Targeted District Review Report

Central Berkshire Regional School District

Review conducted October 24–26, 2017

Office of District Reviews and Monitoring

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Executive Summary

The Central Berkshire Regional School District is the largest district in the Commonwealth in terms of geographic area (214.4 square miles) and one of the smallest in terms of student enrollment. In the 2016–2017 school year, its 3 elementary schools, regional middle school, and regional high school provided for 1,620 students from 7 small communities in Berkshire and Hampshire counties: Becket, Cummington, Dalton, Hinsdale, Peru, Washington, and Windsor.

The superintendent, in her third year of service, has committed to an inclusionary vision that emphasizes that all children can achieve at high levels if they have the support they need to succeed. To foster equitable opportunities for students to achieve and progress in school, she has introduced Universal Design for Learning (UDL) which frames instructional design and the Collaborative Inquiry (CI) protocol which uses a collaborative problem-solving approach to analyze data. Also, the district has expanded co-teaching to focus on the needs of students with disabilities and has begun extending the Workshop Model, a lesson-design framework, to the secondary level. (For descriptions of these initiatives, see the Curriculum and Instruction standard below.)

To realize the district’s vision of inclusion and equity, the superintendent has also transformed the district’s leadership team into a teaching and learning team. In addition to the superintendent and five principals, the teaching and learning team includes a new role of director of teaching and learning and newly defined roles for content coordinators. Content coordinators are now responsible for all subject areas in grades 7–12 rather than in grades 9–12. (The science content coordinator is a K–12 position.)

The superintendent told the team that one of her goals is for all teachers to design lessons so that all students have access to high-quality instruction. With Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as the overarching district priority and means to this end, she models the UDL guidelines in her work with staff. The superintendent also stated that she and the director of teaching and learning are responsible for ensuring that the teaching and learning team understands how each district initiative supports the district’s vision. The director of teaching and learning added that she grounds her work in the UDL framework and guiding principles and models these principles with administrators, principals, and teachers.

The district has provided the needed resources— professional development, common meeting time, and leadership support, coaching, and modeling— to support leaders and teachers in implementing UDL, the CI protocol, and the Workshop Model. While each of these frameworks holds high promise to improve student achievement and how educators practice their craft, as with all major improvement efforts, progress is incremental. The review team gathered evidence on and observed pockets of excellence that illustrate what is possible in the district.

**Instruction**

The team observed 60 classes throughout the district: 18 at the high school, 19 at the middle school, and 23 at the 3 elementary schools. The team observed 22 ELA classes, 18 mathematics classes, 13 science classes, and 7 classes in other subject areas. Among the classes observed were two special education classes. The observations were approximately 20 minutes in length. All review team members collected data using ESE’s Instructional Inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards-based teaching. This data is presented in Appendix C.

In many observed lessons, review team members characterized classroom climate as respectful in tone and behaviors, with constructive routines and positive supports. Overall, teachers demonstrated knowledge of their subject matter. However, a higher incidence of students at the elementary level were engaged in lesson content and activities and assumed responsibility for their learning than their counterparts at the secondary level (grades 6–12).

In observed classrooms, the review team found inconsistencies in the quality of instruction across the district. Overall, observers noted stronger practices at the elementary schools than in the secondary schools, particularly in the use of learning objectives and in setting high expectations for learning and understanding. At the middle school, there was a generally low incidence of instruction that was engaging, encouraged active participation, required higher-order thinking and discussion of ideas and content, and provided opportunities for students to engage with meaningful, real-world tasks.

The district’s greatest instructional challenge is to provide students with sufficient opportunities to engage in higher-order thinking and share their ideas and thinking with each other. Another challenge is to ensure that all students connect their learning to challenging and meaningful real-world tasks regardless of learning needs.

**Strengths**

The district is strengthening its continuous improvement efforts in the following ways:

* Leaders have a keen focus on equity and inclusion.
* The superintendent and other leaders have created a culture of collaboration and shared beliefs and responsibility for student achievement and growth.
* The district has aligned support mechanisms to build leaders’ and teachers’ capacity to implement its improvement agenda.
* The new role of director of teaching and learning and the newly defined role of content coordinators are strengthening the district’s instructional leadership.
* Educators collaborate to use data to provide instruction that addresses students’ diverse learning needs and use a problem-solving approach to improve instruction.
* The district has an expanding culture of data literacy which guides decision-making in and out of the classroom, with particular strengths at the elementary level.
* The district’s tiered system of support and interventions addresses the academic and social-emotional needs of students.

**Challenges and Areas for Growth**

Several current challenges indicate areas in need of attention and improvement:

* The district is not setting measurable goals in its planning documents.
* The district’s ELA, math, and science curricula for grades 6–12 are incomplete and are not aligned with the current Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.
* The quality and rigor of observed instruction is uneven across the district, particularly related to student engagement, higher-order thinking, and the application of knowledge and understanding in grades 6–8.

**Recommendations**

To address the district’s challenges and areas for growth, the review team has highlighted the following “next steps”:

* The district should use student performance data and other data sources to inform its goals and priorities for action.
* Educators should complete as soon as possible K–12 curriculum in all subjects.
* The leadership team at the middle school should continue its work to improve instruction.

The review team believes that the district is on an achievable path as it builds capacity across the teacher corps and within the teaching and learning team and creates the collaborative culture of inquiry that fosters a true learning community. The review team is confident that with time the district can realize its vision of a more equitable educational opportunity for its students.

Central Berkshire RSD Targeted District Review Overview

Purpose

Conducted under Chapter 15, Section 55A of the Massachusetts General Laws, targeted district reviews support local school districts in establishing or strengthening a cycle of continuous improvement. In general, districts performing at the 20th percentile or above receive a targeted review, while lower-performing districts receive a comprehensive review.[[1]](#footnote-1) Reviews consider carefully the effectiveness of systemwide functions, with reference to three district standards used by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE). Targeted reviews address one of the following sets of three standards: **Governance and Administrative Systems** (Leadership and Governance, Human Resources and Professional Development, and Financial and Asset Management standards) or **Student-Centered Systems** (Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment, and Student Support standards) —and may include the team’s observations/thoughts about systems and practices in the set of standards not being addressed. All targeted reviews include finding(s) about instruction based on classroom observations. A targeted review identifies systems and practices that may be impeding improvement as well as those most likely to be contributing to positive results. The targeted district review is designed to promote district reflection on its own performance and potential next steps. In addition to being a tool that districts can use to inform their own improvement efforts, review reports may be used by ESE to identify technical assistance and other resources to provide to the district. This targeted review by the Office of District Reviews and Monitoring focused on the following standards: Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment, and Student Support.

Methodology

Reviews collect evidence for each of the three district standards identified as the focus of the targeted review. Team members also observe classroom instructional practice. A district review team consisting of independent consultants with expertise in the district standards reviews documentation, data, and reports for two days before conducting a three-day district visit that includes visits to individual schools. The team conducts interviews and focus group sessions with such stakeholders as school committee members, teachers’ association representatives, administrators, teachers, parents, and students. Subsequent to the onsite review, the team meets for two days to develop findings and recommendations before submitting a draft report to ESE.

Site Visit

The site visit to the Central Berkshire Regional School District was conducted from October 24–26, 2017. The site visit included 20.5 hours of interviews and focus groups with approximately 44 stakeholders, including school committee members, district administrators, school staff, high-school students, teachers’ association representatives, and parents. The review team conducted one focus group with seven elementary-school teachers and one focus group for secondary teachers attended by one middle-school teacher.

A list of review team members, information about review activities, and the site visit schedule are in Appendix A, and Appendix B provides information about enrollment, attendance, and expenditures. The team observed classroom instructional practice in 60 classrooms in the district’s 5 schools. The team collected data using an instructional inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards-based teaching. This data is contained in Appendix C.

**District Profile**

In the 2016–2017 school year, the district’s 3 elementary schools, regional middle school, and regional high school served 1,620 students from 7 small communities in Berkshire and Hampshire Counties: Becket, Cummington, Dalton, Hinsdale, Peru, Washington, and Windsor. Each has a board of selectmen and an open town meeting form of government. The 15-member school committee elects its chair and typically meets twice a month. At the time of the review in October 2017, the school committee had two vacancies.

The current superintendent has been in the position since July 2015. The district teaching and learning team includes an assistant superintendent responsible for operations and finance, a director of student services, a director of teaching and learning (a new position added in 2017–2018), and five principals. Central office positions have been in flux over the past decade. Six superintendents have led the district over the past nine years. Other leaders include a number of teacher-leaders who serve half time as academic content coordinators for each subject area for grades 7–12 and one for K–12 science. In 2016–2017 there were 128.4 (FTE) teachers in the district.

In the 2016–2017 school year, 1,620 students were enrolled in the district’s 5 schools:

**Table 1: Central Berkshire Regional School District,**

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

| **School Name** | **School Type** | **Grades Served** | **Enrollment** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Becket-Washington Elementary School | ES | Pre-K–5 | 125 |
| Craneville Elementary School | ES | Pre-K–5 | 422 |
| Kittredge Elementary School | ES | Pre-K–5 | 134 |
| Nessacus Regional Middle School | MS | 6–8 | 396 |
| Wahconah Regional High School | HS | 9–12 | 543 |
| **Totals** | **5 schools** | **Pre-K–12** | **1,620** |
| \*As of October 1, 2016 | | | |

Between 2013 and 2017 overall student enrollment decreased by 9 percent. Enrollment figures by race/ethnicity and high needs populations (i.e., students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, English language learners (ELLs) and former ELLs) as compared with the state are provided in Tables B1a and B1b in Appendix B.

Total in-district per-pupil expenditures were higher than the median in-district per pupil expenditures for 51 K–12 districts of similar size (1,000–1,999 pupils) in fiscal year 2015 (the most recent fiscal year for which data are available): $15,890 as compared with $13,140. (See [District Analysis and Review Tool Detail: Staffing & Finance](http://www.doe.mass.edu/dart)). Actual net school spending has been well above what is required by the Chapter 70 state education aid program, as shown in Table B3 in Appendix B.

Student Performance

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

**In ELA and math, the average scaled score on the Next-Generation MCAS was below the state score by more than 3 points for all students.**

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| **Table 2: Central Berkshire RSD**  **Next-Generation MCAS ELA and Math Average Scaled Score (SS) Grades 3–8 by Subgroup, 2017** | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **N** | **ELA SS** | **State SS** | **N** | **Math SS** | **State SS** |
| High Needs | 309 | 488.2 | 488.5 | 309 | 489.2 | 488.1 |
| Econ. Dis. | 249 | 490.3 | 489.2 | 249 | 490.3 | 488.1 |
| SWD | 117 | 478.0 | 480.0 | 117 | 480.8 | 479.8 |
| ELLs | 4 | -- | 484.9 | 4 | -- | 486.8 |
| All | 718 | 495.3 | 499.1 | 718 | 495.4 | 498.8 |
| Next Generation MCAS Achievement Levels: 440–470 Not Meeting Expectations; 470–500 Partially Meeting Expectations; 500–530 Meeting Expectations; and 530–560 Exceeding Expectations | | | | | | |

**The percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS in grades 3-8 was below the state rate by 7 percentage points in ELA (41 percent compared with 49 percent) and by 8 percentage points in math (40 percent compared with 48 percent).**

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| **Table 3: Central Berkshire RSD**  **Next-Generation MCAS ELA and Math Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations (M/E) Grades 3–8, 2017** | | | | | | | | |
|  | **N** | **ELA M/E** | **State M/E** | **Above/Below State** | **N** | **Math M/E** | **State M/E** | **Above/Below State** |
| High Needs | 309 | 25% | 27% | -2 | 309 | 26% | 27% | -1 |
| Econ. Dis. | 249 | 29% | 29% | 0 | 249 | 28% | 27% | 1 |
| SWD | 117 | 9% | 13% | -4 | 117 | 13% | 14% | -1 |
| ELLs | 4 | -- | 23% | -- | 4 | -- | 26% | -- |
| All | 718 | 42% | 49% | -7 | 718 | 40% | 48% | -8 |

**In ELA and math, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on the MCAS in 10th grade was above the state rate by 3 percentage points.**

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| **Table 4: Central Berkshire RSD**  **MCAS ELA and Math Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grade 10 by Subgroup, 2017** | | | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **N** | **ELA** | **State** | **Above/Below State** | **N** | **Math** | **State** | **Above/Below State** |
| High Needs | 48 | 85% | 79% | 6 | 49 | 57% | 58% | -1 |
| Econ. Dis. | 42 | 86% | 81% | 5 | 43 | 63% | 60% | 3 |
| SWD | 13 | 54% | 68% | -14 | 13 | 8% | 42% | -34 |
| ELLs | 1 | -- | 59% | -- | 2 | -- | 39% | -- |
| All | 151 | 94% | 91% | 3 | 153 | 82% | 79% | 3 |

**Between 2014 and 2017, science proficiency on the MCAS for all students did not improve and declined by 4 percentage points for high needs students and by 10 percentage points for students with disabilities.**

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| **Table 5: Central Berkshire RSD**  **MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grades 5, 8, and 10 by Subgroup, 2014–2017** | | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **N (2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr change** | **State (2017)** |
| High Needs | 160 | 40% | 34% | 35% | 37% | -3 | 31% |
| Econ. Dis. | 127 | -- | 39% | 40% | 41% | -- | 32% |
| SWD | 59 | 27% | 19% | 16% | 17% | -10 | 21% |
| ELLs | 3 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 20% |
| All | 410 | 55% | 55% | 52% | 54% | -1 | 53% |

**In ELA, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS was 7 percentage points below the state rate in grades 3–8 as a whole and by 7 to 14 percentage points in each tested grade except the 5th grade.**

**In math, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS was 8 percentage points below the state rate in grades 3–8 as a whole and by 1 to 21 percentage points in each tested grade.**

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| **Table 6: Central Berkshire RSD**  **Next-Generation MCAS ELA and Math Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations (M/E) in Grades 3–8, 2017** | | | | | | | | |
| **Grade** | **N** | **ELA M/E** | **State ELA** | **Difference** | **N** | **Math M/E** | **State Math** | **Difference** |
| 3 | 99 | 36% | 47% | -11 | 99 | 47% | 49% | -2 |
| 4 | 113 | 41% | 48% | -7 | 113 | 44% | 49% | -5 |
| 5 | 119 | 56% | 49% | 7 | 119 | 45% | 46% | -1 |
| 6 | 109 | 40% | 51% | -11 | 109 | 29% | 50% | -21 |
| 7 | 132 | 42% | 50% | -8 | 132 | 32% | 47% | -15 |
| 8 | 146 | 35% | 49% | -14 | 146 | 42% | 48% | -6 |
| 3–8 | 718 | 42% | 49% | -7 | 718 | 40% | 48% | -8 |

**Between 2014 and 2017, in science, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on the MCAS did not improve for the district as a whole and was 54 percent in 2017, 1 point above the state rate of 53 percent.**

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| **Table 7: Central Berkshire RSD**  **MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grades 5, 8, and 10, 2014–2017** | | | | | | | |
| **Grade** | **N (2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr change** | **State (2017)** |
| 5 | 119 | 48% | 48% | 39% | 41% | -7 | 46% |
| 8 | 145 | 32% | 38% | 33% | 31% | -1 | 40% |
| 10 | 146 | 87% | 83% | 87% | 88% | 1 | 74% |
| All | 410 | 55% | 55% | 52% | 54% | -1 | 53% |

**Between 2014 and 2017, in ELA the median student growth percentile (SGP) improved by 8 or more points in grades 4 through 8 and declined by 14.5 points in the 10th grade.**

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| **Table 8: Central Berkshire RSD**  **ELA Median Student Growth Percentile, 2014–2017** | | | | | | | |
| **Grade** | **N (2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr change** | **State (2017)** |
| 3 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 4 | 105 | 45.0 | 48.0 | 36.0 | 56.0 | 11.0 | 50.0 |
| 5 | 117 | 48.0 | 35.0 | 39.0 | 78.0 | 30.0 | 50.0 |
| 6 | 102 | 29.0 | 47.0 | 25.0 | 41.5 | 12.5 | 50.0 |
| 7 | 121 | 37.0 | 42.0 | 15.0 | 54.0 | 17.0 | 50.0 |
| 8 | 139 | 45.0 | 57.0 | 30.0 | 53.0 | 8.0 | 50.0 |
| 10 | 132 | 61.0 | 59.5 | 49.5 | 46.5 | -14.5 | 50.0 |
| Changes in SGP of 10 points or more are considered meaningful. | | | | | | | |

**Between 2014 and 2017, in math the median SGP improved by 6 or more points in the 4th, 5th, and 6th grades and declined by 5 to 30 points in the 7th, 8th, and 10th grades.**

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| **Table 9: Central Berkshire RSD**  **Math Median Student Growth Percentile, 2014–2017** | | | | | | | |
| **Grade** | **N (2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr change** | **State (2017)** |
| 3 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 4 | 105 | 47.5 | 61.0 | 38.0 | 57.0 | 9.5 | 50.0 |
| 5 | 117 | 55.0 | 45.0 | 57.0 | 73.0 | 18.0 | 50.0 |
| 6 | 102 | 36.0 | 56.0 | 35.0 | 42.0 | 6.0 | 50.0 |
| 7 | 121 | 66.0 | 51.0 | 35.0 | 39.0 | -27.0 | 50.0 |
| 8 | 139 | 52.0 | 50.0 | 43.0 | 47.0 | -5.0 | 50.0 |
| 10 | 133 | 62.0 | 58.0 | 50.0 | 32.0 | -30.0 | 50.0 |
| Changes in SGP of 10 points or more are considered meaningful. | | | | | | | |

**In ELA, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS ranged from 30 to 55 percent in the 3rd grade, from 36 to 71 percent in the 4th grade, and from 55 to 63 percent in the 5th grade in Central Berkshire’s three elementary schools. The percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations was 40 percent, 42 percent, and 35 percent in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades, respectively, all below the state rates.**

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| **Table 10: Central Berkshire RSD**  **Next-Generation MCAS ELA Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations by Grade and School, 2017** | | | | | | | |
| **School** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **3–8** |
| Becket Washington School | 55% | 71% | 63% | -- | -- | -- | 62% |
| Craneville | 30% | 36% | 56% | -- | -- | -- | 42% |
| Kittredge | 46% | 39% | 55% | -- | -- | -- | 46% |
| Nessacus Regional Middle | -- | -- | -- | 40% | 42% | 35% | 39% |
| District | 36% | 41% | 56% | 40% | 42% | 35% | 42% |
| State | 47% | 48% | 49% | 51% | 50% | 49% | 49% |

**In math, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS ranged from 31 to 65 percent in the 3rd grade, from 40 to 57 percent in the 4th grade, and from 10 to 56 percent in the 5th grade in Central Berkshire’s three elementary schools. The percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations was 29 percent, 33 percent, and 42 percent in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades, respectively, all below the state rate.**

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| **Table 11: Central Berkshire RSD**  **Next-Generation MCAS Math Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations by Grade and School, 2017** | | | | | | | |
| **School** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **3–8** |
| Becket Washington School | 65% | 50% | 56% | -- | -- | -- | 58% |
| Craneville | 48% | 40% | 52% | -- | -- | -- | 47% |
| Kittredge | 31% | 57% | 10% | -- | -- | -- | 34% |
| Nessacus Regional Middle | -- | -- | -- | 29% | 33% | 42% | 35% |
| District | 47% | 44% | 45% | 29% | 32% | 42% | 40% |
| State | 49% | 49% | 46% | 50% | 47% | 48% | 48% |

**On the MCAS in the 10th grade the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced at Wahconah Regional High was above the state rate by 4 percentage points in ELA and by 3 percentage points in math**.

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| **Table 12: Central Berkshire RSD**  **MCAS ELA and Math Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grade 10, 2017** | | |
| **School** | ELA | Math |
| Wahconah Regional High | 95% | 82% |
| State | 91% | 79% |

**In science, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on the MCAS ranged from 15 percent in the 5th grade at Kittredge to 63 percent at Becket Washington, and was 31 percent in the 8th grade at Nessacus Regional Middle. Science proficiency was 89 percent in the 10th grade at Wahconah Regional High.**

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| **Table 13: Central Berkshire RSD**  **MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced by School and Grade, 2017** | | | | | | | | |
| **School** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **10** | **Total** |
| Becket Washington School | -- | -- | 63% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 63% |
| Craneville | -- | -- | 44% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 44% |
| Kittredge | -- | -- | 15% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 15% |
| Nessacus Regional Middle | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 31% | -- | 31% |
| Wahconah Regional High |  |  | -- | -- | -- |  | 89% | 89% |
| District | -- | -- | 41% | -- | -- | 31% | 88% | 55% |
| State | -- | -- | 46% | -- | -- | 40% | 74% | 53% |

**In ELA, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS in the district’s elementary schools ranged from 42 to 62 percent and was 39 percent at Nessacus Regional Middle.**

**In math, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS in the district’s elementary schools ranged from 34 to 58 percent and was 35 percent at Nessacus Regional Middle.**

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| **Table 14: Central Berkshire RSD**  **Next-Generation MCAS ELA and Math Percent Meeting and Exceeding Expectations by School, 2017** | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | **ELA** | | | | | **Math** | | | | |
| **School** | **All** | **High Needs** | **Econ. Dis.** | **SWD** | **ELLs** | **All** | **High Needs** | **Econ. Dis.** | **SWD** | **ELLs** |
| Becket Washington School | 62% | 45% | 36% | 47% | -- | 58% | 50% | 50% | 40% | -- |
| Craneville | 42% | 27% | 32% | 3% | -- | 47% | 35% | 40% | 9% | -- |
| Kittredge | 46% | 35% | 38% | -- | -- | 34% | 26% | 24% | -- | -- |
| Nessacus Regional Middle | 39% | 21% | 25% | 3% | -- | 35% | 19% | 20% | 9% | -- |
| District | 42% | 25% | 29% | 9% | -- | 40% | 26% | 28% | 13% | -- |

**Between 2014 and 2017, ELA proficiency at Wahconah Regional High declined by 3 percentage points for all students and by 8 percentage points for high needs students.**

**Between 2014 and 2017, math proficiency at Wahconah Regional High declined by 6 percentage points for all students and by 9 percentage points for high needs students.**

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| **Table 15: Central Berkshire RSD**  **MCAS ELA and Math Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grade 10 by Subgroup, 2014–2017** | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | **ELA** | | | | | **Math** | | | | |
| **School** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** |
| Wahconah Regional High | 98% | 91% | 96% | 95% | -3 | 88% | 80% | 81% | 82% | -6 |
| High Needs | 95% | 76% | 91% | 87% | -8 | 67% | 48% | 56% | 58% | -9 |
| Econ. Dis. | -- | 86% | 92% | 88% | -- | -- | 61% | 62% | 63% | -- |
| ELLs | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| SWD | 80% | 53% | -- | 58% | -22 | -- | 17% | -- | 8% | -- |

**In science, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on the MCAS ranged from 15 to 63 percent in the district’s three elementary schools and was 31 percent at Nessacus Regional Middle and 89 percent at Wahconah Regional High.**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 16: Central Berkshire RSD**  **MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced by School and Subgroup, 2014–2017** | | | | | | |
| **School** | **N (2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** |
| Becket Washington School | 16 | 65% | 64% | 53% | 63% | -2 |
| High Needs | 7 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Econ. Dis. | 5 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| SWDs | 6 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| ELLs | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Craneville | 82 | 42% | 48% | 40% | 44% | 2 |
| High Needs | 37 | 30% | 33% | 25% | 30% | 0 |
| Econ. Dis. | 29 | -- | 37% | 27% | 34% | -- |
| SWDs | 14 | 15% | -- | -- | 7% | -8 |
| ELLs | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Kittredge | 20 | 53% | 48% | 32% | 15% | -38 |
| High Needs | 8 | 39% | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Econ. Dis. | 7 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| SWDs | 3 | 45% | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| ELLs | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Nessacus Regional Middle | 145 | 32% | 38% | 34% | 31% | -1 |
| High Needs | 62 | 17% | 22% | 14% | 18% | 1 |
| Econ. Dis. | 47 | -- | 27% | 19% | 19% | -- |
| SWDs | 23 | 13% | 5% | 0% | 13% | 0 |
| ELLs | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Wahconah Regional High | 145 | 87% | 83% | 87% | 89% | 2 |
| High Needs | 44 | 72% | 50% | 71% | 75% | 3 |
| Econ. Dis. | 38 | -- | 58% | 78% | 82% | -- |
| SWDs | 11 | -- | 28% | -- | 36% | -- |
| ELLs | 2 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |

**Between 2013 and 2016, the district’s four-year cohort graduation rate improved by 1.8 percentage points for all students and improved for each subgroup with reportable data except for economically disadvantaged students.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 17: Central Berkshire RSD**  **Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Subgroup, 2013–2016** | | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **N**  **(2016)** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2016)** |
| High needs | 57 | 78.8% | 87.0% | 84.5% | 84.2% | 5.4 | 79.1% |
| Economically Disadvantaged\* | 51 | 82.6% | 87.8% | 87.8% | 82.4% | -0.2 | 78.4% |
| ELLs | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 64.1% |
| SWD | 14 | 63.6% | 78.6% | 68.8% | 71.4% | 7.8 | 71.8% |
| African American/Black | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 78.9% |
| Asian | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 92.7% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 1 | 83.3% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 72.7% |
| Multi-Race, non-Hisp./Lat. | 6 | -- | -- | -- | 100% | -- | 84.3% |
| White | 123 | 90.3% | 94.3% | 92.7% | 91.1% | 0.8 | 91.9% |
| All students | 131 | 89.8% | 94.5% | 92.5% | 91.6% | 1.8 | 87.5% |
| \* Four-year cohort graduation rate for students from low income families used for 2013, 2014, and 2015 rates. | | | | | | | |

**Between 2012 and 2015, the district’s five-year cohort graduation rate improved by 1.8 percentage points for all students, and improved for each subgroup with reportable data except for students with disabilities.**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 18: Central Berkshire RSD**  **Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Subgroup, 2012–2015** | | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **N**  **(2015)** | **2012** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2015)** |
| High needs | 58 | 85.0% | 88.5% | 89.1% | 86.2% | 1.2 | 82.0% |
| Economically Disadvantaged\* | 49 | 86.4% | 93.5% | 90.2% | 89.8% | 3.4 | 81.6% |
| ELLs | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 70.2% |
| SWD | 16 | 78.4% | 63.6% | 85.7% | 68.8% | -9.6 | 74.5% |
| African American/Black | 2 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 82.3% |
| Asian | 2 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 94.1% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 2 | -- | 83.3% | -- | -- | -- | 75.8% |
| Multi-Race, non-Hisp./Lat. | 3 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 88.0% |
| White | 150 | 91.4% | 94.7% | 95.1% | 93.3% | 1.9 | 93.1% |
| All students | 159 | 91.3% | 93.7% | 95.3% | 93.1% | 1.8 | 89.4% |
| \* Four-year cohort graduation rate for students from low income families used for 2012, 2013, and 2014 rates. | | | | | | | |

**In 2016, in-school suspension rates were more than twice the state rate for all students and for each subgroup with reportable data.**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 19: Central Berkshire RSD**  **In-School Suspension Rates by Subgroup, 2013–2016** | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2016)** |
| High Needs | 7.3% | 6.5% | 7.3% | 6.5% | -0.8 | 2.9% |
| Economically disadvantaged\* | 7.8% | 6.9% | 7.6% | 6.5% | -1.3 | 3.2% |
| ELLs | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 1.9% |
| SWD | 7.1% | 7.2% | 8.0% | 8.8% | 1.7 | 3.5% |
| African American/Black | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 3.7% |
| Asian | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 0.6% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 6.4% | 9.3% | -- | 10.3% | 3.9 | 3.1% |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic or Latino | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 2.1% |
| White | 4.9% | 4.0% | 4.3% | 4.5% | -0.4 | 1.4% |
| All Students | 4.8% | 4.1% | 4.2% | 4.7% | -0.1 | 1.9% |

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

**Between 2013 and 2016, out-of-school suspension rates declined for all students and for each subgroup with reportable data and in 2016 were below the state rates for each group except white students.**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 20: Central Berkshire RSD**  **Out-of-School Suspension Rates by Subgroup, 2013–2016** | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2016)** |
| High Needs | 4.7% | 3.6% | 2.2% | 3.3% | -1.4 | 4.9% |
| Economically disadvantaged\* | 4.5% | 3.9% | 2.2% | 3.3% | -1.2 | 5.6% |
| ELLs | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 4.0% |
| SWD | 6.3% | 5.0% | 2.6% | 4.8% | -1.5 | 5.9% |
| African American/Black | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 6.9% |
| Asian | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 0.8% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 10.6% | 3.7% | -- | 3.4% | -7.2 | 5.7% |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic or Latino | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 3.4% |
| White | 2.8% | 2.3% | 2.0% | 2.5% | -0.3 | 1.7% |
| All Students | 2.9% | 2.4% | 1.9% | 2.5% | -0.4 | 2.9% |

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

**Between 2013 and 2016, Central Berkshire’s drop-out rates declined for all students and for each subgroup with reportable data[[2]](#footnote-2) and in 2016 were below the state rates for each group except students with disabilities.**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 21: Central Berkshire RSD**  **Drop-Out Rates by Subgroup, 2013–2016** | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2016)** |
| High Needs | 3.0% | 3.0% | 5.3% | 2.1% | -0.9 | 3.7% |
| Economically disadvantaged\* | 2.2% | 3.6% | 5.2% | 2.0% | -0.2 | 4.1% |
| ELLs | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 6.6% |
| SWD | 4.7% | 3.4% | 8.2% | 4.3% | -0.4 | 3.1% |
| African American/Black | -- | -- | 0.0% | 0.0% | -- | 3.2% |
| Asian | 0.0% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 0.7% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0 | 4.5% |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic or Latino | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0 | 2.4% |
| White | 1.4% | 1.9% | 1.6% | 0.8% | -0.6 | 1.1% |
| All students | 1.3% | 1.8% | 1.5% | 0.7% | -0.6 | 1.9% |
| \*Drop-out rates for students from low income families used for 2013 and 2014 rates. | | | | | | |

Curriculum and Instruction

**Contextual Background**

For the 2017–2018 school year, the superintendent strategically reorganized district personnel to create a network of positions to oversee curriculum and instruction. A director of teaching and learning, a new position in 2017–2018, is responsible for coordinating and strengthening curriculum, instruction, and professional learning in the district. In addition, the director oversees ELA and math K–6. Newly defined in 2017–2018 are the positions of content coordinators for ELA and math for grades 7–12 and for science K–12, as well as content coordinators in all other subject areas. The content coordinators teach half time and work collaboratively with the director of teaching and learning and the five principals to support curriculum and instruction. In their role as instructional leaders, the principals also interact with district leaders as well as teachers to improve teaching, learning, and the curriculum. A new leadership team at the middle school has provided needed expertise and commitment to improving instruction in grades 6–8.

The district has provided the director of teaching and learning, content coordinators, and principals with dedicated time to share information, analyze data, model and coach teachers in instruction, and review curriculum. With the support of these individuals, teachers can design and revise curriculum and improve instruction.

At the time of the review in October 2017, the district was piloting several math and science programs at the middle school. These include: *iScience, Go Math, Big Ideas Math,* and *Discovery.* In 2017–2018, *Foss Science* kits are in the third year of implementation. The piloting of many programs has created a sense of urgency in the district and for some educators, a sense of overload.

The district’s instructional vision is one of inclusivity and equity—that all students can learn and have access to high-quality instruction and learning experiences. Toward that end, the district has introduced two frameworks, Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and the Collaborative Inquiry (CI) protocol, and expanded the Workshop Model of instruction and co-teaching.

UDL is a framework that supports the district’s vision and frames instructional design. UDL provides strategies for teachers and other educators to remove barriers to learning—whether they are academic, social-emotional, or physical. Over 80 percent of the district’s teachers have participated in introductory UDL professional development (PD) since the beginning of 2016–2017 and follow-up PD is planned in 2017–2018. Achieving mastery of UDL strategies is an ongoing district goal; the superintendent counsels patience and perseverance over time to use UDL more effectively to support instructional practices.

The CI protocol is a collaborative problem-solving process that guides data analysis and planning. Small groups of teachers and leaders meet regularly to review and discuss student achievement data in order to more effectively design teaching strategies. The district is building the ability to use the CI protocol as a tool to improve how teachers use data to determine what to teach, how to teach, and what students have learned.

The Workshop Model is a lesson structure that includes direct instruction, work time, and share time. Assessment data and other student information inform flexible grouping. This practice started as an innovation grant initiative at one elementary school and has been fully implemented K–6 for literacy and math instruction. At the elementary schools, teachers have gained knowledge and skills in using the model in ELA and math. They are now sharing their expertise with groups of middle- and high-school educators. The district is expanding the use of the Workshop Model into grades 7 and 8 for ELA and math and there are pockets of implementation at the high school.

The district is also expanding co-teaching to focus on the needs of students with disabilities. To do so, it has provided professional development and coaching to ensure that pairs of teachers can maximize planning and shared instructional strategies for the benefit of students. The district’s commitment to inclusivity is evident in the increasing number of co-taught classrooms that support students with disabilities. Regularly scheduled common planning time and ongoing professional development provide collaboration and learning opportunities for educators to realize the district’s vision for high-quality teaching and learning.

**Strength Findings**

**1. For school year 2017–2018, the district has strategically reorganized its curricular/instructional leadership roles and initiated several promising practices to more consistently coordinate and support improvement efforts focused on teaching and learning.**

* 1. Interviews and a document review indicated that the new districtwide position, director of teaching and learning, supports school administrators and teachers in all aspects of teaching and learning by level and content and works closely with school leaders to support school improvement.
     1. The superintendent and other district leaders said that the director of teaching and learning is responsible for the oversight of districtwide curriculum development, professional development, and all learning opportunities that support district initiatives.
        1. The director works closely with the content coordinators and school leaders to ensure that efforts are focused and coordinated.
        2. The director of teaching and learning is responsible for the ELA and math curriculum K–5, and leads and collaborates with other content coordinators.
        3. The director meets monthly with content coordinators and principals to analyze data, conduct walkthroughs, and monitor progress on district curricula initiatives. In addition, she meets with principals and content coordinators throughout the school year.

i. The director of teaching and learning, principals, and content coordinators communicate curriculum and data items reviewed, discussed, and analyzed at their meetings with teachers. The director of teaching and learning and content coordinators further research and discuss curriculum revisions and data interpretations during professional development days, department meetings, common planning time, and/or collaborative inquiry meetings.

2. The director of teaching and learning is a former principal who understands the district systems as well as the responsibilities of school administrators and the needs of the schools.

3. All content coordinators teach half time in their discipline and work half time as a content coordinator.

a. Content coordinators are responsible for sequencing state standards, overseeing curriculum mapping, analyzing data, implementation of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework, modeling best practices, conducting walkthroughs, and being a resource for teachers.

b. Content coordinators meet four times a year to analyze data, look at assessments to determine progress, and determine strategies for improving curriculum.

* 1. The district is implementing a comprehensive, inclusive, and systematic process for the ongoing review and revision of curricula and the use of the UDL Framework and the Collaborative Inquiry protocol.

1. During district professional development days teachers are grouped in grade-specific and/or subject-specific groups across the district to support horizontal and vertical curriculum alignment.

**Impact**: Well-defined roles and inclusive structures and processes to support curricular improvements help ensure that all students have access to a comprehensive curriculum and high-quality instruction. In addition, teachers more likely have a stronger understanding of curriculum and the resources necessary to effectively deliver that curriculum.

**2. The district is establishing promising practices that address students’ academic needs and promote a collaborative, problem-solving approach to improved instruction.**

* 1. The Collaborative Inquiry (CI) protocol is embedded in the instructional work in the district. In collaborative inquiry, teachers work together to identify common challenges, analyze relevant data, and consider instructional approaches. The goal of this work is to increase student learning.
     1. Administrators reported that all K–12 staff has been trained in the CI protocol and said that it is being implemented K–10. Data analysis now grounds instructional decisions.
     2. The teaching and learning team initiates some of this analysis. Administrators and teachers use the CI protocol to inform curricular revisions and to identify instructional initiatives that support student learning.

a. For example, administrators indicated that they used the protocol to review curriculum alignment, common assessments, and student progress data in order to identify district priorities and strategies and interventions that would inform the work of the content coordinators.

* + 1. The district has provided dedicated time for teachers to analyze data. Teachers at all levels stated that they have CI protocol blocks built into their schedules. Teachers analyze MCAS results, district benchmark assessments, and EWIS data to identify at-risk students and support interventions, establish strategy groupings, inform instructional and curricular adjustments, and decide which resources to adopt.
    2. Principals support teachers in Collaborative Inquiry meetings as assessment data is analyzed. Strategy groupings and related instructional strategies are designed based on the data analysis. At the time of the onsite in October 2017, this activity had been in place K–6 for a year and was new in grades 7 and 8.
    3. A document review indicated that the CI protocol is embedded in district guidance department documents. School Improvement Plans include the protocol as the means by which goals are met. The district’s Tiered Support Systems document references bi-weekly CI protocol meetings where small-group instruction is determined based on the analysis of common assessment data and student work. In addition, the district’s UDL Plan includes the use of the CI protocol to improve inclusive practice and student achievement.
  1. The Workshop Model, a research-based lesson structure, has evolved from a grass-roots teacher initiative to become the district’s model for instructional design. It serves as a major catalyst for change in the district. Through the model’s adoption, school culture has shifted from isolated classroom/school silos to a systemic and collaborative approach to instructional design.
     1. During 2011–2012, the principal of the Becket Washington School wrote an application for a grant to make the Becket Washington School an ESE innovation school.[[3]](#footnote-3) The goal of the grant’s five-year plan was to increase student proficiency in writing across the disciplines. Once the grant was awarded, all Becket Washington teachers participated in yearly on-site ELA trainings facilitated by senior staff developers from Columbia Teachers College Reading and Writing Project over a five-year period.
     2. The district developed a comprehensive professional development plan that incrementally provided K–5 training in the TCRWP units of study in writing and reading; by the summer of 2015 all K–5 teachers in the district had received training in reading and writing. The Workshop Model is now fully implemented at the elementary level and has become the elementary instructional model for teaching literacy (reading and ELA) and mathematics.
     3. Principals and teachers told review team members that implementation of the Workshop Model has promoted greater teacher collaboration. In recent years, the initiative has been expanded to the middle and high schools. Teachers in grades 6–8 received writing training during the summer of 2017 and lesson modeling and observations are available to middle-school teachers. Administrators also reported pockets of implementation of the Workshop Model at the high school.
     4. Implementation of the Workshop Model has effectively shifted the culture among principals to one of collaboration and data analysis. For example, each principal has assumed oversight for an MCAS tested grade across three schools.

**Impact**: The continued fine tuning and expansion of the CI protocol and Workshop Model is helping the district to achieve its goal for all students to learn and have equitable access to rigorous, research-based instruction that meets their needs and prepares them for advanced learning. The way in which these practices have been introduced and implemented is strengthening collaboration and problem-solving among educators.

**Challenges and Areas of Growth**

**3. The district’s 6–12 ELA, mathematics, and science curricula are incomplete and not aligned vertically and horizontally with the 2017 Massachusetts ELA/Literacy and Math Curriculum Frameworks or the 2016 Science, Technology and Engineering Curriculum Framework.**

* 1. Interviews and a document review indicated that the elementary schools have the most comprehensive curriculum guides/roadmaps.

1. The K–5 ELA, math, and science curricula are documented and aligned with the current Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and are vertically and horizontally aligned across the three elementary schools. The elementary schools are using Readers and Writers Workshop and Envision Math.

2. Grade 5 is piloting *iScience* and the *Discovery Science* curricula.

3. A districtwide expectation for the 2017–2018 school year is that K–5 teachers will follow curriculum maps as documented on the K–5 standards-based report cards.

* 1. The implementation of the middle-school curriculum is transitioning to the Workshop Model. In addition, every middle-school student is participating in a pilot program in science, math, or both.

Administrators said that the teachers at the middle school are transitioning to the Workshop Model for reading and writing; grade 7 has adopted the Model for writing and plans to adopt and integrate the reading component soon. Grade 6 teachers are using the Workshop Model for reading and are beginning to use the Workshop Model for writing.

Grade 6 is piloting *iScience*.

*Go Math* and *Big Ideas Math* are pilot programs in grades 6–8.

A districtwide expectation for school year 2017–2018 is that grade 6 teachers will follow Readers and Writers curriculum maps as documented on the grade 6 standards-based report card.

1. Interviews and a document review indicated that the high-school curriculum consists of sequential coursework in ELA, math, and science; work to align curriculum with the current Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks is ongoing.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Each department at the high school has a Personal Learning Network (PLN) composed of subject-specific teachers who meet regularly to review curriculum/data.

Administrators and content coordinators agreed that the high-school curriculum needs vertical and horizontal alignment.

1. A document review indicated that curriculum guides and roadmaps for grades 7–12 are missing some components of a comprehensive curriculum map such as assessments.

ELA, science and math documents for grades 7–12 refer to the Common Core state standards rather than to the current Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.

Other than the ELA curriculum, curriculum maps do not include the standards for literacy in the content areas, which support an interdisciplinary approach for reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

Curriculum documents do not reflect essential components of the UDL framework which administrators, content coordinators, and teachers described as the district’s overarching framework for teaching and learning.

**E.** Administrators said that science curriculum is aligned K–12 except for biology.

**Impact**: Without fully aligned, comprehensive curricula supported by common instructional resources, all students do not have access to cohesive and rigorous learning opportunities.

**4. In observed classrooms, the quality and rigor of instruction was inconsistent across the district. In contrast to the elementary- and high-school levels, at the middle school there was a generally low incidence of instruction that was engaging, encouraged active participation, required higher-order thinking and discussion of ideas and content, and provided opportunities for students to engage with meaningful, real-world tasks.**

1. **Focus Area #1: Learning Objectives & Expectations.**  In most observed classrooms teachers demonstrated knowledge of subject matter and content. At the same time, there was variation in the use of instructional practices that reflected elements of effective instructional design including clearly articulated learning objectives and appropriate classroom activities that match learning goals.
2. In observed classrooms, the review team saw sufficient and compelling evidence that teachers ensured that students understand what they should be learning and why (characteristic # 2) in 78 percent of elementary classes, in 42 percent of middle-school classes, and in 89 percent of high- school classes.
   1. Teachers who provided clear learning objectives shared them orally with students throughout the lesson and many posted learning objectives in a prominent location in the room. In addition, when observers asked students in these classes what they were learning and why this was important, students articulated the purpose of the lesson activity and placed it in a larger context (e.g., “We are extending our knowledge about land forms by studying the impact of tsunamis.”)
   2. In some classrooms teachers posted the learning objective but did not refer to it during the activity. Students often worked individually on a worksheet or task and when asked what they were learning, they reiterated the directions for completing the worksheet or task.
3. Observers noted sufficient and compelling evidence that teachers used appropriate classroom activities that were well aligned to learning objective (characteristic # 3) in 82 percent of elementary classes, in only 47 percent of middle-school classrooms, and in 67 percent of high-school classrooms.
4. **Focus Area #2: Student Engagement & Higher-Order Thinking:** Student-centered instruction that was engaging, promoted active participation, required higher-order thinking and discourse about content and ideas, and provided opportunities for students to engage with meaningful, real-world tasks were observed at all levels. Lessons that reflected these characteristics were of lower incident at the middle school.

Observers saw sufficient and compelling evidence that students assumed responsibility for their own learning and were engaged with their lessons (characteristic # 5) in 87 percent of elementary classes, in 58 percent of middle-school classes, and in 61 percent of high-school classes.

The review team observed sufficient and compelling evidence of students engaged in tasks requiring the use and application of critical thinking (characteristic # 6) in 74 percent of elementary classes, in just 47 percent of middle-school classes, and in 67 percent of high-school classes.

One example of students engaged in higher-order thinking took place in an English class where students analyzed their own writing and a partner’s writing for various strengths or challenges based on a rubric. Students were required to share evidence with their partner to support their revision recommendations. In another example of students thinking critically, students in a biology class used a variety of resources to analyze tissue samples on slides to identify the four cell tissue types, their location in the body, and function.

In classes in which students did not engage in higher-order thinking, teachers presented a concept to students lecture style and then distributed a worksheet for students to complete. Questions did not probe or extend student thinking. Work was independently completed; students did not have an opportunity to share their thinking or strategies with each other.

A review team member had the opportunity to observe two classes that had the same objective (student analysis of literature) but reflected different instructional approaches. One lesson was designed for whole-group instruction. Ideas were shared student to teacher and students completed the task individually. In the second classroom, students analyzed the text and applied themes to their lives during animated discussions within small groups.

Observers found sufficient and compelling evidence that students communicated their ideas and thinking with each other (characteristic # 7) in 65 percent of elementary classes, in only 26 percent of middle-school lessons, and in 75 percent of high-school classrooms.

The team noted sufficient and compelling evidence of students engaged in tasks connected to their lives or with the larger world (characteristic #8) in 65 percent of elementary classrooms, in only 37 percent of middle-school classes, and in 72 percent of high-school classrooms.

**C. Focus Area #3: Inclusive Practice & Classroom Culture** In most observed classrooms across the district, classroom climate was conducive to teaching and learning. Classroom routines and positive supports were in place to ensure that students were focused on the task of learning. Although the district has engaged in a thoughtful and comprehensive plan for the training and implementation of inclusive practices using Universal Design for Learning (UDL) guidelines, observed lessons did not consistently provide opportunities for all students to engage in thought-provoking tasks. The use of a variety of instructional strategies was of lowest incident in middle-school classrooms.

1. In observed classrooms, review team members saw sufficient and compelling evidence of lesson content that was challenging and accessible for all learners (characteristic #9) in 61 percent of elementary- and high-school classes and in only 37 percent of middle-school classes.

Teachers in these classrooms offered multiple means of representation by illustrating content through multiple media and activating or supplying background knowledge. Student learning was supported through multiple means of action and expression using assistive technologies and multiple tools for construction and composition. Activities optimized individual choice and autonomy and in many classrooms students were encouraged to self-assess and reflect on their learning.

2. Observers found sufficient and compelling evidence of teachers using a variety of instructional strategies (characteristic #10) in 82 percent of elementary classes, in just 37 percent of middle- school classes, and in 73 percent of high-school classrooms.

a. Examples included small-group targeted instruction, Socratic circles to promote the exchange of ideas, a science lab designed around the workshop model, and student investigations using multiple resources.

**Impact**: Without clear learning objectives, sufficient opportunities for higher-order thinking and analysis, and lessons designed to promote active participation and to be accessible by all learners in every classroom, the district cannot ensure that students are adequately prepared to achieve at high levels and to succeed in college and careers.

**Recommendations**

**The district should complete as soon as possible K–12 curriculum in all subjects.**

1. The district has developed common curriculum templates (consensus maps) for kindergarten through grade 12 that include many essential research-based components. These maps should be expanded to include assessments and standards for literacy in the content areas, which support an interdisciplinary approach for reading, writing, speaking and listening. District curricula should be based on the current Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks rather than the Common Core state standards.

1. The district should communicate to teachers the plan for completing the curriculum.

1. The district is encouraged to include key elements of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Framework in curriculum maps.

**Benefits**: Implementing this recommendation will mean updated, comprehensive, and clearly articulated alignment of K–12 curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices. Completion of this work will increase the likelihood that comprehensive and coherent curricula will be delivered in all classrooms. As a result, all students will have equitable access to a high-quality education that promotes higher levels of achievement and enables them to be college and career ready.

**Recommended resources:**

* ESE’s *Massachusetts* *Curriculum Frameworks* web page (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/?section=ela-qrg>) includes links to several resources that provide information and guidance about the 2017 ELA/Literacy and Mathematics Frameworks and the 2016 Science and Technology/Engineering Framework.
* *EdReports* ([www.edreports.org](http://www.edreports.org)) provides evidence-based reviews of instructional materials and other resources.

**2. The leadership team at the middle school should continue its work to improve instruction.**

**A.** The team should use grade-level, team, and department meetings as well as professional development days to support teachers’ and administrators’ development of ideas and strategies.

1. These same structures may also provide educators with opportunities to watch videos of effective teaching and discuss and calibrate their understanding of effective strategies.

**B.** Strategies should be identified that will form every middle-school teacher’s repertoire of instructional tools.

1. Recommended required components include: engaging students with the lesson content or objective; encouraging students’ active participation in the lesson; requiring higher-order thinking and discussion of ideas and content; and providing opportunities for students to engage with meaningful, real-world tasks.

**C.** Frequent observations (formal and informal) with timely, targeted feedback will be essential as teachers implement and extend new practices.

**Benefits:** By implementing this recommendation, the middle school will likely enable educators to learn from each other and to continually improve instruction individually and collaboratively.

Assessment

**Contextual Background**

With recent leadership changes and priority setting at the district and school levels, the district and each school have made progress in developing and implementing a well-balanced assessment system and in creating the practices and culture in which the analysis of data is central to decision-making. Three research-based best-practice frameworks in all schools—the Workshop Model of instruction, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and the Collaborative Inquiry protocol (CI)—are helping educators to use data more effectively.

The Workshop Model requires that teachers analyze achievement results to design differentiated learning activities that address students’ learning needs, usually after a specific skill or content has been shared with a whole class or a large group. Teachers at the elementary level are the most experienced in this use of data to help structure their lessons. They are sharing their expertise with groups of secondary teachers to help increase student-centered instruction in grades 7–12 classes. Progress is evident.

UDL is designed to help leaders and teachers better understand and address students’ learning styles and social-emotional and physical needs to improve achievement. The collection, dissemination, analysis, and discussion of student achievement data and other information help teachers identify and address students’ needs as they plan and implement various instructional strategies and interventions. With 80 percent of staff having participated in introductory UDL professional development, leaders and teachers are making progress in understanding the principles of the UDL framework and implementing it in instructional practice and professional goal setting. Within the context of the district’s implementation of the UDL framework, there is a districtwide focus on using data to narrow achievement gaps, particularly for students with disabilities.

The Collaborative Inquiry (CI) protocol supports a shared investigation of specific data to inform improvement decisions. Using CI, teachers in grade-level and content-based teams are gaining skills in determining what students already know, understand and can do and using that information to decide how teachers should adjust instruction to promote higher levels of achievement. Progress in using CI is evident.

**Strength Finding**

**1. The district is establishing a data-literate culture and is building staff capacity to use data analysis to design instruction, to revise curriculum, and to ensure equitable opportunities to learn. Elementary educators show the most proficiency in the use of data for improvement.**

**A.** District leaders said that there are now common expectations for the use of data across all schools. One administrator noted, “Looking at data is opening new conversations about old problems, such as identifying teachers in need of coaching.”

**B.** District leaders and teachers collect and analyze multiple forms of student performance data to guide improvement decisions.

1. Assessments include MCAS test results, AIMSweb assessments, Readers and Writers Workshop literacy assessments, student writing samples, *enVision* math chapter and unit tests, *GoMath* chapter and unit tests, *Fundations* assessments, *iScience* chapter tests, *FOSS* science tests, Study Island benchmark assessments, and PSAT, SAT, and other summative and formative assessments from both elementary and secondary classrooms.

2. Interviewees at all levels described a robust system of formative, summative, and benchmark assessments that provide data to inform decision-making.

3. These assessments and other student information, such as EWIS (Early Warning Indicator System) data, inform discussions and decisions at various team meetings.

4. At the time of the onsite in October 2017, the district was collecting data about its data practices. It conducted a districtwide survey on evidence-based instruction to learn more about how teachers and leaders use data for instructional decision-making.

5. Interviews and a review of educator evaluation documents indicated that teachers use data to set professional improvement goals and to measure progress in achieving them.

**C.** District leaders noted several district priorities for the strategic use of data for improvement:

1. Using the Collaborative Inquiry (CI) protocol for teams to identify trends and patterns in student achievement and student indicators.

2. Using data to monitor students’ progress and to improve their learning experiences.

3. Using data to improve rigor by having more students stretch themselves in advanced level classes such as AP. (The district has compared its AP data with those of other districts to better understand its enrollment and achievement.)

4. Using data to close the achievement gap between students in general education and students with disabilities.

5. At the time of the onsite in October 2017, the district had been using data for more than a year to group K–6 students for instruction. In 2017–2018, this practice is new in grades 7 and 8.

**D.** The three elementary schools use the CI protocol to analyze and use data for improvement.

1. The culture and practices at all three elementary schools indicate that teachers see the analysis and use of data as best practice. They have used student achievement data for several years in grade-level and content-level meetings to design instruction.

a. K–5 teachers described how n ELA and math they use data to prioritize student learning goals, measure and monitor student progress and achievement, and inform instructional and curricular decision-making.

b. Teachers also use data to guide academic and social-emotional interventions through tiered instruction with push-in support in classrooms from special education teachers and Title I teachers.

2. Interviewees stated and a document review confirmed that the CI protocol is in “full swing” at the elementary schools. There, grade-level teams use CI to analyze student progress and achievement in ELA and math. The protocol has helped teachers design targeted action steps to address the needs of struggling students as well as to fine-tune and revise instruction and curriculum.

3. Interviews and a document review provided examples of how the CI protocol has improved how data is used to improve K–6 instruction and the curriculum, and pointedly linked to the UDL framework and the Workshop Model.

4. Interviews and a document review indicated regularly scheduled time for K–5 teachers and leaders to collaborate in grade- and content-level teams and faculty meetings to analyze and discuss student data and other information.

a. A district leader said that every elementary school has a mechanism and a group of teachers responsible for looking at data. In the small elementary schools with one classroom per grade, all the teachers function as a data team.

b. The elementary schools require teachers to spend 90 minutes a month discussing ELA and math data; one staff meeting is dedicated to discussing data. Four times a year grade-level teams from across the district meet to analyze student performance data. The expectation is that teachers analyze the data before meetings and arrive prepared for discussion.

5.The recent creation of a K–5 standards-based report card has clarified teachers’ understanding of how benchmark assessments are aligned with state standards. The report cards were also a catalyst to initiate K–5 grade-alike meetings in 2017–2018 to focus on data analysis.

**E.** The district’s Professional Development Plan for 2017–2018 provides multiple opportunities for teachers to improve their skills in analyzing and using data to better understand student progress and to guide instructional decision-making.

**Impact**: By establishing a culture of data literacy with the capacity to use data well for improvement, the district and each school can ensure stronger learning experiences and access to the curriculum for all students, regardless of learning needs. In addition, the collaboration and cooperation required for deep thinking about student performance data and other data has provided K–5 teachers with opportunities to improve their instructional expertise and their ability to meet students’ needs.

**2. Both the middle and high schools are taking steps to increase and improve data practices.**

**A.** Interviewees told the team that middle-school educators have started to build a more “functional and coherent practice” using the CI protocol to analyze data, but the practice is not consistent across all content areas and all grade levels.

1. Interviewees noted that in the 2016–2017 school year, teacher teams in grades 6–8 began to practice the Collaborative Inquiry (CI) protocol, focusing on what questions to ask and how to facilitate meetings. In the 2017–2018 school year, teams have begun to consider action steps.

2. Interviewees agreed that as data analysis becomes more collaborative and public, it encourages more teacher leadership at the middle school.

3. Under the leadership of a new principal, the middle school has started to analyze EWIS (Early Warning Indicator System) data in Student Support Team and CI meetings to improve teaching and to provide appropriate support for students.

a. Interviewees said that the new middle school principal mentors colleagues in analyzing EWIS data to understand behavioral trends and at-risk factors and to identify students in need of academic and social-emotional support.

**B.** At the high school, there is an effort to engage teachers in more collaborative, team-structured data based discussions and decision-making. This has helped reduce isolation for those who teach one-section classes, which are common in this small school.

1. The CI protocol is now being rolled out in grades 11 and 12 in the 2017–2018 school year with the focus on analyzing data to close the achievement gap in MCAS for students with disabilities.

2. The recent change of content coordinators’ responsibilities to oversee both the middle and the high schools has created a more coherent team approach to looking at trends in student achievement data. As a result, faculty and leaders have more awareness about clear vertical alignment of curriculum and assessments across grades and schools and about sharing best teaching practices.

3. In 2017–2018, the high school is forming an AP teachers’ team to break down the remoteness of solitary courses and to encourage a more cooperative approach to reviewing data and supporting each other’s work.

The high school has also begun to collaborate with the middle school to more effectively use EWIS data. At both schools, leaders, teachers and 6–12 guidance staff are looking more deeply at the needs of high-risk students, especially students with behavioral issues and those with learning disabilities. Interviewees agreed that teachers appreciated having EWIS data available and were exploring the link between MCAS items and local benchmark assessments.

a. For example, the high school has begun a three-tiered system for interventions and begun to use Study Island benchmark assessments for some students. Teachers also look more analytically at topic tests, even though not all are common assessments.

b. As another example, EWIS data has helped teachers identify students on the cusp of chronic absence and when to intervene with students at risk of serial suspension.

**Impact**: When the district has consistent practices for the analysis of student performance data and other information, educators can ensure that high-quality instruction is present in every classroom and offered to all students in a way that meets their diverse learning needs.

**Challenges and Areas for Growth**

**1. The district does not set measurable goals in its district and school plans.**

**A.** Interviews and a reviewofvideos of school committee meetings indicated that at the time of the onsite in October 2017, the district was in the process of drafting a three-year District Improvement Plan (DIP) to be submitted to the school committee in December 2017 for review and approval in January 2018.

**B.** Each school has an improvement plan.

1. School Improvement Plans (SIPs) do not include sufficient data content and data analysis.

a. Most SIPs contain a small amount of data from MCAS results, usually for all students, and not for student sub-groups such as students with disabilities.

b. SIPs do not include formative assessment data.

c. Most SIPs do not provide analysis of student performance data and comparisons among student groups in the district and in the state.

d. The SIPs do not have SMART goals (Specific and Strategic; Measurable; Action-Oriented; Rigorous, Realistic, and Results-Focused; and Timed and Tracked), and because the district does not have a DIP, the SIPs are not aligned to any districtwide goal.

e. The SIPs do not contain interim measurable outcomes that gauge incremental progress to reduce achievement gaps among student groups.

f. The SIPs do not include standard, formal procedures and timelines for progress-monitoring SIP benchmarks and goals and reporting progress toward SIP goals to school councils, staff, and parents.

**Impact statement:**  Without a DIP with data-based SMART goals and SIPs with SMART goals aligned with those in the DIP, stakeholders do not know the direction in which district schools are heading, the plans to achieve their goals, or the extent to which progress is being made.

**Recommendations**

**The district should use student performance data and other data sources to inform planning.**

1. The principals, with the assistance of the school councils, should develop School Improvement Plans (SIPs) with SMART goals that are aligned with the goals in the District Improvement Plan (DIP).

1. The superintendent should ensure that all draft SIPs are rigorous, clear, and include all necessary elements, giving feedback to principals as needed. Once the SIPs have been approved by the superintendent and presented to the school committee, the principals should share them with staff, parents, and the community.

2. The superintendent and the principals should make periodic reports to the school committee and the community on progress toward the achievement of goals in the DIP and the SIPs.

**Benefits:** By implementing this recommendation the district will identify in its improvement planning the goals necessary to improve teaching and learning and the strategies needed to achieve each goal. Through periodic reporting on DIP and the SIP goals by the superintendent and the principals, respectively, stakeholders will know what progress is being made.

**Recommended resources:**

* ESE’s *Planning for Success* tools (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/success/>) support the improvement planning process by spotlighting practices, characteristics, and behaviors that support effective planning and implementation and meet existing state requirements for improvement planning.
* *What Makes a Goal Smarter?* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/presentations/SMARTGoals/Handout5.pdf>) is a description of SMART goals with accompanying examples. The handout was designed to support educators in developing goals as part of the educator evaluation system, but could also be a useful reference for the district as it develops or refines its DIP and SIPs.

Student Support

**Contextual Background**

With the closing of a number of public and private schools in the area, “choice” students[[5]](#footnote-5) have entered the district in increasing numbers.[[6]](#footnote-6) Many of these students have high programmatic and support needs. In the 2016–2017 school year, 37.4 percent of the district’s students are part of the high-needs subgroup because they are in one or more of the following subgroups: economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and English language learners (ELLs) or former ELL students.

The district is committed to supporting the whole child. Leaders and teachers implement several initiatives systemwide that contribute to a positive school culture for students, including a comprehensive health and wellness curriculum. The district’s approach to identifying and addressing the needs of students with disabilities and struggling and at-risk students is comprehensive. The use of Early Warning Information System (EWIS) data is relatively new in some schools, but is a shared focus districtwide and provides continuity in identifying and addressing the needs of students with disabilities and at-risk students over time. Positive behavior interventions and activities at each school reinforce the district’s reputation as one that has high expectations for all students, is safe, and embraces diversity and inclusion.

For grades 9-12, student services leaders and staff, along with school leaders, use a system of tiered interventions for a variety of academic, social-emotional, or behavioral challenges. This includes specific actions that should be taken to support students and who will monitor students’ progress. School leaders and staff convey high expectations and values to students through clear policies with consequences and attention and rewards for students’ positive behavior.

The district has adopted an inclusion model with a concurrent increase in the number of co-taught classrooms, with special education teachers and Title I teachers co-teaching with general education teachers.

**Strength Finding**

**1. The district has a tiered system of supports and interventions in place to address the academic and social-emotional needs of students. Much of the system has been implemented for several years and has resources and broad buy-in from school stakeholders.**

**A.** The district has established a tiered approach of support, with Tier 1 support offered by general education teachers, Tier 2 support increasingly offered via a co-teaching model by special education and Title I teachers in the general education classroom, and Tier 3 support offered by specialists outside the general classroom.

**B.** The district has declared itself a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) district, using an evidence-based approach to ensure that barriers to learning and participation for all students are removed.

1. The district has adopted inclusion supported by co-teaching as the K–12 model for students with disabilities and it is being practiced at all three levels. According to ESE data, in 2015–2016 (latest available data) 72.9 percent of the district’s students with disabilities were served in full inclusion, compared with 71.9 percent of their state peers.

2*.* District leaders spoke of their commitment to removing barriers to learning for struggling students, including students with disabilities.

3. District leaders reported offering K–12 professional development (PD) in co-teaching beginning in late 2015 and more recent and extensive PD in UDL in order to develop a districtwide approach to supporting students.

**C.** Teachers reported that at the elementary level special education teachers and general education teachers have common planning time when they can share effective strategies and discuss data.

**D.** District leaders told the team that the director of teaching and learning analyzes data from various assessments and shares her analysis with principals and content coordinators to guide their conversations with teachers. Other programs also provide data for teachers to monitor.

1. AIMSweb, currently used across the elementary schools, provides formative data that the director of teaching and learning uses to develop strategies for grouping students every six weeks based on their needs. This schedule ensures that teachers are frequently informed about which students need more support and can respond to their needs promptly.

2. Study Island is used as an intervention program in ELA and math in grades 6–8. It is designed to remediate the skills of students and accommodate their specific needs. In 2017–2018, students at the high school are participating in Study Island benchmark assessments as part of the efforts by education leaders to identify specific skills with which grade 9 and 10 students need support.

**E.** The district has implemented several districtwide initiatives to support the social-emotional and behavioral needs of students and provide students specific support when needed.

The district has implemented a K–12 health and wellness curriculum with age-appropriate focus and increased choice of courses by students, including relaxation activities such as yoga, and the Botvin Lifeskills Training, described as a replacement for the Drug Abuse Resistance Education Curriculum (DARE). The health and wellness curriculum helps students to deal with stress and peer pressure and to develop self-esteem.

During Reality Day at the high school students have mock interactions with community members and learn the cost of purchasing a car and food, for example.

Academic leaders and student support personnel are focused on equitable practices at the high school. Interviewees reported activities designed to help students graduate from high school and to support students at risk of not graduating.

1. High-school students reported that guidance counselors and adjustment counselors are available when students need someone to talk to or need help planning their coursework. Also, teachers are willing to come to school early and stay late to support students if they need help and guidance as well as to oversee and attend students’ extra-curricular activities.
2. The counseling coordinator oversees all guidance counselors in grades 6–12, ensuring continuity in the attention given to all students, including those at risk academically or behaviorally.
3. Interviewees said that administrative staff at the elementary and secondary levels track all students’ attendance in order to identify students who may be struggling in school and who are at risk of not graduating.

i. For example, at Craneville Elementary School when a student has a certain number of absences, a school leader or the school nurse calls the parent or guardian to explore reasons for the absence.

ii. At the high school, the assistant principal and the administrative assistant, who tracks attendance, meet bi-weekly with guidance personnel and student adjustment counselors to review students’ absence and make plans to address high absence without making absence a discipline issue.

1. For students at the secondary level, a new system of tiered interventions has been implemented delineating academic or behavior risks, the specific high-school leader and/or student support staff responsible for intervening with students demonstrating those risks, and the specific actions students and staff should take.
2. Review team members were told that The Continuing Education Plan is a template used at the high school for monitoring the progress of students disengaging from high school. It includes individualized expected actions for students and details who will monitor their completion. One interviewee reported, “Dropping out is not an option.”

**F.** District schools have policies and programs in place to ensure a safe respectful school environment.

For example, high-school leaders reported spending a lot of time explaining bullying. When two students cannot get along, the assistant principal may establish and monitor a “no contact policy” between involved students. This can last indefinitely or can be rescinded at the request of both students. One leader estimated that there might be 50 no-contact pairs per year.

Several parents reported incidents of bullying at the elementary level, noting that school personnel handled the incidents effectively.

School leaders articulated the expectations they set for respectful and safe schools. In focus groups, school leaders and students delineated several positive behavior reward activities in place in the district.

Stickers for positive behavior are given at elementary schools; at one a “Superheroes” program reinforces positive behaviors.

The district has provided professional development on positive behavior interventions systemwide.

At the high school, the Renaissance Committee regularly and publicly rewards students’ meritorious efforts. On “Terrific Tuesday,” teachers email parents and/or guardians about the positive behaviors of their students.

The new middle-school principal has begun training students and school staff to implement a Restorative Justice program to respond to---and determine consequences for---students’ negative behaviors.

High-school students reported that their school was a safe place for all students where diversity was respected.

a. They cited the success of the Buddy Program for students with disabilities and the Gay-Straight Alliance for LGBTQ students.

b. Students expressed the view that the newly relaxed dress policy indicated that teachers respected them for their choices, noting that most students wear appropriate clothing.

**Impact**: When a district has a unified tiered system of support in place to address the academic and social-emotional needs of students, sets clear expectations, and provides responsive interventions and practices, it likely identifies struggling students early, provides supports rapidly, and increases time spent on learning.

When students and families experience schools as safe and supportive, students can focus their attention on learning and parents can fully participate in the life of the school and support their children’s learning.

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

Review Team Members

The review was conducted from October 24–26, 2017, by the following team of independent ESE consultants.

1. James Caradonio, Ed. D.
2. Mary Jo Nawrocki
3. Michele Kingsland-Smith
4. Linda L. Greyser, Ed. D.
5. Janet Smith, Ph. D.

District Review Activities

The following activities were conducted during the review:

The team conducted interviews with three members of the school committee.

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

The team conducted interviews/focus groups with the following central office administrators: superintendent and director of teaching and learning.

The team visited the following schools: Becket-Washington Elementary School (Pre-K–5), Craneville Elementary School (Pre-K–5), Kittredge Elementary School (Pre-K–5), Nessacus Regional Middle School (grades 6–8), and Wahconah Regional High School (grades 9–12).

During school visits, the team conducted interviews with five principals and focus groups with seven elementary-school teachers, and one middle-school teacher.

The team observed 60 classes throughout the district: 18 at the high school, 19 at the middle school, and 23 at the 3 elementary schools.

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

* + Student and school performance data, including achievement and growth, enrollment, graduation, dropout, retention, suspension, and attendance rates.
  + Resource Allocation and District Action Reports (RADAR).
  + Data on the district’s staffing and finances.
  + Published educational reports on the district by ESE and the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC).
  + District documents such as district and school improvement plans, school committee policies, curriculum documents, summaries of student assessments, job descriptions, collective bargaining agreements, evaluation tools for staff, goal-setting documents, professional development plans, standards-based report cards, handbooks, school schedules, and the district’s end-of-year financial reports.

Site Visit Schedule

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Tuesday**  October 24, 2017 | **Wednesday**  October 25, 2017 | **Thursday**  October 26, 2017 |
| Orientation with district leaders and principals; document reviews; interview with teachers’ association; secondary schools teacher focus group; and visits to Craneville Elementary School, Kittredge Elementary School, and Nessacus Regional Middle School for classroom observations. | Interviews with district staff and principals; teacher focus groups; parent focus group; school committee interview; document reviews; and visits to Becket-Washington Elementary School, Kittredge Elementary School, Nessacus Regional Middle School, and Wahconah Regional High School for classroom observations. | High school student focus group; follow-up interviews with district leaders; document reviews; visits to Craneville Elementary School, Nessacus Regional Middle School, and Wahconah Regional High School for classroom observations; district wrap-up meeting with the superintendent. |

Appendix B: Enrollment, Attendance, and Expenditures

**Table B1a: Central Berkshire RSD**

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

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Student Group** | **District** | **Percent**  **of Total** | **State** | **Percent of**  **Total** |
| African-American | 13 | 0.8% | 84,996 | 8.9% |
| Asian | 18 | 1.1% | 63,690 | 6.7% |
| Hispanic | 53 | 3.3% | 184,782 | 19.4% |
| Native American | 1 | 0.1% | 2,125 | 0.2% |
| White | 1,485 | 91.7% | 584,665 | 61.3% |
| Native Hawaiian | -- | -- | 855 | 0.1% |
| Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic | 50 | 3.1% | 32,635 | 3.4% |
| All Students | 1,620 | 100.0% | 953,748 | 100.0% |
| Note: As of October 1, 2016 | | | | |

**Table B1b: Central Berkshire RSD**

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

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Student Group** | **District** | | | **State** | | |
| **N** | **Percent of High Needs** | **Percent of District** | **N** | **Percent of High Needs** | **Percent of State** |
| Students w/ disabilities | 228 | 37.6% | 14.0% | 167,530 | 38.4% | 17.4% |
| Econ. Disad. | 473 | 77.9% | 29.2% | 288,465 | 66.1% | 30.2% |
| ELLs and Former ELLs | 11 | 1.8% | 0.7% | 90,204 | 20.7% | 9.5% |
| All high needs students | 607 | 100.0% | 37.4% | 436,416 | 100.0% | 45.2% |
| Notes: As of October 1, 2016. District and state numbers and percentages for students with disabilities and high needs students are calculated including students in out-of-district placements. Total district enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 1,623; total state enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 964,514. | | | | | | |

**Table B2: Central Berkshire RSD**

**Attendance Rates by Subgroup, 2014–2017**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **N (2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2017)** |
| High Needs | 627 | 94.8 | 94.8 | 94.3 | 93.8 | -1.0 | 93.1 |
| Econ. Dis. | 490 | -- | 94.6 | 94.3 | 93.3 | -- | 92.6 |
| ELLs | 11 | 94.9 | 96.4 | 94.0 | 95.9 | 1.0 | 93.5 |
| SWD | 245 | 95.0 | 94.6 | 93.7 | 93.4 | -1.6 | 93.0 |
| African American/Black | 13 | 96.8 | 97.5 | 96.2 | 96.5 | -0.3 | 94.0 |
| Asian | 19 | 96.6 | 94.8 | 96.5 | 95.0 | -1.6 | 96.3 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 62 | 95.5 | 96.0 | 94.4 | 93.3 | -2.2 | 92.8 |
| Multi-Race | 50 | 95.6 | 95.5 | 95.9 | 94.6 | -1.0 | 94.5 |
| White | 1,511 | 95.8 | 95.6 | 95.7 | 95.3 | -0.5 | 95.1 |
| All Students | 1,658 | 95.8 | 95.7 | 95.6 | 95.2 | -0.6 | 94.6 |

**Table B3: Central Berkshire RSD**

**Expenditures, Chapter 70 State Aid, and Net School Spending Fiscal Years 2015–2017**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **FY15** | | | **FY16** | | | **FY17** | | | |
|  | **Estimated** | | **Actual** | **Estimated** | **Actual** | | **Estimated** | | **Actual** | |
| Expenditures | | | | | | | | | | |
| From local appropriations for schools: |  | | | | | | | | | |
| By school committee | $27,772,536 | $26,642,933 | | $27,666,919 | | $26,671,193 | | $27,977,037 | | $26,602,990 |
| From revolving funds and grants | -- | $2,312,945 | | -- | | $2,042,864 | | -- | | $2,042,864 |
| Total expenditures | -- | $28,955,878 | | -- | | $28,714,056 | | -- | | $28,645,831 |
| Chapter 70 aid to education program | | | | | | | | | | |
| Chapter 70 state aid\* | -- | $8,498,034 | | -- | | $8,540,559 | | -- | | $8,629,219 |
| Required local contribution | -- | $10,521,566 | | -- | | $10,815,311 | | -- | | $10,548,832 |
| Required net school spending\*\* | -- | $19,019,600 | | -- | | $19,355,870 | | -- | | $19,178,051 |
| Actual net school spending | -- | $24,382,176 | | -- | | $24,428,300 | | -- | | $25,738,425 |
| Over/under required ($) | -- | $5,362,576 | | -- | | $5,072,430 | | -- | | $6,560,374 |
| Over/under required (%) | -- | 28.2% | | -- | | 26.2% | | -- | | 34.2% |
| \*Chapter 70 state aid funds are deposited in the local general fund and spent as local appropriations.  \*\*Required net school spending is the total of Chapter 70 aid and required local contribution. Net school spending includes only expenditures from local appropriations, not revolving funds and grants. It includes expenditures for most administration, instruction, operations, and out-of-district tuitions. It does not include transportation, school lunches, debt, or capital.  Sources: FY14, FY15, and FY16 District End-of-Year Reports, Chapter 70 Program information on ESE website  Data retrieved 12/13/17 | | | | | | | | | | |

**Table B4: Central Berkshire RSD**

**Expenditures Per In-District Pupil**

**Fiscal Years 2014–2016**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Expenditure Category** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** |
| Administration | $538 | $504 | $620 |
| Instructional leadership (district and school) | $945 | $930 | $1,033 |
| Teachers | $5,399 | $5,479 | $5,459 |
| Other teaching services | $1,261 | $1,287 | $1,196 |
| Professional development | $373 | $279 | $233 |
| Instructional materials, equipment and technology | $421 | $367 | $339 |
| Guidance, counseling and testing services | $523 | $532 | $502 |
| Pupil services | $1,774 | $1,807 | $1,815 |
| Operations and maintenance | $1,186 | $1,392 | $1,375 |
| Insurance, retirement and other fixed costs | $3,039 | $3,314 | $3,791 |
| Total expenditures per in-district pupil | $15,461 | $15,890 | $16,363 |
| Sources: [Per-pupil expenditure reports on ESE website](http://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/statistics/)  Note: Any discrepancy between expenditures and total is because of rounding. | | | |

Appendix C: Instructional Inventory

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Focus Area #1: Learning Objectives & Expectations** |  | Insufficient Evidence | Limited Evidence | Sufficient Evidence | Compelling Evidence | Average Number of points |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (1 to 4) |
| 1. The teacher demonstrates knowledge of the subject matter. | **ES** | 4% | 4% | 35% | 57% | 3.4 |
| **MS** | 11% | 26% | 47% | 16% | 2.7 |
| **HS** | 6% | 22% | 33% | 39% | 3.1 |
| **Total #** | 4 | 10 | 23 | 23 | 3.1 |
| **Total %** | 7% | 17% | 38% | 38% |  |
| 2. The teacher ensures that students understand what they should be learning in the lesson and why. | **ES** | 4% | 17% | 35% | 43% | 3.2 |
| **MS** | 11% | 47% | 37% | 5% | 2.4 |
| **HS** | 0% | 11% | 72% | 17% | 3.1 |
| **Total #** | 3 | 15 | 28 | 14 | 2.9 |
| **Total %** | 5% | 25% | 47% | 23% |  |
| 3. The teacher uses appropriate classroom activities well matched to the learning objective(s). | **ES** | 0% | 17% | 30% | 52% | 3.3 |
| **MS** | 11% | 42% | 21% | 26% | 2.6 |
| **HS** | 0% | 33% | 28% | 39% | 3.1 |
| **Total #** | 2 | 18 | 16 | 24 | 3.0 |
| **Total %** | 3% | 30% | 27% | 40% |  |
| 4. The teacher conducts frequent checks for student understanding, provides feedback, and adjusts instruction. | **ES** | 0% | 4% | 48% | 4% | 3.4 |
| **MS** | 11% | 42% | 21% | 26% | 2.6 |
| **HS** | 0% | 39% | 33% | 28% | 2.9 |
| **Total #** | 2 | 16 | 21 | 21 | 3.0 |
| **Total %** | 3% | 27% | 35% | 35% |  |
| **Total Score For Focus Area #1** | **ES** | 2 | 10 | 34 | 46 | **13.4** |
| **MS** | 8 | 30 | 24 | 14 | **10.3** |
| **HS** | 1 | 19 | 30 | 22 | **12.1** |
| **Total** | 11 | 59 | 84 | 82 | **12.0** |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Focus Area #2: Student Engagement & Higher-Order Thinking** |  | Insufficient Evidence | Limited Evidence | Sufficient Evidence | Compelling Evidence | Average Number of points |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (1 to 4) |
| 5. Students assume responsibility to learn and are engaged in the lesson. | **ES** | 0% | 13% | 48% | 39% | 3.3 |
| **MS** | 11% | 32% | 47% | 11% | 2.6 |
| **HS** | 0% | 39% | 28% | 33% | 2.9 |
| **Total #** | 2 | 16 | 25 | 17 | 3.0 |
| **Total %** | 3% | 27% | 42% | 28% |  |
| 6. Students engage in higher-order thinking. | **ES** | 4% | 22% | 52% | 22% | 2.9 |
| **MS** | 32% | 21% | 42% | 5% | 2.2 |
| **HS** | 0% | 33% | 17% | 50% | 3.2 |
| **Total #** | 7 | 15 | 23 | 15 | 2.8 |
| **Total %** | 12% | 25% | 38% | 25% |  |
| 7. Students communicate their ideas and thinking with each other. | **ES** | 13% | 22% | 39% | 26% | 2.8 |
| **MS** | 26% | 47% | 26% | 0% | 2.0 |
| **HS** | 11% | 14% | 36% | 39% | 3.0 |
| **Total #** | 11 | 18 | 24 | 17 | 2.7 |
| **Total %** | 16% | 26% | 34% | 24% |  |
| 8. Students engage with meaningful, real-world tasks. | **ES** | 22% | 13% | 39% | 26% | 2.7 |
| **MS** | 21% | 42% | 26% | 11% | 2.3 |
| **HS** | 17% | 11% | 44% | 28% | 2.8 |
| **Total #** | 12 | 13 | 22 | 13 | 2.6 |
| **Total %** | 20% | 22% | 37% | 22% |  |
| **Total Score For Focus Area #2** | **ES** | 9 | 16 | 41 | 26 | **11.7** |
| **MS** | 16 | 28 | 27 | 5 | **9.1** |
| **HS** | 6 | 19 | 25 | 22 | **12.0** |
| **Total** | 31 | 63 | 93 | 53 | **11.0** |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Focus Area #3: Inclusive Practice & Classroom Culture** |  | Insufficient Evidence | Limited Evidence | Sufficient Evidence | Compelling Evidence | Average Number of points |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (1 to 4) |
| 9. The teacher ensures that students are engaging in challenging tasks regardless of learning needs. | **ES** | 4% | 35% | 39% | 22% | 2.8 |
| **MS** | 21% | 42% | 32% | 5% | 2.2 |
| **HS** | 11% | 28% | 44% | 17% | 2.7 |
| **Total #** | 7 | 21 | 23 | 9 | 2.6 |
| **Total %** | 12% | 35% | 38% | 15% |  |
| 10. The teacher uses a variety of instructional strategies. | **ES** | 4% | 13% | 43% | 39% | 3.2 |
| **MS** | 21% | 42% | 32% | 5% | 2.2 |
| **HS** | 6% | 22% | 56% | 17% | 2.8 |
| **Total #** | 6 | 15 | 26 | 13 | 2.8 |
| **Total %** | 10% | 25% | 43% | 22% |  |
| 11. Classroom routines and positive supports are in place to ensure that students behave appropriately. | **ES** | 0% | 0% | 43% | 57% | 3.6 |
| **MS** | 26% | 11% | 32% | 32% | 2.7 |
| **HS** | 0% | 0% | 22% | 78% | 3.8 |
| **Total #** | 5 | 2 | 20 | 33 | 3.4 |
| **Total %** | 8% | 3% | 33% | 55% |  |
| 12. The classroom climate is conducive to teaching and learning. | **ES** | 0% | 0% | 48% | 52% | 3.5 |
| **MS** | 21% | 5% | 53% | 21% | 2.7 |
| **HS** | 0% | 22% | 33% | 44% | 3.2 |
| **Total #** | 4 | 5 | 27 | 24 | 3.2 |
| **Total %** | 7% | 8% | 45% | 40% |  |
| **Total Score For Focus Area #3** | **ES** | 2 | 11 | 40 | 39 | **13.0** |
| **MS** | 17 | 19 | 28 | 12 | **9.8** |
| **HS** | 3 | 13 | 28 | 28 | **12.5** |
| **Total** | 22 | 43 | 96 | 79 | **11.9** |

1. Other factors are also taken into consideration when determining the type of review a district will receive. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. With the exception of subgroups whose drop-out rate was zero (0). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <http://www.doe.mass.edu/redesign/innovation/> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The high-school courses include Algebra I, grades 9–10, Honors Algebra, Algebra II, AP Calculus, Honors Pre –Calculus, Grade 12 Advanced Algebra and Statistics, AP English, English 12, CP Honors, English 9, Chemistry, AP Chemistry, Physics, and Biology. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The school choice program allows parents to send their children to schools in communities other than the city or town in which they reside. Tuition is paid by the sending district to the receiving district. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. According to ESE data, the number of choice-in students has increased steadily in the district, from 102.0 in 2010 to 129.1 in 2013 to 167.8 in 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)