

District Review Report

Stoughton Public Schools

Review conducted January 28-31, 2013



Center for District and School Accountability
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and
Secondary Education

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



This document was prepared by the
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.
Commissioner
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Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148-4906
Phone 781-338-3000 TTY: N.E.T. Relay 800-439-2370
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Stoughton Public Schools District Review Overview

Purpose

Conducted under Chapter 15, Section 55A of the Massachusetts General Laws, district reviews support local school districts in establishing or strengthening a cycle of continuous improvement. Reviews consider carefully the effectiveness of system wide functions using the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (ESE) six district standards: 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 2012-2013 school year included those classified into Level 3¹ of ESE's framework for district accountability and assistance in each of the state's six regions: Greater Boston, Berkshires, Northeast, Southeast, Central, and Pioneer Valley. 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 review 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 on-site 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 Stoughton Public Schools was conducted from January 28–31, 2013. The site visit included 32 hours of interviews and focus groups with over 69 stakeholders ranging from school committee members to district administrators and school staff to teachers' association representatives. The review team conducted 3 focus groups with 11 elementary school teachers, 10 middle school teachers, and 15 high school teachers.

The team also conducted visits to seven of the district's eight schools. The team observed classes at the seven schools using ESE's instructional inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards-based teaching.

¹ Districts selected were in Level 3 in school year 2012-2013; all served one or more schools among the lowest 20 percent of schools statewide serving common grade levels pursuant to 603 CMR 2.05(2)(a). The districts with the lowest aggregate performance and least movement in Composite Performance Index (CPI) in their respective regions were selected for review from among those districts not exempt under Chapter 15, Section 55A. A district was exempt if another comprehensive review was completed or scheduled within nine months of the review window.

Further information about the review, the site visit schedule and the review team can be found in Appendix A. Appendix B contains information about student enrollment, district expenditures, and student performance. Appendix C contains the instructional inventory—the record of the team’s observations in classrooms.

District Profile

Stoughton has a town manager form of government and members elect the chairman of the school committee. There are five members on the school committee; they meet twice a month.

The current superintendent has been in the position since 2009. The district leadership team includes the superintendent, the deputy superintendent, the financial coordinator, the principals of the eight schools, and two curriculum supervisors. Central office positions were mostly stable over the three years before the review, until the addition of two curriculum supervisors in 2012. The district has 7.5 principals for its 8 schools. There are also 3.5 other school administrators, who are members of a Unit B bargaining unit, including 2 assistant principals, a dean of discipline for the high school, and two assistant principals at the middle school. There are 292.3 teachers in the district.

Student enrollment reported in 2012 was 3,819. Stoughton High School (grades 9–12) enrolled 1,072 students, O’Donnell Middle School (grades 6–8) enrolled 894, Dawe Elementary School (kindergarten through grade 5) enrolled 397, Gibbons Elementary School (kindergarten through grade 5) enrolled 410, Hansen Elementary School (kindergarten through grade 5) enrolled 283, Jones Early Childhood Center (pre-kindergarten) enrolled 127, South Elementary School (kindergarten through grade 5) enrolled 257, and West Elementary School (kindergarten through grade 5) enrolled 379.

Student population in the district has remained stable since 2008 with a decrease of 55 students during that time: 3,874 students in 2008, 3,862 students in 2009, 3,776 students in 2010, 3,777 students in 2011, and 3,819 students in 2012.

Student demographics for the 2011–2012 school year are in line with the state except that the district has a higher proportion of African-Americans than the state (18 percent, compared with the state’s 8 percent) and a lower proportion of Hispanics than the state (6 percent compared with the state’s 16 percent). As of 2011–2012, white students make up 71 percent of enrollment, compared with 67 percent in the state. English language learners make up 5 percent of the student population, compared with 7 percent in the state, and students whose first language is not English make up 12 percent of the total enrollment, compared with 17 percent in the state. The proportion of students with disabilities in-district is 17 percent, compared with 17 percent in the state; and the proportion of students from low-income families is 29 percent, compared with 35 percent statewide.

Among 11 comparable districts², in 2012 Stoughton students ranked first in MCAS science proficiency, fifth in math proficiency, and sixth in ELA proficiency. In this group of districts Stoughton students had the second highest median SGP in ELA and the sixth highest median SGP in math.

Total in-district per pupil expenditures have been lower in Stoughton than the median in-district per-pupil expenditure for all 35 K-12 districts of the same size (3,000–3,999 students), \$11,023 in fiscal year 2011 compared with \$11,608 (see

² The other districts were: Agawam, Attleboro, Dennis-Yarmouth, Ludlow, Medford, Milford, Norwood, Peabody, Westfield, and Woburn. See [DART for Districts](#).

[District Analysis and Review Tool Detail: Staffing & Finance](#))³, and actual net school spending has been above required, as shown in Table 2 in Appendix B.

Student Performance

Information about student performance includes: (1) the accountability and assistance level of the district, including the reason for the district's level classification; (2) the progress the district and its schools are making toward narrowing proficiency gaps as measured by the Progress and Performance Index (PPI); (3) English language arts (ELA) performance and growth; (4) mathematics performance and growth; (5) science and technology/engineering (STE) performance; (6) annual dropout rates and cohort graduation rates; and (7) suspension rates. Data is reported for the district and for schools and student subgroups that have at least four years of sufficient data and are therefore eligible to be classified into an accountability and assistance level (1-5). "Sufficient data" means that at least 20 students in a district or school or at least 30 students in a subgroup were assessed on ELA and mathematics MCAS tests for the four years under review. Four-and two-year trend data are provided when possible, in addition to areas in the district and/or its schools demonstrating potentially meaningful gains or declines over these periods. Data on student performance is also available in Appendix B. In both this section and Appendix B, the data reported is the most recent available.

1. The district is Level 3 because the West Elementary School is Level 3.⁴

- A. The West Elementary School is among the lowest performing 20 percent of elementary schools.⁵
- B. The district's seven schools place between the 16th percentile and the 55th percentile based on each school's four-year (2009-2012) achievement and improvement trends relative to other schools serving the same or similar grades: West Elementary (16th percentile of elementary schools); Joseph H. Gibbons (40th percentile of elementary schools); South Elementary (50th percentile of elementary schools); Helen Hansen Elementary (53rd percentile of elementary schools); Joseph R. Dawe Jr. Elementary (54th percentile of elementary schools); O'Donnell Middle (55th percentile of middle schools); and Stoughton High (43rd percentile of high schools).

2. The district is not sufficiently narrowing proficiency gaps.

- A. The district as a whole is not considered to be making sufficient progress toward narrowing proficiency gaps. This is because the 2012 cumulative PPI for all students and for high needs⁶ students is less than 75 for the

³ In-district per-pupil expenditures statewide were \$12,895 in 2011.

⁴ Due to the district's Level 3 classification, it received a concurrent determination of need for special education technical assistance or intervention of "Needs Technical Assistance (NTA)." This serves as an indication that while areas of the district's performance may be positive, one or more schools (or, in the case of a single school district, the district as a whole) may be experiencing poor outcomes for students with disabilities and/or are having compliance issues.

⁵ A district is classified into the level of its lowest-performing school unless it has been placed in Level 4 or 5 by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education independent of the level of its schools.

⁶ The high needs group is an unduplicated count of all students in a school or district belonging to at least one of the following individual subgroups: students with disabilities, English language learners (ELL) and Former ELL students, or low income students (eligible for free/reduced price school lunch).

district. The district's cumulative PPI ⁷⁸ is 65 for all students and 54 for high needs students. The district's cumulative PPI for reportable subgroups are: 56 (low income students); 67 (ELL and former ELL students); 47 (students with disabilities); 80 (Asian students); 59 (African American/Black students); 72 (Hispanic/Latino students); and 71 (White students).

3. The district's English language arts (ELA) performance is low⁹ relative to other districts and its growth¹⁰ is moderate.¹¹

- A.** The district met its annual proficiency gap narrowing targets for all students, ELL and Former ELL students, Asian students, and White students; the district did not meet its annual improvement targets for high-needs students, low-income students, students with disabilities, African-American/Black students, or Hispanic/Latino students.¹²

⁷The PPI combines multiple measures of performance data (achievement, improvement, and graduation and dropout rates) over multiple years into a single number. All districts, schools, and student subgroups receive an *annual PPI* based on improvement from one year to the next and a *cumulative PPI* between 0 and 100 based on four years of data. A district's, school's or subgroup's cumulative PPI is the average of its annual Progress and Performance Index scores over the four most recent MCAS administrations, weighting recent years the most (1-2-3-4). A cumulative PPI is calculated for a group if it has at least three annual PPIs. If a group is missing an annual PPI for one year, that year is left out of the weighting (e.g., 1-X-3-4). While a group's annual PPI can exceed 100 points, the cumulative PPI is always reported on a 100-point scale.

⁸The cumulative PPI is a *criterion-referenced* measure of a district or school's performance relative to its own targets, irrespective of the performance of other districts or schools. Conversely, school percentiles are *norm-referenced* because schools are being compared to other schools across the state that serve the same or similar grades.

⁹All districts, schools, and subgroups are expected to halve the gap between their level of performance in the year 2011 and 100 percent proficient by the 2016-17 school year in ELA, mathematics, and STE. The Composite Performance Index (CPI), a measure of the extent to which a group of students has progressed towards proficiency, is the state's measure of progress towards this goal. In this report the 2012 CPI is used to compare the performance of districts, schools, and grades in a particular subject for a given year. For districts, for each level of school, and for each grade the CPIs are ordered from lowest to highest and then divided into five equal groups (quintiles) with the corresponding descriptions: "very high", "high", "moderate", "low" or "very low". In their assignment to quintiles single-school districts are treated as schools rather than districts. Quintiles for grades are calculated two ways: using a ranking of all districts' CPIs for a particular grade, and using a ranking of all schools' CPIs for a particular grade. CPI figures derive from the MCAS Report on the Department's School and District Profiles website: http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/state_report/mcas.aspx.

¹⁰Massachusetts uses student growth percentiles (SGP) to measure how much a student's or group of students' achievement has grown or changed over time. At the student level, student growth percentiles measure progress by comparing changes in a student's MCAS scores to changes in MCAS scores of other students with similar achievement profiles ("academic peers"). Growth at the district, school, and subgroup levels are reported as median SGPs - the middle score when the individual SGPs in a group are ranked from highest to lowest. Median SGPs are reported for ELA and mathematics. In contrast to the CPI, which describes a group's progress toward proficiency based on the group's current level of achievement, the median SGP describes a group's progress in terms of how the achievement of the students in the group changed relative to the prior year as compared to their academic peers. A group demonstrates "moderate" or "typical" growth if the group's median SGP is between the 41st and 60th percentiles.

¹¹For ELA trends in the aggregate, see Table B4a in Appendix B; for selected subgroups, see Table B5a.

¹²A district, school, or subgroup is considered to have met its target when its CPI is within 1.5 CPI points of the target.

- B. The district met its annual growth for all students, ELL and Former ELL students, students with disabilities, Asian students, Hispanic/Latino students, and White students; the district did not meet its annual growth targets for high needs students, low income students, or African-American/Black students.
- C. The district earned extra credit toward its annual PPI for increasing the percentage of students scoring *Advanced* 10 percent or more between 2011 and 2012 for high needs students, low income students, ELL and Former ELL students, students with disabilities, Hispanic/Latino students, and White students. It did not earn extra credit for decreasing the percentage of students scoring *Warning/Failing* 10 percent or more over this period for any reportable subgroup.
- D. In 2012 the district demonstrated very low performance in grade 4, low performance in grades 3, 10, and overall, and moderate performance in grades 5, 6, 7, and 8 relative to other districts. The district demonstrated moderate growth across all grades.
- E. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the district demonstrated potentially meaningful¹³ gains in grade 3. These gains were attributable to its performance over both periods.
- F. The performance of West Elementary (K-5) is very low relative to other elementary schools and its growth is moderate. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the school demonstrated potentially meaningful gains in grade 3. Between 2011 and 2012 the school demonstrated gains in the percentage of students scoring *Proficient* or *Advanced*, and between 2009 and 2012 it made gains in CPI.
- G. The performance of Joseph H. Gibbons (K-5) is low relative to other elementary schools and its growth is moderate. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the school demonstrated gains in median SGP. Most of the gains were attributable to its performance between 2009 and 2012. The school demonstrated variable performance on other measures (i.e., percent *Proficient* or *Advanced* and CPI)
- H. The performance of South Elementary (K-5) is moderate relative to other elementary schools and its growth is moderate. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the school demonstrated gains in the percentage of students scoring *Proficient* or *Advanced*. Most of the gains were attributable to its performance between 2009 and 2012. The school's performance varied on other measures (i.e., CPI and median SGP).
- I. The performance of Helen Hansen Elementary (K-5) is high relative to other elementary schools and its growth is high. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the school demonstrated potentially

¹³ The following changes in measures of achievement and growth, either positive or negative, are potentially meaningful, pending further inquiry: CPI (2.5 points); SGP (10 points); percent *Proficient* and *Advanced* (3 percentage points). Changes are more likely to be potentially meaningful for larger groups of students; higher performing groups tend to demonstrate fewer potentially meaningful changes than lower performing groups; and certain subjects and grade levels are more likely to demonstrate potentially meaningful changes than others. A consistent pattern of potentially meaningful change over several consecutive pairs of consecutive years is more likely to be meaningful than changes from one year to another, whether consecutive or not. In this report, a statement of potentially meaningful change is provided when a district, school, grade level, or subgroup demonstrates three or more instances of declines or gains of the amounts specified above in the CPI, SGP, and percent *Proficient* or *Advanced* over the last four years, the most recent two years, or both. Any instance of decline of one of the amounts specified above (or more) prevents three or more instances of gain from being considered potentially meaningful, and vice versa.

meaningful gains in grades 3, 4, 5, and overall. These gains were mostly attributable to its performance over both periods.

- J. The performance of Joseph R. Dawe Elementary (K-5) is high relative to other elementary schools and its growth is moderate. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the school demonstrated potentially meaningful gains in grade 3 and overall. These gains were attributable to its performance over both periods.
- K. The performance of O'Donnell Middle (6-8) is moderate relative to other middle schools and its growth is moderate. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the school demonstrated potentially meaningful declines in grade 6. Most of the declines were attributable to its performance between 2009 and 2012.
- L. The performance of Stoughton High School (9-12) is moderate relative to other high schools and its growth is moderate. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the school demonstrated gains in the percentage of students scoring *Proficient* or *Advanced* and in the CPI.

4. The district's mathematics performance is low relative to other districts and its growth is moderate.¹⁴ There were variations in performance among grades.

- A. The district met its annual proficiency gap narrowing targets for Asian students and White students; the district did not meet its annual improvement targets for all students, high needs students, low-income students, ELL and Former ELL students, students with disabilities, African-American/Black students, and Hispanic/Latino students.
- B. The district met its annual growth for ELL and Former ELL students, Asian students, and White students; the district did not meet its annual growth targets for all students, high needs students, low income students, students with disabilities, African-American/Black students, and Hispanic/Latino students.
- C. The district earned extra credit toward its annual PPI for increasing the percentage of students scoring *Advanced* 10 percent or more between 2011 and 2012 for ELL and Former ELL students, students with disabilities, Asian students, and White students, and it earned extra credit for decreasing the percentage of students scoring *Warning/Failing* 10 percent or more over this period for ELL and Former ELL students, Asian students, and Hispanic/Latino students.
- D. In 2012 the district demonstrated low performance in grades 3, 4, 7, 10, and overall, and moderate performance in grades 5, 6, and 8 relative to other districts. The district demonstrated low growth in grade 10, moderate growth in grades 4, 5, 7, 8, and overall, and high growth in grade 6.
- E. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the district did not demonstrate potentially meaningful gains or declines in any grade.

¹⁴ For mathematics trends in the aggregate, see Table B4b in Appendix B; for selected subgroups, see Table B5b.

- F. The performance of West Elementary (K-5) is very low relative to other elementary schools and its growth is moderate. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the school demonstrated declines in the percentage of students scoring *Proficient* and *Advanced* and in the CPI across most grades; it demonstrated gains in growth, gains that were largely attributable to the school's performance between 2009 and 2012.
 - G. The performance of Joseph H. Gibbons (K-5) is low relative to other elementary schools and its growth is moderate. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the school demonstrated potentially meaningful declines in grades 3, 4, and overall. Most of the declines were attributable to its performance over both periods
 - H. The performance of South Elementary (K-5) is high relative to other elementary schools and its growth is moderate. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the school demonstrated potentially meaningful gains in grade 5 attributable to the school's performance over both periods.
 - I. The performance of Helen Hansen Elementary (K-5) is high relative to other elementary schools and its growth is moderate. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the school demonstrated potentially meaningful gains in grade 3, 5 and overall attributable to the school's performance over both periods.
 - J. The performance of Joseph R. Dawe Elementary (K-5) is moderate relative to other elementary schools and its growth is also moderate. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the school demonstrated potentially meaningful declines in grade 5 in the percentage of students scoring *Proficient* or *Advanced*, the CPI, and median SGP over both periods. The school also demonstrated potentially meaningful gains in grade 4 attributable to its performance between 2009-2012.
 - K. The performance of O'Donnell Middle (6-8) is moderate relative to other middle schools and its growth is moderate. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the school demonstrated potentially meaningful declines in the aggregate. Most of the declines were attributable to its performance between 2009 and 2012.
 - L. The performance of Stoughton High School (9-12) is moderate relative to other high schools and its growth is low. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the school demonstrated gains in the percentage of students scoring *Proficient* or *Advanced* and the CPI. Over the same period, it demonstrated declines in median SGP.
- 5. The district's science and technology/engineering (STE) performance is moderate relative to other districts.¹⁵**
- A. The district met its annual proficiency gap narrowing targets for all students, low income students, ELL and Former ELL students, Asian students, Hispanic/Latino students, and White students; the district did not meet its

¹⁵ For STE trends in the aggregate, see Table B4c in Appendix B; for selected subgroups, see Table B5c.

annual proficiency gap narrowing targets for high needs students, students with disabilities, or African-American/Black students.

- B. The district earned extra credit toward its annual PPI for increasing the percentage of students scoring *Advanced* 10 percent or more between 2011 and 2012 for all students, high needs students, low income students, Hispanic/Latino students, and White students, but it did not earn extra credit for decreasing the percentage of students scoring *Warning/Failing* 10 percent or more over this period for any reportable subgroup.
- C. In 2012 the district demonstrated low performance in grade 5, moderate performance in grade 10 and overall, and high performance in grade 8 relative to other districts.
- D. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the district demonstrated potentially meaningful gains in grades 5, 8, and overall.
- E. The performance of West Elementary (K-5) is low relative to other elementary schools. Between 2011 and 2012 the school demonstrated increases in the percentage of students scoring *Proficient* or *Advanced* and small gains in the CPI. The gains in the percentage of students scoring *Proficient* or *Advanced* were associated with declines in 2010 and 2011.
- F. The performance of Joseph H. Gibbons (K-5) is moderate relative to other elementary schools. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the school demonstrated potentially meaningful gains in grade 5. Most of the gains were attributable to its performance over both periods.
- G. The performance of South Elementary (K-5) is high relative to other elementary schools. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the school demonstrated gains in the percentage of students scoring *Proficient* or *Advanced* and in the CPI in grade 5. Most of the gains were attributable to its performance between 2009 and 2012.
- H. The performance of Helen Hansen Elementary (K-5) is high relative to other elementary schools. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the school demonstrated potentially meaningful gains in the percentage of students scoring *Proficient* or *Advanced* and in the CPI in grade 5. Most of the gains were attributable to its performance over both periods.
- I. The performance of Joseph R. Dawe Elementary (K-5) is moderate relative to other elementary schools. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the school demonstrated gains in the percentage of students scoring *Proficient* or *Advanced* and in the CPI. Most of the gains were attributable to its performance between 2011 and 2012.
- J. The performance of O'Donnell Middle (6-8) is moderate relative to other middle schools. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the school demonstrated potentially meaningful gains in the percentage of students scoring *Proficient* or *Advanced* and in the CPI in grade 8. These gains were attributable to its performance over both periods.
- K. The performance of Stoughton High School (9-12) is moderate relative to other high schools. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the school demonstrated gains in the CPI in grade 10. It also

demonstrated gains in the percentage of grade 10 students scoring *Proficient* or *Advanced* between 2009 and 2012.

- 6. In 2012, the district met its annual improvement targets for all students for the four-year cohort graduation rate, the five-year cohort graduation rate, and the annual grade 9-12 dropout rate.¹⁶ Over the most recent three-year period for which data is available¹⁷, the four-year cohort graduation rate increased, the five-year cohort graduation rate declined, and the annual grade 9-12 dropout rate declined. Over the most recent one-year period for which data is available, the four-year cohort graduation rate increased, the five-year cohort graduation rate increased, and the annual grade 9-12 dropout rate declined.¹⁸**
- A.** Between 2009 and 2012 the four-year cohort graduation rate increased 11.4 percentage points, from 79.9% to 91.3%, an increase of 14.3 percent. Between 2011 and 2012 it increased 8.6 percentage points, from 82.7% to 91.3%, an increase of 10.4 percent.
- B.** Between 2008 and 2011 the five-year cohort graduation rate declined 3.8 percentage points, from 89.8% to 86.0%, a decrease of 4.2 percent. Between 2010 and 2011 it increased 0.7 percentage points, from 85.3% to 86.0%, an increase of 0.8 percent.
- C.** Between 2009 and 2012 the annual grade 9-12 dropout rate declined 2.0 percentage points, from 3.0% to 1.0%, a decrease of 65.7 percent. Between 2011 and 2012 it declined 0.3 percentage points, from 1.3% to 1.0%, a decrease of 20.8 percent.
- 7. Stoughton Public Schools' rates of in-school suspensions and out-of-school suspensions in 2011-2012 were not significantly different than the statewide rate¹⁹.**
- A.** The rate of in-school suspensions for Stoughton was 4.4 percent, compared to the state rate of 3.4 percent. The rate of out-of-school suspensions for Stoughton was 4.8 percent, compared to the state rate of 5.4 percent.
- B.** There was a significant difference among racial/ethnic groups for in-school suspensions²⁰. The in-school-suspension rate was 9.0 percent for African-American/Black students, 0.6 percent for Asian students, 8.4

¹⁶ All groups (districts, schools, and subgroups) are expected to make steady progress toward a goal of 90 percent for the four-year cohort graduation rate and 95 percent for the five-year rate by the 2016-17 school year. For accountability determinations in any given year, the cohort graduation rate from the prior school year is used. For example, 2012 accountability determinations for the four-year rate use data from 2011; determinations for the five-year rate use data from 2010. Districts, schools, and subgroups are considered to be on target if they meet the state's federally-approved annual targets in a given year for either the four-or five-year cohort graduation rate, whichever is higher.

¹⁷ Note that the 2012 four-year graduation and dropout rates and the 2011 five-year graduation rate will be used in the 2013 accountability determination; the 2011 four-year graduation and dropout rates and the 2010 five-year graduation rate were used in the 2012 determination. See previous footnote.

¹⁸ For annual dropout rate trends from 2009 to 2012, see Table B6 in Appendix B. For cohort graduation rate trends for the last three years available, see Tables B7a and B7b.

¹⁹ Statistical significance based on one sample T test. $P \leq .05$

percent for Hispanic/Latino students, 6.7 percent for Multi-race (not Hispanic or Latino) students, and 3.2 percent for White students.

- C. There was a significant difference among racial/ethnic groups for out-of-school suspensions. The out-of-school-suspension rate was 10.3 percent for African-American/Black students, 0.0 percent for Asian students, 7.4 percent for Hispanic/Latino students, 6.7 percent for Multi-race (not Hispanic or Latino) students, and 3.4 percent for White students.
- D. There was a significant difference between the in-school suspension rates of high needs students and non high needs students (7.2 percent compared to 2.4 percent), low income students and non low income students (8.2 percent compared to 2.9 percent), and students with disabilities and students without disabilities (9.1 percent compared to 3.5 percent).
- E . There was a significant difference between the rates of out-of-school suspensions for high needs students and non high needs students (8.6 percent compared to 2.0 percent), low income students and non low income students (10.3 percent compared to 2.5 percent), and students with disabilities and students without disabilities (10.5 percent compared to 3.7 percent).
- F. On average students in the Stoughton Public Schools missed 11.2 days per disciplinary action²¹, higher than the state average of 3.1.

²⁰ Statistical significance for racial/ethnic groups and other subgroups based on Chi Square. $P \leq .05$

²¹ Disciplinary action refers to in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, permanent expulsion, removal by an impartial hearing officer to an alternative setting, or removal by school personnel to an alternative setting.

Stoughton Public Schools Review Findings

Strengths

Leadership and Governance

1. **One of the strengths of the Stoughton Public Schools, as recognized by staff and community, is the people who work in the school system.**
 - A. The leadership team (central office administrators and school principals) and teachers received favorable comments from various stakeholder groups.
 1. Interviewees said “It’s been an interesting process with the new superintendent—how we have grown.” Principals described themselves as part of a “strong administrative team” with “the support of the deputy [superintendent] and superintendent and of the school committee.” In addition, the 2011 and 2012 evaluations of the superintendent, written by the school committee, acknowledge her contributions to the school system and the people in it.
 2. Interviewees also spoke positively about the principals. The superintendent talked about the principals’ role on the leadership team and their contributions to it. Teachers at the elementary schools mentioned the visibility of their principals; at the middle school, teachers said that they appreciated the new schedule developed by the administration that includes common team planning time for teachers; and at the high school teachers referred frequently to the improved climate with the arrival of the new principal. Furthermore, parents in a focus group said that the principals were approachable.
 3. The teachers received praise from many interviewees. One school committee member said “The teachers are phenomenal.” The superintendent said that the teachers are “great.” Administrators spoke about the work of teachers on initiatives such as revising the curriculum to align with the Common Core Standards; implementing Responsive Classrooms, AIMSweb, and MCAS Action Teams; and making use of data to improve student achievement. A member of the parent focus group said that “teachers make a tremendous difference.”

Impact: Contributions from the adults in the school community, along with the resulting positive perceptions, provide a positive culture for teaching and learning.

- Staff responds positively to the challenges of curriculum revision and increased use of data to drive instruction.
- The community supports the school department’s budget at the town meeting, and the staff is encouraged by the support that the community provides for its work.
- This leads to a supportive organizational framework for future projects—for instance, the new construction that the district is looking into for the high school and South Elementary School.

- 2. The district has collaboratively developed a detailed framework for organizing planning and improvement at the district, school, and teacher-team levels.**
- A.** The Stoughton Public Schools District Strategic Improvement Plan (DSIP) 2009-2014 was developed by 28 community, municipal, and school representatives and was approved by the school committee on September 8, 2009. It contains five goals to move the school system ahead and improve student achievement.
 - B.** Each year a District Action Plan (DAP) is developed from the DSIP with input from the members of the leadership team.
 - C.** School Improvement Plans (SIPs) are prepared for each school using the same template as the DAP.
 - 1. Each year the principals develop SIPs with the assistance of the members of their school council. A SIP may have some of the eight DAP elements and may include other elements depending on the school's goals for that school year. For example, some elements in the Stoughton High School Improvement Plan are the same as those in the DAP, while others are different.
 - D.** Every school has an MCAS Action Plan and Data Team Plan for 2012–2013.
 - 1. According to the superintendent, MCAS Action Plans exist at all levels and are prepared by the deputy superintendent, the principals, and grade-level teams. Teachers in focus groups confirmed this.

Impact: These connected operational plans drive the district's priorities and provide details and guidance about these priorities. The plans provide a roadmap for the staff and the members of the community that highlights the direction the district is taking and how it intends to attain its goals.

Curriculum and Instruction

- 3. The district has nearly completed a systematic and comprehensive curriculum review and revision process with the goal of having complete curriculum guides aligned to the new state standards in every subject and in every grade.**
- A.** The district responded strategically to the need for curriculum revisions and alignment to the new Massachusetts curriculum standards.
 - 1. A coherent plan for the curriculum development and review process was explicitly spelled out and shared with the school community.
 - 2. The district defined its goal in the curriculum revision process: to have an aligned written curriculum in each discipline that adheres to the new state standards using the Understanding By Design (UBD) format.
 - 3. The district added two positions, a science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) curriculum supervisor and a humanities curriculum supervisor; these supervisors oversee the development and implementation of the full curriculum.
 - 4. K-12 steering committees in each subject conducted curriculum audits PK-8 and in all courses at the secondary level. Using the information from the audits, the district created curriculum status charts in all

subjects at the elementary-, middle-, and high- school levels. The status charts help the district track curriculum revisions as they are completed.

- B.** Teachers said that the process has made the curriculum more organized and that they viewed the opportunity to work on the revisions of the curriculum positively.
 - 1. STEM and Humanities supervisors provide oversight to the process districtwide to ensure quality outcomes.
- C.** The district provided professional development about the UBD format.
 - 1. Elementary principals and head teachers were trained in the UBD format.
 - 2. Department directors at the high school received training in the UBD format in 2011.
- D.** The district's online curriculum portal, First Class, provides teachers with access to developing curriculum.
 - 1. Teachers are using First Class to share curriculum documents and materials.
 - 2. New teachers are able to access curriculum resources on First Class.

Impact: The district is close to having an up-to-date and comprehensive curriculum that guides teachers in planning their instruction. This will make possible the alignment of curriculum across schools and from grade level to grade level. These curriculum guides suggest instructional strategies and assessments appropriate to the objectives. Improved instructional and assessment practices will ultimately promote higher levels of student achievement.

Assessment

4. The district has in place a number of the components of a strong assessment system.

- A.** This year the district has begun to implement a new assessment system K-8.
 - 1. AIMSweb provides data on student achievement and growth against Common Core standards in English language arts and mathematics.
 - 2. AIMSweb is administered three times a year and provides alternative assessments for progress monitoring.
 - 3. AIMSweb ELA/Reading replaces the DIBELS in kindergarten and grades 1 and 2 and provides comprehension data as well as the decoding data that the DIBELS has provided in the past.
- B.** Data teams at all levels analyze assessment results and develop initiatives to improve student achievement.
 - 1. For the last three years, data teams in elementary schools have included grade-level data teams for reading, an Elementary Mathematics Liaison Team, and a Literacy Leadership team.
 - 2. This year for the first time there are 12 data teams at the middle and high schools.
 - 3. At the middle school, there are data teams for mathematics, history, science, and two ELA data teams. The teams analyze MCAS and AIMSweb results and make decisions about instructional interventions.

4. At the high school, there are data teams for ELA, history/social studies, world languages, geometry, biology, Algebra I, and interdisciplinary studies. These teams review data for specific courses, such as Algebra I and Biology, and develop formative assessments for the courses.
- C.** The district has this year created positions for K-12 curriculum supervisors, one for Humanities and one for STEM.
1. Creation of these positions enables oversight of the use of data. Data teams at all three levels report to the curriculum supervisors.
 2. At the high school, where there is little data available, these supervisors oversee the development of formative assessments for individual courses.

Impact: Teachers, principals, and the central office have access to data not previously available as well as opportunities to improve instruction based on the data.

- Walk to Read and Move to Math provide tiered instruction based on data at the elementary schools.
- Based on the review of data, students at the middle school receive tiered instruction during the Pathways period.
- Teachers spoke positively about increased access to data.

Human Resources and Professional Development

5. The district has in place efficient and effective Human Resource protocols.

- A.** The district has moved from a paper-dependent application process to an electronic process to increase the efficiency of its recruiting function.
1. Under the previous paper process, the district would routinely receive over 400 paper applications for a single vacancy.
 2. The current electronic system for screening applicants is more efficient because supervisors involved with the hiring process can access the applications from their computers.
- B.** The hiring procedures authored by the deputy superintendent are aligned with accepted human capital procedures in school districts.
- C.** Supervisors are coached and supported through the screening process by the deputy superintendent.
- D.** There are printed hiring guidelines available and in use for vacancies in the teacher ranks at the elementary and secondary levels.
- E.** The supervisor of the vacancy selects interview teams.
- F.** An observed sample lesson is required for finalists for teaching positions.
- G.** The district's human resource hiring systems are uniformly applied and supervised from the central office.

H. The district has a comprehensive Professional Development Plan.

1. The district Professional Development Plan contains a substantial review of the literature on adult learning.
2. It also includes an anthology of district training needs with relevant schedules, training locations, and other logistical requirements associated with earning professional development points, and opportunities outside of district.

I. The district has written records that catalogue its performance evaluations, which are monitored.

1. There is a written annual calendar reflecting which teachers are on summative or formative evaluations each year.
2. The superintendent reads all completed evaluations.

Impact:

- By systematizing the hiring process for teachers and requiring an observed sample lesson before hiring, the district sends an explicit message that it values instructional competence and acts on that value.
- Establishing a centralized professional development plan helps track professional development needs and activities.
- The establishment of a calendar for annual evaluations and the review of all completed performance evaluations by the superintendent are helps in tracking the completion of evaluations and monitoring their quality.

Student Support

6. Schools and staff focus on the needs of individual students.

- A. AIMSweb provides data on individual students. Teachers examine the data about the students in the lowest group of performers and plan for their support. Those who belong to a high-needs subgroup receive the services that they are entitled to by law. However, their individual needs govern the selection of schoolwide support services such as the Pathways program at the middle school and MCAS help at the elementary schools.
- B. Building Based Support Teams (BBSTs) focus on specific students when they review the student's assessment data, the history of interventions, and teacher narratives to suggest further accommodations or recommend referrals for further support services such as counseling, community interventions, and schedule changes.
- C. Teachers cited anecdotal instances of addressing individual student needs and expressed concern about being drawn into meetings when they conflicted with providing help to their students after school.

Impact: Students benefit from school services based upon the attention of staff to students' individual needs.

7. The district provides a variety of support services to students. Most of these services are provided based on available data—MCAS results and in-district formative and summative assessments.

- A. Guidance, teachers, and administrative staff at the high school offer many alternatives to students at risk of dropping out.

1. Students who need a more flexible classroom environment can “try out” the alternative education program that supports students with academic as well as emotional or behavior issues. A complementary program, run by the Special Education Department, supports students with disabilities. In addition, the school offers a number of career and technical opportunities to students with different learning styles.
 2. The CASH program offers business, communication, and media instruction while the Construction Challenge offers a hands-on technology experience in science. The high school also has a Distributive Education Programs of America (DECA) program.
- B.** Students who have not passed courses are given various options for credit recovery.
1. Students who have lost course credit because of excessive absence may make up credits through attendance at Saturday School.
 2. Students recover course credit through a computer-assisted instruction plan called Stepping Stones. Students currently in school may do this during the school day, at home, or during the summer. Students who have already left school may work on this program at home. The district also offers summer school for those who have not passed a course but have received credit for at least two terms during the school year. These courses cost \$200. Summer school is also offered to middle-school students.
- C.** Stoughton has options for young adults who have left school.
1. Those who go to work may complete their high school education at Stoughton Academy. It runs Tuesday and Thursday evenings and offers a full high school diploma, including taking MCAS tests, and a regular graduation. Each course costs \$200.
 2. Those who wish to earn a GED may attend the program run by Massasoit Community College at Stoughton High School on the same evenings as Stoughton Academy.
- D.** All elementary schools and the middle school offer some form of MCAS support outside of school hours.
1. Extra help is available to students before and after school in the elementary schools and at the middle school. Children may access MCAS support through tutoring, a computer program such as Study Island that reinforces math skills, or the Homework Club. The morning MCAS support at the West School is called the Wildcat Achievement Program; the program accepts recommended students and “bubble” students, those who are only a few points away from the next proficiency level.
- E.** The West School offers a summer camp called Multiple Intelligences that is designed to increase retention of learning over the summer months.
1. Through Title I the school runs three, two-week sessions open to high-needs students and other West School students. If there is additional availability, children from other schools are welcome. Since several grant programs are concentrated in the school, the program has the added advantage of offering a hot lunch to all Stoughton public school children who come to the school on camp days.
- F.** The summer camp, extended day, and math coaches at the West School are funded by Title I.

- G. The district is funding two parents to staff a parent engagement center. Each elementary school has a part-time parent liaison. Parent liaisons support an early reading program. They visit families at home to teach parents how to read with their preschool children. At each visit, they leave a book, a bilingual book if appropriate.
- H. The middle school has eliminated many of its study periods in favor of a Pathways course that—among other things—offers support for both ELA and math, AIMSweb, MCAS, and teacher tests.
 1. Many students are assigned to Pathways on the basis of AIMSweb, MCAS, and other data.
 2. Pathways is offered toward the end of the school day. Students may choose or be assigned by need to a humanities, math, or fine arts/academic support track. Others can take a fine arts/academic lab track. Once in the track, students stay for the year although the program itself changes every quarter.

Impact: Stoughton students have a variety of options throughout their schooling to achieve success and a high school diploma.

- The district offers a series of supports within and outside of the school day and the school year that are intended to enhance student skills, to offer enrichment for those who can benefit, and to provide regular support for those who have not attained proficiency on MCAS or who are in danger of dropping out of school.

Finance and Asset Management

8. The budget document has detailed information and is developed through a collaborative process.

- A. The document's executive summary provides a broad range of pertinent information, including a statement of the district's values, historical fiscal challenges, and proposed new staff positions with their rationales. The document has detailed data by line item for three years, from fiscal year 2012 actual expenditures to fiscal year 2013 appropriations and fiscal year 2014 requested funding.
- B. The budget development process includes input at the district and school levels.
 1. The superintendent and finance coordinator meet with principals individually in the fall to discuss the proposed school budget and provide guidelines for expenditure requests.
 2. Later, principals meet with the superintendent and finance coordinator to review school budget requests.

Impact: The district and community receive detailed budget information, and stakeholders have confidence in the budget process.

- Principals accept that budget cuts made by the superintendent are based on a thorough understanding of requests.
- Municipal officials said that the school administration is forthcoming in providing needed budget information and aware of the needs of the community as well as the district.

- 9. The relationship between school district leaders, the school committee, and municipal government officials has improved recently.**
- A. Municipal officials said that by building relationships significant improvement has been made in communications with the school department during the year before the review.
 - B. School committee members described a professional working relationship with municipal officials.
 - C. The superintendent provided the Finance Committee Education Subcommittee with ninety-four pages of requested information about personnel, the current year expense control sheet, classroom enrollment, and revolving accounts and grants.

Impact: A collaborative relationship between school district and municipal leaders has led to the representative town meeting being supportive of the school department's annual budget request.

Challenges and Areas for Growth

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

Leadership and Governance

- 10. Progress on initiatives that would be beneficial to students, teachers, administrators, and the district has been hindered by a difficult relationship and issues of trust between district leadership and the teachers' association.**
- A. Stoughton has a history of difficult relationships between the school committee and the Stoughton Teachers' Association (STA), according to interviewees.
 - 1. A participant in the STA focus group characterized the relationship between the STA and the school committee as "disharmony," and another STA interviewee indicated that there are issues of trust between the parties.
 - 2. School committee members mentioned the strained relationship between the school committee and the STA. One school committee member referred to the relationship with the STA as difficult over the past few years and becoming more so.
 - 3. One school committee member voiced the perception that for the past couple of years the STA has created obstacles and filed unnecessary grievances.
 - B. There have also been recent issues involving the relationship between the central office administration and the STA.

1. STA officers raised concerns about the infrequency of meetings between the president of the association and the superintendent. According to documentation from the superintendent, however, the teachers' association did not accept the suggestion by the superintendent that she and the president of the teachers' association meet once a week "whether there are topics of concern or not, " as "a good beginning of team building."
2. Association leaders had recently sent a letter to the superintendent suggesting that a mediator/facilitator be used to improve labor relations. According to post-review documentation from the superintendent, the mediator/facilitator suggested by the teachers' association proposed that the parties consider Interest-Based Bargaining (IBB) training and support offered at no cost by the Massachusetts Education Partnership, but the teachers' association said that it did not consider IBB to be appropriate for Stoughton. The superintendent then suggested the District Capacity project, another program run by the Massachusetts Education Partnership.
3. The superintendent referred to a number of issues, including implementation of the Massachusetts Math and Science Initiative (MMSI) grant for pre-AP work and the proposed implementation of an advisory program recommended in the 2011 New England Association of Schools and Colleges report and prepared by the teachers. The superintendent said that after one year of the MMSI grant the position of the teachers' association compelled the district to withdraw its application for the grant. Under the grant, the district would be required to compensate teachers involved in the pre-AP program, and the teachers' association did not agree to that, according to interviewees. The loss of this grant was also mentioned in an interview with school committee members as being the result of conflict with the teachers' association.
4. An administrator said that the plan for an advisory program was on hold because the teachers' association had not responded to a request to meet about the program.
5. In the fall of 2012 the STA boycotted the training sessions on the implementation of the new state educator evaluation model, until an agreement was reached about training. According to an interview with representatives of the teachers' association, the issue focused on whether the training was to take place during or outside of teacher work time.
6. STA representatives said that administrators were provided with training on the new educator evaluation model during regular working hours,²² while teachers were expected to attend training outside their working hours. The administration and the STA were unable to negotiate arrangements for educator evaluation training before the 2012-2013 school year, so training could not take place during time set aside for professional development, which created tension.
7. The STA officers and representatives also said that they had some issues with the educator evaluation model and wanted to adapt it.

²² According to the interview with STA representatives, administrators were provided with the training during a leadership team retreat during the summer; however, district administrators provided a document showing that administrators were trained during school hours in three sessions on October 26, 2012, November 9, 2012, and Dec. 14, 2012.

Impact: Differences and issues of trust between district leadership, the school committee, and the teachers' association have slowed progress on the implementation of new programs in the district. Intentionality and care around developing effective communications and building trust between the parties are essential for the Stoughton Public Schools to function, improve, and move forward.

11. The district does not have a complete system of accountability for following through on its plans.

- A. The goals in the District Strategic Improvement Plan (DSIP), dated 2009-2014, District Action Plans (DAPs), School Improvement Plans (SIPs), and MCAS Action Plans are not SMART goals (specific/strategic, measurable, action oriented, rigorous/realistic and timed/tracked goals).
 - 1. For example, the first goal in the District Strategic Improvement Plan 2009–2014 is to expand the curriculum to meet the changing needs of students. This goal does not contain the five components of a SMART goal. This is true of the other goals in the above-mentioned plans.
 - 2. The goals in the plans are not linked with the district's budget; although there is a column in the plan documents for "Resources," no details are given other than an occasional listing of "budget."
- B. Leadership team members do not regularly report to the staff and the community on progress made toward the attainment of the goals in the improvement and action plans.
 - 1. One administrator described regularly sharing progress toward goal attainment at staff meetings, and some others agreed. Another administrator mentioned providing progress updates to goal attainment occasionally, but not regularly, and other administrators in the group agreed with that. Some members of the teacher focus groups said that they received updates about SIP goal attainment during "some monthly staff meetings"; most members, when asked about updates, said that they received "none."
 - 2. Principals reported sharing information on progress made toward SIP goal attainment with the members of the school council from time to time, but they agreed that they did not make regular reports to the community on this matter.
- C. The alignment of the goals among the plans is not explicit.
- D. In many instances, supervisors' evaluations of members of the leadership do not address the progress made on their goals.
 - 1. The evaluations of the principals do not include statements by the superintendent on the status of each goal in their SIPs.

Impact: This absence of SMART, aligned goals in the plans and the absence of accountability for progress toward attaining the goals creates an unclear picture of how the district is addressing its overarching goal—the improvement of student achievement—and what progress it is making toward that goal.

Curriculum and Instruction

The team observed 78 classes throughout the district: 24 at the high school, 19 at the middle school, and 35 at the 5 elementary schools. The team observed 34 ELA classes, 32 mathematics classes, and 12 classes in other subject areas. Among the classes observed were three special education classes, two ELL classes, and one career/technical education class. The observations were approximately 20 minutes in length. All review team members used ESE's instructional inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards-based teaching. See Appendix C for data on the team's classroom observations.

12. Classroom observations revealed substantial variations in instructional practices at the elementary-, middle-, and high-school levels. The elementary level showed a more consistent adherence to effective instructional practices.

(See Appendix C for complete data from the review team's classroom observations.)

- A. Lessons in elementary schools reflected rigor and high expectations (in 71 percent of observed classrooms), and a wide array of educational resources was available to meet students' diverse learning needs (in 91 percent of observed classes).
 - 1. Clear, student-friendly objectives were posted or stated (clear and consistent evidence in 74 percent of elementary classes observed) while varied instructional strategies were matched to learning objectives (80 percent). For example, in a grade 3 ELA class students made filmstrips of scenes from the book they were reading to illustrate sequencing, which was the content topic for the lesson.
 - 2. The review team observed lessons paced to ensure that elementary students were engaged in learning and had opportunities to demonstrate their learning (in 74 percent of observed classes).
 - 3. The team saw an array of practices to check for understanding. Examples include practices such as "thumbs up, thumbs down," students holding up white boards, students holding up hands, and teachers asking questions and moving from group to group to check on students. Productive learning routines such as using writing planners to plan a writing assignment and drawing and filling in charts to understand a math problem were typically present in observed classes.
 - 4. Elementary students were involved in challenging academic tasks (in 77 percent of observed classrooms) and assumed responsibility for their learning either independently or with other students without the teacher's direction (in 74 percent of observed classes).
 - 5. Students made connections to prior knowledge (in 74 percent of observed classes). For example, a grade 4 ELA teacher began a lesson on comparing and contrasting by saying, "Remember when we compared La Laguna to Stoughton?"
 - 6. Students were engaged in productive learning routines (in 86 percent of observed classrooms).
- B. Implementation of many effective instructional practices at the middle school was evident in approximately half of the observed classes.

1. Lessons reflecting rigor and high expectations were not consistently seen at the middle school (observed in 53 percent of classes). In 53 percent of the classes observed, team members did not see clear and consistent evidence of a variety of resources to meet all learners' needs.
 2. Objectives were not typically communicated (clear and consistent evidence in 47 percent of visited classes), and the review team observed clear and consistent evidence of the use of varied strategies matched to the objectives in only 16 percent of classrooms.
 3. Pacing lessons to engage all learners was not fully implemented in observed classes (observed in 58 percent of classrooms), and team members observed clear and consistent evidence of teachers checking for understanding in only 42 percent of middle school classes.
 4. Student engagement in challenging academic tasks was not consistent in observed classes. Most classes at the middle school were teacher led and students did not have opportunities to take responsibility for their learning; the review team observed students making connections to prior knowledge in 47 percent of observed classes. However, as at the elementary level, productive learning routines were fully implemented at the middle school (in 84 percent of observed classes).
- C. As with the middle school, high school instruction did not consistently reflect implementation of effective instructional practices.
1. Reviewers observed lessons that reflected rigor and high expectations in 50 percent of observed high school classes, and the team rarely observed classrooms with multiple resources to meet students' diverse learning needs (clear and consistent evidence was observed in 21 percent of classes).
 2. The communication of learning objectives was not consistently in place (clear and consistent evidence observed in 50 percent of classes), and the use of varied strategies matched to those objectives was in place only in 46 percent of observed classrooms.
 3. The practice of frequently checking for understanding was clearly and consistently observed in 58 percent of classes visited; pacing lessons to engage all students was slightly more fully implemented (clear and consistent evidence in 63 percent of observed classes).
 4. Team members found clear and consistent evidence of productive learning routines that give students opportunities to access content in a variety of ways in 54 percent of observed classrooms at the high school, and of students engaged in challenging academic tasks in 58 percent of observed classroom).
 5. Students clearly and consistently took responsibility for their learning at the high school in 58 percent of observed classes, while the practice of students making connections to prior learning was observed less frequently (clear and consistent evidence in 38 percent of observed classrooms).

Impact: The district has not developed and implemented effective instructional practices to the same degree at each level. Practices in place at the elementary level, such as the data teams functioning for the previous three years and principals monitoring classroom instruction and participating in grade-level team meetings, may contribute to the strengths observed at the elementary level.

The absence of administrators in classrooms, the introduction of data teams at the secondary level for the first time this year, the absence of opportunities for teachers to collaborate at the high school, and the introduction only this year of team planning time at the middle school may have had some bearing on the frequency with which review team members observed effective instructional practices at the secondary level. This variation in effective instructional practices across levels limits students' opportunities to learn.

13. Some key instructional practices require further development districtwide.

- A. Effective instructional practices connected to higher-order thinking skills are not fully developed at all levels in the district.
 - 1. Instruction that required students to engage in higher-order thinking skills such as inquiry, exploration, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of concepts was clearly and consistently in place in 60 percent of observed elementary classrooms, 47 percent of observed middle school classrooms, and 63 percent of observed high school classrooms.
 - 2. The use of varying questioning techniques that require students to analyze, compare, synthesize, and hypothesize about content to promote deeper understanding was not strongly evident in observed classrooms in the district (clear and consistent evidence in 57 percent of elementary classes, 32 percent of middle school classes, and 46 percent of high school classes).
 - 3. The review team did not typically see displayed in the schools visited exemplars of student work that reflect higher-level thinking skills.
- B. The use of varied instructional strategies to ensure that students' diverse learning needs were being met was consistently in place in 60 percent of elementary classes observed, but at much lower rates in middle and high school classes observed (in 26 percent and 38 percent of these classes, respectively).
- C. The practice of having students share their thinking verbally or in writing, individually or in groups or pairs, is not fully in place across the district (in 46 percent of observed elementary school classrooms, in 47 percent of observed middle school classrooms, and 42 percent of observed high school classrooms). Review team members observed a low incidence of students having opportunities to respond to questions that require elaboration about content and ideas (in 31 percent of elementary classrooms, 16 percent of middle school classrooms, and 33 percent of high school classrooms).
- D. The review team observed a low incidence of students using technology as a tool to enhance their own learning (in 11 percent of elementary classes, 21 percent of middle school classes, and 17 percent of high school classes visited).

Impact: When high-quality instructional practices are not being fully implemented throughout the district's schools, students do not have the opportunity to learn to the best of their ability.

Assessment

14. Several factors across schools limit effective use of the data: access to data, support for teachers, and time for collaboration.

- A.** More data is available at the elementary schools and the middle school than at the high school.
 - 1. The district uses a variety of assessments Pre-K–8, including AIMSweb (K–8), Reading Street benchmark assessments (K–5), DRA (K–5), enVision math topic tests (K–6), science units common assessments (grades 3–5), common end-of-unit grade-level assessments (grades 6–8), common grade-level mid-year and final exams (grades 7–8), high school placement exam (grade 8), portfolio-based assessment work samples (Pre-K–K), and teachers-created assessments (K–5).
 - 2. Common mid-year and final examinations are in place in some departments at the high school. While analysis of the results of mid-year exams takes place, there is not as much analysis of final exams.
 - a. Data teams were established at the secondary level during 2012–2013; data team work to develop formative assessments for courses is in its early stages.
 - 3. High school teachers reported in two different interviews that they did not receive sufficient timely MCAS data. According to central office administrators, MCAS data is disseminated to the directors of the English, math, and science departments; however, teachers must visit the department offices to access it.
- B.** Some administrators are not providing teachers with regular data-based feedback on their instruction.
 - 1. Teachers in focus groups reported wide variations as to the presence of administrators in their classrooms.
 - 2. A random review of teacher evaluations indicated that they were seldom tied to the improvement of student achievement.
- C.** Time for collaboration is not always available to provide teachers with opportunities to learn from and with one another.
 - 1. Common planning time in various formats is available at the elementary schools.
 - 2. Planning time for middle-school teams is in transition; until 2012–2013 teachers had planning time by content area; this year middle school teachers have planning time with their teams.
 - 3. The high school has little time for collaboration during the school day and a single contractual obligation outside the school day, specifically to attend a faculty meeting once a month. Attendance at department meetings is not required.

Impact: Without focused attention on the improvement of instructional practice in the light of the student needs revealed by data, increased availability of data has little impact on student achievement.

- When principals do not connect data with teacher practice by providing regular feedback on instruction, teachers do not work as effectively as they might.
- Teachers with little or no time for collaboration are not benefiting from the rich experience of their colleagues.

Human Resources and Professional Development

15. The district has taken steps to implement a new educator evaluation system as required in 2012-2013 for Race to the Top participants, after some delay due to a teacher boycott of training. Still, teachers reported that they did not feel comfortable with the new system or have enough knowledge about it.

- A.** As a participant in the Race to the Top (RTTT) grant program, Stoughton must implement an evaluation system consistent with the new state system for the 2012–2013 school year.
- B.** Stoughton Teachers’ Association’s boycott of the training on the new educator evaluation system occurred at the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year. Association representatives reported that the reason for the boycott was the feeling that it was unfair for administrators to be trained during contractual hours but for teachers to be expected to do the training outside of their normal hours. As mentioned above, the administration and the STA were unable to negotiate arrangements for educator evaluation training before the 2012-2013 school year, so training could not take place during time set aside for professional development, which created tension.
- C.** In November agreement was reached on the training, which then took place during November and December.
- D.** According to association representatives and teachers in another focus group, educator goals written under the new educator evaluation system were due the week of the onsite, the last week in January.
- E.** On January 30, the district sent ESE the agreement on educator evaluation that had been negotiated with the teachers’ association.
- F.** According to the superintendent, the agreement is being implemented in 2012-2013, but because of the late start there was to be a “truncated year” the first year.
- G.** Teachers in one of the focus groups said that though the administration had met with teachers about the new educator evaluation system they still felt uncomfortable and that there were still some unknowns, for instance, “How are they going to use the scores?” Teachers in the focus groups for the other two levels similarly indicated to the review team that they did not know all they needed to about the new evaluation system.
- H.** Representatives of the teachers’ association told review team members that they perceived a climate of fear among teachers in the district, mentioning job security and relating that a principal had transferred a 30-year teacher. One central office administrator told the review team that there was a feeling of anxiety and uncertainty about the implementation of the new educator evaluation system, a feeling that in his view had been created by the teachers’ association. This administrator anticipated that working with the teachers’ association on “district-determined measures” would be challenging. (In a next step in the implementation of the new educator evaluation systems district-determined measures are to be developed and used by districts to inform educators’ ratings.)

Impact: The district’s implementation of the new educator evaluation system per its RTTT agreement has been delayed and its first evaluation year “truncated.” Teachers expressed uncertainty and concern about the implementation.

16. The make-up of the Stoughton staff does not reflect the diversity of the student population, and the district does not have a policy or deliberate practices to recruit educators from diverse backgrounds.

- A. There was substantial diversity among Stoughton's total enrollment of 3,819 students in 2011–2012: 17.6 percent of students were African-American, 4.6 percent Asian, and 5.9 percent Hispanic. ²³However, of its total 2011-2012 staff of 441.5, the district had only 1 African-American staff member (0 percent of total staff) and 1 Asian staff member (0 percent of total staff); 439.5 were white.
- B. A review of school committee policies showed no policies giving guidance to the administration in its recruiting efforts or requiring that the administration take into consideration the characteristics of the student population and the need for a heterogeneous staff from various cultural or racial/ethnic backgrounds.

- 1. The team did not find evidence of an intentional recruitment strategy in the district to diversify staff.

Impact: By not connecting its recruiting of new staff to the profile of the student population, the district misses the opportunity to work in an organized fashion toward a goal of increasing the number of staff who reflect the substantial proportion of students who come from diverse racial/ethnic groups.

Student Support

17. Not all of Stoughton's programs and services have been evaluated for effectiveness.

- A. Though several programs in the district have been evaluated in recent years, including a number of special education programs, the ELL program, and one school's Title I program, not all of those evaluations were data-based, and some programs have not been evaluated.
 - 1. Several years before the review the district instituted the TEAM program to reduce retention of ninth grade students. Approximately 60 incoming ninth grade students whose MCAS scores and school records indicate they are in need of support are selected for the program and are assigned to one of two teams. The effectiveness of the TEAM program has not been evaluated.
- B. According to interviews, the district and its schools have not routinely prepared reports about teacher attendance.
 - 1. Rates of teacher absence at almost all schools were high in 2011-2012, according to data provided the team by the district.
 - 2. At the South Elementary School, the 2011-2012 rate of absence for long-term illness was 7 days per teacher, for short-term illness was 5 days per teacher, and for professional development 2 days per teacher. The rate of absence for any reason was 17 days per teacher.

²³ From 2008 to 2012, the proportions of African-American and Hispanic students increased steadily, from 13.8 percent to 17.6 percent and from 4.0 to 5.9 percent, respectively. The proportion of Asian students decreased from 3.8 percent in 2008 to 3.7 percent in 2009 and then steadily increased to 4.6 percent in 2012.

3. At the Dawe Elementary School, the 2011-2012 rate of absence for long-term illness was 3 days per teacher, for short-term illness 6 days per teacher, for personal days 1 day per teacher, and for unspecified reasons 4 days per teacher. The rate of absence per teacher for any reason was 15 days.
4. At Stoughton High School the 2011-2012 rate of absence for short-term illness was 7 days per teacher, for long-term illness 3 days per teacher, and 4 days per teacher for other reasons (including professional development, jury duty or military service, personal days, and any other reason). The rate of absence per teacher for any reason was 13 days.²⁴
5. In 2011-2012, except for the Jones Early Childhood Center, which had an overall absence rate of 4 days per teacher, the overall teacher absence rate for each of the schools in the district was in the double digits. For teachers in the district as a whole, the overall absence rate was 12 days per teacher.
6. Interviewees said that before this year there had not been any inquiry into this matter.

Impact: When teachers are out of their classrooms, student learning is compromised. And when programs and services, including those put in place to address school or district problems, are not evaluated for effectiveness, the district may in the end be supporting programs or services that are not having their intended result. It may be using its limited funds to support an approach that is ineffective.

18. The Pathways courses at the high school are low-level courses below the college prep and honors levels that do not offer the preparation students need for after graduation.

- A. English language learners (ELLs), students with disabilities, and students who have had academic difficulty are routinely assigned to Pathways courses at the high school; these are low-level courses, below college prep and honors levels. In these courses, the regular education instructor teaches the material at a more basic level and with more structure.
- B. Research indicates that tracks below the college prep level in high schools do not prepare students well for higher education or for career options after high school.

Impact: Because of their placement at the high school in courses below the college prep level ELLs, students with disabilities, and students who have had academic difficulty are not being given access to the same content and held to the same expectations in preparation for college and/or careers as their peers. In addition, it appears that

- ELLs may not be provided with sheltered English immersion to the extent necessary to allow them to have access to a full range of programs, including academically advanced classes;
- students with disabilities may not be provided with individually designed accommodations that allow them to achieve at the same level as their age peers if possible; and
- students who have had academic difficulty may not be provided with the supports necessary to master the material needed for college and career readiness.

²⁴ Numbers do not sum to 13 because of rounding.

19. The district does not adequately address the disaggregated data of high-needs students, thus missing important opportunities to improve its schools and programs. The administrator of special education also has the responsibilities of a principal, and in regular education classroom visits the team did not observe sheltering strategies for English language learners or accommodations for students with disabilities to be widespread.

- A. Several administrators and teachers confirmed in interviews that the district does not look at disaggregated data.
 - 1. When asked about how disaggregated data was used throughout the district, administrative staff said that it varied. One individual mentioned looking at cohort data. Another referred to getting MCAS data for a particular grade. Several teachers said that they did not look at disaggregated data. Elementary and middle school teachers said that the instructional needs of specific subgroups were addressed by focusing on students who fell at the bottom of the performance scale of AIMSweb.
- B. The current administrator of special education serves in the role of principal at the Jones Early Childhood Center as well as being coordinator of all district special education services. Having both these roles makes the administrator of special education less available to ensure that the needs of the district's 619 students with disabilities are met.
- C. When elementary school teachers presented instruction in ELA and math to groups of students that included students with disabilities and ELLs, the presentations did not regularly include accommodations for these students. Instead, the needs of these students were handled in the separate groups that were part of Walk to Read and Move to Math.
- D. According to interviewees, the district has trained a large number of teachers in sheltered English immersion (SEI) categories; English language learners (ELLs) are routinely assigned to classrooms with SEI-trained regular education teachers.
 - 1. However, the review team did not observe rich evidence of sheltering strategies in these classroom, strategies such as word walls, vocabulary building, posted language objectives, and graphic organizers.
 - 2. Reviewers did not find evidence that the training in sheltered English immersion offered by the district was reflected in most classrooms, including at the West School, the Level 3 elementary school that, with 99 ELLs in 2011-2012, had most elementary ELLs.
- E. Proficiency rates for district students with disabilities were lower in 2012 than in 2009 in ELA, math, and science (see Tables 5a-c in Appendix B)—though the proficiency rate in ELA rose from 25 percent in 2011 to 29 percent in 2012. In 2012 the cumulative Progress and Performance Index (PPI) for this subgroup was 47, considerably below the target of 75. Proficiency rates for students with disabilities at the middle school declined in ELA from 43 percent in 2008 to 33 percent in 2012. See [District Analysis and Review Tool for Schools](#), Curriculum tab, selecting for students with disabilities. In 2012 the cumulative PPI for students with disabilities at the middle school was 48.
- F. Proficiency rates for English language learners were higher in 2012 than in 2009 in ELA, but lower in math and STE, though the proficiency rate in STE did rise by 14 percentage points from 2011 to 2012, from 21 percent to

35 percent (see Tables 5a-c in Appendix B). In 2012 the cumulative PPI for ELLs and Former ELLs was 67, below the target of 75.

- G. In 2012 while all district students had a cumulative PPI of 65, high needs students had a cumulative PPI of 54, and two of the three groups within the high needs students group—low-income students, ELLs and Former ELLs, and students with disabilities—had lower cumulative PPIs than all district students (56, 67, and 47 respectively).

Impact: Despite the great benefit of attending to each student's needs individually, there is also a benefit to differentiating services for various high-needs groups. Accommodations recommended for students with disabilities and English language learners are generally recognized to help all students. Though individual students may not be lost in the system, without having all staff taking responsibility for differentiating instruction for subgroups and without examining data by subgroup, opportunities are lost for supporting multiple students at a time and making sure that students in subgroups have access to the benefits of the full instructional menu offered to the rest of Stoughton's students.

In addition, if students perceive that classroom teachers are not taking responsibility for making needed accommodations for them, it may have an impact on their attitude and engagement as well as their learning.

Finance and Asset Management

20. The district's plans do not have clear goals (SMART goals), and the allocation of district resources (money, time and staff) to support particular strategies and objectives is not shown in the plans or in the budget.

- A. The district improvement plan, known as the Annual District Action Plan, does not identify the funds necessary for actions or their source and uses. (See second Leadership and Governance finding under Challenges, above.)
- B. The district budget document development process does not appear to start from and follow through on the improvement plans as the basis of resource allocation and budget requests.
1. The narrative in the district budget document expresses the values of the school district, but the list of new expenditures in the proposed district budget document executive summary is rarely aligned with the priorities established in the Annual District Action Plan.
 2. Only one of the fifteen new expenditures listed in the budget document's executive summary is contained in the Annual District Action Plan.
 3. A low student to teacher ratio is stated to be a priority in the budget document, but not identified as a strategy in the Annual District Action Plan.

Impact: The absence of integration of strategic and budget planning undermines the district's focus on targeting limited resources toward district priorities, and impedes the public's understanding of the district's plan.

Stoughton Public Schools District Review Recommendations

Leadership and Governance

1. **The district should continue its efforts to use a third party to help the school committee and the central office administration work together with the Stoughton Teachers' Association to develop effective lines of communication and resolve issues that hinder the district from moving forward.**
 - A. The third party should be a mutually-agreed-upon, independent mediator/facilitator with experience in resolving labor relations issues between teacher associations, management, and school committees.
 1. The mediator/facilitator might meet with the groups individually to listen to their issues/concerns. Then, serving as an intermediary between and among the parties, the mediator/facilitator could share with each group the other's concerns and issues.
 2. These separate sessions can lead to an opening up of the lines of communication and begin to build trust with the parties involved and to remove the barriers that have caused delays in the implementation of programs and services for the students in the district.
 3. Another possibility is the Massachusetts Education Partnership's District Capacity Project already suggested to the teachers' association by the superintendent.
 4. A suggested resource is the Rennie Center's case study, *Labor-Management-Community Collaboration in Springfield Public Schools* (<http://www.renniecenter.org/research/LaborMgmtCommunityCollab.pdf>), which describes how a district improved collaboration, communication, and relationships among adult stakeholders with the goal of improved student achievement. In particular, Lesson 4 in the case study details the district's experience working with third-party facilitators.

The key benefit of implementing this recommendation is that the improvement of these relationships would mean that labor relations issues would not interfere with the school district's primary goal—the improvement of student achievement. Building trust would change the focus to common endeavors rather than separate positions.

- Furthermore, better lines of communication would provide the association opportunities for input on key issues.
 - Finally, better communication and increased trust would give teachers a better understanding of such new initiatives as the new teacher evaluation system and decrease the anxiety and uncertainty about them.
2. **The district should strengthen its improvement planning process by completing and aligning the goals in its system of plans and including a mechanism to ensure accountability for the follow-through on the plans.**
 - A. The goals in the district and school plans should be SMART goals.
 1. SMART goals are specific/strategic, measurable, action oriented, rigorous/realistic, and timed/tracked.
 - B. Explicit financial information should be included for all strategies/activities for the goals in the district and school plans.

1. Detailed financial funding sources should be provided for every strategy/activity needed to achieve each goal so that stakeholders understand the resources necessary to attain each goal.
- C. Administrators should make regular reports on progress toward achieving the goals in their plans.
1. The superintendent should provide regular status reports to the school committee, staff, and the community on the progress made toward achieving each goal in the District Strategic Improvement Plan (DSIP)/District Action Plan (DAP).
 2. Similarly, the principals should make periodic progress reports to their school councils, staff, parents, leadership team, school committee, and community about the status of the goals in their School Improvement Plans (SIPs).
- D. The goals in the various plans should be aligned with the DSIP/DAP goals.
1. The goals in the SIPs should be aligned with the goals in the DSIP/DAP. And the goals in the MCAS Action Plan and the Data Team Plan in each school should be aligned with that school's SIP goals.
- E. Central office administrators and school principals should be accountable for attaining the goals in their respective plans.
1. The superintendent's evaluations should contain statements from the school committee about the progress made on achieving each of the goals in the DSIP/DAP.
 2. The superintendent should include information in the evaluations of principals about the progress they have made in achieving each of the goals in their SIP.

Implementing these recommendations would engage all stakeholders in a common vision for improving instruction and student performance and would mean that the school committee and the community, as well as staff, would have a clear understanding of district and school priorities, the resources necessary to achieve them, and progress toward accomplishing them.

Curriculum and Instruction

3. **To ensure that high-quality instructional practices are fully implemented at all levels, the review team recommends the development of a common understanding of effective instructional practices, the strengthening of instructional leadership at all levels, increased high-quality supervision and feedback at all levels, more structured opportunities for teachers to plan, share, and reflect on instructional practices, and more professional development opportunities targeted at improving instructional practices districtwide.**
 - A. The district should develop a common understanding of effective instructional practices.
 1. District leaders should consider seeking the assistance of the Southeast District and School Assistance Center (DSAC) to develop a shared district understanding of effective instruction.
 2. Other sources of information that can help Stoughton to clarify and refine its definition of effective instruction are

- i. ESE's Conditions for School Effectiveness Research Guide (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/framework/level4/ConditionResearchGuide.pdf>). In particular, pages 30-35 provide a succinct description of research about specific instructional approaches; and
 - ii. Characteristics of Standards-Based Teaching and Learning: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sda/ucd/walk/>
 - 3. The district should consider providing opportunities for staff at all levels to observe classes to further clarify their understanding of effective instruction.
- B.** Teachers should be provided with more frequent and effective instructional feedback.
- 1. Principals and district administrators should fully implement the new educator evaluation system and expect teachers to work toward demonstration of the Standards and Indicators of Effective Teaching Practice.
 - 2. Principals and instructional supervisors should actively monitor instruction.
 - 3. Some examples of what administrators might look for in walkthroughs and observations are included in ESE's *Characteristics of a Standards-Based Mathematics Classroom* (http://www.doe.mass.edu/omste/news07/mathclass_char.doc) and *An Effective Standards-Based Science and Technology/Engineering Classroom* (http://www.doe.mass.edu/omste/news07/scitechclass_char.pdf).
 - 4. Principals and instructional leaders should identify and share exemplars of effective instructional practices in place in the district.
- C.** Teachers at all levels should be provided with more structured opportunities to plan, share, and reflect on instructional practices.
- D.** The district should provide targeted professional development.
- 1. The district should consider offering professional development to help teachers strengthen students' acquisition of higher-order thinking skills.
 - 2. Additional professional development could address meeting the needs of diverse learners, effective questioning techniques, collaborative and student-centered learning, and the use of technology to enhance learning.

By developing a common understanding of effective instructional practices, the district will bring about greater instructional coherence in all the district's schools. By providing a more robust system of monitoring instruction, the district will target instructional practices that need improvement, increase effective instructional practices,, and enable strong instruction across the district.

Assessment

4. The district should address factors that are limiting teachers' ability and opportunities to make effective instructional use of data.

- A.** Professional development for teachers, whether embedded in the school day or available during district professional development days, should include strategies and programs to address the student needs that the data uncovers.
 - 1. School administrators and curriculum supervisors should investigate and make available to teachers programs that address specific instructional needs shown by data.
 - 2. School administrators and curriculum supervisors should, as they regularly observe teachers, provide them with guidance about classroom practices that would enhance their ability to address students' instructional needs.
 - 3. A recommended resource is ESE's *Professional Learning Communities Guidance* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/ucd/PLCguidance.pdf>), which describes the work of developing and strengthening instructional teams at the school level.
- B.** Administrators should work with teachers to make the changes necessary to ensure time for teacher collaboration.
 - 1. The district might consider raising class size slightly at the elementary- and middle-school levels to allow for increased staffing to free up teachers for common planning.
- C.** The necessary steps might be taken to establish time after the high school day for collaboration at department meetings and for other professional activities.

Benefits to the Stoughton Public Schools from implementing this recommendation will include more opportunities for administrators to guide teacher instruction and more opportunities for teachers to learn from one another.

5. District and high school administrators should ensure that high school teachers have sufficient, timely access to data about their students and take the steps necessary to ensure that teachers have regular opportunities to discuss it.

- A.** Teachers should receive and have opportunities to review timely MCAS data and other data about their students without having to visit their department office to view data.
 - 1. In both faculty meetings and department meetings teachers should have the opportunity to discuss MCAS data.
- B.** Teachers in course-specific data teams should continue district efforts to develop formative assessments.
 - 1. Formative assessments will provide teachers and students with information on student progress at regular intervals.

Benefits to the Stoughton Public Schools from implementing this recommendation will include high school instruction that is informed by more complete knowledge of students' strengths, challenges, and progress.

Human Resources and Professional Development

6. To attract new staff members from diverse backgrounds the school committee should consider enacting and monitoring a recruitment policy that results in a pool of candidates that reflect the student body.

A. Specifically, the district might consider the following:

1. Drafting a recruitment policy that explicitly seeks to recruit and retain a diverse talented pool of educators reflective of the student body;
2. Participating in recruitment fairs that target educators of color
3. Posting opportunities in publications that reach educators of color.
4. Beginning outreach to or joining agencies, universities, communities, and professional associations (such as the Massachusetts Partnership for Diversity in Education at <http://www.mpde.org/> or the Commonwealth Compact at <http://www.commonwealthcompact.org/>) that may be sources for a qualified, diverse pool of education professionals;
5. Partnering with neighboring or similar districts committed to promoting and actively working to diversify their educator staff. The partnership could involve sharing successful practices, discussing current trends and research in this focus area, and working collaboratively to hire and retain excellent teachers;
6. Negotiating internship programs with accredited universities with diverse student populations;
7. Informing the American Association of School Personnel Administrators (AASPA) and the Massachusetts Association of School Personnel Administrators (MASPA), as well as other school personnel organizations in the region, of the district's interest in being contacted by qualified, licensed candidates of diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds whether or not there are vacancies in the district, in order to build a permanent file of qualified candidates of diverse backgrounds interested in the Stoughton schools;
8. Inviting town residents from different racial/ethnic groups or community organizations that work with residents from different racial/ethnic groups as an advisory board to its recruitment effort; and
9. Providing regular updates about the district's progress in hiring qualified, diverse staff that reflect the student body.

Through a policy that promotes systematic outreach to qualified candidates of various backgrounds for positions in the district, the school committee could send a strong message to the schools and community about the importance of attracting a diverse group of candidates. The above series of recommendations could provide an ongoing professional framework for the district to locate a diverse group of qualified staff for employment.

Student Support

- 7. So that high-needs students and other students have the opportunity to achieve at high levels, the review team recommends that the district consider making changes in staffing and that it provide more training and supervision for staff to increase teachers' repertoire of instructional strategies.**
- A.** District leaders should consider separating the roles of special education coordinator and principal of the Jones Early Childhood Center. By virtue of having both these roles, the principal is less available to ensure that the needs of students with disabilities are met.
 - B.** The district should consider assigning supplementary math personnel to assist regular classroom teachers in the preparation of adaptive materials and varied approaches using manipulatives and visual representations of math concepts. These strategies are needed in the inclusionary or sheltered math classrooms.
 - C.** The district should ensure that teachers have RETELL training in accordance with ESE guidelines and ESE's schedule for training.²⁵
 - D.** The district should ensure that teachers have sufficient training in inclusionary practices as well.
 - E.** The district should consider how it might provide classroom teachers and special education teachers time to discuss strategies that accommodate the range of differences that are found in regular education classrooms.
 - F.** As it implements its new evaluation system, the district should evaluate its informal observation and formal evaluation procedures with high-needs populations in mind.
 - 1. Observers and evaluators should verify that sheltering strategies and common accommodations are fully implemented.
 - 2. With the knowledge that students other than students with disabilities or ELLs would also benefit from this enhanced instructional environment, evaluators should ensure that these adaptive strategies are fully in evidence in regular as well as in support classrooms.

Benefits to Stoughton from implementing this recommendation include more time for the administrator of special education to attend to the needs of students with disabilities and an instructional model that more consistently and appropriately reaches the range of differences found in the typical classroom.

- 8. The district should identify programs, procedures, and practices that need evaluation; it should make sure that evaluations include analysis of data and that the decisions it makes based on the evaluations are data driven.**
- A.** Among programs needing evaluation, the district should examine the track record of the ninth grade TEAM program in reducing retentions at the end of the year.

²⁵ RETELL stands for Rethinking Equity and Teaching for English Language Learners. See Guidelines for the Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) Teacher and SEI Administrator Endorsements, with schedule, available at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/retell/>.

1. The district should examine the background of the students in the ninth grade TEAM program to discover commonalities in their educational history. With commonalities established, the district would be able to address students' needs earlier in their school experience.
 2. The district should examine the instructional practices and expectations of teachers involved in the TEAM program and determine whether the program is teaching study skills, developing self-confidence, encouraging goal setting, and modeling active student involvement in addition to providing academic content.
- B.** The district should work to reduce the number of days that teachers are not in classrooms.
1. The district should examine the teacher absence rates at all of its schools, determine the reasons for the high rates of absence across schools (except for the Jones Early Childhood Center), and take steps to reduce the number of absences.
 2. The district should look at the level of teacher morale and the level of leadership support for good attendance.

By making sure it has done a comprehensive evaluation of its programs, procedures, and practices, the district will ensure that it has comprehensive information about which of them should be replicated, adjusted, or eliminated (depending on what the data indicates); this will be an aid in allocating its funds productively. And with improved teacher attendance students will gain valuable instructional time during the school year.

9. The district should ensure that all students are enrolled in courses that prepare them well for college and career readiness. To that end, the district should eliminate Pathways courses at the high school, or at least make sure that they are used effectively only as supplemental courses that help students succeed in their required college preparatory classes.

- A.** Incorporation of all students into college prep classes will necessitate the use of instructional practices that accommodate learning styles and needs.
- B.** The district should provide any professional development teachers need to allow them to use such practices. (See Curriculum and Instruction recommendation, the first Assessment recommendation, and the first Student Support recommendation above.)
- C.** The district should investigate ways to develop more student-centered, project-based classrooms at the high school level.
- D.** Any Pathways courses that the district is considering keeping should be assessed for their value in increasing college and career readiness.
- E.** Any Pathways courses that the district finds to add significant value should be used as supplementary courses, and can be offered as ungraded courses after school and/or during school in addition to (but not in place of) college preparatory courses.
- F.** After eliminating ineffective Pathways courses as described above and incorporating students into college prep classes, the school district should evaluate the effectiveness of this change in providing students with access to

curriculum that is aligned with the new Massachusetts curriculum standards; improving student skills; and increasing student learning, proficiency on MCAS, and college and career readiness.

- G. Under no circumstances should students in specific subgroups be routinely counseled into lower-level courses. The district should ensure that guidance and administrators have procedures and check points in place to ensure that this does not happen.

The benefit of implementing these recommendations is that more students will receive appropriate and consistent instruction in regular and support classrooms, and students will be held to higher standards. Regular classroom teachers will gain the capacity to offer the accommodations that many students need. Although this will not eliminate the need for special support services, it will help ensure that all students receive appropriate instruction in regular education classes.

Finance and Asset Management

10. Aligned to the strengthened strategic planning process recommended under Leadership and Governance above, budget development should include a hard look at whether current resource allocation directly supports strategic improvement, and what reallocations may be needed to fully implement the strategic plan and supporting plans.

- A. Key aspects of the strategic plan would be included in the budget narrative, and specific statements about resources provided in the plan document for initiatives that have financial implications, e.g., staffing changes, changes in class sizes, or new professional development.
- B. Information and resources related to establishing budget priorities can be found in The Rennie Center's *Smart School Budgeting*: (<http://www.renniecenter.org/research/SmartSchoolBudgeting.pdf>).

Benefits from implementing this recommendation could include a greater shared understanding of both the strategic plan and the budget, and more support for implementing the plan, whether financial or not.

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

Review Team Members

The review of the Stoughton School District was conducted from January 28–31, 2013, by the following team of educators, independent consultants to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

1. Dr. John Kulevich, Leadership and Governance
2. Suzanne Kelly, Curriculum and Instruction
3. Patricia Williams, Assessment, review team coordinator
4. Dr. Thomas Johnson, Human Resources and Professional Development
5. Dr. Katherine Lopez Natale, Student Support
6. Wilfrid Savoie, Financial and Asset Management

District Review Activities

The following activities were conducted during the review of the Stoughton Public Schools.

- The review team conducted interviews with the following Stoughton financial personnel: financial coordinator, supervisor of support services, payroll and accounts payable clerks. The review team conducted interviews with the following members of the Stoughton School Committee: chair and members.
- The review team conducted interviews with representatives of the Stoughton teachers' association: president, vice-president, grievance and negotiations chair and committee members, building representative, and member.
- The review team conducted interviews/focus groups with representatives from the Stoughton central office administration: superintendent, deputy superintendent, curriculum supervisors, special education director. The review team visited the following schools in the Stoughton School District: Dawe Elementary School (kindergarten through grade 5), Gibbons Elementary School (kindergarten through grade 5), Hansen Elementary School (kindergarten through grade 5), South Elementary School (kindergarten through grade 5), West Elementary School (kindergarten through grade 5), O'Donnell Middle School (grades 6–8), and Stoughton High School (grades 9–12).
- During school visits, the review team conducted interviews with 3 focus groups with 11 elementary school teachers, 10 middle-school teachers, and 15 high-school teachers.
- The team observed 78 classes throughout the district: 24 at the high school, 19 at the middle school, and 35 at the 5 elementary schools.
- The review team analyzed multiple sets of data and reviewed numerous documents before and during the site visit, including:
 - Data on student and school performance, including achievement and growth data and 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

The following is the schedule for the onsite portion of the district review of the Stoughton School District conducted from January 28–31, 2013.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Orientation with district leaders and principals; interviews with district staff and principals; review of documents; interview with teachers' association.	Interviews with district staff and principals; classroom observations at the O'Donnell Middle School; review of personnel files; teacher focus groups; interview with Unit B association membership; focus group with parents.	Interviews with town personnel; classroom observations at Dawe, Gibbons, Hansen, South, and West Elementary Schools, interviews with school leaders; interview with teachers' association; school committee interviews.	Classroom observations at Stoughton High School and O'Donnell Middle School; interviews with school leaders; follow-up interviews; team meeting; emerging themes meeting with district leaders and principals.

Appendix B: Enrollment, Expenditures, Performance

**Table B1a: Stoughton Public Schools
2012-2013 Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity**

Student Group	District	Percent of Total	State	Percent of Total
Asian	168	4.5%	56,517	5.9%
Afr. Amer./Black	695	18.5%	81,806	8.6%
Hispanic/ Latino	227	6.0%	156,976	16.4%
Multi-race, Non-Hisp. /Lat.	72	1.9%	26,012	2.7%
Nat. Haw. Or Pacif. Isl.	8	0.2%	1,020	0.1%
White	2,581	68.8%	630,150	66.0%
All students	3,753	100.0%	954,773	100.0%

Note: As of October 1, 2012

**Table B1b: Stoughton Public Schools
2012-2013 Student Enrollment by High Needs Populations**

Student Group	District			State		
	N	Percent of High Needs	Percent of District	N	Percent of High Needs	Percent of State
Students w/ disabilities	619	37.9%	16.3%	163,921	35.5%	17.0%
Low income	1,161	71.1%	30.9%	353,420	76.5%	37.0%
ELL and Former ELL	278	17.0%	7.4%	95,865	20.7%	10.0%
All high needs students	1,633	--	43.1%	462,272	--	47.9%

Notes: As of October 1, 2012. District and state numbers and percentages for students with disabilities and high needs students are calculated including students in out-of-district placements. Total district enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 3,788; total state enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 965,602.

**Table B2: Stoughton Public Schools
Expenditures, Chapter 70 State Aid, and Net School Spending Fiscal Years 2011–2013**

	FY11		FY12		FY13
	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual	Estimated
Expenditures					
From local appropriations for schools					
By school committee	34,459,668	34,205,724	35,935,655	35,734,205	37,701,774
By municipality	8,845,256	8,292,895	9,363,038	8,606,085	8,761,482
Total from local appropriations	43,304,924	42,498,619	45,298,693	44,340,290	46,463,256
From revolving funds and grants	---	5,390,349	---	5,280,736	---
Total expenditures	---	47,888,968	---	49,621,026	---
Chapter 70 aid to education program					
Chapter 70 state aid*	---	12,168,170	---	12,860,747	14,019,929
Required local contribution	---	22,865,525	---	22,821,888	23,411,556
Required net school spending**	---	35,033,695	---	35,682,635	37,431,485
Actual net school spending	---	38,410,880	---	39,816,658	41,899,451
Over/under required (\$)	---	3,377,185	---	4,134,023	4,467,966
Over/under required (%)	---	9.6	---	11.6	11.9
<p>*Chapter 70 state aid funds are deposited in the local general fund and spent as local appropriations.</p> <p>**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.</p> <p>Sources: FY11, FY12 District End-of-Year Reports, Chapter 70 Program information on ESE website</p> <p>Data retrieved June 5, 2013</p>					

Table B3: Expenditures Per In-District Pupil: Stoughton Public Schools and State
Fiscal Years 2010–2012, State Fiscal Year 2012

Expenditure Category	2010	2011	2012	State 2012
Administration	\$251.61	\$249.10	\$253.92	\$470.99
Instructional leadership (district and school)	\$842.14	\$731.84	\$746.35	\$854.92
Teachers	\$5,024.84	\$5,210.05	\$5,412.43	\$5,125.13
Other teaching services	\$548.30	\$656.72	\$526.55	\$1,026.54
Professional development	\$184.69	\$179.94	\$215.39	\$231.49
Instructional materials, equipment and technology	\$318.08	\$234.37	\$413.22	\$376.79
Guidance, counseling and testing services	\$386.45	\$361.81	\$311.70	\$386.86
Pupil services	\$1,001.95	\$910.91	\$850.40	\$1,249.52
Operations and maintenance	\$1,007.29	\$1,001.91	\$983.00	\$1,034.67
Insurance, retirement and other fixed costs	\$1,406.66	\$1,486.50	\$1,440.34	\$2,363.99
Total expenditures per in-district pupil	\$10,972.01	\$11,023.15	\$11,153	\$13,121
Sources: FY10, FY11, and FY 12 per-pupil expenditure reports on ESE website Data retrieved: June 5, 2013				

Table B4a: Stoughton
English Language Arts Performance, 2009-2012

Grade and Measure		Number Included (2012)	Spring MCAS Year				Gains and Declines			2012 Performance (CPI, SGP)
			2009	2010	2011	2012	4-Year Trend	2-Year Trend	Potentially Meaningful?	
3	CPI	295	78.1	86.3	79.7	84.2	6.1	4.5	Yes	Low
	P+	295	50%	66%	53%	63%	13	10		--
4	CPI	305	75.6	74.9	78.8	75.8	0.2	-3	--	Very Low
	P+	305	43%	45%	53%	50%	7	-3		--
	SGP	289	33.5	49.5	49.0	51.0	17.5	2.0		Moderate
5	CPI	328	87.2	84.7	85.7	86.5	-0.7	0.8	--	Moderate
	P+	328	66%	63%	67%	68%	2	1		--
	SGP	313	47.5	45.5	55.0	60.0	12.5	5.0		Moderate
6	CPI	298	90.5	91.1	89.1	87.2	-3.3	-1.9	--	Moderate
	P+	298	76%	78%	73%	71%	-5	-2		--
	SGP	288	62.0	55.0	51.0	57.5	-4.5	6.5		Moderate
7	CPI	301	92.6	92.6	89.9	90.0	-2.6	0.1	--	Moderate
	P+	301	75%	78%	72%	74%	-1	2		--
	SGP	288	46.0	39.5	40.0	47.0	1.0	7.0		Moderate
8	CPI	300	93.5	91.9	94.0	93.7	0.2	-0.3	--	Moderate
	P+	300	82%	78%	83%	83%	1	0		--
	SGP	287	38.5	34.0	44.0	47.0	8.5	3.0		Moderate
10	CPI	222	94.5	95.4	97.1	96.7	2.2	-0.4	--	Low
	P+	222	84%	86%	90%	89%	5	-1		--
	SGP	191	57.5	61.0	52.0	56.0	-1.5	4.0		Moderate
All	CPI	2,049	87.3	88.0	87.4	87.3	0.0	-0.1	--	Low
	P+	2,049	68%	70%	69%	70%	2	1		--
	SGP	1,656	48.0	48.0	48.0	52.0	4.0	4.0		Moderate

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. The “2012 Performance” column shows the quintile into which the CPI for the grade (or all grades) falls in a ranking of all Massachusetts districts’ CPIs for that grade (or all grades). See footnote 9 in the Student Performance section above. The “2012 Performance” column also gives the level of the median SGP. Median SGPs from 0 to 20 are considered to be Very Low; from 21 to 40, Low; from 41 to 60, Moderate; from 61 to 80, High; and from 81 to 100, Very High.

**Table B4b: Stoughton
Mathematics Performance, 2009-2012**

Grade and Measure		Number Included (2012)	Spring MCAS Year				Gains and Declines			2012 Performance (CPI, SGP)
			2009	2010	2011	2012	4-Year Trend	2-Year Trend	Potentially Meaningful?	
3	CPI	296	79.2	84.6	84.2	79.7	0.5	-4.5	--	Low
	P+	296	58%	69%	65%	60%	2	-5		--
4	CPI	305	77.9	77.4	79.5	78.8	0.9	-0.7	--	Low
	P+	305	49%	46%	50%	50%	1	0		--
	SGP	290	42.0	48.0	52.0	48.0	6.0	-4.0		Moderate
5	CPI	329	82.5	78.2	80.6	81.6	-0.9	1.0	--	Moderate
	P+	329	61%	56%	59%	61%	0	2		--
	SGP	314	56.0	47.5	51.0	57.0	1.0	6.0		Moderate
6	CPI	299	85.8	87.4	81.3	83.8	-2.0	2.5	--	Moderate
	P+	299	66%	74%	59%	63%	-3	4		--
	SGP	289	63.0	65.5	54.5	62.0	-1.0	7.5		High
7	CPI	299	84.2	83.1	74.4	76.7	-7.5	2.3	--	Low
	P+	299	60%	66%	53%	51%	-9	-2		--
	SGP	286	73.0	56.0	36.5	52.5	-20.5	16.0		Moderate
8	CPI	299	77.9	79.9	80.0	78.2	0.3	-1.8	--	Moderate
	P+	299	55%	58%	59%	59%	4	0		--
	SGP	287	65.0	54.0	48.0	52.0	-13.0	4.0		Moderate
10	CPI	223	89.3	90.3	89.7	91.0	1.7	1.3	--	Low
	P+	223	75%	77%	76%	78%	3	2		--
	SGP	193	42.0	37.0	39.0	31.0	-11.0	-8.0		Low
All	CPI	2,050	82.3	83.0	81.2	81.0	-1.3	-0.2	--	Low
	P+	2,050	61%	64%	60%	60%	-1	0		--
	SGP	1,659	57.0	52.0	48.0	50.0	-7.0	2.0		Moderate

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. The “2012 Performance” column shows the quintile into which the CPI for the grade (or all grades) falls in a ranking of all Massachusetts districts’ CPIs for that grade (or all grades). See footnote 9 in the Student Performance section above. The “2012 Performance” column also gives the level of the median SGP. Median SGPs from 0 to 20 are considered to be Very Low; from 21 to 40, Low; from 41 to 60, Moderate; from 61 to 80, High; and from 81 to 100, Very High.

Table B4c: Stoughton
Science and Technology/Engineering Performance, 2009-2012

Grade and Measure		Number Included (2012)	Spring MCAS Year				Gains and Declines			2012 Performance (CPI)
			2009	2010	2011	2012	4-Year Trend	2-Year Trend	Potentially Meaningful?	
5	CPI	329	79.3	78.3	76.3	81.0	1.7	4.7	Yes	Low
	P+	329	48%	45%	43%	57%	9	14		--
8	CPI	299	74.7	76.1	76.3	78.6	3.9	2.3	Yes	High
	P+	299	43%	44%	43%	53%	10	10		--
10	CPI	226	87.5	90.6	90.8	91.0	3.5	0.2	--	Moderate
	P+	226	69%	74%	77%	75%	6	-2		--
All	CPI	854	80.2	81.4	81.0	82.8	2.6	1.8	Yes	Moderate
	P+	854	53%	54%	54%	60%	7	6		--

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. The “2012 Performance” column shows the quintile into which the CPI for the grade (or all grades) falls in a ranking of all Massachusetts districts’ CPIs for that grade (or all grades). See footnote 9 in the Student Performance section above.

Table B5a: Stoughton
English Language Arts (All Grades)
Performance for Selected Subgroups Compared to State, 2009-2012

Group and Measure			Number Included (2012)	Spring MCAS Year				Gains and Declines	
				2009	2010	2011	2012	4-Year Trend	2-Year Trend
High needs	District	CPI	901	77.3	77.3	77.7	77.4	0.1	-0.3
		P+	901	45%	49%	50%	51%	6	1
		SGP	694	40.5	42.5	44.0	49.0	8.5	5
	State	CPI	235,216	75.3	76.1	77.0	76.5	1.2	-0.5
		P+	235,216	44%	45%	48%	48%	4	0
		SGP	177,719	45.0	45.0	46.0	46.0	1	0
Low income	District	CPI	658	79.9	80.5	80.3	80.0	0.1	-0.3
		P+	658	53%	55%	54%	57%	4	3
		SGP	516	43.0	43.5	46.0	48.0	5.0	2.0
	State	CPI	180,261	75.5	76.5	77.1	76.7	1.2	-0.4
		P+	180,261	45%	47%	49%	50%	5	1
		SGP	137,185	45.0	46.0	46.0	45.0	0.0	-1.0
Students w/ disabilities	District	CPI	354	71.9	68.4	63.9	65.3	-6.6	1.4
		P+	354	32%	32%	25%	29%	-3	4
		SGP	274	34.0	34.0	36.0	47.0	13.0	11.0
	State	CPI	91,757	67.8	67.3	68.3	67.3	-0.5	-1.0
		P+	91,757	28%	28%	30%	31%	3	1
		SGP	66,785	40.0	41.0	42.0	43.0	3.0	1.0
English language learners or Former ELL	District	CPI	159	67.9	74.6	70.8	73.1	5.2	2.3
		P+	159	36%	45%	35%	41%	5	6
		SGP	107	41.5	50.0	49.5	57.0	15.5	7.5
	State	CPI	45,367	64.8	66.1	66.2	66.2	1.4	0.0
		P+	45,367	30%	32%	33%	34%	4	1
		SGP	29,933	51.0	51.0	50.0	51.0	0.0	1.0
All students	District	CPI	2,049	87.3	88.0	87.4	87.3	0.0	-0.1
		P+	2,049	68%	70%	69%	70%	2	1
		SGP	1,656	48.0	48.0	48.0	52.0	4.0	4.0
	State	CPI	497,549	86.5	86.9	87.2	86.7	0.2	-0.5
		P+	497,549	67%	68%	69%	69%	2	0
		SGP	395,772	50.0	50.0	50.0	50.0	0.0	0.0

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

**Table B5b: Stoughton
Mathematics (All Grades)**

Performance for Selected Subgroups Compared to State, 2009-2012

Group and Measure			Number Included (2012)	Spring MCAS Year				Gains and Declines	
				2009	2010	2011	2012	4-Year Trend	2-Year Trend
High needs	District	CPI	902	69.4	70.3	69.3	68.2	-1.2	-1.1
		P+	902	37%	42%	39%	37%	0	-2
		SGP	697	46.0	47.0	45.0	45.0	-1.0	0.0
	State	CPI	235,552	64.5	66.7	67.1	67.0	2.5	-0.1
		P+	235,552	32%	36%	37%	37%	5	0
		SGP	178,144	45.0	46.0	46.0	46.0	1.0	0.0
Low income	District	CPI	661	73.0	72.9	72.1	70.2	-2.8	-1.9
		P+	661	44%	47%	43%	40%	-4	-3
		SGP	520	50.0	45.0	45.0	42.0	-8.0	-3.0
	State	CPI	180,433	64.5	67.1	67.3	67.3	2.8	0.0
		P+	180,433	33%	37%	38%	38%	5	0
		SGP	137,529	44.0	47.0	46.0	45.0	1.0	-1.0
Students w/ disabilities	District	CPI	355	61.9	61.1	55.5	55.6	-6.3	0.1
		P+	355	23%	27%	22%	21%	-2	-1
		SGP	277	39.0	50.0	41.5	43.0	4.0	1.5
	State	CPI	91,876	56.9	57.5	57.7	56.9	0.0	-0.8
		P+	91,876	20%	21%	22%	21%	1	-1
		SGP	66,876	43.0	43.0	43.0	43.0	0.0	0.0
English language learners or Former ELL	District	CPI	158	64.7	67.2	63.4	63.1	-1.6	-0.3
		P+	158	28%	41%	27%	27%	-1	0
		SGP	106	47.0	53.0	49.0	61.5	14.5	12.5
	State	CPI	45,695	59.2	61.5	62.0	61.6	2.4	-0.4
		P+	45,695	29%	31%	32%	32%	3	0
		SGP	30,189	49.0	54.0	52.0	52.0	3.0	0.0
All students	District	CPI	2,050	82.3	83.0	81.2	81.0	-1.3	-0.2
		P+	2,050	61%	64%	60%	60%	-1	0
		SGP	1,659	57.0	52.0	48.0	50.0	-7.0	2.0
	State	CPI	497,984	78.5	79.9	79.9	79.9	1.4	0.0
		P+	497,984	56%	58%	58%	59%	3	1
		SGP	396,357	50.0	50.0	50.0	50.0	0.0	0.0

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

**Table B5c: Stoughton
Science and Technology/Engineering (All Grades)
Performance for Selected Subgroups Compared to State, 2009-2012**

Group and Measure			Number Included (2012)	Spring MCAS Year				Gains and Declines	
				2009	2010	2011	2012	4-Year Trend	2-Year Trend
High needs	District	CPI	347	69.5	68.7	71.4	71.3	1.8	-0.1
		P+	347	33%	29%	35%	39%	6	4
	State	CPI	96,996	62.1	64.3	63.8	65.0	2.9	1.2
		P+	96,996	25%	28%	28%	31%	6	3
Low income	District	CPI	247	73.2	71.0	71.2	73.0	-0.2	1.8
		P+	247	39%	33%	35%	42%	3	7
	State	CPI	74,300	61.1	63.6	62.8	64.5	3.4	1.7
		P+	74,300	25%	28%	28%	31%	6	3
Students w/ disabilities	District	CPI	142	63.8	63.5	64.3	60.0	-3.8	-4.3
		P+	142	23%	18%	22%	21%	-2	-1
	State	CPI	38,590	58.1	59.0	59.2	58.7	0.6	-0.5
		P+	38,590	18%	19%	20%	20%	2	0
English language learners or Former ELL	District	CPI	48	66.7	56.1	60.5	66.1	-0.6	5.6
		P+	48	38%	18%	21%	35%	-3	14
	State	CPI	15,271	50.8	51.8	50.3	51.4	0.6	1.1
		P+	15,271	15%	16%	15%	17%	2	2
All students	District	CPI	854	80.2	81.4	81.0	82.8	2.6	1.8
		P+	854	53%	54%	54%	60%	7	6
	State	CPI	211,464	76.8	78.3	77.6	78.6	1.8	1.0
		P+	211,464	50%	52%	52%	54%	4	2

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 B6: Stoughton
Annual Grade 9-12 Dropout Rates, 2009-2012**

	School Year Ending				Change 2009-2012		Change 2011-2012		State (2012)
	2009	2010	2011	2012	Percentage Points	Percent	Percentage Points	Percent	
All students	3.0%	2.5%	1.3%	1.0%	-2.0	-65.7%	-0.3	-20.8%	2.5%

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 B7a: Stoughton
Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates, 2009-2012**

Group	Number Included (2012)	School Year Ending				Change 2009-2012		Change 2011-2012		State (2012)
		2009	2010	2011	2012	Percentage Points	Percent	Percentage Points	Percent	
High needs	122	66.9%	67.5%	71.2%	84.4%	17.5	26.2%	13.2	18.5%	74.1%
Low income	93	67.1%	69.7%	70.1%	84.9%	17.8	26.5%	14.8	21.1%	72.4%
Students w/ disabilities	48	69.4%	70.4%	71.0%	81.3%	11.9	17.1%	10.3	14.5%	68.6%
English language learners (ELL) or Former ELL	--	41.7%	30.8%	46.2%	--	--	--	--	--	61.1%
All students	275	79.9%	81.9%	82.7%	91.3%	11.4	14.3%	8.6	10.4%	84.7%

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 B7b: Stoughton
Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates, 2008-2011

Group	Number Included (2011)	School Year Ending				Change 2008-2011		Change 2010-2011		State (2011)
		2008	2009	2010	2011	Percentage Points	Percent	Percentage Points	Percent	
High needs	146	77.9%	69.4%	72.6%	77.4%	-0.5	-0.6%	4.8	6.6%	76.5%
Low income	107	82.8%	68.2%	73.7%	77.6%	-5.2	-6.3%	3.9	5.3%	75.0%
Students w/ disabilities	62	65.2%	73.5%	77.8%	75.8%	10.6	16.3%	-2.0	-2.6%	70.8%
English language learners (ELL) or Former ELL	13	83.3%	50.0%	30.8%	46.2%	-37.1	-44.5%	15.4	50.0%	64.2%
All students	301	89.8%	81.5%	85.3%	86.0%	-3.8	-4.2%	0.7	0.8%	86.3%

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 B8: Stoughton
Attendance Rates, 2009-2012

	School Year Ending				Change 2009-2012		Change 2011-2012		State (2012)
	2009	2010	2011	2012	Percentage Points	Percent	Percentage Points	Percent	
All Students	95.9%	94.8%	95.4%	95.7%	-0.2	-0.2%	0.3	0.3%	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 B9: Stoughton
Suspension Rates, 2009-2012**

Group	School Year Ending				Change 2009-2012		Change 2011-2012		State (2012)
	2009	2010	2011	2012	Percentage Points	Percent	Percentage Points	Percent	
In-School Suspension Rate	5.0%	5.8%	4.3%	4.4%	-0.6	-12.0%	0.1	2.3%	3.4%
Out-of-School Suspension Rate	4.2%	3.8%	4.3%	4.8%	0.6	14.3%	0.5	11.6%	5.4%

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.

Appendix C: Instructional Inventory

Schools (Grade Levels) and # Observations: Dawe, Gibbons, Hansen, South and West Elementary Schools, Gr. K-5; O'Donnell Middle School, Gr. 6-8 and Stoughton High School, Gr. 9-12. Subjects Observed and # Observations: Math # 32 ; ELA # 34 Science # 8 Other # 4 Total #Classrooms: 78 # Students 1,277 #Teachers 82 #Assistants 8 # ELL 1 # SPED 1 # RTI 3

Learning environment	By school type:	No evidence 0	Partial evidence 1	Clear & consistent evidence 2
1. Interactions between teacher & students & among students are positive & respectful.	Elementary	0%	0%	100%
	Middle	0%	5%	95%
	High	0%	29%	71%
2. Behavioral standards are clearly communicated & disruptions, if present, are managed effectively & equitably.	Elementary	3%	3%	94%
	Middle	0%	11%	89%
	High	13%	21%	67%
3. Classroom procedures are established & maintained to create a safe physical environment & promote smooth transitions among all classroom activities.	Elementary	0%	6%	94%
	Middle	0%	5%	95%
	High	4%	21%	75%
4. Lesson reflects rigor & high expectations.	Elementary	9%	20%	71%
	Middle	5%	42%	53%
	High	13%	38%	50%
5. Classroom rituals, routines & appropriate interactions create a safe intellectual environment in which students take academic risks & most behaviors that interfere with learning are prevented.	Elementary	6%	3%	91%
	Middle	0%	16%	84%
	High	17%	21%	63%
6. Multiple resources are available to meet students' diverse learning needs.	Elementary	3%	6%	91%
	Middle	0%	53%	47%
	High	38%	42%	21%
7. The physical arrangement of the classroom ensures a positive learning environment & provides all students with access to learning activities.	Elementary	3%	9%	89%
	Middle	0%	0%	100%
	High	21%	17%	63%

Teaching	By school type:	No evidence 0	Partial evidence 1	Clear & consistent evidence 2
8. Demonstrates knowledge of subject & content.	Elementary	0%	11%	89%
	Middle	0%	11%	89%
	High	13%	4%	83%
9. Communicates clear grade-appropriate learning objectives aligned to state standards. Applicable ELL language objectives are evident.	Elementary	11%	14%	74%
	Middle	37%	16%	47%
	High	38%	13%	50%
10. Uses appropriate & varied strategies matched to learning objectives & content.	Elementary	9%	11%	80%
	Middle	16%	68%	16%
	High	42%	13%	46%
11. Requires inquiry, exploration, application, analysis, synthesis, &/or evaluation of concepts individually, in pairs or in groups to demonstrate higher-order thinking. (circle observed skills)	Elementary	14%	26%	60%
	Middle	47%	5%	47%
	High	13%	25%	63%
12. Uses varied questioning techniques that require/seek thoughtful responses & promote deeper understanding.	Elementary	17%	26%	57%
	Middle	26%	42%	32%
	High	25%	29%	46%
13. Implements appropriate & varied strategies that meet students' diverse learning needs.	Elementary	11%	29%	60%
	Middle	16%	58%	26%
	High	33%	29%	38%
14. Paces lesson to engage all students & promote understanding.	Elementary	3%	23%	74%
	Middle	5%	37%	58%
	High	8%	29%	63%
15. Conducts frequent formative assessments to check for understanding & inform instruction.	Elementary	9%	11%	80%
	Middle	37%	21%	42%
	High	8%	33%	58%
16. Makes use of technology to enhance learning.	Elementary	43%	11%	46%
	Middle	42%	32%	26%
	High	17%	21%	63%

Learning	By school type:	No evidence 0	Partial evidence 1	Clear & consistent evidence 2
17. Students are engaged in productive learning routines.	Elementary	3%	11%	86%
	Middle	0%	16%	84%
	High	4%	42%	54%
18. Students are engaged in challenging academic tasks.	Elementary	11%	11%	77%
	Middle	0%	47%	53%
	High	25%	17%	58%
19. Students assume responsibility for their own learning.	Elementary	9%	17%	74%
	Middle	11%	58%	32%
	High	13%	29%	58%
20. Students articulate their thinking or reasoning verbally or in writing either individually, in pairs or in groups.	Elementary	11%	43%	46%
	Middle	32%	21%	47%
	High	25%	33%	42%
21. Students' responses to questions elaborate about content & ideas. (not expected for all responses)	Elementary	37%	31%	31%
	Middle	58%	26%	16%
	High	29%	38%	33%
22. Students make connections to prior knowledge, real world experiences & other subject matter.	Elementary	17%	9%	74%
	Middle	32%	21%	47%
	High	33%	29%	38%
23. Students use technology as a tool for learning &/or understanding.	Elementary	71%	17%	11%
	Middle	68%	11%	21%
	High	79%	4%	17%
24. Student work demonstrates high quality & can serve as exemplars.	Elementary	69%	20%	11%
	Middle	63%	26%	11%
	High	71%	13%	17%