District Review Report

Ralph C. Mahar Regional School District

Review conducted April 13–16, 2015

Center for District and School Accountability

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Organization of this Report

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Ralph C. Mahar RSD 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 Ralph C. Mahar Regional School District was conducted from April 13–16, 2015. The site visit included 22 hours of interviews and focus groups with approximately 56 stakeholders, including school committee members, district administrators, school staff, students, and teachers' association representatives. The review team conducted one focus group with four high school teachers; no teachers attended the middle school focus group.

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 37 classrooms at the middle/high school, 16 in grades 7–8 and 21 in grades 9–12. 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 Ralph C. Mahar Regional School District (one 7–12 middle/high school) is part of a consolidated district that also includes the Orange Elementary School District (two elementary schools) and the Petersham Center School District (one K–6 school). The consolidated district shares a superintendent and a director of student support services. The superintendent is developing a consolidated school improvement plan to address needs in all three districts.

The school committee in the Ralph C. Mahar Regional School District (RSD) consists of 11 members, some of whom also serve on the school committee in the Orange Elementary School District and some of whom also serve on the school committee in the Petersham Center School District.

The current superintendent has been in the position since July 2013. The district leadership team includes the superintendent, the director of finance and operations, the new secondary curriculum coordinator, the director of student support services, the high school/middle school principal, and the director of technology. Central office positions have been mostly stable in number over the past five years. The district has one principal leading one school, which serves grades 7–12. There are three other school administrators, two deans and a student services coordinator who is a member of a bargaining unit. In 2013–2014 there were 66 teachers in the district.

In the 2014–2015 school year, 816 students were enrolled in the district's school.

Table 1: Ralph C. Mahar RSD
Schools, Type, Grades Served, and Enrollment*, 2014–2015

School Name	School Type	Grades Served	Enrollment
Ralph C. Mahar Regional High School	MS/HS	7–12	816
Totals	**1 school**	**7–12**	**816**
*As of October 1, 2014			

Between 2011 and 2015 overall student enrollment increased by 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 6 secondary districts of similar size (<1,000 students) in fiscal year 2013; $13,554 as compared with a median of $15,495 (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

The Ralph C. Mahar Regional School District (RSD) is a Level 2 district for not meeting its gap narrowing targets.

- The Ralph C. Mahar Regional High School is in the 28th percentile of middle-high schools and is in Level 2 with a cumulative Progressive Performance Index (PPI) of 52 for all students and 60 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 87.7 in 2014, below the district's target of 91.2.
- Math CPI was 73.0 in 2014, below the district's target of 79.2.
- Science CPI was 77.0 in 2014, below the district's target of 87.5.

ELA proficiency rates were above the state rate and increased between 2011 and 2014 in the 10th grade. ELA proficiency rates were below the state rate and decreased between 2011 and 2014 in the 7th and 8th grades.

- ELA proficiency rates for all students in the district were 72 percent in 2011 and 72 percent in 2014.
- ELA proficiency in the 7th grade decreased 8 percentage points from 61 percent in 2011 to 53 percent in 2014, 19 percentage points below the state rate of 72 percent.
- ELA proficiency in the 8th grade decreased 4 percentage points from 77 percent in 2011 to 73 percent in 2014, 6 percentage points below the state rate of 79 percent.
- ELA proficiency in the 10th grade increased 12 percentage points from 83 percent in 2011 to 95 percent in 2014, 5 percentage points above the state rate of 90 percent.

Math proficiency rates were below the state rate in the 7th and 8th grades and above the state rate in the 10th grade.

- Math proficiency rates for all students in the district were 50 percent in 2011 and 53 percent in 2014.
- Math proficiency in the 7th grade increased 5 percentage points from 30 percent in 2011 to 35 percent in 2014, 15 percentage points below the state rate of 50 percent.
- Math proficiency in the 8th grade was 48 percent in 2011 and 49 percent in 2014, 3 percentage points below the state rate of 52 percent.

- Math proficiency in the 10th grade was 82 percent in 2011 and 81 percent in 2014, 2 percentage points above the state rate of 79 percent.

Science proficiency rates did not improve in the district between 2011 and 2014.

- 8th grade science proficiency rates decreased 15 percentage points from 47 percent in 2011 to 32 percent in 2014, 10 percentage points below the state rate of 42 percent.
- 10th grade science proficiency rates were 82 percent in 2011 and 81 percent in 2014, 10 percentage points above the state rate of 71 percent.

Students' growth on the MCAS assessments on average is comparable to that of their academic peers statewide in ELA and in mathematics.

- On the 2014 MCAS assessments, the districtwide median student growth percentile (SGP) for ELA was 45.0; the state median SGP was 50.0.
    - ELA median SGP was above 60.0 in the 10th grade (median SGP of 62.0).
    - ELA median SGP fell below 40.0 in the 7th grade (31).
- On the 2014 MCAS assessments, the districtwide median student growth percentile (SGP) for mathematics was 55.0; the state median SGP was 50.0.
    - Math median SGP was above 60.0 in the 8th grade (median SGP of 68.0).
    - Math median SGP fell below 40.0 in the 7th grade (38.5).

Four year and five year cohort graduation rates improved over the past four years. However, the district did not reach the 2014 four year and five year cohort graduation rate targets.[1]

- The four year cohort graduation rate improved from 62.1 percent in 2011 to 71.1 percent in 2014, below the state rate of 86.1 percent.
- The five year cohort graduation rate improved from 66.4 percent in 2010 to 77.0 percent in 2013, below the state rate of 87.7 percent.
- The annual dropout rate declined from 6.4 percent in 2011 to 3.7 percent in 2014, above the state rate of 2.0 percent.

[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 2013 four year cohort graduation rate and 2012 five year cohort graduation rates.

Ralph C. Mahar RSD District Review Findings

Strengths

Leadership and Governance/ Financial and Asset Management

1. This year, the consolidated district is developing priorities for action and a plan to focus and align district resources to support identified essential areas for improvement in the Ralph C. Mahar Regional High School, the Orange elementary schools, and the Petersham Center School.

A. The consolidated district has begun to use the ESE Accelerated Improvement Plan (AIP) model for focused planning.

1. The stated intent of the ESE AIP model is to focus and align all district systems and resources to support the essential areas for improvement that have an impact on measureable student outcomes in the district and schools.

2. Interviews and a document review showed that the Executive Leadership Team conducted self-assessment and analysis, identified district strengths and weaknesses, and established interim goals at the July 2014 administrative retreat.

    a. Interim goals include: continued commitment to engaged students; technology use; student assessment to improve instruction; improved student writing; and providing a coherent professional development plan.

    b. The Executive Leadership Team consists of the superintendent, the director of finance, the elementary and secondary curriculum coordinators, the director of student support services, the high school/middle school principal, the three elementary principals, and the director of technology.

3. A broad array of district, school, and community input has been garnered from the superintendent's entry plan and online surveys of school staff.

    a. School committee members expressed their support for using the superintendent's entry plan as one source for identifying district priorities.

4. The superintendent told the team that the interim goals developed at the July 2014 administrative retreat replaced the 2013–2015 school improvement plan and will serve as a bridge until the new improvement plan is in place.

    a. A document review showed that the Ralph C. Mahar Regional High School 2013–2015 school improvement plan does not contain measureable goals or identify any alignment with funding sources or resources to support goals.

5. The superintendent has made the high school/middle school principal responsible for informing the staff of the interim goals and the principal has met with department coordinators and staff to implement these goals.

B. Internal and external stakeholders support aligning district resources to the essential areas for improvement.

1. The school principal, district administrators, and department coordinators said that they experience positive results when they link budget requests with data, expected outcomes, and student needs.

2. The superintendent acknowledged the importance of telling citizens how funding is linked to the support of teaching and learning.

3. The director of finance and operations said that all budget documents needed to include the priorities of the district in order to provide clear direction.

4. Town officials noted the value of receiving transparent and detailed budgeting information from the superintendent and the director of finance and operations.

Impact: With the identification of measureable district priorities and interim goals, the district is well on its way to developing an improvement plan that can focus on—and align district resources to support—essential areas for improvement.

2. The district superintendent has established a culture of support, collaboration, and openness to address tactical (operational) and strategic issues effectively and to improve the performance of district and school leaders.

A. A document review showed that the superintendent has established a comprehensive and consistent schedule of well-defined and focused meetings.

1. The 2014–2015 meeting schedule includes district and school leaders in the Orange Elementary School District, the Petersham Center School District, and the Ralph C. Mahar Regional School District.

2. The 2014–2015 meeting schedule includes the first names of individuals who will attend the various meetings, creating an informal tone.

3. The 2014–2015 meeting schedule includes three types of meetings and their purposes.

    a. Daily check-in meetings are conducted with the director of finance and operations and central office staff to share daily schedules and activities.

    b. Weekly and bi-weekly tactical meetings are held with individual principals and district administrators. Separate bi-monthly tactical meetings are conducted with groups of three to six individuals representing the major district functions, including: finance,

operations, curriculum and instruction, and key statistical data analysis at the elementary and secondary level. The purpose of these meetings is to review "key metrics" and to resolve tactical obstacles and issues. Meetings are held for 45-90 minutes.

c. Four times per year Executive Leadership Team (ELT) meetings are held with the superintendent, the director of finance, the elementary and secondary curriculum coordinators, the director of student support services, the high school/middle school principal, the three elementary principals, and the director of technology. The purpose of these meetings is to address critical issues, to improve leadership performance, and to improve strategic planning through the use of the Accelerated Improvement Plan.

4. At an annual administrative retreat for one week in the summer, the ELT and invited guests review strategy, current trends/research, and the performance of the ELT and key personnel.

5. The superintendent described her intentional efforts to separate operational meetings from strategic meetings and to include in each type of meeting the appropriate individuals and groups. The superintendent told the team that she works individually with staff on developing leadership and interpersonal skills. The superintendent said that she is attempting to allocate her time proportionally between the three districts.

6. Sample agendas and minutes/notes from the meetings conducted during the current and past year included decisions/actions taken as a result of the meetings and the persons responsible for completing the work.

B. District and school leaders and stakeholders view the superintendent as supportive, collaborative, and open.

1. The high school/middle school principal, the secondary curriculum coordinator, and the director of student support services said that the superintendent has an effective system to address tactical and strategic issues and that they have her support.

   a. Joint walkthroughs with the superintendent provide guidance to the principal.

   b. Administrators described the meetings as productive, noting that the superintendent is very open and collaborative and does not hesitate to conduct a healthy debate.

   c. Administrators said that they must bring data, expected outcomes, and budget needs to support any requests to the superintendent and that decisions are always made in the best interest of the students.

   d. Meeting minutes are shared on Google notes to inform all administrators.

2. Department coordinators described a similar openness and collaboration in their relationships with the principal and the curriculum coordinator. They said that administrators are accessible and supportive in providing leadership coaching and following through on strategic planning, such as informing the staff of the interim goals and ensuring their implementation.

3. The director of finance and operations described the superintendent as very collaborative and open and the reason why he accepted the position. The director told the team that the superintendent seeks to engage the director of finance in the educational process, is receptive to suggestions, and will respond openly when challenged.

4. Regional school committee members were unanimous in their praise of the job that the superintendent is doing. They described the superintendent as being thorough and open in developing the new improvement plan and said that they did not anticipate any surprises when they review the plan in June. Members recognized the efforts of the superintendent to reach out to the communities.

5. Members of the teachers' and support personnel association said that they have good working relations with the superintendent. They said that she encourages ideas and is responsive, noting that the principal has an open door policy with the association.

6. Town officials stated the value of receiving transparent and detailed budget information and give full credit for this practice to the superintendent and the director of finance and operations. Officials recognized the efforts of the superintendent to reach out to the communities.

Impact: A culture of transparency, accountability, collaboration, and joint responsibility for student learning within the district and broader community promotes higher levels of student achievement and is a best practice worthy of replication.

Instruction

3. In observed classrooms, teachers created an environment conducive to learning.

The team observed 37 classes in the district, 21 at the high school and 16 at the middle school. The team observed 12 ELA classes, 11 science classes, 8 math classes, and 6 classes in other 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.

A. In 100 percent of the classes observed at the middle and 95 percent of classes observed at the high school, the team found clear and consistent evidence that the tone of interactions between teachers and students and among students was positive and respectful (#1).

1. Teachers greeted students at the door and asked them to “please take out your books.”
2. A teacher at the high school responded encouragingly to a student’s answer by saying, “I liked your answer and how you used the word ‘rallying.’”
3. A teacher at the middle school asked students, “What should you do if you have a question?’’
4. The team observed students at both levels working together to help solve problems.

B. The team found clear and consistent evidence that behavioral standards were clearly communicated and disruptions, if present, were managed effectively and equitably (#2) in 95 percent of the classrooms visited at both the middle school and the high school.

1. Teachers in the middle school waited until all students were quiet before beginning instruction. One teacher raised her hand, signaling for quiet when she wanted student attention.
2. One teacher at the high school was changing student seating to help eliminate distractions. She told students to let her know privately if the new seating made them uncomfortable.

C. The team found clear and consistent evidence that classroom rituals and routines promoted transitions with minimal loss of instructional time (#4) in 86 percent of classrooms visited at the middle school and the high school.

1. In the middle school one teacher rang a small bell for transitions and students easily complied.
2. In a high school class students quickly moved to put away laptops in the cart and back to their seats for discussion.

D. The team observed students engaged at both the middle school and the high school.

1. Students actively participated by raising their hands, asking and answering questions, and working in groups.
2. Students listened and took notes during lectures.

Impact: A positive learning environment is created when expectations are clear and respect is mutual. Students feel safe and can actively participate in their learning.

Student Support

4. The district has implemented a system of interventions for all students; it provides broad and comprehensive supports, including options for alternative education. The district further supports all students by fostering a positive and respectful social culture.

A. The school provides Title I services in ELA in grades 7–12 and Title I services in math in grades 7–8.

1. Title I services are monitored using STAR assessments and interventions are linked to the ELA and mathematics core curriculum.

2. Both the middle school and the high school have Student Support Teams, which meet regularly and which use student achievement and behavior data to design interventions and monitor students.

3. The middle and high school deans described how school-based data teams monitor "key metrics" such as suspensions, hospitalizations, and academic data to remain alert to the need for interventions.

B. The school implements an effective Response to Intervention (RTI) model informed by a system of early identification and monitoring of student performance data.

1. The school has developed its student schedule around ELA and math skills support courses that are organized in a tiered model.

2. All Tier 2 programs in ELA and math take place at the beginning and the end of the day. Tier 2 math students are assigned to their own classroom teachers because the school believes that they best know their students' needs.

3. Parallel math class scheduling of all tiers provides opportunities for movement between groups as students master skills or require more intervention.

4. Some enrichment opportunities are provided for students in Tier 1; these may include above-grade level novels or Kahn Academy math.

5. Every five weeks, students are assessed and re-grouped.

C. A Structured Mathematics Homework Program provides strong, targeted support for students most at risk for failing math.

1. In addition to traditional academic supports that are available before and after school in the middle- and high-school grades, the district has implemented a unique program to address a key factor in students failing math: students' difficulty completing daily math assignments.

a. This program was developed after an analysis of data showed that a key factor in math proficiency was the ability of students to complete daily math assignments.

b. The program provides 50 minutes of math homework help three days each week for approximately 80 days throughout the year.

c. The program is staffed by paraprofessionals and is limited to 5 students per staff member; preference is given to grade 7 students.

d. Attendance is closely monitored and no more than three unexcused absences are permitted throughout the year.

D. The school provides MCAS support through the following core academic courses programs: the MCAS Boot Camp (small ELA and math groups) and a grade 10 MCAS supplemental program. The classes meet three days per week for 50 minutes.

E. Middle school students and students at risk for retention may attend voluntary summer programs. Thirty students participated in the most recent program of twenty-four sessions for math, ELA, and study skills.

F. The school provides students with access to several specialized programs during and outside of the school day.

1. General education students and students with disabilities can participate in two programs at Mount Wachusetts Community College (MWCC).

   a. Gateway to College is designed for students at risk of dropping out of school; five slots are available for students to earn a diploma and college credits.

   b. Students who are college ready can participate in the Pathways to College program. Up to five students can earn their diploma and an associate's degree from MWCC. First generation college students may also participate in numerous pre-college experiences through the MWCC TRIO Talent Search program.

2. The high school also provides integrated learning center programs. The AM program provides specialized academic instruction in a supportive setting, with gradual re-integration through a highly structured tiered system. The PM program provides academic programs for students unable to "access the curriculum during the traditional academic day."

3. The school provides an online credit recovery program, Compass, which includes a high-school level Spanish language class. The review team was told that this class had started to be a resource for students who desired access to enrichment outside the school day. Virtual High School is a second offering planned for the 2015–2016 school year.

G. The school has established a positive culture, which respects all students.

1. The superintendent told the team that the school is committed to keeping students in school as late in the school day as possible, providing a healthy and supportive environment during and beyond the school day.

    a. Students noted and the review team observed that the school provides a wide range of activities, including typical sports as well as chess, robotics, canoe, kayak, and rod and gun clubs. The school provides breakfast and healthy snacks during after-school activities. Late buses are available two days each week.

2. Review team members observed an atmosphere of inclusivity where diversity was celebrated and publicly acknowledged. Students with significant disabilities were recognized and welcomed.

    a. In the middle school, artwork by students with cognitive disabilities was labeled and displayed in the hallways. Students designed and posted signs recognizing learning differences, including: “I have autism, what’s your superpower?”

    b. Teachers described and the website recognized a high school club, My Little Pony, started by and for students with developmental delays.

3. Students told the team that their small school helped in terms of acceptance of all students. They noted that the CAPS Collaborative program for students with developmental delays was a “great program here.” They mentioned that there was a gay/straight alliance club. Students said that “we all grew up together,” noting that this has made them “accepting to other kids.”

4. Parents, teachers, and students said that the looping system at the middle school helped build relationships between adults and students. Students said that their teachers were responsive to requests; one student noted that he had received an email response to a question at 11:30 p.m. Another student noted, “If you want to do something, someone will help you to get there.”

Impact: When a district implements a robust system of interventions for all students, including options for alternative education, it conveys to the community that it is responsible for meeting the needs of all students as they prepare for post-secondary education and career opportunities. It also communicates its belief that students require diverse ways to access the curriculum and that all students should have access to the academic, behavioral, and social/emotional supports that will enable them to succeed in college and career.

Challenges and Areas for Growth

Curriculum and Instruction

5. The district's curriculum is neither aligned to the 2011 *Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks* nor consistently delivered or continuously improving. Vertical and horizontal alignment takes place in pockets. A formal process for curriculum review or revision is not in place.

A. A document review indicated that the curriculum is not aligned to the 2011 *Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks*.

1. Math alignment and pacing guides are complete for grades 7–12, except for a new 12th grade course.

2. Science is in process for grades 7-12. Some science courses do not have both a map and a pacing guide.

3. ELA is aligned to earlier *Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks*.

    a. Coordinators told the team that the curriculum is horizontally aligned in grades 7 and 8 but not at the high school. They said that vertical alignment is in place where it is appropriate.

B. A review of curriculum documents showed that a common mapping template is used. It includes essential questions, concepts, content, skills, instructional strategies, and assessment practices.

1. Coordinators stated that this is a basic format used for all subjects.

2. Interviewees said that the school plans to integrate technology and Curriculum Embedded Performance Assessments into these maps starting in the middle school.

C. There is no formal process in place for ensuring that the curriculum is consistently implemented or revised.

1. Coordinators stated that there is no formal process in place to evaluate the curriculum. They stated that the district has never had a formal process, noting that curriculum review has always been informal. They said that teachers come to them "and say that they need help with the new Common Core and math practices" and they try to help. They agreed that developing effective aligned curriculum is difficult.

2. All teachers are required to turn in lesson plans electronically to coordinators weekly. Interviews and a document review indicated that a standardized lesson plan format is being used and that lesson plans are spot checked by coordinators; sometimes coordinators provide comments and do so especially for new teachers.

D. In its Draft Accelerated Improvement Plan the consolidated district has recognized the need for a comprehensive, accessible, and rigorous learning program aligned with state standards. The plan addresses the need to align the curriculum to the frameworks vertically and horizontally, and to develop a formal process to review and revise the curriculum.

1. The new secondary curriculum coordinator has formulated a plan to extend curriculum mapping at the middle school to take advantage of what the new 1:1 Chromebook initiative enables teachers to do. She told the team that she has begun to meet with the coordinator of the sending elementary schools to work on coordination. She said that "any place we can make a bridge" could help to improve and extend communication around curriculum.

Impact: Without a fully aligned curriculum and a formal process to review and revise curriculum, it is difficult to ensure that students have access to high-quality, grade-level curricula. Without consistent monitoring of and feedback on lessons it is difficult to judge whether teachers are implementing the curriculum effectively.

6. The allocation of time at the high school is sufficient for instruction, but the 4 by 4 long block structure limits student choice and interrupts the continuity of learning.

A. Currently at the high school there are four blocks of instruction each semester. Each block is 85 minutes long. In one semester students are expected to complete a year-long course.

B. The 4 by 4 long block structure means gaps in the continuity of learning and limits academic choices.

1. Students told the team that the drawback to the block is the gap between courses. For example, students take a whole year of Spanish in one semester and then take Spanish again a year later. This makes continuity difficult.

2. Students stated that the schedule limits them to six academic courses a year. They said that the schedule limits their choice options because single offerings are pitted against each other. One student said that the available choices left him unable to take an AP course.

3. Coordinators told the team that while they liked the long classes they believed that something was lost by not having year-long courses, especially for those students at risk and students in AP classes. In order to help with this issue, coordinators said that they "frontload" courses in ELA and math. The goal, for example, is to place students in math classes until they take the MCAS test. This means that after sophomore year students can go an entire year without math or ELA.

4. A parent told the team that the long block is frustrating; her daughter struggled to do a year of grade 9 math in one semester.

5. One school committee member stated that she joined the education subcommittee to eliminate the block schedule so that students could have more choices.

6. A review of school committee minutes showed that the block schedule has been brought up at the November 3, 2014, school committee meeting. At that meeting parents expressed concerns about meeting the needs of all students including those who want to excel.

C. The long block structure limits the time available to provide supervision and embedded professional development.

1. Coordinators told the team that they are provided one extra block a semester per year for observation and supervision but if the assigned teacher does not have teaching responsibilities during that block, then the coordinator needs coverage in order to observe during that teacher's instructional block.

D. The long block structure limits common planning time at the high school.

Impact: Because the 4 by 4 long block structure limits course choices, interrupts continuity in learning, limits common planning time, and restricts coordinators' time for planning, observations, and feedback, all students are not receiving instruction that maximizes their learning.

7. In observed classrooms, key instructional practices were not consistently in place.

A. The team observed inconsistent use of high-quality, effective instructional practices that display rigor and challenge students to use higher-order thinking and expand upon their ideas.

1. The team found clear and consistent evidence that teachers demonstrated knowledge of their subject and content (#6) in 94 percent of middle school classes and in 95 percent of high school classes. Yet the team found clear and consistent evidence that teachers planned and implemented a lesson that reflected rigor and high expectations in 50 percent of classes at the middle school and in 48 percent of classes at the high school.

    a. Examples of rigor included students being asked to "devise the rule" from the math problems they were working on. In one grade 7 classroom students explored the possibility of getting heads in a coin toss by running an experiment of 30 trials and recording in a table how many heads came up, the number of trials completed, and the experimental probability as a percentage after each trial.

    b. Less rigorous instruction took place in one middle school classroom where students corrected grammatical mistakes in a handout that the teacher then reviewed with the whole class; in another class, students worked on a skills packet, and in another, students read aloud from a textbook.

    c. Similarly, at the high school, in one high-level class students were working on correcting spelling and noun/verb agreement; in another, students were taking a test that consisted of multiple choice and short-response options. In a third classroom students were asking thoughtful questions but the teacher gave brief responses and went back to the topic under discussion.

2. The review team found clear and consistent evidence that the teacher provided opportunities for students to engage in higher-order thinking such as inquiry, exploration, application, analysis, synthesis, and/or evaluation of knowledge or concepts (#11) in 44 percent of classes observed in the middle school and in 24 percent of classes at the high school.

    a. At the middle school examples of higher-order thinking and rigor included students deciding how to demonstrate understanding of *The Hobbit* by choosing the way in which to complete the project. Another class explored probability by focusing on the essential question: How can you use survey results to predict frequency for a whole population?

    b. High school students worked on a project that asked them to be journalists and to write an article on the state of the nation after Lincoln's election. Another class worked on a project to reduce air pollution.

    c. Less rigorous instruction took place in a middle school class where the students watched a film but the teacher did not stop to discuss or to check for understanding until the end. Similarly, in another class, a teacher read directly from the screen as students took notes.

3. The teachers told the team that they were expected to post the learning objective on the board. In observed classrooms, the team found clear consistent evidence of the teacher communicating a clear objective aligned to the *2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks* (#8) in 44 percent of middle school classrooms and in 43 percent of high school classrooms.

4. The review team found clear and consistent evidence that students elaborate about content and ideas when responding to questions (#20) in 27 percent of observed classes districtwide.

    a. In several high school classes, teachers asked thoughtful questions but did not allow students time to think deeply about them. If one student answered, the teacher moved on, missing an opportunity for discussion. When the lesson was more teacher directed, students had fewer opportunities to expand their own ideas.

    b. Students told the team that rigor varied by subject. There were high expectations in some classes and not so high in others. They said that the middle school and grade 9 could use "more higher-level classes."

B. In its Draft Accelerated Improvement Plan the consolidated district has identified as priorities strong instructional leadership and effective instruction.

Impact: Without consistent, agreed-upon instructional practices, instructional quality will vary from classroom to classroom as will students' educational experience.

Assessment

8. The district has not developed formal, consistent processes and practices to collect, analyze, and disseminate student academic and other pertinent data to inform program decisions, to identify the learning needs of special populations, and to evaluate programs and services.

A. The district does not have policies and practices that ensure regular collection, analysis, and dissemination of data.

1. There is no districtwide data team that analyzes and disseminates PK–12 student performance data to ensure that all stakeholders receive accurate and high-quality information.

2. Interviewees told the team that the district has some formal professional learning communities (PLCs) "when we see a need." They said that at the high school data is analyzed informally at department meetings, noting that at the middle school common planning time is sometimes used for data analysis.

3. Interviewees told the team that educators have not received professional development in recent years in how to analyze data to improve instruction.

B. A document review showed that the October 2014 results of the superintendent's survey to students, staff, and parents identified curriculum and instruction challenges, including "limited time for teachers to interact with grade-level team/departments to analyze student growth" and "gaps in vertical articulation of curriculum and assessment in many subject areas."

C. The consolidated district has recognized the need for an assessment plan PreK–12 in its Draft Accelerated Improvement Plan (AIP). The Draft AIP addresses the need for such a plan as well as for regular data analysis, "teacher voices" in assessment planning, more formative assessment, and "structured data teams at all levels of the organization."

1. The district has recently revived its Leadership, Learning, and Data Team to focus on assessment planning PreK–12.

D. The goals set at the 2014 summer retreat for the consolidated district's Executive Leadership Team included "streamlining student assessment and benchmarking so that data is timely and is analyzed with the goal of making instructional adjustments to meet the needs of learners."

E. According to information provided by the district, data is collected from multiple sources including PARCC (ELA and math, grades 7–9), MCAS (ELA, math, and science in grade 10), STAR (grades 7–9), TerraNova (grades 7–10), California Achievement Test (grades 7–9), and unit tests in ELA and math.

1. Teachers and administrators told the review team that common assessments and common rubrics are used in similar courses.

2. In 2015 the district is piloting in grades 7–12 pre- and post-tests in math and Writing to Text (in ELA and science).

Impact: The district is in the early stages of creating a comprehensive and coordinated data system. If the district maintains the current trajectory, including providing the supports, targeted training, and resources required, it will create a comprehensive data infrastructure to systematically improve classroom instruction, to accurately inform curriculum revision, to effectively support goal and policy development, and to ensure that student achievement is consistently the central factor in district decision-making.

Human Resources and Professional Development

9. The district's evaluations of teachers are informative rather than instructive and do not adequately promote educator growth. Department coordinators have limited time to complete classroom observations and record evaluative data and evaluate teachers who are members of the same bargaining unit.

A. Administrators indicat*ed* that since the 2013–2014 school year, the district has recorded its evaluation data using TeachPoint software. Initial webinar trainings were conducted followed by some self-directed training.

1. Department coordinators and the superintendent indicated that TeachPoint software is time consuming and cumbersome to use. They said that while educator evaluation facilitators, one at each level, are available to help educators fill out TeachPoint forms, they are rarely used.

2. The superintendent said that she does not use TeachPoint software and records her administrator evaluation data using Google Docs.

B. Responsibilities for conducting evaluations are delineated as follows.

1. The superintendent evaluates the principal, the secondary coordinator, the elementary coordinator, the director of finance, the director of technology, and the director of special education.

2. The principal has overarching authority for teacher evaluations including process monitoring. If no issues are identified, department coordinators conduct teacher evaluations. If an issue arises with a particular teacher, the principal will step in and complete the evaluation. The principal annually conducts two to three walkthroughs with feedback on each teacher and evaluates the Title I staff.

3. The two deans of students conduct observations on department coordinators and as needed are assigned additional personnel to evaluate. In the 2014–2015 school year, the middle school dean was assigned to evaluate all guidance counselors.

C. Department coordinators who evaluate teachers are members of the same teachers' association bargaining unit as the teachers whom they evaluate. Interviewees said that this practice may present a conflict of interest; however, this practice is permissible according to ESE's Center for Educator Effectiveness. Also, department coordinators have limited time to complete evaluations because they teach a full schedule in one semester, and are given an additional preparation period in the next semester to complete evaluations.

1. Coordinators indicated that they find it hard to complete evaluations in the semester in which they have a full teaching schedule. They said that sometimes they can arrange coverage so that they can do the evaluations, and sometimes they cannot.

D. A review of educators' files on TeachPoint indicated missing and incomplete documents and more informative than instructive[2] feedback about instruction.

1. At the time of the review, formative and summative evaluation data for the 2014–2015 school year had not been recorded.

E. According to ESE's Center for Educator Effectiveness, despite ESE direction, the district was not prepared to implement District Determined Measures (DDMs) in any grades and subjects during the 2014–2015 school year and as a result was placed on a DDMs Monitoring Plan.

Impact: When educators receive primarily informative feedback on performance, growth in educator practice is left to chance and is not linked to district goals. Also, the limited time available for department coordinators to complete classroom observations and to enter data into TeachPoint hinders effective implementation of the district's new educator evaluation system.

10. The district is in the early stages of assembling a team to annually determine professional development programs and services more formally and collaboratively.

A. To meet the immediate needs for professional development (PD) for the 2014–2015 school year, the district's new secondary curriculum coordinator created a PD plan and a schedule of activities.

1. The district's PD plan provides 4 full days of training, 7 trainings of 2 hours and 20 minutes each (during delayed opening days), and one after-school training specifically targeting MCAS and PARCC.

[2] Informative feedback is factual and cites instructional details such as methodology, pedagogy, specific subject matter or skills, or Principles of Effective Teaching (or Leadership in administrative files) or instruction of subject-based knowledge that is aligned with the state curriculum frameworks. It does not commit to improvement strategies. Instructive feedback includes comments intended to improve instruction.

a. PD for counselors in 2014–2015 consists of 20 hours of Naviance training and weekly counselors' meetings.

2. District PD goals include: the development and piloting of District Determined Measures; writing-to-texts and 21st century skills; PARCC instructional implications; and mandatory trainings on bullying, sexual harassment, civil rights, and assessment administration.

3. School PD goals include technology integration, grade 7 1:1 Chromebook implementation, and mandatory trainings on assessment administration.

B. Individual teachers can also request PD for review and approval by the district.

C. The district's Response to Intervention staff function as coaches in grades 7 and 8 and provide job-embedded PD to English and mathematics teachers by conducting skills groups and working with student performance data. In the science and social studies departments, coordinators oversee job-embedded PD.

D. The director of media services oversees a mentoring program for beginning teachers and teachers new to the district. In mid-August, two days for orientation and mentor assignment take place. Mentors meet monthly with teachers throughout the school year.

E. The consolidated district provides PD for its Executive Leadership Team (ELT), which meets every other month during the school year, and conducts a summer retreat for focused strategic planning and professional development. Interviews and a document review indicated that during the ELT retreat held in July 2014, administrators received PD on the strategic planning process, on how to make conversations that count, on the special education and civil rights law, on new school discipline and staff discipline legalities, on *Google Docs* for administrators, and on the roll out of DDMs for administrators.

F. Administrators and teachers told the team that the district is in the beginning stages of creating a PD team to begin functioning in school year 2015–2016.

1. One goal set at the July 2014 ELT retreat is "Providing a coherent professional development plan and theme that brings in experts from the field and provides opportunities for teachers to collaborate, co-create and learn from each other."

   a. PD issues and challenges identified in the Draft Accelerated Improvement Plan (AIP) include: the absence of a plan, of teacher input, and of data-driven PD; poor leadership; and not meeting state and federal expectations."

2. The secondary curriculum coordinator told review team members that the district is in the early stages of assembling a PD team to annually determine its PD plan more formally and collaboratively and to provide choices for staff to better meet differentiated PD needs.

a. An "all call" was sent out to staff seeking a range of individuals from special education, core content areas, and the unified arts to serve on the PD team. A total of five or six individuals will be selected and paid a stipend for service of approximately four to five days of one and one-half hours in duration each.

Impact: When PD programs and services are not determined formally and collaboratively and are not based on district priorities, information about staff needs, student achievement data, and assessments of instructional practices and programs, staff are not receiving focused guidance and support that helps the district make progress toward its goals.

Student Support

11. Although structures and practices are in place to develop and implement interventions for all students, there are no formal processes to evaluate the effectiveness of student support programs.

A. The consolidated district's Draft Accelerated Improvement Plan (AIP) lists three "areas of growth" for student support; none of these addresses the need to evaluate the effectiveness of the many programs that the district offers. There is no mention of the need to understand why the school did not meet its gap narrowing targets in 2014 (for high needs students and students with disabilities) despite its many support programs.

B. In the Draft AIP, the consolidated district completed a root/cause analysis of the key question: "Does the district have responsive systems that support school need and improvement especially as it relates to struggling schools?"

1. The root causes included curriculum related causes, professional development and accountability needs, and low expectations for staff, students, and the community.

2. However, the review team did not find evidence of program reviews to determine the effectiveness of current support programs in promoting higher achievement for all students.

C. The team found that the Ralph C. Mahar Regional High School operates as a small community committed to the well-being of all its students and functions as a collection of services rather than an organized program of services.

1. Although all staff work to support students, there does not seem to be a well-developed and commonly understood set of student achievement goals. Also, a clear vision about the greater purpose is not apparent and services are not integrated.

2. Support staff described their system as a "unified system of support" not formally aligned under one director. Student support staff told the review team that "We know the kids

and when they are experiencing difficulties. We give them emotional and academic supports and we are their first responders."

D. The school schedule lists many content area classes that are taught by special educators. For example, one high school special education teacher is listed in the high school schedule as teaching "specialized" math, geometry, reading, history, and English. Other special education teachers teach core subjects in content areas.

1. It was not clear to the review team how the curricular content is monitored to ensure it has the same rigor and high quality as the general education programs.

E. In October 2012, the NEASC report recommended that the school "conduct ongoing assessments in all student support areas using relevant data, including feedback from the school community to improve services and to ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations."

Impact: Without a formal process of assessing the effectiveness of its support programs, the school cannot guarantee that its programs promote a culture of high student achievement.

Ralph C. Mahar RSD District Review Recommendations

Leadership and Governance/Curriculum and Instruction

1. **The district should carry out its plan to align all curricula to the *2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks*, to regularly review and revise all curricula, and to put in place leadership and support for effective instruction.**

   A. Under the leadership of the curriculum coordinator, the district should convene a districtwide curriculum task force to develop a plan for curriculum development.

      1. The district should communicate to teachers the plan for completing the curriculum.

      2. The district is encouraged to reference ESE's Model Curriculum Units (MCUs) to identify essential components of a comprehensive curriculum and to support teachers as they translate curriculum into instructional practice.

   B. District leadership, in collaboration with the curriculum task force, should develop a process for the timely and regular review and revision of curriculum. This process should be collaborative and include the necessary resources to support the work including dedicated time and updated instructional resources.

      1. The district's plan should provide a timeline for when curricula in each discipline will be regularly reviewed and updated, identify participants, and dedicate time for this ongoing work.

         a. The plan should provide regular meetings to align the curriculum horizontally (across the school) and vertically (between grade levels).

      2. Practices should be established in this plan to ensure that curriculum materials are regularly reviewed and monitored for effectiveness and currency.

   C. District leaders, in collaboration with the curriculum task force, should define the characteristics of high-quality instruction.

      1. Key instructional practices should be prioritized as the district's non-negotiables.

         a. The practices should include those that promote rigor and higher-order thinking and that encourage students to articulate and elaborate on their ideas.

      2. Once a model of instructional practice is identified and defined, district leaders should develop a plan for sharing instructional expectations with staff.

         a. Using grade level, department meetings, faculty meetings, common planning time, and/or professional development days, the district is encouraged to discuss ideas and strategies from the instructional model.

3. The administrative team is also encouraged to conduct non-evaluative walkthroughs in pairs/small groups, to generalize and share feedback about trends observed, and to discuss improvement strategies regularly with teachers.

D. District leaders are encouraged to review the way instructional time is being used at the high school.

Benefits of implementing this recommendation include:

- Comprehensive and coherent curriculum ensures horizontal and vertical alignment and optimizes instructional time. A clearly articulated and comprehensive curriculum review process guarantees currency of curriculum, dedicated time to complete work in a timely way, and a system for reviewing and updating instructional materials.
- Clear and articulated expectations for administrators and teachers of what constitutes high-quality teaching provide a common language that facilitates more focused feedback and professional development.
- A consistent instructional model that focuses on rigor and on challenging students will likely lead to professional growth and improved student achievement.
- A schedule that offers continuity of learning and instruction, more student choice, and opportunity as well as flexibility for teachers and administrators will likely lead to higher academic achievement.

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.
- *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 Massachusetts Frameworks.
- *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://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLTuqmiQ9ssquWrLjKc9h5h2cSpDVZqe6t) is a series of videos that captures the collaboration and deep thinking by curriculum design teams over the course of a full year as they worked to develop Massachusetts' Model Curriculum Units. The series includes videos about developing essential questions, establishing goals, creating embedded performance assessments, designing lesson plans, selecting high-quality materials, and evaluating the curriculum unit.

- *Model Curriculum Units* (http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLTuqmiQ9ssqvx_Yjra4nBfqQPwc4auUBu) is a video series that shows examples of the implementation of Massachusetts' Model Curriculum Units.

- The Model Curriculum Unit and Lesson Plan Template (http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/model/MCUtemplate.pdf) includes Understanding by Design elements. It could be useful for curriculum development and revision.

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

- *Mathematics Framework Exploration Activities* (http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/commoncore/mathexplore/default.html) are a growing set of activities designed by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education mathematics staff and educators. The activities can be accessed and used to promote discussion and collaborative inquiry.

- *Science and Technology/Engineering Concept and Skill Progressions* (http://www.doe.mass.edu/STEM/ste/default.html) articulate of possible ways for students to progress through levels of understanding of concepts.

- ESE's *Writing Standards in Action* (http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/wsa/) provide examples of high-quality student writing with annotations that highlight how each piece demonstrates competence in learning standards at each grade level.

Assessment

2. The district should develop uniform and integrated policies, structures, and practices for the continuous collection, analysis, and dissemination of student performance from all data sources.

A. The superintendent, the principal, and program leaders, in collaboration with teachers, should develop specific strategies, timelines, and clear expectations for the use of data districtwide.

1. The district should establish systematic, consistent processes for the analysis and use of assessment data.

    a. Common protocols to facilitate data collection, dissemination, and use should be developed; these protocols should include ELA, mathematics, and science.

2. The district should ensure that educators at all levels use data strategically to inform instruction, ongoing curriculum revision, program evaluation, and the educator evaluation system.

3. The district should disaggregate data to identify patterns and trends in student subgroup performance.

B. Ongoing, targeted training in the collection, analysis, and use of student performance data should be provided for staff at each grade level and subject area.

1. Training should include, for appropriate staff, the development of skills to use EWIS (Early Warning Indicator System) and Edwin Analytics to inform strategies that meet the needs of all students.

2. The district's leaders and teachers should review how to extend the use of existing department and grade-level meetings to provide opportunities for more frequent and routine data analysis to improve response time to student performance data.

C. District and school leaders should systematically incorporate student assessment results and other pertinent data into all aspects of policy, prioritization, and decision making, including budget development, district and school improvement plans, and the evaluation of educational programs and services.

Recommended resources:

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

- The *Edwin Analytics* web page (http://www.doe.mass.edu/edwin/analytics/) includes links to a Getting Started Guide, as well as a video tutorial series.

- *District-Determined Measures* (http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLTuqmiQ9ssquEalxpfpzD6qG9zxvPWl0c) is a series of videos featuring different aspects of the development and use of District-Determined Measures (DDMs).

Benefits: Implementation of these recommendations will bring clarity and consistency to the district's use of data for decision-making. It will enable the district to prioritize its needs, and sharpen its focus so that it can provide all students with greatly improved learning opportunities and academic outcomes. It

will more fully communicate the district's needs to the community. It will help all stakeholders to evaluate programs, texts, and services.

Human Resources and Professional Development

3. The district should develop policies and practices to effectively promote the culture of growth-oriented collaborative supervision and evidence-based evaluation that is the goal of the new educator evaluation system.

A. District leaders should review current supervisor policies, practices, and expectations to ensure that the quantity and quality of evaluative feedback, both written and verbal, is enhanced.

1. Evaluators should serve as instructional coaches/mentors to educators by engaging them in an ongoing, performance-based, collaborative dialogue, thereby providing them with informal and formal feedback, guidance, and support that is continuous, frequent, and focused on specific professional practice and skills.

2. The district should support and monitor the skills and practices of principals and supervisors to ensure that they are regularly providing staff with high-quality instructional feedback that is timely, informative, instructive, and designed to promote individual growth and overall effectiveness. Administrators should receive ongoing training to enhance their ability to observe and to analyze instruction and to provide feedback focused directly on professional practice, growth, and student achievement.

B. In order to meet the current requirements of the state educator evaluation regulations, the district should use multiple measures of student learning, growth, and achievement in order to create valid and reliable Student Impact Ratings.

1. The district should accelerate, prioritize, and properly resource the development of District-Determined Measures (DDMs). In order to meet state requirements and adhere to the district's DDMs Implementation Plan, DDMs that are integral to curriculum and instruction and can provide meaningful data to educators should be implemented as soon as possible.

C. The district should consider reaching out to ESE's Center for Educator Effectiveness to identify districts that have successfully streamlined the evaluation process.

Recommended resources:

- Educator Evaluation Implementation Surveys for Teachers and Administrators (http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/implementation/) are designed to provide schools and districts with information about the status of their educator evaluation implementation. Information from these surveys can be used to target district resources and supports where most needed to strengthen implementation.

- ESE's *District-Determined Measures* web page (http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/ddm/) provides a wealth of information, implementation resources, and other materials to support the development and use of DDMs.

- *Rating Educator Impact: The Student Impact Rating* (www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/ddm/EducatorImpact.pdf) is a guide to assist educators and evaluators in the determination of Student Impact Ratings.

- *Rating Educator Performance* (www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/implementation/RatingEdPerformance.pdf) is a guide to assist educators and evaluators in the determination of Summative Performance Ratings.

- *Quick Reference Guide: Student and Staff Feedback (*http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/QRG-Feedback.pdf) includes an overview, resource links, and FAQ related to student and staff feedback.

- *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.

Benefits: When educators are provided timely, relevant, and continuous feedback for improvement and ongoing, enhanced opportunities for professional growth, improved professional practice and student achievement will likely result.

4. It is recommended that the district continue to support the work of its newly created professional development team as it formally and collaboratively creates a plan based upon district priorities.

A. The professional development (PD) plan should be aligned with the district's Accelerated Improvement Plan and the district's instructional model (see the Curriculum and Instruction recommendation above). It should outline and document a set of learning experiences for its educators that is systematic, sustained, and aligned with district goals.

B. The plan should identify specific PD needs indicated by student performance data and trends from classroom observations, determine how they might be met, and recommend adjustments in PD practices to meet them.

C. The plan should include goals focused on improving teacher practice and student outcomes, as well as specific strategies, timelines, and evaluation mechanisms.

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.

- *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) is a video presentation that includes examples from real districts.

- ESE's Mathematics Learning Community materials (http://www.doe.mass.edu/STEM/mlc/default.html) are designed to support job-embedded professional development for K-8 mathematics teachers. Their focus is to develop teachers' content knowledge through examining students' work in professional learning communities.

- *Classroom Connections* (http://www.doe.mass.edu/STEM/mlc/ClassConnections/) is a professional development (PD) curriculum that explores important mathematical content across the grade levels and provides teachers with the opportunity to examine written student work in order to identify evidence of the Standards for Mathematical Practice.

- The *Teacher Education Materials Project Database* (http://www.te-mat.org/default.aspx) is a website that was developed to support professional development providers as they design and implement programs for pre-service and in-service K–12 mathematics and science teachers.

- 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.

- *PBS LearningMedia* (http://www.pbslearningmedia.org/) is a free digital media content library that provides relevant educational resources for PreK–12 teachers. The flexible platform includes high-quality content tied to national curriculum standards, as well as professional development courses.

Benefits from implementing this recommendation will include a clearer understanding of the district's expectations about professional development, and the development of a system that prioritizes student learning, supports teachers as lifelong learners, and helps to implement best practices throughout the district. A high-quality professional development program coupled with time and resources already available in the district will likely lead to educator growth and improved student achievement.

Student Support

5. The district should develop formal processes to evaluate student support programs and ensure that these programs sufficiently support all students.

A. The district should review curriculum provided in its support programs to determine whether curriculum and instructional methodology sufficiently support all students and adjust policies and practices and add programs and supports where necessary.

B. The district should consider partnering general and special education teachers for the specialized instruction courses to help improve course rigor.

Recommended resources:

- **Massachusetts Tiered System of Support (MTSS):** 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.

  MTSS Overview: http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/sss/mtss/

  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

- **Early Warning Indicator System:** 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.

  Overview: http://www.doe.mass.edu/edwin/analytics/ewis.html

Benefits from implementing this recommendation will include adjusting policies and practices and providing additional programs or supports, as necessary, so that all students can participate in school offerings to the fullest extent possible and perform to the best of their ability.

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

Review Team Members

The review was conducted from April 13–16, 2015, by the following team of independent ESE consultants.

1. Fred Savoie, leadership and governance, and financial and asset management
2. Melanie Gallo, curriculum and instruction
3. Kahris McLaughlin, assessment
4. William Contreras, human resources and professional development
5. Christine Brandt, student support, *review team coordinator*

District Review Activities

The following activities were conducted during the review:

The team conducted interviews with the following financial personnel: the director of finance and operations and the assistant to the director of finance and operations.

The team conducted interviews with the following members of the school committee: four members, one from Wendell and three from Orange.

The review team conducted interviews with the following representatives of the teachers' association: the president, the vice president, the chair of non-teaching unit C, and two at-large members.

The team conducted interviews/focus groups with the following central office administrators: the superintendent, the secondary curriculum coordinator, the director of student services, and the director of technology.

The team visited the Ralph C. Mahar High School (grades 7–12).

During school visits, the team conducted interviews with one principal and one focus group with four high school teachers. No middle school teachers participated in a scheduled focus group. The team also interviewed the principal of the Mount Wachusetts Community College (MWCC) Gateway and of the Pathways to College program.

The team observed 37 classes in the district: 21 at the high school and 16 at the middle school.

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

- Student and school performance data, including achievement and growth, enrollment, graduation, dropout, retention, suspension, and attendance rates.
- Data on the district's staffing and finances.
- Published educational reports on the district by ESE, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), and the former Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA).
- District documents such as district and school improvement plans, school committee policies, curriculum documents, summaries of student assessments, job descriptions, collective bargaining agreements, evaluation tools for staff, handbooks, school schedules, and the district's end-of-year financial reports.
- All completed program and administrator evaluations, and a random selection of completed teacher evaluations.

Site Visit Schedule

Monday 4/13/2015	**Tuesday** 4/14/2015	**Wednesday** 4/15/2015	**Thursday** 4/16/2015
Orientation with district leaders and principals; interviews with district staff and principals; document reviews; and visits to the middle and high school for classroom observations.	Interviews with district staff and principals; review of personnel files; teacher focus groups; parent focus group; interview with teachers' association; and visits to the middle and high school for classroom observations.	Interviews with town or city personnel; interviews with school leaders; interviews with school committee members; visits to the middle and high school for classroom observations.	Interviews with school leaders; follow-up interviews; district review team meeting; visits to the middle and high school for classroom observations; emerging themes meeting with district leaders and principals.

Appendix B: Enrollment, Performance, Expenditures

Table B1a: Ralph C. Mahar RSD
2014–2015 Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity

Student Group	District	Percent of Total	State	Percent of Total
African-American	14	1.7%	83,556	8.7%
Asian	13	1.6%	60,050	6.3%
Hispanic	49	6.0%	171,036	17.9%
Native American	5	0.6%	2,238	0.2%
White	697	85.4%	608,453	63.7%
Native Hawaiian	1	0.1%	930	0.1%
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	37	4.5%	29,581	3.1%
All Students	816	100.0%	955,844	100.0%

Note: As of October 1, 2014

Table B1b: Ralph C. Mahar RSD
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	138	--	16.4%	165,060	--	17.1%
Low Income	--	--	--	--	--	--
ELLs and Former ELLs	4	--	0.5%	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 840; total state enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 966,391.

Table B2a: Ralph C. Mahar RSD
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
7	CPI	139	83.6	81.7	82.9	79.3	88.3	-4.3	-3.6
	P+	139	61.0%	57.0%	60.0%	53.0%	72.0%	-8.0%	-7.0%
	SGP	127	29	24	31	31	50	2	0
8	CPI	140	89.8	88.6	88.1	88	90.2	-1.8	-0.1
	P+	140	77.0%	75.0%	72.0%	73.0%	79.0%	-4.0%	1.0%
	SGP	137	42.5	50	53	45	50	2.5	-8
10	CPI	116	93.1	95.3	98.4	97.4	96	4.3	-1
	P+	116	83.0%	89.0%	95.0%	95.0%	90.0%	12.0%	0.0%
	SGP	93	85	78	74	62	50	-23	-12
All	CPI	395	88.2	88.5	89.1	87.7	86.7	-0.5	-1.4
	P+	395	72.0%	74.0%	74.0%	72.0%	69.0%	0.0%	-2.0%
	SGP	357	47	50	49.5	45	50	-2	-4.5

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

Table B2b: Ralph C. Mahar RSD
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
7	CPI	139	62.8	70.5	64.8	57.9	72.5	-4.9	-6.9
	P+	139	30.0%	38.0%	35.0%	35.0%	50.0%	5.0%	0.0%
	SGP	128	27	42	29	38.5	50	11.5	9.5
8	CPI	140	69.9	71	72.3	73.6	74.7	3.7	1.3
	P+	140	48.0%	45.0%	47.0%	49.0%	52.0%	1.0%	2.0%
	SGP	135	55	70	59.5	68	50	13	8.5
10	CPI	114	89.5	87.9	91.6	90.6	90	1.1	-1
	P+	114	82.0%	71.0%	82.0%	81.0%	79.0%	-1.0%	-1.0%
	SGP	94	68.5	64	60	57.5	50	-11	-2.5
All	CPI	393	72.3	76	75.1	73	80.3	0.7	-2.1
	P+	393	50.0%	51.0%	53.0%	53.0%	60.0%	3.0%	0.0%
	SGP	357	49	59	49.5	55	50	6	5.5

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

Table B2c: Ralph C. Mahar RSD
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
8	CPI	140	76.9	70.2	70.8	66.6	72.4	-10.3	-4.2
	P+	140	47.0%	35.0%	34.0%	32.0%	42.0%	-15.0%	-2.0%
10	CPI	101	93.2	91.8	92.5	91.3	87.9	-1.9	-1.2
	P+	101	82.0%	77.0%	78.0%	81.0%	71.0%	-1.0%	3.0%
All	CPI	241	83.3	78.7	80.3	77	79.6	-6.3	-3.3
	P+	241	61.0%	52.0%	54.0%	53.0%	55.0%	-8.0%	-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: Ralph C Mahar RSD
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	235	81.9	82.3	82.9	83.6	1.7	0.7
		P+	235	59.0%	61.0%	61.0%	65.0%	6.0%	4.0%
		SGP	203	40.5	45.5	39	44	3.5	5
	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	215	84.2	83.3	83.8	85.9	1.7	2.1
		P+	215	63.0%	64.0%	63.0%	69.0%	6.0%	6.0%
		SGP	187	41.5	46.5	38.5	45	3.5	6.5
	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	68	61.6	64.2	64.2	61	-0.6	-3.2
		P+	68	25.0%	32.0%	29.0%	26.0%	1.0%	-3.0%
		SGP	54	27.5	37	29.5	31.5	4	2
	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	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
		P+	4	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
		SGP	2	--	--	--	--	--	--
	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	395	88.2	88.5	89.1	87.7	-0.5	-1.4
		P+	395	72.0%	74.0%	74.0%	72.0%	0.0%	-2.0%
		SGP	357	47	50	49.5	45	-2	-4.5
	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: Ralph C. Mahar RSD
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	233	62	67.7	65.5	66.3	4.3	0.8
		P+	233	36.0%	38.0%	38.0%	45.0%	9.0%	7.0%
		SGP	201	47	53	45.5	56	9	10.5
	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	212	63.7	69.4	66.5	68.6	4.9	2.1
		P+	212	38.0%	41.0%	40.0%	49.0%	11.0%	9.0%
		SGP	184	47	53	46	56.5	9.5	10.5
	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	68	41.7	46.8	43.1	36.8	-4.9	-6.3
		P+	68	16.0%	13.0%	10.0%	12.0%	-4.0%	2.0%
		SGP	53	33.5	42	26.5	46	12.5	19.5
	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	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
		P+	4	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
		SGP	2	--	--	--	--	--	--
	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	393	72.3	76	75.1	73	0.7	-2.1
		P+	393	50.0%	51.0%	53.0%	53.0%	3.0%	0.0%
		SGP	357	49	59	49.5	55	6	5.5
	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: Ralph C. Mahar RSD
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	150	76.2	72	72.6	71.2	-5	-1.4
		P+	150	48.0%	41.0%	42.0%	44.0%	-4.0%	2.0%
	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	141	78.2	75	73.7	72.2	-6	-1.5
		P+	141	51.0%	46.0%	43.0%	45.0%	-6.0%	2.0%
	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	38	59.4	48.7	52.6	44.7	-14.7	-7.9
		P+	38	19.0%	8.0%	17.0%	16.0%	-3.0%	-1.0%
	State	CPI	38,628	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	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
		P+	1	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	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	241	83.3	78.7	80.3	77	-6.3	-3.3
		P+	241	61.0%	52.0%	54.0%	53.0%	-8.0%	-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: Ralph C. Mahar RSD
Annual Grade 9-12 Dropout Rates, 2011–2014

	School Year Ending				Change 2011-2014		Change 2013-2014		State (2014)
	2011	2012	2013	2014	Percentage Points	Percent	Percentage Points	Percent	
All students	6.4%	6.0%	7.6%	3.7%	-2.7	-42.2%	-3.9	-51.4%	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: Ralph C. Mahar RSD
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	89	59.4%	72.4%	67.8%	69.7%	10.3	17.3%	1.9	2.8%	76.5%
Low income	79	63.3%	71.6%	69.2%	67.1%	3.8	6.0%	-2.1	-3.0%	75.5%
Students w/ disabilities	32	40.9%	64.7%	47.8%	56.3%	15.4	37.7%	8.5	17.8%	69.1%
English language learners or Former ELLs	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	63.9%
All students	187	62.1%	72.3%	72.4%	71.1%	9.0	14.5%	-1.3	-1.8%	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: Ralph C. Mahar RSD
Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates, 2010–2013

Group		School Year Ending				Change 2010-2013		Change 2012-2013		State (2013)
	Number Included (2013)	2010	2011	2012	2013	Percentage Points	Percent Change	Percentage Points	Percent Change	
High needs	59	69.2%	71.0%	75.0%	71.2%	2.0	2.9%	-3.8	-5.1%	79.2%
Low income	52	71.2%	75.0%	74.6%	71.2%	0.0	0.0%	-3.4	-4.6%	78.3%
Students w/ disabilities	23	58.1%	50.0%	70.6%	52.2%	-5.9	-10.2%	-18.4	-26.1%	72.9%
English language learners or Former ELLs	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	70.9%
All students	174	66.4%	72.2%	77.1%	77.0%	10.6	16.0%	-0.1	-0.1%	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: Ralph C. Mahar RSD
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	94.7%	95.1%	95.5%	95.4%	0.7	0.7%	-0.1	-0.1%	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: Ralph C. Mahar RSD
Suspension 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	
In-School Suspension Rate	18.4%	20.6%	15.4%	14.0%	-4.4	-23.9%	-1.4	-9.1%	2.1%
Out-of-School Suspension Rate	9.5%	8.6%	6.9%	7.3%	-2.2	-23.2%	0.4	5.5%	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: Ralph C. Mahar RSD
Expenditures, Chapter 70 State Aid, and Net School Spending
Fiscal Years 2012–2014

	FY12		FY13		FY14	
	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual
Expenditures						
From school committee budget	$12,354,244	$11,305,652	$11,875,700	$11,158,787	$11,702,904	$11,336,551
From revolving funds and grants	--	$1,883,486	--	$1,468,345	--	$2,013,429
Total expenditures	--	$13,189,138	--	$12,627,132	--	$13,349,980
Chapter 70 aid to education program						
Chapter 70 state aid*	--	$5,254,840	--	$5,286,040		$5,304,190
Required local contribution	--	$2,783,833	--	$2,944,041		$2,829,128
Required net school spending**	--	$8,038,673	--	$8,230,081	--	8,133,318
Actual net school spending	--	$9,232,135	--	$8,970,198	--	$9,134,105
Over/under required ($)	--	$1,193,462	--	$740,117	--	$1,000,787
Over/under required (%)	--	14.8	--	9.0	--	12.3

*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, and FY14 District End-of-Year Reports; Chapter 70 Program information on ESE website.

Data retrieved April 15, 2015

Table B9: Ralph C. Mahar RSD
Expenditures Per In-District Pupil
Fiscal Years 2011–2013

Expenditure Category	2011	2012	2013
Administration	$606	$637	$633
Instructional leadership (district and school)	$790	$825	$959
Teachers	$4,266	$4,353	$4,884
Other teaching services	$691	$655	$493
Professional development	$262	$286	$275
Instructional materials, equipment and technology	$583	$668	$273
Guidance, counseling and testing services	$496	$539	$493
Pupil services	$1,841	$1,849	$2,095
Operations and maintenance	$1,268	$1,344	$1,392
Insurance, retirement and other fixed costs	$2,520	$2,244	$2,057
Total expenditures per in-district pupil	$13,323	$13,400	$13,554

Sources: Per-pupil expenditure reports on ESE website

Appendix C: Instructional Inventory

Learning Environment & Teaching	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			
	MS	0	0	16
	HS	0	1	20
	Total #	0	1	36
	Total %	0%	3%	97%
2. Behavioral standards are clearly communicated and disruptions, if present, are managed effectively & equitably.	ES			
	MS	0	1	15
	HS	0	1	20
	Total #	0	2	35
	Total %	0%	5%	95%
3. The physical arrangement of the classroom ensures a positive learning environment and provides all students with access to learning activities.	ES			
	MS	0	1	15
	HS	0	5	16
	Total #	0	6	31
	Total %	0%	16%	84%
4. Classroom rituals and routines promote transitions with minimal loss of instructional time.	ES			
	MS	0	1	15
	HS	2	2	17
	Total #	2	3	32
	Total %	5%	8%	86%
5. Multiple resources are available to meet all students' diverse learning needs.	ES			
	MS	1	2	13
	HS	3	3	15
	Total #	4	5	28
	Total %	11%	14%	76%
6. The teacher demonstrates knowledge of subject and content.	ES			
	MS	0	1	15
	HS	0	1	20
	Total #	0	2	35
	Total %	0%	5%	95%
7. The teacher plans and implements a lesson that reflects rigor and high expectations.	ES			
	MS	2	6	8
	HS	0	11	10
	Total #	2	17	18
	Total %	5%	46%	49%

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			
	MS	6	3	7
	HS	4	8	9
	Total #	10	11	16
	Total %	27%	30%	45%
9. The teacher uses appropriate instructional strategies well matched to learning objective (s) and content.	ES			
	MS	0	8	8
	HS	1	8	12
	Total #	1	16	20
	Total %	3%	43%	54%
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			
	MS	6	1	9
	HS	14	2	5
	Total #	20	3	14
	Total %	54%	8%	38%
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			
	MS	2	7	7
	HS	5	9	7
	Total #	7	16	14
	Total %	19%	43%	38%
12. The teacher uses questioning techniques that require thoughtful responses that demonstrate understanding.	ES			
	MS	2	6	8
	HS	2	2	17
	Total #	4	8	25
	Total %	11%	22%	68%
13. The teacher implements teaching strategies that promote a safe learning environment where students give opinions, make judgments, explore and investigate ideas.	ES			
	MS	1	3	12
	HS	3	5	13
	Total #	4	8	25
	Total %	11%	22%	68%
14. The teacher paces the lesson to match content and meet students' learning needs.	ES			
	MS	2	2	12
	HS	1	8	12
	Total #	3	10	24
	Total %	8%	27%	65%
15. The teacher conducts frequent formative assessments to check for understanding and inform instruction.	ES			
	MS	0	6	10
	HS	4	7	10
	Total #	4	13	20
	Total %	11%	35%	54%
16. The teacher makes use of available technology to support instruction and enhance learning.	ES			
	MS	7	1	8
	HS	11	1	9
	Total #	18	2	17
	Total %	49%	5%	46%

Learning	By Grade Span	Evidence		
		None	Partial	Clear & Consistent
		(0)	(1)	(2)
17. Students are engaged in challenging academic tasks.	ES			
	MS	3	6	7
	HS	0	10	11
	Total #	3	16	18
	Total %	8%	43%	49%
18. Students articulate their thinking verbally or in writing.	ES			
	MS	4	6	6
	HS	3	7	11
	Total #	7	13	17
	Total %	19%	35%	46%
19. Students inquire, explore, apply, analyze, synthesize and/or evaluate knowledge or concepts (Bloom's Taxonomy).	ES			
	MS	2	9	5
	HS	3	11	7
	Total #	5	20	12
	Total %	14%	54%	32%
20. Students elaborate about content and ideas when responding to questions.	ES			
	MS	6	7	3
	HS	6	8	7
	Total #	12	15	10
	Total %	32%	41%	27%
21. Students make connections to prior knowledge, or real world experience, or can apply knowledge and understanding to other subjects.	ES			
	MS	2	6	8
	HS	2	5	14
	Total #	4	11	22
	Total %	11%	30%	59%
22. Students use technology as a tool for learning and/or understanding.	ES			
	MS	8	0	8
	HS	8	3	10
	Total #	16	3	18
	Total %	43%	8%	49%
23. Students assume responsibility for their own learning whether individually, in pairs, or in groups.	ES			
	MS	5	4	7
	HS	6	5	10
	Total #	11	9	17
	Total %	30%	24%	46%
24. Student work demonstrates high quality and can serve as exemplars.	ES			
	MS	9	6	1
	HS	14	7	0
	Total #	23	13	1
	Total %	62%	35%	1%