classroom postings, if appropriate.

Classroom visits are NOT evaluations of individual teachers. Specific information about individual teachers will not be shared with any school personnel. Review team members will not provide feedback to individual teachers.

Guidelines for the review team for classroom visits:

- Record factual data on the Instructional Inventory Record (Appendix E) using quotes, tallies, or descriptions.
- Label Instructional Inventory Record with descriptive characteristics, not identifiers such as teacher names.
- Refrain from adult conversations; avoid distractions to the class.
- Review samples of student work in folders, portfolios, or displays.
- Talk to students (if appropriate): *What are you learning? Why are you learning it? How do you know if your work is good? What do you do if you need help?*
- Talk to teachers (if appropriate): *What did you hope your students would learn? Why? What do you look for to know if your students met lesson objectives?*
- Make sure that each class visit is for about the same amount of time.

Guidelines for discussion during team meetings (all to occur in the team meeting room):

- All team members share evidence related to each characteristic.
- They state factual evidence and do not make judgmental or subjective statements.
- The team shares and tallies the evidence (No Evidence, Partial Evidence, Solid Evidence) for all classes/characteristics using the Instructional Inventory Spreadsheet.
- The team shares highlights (big ideas, trends, areas of strong practice, areas of need) from the aggregated evidence they collected.
- The team discusses overarching trends, strengths, and weaknesses observed.
- The team reaches consensus on the trends across classroom visits.
- No data identifying individual classes is distributed to teachers.
- A team member enters data into the Instructional Inventory Spreadsheet and shares it with the team.

Appendix E: Instructional Inventory Record

District: ________________________School:_____________________________
Observer:_______________ Date: ___________Time in: ____ Time out: ____ Total time: ____ (min.) Part of Lesson: Beginning Middle End
Subject:___________________ If applicable: ELL SPED Grade: ________# students: ____ G: ___ B:____
teachers: ____ # assistants: ___ Key: **N**=No **P**=Partial **S**=Solid Evidence observed directly in the lesson

N	*P*	*S*	*Characteristic*	*Comments*
			Organization of the Classroom	
			1. Classroom **climate** is characterized by respectful behaviors, routines, tone, and discourse.	
			2. A learning **objective** (not simply an agenda or an activity description) for the day's lesson is evident. Applicable language objectives are evident and aligned to the ELPBO for ELL students.	
			3. Available class **time** is maximized for learning.	
			Total for section (3 characteristics)	
			Instructional Design and Delivery	
			4. Instruction links academic concepts to students' **prior knowledge** and experience.	
			5. Supplemental **materials** are aligned with students' **developmental level** and level of English proficiency	
			6. Presentation of **content** is within the students' English proficiency and **developmental level**.	
			7. Depth of **content knowledge** is evident throughout the presentation of the lesson.	

			8. **Instruction** includes a **range of techniques** such as direct instruction, facilitating, and modeling.	
			9. **Questions require** students to engage in a process of **application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation**.	
			10. The teacher **paces** the lesson to ensure that all students are actively engaged.	
			11. Students **articulate** their **thinking and reasoning**.	
			12. Students are **inquiring, exploring,** or **problem solving** together, in pairs, or in small groups.	
			13. Opportunities for students to **apply new knowledge** and content are embedded in the lesson.	
			14. On-the-spot formative assessments **check for understanding** to inform instruction.	
			15. **Formative written feedback** to students is **frequent, timely, and informs revision**.	
			Total for section (12 characteristics)	
			Student Ownership of Learning	
			16. Students can explain how **routines, procedures,** and **processes** are helping their thinking and learning.	
			17. Students can express in their own words **what they are learning** and **why**, when asked.	
			Total for section (2 characteristics)	
			Total tally (17 characteristics)	

Appendix F: Review Indicators

SUMMARY: Review Indicators are grouped under three Domains: (I) Leadership, (II) Curriculum Delivery and (III) Human Resources and Professional Development. One examiner is responsible for each domain. Indicators in italics are to be especially the concern of the team member with expertise in special education. The review indicators have been created by vetting and modifying Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA) indicators, Program Quality Assurance (PQA) criteria, and the 10 "essential conditions" in 603 CMR 2.03(6)(e). The indicators, criteria, and essential conditions on which the review indicators are based are indicated by the references at the end of each: the references to EQA indicators begin with Roman numerals, those to the PQA criteria with letters, and those to the 10 essential conditions with the number 10.

EVIDENCE COLLECTION DOMAIN I: LEADERSHIP WITH COMPONENT SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES

I. LEADERSHIP

District and School Improvement Planning

1. District and school leaders have a clearly understood vision or mission; goals; and priorities. These are included in the District Improvement Plan (DIP), which also includes high standards for all students. The standards-based plan and the analysis of student achievement data drive the development, implementation, and modification of educational programs. I.1 (modified). Each school uses an approved School Improvement Plan (SIP) that is aligned with the DIP, is based on the analysis of student achievement data, and addresses the needs of all students. I.4.

2. District and school leaders monitor student achievement data throughout the year, consider the goals identified in the DIP and the SIPs, and implement or modify programs, policies, and services as required. I.9.

Responsive Leadership

3. *The district ensures that each principal takes responsibility for the learning of all students in the school. Each principal works with the administrator of special education to ensure effective coordination of the delivery and supervision of special education services within the school. CR18*

4. *The district supports each principal in promoting instructional practices responsive to student needs and ensuring that adequate instructional support is available for students and teachers. Instructional support includes remedial instruction for students, consultative services for teachers, availability of reading instruction, appropriate services for linguistic minority students, and other services consistent with effective educational practices. The principal consults with the administrator of special education regarding accommodations and interventions for students. CR18*

5. *The district monitors each school's implementation of a curriculum accommodation plan** *<u>developed by the district's general education program</u> to ensure that all efforts have been made to meet the needs of diverse learners in the general education program, and holds each principal accountable. The plan assists the general education classroom teacher in analyzing and*

accommodating diverse learning styles of all children in the general education classroom and in providing appropriate services and support within the general education program including, but not limited to, direct and systematic instruction in reading and provision of services to address the needs of children whose behavior may interfere with learning. The plan includes provisions encouraging teacher mentoring and collaboration and parental involvement. CR18
*<u>*Note that the curriculum accommodation plan may be part of a multi-year plan.</u>*

6. That district ensures that its curricula are focused on improvement for all of its students and that each of its schools has a curriculum leader who oversees the use, alignment, consistency, and effectiveness of delivery of the curricula . II.3. Each school provides active leadership and support for effective instructional strategies, techniques, and methods grounded in research and focused on improved achievement for all students. II.4.

Data-Based Decision Making

7. District and school leaders implement practices that require all staff regularly use aggregated and disaggregated student assessment data to improve instructional programs and services for all student populations. I.8.

8. District and school leaders annually review student assessment results and other pertinent data to maximize effectiveness in assigning staff, prioritizing goals, and allocating time and resources. III.7.

9. District leaders promote equity by distinguishing among the needs of individual schools' populations and allocating more and better resources to the schools and students with the greater needs. I.5.

10. District and school leaders require all students to participate in all appropriate standardized and diagnostic assessments. III.2.

11. District and school leaders regularly engage in internal and external audits or assessments to determine the effectiveness of programs and services. The data from these assessments are provided to all appropriate staff. III.6. District and school leaders routinely use this data to initiate, modify, or discontinue programs and services for the continuing improvement of instruction and student achievement. III.8.

Development of Policies to Ensure Equitable Participation in the Educational Program

12. The district has fair and equitable policies, procedures, and practices to reduce grade retention and suspensions, exclusions, and other discipline referrals. V.8. The district has policies, procedures, and practices to prevent or minimize dropping out, and to recover dropouts and return them to an educationally appropriate placement. V.9.

13. District and school leaders implement policies and procedures to increase the proportion of underrepresented subgroups in advanced and accelerated programs, in order to close the achievement gap. V.13.

14. Student handbooks and codes of conduct use student-friendly language to communicate expectations and provide guidance for academic success. They include a nondiscrimination policy that is consistent with M.G.L. c. 76, s. 5, and affirms the school's non-tolerance for harassment

based on race, color, national origin, sex, religion, or sexual orientation, or discrimination on those same bases. District and school leaders show the seriousness with which they regard this policy both by their responses to any complaints alleging harassment or discrimination and by the affirmative activities they initiate to promote an inclusive and respectful environment for all students. As the result of this seriousness, discrimination and harassment are minimized. CR.10.A.

Stewardship to Ensure Equitable Allocation of Resources

15. Each principal has the control over the financial resources necessary to successfully implement the SIP. 10ESS.2.

16. The budget is developed and resources are allocated based on the ongoing analysis of aggregated and disaggregated student assessment data to assure the budget's effectiveness in supporting improved achievement for all student populations. VI.2.

17. *As part of its budget development, the district conducts reviews to determine the cost-effectiveness of all of its programs, services, and supports. The reviews include an examination of quality and an analysis of student needs across student populations. The district allocates resources for a continuum of programs, services and supports for all students and revises them as necessary as the result of these reviews. VI.4. SE49.*

18. The district's budget and supplemental funding are adequate to provide for effective instructional practices and adequate operational resources. The community annually provides sufficient financial resources to ensure educationally sound programs and facilities of quality, as evidenced by a sufficient district revenue levy and level of local spending for education. VI.3.

19. The district has a system in place to pursue, acquire, monitor, and coordinate all local, state, federal, and private grants; it monitors special revenue funds, revolving accounts, and the fees related to them to ensure that they are managed efficiently and used effectively for the purposes intended. VI.9.

EVIDENCE COLLECTION DOMAIN II: CURRICULUM DELIVERY WITH COMPONENT SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES

II. CURRICULUM DELIVERY

Curriculum Alignment

1. The district implements curricula for all grade levels in core academic subjects that clearly address all the components of the state curriculum frameworks. Curriculum documents address objectives, resources, instructional strategies, timelines, articulation maps, and measurable outcomes or assessments. II.1. Schools are implementing curricula that are aligned to the state frameworks in core academic subjects. 10ESS.3

2. The district's curricula in all areas are aligned horizontally and vertically. II.2.

Sufficient Time on Learning

3. In order to improve rates of proficiency for all students, the district allocates instructional time in the core academic subjects based on analysis of student achievement data. II.6.

4. The school schedule for student learning provides adequate time on a daily and weekly basis for the delivery of instruction and provision of individualized support as needed in English language arts and math, which is presumed to be at least 90 minutes per day in each subject for students not yet proficient. II. 6. The school provides daily after-school tutoring and homework help for students who need supplemental instruction and focused work on skill development. 10ESS.7.

Teaching and Learning

5. The district creates inclusive classrooms or programs for student populations through an integrated services model, minimizing separation from the mainstream, modifying the curriculum where necessary, and allowing each student with disabilities to be educated in the least restrictive environment. II.9. SE 20.1 and 20.3.

6. *The district or school has a mechanism to ensure that staff members are informed of their specific responsibilities related to the implementation of a student's IEP and the specific accommodations, modifications, and supports that must be provided for the student under it. SE22.3.*

7. Through the ongoing use of formative and summative student assessment data, the district monitors the effectiveness of teachers' instruction and provides resources, professional development, and support to reach and maintain high levels of instructional quality and delivery. II.10.

8. Random observations of classrooms revealed that teachers use a variety of effective techniques and strategies to address diverse student needs. II.11.

Use of Assessments to Inform Instruction

9. The district ensures that each school systematically implements a program of interim assessments (4-6 times per year) in English Language Arts and mathematics that are aligned to school curriculum and state frameworks. 10ESS4. The district/school has a system to provide detailed

tracking and analysis of assessment results and uses those results to inform curriculum, instruction, and individual interventions. 10ESS5.

10. In addition to the MCAS test, district and school leaders regularly uses local benchmarks and other assessment tools to measure student progress and analyzes and disseminate the results in a timely manner to appropriate staff. III.4.

11. At each grade level, the district uses formative assessments and summative data to identify all students who did not meet expectations and provides these students with supplementary and/or remedial services that result in improved academic achievement and MCAS test proficiency. V.2.

Tiered Instruction and Safety Nets

12. The district administration and staff uses aggregated and disaggregated student achievement data on student participation and achievement to adjust instruction and policies for at-risk populations and provides additional programs and supports to assist their progress and academic achievement. V. 1.

13. *The district ensures that a continuum of services and placements is available to meet the needs of all students, including those with disabilities. SE34.*

14. The district provides programs and services to alleviate the adverse effects of poverty (including delayed language development, lack of readiness skills, low self-esteem and aspirations, high mobility and family instability) on students' social, emotional, and intellectual development. V.5.

15. Early intervention programs in literacy are provided at the primary education level and are designed to remedy weaknesses that would prevent students from reading at the 'Proficient' level on the MCAS test by the end of Grade 4. V.3.

Educational Program Continuity

16. *District administration and staff help all students make effective transitions from one school, grade level, or program to another. This assistance is focused on maintaining or improving levels of student performance. V.7.*

Practices to Ensure Equitable Participation in the Educational Program

17. *The district examines patterns of placement for different student populations in its programs, services, and activities to identify barriers to participation and lower them. The district ensures that all student populations are given access to challenging coursework, particularly in the upper grades. CR 4, 25*

18. *The district ensures that all students, including students with disabilities in more restrictive placements, have access to the general curriculum. SE 33*

19. *The district ensures that each school has systems in place to help students who exhibit challenging behavior, including students with disabilities. SE 43*

19. The district ensures that students without disabilities are not placed in special education for other, inappropriate reasons, including previous lack of instruction, social maladjustment, behavioral problems, or limited English proficiency. SE 9A

EVIDENCE COLLECTION DOMAIN III: HUMAN RESOURCES & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WITH COMPONENT SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES

III. HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Staffing

1. The district's policies and practices for the identification, recruitment, and selection of professional staff result in the employment of a diverse and effective teaching force with the capacity to advance student achievement. IV.1.

2. All professional staff have appropriate Massachusetts licensure. IV.2.

3. In the event of unfilled positions, professional staff are hired on professional waivers and are provided mentoring and support to attain the standard of substantial annual progress toward appropriate licensure. IV.3.

Professional Development and Collaboration

4. The work schedule for teachers provides adequate time for regular, frequent department and/or grade-level faculty meetings to discuss individual student progress, curriculum issues, instructional practice, and school wide improvement efforts. Special education and ELL staff members participate as appropriate in these meetings. 10ESS.10

5. The district's professional development program is informed by the content of the instructional program; the needs of diverse learners in the general education classroom; student, paraprofessional, teacher, and administrator needs as indicated by program assessments, including assessment of the special education program; research-based practices; staff evaluations; and student achievement data. IV.7. SE 54

6. *The district integrates general and special education staff in those parts of its professional development program that are relevant to both. SE54.*

Effective Supervision and Evaluation

7. The superintendent effectively delegates the educational and operational leadership of the schools to the principals and program directors and uses student achievement data to assess the success of their leadership. I.11.

8. In their respective assignments, administrators in the district use effective systems of supervision to implement district and school programs and progress toward goals for improving student achievement; they use these systems to identify the strengths and needs of assigned staff. IV.11.

9. The district ensures that school administrators periodically evaluate faculty, including direct evaluation of applicable content knowledge and annual evaluation of overall performance tied in part to solid growth in student learning and commitment to the school's culture, educational model, and improvement strategy. 10ESS.9.

10. The district's human resources, supervision, and professional development processes are linked and supported by appropriate levels of funding. IV.12.