District Review Report

Taunton Public Schools

Review conducted April 13–16, 2015

Center for District and School Accountability

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Organization of this Report

This document was prepared by the
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Published October 2015

Taunton 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, with reference to the six district standards used by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE): leadership and governance, curriculum and instruction, assessment, human resources and professional development, student support, and financial and asset management. Reviews identify systems and practices that may be impeding improvement as well as those most likely to be contributing to positive results.

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

Methodology

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

Site Visit

The site visit to the Taunton School District was conducted from April 13–16, 2015. The site visit included 26 hours of interviews and focus groups with approximately 68 stakeholders, including school committee members, district administrators, school staff, students, and teachers' association representatives. The review team conducted 4 focus groups with 8 elementary school teachers, 9 middle school teachers, 12 high school teachers, and 10 high school students.

A list of review team members, information about review activities, and the site visit schedule are in Appendix A, and Appendix B provides information about enrollment, student performance, and expenditures. The team observed classroom instructional practice in 99 classrooms in 11 schools. The team collected data using an instructional inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards-based teaching. This data is contained in Appendix C.

District Profile

Taunton has a mayor-council form of government and the chair of the school committee is the mayor. The eight members of the school committee meet bi-weekly.

The current superintendent has been in the position since 2009. The district leadership team includes the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, the assistant superintendent for finance and operations, the director of transportation and student services, legal counsel for pupil and personnel, and the director of special education. Central office positions have been mostly stable in number over the past five years. The district has 13 principals leading 13 schools. Other school administrators include assistant principals, curriculum supervisors, and an elementary curriculum coordinator. In 2014–2015, there were 519.2 teachers in the district.

In the 2014–2015 school year, 7,910 students were enrolled in the district's 13 schools:

Table 1: Taunton Public Schools
Schools, Type, Grades Served, and Enrollment*, 2014–2015

School Name	School Type	Grades Served	Enrollment
Leddy	EES	PK	267
Bennett	ES	K–4	352
Chamberlain	ES	K–4	546
East Taunton	ES	PK–4	599
Galligan	ES	K–4	266
Hopewell	ES	K–4	332
Mulcahey	ES	K–4	460
Pole	ES	K–4	611
Friedman	MS	5–7	796
Martin	MS	5–7	731
Parker	MS	5–7	430
Taunton High School	HS	8–12	2,425
Taunton Alternative	HS	8–12	95
Totals	**13**	**PK–12**	**7,910**
*As of October 1, 2014			

Between 2011 and 2015 overall student enrollment decreased by 0.03 percent. Enrollment figures by race/ethnicity and high needs populations (i.e., students with disabilities, students from low-income families, and English language learners (ELLs) and former ELLs) as compared with the state are provided in Tables B1a and B1b in Appendix B.

Total in-district per-pupil expenditures were lower than the median in-district per pupil expenditures for 34 K-12 districts of similar size (5,000–7,999 students) in fiscal year 2014: $11,302 as compared with $12,728 (see District Analysis and Review Tool Detail: Staffing & Finance). Actual net school spending has been well below what is required by the Chapter 70 state education aid program, as shown in Table B8 in Appendix B.

Student Performance

Taunton is a Level 3 district because Elizabeth Pole Elementary and Taunton High are in Level 3 for being in the lowest performing 20 percent of schools in their grade span. The East Taunton Elementary School and Parker Middle School were part of the PARCC field test in 2014; the removal of those students at the elementary and middle levels from the MCAS results may have had a negative impact on the districtwide MCAS results.

- Of the district's 7 elementary schools, 2 are in Level 1 for meeting their gap-narrowing goals for all students and/or high needs students. Bennett is in the 25th percentile and Mulcahey Elementary is in the 26th percentile of elementary schools. Both schools are in Level 1 for having a cumulative PPI of 75 or higher for both all students and high needs students.

- Four elementary schools are in Level 2 for not meeting their gap-narrowing goals for all students and/or high needs students. Galligan is in the 60th, Chamberlain is in the 51st, and Hopewell is in the 38th percentile of elementary schools. East Taunton Elementary was in the 72nd percentile of elementary schools in 2013, but did not receive a percentile in 2014 and remained in Level 2 because all students in the school participated in the PARCC field test.

- Elizabeth Pole is in the 10th percentile of elementary schools and therefore is in Level 3. It has a cumulative Progress Performance Index (PPI) of 39 for all students and 34 for high needs students.

- Taunton's middle schools are in Level 2. Martin Middle is in the 26th and Friedman Middle is in the 44th percentile of middle schools; they are in Level 2 for not meeting their gap narrowing goals for all students and high needs students. Parker Middle is in the 22nd percentile of middle schools and was in Level 2 in 2013 for not meeting its gap narrowing goals; it was held at Level 2 because all its students took the PARCC test.

- Taunton High is in the 17th percentile of middle/high schools or K–12 schools and therefore is in Level 3. It has a cumulative PPI of 48 for all students and 50 for high needs students; the target is 75.

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

- ELA CPI was 84.6 in 2014, below the district's target of 89.7.

- Math CPI was 74.4 in 2014, below the district's target of 83.1.

- Science CPI was 72.2 in 2014, below the district's target of 79.1.

ELA proficiency rates were below the state for the district as a whole and in every tested grade. ELA performance varied by elementary school.[1]

- ELA proficiency rates for all students in the district were 64 percent in 2011 and 63 percent in 2014, 6 percentage points below the 2014 rate of 69 percent.

- ELA proficiency rates in 2014 at the elementary schools ranged from 43 percent at Pole to 63 percent at Chamberlain.

- Between 2011 and 2014 ELA proficiency rates increased by 11 percentage points in the 10th grade and by one percentage point in the 3rd grade.

- Between 2011 and 2014 ELA proficiency rates decreased by 7 percentage points in the 8th grade, by 5 percentage points in the 4th grade, and by 3 to 4 percentage points in the 5th, 6th, and 7th grades.

Math proficiency rates were below the state rate in the district as a whole and in each tested grade. Math performance varied by elementary school.

- Math proficiency rates for all students in the district were 51 percent in 2011 and 49 percent in 2014, 11 percentage points below the state rate of 60 percent.

- Math proficiency rates at the elementary school ranged from 42 percent at Pole to 63 percent at Mulcahey.

- Between 2011 and 2014 math proficiency rates increased by 7 percentage points in the 10th grade, and by 1 to 2 percentage points in the 3rd and 7th grades.

- Math proficiency rates in the district were below the state rate by 16 percentage points in the 6th and 8th grades, by 15 percentage points in the 5th grade, by 10 and 8 percentage points in the

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[1] Please see the top of the Student Performance section for a description of the circumstances in 2014 that may have had a negative impact on the ELA and mathematics proficiency levels in the district.

4th and 10th grades, respectively, and by 5 and 6 percentage points in the 3rd and 7th grades, respectively.

Science proficiency rates were below the state rate for each tested grade and in the district as whole. Science proficiency rates varied by middle school.

- Science proficiency rates for all students in the district were 41 percent in 2011 and 2014, 14 percentage points below the 2014 state rate of 55 percent.

- 5th grade science proficiency rates decreased from 42 percent in 2011 to 38 percent in 2014, 15 percentage points below the 2014 state rate of 53 percent.

- 8th grade science proficiency rates were 31 percent in 2011 and 33 percent in 2014, 9 percentage points below the 2014 state rate of 42 percent.

- 10th grade science proficiency rates were 57 percent in 2011 and 2014, 14 percentage points below the 2014 state rate of 71 percent.

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

- On the 2014 MCAS assessments, the districtwide median student growth percentile (SGP) for ELA was 42.0; the state median SGP was 50.0.

  o ELA median SGP was above 60.0 at Galligan Elementary (78.0).

  o ELA median SGP fell below 40.0 in the 5th grade (median SGP of 36.0) and in the 8th grade (35.0), and at Bennett Elementary (34.0), Mulcahey Elementary (28.0), Martin Middle (36.0), and Taunton High (38.0).

- On the 2014 MCAS assessments, the districtwide median student growth percentile (SGP) for mathematics was 36.0; the state median SGP was 50.0.

  o Math median SGP fell below 40.0 in the 5th grade (23.0), the 8th grade (28.0), and the 10th grade (39.0), and at Bennett Elementary (39.0), Mulcahey Elementary (36.0), Pole Elementary (36.0), Friedman Middle (39.0), and Taunton High (33.0).

The district reached the 2014 four year cohort graduation target of 80.0 but did not reach the five year cohort graduation target of 85.0 percent.[2] Both the four and five year graduation rates were below the state rates.

- The four year cohort graduation rate was 81.9 percent in 2011 and 80.6 percent in 2014.

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[2] 2014 graduation targets are 80 percent for the four year and 85 percent for the five year cohort graduation rates and refer to the 2013 four year cohort graduation rate and 2012 five year cohort graduation rates.

- The five year cohort graduation rate increased from 78.5 percent in 2010 to 83.4 percent in 2013.

The annual district drop-out rate for the district was 1.7 percent in 2014. This rate was the lowest drop-out rate in the last ten school years and represented a decrease of 0.9 percentage point from the 2013 rate.

- The annual district drop-out rate for Taunton declined from 5.5 percent in 2011 to 1.7 percent in 2014, below the 2014 statewide rate of 2.0 percent.

Taunton Public Schools District Review Findings

Strengths

Leadership and Governance

1. **The superintendent, through her collaborative leadership style, has taken steps to establish a culture of continuous improvement in the district.**

    A. The superintendent, collaborating with various stakeholders, has begun to expand their participation and contributions to the district.

        1. This contrasts substantially with the results of ESE's 2009 review before the current superintendent's arrival. ESE's previous review identified top-down communication and ineffective lines of communication and opportunities for collaboration for school and district leaders.

        2. The superintendent works with the school committee to develop and accomplish district goals.

            a. The superintendent stated that she and the school committee work together to draft goals that are aligned to the Strategic Plan. She reported that they recently worked together on a goal to reduce the drop-out rate by half, noting that the 2014 drop-out rate was 1.7 percent for the district and less than 1 percent at the high school. The superintendent said that this was the lowest drop-out rate on record for the school system.[3]

            b. One committee member said that there were times in the past when the school committee was front-page news, but now if they have policy issues, they resolve them amicably.

            c. The superintendent told the team that whenever the committee requests professional development on an issue or concern, she brings people in to address those needs.

            d. School committee members said that they meet with the superintendent at a retreat twice a year to discuss educational issues.

        3. The superintendent reported that she works with three administrative teams to address the goals in the Strategic Plan and in the School Improvement Plans.

            a. The Leadership Team, consisting of the superintendent and the five central office administrators, meets weekly and as needed.

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[3] According to ESE data, the district drop-out rate decreased from 5.5 percent in 2011 to 4.6 percent in 2012 to 2.6 percent in 2013 to 1.7 percent in 2014. The 2014 drop-out rate at the high school was 0.9 percent.

b. The Principals' Team, which includes the Leadership Team and the principals, meets every week. In addition, the superintendent reported that she holds monthly "Individuals," which give principals an opportunity to meet with her alone to discuss issues, and to review their goals and progress.

    i. The superintendent spoke about a collaborative effort with the Principals' Team that enhanced the wrap-around services this year. Additional wrap-around services included two community facilitators, six guidance counselors, and one peer mediator.

c. The All-Administrators Team, consisting of approximately 50 administrators, includes the superintendent, central office administrators, principals, curriculum supervisors, directors, arts staff, associate headmasters, and some assistant principals. This team meets five times a year.

    i. The superintendent reported that the first meeting of the year takes place at the annual two-day leadership retreat at Gillette Stadium. The superintendent said that for the past six years she has worked with the All Administrators Team on analyzing data and developing SMART goals (specific and strategic; measureable; action-oriented; rigorous, realistic, and results-focused; and timed and tracked). She said that this process was implemented in Taunton before the new educator evaluation system was in place.

       The superintendent said that administrative retreats are held in the summer so that the All-Administrators Team can focus on priority areas. She gave as examples of issues the group has addressed, cutting the drop-out rate in half, "disproportionate suspensions," and chronic student absence.

4. Both the superintendent and the president of the Taunton Educators' Association (TEA) indicated that that they have built a positive working relationship.

a. The superintendent and the TEA president stated that they meet every other Monday. They also communicate with one another between these meetings via telephone calls and texts.

b. TEA leaders said that through interest-based bargaining, the teachers' association and the school committee negotiated a new collective bargaining agreement for 2014-2017. The superintendent served on the negotiating team.

c. In addition, TEA leaders said that, under the current district leadership, teachers are included in most committee work and many teachers have been promoted. In addition, grievances are now rare.

5. The superintendent reported that she created a District Transition Team and Community Input Teams to involve the community in addressing matters of concern for the school district.

   a. The District Transition Team (DTT) and the Community Input Teams (CITs) involve over 100 community people in improving the schools in the district, including students, parents, staff, business partners, and school committee members.

      i. The DTT is a steering committee composed of the leaders of each of the CITs.

      ii. The CITs are designed to be aligned with the strategic plan, address student achievement issues, engage school community members in authentic decision-making, usher in significant changes enabling the school district to work through many challenges, and forge stronger connections between the schools and the community in the process.

      iii. The superintendent developed a charge and a list of expectations for each CIT. The CITs meet once or twice a month to develop research-based reports on their issues. The superintendent developed a sample report and expectations, and CIT Reports are expected to include data, advantages and disadvantages, recommendations, and sources of funding. The superintendent and the DTT hear monthly CIT updates.

      iv. The seven CITs currently meeting are: (1) Cultural Proficiency, (2) English Language Learner Family Partnerships & Student Engagement, (3) Early Education for All, (4) Expanding Foreign Language in Our Schools, (5) Honors Policy Revision, (6) Excellence in Our Middle Schools, and (7) Expansion of Tiger Tent Café.

6. The leadership in the district has pursued outside funding sources, including school and business partnerships.

   a. The district and each of the schools have at least one school and business partnership. Several schools have more than one. Partnership businesses include Bristol County Savings Bank, Johnson and Johnson, and BJ's Wholesale Club.

   b. Principals gave numerous examples of the benefits derived from the school and business partnerships, including supplies, discounted memberships, free transportation passes, and support for a life-skills program.

   c. The superintendent reported that she and the mayor worked together to secure funding from local business partners. They were able to secure enough funding from business partners to refurbish the seats in the high school theater and build a student-designed restaurant to support the new Culinary Arts Program.

Impact: Collaborative efforts build trust and efficiencies. Because increasing numbers of individuals now participate on committees and teams with specific purposes and goals aligned with district and school goals, the district will likely achieve its goals for improved student learning.

Curriculum and Instruction

2. **In observed classrooms districtwide, the learning environment was positive and respectful.**

   A. Districtwide the tone of interactions between teachers and students and among students was positive and respectful (#1).

   1. In 92 percent of observed classrooms districtwide there was clear and consistent evidence of a positive and respectful learning environment.

      a. In one elementary classroom, for example, the teachers told her students, "I liked how you are tracking your thinking when you give your answers."

      b. In many classes, the team observed students working with partners, reading to each other, or working on a math problem together. Students were working cooperatively and supportively in small groups, independently, or with a teacher.

      c. At the middle level, the team described interactions between students as being positive, with teachers having expectations for appropriate and respectful student-to-student interactions. The team described students as being generally on task and cooperative.

      d. The review team characterized high school students as "focused" and "friendly" and classrooms as consistently having a tone of respect*.*

   2. Across the district's schools, students followed school and classroom rules, whether posted or implied and disruptions, if any, were handled effectively.

      a. Behavioral standards were clearly and consistently communicated and disruptions, if present, were managed effectively and equitably (#2) in 89 percent of classes observed.

         i. At the middle and high school levels, if students strayed off task, one or two words or signals from the teachers were all that was needed to redirect students. For example, in a middle school class, a teacher raised his hand to signal quiet; in a high school class, a teacher simply said the word "respect" to quiet his class.

      b. Posted classroom rules were most evident at the elementary level where SLANT posters reminded students to: Sit Up; Listen; Ask Questions; Nod Yes or No; and Talk to the Teacher.

3. The physical arrangement of classrooms ensured a positive learning environment and provided all students with access to learning activities (#3) in 86 percent of classes districtwide

   a. Elementary classrooms, for example, were arranged to accommodate groups of 3–6 students in small-group instruction and for collaboration. Work stations and tables for small-group work with teachers were consistently present. Students had easy access to books and materials to support learning.

   b. In most middle school classes observed, desks were arranged in groups for small-group instruction. In one middle school class, desks were removed and replaced with tables to accommodate small-group learning activities.

4. Districtwide classroom rituals and routines clearly and consistently promoted smooth transitions with a minimal loss of instructional time (#4).

   a. The team found that in 83 percent of classes observed districtwide, transitions from one learning activity to the next were smooth and seamless.

   b. At the elementary and middle levels, the team noted that students made "quick" and "clean" transitions from one learning station to the next. In one elementary classroom, gentle chimes were used to signal transitions.

Impact: By establishing a positive, safe, and respectful learning environment districtwide where students consistently follow standards of behavior and have full access to learning activities, the district has met an essential condition for learning.

3. **The district has successfully implemented a research-based literacy model K–4 that is designed to improve student achievement in ELA.**

   A. The team was told that the district's association with Bay State Reading Institute (BSRI) spans four years. In August of 2010, Galligan elementary school was awarded a grant through the Investing in Innovation Fund to address low achievement in ELA. The grant identified BSRI as a provider.

      1. At Galligan, 2011–2012 was the first full year of implementation of the BSRI literacy model Interviewees said that "great results" at Galligan led the Elizabeth Pole and Mulcahey schools to adopt the BSRI literacy model in 2012–2013. During the 2013–2014 school year, the remaining elementary schools in the district adopted the BSRI literacy model.

         a. Galligan elementary school is in its fourth year of full implementation of BSRI.

   B. Elementary teachers districtwide have embraced the BSRI literacy model, which uses research-based pedagogy, including ongoing coaching and support for teachers, frequent data analysis, and differentiated literacy instruction for students.

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1. Teachers and school leaders cited the benefits of the BSRI literacy model, emphasizing that it supports data-driven instruction with fluid grouping. Elementary teachers are concentrating on differentiation and content based teaching and learning.

   a. The superintendent told the team that close to 100 percent of elementary teachers voted to participate in the summer BSRI institute held in August 2014. The five-day workshop covered a range of topics including literacy instruction, pedagogy, and differentiated instruction.

   b. Elementary teachers told the team that the BSRI model has made a "big difference" in literacy in the district. Teachers are using diagnostic data and becoming more proficient at monitoring progress.

2. The team was told that each elementary school has a full-time literacy coach. Literacy coaches, along with the elementary curriculum coordinator, are providing ongoing support to teachers to implement the BSRI literacy model with fidelity. They go into classrooms and model lessons for teachers.

   a. BSRI coaches conduct monthly walkthroughs with school literacy coaches, principals, and the elementary curriculum coordinator. The superintendent reported that she participates whenever possible. Walkthroughs are followed by a debriefing session to help principals know what to look for in classrooms.

   b. Interviewees told the team that elementary schools are paired according to school population. Teachers in "sister schools" participate in across-school walkthroughs to observe their colleagues' use of the BSRI model.

   c. Interviewees told the team that the district adopted *Reading Street* (Pearson) K–6 in 2012. District leaders told the team that *Reading Street* is a good match for small-group learning, which BSRI advocates, as it includes a balanced assessment plan that supports differentiated learning.

3. Interviewees reported that every BSRI meeting is a data meeting. DIBELS is used for benchmark assessments and for monitoring the progress of high-risk students. GRADE is administered twice a year.

   a. Scores are combined to determine the fluency competency for each student and to group students for instruction. At monthly grade- level meetings, teachers review their most recent data. Every six days, during common planning time, students are grouped for small-group instruction based on their needs.

4. District leaders told the team that the BSRI model has unified elementary ELA instructional design and delivery in the district. The superintendent reported that the model has increased student engagement. Further, success with small-group learning in ELA has led to the use of the same instructional model for math at the elementary level and in some

classrooms in grades 5 and 6. This was confirmed by the team during classroom observations (See Appendix C).

Impact: By providing resources for the full implementation of a research-based instructional model designed to address low student achievement in ELA K–4, the district is intentionally addressing the diverse learning needs of its students. Further, elementary teachers are developing a common understanding of high- quality, evidence-based instruction along with a system to actively monitor instruction; these are likely to lead to improved student achievement.

Assessment

4. **In elementary English Language Arts (ELA), the district has established a culture of data-driven decision-making focused on results.**

   A. In elementary ELA, the district has in place a balanced system of formative and summative assessments to measure student progress and to identify high-risk students.

      1. Summative assessments in place are the MCAS, given annually, and the GRADE, given twice a year.

      2. Formative assessments include Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), given three times a year for benchmark assessment and monthly to monitor the progress of high-risk students, and unit assessments from the *Reading Street* reading program, given four times a year.

   B. In elementary ELA, the district has in place a system for monitoring and analyzing assessment results and for making instructional decisions about grouping and support for students.

      1. Reading coaches have initial responsibility for analyzing and presenting data.

      2. Grade-level teams meet monthly to review assessment results.

      3. Teachers meet with the principal every six days during common planning time to arrange students in groups based on those results.

         a. Groups are established within and across classrooms.

   C. Teachers and principals receive regular training from BSRI concerning data-based decision-making and small-group instruction.

      1. Principals have BSRI coaches to help them improve their instructional leadership.

      2. Literacy Coaches have BSRI coaches to help them improve their instructional practices.

      3. ELA teachers have embedded BSRI coaches to help them improve their instruction.

D. In classrooms, teachers plan and facilitate instruction for students in their data-based groups.

1. Teachers assess students' progress regularly.

Impact: In elementary ELA classrooms in the district, students receive instruction carefully differentiated to address what formative assessments indicate are their performance needs. Students are engaged in their learning because it is so precisely targeted to their needs. In addition, because instruction is differentiated for students' needs, it is likely that students will make significant progress in literacy.

Human Resources and Professional Development

5. The district has developed a professional development program that is coordinated and comprehensive and that effectively incorporates a number of key components of the Massachusetts Standards for Professional Development.

A. The district's professional development program is designed to provide appropriate professional growth opportunities for educators at all stages of their careers, as well as to systematically advance the strategic goals of the Taunton Public Schools. Its efforts are guided by and reflect the Massachusetts Standards for Professional Development.

1. This is in marked contrast to the results of ESE's 2009 review before the current superintendent's arrival. ESE's previous review found that the professional development program focused on opportunities related to recertification rather than on performance-driven learning experiences designed to support the attainment of overarching districtwide goals and aligned school-level objectives.

B. The objectives of the district's professional development program are clearly defined and closely aligned with the four core goals in the district's Strategic Plan. Further, the subsequent alignment of all School Improvement Plans with the district's goals and priorities helps ensure that professional development programs, resources, and services are systematically integrated, fully coordinated, and delivered efficiently.

C. Stakeholder interviews and a review of district documents indicated that the district's professional development system is highly collaborative. The program is directed by the Professional Development Council, a joint committee that meets regularly, is chaired by the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, and is composed of administrators and educators representing all school levels and a wide range of disciplines.

1. Teachers confirmed that they serve as full and active members in the planning and oversight of the district's professional development process and program.

2. The Professional Development Council routinely solicits formal suggestions from teachers to determine their professional development interests and needs, as well as preferred

accessibility formats. Council members said that teacher input is highly valued and confirmed that a variety of professional development offerings have been implemented as a result.

3. The district has implemented an improved system to continually assess professional development programs to ensure that they are meeting targeted goals and objectives.

    a. Interviewees said that a new, easily accessible, online evaluation instrument has been developed for teachers to provide timely and formal feedback on the quality of offerings. Members of the Council confirmed that data from these assessments is carefully analyzed to inform efforts to improve professional development programming. Additionally, they said that PDP points are awarded once teachers have completed and submitted their evaluation forms.

D. Although professional development is somewhat limited by the current absence of early release time, the district has developed an extensive array of options and alternatives by which to embed and deliver professional development programs and support services.

1. These include: three full districtwide professional development days; common planning time, currently in place in all elementary schools, at the alternative high school, and under consideration for the middle schools; Term Time Series, four six-week mini-courses offered throughout the fall, spring, and summer; BSRI trainings and summer institutes; Summer Series, week-long teacher workshops that provide stipends; MA Focus Academy, free online graduate courses provided through the DSAC; and the district's reimbursement process, which reimburses educators for 50 percent of the cost of courses taken at area colleges.

2. Interviews and a review of the district's Professional Development Plan showed that the design and delivery of programs and supports is increasingly based on the collection and analysis of data relevant to the Plan's goals, objectives, and targeted audience. These include student data from multiple sources (e.g., BSRI, Reading Street and Envisions Math) as well as educator data, for example, from program proposals and evaluations. The data analysis helps the district make timely and informed decisions about professional development goals, plans, programs, and services.

3. The district has demonstrated its commitment and support by investing significantly increased funding in its professional development programming. According to ESE data, district professional development spending increased from $757 per teacher in 2010 to $2,893 per teacher in 2013.

Impact: The district has created a comprehensive and coordinated professional development program to support educators, to promote district priorities and state initiatives, and to focus systematically on improving student achievement. The district's provision of a wide variety of formal opportunities for educators to collaborate in structured, sustained, and purposeful ways has begun to create a culture of continuous professional growth and an increasing awareness of the shared responsibility for student

learning. These dedicated efforts hold considerable promise for long-lasting improvements to instructional practices and professional competencies, the curriculum, and---ultimately and most importantly---to students' academic opportunities and learning outcomes.

6. **The district is in the first full year of implementing the new educator evaluation system. Many teachers and administrators expressed the view that the new evaluation model has the potential to effectively support district improvement efforts and promote student achievement.**

   A. The district collaboratively developed a comprehensive educator evaluation system that met or exceeded the requirements of the new state model. The agreement was adopted in November 2013 and implemented as a pilot in January 2014.

      1. The superintendent reported that before negotiations she invited all union presidents to participate in a group designed to develop an educator evaluation philosophy and guiding principles. She noted that this collaboration helped unify their thinking and build a foundation for negotiations.

   B. The district has displayed a renewed commitment to student-centered educator evaluation and to using the principles and practices embedded in the new educator evaluation system to support continuous improvement of instructional practice and expansion of professional competencies.

      1. The district created a Joint Labor and Management Team (JLMET), whose role is to monitor the ongoing implementation of the new educator evaluation system. This collaborative team is composed of administrators, teachers, and teachers' association representatives. It meets monthly throughout the school year.

         a. Interviewees told the team that JLMET has done much to provide timely information, clarifications, and materials to support and facilitate the successful implementation of the new evaluation system, including overseeing the development of DDMs.

      2. Interviews and a review of district documents confirmed the superintendent's active and ongoing support for the new educator evaluation system, for the enhanced supervisory and evaluative practices that it provides, as well as her expectation that evaluators meet all the requirements articulated in the new system.

   C. The district continues to make a concerted effort to implement the new educator evaluation system with fidelity. The review team was presented with persuasive evidence that implementation of the system is beginning to produce results that are positive and encouraging.

      1. The review team reviewed the personnel folders of 49 faculty members selected randomly from across the district. Without exception, all staff had received evaluations, either formative or summative, for the 2013–2014 school year. This contrasted sharply with the results of ESE's 2009 review before the current superintendent's arrival. ESE's 2009 review identified the district's then ineffective supervisory and evaluative practices.

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2. The review team also reviewed the personnel folders of all school principals and central office administrators.

    a. The team noted that the evaluations were of excellent quality, corresponded to the new state evaluation regulations, and included detailed, evidence-based commendations and clear and specific recommendations designed to improve administrative practice and promote professional growth.

Impact: The district's efforts to adopt and implement its new educator evaluation system reflect its renewed commitment to comprehensive and systemic school improvement. Representing a significant shift from the district's prior ineffective supervisory and evaluative practices before the current superintendent's arrival, the new system is designed to provide all educators with the meaningful and continuous support and feedback needed to improve classroom competencies, to expand professional practices, and to prioritize and promote student achievement. If the district remains committed to fully and faithfully implementing the new educator evaluation system, continuous and comprehensive improvements in learning opportunities and in academic programs and outcomes for all students will likely result.

Student Support

7. The district has allocated substantial resources to create a system of academic and social/emotional and health support programs for struggling students at all school levels.

    A. A review of school committee minutes indicated that the district has been able to increase support services through a combination of grants, additional funding, and the reallocation of resources.

      1. The superintendent has established a support services leadership structure consisting primarily of the director of special education, the director of transportation and student services, and the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, all of whom collaborate with principals and support staff to ensure that students receive support services.

        a. This contrasts sharply with the results of ESE's 2009 review before the current superintendent's arrival. ESE's previous review identified insufficient administrative leadership in special education and an absence of program continuity or a continuum of services for students at all levels.

      2. The district has allocated staff to support academic and social/emotional and health programs at all schools.

        a. Special education teachers for all grades, English as a Second Language teachers, guidance counselors, a district mathematic coach and tutors, social workers and community facilitators, special education coordinators, school psychologists, adjustment

counselors, nurses, instructional assistants and physical, occupational, and speech and language therapists provide support services.

3. Additional funding was approved by the school committee for fiscal year 2015 to hire staff to support wraparound services.

   a. The superintendent reported that the district was awarded a competitive U. S. Department of Education's Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Demonstration grant in 2011. This $1.1 million grant enabled the district to get a jump-start on social and emotional supports for students, also addressing a need identified in ESE's 2009 review. The guidance counselor positions have been added to the budget as the grant has been phased out.

   b. The school committee approved two additional community facilitator positions to support struggling students and families, a peer mediator position at the high school, and additional guidance counselor positions; these were funded through the general fund and grants. The school committee has included these positions in the fiscal year 2016 budget.

B. Interviews and a review of documents showed that approximately five years ago the district began implementing a full-inclusion, push-in model to support students with disabilities. According to ESE staffing data, from 2012–2014 the district added 15 special education teachers to support regular education teachers. The superintendent reported that this was in addition to inclusion teachers hired in 2010. *Success for All,* a document describing the district's inclusion program, states, "Our goal is to ensure that all educators are well-prepared to support the learning of individuals with special needs…."

   1. In most cases the district does not use either a pull-out model or resource rooms to provide support services for students with disabilities. Every grade is assigned a special education teacher and every school has an inclusion committee.

      a. Districtwide programs are in place for students with social and behavioral difficulties; some students with an autism diagnosis, as well as developmentally delayed students, may require a substantially separate program. When appropriate, these students are included with their peers in regular education classes.

         i. The superintendent said that the inclusion philosophy in the district considers students' needs with the general education setting in mind; however, it was also noted that the least restrictive environment for some students with an autism diagnosis, as well as for developmentally delayed students, may require a substantially separate program.

   2. The district provides professional development in inclusion strategies. For example, the district offered a week-long summer program in inclusive techniques and strategies and a course on brain development and the impact on the inclusive classroom.

a. The superintendent reported that the district worked with the teachers' association representing the educational assistants (EAs) to provide a year-long, graduate level course to more than 200 EAs.

3. The district's enrollment of English language learners (ELLs) increased from 153 in 2011 to 220 in 2014. The ELLs are supported by a director, 10 ESL teachers, 8 instructional assistants, and approximately 100 sheltered-content teachers.[4] The district is exploring a newcomers' ELL program through the Community Input Team process, and ELLs at all levels are enrolled in neighborhood schools, as recommended in ESE's 2009 review report.

C. A process is in place at all schools to identify—and to provide support for—students who need academic support.

1. Interviews and a document review showed that all elementary schools are partnered with the Bay State Reading Institute (BSRI) for ELA, and each school meets monthly to review assessment data to monitor student progress. Mathematics tutors are in place in Title I schools. Teachers regroup students based on assessment results.

2. The district is working toward introducing small-group instruction at the middle school. Middle school teachers work with the district mathematics coach to assess student progress. The team observed pockets of grouping at the middle schools, mostly at grade 5. Interviewees told the team that middle school students have access to after-school support and a homework club. In addition, teachers collaborate with parents to structure work at home.

3. Interviewees told the team that at the high school teachers and guidance counselors track grades to ensure that students are meeting course requirements and teachers provide guidance counselors with feedback about student placement. Teachers contact the guidance department if they believe that a student is in danger of failing a class, and a guidance counselor will meet with the student and contact parents.

   a. High school students said they contact a teacher or a tutor for academic support. They said that most teachers stay after school and student tutors are available in the library.

   b. The superintendent reported that teachers and guidance counselors track grades at all levels to ensure that students are meeting course requirements and teachers provide guidance counselors with feedback about student placement.

4. The district has child study teams in place at all schools; these meet monthly or as needed to discuss academic and social/emotional referrals. Members of the child study team may vary depending on the reason for the referral.

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[4] According to ESE data, between 2010 and 2014, the number of ELLs fluctuated from 159 in 2010 (2 percent of students) to 153 in 2011 to 137 in 2012 to 161 in 2013 to 220 in 2014 (3 percent of students).

5. The district provides Saturday school, after-school, and summer academic support programs. The high school offers an extended-school-year program for all students through age 22. A review of information provided by the district indicated that approximately 267 students attend this program each year.

    a. MCAS support and credit recovery programs are available at the high school during the school year and each summer.

    b. In addition, the district offers ELLs summer support programs related to team building and early college program support.

        i. The superintendent reported that she is on the Board of Directors for Project Contemporary Competitiveness (PCC). Two years ago, the district approached PCC about a partnership that allows them to send ELLs to Stonehill College for the six-week early college summer program. The superintendent noted: "This gives first generation, high needs, ELLs an opportunity to live on a campus and experience college life." The superintendent also reported that students write essays about their experience and 100 percent indicated that they see themselves enrolling in college in the future.

D. **Multiple programs are in place across the district to identify and to address the social/emotional and health needs of students.**

1. The district provided the team with a list of 36 community-based resources and agencies that collaborate with the district to provide services to students and families, including the Boys and Girls Club of Taunton, the Old Colony YMCA, and Community Counseling of Bristol County (CCBC). Interviewees said that CCBC counselors come into the schools to work with students. Finally, a review of the high school guidance department 2013-2014 annual report indicated that 40 seniors have been placed in internships with business partners.

    a. The district has established an ACCESS center at the high school for students to receive information, intervention and support services, and school-based therapeutic services, such as individual or group counseling.

        i. High school students told the team that they use the ACCESS center when they have a personal problem that requires more assistance than a guidance counselor can provide. They said that the guidance department sends students to the ACCESS center to speak with a therapist/psychologist. ACCESS services are free and more intensive counseling services are available for a small fee or are covered by health insurance.

    b. A review of information provided by the district indicated that the Open Circle and Second Step programs have been used at the elementary and middle schools to help students develop social/emotional skills.

2. To increase the graduation rate, to reduce the drop-out rate, and to address social/emotional and health needs of students, the school district established an alternative high school and a virtual school. Interviewees said that 32 students are enrolled in the virtual school and 100 in the alternative high school.

3. A review of documents provided by the district indicated that there are 162 advisory teams at the high school. Every adult is assigned a team of 12–15 students who meet for 22 minutes per month. Topics are determined by the administration to assist students "in their ability to thrive both within and outside the high school setting."

4. The district has a McKinney-Vento liaison who primarily coordinates transportation for homeless students.[5] The district has 151 homeless students, and 48 are transported to schools out of the district.

5. Interviews and a document review showed that attendance is a concern throughout the district. There is particular concern about attendance at the high school, which has high chronic absence rates.[6]

   a. The superintendent reported that the district tracks chronic absence closely because of its work on reducing the drop-out rate. For example, during a recent retreat the superintendent structured data dialogues for approximately 50 administrators, and teams worked together on ways to further reduce chronic absence. She noted that as a continuation of this effort a number of SIPs include the goal of increasing attendance rates.

   b. The superintendent also reported that the district has one of the lowest chronic absence rates among urban districts. According to ESE data, the district's 2014 chronic absence rate was 11.1 percent. The 2014 state chronic absence rate was 12.4 percent.

   c. Each school has a program for outreach and homes are called when a student is absent.

   d. The district has four truancy officers.

6. The district has an organized discipline process with a focus on due process. The process is differentiated by grade level and includes alternatives to in- and out-of-school suspension.

E. The district begins to emphasize college attendance at the PK level, which has a slogan that "Every child goes to college." The high school guidance department has grade 8 students identify goals online to prepare them to identify careers. Guidance counselors work with students in grades 11 and 12 on essay writing, applications, and financial aid. College and Career Readiness Fairs are held for students planning to work after high school.

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[5] The McKinney-Vento Education Act for Homeless Children and Youth requires every school district to designate a staff person as a liaison for students in homeless situations.
[6] According to ESE data, in 2013–2014 the chronic absence rates for grades 9, 10, 11, and 12 were 19.2 percent, 18.1 percent, 21.1 percent, and 17.0 percent, respectively.

1. Guidance counselors visit honors classes to encourage enrollment in Advanced Placement (AP) classes as well as to increase the number of enrollees who take AP exams. There is an open enrollment policy for AP classes and letters are sent to parents of prospective AP students.

   a. A review of data in the high school guidance department's annual report indicated that both AP enrollment and the number of students who have taken AP exams have increased since 2012. According to ESE data, between 2011–2012 and 2013–2014 the number of students taking AP tests increased from 86 to 183 and the numbers of tests taken, from 147 to 341.

2. A review of the high school guidance department annual report indicated that the high school administered a free Accuplacer Placement test to 26 students through Bristol Community College. The district also collaborates with Bristol Community College on a dual-enrollment program; the program had 56 student participants in 2013-2014, an increase from 7 students in 2009-2010.

Impact: Providing access to academic and non-academic support programs allows students to receive interventions and assistance that are likely to improve student achievement and personal development. Having access to a range of comprehensive academic and social/emotional and health services increases the likelihood that students receive the help they need to be successful academically and to prepare them for college and career.

Financial and Asset Management

8. **The district has a capital plan for the needs of all the schools in the district, and the district and the city have pursued Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) and city funding for accelerated repairs to and renovations of school buildings.**

   A. Interviews and a document review showed that the district has a long-range capital plan for athletic and school facilities.

      1. The plan lists and prioritizes the needs of each building, such as roof leaks, security systems, HVAC upgrades, and floor replacements.

      2. Costs have been estimated for most projects, along with proposed completion dates and possible funding sources (city building department or MSBA).

      3. Completed projects are highlighted.

   B. City officials reported that the city is also preparing a long-range capital plan.

C. In 2009 city voters approved a debt-exclusion override to fund a major renovation of the high school and a new middle school.

    1. According to the MSBA, the project was completed in 2011 at a cost of over $112 million, and costs were reimbursed at 83 percent.

D. Other projects have also been proposed, four of which have been approved or received preliminary approval by the MSBA and/or the city.

    1. An Accelerated Repair Project for a new roof at the Galligan Elementary School was approved and funded by the MSBA and the city.

    2. Administrators reported that two additional accelerated school-repair projects have MSBA approval and will be voted on by the school committee and city in July, 2015. City officials said that by making use of existing bonding capacity the city has funded its share of these projects without the need for an override vote.

    3. The superintendent reported that the MSBA has approved a Core project at the Mulcahey Elementary School. She said that the school committee and city will vote on allocating funds to enter into a feasibility study in July, 2015.

    4. The city and the school committee jointly contributed funding to renovate the high school stadium. In addition, the school committee authorized funding for new tennis courts.

E. Administrators reported that the school department is responsible for custodial and cleaning services in the schools, while the city is responsible for maintenance services and major repairs.

    1. Review team members found that although some buildings are old, dating back to 1914, the schools are well maintained and clean.

Impact: The efforts of the district to clean, maintain, repair, and renovate its schools has helped create environments conducive to learning. In addition, its use of MSBA funding has meant that the improvements happen at limited cost to the city.

9. The district has supplemented its revenues and reduced costs through grants, private partnerships, and cost-saving measures.

A. As described in a challenge Financial and Asset Management finding below, the district's resources for expanded support services and improvements in instruction are limited.

B. The district has reported federal and state grant revenues of $7.1 million to $8.6 million for fiscal years 2012–2014.

    1. The district has pursued many grants above and beyond entitlement grants. According to ESE data, of the grants reported for fiscal year 2014 approximately half ($4.4 million) were entitlement grants. The superintendent reported that the remaining half were competitive.

> She noted that this effort has enabled the district to introduce new programs and fund important instructional initiatives in the district.

2. The district's grant manager, along with the superintendent, helps write grant applications, manage grant expenditures, and brings possible grant opportunities to the attention of administrators. Grants for fiscal year 2015 to date total $6.5 million.

3. Administrators reported that competitive grants include 21st Century grants (for after-school programs and the Alternative High School), Department of Public Health grants (for nursing), Elementary and Secondary School Counseling grant funds carried over from fiscal year 2014 (for guidance counselors), and an EOS (Educational Opportunity Scholars) Foundation grant (for the universal breakfast program). Reading specialists, after-school programs, and a math coach are also funded through federal grants.

4. A document review indicated that the district relies on carrying over circuit breaker, school choice, and other revolving funds to offset budget cuts and to meet budget needs. The total of these funds for the fiscal year 2015 budget was $3.6 million; administrators reported that the revenue from revolving funds has been increasing. The superintendent noted that several years ago the revenue from revolving funds had been nearly depleted; however, with a concerted effort to carefully control expenditures, the revolving funds have been increasing.

C. The district has a long tradition of school partnerships with local businesses, some of which provide considerable support for school programs.

1. Administrators said that partnerships with local banks and businesses have supported student activities, field trips, a restaurant for the high school culinary program, and the refurbishment of seats in a theater, and have totaled as much as $90,000 for the seats alone.

2. Partnerships with Community Counseling of Bristol County, the YMCA, the Boys and Girls Club, Bristol Community College, and law enforcement and mental health agencies have provided needed counseling, social/emotional supports, and drug prevention programs for needy students.

D. The district has proactively worked to reduce costs and improve efficiency.

1. The superintendent reported that the district was the only school system in Massachusetts to win the Donald D. Johnson award from MASBO (Massachusetts Association of School Business Officials) in 2012 for its strategies to improve cost-saving measures and efficiencies.

2. Administrators reported that special education programs for autistic, therapeutic, and life-skills programs are offered in the district, thus reducing out-of-district tuition and transportation costs while providing programs for the children in their home schools. According to ESE data, out-of-district costs (excluding choice and charter schools) have declined from $7.6 million in fiscal year 2012 to $5.7 million in fiscal year2014.

   a. The superintendent reported that many of these in-district programs were created with one-time revenues made available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

3. Interviewees told the team that the district moved grade 8 into vacant space at the high school in 2012 and has closed 5 schools since 2010, reducing costs and increasing efficiencies on overhead expenses.

4. Administrators told the team that over $100,000 in legal costs were saved in the first year after the appointment of a lawyer legal counsel for pupils and personnel to the central office.   The superintendent reported that the lawyer reduces special education legal expenses by advising staff on matters in house; half of the legal counsel's job is dedicated to personnel matters not necessarily legal in nature.

5. Electrical expenses are managed through an alert system that turns off lights when schools and rooms are not in use.

   a. The district has a strong partnership with the Taunton Municipal Lighting Plant and together they created an interruptible electrical service program, making Taunton eligible for a special rate resulting in a savings of approximately $100,000 annually.

6. The purchase of supplies is centralized in order to take advantage of bulk prices, group and state bids, and to manage distribution more efficiently.

7. The district has also bought surplus property such as furniture and technology equipment from other school districts and from local businesses such as General Dynamics.

Impact: The strategic use of grants, revolving funds, cost-saving strategies, and efficiencies has supplemented revenues and reduced costs.

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. **Improved student achievement is a primary goal in the district's Strategic Plan and in a number of School Improvement Plans (SIPs). However, planning documents and school committee minutes do not consistently include an analysis of student achievement data to assess students' progress and to decide next steps.**

    A. While the district's Strategic Plan and School Improvement Plans (SIPs) all include as primary goals the improvement of student achievement and the preparation of learners for successful post-secondary pursuits, these documents frequently measure improvement more broadly than through quantitative assessments of student achievement. The Strategic Plan does not contain student achievement data or performance goals; although these can be found in the goals of the superintendent and the school committee that are aligned to the Strategic Plan. SIPs do not consistently use academic assessment results to measure student achievement: only six refer to MCAS measures (including CPI or median SGP) or other benchmarks.

        1. The Taunton High School SIP uses performance on MCAS as a measure of achievement, and also includes attendance and drop-out, graduation, and suspension rates.

        2. Elementary and middle school SIPs measure success using common and benchmark assessments, and they also include as measures of achievement the use of differentiated instruction and participation in tutoring programs.

    B. School committee minutes do not regularly include reports on MCAS results or other academic performance data. School committee members reported that they have received data on college acceptances, graduation rates, and the drop-out rate.

        1. The superintendent provided ESE with sample data reports shared in recent school committee meetings.

    C. ESE data show little improvement in MCAS performance and other achievement measures in most grades and schools.

        1. Taunton is a Level 3 district because two of its schools (Taunton High School and Elizabeth Pole Elementary School) are in the lowest performing 20 percent of schools in their grade spans.

      a. Taunton High School is in the 17th percentile of middle-high schools or K–12 schools and has a cumulative PPI of 48 for all students and 50 for high-needs students, compared to its target of 75.

      b. Elizabeth Pole Elementary School is in the 10th percentile of elementary schools. It has a cumulative PPI of 39 for all students and 34 for high-needs students.

2. Seven schools are in Level 2 and their rankings range from the 22nd to the 72nd percentile.

3. Two elementary schools are in Level 1 for having a cumulative PPI of 75 or higher.

4. With the exception of one school (Galligan Elementary in ELA), median student growth percentiles (SGPs) are 40 or less in both ELA and math, compared with the state median SGP of 50.

5. A document provided to the team indicated that the Taunton district was in the 13th percentile in 2013 and dropped to the 9th percentile in 2014. It lost ground in both ELA and math, and gained only 0.1 percentile in science. [7] [8]

  D. The district has seen some improvements.

1. High school MCAS performance in ELA and math and the annual drop-out rate have improved.

2. Other measures have shown improvement, including the five-year cohort graduation rate, absence rate, and in-school suspension rate.

3. The annual drop-out rate has shown a dramatic improvement (from 5.5 percent in 2011to 1.7 percent in 2014).

4. Administrators reported that the rate of enrollment of Taunton High School graduates in college has improved.[9]

Impact: Without the formal and structured analysis of academic achievement data in its planning documents, the district does not have a clear understanding of its progress in improving student achievement or the specific areas most in need of attention.

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[7] Please see the top of the Student Performance section for a description of the circumstances in 2014 that may have had a negative impact on the ELA and mathematics proficiency levels in the district.

[8] The district's enrollment of English language learners (ELLs) increased from 153 in 2011 to 220 in 2014.

[9] According to the latest available ESE data, between 2007 and 2011 the percentage of graduates enrolled in two- or four-year post-secondary education improved from 64 percent in 2007 to 65 percent in 2008–2010 to 69 percent in 2011.

11. **The superintendent and the school committee propose a preliminary budget based on the city funding the schools to the extent required by state law. However, the final budget is based on the city funding 95 percent of the amount required by the state. There are no public district meetings or process to discuss the budget, and the school committee has no formal system to advocate in the community for students' needs.**

   A. A document review by the team showed that the superintendent's preliminary budget proposal to the school committee is based on city funding at 100 percent of the Net School Spending (NSS) required by the state.

      1. The presentation specifically refers to the calculations used by the state in determining the city's obligation, including the state's requirement that the city fund the deficit carried over from the previous year.

   B. However, in early June the superintendent and the school committee attend a public hearing by the city council on all city budgets, including the proposed budget for the schools; at this hearing the superintendent presents the final budget presentation which, in 2014, was based on an appropriation by the city of 95 percent of required NSS.

      1. The final budget presentation made clear that the presented budget did not meet the state requirement, and it listed the proposed and needed initiatives for the schools that could not be funded as a result.

      2. The city council approved the amount proposed in the superintendent's final budget proposal. Then in the fall, it approved a supplementary budget of $1 million for the schools, but the total amount approved was still more than $3 million below the NSS requirement.

   C. School administrators and city officials reported that there is no district meeting or formal public process to discuss and negotiate the amount that the city council will vote for the schools, but that the superintendent communicates with the mayor concerning the matter.

      1. The superintendent reported that this has been a customary practice for the past several decades in the city of Taunton.

   D. School committee members stated that there is no formal system for advocating for the budget, there are no district public forums, but that they go away from meetings with consensus.

Impact: The district is not funded to the extent required by state law.

Curriculum and Instruction

12. The district is in the early stages of implementing high-quality teaching and learning. Instructional support to implement key instructional practices is more available at the elementary level.

The team observed 99 classes throughout the district: 36 at the high school, 26 at the 3 middle schools, and 37 at the 7 elementary schools. The team observed 52 ELA classes, 30 mathematics classes, and 17 classes in other subject areas. Among the classes observed were 11 special education classes, and 2 ELL classes. The observations were approximately 20 minutes in length. All review team members collected data using ESE's instructional inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards-based teaching. This data is presented in Appendix C.

A. In observed classrooms, the practice of communicating clear learning objectives to promote student understanding varied by level in the district.

    1. At the elementary level, the team found that teachers clearly and consistently communicated clear learning objectives aligned to the *2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks* (#8) in 62 percent of classes observed districtwide. Most elementary classrooms displayed learning objectives and goals in learning stations and had focus walls that included Common Core learning standards.

    2. Communicating clear learning objectives for students was observed clearly and consistently in 73 percent of middle school classes and in 53 percent of high school classes. In many classes, the team found teachers posting agendas and homework in lieu of learning objectives.

B. Districtwide the team saw limited opportunities for students to make connections to prior learning, or to real world experiences, or to apply knowledge and understanding to other subjects (#21). There was clear and consistent evidence of this practice in 41 percent of elementary classes, in 35 percent of middle school classes, and in 36 percent of high school classes observed.

C. In observed classrooms, instruction that supports the full range of learners, including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, varied districtwide.

    1. The team observed clear and consistent evidence of teachers using appropriate modifications for ELLs and students with disabilities (#10) in 51 percent of elementary classes. The team noted that differentiation appeared more structured in ELA classes than in math classes at the elementary level.

    2. In most middle school classes, the team did not observe clear and consistent evidence of appropriate modifications to reach all learners. While the team saw some examples of teachers using stations and small-group work to differentiate, there was clear and consistent evidence of this emerging practice in only 31 percent of middle-school classes observed.

       a. The superintendent acknowledged this and reported that she has directed focus on differentiation at the middle school.

   3. The team observed appropriate modifications to reach all learners in 11 percent of classes at the high school level. In most high school classes, the team saw an instructional approach in which all students were doing the same task.

D. In observed classrooms, opportunities for students to elaborate on their thinking when answering questions about content varied by level in the district.

   1. In 65 percent of elementary classes observed, the team saw clear and consistent evidence of teachers using questioning techniques that require thoughtful responses that demonstrate understanding (#12). For example, the team frequently observed students explaining their thinking to a "neighbor" or to the teacher. Also, teachers asked students to explain math problems in multiple ways.

   2. The team observed clear and consistent evidence of students elaborating about content and ideas when responding to questions (#20) in 19 percent of middle school classes and in 25 percent of high school classes. In most of these classes, students gave one-word answers to questions requiring recall.[10] In one high school class, for example, students consistently gave short answers to questions while the teacher supplied the details.

E. Districtwide, lessons that reflected rigor and high expectations and promoted students' engagement in higher-order thinking skills were not consistently observed by the team.

   1. The team found clear and consistent evidence of lessons that reflected rigor and high expectations (#7) in 44 percent of classes observed districtwide. The team observed students clearly and consistently inquiring, exploring, analyzing, synthesizing and/or evaluating knowledge (#19) in 42 percent of classes observed districtwide.

       a. Examples of rigorous lessons that promoted higher-order thinking included: a middle school ELA class where every learning station had an activity in which some level of higher-order thinking was taking place and a high school lesson where students collaboratively wrote poetry applying a rhyme scheme from Macbeth.

       b. Observed lessons were not sufficiently rigorous when instructional time was lost because of ineffective provisioning, when students filled out worksheets focused on lower-level questions and rote learning for most of the lesson, and lessons in which students were not adequately engaged and answered questions in unison.

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[10] According to Bloom's Taxonomy, lower-order thinking involves the ability to recall previously learned material; higher-order thinking involves comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

F. In observed classrooms, the incidence of frequent formative assessments to check for student understanding was not consistent across levels in the district.

1. In 73 percent of middle school classes, in 57 percent of elementary classes, and in 39 percent of high school classes, the team found clear and consistent evidence of teachers conducting frequent formative assessments to check for understanding and inform instruction (#15).   Most often, teachers used questions to check students' understanding. At the elementary level in math, the team observed examples of students using individual white boards for on-the-spot formative checks.

G. The incidence of the use of available technology as a learning tool for students was low districtwide.

1. Teachers clearly and consistently made use of available technology to support instruction and enhance learning (#16) in 40 percent of classes observed districtwide. The team observed teachers use a range of technology. In some classes observed, teachers used LCD projectors to display worksheets; the team also observed some lessons with Power Point presentations and video clips.

2.   Districtwide the team saw students clearly and consistently using technology as a tool for learning and/or understanding (#22) in only 21 percent of classes observed. While examples of students using technology were limited, they did include: students using graphing calculators; small groups of elementary students working on classroom computers; a grade 5 math class using iPads; and middle and high school students using computer labs for research and projects.

H. Instructional leadership varies among levels in the district.

1. At the elementary level, interviewees told the team that the elementary curriculum coordinator, principals, literacy coaches, and the district math coach provide instructional leadership and support. Each elementary school has a literacy coach and each elementary principal has a principal coach, and BSRI consultants provide additional instructional support. The elementary curriculum coordinator, principals, and BSRI coaches conduct monthly walkthroughs, many of which the superintendent attends, and each one is followed by a debriefing session.

2. The team was told that at the middle level, the elementary curriculum coordinator (K–7), middle school principals, and assistant principals provide instructional leadership and support to teachers. The elementary (K–7)math coach works with teachers at the three middle schools; however, there are no literacy coaches at the middle school level. Teachers reported that without the support of coaches, it is difficult for them to organize stations for small-group learning. They rely on the elementary curriculum coordinator and the district math coach to model lessons for them.

a. The superintendent reported that her strategic priorities (based on feedback from the school community) included middle school instructional coaching positions that have been approved by the school committee and included in the fiscal year 2016 budget. She noted that her goals reflected the expectation that middle school teachers practice inter-visitation in the district to see small-group learning in action and visit other high-performing school systems that get excellent results in mathematics.

3. At the high school, interviewees told the team that curriculum supervisors provide both content and instructional support to teachers. In addition, the superintendent, assistant superintendent, headmaster, and assistant headmaster provide instructional feedback.

a. The superintendent reported that she visits every new teacher's classroom in the district with the headmaster and curriculum supervisor. Together, they conduct an observation and then debrief the expectations for writing high-quality observations that address the rigor of the lesson. However, interviewees told the team that instructional practices are not routinely discussed at high school faculty meetings.

Impact: When instructional support is not equitable at all levels, it is a challenge for a district to achieve consistency in implementing core instructional practices districtwide. Without consistent instructional practices across district schools and within levels in the district, the district cannot ensure that all its students are benefiting from rigorous and challenging instruction. When students with disabilities and English language learners are not consistently receiving appropriate learning modifications, student achievement outcomes are compromised.   And with limited use of technology to support student learning, the district cannot ensure that all students are prepared with the twenty-first century skills they will need for success in school, college, and careers.

13. **Full documentation of the curriculum in core subjects K–12 is incomplete. The district has taken steps to document curriculum by establishing a curriculum revision cycle; in addition, the district has adopted new programs for math and ELA K–6.**

A. K–6 teachers use a program to deliver the taught ELA curriculum. In grade 7, ELA teachers do not have an updated program. At the high school level in ELA, units in core academic courses have recently been revised to reflect the *2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks*.

1. The team was told that the district adopted *Reading Street* (Pearson) K–6 in 2012.   The program is used in all 7 elementary schools K–4, and in middle schools in grades 5 and 6. Before the program was adopted, the district did not have a unified ELA approach K–6.

B. Interviewees told the team that there is no written ELA curriculum in grade 7 districtwide. Teachers use an anthology (Prentice Hall) and common materials and novels for the taught curriculum. Teachers said that they are not all teaching similar material.

1. A review of documents submitted by the district to the team did not find evidence of grade 7 ELA curriculum.

C. Interviews and a review of district documents indicated that the ELA curriculum in core academic courses in grades 8–12 was revised in 2013–2014 to reflect the 2011 Frameworks.

1. Teachers working in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) created genre units that include: standards, essential questions, objectives, vocabulary, strategies, and assessments. Each course has a common writing prompt.

2. While all units contain strategies, they do not contain the specific strategies required to reach diverse learners. For example, WIDA standards have not been addressed in the Atlas Rubicon curriculum documents.

D. There is a heavy reliance on programs and textbooks for the math curriculum at all levels in the district. Documentation is limited to updated pacing guides (K–12) that may vary in format by level. In math, alignment to the *2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks* is achieved through a program in kindergarten through grade 6 and through texts in the upper grades.

1. Interviewees told the team that at the start of the 2014–2015 school year, the district began implementing the EnVision math program (Pearson) at the elementary level PK–4, and at the middle school level in grades 5 and 6. District leaders told the team that many programs were piloted, but EnVision was selected because of its strong alignment to the Common Core standards.

   a. The assistant superintendent, the elementary curriculum coordinator, elementary administrators, and a principal created a weeklong math "summer camp" for administrators to deconstruct grade-level standards to better understand and support the program.

2. For the 2014–2015 school year, the district adopted *McDougal Math* text (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt) in grade 7. An elementary math coach (K–7) was hired in the fall of 2014 implementation of the math program K–6 and the text in grade 7. The team was told that a crosswalk of the EnVision program and the McDougal text is scheduled for the summer of 2015.

   a. Interviewees told the team that before the adoption of the new program K–6 and the new textbook in grade 7, the math curriculum was not aligned to the 2011 Frameworks.

3. Interviewees told the team that while there are updated pacing guides for all math courses at the high school that reflect the 2011 Frameworks, formal revision of the high school math curriculum has not taken place since 1999. New textbooks for grade 8 (*HoltMcDougal Math*), algebra, and geometry were purchased in 2012. Teachers use textbooks, the state frameworks, and pacing guides for the taught curriculum and develop curriculum informally on their own.

   a. The superintendent reported that formal revision of the high school math curriculum is still underway, noting that she continues to devote resources to the effort.

E. Interviews and a review of documents indicated that the science curriculum K–12 is currently being revised by the district's science revision committee, a vertical committee from all levels, to align it to the Mass Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and literacy K–7.

1. School leaders reported that K–4 teachers use Scott Foresman Science texts, science kits, and the non-fiction selections in *Reading Street* to teach science. Units written before 2011 do not reflect literacy standards or Mass NGSS; these will be addressed in future science revisions.

   a. The superintendent reported that teachers are working on these units in working groups and in professional development sessions.

2. Science is departmentalized at the middle level.   Written curriculum guides at this level reflect the 2006 science standards and are under revision as well.

3. Science teachers in grades 8–12 use PLC time in part to write units using the backwards design format. While written documentation is underway, teachers follow the Mass NGSS.

   a. During professional development opportunities, teachers are writing units using the backwards design model.

F. The district has recently revised (2014) the curriculum revision cycle that includes a six-year revision process and includes every department in the district. The superintendent reported that this work started in 2010 and a final process is now in place.

1. Interviewees told the team that before the new curriculum revision cycle in 2014, the district did not conduct regular and timely review and revisions of the district's curricula. However, district leaders told the team there was a need for a continual curriculum renewal process. In summer 2015, teachers from every grade level are scheduled to work on curriculum development in a summer institute.

2. The six-year cycle includes the following yearly focus: study, plan, present, implement, monitor, and reflect. The superintendent reported that a phase-in plan was also created to ensure that adequate resources and funding were part of the plan.

3. At the time of this review, the six-year cycle was not on target. District leaders told the team that the plan set optimistic targets and should be on schedule by the end of 2016. The plan includes backwards design templates for units as well as a sample format for high school syllabi. The district's goal is to have a digital curriculum on Atlas. The superintendent reported that an effort is underway.

G. Curriculum leadership varies by levels in the district while the assistant superintendent provides districtwide leadership.

1. At the elementary level, in kindergarten through grade 4, principals, the elementary curriculum coordinator, literacy coaches, and the elementary (K-7) math coach provide curriculum support for teachers.

2. The team was told that middle school principals work with the assistant superintendent to provide curriculum leadership. The elementary curriculum coordinator and the elementary math coach also provide curriculum leadership at the middle school level; however, interviewees said that at the middle school level curriculum leadership is an issue. There are no curriculum supervisors at the middle school level.

   a. The superintendent reported that while these district-level positions are intended to provide elementary and middle schools with curricular support, two positions are insufficient to provide leadership to all elementary and middle schools, which is why additional resources have been added to the fiscal year 2016 budget.

3. Teachers said that PLC meetings have replaced monthly curriculum meetings.

   a. The superintendent reported that the transition to PLCs was included in her 2011 goals. She noted that she took the lead in developing and providing clear expectations for PLCs to develop a shared understanding among principals, leadership team members, and curriculum supervisors. All educators in the system were given resources that explained the purpose of PLCs, the principal's and curriculum supervisor's role in supporting the goals of teachers, the use of data, and the need for a focus on data and student achievement. The superintendent provided a rationale explaining that the PLCs would ease the transition to the new educator evaluation system and help teachers with team goals.

4. Curriculum supervisors at the high school level provide content and curriculum support for teachers in grades 8–12. They review lesson plans weekly. At this level, PLC time has replaced department meeting time. While curriculum supervisors are present, teachers determine how they will use the time. In the 2014–2015 school year the science department is using PLC time to revise curriculum.

Impact: By establishing a documented process to ensure the regular and timely review and revision of the district's curriculum, the district has taken an important initial step to complete written curriculum in the district. While the district now has unified programs in ELA and in math K-6, programs alone do not represent a fully documented curriculum. Without a comprehensive written curriculum in core subjects, the district cannot ensure that the taught curriculum is aligned to the 2011 Frameworks across classrooms at the same grade level and aligned between grades and between levels in the district, thus hindering the district's ability to effectively improve student achievement.

Assessment

14. **The district does not have in place at the middle and high school levels a balanced system of formative and summative assessments.**

   A. A balanced system of formative and summative assessments is not in place at the middle and high schools.

      1. The middle school has MCAS summative assessments in ELA and math in grades 5, 6, and 7 and the science MCAS at grade 5.

         a. Formative assessments are limited to unit assessments in grades 5 and 6 in ELA from Reading Street and in math from EnVision.

      2. The high school has MCAS summative assessments in ELA, math, and science in grades 8 and 10. Also, high school courses have common summative assessments.

         a. The team did not find evidence of common formative assessments at the high school.

   B. At the middle school, the district is gradually putting in place a system for analyzing and monitoring the available assessment data. At the high school, curriculum supervisors reported doing a written analysis of course summative assessment results and emailing the written report to department members since there is no scheduled opportunity to discuss the results.

      1. Fifth and sixth grade math teachers have begun to have data meetings to analyze available data; however, formative assessment data is limited, and these meetings are taking place less frequently than was planned. Seventh grade teachers have little formative assessment data on which to base their instruction.

      2. Interviewees reported that curriculum supervisors analyze summative assessment data from high school courses on their own and provide a written analysis to the teachers. Because the assessments are summative and the course is over, teachers do not have an opportunity to adjust their instruction, as they would if the assessments were formative.

   C. Teachers at the middle and high school levels have limited coaching available to guide and support them as they transition to data-based instruction.

      1. This year, for the first time, the district has a math coach, who supports teachers in all three middle schools as they gradually move to small-group instruction.

      2. Curriculum supervisors at the high school said that they evaluate their department members. They reported that they also perform as coaches.

   D. Teachers at the middle school level are in the first year of a district effort to implement data-based instruction at their level. High school teachers are focused on curriculum development rather than on instructional refinements.

1. Middle school administrators and teachers reported scattered implementation of data-based instruction, in part because of the limited availability of assessment data and in part because of the limited availability of training and support for using assessment data to inform instructional decisions.

2. The high school collects little formative instructional data and makes limited use of the summative data collected through the administration of common assessments in each high school course. High school curriculum supervisors and the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction reported a focus on the need for and the attention to curriculum development at that level.

3. The superintendent reported that the district is working on developing common assessments this year.

E. Interviewees reported that groups at several levels function as data teams.

1. When principals were asked about data teams at the district level, they said that their bi-monthly meetings with the superintendent serve as district data team meetings, because they frequently discuss assessment data.

2. Elementary level interviewees reported that their monthly grade-level meetings function as data team meetings.

3. Middle school teachers and the district math coach reported that, although the meetings are somewhat infrequent, the middle school math teachers are gathering four times a year to participate in math data team meetings.

    a. The superintendent reported that a more intensive professional development plan is in place for next year.

4. While these meetings serve important functions, none serves the districtwide function of assessing and addressing the district's systemwide data needs, such as:

    - Ensuring a balanced system of formative and summative assessments at all levels;

    - Overseeing coaching and support for teachers across content areas and at all levels in data-based instruction; and

    - Designing districtwide systems for scoring assessments and in providing teachers with ready access to the results.

Impact: The middle and high schools are unable to implement data-based instruction to the extent that it is in place in elementary ELA. With limited formative assessment data, training, and support, teachers do not have adequate resources or guidance to deliver instruction differentiated to address their students' needs.

Human Resources and Professional Development

15. **The district is in the first full year of implementing its new educator evaluation system. Although progress has been made, a number of challenges have prevented the full potential of the evaluative program from being realized.**

   A. Stakeholders have worked collaboratively to develop and implement a system of supervision and evaluation that is aligned with or exceeds the requirements of the state educator evaluation framework, and progress has been achieved.

      1. The superintendent noted that all educators in the district were given a Proficient rating while the new educator evaluation system was being implemented, noting that the school committee voted to endorse this process. Many supervisory and evaluative discussions were held and principals were provided with clear and consistent feedback.

   B. The opinion most often expressed by both administrators and teachers was that the new educator evaluation system is a "work in progress," with a number of technical, operational, and procedural issues that need to be resolved by district leadership for the system to be fully effective.

      1. Interviewees identified a variety of concerns.

         a. The ratio of teachers to supervisors was described as uneven and burdensome, especially at the middle and elementary schools.

         b. The volume and complexity of documentation and recordkeeping, the inconsistent quality of classroom observations, and inconsistencies in the quality and timeliness of communication and written feedback were all cited as areas needing attention.

            i. The superintendent reported that the district followed the Massachusetts Model System for Educator Evaluation and said that "the growing pains and concerns experienced by staff are in response to laws and regulations."

            ii. According to ESE's Center for Educator Effectiveness, ESE does not require any paperwork; it is up to each district to set the forms and the documentation.

         c. Concerns about the timeliness of administrative evaluations were noted.

            i. A document review showed that summary evaluations for the district's principals for the 2013–2014 school year were not completed until March and April of the 2014–2015 school year.

   C. Although teacher evaluations were completed according to contractual timelines, a review of personnel folders and input from teacher focus groups confirmed that the quality of formative and summative evaluations was uneven and varied widely across the district.

1. The superintendent reported that her focus has been on the quality of the observations and evaluations. She has developed a protocol for her to conduct walkthroughs along with principals and curriculum supervisors, a process that has been in place for the past two years. The superintendent said that she has directed the principals and curriculum supervisors to have the Common Core State Standards on hand during walkthroughs, and together they debrief whether the lesson observed is instructionally appropriate and rigorous. She described this as a work in progress.

2. Reviewers found that one half of teacher evaluations examined were not instructive; that is, they did not include the clear feedback and specific suggestions necessary to improve classroom practice. Less than one third provided information or targeted recommendations designed to enhance overall pedagogical competencies and effectiveness or to contribute directly to meaningful professional growth.

D. Teachers indicated that additional and ongoing training in the requirements, systems, and expectations of the new educator evaluation system would be beneficial. Administrators expressed the view that further technical training in observing and analyzing teaching and in writing high-quality, consistent, evidence-based evaluations should be provided.

E. According to ESE's Center for Educator Effectiveness, in June 2014 the district requested a blanket extension for its DDMs Implementation Plan and so was placed on a monitoring plan for one year.

1. The district showed steady progress in September 2014 and December 2014 updates, and completed the Evaluating Educator Implementation Update required of all districts by June 30, 2015.

2. The Office is seeking more information from the district about its plan to determine Student Impact Ratings.

Impact: A variety of technical, operational, and procedural issues could have an adverse impact on continued progress and full implementation of the district's educator evaluation system. When fully and effectively implemented, the new educator evaluation system has the potential to significantly promote the growth, professional ability, and overall effectiveness of educators and educational leaders, thereby greatly enhancing learning opportunities and outcomes for all the district's students.

Financial and Asset Management

16. In recent years because the city has not met its obligation to fund the district at the required level, the implementation of curricular and instructional improvements has been compromised.

    A. Net School Spending (NSS) by the district has been from 2.2 percent to 4.7 percent below the required amount for the six years period 2009–2015. The district was underfunded by $3,019,202 for fiscal year 2015.

        1. Municipal officials cited several reasons for the city's inability to meet its obligation, including: municipal financial reporting errors in 2010 from which the city has not recovered; records lost in the city hall fire; declining unrestricted local aid (other than Chapter 70 school aid; city needs for highways, sidewalks, and police; a 10.8 percent increase in health insurance; and a $3 million deficit in the snow removal account.

        2. They noted that the recent change in regulations about indirect charges for retiree health insurance, estimated at $4.8 million, should help the city meet its NSS obligation over the next three years.

        3. Municipal officials and school administrators stated that usually by October or November after the close of the previous fiscal year the city has appropriated supplementary funding to the school and other city departments from remaining city funds.

            a. In November 2014 the supplementary amount for schools was $1 million, but the total appropriation remained over $3 million below the NSS requirement.

        4. Municipal officials told the team that they have appointed a charter advisory committee to prepare a plan for improving municipal efficiencies.

        5. School administrators and school committee members reported that the city's ability to provide increased funding for schools was limited to increases in Chapter 70 aid.

        6. According to ESE data, the increases in the city's contributions to NSS from fiscal year 2014 to fiscal year 2015) have been in line with increases in the required amount. However, the city's funding remains under the total required amount because of the state requirement to carry over the deficit in the previous year's funding.

        7. According to Department of Revenue data, the city had approximately $6.4 million in free cash and $8.2 million in its stabilization account in 2014, some of which could help the city meet its NSS requirement.

        8. Administrators reported that since 2003 the district and the city have had an agreement on indirect charges for city expenses related to education. However, in past years the district has found incorrect indirect charges on the city's end-of-year financial report; as a result of corrections, indirect charges were recently reduced by $2 million. Administrators now

double check those charges before signing off on them in order to ensure that the net school funding calculation is as accurate as possible.

9. The superintendent's budget presentation pointed out that after deducting Chapter 70 aid and indirect charges from required NSS, the city's obligation for the school budget would only be $15.8 million.

B. Budget requests by administrators have been substantially reduced during the budget process.

1. A review of budget documents showed that administrators' fiscal year 2015 budget requests (the Ideal Budget) totaled over $79 million.

2. The superintendent and assistant superintendent for finance prioritized these requests and presented a preliminary budget to the school committee of $77,012,585 designed to meet 100 percent of the city's NSS requirement. The presentation included a list of proposed strategic priorities totaling over $1.8 million. Included in the priorities were guidance counselors, class-size reductions, and curriculum upgrades.

3. The final budget of $75,862,585 was prepared to reflect an appropriation by the city based on 95 percent of its NSS obligation. The budget was presented to the school committee and the city council in June.

C. Total in-district per-pupil expenditures were lower than the median in-district per pupil expenditures for 35 K-12 districts of similar size (5,000-7,999 students) in fiscal year 2014: $11,302 as compared with $12,728 (see [District Analysis and Review Tool Detail: Staffing & Finance](#)).

D. The students-to-teacher ratio was 15.8:1 in 2014, above the state average of 13.6:1, and the ratio has been increasing over the past three years. The students-to-administrator and students-to-instructional leadership ratios of are also well above state averages. [11]

1. In the 2014 TELL Mass survey, of those teachers who responded 48 percent agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that class sizes are reasonable, such that teachers have the time available to meet the needs of all students.

E. Underfunding for the schools has left the district with many needs.

1. Administrators cited several major district needs, including: additional teachers to reduce class size; curriculum leaders and coaches to support and train teachers to implement new curriculum; ELL programs and staff to keep up with the increasing numbers of ELLs; supervisory support to meet the increased evaluation load of school leaders; additional school administrators to implement initiatives; and building repairs and maintenance.

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[11] According to 2014 ESE data, the students-to-teacher ratio was slightly higher than the rates in two comparable districts; the students-to-administrator ratio was well above the rates in these districts; and the students-to-instructional leader ratio fell between the rates in the comparable districts.

    a.   Curriculum support and maintaining guidance counselors are of particular concern at the middle school level; and middle school teachers cited needs for technology, ELL support, and curriculum initiatives.

F. Administrators, school committee members, and staff reported that the city's underfunding of the schools is an issue, but that the schools do the best they can with what they have.

1. The superintendent and school committee members stated that underfunding by the city presents serious challenges for them.

2. School committee members noted that the possible change in calculating retiree health insurance in the city's indirect costs may result in further cuts in school budgets.

3. The superintendent reported that, in spite of underfunding the school budget, the city has supported capital projects such as renovating schools and the stadium.

Impact: The underfunding of the district has slowed gains in student achievement and has made the implementation of new initiatives difficult.

Taunton Public Schools District Review Recommendations

Leadership and Governance

1. **The school committee should consider ways of increasing its advocacy for an educationally sound budget both publicly and informally. The district should be funded at the required net school spending level.**

   A. The public hearing by the city council on the city budget is intended to provide an opportunity for residents and officials to advocate for budgets including those of the schools. Administrators and the school committee should consider how best to use that forum to advocate effectively for adequate funding.

   B. Other public meetings and forums also provide school committee members with opportunities to advocate and develop public support for an educationally sound budget that meets minimum state requirements.

Benefits from implementing this recommendation could include more accurate public perception of fiscal conditions in the district and the state of education in the district's schools. Expanded involvement of the school committee in the process of presenting the school budget to the city council could increase the city's level of support, as would increased public involvement in the process.

2. **Under the leadership of the superintendent, a working group with wide representation should formally and systemically analyze student achievement and other data and use this data to inform goals and priorities for action in the Strategic Plan and in all School Improvement Plans.**

   A. In the spirit of continuous improvement, the district should periodically review the effectiveness of its systems and practices related to planning and to the analysis of data (including MCAS results and other student performance data, as well as data on staff and operations).

      1. The district should continue to use this information to identify the key issues and challenges it faces, as well as areas of strength that it can build upon to accelerate progress in teaching and learning.

      2. This self-assessment should be used to inform the goals, strategies, and benchmarks in the district's strategic plan and school improvement plans.

Recommended resources:

- *What Makes a Goal Smarter?*
  (http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/presentations/SMARTGoals/Handout5.pdf) is a description of SMART goals with accompanying examples. The handout was designed to support educators in developing goals as part of the educator evaluation system, but would also be a useful reference as the district develops more focused planning documents.

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

- ESE's *District Analysis and Review Tool (DART)* (http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/dart/) is organized by the District Standards and can help district leaders see where similar districts in the state are showing progress in specific areas to identify possible best practice.

- ESE's *Statistical Reports* page (http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/reports/) provides links to downloadable district-level reports on graduation rates, grade retention, dropout rates, educator evaluation data, enrollment, mobility, and other data.

- ESE's *District Standards and Indicators* (http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/review/district/StandardsIndicators.pdf) identify the characteristics of effective districts in supporting and sustaining school improvement.

- The *District Self-Assessment* (http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/review/district/district-self-assessment.pdf) frames the District Standards and Indicators, along with key questions, in a rubric for conducting a scan of current practice, identifying areas of strength and highlighting areas requiring greater focus.

- ESE's *Conditions for School Effectiveness* (http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/ucd/CSE.pdf) identify the research-based practices that all schools, especially the state's most struggling schools, require to effectively meet the learning needs of all students. This tool also defines what each condition looks like when implemented purposefully and with fidelity.

- The *Conditions for School Effectiveness Self-Assessment* (http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/ucd/CSESelf-Assesment.pdf) is a tool for conducting a scan of current practice, identifying areas of strength, and highlighting areas requiring greater focus.

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

- *Focused Planning for Accelerating Student Learning* (http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/sss/dsac/FocusedPlanning.pdf) provides guidance for Level 3 districts to accelerate achievement for all students through the development of a focused, actionable and sustainable Accelerated Improvement Plan (AIP).

- *District Accelerated Improvement Planning - Guiding Principles for Effective Benchmarks* (http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/sss/turnaround/level4/AIP-GuidingPrinciples.pdf) provides information about different types of benchmarks to guide and measure district improvement efforts.

Benefits: By implementing this recommendation, the district will ensure that its planning is based on a careful analysis of relevant data. It will also communicate, through its planning documents, the basis for its goals and strategies.

Curriculum and Instruction

3. **The district should complete as soon as possible its K–12 ELA, math, and science curriculum so that all students have access to a comprehensive and aligned curriculum.**

   A. The district should ensure that K–12 ELA, math, and science curriculum documents are complete and include the following components: objectives, curriculum maps, resources, formative and summative assessments, and units with instructional strategies.

      1. The district should align the math program used in grades K–6 and the math text used in grade 7.

      2. The district should carry out its plan to conduct regular and timely review and revisions of the district's curricula.

      3. WIDA standards should be integrated into the district's curriculum for classes in which English language learners participate.

      4. The district should provide curriculum support at the middle school to ensure the consistent use, alignment and the effective delivery of the core curriculum.

      5. The district should consider using the resources of the Southeast District and School Assistance Center (DSAC) as it moves forward with curriculum development and unit writing.

Recommended resources:

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

- *ESE's Creating Curriculum Units at the Local Level* (http://www.doe.mass/candi/model/mcu_guide.pdf) is a guidance document that can serve as a resource for professional study groups, as a reference for anyone wanting to engage in curriculum development, or simply as a way to gain a better understanding of the process used to develop Massachusetts' Model Curriculum Units.

- *Creating Model Curriculum Units* (http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLTuqmiQ9ssquWrLjKc9h5h2cSpDVZqe6t) is a series of

videos that captures the collaboration and deep thinking by curriculum design teams over the course of a full year as they worked to develop Massachusetts' Model Curriculum Units. The series includes videos about developing essential questions, establishing goals, creating embedded performance assessments, designing lesson plans, selecting high quality materials, and evaluating the curriculum unit.

- *Model Curriculum Units*
  (http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLTuqmiQ9ssqvx_Yjra4nBfqQPwc4auUBu) is a video series that shows examples of the implementation of Massachusetts' Model Curriculum Units. ESE's *Quality Review Rubrics* (http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/model/rubrics/) can support the analysis and improvement of curriculum units.

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

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

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

- The *World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) English Language Development Standards Implementation Guide (Part I)* (http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/wida/Guidance-p1.pdf) provides general information about the WIDA ELD standards framework, expectations for district implementation, and available support.

Benefits: by implementing this recommendation the district will ensure that aligned and documented curriculum materials are implemented districtwide. As a result, all students will have equal access to a high-quality education that enables them to be college and career ready.

4. **It is recommended that the district establish districtwide instructional expectations that emphasize rigor and high expectations and that address students' diverse learning needs. The district should communicate these expectations to the full educational community, and support teachers in their implementation.**

   A. A representative group of teachers and administrators should collaboratively develop a definition of what constitutes high-quality teaching and learning in the district.

B. The group should share this definition with staff in order to ensure there is a common understanding across the district of teaching and learning practices that reflect high learning expectations and address students' diverse learning needs.

1. Using grade-level, department meetings, faculty meetings, common planning time and/or professional development days, the district is encouraged to continue to discuss ideas and strategies related to effective instruction.

   a. Equitable opportunities should continue to be provided by level for teachers to share best practices reflective of the instructional expectations.

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

C. Teachers should be provided with appropriate guidance and feedback to support continuous improvement of instruction.

1. Professional development should focus on elements of the instructional model.

2. The district should review the curricular and instructional support and leadership provided at each level to ensure sufficient embedded professional development for teachers at all levels.

3. Principals, as instructional leaders, should ensure that teachers have the information and support necessary to meet the district's expectations for instruction.

4. Teachers should receive frequent, helpful feedback that helps them to continually improve their instruction (see Human Resources and Professional Development recommendation below).

Recommended resources:

- ESE's Learning Walkthrough Implementation Guide (http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/dart/walk/ImplementationGuide.pdf) is a useful resource to support administrators in establishing a walkthrough process and culture of collaboration.

- Appendix 4, *Characteristics of Standards-Based Teacher and Learning: Continuum of Practice* (http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/dart/walk/04.0.pdf) is a framework that provides a common language or reference point for looking at teaching and learning.

- The March 2014 ESE Educator Evaluation e-Newsletter (http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/communications/newsletter/2014-03.pdf) includes a section called *Implementation Spotlight: Strategies for Focusing Observations and Providing Consistent, Constructive Feedback*.

Benefits from implementing this recommendation will include a districtwide common understanding of high-quality teaching and learning practices. This will provide a common language that will facilitate more focused feedback and professional development. A district that prioritizes high-quality instruction for all students creates and sustains a culture of continuous improvement, resulting in professional growth and increased student achievement.

Assessment

5. **The review team recommends that the district approach its commitment to expansion of the data-based instruction model systemically, by developing uniform and integrated policies, structures, and practices for the continuous collection, analysis, and dissemination of student performance and other data sources.**

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

      1. Building on the practices in place at some levels, the district should establish systematic, consistent processes for the collection, analysis, dissemination, and use of assessment data.

         a. This includes ensuring that a balanced system of formative and summative assessments is in place in all subject areas and levels.

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

      3. The district should continue its work of identifying and using DDMs, and develop the processes by which teachers will be trained and supported in their use as a tool to improve teaching and learning.

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

      1. Training should include, for appropriate staff, the development of skills to use EWIS (Early Warning Indicator System) and Edwin Analytics for making decisions about high-needs students.

   C. District and school leaders should systematically incorporate student assessment results and other pertinent data into all aspects of policy, prioritization, and decision-making, including budget development, planning documents, and the evaluation of educational programs and services. (See Leadership and Governance recommendation above.)

Recommended resources:

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

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

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

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

Benefits from implementing this recommendation will include:

- Clarity and consistency in the district's use of data for decision-making;

- A common understanding of the uses of different types of data;

- Professional development focused on the analysis and use of data to improve instruction and raise student achievement;

- Support for all stakeholders in evaluating programs, texts, and services; and

- Greatly improved learning opportunities and academic outcomes for all students.

Human Resources and Professional Development

6. **To improve the implementation of the new educator evaluation system and enhance its overall effectiveness, the district should urgently address inconsistencies in practices, policies, and procedures, and should provide additional targeted training for both teachers and administrators.**

   A. Using the Joint Labor Management Evaluation Team (JLMET) as its primary platform, the district should develop comprehensive plans to address those identified issues that are slowing the successful implementation of the new educator evaluation system. In particular, JLMET should focus on opportunities to maximize the efficiency of the new educator evaluation system by

scrutinizing the amount of documentation that the district is requiring of educators and evaluators.

1. Additional and ongoing training for both teachers and administrators should be provided to promote understanding of and support for the new educator evaluation system. All administrators should receive targeted training in research-based supervisory and evaluative practices to improve their professional judgment and to provide specific evidence-based feedback to staff that can significantly improve instructional practice and expands professional competencies.

2. The district is encouraged to contact ESE's Center for Educator Effectiveness and the Southeast DSAC for assistance in identifying districts that have had success in implementing and streamlining this work.

3. Although the district is not currently using a software program to manage data related to the educator evaluation system, it might consider developing or acquiring one in the future. More importantly, it will enable administrators to carefully monitor the quality and consistency of implementation by providing convenient and centralized real-time access to all evaluative documents and data in both aggregated and disaggregated formats.

B. The district is urged to work with ESE's Center for Educator Effectiveness to clarify its plan to determine Student Impact Ratings and seek technical assistance in identifying appropriate methods for evaluating educator impact on student learning.

Recommended resources:

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

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

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

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

Benefits from implementing this recommendation**:**

- An improved district monitoring, communication, and recordkeeping system will enable the superintendent and district and school leaders to more effectively oversee and ensure the full and consistent implementation of the new educator evaluation system.   Finding ways to make the implementation of the new educator evaluation system less burdensome, complicated, and labor intensive will allow teachers and administrators more time and resources to focus on the real work and primary purpose of educator evaluation.

- Additional and ongoing targeted trainings will increase the likelihood that the professional skills and judgment and overall effectiveness of both teachers and administrators will continue to improve, and that an authentic and collaborative culture of student-centered, growth-oriented supervision and evaluation will result.

Financial and Asset Management

7. **The city must meet its obligation to fund education at the required net school spending level and provide an educationally sound budget for schools and students.**

   A. The city may choose to meet its Net School Spending (NSS) obligation with a full appropriation that will meet the requirement.

      1. The required amount for fiscal year 2015 is approximately $3 million above the current level of funding for the schools, and could be met by an appropriation from the city's free cash or stabilization fund.

      2. It should be noted that the city can meet its obligation with a one-time appropriation. Once the city meets its obligation the carryover of shortfalls will no longer be necessary, and future required NSS spending levels will not include it. The city's required spending for schools will be similar to what it appropriates now, allowing for inflation.

   B. An alternative is to create a two- or three-year plan to meet the NSS obligation, thus reducing the carryover each year.

      1. This approach would have the advantage for the district of phasing in the additional funding so that it does not have to be devoted largely to one-time expenditures; for example, improvements involving staff can be sustained.

      2. Estimates for the fiscal year 2016 required net school spending are available on ESE's website:

         http://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/chapter70/chapter-16p.html

3. A summary of the regulations is also available:

http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr10.html?section=06

Benefits from implementing this recommendation will include enabling the city to meet its obligation to fund education at the required net school spending level. It should also foster better relationships between the city and the school district. Most importantly, the required funding will enable the district to improve programs and services for students and to raise student achievement levels.

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

Review Team Members

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

1. Dr. John Kulevich, leadership and governance

2. Suzanne Kelly, curriculum and instruction

3. Patricia Williams, assessment, *review team coordinator*

4. Dr. Frank Sambuceti, human resources and professional development

5. James Hearns, student support

6. Dr. George Gearhart, financial and asset management

District Review Activities

The following activities were conducted during the review:

The team conducted interviews with the following financial personnel: assistant superintendent for finance and operations, payroll supervisor, bookkeeper, grants coordinator, and budget analyst.

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

The review team conducted interviews with the following representatives of the teachers' association: president and four members of the executive committee.

The team conducted interviews/focus groups with the following central office administrators: superintendent, assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, director of transportation and student services, director of special education, director of ELL, and elementary curriculum coordinator.

The team visited the following schools: Bennett Elementary (K–4), Chamberlain Elementary (K–4), East Taunton Elementary (K–4), Galligan Elementary (K–4), Hopewell Elementary (K–4), Mulcahey Elementary (K–4), and Pole Elementary (K–4), Friedman Middle (grades 5–7), Martin Middle (grades 5–7), Parker Middle (grades 5–7), and Taunton High School (grades 8–12).

During school visits, the team conducted interviews with 12 principals and focus groups with 8 elementary school teachers, 9 middle school teachers, and 12 high school teachers. At the request of the district, school committee interviews were conducted on day 1; the third Leadership and Governance interview was conducted on day 2; and the Financial and Asset Management interview with

the mayor, the treasurer, and the budget director on day 3. In addition, two team members attended a District Transition Team Meeting.

The team observed 99 classes throughout the district: 36 at the high school, 26 at the 3 middle schools, and 37 at the 7 elementary schools. The team observed 52 ELA classes, 30 mathematics classes, and 17 classes in other subject areas. Among the classes observed were 11 special education classes and 2 ELL classes. The observations were approximately 20 minutes in length. All review team members collected data using ESE's instructional inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards-based teaching. This data is presented in Appendix C.

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

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

o   Data on the district's staffing and finances.

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

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

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

Site Visit Schedule

Monday 04/13/2015	Tuesday 04/14/2015	Wednesday 04/15/2015	Thursday 04/16/2015
Orientation with district leaders and principals; interviews with district staff and principals; document reviews; interview with teachers' association; interview with school committee members and visits to the Hopewell and E. Taunton elementary schools for classroom observations.	Interviews with district staff and principals; review of personnel files; student focus group, teacher focus groups; parent focus group; and visits to Hopewell, Pole, and Bennett elementary schools for classroom observations, and District Transition Team Meeting.	Interviews with school leaders; visits to the Parker, Friedman, and Martin Middle Schools and the Chamberlain, Galligan, Pole, East Taunton, and Mulcahey elementary schools for classroom observations.	Interviews with city personnel; school leaders; follow-up interviews; district review team meeting; visits to Taunton High School for classroom observations; emerging themes meeting with district leaders and principals.

Appendix B: Enrollment, Performance, Expenditures

Table B1a: Taunton Public Schools
2014–2015 Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity

Student Group	District	Percent of Total	State	Percent of Total
African-American	902	11.4%	83,556	8.7%
Asian	112	1.4%	60,050	6.3%
Hispanic	886	11.2%	171,036	17.9%
Native American	23	0.3%	2,238	0.2%
White	5,634	71.2%	608,453	63.7%
Native Hawaiian	16	0.2%	930	0.1%
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	337	4.3%	29,581	3.1%
All Students	7,910	100.0%	955,844	100.0%

Note: As of October 1, 2014

Table B1b: Taunton Public Schools
2014–2015 Student Enrollment by High Needs Populations

Student Groups	District			State		
	N	Percent of High Needs	Percent of District	N	Percent of High Needs	Percent of State
Students w/ disabilities	1,526	--	19.0%	165,060	--	17.1%
Economically disadvantaged	--	--	--	--	--	--
ELLs and Former ELLs	264	--	3.3%	81,146	--	8.5%
All high needs students	--	--	--	--	--	--

Notes: As of October 1, 2014. District and state numbers and percentages for students with disabilities and high needs students are calculated including students in out-of-district placements. Total district enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 8,042; total state enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 966,391.

Table B2a: Taunton Public Schools
English Language Arts Performance, 2011–2014

Grade and Measure		Number Included (2014)	Spring MCAS Year					Gains and Declines	
			2011	2012	2013	2014	State 2014	4-Year Trend	2 Year Trend
3	CPI	504	81.9	84.5	82.8	83.3	82.6	1.4	0.5
	P+	504	53.0%	59.0%	51.0%	54.0%	57.0%	1.0%	3.0%
4	CPI	551	79.9	79.7	79.1	75.7	79.1	-4.2	-3.4
	P+	551	52.0%	51.0%	52.0%	47.0%	54.0%	-5.0%	-5.0%
	SGP	494	50	51	49	47	49	-3	-2
5	CPI	485	84.6	80.5	79.5	81.1	84.5	-3.5	1.6
	P+	485	59.0%	55.0%	55.0%	55.0%	64.0%	-4.0%	0.0%
	SGP	428	34	40	38	36	50	2	-2
6	CPI	498	88	86.3	87.1	84	85.8	-4	-3.1
	P+	498	65.0%	64.0%	67.0%	62.0%	68.0%	-3.0%	-5.0%
	SGP	446	50	52	50	52	50	2	2
7	CPI	482	89.2	89	88.8	88.5	88.3	-0.7	-0.3
	P+	482	71.0%	71.0%	68.0%	67.0%	72.0%	-4.0%	-1.0%
	SGP	437	52	50	46.5	44	50	-8	-2.5
8	CPI	606	91.2	89.5	89.6	86.7	90.2	-4.5	-2.9
	P+	606	78.0%	73.0%	75.0%	71.0%	79.0%	-7.0%	-4.0%
	SGP	556	46	34	44	35	50	-11	-9
10	CPI	457	90.1	93.8	94.2	94.3	96	4.2	0.1
	P+	457	75.0%	81.0%	84.0%	86.0%	90.0%	11.0%	2.0%
	SGP	402	31	38	49	42	50	11	-7
All	CPI	3,583	86.2	85.8	85.4	84.6	86.7	-1.6	-0.8
	P+	3,583	64.0%	64.0%	63.0%	63.0%	69.0%	-1.0%	0.0%
	SGP	2,763	45	45	46	42	50	-3	-4

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

Table B2b: Taunton Public Schools
Mathematics Performance, 2011–2014

Grade and Measure		Number Included (2014)	Spring MCAS Year					Gains and Declines	
			2011	2012	2013	2014	State 2014	4-Year Trend	2 Year Trend
3	CPI	502	84.2	82.4	83.2	83.9	85.1	-0.3	0.7
	P+	502	61.0%	61.0%	63.0%	63.0%	68.0%	2.0%	0.0%
4	CPI	553	79.2	80.6	80.2	74.3	79.6	-4.9	-5.9
	P+	553	47.0%	49.0%	51.0%	42.0%	52.0%	-5.0%	-9.0%
	SGP	496	55	55	54	42	50	-13	-12
5	CPI	487	76	75.4	70.9	73.2	80.4	-2.8	2.3
	P+	487	49.0%	50.0%	43.0%	46.0%	61.0%	-3.0%	3.0%
	SGP	433	32	36	26	23	50	-9	-3
6	CPI	498	80.1	81.9	79.2	72	80.2	-8.1	-7.2
	P+	498	56.0%	59.0%	57.0%	44.0%	60.0%	-12.0%	-13.0%
	SGP	448	49	57	50	41	50	-8	-9
7	CPI	482	70.4	70.7	70.4	70.2	72.5	-0.2	-0.2
	P+	482	43.0%	43.0%	43.0%	44.0%	50.0%	1.0%	1.0%
	SGP	439	41	40	38	45	50	4	7
8	CPI	609	69.5	69.4	68.1	63.6	74.7	-5.9	-4.5
	P+	609	39.0%	44.0%	42.0%	36.0%	52.0%	-3.0%	-6.0%
	SGP	559	35	36	35	28	50	-7	-7
10	CPI	454	84.8	84.8	86.1	86.6	90	1.8	0.5
	P+	454	64.0%	64.0%	71.0%	71.0%	79.0%	7.0%	0.0%
	SGP	404	31	41	47	39	50	8	-8
All	CPI	3,585	77.4	77.6	76.6	74.4	80.3	-3	-2.2
	P+	3,585	51.0%	52.0%	52.0%	49.0%	60.0%	-2.0%	-3.0%
	SGP	2,779	41	44	41	36	50	-5	-5

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

Table B2c: Taunton Public Schools
Science and Technology/Engineering Performance, 2011–2014

Grade and Measure		Number Included (2014)	Spring MCAS Year					Gains and Declines	
			2011	2012	2013	2014	State 2014	4-Year Trend	2 Year Trend
5	CPI	632	74.9	74	72.5	71.7	79	-3.2	-0.8
	P+	632	42.0%	42.0%	40.0%	38.0%	53.0%	-4.0%	-2.0%
8	CPI	608	65.4	66.1	67.3	66.7	72.4	1.3	-0.6
	P+	608	31.0%	37.0%	33.0%	33.0%	42.0%	2.0%	0.0%
10	CPI	411	79.3	79.7	75.7	81.1	87.9	1.8	5.4
	P+	411	57.0%	56.0%	45.0%	57.0%	71.0%	0.0%	12.0%
All	CPI	1,651	72.1	72.5	71.2	72.2	79.6	0.1	1
	P+	1,651	41.0%	43.0%	39.0%	41.0%	55.0%	0.0%	2.0%

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

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

Group and Measure			Number Included (2014)	Spring MCAS Year				Gains and Declines	
				2011	2012	2013	2014	4 Year Trend	2-Year Trend
High Needs	District	CPI	2,101	79.1	78.9	79	78.2	-0.9	-0.8
		P+	2,101	48.0%	48.0%	50.0%	49.0%	1.0%	-1.0%
		SGP	1,495	39	40	44	40	1	-4
	State	CPI	241,069	77	76.5	76.8	77.1	0.1	0.3
		P+	241,069	48.0%	48.0%	48.0%	50.0%	2.0%	2.0%
		SGP	183,766	46	46	47	47	1	0
Econ. Disad.	District	CPI	1,873	81	80.5	80.6	79.6	-1.4	-1
		P+	1,873	53.0%	52.0%	53.0%	52.0%	-1.0%	-1.0%
		SGP	1,365	39	40	43	40	1	-3
	State	CPI	189,662	77.1	76.7	77.2	77.5	0.4	0.3
		P+	189,662	49.0%	50.0%	50.0%	51.0%	2.0%	1.0%
		SGP	145,621	46	45	47	47	1	0
Students w/ disabilities	District	CPI	647	65.9	64.7	62.5	60.5	-5.4	-2
		P+	647	16.0%	17.0%	17.0%	15.0%	-1.0%	-2.0%
		SGP	377	29	35	41	36	7	-5
	State	CPI	90,777	68.3	67.3	66.8	66.6	-1.7	-0.2
		P+	90,777	30.0%	31.0%	30.0%	31.0%	1.0%	1.0%
		SGP	66,688	42	43	43	43	1	0
English language learners or Former ELLs	District	CPI	105	70.7	68.5	66.4	59.5	-11.2	-6.9
		P+	105	38.0%	30.0%	25.0%	19.0%	-19.0%	-6.0%
		SGP	64	43	58.5	50	51.5	8.5	1.5
	State	CPI	47,477	66.2	66.2	67.4	67.8	1.6	0.4
		P+	47,477	33.0%	34.0%	35.0%	36.0%	3.0%	1.0%
		SGP	32,239	50	51	53	54	4	1
All students	District	CPI	3,583	86.2	85.8	85.4	84.6	-1.6	-0.8
		P+	3,583	64.0%	64.0%	63.0%	63.0%	-1.0%	0.0%
		SGP	2,763	45	45	46	42	-3	-4
	State	CPI	488,744	87.2	86.7	86.8	86.7	-0.5	-0.1
		P+	488,744	69.0%	69.0%	69.0%	69.0%	0.0%	0.0%
		SGP	390,904	50	50	51	50	0	-1

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

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

Group and Measure			Number Included (2014)	Spring MCAS Year				Gains and Declines	
				2011	2012	2013	2014	4 Year Trend	2-Year Trend
High Needs	District	CPI	2,095	69	68.9	68.6	66.7	-2.3	-1.9
		P+	2,095	35.0%	37.0%	38.0%	36.0%	1.0%	-2.0%
		SGP	1,504	37	41.5	37	33	-4	-4
	State	CPI	241,896	67.1	67	68.6	68.4	1.3	-0.2
		P+	241,896	37.0%	37.0%	40.0%	40.0%	3.0%	0.0%
		SGP	184,937	46	46	46	47	1	1
Econ. Disad.	District	CPI	1,871	70.8	70.6	70.2	68.1	-2.7	-2.1
		P+	1,871	38.0%	40.0%	41.0%	38.0%	0.0%	-3.0%
		SGP	1,371	37	41	38	34	-3	-4
	State	CPI	190,183	67.3	67.3	69	68.8	1.5	-0.2
		P+	190,183	38.0%	38.0%	41.0%	41.0%	3.0%	0.0%
		SGP	146,536	46	45	46	47	1	1
Students w/ disabilities	District	CPI	642	57	55.5	53.1	51.7	-5.3	-1.4
		P+	642	12.0%	12.0%	13.0%	12.0%	0.0%	-1.0%
		SGP	383	35	38.5	36	32	-3	-4
	State	CPI	91,181	57.7	56.9	57.4	57.1	-0.6	-0.3
		P+	91,181	22.0%	21.0%	22.0%	22.0%	0.0%	0.0%
		SGP	67,155	43	43	42	43	0	1
English language learners or Former ELLs	District	CPI	105	64.4	63.5	59.3	49.8	-14.6	-9.5
		P+	105	32.0%	30.0%	27.0%	17.0%	-15.0%	-10.0%
		SGP	65	34	37.5	41	42	8	1
	State	CPI	47,847	62	61.6	63.9	63.8	1.8	-0.1
		P+	47,847	32.0%	32.0%	35.0%	36.0%	4.0%	1.0%
		SGP	32,607	52	52	53	52	0	-1
All students	District	CPI	3,585	77.4	77.6	76.6	74.4	-3	-2.2
		P+	3,585	51.0%	52.0%	52.0%	49.0%	-2.0%	-3.0%
		SGP	2,779	41	44	41	36	-5	-5
	State	CPI	490,288	79.9	79.9	80.8	80.3	0.4	-0.5
		P+	490,288	58.0%	59.0%	61.0%	60.0%	2.0%	-1.0%
		SGP	392,953	50	50	51	50	0	-1

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

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

Group and Measure			Number Included (2014)	Spring MCAS Year				Gains and Declines	
				2011	2012	2013	2014	4 Year Trend	2-Year Trend
High Needs	District	CPI	928	61.5	60.5	62.2	62.9	1.4	0.7
		P+	928	24.0%	25.0%	26.0%	25.0%	1.0%	-1.0%
	State	CPI	100,582	63.8	65	66.4	67.3	3.5	0.9
		P+	100,582	28.0%	31.0%	31.0%	33.0%	5.0%	2.0%
Econ. Disad.	District	CPI	833	63.5	62.2	62.6	63.9	0.4	1.3
		P+	833	27.0%	27.0%	28.0%	27.0%	0.0%	-1.0%
	State	CPI	79,199	62.8	64.5	66.1	66.8	4	0.7
		P+	79,199	28.0%	31.0%	32.0%	33.0%	5.0%	1.0%
Students w/ disabilities	District	CPI	265	47.9	46.3	47.2	47.7	-0.2	0.5
		P+	265	7.0%	10.0%	9.0%	6.0%	-1.0%	-3.0%
	State	CPI	38,628	59.2	58.7	59.8	60.1	0.9	0.3
		P+	38,628	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	22.0%	2.0%	2.0%
English language learners or Former ELLs	District	CPI	41	54.8	53.6	47	37.8	-17	-9.2
		P+	41	19.0%	17.0%	17.0%	10.0%	-9.0%	-7.0%
	State	CPI	16,871	50.3	51.4	54	54	3.7	0
		P+	16,871	15.0%	17.0%	19.0%	18.0%	3.0%	-1.0%
All students	District	CPI	1,651	72.1	72.5	71.2	72.2	0.1	1
		P+	1,651	41.0%	43.0%	39.0%	41.0%	0.0%	2.0%
	State	CPI	211,440	77.6	78.6	79	79.6	2	0.6
		P+	211,440	52.0%	54.0%	53.0%	55.0%	3.0%	2.0%

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

Table B4: Taunton Public Schools
Annual Grade 9-12 Dropout Rates, 2011–2014

	School Year Ending				Change 2011–2014		Change 2013–2014		State (2014)
	2011	2012	2013	2014	Percentage Points	Percent	Percentage Points	Percent	
All students	5.5%	4.6%	2.6%	1.7%	-3.8	-69.1%	-0.9	-34.6%	2.0%

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

Table B5a: Taunton Public Schools
Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates, 201–2014

Group	Number Included (2014)	School Year Ending				Change 2011–2014		Change 2013–2014		State (2014)
		2011	2012	2013	2014	Percentage Points	Percent Change	Percentage Points	Percent Change	
High needs	307	70.4%	67.4%	72.8%	73.3%	2.9	4.1%	0.5	0.7%	76.5%
Econ. Disad.	271	70.7%	69.8%	73.7%	76.0%	5.3	7.5%	2.3	3.1%	75.5%
Students w/ disabilities	111	52.6%	44.3%	59.1%	56.8%	4.2	8.0%	-2.3	-3.9%	69.1%
English language learners or Former ELLs	9	46.7%	66.7%	63.6%	33.3%	-13.4	-28.7%	-30.3	-47.6%	63.9%
All students	489	81.9%	77.4%	81.0%	80.6%	-1.3	-1.6%	-0.4	-0.5%	86.1%

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

Table B5b: Taunton Public Schools
Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates, 2010–2013

Group	Number Included (2013)	School Year Ending				Change 2010–2013		Change 2012–2013		State (2013)
		2010	2011	2012	2013	Percentage Points	Percent Change	Percentage Points	Percent Change	
High needs	283	65.5%	70.8%	69.8%	76.7%	11.2	17.1%	6.9	9.9%	79.2%
Econ. Disad.	262	66.4%	71.2%	72.5%	77.9%	11.5	17.3%	5.4	7.4%	78.3%
Students w/ disabilities	88	45.7%	52.6%	47.4%	65.9%	20.2	44.2%	18.5	39.0%	72.9%
English language learners or Former ELLs	11	76.5%	46.7%	66.7%	72.7%	-3.8	-5.0%	6.0	9.0%	70.9%
All students	483	78.5%	82.1%	79.2%	83.4%	4.9	6.2%	4.2	5.3%	87.7%

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

Table B6: Taunton Public Schools
Attendance Rates, 2011–2014

Group	School Year Ending				Change 2011–2014		Change 2013–2014		State (2014)
	2011	2012	2013	2014	Percentage Points	Percent Change	Percentage Points	Percent Change	
All students	94.9%	94.9%	94.7%	95.0%	0.1	0.1%	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 B7: Taunton Public Schools
Suspension Rates, 2011–2014

Group	School Year Ending				Change 2011–2014		Change 2013–2014		State (2014)
	2011	2012	2013	2014	Percentage Points	Percent Change	Percentage Points	Percent Change	
In-School Suspension Rate	1.1%	1.4%	1.4%	0.7%	-0.4	-36.4%	-0.7	-50.0%	2.1%
Out-of-School Suspension Rate	5.5%	7.5%	6.5%	6.1%	0.6	10.9%	-0.4	-6.2%	3.9%

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

Table B8: Taunton Public Schools

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

	FY12		FY13		FY14	
	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual
Expenditures						
From local appropriations for schools:						
By school committee	$64,159,259	$64,159,257	$66,720,329	$66,720,330	$68,705,630	$68,736,730
By municipality	$71,902,047	$65,622,978	$62,391,759	$61,592,376	$58,014,962	$57,278,967
Total from local appropriations	$136,061,306	$129,782,234	$129,112,088	$128,312,705	$126,720,592	$126,015,697
From revolving funds and grants	--	$12,438,450	--	$12,519,451	--	$12,617,453
Total expenditures	--	$142,220,684	--	$140,832,157	--	$138,633,150
Chapter 70 aid to education program						
Chapter 70 state aid*	--	$45,565,026	--	$47,630,220	--	$47,822,170
Required local contribution	--	$31,756,429	--	$33,836,343	--	$36,219,481
Required net school spending**	--	$77,321,455	--	$81,466,563	--	$84,041,651
Actual net school spending	--	$74,437,917	--	$77,613,351	--	$80,204,731
Over/under required ($)	--	-$2,883,538	--	-$3,853,212	--	-$3,836,920
Over/under required (%)	--	-3.7	--	-4.7	--	-4.6

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

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

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

Data retrieved April 16, 2015

Table B9: Taunton Public Schools
Expenditures Per In-District Pupil
Fiscal Years 2011–2013

Expenditure Category	2011	2012	2013
Administration	$247	$265	$286
Instructional leadership (district and school)	$491	$552	$572
Teachers	$4,313	$4,747	$4,633
Other teaching services	$701	$636	$666
Professional development	$63	$79	$186
Instructional materials, equipment and technology	$168	$239	$351
Guidance, counseling and testing services	$273	$327	$358
Pupil services	$1,236	$1,245	$1,324
Operations and maintenance	$604	$640	$714
Insurance, retirement and other fixed costs	$1,983	$1,987	$2,150
Total expenditures per in-district pupil	$10,079	$10,718	$11,241

Sources: Per-pupil expenditure reports on ESE website

Appendix C: Instructional Inventory

Learning Environment & Teaching	By Grade Span	Evidence		
		None	Partial	Clear & Consistent
		(0)	(1)	(2)
1. Tone of interactions between teacher and students and among students is positive & respectful.	ES	0%	5%	95%
	MS	0%	12%	88%
	HS	0%	8%	92%
	Total #	0	8	91
	Total %	0%	8%	92%
2. Behavioral standards are clearly communicated and disruptions, if present, are managed effectively & equitably.	ES	0%	14%	86%
	MS	4%	12%	85%
	HS	0%	6%	94%
	Total #	1	10	88
	Total %	1%	10%	89%
3. The physical arrangement of the classroom ensures a positive learning environment and provides all students with access to learning activities.	ES	0%	11%	89%
	MS	0%	19%	81%
	HS	0%	14%	86%
	Total #	0	14	85
	Total %	0%	14%	86%
4. Classroom rituals and routines promote transitions with minimal loss of instructional time.	ES	3%	11%	86%
	MS	4%	12%	85%
	HS	0%	22%	78%
	Total #	2	15	82
	Total %	2%	15%	83%
5. Multiple resources are available to meet all students' diverse learning needs.	ES	0%	11%	89%
	MS	12%	35%	54%
	HS	17%	31%	53%
	Total #	9	24	66
	Total %	9%	24%	67%
6. The teacher demonstrates knowledge of subject and content.	ES	0%	5%	95%
	MS	4%	4%	92%
	HS	3%	6%	92%
	Total #	2	5	92
	Total %	2%	5%	93%
7. The teacher plans and implements a lesson that reflects rigor and high expectations.	ES	8%	38%	54%
	MS	8%	54%	38%
	HS	14%	47%	39%
	Total #	10	45	44
	Total %	10%	45%	44%

Teaching	By Grade Span	Evidence		
		None	**Partial**	**Clear & Consistent**
		(0)	**(1)**	**(2)**
8. The teacher communicates clear learning objective(s) aligned to the *2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks*.	ES	16%	22%	62%
	MS	15%	12%	73%
	HS	33%	14%	53%
	Total #	22	16	61
	Total %	22%	16%	62%
9. The teacher uses appropriate instructional strategies well matched to learning objective (s) and content.	ES	19%	5%	76%
	MS	4%	15%	81%
	HS	25%	19%	56%
	Total #	17	13	69
	Total %	17%	13%	70%
10. The teacher uses appropriate modifications for English language learners and students with disabilities such as explicit language objective(s); direct instruction in vocabulary; presentation of content at multiple levels of complexity; and, differentiation of content, process, and/or products.	ES	30%	19%	51%
	MS	35%	35%	31%
	HS	75%	14%	11%
	Total #	47	21	31
	Total %	47%	21%	31%
11. The teacher provides opportunities for students to engage in higher order thinking such as use of inquiry, exploration, application, analysis, synthesis, and/or evaluation of knowledge or concepts (Bloom's Taxonomy).	ES	16%	19%	65%
	MS	15%	38%	46%
	HS	17%	42%	42%
	Total #	16	32	51
	Total %	16%	32%	52%
12. The teacher uses questioning techniques that require thoughtful responses that demonstrate understanding.	ES	5%	24%	70%
	MS	15%	31%	54%
	HS	19%	42%	39%
	Total #	13	32	54
	Total %	13%	32%	55%
13. The teacher implements teaching strategies that promote a safe learning environment where students give opinions, make judgments, explore and investigate ideas.	ES	3%	19%	78%
	MS	8%	19%	73%
	HS	17%	11%	72%
	Total #	9	16	74
	Total %	9%	16%	75%
14. The teacher paces the lesson to match content and meet students' learning needs.	ES	5%	8%	86%
	MS	4%	19%	77%
	HS	8%	28%	64%
	Total #	6	18	75
	Total %	6%	18%	76%
15. The teacher conducts frequent formative assessments to check for understanding and inform instruction.	ES	5%	38%	57%
	MS	8%	19%	73%
	HS	17%	44%	39%
	Total #	10	35	54
	Total %	10%	35%	55%
16. The teacher makes use of available technology to support instruction and enhance learning.	ES	57%	5%	38%
	MS	62%	12%	27%
	HS	42%	6%	53%
	Total #	52	7	40
	Total %	53%	7%	40%

Learning	By Grade Span	Evidence		
		None	Partial	Clear & Consistent
		(0)	(1)	(2)
17. Students are engaged in challenging academic tasks.	ES	3%	38%	59%
	MS	0%	62%	38%
	HS	14%	47%	39%
	Total #	6	47	46
	Total %	6%	47%	46%
18. Students articulate their thinking verbally or in writing.	ES	5%	27%	68%
	MS	8%	23%	69%
	HS	19%	31%	50%
	Total #	11	27	61
	Total %	11%	27%	62%
19. Students inquire, explore, apply, analyze, synthesize and/or evaluate knowledge or concepts (Bloom's Taxonomy).	ES	14%	32%	54%
	MS	23%	38%	38%
	HS	25%	42%	33%
	Total #	20	37	42
	Total %	20%	37%	42%
20. Students elaborate about content and ideas when responding to questions.	ES	8%	27%	65%
	MS	38%	42%	19%
	HS	33%	42%	25%
	Total #	25	36	38
	Total %	25%	36%	38%
21. Students make connections to prior knowledge, or real world experience, or can apply knowledge and understanding to other subjects.	ES	38%	22%	41%
	MS	42%	23%	35%
	HS	31%	36%	33%
	Total #	36	27	36
	Total %	36%	27%	36%
22. Students use technology as a tool for learning and/or understanding.	ES	65%	8%	27%
	MS	88%	4%	8%
	HS	67%	8%	25%
	Total #	71	7	21
	Total %	72%	7%	21%
23. Students assume responsibility for their own learning whether individually, in pairs, or in groups.	ES	5%	8%	86%
	MS	8%	27%	65%
	HS	11%	36%	53%
	Total #	8	23	68
	Total %	8%	23%	69%
24. Student work demonstrates high quality and can serve as exemplars.	ES	35%	30%	35%
	MS	23%	54%	23%
	HS	69%	8%	22%
	Total #	44	28	27
	Total %	44%	28%	27%