# Watertown Public Schools

Comprehensive District Review Report

May 2023

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Office of District Reviews and Monitoring

75 Pleasant Street

Malden, MA 02148-4906

781-338-3000

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

American Institutes for Research

Education Systems and Policy

201 Jones Road, Suite 100  
Waltham, MA 02451

202-403-5000

[www.air.org](http://www.air.org)

dese logo

American Institutes for Research Logo



Contents

[Executive Summary 1](#_Toc141362601)

[Watertown Public Schools: District Review Overview 5](#_Toc141362602)

[Leadership and Governance 9](#_Toc141362603)

[Curriculum and Instruction 16](#_Toc141362604)

[Assessment 23](#_Toc141362605)

[Human Resources and Professional Development 27](#_Toc141362606)

[Student Support 34](#_Toc141362607)

[Financial and Asset Management 40](#_Toc141362608)

[Appendix A. Summary of Site Visit Activities A-1](#_Toc141362609)

[Appendix B. Districtwide Instructional Observation Report B-1](#_Toc141362610)

[Appendix C. Resources to Support Implementation of DESE’s District Standards and Indicators C-1](#_Toc141362611)

[Appendix D. Enrollment, Attendance, Expenditures D-1](#_Toc141362612)

[Appendix E. Student Performance Data E-1](#_Toc141362613)

 

This document was prepared by the American Institutes for Research, in collaboration with the  
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Jeffrey C. Riley

Commissioner

Published October 2023

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, an affirmative action employer, is committed to ensuring that all of its programs and facilities are accessible to all members of the public. We do not discriminate on the basis of age, color, disability, national origin, race, religion, sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation. Inquiries regarding the Department’s compliance with Title IX and other civil rights laws may be directed to the Human Resources Director, 75 Pleasant St., Malden, MA 02148-4906. Phone: 781-338-6105.

© 2023 Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

*Permission is hereby granted to copy any or all parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes. Please credit the “Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.”*

This document printed on recycled paper.

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148-4906

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

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

## Executive Summary

In accordance with Massachusetts state law, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) contracted with the American Institutes for Research® (AIR®) to conduct a comprehensive review of Watertown Public Schools (hereafter, Watertown) in May 2023. Data collection activities associated with the review focused on understanding how district systems, structures, and practices operate in support of district continuous improvement efforts. The review focused on the six standards (and related indicators) that DESE has identified as being important components of district effectiveness.[[1]](#footnote-2)

### [Leadership and Governance](#_Leadership_and_Governance)

The superintendent of Watertown is Deanne Galdston, who has a team of district officials supporting her. The district is governed by a school committee consisting of seven members: six elected for four-year terms and the Watertown city council president elected for a two-year term. The committee meets twice per month and conducts most deliberations in subcommittees focused on different areas.

Each school has a leadership team comprised of principals, administrators, instructional leaders, and department coordinators. The district provides continual opportunities for collaboration at the school level.

The school committee collaborates with district and community leaders, maintains prudent financial management, and focuses on continuous improvement. They engage with parents through electronic newsletters and social media, but some stakeholders desire more timely and inclusive communication, especially for non-English-speaking families. Budgeting is data informed and collaborative, involving both school and city officials, ensuring sustainable funding while meeting school needs.

The district improvement plan, which centers on equity, excellence, and community, guides their work. The most recent plan was under development at the time of the visit. Both the district and the school improvement plans center on the same three core values of the district: equity, excellence, and community. The district engages various stakeholder groups in the creation of these plans, though this process could include a more diverse group of local stakeholders.

Overall, Watertown’s collaborative culture, transparency, and focus on continuous improvement are regarded as strengths of the district, as well as the transparency and collaborative nature of the budget process.

### [Curriculum and Instruction](#_Curriculum_and_Instruction)

Three observers, who focused primarily on instruction in the classroom, visited Watertown during the week of May 1, 2023. The observers conducted 67 observations in a sample of classrooms across grade levels, focused on literacy, English language arts (ELA), and mathematics. The Teachstone Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) protocol, developed by the Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning at the University of Virginia,[[2]](#footnote-3) guided all classroom observations in the district. These observations used the three grade-band levels of the CLASS protocols: K-3, Upper Elementary (4-5), and Secondary (6‑12). Overall, for the K-5 grade band, instructional observations suggest generally strong evidence of emotional support, classroom organization, student engagement (Grades 4-5), and rigorous instructional support. For the 6-8 grade band, instructional observations provide generally strong evidence of emotional support, classroom organization, student engagement, and rigorous instructional support. For the 9-12 grade band, instructional observations provide mixed evidence of emotional support, classroom organization, student engagement, and rigorous instructional support. The district uses Atlas to share curriculum maps for each grade level and subject area. Atlas is open to parents, guardians, and students through the Watertown public site.

Watertown implements a regular and well-documented curricular review process for all core content areas. The review process is structured to ensure regular formal reviews that align with the district’s mission and core values. Another strength is that Watertown prioritizes consistency and alignment by aligning curricula across all elementary schools. However, there are several areas for growth: a number of the materials in use are either poorly rated or locally created and, therefore, unrated. Another area of growth for Watertown is their documentation of the curriculum for high school mathematics courses. Watertown uses the ELA curriculum Calkins Units of Study for Grades K-5, a set of resources that one district leader said needed to be revisited. The mathematics curriculum for Grades K-5 is the Eureka Squared curriculum, and for Grades 6-8, the mathematics curriculum is Desmos. The high school was exploring a new mathematics curriculum at the time of the visit, according to interviews. Other district strengths include instructional strategies meant to support student engagement, a focus on improving instructional strategies, and a commitment to access in the CTE curriculum. Areas for growth include not only completing the curriculum selection and documentation process, but revisiting adopted resources that may be evaluated as ineffective or of unverified quality.

### [Assessment](#_Assessment)

Watertown uses multiple sources of data to provide a comprehensive picture of student, school, and district performance. District and school leaders expect staff to review student performance data to identify goals for closing achievement, access, and opportunity gaps, and many staff do, a strength of the district. District leaders also collaborate with curriculum coordinators to use student assessment data to inform decision making at the classroom level and opportunities are provides to educators to use data, which are also strengths of the district.

Teachers, parents, and students have access to PowerSchool, the district’s student information system, which house information such as grades, individual assessment scores, and attendance. However, parents interviewed generally agreed that consistency in sharing student performance with parents is an area for growth throughout the district. Moreover, ensuring consistent educator access to relevant data and use of that data to support classroom-level decision-making also are areas for growth.

### [Human Resources and Professional Development](#_Human_Resources_and)

Watertown has several sound human resource and professional development structures in place. The district employs effective human resources policies and practices, and uses the PowerSchool TalentEd system for streamlined record keeping and data storage. The district acknowledges the need for increased diversity in hiring and has implemented strategies such as posting openings on platforms directed toward applicants of color and promoting positive experiences with diverse teachers to encourage students to pursue teaching careers. Recruitment efforts extend beyond local universities through recruitment fairs and conferences outside Massachusetts. Watertown also recently added a director of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB). The district prioritizes data-driven approaches for hiring and classroom assignments based on enrollment, student needs, and maintaining small class sizes. Supervision and evaluation systems, including TeachPoint for formal observations, inform staff development, although school-level staff reported that evaluation systems were implemented inconsistently. Mentoring programs and professional development opportunities support educators’ growth and improvement. Nearly all stakeholders mentioned the mentoring program as a strength for the district, but some teachers noted that the process for matching mentors with new staff could be more deliberate. The position of human resources lead was recently vacant at the time of the visit, with some human resources functions led by the assistant director until that lead position is filled.

### [Student Support](#_Student_Support)

Watertown is prioritizing the development and implementation of equitable student supports and the creation of welcoming and supportive environments for all students. The district improvement plan reflects a commitment to the social-emotional development and well-being of students. Moreover, the district provides a consistently implemented tiered system of support to identify and address the needs of all students. Several documents, interviews, and public records all indicate that Watertown has multiple equity-related initiatives and resources in place. Across focus groups, however, students and parents identified a need to ensure greater consistency in the implementation of these efforts, which is an area of growth. In addition, educators and parents noted a lack of consistency in enforcing behavioral expectations and consequences. Lastly, Watertown provides families and students with opportunities to engage with the district and support students’ academic progress and general well-being. However, parents expressed concerns about how communication from the district is reactive and comes after some key decisions about new practices or processes have already been made. Feedback across focus groups highlighted an area for growth around meaningfully engaging more families in a timelier manner to ensure diverse and robust participation in shared decisions.

### [Financial and Asset Management](#_Financial_and_Asset)

Watertown prioritizes transparent budget documentation and robust financial planning for capital needs. The district maintains clear and accurate budget documents, including historical spending data, that are publicly available on the district website. These documents provide comprehensive information about funding sources and resource allocation for all school sites. Watertown’s budget documentation is clear, complete, and user-friendly, a strength of the district. The district’s long-term capital planning efforts include the construction of new schools and upgrades to existing schools, stemming from collaborative partnerships between school administrators and city leaders. The district’s effective long-term planning for capital needs has allowed the replacement of (or upgrades to) all district schools while placing minimal burden on local taxpayers. An area of growth is planning to ensure sustainability and stability in the office of finance and operations during ongoing leadership changes.

## Watertown 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 carefully consider the effectiveness of systemwide functions, referring to the six district standards used by 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. The design of the comprehensive district review promotes district reflection on its own performance and potential next steps. 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

A district review team consisting of AIR staff members and subcontractors, with expertise in each district standard, reviews documentation and extant data prior to conducting an on-site visit. On-site data collection includes team members conducting interviews and focus group sessions with a wide range of stakeholders, including school committee members, teachers’ association representatives, district and school administrators, teachers, students, and students’ families. Virtual interviews and focus groups also are conducted as needed. Information about review activities and the site visit schedule is in Appendix A. Team members also observe classroom instruction and collect data using the CLASS protocol. The Districtwide Instructional Observation Report resulting from these classroom observations is in Appendix B.

Following the site visit, the team members code and analyze the data to develop a set of objective findings. The team lead and multiple quality assurance reviewers, including DESE staff, then review the initial draft of the report. DESE staff provides recommendations for the district, based on the findings of strengths and areas of growth identified, before AIR finalizes and submits the report to DESE. DESE previews and then sends the report to the district for factual review before publishing it on the DESE website. DESE also provides additional resources to support implementation of DESE’s District Standards and Indicators, summarized in Appendix C.

### Site Visit

The site visit to Watertown was conducted during the week of May 1, 2023. The site visit included 18 hours of interviews and focus groups with approximately 71 stakeholders, including school committee members, district administrators, school staff, students, students’ families, teachers’ association representatives, and representatives from city government. The review team conducted four teacher focus groups, including staff from the high school, middle school, all elementary schools, and specialists from across schools. The classroom teacher groups included nine elementary school teachers, six middle school teachers, and four high school teachers. The review team also offered virtual opportunities for three parent focus groups: one each in English, Portuguese, and Spanish. The focus group conducted in English had 20 participants, the focus group conducted in Spanish had one participant, and the focus group offered in Portuguese did not have any participants. The site visit team conducted two student focus groups while on-site, one at the middle school with seven students and one at the high school with seven students.

The site team also conducted 67 observations of classroom instruction in five schools. Certified team members conducted instructional observations using the Teachstone CLASS protocol.

### District Profile

Watertown’s leader is Deanne Galdston, who was appointed superintendent in 2017. The superintendent receives support from an assistant superintendent of teaching, learning, and assessment; a director of student services, a director of DEIB; and a director of finance and operations. The district also has a director of human resources, but this position was vacant at the time of the site visit. The district is governed by a school committee composed of seven members: six members are elected for four-year terms, and the Watertown city council president is elected to a two-year term.

In the 2022-2023 school year, there were 272 teachers in the district, with 2,662 students enrolled in the district’s five schools. Table 1 provides an overview of student enrollment by school.

Table 1. Schools, Type, Grades Served, and Enrollment, 2022-2023

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| School | Type | Grades served | Enrollment |
| Cunniff Elementary School | Elementary | K-5 | 326 |
| Hosmer Elementary School | Elementary | PK-5 | 716 |
| J. R, Lowell Elementary School | Elementary | K-5 | 355 |
| Watertown Middle School | Middle | 6-8 | 532 |
| Watertown High School | High | 9-12 | 733 |
| Total |  |  | 2,662 |

*Note.* Enrollment data as of October 1, 2022.

Between 2020 and 2023, overall student enrollment remained essentially the same (2020 enrollment was 2,663). Enrollment figures by race/ethnicity and high needs populations (i.e., students with disabilities, students from low-income families, and ELs and former ELs) compared with the state are in Tables D1 and D2 in Appendix D. Appendix D also provides additional information about district enrollment, attendance, and expenditures.

The total in-district per-pupil expenditure was greater than the median in-district per-pupil expenditure for K-12 districts of similar size in fiscal year 2021: $23,944 for Watertown compared with $17,145 for similar districts and greater than average state spending per pupil ($18,560). Actual net school spending was greater than what is required by the Chapter 70 state education aid program, as shown in Table D4 in Appendix D.

### Student Performance

In ELA in Grades 3-8, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations on the Next-Generation Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) declined 5 percentage points from 50 percent in 2019 to 45 percent in 2022, which was above the 2022 state rate of 41 percent. In Grade 10, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations decreased by 4 percentage points from 61 percent in 2019 to 57 percent in 2022, which was below the 2022 state rate of 58 percent. (See Tables E1 and E2 in Appendix E.)

* In Grades 3-8, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations was above the state rate by 7 percentage points for African American/Black students and White students; above the state rate by 2 percentage points and 3 percentage points for students from low-income families and Hispanic/Latino students, respectively; equal to the state rate for high needs students; below the state rate by 27 percentage points Asian students; and below the state rate by 3 percentage points to 4 percentage points for every other student group with reportable data.
* In Grade 10, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations was below the state rate by 14 percentage points for Hispanic/Latino students; below the state rate by 1 percentage point to 5 percentage points for Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino students, ELs and former ELs, and students with disabilities; and above the state rate 3 percentage points to 7 percentage points for every other student group with reportable data.

In mathematics in Grades 3-8, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS declined 2 percentage points from 48 percent in 2019 to 46 percent in 2022, which was above the 2022 state rate of 39 percent. In Grade 10, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations declined 14 percentage points from 63 percent in 2019 to 49 percent in 2022, which was below the 2022 state rate of 50 percent. (See Tables E3 and E4 in Appendix E.)

* In Grades 3-8, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations was above the state rate by 9 percentage points for Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino students and Hispanic/Latino students; above the state rate by 4 percentage points to 7 percentage points for White students, high needs students, students from low-income families, and ELs and former ELs; below the state rate by 21 percentage points for Asian students; and below the state rate by 1 percentage point to 2 percentage points for every other student group with reportable data.
* In Grade 10, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations was above the state rate by 5 percentage points and 6 percentage points for White students and students from low-income families, respectively; equal to the state rate for high needs students; and below the state rate by 10 percentage points to 17 percentage points every other student group with reportable data.

In science in Grades 5 and 8, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS declined 7 percentage points from 50 percent in 2019 to 43 percent in 2022, which was above the 2022 state rate of 42 percent. In Grade 10, 40 percent of all students scored Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations in 2022, which was below the 2022 state rate of 47 percent. (See Tables E5 and E6 in Appendix E.)

* In Grades 5 and 8, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations in science was above the state rate by 19 percentage points for African American/Black students; above the state rate by 1 percentage point to 4 percentage points for Hispanic/Latino students, Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino students, and ELs and former ELs; below the state rate by 20 percentage points for Asian students; and below the state rate by 1 percentage point to 6 percentage points for every other student group with reportable data.
* In Grade 10, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations in science was below the state rate by 8 percentage points to 15 percentage points for Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino students, Hispanic/Latino students, ELs and former ELs, and students with disabilities; and below the state rate by 1 percentage point to 5 percentage points every other student group with reportable data.

The student growth percentile (SGP) on the 2022 MCAS assessments in Grades 3-8 was 53.8 in ELA and 59.1 in mathematics, which represent typical growth. In Grade 10, SGPs was typical in ELA (58.1) and high in mathematics (69.6).1 (See Tables E7-E10 in Appendix E.)

* SGPs in Grades 3-8 in ELA were typical, ranging from 44.0 to 55.7 for each student group with reportable data. Mathematics SGPs were high, ranging from 60.3 to 61.4 for White students, Asian students, and Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino students; and typical for every other student group with reportable data, ranging from 45.8 to 55.2.
* In Grade 10, ELA SGPs were typical for each student group with reportable data, ranging from 44.8 to 59.7. Mathematics SGPs were high for each student group with reportable data ranging from 61.2 to 72.8, except for Hispanic/Latino students, which was typical (58.4).

Watertown’s four-year cohort graduation rate for all students increased 4.5 percentage points from 83.5 percent in 2020 to 88.0 percent in 2022, which was below the 2022 state rate of 90.1 percent. The five-year cohort graduation rate for all students decreased 3.3 percentage points from 92.0 percent in 2019 to 88.7 percent in 2021, which was below the 2021 state rate of 91.8 percent. (See Tables E16 and E17 in Appendix E.)

* The four-year-cohort graduation rate was above the state rate in 2022 by 7.7 percentage points for students with disabilities; above the state rate by 0.3 percentage point and 3.8 percentage points for White students and Asian students; below the state rate by 21.2 percentage points and 10.5 percentage points for ELs and Hispanic/Latino students, respectively; and below the state rate between 0.5 percentage point to 2.8 percentage points for every other student group with reportable data.
* The five-year cohort graduation rate was above the state rate by 11.9 percentage points for African American/Black students; above the state rate by 3 percentage points for Asian students and students from low-income families; below the state rate by 11.3 percentage points for Hispanic/Latino students; and below the state rate between 1.8 percentage points to 6.2 percentage points for every other student group with reportable data.

The district’s annual dropout rate increased from 1.8 percent in 2020 to 2.7 percent in 2022, which was above the 2022 state rate of 2.1 percent. (See Table E20 in Appendix E.)

* The dropout rate in Watertown was twice the state rate for Hispanic/Latino students and ELs, above the state rate for high needs students and students from low-income families, and below the state rate for every other student group with reportable data.

## Leadership and Governance

Watertown’s superintendent is Deanne Galdston, who was appointed in 2017. Dr. Galdston receives support from an assistant superintendent of teaching, learning, and assessment; a director of student services, a director of DEIB; and a director of finance and operations. The district also has a director of human resources, but this position was vacant at the time of the site visit. These district officials, particularly the superintendent, work with the elected school committee members who represent Watertown residents through their oversight of the district. Watertown is governed by a school committee composed of seven members: six members are elected for four-year terms, and the Watertown city council president is elected to a two-year term.

The school committee has a chair, a vice-chair, a secretary, and four other members. Two high school students serve as advisors to the committee; at time of the site visit, the students were in their junior year. The committee meets twice per month, although the two students attend only one monthly meeting. The bulk of the committee’s deliberations occur in three-person subcommittees, including Athletics and Extracurriculars, Budget and Finance, Buildings and Grounds, Curriculum, and Policy. They share their work in the school committee’s meetings as outlined in agendas and minutes.

Each school’s leadership team consists of principals and administrators, instructional leaders (grade-level leads for the elementary and middle schools), and department coordinators at the high school level. The district’s elementary and middle schools have one mathematics and one literacy coach per school site. Staff confirmed the importance of having these roles at each school, rather than sharing a coach with other sites, which occurred previously. Staff at all levels gain leadership experience by being a mentor for new teachers, serving as an instructional lead or a department chair, facilitating professional development sessions, or serving on professional learning teams. District and school leaders cited staff and leadership stability at the middle school a challenge since losing a beloved principal several years ago.

School committee members said that the district improvement plan includes valuable input from stakeholders and serves as both the district’s and the school committee’s guide to their work throughout the year. The school improvement plans center on the three core values of the district: equity, excellence, and community. Stakeholders noted lack of participation in engagement activities, such as surveys and outreach efforts and the inclusion and belonging of diverse populations as areas for growth. Some stakeholders, especially parents, cited the need for more diversity in not only the teaching staff but also leadership and governance entities.

Table 2 summarizes key strengths and areas for growth in leadership and governance.

Table 2. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Leadership and Governance Standard

| Indicator | Strengths | Areas for growth |
| --- | --- | --- |
| [School committee governance](#_School_Committee_Governance) | * The school committee and city stakeholders regularly use collaborative decision-making processes. * The school committee ensures prudent financial management and spending within the approved budget. |  |
| [District and school leadership](#_District_and_School) | * The district provides continual opportunities for collaboration and leadership at the school and grade levels. |  |
| [District and school improvement planning](#_District_and_School_1) | * District stakeholder engagement and relationship building among varied constituents are a hallmark in Watertown. * The district’s school improvement planning work is centered on the three core values of equity, excellence, and community. | * Inclusion of diverse populations in the district decisions, such as the next four-year plan, especially families of English learners |
| [Budget development](#_Budget_Development) | * Relevant school, district, and city leaders collaborate in the priority setting process. * The budget process is transparent and collaborative across city and the district. |  |

### School Committee Governance

The school committee partners with district and community leaders to uphold Massachusetts laws and regulations, communicates with multiple education stakeholder groups, and maintains fiduciary responsibilities to the district and the City of Watertown. The committee’s culture of collaboration was emphasized in interviews with school and district leaders and community members, particularly regarding budget planning and cost-sharing practices. School committee members shared that the priorities for their work center on the district’s vision and mission and include communication with the community in multiple languages and platforms. A leader summarized that their work is linked to the community, and they act as “that conduit, helping people navigate the district is an important thing that we do [and] centering everything on the needs of kids.”

The school committee includes seven members. Among these members, according to respondents, are a diverse set of perspectives that represent a significant portion of the community: Watertown citizens who also have experience as educators and union members (in districts outside Watertown), as well as parents of current and former students; in recent years, there also have been two high school student advisors. A recent change to committee meetings was the implementation of subcommittees. Respondents indicated that this development streamlined meetings into big-picture discussions, and the subcommittees consider implications in carrying out initiatives. Committee members shared that the student advisors attend the first of each month’s meetings. The school committee evaluates the superintendent annually and shares their feedback as a commitment to continuous improvement. According to several respondents, the committee’s consistent engagement, along with other city and district partners, with the collective bargaining process has resulted in mutually agreed-on contracts that benefit students and staff.

The school committee and Watertown’s city officials who were interviewed all highlighted the collaborative partnerships and decision-making processes that the district and city have established, which is a strength of the district. This partnership is best exemplified through the district’s finance and capital planning process, as discussed in greater detail in the finance section. Respondents indicated that a key staff member for both departments, the Director of Public Buildings, reports directly to both the city and the district, overseeing services of the custodial staff, schools’ sports fields, and snow removal with minimal interdepartmental conflict. Along with having a strong relationship with city officials, interviewees highlighted the positive relationship the school committee has with the teachers’ union. A committee member characterized it as “a unique relationship with our union in that we have very large amounts of mutual respect.” Some respondents noted that having teacher representation on the school committee helps, and some teachers reported that the school committee cares about teacher well-being. Staff reported that they have an opportunity for voice in school operations, although some respondents noted that not all suggestions are considered when the district makes final decisions.

The school committee is transparent in sharing documents with the community and parents. The school committee sends out an update after meetings or monthly, reviewing the meetings. Both the superintendent and the assistant superintendent disseminate and post communications to the district website and quarterly newsletters. A review of the district’s website indicated that school committee meeting minutes, agendas, videos, supporting documents, and dates for future meetings are all posted.

Nonetheless, several parents reported feeling uninformed about some areas of district operations, particularly as it relates to meetings or committees other than the school committee who are making key decisions. One parent stated that

district projects get communicated to us after they’re already happening [. . .] they’re either in progress or you get an email that says, “We are doing this, or by the way, this is already happening. We just want to let everyone know.” I don’t know if we ever get something in advance that says we’re planning on doing this. We’d like input or feedback by a certain date before this happens.

Another parent asserted the following:

The timeliness of communications needs a lot of improvement. If there is an opportunity for parent feedback, that communication comes so late that it’s very hard for parents to, in my opinion, to be able to take the time to provide that feedback.

The district uses the Smore newsletter platform for announcements. This platform provides accessibility and Google translate functionality. Although the district and individual school websites also can use Google Translate, not all uploaded documents can be translated.

The school committee is currently working to equitably improve student outcomes for the special education and EL populations, issues that present both fiscal and operational challenges. All committee and leadership stakeholders agreed that one of the most challenging extraordinary situations was what several interview participants characterized as a significant increase in students attending out-of-district programs for special education. This concern regarding out-of-district placements was also reported as a cost-related concern in a memo to the school committee from the district’s Director of Finance and Operations in January 2023 and reported in the *Watertown News* (February 2023). Figures indicate an increase from 45 out-of-district placements in 2017 to a peak of 56 in 2020 and then 49 in 2021. The January 2023 memo to the school committee reports the increase in out-of-district placements as “post-covid” [sic]. Respondents also noted a notable recent increase of newcomers and other multilingual learners in the district. In addition to the financial challenges of supporting identified student groups, the budget includes an 18 percent teacher salary increase in 2025-2027 and an upcoming debt service for the new high school building. Despite current and future challenges, the committee manages a budget that did not require Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) funding or a tax override for the elementary school construction or middle school renovations. Multiple respondents noted that the district will require MSBA funding but not a tax override for the new high school. In general, the school committee, in partnership with the city manager, ensures prudent financial management and spending within the approved budget, which is a strength of the district.

The school committee also is responsible for using data to evaluate the superintendent. Interview participants described the evaluation process, and a review of school committee minutes suggests the committee fulfills its responsibility to evaluate the superintendent. The school committee completed their most recent evaluation in July 2023.

### District and School Leadership

The superintendent has built a collaborative culture of trust and accountability among stakeholders. School committee members and the city manager stated that the superintendent was present and engaged at school and community events, which builds a sense of support for the district. Interviews established continual opportunities for collaboration and strong leadership at the school and district levels through site-based instructional leadership teams (ILTs) plus mathematics and literacy coaching in Grades K-8 as a strength. The superintendent said the following:

I really believe fully that if students feel they belong, if families feel they belong, if teachers feel they belong, then I think that we’re going to get to a place where people do believe that every child can be successful in the Watertown Public Schools.

Leaders described how they pursued this among staff as well. For example, this year the high school principal held “fireside chats.” Faculty shared that the chats are a “good opportunity to feel like you’re being heard.” Both the fireside chats and the faculty senate provide avenues for more detailed discussions regarding staff well-being issues, and notes are shared with all faculty at the high school level.

The superintendent engages with multiple stakeholders while leading district operations. The team meets every Monday for cabinet meetings and every other Tuesday for a Tech Talk with the data coordinator, the instructional technology lead, and the technology manager. Principals or cabinet members also may attend the Tech Talks. Additionally, all principals and the Cabinet members meet weekly, and sometimes engage in morning learning walks. The school committee chair emphasized that “there’s been a focus on leadership in this district since we hired the new superintendent . . . [strong] leadership can help make changes in schools, positive changes.”

Respondents indicated that school leaders have high levels of autonomy but can and do collaborate to solve some districtwide issues. Evidence indicates that leaders collaborate in resolving challenges. Several respondents discussed scheduling as an example in interviews and focus groups. Scheduling for teachers with shared positions, such as music teachers who are shared across elementary and middle schools, is a key example, as well as specialist, physical education, or art instructors who are shared among more than one elementary school. School committee members reported requesting teacher input about scheduling, and school leaders noted that they have tried several ways to gather input and create a collaborative process. A school leader described this collaborative process:

We worked with a high school class—stats class—to kind of analyze the survey data that came in and then they had a project where they presented data. So it’s really [a] great learning experience for everyone . . . I feel like not only [the superintendent’s] support of the autonomy we have [at the school level] over our schedules, as well as the structures that were in place, for me to have talked with all those groups and to be able to get people’s feedback so that people can feel like their voices were heard in this process has been really helpful.

In general, staff noted several ways that school-level autonomy is a key lever in addressing scheduling challenges.

School committee members interviewed agreed that the superintendent has successfully led district and school leaders in communicating effectively with parents, which differs from past administrations. District and school leaders engage with parents through electronic newsletters, which can be translated into multiple languages. In addition to information posted on the district website, leaders also share via social media on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. To improve outreach to families whose first language is not English, the superintendent is planning to build a family center that would be a safe and welcoming place for families to begin connecting with the district.

### District and School Improvement Planning

The district’s stakeholders agreed that the district improvement plan is the guiding document for their collaborative work. The most recent iteration of this plan was under development at the time of the site visit. A school committee member summarized as follows:

Our district improvement plan contains so many amazing pieces of input from stakeholders that it’s also incumbent on us to use that as our guide. It’s not just the district’s guide, but it’s the school committee’s guide. So we use that when we’re looking at what we’re going to do and what our goals are as a school committee to help inform what we need to be thinking of for the future.

The superintendent shared the three core district values that guide their improvement efforts: equity, excellence, and community. Multiple respondents were familiar with these priorities, and this common vision is a strength of the district. The district uses a clear, thoughtful, and inclusive process in establishing a three- to five-year district improvement strategy, known as their “success strategies.” A new plan was in the early development stages at the time of the site visit, and the process for creating it includes a 22-member success strategy team comprising school committee members, teachers, parents, students, and community members who will shape how the district will pursue their “success strategies” in the next several years. The superintendent stated that Watertown has “just completed our four-year district improvement strategy and are in the process currently of finalizing our next four-year plan.”

As part of the district planning process, leaders are addressing the need to support students and their families who speak languages other than English, including Portuguese, Spanish, and Pashto. The superintendent stated that the district has liaisons for each predominant language spoken by these families. A key improvement strategy focus this past year has been on ELs because a review of data showed stakeholders that it was an area they needed to address. Specifically, district staff noted that multilingual learners had grown from 10% of the district’s population in 2017 to 16.6% in 2023 while experiencing some declines in proficiency; staff also reported some challenges in engaging families of these students. In addition to having a director of DEIB, a districtwide DEIB group and school-based teams meet monthly to discuss the needs of the district’s most vulnerable learners. However, both staff and parent respondents reported that the district sometimes struggles to engage multilingual families. The need to further address the needs of these diverse groups in the four-year planning process, especially EL families is an area of growth for the district.

The district strives to coordinate improvement planning across sites. Watertown schools use site councils comprising the principal, teachers, and parents to plan and monitor school improvement. In the fall, the site councils work to create each school’s improvement plan, ensuring the site’s school improvement objectives and strategies align with the district’s strategic objectives. All plans center on the district’s vision, mission, and three core values (equity, excellence, and community), which is a strength of the district. The engagement and relationship building among various constituents in the improvement planning process is a hallmark and another strength of the district. The three elementary school improvement plans focus on the district’s strategic objective of equity for all students through the Year 2 implementation of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) for mathematics and literacy instruction and early screening for dyslexia and interventions for social and emotional learning. The strategic objectives of equity and excellence strengthen core instruction for ELs. The elementary school improvement plans also align with the district’s strategic objective of community. The middle school plan prioritizes students’ academic, social, and emotional potential; instructional excellence; and caring and collaborative relationships in educationally appropriate and joyful learning environments. The high school’s plan focuses on the district’s strategic objectives of communication; equity; instructional excellence; and building educationally appropriate, joyful environments. Each site council meets monthly to review data and evaluate the school’s progress toward the goals and action strategies established. The plan is subsequently submitted to the superintendent in June.

### Budget Development

All district leaders and city stakeholders involved in the budgeting process concurred that budget development, monitoring, and resource allocation is a data-informed, collaborative, and transparent process. Budgeting begins in October, with the superintendent setting broad priorities and then moves to the individual school sites to make school-level estimates and requests of the district. School leaders, along with their leadership teams, meet to review data—such as enrollment or changes in specific populations such as multilingual learners-- and local needs to prepare requests for items such as additional staff. By March, the district office proposes to the school committee a preliminary budget and subcommittees work to review. By April, the school committee concludes discussions, votes, and then moves the approved budget to the city manager for city officials to finalize as part of the annual city budget.

In addition, several important interactions occur between the district and city government throughout the process to help ensure a budget that is both sustainable and meets district needs. The city charter indicates that the city council president sits on the school committee, allowing for involvement and understanding of budget discussions from inception to the city council budget hearings and the final school committee vote. In addition, the city manager is a key leader in the city budgeting process and an important collaborator for the district in doing fiscal planning. The city manager participates in school committee meetings, particularly for votes on employee contracts, which allows for city government and district representation in collective bargaining discussions. This participatory, collaborative, and transparent approach allows for each site’s agency and city-school collaboration, which is a strength of the district.

Several stakeholders shared what happens when there is sufficient budget to allow discussion of additional priorities: 32 district leaders and staff meet to share and prioritize their “asks” in groups of eight to 12. Once the full group votes on the priorities, the list is sent to the school committee for disposition as funded, partially funded, or not funded. Stakeholders agreed it was a transparent process of collaboration and prioritization, which is another strength of the district.

### Recommendations

* The district should seek to increase the involvement of families of multilingual learners in district decision-making and in its four-year planning process.

## Curriculum and Instruction

Watertown implements regular and rigorous curricular reviews for all core content areas. The curriculum process is a five- to seven-year cycle, which includes four stages (as outlined later). The review process is well documented and structured to ensure regular formal reviews aligned with the district’s mission and core values. Watertown uses the ELA curriculum Calkins Units of Study for Grades K-5. The mathematics curriculum for Grades K-5 is the Eureka Squared curriculum, and for Grades 6-8, the mathematics curriculum is Desmos. The high school was exploring a new mathematics curriculum at the time of the visit, according to interviews.

Table 3 summarizes key strengths and areas for growth in curriculum and instruction.

Table 3. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Curriculum and Instruction Standard

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Indicator | Strengths | Areas for growth |
| [Curriculum selection and use](#_Curriculum_Selection_and) | * The curricular review process is well documented and structured to ensure regular, rigorous reviews for all content areas. * The district prioritizes consistency and alignment by aligning curricula to district standards across all elementary schools. | * Across all grade levels and subject areas, use of high-quality instructional materials according to rating systems like CURATE and EdReports * Documentation of curricular materials in Grades 9-12 mathematics * Incorporating the verification of curricula ratings on calibrated and rigorous ratings systems including CURATE and EdReports |
| [Classroom instruction](#_Classroom_Instruction) | * Districtwide, teachers are implementing strategies that create opportunities for high levels of student engagement. * District staff members demonstrate a focus on improving instructional practices for all grades and a commitment to equity. |  |
| [Student access to coursework](#_Student_Access_to_1) | * Watertown High School demonstrates a commitment to career and technical education (CTE) for high school students. |  |

### Curriculum Selection and Use

Watertown ensures that all teachers have access to the district’s accepted curricular materials, though the quality of some of these materials is either undetermined or of concern, which is an area of growth for the district. Many of the curricula in use are unrated on CURATE[[3]](#footnote-4) or are locally created curricula that follow the understanding by design (UbD) framework. For ELA in Grades K-5, Watertown uses Calkins Units of Study, which was not rated on CURATE. However, this curriculum is rated as “Does Not Meet Expectations” by EdReports and was characterized as “a resource that we need to review” by one district leader. WPS uses Heggerty for phonemic awareness, GEODES, and Fundations in Grades K - 3 for explicit phonics instruction. For ELA in Grades 6-12, teacher-developed curricula, which have no CURATE rating, are used. For mathematics, the district recently implemented the Eureka Squared curriculum for Grades K-5, and uses Desmos for Grades 6-8. Neither of these curricula are rated on CURATE, but both meet expectations according to EdReports. For high school mathematics, no CURATE-rated curricula were bring used at the time of this reviews. Watertown High’s program of studies lists several mathematics courses for all high school grades, from algebra and geometry through calculus and statistics, including Advanced Placement courses, as well as electives, but no curricular materials—nor their CURATE ratings—were described. For science, Watertown uses Mystery Science for Grades K-5, a teacher-developed curriculum for Grades 6 and 8; LabAids for Grade 7; and a teacher-developed curriculum alongside textbooks for Grades 9-12. LabAids has a “Partially Meets Expectations” rating on CURATE, whereas the other curricula have no ratings. For history and social science, all grades use teacher-created curricula not reviewed by CURATE. An area for growth for the district is their documentation of all curricular materials, specifically the curriculum for high school mathematics courses, for which a list of courses is available, but not documentation of the curriculum or materials used. Staff reported in interviews that they were still investigating a new curriculum for high school at the time of the site visit.

District leaders shared various practices to ensure consistent implementation of selected materials. Along with aligning the elementary standards-based curricula across the elementary schools and implementing standards-based assessments and report cards, the district hired instructional coaches (eight coaches in Grades K-8, with coaches at each school). Instructional leaders concurred on the priorities of their work: equity, inclusion, and community.

A strength of the district is the *Watertown Curriculum Review Process.* The review process is well documented and structured to ensure regular reviews for all content areas. A curricular review team with teachers, parents, and administrators conducts the process, which is led by the curriculum coordinators for the program under review. The four phases of the curricular review process are as follows: (1) *Study*:assess the current state of the program and form the committee; (2) *Plan*:reestablish instructional goals and determine implementation recommendations; (3) *Implement*:implement strategies/actions for continuous improvement with sufficient resources and professional development; and (4) *Monitor*: review the process and progress of the implementation plans and collect data on the indicators of success. This process allows the district to consistently engage in systematic reviews and assessments of the curricula and provides opportunities for continuous revision and improvement in both content and instructional practices. Participants in teacher focus groups and interviewed district leaders stated that the curricular review process prioritizes teacher input and development and ensures the horizontal alignment of curricular materials. At the time of the district review, participants revealed that the district had a strong start in reviewing the mathematics content area across all grade levels. However, the review process did not always include verifying rating of curricula on calibrated and rigorous ratings systems including CURATE and EdReports, as indicated by the unrated or poorly rated curricula in use in some areas. This is an area of growth for the district.

The curricular review process was designed about four years prior to the on-site visit. Respondents reported its use largely as designed, especially in reviewing the mathematics content area, although the planned timelines were delayed by the pandemic. The curricular review committee began its first phase of the review cycle (Study) during the 2019-2020 academic year on the mathematics focus area, assessing the current state of the program (e.g., gaps, consistency of implementation, resources, professional development, student achievement) and identifying potential areas for improvement. Even with interruption by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, curriculum review process was adapted in academic year 2021 to include reviews for K-12 mathematics, elementary ELA, and world languages for Grade 4 in Phase 1. Beginning in academic year 2022, the curriculum review cycle for the mathematics focus area transitioned into Phase 2, but the remaining content areas entered the initial phases of the review process. In addition, the District engaged in an elementary Literacy Program Review facilitated by the Assistant Superintendent and the District Literacy Team. After reviewing six CURATE-approved programs, they decided on piloting two evidence-based programs during the 2023 - 2024 school year: Expeditionary Learning and Wit & Wisdom, then evaluate and adopt a program for full implementation during the 2024 - 2025 school year.

Reviews for other content areas are currently taking place in the district. At the time of the site visit, ELA for Grades K-5, history/social sciences for Grades K-12, and English as a second language (ESL) are in Phase 1 of the curricular review process. In interviews, district and school leaders shared that Watertown has been reviewing research and looking at resources from DESE to help inform modifications to their programs. A review of data revealed conflicting information on whether staff used CURATE or other ratings in the review process; some interview participants mentioned it, while the official review process document does not. Currently in Phase 2 are physical education/health for elementary, continuing interrupted review of mathematics for Grades K-12, and world languages for elementary and Grade 6. According to district leaders, K-8 mathematics is in a slightly different place compared with the high school. At the elementary and middle schools, they are in the beginning stages of implementation, whereas the high school is still investigating a new curriculum. The only content area fully in Phase 3 is secondary ELA. Lastly, the content areas in Phase 4 are world languages (secondary), fine and performing arts, CTE, physical education/health (secondary), and digital learning and literacy.

The district uses UbD as its framework for planning and implementing curricula, assessments, and instruction across all disciplines and grade levels. The UbD format is guided by state curriculum standards and the district’s vision for the curriculum, which is then used to ensure equitable teaching in support of their diverse learners. To further ensure that their instructional materials are equitable, Watertown uses *Seven Forms of Bias to Consider in Instructional Materials,* a checklist that prompts teachers to screen the instructional material(s) they plan to use in their teaching and describe how they will address the presence of bias.

Another strength of the district is how Watertown leaders have prioritized consistency and alignment throughout the district by aligning curricular materials at all three elementary school sites. In addition to the district’s demonstrated use of the curricular review process, Watertown’s *UbD Backward Design Curriculum Plan* supports their commitment to continuous improvement and alignment in instructional experiences across each school. For example, district staff spoke of planned professional development experiences in which teachers from each school attend weekly coaching meetings with their grade-level teams to receive guidance on curricular implementation, focus on district standards, and review ELA curricular resources. The teams use Atlas, a curriculum management system, to store, modify, and publish curriculum maps and approved units. Through Atlas, staff can easily and readily access curriculum materials.

### Classroom Instruction

Three observers, who focused primarily on instruction in the classroom, visited Watertown during the week of May 1, 2023. The observers conducted 67 observations in a sample of classrooms across grade levels, focused on literacy, ELA, and mathematics. The CLASS protocol guided all classroom observations in the district. These observations used the three grade-band levels of CLASS protocols: K-3, Upper Elementary (4-5), and Secondary (6-12).

The K-3 protocol includes 10 classroom dimensions related to three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support. The Upper Elementary and Secondary protocols include 11 classroom dimensions related to three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support, in addition to Student Engagement. The three domains observed at all levels broadly are defined as follows:

* Emotional Support. Describes the social-emotional functioning of the classroom, including teacher-student relationships and responsiveness to social-emotional needs.
* Classroom Organization. Describes the management of students’ behavior, time, and attention in the classroom.
* Instructional Support. Describes the efforts to support cognitive and language development, including cognitive demand of the assigned tasks, the focus on higher order thinking skills, and the use of process-oriented feedback.

When conducting a classroom visit, the observer rates each dimension (including Student Engagement) on a scale of 1 to 7. A rating of 1 or 2 (low range) indicates that the dimension was never or rarely evident during the visit. A rating of 3, 4, or 5 (middle range) indicates that the dimension was evident but not exhibited consistently or in a way that included all students. A rating of 6 or 7 (high range) indicates that the dimension was reflected in all or most classroom activities and in a way that included all or most students.

In Watertown, ratings are provided across three grade bands: K-5, 6-8, and 9-12. For each grade band, ratings are provided across the overarching domains, as well as at individual dimensions within those domains. The full report of findings from observations conducted in Watertown is in Appendix B, and summary results are in Tables 17, 18, and 19 in this appendix.

In summary, findings from the Watertown observations were as follows:

* Emotional Support. Ratings were in the upper middle range for the K-5 and 6-8 grade bands (5.5 and 5.0, respectively) and in the middle range for the 9-12 grade band (4.7).
* Classroom Organization. Ratings were in the high range (e.g., 6.5) for all grade bands.
* Instructional Support. Ratings were in the lower middle range (e.g., 3.2) for all grade bands.
* Student Engagement. For Grades 4 and up, where student engagement was measured as an independent domain, ratings were in the upper middle range for Grades 4-5 (5.6) and Grades 6-8 (5.4) and the middle range for Grades 9-12 (4.9).

A notable strength of the district is their effort in recent years to increase student engagement opportunities within the classroom. Across multiple focus groups and interviews, increasing student engagement emerged as a high-priority instructional strategy throughout the district. Elementary and high school teachers noted that their lessons allow students to take ownership of their learning and engage in collaborative work. For example, one teacher explained that they have students work in “quadrant groups,” or groups of four students in which each student has a role to play. The teacher uses a rubric to assess their work together, and students can hold each other accountable for their learning. Another teacher described how they use peer feedback, test corrections, and mandatory reflections to help students identify areas for improvement.

Student and district leader focus groups provided additional insight into the learning experiences for students. One district leader described how Watertown began offering alternative ways to demonstrate learning, such as a “novel approach,” in which students read a whole class novel in a few weeks and then follow the readings with thematic book clubs. Students in the high school and middle school focus groups agreed that their lessons are interactive, fun, and interesting, and they have freedom and flexibility in their learning.

Another strength of the district is how district staff members demonstrate a focus on improving instructional practices for all grades and a commitment to equity. The Watertown *District Curriculum Accommodation Plan* (DCAP)*,* which aligns with the district’s core values, lays out strategies for ensuring inclusive learning environments that support students in reaching their full potential academically, socially, and emotionally. Across multiple focus groups and interviews, teachers and support staff across all grades cited equity and inclusion as priorities for the district. As mentioned previously, Watertown uses an equity checklist to screen the instructional material(s) that teachers plan to use in their instruction and describe how they will address the presence of bias. To provide additional instructional support to teachers, district staff members explained how the district hired eight instructional coaches for Grades K-8. School leaders and instructional staff explained that teachers receive professional development from these coaches to help guide their curriculum implementation and help align their materials to district standards. For instance, one teacher described how in a department meeting on engagement, they met with an EL instructional coach who gave feedback on using sentence frames and incorporating English to support students in the sheltered mathematics class. In addition, district staff members reported how a “Grading for Equity” professional development session sparked changes in grading practices at the middle and high school levels.

During the summer, the district offers comprehensive enrichment programs across Grades PK-12 that prioritize relationships, core disciplines, and healthy human connections. As highlighted in the *Watertown Summer 2023 Academic & Enrichment Offerings* document, overall programming includes opportunities for social-emotional wellness, individualized learning, projects for enrichment, and a combination of online and offline learning options. The Summer Success Program, which is by invitation and free for students, offers literacy and math interventions based on data to students in the lower 25% of achievement and to newcomer ELs across all grades with an opportunity to practice English through speaking, reading, and writing activities. The Extended School Year Summer Program is for all students who have demonstrated a substantial regression of skills after a break during school to attend special education sessions to maintain their skills. Students are recommended for specific Extended School Year services based on their individualized education program. Watertown offers a large range of comprehensive enrichment programs across all grades.

### Student Access to Coursework

The district ensures that all students have access to a range of rigorous coursework and a variety of content areas. Watertown High School demonstrates a commitment to offering CTE education opportunities to all students, making this a strength of the district. In focus groups, high school students described how Watertown offers support in thinking about and starting a plan for life after high school. One student remarked as follows:

There are some classes that, like, directly preps you for that kind of stuff . . . there’s also this, like, med class that you can take if you’re interested in medicine that, like, puts you in the setting of the hospital and directly prepares you for that.

The superintendent shared similar sentiments:

So, I think, you know, one of the things that that we’ve done that I’m particularly proud of is our commitment to CTE . . . we try really hard to not limit opportunities for students to explore their interests kind of across the board.”

The district’s commitment to CTE also is demonstrated through its educational pathways. Watertown High School offers two ways to experience CTE: vocational/technical dedicated pathways (Chapter 74 programs) or electives in a traditional high school schedule. Students have the option to choose pathways from either engineering technology, medical assisting, or digital media communications. The vocational/technical dedicated pathways are open to sophomores and represent a three-year commitment that will provide students with an endorsement on their high school transcript. Freshman interested in this three-year program must complete an application that includes a parent or guardian signature. The curricula for these programs align to DESE standards and frameworks. If more sophomores apply than can be accommodated in a given program, students are selected randomly using a lottery and a wait list will be created. If space is available in another program, students are offered the option to enroll there.

In addition to robust honors and Advanced Placement courses, high school students have access to a range of rigorous coursework and a variety of content areas. To improve accessibility, electives, which are open to all students, include options such as Marketing/Finance, Culinary Arts, Construction Technology, Design and Visual Communications, Medical Assisting, Radio and Television Broadcasting, Engineering/Engineering Technology, and Early Education and Care. The Engineering/Engineering Technology program area is in partnership with Project Lead The Way, a nationwide, nonprofit organization dedicated to providing students with transformative classroom experiences. Each engineering course engages students in interdisciplinary courses, such as working with a client to design a home, programming electronic devices or robotic arms, or exploring algae as a biofuel source. Students also can choose from opportunities such as independent study, virtual high school, a student classroom/lab assistant program, and a community service program. In the student classroom/lab assistant program, students may choose to volunteer their services in school activities rather than attend study periods. They will receive 1.5 academic credits for each period they volunteer in a semester. The community service program combines educational experiences beyond the classroom with valuable contributions to social agencies and schools. Students can be placed in hospitals, mental health clinics, workshops, recreation for the developmentally delayed, nursery schools, elementary and junior high schools, nursing homes, and special education and library work in Watertown and neighboring communities. In these placements, students may be assigned to individuals, groups, or hospital wards. Each student must complete 36 hours of community service to graduate.

There were relatively few examples of advanced coursework at the middle school level. In focus groups, district instructional staff noted that Watertown recognized the need to increase access to advanced learning opportunities in Grade 8 mathematics. Several staff noted that district leaders are reviewing how they may adjust their middle school mathematics leveling to allow more students access to higher level courses such as algebra. A district staff member stated that the district has increased the amount of data (e.g., formulas, teacher recommendations, parent meetings, student choice) used within the process for recommending students for enrolling in algebra during eighth grade.

### Recommendations

* The district should document its curricular materials for high school mathematics.
* The district should ensure it is employing high-quality instructional materials in ELA through use of tools like CURATE and EdReports.
* The district should review student access to advanced learning opportunities, such as in middle school math, to identify and eliminate any potential structural barriers.

## Assessment

Watertown ensures that multiple sources of data are collected throughout the year to provide a comprehensive picture of student, school, and district performance. According to the district’s 2022-2023 assessment inventory, the district administers academic assessments, including the PSAT for Grades 10 and 11, i-Ready adaptive diagnostics for Grades K-9, and DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) for Grades K-2. The district uses ACCESS for ELLs and the ACTFL Assessment of Performance Toward Proficiency in Languages as targeted language assessments for their ELs.

Teachers, parents, and students have access to Google Classroom and PowerSchool, the district’s student information systems, which house information such as grades, individual assessment scores, and attendance.

Table 4 summarizes key strengths and areas for growth in assessment.

Table 4. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Assessment Standard

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Indicator | Strengths | Areas for growth |
| [Data and assessment systems](#_Data_and_Assessment) | * The district uses multiple sources of data to provide a comprehensive picture of student, school, and district performance. |  |
| [Data use](#_Data_Use) | * District and school leaders expect staff to review student performance data to identify goals for closing achievement, access, and opportunity gaps. * District leaders collaborate with curriculum coordinators to use student assessment data to inform decision making at the classroom level. | * Structures and routines for data use are not consistent across the district |
| [Sharing results](#_Sharing_Results) | * School and district leaders provide opportunities for educators and others to use data to inform decision making at the classroom level. | * Teachers’ access to clear, actionable data to inform classroom-level decision-making * Consistency in sharing student performance data and progress with families |

### Data and Assessment Systems

Watertown uses assessments and related data to ensure that all teachers provide effective instruction that challenges and supports all students. The district ensures that multiple sources of data are collected to provide a comprehensive picture of student, school, and district performance. According to the *WPS Assessment Calendar for 2022-2023*, teachers administer i-Ready adaptive diagnostics for Grades K-9, DIBELS for Grades K-2, the PSAT for Grades 10 and 11, MCAS for all grades, ACCESS for ELLs, and the ACTFL Assessment of Performance Toward Proficiency in Languages. In addition to these assessments, elementary school teachers described formative assessments integrated into the locally created curricula between benchmark assessments. Currently, teachers in Grades K-5 use Fountas and Pinnell for literacy support and end-of-unit module assessments for mathematics support. Watertown leaders use MCAS results to gain a districtwide vision of student progress and to inform classroom-level instruction. Data on multilingual learners is available through Ellevation, though some teachers reported issues with accessing this system. Overall, this varied data collection is a strength of the district.

### Data Use

Data use within the district varies across schools and grade levels; however, effectively using data is a concrete goal for the district that is integrated into all school improvement plans. Although the district has not developed a standardized process for reviewing data for school teams, a strength of the district is that district and school leaders expect staff to review student performance data to identify goals for closing achievement, access, and opportunity gaps. The superintendent described using survey results from the Views of Climate and Learning and the University of Chicago’s 5 Essentials[[4]](#footnote-5) report to identify district strengths and weaknesses. The assistant superintendent presents to the school committee annually regarding MCAS data and the different results and trends observed.

At the school level, school leaders and teachers across multiple focus groups and interviews noted that staff throughout the district use data review cycles across grade levels, schools, and the district; however, thought processes can vary by school. Throughout the school year, mathematics and literacy teams at the elementary schools participate in five What-I-Need (WIN) cycles. At the beginning of the WIN cycle, grade-level data teams meet to analyze diagnostic data for the whole grade/class, identify priority students, match students to necessary interventions, and explore targeted goals and outcomes. Teachers conclude the cycle by reflecting on student progress from the previous cycle and resetting goals and supports. District-level staff reported consistent and high levels of data use. However, several teachers noted obstacles to effective and consistent data use. These include insufficient time to analyze available data and a lack of universal knowledge on how to access the district’s data storage and management systems, especially at the middle school level. Despite these challenges, multiple staff reported that teachers use data to inform classroom-level decisions. Still, building consistent structures and routines for data use is an area for growth for the district.

Another strength of the district is the continued collaboration between district leaders and curriculum coordinators. District leaders support the use of data to inform decision making at the classroom level, and professional development is designed to improve the use of data and assessments to inform the practices of all educators. Across multiple focus groups and interviews, district leaders emphasized the importance of collaborating with instructional coaches and curriculum coordinators and how their work has helped align curricula both vertically and horizontally across schools. The superintendent stated, “We know what we need to do, and we’re going to provide the support for the teachers to make it happen.” According to district documents and school staff focus groups, the district hosts data meetings with curriculum coordinators, teachers, and coaches to review and analyze beginning-, middle-, and end-of-year data from the i-Ready assessment. At the elementary schools, each school has both a literacy coach and a mathematics coach who meet regularly with grade-level teams to review data and plan instruction. At the middle school, teachers come together during department/content area team meetings and in smaller grade-level curriculum meetings, known as clusters. Teachers meet twice with their cluster and twice with their department during any given cycle. The middle school has two coaches, one in literacy and one in mathematics, who support the review of student data. At the high school, teachers come together for department meetings according to their curricular content area. All departments have a shared common planning period. High school teachers described reviewing data and identifying target areas while in these meetings. In addition, the high school has an academic leadership team. This team meets weekly and consists of curriculum coordinators, assistant principals, and the principal. Teachers also shared instances of a professional development provider brought in to help teachers and coaches have meaningful discussions about student outcomes.

The district leadership team also actively focuses on strengthening systems to support the use of student data within schools. One district priority is to further support the regular and systematic use of student assessment data across schools. This priority is integrated into not only all school improvement plans but also the district improvement plan. Moreover, the assistant superintendent is supporting school leaders and teachers by providing professional development designed to improve data use.

### Sharing Results

An area of growth for the district is teachers’ access to clear, actionable data that can support classroom-level decision making. Teachers and district staff agreed that educators have general access to relevant data that can support classroom-level decision making, but according to one district leader, shared data are not always clear, understandable, or actionable. Some teachers, particularly specialists, echoed this sentiment about accessibility. A district leader shared that the district is currently working to improve ways to make data “digestible” and “clean and specific.”

District staff reported sharing data with staff in a variety of ways. In addition, teachers share data during department meetings with peer teachers who focus on the same content, presenters from i‑Ready attend schoolwide data analysis meetings and guide teachers and other educators through understanding the results. The presentation shows the percentage of students in Watertown who scored at each achievement level in the most recent year and on the preceding three tests to show trends in scores. The data presentation used PowerPoint slides to ensure accessibility to all participants both during and after meetings.

Students and parents have access to Google Classroom and PowerSchool to stay updated about student performance and attendance data. In focus groups, teachers reported that Watertown has a transparent grading portal system in which families can see not only current grades but also actual scores and individual assessments; however, parents shared concerns about a lack of communication from the district regarding the frequency of progress reports.

In focus groups, students reported that teachers share updates on their performance with parents through emails, telephone calls, and progress reports. A high school teacher shared the following example:

We do have a DNF [Did Not Finish] list . . .. It’s for students that [are] in danger of failing. And so we update parents. We’re supposed to send an email first. If we get no response, then we follow up with a phone call, and then if we still get no responses, we’re supposed to keep track of if a parent responded or not.

Teachers also stated that this process is consistent across departments and confirmed that families have access to their own data. In addition, parents have the option to attend grade-level conferences.

Interviewed parents, however, generally agreed that consistency in sharing student performance with parents is an area for growth throughout the district. During the family focus groups, several parents reported mixed experiences regarding school communications. One parent claimed not learning that their child was receiving interventions until after the fact. Multiple parents expressed the view that there are insufficient opportunities to speak with teachers about their children’s progress, such as when final report cards are issued at the end of the school year. Another parent felt the report cards included “generic cut and paste” comments, and the cards do not specify student strengths and areas for improvement.

### Recommendations

* The district should find ways to support teachers in interpreting and acting on student data already available to them, potentially through training or additional staff.
* The district should strengthen engagement with families by setting clear district-wide expectations around family communication and by creating systems that allow teachers to provide specific feedback about student performance.

## Human Resources and Professional Development

Watertown has several sound human resource and professional development structures in place. The district employs effective human resources policies and practices, using the PowerSchool TalentEd system for streamlined record keeping and data storage. The district acknowledges the need for increased diversity in hiring and has implemented strategies such as posting openings on platforms directed toward applicants of color and promoting positive experiences with diverse teachers to encourage students to pursue teaching careers. Recruitment efforts extend beyond local universities through recruitment fairs and conferences outside Massachusetts. Watertown also recently added a director of DEIB. The district prioritizes data-driven approaches for hiring and classroom assignments based on enrollment, student needs, and maintaining small class sizes. Supervision and evaluation systems, including TeachPoint for formal observations, inform staff development, and mentoring programs and professional development opportunities support educators’ growth and improvement. Nearly all stakeholders mentioned the new teacher mentoring program as a strength for the district.

Table 5 summarizes key strengths and areas for growth in human resources and professional development.

Table 5. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Human Resources and Professional Development Standard

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Indicator | Strengths | Areas for growth |
| [Infrastructure](#_Infrastructure) | * The district is in the process of digitizing human resources records. |  |
| [Recruitment, hiring, and assignment](#_Recruitment,_Hiring,_and) |  | * Increasing diversity of the teaching force though improved recruitment and hiring processes |
| [Supervision, evaluation, and educator development](#_Supervision,_Evaluation,_and) | * The district has a mentoring program for new staff. * The district continually chooses a needs-based theme and focuses on it for sustained professional development. | * Aligning evaluation and feedback practices to increase consistency and provide more actionable feedback |
| [Recognition, leadership development, and advancement](#_Recognition,_Leadership_Development) | * District staff are continually encouraged to participate as professional development session facilitators or mentors to build leadership skills. | * Creating a transparent roadmap for advancement |

### Infrastructure

Watertown employs several effective human resources policies, procedures, and practices, most notably a new record-keeping system. Respondents described a new record-keeping system used by the department: PowerSchool TalentEd. One district leader said, “[The new system] allows us to really have one place where all of the data [HR forms] is stored electronically.” Staff described how the user experience for new hires has been streamlined; the system compiles forms to be completed electronically and sends reminders regarding pending items. Moving forward, the goal is to use the system as a way for employees to access personnel data quickly and easily. Interview participants reported a desire for staff to see the human resources department as what one respondent called “customer oriented.” At the time of the visit, recent hires’ information is completely uploaded into the new system, but some legacy staff’s files are still being scanned and uploaded. Despite being in its early stages, the transition process to digital records is a strength of the district.

Regarding infrastructure for planning and decision-making, respondents at all levels described a commitment to keeping class sizes manageable in Watertown. However, human resources staff do not have or use reports on enrollment projections for use in planning or decision-making. Human resources staff do have access to regular reports of current enrollment, which are part of each school committee meeting.

Some positions have dual reporting structures between the city and the school district, and some human resources functions are also shared between the two entities. For instance, the city’s director of public buildings reports to the district superintendent and the city manager; both city and district staff are under their supervision. The custodial staff supervisor and school custodians are employees of the city. In addition to these shared reporting structures, the City of Watertown is responsible for managing benefits. Respondents from both the city and the district reported that these relationships and universally described them as effective and manageable from a human resources standpoint, indicating that the current dual-reporting organizational structure is suitable for the needs of these positions.

### Recruitment, Hiring, and Assignment

According to the respondents, hiring processes are a joint effort between human resources, school sites, and the school committee. The director of human resources position was vacant at the time of the site visit and was being filled by another member of the department at that time. Determining the need for staff is a process that most often originates at the school level, as discussed in the preceding section. The decision to hire is based on a review of enrollment numbers, retirements, or long-term leaves that are discussed during the budgeting process. The human resources department then advertises the vacancies. Once applications are received, the principals identify and recommend candidates for teaching and instructional assistants, and the superintendent has a final meeting with new teacher candidates. District and school leaders concur that principals have autonomy in selecting the candidate to fill their data-informed needs. New positions are approved as part of school committee’s approval of the overall budget each year.

Parents, staff, and district leaders agreed in interviews on the need to diversify staff, and Watertown has several efforts under way related to diversifying the workforce. Three years ago, a director of DEIB position was created. This staff member has participated in job fairs as part of diversification efforts. The DEIB director, however, does not take part in the instructional hiring committees. In addition, while an external equity audit by Public Consulting Group found that majority of the respondents indicated that the district’s current recruitment systems employ a variety of strategies to hire and retain a diverse workforce and make diversity a priority, it also found there are “wide gaps in representations between the study body and the staff of the district.” Given these persistent gaps, a number of district and school leaders and teachers who participated in focus groups cited several reasons—such as having a teaching force more representative of the student body—to continue to strengthen their efforts towards diversifying the staff. Respondents also identified potential barriers, such as posting some jobs late in the hiring season, which does not help when hiring new staff is generally difficult. Respondents in several roles noted that hiring practices can sometimes be insular, and not create a wide enough search to attract diverse candidates. District staff noted the need to increase diversity of staff through the recruitment and hiring process as an area for growth.

Several respondents described the current recruitment processes and current efforts to diversify the teaching staff. District and school leaders, the school committee, and the superintendent shared that openings are posted internally and subsequently sent to “five or six different platforms as opposed to the one or two that we were focusing on a couple of years ago,” to reach more applicants. District staff also have made outreach through recruitment fairs by attending new conferences outside the state. As a “grow your own” approach, the superintendent shared Watertown is beginning to take part in Future Teachers of America (FTA), “where we encourage our high school kids to be teachers.” While this program is not yet established, FTA is a national program with state and local chapters and encourages and supports students with networking and professional development.

### Supervision, Evaluation, and Educator Development

Watertown’s supervision and evaluation systems inform a comprehensive approach to staff development, but some school-level respondents noted that the evaluation process needs more consistency.

Participants described the evaluation and feedback process differently, based on their roles. Evaluators receive annual evaluation training from the assistant superintendent’s office, with implementation support provided by the human resources office. Several interview and focus group respondents indicated that the evaluation begins with those being evaluated choosing a professional practice goal. For the 2022-2023 school year, the focus was on equitable grading practices for the district, and all staff were to have a goal related to this area. The evaluation process includes observations conducted by school leaders. According to the superintendent, teachers should choose one of the 10 academic power standards as a focal point, and observers concentrate on student learning and the methods employed for delivering lesson content with a focus on each teacher’s selected standard.

Teachers at all levels reported having coaches, department heads, or administrators in their classrooms regularly, though precisely how often varied by school level. In the elementary schools, teachers reported that staff with professional teaching status (PTS) are observed twice annually, whereas non-PTS teachers take part in up to six observations per year. In the middle school, PTS teachers are evaluated twice yearly by a primary evaluator and once by a secondary evaluator (administrator). High school teachers are observed about six times per year; department heads often conduct these observations. Principals generally reported that coaches, particularly at the elementary level, are instrumental in the evaluation and feedback process, in both gathering data and offering instructional support for teachers. In addition to formal observations, principals conduct informal walkthroughs with other staff and discuss general trends in instruction. Instructional staff interviewed disagreed on the consistency with which they got feedback through formal and informal observations and walkthroughs, and teachers at all levels reported at least some level of inconsistency in the implementation of the evaluation system, including frequency and the use of actionable feedback.

A review of evaluation records underscores this need for feedback. District records suggest that teacher evaluations are consistently uploaded to TeachPoint. A review of the educator evaluation files indicated that teachers received ratings and feedback on their performance based on the Standards and Indicators of Effective Practice. Simple random sampling was used to select the sample of 10 PTS teachers scheduled for a summative evaluation for the 2021-2022 school year (less than 100 teachers were scheduled for a summative evaluation in 2021-22). Of the 10 teacher evaluations selected for review, all were available for review. However, only nine of the 10 evaluations were complete, not missing required components such as ratings for each standard or an overall rating. A review of the records showed that the expected use of specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely (SMART) goals is consistent. The review of the evaluation documents indicated that all evaluations (100 percent) contained student learning and professional practice SMART goals. Nearly all evaluations (90 percent) referenced multiple sources of evidence, such as observations, student work samples, or other evidence to support progress toward student learning goals, professional learning goals, standards, and indicators. Nearly all evaluations (90 percent) included feedback for each standard, 90 percent of the evaluations included feedback identifying strengths, but only 30 percent of the evaluations included feedback identifying areas of improvement. Making more consistent use of the formal and informal observation systems to provide teachers with consistent, actionable feedback is an area of growth for the district.

District records suggest that administrator evaluations are consistently uploaded to TeachPoint. Of the nine administrators due for a summative evaluation for 2021-2022, all evaluations (100 percent) were available for review. However, only three evaluations were complete with performance ratings and assessment of progress toward goals. Of the nine summative evaluations reviewed, 55 percent (five evaluations) included student learning goals and professional practice goals. None of the evaluations included a school improvement goal. Three evaluations included or referenced multiple sources of evidence to assess performance on summative evaluation standards. Only four evaluations included evaluator comments with feedback identifying each administrator’s strengths, and only one evaluation provided administrators with identified areas for improvement.

A strength of Watertown is that districtwide professional development is data driven; they conduct a needs assessment and then decide quarterly session topics. The district also assesses the effectiveness of the professional development provided; documents provided by the district include the surveys conducted after each session and resulting feedback. The district’s professional development is calendar established, with expectations outlined in the collective bargaining contracts.

The approach for professional development for 2022-2023 was detailed in the *Professional Development Districtwide Overview 2022-2023 Partners/Consultants* document. In addition, the district biennially creates a chart that illustrates Watertown’s professional development values and guiding principles, district teams and committees, and professional learning content and schedule by level as well as the Annual Summer Learning Institute. In 2022-2023, the focus of the district’s professional development was EL strategies and discourse across all disciplines, including mathematics. To meet this focus, two courses were offered, one for teachers—Maximizing Language Development for English Learners—and one for administrators—Leading for English Learner Equity and Achievement. In addition, the *Districtwide Overview* document outlined other topics that staff and district leaders confirmed took place in interviews: Grading for Equity, Responsive Classroom for K-8, and tiered behavioral interventions as part of MTSS.

The overview document does not list tiered academic interventions or topics related to students with special needs, two areas that several teachers noted the need for training. Despite the professional development planning process being a strength of the district, it should be noted that these topics—or other topics deemed important by staff—may need to be considered for inclusion in subsequent years.

The district provided a recent example of a Watertown collection chart: Professional Learning Across Preschool-Grade 12: 2020-2021. This most recent version emphasizes social and emotional learning professional development, which many staff members referred to during interviews because it was a central topic during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a follow-up to the summer training on social-emotional learning, a team was formed with a representative from each grade level, as described by elementary staff. Other professional development opportunities include literacy and mathematics coaching for K-8 staff in which teachers set goals, meet with their coach, receive feedback as they go through a cycle, and revisit goals as part of a continuous improvement cycle. An elementary school coach emphasized that “every teacher we’ve worked with here always wants to be a better teacher.”

For the past three years, the Teaching Learning Alliance has provided professional development focused on looking at student work and designing instruction at multiple grade levels. It can take the form of modeling, observations, or teachers pulled out for coaching sessions. Teachers also are encouraged to facilitate professional development sessions to share their practice and grow professionally.

New staff receive additional professional development through the district’s mentoring program. This program is central to Watertown’s induction process. New teachers are assigned a mentor from their grade level to help with site and district procedures or processes. In addition to these supports, middle and high school teachers also meet with an EL instructional coach. The mentor committee manages the mentor program; committee members work closely with the human resources department for effective implementation. A coach in the mentoring program spoke to the rigor of being a mentor and stated, “When you mentor, it’s a constant conversation.” Monthly mentor meetings, mentor logs, and the mentor handbook are part of the support for first- and second-year teachers. New teachers also can participate in online training for 16 programs that are available on the district website, including the various curricula and supports such as Ellevation; Math in Focus; and the platforms Google Classroom, PowerSchool, and TeachPoint. Information on accommodation plans, field trip permission forms, MCAS testing, and Newsela resources also are in the mix. Overall, Watertown’s mentoring program is a strength of the district, but some teachers reported that the process could include a more thoughtful match between new staff and their mentors (e.g., based on similar areas of responsibility).

In addition, while the elementary and middle schools have instructional coaches as additional sources of support, the high school has mentors for new staff, but fewer resources for other staff. A staff member shared that an EL mentor helped redesign how a sheltered content class was set up, including working with students to gather feedback. A faculty member shared as follows:

I worked with one [mentor] from the EL department. When we redesigned the way our sheltered math class was set up, she gave us some feedback. She came in and worked with the kids and observed and gave us some feedback about using more sentence frames.

Staff reported that coaches and mentors were key resources in providing instructional support and professional development. Middle and high school faculty also participate in a book study for additional professional development. A recent title was *Grading for Equity*, which aligned with the professional development outlined in the aforementioned document. Leadership development and support is an area that district leaders, school leaders, and staff all agreed was meaningful, which is a strength of the district. School staff and leaders detailed strategic use of staffing, scheduling, and budgeting to improve student outcomes. They provided an example of collaborative scheduling of classes for staff in the arts who are shared across the elementary and middle schools. Mentors complete a form indicating interest and attend a full-day training conducted during the summer. The ILTs also provide leadership opportunities for the grade-level representative to lead level collaboration. ILTs meet twice each month, the principal leads one session, with the other facilitated by the ILT representative. Agenda topics are shared in advance and are based on the time of the school year, (e.g., in May the topic could be placing elementary students in classes for the following year). Other leadership/development opportunities include a Responsive Classroom team and the professional development council. High school staff are encouraged to facilitate the professional development sessions on the calendar. The half-day professional development sessions include three or four sessions, affording staff many opportunities to grow their facilitation skills and share expertise.

### Recognition, Leadership Development, and Advancement

Teachers and district staff view the district’s mentoring program as a leadership opportunity for experienced teachers. District staff also pointed to the quarterly and summer professional development program as a leadership opportunity for teachers who lead sessions for colleagues. Staff leadership opportunities also include membership on ILTs at the elementary level. ILTs meet weekly to discuss data, updates, and school priorities, and their members report back to grade-level teams. These teams include a representative from each grade level, along with other school leaders. At the high school level, the faculty senate provides a similar leadership opportunity. The senate includes one member from each department who volunteers for the senate, which meets with the principal monthly; these staff then report back to colleagues. Additional leadership opportunities are posted internally on bulletin boards at all school sites and ensures that staff are informed of these openings.

Interviews with district leaders and staff did not indicate a formal path for career advancement from staff to school leadership. The references to advancement are in the collective bargaining unit agreements. These agreements outline that evaluation ratings of proficient or exemplary in all performance standards are required for an educator to attain PTS. If the summative performance rating is exemplary and if the prior school year’s impact on student learning is rated moderated or high, the educator will be recognized with public commendation. The lack of a transparent roadmap for advancement is an area for growth.

### Recommendations

* The district should continue to expand its efforts to recruit more diverse educators.
* The district should ensure all evaluations –for both teachers and administrators – include consistent, actionable feedback, particularly around areas of improvement.
* The district should develop a formalized roadmap for educators who wish to advance in their careers.

## Student Support

Watertown is prioritizing the development and implementation of equitable student supports, as described in a document review and focus groups with teachers and school and district leaders. The district has committed to identifying and addressing students’ needs while engaging families and students in planning and decision-making efforts to improve the school community. The district improvement plan reflects a commitment to the social-emotional development and well-being of students. Moreover, each school has a multidisciplinary team that meets to review student data and develop appropriate intervention and/or support plans based on student needs. Lastly, Watertown provides families and students with opportunities to engage with the district and support students’ academic progress and general well-being through school committee meetings, diversity councils from each school, student intervention teams (SITs), and parent teacher organizations (PTOs). Results from the Views of Climate and Learning survey indicate a relatively strong school climate across all school levels and student subgroups, as evidenced by overall school climate scores in the “favorable” range (51 to 70, with a maximum score of 100).

Table 6 summarizes key strengths and areas for growth in student support.

Table 6. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Student Support Standard

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Indicator | Strengths | Areas for growth |
| [Safe and supportive school climate and culture](#_Safe_and_Supportive) | * The district focuses on creating welcoming and supportive environments for all students. | * Ensure greater consistency in the implementation of existing equity efforts * Establishing more restorative behavioral practices, monitoring the consistent and equitable use of those practices, and ensuring that these approaches are clear and understood by staff, students, and families |
| [Tiered systems of support](#_Tiered_Systems_of) | * The district provides a consistently implemented tiered system of support to identify and address the needs of all students. |  |
| [Family, student, and community engagement and partnerships](#_Family,_Student,_and) |  | * Ensuring that opportunities for parent input are available to more families and offer ample opportunity for participation |

### Safe and Supportive School Climate and Culture

Overall, Watertown prioritizes the creation of a welcoming and supportive environment for all students. The district improvement plan reflects a commitment to the social-emotional development and well-being of students. Staff identified several examples of how they work to foster positive, inclusive, and welcoming learning environments, including the use of Responsive Classroom in the elementary schools, social-emotional programming at the middle school, and positive behavioral approaches such as clarifying behavioral expectations and consequences at all school levels, though some parents reported that the district can improve in the full implementation of these efforts. Student focus groups corroborated that the structures and relationships in place across Watertown schools generally lead to a positive overall climate.

Watertown’s focus on creating welcoming and supportive environments for all students and accompanying concrete actions is a strength of the district. The district improvement plan includes a mission focused on “creating an equitable, challenging, and innovative learning environment where everyone belongs, and every student is empowered to shape the world around them.” This district objective is part of individual school improvement plans and aligned to priorities within the district improvement plan. Examples of actions that school staff are taking include providing professional learning for staff on how to support students with diverse backgrounds; implementing new curricula that highlight diverse perspectives; and holding staff and community discussions about issues of diversity and schoolwide vision.

Watertown has pursued several efforts to identify, plan for, and start addressing equity-related needs. To further demonstrate its commitment to access and equity for all students, the district contracted with Public Consulting Group LLC in 2021 to conduct an independent, external equity audit. The purpose of the audit was to examine all areas of the school system’s operations (e.g., policies, practices, and programs) through the lens of equity, with the goal to identify structural and programmatic barriers that inhibit an inclusive and equitable learning environment. The audit was used to develop a set of customized recommendations grounded in Watertown’s data and help the district proactively address bias. These included implementing several initiatives related to developing staff capacity to examine and dismantle implicit biases and systemic inequalities. According to the most recent district improvement strategy(a new one was under development at the time of the visit),action steps for equity initiatives include developing a plan for physical safety; attending specifically to the transition of more vulnerable groups of students (e.g., preschool, kindergarten, substantially separate programs, ELs); and attending to equity by meeting students’ individual learning needs. Staff shared that the equity audit sparked a concerted effort to broaden district recruitment to focus on diversity and promoting applicants of color. In addition, district leaders shared that the district has worked to create welcoming environments by building rapport between staff and students and by offering professional development opportunities to teachers on self-care. Lastly, the district convened a formal equity team to lead the district’s work in creating equitable environments. The equity leadership team is a districtwide steering committee of educators, administrators, students, parents, and community members that meets regularly to examine and promote the core values and vision for equity across the district.

While interviews with staff and a review of documents identified several efforts related to equity, some community members nonetheless reported that there were still areas of improvement in the district. Across focus groups, students and parents identified a need to diversify leadership and to develop staff’s ability to examine and dismantle implicit biases, thus creating more welcoming environments for all students. For example, one parent reported that their child’s kindergarten teacher only sent out pictures of White children. When the parent raised the issue, they reported feeling that the teacher was not responsive to their concerns. According to one student, “anyone who isn’t like the general student body, be prepared for a lot of microaggressions” [from peers]. Some, but not all, students in one focus group agreed with this sentiment. Another parent reported very positive experiences at the classroom level, but also noted frustrations with administrators in getting equity-related policy concerns addressed and a lack of consistency throughout the district. Considering the various equity efforts in place already discussed, an area of growth for Watertown is ensuring greater consistency in the implementation of existing equity efforts.

District and school staff shared that Watertown has developed bullying and safety protocols, as well as plans for how to respond to and disseminate information following a crisis in the district. However, across interviews and focus groups, feedback consistently exhibited concerns about student behavior and discipline practices across schools. Educators agreed about a lack of consistency in enforcing behavioral expectations and consequences. Feedback from parents also noted concerns about inconsistent discipline within schools. For instance, one parent described their school’s discipline practices as being “out of the 1950s” and “archaic.” Another parent explained how their primary grades student was suspended for what they considered a minor issue. The parent refused the suspension. Student feedback highlighted the need for increased consistency in both expectations and consequences for behavior in educational settings both inside and outside the classroom (e.g., bathrooms, cafeteria, hallways). Respondents described a need for the district to identify consistent and equitable approaches for responding to student behavior and to ensure that these approaches are clear and understood by all staff, students, and families. This feedback on the need for both more restorative behavioral practices and consistency in the use of those practices highlights an area of growth for the district

### Tiered Systems of Support

A notable strength of the district is how Watertown provides a consistently implemented tiered system of support to identify and address the needs of all students. This process uses data-driven decision making to develop appropriate interventions and supports. According to district documents, the first step in Watertown’s tiered system of support process is for educators to implement, monitor, and document Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions with fidelity for a minimum of four to six weeks. If these interventions are ineffective, the next step in the process typically involves a teacher referral to an SIT, which is a group of educators who conduct an internal review of student data, develop an academic support plan, and then do a follow-up review to ensure the effectiveness of the plan. Information collected through the district review confirmed that each school has multidisciplinary teams, a SIT and a student support team (SST), that meet weekly with classroom teachers to review data and develop appropriate intervention and/or support plans based on student needs. According to district documents, the SIT is a team of individuals who work with teachers and parents to problem-solve about a student’s academic, social-emotional, and behavioral challenges and provide targeted support. SITs notify families about student concerns and invite them to meet with the team to review data and action plans. If a student needs additional support after referral to the SIT, they can then be referred to an SST. The SST is a team of specialists who focus on intensive Tier 3 support, such as coordination of care among school and outside providers. This tiered system of support is implemented throughout the district to identify and address the needs of all students and is the main mechanism for supporting social-emotional needs.

Both district- and school-sponsored professional development opportunities reflect topics related to student learning along a continuum of needs, including academic, social, and emotional learning. In addition, the DCAP describes a proactive MTSS designed to ensure that Watertown “prepares all students for life by engaging them in a challenging and meaningful education within an inclusive, diverse community.” The DCAP details personnel and interventions that are accessible to all students and families through general education and provides universal accommodations related to curriculum access, engagement, assessment, and supporting student learning.

To establish systems and structures to ensure that all Watertown students receive what they need to develop and achieve their full potential, the district developed the comprehensive *WPS MTSS District Handbook (2022-2023)* in collaboration with the MTSS implementation planning team and K-8 building principals. The planning team includes K-12 staff focused on work within both the academic and behavioral strands and is facilitated by district staff and an external consultant. Student support staff reported using the handbooks within all schools. In addition to providing evidence-based practices, programs, and systems to students by tier, the handbook employs Universal Design for Learning and social-emotional learning principles across all tiers for all students. School staff reported professional learning that builds teachers’ expertise in academic, behavioral, and social-emotional learning. For instance, one district leader shared doing “a series of workshops with them [teachers] in terms of safety and belonging, oral discourse, academic vocabulary, and how to use Ellevation, which is similar to a student information system for ESL.” A school leader stated that they have “had a lot of professional development around the science of reading design and looking at why it’s important to make a shift.”

Moreover, school leaders agreed that the district has shifted toward MTSS, looking at not only academics but also the social-emotional behavioral piece as well. School leaders noted that the middle and high schools are in the early stages of expanding their skills in Tier 1 practices, whereas the elementary teachers take a four-day Responsive Classroom session during the summer. While a number of staff respondents described these efforts as being underway, several parent respondents, as noted in the preceding section, reported that there was a need for improvement in aligning positive and restorative approaches to behavior management.

In the elementary and middle schools, students have access to Tier 2 supports through the WIN block, during which students can receive additional academic support. The *Guidance for Creating WIN Groups* document outlines the process for identifying groups and appropriate instructional focus area goals for all students. The document also describes the order in which students should be prioritized based on their needs. In focus groups, teachers described how, during the WIN block, students are subdivided into groups based on their needs. For example, according to a special education teacher, some groups may be students with special education needs, some may include multilingual learners, but all students are subdivided into groups designed to meet their particular needs at a particular point in time. For students who require additional support, staff members are intentional about not overscheduling students for interventions. Middle school teachers reported instances in which students with very different levels of need were in the same groups during WIN blocks, causing confusion about how to approach some of these groups. Middle school teachers further described how students are never scheduled for two WIN interventions because they alternate between an elective day and a WIN block day; staff reported that no time is available for multiple interventions. Although the high school does not have a WIN block, students have access to additional academic supports, such as a mathematics lab, academic support blocks, a writing lab, and tutoring provided by teachers and instructional assistants.

### Family, Student, and Community Engagement and Partnerships

Watertown provides families and students with opportunities to engage with the district and support students’ academic progress and general well-being. High school students can participate in advisory councils that provide feedback and updates to the school committee. For instance, a high school student attended a school committee meeting to present the results of a Watertown High School student body Instagram poll regarding the allocation of potential funds, with results indicating the continued need for increased mental health resources. Families are represented on diversity councils from each school and PTOs. The SITs notify families about a student’s concern and meet with them to review data, develop action plans, and set or revise goals that have been set for the student. The Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) is a district-level, parent-driven group that provides input to the district on current successes and challenges in special education and related services. This council provides families and other community members with information about basic rights pertaining to special education and space to discuss special education concerns. According to school committee minutes, the SEPAC also provides feedback to the school committee. District leaders described how the district provides accessibility to interpretation for parents and teachers. Weekly electronic newsletters are sent out for each school, and the newsletters use a program that directly translates the information into almost any language. According to one district leader, the district’s use of interpreters has increased dramatically, and family liaisons work closely with families and teachers.

However, multiple parents expressed concerns about how communication from the district is reactive and comes after decisions have already been made, such as offering ample time and opportunity for input on policy changes. One parent indicated that “there’s definitely better communication at the school level and horrendous lack thereof at the district level.” Ensuring that opportunities for parent input are available to more families and offer ample opportunity for participation is an area of growth for the district.

Parents shared various concerns about how the community is represented and involved in district decision-making processes. For example, some parents expressed a desire to see more diversity in district leadership and staff. While some parents were pessimistic about diversity, other parents shared a hopeful outlook that, given Watertown’s financial resources, the district had potential to be a better place for attracting the best candidates. In addition, some respondents said communications regarding some community input or feedback opportunities were lacking or limited. For example, some timelines for response are brief and do not always provide sufficient response time for busy parents. Parents and other stakeholders expressed concerns about the limited stakeholder participation in surveys and district/school outreach efforts. Both parents and the superintendent noted that the opportunities provided for input, such as the coffee times with the superintendent or surveys, do not have high participation. The superintendent similarly reported a need for a better plan to obtain timely feedback from stakeholders. As a result of this lack of participation, some parents said, participation wanes because too few voices participate in these processes and they do not see change. Moreover, some parents reported a fear of retaliation either against them or their children for speaking up in opposition to some decisions and policies. Feedback across focus groups highlighted the need for opportunities for parent input that are available to more families and offer ample opportunity for participation as an area for growth.

Parents are informed of school news via the electronic newsletter disseminated on the Smore platform, which allows for translation into other languages. In addition to information posted on the district website, information is shared via social media on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. School committee members shared that the superintendent has set the example for communication, and principals and teachers also are actively communicating, which differs from past actions. To improve outreach to families whose first language is not English, the superintendent’s plan is for the district to build a family center that would be a safe and welcoming place for families to begin connecting with the district and to remain engaged.

Watertown does provide some opportunities for community engagement. Across multiple focus groups and interviews, the Anti-Bias Coalition was described as a community partner with Watertown’s schools. Community members participate in the coalition and host events with support from the district and district leaders. According to one district leader, the district partners with other community organizations, such as Wayside, which provides mental health and identity supports to high school students; Watertown Savings Bank, which provides grants; and Watertown Community Foundation, which provides support services. Lastly, Watertown offers Watertown Community Education, a self-sustaining program that provides quality learning and enrichment services for children and adults. Watertown Community Education operates before school and afterschool programs as well as vacation week programs, summer programs, afternoon and evening programs, and programs for the adult community.

### Recommendations

* The district should build upon its response to its equity audit and ensure greater consistency in its implementation of existing equity efforts.
* The district should review its approach to student behavior across schools to determine where schools can achieve greater equity and vertical and horizontal consistency.
* The district should review its structures around district communications, with a focus on providing sufficient time for community feedback on key decisions, engaging diverse stakeholders, and eliminating any perception of retaliation for sharing critical feedback.

## Financial and Asset Management

Watertown prioritizes transparent budget documentation and robust financial planning for capital needs. The district maintains clear and accurate budget documents, including historical spending data, that are publicly available on the district website. These documents provide comprehensive information about funding sources and resource allocation for all school sites. Watertown’s budget documentation is clear, complete, and user-friendly. The district’s long-term capital planning efforts include the construction of new schools and upgrades to existing facilities with minimal burden to taxpayers, a result of collaborative partnerships between school administrators and city leaders.

Table 7 summarizes key strengths and areas for growth in financial and asset management.

Table 7. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Financial and Asset Management Standard

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Indicator | Strengths | Areas for growth |
| [Budget documentation and reporting](#_Budget_Documentation_and) | * The district maintains clear and accurate budget documents and provides regular updates to the community. | * Ensuring sustainability and stability in financial and operations leadership during a period of coming leadership transition |
| [Adequate budget](#_Adequate_Budget) | * The district ensures that all stakeholders know the forecasting and budget process timeline to ensure needs-based budgeting. |  |
| [Financial tracking, forecasting, controls, and audits](#_Financial_Tracking,_Forecasting,) |  |  |
| [Capital planning and facility maintenance](#_Capital_Planning_and) | * The district has engaged in effective long-term planning for capital needs with minimal burden on local taxpayers. * The capital investment plan is the guiding document for facility maintenance plans. |  |

### Budget Documentation and Reporting

District leaders highlighted the collaborative process between school administrators, city leaders, and district central office staff in developing the overall budget, as discussed in the Leadership and Governance section. The director of finance and operations monitors the fiscal management process, which begins at the school level. School-level administrators concurred on their autonomy when developing and proposing their individual budgets based on school needs. Grade-level and departmental meetings surface specific needs, which are communicated to school leaders and subsequently proposed to the district office. After the superintendent reviews the budget, it is presented as a whole-district budget and discussed at school committee subcommittee meetings and full committee meetings before being approved.

District finance is managed by the Director of Finance and Operations, in collaboration with an assistant business manager, an administrative assistant, and grants and operations manager. The Director of Finance and Operations reported that there have been several efforts to add new positions and staff as well as codify systems and procedures in the past five years. The finance and operations office take a leadership role in the budget process in collaboration with the district leadership team and other City staff. The director of finance and operations also manages other costs, such as classroom furniture, technology (e.g., new server), and telephone system needs. This office has used the Munis system to track the regular (in some cases, daily) expenditure of funds, revolving gifts and grants, and positions and staffing. Additional spreadsheets provide a backup to this information. The individuals who occupy two major positions that support the budget reporting and fiscal management process, the district auditor and the director of finance and operations, will be new for the 2023-2024 school year. Ensuring continued stability in the finance and operations office during a time of transition is an area of growth for the district.

Watertown maintains clear and accurate budget documents that include information about all sources of funds and the allocation of resources for all school sites. Once the school committee votes on the district budget, it is publicly posted on the district website. A search near the time of the on-site visit included budgets from fiscal year 2012 to fiscal year 2023 and the superintendent’s recommended budget for fiscal year 2024. In addition, the school committee and subcommittee meeting minutes are posted on the district website and contain summaries of budget discussions and action items plus the monthly budget updates. The current budget document provides information on funding sources, including federal and state grant funding, choice fund revenue, and circuit breaker fund revenue. Current and historical data provide sufficient detail for stakeholders to understand the current year’s allocations. Budget documents are a strength of the district; they are clear, accurate, complete, publicly available, and user-friendly. Details are sufficient for stakeholders to understand the current year’s resource allocation and explanations for needed resources.

### Adequate Budget

The district line in the city budget matches the school committee’s approved budget. District and city officials generally agreed that the district’s current budget provides sufficient general appropriation funds, and the district uses all funding effectively to support student performance, opportunities, and outcomes. Multiple respondents at all levels also noted the sufficient local budget for capital projects, discussed later in the capital section. Those interviewed about the budgeting process spoke to ongoing communication between the city and the district throughout the year, aided by a good relationship with the city manager’s office and the representation of city government on the school committee as key factors for having an adequate budget for the district. City and district leaders emphasized that the previous city manager’s foresight, commitment, and planning allowed Watertown to be in a strong financial position.

In addition to providing the district with adequate funding for school operations, the city shares costs through the Department of Public Buildings, a shared department that includes custodians and maintenance staff, as well as supporting health insurance and other benefits, such as retiree health insurance.

Those interviewed regarding the budget shared that additional funding beyond the district budget and the cost sharing for services is provided to the district through the director of finance and operations’ “wish list.” Every February, this list is created to use any funds earmarked in the budget and identify funds not used for any reason, which can then be used by the district for needs that arise during the school year. District and school leaders meet to share and prioritize needs; once approved at the district level, the list is sent to the school committee. The prioritized items that are “fully or partially funded” are then managed by school sites.

Additional funding comes from gifts and grants. The district receives gifts as outlined in the *Fiscal Year 2023 School Committee Voted Budget* from the Watertown Community Foundation, the PTOs which fund technology and trips, as well as local businesses and citizens who “generously donate to Watertown Public Schools.” Federal and state grants “support specific students’ needs and/or programs,” the largest portion designated for special education services. In addition, the district “receives grants for professional development of staff and for reading and math support.” Grants are centrally tracked, although the site’s allotted funds are managed at the school site that requested the grant.

### Financial Tracking, Forecasting, Controls, and Audits

Watertown has several clear mechanisms for financial tracking and communicating this information to the public. According to district leaders, the director of finance and operations reports to the superintendent and the school committee monthly. These reports include updates on salaries, gifts, and grant spending. Quarterly, a budget memo takes “a deeper dive into where the budget is at that moment.” Reports are housed on the district website, and any notable updates are included in the superintendent’s newsletters. The end-of-year report for DESE is prepared by the assistant business manager and submitted to DESE. As noted in the November 1, 2022, budget and finance committee meeting, a recommendation was made that full reports to the school committee be made quarterly, rather than monthly, with any monthly detailed updates given as needed.

Ongoing communication and data sharing between school building principals and the business office ensure spending forecasted for the year is encumbered as budgeted. The finance and operations office runs monthly budget reports that cover budget and nonbudget funds (e.g., grants), plus salary reports that run more than monthly to ensure that all encumbered salaries and expenses are consistently tracked in the Munis system and additional spreadsheets.

Grants and gifts, including large ones from the town’s parent group, are tracked and reported to DESE by the director of finance and operations, with school sites or the department receiving the grant managing the funds. The director also tracks grant spend down on a district spreadsheet to ensure that funds are encumbered. Independent auditing services conduct the triennial student activity audit. Grants and a city financial audit are conducted regularly, as in other cities and towns. DESE also conducts multiple audits annually. The director of finance and operations reported that no findings have been discovered recently.

### Capital Planning and Facility Maintenance

Watertown has a long-term capital plan that addresses the district’s needs while minimizing burden on taxpayers, This plan serves as a clear guide to both district staff and the general public, which is a strength of the district. Collaborative partnerships between the school committee, city partners, and district leaders play a key role in implementing this plan.

District and city leaders concurred that Watertown’s school finances are characterized by sound financial planning related to district expenditures in general and capital expenses in particular. Several respondents credited the previous city manager who served 29 years in the position, whose commitment to education and capital facilities and was demonstrated by integrating new growth and strategic thinking into the budget planning process, leaving the district in a very stable financial position and able to address capital needs, in particular. Multiple respondents noted that the City of Watertown has pursued the district’s capital plans without local tax override votes to fund schools, with only one project partially funded by the state’s MSBA process.

The *Building Up for the Future* document, which includes the plans for three new elementary schools, middle school upgrades, and planning for a new high school, exemplifies this collaborative effort and sound financial planning. The last new elementary school building will open this fall, and the high school project is in its early stages. Projects in the middle school’s improvement plan are well under way to meet students’ needs in the next five years. City and district leaders concurred on the improvements that have been made: 90 percent of the building is air-conditioned, and many spaces have new furniture, boilers, windows, and flooring. Currently, the roof is being assessed, and interior painting is on track for completion. Two of the three elementary schools are zero-net energy buildings and the high school will be as well. By committing to climate resilience and sustainability, students learn life lessons beyond their academics.

Watertown city leaders also described how they share costs with the schools for facility maintenance. As previously mentioned, school custodial staff is provided by the city. The city also maintains the schools’ sports fields, school and town custodians take care of the building sidewalks in winter, and the city Department of Public Works oversees the parking lots for snow removal. The joint city-school director of public buildings oversees much of these activities. Conversations with principals and assessments conducted by Watertown’s director of public buildings determine regular capital needs, including air-conditioning, bathrooms, and refrigeration.

Cyclical curricular purchases are part of the capital plan. Currently, the district is actively looking to purchase a new literacy curriculum. The district’s collaboration with all stakeholders and the fact that “the city is obviously very committed to ensuring that our schools are excellent” is a strength of the district.

### Recommendations

* Where possible, the district should create systems or artifacts to preserve historical knowledge, to ensure continued stability in the finance and operations office during a time of transition.

## Appendix A. Summary of Site Visit Activities

The AIR team completed the following activities as part of the district review activities in Watertown. The team conducted 67 classroom observations during the week of May 1, 2023, and held interviews and focus groups between May 1 and 5, 2023. The site visit team conducted interviews and focus groups with the following representatives from the school and the district:

* Superintendent
* Other district leaders
* School committee members
* Teachers’ association members
* Principals
* Teachers
* Support specialists
* Parents
* Middle and high school students
* City government representatives

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

* 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
* Curricular review process and timeline
* Watertown curriculum review materials and curriculum design documents
* Published educational reports on the district by DESE, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, and the former Office of Educational Quality and Accountability
* District documents such as district and school improvement plans, school committee policies, curriculum documents, summaries of student assessments, job descriptions, collective bargaining agreements, evaluation tools for staff, handbooks, school schedules, and the district’s end-of-year financial reports
* All completed program and administrator evaluations and a random selection of completed teacher evaluations

## Appendix B. Districtwide Instructional Observation Report



Watertown Public Schools

Classroom Visits: Summary of Findings

Districtwide Instructional Observation Report

May 2023



201 Jones Road  
Waltham, Massachusetts  
781-373-7000 | TTY 877.334.3499

[www.air.org](http://www.air.org)

Contents

**Page**

[Introduction 1](#_Toc92194253)

[Positive Climate 3](#_Toc92194254)

[Teacher Sensitivity 4](#_Toc92194255)

[Regard for Student Perspectives 5](#_Toc92194256)

[Negative Climate 6](#_Toc92194257)

[Behavior Management 7](#_Toc92194258)

[Productivity 8](#_Toc92194259)

[Instructional Learning Formats 9](#_Toc92194260)

[Concept Development 10](#_Toc92194261)

[Content Understanding 11](#_Toc92194262)

[Analysis and Inquiry 12](#_Toc92194263)

[Quality of Feedback 13](#_Toc92194264)

[Language Modeling 14](#_Toc92194265)

[Instructional Dialogue 15](#_Toc92194266)

[Student Engagement 16](#_Toc92194267)

[Summary of Average Ratings: Grades K-5 17](#_Toc92194268)

[Summary of Average Ratings: Grades 6-8 18](#_Toc92194269)

[Summary of Average Ratings: Grades 9-12 19](#_Toc92194270)

[References 20](#_Toc92194271)

Introduction

The *Districtwide Instructional Observation Report* presents ratings for the classroom observations that were conducted by certified observers at American Institutes for Research (AIR) as part of the Massachusetts District Reviews.

Three observers visited Watertown Public Schools during the week of May 1, 2023. Observers conducted 67 observations in a sample of classrooms across five schools. Observations were conducted in grades K-12 and focused primarily on literacy, English language arts, and mathematics instruction.

The classroom observations were guided by the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), developed by the Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) at the University of Virginia. Three levels of CLASS Manuals were used: K–3, Upper Elementary, and Secondary. The K–3 tool was used to observe grades K–3, the Upper Elementary tool was used to observe grades 4–5, and the Secondary tool was used to observe grades 6–12.

The K–3 protocol includes 10 classroom dimensions related to three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support (listed in Table 1).

Table 1. CLASS K–3 Domains and Dimensions

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Emotional Support | Classroom Organization | Instructional Support |
| * Positive Climate * Negative Climate * Teacher Sensitivity * Regard for Student Perspectives | * Behavior Management * Productivity * Instructional Learning Formats | * Concept Development * Quality of Feedback * Language Modeling |

The Upper Elementary and Secondary protocols include 11 classroom dimensions related to three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support (listed in Table 2), in addition to Student Engagement.

Table 2. CLASS Upper Elementary and Secondary Domains and Dimensions

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Emotional Support | Classroom Organization | Instructional Support |
| * Positive Climate * Teacher Sensitivity * Regard for Student Perspectives | * Behavior Management * Productivity * Negative Climate | * Instructional Learning Formats * Content Understanding * Analysis and Inquiry * Quality of Feedback * Instructional Dialogue |
| Student Engagement | | |

When conducting a visit to a classroom, the observer rates each dimension (including Student Engagement) on a scale of 1 to 7. A rating of 1 or 2 indicates that the dimension was never or rarely evident during the visit. For example, a rating of 1 or 2 on Teacher Sensitivity indicates that, at the time of the visit, the teacher was not aware of students who needed extra support or attention, was unresponsive to or dismissive of students, or was ineffective at addressing students’ problems; as a result, students rarely sought support from the teacher or communicated openly with the teacher. A rating of 3, 4, or 5 indicates that the dimension was evident but not exhibited consistently or in a way that included all students. A rating of 6 or 7 indicates that the dimension was reflected in all or most classroom activities and in a way that included all or most students.

Members of the observation team who visited the classrooms all received training on the CLASS protocol and then passed a rigorous certification exam for each CLASS protocol to ensure that they were able to accurately rate the dimensions. All observers must pass an exam annually to maintain their certification.

Research on CLASS protocol shows that students in classrooms that rated high using this observation tool have greater gains in social skills and academic success than students in classrooms with lower ratings (MET Project, 2010; CASTL, n.d.). Furthermore, small improvements on these domains can affect student outcomes: “The ability to demonstrate even small changes in effective interactions has practical implications—differences in just over 1 point on the CLASS 7-point scale translate into improved achievement and social skill development for students” (CASTL, n.d., p. 3).

In this report, each CLASS dimension is defined, and descriptions of the dimensions at the high (6 or 7), middle (3, 4, or 5), and low levels (1 or 2) are presented *(definitions and rating descriptions are derived from the CLASS K–3*, *Upper Elementary, and Secondary Manuals).* For each dimension we indicate the frequency of classroom observations across the ratings and provide a districtwide average of the observed classrooms. In cases where a dimension is included in more than one CLASS manual level, those results are combined on the dimension-specific pages. In the summary of ratings table following the dimension-specific pages the averages for every dimension are presented by grade band (K-5, 6-8, and 9-12). For each dimension, we indicate the grade levels for which this dimension is included.

Positive Climate

Emotional Support domain, Grades K−12

Positive Climate reflects the emotional connection between the teacher and students and among students and the warmth, respect, and enjoyment communicated by verbal and nonverbal interactions (*CLASS K–3 Manual*, p. 23, *CLASS Upper Elementary Manual,* p. 21, *CLASS Secondary Manual*, p. 21). Table 3 (as well as tables for the remaining dimensions) includes the number of classrooms for each rating on each dimension and the district average for that dimension.

Table 3. Positive Climate: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average

Positive Climate District Average\*: 5.0

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | | Middle Range | | | High Range | | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 67 | 5.0 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 19 | 4 | 0 | 28 | 4.9 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 7 | 7 | 2 | 18 | 5.3 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 9 | 6 | 1 | 21 | 5.0 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 3, the district average is computed as:   
([2 x 2] + [3 x 4] + [4 x 6] + [5 x 35] + [6 x 17] + [7 x 3]) ÷ 67 observations = 5.0

Ratings in the Low Range. All indicators are absent or only minimally present. Teachers and students do not appear to share a warm, supportive relationship. Interpersonal connections are not evident or only minimally evident. Affect in the classroom is flat, and there are rarely instances of teachers and students smiling, sharing humor, or laughing together. There are no, or very few, positive communications among the teacher and students; the teacher does not communicate encouragement. There is no evidence that students and the teacher respect one another or that the teacher encourages students to respect one another.

Ratings in the Middle Range. There are some indications that the teacher and students share a warm and supportive relationship, but some students may be excluded from this relationship, either by the teacher or the students. Some relationships appear constrained—for example, the teacher expresses a perfunctory interest in students, or encouragement seems to be an automatic statement and is not sincere. Sometimes, teachers and students demonstrate respect for one another.

Ratings in the High Range. There are many indications that the relationship among students and the teacher is positive and warm. The teacher is typically in close proximity to students, and encouragement is sincere and personal. There are frequent displays of shared laughter, smiles, and enthusiasm. Teachers and students show respect for one another (e.g., listening, using calm voices, using polite language). Positive communication (both verbal and nonverbal) and mutual respect are evident throughout the session.

Teacher Sensitivity

Emotional Support domain, Grades K−12

Teacher Sensitivity encompasses the teacher’s awareness of and responsiveness to students’ academic and emotional needs. High levels of sensitivity facilitate students’ abilities to actively explore and learn because the teacher consistently provides comfort, reassurance, and encouragement (*CLASS K–3 Manual,* p. 32, *CLASS Upper Elementary Manual,* p. 27, *CLASS Secondary Manual,* p. 27).

Table 4. Teacher Sensitivity: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average

Teacher Sensitivity District Average\*: 5.8

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | | Middle Range | | | High Range | | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 67 | 5.8 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 8 | 11 | 7 | 28 | 5.8 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 7 | 5 | 18 | 5.8 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 7 | 7 | 5 | 21 | 5.7 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 4, the district average is computed as:   
([3 x 1] + [4 x 4] + [5 x 20] + [6 x 25] + [7 x 17]) ÷ 67 observations = 5.8

Ratings in the Low Range. In these sessions, the teacher has not been aware of students who need extra support and pays little attention to students’ needs. As a result, students are frustrated, confused, and disengaged. The teacher is unresponsive to and dismissive of students and may ignore students, squash their enthusiasm, and not allow them to share their moods or feelings. The teacher is not effective in addressing students’ needs and does not appropriately acknowledge situations that may be upsetting to students. Students rarely seek support from the teacher and minimize conversations with the teacher, not sharing ideas or responding to questions.

Ratings in the Middle Range. The teacher is sometimes aware of student needs or aware of only a limited type of student needs, such as academic needs, not social-emotional needs. Or the teacher may be aware of some students and not of other students. The teacher does not always realize a student is confused and needs extra help or when a student already knows the material being taught. The teacher may be responsive at times to students but at other times may ignore or dismiss students. The teacher may respond only to students who are upbeat and positive and not support students who are upset. Sometimes, the teacher is effective in addressing students’ concerns or problems, but not always.

Ratings in the High Range. The teacher’s awareness of students and their needs is consistent and accurate. The teacher may predict how difficult a new task is for a student and acknowledge this difficulty. The teacher is responsive to students’ comments and behaviors, whether positive or negative. The teacher consistently addresses students’ problems and concerns and is effective in doing so. Students are obviously comfortable with the teacher and share ideas, work comfortably together, and ask and respond to questions, even difficult questions.

Regard for Student Perspectives

Emotional Support domain, Grades K−12

Regard for Student Perspectives captures the degree to which the teacher’s interactions with students and classroom activities place an emphasis on students’ interests, motivations, and points of view and encourage student responsibility and autonomy (*CLASS K–3 Manual,* p. 38, *CLASS Upper Elementary Manual,* p. 35, *CLASS Secondary Manual*, p. 35).

Table 5. Regard for Student Perspectives: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average

Regard for Student Perspectives District Average\*: 4.0

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | | Middle Range | | | High Range | | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 67 | 4.0 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 9 | 9 | 1 | 3 | 28 | 4.5 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 18 | 3.7 |
| Grades 9-12 | 1 | 4 | 10 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 21 | 3.4 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 5, the district average is computed as:   
([1 x 1] + [2 x 7] + [3 x 21] + [4 x 13] + [5 x 18] + [6 x 4] + [7 x 3]) ÷ 67 observations = 4.0

Ratings in the Low Range. At the low range, the teacher exhibits an inflexible, rigid adherence to his or her plan, without considering student ideas or allowing students to make contributions. The teacher inhibits student enthusiasm by imposing guidelines or making remarks that inhibit student expression. The teacher may rigidly adhere to a lesson plan and not respond to student interests. The teacher does not allow students any autonomy on how they conduct an activity, may control materials tightly, and may offer few opportunities for students to help out with classroom responsibilities. There are few opportunities for students to talk and express themselves.

Ratings in the Middle Range. The teacher exhibits control at times and at other times follows the students’ lead and gives them some choices and opportunities to follow their interests. There are some opportunities for students to exercise autonomy, but student choice is limited. The teacher may assign students responsibility in the classroom, but in a limited way. At times, the teacher dominates the discussion, but at other times the teacher allows students to share ideas, although only at a minimal level or for a short period of time.

Ratings in the High Range. The teacher is flexible in following student leads, interests, and ideas and looks for ways to meaningfully engage students. Although the teacher has a lesson plan, students’ ideas are incorporated into the lesson plan. The teacher consistently supports student autonomy and provides meaningful leadership opportunities. Students have frequent opportunities to talk, share ideas, and work together. Students have appropriate freedom of movement during activities.

Negative Climate

Emotional Support domain, Grades K− 3  
Classroom Organization domain, Grades 4− 12

Negative Climate reflects the overall level of expressed negativity in the classroom. The frequency, quality, and intensity of teacher and student negativity are key to this dimension (*CLASS K–3 Manual*, p. 28, *CLASS Upper Elementary Manual,* p. 55, *CLASS Secondary Manual,* p. 55). For the purposes of this report, we have inversed the observers scores, to be consistent with the range scores across all dimensions. Therefore, a high range score in this dimension indicates an absence of negative climate, and a low range score indicates the presence of negative climate.[[5]](#footnote-6)

Table 6. Negative Climate: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average

Negative Climate District Average\*: 6.8

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | | Middle Range | | | High Range | | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 67 | 6.8 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 23 | 28 | 6.8 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 14 | 18 | 6.8 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 17 | 21 | 6.8 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 6, the district average is computed as:   
([5 x 2] + [6 x 11] + [7 x 54]) ÷ 67 observations = 6.8

Ratings in the Low Range.Negativity is pervasive. The teacher may express constant irritation, annoyance, or anger; unduly criticize students; or consistently use a harsh tone and/or take a harsh stance as he or she interacts with students. Threats or yelling are frequently used to establish control. Language is disrespectful and sarcastic. Severe negativity, such as the following actions, would lead to a high rating on negative climate, even if the action is not extended: students bullying one another, a teacher hitting a student, or students physically fighting with one another.

Ratings in the Middle Range. There are some expressions of mild negativity by the teacher or students. The teacher may express irritability, use a harsh tone, and/or express annoyance—usually during difficult moments in the classroom. Threats or yelling may be used to establish control over the classroom, but not constantly; they are used more as a response to situations. At times, the teacher and students may be sarcastic or disrespectful toward one another.

Ratings in the High Range. There is no display of negativity: No strong expressions of anger or aggression are exhibited, either by the teacher or students; if there is such a display, it is contained and does not escalate. The teacher does not issue threats or yell to establish control. The teacher and students are respectful and do not express sarcasm.

Behavior Management

Classroom Organization domain, Grades K−12

Behavior Management refers to the teacher’s ability to provide clear behavioral expectations and use effective methods to prevent and redirect misbehavior (*CLASS K–3 Manual*, p. 45, *CLASS Upper Elementary Manual,* p. 41, *CLASS Secondary Manual*, p. 41).

Table 7. Behavior Management: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average

Behavior Management District Average\*: 6.3

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | | Middle Range | | | High Range | | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 67 | 6.3 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 21 | 28 | 6.6 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 9 | 18 | 6.1 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 11 | 21 | 6.0 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 7, the district average is computed as:   
([4 x 5] + [5 x 12] + [6 x 9] + [7 x 41]) ÷ 67 observations = 6.3

Ratings in the Low Range. At the low range, the classroom is chaotic. There are no rules and expectations, or they are not enforced consistently. The teacher does not monitor the classroom effectively and only reacts to student disruption, which is frequent. There are frequent instances of misbehavior in the classroom, and the teacher’s attempts to redirect misbehavior are ineffective. The teacher does not use cues, such as eye contact, slight touches, gestures, or physical proximity, to respond to and redirect negative behavior.

Ratings in the Middle Range. Although rules and expectations may be stated, they are not consistently enforced, or the rules may be unclear. Sometimes, the teacher proactively anticipates and prevents misbehavior, but at other times the teacher ignores behavior problems until it is too late. Misbehavior may escalate because redirection is not always effective. Episodes of misbehavior are periodic.

Ratings in the High Range. At the high range, the rules and guidelines for behavior are clear, and they are consistently reinforced by the teacher. The teacher monitors the classroom and prevents problems from developing, using subtle cues to redirect behavior and address situations before they escalate. The teacher focuses on positive behavior and consistently affirms students’ desirable behaviors. The teacher effectively uses cues to redirect behavior. There are no, or very few, instances of student misbehavior or disruptions.

Productivity

Classroom Organization domain, Grades K−12

Productivity considers how well the teacher manages instructional time and routines and provides activities for students so that they have the opportunity to be involved in learning activities (*CLASS K–3 Manual,* p. 51, *CLASS Upper Elementary Manual,* p. 49, *CLASS Secondary Manual*, p. 49).

Table 8. Productivity: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average

Productivity District Average\*: 6.6

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | | Middle Range | | | High Range | | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 67 | 6.6 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 22 | 28 | 6.7 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 13 | 18 | 6.7 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 5 | 13 | 21 | 6.5 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 8, the district average is computed as:   
([5 x 5] + [6 x 14] + [7 x 48]) ÷ 67 observations = 6.6

Ratings in the Low Range. At the low level, the teacher provides few activities for students. Much time is spent on managerial tasks (such as distributing papers) and/or on behavior management. Frequently during the observation, students have little to do and spend time waiting. The routines of the classroom are not clear and, as a result, students waste time, are not engaged, and are confused. Transitions take a long time and/or are too frequent. The teacher does not have activities organized and ready and seems to be caught up in last-minute preparations.

Ratings in the Middle Range. At the middle range, the teacher does provide activities for students but loses learning time to disruptions or management tasks. There are certain times when the teacher provides clear activities to students, but there are other times when students wait and lose focus. Some students (or all students, at some point) do not know what is expected of them. Some of the transitions may take too long, or classrooms may be productive during certain periods but then not productive during transitions. Although the teacher is mostly prepared for the class, last-minute preparations may still infringe on learning time.

Ratings in the High Range. The classroom runs very smoothly. The teacher provides a steady flow of activities for students, so students do not have downtime and are not confused about what to do next. The routines of the classroom are efficient, and all students know how to move from one activity to another and where materials are. Students understand the teacher’s instructions and directions. Transitions are quick, and there are not too many of them. The teacher is fully prepared for the lesson.

Instructional Learning Formats

Classroom Organization domain, Grades K−3

Instructional Support domain, Grades 4− 12

Instructional Learning Formats refer to the ways in which the teacher maximizes students’ interest, engagement, and abilities to learn from the lesson and activities (*CLASS K–3 Manual*, p. 57; *CLASS Upper Elementary Manual*, p. 63, *CLASS Secondary Manual,* p. 61).

Table 9. Instructional Learning Formats: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average

Instructional Learning Formats District Average\*: 4.9

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | | Middle Range | | | High Range | | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 67 | 4.9 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 11 | 13 | 2 | 28 | 5.5 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 11 | 1 | 0 | 18 | 4.5 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 3 | 0 | 21 | 4.3 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 9, the district average is computed as:   
([2 x 1] + [3 x 9] + [4 x 9] + [5 x 29] + [6 x 17] + [7 x 2]) ÷ 67 observations = 4.9

Ratings in the Low Range. The teacher exerts little effort in facilitating engagement in the lesson. Learning activities may be limited and seem to be at the rote level, with little teacher involvement. The teacher relies on one learning modality (e.g., listening) and does not use other modalities (e.g., movement, visual displays) to convey information and enhance learning. Or the teacher may be ineffective in using other modalities, not choosing the right props for the students or the classroom conditions. Students are uninterested and uninvolved in the lesson. The teacher does not attempt to guide students toward learning objectives and does not help them focus on the lesson by providing appropriate tools and asking effective questions.

Ratings in the Middle Range. At the middle range, the teacher sometimes facilitates engagement in the lesson but at other times does not, or the teacher facilitates engagement for some students and not for other students. The teacher may not allow students enough time to explore or answer questions. Sometimes, the teacher uses a variety of modalities to help students reach a learning objective, but at other times the teacher does not. Student engagement is inconsistent, or some students are engaged and other students are not. At times, students are aware of the learning objective and at other times they are not. The teacher may sometimes use strategies to help students organize information but at other times does not.

Ratings in the High Range.The teacher has multiple strategies and tools to facilitate engagement and learning and encourage participation. The teacher may move around, talk and play with students, ask open-ended questions of students, and allow students to explore. A variety of tools and props are used, including movement and visual/auditory resources. Students are consistently interested and engaged in the activities and lessons. The teacher focuses students on the learning objectives, which students understand. The teacher uses advanced organizers to prepare students for an activity, as well as reorientation strategies that help students regain focus.

Concept Development

Instructional Support domain, Grades K−3

Concept Development refers to the teacher’s use of instructional discussions and activities to promote students’ higher order thinking skills and cognition and the teacher’s focus on understanding rather than on rote instruction (*CLASS K–3 Manual*, p. 64).

Table 10. Concept Development: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average

Concept Development District Average\*: 3.2

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | | Middle Range | | | High Range | | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 19 | 3.2 |
| Grades K-3\*\* | 0 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 19 | 3.2 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 10, the district average is computed as:   
([2 x 6] + [3 x 6] + [4 x 5] + [5 x 2]) ÷ 19 observations = 3.2

\*\*Concept Development does not appear in the CLASS Upper Elementary Manual, therefore scores for the Elementary School Level represent grades K-3 only.

Ratings in the Low Range. At the low range, the teacher does not attempt to develop students’ understanding of ideas and concepts, focusing instead on basic facts and skills. Discussion and activities do not encourage students to analyze and reason. There are few, if any, opportunities for students to create or generate ideas and products. The teacher does not link concepts to one another and does not ask students to make connections with previous content or their actual lives. The activities and the discussion are removed from students’ lives and from their prior knowledge.

Ratings in the Middle Range. To some extent, the teacher uses discussions and activities to encourage students to analyze and reason and focuses somewhat on understanding of ideas. The activities and discussions are not fully developed, however, and there is still instructional time that focuses on facts and basic skills. Students may be provided some opportunities for creating and generating ideas, but the opportunities are occasional and not planned out. Although some concepts may be linked and also related to students’ previous learning, such efforts are brief. The teacher makes some effort to relate concepts to students’ lives but does not elaborate enough to make the relationship meaningful to students.

Ratings in the High Range. At the high range, the teacher frequently guides students to analyze and reason during discussions and activities. Most of the questions are open ended and encourage students to think about connections and implications. Teachers use problem solving, experimentation, and prediction; comparison and classification; and evaluation and summarizing to promote analysis and reasoning. The teacher provides students with opportunities to be creative and generate ideas. The teacher consistently links concepts to one another and to previous learning and relates concepts to students’ lives.

Content Understanding

Instructional Support domain, Grades 4− 12

Content Understanding refers to the depth of lesson content and the approaches used to help students comprehend the framework, key ideas, and procedures in an academic discipline. At a high level, this dimension refers to interactions among the teacher and students that lead to an integrated understanding of facts, skills, concepts, and principles (*CLASS Upper Elementary Manual*, p. 70, *CLASS Secondary Manual,* p. 68).

Table 11. Content Understanding: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average

Content Understanding District Average\*: 4.1

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | | Middle Range | | | High Range | | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 48 | 4.1 |
| Grades 4-5\*\* | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 4.3 |
| Grades 6-8 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 3 | 0 | 18 | 4.1 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 1 | 9 | 4 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 21 | 3.9 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 11, the district average is computed as:   
([1 x 2] + [2 x 1] + [3 x 14] + [4 x 11] + [5 x 16] + [6 x 3] + [7 x 1]) ÷ 48 observations = 4.1

\*\*Content Understanding does not appear in the CLASS K-3 Manual, therefore scores for the Elementary School Level represent grades 4-5 only.

Ratings in the Low Range. At the low range, the focus of the class is primarily on presenting discrete pieces of topically related information, absent broad, organizing ideas. The discussion and materials fail to effectively communicate the essential attributes of the concepts and procedures to students. The teacher makes little effort to elicit or acknowledge students’ background knowledge or misconceptions or to integrate previously learned material when presenting new information.

Ratings in the Middle Range. At the middle range, the focus of the class is sometimes on meaningful discussion and explanation of broad, organizing ideas. At other times, the focus is on discrete pieces of information. Class discussion and materials communicate some of the essential attributes of concepts and procedures, but examples are limited in scope or not consistently provided. The teacher makes some attempt to elicit and/or acknowledge students’ background knowledge or misconceptions and/or to integrate information with previously learned materials; however, these moments are limited in depth or inconsistent.

Ratings in the High Range. At the high range, the focus of the class is on encouraging deep understanding of content through the provision of meaningful, interactive discussion and explanation of broad, organizing ideas. Class discussion and materials consistently communicate the essential attributes of concepts and procedures to students. New concepts and procedures and broad ideas are consistently linked to students’ prior knowledge in ways that advance their understanding and clarify misconceptions.

Analysis and Inquiry

Instructional Support domain, Grades 4− 12

Analysis and Inquiry assesses the degree to which students are engaged in higher level thinking skills through their application of knowledge and skills to novel and/or open-ended problems, tasks, and questions. Opportunities for engaging in metacognition (thinking about thinking) also are included (*CLASS Upper Elementary Manual*, p. 81, *CLASS Secondary Manual*, p. 76).

Table 12. Analysis and Inquiry: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average

Analysis and Inquiry District Average\*: 2.3

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | | Middle Range | | | High Range | | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 48 | 2.3 |
| Grades 4-5\*\* | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 2.9 |
| Grades 6-8 | 6 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 18 | 2.4 |
| Grades 9-12 | 12 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 21 | 1.9 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 12, the district average is computed as:   
([1 x 20] + [2 x 11] + [3 x 5] + [4 x 9] + [5 x 1] + [6 x 2]) ÷ 48 observations = 2.3

\*\*Analysis and Inquiry does not appear in the CLASS K-3 Manual, therefore scores for the Elementary School Level represent grades 4-5 only.

Ratings in the Low Range. At the low range, students do not engage in higher order thinking skills. Instruction is presented in a rote manner, and there are no opportunities for students to engage in novel or open-ended tasks. Students are not challenged to apply previous knowledge and skills to a new problem, nor are they encouraged to think about, evaluate, or reflect on their own learning. Students do not have opportunities to plan their own learning experiences.

Ratings in the Middle Range. Students occasionally engage in higher order thinking through analysis and inquiry, but the episodes are brief or limited in depth. The teacher provides opportunities for students to apply knowledge and skills within familiar contexts and offers guidance to students but does not provide opportunities for analysis and problem solving within novel contexts and/or without teacher support. Students have occasional opportunities to think about their own thinking through explanations, self-evaluations, reflection, and planning; these opportunities, however, are brief and limited in depth.

Ratings in the High Range. At the high range, students consistently engage in extended opportunities to use higher order thinking through analysis and inquiry. The teacher provides opportunities for students to independently solve or reason through novel and open-ended tasks that require students to select, utilize, and apply existing knowledge and skills. Students have multiple opportunities to think about their own thinking through explanations, self-evaluations, reflection, and planning.

Quality of Feedback

Instructional Support domain, Grades K− 12

Quality of Feedback refers to the degree to which the teacher provides feedback that expands learning and understanding and encourages continued participation in the learning activity (*CLASS K–3 Manual*, p. 72). In the upper elementary and secondary classrooms, significant feedback also may be provided by peers (*CLASS Upper Elementary Manual*, p. 89, *CLASS Secondary Manual*, p. 93). Regardless of the source, the focus of the feedback motivates learning.

Table 13. Quality of Feedback: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average

Quality of Feedback District Average\*: 3.6

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | | Middle Range | | | High Range | | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 67 | 3.6 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 1 | 7 | 10 | 9 | 1 | 0 | 28 | 4.1 |
| Grades 6-8 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 0 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 18 | 3.4 |
| Grades 9-12 | 4 | 2 | 7 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 3.1 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 13, the district average is computed as:   
([1 x 6] + [2 x 9] + [3 x 17] + [4 x 13] + [5 x 19] + [6 x 2] + [7 x 1]) ÷ 67 observations = 3.6

Ratings in the Low Range. At the low range, the teacher dismisses incorrect responses or misperceptions and rarely scaffolds student learning. The teacher is more interested in students providing the correct answer than understanding. Feedback is perfunctory. The teacher may not provide opportunities to learn whether students understand or are interested. The teacher rarely questions students or asks them to explain their thinking and reasons for their responses. The teacher does not or rarely provides information that might expand student understanding and rarely offers encouragement that increases student effort and persistence.

Ratings in the Middle Range. In the middle range, the teacher sometimes scaffolds students, but this is not consistent. On occasion, the teacher facilitates feedback loops so that students may elaborate and expand on their thinking, but these moments are not sustained long enough to accomplish a learning objective. Sometimes, the teacher asks students about or prompts them to explain their thinking and provides information to help students understand, but sometimes the feedback is perfunctory. At times, the teacher encourages student efforts and persistence.

Ratings in the High Range. In this range, the teacher frequently scaffolds students who are having difficulty, providing hints or assistance as needed. The teacher engages students in feedback loops to help them understand ideas or reach the right response. The teacher often questions students, encourages them to explain their thinking, and provides additional information that may help students understand. The teacher regularly encourages students’ efforts and persistence.

Language Modeling

Instructional Support domain, Grades K− 3

Language Modeling refers to the quality and amount of the teacher’s use of language stimulation and language facilitation techniques (*CLASS K–3 Manual*, p. 79).

Table 14. Language Modeling: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average

Language Modeling District Average\*: 3.7

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | | Middle Range | | | High Range | | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 19 | 3.7 |
| Grades K-3\*\* | 0 | 1 | 9 | 5 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 19 | 3.7 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 14, the district average is computed as:   
([2 x 1] + [3 x 9] + [4 x 5] + [5 x 3] + [7 x 1]) ÷ 19 observations = 3.7

\*\*Language Modeling does not appear in the CLASS Upper Elementary Manual, therefore scores for the Elementary School Level represent grades K-3 only.

Ratings in the Low Range. In the low range, there are few conversations in the classroom, particularly between the students and the teacher. The teacher responds to students’ initiating talk with only a few words, limits students’ use of language (in responding to questions) and asks questions that mainly elicit closed-ended responses. The teacher does not or rarely extends students’ responses or repeats them for clarification. The teacher does not engage in self-talk or parallel talk—explaining what he or she or the students are doing. The teacher does not use new words or advanced language with students. The language used has little variety.

Ratings in the Middle Range. In this range, the teacher talks with students and shows some interest in students, but the conversations are limited and not prolonged. Usually, the teacher directs the conversations, although the conversations may focus on topics of interest to students. More often, there is a basic exchange of information but limited conversation. The teacher asks a mix of closed- and open-ended questions, although the closed-ended questions may require only short responses. Sometimes, the teacher extends students’ responses or repeats what students say. Sometimes, the teacher maps his or her own actions and the students’ actions through language and description. The teacher sometimes uses advanced language with students.

Ratings in the High Range.There are frequent conversations in the classroom, particularly between students and the teacher, and these conversations promote language use. Students are encouraged to converse and feel they are valued conversational partners. The teacher asks many open-ended questions that require students to communicate more complex ideas. The teacher often extends or repeats student responses. Frequently, the teacher maps his or her actions and student actions descriptively and uses advanced language with students.

Instructional Dialogue

Instructional Support domain, Grades 4− 12

Instructional Dialogue captures the purposeful use of content-focused discussion among teachers and students that is cumulative, with the teacher supporting students to chain ideas together in ways that lead to deeper understanding of content. Students take an active role in these dialogues, and both the teacher and students use strategies that facilitate extended dialogue (*CLASS Upper Elementary Manual*, p. 97, *CLASS Secondary Manual*, p. 101).

Table 15. Instructional Dialogue: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average

Instructional Dialogue District Average\*: 3.1

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | | Middle Range | | | High Range | | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 48 | 3.1 |
| Grades 4-5\*\* | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 9 | 4.2 |
| Grades 6-8 | 4 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 18 | 2.9 |
| Grades 9-12 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 2.8 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 15, the district average is computed as:   
([1 x 10] + [2 x 12] + [3 x 5] + [4 x 12] + [5 x 4] + [6 x 4] + [7 x 1]) ÷ 48 observations = 3.1

\*\*Instructional Dialogue does not appear in the CLASS K-3 Manual, therefore scores for the Elementary School Level represent grades 4-5 only.

Ratings in the Low Range. At the low range, there are no or few discussions in the class, the discussions are not related to content or skill development, or the discussions contain only simple question-response exchanges between the teacher and students. The class is dominated by teacher talk, and discussion is limited. The teacher and students ask closed-ended questions; rarely acknowledge, report, or extend other students’ comments; and/or appear disinterested in other students’ comments, resulting in many students not being engaged in instructional dialogues.

Ratings in the Middle Range. At this range, there are occasional content-based discussions in class among teachers and students; however, these exchanges are brief or quickly move from one topic to another without follow-up questions or comments from the teacher and other students. The class is mostly dominated by teacher talk, although there are times when students take a more active role, or there are distributed dialogues that involve only a few students in the class. The teacher and students sometimes facilitate and encourage more elaborate dialogue, but such efforts are brief, inconsistent, or ineffective at consistently engaging students in extended dialogues.

Ratings in the High Range.At the high range, there are frequent, content-driven discussions in the class between teachers and students or among students. The discussions build depth of knowledge through cumulative, contingent exchanges. The class dialogues are distributed in a way that the teacher and the majority of students take an active role or students are actively engaged in instructional dialogues with each other. The teacher and students frequently use strategies that encourage more elaborate dialogue, such as open-ended questions, repetition or extension, and active listening. Students respond to these techniques by fully participating in extended dialogues.

Student Engagement

Student Engagement domain, Grades 4−12

Student Engagement refers to the extent to which all students in the class are focused and participating in the learning activity that is presented or facilitated by the teacher. The difference between passive engagement and active engagement is reflected in this rating (*CLASS Upper Elementary Manual*, p. 105).

Table 16. Student Engagement: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average

Student Engagement District Average\*: 5.2

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | | Middle Range | | | High Range | | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 48 | 5.2 |
| Grades 4-5\*\* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 5 | 0 | 9 | 5.6 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 8 | 6 | 2 | 18 | 5.4 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 7 | 7 | 5 | 1 | 21 | 4.9 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 16, the district average is computed as:   
([3 x 1] + [4 x 9] + [5 x 19] + [6 x 16] + [7 x 3]) ÷ 48 observations = 5.2

\*\*Student Engagement does not appear in the CLASS K-3 Manual, therefore scores for the Elementary School Level represent grades 4-5 only.

Ratings in the Low Range. In the low range, the majority of students appear distracted or disengaged.

Ratings in the Middle Range. In the middle range, students are passively engaged, listening to or watching the teacher; student engagement is mixed, with the majority of students actively engaged for part of the time and disengaged for the rest of the time; or there is a mix of student engagement, with some students actively engaged and some students disengaged.

Ratings in the High Range. In the high range, most students are actively engaged in the classroom discussions and activities.

Summary of Average Ratings: Grades K–5

Table 17. Summary Table of Average Ratings for Each Dimension in Grades K–5

|  | Low Range | | Middle Range | | | | High Range | | n | Average Scores\* |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | 2 | | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Emotional Support Domain | 0 | 1 | | 7 | 14 | 37 | 20 | 33 | 112 | 5.5 |
| Positive Climate | 0 | 1 | | 1 | 3 | 19 | 4 | 0 | 28 | 4.9 |
| Negative Climate\*\* | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 23 | 28 | 6.8 |
| Teacher Sensitivity | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 2 | 8 | 11 | 7 | 28 | 5.8 |
| Regard for Student Perspectives | 0 | 0 | | 6 | 9 | 9 | 1 | 3 | 28 | 4.5 |
| Classroom Organization Domain | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 2 | 17 | 20 | 45 | 84 | 6.3 |
| Behavior Management | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 21 | 28 | 6.6 |
| Productivity | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 22 | 28 | 6.7 |
| Instructional Learning Formats\*\*\* | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 2 | 11 | 13 | 2 | 28 | 5.5 |
| Instructional Support Domain | 4 | 10 | | 24 | 29 | 22 | 2 | 2 | 93 | 3.7 |
| Concept Development (K-3 only) | 0 | 6 | | 6 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 19 | 3.2 |
| Content Understanding (UE only) | 0 | 0 | | 1 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 4.3 |
| Analysis and Inquiry (UE only) | 2 | 2 | | 1 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 2.9 |
| Quality of Feedback | 0 | 1 | | 7 | 10 | 9 | 1 | 0 | 28 | 4.1 |
| Language Modeling (K-3 only) | 0 | 1 | | 9 | 5 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 19 | 3.7 |
| Instructional Dialogue (UE only) | 2 | 0 | | 0 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 9 | 4.2 |
| Student Engagement (UE only) | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 4 | 5 | 0 | 9 | 5.6 |

\*The district average is an average of the scores. For example, for Positive Climate, the district average is computed as: ([2 x 1] + [3 x 1] + [4 x 3] + [5 x 19] + [6 x 4]) ÷ 28 observations = 4.9

\*\*Negative Climate is rated on an inverse scale. An original score of 1 is given a value of 7. The scoring in the table reflects the normalized adjustment: ([5 x 1] + [6 x 4] + [7 x 23]) ÷ 28 observations = 6.8. In addition, Negative Climate appears in the Classroom Organization Domain for the Upper Elementary Manual.

\*\*\*Instructional Learning Formats appears in the Instructional Support Domain for the Upper Elementary Manual.

Summary of Average Ratings: Grades 6–8

Table 18. Summary Table of Average Ratings for Each Dimension in Grades 6–8

|  | Low Range | | | Middle Range | | | High Range | | n | Average Scores\* |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Emotional Support Domain | 0 | 4 | 7 | | 4 | 18 | 14 | 7 | 54 | 5.0 |
| Positive Climate | 0 | 1 | 1 | | 0 | 7 | 7 | 2 | 18 | 5.3 |
| Teacher Sensitivity | 0 | 0 | 1 | | 0 | 5 | 7 | 5 | 18 | 5.8 |
| Regard for Student Perspectives | 0 | 3 | 5 | | 4 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 18 | 3.7 |
| Classroom Organization Domain | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 1 | 5 | 12 | 36 | 54 | 6.5 |
| Behavior Management | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 1 | 5 | 3 | 9 | 18 | 6.1 |
| Productivity | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 5 | 13 | 18 | 6.7 |
| Negative Climate\*\* | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 4 | 14 | 18 | 6.8 |
| Instructional Support Domain | 14 | 17 | 15 | | 12 | 22 | 9 | 1 | 90 | 3.5 |
| Instructional Learning Formats | 0 | 0 | 4 | | 2 | 11 | 1 | 0 | 18 | 4.5 |
| Content Understanding | 2 | 0 | 4 | | 3 | 6 | 3 | 0 | 18 | 4.1 |
| Analysis and Inquiry | 6 | 5 | 2 | | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 18 | 2.4 |
| Quality of Feedback | 2 | 6 | 3 | | 0 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 18 | 3.4 |
| Instructional Dialogue | 4 | 6 | 2 | | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 18 | 2.9 |
| Student Engagement | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 2 | 8 | 6 | 2 | 18 | 5.4 |

\*The district average is an average of the scores. For example, for Positive Climate, the district average is computed as: ([2 x 1] + [3 x 1] + [5 x 7] + [6 x 7] + [7 x 2]) ÷ 18 observations = 5.3

\*\*Negative Climate is rated on an inverse scale. An original score of 1 is given a value of 7. The scoring in the table reflects the normalized adjustment: ([6 x 4] + [7 x 14]) ÷ 18 observations = 6.8

Summary of Average Ratings: Grades 9–12

Table 19. Summary Table of Average Ratings for Each Dimension in Grades 9–12

|  | Low Range | | | Middle Range | | | High Range | | n | Average Scores\* |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Emotional Support Domain | 1 | 4 | 12 | | 5 | 19 | 16 | 6 | 63 | 4.7 |
| Positive Climate | 0 | 0 | 2 | | 3 | 9 | 6 | 1 | 21 | 5.0 |
| Teacher Sensitivity | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 2 | 7 | 7 | 5 | 21 | 5.7 |
| Regard for Student Perspectives | 1 | 4 | 10 | | 0 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 21 | 3.4 |
| Classroom Organization Domain | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 4 | 7 | 11 | 41 | 63 | 6.4 |
| Behavior Management | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 4 | 3 | 3 | 11 | 21 | 6.0 |
| Productivity | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 3 | 5 | 13 | 21 | 6.5 |
| Negative Climate\*\* | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 1 | 3 | 17 | 21 | 6.8 |
| Instructional Support Domain | 20 | 14 | 26 | | 21 | 19 | 4 | 1 | 105 | 3.2 |
| Instructional Learning Formats | 0 | 1 | 5 | | 5 | 7 | 3 | 0 | 21 | 4.3 |
| Content Understanding | 0 | 1 | 9 | | 4 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 21 | 3.9 |
| Analysis and Inquiry | 12 | 4 | 2 | | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 21 | 1.9 |
| Quality of Feedback | 4 | 2 | 7 | | 3 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 3.1 |
| Instructional Dialogue | 4 | 6 | 3 | | 7 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 2.8 |
| Student Engagement | 0 | 0 | 1 | | 7 | 7 | 5 | 1 | 21 | 4.9 |

\*The district average is an average of the scores. For example, for Positive Climate, the district average is computed as: ([3 x 2] + [4 x 3] + [5 x 9] + [6 x 6] + [7 x 1]) ÷ 21 observations = 5.0

\*\*Negative Climate is rated on an inverse scale. An original score of 1 is given a value of 7. The scoring in the table reflects the normalized adjustment: ([5 x 1] + [6 x 3] + [7 x 17]) ÷ 21 observations = 6.8

References

Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning. (n.d.). *Measuring and improving teacher-student interactions in PK−12 settings to enhance students’ learning*. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia. Retrieved from <http://www.teachstone.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/class-mtp-pk-12-brief.pdf>

MET Project. (2010). *The CLASS protocol for classroom observations*. Seattle, WA: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Retrieved from <http://metproject.org/resources/CLASS_10_29_10.pdf>

Pianta, R. C., Hamre, B. K., & Mintz, S. (2012). *Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Manual, Secondary.* Charlottesville, VA:Teachstone.

Pianta, R. C., Hamre, B. K., & Mintz, S. (2012). *Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Manual, Upper Elementary.* Charlottesville, VA:Teachstone.

Pianta, R. C., La Paro, K. M., & Hamre, B. K. (2008). *Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Manual, K–3.* Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

## Appendix C. Resources to Support Implementation of DESE’s District Standards and Indicators

Table C1. Resources to Support Leadership and Governance

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Resource | Description |
| [*Transforming School Funding: A Guide to Implementing Student-Based Budgeting (SBB)*](https://www.erstrategies.org/cms/files/2752-student-based-budgeting-guide.pdf),%20from%20Education%20Resource%20Strategies) from Education Resource Strategies | This guide describes a process to help districts tie funding to specific student needs. |
| [Principal Induction and Mentoring Handbook](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeffectiveness/mentor/principal.html) | A series of modules designed to support novice principals and their mentors in the development of antiracist leadership competencies aligned to the Professional Standards for Administrative Leadership. |
| [Coherence Guidebook](https://www.doe.mass.edu/csdp/guidebook/coherence-guidebook.pdf) | The guidebook illustrates a systems-level path toward deeper learning. School system leaders and teams may use the guidebook, along with its companion self-assessment, to articulate a vision of deeper learning, identify high-leverage instructional priorities, refine tiered supports, and leverage systems and structures—all in service of the articulated vision. |

Table C2. Resources to Support Curriculum and Instruction

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Resource | Description |
| [Curriculum Matters MA](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/impd/default.html) Webpage | A suite of resources to support the use of high-quality curriculum, including [*IMplement MA*](https://www.doe.mass.edu/rlo/instruction/implement-ma-process/story.html), our recommended four-phase process to prepare for, select, launch, and implement new high-quality instructional materials with key tasks and action steps. Also includes [*CURATE*](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate/default.html), which convenes panels of Massachusetts teachers to review and rate evidence on the quality and alignment of specific curricular materials and then publishes their findings for educators across the Commonwealth to consult. |
| [MA Curriculum Frameworks Resources](https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/) | Some of the most frequently used resources include “[What to Look For”](https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/observation/) classroom observation guides; the [Family Guides](https://www.doe.mass.edu/highstandards/default.html) to help families understand what students are expected to know and do by the end of each grade; and the Standards Navigator tool and app, which can be used to explore the standards, see how they are connected to other standards, related student work samples, reference guides, and definitions. |
| [Mass Literacy](https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/) Guide | An interactive site with research, information, and resources on evidence-based practices for early literacy that are culturally responsive and sustaining. There is current information on complex text, fluent word reading, language comprehension, students experiencing reading difficulties, equity in literacy, how to support an MTSS for ELA/literacy, and much more. |
| [Coherence Guidebook](https://www.doe.mass.edu/csdp/guidebook/coherence-guidebook.pdf) | The guidebook illustrates a systems-level path toward deeper learning. School system leaders and teams may use the guidebook, along with its companion self-assessment, to articulate a vision of deeper learning, identify high-leverage instructional priorities, refine tiered supports, and leverage systems and structures—all in service of the articulated vision. |

Table C3. Resources to Support Assessment

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Resource | Description |
| DESE’s [District Data Team Toolkit](http://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/toolkit/) | A set of resources to help a district establish, grow, and maintain a culture of inquiry and data use through a district data team. |

Table C4. Resources to Support Human Resources and Professional Development

| Resource | Description |
| --- | --- |
| [Educator Evaluation Implementation Resources](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/implementation/default.html) | A suite of resources and practical tools that reflect feedback from educators on how to implement educator evaluation in support of more equitable, culturally responsive schools and classrooms for all. These resources include Focus Indicators, a subset of Indicators from the Classroom Teacher and School Level Administrator Rubrics that represent high-priority practices for the 2022-2023 school year. |
| [Guide to Building Supportive Talent Systems](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeffectiveness/talent-guide/default.html) | Resources, considerations, and updates for recruiting, hiring, evaluating, and supporting educators and school staff, with a focus on racial equity. |
| [Professional Learning Partner Guide](https://plpartnerguide.org/) | A free, online, searchable list of vetted professional development providers who have expertise in specific sets of high-quality instructional materials. Schools and districts can use this guide to easily find professional development providers to support the launch or implementation of high-quality instructional materials. |

Table C5. Resources to Support Student Support

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Resource | Description |
| [Safe and Supportive Schools (SaSS) Framework and Self-Reflection Tool](http://sassma.org/) | Based on [Five Essential Elements](http://sassma.org/essentialelements.asp), these resources (see [At-a-Glance overview](http://sassma.org/SaSSFrameworkAndSRT.docx)) can help guide school- and district-based teams in creating safer and more supportive school climates and cultures. Through a phased process (with preliminary and deeper dive self-reflection options) teams can create plans based on local context and data and through examination of [six areas](http://sassma.org/levers.asp) of school operation. |
| [MTSS Blueprint](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfss/mtss/) | This MTSS resource offers a framework for how school districts can build the necessary systems to ensure that all students receive a high-quality educational experience. |
| [Prenatal through Young Adulthood Family Engagement Framework for Massachusetts](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/family-engagement-framework.pdf) | This resource offers a roadmap for practitioners and families in health, human services, and education. A companion document is the [Family, School, and Community Partnership Fundamentals Self-Assessment Version 2.0](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/fscp-fundamentals.docx). |
| State and local student survey data such as the Views of Climate and Learning and the Youth Risk Behavior Survey | State and local student survey data can provide information about student experiences, strengths, and needs. They also can help prompt additional local inquiry through focus groups, advisories, and ongoing communication with students, families, staff, and partners to inform continuous improvement efforts. |

Table C6. Resources to Support Financial and Asset Management

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Resource | Description |
| [*Spending Money Wisely: Getting the Most From School District* *Budgets*](https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/3412255/Spending-Money-Wisely-Getting-the-Most-from-School-District-Budgets-e-book.pdf) (scroll down to Research section) | A discussion of the top 10 opportunities for districts to realign resources and free up funds to support strategic priorities. |
| [Resource Allocation and District Action Reports (RADAR)](https://www.doe.mass.edu/research/radar/) | RADAR is a suite of innovative data reports, case studies, and other resources that provide a new approach to resource decisions. |
| [Planning for Success (PfS)](https://www.doe.mass.edu/research/success/) | An inclusive, hands-on planning process designed to build district and school capacity and coherence while also building community understanding and support. |
| [DESE spending comparisons website](https://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/statistics/default.html) | A clearinghouse of school finance data reports and other resources available to district users and the public. |

## Appendix D. Enrollment, Attendance, Expenditures

Table D1. Watertown Public Schools: Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity, 2022-2023

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | District | Percentage of total | State | Percentage of total |
| All | 2,662 | 100.0% | 913,735 | 100.0% |
| African American | 96 | 3.6% | 85,662 | 9.4% |
| Asian | 222 | 8.3% | 67,010 | 7.3% |
| Hispanic | 604 | 22.7% | 221,044 | 24.2% |
| Native American | 9 | 0.3% | 2,155 | 0.2% |
| White | 1,497 | 56.2% | 496,800 | 54.4% |
| Native Hawaiian | 1 | 0.0% | 787 | 0.1% |
| Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic | 233 | 8.8% | 40,277 | 4.4% |

*Note*. As of October 1, 2022.

Table D2. Watertown Public Schools: Student Enrollment by High Needs Populations, 2022-2023

|  | District | | | State | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | *N* | Percentage of high needs | Percentage of district | *N* | Percentage of high needs | Percentage of state |
| All students with high needs | 1,374 | 100.0% | 50.9% | 508,820 | 100.0% | 55.1% |
| Students with disabilities | 508 | 37.0% | 18.8% | 179,095 | 35.2% | 19.4% |
| Low-income households | 962 | 70.0% | 36.1% | 386,060 | 75.9% | 42.3% |
| ELs and former ELs | 443 | 32.2% | 16.6% | 110,554 | 21.7% | 12.1% |

*Note*. As of October 1, 2022. District and state numbers and percentages for students with disabilities and high needs are calculated including students in out-of-district placements. Total district enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 2,699; total state enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 923,349.

Table D3. Watertown Public Schools: Chronic Absencea Rates by Student Group, 2020-2022

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | *N* (2022) | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | State (2022) |
| All students | 2,744 | 12.3 | 11.7 | 20.2 | 27.7 |
| African American/Black | 116 | 13.3 | 13.2 | 24.1 | 32.0 |
| Asian | 236 | 10.1 | 7.7 | 16.9 | 15.4 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 610 | 17.5 | 22.8 | 31.8 | 42.3 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 222 | 13.8 | 7.0 | 18.9 | 28.4 |
| Native American | 10 | 15.4 | 11.1 | 10.0 | 37.8 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 1 | — | — | — | 32.1 |
| White | 1,549 | 10.9 | 9.0 | 15.9 | 22.1 |
| High needs | 1,517 | 18.0 | 18.6 | 27.9 | 37.1 |
| Low incomeb | 1,136 | — | — | 30.5 | 40.6 |
| ELs | 476 | 16.2 | 21.4 | 28.4 | 39.9 |
| Students w/disabilities | 543 | 19.8 | 18.2 | 28.5 | 36.9 |

a The percentage of students absent 10 percent or more of their total number of student days of membership in a school. b Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](https://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/sims/redefining-lowincome.html). This change also affects the high needs group.

Table D4. Watertown Public Schools: Expenditures, Chapter 70 State Aid, and Net School Spending Fiscal Years, 2020-2022

|  | Fiscal Year 2020 | | Fiscal Year 2021 | | Fiscal Year 2022 | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Estimated | Actual | Estimated | Actual | Estimated | Actual |
| Expenditures | | | | | | |
| From local appropriations for schools |  | | | | | |
| By school committee | $50,441,424 | $49,951,622 | $51,937,315 | $51,907,686 | $53,755,121 | $54,968,998 |
| By municipality | $13,686,187 | $12,758,668 | $18,731,615 | $18,445,156 | $27,684,508 | $26,540,459 |
| Total from local appropriations | $64,127,611 | $62,710,290 | $70,668,930 | $70,352,842 | $81,439,629 | $81,509,457 |
| From revolving funds and grants | — | $6,498,794 | — | $6,644,938 | — | $8,131,777 |
| Total expenditures | — | $69,209,084 | — | $76,997,781 | — | $89,641,235 |
| **Chapter 70 aid to education program** | | | | | | |
| Chapter 70 state aida | — | $5,858,595 | — | $5,858,595 | — | $5,936,805 |
| Required local contribution | — | $25,692,240 | — | $27,347,367 | — | $27,731,833 |
| Required net school spendingb | — | $31,550,835 | — | $33,205,962 | — | $33,668,638 |
| Actual net school spending | — | $56,914,542 | — | $58,341,366 | — | $60,560,018 |
| Over/under required ($) | — | $25,363,707 | — | $25,135,404 | — | $26,891,380 |
| Over/under required (%) | — | 80.4% | — | 75.7% | — | 79.9% |

*Note*. Data as of June 2, 2023, and sourced from fiscal year 2022 district end-of-year reports and Chapter 70 program information on DESE website.

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

Table D5. Watertown Public Schools: Expenditures Per In-District Pupil, Fiscal Years 2020-2022

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Expenditure category | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
| Administration | $757 | $1,088 | $1,153 |
| Instructional leadership (district and school) | $1,584 | $1,764 | $1,635 |
| Teachers | $8,422 | $9,178 | $9,126 |
| Other teaching services | $1,820 | $2,134 | $2,224 |
| Professional development | $422 | $332 | $472 |
| Instructional materials, equipment, and technology | $555 | $754 | $675 |
| Guidance, counseling, and testing services | $963 | $1,080 | $1,136 |
| Pupil services | $1,454 | $1,657 | $2,251 |
| Operations and maintenance | $1,525 | $1,754 | $1,798 |
| Insurance, retirement, and other fixed costs | $3,843 | $4,202 | $4,112 |
| Total expenditures per in-district pupil | $21,346 | $23,944 | $24,581 |

*Note*. Any discrepancy between expenditures and total is because of rounding. Data are from <https://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/statistics/per-pupil-exp.xlsx>.

## Appendix E. Student Performance Data

The COVID-19 pandemic had a profound impact on the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years. Data reported in this appendix may have been affected by the pandemic. Please keep this in mind when reviewing the data and take particular care when comparing data across multiple school years.

Table E1. Watertown Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Achievement by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2019-2022

| Group | *N* (2022) | Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations | | | | Percentage not meeting expectations | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2019 | 2021 | 2022 | State (2022) | 2019 | 2021 | 2022 | State (2022) |
| All | 1,097 | 50 | 46 | 45 | 41 | 12 | 14 | 17 | 17 |
| African American/Black | 36 | 43 | 30 | 33 | 26 | 15 | 14 | 14 | 27 |
| Asian | 87 | 60 | 45 | 36 | 63 | 12 | 15 | 23 | 8 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 249 | 30 | 26 | 25 | 22 | 17 | 26 | 33 | 31 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 93 | 54 | 52 | 44 | 48 | 11 | 11 | 15 | 14 |
| Native American | 4 | — | — | — | 29 | — | — | — | 25 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | — | 43 | — | — | — | 17 |
| White | 628 | 54 | 52 | 55 | 48 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 11 |
| High needs | 583 | 29 | 27 | 24 | 24 | 21 | 24 | 31 | 28 |
| Low incomea | 428 | — | — | 26 | 24 | — | — | 30 | 28 |
| ELs and former ELs | 256 | 29 | 25 | 16 | 20 | 23 | 26 | 38 | 34 |
| Students w/disabilities | 242 | 13 | 10 | 8 | 11 | 33 | 38 | 50 | 46 |

a Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](https://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/sims/redefining-lowincome.html). This change also affects the high needs group.

Table E2. Watertown Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2019-2022

| Group | *N* (2022) | Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations | | | | Percentage not meeting expectations | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2019 | 2021 | 2022 | State (2022) | 2019 | 2021 | 2022 | State (2022) |
| All | 167 | 61 | 68 | 57 | 58 | 4 | 11 | 10 | 8 |
| African American/Black | 7 | — | — | — | 41 | — | — | — | 13 |
| Asian | 9 | 71 | 73 | — | 79 | 0 | 0 | — | 4 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 41 | 41 | 45 | 24 | 38 | 10 | 31 | 27 | 17 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 14 | — | — | 57 | 62 | — | — | 0 | 6 |
| Native American | 1 | — | — | — | 53 | — | — | — | 8 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | — | 45 | — | — | — | 16 |
| White | 95 | 68 | 76 | 68 | 65 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 4 |
| High needs | 98 | 39 | 47 | 42 | 38 | 8 | 23 | 17 | 15 |
| Low incomea | 79 | — | — | 47 | 40 | — | — | 16 | 14 |
| ELs and former ELs | 24 | 5 | 20 | 17 | 21 | 5 | 50 | 42 | 30 |
| Students w/disabilities | 31 | 12 | 36 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 24 | 23 | 26 |

a Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](https://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/sims/redefining-lowincome.html). This change also affects the high needs group.

Table E3. Watertown Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2019-2022

| Group | *N* (2022) | Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations | | | | Percentage not meeting expectations | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2019 | 2021 | 2022 | State (2022) | 2019 | 2021 | 2022 | State (2022) |
| All | 1,095 | 48 | 31 | 46 | 39 | 12 | 20 | 16 | 17 |
| African American/Black | 36 | 23 | 8 | 17 | 19 | 18 | 31 | 25 | 31 |
| Asian | 87 | 57 | 34 | 48 | 69 | 11 | 17 | 22 | 6 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 248 | 29 | 11 | 27 | 18 | 18 | 32 | 29 | 32 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 95 | 61 | 35 | 53 | 44 | 11 | 19 | 8 | 16 |
| Native American | 4 | — | — | — | 27 | — | — | — | 23 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | — | 39 | — | — | — | 19 |
| White | 625 | 53 | 37 | 54 | 47 | 10 | 16 | 11 | 11 |
| High needs | 582 | 27 | 15 | 26 | 22 | 22 | 34 | 29 | 28 |
| Low incomea | 424 | — | — | 26 | 20 | — | — | 29 | 29 |
| ELs and former ELs | 259 | 28 | 15 | 25 | 21 | 18 | 32 | 34 | 32 |
| Students w/disabilities | 242 | 11 | 5 | 11 | 12 | 41 | 50 | 49 | 45 |

a Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](https://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/sims/redefining-lowincome.html). This change also affects the high needs group.

Table E4. Watertown Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2019-2022

| Group | *N* (2022) | Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations | | | | Percentage not meeting expectations | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2019 | 2021 | 2022 | State (2022) | 2019 | 2021 | 2022 | State (2022) |
| All | 163 | 63 | 59 | 49 | 50 | 7 | 11 | 10 | 10 |
| African American/Black | 7 | — | — | — | 26 | — | — | — | 20 |
| Asian | 9 | 88 | 73 | — | 78 | 0 | 0 | — | 4 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 40 | 45 | 28 | 13 | 26 | 8 | 38 | 20 | 21 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 14 | — | — | 43 | 53 | — | — | 7 | 10 |
| Native American | 1 | — | — | — | 37 | — | — | — | 16 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | — | 48 | — | — | — | 19 |
| White | 92 | 67 | 67 | 64 | 59 | 7 | 5 | 9 | 6 |
| High needs | 95 | 44 | 37 | 28 | 28 | 13 | 24 | 18 | 19 |
| Low incomea | 78 | — | — | 35 | 29 | — | — | 14 | 19 |
| ELs and former ELs | 23 | 14 | 14 | 0 | 17 | 5 | 48 | 30 | 32 |
| Students w/disabilities | 30 | 21 | 28 | 3 | 15 | 32 | 28 | 33 | 33 |

a Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](https://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/sims/redefining-lowincome.html). This change also affects the high needs group.

Table E5. Watertown Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS Science Achievement by Student Group, Grades 5 and 8, 2019-2022

| Group | *N* (2022) | Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations | | | | Percentage not meeting expectations | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2019 | 2021 | 2022 | State (2022) | 2019 | 2021 | 2022 | State (2022) |
| All | 353 | 50 | 47 | 43 | 42 | 13 | 13 | 16 | 18 |
| African American/Black | 10 | 36 | 0 | 40 | 21 | 29 | 17 | 10 | 31 |
| Asian | 38 | 61 | 42 | 45 | 65 | 7 | 6 | 32 | 8 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 91 | 29 | 27 | 24 | 20 | 17 | 29 | 29 | 33 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 28 | 65 | 44 | 50 | 48 | 12 | 13 | 11 | 15 |
| Native American | — | — | — | — | 28 | — | — | — | 25 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | — | 41 | — | — | — | 20 |
| White | 186 | 55 | 55 | 51 | 52 | 11 | 11 | 7 | 10 |
| High needs | 194 | 26 | 24 | 21 | 24 | 25 | 24 | 27 | 29 |
| Low incomea | 145 | — | — | 21 | 23 | — | — | 26 | 30 |
| ELs and former ELs | 90 | 30 | 18 | 19 | 18 | 22 | 27 | 33 | 37 |
| Students w/disabilities | 82 | 12 | 16 | 9 | 15 | 37 | 37 | 41 | 44 |

a Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](https://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/sims/redefining-lowincome.html). This change also affects the high needs group.

Table E6. Watertown Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS Science Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2019-2022

| Group | *N* (2022) | Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations | | | | Percentage not meeting expectations | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2019 | 2021 | 2022 | State (2022) | 2019 | 2021 | 2022 | State (2022) |
| All | 159 | — | — | 40 | 47 | — | — | 9 | 14 |
| African American/Black | 6 | — | — | — | 25 | — | — | — | 25 |
| Asian | 9 | — | — | — | 70 | — | — | — | 6 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 36 | — | — | 14 | 23 | — | — | 11 | 28 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 14 | — | — | 36 | 51 | — | — | 21 | 12 |
| Native American | 1 | — | — | — | 38 | — | — | — | 14 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | — | 45 | — | — | — | 23 |
| White | 93 | — | — | 51 | 56 | — | — | 51 | 8 |
| High needs | 90 | — | — | 23 | 26 | — | — | 14 | 24 |
| Low incomea | 75 | — | — | 25 | 26 | — | — | 8 | 25 |
| ELs and former ELs | 20 | — | — | 5 | 13 | — | — | 25 | 43 |
| Students w/disabilities | 28 | — | — | 7 | 16 | — | — | 32 | 37 |

a Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](https://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/sims/redefining-lowincome.html). This change also affects the high needs group.

Table E7. Watertown Public Schools: ELA Mean Student Growth Percentile in Grades 3-8, 2019 and 2022

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | *N* (2022) | 2019 | 2022 | State (2022) |
| All students | 804 | 50.4 | 53.8 | 49.8 |
| African American/Black | 22 | 50.4 | 55.5 | 48.8 |
| Asian | 62 | 59.3 | 52.2 | 58.5 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 179 | 50.4 | 51.4 | 46.5 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 65 | 49.5 | 48.9 | 51.5 |
| Native American | 4 | — | — | 46.2 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | 51.7 |
| White | 472 | 49.8 | 55.7 | 50.0 |
| High needs | 417 | 49.0 | 49.6 | 46.7 |
| Low incomea | 314 | — | 50.9 | 46.5 |
| ELs and former ELs | 177 | 54.7 | 48.0 | 47.7 |
| Students w/disabilities | 164 | 46.6 | 44.0 | 41.8 |

a Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](https://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/sims/redefining-lowincome.html). This change also affects the high needs group.

Table E8. Watertown Public Schools: ELA Mean Student Growth Percentile in Grade 10, 2019 and 2022

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | *N* (2022) | 2019 | 2022 | State (2022) |
| All students | 145 | 42.9 | 58.1 | 50.0 |
| African American/Black | 7 | — | — | 49.8 |
| Asian | 9 | — | — | 56.0 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 30 | 44.8 | 44.8 | 47.6 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 11 | — | — | 50.6 |
| Native American | 1 | — | — | 54.1 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | 49.5 |
| White | 87 | 43.2 | 59.7 | 50.1 |
| High needs | 80 | 45.8 | 56.6 | 47.7 |
| Low incomea | 69 | — | 57.8 | 47.2 |
| ELs and former ELs | 13 | — | — | 50.5 |
| Students w/disabilities | 27 | 39.3 | 56.4 | 45.1 |

a Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](https://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/sims/redefining-lowincome.html). This change also affects the high needs group.

Table E9. Watertown Public Schools: Mathematics Mean Student Growth Percentile in Grades 3-8, 2019 and 2022

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | *N* (2022) | 2019 | 2022 | State (2022) |
| All students | 801 | 54.3 | 59.1 | 49.9 |
| African American/Black | 22 | 53.6 | 55.1 | 47.0 |
| Asian | 62 | 56.6 | 61.4 | 59.8 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 177 | 57.2 | 55.2 | 46.4 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 68 | 60.9 | 62.0 | 51.0 |
| Native American | 4 | — | — | 49.5 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | 49.9 |
| White | 468 | 53.2 | 60.3 | 50.4 |
| High needs | 415 | 52.8 | 53.2 | 47.1 |
| Low incomea | 310 | — | 54.1 | 46.4 |
| ELs and former ELs | 179 | 55.4 | 54.4 | 48.6 |
| Students w/disabilities | 164 | 49.0 | 45.8 | 43.3 |

a Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](https://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/sims/redefining-lowincome.html). This change also affects the high needs group.

Table E10. Watertown Public Schools: Mathematics Mean Student Growth Percentile in Grade 10, 2019 and 2022

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | *N* (2022) | 2019 | 2022 | State (2022) |
| All students | 142 | 69.9 | 69.6 | 50.0 |
| African American/Black | 7 | — | — | 45.6 |
| Asian | 9 | — | — | 57.3 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 29 | 67.7 | 58.4 | 44.4 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 11 | — | — | 50.0 |
| Native American | 1 | — | — | 46.6 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | 41.2 |
| White | 85 | 69.1 | 72.8 | 51.6 |
| High needs | 77 | 67.0 | 63.0 | 46.7 |
| Low incomea | 67 | — | 63.9 | 45.6 |
| ELs and former ELs | 12 | — | — | 48.9 |
| Students w/disabilities | 26 | 59.1 | 61.2 | 47.3 |

a Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](https://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/sims/redefining-lowincome.html). This change also affects the high needs group.

Table E11. Watertown Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Achievement by Grade,   
2019-2022

| Grade | *N* (2022) | Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations | | | | Percentage not meeting expectations | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2019 | 2021 | 2022 | State (2022) | 2019 | 2021 | 2022 | State (2022) |
| 3 | 202 | 57 | 47 | 46 | 44 | 7 | 9 | 16 | 15 |
| 4 | 198 | 53 | 48 | 41 | 38 | 10 | 11 | 18 | 16 |
| 5 | 182 | 54 | 54 | 47 | 41 | 10 | 13 | 13 | 13 |
| 6 | 170 | 43 | 46 | 43 | 41 | 19 | 19 | 19 | 22 |
| 7 | 165 | 40 | 39 | 44 | 41 | 11 | 19 | 16 | 19 |
| 8 | 180 | 55 | 43 | 48 | 42 | 12 | 14 | 20 | 18 |
| 3-8 | 1,097 | 50 | 46 | 45 | 41 | 12 | 14 | 17 | 17 |
| 10 | 167 | 61 | 68 | 57 | 58 | 4 | 11 | 10 | 8 |

Table E12. Watertown Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Grade, 2019-2022

| Grade | *N* (2022) | Percentages meeting or exceeding expectations | | | | Percentage not meeting expectations | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2019 | 2021 | 2022 | State (2022) | 2019 | 2021 | 2022 | State (2022) |
| 3 | 204 | 52 | 33 | 40 | 41 | 12 | 22 | 26 | 20 |
| 4 | 198 | 58 | 27 | 51 | 42 | 11 | 26 | 13 | 17 |
| 5 | 182 | 48 | 33 | 42 | 36 | 11 | 18 | 16 | 16 |
| 6 | 169 | 33 | 21 | 47 | 42 | 14 | 19 | 14 | 15 |
| 7 | 166 | 46 | 31 | 48 | 37 | 12 | 16 | 10 | 19 |
| 8 | 176 | 55 | 37 | 49 | 36 | 11 | 15 | 17 | 17 |
| 3-8 | 1,095 | 48 | 31 | 46 | 39 | 12 | 20 | 16 | 17 |
| 10 | 163 | 63 | 59 | 49 | 50 | 7 | 11 | 10 | 10 |

Table E13. Watertown Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS Science Achievement by Grade, 2019‑2022

| Grade | *N* (2022) | Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations | | | | Percentage not meeting expectations | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2019 | 2021 | 2022 | State (2022) | 2019 | 2021 | 2022 | State (2022) |
| 5 | 180 | 49 | 47 | 45 | 43 | 14 | 13 | 14 | 18 |
| 8 | 173 | 50 | 48 | 41 | 42 | 12 | 13 | 17 | 18 |
| 5 and 8 | 353 | 50 | 47 | 43 | 42 | 13 | 13 | 16 | 18 |
| 10 | 159 | — | — | 40 | 47 | — | — | 9 | 14 |

*Note*. Grade 10 results for the spring 2021 STE are not provided because students in the class of 2023 were not required to take the STE test. Information about the Competency Determination requirements is available at <https://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/graduation.html>. In 2019, 10th graders took the Legacy MCAS science test.

Table E14. Watertown Public Schools: ELA Mean Student Growth Percentile by Grade, 2019 and 2022

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade | *N (*2022) | 2019 | 2022 | State (2022) |
| 3 | — | — | — | — |
| 4 | 177 | 55.6 | 54.1 | 50.0 |
| 5 | 159 | 58.1 | 55.9 | 49.9 |
| 6 | 150 | 38.8 | 50.9 | 49.8 |
| 7 | 150 | 47.8 | 49.8 | 49.7 |
| 8 | 168 | 52.5 | 57.8 | 49.7 |
| 3-8 | 804 | 50.4 | 53.8 | 49.8 |
| 10 | 145 | 42.9 | 58.1 | 50.0 |

Table E15. Watertown Public Schools: Mathematics Mean Student Growth Percentile by Grade, 2019 and 2022

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade | *N* (2022) | 2019 | 2022 | State (2022) |
| 3 | — | — | — | — |
| 4 | 179 | 69.7 | 54.9 | 50.0 |
| 5 | 159 | 56.5 | 59.7 | 50.0 |
| 6 | 150 | 24.6 | 51.8 | 49.8 |
| 7 | 149 | 61.1 | 66.0 | 49.9 |
| 8 | 164 | 61.5 | 63.5 | 49.8 |
| 3-8 | 801 | 54.3 | 59.1 | 49.9 |
| 10 | 142 | 69.9 | 69.6 | 50.0 |

Table E16. Watertown Public Schools: Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Student Group,   
2020-2022

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | *N* (2022) | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | State (2022) |
| All students | 166 | 83.5 | 87.6 | 88.0 | 90.1 |
| African American/Black | 7 | 57.1 | 100 | 85.7 | 86.2 |
| Asian | 18 | 66.7 | 100 | 100 | 96.2 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 41 | 62.5 | 72.7 | 70.7 | 81.2 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 8 | 100 | — | 87.5 | 88.7 |
| Native American | — | — | — | — | 82.2 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | — | 81.3 |
| White | 92 | 90.4 | 90.7 | 93.5 | 93.2 |
| High needs | 108 | 71.1 | 82.4 | 82.4 | 83.9 |
| Low incomea | 92 | 69.8 | 86.1 | 80.4 | 83.2 |
| ELs | 27 | 47.8 | 69.6 | 51.9 | 73.1 |
| Students w/disabilities | 28 | 70.5 | 72.1 | 85.7 | 78.0 |

a Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](https://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/sims/redefining-lowincome.html). This change also affects the high needs group.

Table E17. Watertown Public Schools: Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Student Group,   
2019-2021

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | *N* (2021) | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | State (2021) |
| All students | 194 | 92.0 | 87.6 | 88.7 | 91.8 |
| African American/Black | 9 | 100 | 85.7 | 100 | 88.1 |
| Asian | 18 | 100 | 83.3 | 100 | 97.0 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 44 | 87.0 | 65.6 | 72.7 | 84.0 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 3 | — | 100 | — | 91.2 |
| Native American | 2 | — | — | — | 84.1 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | — | 87.7 |
| White | 118 | 91.6 | 93.0 | 92.4 | 94.4 |
| High needs | 119 | 88.3 | 77.8 | 84.0 | 85.8 |
| Low incomea | 101 | 88.1 | 77.8 | 88.1 | 85.1 |
| ELs | 23 | 64.7 | 65.2 | 73.9 | 78.0 |
| Students w/disabilities | 43 | 89.1 | 72.7 | 74.4 | 80.6 |

a Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](https://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/sims/redefining-lowincome.html). This change also affects the high needs group.

Table E18. Watertown Public Schools: In-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2020-2022

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | *N* (2022) | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | State (2022) |
| All students | 2,733 | 0.8 | 0.9 | 1.4 | 1.6 |
| African American/Black | 118 | — | — | — | 2.2 |
| Asian | 236 | — | — | — | 0.4 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 610 | 1.0 | 1.2 | 1.6 | 2.1 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 221 | — | — | 1.4 | 1.8 |
| Native American | 10 | — | — | — | 2.4 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 1 | — | — | — | 1.9 |
| White | 1,537 | 0.8 | 0.7 | 1.4 | 1.4 |
| High needs | 1,524 | 1.2 | 1.3 | 2.0 | 2.2 |
| Low incomea | 1,134 | — | — | 2.5 | 2.3 |
| ELs | 487 | — | 1.5 | 1.0 | 1.4 |
| Students w/disabilities | 563 | 1.7 | 1.9 | 2.3 | 2.8 |

a Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](https://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/sims/redefining-lowincome.html). This change also affects the high needs group.

Table E19. Watertown Public Schools: Out-of-School Suspension Rates by Student Group,   
2020-2022

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | *N* (2022) | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | State (2022) |
| All students | 2,733 | 0.2 | 0.6 | 1.1 | 3.1 |
| African American/Black | 118 | — | — | — | 6.2 |
| Asian | 236 | — | — | — | 0.7 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 610 | 0.0 | 0.8 | 1.5 | 4.9 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 221 | — | — | 1.4 | 3.5 |
| Native American | 10 | — | — | — | 4.3 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 1 | — | — | — | 3.6 |
| White | 1,537 | 0.3 | 0.5 | 1.0 | 2.1 |
| High needs | 1,524 | 0.3 | 0.8 | 1.4 | 4.6 |
| Low incomea | 1,134 | — | — | 1.6 | 5.2 |
| ELs | 487 | — | 1.0 | 0.4 | 3.5 |
| Students w/disabilities | 563 | 0.2 | 1.5 | 2.0 | 5.8 |

a Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](https://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/sims/redefining-lowincome.html). This change also affects the high needs group.

Table E20. Watertown Public Schools: Dropout Rates by Student Group, 2020-2022

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | *N* (2022) | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | State (2022) |
| All students | 700 | 1.8 | 2.0 | 2.7 | 2.1 |
| African American/Black | 29 | 0.0 | 3.0 | 0.0 | 2.8 |
| Asian | 59 | 2.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.6 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 141 | 5.1 | 6.6 | 9.9 | 4.3 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 30 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 2.4 |
| Native American | 4 | 0.0 | — | — | 4.3 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | — | 1.2 |
| White | 437 | 0.9 | 0.7 | 1.1 | 1.3 |
| High needs | 390 | 2.9 | 3.6 | 4.4 | 3.6 |
| Low incomea | 317 | 2.6 | 3.0 | 5.0 | 3.8 |
| ELs | 76 | 6.7 | 20.3 | 17.1 | 7.8 |
| Students w/disabilities | 113 | 3.7 | 0.0 | 2.7 | 3.4 |

a Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](https://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/sims/redefining-lowincome.html). This change also affects the high needs group.

Table E21. Watertown Public Schools: Advanced Coursework Completion Rates by Student Group, 2020-2022

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | *N* (2022) | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | State (2022) |
| All students | 317 | 62.2 | 67.5 | 66.6 | 64.9 |
| African American/Black | 13 | 31.3 | 57.9 | 61.5 | 55.5 |
| Asian | 33 | 78.3 | 83.3 | 69.7 | 84.9 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 71 | 30.2 | 48.1 | 49.3 | 49.2 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 21 | 70.0 | 80.0 | 71.4 | 66.1 |
| Native American | 2 | — | — | — | 50.0 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | — | 65.4 |
| White | 177 | 71.2 | 72.4 | 73.4 | 69.5 |
| High needs | 173 | 37.4 | 53.7 | 51.4 | 49.1 |
| Low incomea | 141 | 44.5 | 57.0 | 54.6 | 50.1 |
| ELs | 28 | 18.2 | 20.0 | 14.3 | 30.0 |
| Students w/disabilities | 46 | 18.8 | 31.1 | 30.4 | 34.3 |

a Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](https://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/sims/redefining-lowincome.html). This change also affects the high needs group.

1. DESE’s District Standards and Indicators are at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/district-review/district-standards-indicators.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. For more information on the Teachstone CLASS protocol, visit <https://teachstone.com/class/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. CURATE: CUrriculum RAtings by TEachers. See <https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. The University of Chicago’s 5Essentials is a school improvement system that includes surveys on leadership, teacher collaboration, family involvement, school environments, and instruction. For more information, visit <https://uchicagoimpact.org/our-offerings/5essentials> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. When observers rate this dimension it is scored so that a low rating (indicating little or no evidence of a negative climate) is better than a high rating (indicating abundant evidence of a negative climate). To be consistent across all ratings, for the purposes of this report we have inversed this scoring. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)