Comprehensive District Review Report

Dennis-Yarmouth Reg. School District

Review conducted November 27–30, 2017

Office of District Reviews and Monitoring

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Executive Summary

The Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District has had relatively stable school and district leadership over the last decade. Most district and school leaders have been in the district and/or their positions for many years and five of the seven school committee members have served for three years or more. In addition to stable district and school leadership, the district supports teachers with coaches, mentors, and teacher leaders.

The superintendent and the school committee face several challenges to improve student achievement in the district. The district has in place a multi-year strategic plan (2014–2019) and an annual action plan which provides an update on progress toward the initiatives in the strategic plan. However, the strategic plan and the action plan do not include strategic objectives or initiatives in the form of SMART goals.[[1]](#footnote-1) The strategic and action plans do not identify specific performance goals based on achievement data. All schools have school improvement plans that are generally aligned with the strategic plan.

In addition, the district has been without an aligned, consistently delivered, and continuously improving curriculum for many years. Also, the district has not established a set of rigorous, research-based instructional expectations throughout the district. The absence of an aligned K–12 curriculum and of a set of research-based instructional expectations used in all district schools may be linked to the inconsistent instruction observed by the team in classrooms.

The district has a balanced system of assessments and has established uniform structures, protocols, and practices for the continuous collection, analysis, and dissemination of data. In addition, the district is in the early stages of developing the eDoctrina data and curriculum repository. Adherence to the data protocols and practices has not been established across district schools; this is a concern in this district with multiple transition points where it is tantamount that accurate student assessment data follows students from school to school.

The district provides educators with instructive recommendations to promote professional growth. However, the district does not have a comprehensive professional development program that is collaboratively developed with teachers and has clear goals and objectives based on district and school priorities.

The district educates the “whole child” and provides numerous programs for students and families; it has not established a tiered system of support across the district. The district loses many students to choice, charter, and private schools resulting in substantial tuition costs to the district. Also the district continues to struggle with chronic absence, particularly at the secondary level.[[2]](#footnote-2)

The two towns that make up the regional district have expressed dissatisfaction with the regional agreement assessment and funding by the two towns. As a result, a regional agreement committee has been established to mitigate concerns with the agreement.

**Instruction**

The team observed 77 classes throughout the district: 24 at the high school (grades 8–12), 14 at the middle school (grades 6 and 7), and 39 at the 3 elementary schools serving kindergarten through grade 3 and the 1 elementary school serving grades 4 and 5. The team observed 26 ELA classes, 37 mathematics classes, and 14 classes in other subject areas. The observations were approximately 20 minutes in length. All review team members collected data using ESE’s Instructional Inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards-based teaching. This data is presented in Appendix C.

In observed classrooms, the quality of instruction varied and was often not challenging. Districtwide the quality and rigor of the instruction in observed lessons was uneven. While generally teachers were knowledgeable, created a classroom climate that was conducive to learning, and established routines and positive supports to ensure that students behave appropriately, many students were not challenged to use higher-order thinking skills. In observed classrooms few students across the district communicated their ideas and thinking with each other and were led to be engaged with meaningful real-world tasks.

**Strengths**

* The district has developed a 2014–2019 strategic plan that includes a mission and vision and includes four focus areas for its programs and initiatives: student learning— curriculum, instruction, and assessment; school culture; communication; and safety.
* The superintendent has embedded a culture across the district to support the social-emotional and health needs of students and families.
* The district has implemented initiatives and strategies to strengthen curriculum and instruction in the district.
  + - The district has established a balanced system of assessments and teachers meet regularly to review assessment data and to plan and modify curriculum and instruction.
    - The district supports teachers with coaches, mentors, and teacher leaders.
* Educators receive actionable feedback from evaluators that enhance professional growth.
* The district provides social-emotional programs and initiatives to support children and their families.
* The district has established a committee with representation from both towns to discuss changes to the regional agreement.

**Challenges and Areas for Growth**

* The district’s strategic plan and annual action plan do not include measurable goals.
* The district does not have a complete, aligned K–12 curriculum.
* Observed instruction in the district is inconsistent and students are not always challenged to use higher-order thinking skills.
* The district has not articulated and implemented a set of research-based instructional expectations for use in all schools.
* The district does not have a collaboratively developed comprehensive professional development program that has clear goals based on district and school priorities.
* The district does not use multiple measures of student learning, growth, and achievement as evidence in the teacher evaluation process.
* The district has not established a tiered system of support across the district.
* The district loses many students to choice, charter, and private schools resulting in substantial tuition costs to the district.
* The district has high rates of chronic absence, particularly at the secondary level.

**Recommendations**

* District action plans should include expected results in the form of SMART goals.
* With a sense of urgency, the district should prioritize the development of curriculum in all content areas and a regular curriculum review and review process.
* The district should articulate and implement a set of research-based instructional expectations for use across the district.
* The district should continue to develop the eDoctrina repository for curriculum and assessment data.
* The district should develop a comprehensive professional development program characterized by strong collaborative leadership and alignment with district priorities.
* The district should develop a multi-tiered system of support.
* The district should consider surveying students and families about the reasons for high absence rates and possible ways of improving attendance.
* The district should formally collect feedback from stakeholders to determine why families are leaving, analyze results, and make recommendations for change.

Dennis-Yarmouth Comprehensive District Review Overview

Purpose

Conducted under Chapter 15, Section 55A of the Massachusetts General Laws, comprehensive district reviews support local school districts in establishing or strengthening a cycle of continuous improvement. Reviews consider carefully the effectiveness of systemwide functions, with reference to the six district standards used by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE): leadership and governance, curriculum and instruction, assessment, human resources and professional development, student support, and financial and asset management. Reviews identify systems and practices that may be impeding improvement as well as those most likely to be contributing to positive results. In addition to being a tool that districts can use to inform their own improvement efforts, review reports may be used by ESE to identify technical assistance and other resources to provide to the district.

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.

Site Visit

The site visit to the Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District was conducted from November 27–30, 2017. The site visit included 36 hours of interviews and focus groups with approximately 65 stakeholders, including school committee members, district administrators, school staff, students, and teachers’ association representatives. The review team conducted two focus groups with five elementary-school teachers and one high-school teacher. No teachers attended the focus group for middle-school teachers.

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 77 classrooms in 6 schools. The team collected data using ESE’s Instructional Inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards-based teaching. This data is contained in Appendix C.

**District Profile**

The Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District is governed by an elected seven-member school committee with four members representing Yarmouth and three, Dennis. Committee members elect the chair of the regional school committee. The school committee meets two times monthly September through June. Both Dennis and Yarmouth have a selectmen/town administrator form of government.

The current superintendent has been in the position since October 31, 2005. The district leadership team includes the superintendent, the assistant superintendent for administration and business, the director of humanities and the arts, the director of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math), the director of early learning, and the director of pupil services. Central office positions have been mostly stable in number over the past five years. The district has six principals leading six schools. There are 10 other school administrators, including assistant principals, a dean of students, and an athletic director. In the 2016–2017 school year, there were 291 teachers in the district.

In the 2016–2017 school year, 3,024 students were enrolled in the district’s 6 schools:

**Table 1: Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District**

**Type, Grades Served, and Enrollment\*, 2016–2017**

| **School** | **School Type** | **Grades Served** | **Enrollment** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Marguerite E. Small Elementary | ES | Pre-K–3 | 306 |
| Station Avenue Elementary | ES | K–3 | 425 |
| N. H. Wixon Innovation School | ES | 4–5 | 514 |
| Ezra H. Baker Innovation School | ES | Pre-K–3 | 353 |
| Mattacheese Middle School | MS | 6–7 | 423 |
| Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High School | HS | 8–12 | 1,003 |
| **Totals** | **6 schools** | **Pre-K–12** | **3,024** |
| \*As of October 1, 2016 | | | |

Between 2013 and 2017 overall student enrollment decreased by 2.3 percent. Enrollment figures by race/ethnicity and high needs populations (i.e., students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, 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 higher than the median in-district per pupil expenditures for 30 K–12 districts of similar size (3,000–3,999 students) in fiscal year 2015:  $16,982 as compared with $13,224 (see [District Analysis and Review Tool Detail: Staffing and Finance](http://www.doe.mass.edu/dart/)). Actual net school spending has been well above what is required by the Chapter 70 state education aid program, as shown in Table B3 in Appendix B.

Student Performance

**Note:** The Next-Generation MCAS assessment is administered to grades 3–8 in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics; it was administered for the first time in 2017. (For more information, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/parents/results-faq.html>.) The MCAS is administered to grades 5 and 8 in science and to grades 10 in ELA, math, and science. Data from the two assessments are presented separately because the tests are different and cannot be compared.

**The average scaled score on the Next-Generation MCAS assessment was below the state average scaled score for all students by 4.6 and 6.0 points in ELA and math, respectively, and was below the state averaged scaled score in ELA and math for each subgroup that makes up the high needs population.**

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| **Table 2: Dennis-Yarmouth RSD**  **Next-Generation MCAS ELA and Math Average Scaled Score (SS) by Subgroup Grades 3–8, 2017** | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **N** | **ELA SS** | **State SS** | **N** | **Math SS** | **State SS** |
| High Needs | 834 | 487.2 | 488.5 | 839 | 485.9 | 488.1 |
| Econ. Dis. | 662 | 488.3 | 489.2 | 665 | 486.2 | 488.1 |
| SWD | 320 | 476.3 | 480.0 | 320 | 476.5 | 479.8 |
| ELLs | 160 | 483.6 | 484.9 | 163 | 482.0 | 486.8 |
| All | 1,420 | 494.5 | 499.1 | 1,427 | 492.8 | 498.8 |
| Next Generation MCAS Achievement Levels: 440–470 Not Meeting Expectations; 470–500 Partially Meeting Expectations; 500–530 Meeting Expectations; 530–560 Exceeding Expectations | | | | | | |

**The percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS assessment in grades 3–8 was below the state rate by 10 and 12 percentage points in ELA and math, respectively, and was below the state rate in ELA and math for each subgroup that makes up the high needs population.**

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| **Table 3: Dennis-Yarmouth RSD**  **Next-Generation MCAS ELA and Math Percent Meeting or Exceeding (M/E) Expectations by Subgroup Grades 3–8, 2017** | | | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **N** | **ELA M/E** | **State M/E** | **Above/Below State** | **N** | **Math M/E** | **State M/E** | **Above/Below State** |
| High Needs | 834 | 24% | 27% | -3 | 839 | 22% | 27% | -5 |
| Econ. Dis. | 662 | 26% | 29% | -3 | 665 | 23% | 27% | -4 |
| SWD | 320 | 7% | 13% | -6 | 320 | 8% | 14% | -6 |
| ELLs | 160 | 19% | 23% | -4 | 163 | 17% | 26% | -9 |
| All | 1,420 | 39% | 49% | -10 | 1,427 | 36% | 48% | -12 |

**The percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on the MCAS assessment in 10th grade was below the state rate in ELA by 3 percentage points and below the state rate by 4 percentage points in math.**

* In ELA the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced was below the state rate by 10 and 3 percentage points for students with disabilities and high needs students, respectively.
* In math the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced was below the state rate by 9 percentage points for students with disabilities and above the state rate by 2 and 4 percentage points for high needs students and economically disadvantaged students, respectively.

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| **Table 4: Dennis-Yarmouth RSD**  **MCAS ELA and Math Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced by Subgroup in Grade 10, 2017** | | | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **N** | **ELA** | **State** | **Above/Below State** | **N** | **Math** | **State** | **Above/Below State** |
| High Needs | 96 | 76% | 79% | -3 | 97 | 60% | 58% | 2 |
| Econ. Dis. | 74 | 81% | 81% | 0 | 76 | 64% | 60% | 4 |
| SWD | 45 | 58% | 68% | -10 | 46 | 33% | 42% | -9 |
| ELL | 8 | -- | 59% | -- | 8 | -- | 39% | -- |
| All | 200 | 88% | 91% | -3 | 201 | 75% | 79% | -4 |

**Between 2014 and 2017, science proficiency for all students declined by 5 percentage points, and also declined by 2 to 5 percentage points for high needs students, students with disabilities and English language learners.**

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| **Table 5: Dennis-Yarmouth RSD**  **MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced by Subgroup in Grades 5, 8, and 10, 2014–2017** | | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **N (2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr change** | **State (2017)** |
| High Needs | 344 | 32% | 29% | 39% | 28% | -4 | 31% |
| Econ. Dis. | 264 | -- | 35% | 44% | 29% | -- | 32% |
| SWD | 153 | 16% | 11% | 14% | 11% | -5 | 21% |
| ELLs | 60 | 15% | 10% | 35% | 13% | -2 | 20% |
| All | 643 | 50% | 44% | 50% | 45% | -5 | 53% |

**In ELA, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS assessment was 10 percentage points below the state rate in grades 3–8 as a whole and 2 to 22 percentage points below the state rate in grades 3 through 7, and equal to the state rate in the 8th grade.**

**In math, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS assessment was 12 percentage points below the state rate in grades 3–8 as a whole and 9 to 18 percentage points below the state rate in each tested grade.**

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| **Table 6: Dennis-Yarmouth RSD**  **Next-Generation MCAS ELA and Math Percent Meeting or Exceeding (M/E) Expectations in Grades 3–8, 2017** | | | | | | | | |
| **Grade** | **N** | **ELA M/E** | **State ELA** | **Difference** | **N** | **Math M/E** | **State Math** | **Difference** |
| 3 | 264 | 25% | 47% | -22 | 266 | 37% | 49% | -12 |
| 4 | 268 | 35% | 48% | -13 | 268 | 31% | 49% | -18 |
| 5 | 249 | 47% | 49% | -2 | 250 | 36% | 46% | -10 |
| 6 | 195 | 45% | 51% | -6 | 196 | 37% | 50% | -13 |
| 7 | 231 | 38% | 50% | -12 | 230 | 38% | 47% | -9 |
| 8 | 213 | 49% | 49% | 0 | 217 | 35% | 48% | -13 |
| 3–8 | 1,420 | 39% | 49% | -10 | 1,427 | 36% | 48% | -12 |

**Between 2014 and 2017, in science, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on the MCAS assessment declined by 5 percentage points for all students and by 2 to 11 percentage points in the 5th, 8th, and 10th grades.**

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| **Table 7: Dennis-Yarmouth RSD**  **MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grades 5, 8, and 10, 2014–2017** | | | | | | | |
| **Grade** | **N (2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr change** | **State (2017)** |
| 5 | 250 | 47% | 36% | 41% | 36% | -11 | 46% |
| 8 | 217 | 35% | 34% | 35% | 33% | -2 | 40% |
| 10 | 176 | 78% | 72% | 83% | 74% | -4 | 74% |
| All | 643 | 50% | 44% | 50% | 45% | -5 | 53% |

**Between 2014 and 2017, in ELA the median student growth percentile (SGP) improved by 2 to 22.5 points in the 4th through 8th grades, and declined by 15.0 points in the 10th grade.**

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| **Table 8: Dennis-Yarmouth RSD**  **ELA Median Student Growth Percentile, 2014–2017** | | | | | | | |
| **Grade** | **N (2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr change** | **State (2017)** |
| 3 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 4 | 246 | 45.0 | 54.0 | 41.0 | 47.0 | 2.0 | 50.0 |
| 5 | 231 | 52.0 | 62.0 | 62.0 | 61.0 | 9.0 | 50.0 |
| 6 | 181 | 36.5 | 32.0 | 24.0 | 40.0 | 3.5 | 50.0 |
| 7 | 215 | 46.0 | 57.0 | 62.0 | 50.0 | 4.0 | 50.0 |
| 8 | 194 | 38.0 | 42.0 | 46.0 | 60.5 | 22.5 | 50.0 |
| 10 | 155 | 68.0 | 34.0 | 60.0 | 53.0 | -15.0 | 50.0 |
| Changes in SGP of 10 points or more are considered meaningful. | | | | | | | |

**Between 2014 and 2017, in math the median SGP declined by 8 and 13.5 points in the 5th and 6th grade and improved by 4.0 to 18.0 points in the 7th, 8th and 10th grades.**

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| **Table 9: Dennis-Yarmouth RSD**  **Math Median Student Growth Percentile, 2014-2017** | | | | | | | |
| **Grade** | **N (2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr change** | **State (2017)** |
| 3 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 4 | 245 | 36.0 | 59.0 | 40.0 | 35.0 | -1.0 | 50.0 |
| 5 | 231 | 53.0 | 70.0 | 41.0 | 45.0 | -8.0 | 50.0 |
| 6 | 178 | 43.0 | 40.0 | 26.0 | 29.5 | -13.5 | 50.0 |
| 7 | 213 | 33.0 | 53.0 | 57.0 | 51.0 | 18.0 | 50.0 |
| 8 | 196 | 30.0 | 52.0 | 43.0 | 37.5 | 7.5 | 50.0 |
| 10 | 150 | 43.5 | 39.0 | 57.0 | 47.5 | 4.0 | 50.0 |
| Changes in SGP of 10 points or more are considered meaningful. | | | | | | | |

**In ELA, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS assessment ranged from 10 to 36 percent in the three elementary schools with the 3rd grade, was 36 and 48 percent in the 4th and 5th grades, and 46 and 40 percent in the 6th and 7th grades. The percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations was 51 percent in the 8th grades.**

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| **Table 10: Dennis-Yarmouth RSD**  **Next-Generation MCAS ELA Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations by Grade and School, 2017** | | | | | | | |
| **School** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **3–8** |
| Baker Innovation | 23% | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 22% |
| Small | 10% | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 10% |
| Station Avenue | 36% | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 36% |
| Wixon Innovation | -- | 36% | 48% | -- | -- | -- | 42% |
| Mattacheese Middle | -- | -- | -- | 46% | 40% | -- | 43% |
| Dennis-Yarmouth Reg. High | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 51% | 50% |
| District | 25% | 35% | 47% | 45% | 38% | 49% | 39% |
| State | 47% | 48% | 49% | 51% | 50% | 49% | 49% |

**In math, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS assessment ranged from 23 to 52 percent in the three elementary schools with the 3rd grade, was 31 and 38 percent in the 4th and 5th grades, and 38 and 40 percent in the 6th and 7th grades. The percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations in math was 36 percent in the 8th grades.**

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| **Table 11: Dennis-Yarmouth RSD**  **Next-Generation MCAS Math Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations by Grade and School, 2017** | | | | | | | |
| **School** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **3-8** |
| Baker Innovation | 31% | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 30% |
| Small | 23% | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 23% |
| Station Avenue | 52% | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 52% |
| Wixon Innovation | -- | 31% | 38% | -- | -- | -- | 35% |
| Mattacheese Middle | -- | -- | -- | 38% | 40% | -- | 39% |
| Dennis-Yarmouth Reg. High | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 36% | 36% |
| District | 37% | 31% | 36% | 37% | 38% | 35% | 36% |
| State | 49% | 49% | 46% | 50% | 47% | 48% | 48% |

**The percentage of students in the 10th grade scoring proficient or advanced on the MCAS assessment was below the state rate by 1 percentage point in ELA and math**.

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| **Table 12: Dennis-Yarmouth RSD**  **MCAS ELA and Math Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grade 10, 2017** | | |
| **School** | **ELA** | **Math** |
| Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High | 90% | 78% |
| State | 91% | 79% |

**In science, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on the MCAS assessment was 38 percent in the 5th grade and 33 and 75 percent in the 8th and 10th grades.**

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| **Table 13: Dennis-Yarmouth RSD**  **MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced by School and Grade, 2017** | | | | | | | | |
| **School** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **10** | **Total** |
| Baker Innovation | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Small | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Station Avenue | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Wixon Innovation | -- | -- | 38% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 38% |
| Mattacheese Middle | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Dennis-Yarmouth Reg. High | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 33% | 75% | 52% |
| District | -- | -- | 36% | -- | -- | 33% | 74% | 45% |
| State | -- | -- | 46% | -- | -- | 40% | 74% | 53% |

**In ELA, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS assessment in the district’s elementary schools ranged from 10 to 42 percent, was 43 percent at Mattacheese Middle, and 50 percent at Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High.**

* The percentage of high needs students meeting or exceeding expectations ranged from 6 to 29 percent in the district’s elementary schools, was 28 percent at Mattacheese Middle, and 22 percent at Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High.
* The percentage of economically disadvantaged students meeting or exceeding expectations ranged from 8 to 32 percent in the district’s elementary schools, was 29 percent at Mattacheese Middle, and 21 percent at Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High.
* The percentage of students with disabilities meeting or exceeding expectations ranged from 0 to 8 percent in the district’s elementary schools, was 10 percent at Mattacheese Middle, and 9 percent at Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High.
* The percentage of English language learners meeting or exceeding expectations ranged from 7 to 28 percent in the district’s elementary schools, was 12 percent at Mattacheese Middle, and 13 percent at Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High.

**In math, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS assessment in the district’s elementary schools ranged from 23 to 52 percent, was 39 percent at Mattacheese Middle, and 36 percent at Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High**

* The percentage of high needs students meeting or exceeding expectations ranged from 18 to 42 percent in the district’s elementary schools, was 24 percent at Mattacheese Middle, and 14 percent at Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High.
* The percentage of economically disadvantaged students meeting or exceeding expectations ranged from 21 to 43 percent in the district’s elementary schools, was 25 percent at Mattacheese Middle, and 13 percent at Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High.
* The percentage of students with disabilities meeting or exceeding expectations ranged from 0 to 23 percent in the district’s elementary schools, was 12 percent at Mattacheese Middle, and 4 percent at Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High.
* The percentage of English language learners meeting or exceeding expectations ranged from 7 to 27 percent in the district’s elementary school, was 4 percent at Mattacheese Middle, and 13 percent at Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High.

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| **Table 14: Dennis-Yarmouth RSD**  **Next-Generation MCAS ELA and Math Percent Meeting and Exceeding Expectations by School, 2017** | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | **ELA** | | | | | **Math** | | | | |
| **School** | **All** | **High Needs** | **Econ. Dis.** | **SWD** | **ELLs** | **All** | **High Needs** | **Econ. Dis.** | **SWD** | **ELLs** |
| Baker Innovation | 22% | 14% | 15% | 3% | 7% | 30% | 20% | 21% | 10% | 7% |
| Small | 10% | 6% | 8% | 0% | 7% | 23% | 18% | 23% | 0% | 14% |
| Station Avenue | 36% | 22% | 26% | 8% | 14% | 52% | 42% | 43% | 23% | 27% |
| Wixon Innovation | 42% | 29% | 32% | 7% | 28% | 35% | 21% | 22% | 5% | 23% |
| Mattacheese Middle | 43% | 28% | 29% | 10% | 12% | 39% | 24% | 25% | 12% | 4% |
| Dennis-Yarmouth Reg. High | 50% | 22% | 21% | 9% | 13% | 36% | 14% | 13% | 4% | 13% |
| District | 39% | 24% | 26% | 7% | 19% | 36% | 22% | 23% | 8% | 17% |

**Between 2014 and 2017, ELA proficiency in the 10th grade improved by 9 percentage points for all students and by 17 and 23 percentage points for high needs students and students with disabilities, respectively.**

**Between 2014 and 2017, math proficiency in the 10th grade improved by 26 percentage points for all students, by 35 percentage points for high needs students, and by 22 percentage points for students with disabilities.**

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| **Table 15: Dennis-Yarmouth RSD**  **MCAS ELA and Math Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced by Subgroup in Grade 10, 2014-2017** | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | **ELA** | | | | | **Math** | | | | |
| **School** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** |
| Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High | 81% | 88% | 91% | 90% | 9 | 52% | 70% | 79% | 78% | 26 |
| High Needs | 63% | 76% | 80% | 80% | 17 | 29% | 51% | 63% | 64% | 35 |
| Econ. Dis. | -- | 77% | 84% | 85% | -- | -- | 52% | 79% | 69% | -- |
| ELLs | 32% | 54% | 79% | -- | -- | 13% | 38% | 47% | -- | -- |
| SWD | 37% | 56% | 54% | 60% | 23 | 15% | 25% | 17% | 37% | 22 |

**Between 2014 and 2017, in science, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on the MCAS assessment declined by 10 percentage points for all students at Wixon Innovation and declined by 2 percentage points at Dennis-Yarmouth Regional.**

* Science proficiency for high needs students declined by 10 and 1 percentage points at Wixon Innovation and Dennis-Yarmouth Regional, respectively.
* Science proficiency for students with disabilities declined by 13 percentage points at Wixon Innovation and did not improve at Dennis-Yarmouth Regional.
* Science proficiency for English language learners declined by 4 percentage points at both Wixon Innovation and Dennis-Yarmouth Regional.
* In 2017, science proficiency for economically disadvantaged students was 22 percent at Wixon Innovation and 35 percent at Dennis-Yarmouth Regional.

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| **Table 16: Dennis-Yarmouth RSD**  **MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Science by School and Subgroup, 2014–2017** | | | | | | |
| **School** | **N (2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** |
| Wixon Innovation | 237 | 48% | 36% | 41% | 38% | -10 |
| High Needs | 142 | 33% | 21% | 28% | 23% | -10 |
| Econ. Dis. | 108 | -- | 25% | 31% | 22% | -- |
| SWD | 59 | 18% | 4% | 9% | 5% | -13 |
| ELLs | 36 | 23% | 9% | 14% | 19% | -4 |
| Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High | 388 | 54% | 50% | 58% | 52% | -2 |
| High Needs | 185 | 35% | 35% | 48% | 34% | -1 |
| Econ. Dis. | 144 | -- | 43% | 54% | 35% | -- |
| SWD | 82 | 17% | 16% | 19% | 17% | 0 |
| ELLs | 22 | 9% | 8% | 44% | 5% | -4 |

**Between 2013 and 2016, the district’s four-year cohort graduation rate declined by 2.2 percentage points for all students and each subgroup with reportable data except for White students and Hispanic or Latino students.**

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| **Table 17: Dennis-Yarmouth RSD**  **Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates, 2013–2016** | | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **N**  **(2016)** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2016)** |
| High needs | 109 | 81.9 | 73.4 | 76.3 | 77.1 | -4.8 | 79.1% |
| Economically Disadvantaged\* | 100 | 83.7 | 77.2 | 76.9 | 78.0 | -5.7 | 78.4% |
| ELLs | 9 | 83.3 | 75.0 | 81.8 | 66.7 | -16.6 | 64.1% |
| SWD | 36 | 65.4 | 58.1 | 63.9 | 58.3 | -7.1 | 71.8% |
| African American | 14 | 85.7 | 76.9 | 50.0 | 64.3 | -21.4 | 78.9% |
| Asian | 9 | -- | -- | -- | 77.8 | -- | 92.7% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 11 | 81.0 | 69.2 | 68.2 | 81.8 | 0.8 | 72.7% |
| Multi-Race, non-Hisp./Lat. | 8 | 100.0 | 63.6 | 90.9 | 62.5 | -37.5 | 84.3% |
| White | 153 | 88.2 | 86.7 | 84.0 | 89.5 | 1.3 | 91.9% |
| All | 197 | 88.0 | 82.5 | 81.3 | 85.8 | -2.2 | 87.5% |
| \* Four-year cohort graduation rate for students from low income families used for 2013, 2014, and 2015 rates. | | | | | | | |

**Between 2012 and 2015, the district’s five-year cohort graduation rate declined by 1.5 percentage points for all students and was 83.9 percent in 2015, 5.5 percentage points below the state rate of 89.4 percent.**

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| **Table 18: Dennis-Yarmouth RSD**  **Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates, 2012–2015** | | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **N**  **(2015)** | **2012** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2015)** |
| High needs | 118 | 78.9 | 81.9 | 77.1 | 80.5 | 1.6 | 82.0% |
| Economically Disadvantaged\* | 104 | 78.2 | 83.7 | 81.5 | 80.8 | 2.6 | 81.6% |
| ELLs | 11 | 84.6 | 83.3 | 75.0 | 81.8 | -2.8 | 70.2% |
| SWD | 36 | 66.7 | 65.4 | 58.1 | 69.4 | 2.7 | 74.5% |
| African American | 10 | 78.9 | 85.7 | 76.9 | 60.0 | -18.9 | 82.3% |
| Asian | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 94.1% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 22 | 78.9 | 81.0 | 76.9 | 68.2 | -10.7 | 75.8% |
| Multi-Race, non-Hisp./Lat. | 11 | 90.9 | 100.0 | 72.7 | 90.9 | 0.0 | 88.0% |
| White | 144 | 86.0 | 88.2 | 88.0 | 86.8 | 0.8 | 93.1% |
| All | 192 | 85.4 | 88.0 | 84.5 | 83.9 | -1.5 | 89.4% |
| \* Four-year cohort graduation rate for students from low income families used for 2012, 2013, and 2014 rates. | | | | | | | |

**Between 2013 and 2016, in-school suspension rates declined for all students by 0.9 percentage points and declined for each subgroup with reportable data. In-school suspension rates were below the state rate for all students and for each subgroup with reportable data.**

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| **Table 19: Dennis-Yarmouth RSD**  **In-School Suspension Rates by Subgroup, 2013–2016** | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2016)** |
| High Needs | 2.8% | 3.2% | 0.7% | 1.3% | -1.5 | 2.9% |
| Economically disadvantaged\* | -- | -- | 0.6% | 1.5% | -- | 3.2% |
| ELLs | 3.6% | 1.1% | -- | -- | -- | 1.9% |
| SWD | 3.9% | 5.8% | 1.2% | 1.6% | -2.3 | 3.5% |
| African American | 2.3% | 2.7% | 0.4% | 1.8% | -0.5 | 3.7% |
| Asian | 5.6% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 0.6% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 3.0% | 2.7% | 0.6% | 0.9% | -2.1 | 3.1% |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic or Latino | 3.9% | 6.1% | 0.5% | 1.5% | -2.4 | 2.1% |
| White | 1.4% | 1.9% | 0.5% | 0.9% | -0.5 | 1.4% |
| All | 1.8% | 2.3% | 0.5% | 0.9% | -0.9 | 1.9% |

\*Suspension rates for students from low income families used for 2013 and 2014 rates.

**Out-of-school suspension rates declined between 2013 and 2016 by 1.7 percentage points for all students and also declined for each subgroup with reportable data except for African-American/Black students.**

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| **Table 20: Dennis-Yarmouth RSD**  **Out-of-School Suspension Rates by Subgroup, 2013–2016** | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2016)** |
| High Needs | 5.8% | 5.0% | 3.5% | 3.2% | -2.6 | 4.9% |
| Economically disadvantaged\* | -- | -- | 3.8% | 3.3% | -- | 5.6% |
| ELLs | 4.5% | 2.2% | -- | -- | -- | 4.0% |
| SWD | 9.2% | 10.2% | 4.8% | 4.0% | -5.2 | 5.9% |
| African American | 5.9% | 6.7% | 2.3% | 6.7% | 0.8 | 6.9% |
| Asian | 6.9% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 0.8% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 4.9% | 4.1% | 2.2% | 1.2% | -3.7 | 5.7% |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic or Latino | 4.4% | 7.2% | 5.9% | 4.0% | -0.4 | 3.4% |
| White | 3.6% | 2.7% | 2.3% | 1.8% | -1.8 | 1.7% |
| All | 4.0% | 3.3% | 2.4% | 2.3% | -1.7 | 2.9% |

\* Suspension rates for students from low income families used for 2013 and 2014 rates.

**Between 2013 and 2016, the dropout rate for all students declined by 0.9 percentage point and was 2.8 percent in 2016, above the 2016 state rate of 1.9 percent.**

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| **Table 21: Dennis-Yarmouth RSD**  **Dropout Rates by Subgroup, 2013–2016** | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2016)** |
| High Needs | 4.9% | 2.3% | 5.7% | 3.3% | -1.6 | 3.7% |
| Economically disadvantaged\* | -- | -- | 5.6% | 5.0% | -- | 4.1% |
| ELLs | 0.0% | 0.0% | 3.3% | 0.0% | 0.0 | 6.6% |
| SWD | 9.3% | 2.8% | 6.9% | 2.4% | -6.9 | 3.1% |
| African American | 9.8% | 2.7% | 0.0% | 3.0% | -6.8 | 3.2% |
| Asian | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0 | 0.7% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 3.3% | 5.2% | 6.2% | 4.2% | 0.9 | 4.5% |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic or Latino | 10.0% | 0.0% | 10.0% | 2.6% | -7.4 | 2.4% |
| White | 3.0% | 1.8% | 2.3% | 2.8% | -0.2 | 1.1% |
| All | 3.7% | 2.1% | 2.8% | 2.8% | -0.9 | 1.9% |
| \*Dropout rates for students from low income families used for 2013 and 2014 rates. | | | | | | |

Leadership and Governance

***Contextual Background***

The district’s seven-member school committee governs according to its policy manual, which is periodically updated based on local need and recommendations from the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC). All school committee members reported that they have participated in the required member training “Charting the Course” from MASC. Further, members continue their education by attending the annual MASC conference in neighboring Hyannis. The school committee has three subcommittees: finance/capital planning, policy review, and sick leave bank, and two representatives: Cape Cod Collaborative and a liaison to the board of selectmen. In addition, a committee that includes two selectmen and two finance committee members from each town periodically meets to discuss the district’s regional agreement. The superintendent and town administrators attend the regional agreement committee meetings, but are not voting members. School committee members and town officials stated that student achievement and the well-being of students and families are their top priority.

The school committee has a high level of confidence in the superintendent who is now in her 13th year of leading the district. She fosters a culture of “All Means All,” meaning that everyone will work to help ensure that students have all the food, clothing, and social-emotional support that they need for success in school and in life. This belief permeates all levels of the district—from the school committee to administrators to teachers to other school-level personnel. The school committee evaluates the superintendent annually in open session based on her goals.

***Strength Findings***

**1. The district has developed a five-year strategic plan with core values and a vision and mission which guide the district and schools in the development of educational initiatives.**

* 1. The superintendent, with input from a representative group of stakeholders, developed a multi-year (2014–2019) strategic plan.
     1. The district’s strategic plan has four major strategic goals: student learning; supportive school culture; communication; and safety. Each goal includes more specific initiatives.
     2. The district’s strategic plan is posted on the district’s web site.

**B.** The superintendent reports on the previous year’s achievements and progress on meeting the strategic plan’s goals and initiatives. The most recent update was presented in April 2017.

**C.** School Improvement Plans (SIPs) are aligned with the strategic plan.

1. A review of SIPs showed a close alignment with the district’s strategic goals as well as the inclusion of some school-specific goals. For instance, the high school SIP contains goals relating to students’ dropout and graduation rates.

2. While each school’s 2016–2017 SIP was developed before the release of the spring 2017 MCAS results, all schools did a summer/fall 2017 update to the 2017–2018 SIP based on this new data. All updated school plans contain a school-specific target for increased student achievement on the MCAS assessment.

**D.** The goals of the strategic plan along with progress updates and student performance data are communicated at many levels.

* + 1. The superintendent presents an opening day overview of district initiatives and student achievement targets to the entire district staff. Likewise, the superintendent conducts a mid-year all-staff assembly to reinforce the importance of increasing student achievement.
    2. During public school committee meetings the superintendent and her leadership team provide an update to stakeholders about student achievement on state tests. All school committee meetings are aired on local cable television, and are archived for viewing on the district’s website.
    3. The superintendent meets monthly with the teachers’ association to enhance communications and maintain a focus on students and teachers. Teachers’ association representatives stated that “Teachers can say what they want to say and they are heard.”

**Impact**: When school personnel at all levels work together toward a vision, mission, and common values enumerated in the district’s strategic plan and school improvement plans, they demonstrate to stakeholders a commitment to the well-being and academic achievement of all students.

1. **Under the leadership of the superintendent the district has instilled an “All Means All” culture across the community and district to support the social-emotional and health needs of students.**

**A.** Interviews and a document review indicated that the “All Means All” initiative is embedded across the district.

The superintendent told the review team that the major leadership strength of the district was an attitude that “All our kids are all our kids.” She further stated “We address the needs of all students. We’ll wrap services around them.”

The superintendent promotes the “All Means All” attitude in her opening day assembly for all district teachers, administrators, and other staff.

School committee members told the team that they were aware that the superintendent focuses on “All Means All” in her opening day address to staff and that she ensures that students receive food if needed.

Review team members asked the four districtwide directors to define high-quality teaching in the Dennis-Yarmouth district. Answers included “All students can learn—all teachers must believe that” and “Teachers need to know their students.”

School leaders were asked about the strengths of the district and its schools. Their first and predominant response described the district’s and schools’ efforts to maintain connections with students and families.

a. Examples of the district's and schools’ efforts included: providing dinners to needy families, including turkey dinners at Thanksgiving; giving projects (such as winter coats) at every school; school-based food pantries; reaching out to connect with families; and seeking opportunities for students to be involved in volunteering and giving back.

b. Interviewees said that one school sends 50 students home every weekend with backpacks full of food.

c. Some schools have clothing closets where students can obtain donated coats, boots, and other clothing as needed.

The district has developed partnerships with numerous agencies to support families, including Gosnold, Inc., the Family Resource Center, the Cape and Islands Workforce Investment Board, the Yarmouth Food Pantry, Barnstable County Human Services, Emerald Hollow Farm, Cape Cod Community College, Bridgewater State College, the Dennis-Yarmouth recreation departments, the district attorney’s office, and local Rotary Clubs.

**Impact**: A student who comes to school prepared to learn is more likely to achieve socially and academically. While feeding and clothing students have not always been considered part of a school’s function, many dedicated educational professionals in this district take on this responsibility, thus providing the students an opportunity for a more successful and more productive future.

***Challenges and Areas for Growth***

**3. The district’s annual action plan does not include measurable goals, staff responsible for completing activities, timelines, and the staff and financial resources to support plan activities.**

1. The April 2017 district action plan contains the following four strategic focus areas, with associated strategic objectives and initiatives:
   * + 1. Student Learning:
          1. Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
          2. Technology
       2. Supportive School Culture:
          1. Diverse Learners
          2. Wellness
       3. Communication:
          1. Inform, Listen, Engage

4. Safety

**B.** The April 2017 action plan contains updates relating to progress toward the strategic plan goals for fiscal year 2017, and in some instances a fiscal year 2018 action steps.

**C.** The plan does not contain expected results in the form of SMART goals[[3]](#footnote-3); timelines for completing priorities; resources, including budgetary considerations; and staff responsible for planning and implementing priorities.

The action plan does not identify specific performance goals based on achievement data.

**Impact**: Without comprehensive, actionable improvement plans with data-based SMART goals that identify timelines for achieving priorities, responsible staff, and necessary resources, the district cannot systematically implement, monitor, and refine continuous improvement efforts and the district cannot ensure accountability for meeting improvement priorities.

***Recommendations***

**The district should revise its annual action plan to focus on measurable goals and to include other important elements.**

1. The annual action plan should include both the planned action steps for achieving its strategic initiatives and the indicators of effective implementation of strategic initiatives.

The goals should be SMART (Specific and Strategic; Measurable; Action-Oriented; Rigorous, Realistic, and Results-Focused; and Timed and Tracked).

The goals should be based on student achievement results and other data.

**B.** The action plan should include clear action steps and specify responsible staff and needed resources.

**C.** The development of the action plan should inform the district’s budget priorities.

**D.** Annual School Improvement Plans should be aligned with the action plan.

**E.** The district should establish procedures to regularly review progress toward goals. Adjustments should be made to action steps and timelines based upon the review.

**F.** The district should continue to report on the previous year’s achievements and progress on meeting the strategic plan’s goals.

**Benefits**: By implementing this recommendation, the district will develop measurable goals and a specific plan for achieving them. This will mean a clearer path to continuous improvement and more coherent and effective district systems.

**Recommended resources:**

* 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.
* *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 could also be a useful reference for the district as it develops or refines its DIP and SIPs.

Curriculum and Instruction

The district has been without an aligned, consistently delivered, and continuously improving curriculum in all content areas for many years. In 2011, an ESE Differentiated Needs district review noted that administrators and teachers in the district expressed a sense of urgency about the need to update the K–12 curriculum in all areas, partially in response to the introduction of new Massachusetts curriculum frameworks. The report recommended that the district “continue with its plan to create aligned, up-to-date K–12 curriculum guides for English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies to inform and guide instruction….” The superintendent has had the development of a curriculum development and review cycle as an element of her action plan since a districtwide strategic planning process was initiated in 2013. Following a 2013 accreditation visit by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, the high school began to document some of its instructional units and the review team found some evidence that the high school has begun to develop a scope and sequence for each course within each department.

The district has taken some steps toward addressing the need for an organized curriculum and accompanying guides. It has trained teacher leaders and coaches in the Understanding by Design (UbD) process and deployed them to work with teachers in their assigned schools to review the Massachusetts learning standards, develop assessments to address those standards, and create instructional units. In 2013, the district began to work with the Lesley Literacy Collaborative (LLC) and trained teacher leaders and coaches to implement a literacy framework.

Key components of the work with the LLC include: on-site professional development (PD) for literacy coaches to provide job-embedded PD for teachers and the development of an instructional framework aligned with Massachusetts curriculum frameworks in ELA. The LLC does not provide scope and sequence documents or common materials. Teachers need to determine how to implement the curriculum frameworks individually or as part of a professional learning community (PLC) at their school.

During the 2015–2016 school year, the district began to implement K–3 the Eureka Math curriculum**,** which is aligned with most of the Massachusetts math standards. In 2016–2017, implementation was extended to grades 4–8. Teachers and coaches told reviewers that whenEureka Mathwas implemented in grades 4–8 during the 2016–2017 school year PD was provided; however, when Eureka Math was implemented K–3 in 2015–2016, training was not provided. Interviewees told the team thatEureka Math common assessments are being used across the district. The high-school math department is reviewing its current scope and sequence documents to align them with Eureka Math. A document review indicated that Eureka Math provides scope and sequence documents, pacing and preparation guides, and curriculum maps and curriculum overviews. It also provides a bank of common formative and summative assessments, including “tickets to leave” and similar assessments.

District staff said they were pleased to see a strong scope and sequence in mathematics, combined with aligned instructional materials and formative and summative assessments. Staff and community members stated that the district urgently needed to develop a similar curriculum for English language arts (ELA), science, and other subjects. Coaches told reviewers that the PLC in each school was responsible for leading curriculum development and implementation.

The district has begun implementation of eDoctrina, a software program which includes standards-based lesson and unit planners, an assessment builder, a parent/student portal, several data reports, a student goal tracking tool, and other elements. Teachers and leaders described eDoctrina as a warehouse of documents related to curriculum and assessment.

Each school and grade-level PLC within each school is required to develop its own instructional strategies. During the onsite review, most principals articulated elements of high-quality instruction. However, the district has not established a set of rigorous, research-based instructional expectations throughout the district.

During the 2015–2016 school year, because of retirements, the district’s office of instruction was reorganized. The duties of the former director of instruction were divided and the positions of director of instruction for humanities and the arts and the director of instruction for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) were created.

***Strength Finding***

**1. District and school leaders have implemented initiatives and strategies to improve curriculum and instruction in the district.**

* 1. District and school leaders and teachers told the team that the district established professional learning communities (PLCs) in each grade at each school in the 2006–2007 school year. The purpose of PLCs is to enable teachers to collaboratively review and analyze student achievement data, develop lesson plans and instructional strategies, and plan common assessments.
     1. Elementary- and middle-school teachers receive one 45-minute period each week for common planning time (CPT) and PLCs. The period can include 15 minutes of CPT and 30 minutes for the PLC. The teacher leader is responsible for developing the meeting agenda. High-school teachers have one CPT/ PLC period weekly.
     2. School and district leaders and teachers reported that teacher leaders lead PLCs and that each grade level in each school has at least one teacher leader. At the high school, department chairs serve as teacher leaders. The team was told that there were about 65 teacher leaders in the district.
        1. Principals and directors told the review team that teacher leaders receive training during the summer and after school during the school year.

3.District and school leaders stated that the district created the position of literacy coach as a result of the Lesley Literacy Collaborative (LLC) work. The district has 4 literacy coaches; 2 for kindergarten through grade 3, 1 for kindergarten through grade 5, and 1 for grades 4–8. A review of job descriptions provided by the district showed that an LLC coach is “a teacher, staff developer, coach, participant in the professional learning community and a learner.”

* + - * 1. Coaches must commit to two years of training (four weeks in year one), including four days of training, attendance at the Literacy for All Conference, and ongoing PD in year two.
        2. Principals told the team that coaches provide guidance and support. They also said that literacy coaches are the strongest path to consistency in the district and that they provide high-quality professional development.

**Impact**: Well-trained teacher leaders and coaches provide support and job-embedded professional development which is an important step in improving curriculum and instruction.

***Challenges and Areas for Growth***

**2. The district has not developed and implemented a complete curriculum in all content areas at all levels.**

* 1. Interviews and a review of documents indicated that the district does not have an aligned K–12 curriculum.

1. School leaders stated that the district does not have a defined ELA curriculum to provide to new K–8 teachers. They said that across the district there are a lot of similarities in the ELA curricula, but the district does not have a written curriculum. Furthermore, they stated that the absence of a scope and sequence in ELA is a “major deficit” for the district.
   1. District leaders told the team that since the district is working with the Lesley Literacy Collaborative (LLC), they set common goals based on the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks and then direct the teachers to use whatever materials they have available.
   2. Interviewees told the team that as literacy is arranged in thematic units, pacing is important to ensure that teachers are addressing and assessing the standards. However, team members were told that pacing varied from classroom to classroom.

2. When the review team asked interviewees who was responsible for the development of curriculum and instruction for each subject and grade level, they said that it was a difficult question.

a. Interviewees told reviewers that they had Eureka for mathematics and guidelines for ELA, but there was not clarity about who was responsible for curriculum development in each content area. They reported that the district did not have scope and sequence other than in math.

b. They also stated that while the high school was developing curriculum for each course, the district did not have a K–7 curriculum.

3. District leaders and staff expressed varying opinions about the status of the science curriculum.

a. Some district leaders told team members that the science curriculum is “somewhat developed.”

b. Other district leaders said that the district did not have a scope and sequence in science, noting that they did not know what they would give to a new teacher to guide science instruction.

4. District leaders, principals, and teachers told the review team that they had been working on developing curriculum maps, but complete curriculum maps were not available for review by team members.

a. District leaders said that recent professional development has focused on curriculum mapping.

b. Coaches told interviewers that they had been working on curriculum maps for four years in the professional learning communities (PLCs) and that they had curriculum maps that had been developed “a couple of years ago.” Team members were told that curriculum maps were not stored in a central location.

5. School committee members expressed concern about the state of curriculum development in the district. Members told team members that the district needed a curriculum that “spirals, that builds on each level” and that the district was not close to having that completed. School committee members recognized that student achievement was directly related to curriculum and that the district did not have a full curriculum.

**B.** The district does not have an established, documented, and recurring process for the regular and timely review and revision of curricula based on valid research, the analysis of MCAS results, and other assessments and input from professional staff.

The superintendent told team members that the district did not have a curriculum revision schedule.

Interviewees stated that the district had brought teachers together to write curriculum, but the process “wasn’t rigorous enough and it fell apart….”

District administrators reported that the district had started math curriculum development in 2003 using an inquiry-based process, primarily in grades 6–12. In 2011, the math department went through “a revision,” and started looking for resources. In 2015, Eureka Math was acquired.

District leaders told the team that following the last NEASC report in 2013, which recommended that the high school develop a purposeful curriculum, the high school began to enter course curricula onto a “common template.” The work was done at the high school, without district direction or consultation with K–7 staff.

**Impact**: The absence of an aligned, purposefully developed, and regularly updated curriculum means that all students do not have access to high-level, grade-appropriate curriculum. The absence of written curriculum in each content area results in each teacher or PLC developing and employing its own curriculum, each with different components and outcomes. When teachers do not have a written curriculum and well-developed curriculum guides, the district cannot ensure that the taught curricula are aligned with current frameworks and are aligned vertically and horizontally.

1. **In observed classrooms, the quality and rigor of instruction was inconsistent throughout the district. Instruction often did not challenge students.**
2. **Focus Area #1**. **Learning Objectives & Expectations** In most observed classrooms teachers demonstrated knowledge of subject matter and content. There was variation in the presentation and use of learning objectives, the use of appropriate classroom activities well matched to the learning objective, and the teachers’ use of frequent checks for student understanding that led to feedback and adjustment to instruction.
3. In observed classrooms, team members saw compelling or sufficient evidence that teachers provided and reinforced a clear learning objective (characteristic #2) in 59 percent of elementary-school classes, in 78 percent of middle-school classes, and in 54 percent of high-school classes.

a. In an elementary science class, a clear learning objective was posted on a graphic organizer: “Write about evaporation. Tell: where your droplet is. What would make him/her evaporate? What happens when he/she evaporates?” Students were able to describe to review team members why this was important to know.

b. In contrast, a clear objective was not present in a high-school mathematics class about dilation. When asked about dilation, students described dilation as “when you make an object bigger or smaller,” but could not tell why they were studying it.

1. Review team members observed compelling or sufficient evidence of the teacher using appropriate classroom activities well matched to the learning objective(s) (characteristic #3) in 70 percent of elementary-school classes, in 78 percent of middle- level classes, and in 50 percent of high-school classes.

a. In an elementary ELA class the following example of an appropriate classroom activity well matched to the learning objective was observed: “Devise a paragraph describing the character traits of Goldilocks and the three bears and explain why [you know] they have those traits.”

1. Team members observed compelling or sufficient evidence of the teacher conducting frequent checks for student understanding, provide feedback and/or adjust instruction (characteristic #4) in 62 percent of elementary classes, in 85 percent of middle-school classes, and in 54 percent of high-school classes.

a. For example, in a high school ELA class the teacher asked, “What does this stanza mean?”

1. **Focus Area #2: Student Engagement & Higher Order Thinking** Observers noted a variation across school levels in how well lessons gave students opportunities to assume responsibility for their own learning and be engaged in lessons and in how well lessons encouraged students to develop and engage in higher-order thinking. In observed classrooms across the district, few students communicated their ideas and thinking with each other and were given opportunities to be engaged with meaningful real-world tasks.
   * 1. Review team members observed compelling or sufficient evidence that students were given opportunities to assume responsibility to learn and be engaged in the lesson (characteristic #5) in 59 percent of elementary-school classes, in 85 percent of middle-school classes, and in 50 percent of high-school classes.
        1. In a high-school writer’s workshop class, students were given opportunities to assume responsibility for their learning and were highly engaged. As students critiqued and commented on each other’s writing, a student was heard to say, “I really liked how you used descriptions to mislead the reader….”
        2. An example of students not being given opportunities to assume responsibility for their own learning was observed in an elementary class where students did low-level work sheets while the assistant circulated around the room maintaining order but not engaging with students.
     2. Observers saw compelling or sufficient evidence of students engaged in higher-order thinking (characteristic # 6) in 56 percent of elementary-school classes, in 71 percent of middle-school classes, and in 34 percent of high-school classes.
        1. Higher-order thinking was observed in a middle-school science class in which students were asked to determine “Which body systems do you feel are the most important to an organism’s survival? Why?”
        2. Higher-order thinking was not observed in a middle-school science class in which the teacher asked, “Did the results match your prediction?” When students responded “Yes” or “No,” the teacher did not ask students to discuss or explain their answers.
     3. Team members observed compelling or sufficient evidence of students communicating their ideas and thinking to each other (characteristic #7) in 35 percent of elementary classes, in 71 percent of middle-school classes, and in 42 percent of high-school classes.
        1. In a high-school ELA class, students communicated their ideas and thinking to each other by offering comments, suggestions, and critiques of each other’s work.
        2. In contrast, students were not given the opportunity to communicate their ideas in an elementary math class on subtraction. Instead of students coming to the board and showing their own work, the teacher—not the students—described the students’ thinking.
     4. In 46 percent of elementary classes, in 54 percent of middle-school classes, and in 46 percent of high-school classes, observers noted compelling or sufficient evidence of students engaged in tasks connected to their lives or with the larger world (characteristic #8).
        1. In a middle-school math class, the teacher connected students’ learning with the larger world by asking them to solve the problem, “The value of a piece of office equipment is changing at a rate of -$175 per year. How long will it take for the change in value to be -$1,050?”
        2. In a high-school class on the quadratic formula, the teacher did not provide a real-world application for what was being learned.
2. **Focus Area #3: Inclusive Practice & Classroom Culture** In most classrooms observed, classroom teachers created a classroom climate that was conducive to learning and established routines and positive supports to ensure that students behave appropriately. However, in many high school classes teachers did not ensure that students were engaged in challenging tasks, regardless of learning needs. In the majority of observed high-school and middle-school classrooms teachers did not use a variety of instructional strategies to make learning accessible to all students.

Observers noted compelling or sufficient evidence that teachers engaged students in challenging tasks regardless of learning needs (characteristic #9) in 54 percent of elementary classes, in 57 percent of middle-school classrooms, and in 29 percent of high-school classrooms.

In a high-school ELA class, students were able to choose from among three different journal prompts, all with the same learning objective.

In contrast, in an elementary ELA class, one-third of the class was given low-level spelling worksheets to complete while the remainder of the class worked on creative writing assignments.

In observed classrooms, team members saw compelling or sufficient evidence of teachers using a variety of instructional strategies (characteristic #10) in 51 percent of elementary classes, in 28 percent of middle-school classrooms, and in 21 percent of high- school classes.

To make the lesson accessible to all students, a middle-school teacher used teacher talk, individual research, group sharing of a game, and an exit ticket.

An example of a class in which the teacher did not use a variety of instructional strategies took place in a middle-school science class where the teacher talked to the whole class for most of the observation.

**Impact**: Without clear learning objectives, sufficient opportunities for higher-order thinking skills tied to real-world applications, and challenging tasks provided to every student, the district cannot ensure that Dennis-Yarmouth students are sufficiently prepared to achieve at high levels and to succeed in college, careers, and civic participation.

***Recommendations***

**The district should clarify who is responsible for curriculum development. The district should complete with urgency K–12 curriculum and establish a process for the regular and timely review and revision of curricula.**

1. The district should clarify who is responsible for curriculum development in each content area.

1. If possible, the district should put in place a leadership position with this responsibility.

2. The district might also consider assigning oversight for curriculum development to existing personnel.

3. The person(s) with this responsibility should oversee and coordinate the steps below.

1. The district should put in place complete, documented, coherent, and aligned curricula, starting with English language arts and literacy, math, and science and technology/engineering and then moving to history/social science and other subjects once standards for those subjects (currently under review) have been approved.

The district should ensure that curricula K–12 include curriculum units, objectives, resources, instructional strategies, timelines, and a balanced set of formative and summative assessments.

**C.** The district should develop a multi-year, plan for regular, timely review, revision, and alignment of curricula.

The district should develop a multi-year timeline for when K–12 curricula in each subject will be regularly reviewed and updated, identify persons responsible, and identify time for this ongoing work.

The plan should be based on analysis of student performance data and other data sources, and should involve educators from different levels and areas of expertise.

b. The plan should include regular meetings to align the curriculum horizontally (across schools) and vertically (between grade levels).

2. The district should identify the resources needed to support this work.

3. The plan should ensure that curriculum materials are regularly reviewed for effectiveness and identify which materials, textbooks, software or online programs work well and which need revision or replacement.

**Benefits:** By implementing this recommendation the district will ensure vertically and horizontally aligned high-quality curricula aligned with current frameworks. Furthermore, a clearly articulated, ongoing, and systematic curriculum review process will ensure the currency of curriculum and instructional materials and provide students access to a fully developed curriculum that meets their diverse learning needs.

**Recommended resources:**

* ESE’s Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks web page (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/>) provides information about the 2017 English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics Frameworks, including grade-by-grade comparisons between the 2010 and 2017 Frameworks and a slide deck supporting implementation of the 2017 Frameworks.
  + - *Creating Curriculum Units at the Local Level* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/model/mcu_guide.pdf>) is a guidance document that can serve as a resource for professional study groups, as a reference for anyone wanting to engage in curriculum development, or simply as a way to gain a better understanding of the process used to develop Massachusetts’ Model Curriculum Units.
    - The Massachusetts Science and Technology/Engineering Curriculum Framework web page (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/stem/ste/> provides links to the current standards and supporting documents, including strand maps, crosswalks, and other guidance materials.
* *ESE’s STE Quality Review Rubric* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/model/rubrics/STE.pdf>) is designed to help educators determine the quality, rigor, and alignment of lessons and units to the 2016 MA STE Curriculum Framework.
  + - 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.
    1. **The district should identify and articulate a set of research-based instructional expectations for the district, communicate this to the full educational community, and support teachers in its implementation. These expectations should be based on and aligned with the district’s curriculum (described in the recommendation above).**

1. The district should convene a representative group of teachers and instructional leaders to define the characteristics of effective instruction.

The district has several resources to support this: the educator evaluation rubric, the *Understanding by Design* (UbD) framework, Research for Better Teaching’s *Skillful Teacher* model, the response to intervention (RTI) elements included in the Lesley Literacy Collaborative work, and the nine effective instructional strategies[[4]](#footnote-4) .

The recommended product of these meetings is a set of expectations that challenges and engages students to develop and use higher-order thinking skills, includes differentiated instructional strategies to address students’ diverse learning needs, and requires students to demonstrate understanding and application of knowledge and skills, especially through performances, orally and in writing.

**B.** Once the set of instructional expectations has been defined, district leaders should develop a plan to share these expectations with staff.

1. The district is encouraged to provide opportunities for educators to discuss ideas and strategies from the set of instructional expectations. These opportunities might include grade level, department meetings, faculty meetings, common planning time, or professional development days.

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

**C.** Teachers should be provided with appropriate guidance and feedback as they implement instructional expectations.

1. Principals, as instructional leaders, should ensure that teachers have the information and support needed to meet the district’s instructional expectations.

2. The district should continue to provide teachers with frequent, constructive feedback that helps them to improve instruction.

3. Professional development should focus on elements of the instructional expectations as applied to the specific curricula that teachers and students work with every day.

**Benefits:** Implementing this recommendation will mean clear and articulated expectations for educators for best instructional practices. This will provide a common language that will facilitate more focused feedback and professional development. The ultimate beneficiaries will be Dennis-Yarmouth’s students who will likely have optimal opportunities to become active, thoughtful learners who can apply what they know, can do, and understand in the real world.

**Recommended resources:**

* ESE’s *Learning Walkthrough Implementation Guide* (<http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/accountability/dart/walkthrough/implementation-guide.docx>) is a resource to support instructional leaders in establishing a *Learning Walkthrough* process in a school or district. It is designed to provide guidance to those working in an established culture of collaboration as well as those who are just beginning to observe classrooms and discuss teaching and learning in a focused and actionable manner.

Appendix 4, *Characteristics of Standards-Based Teaching and Learning: Continuum of Practice* (<http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/accountability/dart/walkthrough/continuum-practice.pdf>) is a framework that provides a common language or reference point for looking at teaching and learning.

* ESE’s *Calibration Video Library* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/calibration/>) is a collection of professionally created videos of classroom instruction produced by the School Improvement Network. These videos depict a range of practice (this is NOT a collection of exemplars) to support within-district calibration activities that promote a shared understanding of instructional quality and rigor.
  + ESE’s *Online Calibration Training Tool* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/calibration/tool/>) uses videos of classroom instruction from ESE’s Calibration Video Library to simulate brief, unannounced observations. Groups of educators, such as a district leadership team, watch a video together and then individually assess the educator’s practice related to specific elements from the Model Classroom Teacher Rubric and provide the educator with written feedback. Through real-time data displays, the group members can then see how their conclusions compare to each other, as well educators throughout the state.
* ESE’s *"What to Look For" Observation Guides* ***(Updated August 2017)*** (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/observation/>) describe what observers should expect to see in a classroom at a particular grade level in a specific subject area. This includes the knowledge and skills students should be learning and using (as reflected in state learning standards) and best practices related to classroom curriculum, instruction, and assessment for each subject area. The guides are not designed to replace any evaluation system or tools districts currently use, but are a resource to help classroom observers efficiently identify what teachers and students should be experiencing in specific subjects and grade levels.

Assessment

***Contextual Background***

In Dennis-Yarmouth, the collection, dissemination, and analysis of student performance data is performed largely at the school level. Professional learning communities (PLCs) at each grade level in each school provide the vehicle for data-driven improvement at the three elementary schools. Common planning times (CPTs) for each subject area are the means to discuss student data at the middle and high schools. Teacher leaders (department chairs at the high school) are responsible for disseminating data for analysis during PLCs and CPTs. In addition to teacher leaders, coaches often attend PLC meetings to assist in the analysis of data and the discussion of appropriate strategies and interventions. The use of protocols to analyze data has not been established throughout the district.

The district uses a variety of data sources to assess literacy and reading skills. In kindergarten through grade 3, the following assessments are administered: Benchmark Assessment System (BAS), assessments of letter identification, letter sound, concepts about print, writing picture names, high frequency words, and segmentation (Fountas and Pinnell). In grades 4 and 5, BAS, developmental reading assessment (DRA2), and reading inventory are administered. Common writing benchmarks are used K–12.

In mathematics, data from Aimsweb Math Concepts and Applications (MCAP) are used in kindergarten, and the Eureka end-of-unit tests and exit tickets provide data K–12. Story problem assessments aligned with grade-level goals are used K–3. The high school uses common unit assessments as well as end-of-year summative assessments in most courses.

Although there are multiple transitions for students in the district,[[5]](#footnote-5) the district does not have a common repository for assessment data.

***Strength Finding***

* + 1. **A balanced system of assessments and an instructional planning and support structure are in place to support the use of assessment data to plan and modify instruction and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.**
  1. The district has implemented a system of formative, summative, and diagnostic assessments K–12.
     1. Interviews and a review of the district’s assessment inventory indicated that the following reading and literacy assessments are administered three times per year: Benchmark Assessment System (BAS) and assessments in letter identification, letter sound, concepts about print, writing picture names, high frequency words, and segmentation (Fountas and Pinnell). Classroom teachers also reported using running records in their literacy block to determine students’ reading skills while reading developmentally appropriate texts.
     2. In mathematics, the MCAP assessment is administered in kindergarten, and formative assessments are used six to seven times per year, as part of the Eureka mathematics program.
     3. At the intermediate- and middle-school levels, the Reading Inventory assessment is administered three times per year for all students. Eureka Math end-of-unit tests are administered six to seven times per year.

4. In grades 4–5, students are given either the BAS three times per year or the DRA 2 two times per year.

5. In grades 6–7, the BAS is administered to students below grade level.

6. Struggling readers are given the DRA 2 (Developmental Reading Assessment) three times per year.

7. At the high school, common unit assessments are administered in math six times per year and summative assessments are administered in most courses.

8. Varied common assessments in writing are administered three or more times per year K–12.

9. Preliminary SATs (PSATs) are administered to all students and are paid for by the district. Guidance staff inform all grade 10 students of the individualized online information available, and encourage them to practice taking the SATs.

10. ACCESS (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State to State) is administered annually to English language learners (ELLs), and the ELL coach maintains a database of scores and shares results with principals.

11. In 2015–2016, AP courses and tests were offered in 15 subject areas.

* 1. Teachers meet regularly to review data and plan and modify curriculum and instruction.
     1. Elementary teachers meet one time per week to review data in professional learning communities (PLCs). Middle-school teachers meet every six days in PLCs. At the high school, common planning time (CPT) takes place during one block weekly. These meetings provide regular opportunities to analyze and discuss assessment data.
        1. Interviewees indicated that teacher leaders at the elementary and middle schools and high-school department chairs disseminate data and prepare the agenda for PLC and CPT meetings.
        2. Administrators, teacher leaders, and coaches gave examples of how data analysis has informed changes in instruction or formative assessments. A district administrator told the team that district and school leaders look for trends in MCAS data that would indicate the need to do a more effective job of teaching in a particular curriculum standard area. One teacher leader talked about changing a common formative mathematics assessment based on MCAS data. An elementary educator indicated that teachers use benchmark assessment data to create flexible groups to meet students’ needs.
     2. Teachers, coaches, and other staff told the team that reading teachers, special education teachers, Title I teachers, and English Language Education teachers often participate in PLC and CPT meetings.
     3. Interviewees said that teachers analyze data from ESE’s Edwin teaching and learning platform in some meetings, particularly when educators are discussing struggling students. In addition, teacher leaders have access to Edwin and have provided data to PLCs to analyze subgroup performance.
     4. Principals analyze MCAS test data to develop goals in their SIPs, and goals generally include measurable targets for improvement.

**C.** The district has hired a data specialist to generate assessment reports as needed.

**D.** Interviews and a document review indicated thatthe district has established data protocols to guide PLCs in analyzing data and identifying strategies and next steps based on findings.

1. The district has a common protocol for analyzing MCAS data by grade level and subject as well as at the school level by curriculum standard.

2. Coaches, teacher leaders, and department chairs have been trained in the use of the district’s data protocol in the analysis of various assessment data.

3. The district has developed a data form used for initial assessment, which includes four steps: collection of benchmark data, analysis of strengths and obstacles, and development of SMART goals and instructional strategies, including their frequency and duration, for implementation. The form can be used for literacy benchmark tests and other formative assessments, such as Eureka mathematics exit ticket data.

**Impact:** With abalanced system of assessments and planning and support infrastructure in place, instructional leaders and teachers likely have the capacity to use assessment data to plan and modify instruction, and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.

***Challenges and Areas for Growth***

1. **The district** **does not have a common repository for sharing data throughout the district.**
2. Although there are multiple transition points for students in the district, the district does not have a mechanism to share data across the district.

1. The district has recently purchased eDoctrina as a repository for curriculum and assessment data, but its use is limited to the directors and a few instructional leaders and teachers who are piloting its use, trying to upload curriculum and assessments as quickly as possible.

2. Interviewees reported that assessment data is stored in various places that are not shared. Instructional coaches, teacher leaders, and department chairs gave several examples of where data is stored, including Excel spreadsheets, the reading inventory database, an ACCESS (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State to State) database, and folders.

3. One coach said that the district has had common assessments for years, but did not have a way to compare data to inform common goals. Another said that schools have their own spreadsheets and because the district does not have a central system for storing and disseminating data they are “using data locally, so we can use it before it’s too old.”

4. One educator told the team that a districtwide database for early literacy was in the developmental stages.

**Impact**: Without a common repository for assessment data, teachers and administrators cannot access, analyze, and use data to inform instruction and evaluate programs in a timely fashion. The absence of a consistent mechanism for sharing data prevents staff at various transition points from viewing and analyzing data on incoming students. In addition, it prevents grade-level teachers across the district from comparing data.

***Recommendation***

**The district should ensure that all educators use a shared repository for storing and accessing data.**

1. The district should continue to develop the eDoctrina repository for curriculum and assessment data and ensure that educators are equipped to use it as part of their work.
2. Data entered in eDoctrina should be subject to a review and approval process.
3. Ongoing professional development should be offered to prepare all staff to use eDoctrina.
4. The district should continue to use ESE’s Edwin and ensure that teachers have access to this information.

**Benefits** from implementing this recommendation will include the ability of school staff to analyze student data in an effective and timely fashion to inform instruction and program development and to enable same-grade teachers across the district to compare data. In addition, it will enable staff at transition points to review data of incoming students to ensure appropriate course and program placement as well as needed supports.

**Recommended resources:**

* ESE’s District Data Team Toolkit (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/toolkit/district-data-toolkit.pdf>) is a set of resources to help a district establish, grow and maintain a culture of inquiry and data use through a District Data Team.
* The Edwin Analytics web page (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edwin/analytics/>) includes links to a Getting Started Guide, as well as a video tutorial series.

Human Resources and Professional Development

***Contextual Background***

The district and schools have policies and practices in place to recruit, hire, and retain administrators and teachers. There are ample opportunities for teachers to assume leadership positions. For example, the district has teacher leaders at all grade levels to support teachers in Professional Learning Communities. In addition, teachers can apply to be mentors for new teachers and coaching opportunities may be available to teachers with appropriate experience.

The district adopted the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework in 2012. A review of a random sample of educators’ evaluation files across the district indicated that evaluation documents generally included actionable feedback. Most reviewed evaluations included general narrative about accomplishments as well as recommendations or suggestions for improvement. Most teachers and administrators had completed a self-assessment and goal setting documents that included student learning SMART goals.[[6]](#footnote-6) However, implementation is incomplete because the district does not use multiple measures of student learning, growth, and achievement as evidence in the teacher evaluation process.

The district does not have ongoing formal calibration training for evaluators, which may be a factor in the inconsistency seen in educators’ ratings across the schools in the districts. For example, in 2015–2016, nearly 60 percent of educators at Marguerite E. Small Elementary were rated exemplary and no one was rated needs improvement or unsatisfactory, compared to 8.2 percent exemplary and nearly 5 percent needs improvement or unsatisfactory ratings for educators at Mattacheese Middle School. Rigorous and ongoing calibration training for all evaluators will help the district determine whether differences in the distribution of ratings across schools in the district is because of differences in evaluators’ expectations or in educators’ performance.

The district does not have a comprehensive, data-based professional development (PD) program with clear goals and objectives based on district and school priorities. Furthermore, the district does not have a PD committee to guide the planning, implementation, and oversight of PD. PD leadership is provided by central office directors who make most decisions about PD programming throughout the district with limited input from teachers or school leaders. Surveys of educator PD needs are sporadic, and the district does not have programs or strategies in place to formally evaluate PD programs.

***Strength Findings***

**The district’s supervision and evaluation practices promote a culture of professional growth through consistent and timely evaluations and observations that include actionable feedback.**

1. Teachers’ and administrators’ evaluations reviewed by the team included written actionable feedback and suggestions for improvement.
2. Team members reviewed the evaluation files of 24 teachers randomly selected from across the district. The evaluation files reviewed included teachers on developing or self-directed one- or two-year plans. The evaluation files included completed supporting documents such as self-assessments, evidence folders, and team or individual goal setting documents. Most goals setting documents included SMART goals.[[7]](#footnote-7)
   1. Interviewees told the team that they try to not have teams or individual teachers focus on the same goal year after year and they ask for more specificity on goal selection, such as developing a goal related to a subgroup.
   2. Formative assessments/evaluations and summative evaluations were generally conducted in accordance with the timelines required by the educator’s plan. Evaluators conducted numerous observations of educators using an evidence collection observation tool.
   3. Interviewees said the district has been tracking observation data to determine whether sufficient observations were being conducted and whether teachers were implementing recommendations provided to them during observations. A review of this data showed that the district tracked the number of observations by school by month between school year 2014–2015 and school year 2016–2017. For example, during January 2015, evaluators conducted 72 observations at the high school. During January 2017, 124 were conducted. During September and October 2017, 460 observations were conducted.
   4. All evaluation documentation is stored in TeachPoint, the district’s evaluation management system.
3. The teachers’ assessments/evaluations reviewed by the team were informative[[8]](#footnote-8) and included evidence related to professional practice and student achievement SMART goals and a description of progress on goals. Most assessments/evaluations included actionable feedback that would enhance educator skills or suggestions or queries on how the class could be improved. For example, one evaluator asked “What did you learn about the writers at the table in how they were using the text to support their own graphic organizers? Another asked, “For the students reading independently, was there a share out of the character information you had in the SmartBoard prompt?” Another asked, “Did students return to the whole group with sticky notes connected to what you wanted them to have?”
   1. When interviewees were asked about the quality of assessments/evaluations and whether actionable feedback was provided, they stated that evaluators asked teachers reflective questions and looked for critical thinking in teachers’ responses.
   2. A review of the assessments/evaluations showed that in most cases teachers responded to evaluators’ suggestions or queries. For example, in response to a question on why morning meeting was important and worthy of the time each day, the teacher responded: “Morning Meeting is an important routine in the day that pulls kids together as a community. They learn so many social skills during this time. The most important is communication in appropriate ways, i.e. eye contact with speakers, listening while others talk, taking turns. It is also a "centering" time where we all start off on the same foot and together….”
   3. When asked whether evaluators have spent time calibrating the equity and fairness of evaluations across the district, administrators told the team that they have discussed calibration at the weekly administrative team meetings and some principals and assistant principals have conducted calibration at the school level by reviewing a random sample of evaluations and ratings.
4. The team reviewed the evaluation files of 15 administrators, including the most recent evaluation of the superintendent conducted by the school committee. As with teachers’ evaluation files, administrators completed self-assessments and goal setting documents included SMART goals. Summative and end-of-cycle evaluations were completed in a timely manner and evaluators provided administrators with suggestions for improvement that would promote professional growth. For example, an evaluator asked an administrator who was observed chairing a meeting “Would you have done anything differently and if so how would you have changed it?” The educator responded that it might be better to schedule the meeting after school to increase attendance.
5. Teachers stated that they received actionable feedback from evaluators and that reflection was a strength of the educator evaluation system. They stated that even exemplary teachers were being pushed forward.

**Impact**: Providing educators with actionable feedback to enhance practice and professional competencies improves the effectiveness of supervisory practices and the quality of observations and evaluations, which likely leads to teachers and administrators improving their performance and student achievement.

**The district provides teachers with opportunities to serve as instructional leaders, mentors, and coaches.**

1. The district has created a teacher leader program that has placed approximately 40 teacher leaders in district schools.
2. District and school leaders said that each grade level at each school has at least one teacher leader. Coaches and department chairs also serve as teacher leaders. Teacher leader positions are posted every spring and principals make the hiring decisions. Interviewees stated that there is little turnover in these positions.
3. Teacher leaders receive an annual stipend and except for department heads have a full teaching schedule. Teacher leaders attend five days of training during the summer. Examples of training that has been provided include curriculum mapping, data analysis, and Understanding by Design.
4. Teacher leaders have numerous roles including advisor, facilitator, liaison, and participant.
5. As an advisor, a teacher leader serves on district and school learning councils and attends multiple council meetings throughout the year. For example, the district’s teaching and learning council, which has about 65 members and includes administrators and teacher leaders, has five two-hour meetings during the school year to discuss many topics, including professional development and student achievement data.
6. As a facilitator, the teacher leader leads professional learning communities (PLCs) and coordinates grade-level team activities. Interviews and a review of PLC schedules indicated that PLCs are generally data-driven grade-level or department meetings held weekly or bi-weekly for approximately 45 minutes. Minutes are taken for each meeting and the teacher leader develops the agenda, although sometimes the principal asks the team to focus on a specific topic.
7. As a liaison, the teacher leader coordinates communication and connections between team members at other schools.
8. Teachers have the opportunity to mentor new teachers and teachers new to the district.
9. The district has a two-year mentoring program for new teachers who are all assigned a mentor.
10. All mentors are trained and receive stipends.
11. Representatives of the Dennis-Yarmouth Education Association told the team that the mentoring program is effective.
12. With the appropriate experience and background, a teacher can apply to become an instructional coach. The district has multiple content coaches who provide support to students and teachers.

**Impact:** Providing teachers with opportunities to assume leadership and support positions enhances the district’s ability to recruit, hire, and retain teachers. At the same time, providing new and veteran teachers with instructional support improves teacher morale and creates a culture of professional growth and development. In addition, providing teachers with staff who help them analyze data and implement instructional strategies likely leads to improved instruction and student achievement.

***Challenges and Areas for Growth***

1. **The district has not taken action on the components of the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework that requires the collection and use of feedback and of multiple measures of student learning, growth, and achievement in the teacher evaluation process.**
2. As of the 2015–2016 school year, state educator evaluation regulations (603 CMR 35.07) call for all districts to collect and use student feedback as evidence in the teacher evaluation process and staff feedback as evidence in the administrator evaluation process.[[9]](#footnote-9)
3. District and school leaders told the team that the district has not collected student feedback as evidence in the teacher evaluation process.
4. Interviewees stated that staff feedback collected through surveys on Google docs informs principals’ evaluations.
5. The educator evaluation regulations also call for districts to develop and use multiple measures of student learning, growth, and achievement, including common assessments, to inform judgments about educators’ impact.

Although the district has developed and administers common assessments to assess students’ learning, interviewees reported that common assessment data is not consistently used in all grades to as evidence in the teacher evaluation process.

**Impact**: By not taking action on these components of the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework, the district is limited in its ability to effectively identify educators’ strengths and help them to continuously improve.

1. **The district does not have a comprehensive, data-driven professional development program that is collaboratively developed and has clear goals and objectives based on district and school priorities.**
2. Interviews with district and school leaders and a document review indicated that the district does not have a professional development (PD) program that has clear goals and objectives that are aligned with state, district, school, and educator goals and priorities; is developed collaboratively with educators using multiple sources of student and educator data; and is evaluated for effectiveness.
3. In response to a request to review the district’s PD plan, the district provided the team with three sets of documents from school years 2015–2016 through 2017–2018 entitled Professional Development & Initiatives. In addition, the district provided the agenda and schedule for the All-Cape In-Service Day at the Cape Cod Collaborative. These documents contained the titles of numerous programs and initiatives, but did not include goals, objectives, or training schedules.

2. A review of the district’s school calendar and information provided by district and school leaders indicated that the district has four teacher PD days. Three days are scheduled during staff orientation before school begins. The fourth day is scheduled at the Cape Cod Collaborative as part of an All-Cape In-Service Day in early September.

a. Examples of district PD topics included eDoctrina and behavior training. On the All-Cape In-Service Day teachers could choose from a broad range of programs.

**B.** The district has a limited structure of collaboration to determine and assess district, school, and teachers’ PD needs.

1. Interviewees stated that for the most part the K–12 directors at the central office determine PD programs, and teachers and school leaders do not have formal participation in the planning or scheduling of district PD. Interviewees stated that in some instances the directors receive input on PD needs from professional learning communities (PLCs), teaching and learning councils, and from coaches.

2. The district does not have a PD committee to collaboratively assess district and teachers’ needs and develop PD programming aligned with district, school, and teachers goals. Interviewees told the team that a committee had existed in the past. Interviewees offered various views about why a PD committee did not exist including the absence of compensation for educators to attend meetings and the fact that committee members’ suggestions were not seriously considered.

3. The district has a limited formal process of surveying teacher’s PD needs or interests and of formally evaluating the effectiveness of PD programs.

a. Interviewees stated some surveys/evaluations were conducted, but results were not released. Other said surveys were periodic.

b. Interviewees said that effectiveness was measured in various ways. Some interviewees said that after PD they work with coaches to develop look-fors and to observe what is happening in the classroom. Others look at running records to determine how PD programs have benefited readers.

4. Interviewees told the team that teachers have expressed to the district the need for more PD on integrating the application of social-emotional programming theory into practice in the classroom.

**C.** District and school leaders noted pockets of professional development across the district. Teacher leaders facilitate forty-five minute PLCs at all schools and grades across the district.

1. Multiple content coaches provide job-embedded PD at the district and school levels.
2. The district partners with Lesley University on developing literacy coaches and training teachers in the literacy collaborative model.
3. Teachers receive training in Sheltered English Immersion strategies.
4. The district provides new teachers with professional development opportunities as part of the mentoring program.
5. The district offers teachers course reimbursement for approved courses as part of the collective bargaining agreement.

**Impact**: Without a collaboratively developed data-driven PD plan with SMART goals aligned with district goals and priorities, the district is challenged to support all educators, advance district and school priorities, and improve instruction and student achievement.

***Recommendations***

1. **The district should fully implement all components of the Massachusetts Education Evaluation Framework.**
2. In order to implement the requirements of the state’s educator evaluation regulations, the district should collect, analyze, and use student feedback as a source of evidence to inform teachers’ evaluations.
3. The district should develop and implement a plan for the development and appropriate use of multiple measures of student learning, growth, and achievement.

**Benefits**: Implementing this recommendation will improve educators’ practice and skills and raise student achievement.

**Recommended resource**:

* ESE Model Student Feedback Surveys (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/feedback/>)

1. **The district should develop a professional development program characterized by strong collaborative leadership and alignment with district priorities.**

**A.** The district should outline and document a set of learning experiences for its educators that is systematic, sustained, and aligned.

1. The district’s professional development (PD) program should be overseen by a committee composed of administrators and teacher representatives from all schools, thereby creating a well-defined leadership structure. Its responsibility would be to systematically plan and implement comprehensive and coordinated PD across the district.The committee should evaluate the effectiveness of PD programs.
2. The plan should identify specific PD needs, determine how they might be met, and recommend adjustments in PD practices to meet them.
3. The model should address needs indicated by student achievement data and trends from classroom observations. It should include goals focused on improving teachers’ practices and student outcomes in alignment with the district’s curricula.

**Benefits:** By implementing these recommendations the district will develop a districtwide PD program that is aligned with district and school goals and includes expected learning experiences for educators and students. This will mean high-quality PD in the district. A high-quality PD program coupled with the time and resources available in the district will likely lead to improved professional practices and student achievement.

**Recommended resources**:

* + *The Massachusetts Standards for Professional Development* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/pd/standards.pdf>) describe, identify, and characterize what high quality learning experiences should look like for educators.
  + *Quick Reference Guide: Educator Evaluation & Professional Development* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/QRG-ProfessionalDevelopment.pdf>) describes how educator evaluation and professional development can be used as mutually reinforcing systems to improve educator practice and student outcomes.
  + ESE’s *Professional Development Self-Assessment Guidebook* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/sss/dsac/pd/PDProviderGuide.pdf>) provides tools for analyzing professional development offerings’ alignment with the Massachusetts Standards for Professional Development, the Educator Evaluation Framework, and the Standards and Indicators of Effective Practice.
* ESE’s *Calibration Video Library* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/calibration/>) is a collection of professionally created videos of classroom instruction produced by the School Improvement Network. These videos depict a range of practice (this is NOT a collection of exemplars) to support within-district calibration activities that promote a shared understanding of instructional quality and rigor.
* ESE’s *Online Calibration Training Tool* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/calibration/tool/>) uses videos of classroom instruction from ESE’s Calibration Video Library to simulate brief, unannounced observations. Groups of educators, such as a district leadership team, watch a video together and then individually assess the educator’s practice related to specific elements from the Model Classroom Teacher Rubric and provide the educator with written feedback. Through real-time data displays, the group members can then see how their conclusions compare to each other, as well educators throughout the state.

Student Support

***Contextual Background***

In school year 2017–2018, 55.5 percent of Dennis-Yarmouth’s students are part of the high-needs subgroup because they are in one or more of the following groups: economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and English language learners ELLs or former ELLs.

Many students come to school each day with high programmatic and support needs. For example, students with disabilities represent 19.5 percent of the total student enrollment, compared with 17.7 percent of the state; English language learners make up 8.5 percent of enrollment, compared with the state rate of 10.2 percent; and economically disadvantaged students make up 41.6 percent of enrollment, compared with 32 percent across the state.

District educators are dedicated to supporting the social needs of all students. They strongly emphasize activities that ensure all students have the necessities of life. Interviewees told the team many anecdotes about educators going above and beyond the requirements of their jobs to respond to the specific needs of students and families by ensuring that families have what they need so that students come to school ready to learn. These include winter coat drives, school-based food pantries, and calls and home visits by social workers at each level to connect students’ families with the social supports they need. In addition, the superintendent and district educators have established local partnerships to support students and families and keep students coming to school. An example is the district’s recent partnership with Gosnold Counseling Center (Hyannis) to provide counseling at all district schools for students and families struggling with substance abuse and other issues.

The district has established various positive behavior programs K–12, and has assigned a behavior specialist to each level. Also, the district has recently hired a new director of pupil services with deep experience in larger urban school districts, and a focus on defining a multi-tiered system of support districtwide and identifying the appropriate personnel to implement it.

The team did not find evidence of documents and definitions of tiers at all levels that would constitute a system for assigning students to academic and social-emotional interventions. Several interviewees stated that some students are incorrectly identified as needing special education services because some teachers are not well-informed about interventions and some teachers struggle in applying Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) techniques. There was little evidence of educators using ESE data disaggregated by student subgroup on graduation rates, dropout rates and college and career readiness as a means of identifying equitable strategies for students from those subgroups that support their ongoing engagement at the high-school level.

Perhaps the greatest challenge the district faces in improving student achievement is the consistently high rate of chronic absence.[[10]](#footnote-10) The district also has a four-year cohort graduation rate which has been consistently lower than the state rate in recent years and a dropout rate which has been consistently higher.[[11]](#footnote-11)

***Strength Findings***

**1. The district provides social supports at all levels and partners with outside agencies and groups to help ensure that all students come to school ready to learn.**

* 1. The district focuses on educating the “whole child,” and schools have implemented numerous supports and initiatives within schools so that students’ and their families’ needs are understood districtwide and met in a variety of ways.
     1. Student support staff reported that positive behavior efforts are undertaken at schools, with a variety of programs and specialists at every level K–12.
        1. The district has adopted “The Dolphin Way” as a districtwide approach that supports internal behavior regulation and positive reinforcement.
        2. At the kindergarten level, the “Tools of Mind” program is also used.
        3. The district has adopted the “Calmer Choice” program in grades 1 through 7.
        4. Team members were told that teachers write “shout-outs” on cards to students at the high school for demonstrating positive behaviors. Shout-outs are read aloud in students’ homerooms.
        5. Various positive behavior expectations have been articulated in all schools, and included as goals in current school improvement plans.
        6. Behavior specialists assigned to each level model interventions and best practices, and review behavior data to identify any struggling students to facilitate their transitions to the next school level.
     2. The superintendent reported that each school has a social worker who works with families and students, especially those with high absence, to identify the needs of the family and make appropriate referrals. For example, at the high school, the social worker works closely with students with low attendance and their families through phone calls, home visits, and problem-solving with teachers. In addition, social workers connect families to needed resources.
     3. High-school students (grades 8 to 12) reported that they felt safe at the high school.
        1. One student recounted how her fears of unfriendly older students were resolved the first day of grade 8 when students in the higher grades and faculty greeted the arriving school buses with cheers and applause.

4. Interviewees named a wide variety of clubs and sports offerings at the high schools that any students can join.

5. At the high school, close collaboration between the English language education (ELE) acquisition coach and the guidance director supports students advancing their language development. This includes assigning English language learners (ELLs) to specific teachers with strong Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) skills.

* 1. District leaders identified several partnerships with agencies and educational groups outside of the district schools that support all students.
     1. The district has partnered with Gosnold Counseling Center (Hyannis) to provide substance abuse counseling at each district school for students and/or family members.
     2. In the summer of 2016, the ELE language acquisition coach participated in facilitator training offered by ESE for the Next Generation ELE Project, focused on piloting and adapting model curriculum units for ELLs. She then piloted the units during school year 2016–2017. To extend that work, at the time of the onsite in November 2017, the ELE language acquisition coach was launching a collaborative effort among local educators to build a comprehensive English language development (ELD) curriculum around the model units.

**Impact**: When a district responds to students’ and families’ needs by providing social supports in schools and in the community, it increases stability in students’ lives and provides a safe place for learning.

**2. The district provides supports at all levels to ready students for college and career.**

* 1. Interviews and a document review indicated a range of activities to ready students for college and careers.
     1. Third graders visit a nearby college on a visit arranged by the superintendent.
     2. Counselors at Mattacheese Middle School have adapted the Mass Model from the Massachusetts School Counselors’ Association to provide students in grades 6 and 7, via group lessons in classes, college and career readiness resources.
     3. The high school guidance office supports college readiness activities for all students in grades 8 to 12. For example, students use Naviance software to identify their learning styles, understand multiple intelligences, plan for college, write resumes, and identify the colleges that are an appropriate fit.
     4. The high-school guidance office offers a course for which students receive high school credits; by participating students work in dozens of local agencies and businesses, as well as various schools in the district.
        1. For example, an interviewee described how ELLs used their bilingual skills in agencies and district schools where their work included interpreting for clients and students.
     5. The district has a dual-enrollment agreement with Cape Cod Community College. For example, an interviewee described the dual enrollment in the computer-aided design (CAD) course, for example, as being “very robust,” preparing students to take the certifying CAD exam.

1. According to the most recent ESE data available, in the 2013–2014 academic year, students in the district attended community colleges at a rate of 33.9 percent, compared with the state rate of 27.1 percent.

**Impact**: When educators help all students build skills that will prepare them for gainful employment and careers, it demonstrates that educators and the surrounding community are long-term partners in students’ success.

***Challenges and Areas for Growth***

**3. The district’s policies and practices are not ensuring that all students regularly attend school.**

**A.** Chronic absence is defined as not attending school 10 percent or more of the total number of a student’s days of membership in a school. According to ESE data, in 2016–2017 17.1 percent of students in the district were chronically absent, compared with 13.5 percent of their peers statewide.

1. Between 2011 and 2016 the district’s rate of chronic absence fluctuated between 17.1 percent and 20.9 percent; in 2017, the rate declined to 17.1 percent.

2. In the school year 2016–2017, the percentages of chronically absent students were as follows: 10.6 percent in grade 5; 9.0 percent in grade 6; 14.3 percent in grade 7; 17.6 percent in grade 8; 25.1 percent in grade 9; 28.6 percent in grade 10; 31.1 percent in grade 11; and 40 percent in grade 12.

**B.** When the superintendent was asked about high-school absence rates, she said that she has implemented some initiatives to curb high absence, including a team focused on the “Keep Them Coming” initiative of the Cape and Islands district attorney’s office, and noted that a later start time for the high school has been discussed.

**C.** Interviewees identified a range of possible factors contributing to high absence rates, but did not have specific data to definitively identify factors.

**D.** The 2017–2018 Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High School Student and Parent Handbook states that “daily, punctual attendance is a critically important part of the learning process.” The handbook states that absences “do not require a note from any source, i.e., parent, doctor, dentist, court, etc.”

1. The consequence for eight or more absences for students in grades 9 and 10 and first semester of grade 11 is the withholding of all credit toward graduation. Students in second semester of grade 11 “who carry a credit loss into grade 12 may be denied off-campus lunch privileges for the first term of senior year. Seniors who exceed the attendance obligation will lose off-campus lunch privileges.” The handbook states that “it is not the intent of the attendance policy to be unreasonably punitive toward students for unusual or extenuating circumstances,” and so includes an appeals process “for those extraordinary situations which result in excessive absences.”

**E.** Interviewees said that the absence of an enforced attendance policy contributed to high rates of absence and chronic absence at the high school.

1. One district leader reported that a change in the district’s approach to attendance should be considered carefully so that it does not have unintended effects such as a higher dropout rate.

**Impact**: As the Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High School Student and Parent Handbook states, “Daily, punctual attendance is a critically important part of the learning process.” Chronic absence is an early indicator for low achievement and dropping out of school. Frequent interruption of instruction likely interferes with sustained learning and academic growth.

***Recommendations***

* + 1. **The district should accelerate efforts to define and implement a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) for all learners in the district K–12.**

**A.** It couldcomplement its current attention to establishing an MTSS by completing the MTSS self-assessment.

**B.** Based on findings from the self-assessment, the district should create a calendar and action steps to address the systems and practices that need strengthening.

1. The district should work toward a shared understanding of flexible tiers and define Tier one instructional interventions and Tier one behavioral interventions.

2. Defining tiers two and three should follow.

**C.** To ensure coordination and consistency, the district should ensure that academic and nonacademic core components of MTSS are documented and communicated, including high- quality core curriculum and instruction; schoolwide behavior/social rules, supports and expectations at each level; universal screening and progress monitoring; research-based interventions and assessment practices; and collaborative school/family problem solving.

**D.** The district should consider the benefit of producing a service “map” for each school level that identifies specific student outcomes and/or behaviors (i.e., warning signs) associated with specific student challenges, such as insufficient credits to graduate. It could also identify staff responsible for monitoring data from ESE’s early warning data indicator system (EWIS) as well as local data, taking specific actions or making referrals to address warning signs, and monitoring students’ progress.

**Benefits:** Implementing this recommendation will enhance the ability of district educators to meet the learning needs of all students.

**Recommended resources:**

* ESE’s *Early Warning Indicator System* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edwin/analytics/ewis.html> ) is a tool to provide information to districts about the likelihood that their students will reach key academic goals. Districts can use the tool in conjunction with other data and sources of information to better target student supports and interventions and to examine school-level patterns over time in order to address systemic issues that may impede students’ ability to meet academic goals.
* The *Early Warning Implementation Guide* provides information on how to use early warning data, including the Massachusetts Early Warning Indicator System (EWIS), to identify, diagnose, support and monitor students in grades 1-12. It offers educators an overview of EWIS and how to effectively use these data in conjunction with local data by following a six-step implementation cycle.
* The *Massachusetts Tiered System of Support (MTSS)* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfss>) is a blueprint for school improvement that focuses on systems, structures and supports across the district, school, and classroom to meet the academic and non-academic needs of all students. The MTSS website includes links to a self-assessment and a variety of helpful resources.
* The *Educator Effectiveness Guidebook for Inclusive Practice* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/guidebook/>) includes tools for districts, schools, and educators that are aligned to the MA Educator Evaluation Framework and promote evidence-based best practices for inclusion following the principles of Universal Design for Learning, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, and Social and Emotional Learning.
* ESE’s *Calibration Video Library* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/calibration/>) is a collection of professionally created videos of classroom instruction produced by the School Improvement Network. These videos depict a range of practice (this is NOT a collection of exemplars) to support within-district calibration activities that promote a shared understanding of instructional quality and rigor.
  + 1. **The district should revise its attendance policy to improve student attendance and take appropriate steps to curb the high chronic absence in grades 5–12.**

1. The district should conduct a study of attendance data.
2. The district should consider surveying students and families about the reasons for high absence rates and possible ways of improving attendance.
3. The district should review how absence is monitored to ensure accuracy in reporting.
4. Principals should consider including attendance goals in school improvement plans.
5. Although the district may excuse extended absence because of illness or hospitalization, it should rewrite its attendance policy so that students are expected to be in school daily and the number of permissible absences is limited.

**D.** District leaders should analyze results and formulate recommendations for change.

1. The district should inform stakeholders of planned changes.

**Benefits:** By implementing this recommendation the district will improve attendance and increase students’ opportunity to learn.

**Recommended resources:**

* *Every Student, Every Day: A Community Toolkit to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism* (<http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/chronicabsenteeism/toolkit.pdf>) is a set of Action Guides that provide information and resources to help ensure that all young people are in school every day and benefitting from coordinated systems of support.
* ESE’s *Family and Community Involvement* web page (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/FamComm/f_involvement.html>) provides several resources, including ESE’s *Guide to Parent, Family, and Community Involvement*.
  + - *Youth Voices - How High Schools can Respond to the Needs of Students and Help Prevent Dropouts* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/dropout/youthfocusgroup.pdf>) is a report based on youth focus groups across the Commonwealth who shared their insight about what they liked most and least about school; why students drop out; and how schools should be improved.

Financial and Asset Management

***Contextual Background***

The Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District was formed in 1954 when the two towns built a regional high school. In 1975, the towns agreed to regionalize all grades at special town meetings. The 1975 regional agreement included provisions for the towns to lease the premises, buildings, and equipment of their operating schools to the regional district at no cost. In 2013, the regional agreement was amended to address the following grade re-configuration: K–3 elementary, 4–5 elementary, 6–7 middle school, and the addition of grade 8 to the high school.

The district has had a challenging partnership going back at least to 2006 when Yarmouth proposed a change in the operating assessment method (how the towns fund the schools) previously outlined in the regional district agreement. The amendment to change the assessment method was subsequently approved by both towns. In preparing annual budgets, regional school districts must use the state’s statutory formula to ensure that each complies with its required minimum local contribution. The law allows regional school districts to use the assessment formula outlined in the regional agreement instead of the statutory method, but only with the approval of all members at town meeting. In 2009 Yarmouth voted down its assessment and the district had to call a joint meeting of the two towns to approve the budget. Hard feelings have persisted since then over the assessment and budget votes. The difficulties between the towns were mentioned in the 2011 DESE Review of the Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District. That report stated that complex financial and political factors had created uncertainties and difficulties between the two towns and among town and regional district leaders. At the time of the review in November 2017 the towns were working with the Massachusetts School Building Authority on plans to renovate or build one or more school buildings, but did not agree on how to share capital costs for renovations and repairs in the regional school district. A regional agreement committee with representation from both towns has been organized to discuss changes to the regional agreement.

The district faces a serious financial challenge because of the loss of students to choice, charter, and private schools.

***Strength Finding***

**1. In recognition of the long-standing difficulties between Dennis and Yarmouth and a desire to address them, in September 2017 the towns formed a regional agreement committee to discuss the regional agreement.**

**A.** For many years Dennis and Yarmouth have disagreed about the regional agreement and the budget. At the time of the review in November 2017 the towns did not agree on how to share capital costs for renovations and repairs in the regional school district.

**B.** The superintendent requested an opinion from the district’s legal counsel about financial responsibility for capital improvements made to town-owned school buildings.

1. A document review indicated that the district’s legal counsel found that the regional agreement allocated costs for capital improvements based on enrollment, but the current leases did not address the issue. The attorneys recommended that the district amend the leases or the regional agreement for alignment and consistency.

**C.** In September 2017 Dennis and Yarmouth formed a committee to discuss the regional agreement.

1. A district administrator said that stress between the towns and the funding shift it has created is one of the district’s biggest financial challenges. “Anything we can do to alleviate stress between the towns is a goal.”

2. The committee includes selectmen and members of finance committees.

3. The superintendent stated that she attends every meeting of the new committee but is not a member.

**Impact**: A regional agreement committee with representation from both towns can help resolve disagreements between Dennis and Yarmouth and can help the regional district’s partners to move forward with needed building improvements.

***Challenges and Areas for Growth***

**2. The district loses many students to choice, charter, and private schools resulting in substantial tuition costs to the district.**

**A.** Between fiscal year 2012 and fiscal year 2016, many students chose to attend school out of the district resulting in substantial tuition costs to the district.

1. The table below represents the losses of students and tuition for out-of-district school choice for fiscal year 2012 through fiscal year 2016.

**Table 22: Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District**

**Losses in Enrollment and Tuition from Out-of-District School Choice**

**Fiscal Year 2012 through Fiscal Year 2016**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Fiscal Year** | **Number of Out-of-District**  **Choice Students** | **Choice-Out Tuition** |
| 2011–2012 | 321 | $3,842,598 |
| 2012–2013 | 335 | $4,457,006 |
| 2013–2014 | 346 | $4,325,729 |
| 2014–2015 | 356 | $4,062,416 |
| 2015–2016 | 353 | $3,947,855 |

Source: End-of-Year Reports and MA ESE School Choice Trends in Enrollment and Tuition

**B.** District administrators said that they were encouraged that the costs had decreased since 2013, but noted that the cost to the district is difficult to absorb.

1. When asked why so students choose to attend school out of the district, many interviewees told the team that the ongoing disagreements between the towns on the budget and other matters may be a factor.

**Impact:** School choice enrollments continue to reduce the funding that the schools have to support all children’s education.

**3. At the time of the review, two newly appointed business office administrators without recent experience in financial management had assumed responsibility for managing the district’s finances.**

1. After the June 2017 departure of the director of finance and operations, who had served in the position for six years, the superintendent restructured the business office by creating two new positions.
2. The position of assistant superintendent for administrative and business services was created in July 2017 and the person who had been the high school principal for many years was appointed to this position on August 17, 2017.

a. The assistant superintendent serves as the primary business leader for the district and oversees all business office responsibilities including transportation, food services, and facilities. In addition, he advises the superintendent on educational and operational matters in the district.

b. The assistant superintendent has a mentor who is a retired school business administrator.

1. The position of business office coordinator was created in July 2017 and the person responsible for human resources in the district since January 2017 assumed the business office coordinator duties.

a. The business office coordinator supervises accounts payable, bookkeeping, benefits and payroll functions and continues to have responsibility for all human resource duties.

b. The business office coordinator has been working with the Massachusetts Association of School Business Officers (MASBO) and attending MASBO meetings and conferences.

**B.** At the time of the onsite in November 2017, the new business office administrators were taking on new responsibilities, including preparing a budget, developing a financial policies and practices manual, and training staff in business office practices.

1. Yarmouth town officials had requested that the district use a zero-based budget process as it prepared the fiscal year 2019 budget and the superintendent had agreed. In the past, district administrators began the budget process with a level-services budget.

2. Interviews and a document review indicated that an audit had found that sufficient financial controls were not in place in a district tuition program.

3. Some business office support staff told the review team that the previous business administrator had taken on much of the office work himself; they expressed the opinion that they were not as well informed about business operations as they might have been.

**Impact**: As they assume their responsibilities for the financial management of the district, two new business office administrators have to prepare a budget, write a financial policies and practices manual, and train staff in business office practices. With ongoing support and training, these new leaders in critical roles can effectively manage business operations in the district.

***Recommendations***

**District leaders should continue to provide information to the towns about district finances and operations as the regional agreement committee reviews the regional agreement.**

1. The superintendent and assistant superintendent should continue to meet regularly with town boards and committees to share information about district finances and operations. Transparency and open communications are essential as the regional agreement committee does its work.
2. The superintendent should work with the district’s attorneys to ensure clear, consistent language about responsibility for capital improvements in the school building leases.
3. The superintendent and town administrators should work with ESE’s Office of School Governance,[[12]](#footnote-12) as the Commissioner must approve all amendments to regional agreements.

**Benefits:** Clarity and consistency in the leases and the regional agreement will be important as the district works with the Massachusetts School Building Authority on plans to renovate or build one or more school buildings.

**Recommended resources:**

* ESE’s Regional School District Organization (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/regional/>) provides information about laws and regulations, reports, professional organizations, and the process for establishing and amending a regional school district agreement.
* *Advisory on School Governance* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/advisory/cm1115gov.html>) explains state law as it applies to particular functions of school governance, and provides recommendations on the important role that each partner in this endeavor plays in advancing collaboration and school improvement.
* The *District Governance Program* (<http://www.masc.org/field-services/district-governance-project>), provided by the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, is designed to focus on continuous improvement and to build understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the school committee and the superintendent.
  + - *Labor-Management-Community Collaboration in Springfield Public Schools* (<http://www.renniecenter.org/research/LaborMgmtCommunityCollab.pdf>) is a case study from the Rennie Center describing how a district improved collaboration, communication, and relationships among adult stakeholders with the goal of improved student achievement.
* *Smarter School Spending for Student Success* (<http://smarterschoolspending.org/>) provides free processes and tools to help districts use their resources to improve student achievement.
* *At-A-Glance Community Reports* (<http://www.mass.gov/dor/local-officials/dls-newsroom/employee-contacts/dls/at-a-glance-community-reports.html>) are community-specific overviews of key data from the Department of Revenue, including socioeconomic data, cherry sheet data, tax revenue information, and other data.
* ESE’s webpage on school finance laws and regulations (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr10.html?section=04>) provides a list of municipal payments commonly made on behalf of school districts.

**2. The district should formally collect feedback from stakeholders to determine why families are leaving, analyze results, and make recommendations for change.**

1. The district should collect school choice data and formally collect feedback (for example, through exit interviews) from stakeholders, including parents who have enrolled their children in other districts and parents who chose to keep their children in the district’s schools.

1. The district should determine from which schools and grades students are “choicing out.”

2. The district should collect feedback from a large enough number of families to understand the range of reasons why families are leaving the district.

**B.** District leaders should analyze results and formulate recommendations for change.

1. The district should inform stakeholders of planned changes.

**3. The district should provide the assistant superintendent for administrative and business services and the business office coordinator appropriate training and support as they assume responsibility for the district’s financial management.**

1. The district should provide the assistant superintendent for administrative and business services and the business office coordinator ongoing training and/or mentoring in school finance, accounting, auditing, and the preparation of school budgets.

The district should consider hiring consultants with financial management experience.

The business office coordinator should continue her work with the Massachusetts Association of School Business Officers (MASBO) and her attendance at MASBO meetings and conferences.

1. The business office support staff should know how their individual work fits in with the overall operation and reporting requirements of the business office, and be trained in their roles.

**C.** The district’s treasurer should regularly review the monthly bank statement reconciliation completed by the assistant treasurer.

**Benefits** from implementing this recommendation will include a business office staff that is trained, qualified, and effectively managing school finances and operations. As a result, all stakeholders will have trust and confidence in the financial management of the district.

**Recommended resources:**

* ESE’s *Chapter 70 Program* web page (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/chapter70/>) provides information, resources, and updates about the Chapter 70 program.
* ESE’s webpage on school finance laws and regulations (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr10.html?section=04>) provides a list of municipal payments commonly made on behalf of school districts.
* *End-of-Year Financial Report* information can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/accounting/eoy/>.
* *Primer on Levy Limits/Proposition 2 ½* (<http://www.mass.gov/dor/docs/dls/publ/misc/levylimits.pdf>) is a guide from the Department of Revenue website designed to explain the basic provisions of Proposition 2 ½. The Primer focuses in particular on those aspects of the law that have been found to cause the most confusion, for example: the ways in which Proposition 2 ½ limits the property tax, how the levy limit is calculated, how an override differs from a debt exclusion or capital outlay expenditure exclusion, and how new growth works.
* The Rennie Center’s *Smart* *School Budgeting* (<http://www.renniecenter.org/sites/default/files/2017-01/SmartSchoolBudgeting.pdf> ) is a summary of existing resources on school finance, budgeting, and real­location.
* *Best Practices in School District Budgeting* (<http://www.gfoa.org/best-practices-school-district-budgeting>) outlines steps to developing a budget that best aligns resources with student achievement goals. Each step includes a link to a specific resource document with relevant principles and policies to consider.

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

Review Team Members

The review was conducted from November 27–30, 2017, by the following team of independent ESE consultants.

1. Dr. Charles Burnett, Leadership and Governance
2. Richard Silverman, Ed. D, Curriculum and Instruction
3. Maureen Murray Adamson, Ed. D, Assessment
4. James L. Hearns, Human Resources and Professional Development, *review team coordinator*
5. Janet Smith, Ph.D., Student Support
6. Margaret Foster, 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 administration and business services, assistant treasurer, business office coordinator, payroll clerk, bookkeeper, accounts payable clerk, two town administrators, and two town accountants.

The team conducted interviews with the following members of the school committee: chairperson, vice chairperson, secretary, treasurer, and two members.

The review team conducted interviews with the following representatives of the teachers’ association: president and three vice-presidents.

The team conducted interviews/focus groups with the following central office administrators: superintendent, assistant superintendent for administration and business services, director of humanities and the arts, director of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) instruction, director of pupil services, and director of early learning.

The team visited the following schools: Marguerite E. Small Elementary (Pre-K–3), Station Avenue Elementary (K–3), N. H. Wixon Elementary School (grades 4–5), Ezra H. Baker Innovation School (Pre-K–3), Mattacheese Middle School (grades 6–7), and Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High School (grades 8–12).

During school visits, the team conducted interviews with six principals and nine coaches, and two focus groups with five elementary-school teachers and one high-school teacher. No teachers attended the focus group for middle-school teachers.

The team observed 77 classes in the district: 24 at the high school, 14 at the middle school and 39 at the 4 elementary schools.

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

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

Site Visit Schedule

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Monday**  11/27/2017 | **Tuesday**  11/28/2017 | **Wednesday**  11/29/2017 | **Thursday**  11/30/2017 |
| Orientation with district leaders and principals; interviews with district staff and principals; document reviews; interview with teachers’ association; and visits to the Ezra Baker Innovation and Marguerite E. Small elementary schools for classroom observations. | Interviews with district staff and principals; review of personnel files; teacher focus groups; parent and student focus groups; and visits to Dennis-Yarmouth High School and Station Avenue Elementary School for classroom observations. | Interviews with town or city personnel; interviews with school leaders; interviews with school committee members; visits to the Nathaniel H. Wixon Innovation, Mattacheese Middle, Ezra H. Baker Innovation, and Marguerite E. Small schools for classroom observations. | Interviews with school leaders; follow-up interviews; district review team meeting; visits to Dennis-Yarmouth High School, Mattacheese Middle School, and Nathaniel H. Wixon Innovation School for classroom observations; district wrap-up meeting with the superintendent. |

Appendix B: Enrollment, Attendance, Expenditures

**Table B1a: Dennis-Yarmouth RSD**

**2016–2017 Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **District** | **Percent**  **of Total** | **State** | **Percent of**  **Total** |
| African-American | 267 | 8.8% | 84,996 | 8.9% |
| Asian | 69 | 2.3% | 63,690 | 6.7% |
| Hispanic | 311 | 10.3% | 184,782 | 19.4% |
| Native American | 67 | 2.2% | 2,125 | 0.2% |
| White | 2,122 | 70.2% | 584,665 | 61.3% |
| Native Hawaiian | 3 | 0.1% | 855 | 0.1% |
| Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic | 185 | 6.1% | 32,635 | 3.4% |
| All | 3,024 | 100.0% | 953,748 | 100.0% |
| Note: As of October 1, 2016 | | | | |

**Table B1b: Dennis-Yarmouth RSD**

**2016–2017 Student Enrollment by High Needs Populations**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **District** | | | **State** | | |
| **N** | **Percent of High Needs** | **Percent of District** | **N** | **Percent of High Needs** | **Percent of State** |
| Students w/ disabilities | 564 | 34.5% | 18.4% | 167,530 | 38.4% | 17.4% |
| Econ. Dis. | 1,199 | 73.2% | 39.6% | 288,465 | 66.1% | 30.2% |
| ELLs and Former ELLs | 249 | 15.2% | 8.2% | 90,204 | 20.7% | 9.5% |
| All high needs students | 1,637 | 100.0% | 53.4% | 436,416 | 100.0% | 45.2% |
| Notes: As of October 1, 2016. District and state numbers and percentages for students with disabilities and high needs students are calculated including students in out-of-district placements. Total district enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 3,066; total state enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 964,514. | | | | | | |

**Table B2: Dennis-Yarmouth RSD**

**Attendance Rates, 2014–2017**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **N (2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2017)** |
| High Needs | 1,703 | 92.9 | 92.7 | 92.6 | 92.8 | -0.1 | 93.1 |
| Econ. Dis. | 1,248 | -- | 92.4 | 92.3 | 92.4 | -- | 92.6 |
| ELLs | 288 | 94.9 | 94.1 | 94.0 | 93.9 | -1.0 | 93.5 |
| SWD | 664 | 91.8 | 91.9 | 92.1 | 92.6 | 0.8 | 93.0 |
| African American | 295 | 94.9 | 95.1 | 94.5 | 94.1 | -0.8 | 94.0 |
| Asian | 74 | 97.2 | 96.5 | 95.6 | 96.0 | -1.2 | 96.3 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 354 | 93.4 | 92.6 | 92.8 | 92.6 | -0.8 | 92.8 |
| Multi-Race | 200 | 92.3 | 92.6 | 92.5 | 93.9 | 1.6 | 94.5 |
| White | 2,264 | 93.6 | 93.6 | 93.8 | 93.9 | 0.3 | 95.1 |
| All | 3,263 | 93.7 | 93.7 | 93.7 | 93.8 | 0.1 | 94.6 |
| 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 B3: Dennis-Yarmouth RSD**

**Expenditures, Chapter 70 State Aid, and Net School Spending**

**Fiscal Years 2015–2017**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **FY15** | | **FY16** | | **FY17** | |
|  | **Estimated** | **Actual** | **Estimated** | **Actual** | **Estimated** | **Actual** |
| Expenditures | | | | | | |
| From school committee budget | $54,253,259 | $53,695,417 | $55,446,008 | $54,748,969 | $56,653,332 | $56,267,669 |
| From revolving funds and grants | -- | $6,146,463 | -- | $6,064,998 | --- | $6,882,561 |
| Total expenditures | -- | $59,841,881 | -- | $60,813,967 | --- | $63,150,230 |
| Chapter 70 aid to education program | | | | | | |
| Chapter 70 state aid\* | -- | $6,718,014 | -- | $6,803,239 | -- | $6,993,814 |
| Required local contribution | -- | $30,189,585 | -- | $30,284,637 | -- | $30,483,143 |
| Required net school spending\*\* | -- | $36,907,599 | -- | $37,087,876 | -- | $37,476,957 |
| Actual net school spending | -- | $47,338,714 | -- | $49,082,129 | -- | $51,230,326 |
| Over/under required ($) | -- | $10,431,115 | -- | $11,994,253 | -- | $13,753,369 |
| Over/under required (%) | -- | 28.3% | -- | 32.3% | -- | 26.9% |
| \*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: FY15, FY16, FY17 District End-of-Year Reports; Chapter 70 Program information on ESE website.  Data retrieved 12/13/17 and 2/28/18 | | | | | | |

**Table B4: Dennis-Yarmouth RSD**

**Expenditures Per In-District Pupil**

**Fiscal Years 2014–2016**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Expenditure Category** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** |
| Administration | $443 | $498 | $502 |
| Instructional leadership (district and school) | $983 | $1,023 | $1,086 |
| Teachers | $6,882 | $6,772 | $6,644 |
| Other teaching services | $1,384 | $1,385 | $1,471 |
| Professional development | $159 | $172 | $112 |
| Instructional materials, equipment and technology | $462 | $451 | $525 |
| Guidance, counseling and testing services | $520 | $533 | $501 |
| Pupil services | $2,035 | $1,975 | $1,959 |
| Operations and maintenance | $1,362 | $1,298 | $1,213 |
| Insurance, retirement and other fixed costs | $2,812 | $2,845 | $2,894 |
| Total expenditures per in-district pupil | $17,042 | $16,952 | $16,906 |
| Sources: [Per-pupil expenditure reports on ESE website](http://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/statistics/)  Note: Any discrepancy between expenditures and total is because of rounding. | | | |

Appendix C: Instructional Inventory

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Focus Area #1: Learning Objectives & Expectations** |  | Insufficient Evidence | Limited Evidence | Sufficient Evidence | Compelling Evidence | Avg Number of points |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (1 to 4) |
| 1. The teacher demonstrates knowledge of the subject matter. | **ES** | 0% | 18% | 44% | 38% | 3.2 |
| **MS** | 0% | 0% | 64% | 36% | 3.4 |
| **HS** | 0% | 13% | 33% | 54% | 3.4 |
| **Total #** | 0% | 10 | 34 | 33 | 3.3 |
| **Total %** | 0% | 13% | 44% | 43% |  |
| 2. The teacher ensures that students understand what they should be learning in the lesson and why. | **ES** | 10% | 31% | 33% | 26% | 2.7 |
| **MS** | 7% | 14% | 71% | 7% | 2.8 |
| **HS** | 13% | 33% | 25% | 29% | 2.7 |
| **Total #** | 8 | 22 | 29 | 18 | 2.7 |
| **Total %** | 10% | 29% | 38% | 23% |  |
| 3. The teacher uses appropriate classroom activities well matched to the learning objective(s). | **ES** | 3% | 28% | 44% | 26% | 2.9 |
| **MS** | 0% | 21% | 64% | 14% | 2.9 |
| **HS** | 13% | 38% | 29% | 21% | 2.6 |
| **Total #** | 4 | 23 | 33 | 17 | 2.8 |
| **Total %** | 5% | 30% | 43% | 22% |  |
| 4. The teacher conducts frequent checks for student understanding, provides feedback, and adjusts instruction. | **ES** | 3% | 36% | 49% | 13% | 2.7 |
| **MS** | 7% | 7% | 64% | 21% | 3.0 |
| **HS** | 4% | 42% | 25% | 29% | 2.8 |
| **Total #** | 3 | 25 | 34 | 15 | 2.8 |
| **Total %** | 4% | 32% | 44% | 19% |  |
| **Total Score For Focus Area #1** | **ES** |  |  |  |  | **11.6** |
| **MS** |  |  |  |  | **12.1** |
| **HS** |  |  |  |  | **11.5** |
| **Total** |  |  |  |  | **11.6** |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Focus Area #2: Student Engagement & Higher-Order Thinking** |  | Insufficient Evidence | Limited Evidence | Sufficient Evidence | Compelling Evidence | Avg Number of points |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (1 to 4) |
| 5. Students assume responsibility to learn and are engaged in the lesson. | **ES** | 3% | 38% | 44% | 15% | 2.7 |
| **MS** | 0% | 14% | 64% | 21% | 3.1 |
| **HS** | 13% | 38% | 29% | 21% | 2.6 |
| **Total #** | 4 | 26 | 33 | 14 | 2.7 |
| **Total %** | 5% | 34% | 43% | 18% |  |
| 6. Students engage in higher-order thinking. | **ES** | 10% | 33% | 46% | 10% | 2.6 |
| **MS** | 7% | 21% | 64% | 7% | 2.7 |
| **HS** | 25% | 42% | 13% | 21% | 2.3 |
| **Total #** | 11 | 26 | 30 | 10 | 2.5 |
| **Total %** | 14% | 34% | 39% | 13% |  |
| 7. Students communicate their ideas and thinking with each other. | **ES** | 23% | 42% | 23% | 13% | 2.3 |
| **MS** | 7% | 21% | 64% | 7% | 2.7 |
| **HS** | 25% | 33% | 29% | 13% | 2.3 |
| **Total #** | 14 | 24 | 23 | 8 | 2.4 |
| **Total %** | 20% | 35% | 33% | 12% |  |
| 8. Students engage with meaningful, real-world tasks. | **ES** | 26% | 28% | 38% | 8% | 2.3 |
| **MS** | 7% | 29% | 50% | 14% | 2.7 |
| **HS** | 29% | 25% | 21% | 25% | 2.4 |
| **Total #** | 18 | 21 | 27 | 11 | 2.4 |
| **Total %** | 23% | 27% | 35% | 14% |  |
| **Total Score For Focus Area #2** | **ES** |  |  |  |  | **9.8** |
| **MS** |  |  |  |  | **11.2** |
| **HS** |  |  |  |  | **9.6** |
| **Total** |  |  |  |  | **10.0** |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Focus Area #3: Inclusive Practice & Classroom Culture** |  | Insufficient Evidence | Limited Evidence | Sufficient Evidence | Compelling Evidence | Avg Number of points |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (1 to 4) |
| 9. The teacher ensures that students are engaging in challenging tasks regardless of learning needs. | **ES** | 5% | 41% | 36% | 18% | 2.7 |
| **MS** | 14% | 29% | 57% | 0% | 2.4 |
| **HS** | 29% | 42% | 21% | 8% | 2.1 |
| **Total #** | 11 | 30 | 27 | 9 | 2.4 |
| **Total %** | 14% | 39% | 35% | 12% |  |
| 10. The teacher uses a variety of instructional strategies. | **ES** | 8% | 41% | 38% | 13% | 2.6 |
| **MS** | 7% | 64% | 21% | 7% | 2.3 |
| **HS** | 21% | 58% | 8% | 13% | 2.1 |
| **Total #** | 9 | 39 | 20 | 9 | 2.4 |
| **Total %** | 12% | 51% | 26% | 12% |  |
| 11. Classroom routines and positive supports are in place to ensure that students behave appropriately. | **ES** | 3% | 13% | 38% | 46% | 3.3 |
| **MS** | 0% | 7% | 50% | 43% | 3.4 |
| **HS** | 0% | 29% | 29% | 42% | 3.1 |
| **Total #** | 1 | 13 | 29 | 34 | 3.2 |
| **Total %** | 1% | 17% | 38% | 44% |  |
| 12. The classroom climate is conducive to teaching and learning. | **ES** | 8% | 13% | 44% | 36% | 3.1 |
| **MS** | 0% | 14% | 50% | 36% | 3.2 |
| **HS** | 8% | 21% | 33% | 38% | 3.0 |
| **Total #** | 5 | 12 | 32 | 28 | 3.1 |
| **Total %** | 6% | 16% | 42% | 36% |  |
| **Total Score For Focus Area #3** | **ES** |  |  |  |  | **11.6** |
| **MS** |  |  |  |  | **11.3** |
| **HS** |  |  |  |  | **10.3** |
| **Total** |  |  |  |  | **11.1** |

1. SMART goals are specific and strategic; measureable; action-oriented; rigorous, realistic, and results- focused; and timed and tracked. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Chronic absence is defined as being absent 10 percent or more of “days of membership” in the school district. According to ESE data, between 2011 and 2016, the district’s rate of chronic absence fluctuated between 17.1 percent and 20.9 percent; in 2017, the rate declined to 17.1 percent, compared with the state rate of 13.5 percent. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. SMART goals are (Specific and Strategic; Measurable; Action-Oriented; Rigorous, Realistic, and Results-Focused; and Timed and Tracked). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. from *Classroom Instruction that Works* by Robert Marzano, Debra Pickering, and Jane Pollock [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Students transition from the K–3 schools to the school serving grades 4–5, from the school serving grades 4–5 to the school serving grades 6–7, and from the school serving grades 6–7 school to grade 8 at the high school. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. SMART goals are (Specific and Strategic; Measurable; Action-Oriented; Rigorous, Realistic, and Results-Focused; and Timed and Tracked). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. SMART goals are specific and strategic; measureable; action-oriented; rigorous, realistic, and results- focused; and timed and tracked. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. An informative evaluation is factual and cites instructional details such as methodology, pedagogy, Standards and Indicators of Effective Teaching Practice or instruction of subject-based knowledge that is aligned with the state curriculum frameworks. It does not commit to improvement strategies. An instructive evaluation includes comments intended to improve instruction. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. On Tuesday, February 28, 2017, after collecting public comment since November 2016, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education voted 9-1 to amend the educator evaluation regulations. The most significant change in the regulations is the elimination of a separate student impact rating. Under the [amended regulations](http://www.doe.mass.edu/boe/docs/FY2017/2017-02/item6.html), evaluators do not have to make a separate judgment about an educator’s impact on student learning. Instead, student learning is embedded as an indicator within one of the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework’s four standards. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Chronic absence is defined as being absent 10 percent or more of “days of membership” in the school district. According to ESE data, between 2011 and 2016, the district’s rate of chronic absence fluctuated between 17.1 percent and 20.9 percent; in 2017, the rate declined to 17.1 percent, compared with the state rate of 13.5 percent. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. According to ESE data, in recent years the district’s high-school dropout rate (grades 9 through 12) was as follows: 2.1 percent in 2014 (compared with the state rate of 2.0 percent); 2.8 percent in 2015 (compared with the state rate of 1.9 percent); 2.8 percent In 2016 (compared with the state rate of 1.9 percent); and 1.9 percent in 2017 (compared with the state rate of 1.8 percent). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Contact Ruth Hersh at [rhersh@doe.mass.edu](mailto:rhersh@doe.mass.edu) or 781-338-6588 or Christine Lynch at [clynch@doe.mass.edu](mailto:clynch@doe.mass.edu) or 781-338-6520. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)