District Review Report

Saugus Public Schools

Comprehensive review conducted March 18–21, 2019

Office of District Reviews and Monitoring

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148-4906

Phone 781-338-3000 TTY: N.E.T. Replay 800-439-2370

[www.doe.mass.edu](http://www.doe.mass.edu)



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

Jeffrey C. Riley

Commissioner

**Published November 2019**

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Executive Summary

The district is engaged in a physical transformation, as it creates new and totally renewed school buildings that will soon serve every student. In addition to its investment in its plant, the district is also making clear steps toward improvement in its literacy practices at the elementary level, leveraging partnerships with external resources and partners to increase the capacity of its educators, and increasing its efforts to support students at risk of not graduating. At the same time, the district faces challenges in planning, collaboration, instruction, curriculum, data use, educator evaluation, professional development, student support, and the allocation of resources. This report recommends a series of steps that can increase the district’s capacity to ensure the learning success of all its students. These recommendations, outlined below and detailed in the body of the report, share an emphasis on placing student outcomes at the center of all planning and action, using data to drive improvement, developing the district’s capacity to support students effectively, and investing in the development of educators.

The current building effort offers a powerful example of the challenge facing the district. In June 2017, after an extensive townwide campaign, voters overwhelmingly supported two debt exclusion votes, which committed the town to providing every student in the district a new or renovated school. As a part of this $186 million building initiative for a new middle school–high school building and two fully renovated buildings that will house all elementary students, the town secured the substantial support of the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA), which committed $92.7 million of this funding. As the buildings come on line in school years 2021 and 2022, students and staff will experience substantial improvements in access to high-quality facilities and learning resources. The review team is impressed that the community would make so substantial and lasting a commitment to its children and to its schools, leveraging high levels of state support. Multiple staff, administrators, municipal leaders, families, and students expressed excitement and pride in these projects. Many leaders were observed dedicating time and effort to ensure the successful completion of the building and renovation projects.

Buildings are important, but no matter how fine they are, they cannot ensure student success. When the review team asked how they planned to improve student outcomes, multiple leaders and staff pointed to the pending state-of-the-art facilities in response, expressing the expectation that student outcomes would rise once school was underway in the new buildings. The review team found this trend problematic. Certainly, new and renovated facilities will offer students and educators much to build on, and widespread support from a community can affect the morale of a school or district. The review team has a deep appreciation for the degree of effort involved when any district takes on the construction of a new school, let alone when a district takes on the renovation or rebuilding of all its schools simultaneously—something that the review team has not seen before. The team also appreciates that this effort, which is being led by a lean administrative team, is taxing leaders’ ability to attend to the things that will make the difference in student outcomes. Nonetheless, the team found little to indicate that the kinds of advancement needed in the district were likely to emerge from improvements in facilities, however substantial.

Improvement in student learning outcomes derives from effective teaching and high expectations and comprehensive support for students, teachers, and school leaders.  The review team was impressed by the urgent need for a series of changes in how leaders and staff do the planning, implementing, and evaluating of teaching and learning—the activities that are most likely to lead to better student outcomes. With all due respect to the enormity of the accomplishment that funding and completing the building projects represent, the review team’s evidence, analysis, and concrete recommendations focus leaders and staff on how—as a part of their daily work, in the midst of this transformation—they can strengthen their practice to improve outcomes for all students.

**Instruction**

The team observed 64 classes throughout the district: 20 at the high school, 17 at the middle school, and 27 at the 4 elementary schools. The team observed 29 English language arts (ELA) classes, 17 mathematics classes, and 18 classes in other subject areas. Among the classes observed were three special education classes and one English language learner (ELL) class. The observations were approximately 20 minutes in length. All review team members collected data using ESE’s Instructional Inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards-based teaching. This data is presented in Appendix C.

The quality of instruction in observed classes was inconsistent from class to class and school to school. While instruction at the elementary level demonstrated greater evidence of good practice, instruction at all three levels did not reliably provide students with clear learning objectives, create rigorous learning opportunities, focus on the development of higher-order thinking skills and respond to the diverse learning needs of all students. Instruction at the elementary level showed substantial evidence of student engagement, and the team observed many teachers at this level checking for understanding, providing feedback, and adjusting their instruction. The team found limited evidence of such practices in observed middle and high school classes.

**Strengths**

* Under the leadership of the school committee and the superintendent, the district partnered effectively with municipal leaders to increase the level of community support for the schools.
* At the elementary level, a research-based initiative has been established to develop a coherent approach to the delivery of writing instruction across the district’s four elementary schools.
* The district is leveraging internal and external resources in a coordinated attempt to enhance and expand the professional capacities of teachers and school leaders.
* The district has increased support for students at risk of not graduating by hiring two wraparound counselors and establishing credit recovery options.
* As part of a comprehensive restructuring of its educational model, the district has secured funding for construction of a new middle/high school building, an addition and renovations for another school, and renovations to one other school building. By 2021, all students will attend a new, renovated, or renovated/expanded school with up-to-date facilities.

**Challenges and Areas for Growth**

* District and school improvement plans are incomplete, unfocused, uneven in quality, and in some cases, nonexistent. There is limited evidence of strategic planning to drive improvement and assessment of progress toward the realization of outcomes.
* The school committee, central office, and school leaders have not established a culture of collaboration that focuses on improving teaching and learning and is infused with a sense of urgency.
* In observed classrooms, the quality of instruction was inconsistent districtwide.
* The district does not have a high-quality, standards-aligned, documented curriculum; a regular curriculum review and revision process; and a sufficient number of people empowered to exercise curriculum leadership.
* The district’s data collection and analysis system is incomplete andinconsistent.
* The district does not use data systematically to improve teaching, learning, and decision-making, and to inform key stakeholders.
* The district’s educator evaluation system does not ensure that educators receive high-quality feedback[[1]](#footnote-1) that helps them to improve their practice.
* The district’s professional development program is not informed by student and educator data, aligned with district and educator goals, and focused on student outcomes.
* The district does not have a proactive tiered system of targeted academic and other support to meet the needs of all students, based upon data-driven decision-making and progress monitoring.
* The district has not established a positive behavioral system with an ongoing data-monitoring process to evaluate progress.
* Many principals, teachers, and students expressed concern and frustration with the history of allocation of financial resources, which they stated has led to an inadequate deployment of staff, both at the leadership level and in key school-based roles, and insufficient provision of learning materials, textbooks, and supplies.
* The district’s budget documents for fiscal year 2019 and fiscal year 2020 do not include key information that connects improvement planning and student performance to the allocation of resources, nor do they include all available resources, such as grants and revolving accounts. In addition, the district and the town do not have an up-to-date and signed written agreement on municipal expenditures in support of the district.
* The district and the town do not have a comprehensive plan to improve and maintain its buildings and to ensure the effective use of buildings and operational systems. Staffing of facilities is incomplete.

**Recommendations**

The district should ensure that its planning documents drive the development, implementation, and modification of educational programs and practices.

* + - The district should develop a robust emphasis on collecting, using, and sharing student data within all leadership teams, focusing team meetings on educational goals and improvement strategies, and building a sense of urgency.

The district should ensure that all teachers have access to high-quality, comprehensive, standards-based, and horizontally and vertically aligned curricula, and the support needed to implement the curricula effectively. The district should develop and implement an ongoing curriculum review and revision process.

* + - The district should ensure that all teachers provide effective standards-based instruction that challenges and supports all students. A focus on instructional improvement should drive districtwide and school-based planning, professional learning and coaching, collaboration and common planning time, and educator evaluation.
* The district should develop uniform and integrated policies for the efficient and purposeful collection, use, and sharing of data to improve teaching, learning, and decision-making.

The district should fully implement all components of the educator evaluation system, with a particular emphasis on ensuring that all educators receive high-quality feedback.

The district should build a professional development program that is informed by data and includes well-defined, measurable goals that are aligned with district, school, and educator goals.

* The district should develop and implement a formal tiered system of support.
* The district should adopt a multi-tiered positive behavioral intervention and support system and provide professional development to help district and school leaders, teachers, and support staff to implement it across the district.
* The district should strengthen its efforts to improve student attendance and reduce the need to rely on suspension as a response to misconduct.
* The district should review whether its current allocation of resources effectively meets the goals and priorities needed to improve students’ performance, opportunities, and outcomes, and reallocate resources as necessary.
* The district should develop a clear, comprehensive budget document that details how the budget supports district and school goals, how much schools and programs cost, and how outside funds are used. The district and the town should formalize in writing their agreement on municipal expenditures that are provided to the district.
* District administrators and town officials should develop a long-term capital improvement plan, as well as a preventative maintenance manual.

Saugus Public Schools 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 (DESE): 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 providing information to each district reviewed, DESE uses review reports to identify resources and/or technical assistance 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, students, and students’ families. Team members also observe classroom instruction. Subsequent to the onsite review, the team meets for two days to develop findings and recommendations before submitting a draft report to DESE. DESE edits and fact-checks the draft report and sends it to the district for factual review before publishing it on the DESE website.

Site Visit

The site visit to the Saugus Public Schools was conducted from March 18–21, 2019. The site visit included 37 hours of interviews and focus groups with approximately 90 stakeholders, including school committee members, district administrators, school staff, students, students’ families, teachers’ association representatives, and external coaches. The review team conducted 3 focus groups with 5 elementary-school teachers, 19 middle-school teachers, and 15 high-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, attendance, and expenditures. The team observed classroom instruction in 64 classrooms in 6 schools. The team collected data using DESE’s Instructional Inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards-based teaching. This data is contained in Appendix C.

**District Profile**

Saugus has a town manager form of government and the chair of the school committee is elected. The member receiving the most votes in the school committee election is customarily elected chair, although this practice is not always followed. The five member school committee meets twice monthly from September through June, except in December and February when it meets once. The school committee usually does not meet in July and August.

The current superintendent has been in the position since July 1, 2016. The district leadership team includes the superintendent, the executive director of curriculum, instruction, and accountability, the executive director of pupil personnel services and special education and the executive director of finance and administration. Between 2013 and 2018, the number of central office positions declined 23 percent, and these four leaders are the only central office staff. The district has six principals leading six schools. There are five other school administrators, two vice-principals at the middle school, two assistant principals at the high school, and a guidance director at the high school. In the 2018–2019 school year, there were 202.8 FTE teachers in the district.

In the 2018–2019 school year, 2,609 students were enrolled in the district’s 6 schools:

**Table 1: Saugus Public Schools**

**Schools, Type, Grades Served, and Enrollment\*, 2018–2019**

| **School** | **Type** | **Grades Served** | **Enrollment** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Veterans Memorial Elementary School | ES | Pre-K–5 | 524 |
| Lynnhurst Elementary School | ES | K–5 | 282 |
| Oaklandvale Elementary School | ES | K–5 | 241 |
| Waybright Elementary School | ES | Pre-K–5 | 229 |
| Belmonte Middle School | MS | 6–8 | 634 |
| Saugus High School | HS | 9–12 | 699 |
| **Total** | **6** | **Pre-K–12** | **2,609** |
| \*As of October 1, 2018 | | | |

Between 2014 and 2018 overall student enrollment decreased by 7.6 percent, from 2,850 in 2014 to 2,609 in 2018. Enrollment figures by race/ethnicity and high needs populations (i.e., students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, and English learners (ELs) and former ELs) as compared with the state are provided in Tables B1a and B1b in Appendix B.

The total in-district per-pupil expenditure was higher than the median in-district per-pupil expenditure for 48 K–12 districts of similar size (2,000–2,999 students) in fiscal year 2017: $15,487 as compared with $14,595 (see [District Analysis and Review Tool Detail: Staffing & 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 grade 10 in ELA, math, and science. Data from the two assessments are presented separately because the tests are different and cannot be compared.

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| **Table 2: Saugus Public Schools**  **Accountability Percentile, Criterion Reference Target (CRT) Percentage, Reason for Classification** | | | | |
| **School** | **Accountability Percentile** | **CRT Percentage** | **Overall Classification** | **Reason For Classification** |
| Lynnhurst | 73 | 81% | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Meeting targets |
| Oaklandvale | 46 | 43% | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Partially meeting targets |
| Veterans Memorial | 53 | 87% | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Meeting targets |
| Waybright | 51 | 25% | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Partially meeting targets |
| Saugus Middle | 9 | 8% | Requiring assistance or intervention | In need of focused/targeted support: Among the lowest performing 10% of schools and low subgroup performance for White students and high needs students |
| Saugus High | 23 | 57% | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Partially meeting targets |
| District | -- | 31% | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Partially meeting targets |

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| **Table 3: Saugus Public Schools**  **Next-Generation MCAS ELA Scaled Scores Grades 3–8, 2017–2018** | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **State (2018)** | **Above/Below** |
| African American/Black | 57 | 492.6 | 491.8 | -0.8 | 490.3 | 1.5 |
| Asian | 47 | 504.5 | 506.2 | 1.7 | 511.6 | -5.4 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 222 | 495.4 | 493.6 | -1.8 | 489.7 | 3.9 |
| Multi-Race | 32 | 500.9 | 499.4 | -1.5 | 502.8 | -3.4 |
| White | 882 | 499.1 | 497.2 | -1.9 | 504.2 | -7.0 |
| High Needs | 617 | 492.1 | 490.2 | -1.9 | 490.1 | 0.1 |
| Econ. Dis. | 405 | 494.8 | 491.7 | -3.1 | 490.2 | 1.5 |
| SWD | 244 | 481.6 | 482.1 | 0.5 | 480.8 | 1.3 |
| EL | 151 | 489.4 | 489.4 | 0.0 | 488.4 | 1.0 |
| All | 1,249 | 498.5 | 496.6 | -1.9 | 500.5 | -3.9 |
| Next Generation MCAS Achievement Levels: 440–470 Not Meeting Expectations; 470–500 Partially Meeting Expectations; 500–530 Meeting Expectations; 530–560 Exceeding Expectations | | | | | | |

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| **Table 4: Saugus Public Schools**  **Next-Generation MCAS Math Scaled Scores Grades 3–8, 2017—2018** | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **State (2018)** | **Above/Below** |
| African American/Black | 59 | 488.7 | 487.1 | -1.6 | 486.9 | 0.2 |
| Asian | 47 | 510.3 | 510.0 | -0.3 | 514.3 | -4.3 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 224 | 495.7 | 494.6 | -1.1 | 487.4 | 7.2 |
| Multi-Race | 32 | 501.6 | 494.9 | -6.7 | 499.7 | -4.8 |
| White | 885 | 500.1 | 499.1 | -1.0 | 501.8 | -2.7 |
| High Needs | 621 | 491.9 | 491.0 | -0.9 | 488.2 | 2.8 |
| Econ. Dis. | 410 | 493.7 | 492.3 | -1.4 | 487.7 | 4.6 |
| SWD | 243 | 482.1 | 482.1 | 0.0 | 479.2 | 2.9 |
| EL | 151 | 492.3 | 492.1 | -0.2 | 488.5 | 3.6 |
| All | 1,256 | 499.3 | 498.0 | -1.3 | 498.4 | -0.4 |
| Next Generation MCAS Achievement Levels: 440–470 Not Meeting Expectations; 470–500 Partially Meeting Expectations; 500-–530 Meeting Expectations; 530–560 Exceeding Expectations | | | | | | |

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| **Table 5: Saugus Public Schools**  **Next-Generation MCAS ELA Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations Grades 3–8, 2017—2018** | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **State (2018)** | **Above/Below** |
| African American/Black | 57 | 27% | 33% | 6 | 31% | 2 |
| Asian | 47 | 57% | 64% | 7 | 71% | -7 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 222 | 45% | 37% | -8 | 31% | 6 |
| Multi-Race | 32 | 52% | 44% | -8 | 54% | -10 |
| White | 882 | 47% | 44% | -3 | 58% | -14 |
| High Needs | 617 | 32% | 31% | -1 | 31% | 0 |
| Econ. Dis. | 405 | 39% | 33% | -6 | 32% | 1 |
| SWD | 244 | 11% | 14% | 3 | 14% | 0 |
| EL | 151 | 31% | 33% | 2 | 30% | 3 |
| All | 1,249 | 47% | 43% | -4 | 51% | -8 |

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| **Table 6: Saugus Public Schools**  **Next-Generation MCAS Math Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations Grades 3–8, 2017–2018** | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **State (2018)** | **Above/Below** |
| African American/Black | 59 | 22% | 32% | 10 | 26% | 6 |
| Asian | 47 | 80% | 72% | -8 | 74% | -2 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 224 | 41% | 37% | -4 | 27% | 10 |
| Multi-Race | 32 | 60% | 44% | -16 | 49% | -5 |
| White | 885 | 49% | 48% | -1 | 55% | -7 |
| High Needs | 621 | 32% | 31% | -1 | 28% | 3 |
| Econ. Dis. | 410 | 37% | 33% | -4 | 27% | 6 |
| SWD | 243 | 11% | 15% | 4 | 14% | 1 |
| EL | 151 | 39% | 36% | -3 | 30% | 6 |
| All | 1,256 | 48% | 46% | -2 | 48% | -2 |

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| **Table 7: Saugus Public Schools**  **MCAS ELA Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grade 10, 2017–2018** | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **State (2018)** | **Above/Below** |
| African American/Black | 8 | -- | -- | -- | 85% | -- |
| Asian | 9 | -- | -- | -- | 95% | -- |
| Hispanic or Latino | 28 | 89% | 82% | -7 | 78% | 4 |
| Multi-Race | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 93% | -- |
| White | 114 | 89% | 91% | 2 | 94% | -3 |
| High Needs | 73 | 77% | 78% | 1 | 79% | -1 |
| Econ. Dis. | 48 | 86% | 83% | -3 | 81% | 2 |
| SWD | 23 | 45% | 57% | 12 | 69% | -12 |
| EL | 12 | -- | 75% | -- | 64% | 11 |
| All | 161 | 89% | 90% | 1 | 91% | -1 |

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| **Table 8: Saugus Public Schools**  **MCAS Math Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grade 10, 2017–2018** | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **State (2018)** | **Above/Below** |
| African American/Black | 8 | -- | -- | -- | 60% | -- |
| Asian | 9 | -- | -- | -- | 91% | -- |
| Hispanic or Latino | 29 | 58% | 66% | 8 | 56% | 10 |
| Multi-Race | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 79% | -- |
| White | 113 | 69% | 69% | 0 | 85% | -16 |
| High Needs | 74 | 49% | 50% | 1 | 57% | -7 |
| Econ. Dis. | 49 | 58% | 55% | -3 | 59% | -4 |
| SWD | 23 | 10% | 26% | 16 | 40% | -14 |
| EL | 12 | -- | 67% | -- | 44% | 23 |
| All | 161 | 69% | 69% | 0 | 78% | -9 |

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| **Table 9: Saugus Public Schools**  **MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grades 5, 8, and 10, 2015–2018** | | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2018)** |
| African American/Black | 27 | 32% | 37% | 30% | 37% | 5 | 30% |
| Asian | 23 | 61% | 48% | 48% | 57% | -4 | 68% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 75 | 44% | 39% | 29% | 40% | -4 | 30% |
| Multi-Race | 9 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 54% |
| White | 434 | 52% | 44% | 50% | 43% | -9 | 60% |
| High Needs | 265 | 33% | 28% | 29% | 29% | -4 | 31% |
| Econ. Dis. | 166 | 40% | 32% | 33% | 32% | -8 | 32% |
| SWD | 111 | 15% | 8% | 14% | 14% | -1 | 21% |
| EL | 51 | 12% | 27% | 24% | 35% | 23 | 20% |
| All | 570 | 50% | 43% | 46% | 42% | -8 | 53% |

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| **Table 10: Saugus Public Schools**  **Next-Generation MCAS ELA Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Grades 3–8, 2017–2018** | | | | | | |
| **Grade** | **N** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **State (2018)** | **Above/Below** |
| 3 | 178 | 54% | 56% | 2 | 52% | 4 |
| 4 | 214 | 48% | 50% | 2 | 53% | -3 |
| 5 | 214 | 58% | 59% | 1 | 54% | 5 |
| 6 | 216 | 46% | 38% | -8 | 51% | -13 |
| 7 | 207 | 37% | 26% | -11 | 46% | -20 |
| 8 | 220 | 38% | 31% | -7 | 51% | -20 |
| 3–8 | 1,249 | 47% | 43% | -4 | 51% | -8 |

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| **Table 11: Saugus Public Schools**  **Next-Generation MCAS Math Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Grades 3--8, 2017–2018** | | | | | | |
| **Grade** | **N** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **State (2018)** | **Above/Below** |
| 3 | 177 | 58% | 54% | -4 | 50% | 4 |
| 4 | 215 | 51% | 48% | -3 | 48% | 0 |
| 5 | 214 | 50% | 57% | 7 | 46% | 11 |
| 6 | 217 | 55% | 46% | -9 | 47% | -1 |
| 7 | 212 | 42% | 25% | -17 | 46% | -21 |
| 8 | 221 | 35% | 47% | 12 | 50% | -3 |
| 3–8 | 1,256 | 48% | 46% | -2 | 48% | -2 |

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| **Table 12: Saugus Public Schools**  **MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grades 5, 8, and 10, 2015–2018** | | | | | | | |
| **Grade** | **N (2018)** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2018)** |
| 5 | 214 | 47% | 47% | 42% | 49% | 2 | 47% |
| 8 | 221 | 38% | 26% | 35% | 21% | -17 | 35% |
| 10 | 135 | 70% | 66% | 68% | 68% | -2 | 74% |
| All | 570 | 50% | 43% | 46% | 42% | -8 | 52% |

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| **Table 13: Saugus Public Schools**  **English Language Arts and Math Mean Student Growth Percentile, 2018** | | | | | | |
|  | **ELA** | | | **Math** | | |
| **Grade** | **N (2018)** | **2018** | **State 2018** | **N (2018)** | **2018** | **State (2018)** |
| 3 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 4 | 194 | 42.2 | 50.0 | 195 | 44.1 | 50.1 |
| 5 | 197 | 57.1 | 50.1 | 197 | 65.1 | 50.0 |
| 6 | 201 | 31.2 | 50.1 | 202 | 49.9 | 50.0 |
| 7 | 184 | 32.5 | 50.0 | 187 | 29.1 | 50.0 |
| 8 | 209 | 41.5 | 50.0 | 210 | 48.3 | 50.0 |
| 10 | 141 | 36.6 | 49.9 | 141 | 45.7 | 49.9 |

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| **Table 14: Saugus Public Schools**  **Next-Generation MCAS ELA Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations by School and Grade, 2018** | | | | | | | |
| **School** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **3–8** |
| Lynnhurst | 61% | 68% | 71% | -- | -- | -- | 67% |
| Oaklandvale | 68% | 36% | 61% | -- | -- | -- | 53% |
| Veterans Memorial | 57% | 49% | 55% | -- | -- | -- | 54% |
| Waybright | 43% | 56% | 60% | -- | -- | -- | 54% |
| Saugus Middle | -- | -- | -- | 38% | 26% | 32% | 32% |
| District | 56% | 50% | 59% | 38% | 26% | 31% | 43% |
| State | 52% | 53% | 54% | 51% | 46% | 51% | 51% |

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| **Table 15: Saugus Public Schools**  **Next-Generation MCAS Math Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations by School and Grade, 2018** | | | | | | | |
| **School** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **3–8** |
| Lynnhurst | 51% | 63% | 65% | -- | -- | -- | 60% |
| Oaklandvale | 74% | 48% | 58% | -- | -- | -- | 59% |
| Veterans Memorial | 49% | 49% | 51% | -- | -- | -- | 49% |
| Waybright | 54% | 39% | 65% | -- | -- | -- | 53% |
| Saugus Middle | -- | -- | -- | 46% | 27% | 48% | 41% |
| District | 54% | 48% | 57% | 46% | 25% | 47% | 46% |
| State | 50% | 48% | 46% | 47% | 46% | 50% | 48% |

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| **Table 16: Saugus Public Schools**  **MCAS ELA and Math Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grade 10, 2018** | | |
| **School** | **ELA** | **Math** |
| Saugus High | 91% | 70% |
| State | 91% | 78% |

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| **Table 17: Saugus Public Schools**  **MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced by School and Grade, 2018** | | | | | | | | |
| **School** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **10** | **Total** |
| Lynnhurst | -- | -- | 47% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 47% |
| Oaklandvale | -- | -- | 48% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 48% |
| Veterans Memorial | -- | -- | 47% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 47% |
| Waybright | -- | -- | 63% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 63% |
| Saugus Middle | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 21% | -- | 21% |
| Saugus High | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 69% | 69% |
| District | -- | -- | 49% | -- | -- | 21% | 68% | 42% |
| State | -- | -- | 47% | -- | -- | 35% | 74% | 52% |

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| **Table 18: Saugus Public Schools**  **Next-Generation MCAS ELA Percent Meeting and Exceeding Expectations by School and Student Group, 2018** | | | | | | | | | | |
| **School** | **All** | **High Needs** | **Econ. Dis.** | **SWD** | **EL** | **African American** | **Asian** | **Hispanic** | **Multi-race** | **White** |
| Lynnhurst | 67% | 53% | 56% | 39% | 50% | -- | -- | 59% | -- | 68% |
| Oaklandvale | 53% | 45% | 50% | 23% | 52% | -- | -- | 56% | -- | 52% |
| Veterans Memorial | 54% | 39% | 42% | 6% | 73% | 57% | -- | 46% | -- | 54% |
| Waybright | 54% | 40% | 34% | 36% | 45% | -- | -- | 60% | -- | 53% |
| Saugus Middle | 32% | 19% | 21% | 7% | 15% | 19% | 59% | 25% | -- | 34% |
| District | 43% | 31% | 33% | 14% | 33% | 33% | 64% | 37% | 44% | 44% |
| State | 51% | 31% | 32% | 14% | 30% | 31% | 71% | 31% | 54% | 58% |

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| **Table 19: Saugus Public Schools**  **Next-Generation MCAS Math Percent Meeting and Exceeding Expectations by School and Student Group, 2018** | | | | | | | | | | |
| **School** | **All** | **High Needs** | **Econ. Dis.** | **SWD** | **EL** | **African American** | **Asian** | **Hispanic** | **Multi-race** | **White** |
| Lynnhurst | 60% | 48% | 41% | 40% | 44% | -- | -- | 50% | -- | 61% |
| Oaklandvale | 59% | 48% | 52% | 27% | 52% | -- | -- | 61% | -- | 56% |
| Veterans Memorial | 49% | 35% | 34% | 13% | 64% | 43% | -- | 43% | -- | 50% |
| Waybright | 53% | 46% | 48% | 32% | 64% | -- | -- | 40% | -- | 52% |
| Saugus Middle | 41% | 23% | 28% | 5% | 22% | 21% | 64% | 31% | -- | 44% |
| District | 46% | 31% | 33% | 15% | 36% | 32% | 72% | 37% | 44% | 48% |
| State | 48% | 28% | 27% | 14% | 30% | 26% | 74% | 27% | 49% | 55% |

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| **Table 20: Saugus Public Schools**  **MCAS ELA and Math Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grade 10 by School and Student Group, 2015–2018** | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | **ELA** | | | | | **Math** | | | | |
| **School** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **4-yrChange** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **4-yr Change** |
| Saugus High | 90% | 91% | 90% | 91% | 1 | 79% | 70% | 70% | 70% | -9 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| African American/Black | 70% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 70% | -- | -- | -- |  |
| Asian | 67% | 91% | -- | -- | -- | 92% | 82% | -- | -- | -- |
| Hispanic | 88% | 94% | 88% | 85% | -3 | 84% | 81% | 59% | 65% | -19 |
| Multi-race | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| White | 94% | 89% | 90% | 92% | -2 | 77% | 69% | 71% | 71% | -6 |
| High Needs | 80% | 75% | 80% | 81% | 1 | 65% | 59% | 51% | 52% | -13 |
| Econ. Dis. | 85% | 93% | 91% | 83% | -2 | 69% | 75% | 62% | 54% | -15 |
| SWD | 52% | 29% | 53% | 60% | 8 | 27% | 29% | 11% | 30% | 3 |
| EL | -- | -- | -- | 82% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 73% | -- |

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| **Table 21: Saugus Public Schools**  **MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Science by School and Student Group, 2015–2018** | | | | | | |
| **School** | **N (2018)** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **4-yr Change** |
| Lynnhurst | 49 | 58% | 57% | 45% | 47% | -11 |
| African American/Black | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Asian | 4 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Hispanic | 5 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Multi-race | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| White | 38 | 59% | 57% | 52% | 45% | -14 |
| High Needs | 27 | 43% | 41% | 24% | 37% | -6 |
| Econ. Dis. | 12 | -- | 47% | 20% | 25% | -- |
| SWD | 12 | -- | -- | -- | 33% | -- |
| EL | 8 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Oaklandvale | 31 | 52% | 21% | 49% | 48% | -4 |
| African American/Black | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Asian | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Hispanic | 6 | -- | -- | 50% | -- | -- |
| Multi-race | 2 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| White | 22 | 57% | 26% | 48% | 55% | -2 |
| High Needs | 14 | 42% | 30% | 32% | 36% | -6 |
| Econ. Dis. | 10 | 50% | -- | 37% | 30% | -20 |
| SWD | 4 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| EL | 6 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Veterans Memorial | 85 | 38% | 39% | 32% | 47% | 9 |
| African American/Black | 4 | -- | 40% | -- | -- | -- |
| Asian | 2 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Hispanic | 16 | 40% | 50% | 23% | 50% | -- |
| Multi-race | 2 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| White | 61 | 39% | 36% | 35% | 46% | 7 |
| High Needs | 44 | 20% | 22% | 14% | 36% | 16 |
| Econ. Dis. | 32 | 28% | 23% | 13% | 38% | 10 |
| SWD | 18 | 8% | 0% | 13% | 6% | -2 |
| EL | 9 | -- | -- | 9% | -- | -- |
| Waybright | 40 | 58% | 73% | 64% | 63% | 5 |
| African American/Black | 2 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Asian | 2 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Hispanic | 4 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Multi-race | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| White | 30 | 63% | 73% | 65% | 63% | 0 |
| High Needs | 20 | 33% | 53% | 60% | 60% | 27 |
| Econ. Dis. | 9 | -- | 50% | 69% | -- | -- |
| SWD | 10 | -- | -- | -- | 40% | -- |
| EL | 5 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Saugus Middle | 218 | 39% | 28% | 36% | 21% | -18 |
| African American/Black | 11 | -- | 31% | -- | 9% | -- |
| Asian | 6 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Hispanic | 21 | 27% | 20% | 10% | 19% | -8 |
| Multi-race | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| White | 178 | 40% | 28% | 43% | 22% | -18 |
| High Needs | 88 | 20% | 19% | 23% | 7% | -13 |
| Econ. Dis. | 51 | 25% | 22% | 24% | 12% | -13 |
| SWD | 38 | 4% | 0% | 13% | 0% | -4 |
| EL | 16 | -- | -- | 9% | 0% | -- |
| Saugus High | 133 | 70% | 66% | 69% | 69% | -1 |
| African American/Black | 8 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Asian | 8 | 75% | 60% | -- | -- | -- |
| Hispanic | 21 | 67% | 53% | 54% | 52% | -15 |
| Multi-race | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| White | 96 | 72% | 69% | 69% | 72% | 0 |
| High Needs | 58 | 53% | 43% | 48% | 48% | -5 |
| Econ. Dis. | 42 | 57% | 58% | 59% | 50% | -7 |
| SWD | 20 | 30% | 14% | 16% | 30% | 0 |
| EL | 6 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |

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| **Table 22: Saugus Public Schools**  **Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Student Group, 2015–2018** | | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **N**  **(2018)** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2018)** |
| African American/Black | 5 | 70.0 | 100.0 | 90.0 | -- | -- | 80.1 |
| Asian | 12 | -- | 83.3 | 91.7 | 66.7 | -- | 94.3 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 21 | 77.8 | 70.6 | 81.5 | 76.2 | -1.6 | 73.8 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hisp./Lat. | 2 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 86.5 |
| White | 114 | 89.5 | 87.3 | 90.1 | 87.7 | -1.8 | 92.2 |
| High needs | 63 | 76.7 | 74.4 | 85.2 | 76.2 | -0.5 | 78.0 |
| Economically Disadvantaged\* | 52 | 80.3 | 76.1 | 85.3 | 78.8 | -1.5 | 77.4 |
| SWD | 19 | 66.7 | 61.9 | 85.7 | 52.6 | -14.1 | 72.4 |
| EL | 5 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 64.1 |
| All | 156 | 86.6 | 86.4 | 89.2 | 84.0 | -2.6 | 87.9 |
| \* Four-year cohort graduation rate for students from low-income families used for 2015 rates. | | | | | | | |

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| **Table 23: Saugus Public Schools**  **Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Student Group, 2014–2017** | | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **N**  **(2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2017)** |
| African American/Black | 10 | 62.5 | 80.0 | 100.0 | 90.0 | 27.5 | 84.2 |
| Asian | 12 | 100.0 | -- | 83.3 | 91.7 | -8.3 | 95.4 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 87 | 80.0 | 83.3 | 70.6 | 85.2 | 5.2 | 77.4 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hisp./Lat. | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 87.7 |
| White | 162 | 82.8 | 91.4 | 89.9 | 90.7 | 7.9 | 93.9 |
| High needs | 108 | 70.8 | 80.2 | 79.3 | 86.1 | 15.3 | 83.0 |
| Economically Disadvantaged\* | 102 | 72.7 | 81.6 | 78.9 | 86.3 | 13.6 | 82.0 |
| SWD | 28 | 50.0 | 76.2 | 81.0 | 85.7 | 35.7 | 76.8 |
| EL | 5 | 85.7 | -- | -- | -- | -- | 69.0 |
| All | 212 | 82.3 | 89.3 | 88.5 | 90.1 | 7.8 | 90.1 |
| \* Five-year cohort graduation rate for students from low-income families used for 2014 rates. | | | | | | | |

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| **Table 24: Saugus Public Schools**  **In-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2015–2018** | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2018)** |
| African American/Black | -- | 10.3 | 11.7 | 10.1 | -- | 3.4 |
| Asian | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 0.6 |
| Hispanic or Latino | -- | 3.4 | 4.7 | 5.2 | -- | 2.4 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic or Latino | -- | -- | -- | 9.0 | -- | 2.3 |
| White | 1.3 | 4.3 | 3.8 | 5.0 | 3.7 | 1.4 |
| High Needs | 1.9 | 5.8 | 5.4 | 6.2 | 4.3 | 2.7 |
| Economically disadvantaged\* | 2.3 | 6.1 | 7.1 | 7.3 | 5 | 2.9 |
| SWD | 2.0 | 7.7 | 6.3 | 6.5 | 4.5 | 3.3 |
| EL | -- | -- | -- | 3.6 | -- | 1.8 |
| All | 1.2 | 4.3 | 4.1 | 5.2 | 4 | 1.8 |

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| **Table 25: Saugus Public Schools**  **Out-of-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2015–2018** | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2018)** |
| African American/Black | -- | -- | 8.6 | 5.9 | -- | 6.0 |
| Asian | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 0.7 |
| Hispanic or Latino | -- | 2.1 | 3.5 | 3.9 | -- | 5.1 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic or Latino | -- | -- | -- | 9.0 | -- | 3.3 |
| White | 2.0 | 1.9 | 2.9 | 2.4 | 0.4 | 1.4 |
| High Needs | 2.6 | 3.0 | 4.1 | 4.2 | 1.6 | 4.6 |
| Economically disadvantaged\* | 3.0 | 3.1 | 5.1 | 4.7 | 1.7 | 5.4 |
| SWD | 2.5 | 4.9 | 4.6 | 4.1 | 1.6 | 5.8 |
| EL | -- | -- | -- | 2.0 | -- | 3.7 |
| All | 1.7 | 1.7 | 3.2 | 3.0 | 1.3 | 2.9 |

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| **Table 26: Saugus Public Schools**  **Dropout Rates by Student Group, 2015—2018** | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2018)** |
| African American/Black | 3.4 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 3.7 | 0.3 | 2.9 |
| Asian | 0.0 | 8.3 | 2.5 | 3.2 | 3.2 | 0.6 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 2.6 | 4.0 | 1.2 | 4.1 | 1.5 | 4.5 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic or Latino | 20.0 | -- | -- | 0.0 | -20 | 1.9 |
| White | 1.4 | 2.3 | 1.8 | 2.9 | 1.5 | 1.0 |
| High Needs | 3.8 | 3.8 | 2.6 | 4.1 | 0.3 | 3.6 |
| Economically disadvantaged\* | 3.6 | 5.3 | 2.3 | 4.4 | 0.8 | 3.6 |
| SWD | 3.1 | 3.9 | 2.5 | 2.5 | -0.6 | 3.4 |
| EL | 0.0 | 0.0 | 6.7 | 14.3 | 14.3 | 7.6 |
| All | 1.8 | 2.8 | 1.8 | 3.1 | 1.3 | 1.9 |
| \*Drop-out rates for students from low-income families used for 2014 rates. | | | | | | |

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| **Table 27: Saugus Public Schools**  **Advanced Coursework Completion by Student Group, 2017–2018** | | | | | |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **Target** |
| African American/Black | 11 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Asian | 17 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Hispanic or Latino | 42 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic or Latino | 2 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| White | 252 | 66.4 | 95.2 | 28.8 | 71.5 |
| High Needs | 107 | 41.3 | 96.3 | 55.0 | 48.3 |
| Economically disadvantaged | 73 | 46.8 | 100.0 | 53.2 | 55.9 |
| SWD | 33 | 21.7 | 84.8 | 63.1 | 27.2 |
| EL | 20 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| All | 326 | 63.8 | 96.6 | 32.8 | 68.4 |

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| **Table 28: Saugus Public Schools**  **Progress toward Attaining English Language Proficiency, 2017–2018** | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | **Non-high school** | | | | | **High school** | | | | |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **Target** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **Target** |
| EL | 81 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| All | 81 | 68.6 | 70.4 | 1.8 | 57.1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |

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| **Table 29: Saugus Public Schools**  **Chronic Absence Rates by Student Group,\* 2017–2018** | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | **Non-high school** | | | | | **High school** | | | | |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **Target** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **Target** |
| African American/Black | 77 | -- | -- | -- | -- | 29 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Asian | 87 | -- | -- | -- | -- | 32 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Hispanic or Latino | 323 | -- | -- | -- | -- | 116 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Multi-Race, non-Hisp./Lat. | 44 | -- | -- | -- | -- | 6 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| White | 1,195 | 13.6 | 14.6 | -1.0 | 12.6 | 513 | 29.9 | 28.1 | 1.8 | 28.9 |
| High needs | 871 | 18.1 | 21.5 | -3.4 | 16.2 | 299 | 39.7 | 38.5 | 1.2 | 37.8 |
| Economically Disadvantaged | 511 | 20.0 | 25.6 | -5.6 | 17.4 | 181 | 47.1 | 44.8 | 2.3 | 44.5 |
| SWD | 308 | 16.9 | 16.9 | 0.0 | 14.5 | 90 | 42.3 | 34.4 | 7.9 | 39.9 |
| EL | 246 | -- | -- | -- | -- | 64 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| All | 1,736 | 13.2 | 14.8 | -1.6 | 12.1 | 700 | 29.3 | 28.4 | 0.9 | 28.2 |
| \* The percentage of students absent 10 percent or more of their total number of student days of membership in a school | | | | | | | | | | |

Leadership and Governance

***Contextual Background***

The district is emerging from a period of discontinuity and frequent transition in the role of superintendent. Five superintendents served during the interval between 2013 and 2016. The current superintendent’s tenure of 2.75 years is the second longest in the past decade. In March 2019, the school committee formally extended the superintendent’s contract for an additional three years, offering the prospect of more stable leadership.

The district has also experienced recent changes in central office and school leadership positions. At the time of the onsite in March 2019, two of the three central office leaders had served for less than two years; the middle school principal was in her second year; and two of the four elementary school principals were in their first year.

The district has few leadership positions. The central office consists of only four leaders: the superintendent and executive directors in finance and administration, pupil personnel services and special education, and curriculum, instruction, and accountability. There are no additional central office positions in curriculum, instruction, assessment, student support, facilities, and finance. The high school has two assistant principals and a guidance director, and the middle school has two vice principals; however, there are no team leaders, coaches, and department heads in the schools.

Within the context of these staffing constraints, the district has adopted a strategy of engaging external resource organizations and consultants as coaches, trainers, and strategists in critical improvement areas, such as elementary school literacy, the educator evaluation system, and instructional practices. Consultants have also been engaged to help with turnaround work at the middle school and the planning of work in data teaming.

A high proportion of district and school leaders have been hired from within. Of the 10 district leaders who work in the central office or lead a school, 5 attended the Saugus schools. Six have been employed in the Saugus schools for most of their careers, averaging twenty-two and one-half years as employees of the district.

***Strength Finding***

**1. Under the leadership of the school committee and the superintendent, the district partnered effectively with municipal leaders to increase the level of community support for the schools.**

* 1. In June 2017, two debt exclusion proposals amounting to 186 million dollars for new and renovated school buildings were approved by a 71 percent majority vote following a year of collaboration among the superintendent, the school committee, the town manager, and community partners.

1. Subsequent to these votes, the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) approved $92.7 million in funding for a new middle-high school.

* 1. Municipal officials, school committee members, and district leaders attributed the success of the debt exclusion initiative to community engagement and outreach efforts led by the superintendent, the town manager, the school committee chair, and others.

1. Over the course of the final year of this effort, district leaders, municipal officials, and community partners collaborated to make the case for the long-term benefits to the town of this investment and persuaded stakeholders, including families, business leaders, non-profit and community agencies, and civic associations, to support it.

2. District leaders and municipal officials reported that the chair of the school committee, who also served as chair of the school building committee, formed a close working relationship with other district leaders, municipal officials, and community leaders.

* + - 1. Municipal officials expressed the view that the advocacy of district leaders, municipal officials, and community partners was critical to the success of the bond initiative. The bond issue will add 445 dollars to the annual tax bill for an average single-family home over a period of 30 years.

**C.** District leaders and municipal financial officials have worked collaboratively to increase community support for the schools.

1. The superintendent stated that his communication with the town manager has resulted in a strong professional association. The town manager reported that the superintendent collaborated with him and that they had a positive relationship.

* + 1. The town accountant and the town finance director reported that the executive director of finance and administration communicated regularly with them and that they all followed professionally accepted financial practices. This has increased confidence in district-municipal transactions.

**Impact**: By forging positive ties between the district and the town, working with community partners, and making the case for investment and change, district leaders and town officials have facilitated a large new investment in the town’s schools, laying the foundation for improvements in the quality of student learning experiences and academic outcomes.

***Challenges and Areas for Growth***

**2. District and school improvement plans are incomplete, uneven in quality, and in some cases, nonexistent. There is limited evidence of strategic planning to drive improvement and assessment of progress toward the realization of outcomes.**

* 1. The district does not have a current district improvement plan (DIP) that details the work that will be done to improve educational programs and practices.

1. A two-page draft document entitled District Plan Overview 2018–2021 consists of a mission statement, a vision statement, a theory of action, values, strategic objectives, and outcomes. While this document provides a promising initial framework for strategic planning over a multi-year period, it does not include student outcomes, measures such as SMART goals,[[2]](#footnote-2) and specific goals for any of the school years it encompasses. School Improvement Plans (SIPs) are not linked to the draft district plan.
2. When asked about a DIP or a strategic plan, district leaders referenced the Saugus Educational Plan, which was developed by the superintendent in January 2017 in fulfillment of a requirement for MSBA approval of the middle-high school building project. This document includes a detailed description of the limitations of each school’s facilities, necessary improvements, and planned programmatic and curricular upgrades. The Saugus Educational Plan does not contain essential components of a DIP, including goals for improved student outcomes, specific improvements in academic performance, and a clear and explicit framework for improvement.
   1. Some current SIPs detail specific goals for student outcomes and offer leaders a means for assessing progress toward these goals; however, most do not include essential components of effective SIPs.

The 2018–2019 Lynnhurst Elementary School SIP meets a high standard. This plan provides a detailed accounting of student outcomes for the prior school year as assessed by multiple measures; tracks school progress against clearly established benchmarks of progress; describes the school’s analysis of why goals were not met, met, or exceeded; and lays out a detailed set of sequenced goals and objectives for the current school year, including timelines, clearly defined activities, persons responsible, and measurable outcomes.

a. Most significantly, each of the four SMART goals of the Lynnhurst SIP consists of identified target groups of students, concrete student outcomes, timelines, ties to specific measurements, and benchmarks.

No written goals, in any of the other SIPS or districtwide planning documents reviewed by the team were this complete.

The 2018–2020 Waybright Elementary School SIP tracks the school’s progress toward fulfillment of the goals for the prior school year; documents gaps in student performance; identifies barriers to improvement; and lays out a clear plan for the 2018–2019 school year. The plan includes goals to improve instruction, teacher collaboration, home to school connections usage of technology, and student performance on open-ended questions. All of the goals are in SMART goal format; however, while most include action steps, persons responsible, and measures of progress, they often do not specify target groups of students, measures of performance, and timelines.

The 53-page 2019–2020 SIP for the high school includes: comprehensive data on MCAS, graduation, attendance, dropout rates and other outcomes, an analysis of gaps in student achievement in ELA and math and among students with disabilities and English learners, and an analysis of the barriers to closing these gaps and strategies for improvement, including the idea of a Saturday Intervention Program to help students recover course credit. The SIP does include a set of charted objectives, but the specific benchmarks for the academic year are all focused on the process of setting up a schedule, or developing a program or administrative process, rather than on the student academic outcomes that it is intended to help achieve. The plan does not include any benchmarks or outcomes that target an identified level of improvement in student performance to be achieved, at any level, in any subject.

The 2017–2018 Belmonte Middle School SIP established ambitious goals for improved student outcomes on the MCAS tests. These included reducing the proficiency gap between all students and students in the high needs group by one-half in English language arts (ELA), mathematics, and science and technology/engineering and enabling all students to achieve a Student Growth Percentile of 55 or higher. However, these goals were not supported by clear plans for changes in practice and the SIP did not have measurable benchmarks or plans for assessing students’ incremental progress toward intended outcomes.

The 2018–2019 Veterans Elementary School SIP consists of process action steps that the school plans to take, but is missing improvement targets, including specific educational outcomes for students.

1. The Oaklandvale Elementary School and the Belmonte Middle School do not have current SIPs. The team was told that the Oaklandvale principal began in July of 2018, well after the period in which a SIP was normally prepared for the following school year, and did not have the benefit of a current SIP to work from. The middle school engaged in the turnaround planning process with the Statewide System of Support (SSoS) team in school year 2018–2019 and as part of that process had the benefit of a turnaround site visit by an external vendor. However, both Oaklandvale and Belmonte do not have a school or district-generated framework to inform and shape their work, assess their progress, and make changes.
2. All the SIPS reviewed by the team are common in format; however, the district does not have a central, districtwide procedure for developing the DIP and ensuring the alignment of SIP goals with DIP goals.

**E.** Multiple interviews and a document review indicated that a number of the current efforts of the district were insufficiently documented.

**Impact**: The absence of a DIP leaves school leaders and teams with little guidance and structure for aligning their planning efforts. It is hard for a district or a school to make sustained and meaningful progress without clear and focused plans, measurable goals linked to timelines, benchmarks, and persons and teams responsible and accountable for achieving outcomes. In such circumstances, leaders have great difficulty focusing and prioritizing their work, accurately accessing progress, and planning intelligently for next stages. Educators, families, students, and other stakeholders who do not have access to planning processes cannot meaningfully participate in setting the direction for and assessing the effectiveness of the work of the district and individual schools. As its multiple current initiatives unfold, some with ample reporting and others with a limited degree of documentation, the district leadership faces the challenge of developing the capacity to account for and present its improvement work in routine, reliable, and transparent ways.

**3. The school committee, central office, and school leaders have not established a culture of collaboration that focuses on improving teaching and learning and is infused with a sense of urgency.**

**A.** Interviews with school committee members and staff and a review of school committee meeting minutes indicated that the school committee infrequently planned for, critically considered, and assessed progress toward the realization of student learning goals. Although the school committee reviews MCAS tests results annually, it rarely reviews any other student outcome data or monitors the impact of key improvement strategies on student performance.

**B.** Interviews with school committee members and other stakeholders and a review of school committee minutes indicated that the school committee was often preoccupied by conflict among members, communication issues between individual school committee members and the superintendent, and matters that were not the responsibility of the school committee, such as personnel.

* + 1. Recently, the school committee instituted a policy prohibiting the participation of three or more members of the school committee in a social media interaction in compliance with the open meeting law. This policy was in response to members’ frequent use of social media to communicate with each other about district-related matters.

**C.** School committee members have not recently engaged in a common set of formal learning, planning, or professional development experiences that would give them a shared approach to their responsibilities and work.

1. While some members of the school committee have attended Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) trainings, the entire school committee has not participated in team development training, or conducted planning exercises to develop common expectations, norms, and practices.

**D.** District and school leaders stated that their meetings focused almost entirely on logistical and managerial matters and updates that could be communicated by email or other means.

* + 1. Leaders expressed disappointment that their work did not focus more on improvement practices and how to strengthen them.
    2. Leaders reported that they rarely reviewed disaggregated student group data, including data on the performance of economically disadvantaged students, English learners, and students with disabilities.

**Impact**: A district is unlikely to achieve and sustain meaningful improvement without developing priorities, routines, and practices to ensure the stewardship of improvement work. Progress is impeded when leaders are not regularly and publicly focused on improvement goals, the school committee does not review student performance data regularly, and the leadership team’s collaborative time focuses only intermittently on solving the learning and teaching challenges that confront staff and students.

***Recommendations***

**1. The district should ensure that its planning documents drive the development, implementation, and modification of educational programs and practices.**

1. Under the leadership of the superintendent, the district should convene a representative group of stakeholders to develop a District Improvement Plan (DIP).

1. The DIP should include measurable goals (including progress benchmarks and final outcomes).

a. The goals should be based on an analysis of historical, longitudinal, and current disaggregated data related to student performance, opportunities, and outcomes.

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

3. The district should consider whether to build on the draft District Plan Overview 2018–2021.

a. This decision should be based in part on the extent to which the draft District Plan Overview reflects a careful review of data and wide input from district stakeholders.

**B.** Principals, in collaboration with school councils, should ensure that each school develops an annual School Improvement Plan (SIP) aligned with the DIP. Each SIP should include specific measures to determine the progress of school-based initiatives.

1. Similar to the DIP, these measures should be SMART.

2. Leaders of schools with the longest and strongest tradition of producing effective SIPs could be invited to co-lead a session to help teams from other schools improve their planning practices.

**C.** The district should develop a process for reviewing SIPs for quality and alignment with SIP goals, and for using the most recent student data to continually monitor and update district and school improvement plans.

**D.** District and school leaders should provide frequent, timely, and thorough information to the school committee, staff, students, families, and community on progress toward the achievement of plan goals.

**Benefits:** By developing, communicating, and using measurable goals based on an analysis of historical, longitudinal, and current disaggregated student data and other data sources, the district will ensure that it is focused on the most important areas for improvement. By making a commitment to the yearly amount of change that it plans to achieve, the district will be able to plan and regularly monitor the impact of key improvement strategies, instructional practices, and the use of resources on student performance, opportunities, and outcomes.

**Recommended resources:**

* DESE’s *District Standards and Indicators* (<http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/accountability/district-standards-indicators.pdf>) identify the characteristics of effective districts in supporting and sustaining school improvement.
  + The *Conditions for School Effectiveness Self-Assessment* (<http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/accountability/school-effect-self-assessment.pdf>) is a tool for conducting a scan of current practice, identifying areas of strength, and highlighting areas requiring greater focus.
* The *Massachusetts Definition of College and Career Readiness* (<http://www.mass.edu/library/documents/2013College&CareerReadinessDefinition.pdf>) is a set of learning competencies, intellectual capacities and experiences essential for all students to become lifelong learners; positive contributors to their families, workplaces and communities; and successfully engaged citizens of a global 21st century. This could be a helpful resource as the district articulates its vision and goals.
* DESE’s *Planning for Success* tools (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/success/>) support the improvement planning process by spotlighting practices, characteristics, and behaviors that support effective planning and implementation and meet existing state requirements for improvement planning.
* *Focused Planning for Accelerating Student Learning* (<http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/accountability/dsac/focused-planning.pdf>) provides guidance for districts to accelerate achievement for all students through the development of a focused, actionable and sustainable Accelerated Improvement Plan (AIP). 
  + - *District Accelerated Improvement Planning - Guiding Principles for Effective Benchmarks* (<http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/accountability/turnaround/level-4-guiding-principles-effective-benchmarks.pdf>) provides information about different types of benchmarks to guide and measure district improvement efforts.
* *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.
* *Turnaround Practices in Action* (<http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/accountability/turnaround/practices-report-2014.pdf>) is a practice guide that highlights practices and strategies observed in turnaround schools that have shown significant and rapid gains in student achievement. It presents key practices for consideration as avenues to improve and sustain ongoing and future turnaround efforts.
  + 1. **The district should develop a robust emphasis on collecting, using and sharing student data within all leadership teams, focusing team meetings on educational goals and improvement strategies and building a sense of urgency.**

1. School committee meetings should give high priority to reviewing and discussing student performance data and evidence and the results of educational initiatives.
2. All meetings held in the district, as a matter of course, should include consideration of student outcomes, and make deliberate use of student data.
3. In keeping with the new school committee policy about the use of social media, the district should ensure that its use of media and social media is consistent with its strategic purposes, and focuses on discussions of school and district improvement initiatives, student performance, and evidence of outcomes.

**Benefits** from implementing this recommendation include using planning and training time to analyze data, increasing the skills of district and school leaders and school committee members in using data to advance improvement work, using social and other media to inform stakeholders about district initiatives and student outcomes, and building the capacity of the district as a whole.

**Recommended resources:**

* *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-2/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.

Curriculum and Instruction

***Contextual Background***

The executive director of curriculum, instruction, and accountability is the one person in the district with a designated leadership role for curriculum. Elementary principals provide some oversight to curriculum in their schools. The district director’s intended curricular responsibilities include oversight, revision, and implementation of the district’s curriculum; however, he has additional responsibilities for a range of substantive district initiatives. With these factors considered, district-led curriculum practices are not robust.

Of the three levels in the district, the elementary level (Pre-K–5) has the most curricular consistency. For literacy, all four elementary schools follow the Pearson *Reading Street Program* and use a phonics program in kindergarten through grade 2, *Enhanced Core Reading Instruction* (ECRI), developed by HILL for Literacy. In addition, Keys to Literacy (KTL) has been providing professional development in writing over the course of two school years to all elementary teachers. For mathematics, the elementary level follows the *enVisions 2.0* *Math Program*. While the elementary curriculum is achieving some coherence, *Reading Street and enVision 2.0* have both been found by EdReports to be insufficiently aligned to college- and career-ready standards and, as a result, are ineligible for review by DESE’s [CURATE](http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/curate/) project. There is little evidence of vertical alignment between the elementary- and middle-school levels.

Curricular practices at the middle school and the high school have been affected by an absence of content leadership, instructional coaches, team leaders, and department heads. For the most part, curriculum is teacher driven. Teachers use the standards and search for online resources. The district has not systematically addressed recent shifts in Massachusetts curriculum frameworks in ELA, math, and science. Existing curriculum documents are incomplete and many have not been updated. There is no centralized, consistent online access to curriculum. Although the superintendent’s draft District Plan Overview 2018–2021 identifies the realignment of curriculum as one of its strategic initiatives, and the executive director of curriculum, instruction, and accountability confirmed the realignment of curriculum as one of his goals, at the time of the onsite in March 2019, the district had not made concrete plans to initiate this work.

The district does not have a 1:1 Chromebook policy, but has steadily increased the number of Chromebooks throughout the district to improve access. At the time of the onsite, the use of Google Classroom was developing in the district, but teachers reported that they needed more professional development and instructional technology support.

Common planning time (CPT) varies among the four elementary schools. Middle-school teachers meet once every six days as curriculum teams where they plan lessons and look for resources. At the high school, grade 9 and 10 teachers meet twice per week in CPT and the rest of the staff meets once a week for 35 minutes. While this time was designated to enable teachers to plan and discuss lessons, multiple teachers reported that they had to use it for preparing and duplicating materials. During the 2018–2019 school year, teacher-led professional learning communities (PLCs) at the middle school are reading and discussing a book on Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

At the time of the onsite, the district was analyzing whether enrollment in honors and advanced placement courses reflected the current student demographics. The high school worked with an external consultant a number of years ago to break down barriers for students to enter honors and advanced placement courses. The high school has a small academy for an advanced program of studies, which begins in grade 9, focuses on advanced placement courses, and has specific grade point average entry requirements; it enrolls fewer than 30 students.

In planning for the future middle/high school, the district decided that it would use 68-minute blocks throughout the school, and organized a team of 13 middle- and high-school teachers to begin to develop an approach to implementing this new system. This group of teachers has worked closely with an external consultant in a series of professional learning exercises focused on research-based instructional practices, such as the use of objectives, activators, “do nows,” exit tickets, and summarizers. Using a train-the-trainer approach, the team has been modeling these instructional practices for middle- and high-school teachers during the district’s five half-day professional development days.

***Strength Finding***

**1. At the elementary level, a research-based initiative has been established to develop a coherent approach to the delivery of writing instruction across the district’s four elementary schools.**

**A.** Since the 2017–2018 school year, the district has partnered with Keys to Literacy (KTL), an external professional development (PD) provider, to build the capacity of elementary teachers to deliver high-quality writing instruction across the district’s elementary schools.

1. A document review and interviews with district and school leaders indicated that KTL consultants worked collaboratively with principals and teachers to plan and coordinate PD focused on writing instruction and the assessment of writing standards within all the district’s elementary schools.

2. District and school leaders reported that KTL consultants, whom district educators sometimes referred to as coaches, provided both coaching and PD in writing instruction to the district’s elementary teachers in schools and during the district’s five half-day PD days.

a. Typically, KTL consultants/coaches are assigned to an elementary school and grade level. In the morning, they go into classrooms, conduct observations of writing instruction, and provide feedback to teachers. They also use KTL writing strategies to model writing lessons and reflect with teachers. In the afternoon, they facilitate district grade-level meetings with teachers that principals also frequently attend.

i. Multi-grade groups are also formed to ensure the vertical alignment of writing instruction.

ii. Teachers reported that during the first year of working with KTL consultants, grade- level teams developed rubrics to score writing assessments.

b. During the PD meetings, grade-level teachers review student work with the KTL consultants to monitor students’ writing progress.

**B.** Through the KTL initiative and the collaborative work of elementary teachers, the district has developed writing tools, and research-based writing practices are being implemented in classrooms.

1. Interviews and a document review indicated that elementary teachers were using writing rubrics and prompts that they developed collaboratively.

2. During the 2018–2019 school year, KTL coaches have helped teachers incorporate research-based writing practices in their classroom instruction.

**C.** The KTL initiative has supported the alignment of high-quality writing instruction across the district’s elementary schools and has contributed to elementary teacher collaboration across the district.

Elementary principals reported that the KTL initiative has been valuable in increasing the horizontal alignment and cohesiveness of the writing program at the elementary level.

Teachers said that they valued collaborating with other elementary teachers and found the cross-district meetings helpful.

Three 2018–2019 elementary School Improvement Plans cite the importance of the KTL initiative in creating a coherent districtwide approach to writing that builds an effective and consistent delivery of writing instruction.

**Impact**: By providing research-based support for written-language instruction that is consistently implemented across elementary schools and aligned both vertically and horizontally, the district ensures that its elementary students are likely to experience high-quality instruction that will lead to improved academic outcomes.

***Challenges and Areas for Growth***

**2. In observed classrooms, the quality of instruction was inconsistent districtwide.**

1. **Focus Area #1: Learning Objectives & Expectations** Although the use of learning objectives was being addressed in professional development for middle- and high-school teachers, the team found limited evidence of the practice in middle- and high-school classes. In fact, there was limited evidence of teachers ensuring that students understood what they were learning and why in most observed classes districtwide.
   1. The review team found sufficient and compelling evidence that learning objectives were clearly explained (characteristic #2) in 48 percent of observed elementary classes, in 30 percent of middle-school classes, and in 40 percent of high-school classes.

a. In classes where the team found sufficient and compelling evidence of this practice, learning objectives were clear, carefully explained, and reinforced during the lesson. When asked, students in these classes could explain what they were doing and why.

b. In contrast, the team found that teachers did not effectively use learning objectives in most observed classes. Classroom objectives were not posted, not referenced during the lesson, and were not clear to students. For example, in one middle-school class observed at the start of the lesson, objectives were not posted or verbally shared with students. The teachers did not attempt to ensure that students understood the focus of the lesson or had a grasp of the relationship of what they would be learning to prior knowledge or instruction.

* 1. In 81 percent of observed elementary classes, in 29 percent of middle-school classes, and in 35 percent of high-school classes, the review team found sufficient and compelling evidence that teachers conducted frequent checks for understanding, provide feedback, and adjusted instruction (characteristic #4).

In most elementary classes, teachers conducted checks for understanding by circulating around the room and providing feedback to individual students, pairs, or groups. In a grade 1 mathematics class, the teacher asked students to walk her through how they solved a math problem. Teachers checked students’ do now responses, or provided exit tickets at the end of lessons.

In contrast, in most observed middle- and high-school classes, the team found a limited range and use of effective strategies to check for student understanding. In these classes, teachers called only on volunteers, engaged the same students repeatedly, directed questions at the whole group, and sought and accepted one or two-word individual and group responses. In some observed classes, teachers never checked for understanding during the observation period.

i. The team observed only one use of an exit ticket in middle-school observations (n=17) and two in high-school observations (n=20). The team did not observe other strategies at these levels, such as think-pair-share or summarizers at the end of lessons to check for student understanding.

**B. Focus Area #2: Student Engagement & Higher-Order Thinking** Although school leaders at every level identified student engagement as a key instructional goal, only the elementary level showed sufficient evidence of student engagement. Districtwide, in most classrooms observed, students did not have sufficient opportunities to engage in challenging higher-order thinking skills.

1. In 78 percent of elementary classes and in 35 percent of both observed middle-school and high-school classes, the review team found sufficient to compelling evidence of students being engaged in the content of the lesson and having opportunities to be responsible for doing the thinking in the classroom (characteristic #5).

The team noted that students in most observed elementary classes were actively engaged in the content of the lesson. In these classes, students took ownership of learning while teachers acted as facilitators. Students wrote and shared their writing with partners, or completed math tasks that connected to the lesson objective on their own or with partners. In addition, in a number of classes, students were actively involved in hands-on science experiments.

For example, in a grade 5 science class, students conducted experiments at their desks, recording data to be used for making predictions and analysis.

b. Although the team noted examples of classes at both the middle and high schools where students were actively engaged in lesson content, in most observed classes at both levels, teacher-directed lessons dominated the modes of instruction. Teachers did most of the work— lecturing, reading to students, explaining and solving math problems —while students sat taking notes, listening, or copying text from the interactive white board. Expectations were not set for students to be active learners through initiative-taking, practice, or active inquiry. For example, in one high-school class where multiple students finished their project early, provision was not made to engage them in any follow-up learning task. They sat and did nothing.

i. Some students kept their heads on their desks without the teacher intervening or redirecting them. In other classes, students repeatedly checked their cell phones.

In 44 percent of observed elementary classes, in only 6 percent of middle-school classes, and in 25 percent of high-school classes, the review team found sufficient and compelling evidence of students having consistent opportunities to engage in tasks that required analysis, problem-solving, evaluation, or application of new knowledge.

a. At the elementary level, in classes with limited opportunities for students to develop higher-order thinking skills, students filled in worksheets, or completed tasks that focused on facts or comprehension. Teachers asked lower-level recall questions which did not require students to develop their thinking skills. In one observed class, the teacher did not give students a chance to answer her question before she provided the answer.

b. Similarly, in almost all observed middle-school classes, teachers did not effectively use questions to increase students’ higher-order thinking skills. Teachers’ questions were predominantly focused on lower-level thinking skills. In these classes, teachers did the explaining, not the students. The team noted a heavy use of worksheets and learning packets where students filled in answers. Overall, classes were characterized by low academic expectations. In one ELA class, the teacher read to students during the entire observation time without posing one probing discussion question that might have supported higher-order thinking.

c. The team found that in only 5 of the 20 observed high-school classes, teachers asked students challenging questions or gave them assignments that included analysis, synthesis, or evaluation. In most observed high school classes, including advanced courses, students were minimally engaged in higher-order thinking skills. In these classes, teachers’ questions were predominantly lower-level recall questions or did not require students to explain their thinking. The team did not observe any examples of learning tasks such as debates, student designed projects, role-playing or student self-reflection. Instead, the focus was on correct answers. For example, in an advanced mathematics class, when students solved problems, the teacher did not set expectations for them to explain their answers.

**C. Focus Area #3: Inclusive Practices & Classroom Culture** Ensuring that lessons are designed to support and challenge students, regardless of the learning needs, was the least developed characteristic of effective instruction, districtwide.

1. In 30 percent of observed elementary classes, in 6 percent of middle-school classes, and in 10 percent of high-classes, the team saw sufficient and compelling evidence that lessons supported all students, regardless of their varied learning needs. The team did not find a single example of compelling evidence of this practice in observed middle- and high-school classes. The review team did not see a co-teaching model in any observed inclusion classes.

At the elementary level, in 8 of the 27 observed classes, the team notes that students’ varied learning needs were addressed, either through the efforts of additional support personnel such as paraprofessionals, clustering of students in small groups with the teacher or in pairs with partners, or by the use of Chromebooks. However, in a majority of observed classes students were given the same assignments with no adjustments to product or process to meet their varied needs.

b.In almost allobservedclasses in the middle and high schools, the review teams found limited evidence that lessons were designed to meet students’ varied learning needs. With the exception of three classes, in which students had choices in assignments and worked in small groups with the teacher’s or paraprofessional’s help, students were given the same assignment with little or no adjustments to meet their varied learning needs. The support of special education personnel was not maximized. For example, in an inclusion class observed at the high school, the special education teacher sat in a classroom chair and did not work with students while the teacher directed the lesson, missing an opportunity to give students the support that they needed.

**Impact**: When lessons do not consistently contain clear learning objectives, frequent checks for student understanding, active student engagement in rigorous learning opportunities, and support for students’ varied learning needs, student learning outcomes are jeopardized. When the quality of instruction is limited, students are not being adequately prepared for college, career, and civic participation.

**The district does not have a high-quality, standards-aligned, documented curriculum; a regular curriculum review and revision process; and a sufficient number of people empowered to exercise curriculum leadership.**

1. The district does not have an updated and documented curriculum that teachers use to plan for instruction, or an established curriculum review and revision process that addresses vertical alignment.. The district has not developed consistent, systemic processes to align curricula to the current Massachusetts curriculum frameworks.

1. School leaders and teachers told the review team that the district did not have consistent adopted curricula for most subjects K–12 that teachers, particularly middle- and high-school teachers, used to plan instruction. When the review team asked middle- and high-school teachers what curriculum materials they used to plan for instruction, they consistently stated that they had the standards, but did not have a written curriculum.

2. The team was told that formal curriculum revisions did not take place in response to the development of the 2016 Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) Curriculum Framework or the 2017 English Language Arts and Literacy (ELA) and Mathematics Curriculum Frameworks.

a. In its self-assessment submitted in advance of the onsite, the district provided an incomplete account of the status of curriculum alignment. The curriculum alignment narrative listed some out-of-date units, described the recent curriculum work of a social studies team and a wellness team, and referred to future planning without specifying how a standards aligned pre-kindergarten through grade 12 curriculum would be developed and revised.

3. Interviewees reported that the district did not systematically address alignment with the 2016 STE Curriculum Framework. Instead, teachers were simply given a copy of the new science standards.

a. At the time of this review in March 2019, middle-school science teachers had begun work on aligning their curriculum with the STE framework and had met once with grade 9 science teachers to address vertical alignment. However, the elementary science curriculum had not been addressed, and principals and teachers described elementary science as inconsistent across the district.

4. Teachers reported that the elementary level did not have a social studies curriculum. Recently, a social studies curriculum team consisting of teachers representing each level was formed to address the 2018 History and Social Science framework.

5. Interviews with district leaders, school leaders, and teachers and a document review indicated that the district has not established a regular and consistent curriculum review process. In the district’s self-assessment submitted in advance of the onsite, it rated curriculum selection and use as “Not at All Well” described by the indicator “The district implements regular, rigorous curriculum reviews that consider specific district needs as well as relevant research.” (Possible ratings are “Very Well,” “Well,” “Somewhat Well,” and “Not at All Well.”)

a. School leaders and teachers consistently expressed a concern for the absence of vertical alignment at transition points in the district and in content areas throughout the grade levels.

1. With the exception of a district leader, there are no designated leadership roles for curriculum at any level in the district. Principals oversee curriculum in their schools at the elementary level, but it is not their primary responsibility. The middle school and high school do not have curriculum leaders, content specialists, and department heads.
2. Interviews with district leaders and teachers and a document review indicated that the district’s executive director of curriculum, instruction, and accountability was solely responsible for the district’s curriculum.

a. Multiple district leaders confirmed that the director was the district’s chief curriculum officer, with responsibility for the oversight, implementation, and revision of the district’s curriculum, with a focus on consistency throughout the district’s six schools.

* + - 1. However, the director has additional responsibilities including, but not limited to, coordinating professional development, the district’s educator evaluation system, federal grants, and all entitlement programs.

2. The team was told that a reduction in district curriculum leadership roles began in 2013–2014 and continued for several years. School leaders and teachers reported that as a result the district did not have leadership, coordination, or infrastructure for curriculum build into district staffing. The district does not have academic directors, department heads, and instructional coaches. Principals reported that the district did not have STEM leadership to implement the new science standards.

a. In interviews, school leaders and teachers consistently cited a pressing need for curriculum leadership at all levels.

3. Principals stated that although they did oversee the curriculum in their schools, they did not consider it a priority, given their multiple responsibilities. Elementary-school principals meet monthly in a professional learning community (PLC) where they collaborate on alignment of programs that are used districtwide for elementary ELA and mathematics.

a. The director does not regularly attend the principals’ monthly PLCs where curriculum may be discussed, but does attend meetings with principals that are led by the superintendent. However, principals told the team that these meetings were mostly devoted to management rather than teaching and learning concerns.

**C.** In response to an absence of curriculum leadership, and missing a formal process for revising and updating curriculum documents, teachers are creating their own curriculum by following the standards and searching for resources.

Elementary teachers reported that they followed the adopted programs in ELA and mathematics. However, they have only the science standards. In the absence of a science curriculum and current textbooks, teachers select science materials individually or in informal groups.

a. Review team members noted that a science textbook used in one observed elementary classroom was not aligned with the 2016 STE framework, and the copyright date was 2006.

When asked about how they were supported to implement high-quality, standards-based curriculum, middle-school teachers told the team they were not supported. With no overarching curriculum and limited resources, they said that the majority of teachers were using teacher-prepared materials developed during their planning time. They follow the standards and spend their prep time looking for online resources.

3. When the review team asked high-school teachers about curriculum resources, they stated that they created curriculum day-by-day in their planning time and relied on their peers for curriculum support. For mathematics, a textbook with an online component was cited as a resource that one teacher used. Overall, teachers described their curriculum as individualized and curriculum as a priority to develop.

**Impact**: With limited curriculum leadership and curricular resources, teachers are unable to plan high-quality and rigorous standards-aligned instruction and assessment. Without a written curriculum aligned with the current Massachusetts frameworks, the district cannot guarantee the horizontal and vertical alignment of the taught curriculum, which can result in major learning gaps for students, hindering their learning outcomes**.**

***Recommendations***

**1. The district should ensure that all teachers have access to high-quality, comprehensive, standards-based, and horizontally and vertically aligned curricula and the support needed to implement the curricula effectively. The district should develop and implement an ongoing curriculum review and revision process.**

**A.** With a sense of urgency, the district should produce a detailed plan for adopting or developing an updated and documented curriculum, particularly in core subjects at the middle school and high school, and science K–5.

The district should continue to partner with the SSoS, including support from the Center for Instructional Support content specialists for assistance in curriculum selection, alignment, or development and for guidance to the district as it moves forward with curriculum development.

The district should immediately form content teams of teachers in core subjects with grade- level representation, provide them with training and support to select a curriculum or develop scope and sequence documents and units of study.

**B.** The district should carefully consider the need for additional curriculum and content support and determine how curriculum leadership can be provided at every level.

1. The district should develop a process for the regular review and revision of curriculum.

With support from SSoS, the district should identify comparable districts that have established an effective process for conducting curriculum reviews and draw on their examples to develop and tailor an effective curriculum review process for the district.

1. The district should ensure that resources for hands-on science experiences for students are available to teachers so that they can implement lessons of the 2016 Science and Technology/Engineering Framework effectively.
2. The district should continue providing support to the social studies curriculum team and ensure that resources to implement the new social studies curriculum are available to teachers at all levels.
3. The district should consider providing teachers with easy access to its written curriculum, as it is developed, by creating an online designated curriculum platform where only documents which have been vetted by curriculum teams along with curriculum leaders are uploaded. These documents could include Massachusetts curriculum frameworks, scope and sequence documents that will be completed along with units of study, exemplar lesson plans, and lists of resources to support each unit of study.

**Benefits**: Implementing this recommendation will ensure that teachers and students have access to an updated, comprehensive, and clearly articulated curriculum that prepares students for success in high school and beyond. A more systematic approach to curricular practices, including the development of additional leadership to support the development, implementation, and regular revision of a newly written curriculum, will increase the district’s capacity to improve student learning outcomes districtwide.

**Recommended resources:**

**•** DESE’s Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks web page (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/>) provides information about the 2017 ELA/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.

* Quick Reference Guide: Establishing an Effective Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) Program (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/stem/ste/STEprogram.docx> ): DESE has identified five components districts should attend to when designing a rigorous, coherent, and relevant pre-K-12 STE education program. Educators, administrators, and curriculum designers can refer to this guide for brief descriptions and resources for each component.
  + - DESE’s Instructional Materials and Professional Development page ([www.doe.mass.edu/candi/impd/](http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/impd/)) provides resources for improving and collaborating on curriculum, including quick reference guides and maps designed to facilitate cross-district communication about curriculum.
    - EdReports.org (<http://www.edreports.org/>) provides free, independent reviews of K-12 education materials. The reviews focus on alignment to college and career ready standards and other indicators of high quality as recommended by educators.
    - The CURATE Project (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate/>) convenes panels of Massachusetts teachers to review and rate evidence on the quality and alignment of specific curricular materials, then publish their findings for educators across the Commonwealth to consult.

CURATE panels review only products that have already been found by an independent evaluation process to be partially or fully aligned to college- and career-ready standards.

* + - Quick Reference Guide: Aligning Curriculum to Massachusetts Standards (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/impd/qrg-aligning-curriculum.pdf>) is designed to support teachers, coaches, administrators, and curriculum developers in the work of considering the ways in which curricular materials may diverge from the Massachusetts standards.
* Quick Reference Guide: Assessing Your Curriculum Landscape (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/impd/qrg-assessing-curriculum.pdf>) is designed to support districts assess their curriculum landscape by asking three questions: (1) Do teachers have ready access to high-quality, standards-aligned curricular materials? (2) Do sustained and collaborative professional learning structures empower teachers to use those materials in ways responsive to their students’ needs? (3) Are curriculum review processes regular, rigorous, and responsive to stakeholder input and needs?
  + 1. **The district should ensure that all teachers provide effective standards-based instruction that challenges and supports all students. A focus on instructional improvement should drive districtwide and school-based planning, professional learning and coaching, collaboration and common planning time, and educator evaluation.**
    2. Drawing on work that teachers and administrators are already doing in each school to improve instruction, a representative group of instructional leaders and teachers should convene to identify key instructional practices.

1. The recommended product of these meetings is a set of expectations that focuses on the use of clear learning objectives and checking for understanding, increases student ownership of learning, challenges and engages students to develop and use higher-order thinking, and supports students’ varied learning needs.

2. The district should prioritize these instructional strategies as its “non-negotiables.”

**B.** Once a set of instructional expectations has been defined, district leaders should develop a plan to share these expectations with staff. The district is encouraged to provide opportunities for educators to discuss ideas and strategies from these instructional priorities. These opportunities might include at instructional leadership team meetings, faculty meetings, PLC meetings, grade-level meetings, common planning time, and professional development days.

1. The district should develop structures to support peer observation to model instructional feedback and encourage peer feedback.

a. Equitable opportunities should be provided by level for teachers to share best practices.

**C.** The district should consider establishing collaborative learning walks together with protocols for school leaders and teachers to identify district and school instructional trends in practice, calibrate ratings, and generalize feedback from these walkthroughs.

1. The district should share trends in practice (strengths and areas for growth) with staff and use these trends to further discussions of best practice.

**D.** Teachers should receive appropriate guidance and feedback as they implement the district’s instructional expectations.

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

2. Principals and other instructional leaders should ensure that teachers have the information and support necessary to meet the district’s expectations for instruction.

3. The district should provide teachers with high-quality feedback[[3]](#footnote-3) that helps them to improve instruction.

**E.** The district should explore ways to develop instructional coaching models across the district.

**F**. Administrators and teachers should take steps to ensure that planning documents and meeting and planning time in the district promote a shared expectation for meaningful instructional improvement. (See recommendations in the Leadership and Governance section of this report.)

**Benefits:**  Implementing this recommendation will mean a deeper understanding of instructional strengths and challenge in the district, a stronger culture of professional growth and development, consistency and focus across the entire district related to instructional improvement, and instruction that focuses on challenging and engaging tasks with measurable outcomes for all students.

**Recommended resources:**

* DESE’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.
* DESE’s *Online Calibration Training Platform* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/calibration/>) uses videos of classroom instruction 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.

**•** DESE’s "What to Look For" Observation Guides (Updated August 2017)(<http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/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 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.

• DESE’s Learning Walkthrough Implementation Guide (<http://www.mass.gov/edu/government/departments-and-boards/ese/programs/accountability/tools-and-resources/district-analysis-review-and-assistance/learning-walkthrough-implementation-guide.html>) 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. (The link above includes a presentation to introduce Learning Walkthroughs.)

* 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](http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/accountability/dart/walkthrough/continuum-)) is framework that provides a common language or reference point for looking at teaching and learning.

Assessment

***Contextual Background***

Teachers and leaders have limited assessment data to inform their work. At the secondary level in particular, the review team found limited evidence of districtwide planning that prioritized the use of data to close achievement gaps, compare district performance with peer districts, identify areas for improvement, including student needs, and inform instructional planning. The district does not have the infrastructure and designated personnel needed to develop a data-rich culture.

Over the five years before the onsite in March 2019, school mid-level management positions have been steadily eliminated. As a result, critical roles that often support assessment work no longer exist, including teacher leaders, coaches, and department heads. The district is gradually building teams of teachers who volunteer to take on responsibility for projects that use data to advance teaching and learning. For example, a team of middle- and high-school teachers has worked to develop a long block of teaching time to be implemented at the new middle- and high-school complex. This group has recently begun exploring ways to exercise leadership in improving teaching practices. While the existence of such a team is a promising demonstration of an active interest in addressing the absence of designated leadership in curriculum, instruction, and assessment, this team is in the earliest stages of its work, and has not taken significant action on the assessment challenges that the district faces at the secondary level.

The district places a great deal of emphasis on the MCAS tests as an assessment tool, in part because for many students, it is the only assessment that is common to a grade level or a school. The MCAS tests results are referenced in almost all Saugus SIPs. The MCAS tests are a summative assessment of class and student group progress over a school year. However, the district does not administer formative assessments in core subjects at intervals throughout the year to supplement summative assessments as part of a systematic assessment program.

The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) and DIBELS Next are administered in all four elementary schools in kindergarten through grade 5. Elementary literacy specialists administer the assessment three times annually. Specialists, classroom teachers, and some principals analyze the results and make decisions on Response to Intervention (RtI) provisions for students.Staff regularly monitor each student’s progress during the year and adjust provisions as necessary.

Several years ago, the district standardized DIBELS data collection and management practices in order to ensure the validity of DIBELS data. Elementary school principals reported that they were able to rely on the quality and use of DIBELS data in a way that represented an improvement from the past.

During the 2018–2019 school year, middle-school staff began the administration of Renaissance 360 assessments in ELA and mathematics in grades 6, 7, and 8. Middle-school leaders and teachers expressed the expectation that assessments would provide actionable data in the future, but in the late winter of the first year of implementation, interviewees said that early adoption challenges and inconsistency in the use of Renaissance 360 in the first year had hampered progress.

Staff at all levels do not have authority to establish assessment priorities, and plan and execute steps toward development.

***Challenges and Areas for Growth***

1. **The district’s data collection and analysis system is incomplete andinconsistent.**
2. Assessment data information in the district is inconsistently collected, uneven in quality, and limited in volume and usefulness.

1. In addition to the MCAS tests, DIBELS is the only assessment in wide use across all the elementary schools in a uniform way. It is the only districtwide formative assessment administered at intervals throughout the school year to help teachers at the same grade level, and schools as a whole, plan and adjust instruction.

2. Elementary schools administer the benchmark assessments from the *Pearson Reading Street* and *enVision math* programs; however, the team was told that the approaches varied: in some schools, teachers use the benchmarks directly from the programs, while in others teachers modify these benchmarks. The results cannot be compared because the benchmarks are not common.

3. Common assessments in writing have been in place for several years at one elementary school and were recently introduced at the other three. It is difficult for the district to assess the impact of these assessments, however, because the writing assessments administered in each school differ and the results cannot be compared for meaningful analysis.

4. In 2018–2019, the middle school began to administer Renaissance 360 assessments in ELA and mathematics in grades 6, 7, and 8. The team was told that the accuracy and completeness of the data was not certain, because educators were still learning how to make optimal use of the system, and not all teachers have become fully engaged in its use.

5. At the middle school, teachers and administrators reported that benchmark assessments were most often developed and administered by individual teachers for their own classes. Because the instruments vary depending on the teacher, the results cannot be compared.

6. At the high school, teachers are required to submit copies of their common mid-year and final examinations; however, there is no requirement that they submit their results. High-school teachers said that school leaders and departments relied heavily on the MCAS test results.

7. At the high school, staff reported reliance on the analysis of the MCAS assessment by administrators and departments. MCAS is not an effective assessment tool for teachers seeking to adjust or improve their practice with an individual student, re-teach a lesson for students who may not have mastered the material, or challenge a current class of students with work that is intended to accelerate their progress based on their recent performance.

**B.** In its self-assessment submitted in advance of the onsite, the district rateddata selection as “Somewhat Well” described by the indicator “The district ensures that multiple sources of data are collected and that the data provides a comprehensive picture of student, school, and district performance.” The district rated assessment methods as “Somewhat Well” described by the indicator “The district ensures that educators use a variety of informal and formal assessment methods, including formative assessments and common interim assessments. The assessments are aligned across grades and subjects and provide actionable information.” Possible ratings are “Very Well,” “Well,” “Somewhat Well,” and “Not at All Well.”

**Impact:** When student, grade-level, school, and district outcomes and assessment data are limited, teachers, school and district leaders are deprived of the tools they need to determine the achievement of students and the impact of teaching practices. Without common benchmark assessments at each level, school and district leaders do not have a measure of the progress students are making in acquiring expected skills and knowledge during the course of the school year. Consequently, teachers and leaders cannot make informed instructional decisions, or act effectively to improve student achievement.

**2. The district does not use data systematically to improve teaching, learning, and decision-making, and to inform key stakeholders.**

**A.** District andschool leaders reported that data from the MCAS tests, DIBELS, and Renaissance 360 served as the primary sources of academic data across the district. They said that limited leadership in the content areas and absence of infrastructure for curriculum development and revision impeded the development of a comprehensive and aligned common districtwide system of formative, benchmark, and summative assessments.

Principals stated that the district’s culture was not “data friendly.” The review team was told that there were data teams in the schools at one time. Teachers said that there was a need to provide PD to enhance the capacity of staff to collect, analyze, and effectively use student academic assessment data.

The superintendent expressed his intention to form a working relationship with an external partner organization with expertise in helping schools build data teams.

**B.** There is a disparity between the ratings of current assessment practices and capacities in the district’s self-assessment, and the evidence the team gathered from interviews, observations, and documents provided by the district.

1. In its self-assessment submitted in advance of the onsite, the district rated itself as performing “Somewhat Well,” against the indicators of effective assessment practice.[[4]](#footnote-4)These indicators include data selection, assessment methods, data quality checks, district data use, and support for data use. The district noted that data quality checks, district data use, and support for data use were “emerging practices.”

1. The draft District Plan Overview 2018–2021 states that the district will “use uniform assessment to gauge student learning” under the strategic objective to “empower educational excellence across the district.” However, the review team found limited evidence of districtwide planning that focuses on assessment in current school improvement plans, other documents, and in interviews. Inconsistency in the assessments administered continues to be a major limitation of the district’s assessment system.

**C.** The team found only one agenda item related to the sharing of student performance data in a review of 2018–2019 school committee meeting agendas through March 2019. This was the annual school committee review of the MCAS tests results in the fall.

**D.** The district does not have the capacity to use data systematically to drive continuous improvement.

1. The review team was told that the district administrator responsible for curriculum, instruction, and accountability had limited authority to enact changes. Customarily, decisions about assessment practices are made at the school level, often by individual teachers.

2. When asked about district use of data, principals reported that there was little commonality except for the use of MCAS tests and DIBELS results.

3. The review team was told that few regularly scheduled meetings districtwide were devoted to assessment and data analysis.

a. One noted exception is that principals, literacy specialists, and teachers participate in regular DIBELS meetings at the elementary level.

b. Data meetings at the middle school, established as a regular practice in 2017–2018, have been replaced in 2018–2019 by the study of a book concerning instruction.

c. Teachers at all levels have common planning time; however, school leaders reported that because of the range of their responsibilities they were not often available to conduct and facilitate data discussions and the district did not have teacher leaders and department heads to act in this role.

**Impact**: Without a system for the continuous collection, use, and sharing of student performance data, the district has a limited ability to make appropriate and timely adjustments to its programs, instruction, and professional development offerings. When the school committee receives and discusses only the annual MCAS tests results—and does not review and discuss other data and evidence of student outcomes—it limits its ability to monitor efforts to close the achievement gap, assess district progress over time, and compare the performance of the district with peer districts. Without a comprehensive set of assessments, educators do not have sufficient information to improve instruction and respond effectively to the diverse learning needs of all students.

***Recommendation***

1. **The district should develop uniform and integrated policies for the efficient and purposeful collection, use, and sharing of data, and the routine use of formative assessment to improve teaching, learning, and decision-making.**

**A.** The superintendent, principals, and teachers should develop specific strategies, timelines, and clear expectations for the use of data K–12.

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

2. In building a system, the district should replicate practices that have worked and are in place in some parts of the district, such as the process used to standardize the collection of DIBELS data, and the uniform use of two DIBELS assessments and their results in all four elementary schools.

**B.** The district should thoughtfully add additional formative assessments to its repertoire to ensure that it is measuring the range of student achievement.

**C.** The district should ensure that teachers and administrators have regularly scheduled opportunities to review and analyze the collected data.

**E.** The district should prioritize principals’ responsibility to help teachers build data analysis skills and make regular use of assessment results in planning instruction.

* 1. The district should ensure that assessment results are shared with students, teachers, and students’ families.
  2. The district should provide ongoing, focused PD for all staff on the collection, analysis, and use of student performance data, and support principals and teachers with PD to build these practices into the structure of each school.

**Benefits:** Using data collected from a variety of assessments made available in a coherent districtwide system, teachers and administrators have the opportunity to access and analyze student performance, opportunities, and outcomes to improve teaching learning, and the curriculum.

**Recommended resources:**

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

DESE’s *District Data Team Toolkit* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/toolkit/>) 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.

Human Resources and Professional Development

***Contextual Background***

The district has begun to take some steps to improve certain components of its human resources and professional development (PD) systems. In an abbreviated draft document entitled “District Plan Overview 2018-2021,” attracting and retaining qualified and effective staff is listed as a “Theory of Action.” Principals and district leaders identified a newly developed and improved mentoring program as an example of a concrete step taken thus far to address this goal.

The need to create and provide meaningful PD in alignment with district programming initiatives was cited as a strategic objective in the same document. While the district is implementing a number of important and promising PD initiatives, the absence of a comprehensive PD plan with clear and measurable goals and objectives makes it difficult to identify the strategic linkages and accurately assess the overall effectiveness of these efforts.

District leaders stated that the primary means of achieving the goal of improving teaching and learning was the recent consultant-led, multi-year PD coaching program focused on improving principals’ evaluative competencies. Although the full benefits of this program were not evident in the review team’s review of educator evaluation documents, there was general agreement among district principals that this program was beginning to improve their capacity to supervise and evaluate teachers more effectively.

**Strength Finding**

**1. The district is leveraging internal and external resources in a coordinated attempt to enhance and expand the professional capacities of teachers and school leaders.**

**A.** The district is accessing and allocating available resources in an attempt to create improved academic opportunities, achievement, and outcomes for students. It is doing so by providing focused training and strategic support for district leaders, teachers, and principals.

1. To support the implementation of the new 68-minute instructional block at the middle and high schools in 2019–2020, the district contracted the services of a consultant to work with teachers and principals from both schools. Interviewees reported that a committee of teachers from grades 6 through 12 collaborated with the consultant during early release and full-day PD time to develop the block schedule and was now working to design a model of engaging, student-centered instructional practices and lesson design.

a. Members of the team stated that they received five days of training and that they now served as facilitator/leaders for the individual content-based teacher teams that have been meeting during PD time throughout the 2018–2019 year.

2. District leaders told the team that a similar initiative was underway at the Belmonte Middle School. Because the school was identified by DESE as requiring assistance or intervention in the form of focused/targeted support, Belmonte Middle School’s Instructional Leadership Team received support from the Statewide System of Support (SSoS) throughout its turnaround planning process. Staff from SSoS have been working with a task force of teachers and school leaders to develop a comprehensive turnaround plan to redefine and revitalize their entire school community. With the continued support of SSoS staff, and through PD structures and systems including peer collaboration, coaching, and action research, the school is working to develop a system with the capacity to produce continuous and lasting improvement.

3. Principals said that all elementary teachers met by grade level or specialty area in support of the KTL initiative in all the district’s elementary schools, using scheduled PD time, and receiving the direct support and active participation of KTL trainers/coaches. These teams work to collaboratively develop instructional units, strategies, and processes, and to effectively incorporate KTL writing methodologies within the elementary curriculum.

4. The review team was told that the district has also extended PD support directly to all principals. For the past three school years, a consultant has provided principals with group trainings and individualized coaching specifically designed to expand and improve the quality of their supervisory practices and evaluative skills. In 2018–2019, as a result of SSoS involvement, additional support is available and being provided to middle-school leaders to expand their leadership capacity and enhance their professional competencies.

a. Principals expressed the view that this support enabled them to supervise teaching and evaluate teachers with increasing confidence and effectiveness.

**B.** Some ad-hoc leadership teams have begun to provide school leaders and teachers with opportunities to develop professionally.

1. For example, during the 2017–2018 school year the principals of the middle and high schools formed a team of teachers known as the long block team. This team met regularly to research program designs and block schedules for the new middle school/high school. With the support of an external consultant, this team proved its value to district and school leaders, who cited its successful work. This team is now at work planning for the future of the middle school/high school.
2. In a similar development, on their own initiative, the elementary school principals have recently begun meeting regularly as a group, creating an impromptu professional learning community that appears to function somewhat independently of the district office. The principals focus on core concerns about improvement in their schools and share successes and challenges.

**Impact**: Recognizing that its needs are many and its resources limited, the district has determined to access and target its coaching, training, and professional learning resources in a manner that will most directly affect student learning. By focusing professional and leadership development training on leaders and teams who have responsibility for key roles in improvement, by seeking to root new practices in schools, and by maintaining a sustained and clear focus on its prioritized needs, the district is increasing the likelihood of improving educational opportunities and academic outcomes for all students.

***Challenges and Areas for Growth***

1. **The district’s educator evaluation system does ensure that educators receive high-quality feedback[[5]](#footnote-5) that helps them to improve their practice.**

**A.** The team reviewed the evaluations of 32 randomly selected teachers from across the district in TeachPoint, the district’s educator evaluation management system.

1. In general, all required evaluative documents were completed in a timely manner, including goals, self-assessments, records of evidence, and formative assessments/evaluations and summative evaluations. However, almost all of the teacher formative assessments/evaluations and summative evaluations reviewed by the team were not of high quality. They were insufficiently informative and instructive[[6]](#footnote-6) and did not provide guidance to help educators expand professional competencies and improve classroom practices.

a. Only 17 of the 32 teacher evaluations spanning 2018–2019 could be described as being evidence based. The remaining 15 evaluations contained little evidence that was concrete or lesson specific. Instead, feedback was typically generic, vague, and/or a paraphrased restatement of the language of the department’s performance indicators themselves: “Evidence and observations show continued progress toward this goal.” “[The teacher] uses a variety of instructional strategies and resources to meet the needs of all learners.”

b. Only 10 of the 32 reviewed evaluations were instructive. Most provided little concrete feedback, clear pedagogical suggestions, or specific and actionable recommendations for improved classroom practice or enhanced lesson design. When feedback was included it was often superficial, overly generalized, or congratulatory: “I have observed great progress in this goal.” “This will be addressed in the summative evaluation. There are no concerns at this time.” “They have been lucky to have her as a teacher.”

2. The team also reviewed the 2017–2018 evaluative documentation of the superintendent and the six principals. A review of principals’ evaluation files showed the absence of four of the five required program components: SMART goals,[[7]](#footnote-7) self-assessments, evidence documentation, and formative assessments. Instead, principals received only an annual summative evaluation.

a. The feedback provided to principals in their summative evaluations was rarely specific, concrete, or actionable. Rather than offering ideas, suggestions, and guidance on how to improve, the feedback consisted of general encouragement to persevere.

**B.** The district’s current supervisory practices do not appear to be adequate to properly inform and fully support a high-quality, effective educator evaluation system.

Although some teachers reported that their principals visited their classrooms regularly and provided them with helpful and timely feedback, many teachers stated that their principals seldom visited their classrooms and offered little useful feedback when they did. This was confirmed by the review team’s analysis of the announced and unannounced classroom observation documents in the district’s TeachPoint system.

Principals stated that because of the added demands caused by the absence of key curriculum leadership positions and of essential infrastructure and supports, they found it “nearly impossible” to be fully effective. Consequently, principals described themselves as “managers, not instructional leaders,” who struggled to find the time required to supervise and evaluate their teachers effectively.

While the superintendent reported that he had high expectations for central office leaders and principals and was demanding, his evaluative feedback was missing specific guidance to help them improve their practice.

**C.** As of the 2015–2016 school year, state educator evaluation regulations (603 CMR 35.07) call for districts to collect and use student feedback as an evidence source in the teacher evaluation process and staff feedback as evidence in the administrator evaluation process. This feedback may also be used to inform an educator’s self-assessment, goal setting, or as evidence to demonstrate growth over time.

1. Principals said that the district has not initiated any action or developed any plan to collect and use student and staff feedback in the educator evaluation process.[[8]](#footnote-8)

**D.** The team did not find evidence of the use of educators’ impact on student learning in the educator evaluation process, which is also a state requirement. [[9]](#footnote-9)

1. District leaders and principals reported that the district has not developed or initiated any of the action steps required to implement this requirement.

**Impact**: Without high-quality (specific, timely, and actionable) feedback designed to promote the professional growth of teachers and administrators, the district is missing opportunities to help educators build their skills and improve students’ learning experiences and outcomes.

* + 1. **The district’s professional development program is not informed by student and educator data, aligned with district and educator goals, and focused on student outcomes.**

**A.** District professional development (PD) structures are not consistent with the guiding principles of state standards for professional development.

1. Teachers and a district leader reported that the district did not have a formal PD committee or designated leadership group. They stated that the executive director of curriculum, instruction, and accountability planned and directed all district PD programs and activities in collaboration with the principals.

1. In multiple interviews, teachers described the district’s PD programming as top down, allowing no meaningful teacher voice or role in its planning or design. They reported that almost all PD programs were districtwide in scope and without appropriate differentiation by school, grade, content, teacher need, and career stage.

**B.** The state’s standards for professional development also require that PD should be an intentional, deliberate, carefully planned process with well-defined, measurable goals that are directly aligned with priorities articulated in the district’s strategic plan.

District leaders reported that formal comprehensive PD plan had not been developed and that the district and the schools did not have specific written PD goals or objectives. District leaders stated a desire to construct such a plan for the 2019–2020 school year.

At the time of the onsite in March 2019, the district was missing a comprehensive and measurable District Improvement Plan (DIP) by which to properly guide the professional efforts of teachers and administrators.

Teachers told the review team that PD programming often appeared to have been minimally planned, that program agendas were typically generated “the day before,” and that the quality and relevance of PD activities were inconsistent.

1. The PD standards also require the collection, analysis, and use of multiple sources of student and educator data including assessment results, demographic data, surveys, and observations to directly inform PD programming decisions and the ongoing evaluation of programs in order to make subsequent improvements. The district does not have many of these tools as well.

The district’s systems for data collection and analysis are not fully developed or highly effective. In its self-assessment submitted in advance of the onsite, district leaders rated the district’s present capacity to use data systematically to improve teaching, learning, and decision making as an “emerging practice.” (See the Assessment Challenge findings above.)

The district has begun to collect educator data, by distributing an interest inventory in the spring and Google feedback assessments for most PD programs and activities. Teachers reported, however, that they were unaware of whether or how whether such data were used to inform decisions about the quality and value of PD programming.

**Impact**: The absence of a clear PD plan aligned with student and educator data and district and educator goals makes it difficult for the district to provide appropriately targeted and differentiated PD at all stages of their careers that improves their knowledge, skills, and ability to meet the learning needs of all students.

***Recommendations***

**1. The district should fully implement all components of the educator evaluation system, with a particular emphasis on ensuring that all educators receive high-quality feedback.**

**A.** The district should support and monitor the skills and practices of evaluators to ensure that they regularly provide all staff with high-quality instructional feedback that is specific, timely, and actionable and that promotes professional growth and effectiveness.

1. The district should continue to provide formal and ongoing training, coaching, and calibration activities for all evaluators to enhance quality and accuracy and reflect fairness and consistency in the evaluation process and documentation.

2. The superintendent should thoroughly complete all administrators’ evaluations in a timely manner in an effort to model effective written feedback for administrators and to meet the requirements of the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework.

**B.** The district should develop and implement processes for collecting and using student feedback in the teacher evaluation process and staff feedback in the administrator evaluation process.

**C.** As part of the educator evaluation system, the district should develop and implement processes for educators and others, including their evaluators, to work together to establish anticipated student learning gains prior to administering common and classroom assessments and compare student results on those assessments to anticipated gains.

**Benefits**: By improving the quality and consistency of supervisory practices and evaluative documents, the district will create a more effective mechanism for improving the quality of classroom instruction resulting in enriched learning experiences and increased academic outcomes for all students. Improving the evaluations of principals will expand their capacity and the overall effectiveness of the district’s educational leaders and improve the quality of teaching and learning in each school.

The collection and use of student feedback as an evidence source in the teacher evaluation process and of staff feedback as evidence in the administrator evaluation process will enable teachers and principals to reflect more accurately and comprehensively on their professional efficacy and to identify areas of strength and for growth. Ultimately, this will result in improved academic opportunities, outcomes, and performance for students.

**Recommended resources:**

* + - * *A Protocol for developing S.M.A.R.T Goal Statements* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/>) is designed to support educators in developing S.M.A.R.T. goal statements using the appropriate evaluation rubric and a DESE-developed protocol. *The Evidence Collection Toolkit (*[*http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/*](http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/rubrics/)*)* is designed to help districts establish clear and consistent expectations for evidence collection and promote a meaningful process for the collection, analysis, and sharing of high-quality artifacts. The toolkit Includes: brief guidance, examples of district strategies, a worksheet for district decision-making, and a handout of Evidence Collection Tips for Educators.
* *On Track with Evaluator Capacity* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/pln/OnTrack-EvaluatorCapacity.pdf>) is an interactive document that provides specific strategies, lessons learned, and links to district-created resources. It was produced by eight districts that were part of a Professional Learning Network for Supporting Evaluator Capacity.
* *Quick Reference Guide: Opportunities to Streamline the Evaluation Process* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/QRG-Streamline.pdf>) is designed to help districts reflect on and continuously improve their evaluation systems:
  + What’s working? What are the bright spots?
  + How can we streamline the process to stay focused on professional growth and development?
  + What do we need to adjust to ensure our system is valuable to educators and students?
* DESE’s Educator Evaluation Training Workshops (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/training/teachers/default.html>) provide a general overview to the educator evaluation framework as well as opportunities to engage in activities associated with the first three steps of the 5-Step Cycle. This is a particularly helpful resource for educators new to the educator evaluation framework.
* DESE’s calibration platform (<http://www.ma-calibration.com/>) includes tasks and activities to help educators calibrate their understanding of both content and pedagogy.
* DESE’s Evaluator Calibration Training resources (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/calibration/>) include tools, protocols, and videos to support evaluator calibration around perceptions of practice aligned to ESE’s model rubrics as well as high quality feedback.
* *Quick Reference Guide: Student and Staff Feedback* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/QRG-Feedback.pdf>) provides information about how to select feedback instruments and use feedback as part of the educator evaluation system, along with links to relevant resources.

**2. The district should build a professional development program that is informed by data and includes well-defined, measurable goals that are aligned with district, school, and educator goals.**

**A.** The district’s professional development (PD) plan should describe a set of learning experiences that is varied, systematic, informed by student and educator data, with specific, measurable goals aligned with district, school, and educator goals.

1. The district should develop a coordinated PD plan and design, implement, and evaluate the effectiveness of district PD programs and supports.

2. The district should provide formal opportunities for teachers to participate in the design, implementation, and assessment of PD.

3. PD programming should be sufficiently differentiated to accommodate the individual learning needs and the experience and expertise of teachers, including grade-level, content, and career stage.

4. All PD programs and activities at both the district and school levels should be regularly evaluated by staff. The PD team should use the results of those evaluations, as well as a careful analysis of student performance and other data, to make needed and timely improvements to future PD programming.

**Benefits**: The development of a carefully planned, robust, data-informed, differentiated PD program will help to strengthen educators’ skills, ultimately benefiting student performance and outcomes. Involving staff directly in the design, implementation, and assessment of PD programming will increase their sense of ownership and enhance their support for and active participation in district and school improvement efforts, as well as their own professional growth.

**Recommended resources:**

* *The Massachusetts Standards for Professional Development* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/pd/standards.html>) describe, identify, and characterize what high quality learning experiences should look like for educators.
* DESE’s *Professional Development Self-Assessment Guidebook* (<http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/accountability/dsac/professional-development-self-assessment-guide.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.
* *Identifying Meaningful Professional Development* (<https://youtu.be/zhuFioO8GbQ>) is a video in which educators from three Massachusetts districts discuss the importance of targeted, meaningful professional development and the ways districts can use the evaluation process to identify the most effective PD supports for all educators.
* DESE’s Information for Professional Development Providers web page (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/pd/providers.html>) provides links to professional development course parameters and a self-assessment.
* Professional development case studies (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/pd/CaseStudies/>) highlight districts implementing meaningful professional development programs that support educators throughout the entire career continuum. They include examples of PD programs that are job-embedded, teacher-led, data-driven, and aligned to educator and district needs.

Student Support

***Contextual Background***

At the time of the onsite in March 2019, the district was involved in a comprehensive facilities renewal project. While it is impossible to predict its impact with certainty, new grade and school configurations will change the nature and role of every school. All school buildings will become handicap accessible and IDEA compliant[[10]](#footnote-10), and the district will ends its current practice of concentrating the population of elementary-level students with disabilities in one of four elementary schools.

The district struggles to address the needs of students systemically, even as the enrollment of economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and English learners (ELs) increases.[[11]](#footnote-11) The district has some inclusion teams in place; however, these teams have not been trained in a co-teaching model, which would engage general education and special education teachers in shared planning, organization, delivery, and assessment of instruction.

The review team found little evidence that limited- or non-English speaking families received general school information in their home language; the one exception was contracted translation services for the families of students receiving or being evaluated for special education services. The district’s website does not offer a translation option for families to choose their home language. Educators reported that all other correspondence was sent home in English only.

The high-school student handbook includes information about the building crisis response team plan, which includes specific lock-in, lock-down, and secure-in-place procedures, and intruder notification to all staff computers, as well as to the police. Teachers expressed the desire to have a more current plan. High-school students expressed concerns about their safety in school because of easy access to the building, even though locks have recently been added to exit/entrance doors. The district is considering providing training that could address these concerns.

***Strength Finding***

**The district has increased support for students at risk of not graduating by hiring two wraparound counselors and establishing credit recovery options.**

1. The district has hired two wraparound counselors to address attendance issues; meet with hospitalized students; attend re-entry meetings; conduct support groups, such as a group for grandparents raising their grandchildren; and assist families in accessing community resources based on their individual needs.

1. Wraparound counselors meet with the superintendent monthly to prioritize the needs of the individual students and families that they support.

2. Wraparound counselors have been trained to develop 504 accommodation plans that provide appropriate support to increase the academic achievement of students with diagnosed disabilities.

3. School counselors and district leaders described the wraparound counselors as beneficial and expressed the view that the addition of these positions was something the district has done very well.

1. Administrators and counselors reported that the district has implemented online support programs, including credit recovery opportunities to help students increase their academic achievement and graduate on time.

1. GradPoint Credit Recovery Program is an online, self-paced, comprehensive, standards-based learning opportunity. It enables students who are credit deficient to retake courses to earn academic credit.

2. Online Edgenuity courses are offered on Saturday mornings for credit recovery and to prevent students from dropping out of school. Saugus teachers support the students in these courses.

3. An administrator described an after-school Title I-funded program at the middle school, entitled Club Overtime, which incorporates active games with academic support. Staff plan to collect data on participation and intended outcomes, including improvement in students’ grades and a decrease in behavioral referrals.

4. The district uses Khan Academy to support academic needs and to encourage students to prepare for PSAT and SAT tests.

**Impact:** When the district provides concrete help to struggling students who are facing health, mental health, housing, and other challenges, it increases the likelihood that these students and their families will overcome the non-academic barriers to learning that are interfering with school life, enabling them to engage more fully in their learning efforts. By recognizing the needs of students who are at risk of not graduating and providing them with targeted social and academic supports outside of the school day, the district is greatly increasing students’ prospects for academic success and graduation.

***Challenges and Areas for Growth***

**2. The district does not have a proactive tiered system of targeted academic and other support to meet the needs of all students, based on data-driven decision-making and progress monitoring.**

**A**. Administrators reported that the district did not have a uniform tiered system of support for all students.

1. The draft District Plan Overview 2018–2021 includes PD for teachers in Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as part of a strategic initiative to increase teachers’ ability to facilitate student-centered lessons that meet students’ individual learning styles. Although some teachers at the middle school read and discussed chapters from a UDL text this school year in a book club, they reported that follow-up and implementation strategies were missing.

a. The district does not have an updated District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) that describes the services and supports that it provides to ensure that all possible efforts are being made to meet students’ needs in general education classes and to accommodate a wide range of student learning styles and needs.

**B**. The review team did not find evidence of instruction that met students’ diverse learning needs.

1. Although the review team found sufficient and compelling evidence that teachers were using a variety of instructional strategies in 71 percent of observed elementary classes, the proportion in middle- and high-school classes was 29 percent and 20 percent, respectively.

2. The review team found sufficient and compelling evidence of the engagement of students in challenging tasks, regardless of learning needs in only 30 percent of observed elementary school classes, in 6 percent of observed middle-school classes, and in 10 percent of observed high-school classes.

**C.** Some students with disabilities may not be receiving adequate supports in the general education program.

1. In 2018, 43 percent of Saugus students with disabilities scored in the needs improvement (NI) and failing (F) categories on the Grade 10 English Language Arts MCAS test, compared with 31 percent of students with disabilities statewide. In addition, 73 percent of Saugus students with disabilities scored in the NI and F categories in Mathematics, compared with 60 percent of students with disabilities statewide.

2. Several parents reported that mandated services were either not being provided, or were provided in an untimely manner to their children. Teachers reported that some IEPs were not being fully implemented. Students stated that 504 plans were not always followed by classroom teachers, creating problems that must be resolved by guidance staff.

a. In response to some of these concerns, the superintendent identified the need to establish a special education transition program.

3. High-school teachers told the team that students with disabilities were often taught by paraprofessionals, rather than teachers.

4. Teachers said that general education and special education teachers had not been trained to function as co-teachers.

5. An administrator reported the need for both PD and a special education policy and procedure manual.

6. Inclusion teams have not received targeted PD and common planning time has not been uniformly scheduled and used to plan a range of teaching strategies to engage all students.

**Impact:**  Without a clearly defined, tiered system of support that includes data-driven decision-making, progress monitoring, and evidence-based supports in conjunction with a variety of instructional strategies, educators likely are unable to respond rapidly and with impact to the emergent needs of students. Without such a system, the district likely struggles and falls short of its aspiration to improve all students’ performance, opportunities, and outcomes.

**3. The district has not established a positive behavioral system with an ongoing data-monitoring process to evaluate progress.**

**A.** Counselors reported that positive behavioral interventions and supports were not in place throughout the district.

**B.** In the district’s self-assessment submitted in advance of the onsite,district leaders reported that they have not implemented districtwide positive behavioral systems and expectations that are taught, modeled, and rewarded and that ensure policies and practices are inclusive and equitable and are evaluated for progress to inform practices.

**C.** Parents told the team that discipline was inconsistent and cyberbullying was not adequately addressed. Students, counselors, and elementary teachers identified an absence of police collaboration and access to a full-time resource officer as areas of concern, especially when issues of cyberbullying arose. Middle-school teachers reported that discipline was inconsistent and there was an absence of a shared philosophy about student behavior. They described the hallways as “bully zones” and expressed the view that students would feel better with clearer expectations. Middle- and high-school teachers described the discipline in both schools as missing consistency in policies, practices, and consequences.

**D.** Whilethe team found sufficient and compelling evidence ofa climate conducive to teaching and learning in 89 percent of the elementary classrooms, the proportions for the middle school and the high school were 59 percent and 55 percent, respectively.

**E.** Many students are missing significant instructional time.

1.The percentage of district students suspended in-school and out-of-school has increased over the three years before the onsite and exceeds the statewide averages.According toDESE data, between 2016 and 2018 the district’s in-school suspension rate increased by .9 percent, from 4.3 percent in 2016 to 5.2 percent in 2018. During the same interval, the statewide in-school suspension rate increased by .1 percent from 1.8 percent in 2016 to 1.9 percent in 2018. The district’s out-of-school suspension rate increased by 1.3 percent, from 1.7 percent in 2016 to 3.0 percent in 2018. Between 2016 and 2018, the statewide rate remained at 2.9 percent.

a. The middle school’s out-of-school suspension rate is well above the high school out-of-school suspension rate and increasing. Between 2016 and 2018, the middle school’s out-of-school suspension rate increased by 6.0 percent, from 2.5 percent in 2016 to 8.2 percent in 2018. During the same interval, the high school’s out-of-school suspension rate decreased by .9 percent, from 3.6 percent in 2016 to 2.5 percent in 2018.

2. Between 2016 and 2018, the percentage of district students absent for 10 or more days each year increased by 3.5 percent, from 40.4 percent in 2016 to 43.1 percent in 2017 to 43.9 percent in 2018. During the same interval, the statewide average increased by 13.6 percent, from 30.5 percent in 2016 to 33.3 percent in 2017 to 34.1 percent in 2018.

3. The percentage of district students who are chronically absent increased by 4.1 percent, from 16.3 percent in 2016 to 18.3 percent in 2017 to 18.6 percent in 2018, and exceeds the statewide average. Between 2016 and 2018, the statewide average increased by .9 percent, from 12.3 percent in 2016 to 13.5 percent in 2017 to 13.2 percent in 2018.

a. The 2018 chronic absence rates are high for grades 7–12.

i. In 2018, the grade levels in the district with the highest chronic absence rates were as follows: 19.9 percent for grade 7; 17.4 percent for grade 8; 23.5 percent for grade 9; 25.5 percent for grade 10; 40.2 percent for grade 11; and 39 percent in grade 12.

b. The chronic absence rates for some student groups are high.

i. In 2018, the student groups in the district with the highest chronic absence rates were as follows: 31.1 percent for English learners, 29.5 percent for economically disadvantaged students, and 21 percent for students with disabilities.

**G.** Althoughthe district provides credit recovery opportunities to students who are at risk of dropping out, according to DESE data, between 2016 and 2018 the district’s annual dropout rate increased by .3 percent, from 2.8 percent in 2016 to 3.1 percent in 2018, and exceeds the statewide average. During the same interval, the statewide average remained at 1.9 percent.

**Impact:** Without positive behavioral interventions and supports in place and without a positive, supportive school climate, the district has a limited ability to create safe and effective learning environments that are conducive to quality teaching and learning.

***Recommendations***

1. **The district should develop and implement a formal tiered system of support.**
2. Using a process of its own design that includes a range of stakeholders, the district should develop a coordinated districtwide tiered approach to supporting students.
3. In Tier 1, the district should provide students with core instruction using a variety of instructional strategies that is robust and responsive and that provides universal behavioral supports.
4. In Tier 2, educators should identify students, based on universal screening and progress monitoring, to receive instruction through supplemental interventions in addition to the core instruction.
5. In Tier 3, educators should monitor and support students with high levels of frequency, providing more intense interventions in addition to core instruction.
6. The district should provide high-quality PD for all staff to facilitate the development and implementation of a formal tiered system of support that includes providing for individual differences in the general education program and progress monitoring. The district should also provide PD for co-teaching teams on effective practices in the inclusive classroom.
7. The district should develop a renewed DCAP and provide teachers with PD on the accommodations and instructional strategies elaborated in it.
8. The district should ensure that school leadership teams systematically evaluate the effectiveness of its tiered system of support using data to inform planning and adjustments to practice.

**Benefits:** A data-driven tiered system of supports will ensure that all students receive high-quality core instruction, using a variety of instructional strategies and targeted interventions. As a result, the district will be better able to improve all students’ performance, opportunities, and outcomes.

**Recommended resources:**

* The *Early Warning Implementation Guide* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/ccr/ewi/>) 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 Systems for Student Success (SfSS)* (<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 SfSS 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.
* *Making the Case for the Importance of School Climate and Its Measurement* (<http://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/events/webinar/making-case-importance-school-climate-and-its-measurement>) is a recorded webinar, along with a detailed PowerPoint presentation, that addresses: the linkages between school climate and students’ development; models of school climate; best practices in communicating the importance of school climate to stakeholders; and characteristics of good school climate measures.
* *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.
* *Guiding Principles: A Resource Guide for Improving School Climate and Discipline* (<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/guiding-principles.pdf>) highlights ways in which states and school districts can promote academic excellence by creating safe and productive learning environments for all students.
* *Family, School, and Community Partnership Fundamentals* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/bese/councils/>) provide a framework for family engagement, along with a self-assessment tool.

**2. The district should adopt a multi-tiered positive behavioral intervention and support system and provide professional development to help district and school leaders, teachers, and support staff** **to implement it across the district.**

1. The district should develop positively stated expectations for students. These expectations should be taught to students, posted throughout the district, and regularly reviewed.

1. The district should provide PD for teachers to help them build up their capacity to identify, understand, and respond to the underlying causes of student behavior.

2. The district should use an ongoing data monitoring system to evaluate progress and inform practices. Specific rules, behaviors, and expectations should be taught, modeled, and rewarded as part of a schoolwide positive behavioral system.

3. The district should ensure that behavior management, discipline policies, practices and procedures are inclusive, developmentally appropriate, unbiased, equitable, supportive, and aligned with the needs of all students.

**Benefits:** By adopting and implementing a system of positive behavioral interventions and supports, the district will create an environment that helps students develop social-emotional and academic knowledge, skills, and competencies. An effectively implemented positive behavioral system has the potential to contribute to safe, positive, healthy, inclusive, engaging, and welcoming learning environments that cultivate supportive relationships and a strong sense of belonging.

**Recommended resources:**

* DESE’s *Bullying Prevention and Intervention* page (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/bullying/>) provides resources to help districts and schools to prevent and address bullying, in support of related legislation signed into law in 2010.
* *Supporting and Responding to Behavior: Evidence-Based Classroom Strategies for Teachers* (<https://www.osepideasthatwork.org/evidencebasedclassroomstrategies/>) summarizes evidence-based, positive, proactive, and responsive classroom behavior intervention and support strategies that can help teachers capitalize on instructional time and decrease disruptions.
* *Addressing the Root Causes of Disparities in School Discipline* (<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/addressing-root-causes-disparities-school-discipline>) is an action planning guide designed to help school and district teams address disparities in school discipline.
* *School Climate Practices for Implementation and Sustainability* (<http://www.schoolclimate.org/publications/documents/SchoolClimatePracticeBriefs-2013.pdf>), from The National School Climate Center, is a set of Practice Briefs focused on improving school climate.
* *Guiding Principles: A Resource Guide for Improving School Climate and Discipline* (<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/guiding-principles.pdf>) highlights ways in which states and school districts can promote academic excellence by creating safe and productive learning environments for all students.
* *Safe and Healthy Learning Environments* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/safety/>) is a web page outlining a number of ESE programs and related resources that can help school districts and communities build safe and healthy learning environments for all students.
* The *Behavioral Health and Public Schools Framework* (<http://bhps321.org/viewframework.asp>) is a guidance document to help schools establish supportive environments with collaborative services that will enable all students – including those with behavioral health needs – to achieve at their highest potential.

**3. The district should strengthen its efforts to improve student attendance and reduce the need to rely on suspension as a response to misconduct.**

**A.** The district should analyze attendance data and determine the root cause(s) of chronic absence.

1.The district should use disaggregated data to examine attendance rates and analyze the extent to which specific student groups have disproportionate rates of chronic absence.

2.The district shouldgather input from students and families through focus groups and surveys about the reasons for high absence rates and possible ways to address the challenge of students missing too much instruction.

3. The district should ensure that schools support two-way communication and access for all students’ families, including providing interpretation and translation services to families, as appropriate.

4.The district should determine the root causes of high and disproportionate absence rates and take steps to address them, including reviewing current initiatives to improve attendance and adjusting efforts as needed.

**B.** The district should analyze suspension data and determine the root cause(s) of suspension.

1. The district should use disaggregated data to examine suspension rates and analyze the extent to which specific student groups are suspended disproportionately.

2. The district should determine the root causes of high and disproportionate suspension rates and take steps to address them, including reviewing current initiatives to improve suspension and adjusting efforts as needed.

3. The district should implement positive behavioral interventions, student supports, and strategies including restorative practices and conflict resolution.

a. The district should continue to implement the PBIS program to improve student behavior and evaluate whether PBIS is contributing to a reduction in suspensions.

4. The review team strongly recommends that the district take advantage of opportunities to participate in DESE-sponsored professional development on rethinking discipline.

**C.** The district should consider that addressing attendance and suspension may involve a range of wider initiatives such as improving instruction and its relevance to post-graduation goals; fostering a positive school climate; and building or strengthening relationships with students and their families.

1. The district might consider ways to increase students’ agency, personalize their learning, and increase their understanding of the connections and relevance of their current coursework to their future success.

**Benefits**: The primary benefit of implementing this recommendation is that if students are in school, they are more likely to succeed. Engaging students and families in identifying the causes of student absence and suspensions and in suggesting ways to improve attendance and lower suspension likely will help raise attendance, decrease suspensions, and promote students’ growth and development.

**Recommended resources:**

* *Addressing the Root Causes of Disparities in School Discipline* (<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/addressing-root-causes-disparities-school-discipline>) is a guide that describes how to carry out a descriptive analysis of disparities in school discipline and how to conduct a root cause analysis to systematically address school-based factors that contribute to disparities. These analyses should result in an actionable understanding of the following:
  + Who is being disparately disciplined and what is happening to them
  + The systemic causes of disparities in school discipline and why they occur
  + How you can reduce and eliminate disparities in school discipline
* *Resource Guide for Superintendent Action* (<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/rethink-discipline-resource-guide-supt-action.pdf>) is designed to highlight the role that superintendents and school leaders play in developing safe and supportive school climate and discipline; offer possible district- and school-level action steps for initiating and enhancing local efforts to create safe and supportive school climate and discipline systems and practices; and share promising practices and useful resources for implementing and sustaining safe and supportive school climate and discipline in collaboration with local stakeholders.
* *Positive School Discipline* (<http://positiveschooldiscipline.promoteprevent.org/course>) is an interactive, self-paced course for school leaders that includes skill-building activities, real-world examples, and key strategies for creating a positive school climate.
* *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.
* The Attendance Works website (<https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/>) provides several resources to help address chronic absenteeism, including district- and school-level self-assessments and planning tools, webinars, and toolkits.
* *My Career and Academic Plan (MyCAP)* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/ccr/initiatives/>) is a student-directed, multi-year planning tool and process that allows students to map academic plans, document personal/social growth, and engage in career development activities consistent with the student's unique, self-identified interests, needs, and goals for the attainment of post-secondary success. (A new MyCAP guidance document will be available in spring 2019 at the website listed above.)

Financial and Asset Management

***Contextual Background***

Communication and collaboration between the district and the town have improved since the last district review in 2010. Frequent interaction and the adoption of a townwide accounting system have enabled transparency in financial operations and the sharing of knowledge and experience. The town recently hired a consultant who specializes in government accounting to strengthen its systems and processes and to further enhance compatibility among town departments, including the district.

The presence of the executive director of finance and administration who has worked in the district since 2012 and who works collaboratively with town finance officials has contributed to consistency in the management of the district’s business office. The executive director oversees a business office that is efficient and follows sound financial practices, as evidenced by the existence of an updated financial policies and procedures manual and the absence of any financial irregularities in annual audits. The executive director of finance and administration meets regularly with the superintendent and is an integral member of the central office administrative team.

It is apparent that the district and the town share a commitment to efficiency. The executive director of finance and administration views finding efficiencies as a priority: she makes frequent reviews of staff and expense budgets and ensures that a limited amount of district funds remains unspent at the end of the fiscal year.

With the use of 6 school buildings, 3 of which are over 50 years old, the district has found that maintaining and operating the older buildings is an inefficient allocation of education resources. The district hopes to find significant savings in building operations and maintenance when grades are reconfigured, enabling the district to locate pre-kindergarten through grade 12 in just 3 buildings, and close the 3 older buildings.

***Strength Finding***

**1. As part of a comprehensive restructuring of its educational model, the district has secured funding for construction of a new middle/high school building, an addition and renovations for another school, and renovations to one other school building. By 2021, all students will attend a new, renovated, or renovated/expanded school with up-to-date facilities.**

**A.** District leaders and town officials worked together on preparing both a public information effort, and a plan, the January 2017 Saugus Public Schools Educational Plan, to address the educational needs of students, which the present school buildings could not provide.

1. The district uses 6 school buildings and an administration building that range in age from 18 to 123 years old; while most have had recent renovations, Oaklandvale Elementary School is 57 years old and has not had improvements.

2. Although the current high-school building is sufficient in size for its student population, it is missing full handicap accessibility and essential educational facilities in the areas of science and technology/engineering.

**Table 30: Saugus Public Schools**

**Years of Construction and Renovation and Ages of Schools**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **School** | **Year Built** | **Year Renovated** | **Age of School** |
| Oaklandvale Elementary | 1962 |  | 57 |
| Waybright Elementary | 1965 | 2010 | 54 |
| Lynnhurst Elementary | 1964 | 2006 | 55 |
| Veterans Memorial Elementary | 2001 | 2006 | 18 |
| Belmonte Middle | 1966 | 2003 | 53 |
| Saugus High | 1954 | 1971 | 65 |
| Roby Administration | 1896 |  | 123 |

a. Science labs do not have sufficient lab space and are not handicap accessible. There are deficient electrical outlets and gas jets and the labs do not have proper storage areas for chemicals and equipment. The 2017 Saugus Public Schools Educational Plan cited the condition of the science labs as the primary need and focus of the building project.

b. Wireless connectivity is an issue in some areas of the current building.

3. Three of the four elementary schools were built between 1962 and 1965. According to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA), these schools are near or exceeding their student capacity.

a. Oaklandvale school capacity is 237 students and has a 2018–2019 enrollment of 240 students.

b. Lynnhurst school capacity is 276 students and has a 2018–2019 enrollment of 270 students.

c. Waybright school capacity is 237 students and has a 2018–2019 enrollment of 231 students.

4. The Waybright School is not handicap accessible. In addition, the Oaklandvale and Lynnhurst schools do not have libraries/media centers or computer labs.

**B.** The Saugus submission to the MSBA to fund building construction and improvements required a districtwide master plan, which was developed by a building committee composed of district leaders and municipal officials and other residents.

1. MSBA invited the town and the district into the eligibility period for constructing the new high school in January 2015. This period required preliminary steps that included the formation of a building committee.

a. A 25 to 30 member building committee was formed that consisted of the town manager, the superintendent, school committee members, teachers, and other constituents. Its current chair is the chair of the school committee.

**C.** As part of the Master Plan, the Saugus Public Schools Educational Plan details the requirements and benefits that will result from reconfiguring the grade levels offered in a smaller number of new or renovated school buildings.

1. The 51-page 2017 Saugus Public Schools Educational Plan recommends combining the middle and high schools into a new building, closing the three older elementary schools, locating a pre-kindergarten through grade 2 elementary school in the Veterans Memorial Elementary School, and creating a STEAM Academy for grades 3 to 5 at the Belmonte Middle School site. The superintendent anticipated that the middle school/high school would open in the fall of 2020, and the two levels of elementary schools would be ready in 2021.

a. The superintendent told the review team that the town and district worked with an outside educational consultant who conducted many communitywide workshops to gather stakeholder input.

* 1. Working with a variety of stakeholders, district leaders and town officials secured overwhelming voter support for a debt exclusion to fund the new projects.

1. In June 2017, two debt exclusion articles were approved by Saugus voters by margins exceeding 70 percent.
   * + 1. The first debt exclusion article asked for voter approval to fund the town’s portion of the new middle/high school construction. MSBA is paying for 57.7 percent of the project’s $160,720,000 cost with the town paying the remaining $68,000,000.
       2. The second debt exclusion vote was for the consolidation of four elementary schools to two. This move will cost the town approximately $25 million for an addition to one school and renovations to both. MSBA funding was not available because the preschool and administrative offices were located in these buildings. With this vote, the town has committed to pay for the entire addition and renovations.

2. District leaders and town officials said that they and their many civic allies were able to secure the strong support of the Saugus voters through an extensive outreach effort to parents, local businesses and organizations, senior citizens and churches, among other groups.

**Impact**: Through a cooperative and comprehensive approach, district leaders and town officials have advocated for and made possible the reconfiguration of grade levels in newer, well-equipped, and adequately sized school buildings that can support educators in their effort to provide a 21st century education for all students.

***Challenges and Areas for Growth***

**2. Many principals, teachers, and students expressed concern and frustration with the history of allocation of financial resources, which they stated has led to an inadequate deployment of staff, both at the leadership level and in key school-based roles, and insufficient provision of learning materials, textbooks, and supplies.**

**A.** The district’s net school spending (NSS) has consistently exceeded the required level over at least the last 10 years, by margins that range from 17.3 percent in fiscal year 2010 to 49.3 percent in 2018.

1. An area of spending that is of concern among district administrators and town officials is the amount spent on benefits and fixed costs. In this category of spending Saugus ranks highest among 10 similar districts,[[12]](#footnote-12) with a per-pupil in-district cost of $3,968 in 2017. The next highest level of spending in the category is $3,494.

a. When asked what accounted for a higher level of per-pupil spending than the other districts in the comparison group, a district leader cited health insurance and retirement benefits. According to DESE data, retirement costs increased by 52 percent between 2016 and 2018 and insurance for active and retired employees increased by 38 percent during that period. The health insurance split between employer and employee is currently 90 percent/10 percent. The district’s strategy to deal with these costs is to limit the addition of full-time equivalent hires who would be eligible for insurance benefits.

b. One interviewee described health insurance expenses as a “budget buster.”

**B.** Many stakeholders told review team members that the district did not have enough administrative and instructional personnel to meet the needs of staff and students or enough educational resources and materials for effective instruction.

Of particular concern among principals and teachers is the absence of curriculum leaders at the district and school level. Saugus has a districtwide executive director of curriculum, instruction, and accountability who serves as the only designated curriculum leader in the district. According to DESE data, from 2014 to 2018, the number of district and school leaders declined from 21 FTEs to 16 FTEs, a decrease of 23.8 percent. Between 2014 and 2018, the student population decreased only 7.6 percent, from 2,803 in 2014 to 2,588 in 2018.

Principals and teachers stated that curriculum leaders at both the elementary and secondary level were needed in all subjects.

i. In fiscal year 2019, stipends are being paid to a few elementary teachers through a grant to develop curriculum.

A district administrator and teachers said the district did not have instructional coaches, department heads, and content specialists.

Interviewees also expressed their concern that there were not enough adjustment counselors or a full-time resource officer for the district.

Although some interviewees expressed the view that more adjustment counselors were needed, the superintendent told review team members that the district recently hired two districtwide wrap-around counselors who can provide the services offered by adjustment counselors and strengthen connections to families and the community.

The district occasionally has a Saugus police officer who visits the high school, but he is a detective and not a dedicated resource officer.

Many teachers and leaders shared their difficulty in finding someone they could go to when they needed support or help with a problem or initiative. When describing their deliberations about whether or not to consult with a leader, interviewees made comments such as “not wanting to bother them” or feeling “reluctant to add to their responsibilities.”

5. At the same time, leaders expressed frustration that they did not have time to offer support to those who need it. They reported there were no “middle layers” in school leadership, observing that they had to “change hats” all day to cover all of their extended responsibilities. One principal described the position as an island with “almost too much” authority.

**C.** Some students and teachers do not have current textbooks, or do not have access to classroom materials that are available in sufficient quantities.

1. Teachers and students said they were using outdated textbooks, some of which were falling apart. Other teachers said they had no textbooks at all.

2. Teachers sometimes find it necessary to purchase their own classroom materials or ask parents to contribute materials.

3. When asked where the district could be allocating more resources, one leader said curriculum resources.

**D.** District leaders stated that they believed that the necessary personnel were currently in place, or would be added in fiscal year 2020 to provide essential services. They also stated that they believed there were sufficient school-level budgets for textbooks and materials.

1. As examples of meeting staff needs, the superintendent pointed to recent staff positions such as the two wrap-around counselors that have been hired in fiscal year 2019, a new Board Certified Behavior Analyst position, an additional .5 ELL teacher, and a full-time adjustment counselor that have been proposed for fiscal year 2020.

2. The superintendent and district leaders stated that principals did not fully embrace their budget authority and that with some additional professional development, they could become more adept at purchasing needed curriculum and supplies within current budget levels.

**Impact**: Whether accurate or not, the widespread perception that the allocation of resources is inadequate and ineffective may be creating the impression that the district is not fully supporting the needs of staff and students. The current allocation of resources may not be sufficient to improve students’ performance, opportunities, and outcomes.

**3. The district’s budget documents for fiscal year 2019 and fiscal year 2020 do not include key information that connects improvement planning and student performance to the allocation of resources, nor do they include all available resources, such as grants and revolving accounts. In addition, the district and the town do not have an up-to-date and signed written agreement on municipal expenditures in support of the district.**

**A.** Although the fiscal year 2019 and fiscal year 2020 budget documents include some important financial data, neither document includes student performance data, the goals and priorities of the district to improve performance, and detail on all sources of funds that can be used to meet goals.

1. The fiscal year 2019 budget document contains a one-page letter from the superintendent, followed by 16 pages of comparisons between Saugus Public Schools and various other districts with similar student group demographics, expenditures per pupil, attendance and dropout rates, and other data categories.

a. One page of the comparison section contains data comparing the percentages of Saugus students scoring *Proficient* or higher on the 2016 MCAS tests in ELA and mathematics with the percentages for 12 other communities. This is the only student performance data in the budget book.

b. The comparisons section of the budget document is followed by several pages of explanations of circuit breaker funds, out-of-district school placements, and a guide to how per-pupil spending is calculated.

c. The final section of the budget document is a line item budget with two years of actual expenses for fiscal year 2016 and fiscal year 2017, budget numbers for fiscal year 2018, and staff FTEs for those years.

d. When asked why he chose this approach, the superintendent stated that the focus was on framing the issues facing the district, helping local leaders and residents understand who Saugus’s actual peer districts were, and partially telling the story of why Saugus was not performing at the desired level.

1. The fiscal year 2020 budget document is similar to fiscal year 2019 in composition, but in the fiscal year 2020 budget document the superintendent focuses his message on the methodology used to construct the budget. There is discussion of the differences between incremental budgeting and zero-based budgeting and how the district decided to use a hybrid model combining both methods. The fiscal year 2020 budget document begins with a one-and-a-half-page letter from the superintendent and includes a one-page budget timeline schedule.

a. The methodology section is followed by the same line item budget format as that used in fiscal year 2019.

b. There is no discussion of student data, or goals and priorities to improve student performance.

c. The fiscal year 2020 budget document does not include all sources of funds.

d. When asked in an interview why he compiled the fiscal year 2020 budget document in this way, the superintendent said that he wanted to answer the questions of the town’s finance committee and demonstrate that the district was practicing realistic budgeting.

e. Another district leader answered a similar question by saying that the district wanted to show town officials that what was contained in the district’s budget lines was supported by a thorough review of actual expenses.

a. Town officials confirmed that, in the past, there had been a level of mistrust between the school district and town on spending and financial processes, but that the relationship has improved.

**B.** A district leader said that special revenue was reported regularly to the school committee through budget versus actual spending reports. Consequently, this leader did not include this information in the budget proposal and budget document.

**C.** The district and the town do not have a current and signed written agreement on municipal expenditures in support of the schools.

1. The district and the town do not have an up-to-date, written agreement on a method for determining the cost of municipal services that are provided to the district by the town, as required by state regulation CMR 10.05.

a. District leaders and town officials reported that it has been many years since there has been an agreement. However, a town official said town officials were drafting the agreement and would meet with district leaders to discuss it.

2. This document did not exist at the time of the last district review in 2010, at which time the district and town were urged to reach agreement through improved communication.

**Impact**: A budget document that is only marginally connected to district and school goals, and with limited student performance data, does not give stakeholders a clear picture of how resources are allocated to support the district’s priorities. Without a current and signed written agreement on a methodology for calculating the cost of municipal services that are provided to the district by the town, the district cannot effectively monitor and internally audit costs for education-related services and ensure the accuracy of these expenditures.

**4. The district and the town do not have a comprehensive plan to improve and maintain its buildings and to ensure the effective use of buildings and operational systems. Staffing of facilities is incomplete.**

**A.** A comprehensive review of available documents by the review team indicated that neither a long-term capital improvement plan nor a preventive maintenance manual was available or public.

**B.** Upon inquiry, district leaders and town officials told the review team that the district did not have a comprehensive capital improvement plan for its buildings and systems, or a preventive maintenance manual.

1. A town official stated that the district had only a short, informal informational document for capital improvements. The town plans to hire an engineer who will serve as townwide maintenance officer and have responsibility for compiling a comprehensive capital plan.

**C.** The district had a head custodian who retired recently and has not been replaced. The head custodian’s only districtwide responsibility was for accepting supply deliveries to a central location and monitoring inventory.

**D.** The district does not have a buildings or facilities manager. The superintendent is responsible for buildings and grounds, including areas such as appropriate use of pesticides and water testing for the presence of lead, while the executive director of finance and administration is responsible for the financial costs associated with buildings and grounds. Given the depth and complexity of the superintendent’s other responsibilities, the review team found the idea that he bore responsibility for pesticide and lead testing to be a concrete example of the consequence of a hollowed-out central-office staffing pattern.

**E.** There is no preventative maintenance manual at either the district or the town level.

1. The absence of a capital improvement plan and a preventative maintenance manual were noted in the 2010 district review.

**Impact**: Without the appropriate staff and a coherent plan for consistent and proactive maintenance, the district cannot reliably provide safe, secure, and well-maintained teaching and learning environments that are conducive to teaching and learning. Awareness of issues and planning for near and long-term building and systems needs is essential in the effective and high-quality management of facilities.

***Recommendations***

**1. The district should review whether its current allocation of resources effectively meets the goals and priorities needed to improve students’ performance, opportunities, and outcomes, and reallocate resources as necessary.**

**A.** District leaders should consider offering all stakeholders an opportunity to voice their concerns over the current level of staffing and materials resources.

1. District leaders could begin this process by meeting with the principals and listening to any concerns they have about adequately addressing the need for curriculum leaders such as department heads, coaches, and content specialists, and academic materials in their schools.

This could also be an opportunity to remind the principals of the control granted to them through education reform for their school-level budgets. Principals can be encouraged to think and act in a proactive manner to address their staffing and academic resource needs in both the present timeframe and as they anticipate their budget requests for the next fiscal year. Principals should be encouraged to include educators and school councils in the development of their budgets.

2. Both educators and students could also have their voices heard during this review of resource allocation. School-level meetings would offer an opportunity for educators and students to meet with district and school leaders and share their experiences of not having enough textbooks, workbooks, paper, and other supplies to provide quality education.

* 1. District leaders should continuously review how and where it is allocating resources and how staffing and expenses are aligned with academic and student needs.

**C.** If district leaders determine that a re-allocation of resources would be beneficial to improve student outcomes, the superintendent should communicate any changes in budget allocations to all stakeholders, along with the rationale for those changes.

**Benefits** from implementing this recommendation will include a transparent and comprehensive process to address the concerns of stakeholders about the effectiveness of the district’s budget, and its role in helping to meet the primary goal of supporting and improving student performance outcomes.

**Recommended resources:**

* *Shifting Resources Strategically to Fund District Priorities* (<https://dmgroupk12.com/solutions/strategic-budgeting>) describes how to reallocate existing funds to support key strategic efforts in three key areas: general education staffing levels, special education services, and federal funds such as Title I, II, and III. It also lists “Ten Mistakes to Avoid” and a list of reflection questions to guide districts’ reallocation.
* *Transforming School Funding: A Guide to Implementing Student-Based Budgeting* (<https://www.erstrategies.org/cms/files/2752-student-based-budgeting-guide.pdf>), from Education Resource Strategies, describes a process to help districts tie funding to specific student needs.
* DESE’s Turnaround Sustainability Toolkit (<http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/accountability/turnaround/redesign/sustainability-toolkit.zip>) contains tools, frameworks, and resources designed to help district and school leaders effectively plan for sustainability of turnaround efforts. It was originally intended for schools whose School Redesign Grants are ending, but could be helpful for any school or district to consider when reallocating funds to support sustainability.
* In *Spending Money Wisely: Getting the Most from School District Budgets* (<https://dmgroupk12.com/> scroll down to Research section), authors Nathan Levenson, Karla Baehr, James C. Smith, and Claire Sullivan identify and discuss the top ten opportunities for districts to realign resources and free up funds to support strategic priorities. Drawing on the wisdom of leading thinkers, district leaders, and education researchers from across the country, the authors gathered a long list of opportunities for resource reallocation. To distill these down to the ten most high-impact opportunities, each opportunity was assessed based on its financial benefit, its impact on student achievement, its political feasibility, and its likelihood of success relative to the complexity of implementation.
* *Smarter School Spending for Student Success* (<http://smarterschoolspending.org/>) provides free processes and tools to help districts use their resources to improve student achievement.
* *Per-Pupil Expenditure Reports* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/statistics/ppx14-18.html>) is a report series that provides summary and detail per pupil spending data for each school district.
* DESE’s *School Finance Statistical Comparisons* web page (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/statistics/>) provides comparisons of per-pupil expenditure, long-term enrollment, teacher salaries, and special education direct expenditure trends.
* 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.

**2. The district should develop a clear, comprehensive budget document that details how the budget supports district and school goals, how much schools and programs cost, and how outside funds are used. The district and the town should formalize in writing their agreement on municipal expenditures that are provided to the district.**

**A.** The districtshould develop a budget document that contains all essential information about the financial operations of the district.

1. All funding sources should be included with detailed spending plans. Estimated grant amounts, circuit breaker, school choice, and expenses from other revolving accounts would be included in this section.

**B.** The budget document should include information about how the budget supports district and school goals, as well as descriptions and subtotals for school and program staffing and costs.

1. The document should detail how student performance data, particularly data related to performance, access, and opportunity outcomes and gaps have been used to set budget priorities.

2. The district should consider including in the budget document narratives explaining underlying assumptions and major changes.

**C.** At least two years of actual, clearly labeled expenses, the current year’s budget numbers, and the proposed budget amounts should all be included. This financial data will allow stakeholders to make comparisons among years and recognize trends in actual and proposed spending.

**D.** The budget document should be made available to all constituents through the district’s website. Access to the document should also be available at the district’s central office for those stakeholders who may prefer a printed copy.

**E.** In compliance with 603 CMR 10:04, the district and the town should formalize in writing their agreement on municipal expenditures that are provided to the district.

* + 1. The regulation lists 13 municipal expenses that can be reported as incurred on behalf of the district, plus other reporting information about insurance and retirement benefits.
    2. The district and the town should formalize their agreement by detailing the calculation process and/or amounts to be used in calculating municipal expenditures that are provided to the district.
    3. District leaders should review and revise the agreement with town officials annually, as needed.

**Benefits:** By implementing this recommendation, the district will have a comprehensive budget document that clearly presents the district’s efforts to improve student outcomes through effective planning and implementation of goals and priorities. The superintendent, the school business administrator, and district and school leaders will all benefit from participating in a strategic process that will strengthen their capacity to communicate and manage the district’s financial and improvement activities. A formal written agreement between the district and the town on financial responsibilities will contribute to a collaborative working relationship and clarity about district spending.

**Recommended resources:**

* *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.
* *Smarter School Spending for Student Success* (<http://smarterschoolspending.org/>) provides free processes and tools to help districts use their resources to improve student achievement.
* *End-of-Year Financial Report* information can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/accounting/eoy/>.
* DESE’s web page 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.

**3. District administrators and town officials should develop a long-term capital improvement plan, as well as a preventative maintenance manual.**

**A.** Using the best practices guidelines of the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA), district leaders and town officials should create a 5- to 10-year facilities capital improvement plan that addresses deferred maintenance and replacement of buildings and/or their components.

The plan should prioritize the needs of the district’s six current school buildings as well as anticipate the structural and operating needs of the three buildings that the schools will occupy in 2021.

An important component of the plan will be the estimated cost of present and future projects. The anticipated hiring of a maintenance engineer by the town will provide the district with a helpful and knowledgeable resource to assist with developing cost estimates.

The district should consider expanding the responsibilities of the current head custodian position or a similar position to include districtwide planning and maintenance.

**B.** MSBA also offers guidance on the development of a written maintenance manual for custodial and routine maintenance standards.

The manual should include cleaning and maintenance standards, operating instructions for equipment and mechanical systems such as heat and electrical and an inspection schedule. Material Safety Data Sheets for hazardous chemicals and materials should also be included in the manual.

Each school building should have an accessible, written manual, which is reviewed and revised regularly, as needed.

**Benefits**: Long-term capital planning will help ensure that buildings are environmentally safe, in good repair, and conducive to teaching and learning. Long-term planning will also reduce the cost of maintenance and repairs, enabling the district to allocate more resources to improving al students’ performance, opportunities, and outcomes.

**Recommended resources:**

* DESE’s *School Building Issues* web page (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/sbuilding/>) includes funding opportunities, guidelines, and resources related to school buildings.
* *Planning Guide for Maintaining School Facilities* (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2003347>), from the National Center for Education Statistics, is intended to help school districts plan for efficient and effective operations. It addresses various topics, including conducting a facilities audit, planning and evaluating maintenance, and managing staff and contractors.
* *The Massachusetts School Checklist* (<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/environmental-health/exposure-topics/iaq/iaq-methods/the-mass-school-checklist.html>) is a list of the most important environmental health and safety issues for schools to address. It includes regulations and industry standards/guidelines related to elements on the checklist, as well as additional resources.
* The Green Ribbon Schools Award honors schools that are exemplary in reducing environmental impact and costs, improving the health and wellness of students and staff, and delivering effective environmental and sustainability education. The district might find several related resources useful, including Massachusetts’ *Green Ribbon Schools Award Resource Guide* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/sbuilding/GreenRibbon/ResourcesGuide.pdf>) and the US Department of Education’s *Green Strides* resource list (<http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/green-strides/resources.html>).
* MassEnergyInsight (<https://www.massenergyinsight.net/home>) is a free, web-based tool made available by the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources as part of the Massachusetts Green Communities Program. The tool is designed to help communities learn about and monitor energy use and related costs, plan energy efficiency programs, and communicate this information.

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

Review Team Members

The review was conducted from March 18–21, 2019, by the following team of independent DESE consultants.

1. Andrew Bundy, Leadership and Governance, *review team coordinator*
2. Suzanne Kelly, Curriculum and Instruction
3. Patricia Williams, Assessment
4. Frank Sambuceti, Human Resources and Professional Development
5. Valerie Murphy, Student Support
6. Marge 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: the Saugus Public Schools executive director of finance and administration, payroll clerk, accounts payable clerk, and human resources clerk, the town manager, town accountant, and town finance director.

The team conducted interviews with all five members of the school committee: chair, vice-chair, and three members.

The review team conducted interviews with the following representatives of the teachers’ association: president, vice-president for elementary, vice-president for middle, and vice president for high school.

The team conducted interviews/focus groups with the following central office administrators: the executive director for finance and administration; the executive director for curriculum, instruction and assessment; and the executive director for pupil personnel services and special education.

The team visited the following schools: Saugus High School (grades 9–12); Belmonte Middle School (grades 6–8); Lynnhurst (K–5), Oaklandvale (K–5), Veterans (K–5), and Waybright (K–5).

During school visits, the team conducted interviews/focus groups with 12 students, 4 members of students’ families, and 6 principals, and focus groups with 5 elementary-school teachers, 19 middle-school teachers, and 15 high-school teachers. The team also interviewed an external literacy coach and a member of the staff of the Statewide System of Support, each of whom currently works with the Saugus Public Schools.

The team observed 64 classes throughout the district: 20 at the high school, 17 at the middle school, and 27 at the 4 elementary schools. The team observed 29 ELA classes, 17 mathematics classes, and 18 classes in other subject areas. Among the classes observed were three special education classes and one ELL class. The observations were approximately 20 minutes in length. All review team members collected data using DESE’s Instructional Inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards-based teaching.

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 and the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC).
  + District documents such as school improvement plans, school committee meeting notes, the collective bargaining agreement, school schedules, and the district’s end-of-year financial reports.
  + All completed administrator evaluations, and a random selection of completed teacher evaluations.

Site Visit Schedule

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Monday**  3/18/19 | **Tuesday**  3/19/19 | **Wednesday**  3/20/19 | **Thursday**  3/21/19 |
| Orientation with district leaders and principals; interviews with district staff and principals; document reviews; and visits to the Veterans and Lynnhurst elementary schools and Belmonte Middle School for classroom observations. | Interviews with district staff and principals; review of personnel files; teacher focus groups; students and students’ families focus groups; and visits to Belmonte Middle School and Saugus High School for classroom observations. | Interviews with school leaders; interviews with school committee members; interview with teachers’ association; visits to Oaklandvale and Waybright elementary schools and Saugus High School for classroom observations. | Interviews with school leaders; interviews with town personnel; interview with external coaches; district review team meeting; visits to Belmonte Middle School and Saugus High School for classroom observations; district wrap-up meeting with the superintendent. |

Appendix B: Enrollment, Attendance, Expenditures

**Table B1a: Saugus Public Schools**

**2018–2019 Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **District** | **Percent**  **of Total** | **State** | **Percent of**  **Total** |
| African-American | 127 | 4.9% | 87,104 | 9.2% |
| Asian | 134 | 5.1% | 66,890 | 7.0% |
| Hispanic | 489 | 18.7% | 197,644 | 20.8% |
| Native American | 15 | 0.6% | 2,159 | 0.2% |
| White | 1,776 | 68.1% | 561,096 | 59.0% |
| Native Hawaiian | 3 | 0.1% | 802 | 0.1% |
| Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic | 65 | 2.5% | 35,936 | 3.8% |
| Al**l** | 2,609 | 100.0% | 951,631 | 100.0% |
| Note: As of October 1, 2018 | | | | |

**Table B1b: Saugus Public Schools**

**2018–2019 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 | 446 | 36.2% | 16.9% | 173,843 | 38.0% | 18.1% |
| Econ. Dis. | 774 | 62.8% | 29.7% | 297,120 | 64.9% | 31.2% |
| EL and Former EL | 163 | 13.2% | 6.2% | 99,866 | 21.8% | 10.5% |
| All high needs students | 1,232 | 100.0% | 46.6% | 458,044 | 100.0% | 47.6% |
| Notes: As of October 1, 2018. 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 2,645; total state enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 962,297. | | | | | | |

**Table B2a: Saugus Public Schools**

**Attendance Rates by Student Group, 2015–2018**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2018)** |
| African American/Black | 119 | 95.0 | 95.5 | 94.6 | 94.6 | -0.4 | 94.1 |
| Asian | 138 | 96.6 | 95.4 | 95.3 | 95.6 | -1.0 | 96.2 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 479 | 94.0 | 93.6 | 93.4 | 93.1 | -0.9 | 92.7 |
| Multi-Race | 67 | 94.4 | 93.0 | 94.6 | 94.6 | 0.2 | 94.4 |
| White | 1,932 | 94.1 | 93.9 | 93.6 | 93.3 | -0.8 | 95.1 |
| High Needs | 1,325 | 93.3 | 92.8 | 92.8 | 92.4 | -0.9 | 93.2 |
| Econ. Dis. | 921 | 92.5 | 92.3 | 92.3 | 91.7 | -0.8 | 92.5 |
| SWD | 462 | 93.6 | 92.7 | 93.0 | 93.2 | -0.4 | 92.9 |
| EL | 180 | 95.1 | 95.1 | 93.9 | 92.4 | -2.7 | 93.3 |
| All | 2,752 | 94.2 | 94.0 | 93.7 | 93.4 | -0.8 | 94.5 |
| 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 B2b: Saugus Public Schools**

**Chronic Absence Rates by Student Group\*, 2015–2018**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2018)** |
| African American/Black | 119 | 16.1 | 11.0 | 19.7 | 12.6 | -3.5 | 16.4 |
| Asian | 138 | 7.6 | 14.3 | 14.2 | 10.9 | 3.3 | 7.6 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 479 | 18.6 | 18.3 | 18.1 | 22.3 | 3.7 | 22.5 |
| Multi-Race | 67 | 15.8 | 14.6 | 14.6 | 19.4 | 3.6 | 14.2 |
| White | 1,932 | 13.7 | 16.3 | 18.8 | 18.5 | 4.8 | 10.0 |
| High Needs | 1,325 | 20.6 | 22.7 | 24.1 | 25.9 | 5.3 | 20.1 |
| Econ. Dis. | 921 | 24.4 | 26.3 | 27.5 | 29.5 | 5.1 | 22.9 |
| SWD | 462 | 19.2 | 21.8 | 21.6 | 21.0 | 1.8 | 20.7 |
| EL | 180 | 16.0 | 13.1 | 18.6 | 31.1 | 15.1 | 20.4 |
| All | 2,752 | 14.2 | 16.3 | 18.3 | 18.6 | 4.4 | 13.2 |
| \* The percentage of students absent 10percent or more of their total number of student days of membership in a school | | | | | | | |

**Table B3: Saugus Public Schools**

**Expenditures, Chapter 70 State Aid, and Net School Spending Fiscal Years 2016–2018**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **FY16** | | | **FY17** | | | **FY18** | | |
|  | **Estimated** | | **Actual** | **Estimated** | **Actual** | | **Estimated** | | **Actual** |
| Expenditures | | | | | | | | | |
| From local appropriations for schools: |  | | | | | | | | |
| By school committee | $28,175,250 | $27,682,789 | | $28,575,250 | | $28,218,322 | | $29,075,250 | $28,418,305 |
| By municipality | $16,605,355 | $15,909,759 | | $16,724,758 | | $17,682,635 | | $18,942,027 | $23,747,824 |
| Total from local appropriations | $44,280,605 | $43,592,548 | | $44,900,008 | | $45,900,957 | | $48,017,277 | $52,166,129 |
| From revolving funds and grants | -- | $3,620,283 | | -- | | $3,734,700 | | -- | $3,584,145 |
| Total expenditures | -- | $47,212,831 | | -- | | $49,635,657 | | -- | $55,750,274 |
| Chapter 70 aid to education program | | | | | | | | | |
| Chapter 70 state aid\* | -- | $5,338,002 | | -- | | $5,488,812 | | -- | $5,569,152 |
| Required local contribution | -- | $24,111,062 | | -- | | $23,261,068 | | -- | $23,048,854 |
| Required net school spending\*\* | -- | $29,449,064 | | -- | | $28,749,880 | | -- | $28,618,006 |
| Actual net school spending | -- | $37,684,436 | | -- | | $40,695,350 | | -- | $42,739,904 |
| Over/under required ($) | -- | $8,235,372 | | -- | | $11,945,470 | | -- | $14,121,898 |
| Over/under required (%) | -- | 28.0% | | -- | | 41.5% | | -- | 49.3% |
| \*Chapter 70 state aid funds are deposited in the local general fund and spent as local appropriations.  \*\*Required net school spending is the total of Chapter 70 aid and required local contribution. Net school spending includes only expenditures from local appropriations, not revolving funds and grants. It includes expenditures for most administration, instruction, operations, and out-of-district tuitions. It does not include transportation, school lunches, debt, or capital.  Sources: FY16, FY17, and FY18 District End-of-Year Reports, Chapter 70 Program information on ESE website  Data retrieved 11/13/18 | | | | | | | | | |

**Table B4: Saugus Public Schools**

**Expenditures Per In-District Pupil**

**Fiscal Years 2015–2017**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Expenditure Category** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** |
| Administration | $323 | $446 | $469 |
| Instructional leadership (district and school) | $1,108 | $983 | $1,103 |
| Teachers | $5,374 | $5,789 | $5,827 |
| Other teaching services | $933 | $968 | $1,083 |
| Professional development | $81 | $100 | $113 |
| Instructional materials, equipment and technology | $220 | $175 | $295 |
| Guidance, counseling and testing services | $353 | $386 | $322 |
| Pupil services | $1,075 | $1,116 | $1,133 |
| Operations and maintenance | $1,125 | $1,112 | $1,174 |
| Insurance, retirement and other fixed costs | $3,197 | $3,170 | $3,968 |
| Total expenditures per in-district pupil | $13,789 | $14,246 | $15,487 |
| Sources: [Per-pupil expenditure reports on ESE website](http://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/statistics/ppx.html)  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** | 15% | 11% | 63% | 11% | 2.7 |
| **MS** | 6% | 35% | 53% | 6% | 2.6 |
| **HS** | 5% | 30% | 60% | 5% | 2.7 |
| **Total #** | 6 | 15 | 38 | 5 | 2.7 |
| **Total %** | 9% | 23% | 59% | 8% |  |
| 2. The teacher ensures that students understand what they should be learning in the lesson and why. | **ES** | 7% | 44% | 48% | 0% | 2.4 |
| **MS** | 12% | 59% | 18% | 12% | 2.3 |
| **HS** | 5% | 55% | 40% | 0% | 2.4 |
| **Total #** | 5 | 33 | 24 | 2 | 2.4 |
| **Total %** | 8% | 52% | 38% | 3% |  |
| 3. The teacher uses appropriate classroom activities well matched to the learning objective(s). | **ES** | 4% | 26% | 48% | 22% | 2.9 |
| **MS** | 18% | 41% | 35% | 6% | 2.3 |
| **HS** | 5% | 40% | 55% | 0% | 2.5 |
| **Total #** | 5 | 22 | 30 | 7 | 2.6 |
| **Total %** | 8% | 34% | 47% | 11% |  |
| 4. The teacher conducts frequent checks for student understanding, provides feedback, and adjusts instruction. | **ES** | 0% | 19% | 70% | 11% | 2.9 |
| **MS** | 18% | 53% | 29% | 0% | 2.1 |
| **HS** | 20% | 45% | 35% | 0% | 2.2 |
| **Total #** | 7 | 23 | 31 | 3 | 2.5 |
| **Total %** | 11% | 36% | 48% | 5% |  |
| **Total Score For Focus Area #1** | **ES** |  |  |  |  | 10.9 |
| **MS** |  |  |  |  | 9.3 |
| **HS** |  |  |  |  | 9.7 |
| **Total** |  |  |  |  | 10.1 |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **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** | 4% | 19% | 52% | 26% | 3.0 |
| **MS** | 12% | 53% | 29% | 6% | 2.3 |
| **HS** | 20% | 45% | 35% | 0% | 2.2 |
| **Total #** | 7 | 23 | 26 | 8 | 2.5 |
| **Total %** | 11% | 36% | 41% | 13% |  |
| 6. Students engage in higher-order thinking. | **ES** | 11% | 44% | 37% | 7% | 2.4 |
| **MS** | 24% | 71% | 6% | 0% | 1.8 |
| **HS** | 20% | 55% | 20% | 5% | 2.1 |
| **Total #** | 11 | 35 | 15 | 3% | 2.2 |
| **Total %** | 17% | 55% | 23% | 5% |  |
| 7. Students communicate their ideas and thinking with each other. | **ES** | 7% | 30% | 56% | 7% | 2.6 |
| **MS** | 35% | 24% | 35% | 6% | 2.1 |
| **HS** | 40% | 30% | 30% | 0% | 1.9 |
| **Total #** | 16 | 18 | 27 | 3 | 2.3 |
| **Total %** | 25% | 28% | 42% | 5% |  |
| 8. Students engage with meaningful, real-world tasks. | **ES** | 7% | 33% | 44% | 15% | 2.7 |
| **MS** | 12% | 41% | 35% | 12% | 2.5 |
| **HS** | 25% | 25% | 40% | 10% | 2.4 |
| **Total #** | 9 | 21 | 26 | 8 | 2.5 |
| **Total %** | 14% | 33% | 41% | 13% |  |
| **Total Score For Focus Area #2** | **ES** |  |  |  |  | 10.7 |
| **MS** |  |  |  |  | 8.7 |
| **HS** |  |  |  |  | 8.5 |
| **Total** |  |  |  |  | 9.5 |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **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** | 11% | 59% | 15% | 15% | 2.3 |
| **MS** | 18% | 76% | 6% | 0% | 1.9 |
| **HS** | 30% | 60% | 10% | 0% | 1.8 |
| **Total #** | 12 | 41 | 7 | 4 | 2.0 |
| **Total %** | 19% | 64% | 11% | 6% |  |
| 10. The teacher uses a variety of instructional strategies. | **ES** | 4% | 26% | 56% | 15% | 2.8 |
| **MS** | 12% | 59% | 29% | 0% | 2.2 |
| **HS** | 25% | 55% | 20% | 0% | 2.0 |
| **Total #** | 8 | 28 | 24 | 4 | 2.4 |
| **Total %** | 13% | 44% | 38% | 6% |  |
| 11. Classroom routines and positive supports are in place to ensure that students behave appropriately. | **ES** | 4% | 11% | 52% | 33% | 3.1 |
| **MS** | 6% | 24% | 59% | 12% | 2.8 |
| **HS** | 0% | 30% | 65% | 5% | 2.8 |
| **Total #** | 2 | 13 | 37 | 12 | 2.9 |
| **Total %** | 3% | 20% | 58% | 19% |  |
| 12. The classroom climate is conducive to teaching and learning. | **ES** | 7% | 4% | 59% | 30% | 3.1 |
| **MS** | 12% | 29% | 59% | 0% | 2.5 |
| **HS** | 0% | 45% | 55% | 0% | 2.6 |
| **Total #** | 4 | 15 | 37 | 8 | 2.8 |
| **Total %** | 6% | 23% | 58% | 13% |  |
| **Total Score For Focus Area #3** | **ES** |  |  |  |  | 11.4 |
| **MS** |  |  |  |  | 9.3 |
| **HS** |  |  |  |  | 9.1 |
| **Total** |  |  |  |  | 10.1 |

1. High-quality feedback is specific, timely, and actionable. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. SMART goals are Specific and Strategic; Measurable; Action Oriented; Rigorous, Realistic, and Results Focused; and Timed and Tracked. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. High-quality feedback is specific, timely, and actionable. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Possible ratings are “Very Well,” “Well,” “Somewhat Well,” and “Not at All Well.” [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. High-quality feedback is specific, timely, and actionable. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. 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-6)
7. SMART goals are specific and strategic; measureable; action-oriented; rigorous, realistic, and results- focused; and timed and tracked. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. [↑](#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, 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. IDEA stands for the Individuals with Disabilities Act. The priorities of IDEA are to:

    1. Ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free and appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living;
    2. Ensure that the rights of children with disabilities and their parents are protected;
    3. Assist states, localities, educational service agencies, and Federal agencies to provide for the education of all children with disabilities;
    4. Assess and ensure the effectiveness of efforts to education children with disabilities.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Between 2016 and 2018, the percentage of economically disadvantaged students increased, from 25.1 percent in 2016 to 26.5 percent in 2017 to 28.6 percent in 2018. During the same interval, the percentage of students with disabilities increased from 15.3 percent in 2016 to 15.8 percent in 2017 to 16.9 percent in 2018. Between 2016 and 2018, the percentage of ELs fluctuated with an overall increase from 4.7 percent in 2016 to 4.0 percent in 2017 to 5.8 percent in 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. The comparison districts are Agawam, Falmouth, Hudson, Ludlow, Monomoy Regional, Northbridge, Rockland, South Hadley, Stoughton, and Winthrop. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)