



Taunton Public Schools
REVIEW OF
DISTRICT SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES
ADDRESSING THE DIFFERENTIATED NEEDS
OF ALL STUDENTS

October 2009

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Overview of the Reviews of District Systems and Practices Addressing the Differentiated Needs of All Students

Purpose:

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

Key Questions:

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

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

Methodology:

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

The review of the Taunton Public Schools was conducted from June 8-11, 2009. The review included visits to the following district schools: Taunton High School (9-12), Benjamin Friedman Middle School (5-8), Joseph H. Martin Middle School (5-8), Edmund Hatch Bennett Elementary School (K-4), Joseph C. Chamberlain Elementary School (K-4), East Taunton Elementary School (K-4), H. H. Galligan Elementary School, (K-4) and the Elizabeth Pole Elementary School (K-4). Further information about the review and its schedule can be found in Appendix B; information about the members of the review team can be found in Appendix A.

Taunton Public Schools

District Profile¹

Fifteen schools make up the Taunton Public School district. These include one preschool serving 3- and 4-year-old students, nine elementary schools (K-4), four middle schools (5-8) and one high school (9-12). The total district enrollment for the 2008-2009 school year was 7,865 students. Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity was: 8.2 percent African American; 1.1 percent Asian; 11.5 percent Hispanic; 0.2 percent Native American; 75.1 percent White; 0.1 percent Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander and 3.8 percent Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic.

The superintendent, who had been in that position for the past four years, completed his tenure with the district at the end of June 2009 and was replaced by a new superintendent, who assumed her duties in July 2009, after the review team's visit to the district. The former superintendent's contract had not been renewed by the school committee over a year before, and during that time relations between the superintendent and school committee were not harmonious. In public statements, the school committee stated that the superintendent's lack of communication with them was a major problem. The incoming superintendent, who had been employed as an assistant superintendent in the district during the 2007-2008 school year, and who left to go another district, was selected and appointed as superintendent by the school committee in the spring of 2009.

During the past three years, one of the district's challenges has been the number of central administrative positions that have been unfilled. As a result, remaining central administrative staff has had to assume many extra responsibilities. There have been four special education directors during the past four years, and this year an interim special education director has been functioning in that role with no assistance such as special education coordinators.

Demographic information obtained from the ESE website (see Table 1 on page 4) shows that the proportion of special education students in the district has not increased since 2006-2007. Rather, the proportion has decreased by 0.3 percentage points. There was an increase of 3.3 percentage points in the proportion of students from low-income families. The impact of this increase in the proportion of low-income students is reflected in the increase of 2.7 points in the proportion of students receiving free lunch.

¹ Student demographic data derived from the website of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Table 1: Special Populations by Percentage – Taunton Public Schools

	First Language Not English	LEP	SPED	Low Income	Free Lunch	Reduced Lunch
2008-2009	7.9	2.6	17.4	41.4	33.0	8.4
2007-2008	7.9	2.1	16.7	38.3	30.1	8.2
2006-2007	7.6	1.6	17.7	38.1	30.3	7.8

Student Performance²

The district made ELA AYP in the aggregate in 2006, 2007, and 2008. All subgroups made ELA AYP in 2006 and 2007. However, all subgroups did not make ELA AYP in 2008. The district did make AYP in mathematics in the aggregate and for all subgroups during all three years beginning in 2006.

A review of the ELA and mathematics MCAS data from 2006 to 2008 for grade 10 showed that taken as a group, all students at that grade made slow but steady improvement over those three test administrations. In 2006 the combined percentage in the Advanced and Proficient categories in ELA was 59 percent; in 2008 it was 69 percent. For math, in 2006, the combined percentage was 60 percent and in 2008 it was 67 percent.

The data for special education students at grade 10 does not show the same rate of improvement. In 2006, 13 percent of special education students in grade 10 scored in the ELA Advanced and Proficient categories; in 2008 the percentage had increased only to 15 percent. And the combined percentage scoring in these categories in mathematics showed a decrease of one percentage point, from 19 percent in 2006 to 18 percent in 2008.

In 2008 (see Table 2 on page 5) the percentage of Taunton's special education students in the combined Needs Improvement and Warning categories was almost always higher than that of the state. The one exception was at grade 3 mathematics where the percentage of Taunton's students in these two categories was 68 percent compared to the state percentage of 71 percent. At grades 6 and 7, for both ELA and mathematics, the percentage of Taunton's special education students

² Data derived from the website of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

in these combined categories was at least 10 percentage points above the state percentage; at grade 8 the difference was 14 percentage points for ELA and 6 points for mathematics.

The 2008 mathematics and ELA scores at grade 10 show the greatest discrepancy between district and state. Taunton had 86 percent of its 10th grade special education students in the ELA Needs Improvement and Failing categories compared to 66 percent of the state's 10th grade special education students. Similarly, in mathematics, 83 percent of Taunton's 10th grade special education students were in these combined categories compared to 67 percent of their peers across the state.

Table 2: 2008 MCAS Results

**Percentages of District and State Special Education Students Scoring
in the Combined Needs Improvement and Warning/Failing Categories**

Test	District	State	Difference
Gr 3 Reading	79	78	+ 1
Gr 3 Math	68	71	- 3
Gr 4 ELA	92	86	+ 6
Gr 4 Math	84	83	+ 1
Gr 5 ELA	83	77	+ 6
Gr 5 Math	92	82	+10
Gr 6 ELA	84	73	+11
Gr 6 Math	94	82	+12
Gr 7 ELA	85	72	+ 13
Gr 7 Math	98	88	+ 10
Gr 8 ELA	77	63	+ 14
Gr 8 Math	95	89	+6
Gr 10 ELA	86	66	+ 20
Gr 10 Math	83	67	+16

A review of the graduation rates for 2008 showed that 73.1 percent of all Taunton's students were graduated compared to the state's overall figure of 81.2 percent. However, the graduation rate for Taunton's special education students was 39.8 percent compared to the 64.1 percentage in the state.

The former superintendent made the improvement of student attendance a priority goal throughout his time in the district. Principals not only received a monthly attendance breakdown for their school but also received data on other schools so as to be able to compare data. At the time of the review the homepage on the district's website featured a graph showing all schools in the district and their monthly attendance data. As a result of this focus, attendance in the district improved from 94.3 percent in 2005 to 95.7 percent in 2008.

Findings

Student Achievement

The gap in MCAS achievement between special education students and all students in Taunton widens in the higher grades, reaching its widest at grade 10 in both mathematics and ELA.

A comparison of the scores of all students in Taunton with all students in the state does not show significant differences. However, there is a gap between the performance of special education students in Taunton and the performance of all Taunton students that widens, with a few exceptions, as the grades become higher, reaching its widest at grade 10. A review of the special education MCAS scores in grade three Reading showed that in 2008 79 percent of the special education students in Taunton scored in the Needs Improvement and Warning Categories versus 43 percent of all students. For mathematics, 68 percent of the third grade special education students scored in these categories versus 33 percent of all students.

At the 10th grade level, 86 percent of special education students versus 31 percent of all students scored in the Warning and Needs Improvement categories of the ELA test in 2008, while 83 percent of 10th graders in special education versus 34 percent of all students scored in the combined categories on the mathematics MCAS.

During interviews the review team was told that Taunton's special education scores were the highest among 20 other urban districts. While this may be true, there is a significant gap between special education students and all students in scores attained. Interviewees at the district level acknowledged that there was work to be done regarding the achievement of special education students.

Leadership

The leadership of the district did not provide effective lines of communication or opportunities for collaboration for school and district leaders.

The leadership of the district has been characterized by top-down communication. According to the former superintendent and principals, memos were frequently sent and emailed to principals regarding actions to take, often including updated data on achievement, attendance, suspensions, etc. for both the school as a whole and for subgroups; the review team was given copies of several of these memos. When the superintendent left the country on a fellowship in June 2009 he informed his staff and the school committee at the last minute by memo. Others reported, and the former superintendent confirmed, that few districtwide or individual meetings of principals with central office administrators were held in 2008-2009, in part due to the transition to a new superintendent. Administrators reported meeting more frequently in previous years, although one principal stated that "it wasn't about sharing, it was handouts with what we had to do." Principals had little input into district planning or the budget, reporting emails asking what they could cut but no meetings to discuss needs or priorities. The former superintendent also reported that school committee members had on occasion interfered with decisions by administrators about school or student issues such as special education services.

Interviews with principals and the former superintendent confirmed that principals had fewer individual meetings with the superintendent on their goals and school programs in 2008-2009, and that they have not been evaluated in the past few years. The former superintendent pointed out that this was due to the lack of funding for merit pay for them for achieving goals.

Administrators, especially principals, expressed a need for collaboration and mutual support. Because there have been few districtwide meetings for administrators, they have had few formal opportunities to share practices and discuss school needs with each other. One principal stated that “We have learned to be self-sufficient and we know where to go,” and another reported feeling isolated, with each school “rolling the ball in a different direction.”

Principals have had little if any control over school budgets and have received no regular reports. When they have needed something for their schools, they have gone to the assistant superintendent or special education director, who have generally approved the request in line with contractual or IEP requirements. There has been no gatekeeper or system in place to discuss the impact of these decisions or review alternatives, and they resulted in \$1,496,114 in salary overruns for FY2009.

This top-down leadership style was effective in making a priority of attendance, data, and measurable goals to improve achievement, but it limited the opportunities for administrators to collaborate and share in decision-making. The small number of districtwide and individual meetings with the former superintendent resulted in few discussions about effective practices and less guidance and support, particularly for new principals. The top-down leadership style may also have contributed to the high turnover in administrative staff over the past four years, described in a subsequent finding. Administrative turnover and limited collaboration have resulted in a potential for fragmentation of programs and policies; for example, as noted in subsequent findings, inclusion and other special education practices in the schools are inconsistent, and supervision and evaluation procedures do not conform to requirements. Finally, due to administrative turnover and a lack of collaboration, the district has had a limited capacity to profit from the richness of advice, criticism, and support that could have been gained from imaginative and experienced administrators and principals when setting policy or planning for the district.

Long-range planning for the district and for schools has been based on data and achievement goals, but the District Improvement Plan (DIP) is out of date and does not identify major district programs, initiatives, and strategies to achieve its goals.

The DIP for 2007-09 was data-driven, specifying as goals to exceed AYP at each school, to improve MCAS and Stanford 9 scores, to reduce dropouts, to improve attendance, and to reduce retentions in ninth grade. For attendance it gave specific targets, including targets for subgroups, for each school. The plan was nearly identical to the previous plan and repeated data for 2004-2006; according to the former superintendent it was not updated because of the transitions in leadership of the district. As noted in the plan, due to administrative staff turnover it was “more of a baseline, a point at which our district can begin to truly assess where we are...” The plan did not identify action steps, strategies, or programmatic changes to accomplish its goals, with

the exception of a few school attendance goals. It did not include areas such as facilities, organization, or funding.

Despite the out-of-date DIP, School Improvement Plans (SIPs) had generally been updated. The format for most SIPs included a summary of previous plan goals and accomplishments, MCAS and other data, an outline of school goals, and a chart including actions for each goal. Actions to achieve goals included strategies and programs such as identifying at-risk students, offering before- and after-school tutoring, increasing time in class, and using instructional technology. Most were aligned with the DIP, including specific measurable targets to accomplish MCAS, attendance, and other goals. Exceptions, most notably the high school “Restructuring and School Improvement Plan,” had different formats and did not clearly align with the DIP but shared its emphasis on achievement and attendance targets.

The district lacks sufficient effective administrative leadership in special education. This has considerably weakened the district’s ability to plan, administer, and evaluate its services to students.

Interviews with the former superintendent, central office administrators, school principals, the interim special education director, teachers, and parents revealed that the turnover of directors and an insufficient number of supportive administrative staff in special education are viewed as significant and troubling issues. One parent stated, “It has been very stressful having a new director” each year, and others raised the issue of lack of support for special education from the outgoing superintendent. The absence of a highly skilled, experienced preK-12 director has had an impact on every aspect of the special education program including personnel management, communication among all stakeholders, cost containment, program development, continuity and expansion, and the delivery of appropriate services to students. As stated in interviews quoted on page 7 of this report, the result was that administrators learned to be self-sufficient, but each school went about things differently.

Taunton has had four special education directors in four years. At the time of the review, the program was administered by a full-time interim director who most recently had held the position of assistant to the last director. The district also listed the assistant superintendent in this position although it appeared that he had no direct administrative responsibilities in this area. Changeover in this position has affected the district’s ability to plan strategically to address critical issues of closing the achievement gap for its special needs students and addressing the low four-year graduation rate for special education students in the district (39.8 percent versus the state rate of 64.1 percent in 2008).

The lack of stable leadership in special education has prevented ongoing, systematic examination of program quality and effective analysis of student needs across student populations. The Department’s August 15, 2006, Mid-cycle Coordinated Program Review Report cited the need for “documentation of program evaluation specific to special education programs, services and administrative functions” and requested a copy of the district’s plan to do so by November 2006. During this review, the team asked if such a plan for program evaluation was in place; however, no plan was provided to the team. Analysis of individual student classroom and test performance data is strong; yet there is no analysis of program effectiveness. For example, the number of

special education students participating in supplementary programs is unknown; no system to track performance within these programs is in place.

The team found a range of interventions and program descriptions across the district's schools; however a consistent understanding or "vision" of what constitutes an inclusion or partial inclusion setting is lacking. For example, one middle school referred in its SIP to the need to learn what the term "inclusion" meant; it concluded that no districtwide definition existed. Another middle school's principal described two models of inclusion in his school, strongly preferring one over the other. Teachers stated that the inclusion model "varies from school to school." The high school has no formal inclusion programs, with its students receiving only pullout or substantially separate services in ELA and mathematics. Among the preschool and nine elementary schools, only twelve classrooms are designated as "inclusion classrooms." Guidelines for staffing similar programs at different schools and analyses of data to determine the success rate of interventions are lacking.

The current model of service delivery, as reported in the 2007-2008 district profile, showed a total enrollment of 1196 students, with 32.7 percent in full inclusion settings, 38.9 percent in partial inclusion (versus 22.5 percent statewide), 20 percent in substantially separate settings (versus 15.1 percent statewide), and 8.4 percent in out-of-district classrooms. According to interviews with the business manager, special education accounts for 29 percent of the total school budget monies. The district was \$411,000 over budget in out-of-district placement costs. In addition, in the 2008-2009 school year, 21 special-education-related professional staff and at least 26 teaching assistant positions were added although these were not in the 2008-2009 budget. Some of these additions were the results of IEP Team recommendations; there appear to be few, if any, review processes in place to manage and control unanticipated personnel costs. Processes to evaluate staffing patterns for possible cost-savings or over-servicing are not in place.

School-based special education Teams are headed by the guidance counselors at all levels except the preschool. There are no designated cross-district Team leaders with special education training who are responsible for chairing Team meetings at the elementary, middle, or high school levels. The interim director attends Team meetings as needed, particularly if the Team's recommendations could result in considerable expense to the district. According to district and school leaders, attendance at Team meetings at 15 school sites is difficult, if not impossible, for one person to accomplish. Determination of eligibility for special education programs was a concern to some leaders, though the rate in 2008-2009 of 17.4 percent was minimally higher than the state's percentage of 17.1 percent. The review team is concerned about the proportion of students who were found to be eligible by Teams for partial inclusion and substantially separate programs, a total of 68.9 percent of the special education population in 2007-2008. A related concern raised by the review team is the appropriateness of placement recommendations by Teams headed by general education staff.

The lack of a highly skilled, experienced special education administrator, as well as districtwide coordinators at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, has resulted in a fragmented program with inconsistent delivery of services to students. The design and implementation of

inclusion and partial inclusion practices is also influenced by school-level leaders: a high turnover of principals and other school leaders, documented elsewhere in this report, is a contributing factor to program fragmentation.

Horizontal and vertical communication among all special education staff across the district is poor to non-existent. At transition grades, sending and receiving special educators confer with each other regarding the students who are moving up, but meetings among job-alike special education staff are infrequent, nor are there formal opportunities for K-12 staff to meet regularly. Parents, teachers, school leaders, and central office administrators all acknowledged that communication with the special education administration was challenging because the interim director had so many responsibilities. The lack of consistent preK-12 leadership in special education and the absence of coordinators for the levels have resulted in poor communications across the district.

In the review team's judgment, the absence of a permanent districtwide special education administrator and supportive Team chairs or directors at each level has affected the district's ability to plan strategically, to provide consistent types of programs across all schools, and to evaluate these programs for student success and cost-effectiveness. With turnover at the leadership position, communication among all stakeholders is minimal. This lack of communication constitutes an impediment to improved student performance.

The school budget has been inadequate to fund several district needs, and school principals do not have control over school budgets.

ESE records show that per-pupil spending by the district for FY2008 was \$10,474, less than the state average by almost \$2,000. According to administrators budgets were level-funded for the past two years, and resources were based on what was in the budget the previous year. The proposed FY10 budget reductions included reductions of assistant principals, reading teachers, afternoon program teaching positions, a middle school teacher, a custodian, and supplies and equipment. New initiatives and needs have not been funded, with the exception of the grade 7-8 mathematics program, and some positions, such as those of the assistant superintendent for human resources and the Title I director, have not been filled. A proposed position for an assistant special education director, to help develop and monitor over 2000 IEPs, has not been funded. Administrative support staff have assumed additional responsibilities to help compensate for these unfilled positions, but other responsibilities have not been carried out, such as the training of evaluators and the oversight of staffing patterns to ensure resources are comparable among schools. Principals noted unmet needs in their schools as well, such as reading specialists, assistant principals, and counselors.

In FY2009 the district projected 63 new positions not included in its budget for a total overrun of \$1,496,114, and out-of-district tuition overages of \$411,000. Nearly all the positions were in special education. This may be due in part to the recent practice of budgeting for what schools and programs have currently and not taking into account new IEPs and other new needs, and it may be due to the lack of a gatekeeper or system for personnel requests where needs could be discussed and alternatives considered.

The district has implemented fund-raising and cost-effective measures to help offset the shortage of district funding. Administrators reported that the number of partnerships with local businesses and organizations has increased from 6 to 16 and donations, including in-kind donations, from \$4,000 to \$102,000. The district has made use of other community resources such as Bristol County Community Counseling. By changing behaviors in the schools it has saved \$1,319,542 in energy costs over three years. It has brought special education programs in-house, such as autistic, behavioral, and developmentally delayed programs, saving on tuition and transportation costs.

The process for expenditures is centralized. Principals do not get regular reports on the status of their budgets. When they need to order something they submit a requisition, and the business office checks to see if funds are available. Many supplies, such as paper and other school supplies, are ordered and stored centrally and delivered to the schools as needed. According to principals and central office administrators, principals have authority over hiring; their recommendations are followed for appointments provided that the position is budgeted or the need is approved.

The district made a priority of improving attendance and attendance rates have increased.

The DIP included attendance targets for each school in 2005 and 2006. Most schools identified subgroup targets as well as aggregate targets, and some specified strategies such as communications with parents and student incentives. Principals' goals included attendance targets as well. The former superintendent kept the focus on attendance by distributing to schools monthly reports showing attendance rates by school and by highlighting in memos attendance issues for subgroups and the link between suspensions and attendance. Data reviewed by the team showed a consistent improvement in attendance rates from 94.3 percent in 2005 to 95.7 percent in 2008; out-of-school suspensions also improved, declining from 7.1 percent to 5.8 percent.

Curriculum Delivery

The district uses data from a variety of assessments in order to analyze student needs.

According to the former superintendent, and as confirmed in interviews with curriculum coordinators as well as other district staff, before his arrival in the district four years ago there were only three people who were trained in the use of data. The value of assessment results was consequently limited, as staff did not have the skills to analyze summative assessment data such as MCAS data, as well as data derived from formative assessments, in order to improve instruction. At the time of the review there were more than 66 staff members who had been trained in the use of TestWiz. The former superintendent believed that principals know the importance of the use of data and that they have communicated this to teachers. A review of documents included a sampling of memos from the former superintendent to principals stressing the importance of using data to improve instruction with the ultimate goal of improving student achievement. All principals agreed that the district is data-driven and that they regularly receive data from curriculum coordinators, as well as "crunching it ourselves."

Data collection began four years ago with the data generated from the district's Reading First grant and the John Silber reading grant. At the present time, according to interviews with principals and curriculum staff, there is a systemic assessment program in place for ELA and mathematics. Timely assessments are administered throughout the year. The review team examined documents relating to a schedule of assessments that included the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) (grades K-4), the Harcourt Reading (grades 1-6), Prentice-Hall (grades 7 and 8 Literacy), and the Stanford 9 (grades 2 and 9). Skill-building programs such as PLATO at the middle and high school levels as well as Study Island at the middle school level are also used. In addition to these assessments, teachers use end-of-unit tests. Because many assessments are technological assessment tools, with students self-testing at the computer, the turnaround time for return of assessment data is usually no more than two days. .

Benefiting from the ability of staff to analyze data, teachers regularly discuss data during grade level as well as department meetings throughout the year.

The district used the results of mathematics assessments to determine that the Connected Math program, which was being used in the middle schools, was not meeting the needs of seventh and eighth graders. As a result, that program was discontinued and the McDougal Littell program was instituted in January 2008.

The district is a participant in ESE's Education Data Warehouse and already has compiled and uploaded some student data. Eventually, the Warehouse will allow the district to enter all assessment data so that all staff will have access to it. However, the district needs to implement a new student information management system in order to take full advantage of the Data Warehouse.

A number of programs both within and outside of the school day have been instituted in order to provide support for at-risk students.

During the school day the district uses the Three Tier Model to identify students needing interventions at all levels in reading and mathematics. Materials provided by the curriculum coordinators illustrated how the tiered model functions, with supports listed for each tier of the model. According to interviewees support varies by level, but can include pull-out support, small group instruction, and support provided through computer programs such as PLATO, My Access, and Study Island.

Another means of support provided by the Three Tier Model is After School Support: the district has made a financial commitment in order to implement this type of assistance for at-risk students. In interviews principals and teachers, as well as district administrators, confirmed that each school, including the preschool, has an after-school program that runs for one-and-a-half hours two days a week. The focus is generally on MCAS, but with specific skill needs identified for each student attending. Principals said that attendance was very good even though students are not required to attend and transportation is not provided.

The review team was told by principals that the former superintendent wanted every student with needs, whether a special education student or not, to attend these programs. One principal said, "We find who is at risk and work with them, subgroup or not." The district also funds February

and April vacation programs at each school that focus on mathematics or ELA, and there is a Saturday program available at each school.

In addition to these districtwide programs some schools in the district have developed their own programs to provide support. One middle school has developed an MCAS remediation program that takes place on a half-year cycle during the seventh and eighth grade supplementary period. In an effort at outreach, another middle school that has students who reside in a nearby housing project provides reading and mathematics support at the housing project itself.

After interviews with members of the district and school staff, the review team is of the opinion that the district is making serious efforts to provide support for students at risk.

The district does not require or monitor the implementation of a curriculum accommodation plan developed by the district's general education program.

The review team did not find any evidence in interviews that school and program leaders and teachers have any knowledge of a curriculum accommodation plan to meet the needs of diverse learners in the general education program. Child-study teams do sometimes generate lists of suggested accommodations. For example, one form that the high school uses had such a list. At one middle school, the principal stated that he had resources from which he draws ideas for accommodations. However, the team found no evidence of a districtwide or school-based accommodation plan. This lack means that general education classroom teachers are not assisted in analyzing and accommodating the diverse learning styles of all children in their classroom and in providing appropriate services or support within the general education program.

Inexperience with implementing classroom accommodations makes a teaching staff less trained and ready to accept inclusion students and less able to provide differentiated instruction for students at risk.

The district service delivery model as it currently exists does not provide for program continuity or a continuum of services for students preK-12.

Not all neighborhood schools have inclusion classrooms. Some students who would be appropriately placed in an inclusion classroom must attend another school within the district when their home school does not offer inclusion. Some principals referred to the high number of students who come to their schools on vans and questioned the efficiency of busing so many children to in-district programs. The district has recognized this as an issue of continuity and equitable participation and has begun to change this pattern at the kindergarten level for 2009-2010; it expects to grow this initiative to eventually include all grade levels. However, at the high school level students who have no choice but pull-out or substantially separate services would not experience this change until the year 2019 (for freshmen). Some principals discussed their concerns regarding the continuum of services within their school, particularly their concern when students are found to be eligible for inclusion classes and none exists within their school. One principal stated that the achievement "gap gets larger the more restrictive a program is."

The district currently offers in-district programs for some students who previously attended out-of-district programs. Examples include programs for students on the autism spectrum, students

with developmental delays, and students with challenging behaviors. These programs are district programs, and students transfer to them from their neighborhood schools. The team found little in the way of plans to provide for transitions for students who return from out-of-district settings. However, the district expressed the desire to offer program continuity for students preK-12 and to bring more out-of-district students back to their local schools. Parents also expressed a strong desire to have their students educated in Taunton schools rather than in out-of-district settings.

Coordination of special education, English Language Learner, and Title I services is minimal. Turnover among the administrators for these services or the absence of a current administrator has prevented planning and coordinating resources and services to serve the needs of Taunton at-risk students as well as possible. Without effective leadership, these programs continue to provide a piecemeal approach to closing the achievement gap for all subgroups.

During the team's visits to 46 classrooms, the greatest amount of evidence of positive descriptors was observed in the "Organization of the Classroom" category. Less evidence of positive descriptors was observed in the "Instructional Design and Delivery" category, and the least amount of positive evidence was observed in the category relating to "Student Ownership of Learning."

During the review of the Taunton Public Schools, the team visited 46 classrooms in 8 different schools. A total of 27 classrooms were visited at the 5 elementary schools in the review, 12 classrooms at the two middle schools, and 7 classrooms at the district's one high school. Team members used an Instructional Inventory Record developed by ESE that contains three major categories: "Organization of the Classroom," "Instructional Design and Delivery," and "Student Ownership of Learning."

Descriptors contained in each category were rated by team members using "No Evidence," "Partial Evidence," or "Solid Evidence." Classroom visits were generally random, teacher identity was not recorded, and visits generally lasted about 20 minutes. At the completion of the visits team members recorded their data. Data collected was then broken down by the number of descriptors that received No Evidence, Partial Evidence, or Solid Evidence ratings. Totals were then divided by the number of classrooms visited and percentages assigned to the ratings for each descriptor and ultimately for each of the major categories.

The first category, "Organization of the Classroom," contains descriptors that relate to the climate of the classroom, focusing on respectful behaviors both among students and between students and teachers. This category also includes reference to the use of written learning objectives and applicable language objectives, as well as how time is maximized for learning. Partial or Solid Evidence for this category was evident in 85 percent of the elementary classrooms visited, 83 percent of the classrooms visited at the middle schools, and 100 percent of those visited at the high school.

The second category, "Instructional Design and Delivery," looks at how teachers link instruction to students' prior knowledge. Consideration is also given to students whose first language is not English. In this case, a descriptor addresses whether supplemental materials are aligned with students' developmental level as well their level of English proficiency. The category also

includes descriptors related to the depth of the teacher's content knowledge, the ways in which instruction is delivered (whole group, small group), and the type of questioning teachers use to involve students in the teaching/learning process. Other descriptors relate to opportunities for students to apply new knowledge and to informal and formal assessments of student learning. The descriptors that showed the greatest variance among the levels included, "Questions require students to engage in a process of application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation." At the elementary level Partial or Solid Evidence was observed 56 percent of the time, at the middle school level 75 percent, and at the high school 86 percent.

Another descriptor, "Students are inquiring, exploring, or problem solving together, in pairs, or in small groups" was evident in 78 percent of observed elementary classrooms; 33 percent of observed middle school classrooms, and 57 percent of classrooms observed at the high school.

Partial or Solid Evidence for all descriptors in the category was observed in 74 percent of the elementary classrooms visited, in 75 percent of visited middle school classrooms, and in 79 percent of the high school classrooms visited.

The third and final category, "Student Ownership of Learning," includes two descriptors that ask whether students can explain how classroom routines and procedures help their thinking and learning and can express in their own words what they are learning and why. Partial or Solid Evidence for this category was observed in 30 percent of the elementary classrooms visited. At the middle school the percentage was 17 percent and at the high school, 88 percent. This high figure of 88 percent at the high school contained a high incidence of Partial Evidence. It should also be noted that in accordance with the visit protocol team members did not speak to students if direct instruction was taking place. This may help account for the lack of Partial or Solid Evidence at both the elementary and middle school levels.

Human resources and professional development

Key elements of the district's "Performance Standards for Administrators" and "Procedures for Teacher Evaluation" do not comply with state requirements for evaluation standards at 603 CMR 35.00.

A review of district documents and interviews with Taunton school administrators revealed the absence of written performance standards for the evaluation of principals, as required in 603 CMR 35.04. Review team members were informed that the former superintendent had failed to provide principals with either formative or summative annual written evaluations throughout the past four years. In addition, district administrators reported that despite his responsibility to do so (603 CMR 35.06), the superintendent had not provided appropriate training in the principles of supervision and evaluation to those supervisors, including both principals and curriculum directors, who lacked it. Principals and faculty members asserted that teacher evaluations were conducted in accordance with published district policies and procedures and that these evaluations were informative and instructive and used to promote individual growth and overall effectiveness. They confirmed, however, that according to the terms of the "Taunton Public Schools Evaluation Procedures" contractual agreement, teachers with professional status are evaluated only once every three years instead of every two years as required by state regulation.

(603 CMR 35.06)

These failures to comply with key requirements of Massachusetts Evaluation Regulations and Performance Standards Frameworks have, in the judgment of the review team, significantly undermined Taunton's efforts to clearly identify and effectively and consistently implement districtwide and school-level improvement initiatives. They have impeded systematic progress toward completing specific objectives for increasing student academic achievement, especially for underperforming subgroups, as well as efforts to enhance the individual growth and overall effectiveness of both teachers and administrators. In general, the review team believes that the district is making insufficient use of supervision and evaluation systems as an effective tool to monitor, assess, and promote the implementation of both district and school-based goals and instructional programs.

The district's professional development program focuses on offering staff a wide variety of individual opportunities related to recertification rather than providing them with focused and performance-driven learning experiences designed to support the attainment of overarching districtwide goals and aligned school-level objectives.

The Taunton Public Schools' calendar has three full professional development (PD) days built into the academic year. During the 2008-2009 school year they were scheduled during the months of October, November, and January. A review of the professional development catalogue and interviews with both teachers and administrators revealed that teachers had available to them a very extensive number and variety of workshops developed and taught by staff. The review team learned that although there were periodic school-based whole-school topic presentations, in general, individual faculty members had the option of selecting from an array of as many as 60 different in-service workshops that were typically offered. The review team also noted few PD opportunities that would allow general and special education teachers to develop the skills needed for effective collaboration and for the design and delivery of inclusion programs. The limited number of inclusion classrooms across the district has resulted in a relatively small pool of faculty able to teach students with diverse learning needs.

A review of the District Improvement Plan and individual School Improvement Plans revealed the lack of any clear, systematic alignment of PD offerings with specific goals or targeted objectives. Further, interviews with principals and teacher focus groups revealed that faculty members' individual professional development plans (IPDPs) typically contain only specific, individualized professional or recertification objectives rather than incorporating overarching district or school improvement goals. This lack of formal linkage with district priorities and identified needs has resulted in a professional development curriculum that is fragmented, unfocused, and unable to fulfill the needs of teachers and students or to enhance the district's capacity to support all learners.

Interviews with faculty and staff showed that a lack of leadership and of adequate financial resources had also had an impact on the overall effectiveness of the district's professional development program. Unfilled administrative positions had obliged the assistant superintendent to assume nominal responsibility for the PD program in addition to the duties of several other interim assignments, including curriculum director and ELL director. A promising systemwide

initiative that had been implemented to provide in-district Research for Better Teaching (RBT) training to all teachers and administrators was abandoned several years ago because of budgetary constraints. Additionally, principals reported that inadequate funding limited their ability to encourage faculty to attend targeted out-of-district seminars, courses, or workshops, or to bring professional trainers into the schools.

Although the review team commends the district for incorporating three full days of professional development for all staff into the school calendar, its opinion is that at present, Taunton's PD program falls well short of its potential. Little evidence could be found of systematic and coordinated efforts to use the needs of diverse learners in the regular education classroom or underperforming student subgroups to inform the professional development program. In general, the program has not been linked to student, staff, and administrator needs, as indicated by program assessments, data analysis, staff evaluations, and overall student achievement.

The turnover rate of both central office and school administrators within the Taunton Public Schools has been extraordinarily high during the past four years.

The former superintendent of schools cited Taunton's high rate of administrative turnover as a significant impediment to continuous and sustained progress within the district. According to documents provided by his office, during the past four years, two assistant superintendents, three business managers, two Title I directors, four special education directors, over two dozen school administrators (principals and assistant principals), and numerous curriculum coordinators have left the district. The former superintendent attributed this phenomenon primarily to routine factors such as retirements and normal out-migration variables. Interviews with principals and other key administrators, however, provided evidence that numerous other professional causes had also contributed substantially to this persistent pattern. Among the factors most commonly identified by interviewees and documented more fully in the Leadership section of this report were:

- (a) a widely perceived lack of support from the former superintendent. Administrators reported that communication was primarily "top down" and in the form of memos and written directives from the superintendent to individual principals. Meetings of the administrative team were held very infrequently, thus providing minimal opportunities for meaningful and productive professional collaboration, planning, problem-solving, or development and clarification of common goals;
- (b) lack of either formative or summative annual performance assessments of principals by the former superintendent; and
- (c) lack of any sort of formal mentoring assistance, coaching support, or orientation program for new principals, leading to what were described as feelings of uncertainty and isolation, as well as low morale.

The review team believes that these factors have contributed substantially to Taunton's documented high rate of administrative turnover and that the consequent negative impact on leadership capacity and effectiveness within the district has been very considerable. Although the review team had the opportunity to meet many dedicated and conscientious administrators

and to learn of numerous pockets of excellence across the district, it was apparent that school leaders were working in relative isolation and were provided with very few genuine opportunities for professional growth, recognition, collaboration, or formal support. Taunton's inability to retain administrators has affected the district's ability to develop, implement, and sustain both short-term and longer-range strategies designed to improve the academic achievement of all students, especially those with specific learning needs. It has also compromised the overall effectiveness of the district's supervision and professional development processes.

Recommendations:

Leadership

The incoming superintendent should analyze the needs of the district and prepare a plan for its administrative structure.

The arrival of a new superintendent brings an opportunity to reduce turmoil in the district, fill unfilled positions, embark on new initiatives, and improve communication by reorganizing the administrative structure. Certain administrative positions such as an assistant superintendent for human resources, assistant special education director(s), and a Title I director have not been filled. The duties of these positions include the review and oversight of programs, of staffing patterns for the district, of professional development, and of the resources required to deliver special education and other support services to at-risk children. The district needs gatekeepers for unforeseen requests and needs such as personnel and special education services in order to ensure that the requests are thoroughly reviewed and discussed, resources are equitable, the budget impact is considered, and alternatives are explored.

A reorganization plan would take into account these missing administrative functions in addition to providing the means to implement new directions and programs for the district. The vacant positions provide an opportunity to reorganize duties with relatively minor disruption to existing central office administrators, who have already shown the ability to take on a variety of tasks.

The district should begin the process of developing and implementing an updated District Improvement Plan.

The current plan is based on data now out of date (2006). With the advent of new leadership the time is right for a new district plan to identify the new superintendent's vision and direction for the district. It should update the data to 2009 and continue to include achievement and other targets. The updated plan would provide an opportunity to clarify organizational, programmatic, or facility initiatives at this time of change in the district. Input from school committee, central administrators, principals, teachers, and parents would be valuable. Revised School Improvement Plans should align with the new District Improvement Plan and its initiatives.

The superintendent should consider regularly scheduled meetings with principals to foster a shared vision and mission for the district and mutual support and collaboration among administrators.

Principals have had few formal opportunities to share ideas, provide mutual support to each other, or collaborate on district decisions. Their input into budget and policy decisions would be valuable, and frequent communication is necessary to share resources and ensure consistency in practices and programs, a need evident in special education. New principals are especially in need of guidance and support. Individual meetings of the superintendent with principals as well as meetings in a group would provide the collaboration and communication needed and would clarify the expectations and initiatives of the district leadership.

The district should consider ways to open the budget process to school and central office staff. Administrators should have the opportunity to communicate their school and program needs in the budget process and principals should have more control over their budgets.

The budget has been based on “what they had last year” and has been developed centrally, so there have been few opportunities to identify and prioritize school needs. A process is needed for principals and other administrators to identify needs; meetings would be effective in setting priorities. The principal of each school needs the authority, as well, to prioritize school needs from day to day; personnel needs have generally been met by requests to the assistant superintendent, but principals do not receive reports on the status of their budgets and have not managed their own operational budgets at the school level.

The incoming superintendent and the school committee should consider as a high priority the appointment of a highly skilled director of special education. A new director will require the full cooperation and support of the superintendent and the school committee in addressing the findings stated in this report.

The administrators and staff in the Taunton Public Schools are strongly committed to improving the performance of students in all subgroups. They have developed extensive programs and structures to address the needs of at-risk students, yet they have not reached their goal of making AYP for all subgroups. Planning, coordination, and evaluation of these programs, as carried out by a skillful, experienced director of special education, would provide for more efficient and effective delivery of services. With central office support, the director would also reestablish strong communication and trust among all constituencies and build a strong, positive culture of support for students in general and special education.

The district should consider providing coordinators at the elementary, middle, and high school levels skilled at determining eligibility and appropriate placements and conducting Team meetings.

Guidance counselors currently function as Team chairs; understandably, with 15 schools, consistency in eligibility findings is a challenge for the district. One example was cited by principals: when one Team in one school finds a child eligible for a substantially separate program, the receiving school sometimes finds the referral inappropriate or questionable. Coordinators at the three levels could chair Team meetings across all of a level’s schools, ensuring consistent knowledge and application of eligibility guidelines. A related concern is that the guidance counselors who function as Team chairs are not able to carry out their guidance responsibilities for the general education population because of the time required to chair Team meetings. Principals felt that at-risk students were underserved as a result of this model.

The district should consider conducting an audit of staffing for all special education programs. The outcomes should include establishing guidelines for consistent staffing of programs across all schools and examining current staff assignments to avoid over- or under-staffing in some areas.

It appeared to the review team that, at present, there is no one with the responsibility of serving as “gate-keeper” for new staff assignments resulting from Team meeting recommendations. Without clear guidelines or oversight by a permanent director, Team chairs have no guidance or directives with respect to a request for added personnel or services. An audit of all special education staffing at all schools should be conducted. The related questions of over-servicing of students and underuse of inclusion programs should be answered. It is possible that such an audit could result in cost savings that could provide for the hiring of the coordinators mentioned earlier.

Curriculum Delivery

The district should continue with its initiative of returning students to their neighborhood schools by ensuring a continuum of services within these schools. The district should focus on providing inclusion classrooms at each school to reduce the numbers of students in partial inclusion and substantially separate programs where appropriate.

The interim special education director has already begun work in this area, so as to institute kindergarten inclusion classrooms in every school in school year 2009-2010. The staffing audit mentioned in the previous recommendation might provide additional personnel to support this needed change. However, the slow pace of this change is of concern to the review team. For example, the high school special education student population is not provided with sufficient least restrictive options due to the lack of availability of inclusion classrooms in ELA and mathematics. The high level of staffing of special educators at the high school raises the question of why the shift to more collaborative teaching in inclusion classes with general educators has not already occurred. The causes for the high number of students in substantially separate programs at all levels should be studied to learn whether these students cannot be better served in less restrictive settings and to determine the continuum of services needed to keep students progressing toward least restrictive settings. Similarly, the needs of students in out-of-district settings should be reexamined to see if they might be met in any redesigned in-district substantially separate programs.

The district should consider formally developing a curriculum accommodation plan to ensure that all efforts have been made to meet the needs of diverse learners in the general education classroom.

Though some principals acknowledged that an accommodation plan was something they had heard about or used in other districts, all agreed that such a plan did not exist in Taunton. Although child study teams or instructional support teams are functioning in all of the schools, no school had a collection of accommodations available to all that might assist teachers in meeting the needs of students in the general education classroom. The small number of classrooms identified as “inclusion” reinforces the notion that not all teachers view it as their

responsibility to teach all students and to acquire the skills needed to teach diverse learning styles. A curriculum accommodation plan, developed in collaboration with all of the schools, would provide all teachers with a rich resource of strategies and best practices that could help to ensure that the school has made all efforts to accommodate a youngster within the general education program.

Human resources and professional development

Those elements of Taunton’s performance standards and practices for both administrators and teachers that do not conform with state regulations (603 CMR 35.00) should be revised so that they are aligned with all relevant procedural requirements.

Working with stakeholder representatives as appropriate, the new superintendent of schools should establish, for the approval of the school committee, written performance standards for the evaluation of all district administrators and school principals. These performance standards should be consistent with and meet the “Principles of Effective Administrative Leadership” adopted by the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Once they are in place, the superintendent should use these performance standards to provide school and district leaders with written annual formative and summative assessments. These evaluations should be informative and instructive and be used to promote the individual growth as well as the overall effectiveness of the members of the administrative team.

Further, the new superintendent should assume responsibility for ensuring that all district supervisors have been fully trained in appropriate principles of supervision and evaluation.

Finally, the “Taunton Public Schools Evaluation Procedures” should be revised so that faculty with professional status are evaluated at least once every two years, as required by 603 CMR 35.06, instead of every three years as is the current district practice.

The district should consider revising its professional development program so that it is more clearly aligned with and better supports districtwide strategic goals and related school improvement objectives.

At present, Taunton’s professional development workshops offer faculty the choice of a very broad range of diverse topics intended primarily to serve the recertification needs of individual staff members. District leadership should consider redesigning the PD program by narrowing its overly broad scope and focusing instead on in-service topics that are more directly aligned with and support core district goals and related school improvement objectives. In this redesign, the PD program would be systematically linked to the needs of diverse learners in the general education classroom, teachers, and administrators as indicated by program assessments, staff evaluations, and student achievement data. The district should consider addressing the issue of professional development leadership, also, so that an administrator with sufficient time, interest, and expertise is appointed to oversee the program and identify and implement the needed improvements. Further, additional funding of the district’s PD program is needed so that when targeted in-service support or out-of-district seminars, courses, or workshops are required, they can be provided. The district should consider the restoration of RBT training for all of Taunton’s

teachers and administrators.

Finally, the review team recommends that principals encourage teachers to incorporate in their annual individual professional development plans (IPDPs) clear connections to overarching district goals, school improvement objectives, and related PD programming.

The new superintendent should consider undertaking a thorough analysis of the district's policies and practices related to the selection, orientation, support, and evaluation of district administrators and principals.

The review team believes that a four-year pattern of high administrative turnover has undermined the district's efforts to achieve successful and continuous improvement initiatives. The new superintendent is encouraged to undertake a thorough internal analysis of the factors that have been most responsible for this recurrent condition and to implement in response specific strategies to remedy identified problems.

More specifically, the review team recommends substantially increasing opportunities for district and school leaders for meaningful and ongoing communication, professional growth, recognition, collaboration, and individualized support. The capacity to attract and retain capable and effective administrators is central to Taunton's future ability to design and implement both short- and long-range strategies to improve the academic achievement of all learners and sustain successful school improvement initiatives.

The district should consider having all Taunton Public School teachers participate in ongoing professional development to develop their ability to differentiate instruction and build their capacity to participate in inclusion programs.

Classroom observations by the review team did not reveal extensive use of strategies to differentiate instruction, nor were teachers and principals well-versed in these when interviewed by the team. Though there have been some professional development programs in differentiation, there does not appear to be a district commitment to full and skillful implementation. Training provided to inclusion teachers would benefit all teachers, building district capacity for inclusion.

Appendix A: Differentiated Needs Review Team Members

The review of the Taunton Public Schools was conducted from June 8-11, 2009, by the following team of educators, independent consultants to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Dolores Fitzgerald—site coordinator, curriculum delivery

Christine Brandt—special education

Dr. George Gearhart—leadership

Dr. Frank Sambuceti—human resources and professional development

Appendix B: Differentiated Needs Review Activities and Schedule

Differentiated Needs Review Activities

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

- The review team conducted interviews and focus groups with the following representatives from the Taunton Public Schools' central office administration:

Former superintendent of schools, assistant superintendent of schools, business manager, interim director of special education, energy manager, coordinator for business partnerships and internships, PreK-12 ELA coordinator, Pre-K-12 mathematics coordinator, grades 7-12 English curriculum supervisor, extended day program director, coordinator of projects for personnel, education consultant, ELL coordinator, former Title I director, social studies curriculum supervisor, PreK-12 science curriculum coordinator, grades 5-12 industrial technology curriculum supervisor, grants coordinator, district kindergarten consultant, technology director K-12.

- In addition, the review team conducted
 - a teacher focus group with representatives from the high school (alternative education, social studies, and three special education teachers), four middle school teachers, and five elementary teachers and
 - a parent focus group consisting of eight parents.

The review team visited the following schools in Taunton: Edmund Hatch Bennett Elementary (K-4), Joseph C. Chamberlain Elementary (K-4), East Taunton Elementary (K-4), H.H. Galligan Elementary (K-4), Elizabeth Pole Elementary (K-4), Joseph H. Martin Middle School (5-8), Benjamin Friedman Middle School (5-8), Taunton High School (9-12).

- During school visits, the review team conducted interviews with school principals (one preschool, five elementary, and two middle school), an assistant principal (middle school), and a high school guidance staff member.
 - The review team conducted 46 classroom visits for different grade levels and subjects across the 8 schools visited.
- The review team reviewed the following documents provided by the Department:
 - District profile data
 - Latest Coordinated Program Review Report and follow-up Mid-cycle Report
 - Staff contracts
 - Reports on licensure and highly qualified status
 - Long-term enrollment trends
 - End-of-year financial report for the district for 2008
 - List of the district's federal and state grants

- Municipal profile

- The review team reviewed the following documents at the district and school levels (provided by the district or schools):
 - District Improvement Plan
 - School Improvement Plans
 - School Committee Policy Manual
 - Curriculum Guide
 - High School Program of Studies
 - Calendar of Formative and Summative Assessments
 - Copies of data analyses/reports used in schools
 - Descriptions of Student Support Programs
 - Program Evaluations
 - Student and Family Handbooks
 - Faculty Handbook
 - Professional Development Program/Schedule/Courses
 - Teacher Planning Time/Meeting Schedules
 - Classroom Observation Tools/Learning Walk Tools
 - Job Descriptions (for central office and school administrators and instructional staff)
 - Principal Evaluations (Incomplete form only)
 - Description of Pre-Referral Process
 - School Schedules
 - Data Warehouse Document
 - District Three-Tier Reading Model
 - Writing Expectations Grades 6-12
 - Allocation of Reading Specialists
 - School Committee Goals 2008-2009
 - Taunton Public Schools Implementation Plan for Improved Literacy Outcomes
 - K-4 Reading Assessment Schedule
 - Taunton Public Schools Mentor/Mentee Handbook

Review Schedule

The following is the schedule for the onsite portion of the differentiated needs review of the Taunton Public Schools conducted from June 8-11, 2009.

Time	Monday, June 8	Tuesday, June 9	Time	Wednesday, June 10	Thursday, June 11
7:30-7:45 7:45-8:30	Team Arrival Introductory Meeting with District Leaders	Team Meeting and Document Review	7:30-2:30	School Visits Taunton High School East Taunton Elementary Benjamin Friedman MS Martin Middle School	7:30 Team Meeting 8:00 – 12:00 School Visits Elizabeth Pole Elementary Bennett Elementary Chamberlain Elementary Galligan Elementary
8:30-9:45	Interview with Superintendent (I) Leadership (S) Special Education Interview with Curriculum Director (II) Curriculum (III) HR and PD	Interview with Superintendent (S) Special Education (I) Leadership Interview with Curriculum Team (II) Curriculum (III) HR and PD			
10:00-11:15	Interview with CFO and key team members (I) Leadership (III) HR and PD Interview with Special Education Director (S) Special Education (II) Curriculum	Interview with Human Resources Director and key members (III) HR and PD (S) Special Education Document Review (I) Leadership (II) Curriculum			

11:30-12:30	Lunch and Team Meeting	Lunch and Team Meeting	12:15-12:45		Lunch and Team Meeting
12:30-1:15	Interview with Professional Development Director and key team members (III) HR and PD (S) Special Education Document Review (I) Leadership (II) Curriculum	Interview Title 1, McKinney Vento, Student Support, ELL Directors (S) Special Education (I) Leadership Document Review (II) Curriculum (III) HR and PD	12:45-3:00		Team Meeting
1:30-2:45	Interview with Student Assessment and Program Eval, (II) Curriculum (S) Special Education Principal Interviews (I) Leadership (III) HR and PD	Interview with 9-12 Department Heads (II) Curriculum (III) HR and PD	2:30-3:00	Meeting with Superintendent (II) Curriculum (I) Leadership	
3:00-4:00	Team Meeting	Team Meeting	3:00-4:00	Parent Focus Group (S) Special Education (I) Leadership Teacher Focus Group (II) Curriculum (III) HR and PD	Final Meeting with District Leaders