District Review Report

Wareham Public Schools

Comprehensive review conducted December 10–13, 2018

Office of District Reviews and Monitoring

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Commissioner

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Executive Summary

Wareham is a districtin southeastern Massachusetts that is well resourced and has had consistent school and central office leadership in recent years.   The town of Wareham has consistently exceeded net school spending requirements since fiscal year 2012 by percentages that ranged from 8.5 percent in fiscal year 2013 to 24.1 percent in fiscal year 2018.  The district has developed a long-term capital plan and has received approval by the Massachusetts School Building Authority to build a new elementary school.

This support has enabled the district to allocate resources aligned with school improvement plans and to implement an International Baccalaureate program to develop “challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.” At the same time, the district supports a director who oversees the grant-funded, Beyond School Time program. This program provides numerous student support programs, such as extended day summer and during-the-school -year programs and a Pathways to Alternate Student Success program that provides an alternative pathway for high-school students to graduate.

The district closed the Minot Forest Elementary School building in the fall 2018 in preparation for demolition as plans were underway to build a new elementary school for all students in pre-kindergarten to grade 4. K–2 students attend the Decas Elementary School. Students in grades 5 through 7 attend the middle school; the Minot Forest Elementary School (students in grades 3 and 4) is housed in a separate wing of the middle school. Students in grades 8–12 attend the high school.

Over the five years before the onsite review in December 2018, the district developed a collaborative leadership model that has contributed to staff stability, improved student achievement, and fostered a positive relationship with town leaders.  This model has contributed to the consistent implementation of improvement initiatives across the district.

The district is not without challenges.  The district has high rates of chronic absence.[[1]](#footnote-1) In 2018, 17.9 percent of the students were chronically absent, compared with the state rate of 13.2 percent. In addition, in- and out-of-school suspension rates far exceed the state rates.[[2]](#footnote-2) The district is also challenged by the number of students who are choosing to enroll in other districts, approximately 213 in 2018. In 2018, 49 students who came from other districts to enroll in school in Wareham.

**Instruction**

The team observed 93 classes throughout the district: 45 at the 2 high schools, 25 at the 1 middle school, and 23 at the 2 elementary schools. The team observed 30 ELA classes, 26 mathematics classes, and 37 classes in other subject areas. Among the classes observed were 5 special education classes, 30 inclusion classes, and 3 career/technical education classes. The observations were approximately 20–25 minutes in length. All review team members collected data using DESE’s Instructional Inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards-based teaching. This data is presented in Appendix C.

Districtwide in observed lessons, classroom climate was characterized by respectful behaviors, routines, tone, and discourse.

However, in observed classes at the elementary and high-school levels more opportunities are needed for students to engage in instruction that challenges them to use higher-order thinking skills. Students need to participate in more discourse that promotes critical thinking.

**Strengths**

* District and school leaders and town officials have a collaborative working relationship and focus their efforts to improve students’ performance, opportunities, and outcomes.
* District and school leaders and staff use the district’s strategic plan, annual action plans, and School Improvement Plans to drive the development, implementation, and modification of educational programs and practices. The goal of the district’s planning documents is to transform the district.
* District administrators allocate resources based on the goals and priorities of the School Improvement Plans as well as student needs as they arise, and the district acts upon these goals and priorities.
* The district has established a robust and inclusive curriculum review and revision process that is informed by district needs and includes structures to support its implementation.
* The district provides all students access to a range of rigorous academic offerings, learning experiences, and supports that are aligned with students’ ambitions and interests and prepare them for college, careers, and civic engagement.
* The district has implemented a balanced system of assessments across all schools and grades to measure students’ progress and support struggling students. The results are collected, analyzed, and shared in an organized way with stakeholders.
* The district’s educator evaluation system prioritizes opportunities for teachers and administrators to receive high-quality feedback[[3]](#footnote-3) that helps them improve their practice.
* The district has allocated staff and programmatic resources to support students’ needs.
* The district has developed a long-term capital plan and has received approval for the construction of a new elementary school.

**Challenges and Areas for Growth**

* In observed classrooms across the district, instruction did not consistently engage students in higher-order thinking, promote meaningful student discourse about content and their thinking, and ensure that students were supported and challenged regardless of learning needs.
* The district is challenged by high chronic absence and suspension rates.
* The district is facing increasingly high numbers of students choosing to enroll in other districts.

**Recommendations**

* The district should ensure that all teachers provide effective instruction that challenges and supports all students.
* The district should strengthen its efforts to improve student attendance and reduce the need to rely on suspension as a response to misconduct.
* District leaders and town officials should continue to work strategically and collaboratively to improve all students’ performance, opportunities, and outcomes. They should take decisive and collaborative action to prepare projections of enrollment, expenditures, and revenue for the next five years, and develop plans to meet the challenges of declining enrollment.

Wareham Public Schools District Review Overview

Purpose

Conducted under Chapter 15, Section 55A of the Massachusetts General Laws, comprehensive district reviews support local school districts in establishing or strengthening a cycle of continuous improvement. Reviews consider carefully the effectiveness of systemwide functions, with reference to the six district standards used by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE): Leadership and Governance, Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment, Human Resources and Professional Development, Student Support, and Financial and Asset Management. Reviews identify systems and practices that may be impeding improvement as well as those most likely to be contributing to positive results.

DESE can use review reports when identifying technical assistance and other resources to provide to the district.

Methodology

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

Site Visit

The site visit to the Wareham Public Schools was conducted from December 10–13, 2018. The site visit included approximately 40 hours of interviews and focus groups with approximately 55 stakeholders, including school committee members, district administrators, school staff, students, students’ families, and teachers’ association representatives. The review team conducted 3 focus groups with 6 elementary-school teachers, 1 middle-school teacher, and 10 high-school teachers.

A list of review team members, information about review activities, and the site visit schedule are in Appendix A, and Appendix B provides information about enrollment, attendance, and expenditures. The team observed classroom instructional practice in 93 classrooms in 5 schools. The team collected data using DESE’s Instructional Inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards-based teaching. This data is contained in Appendix C.

**District Profile**

Wareham has a town manager form of government and the chair of the school committee is elected. The five members of the school committee meet twice monthly September through June. In 2018, they did not meet in July and met once in August.

The superintendent has been in the position since August 1, 2013. The district leadership team includes the superintendent; the assistant superintendent; the business manager; the director of student services; the director of beyond school time/Collaborative Alternative School (PASS); and the director of family and community engagement and global education. Central office positions have been mostly stable in number in recent years. The district has five principals leading five schools. There are 29 other school administrators, including 5 assistant principals, 2 half-time assistant principals,[[4]](#footnote-4) 5 deans, and 12 department chairs. In the 2017–2018 school year, there were 189 teachers in the district. In the 2017–2018 school year, 2,314 students were enrolled in the district’s 5 schools:

**Table 1: Wareham Public Schools**

**Schools, Type, Grades Served, and Enrollment\*, 2017–2018**

| **School** | **Type** | **Grades Served** | **Enrollment** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| John William Decas Elementary | ES | K–2 | 577 |
| Minot Forest Elementary | ES | Pre-K, 3–4 | 490 |
| Wareham Middle | MS | 5–8 | 726 |
| [Wareham Cooperative Alternative](http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/profiles/student.aspx?orgcode=03100315&orgtypecode=6) | HS | 9–12 | 63 |
| Wareham Senior High | HS | 9–12 | 458 |
| **Totals** | **5 schools** | **Pre-K–12** | **2,314** |
| \*As of October 1, 2017 | | | |

Note: The data in Table 1 do not reflect the district’s grade configuration at the time of the onsite review in December 2018. In school year 2018–2019, the middle school and high school configurations changed to grades 5–7 and grades 8–12, respectively.

Between 2014 and 2018 overall student enrollment decreased by 15.7 percent. Enrollment figures by race/ethnicity and high needs populations (i.e., students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, and English learners (ELs) and former ELs) as compared with the state are provided in Tables B1a and B1b in Appendix B.

The total in-district per-pupil expenditure was higher than the median in-district per-pupil expenditure for 48 K–12 districts of similar size (2,000–2,999 students) in fiscal year 2017: $15,381 as compared with a median of $14,595 (see [District Analysis and Review Tool Detail: Staffing & Finance](http://www.doe.mass.edu/dart/)). Actual net school spending has been above what is required by the Chapter 70 state education aid program, as shown in Table B3 in Appendix B.

Student Performance

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

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| **Table 2: Wareham Public Schools**  **Accountability Percentile, Criterion Reference Target (CRT) Percentage, Reason for Classification** | | | | |
| **School** | **Accountability Percentile** | **CRT Percentage** | **Overall Classification** | **Reason For Classification** |
| Decas | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Minot Forest | 28 | 92% | Nor requiring assistance or intervention | Meeting targets |
| Wareham Middle | 20 | 38% | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Partially meeting targets |
| Wareham Cooperative Alternative | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Wareham Senior High | 42 | 85% | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Meeting targets |
| District | -- | 58% | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Partially meeting targets |

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| **Table 3: Wareham Public Schools**  **Next-Generation MCAS ELA Scaled Scores Grades 3–8, 2017–2018** | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **State (2018)** | **Above/Below** |
| African American/Black | 97 | 487.2 | 487.9 | 0.7 | 490.3 | -2.4 |
| Asian | 7 | 501.5 | -- | -- | 511.6 | -- |
| Hispanic or Latino | 78 | 490.0 | 490.1 | 0.1 | 489.7 | 0.4 |
| Multi-Race | 113 | 486.0 | 490.9 | 4.9 | 502.8 | -11.9 |
| White | 835 | 494.2 | 495.1 | 0.9 | 504.2 | -9.1 |
| High Needs | 738 | 487.2 | 488.7 | 1.5 | 490.1 | -1.4 |
| Econ. Dis. | 650 | 488.8 | 489.7 | 0.9 | 490.2 | -0.5 |
| SWD | 297 | 474.6 | 477.0 | 2.4 | 480.8 | -3.8 |
| EL | 19 | 485.6 | 485.7 | 0.1 | 488.4 | -2.7 |
| All | 1,141 | 492.6 | 493.6 | 1.0 | 500.5 | -6.9 |
| Next Generation MCAS Achievement Levels: 440–470 Not Meeting Expectations; 470–500 Partially Meeting Expectations; 500–530 Meeting Expectations; 530–560 Exceeding Expectations | | | | | | |

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| **Table 4: Wareham Public Schools**  **Next-Generation MCAS Math Scaled Scores Grades 3–8, 2017–2018** | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **State (2018)** | **Above/Below** |
| African American/Black | 97 | 481.0 | 483.4 | 2.4 | 486.9 | -3.5 |
| Asian | 7 | 503.7 | -- | -- | 514.3 | -- |
| Hispanic or Latino | 77 | 482.9 | 483.7 | 0.8 | 487.4 | -3.7 |
| Multi-Race | 112 | 484.8 | 485.9 | 1.1 | 499.7 | -13.8 |
| White | 839 | 488.4 | 490.7 | 2.3 | 501.8 | -11.1 |
| High Needs | 737 | 481.9 | 484.1 | 2.2 | 488.2 | -4.1 |
| Econ. Dis. | 649 | 482.7 | 484.9 | 2.2 | 487.7 | -2.8 |
| SWD | 298 | 471.6 | 473.5 | 1.9 | 479.2 | -5.7 |
| EL | 19 | 480.5 | 484.4 | 3.9 | 488.5 | -4.1 |
| All | 1,143 | 487.2 | 489.0 | 1.8 | 498.4 | -9.4 |
| Next Generation MCAS Achievement Levels: 440–470 Not Meeting Expectations; 470–500 Partially Meeting Expectations; 500–530 Meeting Expectations; 530–560 Exceeding Expectations | | | | | | |

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| **Table 5: Wareham Public Schools**  **Next-Generation MCAS ELA Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations Grades 3–8, 2017–2018** | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **State (2018)** | **Above/Below** |
| African American/Black | 97 | 26% | 24% | -2 | 31% | -7 |
| Asian | 7 | 55% | -- | -- | 71% | -- |
| Hispanic or Latino | 78 | 28% | 32% | 4 | 31% | 1 |
| Multi-Race | 113 | 26% | 32% | 6 | 54% | -22 |
| White | 835 | 40% | 40% | 0 | 58% | -18 |
| High Needs | 738 | 26% | 27% | 1 | 31% | -4 |
| Econ. Dis. | 650 | 28% | 29% | 1 | 32% | -3 |
| SWD | 297 | 6% | 8% | 2 | 14% | -6 |
| EL | 19 | 32% | 16% | -16 | 30% | -14 |
| All | 1,141 | 37% | 37% | 0 | 51% | -14 |

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| **Table 6: Wareham Public Schools**  **Next-Generation MCAS Math Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations Grades 3–8, 2017–2018** | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **State (2018)** | **Above/Below** |
| African American/Black | 97 | 18% | 19% | 1 | 26% | -7 |
| Asian | 7 | 55% | -- | -- | 74% | -- |
| Hispanic or Latino | 77 | 15% | 21% | 6 | 27% | -6 |
| Multi-Race | 112 | 20% | 25% | 5 | 49% | -24 |
| White | 839 | 28% | 32% | 4 | 55% | -23 |
| High Needs | 737 | 18% | 22% | 4 | 28% | -6 |
| Econ. Dis. | 649 | 19% | 22% | 3 | 27% | -5 |
| SWD | 298 | 5% | 8% | 3 | 14% | -6 |
| EL | 19 | 16% | 37% | 21 | 30% | 7 |
| All | 1,143 | 26% | 30% | 4 | 48% | -18 |

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| **Table 7: Wareham Public Schools**  **MCAS ELA Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grade 10, 2017–2018** | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **State (2018)** | **Above/Below** |
| African American/Black | 13 | 91% | 85% | -6 | 85% | 0 |
| Asian | 3 | -- | -- | -- | 95% | -- |
| Hispanic or Latino | 12 | -- | 83% | -- | 78% | 5 |
| Multi-Race | 13 | -- | 100% | -- | 93% | 7 |
| White | 77 | 86% | 86% | 0 | 94% | -8 |
| High Needs | 68 | 84% | 78% | -6 | 79% | -1 |
| Econ. Dis. | 56 | 83% | 80% | -3 | 81% | -1 |
| SWD | 32 | 78% | 66% | -12 | 69% | -3 |
| EL | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 64% | -- |
| All | 120 | 87% | 87% | 0 | 91% | -4 |

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| **Table 8: Wareham Public Schools**  **MCAS Math Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grade 10, 2017–2018** | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **State (2018)** | **Above/Below** |
| African American/Black | 13 | 27% | 54% | 27 | 60% | -6 |
| Asian | 3 | -- | -- | -- | 91% | -- |
| Hispanic or Latino | 11 | -- | 45% | -- | 56% | -11 |
| Multi-Race | 13 | -- | 62% | -- | 79% | -17 |
| White | 75 | 69% | 73% | 4 | 85% | -12 |
| High Needs | 65 | 53% | 52% | -1 | 57% | -5 |
| Econ. Dis. | 54 | 52% | 56% | 4 | 59% | -3 |
| SWD | 31 | 39% | 32% | -7 | 40% | -8 |
| EL | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 44% | -- |
| All | 117 | 63% | 67% | 4 | 78% | -11 |

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| **Table 9: Wareham Public Schools**  **MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grades 5, 8, and 10, 2015–2018** | | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **4-yr change** | **State (2018)** |
| African American/Black | 39 | 20% | 29% | 25% | 31% | 11 | 30% |
| Asian | 5 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 68% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 26 | 37% | 43% | 18% | 15% | -22 | 30% |
| Multi-Race | 40 | 26% | 22% | 33% | 30% | 4 | 54% |
| White | 357 | 42% | 39% | 39% | 40% | -2 | 60% |
| High Needs | 279 | 25% | 24% | 24% | 25% | 0 | 31% |
| Econ. Dis. | 243 | 26% | 26% | 26% | 25% | -1 | 32% |
| SWD | 120 | 12% | 9% | 14% | 16% | 4 | 21% |
| EL | 4 | -- | -- | 40% | -- | -- | 20% |
| All | 473 | 38% | 37% | 35% | 37% | -1 | 53% |

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| **Table 10: Wareham Public Schools**  **Next-Generation MCAS ELA Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Grades 3–8, 2017–2018** | | | | | | |
| **Grade** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **State (2018)** | **Above/Below** |
| 3 | 204 | 27% | 27% | 0 | 52% | -25 |
| 4 | 201 | 35% | 38% | 3 | 53% | -15 |
| 5 | 180 | 38% | 51% | 13 | 54% | -3 |
| 6 | 186 | 40% | 33% | -7 | 51% | -18 |
| 7 | 185 | 48% | 32% | -16 | 46% | -14 |
| 8 | 185 | 31% | 42% | 11 | 51% | -9 |
| 3–8 | 1,141 | 37% | 37% | 0 | 51% | -14 |

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| **Table 11: Wareham Public Schools**  **Next-Generation MCAS Math Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Grades 3–8, 2017–2018** | | | | | | |
| **Grade** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **State (2018)** | **Above/Below** |
| 3 | 206 | 25% | 22% | -3 | 50% | -28 |
| 4 | 202 | 31% | 41% | 10 | 48% | -7 |
| 5 | 181 | 23% | 34% | 11 | 46% | -12 |
| 6 | 184 | 21% | 23% | 2 | 47% | -24 |
| 7 | 185 | 27% | 24% | -3 | 46% | -22 |
| 8 | 185 | 28% | 32% | 4 | 50% | -18 |
| 3–8 | 1,143 | 26% | 30% | 4 | 48% | -18 |

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| **Table 12: Wareham Public Schools**  **MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grades 5, 8, and 10, 2015–2018** | | | | | | | |
| **Grade** | **N (2018)** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **4-yr change** | **State (2018)** |
| 5 | 181 | 51% | 48% | 37% | 41% | -10 | 47% |
| 8 | 185 | 30% | 23% | 28% | 23% | -7 | 35% |
| 10 | 107 | 29% | 45% | 46% | 53% | 24 | 74% |
| All | 473 | 38% | 37% | 35% | 37% | -1 | 52% |

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| **Table 13: Wareham Public Schools**  **English Language Arts and Math Mean Student Growth Percentile, 2018** | | | | | | |
|  | **ELA** | | | **Math** | | |
| **Grade** | **N** | **2018** | **State** | **N** | **2018** | **State** |
| 3 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 4 | 186 | 51.3 | 50.0 | 185 | 64.8 | 50.1 |
| 5 | 156 | 67.2 | 50.1 | 155 | 62.5 | 50.0 |
| 6 | 166 | 46.5 | 50.1 | 165 | 45.2 | 50.0 |
| 7 | 166 | 45.1 | 50.0 | 163 | 52.8 | 50.0 |
| 8 | 171 | 47.0 | 50.0 | 171 | 45.9 | 50.0 |
| 10 | 89 | 55.9 | 49.9 | 89 | 53.6 | 49.9 |

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| **Table 14: Wareham Public Schools**  **Next-Generation MCAS ELA Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations by Grade and School, 2018** | | | | | | | |
| **School** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **3–8** |
| Decas | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Minot Forest | 28% | 39% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 34% |
| Wareham Middle | -- | -- | 55% | 34% | 34% | 44% | 41% |
| District | 27% | 38% | 51% | 33% | 32% | 42% | 37% |
| State | 52% | 53% | 54% | 51% | 46% | 51% | 51% |

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| **Table 15: Wareham Public Schools**  **Next-Generation MCAS Math Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations by Grade and School, 2018** | | | | | | | |
| **School** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **3–8** |
| Decas | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Minot Forest | 23% | 42% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 33% |
| Wareham Middle | -- | -- | 37% | 23% | 26% | 33% | 30% |
| District | 22% | 41% | 34% | 23% | 24% | 32% | 30% |
| State | 50% | 48% | 46% | 47% | 46% | 50% | 48% |

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| **Table 16: Wareham Public Schools**  **MCAS ELA and Math Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grade 10, 2018** | | |
| **School** | **ELA** | **Math** |
| Wareham Cooperative Alternative | 50% | -- |
| Wareham Senior High | 95% | 75% |
| State | 91% | 78% |

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| **Table 17: Wareham Public Schools**  **MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced by School and Grade, 2018** | | | | | | | | |
| **School** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **10** | **Total** |
| Decas | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Minot Forest | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Wareham Middle | -- | -- | 44% | -- | -- | 23% | -- | 33% |
| Wareham Cooperative Alternative | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Wareham Senior High | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 59% | 59% |
| District | -- | -- | 41% | -- | -- | 23% | 53% | 37% |
| State | -- | -- | 47% | -- | -- | 35% | 74% | 52% |

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| **Table 18: Wareham Public Schools**  **Next-Generation MCAS ELA Percent Meeting and Exceeding Expectations by School, 2018** | | | | | | | | | | |
| **School** | **All** | **High Needs** | **Econ. Dis.** | **SWD** | **EL** | **African American** | **Asian** | **Hispanic** | **Multi-race** | **White** |
| Decas | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Minot Forest | 34% | 26% | 29% | 7% | -- | 26% | -- | 38% | 29% | 35% |
| Wareham Middle | 41% | 31% | 33% | 9% | 25% | 26% | -- | 29% | 38% | 45% |
| District | 37% | 27% | 29% | 8% | 16% | 24% | -- | 32% | 32% | 40% |
| State | 51% | 31% | 32% | 14% | 30% | 31% | 71% | 31% | 54% | 58% |

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| **Table 19: Wareham Public Schools**  **Next-Generation MCAS Math Percent Meeting and Exceeding Expectations by School, 2018** | | | | | | | | | | |
| **School** | **All** | **High Needs** | **Econ. Dis.** | **SWD** | **EL** | **African American** | **Asian** | **Hispanic** | **Multi-race** | **White** |
| Decas | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Minot Forest | 33% | 26% | 28% | 11% | -- | 20% | -- | 19% | 25% | 37% |
| Wareham Middle | 30% | 21% | 21% | 7% | 50% | 20% | -- | 18% | 27% | 32% |
| District | 30% | 22% | 22% | 8% | 37% | 19% | -- | 21% | 25% | 32% |
| State | 48% | 28% | 27% | 14% | 30% | 26% | 74% | 27% | 49% | 55% |

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| **Table 20: Wareham Public Schools**  **MCAS ELA and Math Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grade 10, 2015-2018** | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | **ELA** | | | | | **Math** | | | | |
| **School/Group** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **4-yr Change** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **4-yr Change** |
| Wareham Senior High | 86% | 87% | 90% | 95% | 9 | 64% | 68% | 69% | 75% | 11 |
| African American/Black | 91% | 100% | -- | 92% | 1 | 82% | 70% | -- | 58% | -24 |
| Asian | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Hispanic | 92% | 91% | -- | -- | -- | 83% | 82% | -- | -- | -- |
| Multi-race | 63% | 82% | -- | 100% | 37 | 31% | 82% | -- | 58% | 27 |
| White | 88% | 88% | 88% | 95% | 7 | 64% | 65% | 75% | 85% | 21 |
| High Needs | 75% | 72% | 89% | 90% | 15 | 50% | 47% | 60% | 62% | 12 |
| Econ. Dis. | 76% | 74% | 87% | 95% | 19 | 55% | 52% | 60% | 67% | 12 |
| SWD | 54% | 48% | 83% | 78% | 24 | 32% | 16% | 45% | 41% | 9 |
| EL | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |

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| **Table 21: Wareham Public Schools**  **MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Science by School and Student Group, 2015–2018** | | | | | | |
| **School** | **N (2018)** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **4-yr Change** |
| Decas | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Minot Forest | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Wareham Cooperative Alternative | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Wareham Middle | 347 | 43% | 36% | 33% | 33% | -10 |
| African American/Black | 25 | 30% | 25% | 29% | 24% | -6 |
| Asian | 2 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Hispanic | 14 | 21% | 39% | 17% | 7% | -14 |
| Multi-race | 25 | 32% | 19% | 32% | 24% | -8 |
| White | 277 | 47% | 39% | 36% | 36% | -11 |
| High Needs | 203 | 30% | 25% | 23% | 24% | -6 |
| Econ. Dis. | 182 | 31% | 27% | 24% | 24% | -7 |
| SWD | 82 | 14% | 9% | 13% | 11% | -3 |
| EL | 3 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Wareham Senior High | 95 | 29% | 45% | 52% | 59% | 30 |
| African American/Black | 13 | 9% | -- | -- | 46% | 37 |
| Asian | 3 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Hispanic | 9 | 60% | 70% | -- | -- | -- |
| Multi-race | 12 | 13% | 36% | -- | 50% | 37 |
| White | 56 | 32% | 43% | 55% | 70% | 38 |
| High Needs | 48 | 14% | 21% | 37% | 40% | 26 |
| Econ. Dis. | 40 | 15% | 27% | 45% | 38% | 23 |
| SWD | 20 | 5% | 0% | 22% | 35% | 30 |
| EL | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |

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| **Table 22: Wareham Public Schools**  **Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates, 2014–2017** | | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **N**  **(2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2017)** |
| African American/Black | 13 | 91.3 | 54.5 | 79.2 | 53.8 | -37.5 | 80.0 |
| Asian | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 94.1 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 18 | 57.1 | 58.3 | 66.7 | 72.2 | 15.1 | 74.4 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hisp./Lat. | 19 | 80.0 | 76.9 | 78.6 | 68.4 | -11.6 | 85.2 |
| White | 119 | 71.3 | 76.4 | 76.0 | 71.4 | 0.1 | 92.6 |
| High needs | 114 | 66.7 | 63.4 | 68.7 | 62.3 | -4.4 | 80.0 |
| Economically Disadvantaged\* | 108 | 64.9 | 64.7 | 67.3 | 63.0 | -1.9 | 79.0 |
| SWD | 44 | 65.6 | 44.7 | 57.5 | 43.2 | -22.4 | 72.8 |
| EL | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 63.4 |
| All | 173 | 73.5 | 73.0 | 76.4 | 69.4 | -4.1 | 88.3 |
| \* Four-year cohort graduation rate for students from low-income families used for 2014 and 2015 rates. | | | | | | | |

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| **Table 23: Wareham Public Schools**  **Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates, 2013–2016** | | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **N**  **(2016)** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2016)** |
| African American/Black | 24 | 69.2 | 91.3 | 54.5 | 79.2 | 10.0 | 83.4 |
| Asian | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 94.8 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 12 | 85.7 | 57.1 | 66.7 | 83.3 | -2.4 | 76.8 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hisp./Lat. | 14 | 70.0 | 86.7 | 80.8 | 92.9 | 22.9 | 87.4 |
| White | 121 | 84.8 | 76.4 | 80.5 | 77.7 | -7.1 | 93.5 |
| High needs | 115 | 76.1 | 73.2 | 68.8 | 72.2 | -3.9 | 82.9 |
| Economically Disadvantaged\* | 107 | 75.8 | 72.4 | 70.6 | 71.0 | -4.8 | 82.1 |
| SWD | 40 | 72.5 | 67.2 | 50.0 | 65.0 | -7.5 | 76.5 |
| EL | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 70.9 |
| All | 174 | 81.9 | 78.0 | 77.0 | 79.9 | -2.0 | 89.8 |
| \* Four-year cohort graduation rate for students from low-income families used for 2013 and 2014 rates. | | | | | | | |

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| **Table 24: Wareham Public Schools**  **In-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2015–2018** | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2018)** |
| African American/Black | 7.6 | 3.2 | 13.8 | 10.7 | 3.1 | 3.4 |
| Asian | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 0.6 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 14.4 | 8.1 | 11.6 | 8.1 | -6.3 | 2.4 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic or Latino | 11.1 | 5.7 | 10.8 | 10.0 | -1.1 | 2.3 |
| White | 5.3 | 3.8 | 4.9 | 4.4 | -0.9 | 1.4 |
| High Needs | 8.4 | 5.4 | 8.7 | 7.3 | -1.1 | 2.7 |
| Economically disadvantaged\* | 8.5 | 5.0 | 8.7 | 7.3 | -1.2 | 2.9 |
| SWD | 11.2 | 6.9 | 10.4 | 10.0 | -1.2 | 3.3 |
| EL | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 1.8 |
| All | 6.7 | 4.2 | 6.7 | 5.8 | -0.9 | 1.8 |

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| **Table 25: Wareham Public Schools**  **Out-of-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2015–2018** | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2018)** |
| African American/Black | 13.8 | 15.2 | 15.8 | 14.8 | 1.0 | 6.0 |
| Asian | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 0.7 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 12.6 | 16.2 | 12.6 | 14.5 | 1.9 | 5.1 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic or Latino | 12.5 | 16.0 | 11.6 | 15.8 | 3.3 | 3.3 |
| White | 8.5 | 8.0 | 7.6 | 8.7 | 0.2 | 1.9 |
| High Needs | 12.5 | 12.8 | 12.0 | 12.8 | 0.3 | 4.6 |
| Economically disadvantaged\* | 11.9 | 12.7 | 11.8 | 13.0 | 1.1 | 5.4 |
| EL | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 3.7 |
| All | 9.5 | 10.0 | 9.0 | 10.3 | 0.8 | 2.9 |

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| **Table 26: Wareham Public Schools**  **Dropout Rates by Student Group 2014–2017** | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2017)** |
| African American/Black | 4.1 | 9.4 | 13.2 | 7.1 | 3.0 | 2.9 |
| Asian | -- | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | -- | 0.6 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 5.0 | 4.0 | 13.0 | 1.9 | -3.1 | 4.2 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic or Latino | 4.9 | 8.8 | 15.6 | 1.7 | -3.2 | 1.7 |
| White | 4.8 | 6.4 | 6.9 | 6.2 | 1.4 | 1.1 |
| High Needs | 5.2 | 9.7 | 9.7 | 7.2 | 2.0 | 3.5 |
| Economically disadvantaged\* | 4.6 | 9.0 | 11.1 | 7.7 | 3.1 | 3.6 |
| SWD | 8.5 | 12.5 | 9.5 | 7.1 | -1.4 | 3.3 |
| EL | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 6.5 |
| All | 4.8 | 7.2 | 8.7 | 5.4 | 0.6 | 1.8 |
| \*Dropout rates for students from low-income families used for 2014 rates. | | | | | | |

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| **Table 27: Wareham Public Schools**  **Advanced coursework completion** | | | | | |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **Target** |
| African American/Black | 18 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Asian | 7 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Hispanic or Latino | 15 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic or Latino | 21 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| White | 182 | 28.8 | 37.9 | 9.1 | 33.9 |
| High Needs | 125 | 6.8 | 18.4 | 11.6 | 13.8 |
| Economically disadvantaged | 89 | 9.9 | 22.5 | 12.6 | 19.0 |
| SWD | 59 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 5.5 |
| EL | 4 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| All | 246 | 29.0 | 35.4 | 6.4 | 33.6 |

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| **Table 28: Wareham Public Schools**  **Progress toward Attaining English Language Proficiency** | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | **Non-high school** | | | | | **High school** | | | | |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **Target** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **Target** |
| EL | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| All | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |

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| **Table 29: Wareham Public Schools**  **Chronic Absence Rates,\* 2017–2018** | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | **Non-high school** | | | | | **High school** | | | | |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **Target** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **Target** |
| African American/Black | 122 | -- | -- | -- | -- | 52 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Asian | 9 | -- | -- | -- | -- | 10 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Hispanic or Latino | 111 | -- | -- | -- | -- | 43 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Multi-Race, non-Hisp./Lat. | 169 | -- | -- | -- | -- | 55 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| White | 1,148 | -- | -- | -- | -- | 397 | 19.6 | 18.1 | 1.5 | 18.6 |
| High needs | 1,041 | 19.9 | 21.2 | -1.3 | 18.0 | 336 | 25.5 | 26.2 | -0.7 | 23.6 |
| Economically Disadvantaged | 832 | 21.1 | 22.7 | -1.6 | 18.5 | 243 | 30.9 | 28.4 | 2.5 | 28.3 |
| SWD | 394 | 25.1 | 24.9 | 0.2 | 22.7 | 158 | 22.8 | 29.1 | -6.3 | 20.4 |
| EL | 32 | -- | -- | -- | -- | 6 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| All | 1,575 | 15.0 | 16.3 | -1.3 | 13.9 | 566 | 19.6 | 19.3 | 0.3 | 18.5 |
| \* The percentage of students absent 10 percent or more of their total number of student days of membership in a school | | | | | | | | | | |

Leadership and Governance

***Contextual Background***

Overall, there is stability in the district’s leadership team. The superintendent is in her sixth year as leader of the district, and the assistant superintendent is in her fifth year. The director of beyond school time, the Collaborative Alternative School (PASS), and 21st Century Learning and the director of family and community engagement and global education are in their sixth year. The director of pupil personnel is in her second year and the business manager is in her first year.

The superintendent is also building her leadership team at the school level. One elementary principal is in her seventeenth year in the district; the high school principal is in his tenth year. However, the district has an interim middle-school principal in her first year (appointed January 2019) and an elementary principal in her second year. Both have risen through the ranks within the district. Two of the five schools have seen leadership stability at the principal level.

The superintendent has identified four goals to help guide her work to support district improvement: support the new elementary school building project, ensure challenging and engaging instruction, improve the academic performance of all students, and facilitate a communication system to update the school community. The superintendent collaborates with district and school leaders, town officials, and the community to support district improvement.

District and school leaders focus on improvement that addresses students’ attendance, positive behaviors, and academic success. District and school leaders use academic data, staff, student, and family survey results to monitor students’ progress. Leaders and teachers use qualitative and quantitative analysis of data and surveys to measure progress toward district, school, and professional goals.

The district’s budget process and budget recommendations to the school committee address the goals and strategies of the district’s planning documents and the specific needs of students.

The five members of the school committee understand their responsibilities, and focus on improving outcomes for all students. They use the district’s vision and strategic plan to guide their policies, deliberations, and decisions.

**Strength Findings**

**1. District and school leaders and town officials have a collaborative working relationship and focus their efforts to improve students’ performance, opportunities, and outcomes.**

1. Interviews and a review of the minutes of school committee meetings indicated that the school committee worked collaboratively with the superintendent and school leaders on behalf of students.
   * + 1. District and school leaders said that school committee members supported the education of students, sought information about data they received, and focused on school improvement.”
       2. The school committee holds the superintendent accountable for moving the district forward and annually evaluates the superintendent based upon her goals.
2. District leaders and municipal officials have developed a culture of collaboration.
   * + 1. District and town departments and committees meet often during the budget development process to decide the allocations for cost centers.
          1. The budget development process begins in October, and the town and the district collaborate and solve problems to make sure that all district and town departments are considered in the process.

i. A review of the district’s self-assessment submitted in advance of the onsite review indicated that in the five years before the onsite review in December 2018, town officials, school committee members, principals, and school leaders worked together to understand the various needs of the townspeople.

* + - * 1. The superintendent stated that the school committee understood the town’s financial situation and moderated its budget requests accordingly, but still has a positive relationship with the town. Another district leader stated that she had conversations with town officials almost every day.
        2. A review of the minutes of school committee meetings indicated that the town administrator, the town board of selectmen, and the finance committee were invited to budget hearings and presentations at school committee meetings. Town officials told the team that the superintendent and town administrator met during the budget process six to eight times and called each other frequently during the year. Some school committee members are invited to meet with the town board of selectmen. This enables them to express their thoughts about the allocation of resources.

2. District leaders stated that the new school was an example of the school committee and the superintendent advocating for and the town supporting an investment in the district.

1. District and school leaders have also developed a culture of collaboration.
   * 1. The superintendent said that she met with principals weekly as part of their evaluation process. She also visits the schools weekly and meets individually with the principals to discuss progress toward goals. There is also a bi-weekly meeting conducted jointly by the superintendent, the principal, and the school’s leadership team.
     2. School administrators told the team that they met one–to–one with the superintendent weekly, and the superintendent was readily accessible whenever they needed to consult her.
     3. The district ensures that each school has an effective leadership team that assures staff understanding and commitment to the school’s mission and strategies.

School leaders said that the middle school created a leadership team model that mirrored the high-school model. Principals, assistant principals, and department chairs lead the school by facilitating communication and promoting cohesiveness.

District leaders meet with school administrators biweekly, and department chairs and all evaluators monthly. Meetings focus on data review, program development, professional development, classroom walkthroughs, collegial support, calibration practice, or philosophical decisions.

School leaders and teachers told the review team that teachers had leadership opportunities to become a department chair, serve as a mentor, or serve on committees such as school improvement, evaluation, or global education.

1. The school committee and district and school leaders focus on improving the social-emotional and academic growth of all students.
   * 1. Interviews and a document review indicated that the school committee focused on closing performance, access, and opportunity gaps, and that members regularly reviewed disaggregated data to gauge the social-emotional and academic progress of all students.
     2. A review of the minutes of school committee meetings indicated that committee members discussed student enrollment in the International Baccalaureate (IB) program, dropout prevention and alternative programs, and advanced placement enrollment with school staff. District administrators also presented Formative Assessment System for Teachers (FAST), developmental reading assessment (DRA), and Fountas and Pinnell literacy data to show students’ progress.

3. The superintendent stated that she provided “in-depth” data regularly to the school committee.

**Impact**: When district and school leaders have a collaborative working relationship, focus on improving outcomes for students, and advocate for meeting students’ needs, the district is better prepared to improve students’ performance, opportunities, and outcomes.

**2. District and school leaders and staff use the district’s strategic plan, annual action plans, and School Improvement Plans to drive the development, implementation, and modification of educational programs and practices. The goal of the district’s planning documents is to transform the district.**

The district’s strategic plan, which was developed by families, teachers, district and school leaders, and others, drives the district’s work. The school committee approved the five-year strategic plan (2016–2021) in April 2016.

The strategic plan provides a focus on accelerating students’ progress in the district.

Scholarship, leadership, citizenship, and stewardship are the four key principles of the strategic plan. The principles help the schools focus on building a student’s capacity to learn; creating student-centered classrooms; expanding a student’s curiosity and critical thinking; developing a transference of knowledge from subject to subject; and creating expectations for learning.

Each principle has between 4–17 elements or descriptors; the total number of elements for the 4 principles is 32. For example, student voice and student engagement are two elements of Scholarship.

A rubric, which follows the strategic plan, defines goals and expectations for each element of each principle in each of the three stages of transforming Wareham: planning (stage 1), building (stage 2), and transforming (stage 3). [[5]](#footnote-5)

For example, for the element Student Voice under Scholarship, the rubric reads in part:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Rubric Element** | **Planning (stage 1)** | **Building (stage 2)** | **Transforming (stage 3)** |
| Student Voice | Students have few opportunities for producing student-directed work, to make choices, and exercise control over appropriate aspects of their learning experiences. | Students have a growing number of opportunities for producing student-directed work, to make choices, and exercise control over appropriate aspects of their learning experiences. | Students have numerous opportunities for producing student-directed work, to make choices, and exercise control over appropriate aspects of their learning experiences. |

Staff provide annual feedback, using the definition of the elements, to determine where they believe they are in this process (planning, building, or transforming). To determine students’ growth, students, teachers, and families complete annual surveys. The survey results determine the district’s growth in the 4 principles and 32 elements.

* + 1. Each school has a School Improvement Plan (SIP) developed by families, teachers, students, leaders, and school councils that is aligned with the district’s strategic plan. The SIPs drive the implementation of each school’s education program. SIP goals for 2018–2019 intentionally include at least one element from each of the four principles in the strategic plan. The SIPs define the “transforming” stage for every element. The success of each goal is determined by how well the school has reached the “transforming” stage.
       1. The superintendent told the review team that the district wanted people to know where the district was in the process of improvement and asked principals to discuss data with their staff. She noted that the district collected results from surveys and data and shared the results with teachers. The superintendent stated, “We have to have student and teacher involvement so they will be invested [in the process of improvement].”
       2. School leaders told the team that the goal was to have the district reach the transforming stage within five years. They said that the rubric followed the strategic plan and defined where the district was at each stage.
       3. Administrators, school leaders, and teachers told the review team that morale was high at their school.

**Impact**: When all stakeholders use the district’s strategic plan and SIPs to drive the development, implementation, and modification of educational programs and practices, the district likely ensures progress toward goals.

**3. District administrators allocate resources based on the goals and priorities of the School Improvement Plans as well as student needs as they arise, and the district acts upon these goals and priorities.**

1. Interviews and a document review indicated that the district had identified encouraging positive student behavior, increasing students’ social-emotional development, and improving the teacher evaluation system as areas to be addressed.

The middle school and the two elementary schools have developed frameworks with Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) to identify and serve students with social-emotional needs. School leaders and teachers said that teacher evaluations, through increased walkthroughs, have become a major part of a supervisor’s role. They also said that teacher evaluations were viewed as an integral component of the district’s approach to professional development.

* + - 1. In fiscal year 2019, the district added two department chairs at Decas Elementary and five department chairs at Minot Forest, grade 4, to provide educational leadership and conduct classroom observations.

Budget presentations and documents for fiscal years 2019 and 2020 list budget priorities that include maintaining and improving discipline and meeting special education needs of students.

a. For example, the fiscal year 2020 proposed budget requests a half-time dean at the Minot Forest Elementary School, an additional .5 middle-school assistant principal, a special education assistant principal at the high school, a pre-K social worker, an additional special education team chair, and increased hours for two school psychologists. These positions are intended to enhance support for students with behavior and social-emotional issues. The district has allocated funding for curriculum development, and teachers and administrators said that they had adequate materials to effectively implement the curriculum.

**Impact**: By providing the funds needed to address the behavioral and social-emotional needs of students as well as to improve the quality of teaching, and by strategically allocating funds based on district and school priorities, the district likely can reach its goal of providing rigorous and high-quality education for all students.

Curriculum and Instruction

***Contextual Background***

At the time of the onsite review in December 2018, the assistant superintendent was in her fifth year in the district. She is responsible for the oversight of strategic planning, curriculum, instruction, assessment, accountability, data analysis, and professional development and works collaboratively with a leadership team to ensure that curriculum is current, strategic and school improvement planning and instruction are data-driven and reflect best practice, and professional development is relevant and timely. The leadership team includes principals; assistant principals; the pre-K department chair; the International Baccalaureate coordinator; the director of beyond school time and 21st century; the director of global education, English learners, and family/community engagement; the K–2 department chair; and 11 content department chairs including two for special education.

The district worked during the four years before the onsite review to align its curriculum with current Massachusetts frameworks. English language arts, mathematics, and science units are complete and are continually reviewed to incorporate updated approaches, strategies, and instructional priorities from the district’s strategic plan such as student voice and choice (see the second Leadership and Governance Strength finding above). The district has begun mapping the history and social sciences curricula. Curriculum materials are strategically vetted to ensure that they are research based, inclusive, and have the capacity to evolve, such as through online components to ensure currency of information.

The district has purchased sufficient instructional resources to support the implementation of its curricula. The kindergarten through grade 8 reorganization has facilitated the articulation of curriculum at all levels (see the Executive Summary above). Curriculum discussions within grades and among grades take place often and are facilitated by content department chairs.

Wareham educators share a common understanding of best instructional practice, and have developed and implemented several tools to support teachers. The Massachusetts Model Educator Evaluation Rubrics define district instructional expectations in Wareham. Administrators developed several checklists aligned with this rubric that are used for unannounced classroom walkthroughs. In addition, the middle and high schools generated best instructional practice documents to identify priority expectations in each school. The Wareham Middle School Best Instructional Practices document is most directly linked with the Massachusetts Model Educator Evaluation Rubrics and classroom walkthrough checklist.[[6]](#footnote-6) While the district uses these walkthrough data to evaluate and support individual teachers, the team did not find evidence that the district aggregated these data to identify instructional trends (strength or challenges) across grades, schools, or the district to further promote a culture of growth among educators. The district has offered training for instructional improvement such as Research for Better Teaching. Some teachers told the review team that the IB program was shaping instructional practices across the district (see the second Curriculum and Instruction finding below).

**Strength Findings**

**1. The district has established a robust and inclusive curriculum review and revision process that is informed by district needs and includes structures to support its implementation.**

* 1. District educators view curriculum review and revision as an ongoing process that is inclusive, is research-based, and is responsive to the needs of the district.
     1. Teachers and administrators said that the review process was triggered by several factors, including research, teacher requests, student input, student performance data, and revisions to the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks.
        1. For example, teachers and administrators stated that student performance data triggered a review of K–4 curriculum and early literacy instructional practices. A consultant was brought in to work initially with kindergarten teachers. The initiative was expanded through grade 4 when assessment trends showed promise. Administrators reported that student performance has improved, and data shared with the review team demonstrated increased student performance on the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA).
        2. Student interest drove many current elective topics at the high school including culinary arts, hotel and tourism, and careers in childcare.

i. District and school leaders said that high-school students were interested in culinary arts, the business program, and hotels and tourism.

* + - 1. The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approved the Massachusetts History and Social Sciences Curriculum Framework in June 2018. At the time of the review in December 2018 the district had begun mapping changes to curriculum documents at the middle and high schools.
    1. Administrators and teachers were told that the district approved for purchase only those programs, texts, and instructional materials that were supported by teachers, best supported all students, and were aligned with the state frameworks.
    2. Parent voice is also included in this process. For example, when the district was selecting math and science curricula a committee of families and teachers reviewed textbooks.
    3. Funding is allocated for curriculum development and teachers and administrators reported that they had adequate materials to effectively implement the curriculum.
  1. The district has established and maintains well-defined structures to ensure consistency in the written and taught curriculum across all grades.
     1. The district has developed a common curriculum template that is a hybrid of the International Baccalaureate and Understanding by Design templates. All teachers throughout the district are required to use this template in their unit design. The district supports a Google platform where all curriculum documents are housed and are accessible to all educators.
     2. Administrators and teachers across all levels said that the district provided sufficient dedicated time for horizontal and vertical curriculum articulation and development. This often takes place during department and/or grade-level meetings, release days, and full-day professional development (PD) days.
     3. The district supports a team of department chairs who are responsible for providing leadership in curriculum, instruction, and assessment in their content areas. Department chairs model instruction, provide peer coaching and PD, mentor teachers, evaluate teachers, and facilitate curriculum development for their departments/grades.

**Impact**: A district that has in place well-defined and inclusive processes, structures, and tools to support the use of high-quality, standards-aligned, curricular materials helps to ensure that all students have access to high-quality teaching and learning. In addition, teachers likely have a clear sense of content and instructional expectations and the resources available to effectively deliver the curricula.

1. **The district provides all students access to a range of rigorous academic offerings, learning experiences, and supports that are aligned with students’ ambitions and interests and prepare them for college, careers, and civic engagement.**
2. A review of the high school’s program of studies identified a comprehensive compendium of core and elective courses. There are also multiple opportunities for students to accelerate their learning.

Wareham High School’s recommended graduation pathways meet Mass Core high school graduation recommendations.

a. Teachers, administrators, and students expressed a collective pride in the number of electives available to students, including coursework in culinary arts, marketing, tourism, fine arts, STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math), and computer sciences.

b. The global education program has been in place at the high school since 1970. Students and educators actively participate in this exchange program. The district hosts international students and provides Wareham students with the same opportunities. Teacher sabbaticals are encouraged, and students’ graduation portfolios include a cultural proficiency opportunities and awareness requirement.

Students are offered the opportunity to accelerate their learning through two dual- enrollment programs. Students in grade 8, now housed at the high school, may elect to accelerate their learning by enrolling in grade 9 mathematics and/or English courses. Students in grades 11 and 12 have the option of dual enrollment at Wareham High School and Bridgewater State University. The district provides transportation. In addition, the high school has expanded the number of Advanced Placement (AP) courses and encourages all students to participate.

a. District leaders and teachers said that AP classes were open to all students and there were no pre-requisites.

The International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma program is an integral part of the school’s culture and educational philosophy.

a. Teachers, students, and administrators told the review team how this program has influenced instructional design and delivery at the high school and at the middle school.[[7]](#footnote-7) The district’s curriculum/unit template incorporates the instructional requirements of the IB program (see the first Strength finding in the Curriculum and Instruction standard).

b. The review team observed the IB philosophy of intercultural understanding and respect in classrooms throughout the district.

4. The guidance department invites all students in grades 9–11 to consider enrolling in IB and dual-enrollment courses.

1. Students at the middle school have many opportunities to engage in challenging and accelerated classes and topics of interest.

1. As part of the candidacy requirements for the IB, the middle school curriculum reflects rigorous IB academic expectations.

2. The middle school also has a well-developed STEAM program. For example, review team members were able to observe a grade 5 magnets class and a grade 7 bio-technology STEAM class.

3. District and school leaders and teachers stated that the middle school also had a working cranberry bog that students maintain, and the school offered computer programming/coding classes.

4. The district has established additional programs through area partnerships to extend K–12 learning beyond the classroom. Partners include Buzzards Bay Coalition, which provides programs during and after school for students and parents, and Boston Wise, which provides student exchange programs with China.

1. During the onsite review, the team observed inclusion and co-taught classrooms at all levels. General and special education teachers in these classrooms shared instructional responsibility. Para-professional support was also evident in general education classrooms. Teachers use data to identify students’ needs and design core instruction and intervention systems to support student learning. Interventions may be included in core instruction or during dedicated blocks of time during the school day, after school, and/or during the summer months.

**Impact**: Districts that provide a range of challenging academic coursework and experiences encourage choice, address students’ diverse interests, skills, and readiness levels, and help to ensure that all students have equitable access to a high-quality, rigorous education.

**Challenges and Areas for Growth**

**3. In observed classrooms across the district, instruction did not consistently engage students in higher-order thinking, promote meaningful student discourse about content and their thinking, and ensure that students were supported and challenged regardless of learning needs.**

* 1. The team observed sufficient and compelling evidence of students consistently and deeply engaged in higher-order thinking, such as analysis, synthesis, problem-solving, evaluation and the application of new knowledge in 48 percent of elementary classrooms, in 80 percent of middle-school classrooms, and in 51 percent of high-school classrooms. (See Appendix C, Focus Area #2, characteristic #6.)

1. The team found that lessons that engaged students in higher-order thinking had certain characteristics.
   1. Lessons that engaged students in higher-order thinking typically offered students choices for demonstrating their understanding such as creating a poster, game, PowerPoint presentation, real-world story problems or rap/rhyme. Teachers asked students to make connections between systems, topics, and texts and to weigh the impact of advances in bio-technology on their lives.
   2. Lessons that included projects and group work did not always engage students in higher-order thinking.
   3. In classrooms where the team saw little higher-order thinking, instruction was primarily teacher directed with limited opportunities for deep investigation and meaningful and extended discussion of topics. Teachers’ questions and students’ responses generally were based on basic recall of facts.

**B.** Team members observed sufficient and compelling evidence of students communicating their ideas consistently and authentically with each other in 52 percent of elementary classes, in 84 percent of observed middle-school classes, and in 55 percent of high-school classes. (See Appendix C, Focus Area #2, characteristic #7.)

1. In many observed classes, exchanges among students were deeply connected to the content, sustained, and actively engaged all students.

2. In some classes, however, most observed communication was between teachers and students. Students’ responses to teachers’ questions were often brief, and teachers rarely asked students to extend or elaborate on their thinking.

**C.** In observed classes, the team saw sufficient and compelling evidence of teachers ensuring that students were engaged in challenging tasks regardless of students’ learning needs in 79 percent of elementary classes, in 80 percent of middle-school classes, and in 65 percent of high-school classes. (See Appendix C, Focus Area #3, characteristic # 9)

**D.** Review team members observed sufficient and compelling evidence thatteachers used a variety of instructional strategies within a lesson to ensure students were supported and challenged in 83 percent of elementary classes, in 88 percent of middle-school classrooms, and in 51 percent of high-school classes. (See Appendix C, Focus Area #3, characteristic #10)

1. In classrooms where the team observed a variety of instructional strategies to meet students’ diverse needs, teachers

* helped students make connections to prior learning;
* designed lessons around student choice;
* designed learning centers around a common skill or concept;
* strategically grouped students to maximize their learning;
* incorporated technology and other instructional tools and materials to enhance engagement;
* encouraged discussion to further student learning; and
* structured lessons to allow whole-class and small-group instruction, independent practice, choice, and discourse among students.

2. In other classes, teachers relied heavily on one approach or format and did not provide opportunities for students to make connections to their prior learning, collaborate with others, and share their thinking. Lessons were teacher directed and did not provide a variety of activities designed to meet students’ diverse needs.

**Impact**: Without consistently providing effective student-centered instruction that promotes higher-order thinking, challenges and supports all students, and promotes student discussion about content and their thinking, the district cannot optimize students’ learning opportunities and adequately prepare them for college, careers, and civic participation.

**Recommendation**

**The district should ensure that all teachers provide effective instruction that challenges and supports all students.**

1. The district should convene a representative group of teachers and instructional leaders to identify the district’s instructional strengths and challenges.

1. The district’s educator evaluation rubric, its best practice documents, classroom walkthrough data, and this report’s Instructional Inventory data (Appendix C) can support this work.

2. Areas of focus should include engaging students in higher-order thinking, promoting meaningful discourse about content and students’ thinking, and supporting and challenging students regardless of their learning needs.

3. The district should consider revising its planning documents to address the identified instructional challenges, and should require teachers to consider these areas when they develop student learning or professional practice goals.

4. Professional development should focus on instructional areas that need strengthening as applied to the specific curricula that students and teachers work with every day.

1. The district is encouraged to provide opportunities for educators to discuss ideas and strategies for improvement of instruction.
   1. These opportunities might include grade-level, department meetings, common planning time, faculty meetings, and professional days.
   2. The district should continue to support peer observation.

a. Equitable opportunities should be provided by level for teachers to share best practices, with a particular emphasis on opportunities for high-school educators to observe exemplary peers.

1. Teachers should receive appropriate guidance and feedback as they enhance instruction so that it challenges and supports all students.
   * 1. Principals and other instructional leaders should ensure that teachers have the information and support necessary to strengthen identified areas of challenge.
     2. The district should continue to provide teachers with high-quality feedback[[8]](#footnote-8) that helps them to improve instruction.
2. The review team recommends that evaluators consider aggregating their walkthrough data to identify district and school instructional trends that may inform improvement goals and professional development.
   * 1. Administrators are encouraged to continue conducting walkthroughs in administrative teams to more consistently understand district trends in practice, calibrate ratings, and generalize feedback from these walkthroughs. This practice will provide the district with quantitative data on instructional trends across the district.
     2. The district should share trends in practice (strengths and areas for growth) with faculty and use these trends to further discussions of best practice.

**Benefits:** Implementing this recommendation will mean a deeper understanding of instructional challenges and strengths across the district, a stronger culture of professional growth and improvement, and instruction that is more clearly aligned with district priorities. In addition, the district likely will ensure that all teachers provide high-quality instruction that centers on challenging and engaging tasks with measurable outcomes for all students.

**Recommended resources:**

* ESE’s *Calibration Video Library* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/calibration/>) is a collection of professionally created videos of classroom instruction produced by the School Improvement Network. These videos depict a range of practice (this is NOT a collection of exemplars) to support within-district calibration activities that promote a shared understanding of instructional quality and rigor.
* ESE’s *"What to Look For" Observation Guides* ***(Updated August 2017)*** (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/observation/>) describe what observers should expect to see in a classroom at a particular grade level in a specific subject area. This includes the knowledge and skills students should be learning and using (as reflected in state learning standards) and best practices related to classroom curriculum, instruction, and assessment for each subject area. The guides are not designed to replace any evaluation system or tools districts currently use but are a resource to help classroom observers efficiently identify what teachers and students should be experiencing in specific subjects and grade levels.

Assessment

***Contextual Background***

The district collects, uses, and shares student performance data to identify students’ academic strengths and challenges.Teachers use formative and summative assessment results to modify instruction and develop instructional strategies to challenge and support struggling students. District administrators and teachers analyze the results of disaggregated student assessment data across classrooms and schools, and design and implement academic strategies intended to improve teaching and learning at all levels.

Central office administrators share disaggregated student assessment data with school administrators, staff, teachers, students, and families. Parents are provided student performance data such as report cards through the PowerSchool portal. The district also shares disaggregated student performance data with the school committee and the larger community through reports presented during televised school committee meetings.

The district administers a range of assessments in kindergarten through grade 12 to measure students’ literacy, mathematics, and reading skills. For example, the developmental reading assessment (DRA) is administered in kindergarten through grade 2 to determine students’ reading levels. The formative FAST Math and FAST ELA assessments are administered in kindergarten through grade 5 to identify struggling students as early as possible. Summative math, science, and writing (ELA) and formative math benchmark assessments are administered in grades 4–7. Formative writing assessments are given K–8. Authentic assessments[[9]](#footnote-9) are administered in other subjects. At the high-school level, students are required to maintain portfolios, and the MCAS assessment, common mid-terms, finals, AP, and IB examinations are administered.

**Strength Findings**

1. **The district has implemented a balanced system of assessments across all schools and grades to measure students’ progress and support struggling students. The results are collected, analyzed, and shared in an organized way with stakeholders.**

**A.** The district has implemented a system of formative and summative assessments in kindergarten through grade 12.

* + 1. Interviews with school and district leaders and a review of the district assessment inventory submitted as part of the district’s self-assessment[[10]](#footnote-10) indicated that the following reading, literacy, and mathematics assessments were administered in kindergarten through grade 5:

a. The DRA is administered three times each year to measure reading fluency, accuracy, and comprehension;

b. The FAST is administered in reading and math three times each year to identify struggling students;

c. Fountas and Pinnell running records is used to determine whether students are using strategies they have been taught to decode and comprehend text and whether they are making progress.

d. The Lexia program is used by teachers and students to measure learning progress and to inform instruction, according to information on the district website and provided by school leaders.

2. Writing benchmark assessments are administered five times each year in grades 3–7 and three times a year K–2.

3. Summative math, science, and writing (ELA) assessments and formative math benchmark assessments are administered in grades 5–7.

4. A portfolio including a virtual notebook in science is a major high school assessment and graduation requirement. The school also administers the MCAS assessment, common mid-terms and finals, AP examinations in 12 subjects, and IB examinations in 8 subjects.

5. The Wareham Comprehensive Assessment System, a district-developed ELA assessment based on the grade 10 MCAS ELA test, is administered during midterms to help grade 10 students practice and prepare.

1. The district has practices in place to collect and analyze assessment data.
   * + 1. Consultants provide data walls to all teachers K–4, which includes DRA, FAST, running records, and other assessments.

i. FAST is available to teachers in real time to monitor progress and inform instruction.

2. At the K–4 level, data meetings are held every six weeks to measure students’ progress and regroup students.

3. School leaders told the team all schools had teams of teachers and department chairs that meet regularly (monthly, weekly) to review assessment results.

4. A review of curriculum documents indicated that the documents included a section for assessment.

**C.** Student assessment data is shared across schools and classrooms and with stakeholders.

* + 1. School and district leaders told the team that they had a data day at the beginning of the year to discuss student assessment data.
    2. Learning walks conducted by staff generate reports for teachers and are used to share information concerning teaching and learning.

3. Course assessment data is shared with students and families through the PowerSchool portal. School and district leaders stated that PowerSchool had the capacity to generate data report and included three years of data, including MCAS assessment data.

4. Department chairs and teachers serve as student advisors who assess and support student academic progress and social-emotional growth during advisory classes.

5. School and district leaders said and a review of the minutes of school committee meetings confirmed that student assessment data was reviewed at committee meetings.

**Impact**: Having an organized process in place that allows formative, benchmark and summative assessment results to be collected, used, and shared with teachers in a meaningful way likely enhances the district’s capacity to quickly identify student strengths and challenges and improve teaching, learning, and decision-making.

Human Resources and Professional Development

***Contextual Background***

The district and schools have policies, procedures, and practices in place to recruit and hire administrators and teachers that are implemented consistently across the district. Principals are the hiring managers, and the superintendent makes the final offer of employment based upon the principal’s recommendation and verification of credentials. District leaders meet with principals every other week and advise principals of impending retirements and other personnel vacancies for planning. Personnel needs are driven by enrollment and anticipated students’ learning needs. The district uses the SchoolSpring web-based service to advertise positions and recruit candidates. In addition, the district has a formal relationship with Bridgewater State University for the placement of student teachers, some of whom the district hires as teachers. Efforts are made to conduct employment interviews after the February school vacation with hiring offers being made in early March in order to attract and hire the best candidates.

The district’s educator evaluation system prioritizes opportunities for teachers and administrators to receive high-quality feedback[[11]](#footnote-11) and provides opportunities and support for teachers to assume leadership positions such as by serving as a mentor in the district’s one-year mentoring program. Teachers new to the district receive an Inductee Program Handbook,which clearly outlines the mentoring program. Mentors in the district receive the Mentor Handbook,which outlines a mentor’s roles and responsibilities. Mentor teachers are required to meet with new teachers at least once each week from September through December and at least twice each month thereafter in a formal meeting. During these meetings, mentors and mentees review lesson plans, address concerns and issues, and discuss student assessment, parent communications, and classroom management.  The expectation is that informal meetings will take place more frequently.

Teachers told review team members that while mentors were assigned to be a mentor only for one year the relationship between teacher and mentor carried beyond the one year.  They added that the district’s educator evaluation system provided a means of following the development of new teachers with 50 hours of mentoring beyond the induction year as part of their approved professional licensure program as required by state  regulation 603 CMR 7.04 (2)(c)(5).

The district does not have a formal designated professional development (PD) committee to guide the planning, implementation, and oversight of PD; however, the assistant superintendent coordinates and monitors district PD. PD is a collaborative process. The district leadership team discusses PD needs and other topics during semi-monthly leadership team meetings. At the high school, the principal, assistant principal, and department chairs meet weekly to discuss PD. In the 2018 school year, the district offered 182 PD opportunities. In addition, the district offers every teacher up to $1,000 of tuition reimbursement for approved courses each year. Topics for PD offerings are generated from an analysis of the TeachPoint PD survey. Administrators and teachers characterized the PD program as “purposeful, planned, flexible, and reflective of staff requests and needs.”

**Strength Findings**

1. **The district’s educator evaluation system prioritizes opportunities for teachers and administrators to receive high-quality feedback that helps them improve their practice.**
2. The team reviewed the evaluative documentation of 28 randomly selected teachers across the district in TeachPoint, the district’s educator evaluation management system.

1. Teachers’ evaluations were timely, specific, informative, and instructive[[12]](#footnote-12) and included actionable feedback.

**B.** The team also reviewed the evaluative documentation of 16 administrators in Teach Point. Administrators’ evaluations were timely, specific, instructive, and actionable.

**C.** The superintendent told the team that she met with principals weekly as part of their evaluative process. She also visits the schools each week and meets with the principals individually to discuss their progress toward fulfillment of their goals.

1. Observation appear to be a primary method of evaluation in the district. During the 2016–2018 interval, the district conducted 381 observations in the classrooms of the 28 randomly selected teachers. Twenty-one of the twenty-eight teachers experienced ten or more observations, four experienced five to eight observations, and three experienced one to four observations.

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

1. Interviewees said that individual teachers received feedback from students and parents based on surveys. At the time of the onsite review in December 2018, while this feedback was not part of the educator evaluation process, administrators reported its use in the educator evaluation process was being negotiated.
2. Interviews and a document review indicated that the district used staff feedback and student assessment data in the educator evaluation process.

**E.** Administrators stated that they tried to ensure inter-rater reliability in the evaluation process by engaging in joint observations of classroom videos, walkthroughs in groups of three, and learning walks followed by calibration discussions. They also said that all administrators were trained in *Observing and Analyzing Teaching* and *Analyzing Teaching for Student Results*. The district provides regular and ongoing training to its evaluators.

**F.** Teachers and administrators told the team that evaluative feedback, particularly feedback after walkthroughs, was most valuable in improving the quality of instruction.

**Impact**: By providing high-quality (specific, timely, and actionable) feedback designed to contribute to the professional growth of teachers and administrators, the district likely helps educators build their skills and improve students’ learning experiences and outcomes.

1. **The district increased opportunities for teacher leadership through the creation of more department chair positions.**
2. The district increased the number of department chair positions to 17 and added the evaluation of teachers to their responsibilities. Administrators noted that the past practice of having just four principals and six assistant principals doing all the evaluations made it nearly impossible to implement the educator evaluation system with any degree of effectiveness.
3. Teachers and administrators stated that the district’s drive to improve instruction through supporting the inclusion of additional department chair positions as evaluators has been a major factor in teachers changing how they do things. They further said that in addition to promoting teacher leadership, using department chairs as evaluators was an effective practice. Department chairs have credibility with other teachers and function as advisors and coaches with content area expertise, teach classes, and are members of the same bargaining unit.
4. Department chairs expressed the view that the practice of having teachers observe and evaluate each other was an informal example of the promotion of teacher leadership. They stated that when teachers debriefed with the teachers whose classes they observed, a combination of coaching and evaluation took place that was not part of the formal evaluation process.
5. Teachers stated that they had the freedom to reflect on feedback received from the evaluations and/or walkthroughs with their department chairs and were free to ask them for additional assistance.

**B.** At the time of the onsite review in December 2018, the negotiated Wareham Education Association (WEA) Unit A collective bargaining agreement (CBA) provided that the work year for department chairs would be the same as the teachers’ work year plus 10 additional days, and that department chairs would not be required to work during school vacations. The negotiated CBA also provided that the stipend for being department chair would be $9,300 in addition to the annual teacher’s salary.

**Impact**: In promoting opportunities for teacher leadership by encouraging teachers to assume leadership positions as department chairs, the district has built its capacity to track and implement its educator evaluation system and to retain effective professional staff and maximize their impact.

Student Support

***Contextual Background***

Many Wareham students come to school each day with unique academic and support needs. According to DESE data, in 2017–2018, 61.7 percent of students are part of the high needs student group because they are in one or more of the following groups: economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and English learners (ELs) or former ELs. Students with disabilities represent 26.2 percent of the total student population, compared with 17.7 percent of the state; ELs make up 1.1 percent of enrollment, compared with 10.2 percent across the state; and 51.8 percent of students come from economically disadvantaged households, compared with 32 percent across the state. As overall enrollment in the district declines,[[13]](#footnote-13) students’ families are facing greater economic hardship. Between 2016 and 2018, the proportion of economically disadvantaged students increased, from 43.5 percent in 2016 to 50.4 percent in 2017 to 51.8 percent in 2018.[[14]](#footnote-14)

The district has worked to establish a supportive environment for students, and has allocated resources and developed numerous programs to help students succeed. For example, staff are in place throughout the district to support the academic and social-emotional needs of students, including counselors, psychologists, social workers, special education teachers, and paraprofessionals. The district’s Beyond School Time program provides a range of after-school and summer programs to meet the needs of students, families, and caregivers. Examples include 21st century centers, extended-day programs, community and family engagement programs, and grandparents and teen mom programs. The district also offers a Pathways to Alternative Student Success (PASS) program which provides students an alternative to attending all Wareham Senior High classes during the day. A partnership with Gosnold, Inc. provides counseling for struggling students and families.

The district’s four- and five-year graduation rates are below the state rates[[15]](#footnote-15) and the district is challenged with high student absence and suspension rates. In 2017–2018, 39.5 percent of Wareham students missed 10 days or more of school, compared with 34.1 percent statewide, and the district’s chronic absence[[16]](#footnote-16) rate was 17.9 percent, compared with the state rate of 13.2 percent. Students are also missing school by being suspended out of school. In 2017–2018, the district’s out-of-school suspension rate was 10.3 percent, compared with the state rate of 2.9 percent. The 2017–2018 district in-school suspension rate was 5.8 percent, compared with the state rate of 1.8 percent.[[17]](#footnote-17)

Wareham has been identified to participate in the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s (DESE) Rethinking Discipline Initiative every year since 2016.[[18]](#footnote-18) DESE has worked with over 30 schools/districts to provide technical assistance and professional development opportunities to assist with the reduction of inappropriate or excessive use of long-term suspension and expulsion, including disproportionate rates of suspension and expulsion for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and/or of students of color. As part of the Rethinking Discipline Initiative, districts are required to develop annual action plans.

In January 2019, Wareham Public Schools, Wareham Senior High, and Wareham Middle School were re-identified for discipline disparities and discrepancies under state and federal regulation, as described below.

Wareham Senior High was identified for a large discipline disparity for Black/African American students and Multi-race/Non-Hispanic students. Similarly, Wareham Middle School was identified for a large disparity for Hispanic students, Black/African American students, and Multi-race/Non-Hispanic students.

Wareham Public Schools were identified as having a significant discrepancy in the rate of disciplinary removals of multiracial students with IEPs and Hispanic students with IEPs, for more than 10 days annually, under Special Education Indicator 4B.[[19]](#footnote-19) DESE notified the Wareham district that it would undertake a multi-faceted review process in coming years to “highlight progress made in improving discipline practices and offer additional insights related to action plans submitted.”

In April 2019, DESE determined that district policies, practices, and procedures regarding IEP development and implementation, the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and procedural safeguards were appropriate and as such did not contribute to the significant discrepancy of disciplinary removals of multiracial or Hispanic students with IEPs among the Wareham district’s population during fiscal year 2018.

***Strength Finding***

**1. The district has allocated staff and programmatic resources to support students’ needs.**

**A.** Interviews and a document review indicated thatthe district has allocated staff and program resources to provide a system of academic and social-emotional support programs at all schools.

1. The district has created a support services leadership structure that includes the assistant superintendent; the director of student services; the director of beyond school time, Collaborative Alternative School (PASS), and 21st century learning; and the director of family and community engagement and global education. The business manager, the director of transportation and facilities, and the director of food service provide operational support.

2.At the school level, the district has strategically allocated resources for students who have been identified as needing academic and/or social-emotional support. Special education teachers, guidance counselors, social workers, department chairs, school adjustment counselors, paraprofessionals, ESL teachers, behaviorists, deans, school psychologists, nurses, and a variety of therapists provide support services.

a. School leaders stated that the school committee addressed a budget restriction in fiscal year 2018 by reducing the number of school administrators in order to retain teachers.

b. District leaders and staff stated that staff needs were based on enrollment changes and students’ needs.

3. In recent years, the district has allocated additional resources and implemented a co-teaching model to support students with disabilities. District leaders and teachers told the team that all schools used inclusion, substantially separate classes, and small groups to provide services to students with disabilities.

a. According to DESE data for 2016–2017 (latest available data), 55.7 percent of Wareham students with disabilities were enrolled in full-inclusion classes, compared with 63.3 percent across the state; 19.4 percent in partial-inclusion classes, compared with 15.7 percent statewide; and 18.0 percent in substantially separate classes, compared with 13.9 percent across the state. According to DESE data, it is not likely that the district has disproportionate representation of racial/ethnic groups in special education as a result of inappropriate identification.

b. The district allocated resources to increase the number of special education teachers from 22 in fiscal year 2016 to 40 in fiscal year 2018. During the same interval, the district increased the number of special education paraprofessionals from 46 to 60.

i. District leaders and staff said that the district increased the number of special education paraprofessionals because the number of students with significant special needs had increased.

c. School leaders described a co-teaching model at all levels that includes a general education and a special education teacher in inclusion classrooms. The district also provides professional development for co-teachers. At the high school, all ELA, mathematics, and science classes have co-teachers and the special education and general education teachers plan together. The district uses flexible grouping to provide support to students.[[20]](#footnote-20)

d. Teachers receive special education training annually, including a session in 2016 on differentiation and inclusive practices.

**B.** The district has implemented assessments to identify students at all levels who need academic and social-emotional support.

1. District leaders and teachers stated that school and district leaders had many conversations to anticipate the academic and social-emotional programming needs of students.

2. In pre-kindergarten through grade 4, the district has implemented a proactive approach for instructing children in poverty using a well-developed assessment system in combination with specific literacy strategies. A consultant facilitates this approach. Teachers have received PD in these strategies and use FAST Math and FAST ELA,[[21]](#footnote-21) Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), and Fountas and Pinnell progress monitoring and benchmark assessments to group and regroup students continuously based on assessment results. The consultant provides data walls for all teachers. Some elementary teachers referred to this as high- impact instruction with aggressive assessments.

3. At the middle school, assessments including FAST, common writing assignments, and standards-based mathematics benchmark assessments are used to develop flexible groups and determine whether students need additional support, such as classes in ELA and mathematics.

4. Authentic assessments,[[22]](#footnote-22) common midterms and finals, as well as Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) exam results are used to measure students’ progress and success at the high school.

5. Students receive tailored academic instruction and counseling at therapeutic learning centers and ASD (autism spectrum disorder) programs are in place for students with significant cognitive learning issues.

**C.** Student support councils andprograms are in place in the district to support the academic and social-emotional needs of students.

1. All schools have student support councils (SSCs) which meet periodically or as needed to discuss students’ progress. Members of the council vary based on the needs of the students they are discussing. Generally, the council convenes when a teacher refers a student. The council reviews student and develops an intervention plan that is implemented from four to six weeks and adjusted as needed.

2. The district has partnerships with organizations and businesses that provide services and programs for students and families. Examples include Gosnold, Inc., a mental health organization; the YMCA; the Buzzards Bay Coalition; South Coast Health; and Child and Family Service of Attleboro. District leaders stated that the high school had relationships with 24 businesses, some that provide internships and vocational training opportunities.

3. The district’s Beyond School Time program provides extended-day and summer academic and enrichment programs. For example, Community Academic Recreation and Enrichment (CARE) is a 21st Century after-school program for elementary and middle-school students funded by a DESE administered grant. The 21st Century after-school program at Wareham High School is entitled Successful Adaptable Innovative Learning (SAIL). The Beyond School Time program also offers other extended day, tutoring, and playgroup programs.

**Impact:** A system of approaches to supporting students’ well-being ensures that students receive the support they need to be successful academically, behaviorally, socially, and emotionally.

***Challenges and Areas for Growth***

**2. The district is challenged by high chronic absence and suspension rates.**

**A.** According to DESE data, in recent years the district’s chronic absence rates have fluctuated with an overall increase and have been consistently higher than state rates. In 2018, the district’s chronic absence rate was 17.9 percent, with 414 students missing for more than 10 percent of their days of school membership.

**Table 30: Wareham Public Schools**

**Chronic Absence Rates,\* 2014–2018**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** |
| **Wareham** | 14.5 | 16.9 | 13.3 | 17.1 | 17.9 |
| **State** | 12.3 | 12.9 | 12.3 | 13.5 | 13.2 |

\*These data reflect the percentage of students absent for more than 10 percent of their days of membership in a school.

1**.** The2018 chronic absence rates are high for all levels in the district and particularly high for grades 6, 7, and 9.

a. In 2018, the percentages of chronically absent students for the elementary-, middle-, and high-school levels were as follows: 15.3 percent for the Decas School (pre-K–2); 17.2 percent for the Minot Forest School (pre-K, grades 3–4); 19.8 percent for the middle school; and 17.8 percent for the high school.

b. In 2018, the grade levels in the district with the highest chronic absence rates were as follows: 21.3 percent for grade 6; 23.2 percent for grade 7; and 29.9 percent for grade 9.

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

a. In 2018, the student groups in the district with the highest chronic absence rates were as follows: 20.7 percent for African American/Black students; 28.8 percent for Hispanic/Latino students; 25.9 percent for students with disabilities; 23.5 percent for economically disadvantaged students; and 25 percent for English learners.

1. The district’s in- and out-of-school suspension rates have fluctuated with an overall decrease and have been consistently higher than statewide in- and out-of-school suspension rates.

**Table 31: Wareham Public Schools and State**

**In-School and Out-of-School Suspension Rates,\* 2014–2018**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** |
| **In-School Suspension Rates (IS)** | | | | | |
| District IS suspension rate (all grades) | **6.1** | **6.7** | **4.2** | **6.7** | **5.8** |
| State IS suspension rate (all grades) | 2.1 | 1.8 | 1.9 | 1.7 | 1.8 |
| **Out-of-School Suspension Rates (OOS)** | | | | | |
| District OOS suspension rate (all grades) | **12.3** | **10.8** | **11.7** | **10.2** | **10.3** |
| State OOS suspension rate (all grades) | 3.9 | 2.9 | 2.9 | 2.8 | 2.9 |

\*Suspension rates represent the percentage of students suspended one or more times during the year. Source: DESE data.

1. In 2017 (latest available data), the in-school suspension rates were high for the middle- and high-school levels in the district and particularly high for grades 9 and 10.

a. The in-school suspension rates were 8.1 for the middle school, 15.3 for the high school, 27.3 for grade 9, and 17.8 for grade 10.

2. The in-school suspension rates for some student groups are high. The 2017 (latest available data) in-school suspension rates were 13.8 for African American/Black students, 10.8 for multi-race, non-Hispanic/Latino students, and 10.4 for students with disabilities.

3. The 2017 (latest available data) out-of-school suspension rates were high for the middle- and high-school levels at 13.4 and 15.3, respectively, and especially high for grade 9 at 25.7.

4. The out-of-school suspension rates for some student groups are high. The 2017 (latest available data) out-of-school suspension rates were 15.8 for African American/Black students, 11.8 for economically disadvantaged students, 12.6 for Hispanic/Latino students, and 16.2 for students with disabilities.

**C.** School leaders told the team they were aware of high absence and suspension rates and they have identified the need to improve attendance and reduce suspensions.

1. Interviews and a document review indicated that the district has put in place some practices to improve student attendance and reduce suspensions.

a. From 2016–2019, the district has participated in DESE’s Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) PBIS Academy designed to aid school and district teams with the implementation of tiered systems of instruction and support. The University of Connecticut partners with DESE in this initiative and provides the program.

b. In general, in 2018–2019 the district shares with families “clear expectations” for attendance[[23]](#footnote-23) and consequences for absence.[[24]](#footnote-24) It also rewards students for improved attendance.

c. The district contacts preschool families to determine why students are missing school. District leaders and staff told the team that transportation was often an issue in preschool.

d. Interviewees told the team that in 2018–2019, the middle school was looking more closely at attendance and focusing on its tardy students. In addition, it notifies families after a student’s third absence and puts services in place before involving the courts.

e. The high school is working with families to improve attendance. The school resource officer visits homes, sends letters to students’ homes, and contacts families by telephone.

**Impact**: Chronic absence is an early indicator for low achievement and dropping out of school. Frequent absences interfere with sustained student learning, achievement, and progress toward college and career readiness and civic participation. Frequent suspensions likely mean that students fall behind academically, become disengaged from school, and drop out.

***Recommendation***

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Recommended resources:**

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

Financial and Asset Management

***Contextual Background***

The town of Wareham has consistently exceeded net school spending requirements since fiscal year 2012 by percentages ranging from 8.5 percent in fiscal year 2013 to 24.1 percent in fiscal year 2018. Through its long-range capital plan, the town has also supported the district’s capital needs.[[25]](#footnote-25)

District administrators have a cooperative relationship with town officials and regularly communicate about the needs of the district and the town’s ability to fund those needs. The town has appropriated funds when available to support educational initiatives such as one-to-one Chromebooks and school needs such as HVAC[[26]](#footnote-26) repairs and roof replacements. In 2018, a pre-kindergarten to grade 4 elementary school was approved for construction to replace the Minot Forest and Decas elementary schools (see the Leadership and Governance Contextual Background above and the Strength finding below). The new school will be constructed on the footprint of the Minot Forest School and Decas will be returned to the town for possible use as decided by town officials and the voters. The district will eventually have four schools: a pre-kindergarten to grade 4 elementary school, a grades 5 through 7 middle school, a grades 8 through 12 high school, and the Cooperative Alternative School.

While foundation enrollment, the number of school-aged children in the town, has decreased in recent years[[27]](#footnote-27) and Chapter 70 aid has increased (see Table B3 in Appendix B), the number of students using the school choice option to enroll in other districts has increased steadily (see Table 30 below). From 2014 to 2018, the enrollment of students in Wareham decreased by 15.7 percent, from 2,745 in 2014 to 2,314 in 2018. As enrollment has declined, the district has reduced district and school leaders.[[28]](#footnote-28)At the same time, in-district per-pupil expenditures have risen from $13,365 in 2013 to $15,381 in 2017. In addition, between 2013 and 2017, total out-of-district expenditures have increased from $3,115,623 in 2013 to $6,037,703 in 2017.

In recent years, the district has seen an increase in the proportions of students with disabilities[[29]](#footnote-29) and students with significant social-emotional needs, and students experiencing the effects of the opioid epidemic in the town. To support these students the district has increased special education staff[[30]](#footnote-30) and instructional expenses, both within and outside of the district. For example, it has hired administrators, behavior specialists, social workers, and psychologists. Operating expenses in these areas have increased and have continued to grow.

Transportation is another area of increasing expense. The district owns and operates a fleet of buses. To control costs, the district solicited bids from contractors to provide in-district transportation in 2018. It received only one bid, which was much higher than the cost of continuing to operate its own program. The district may consider going out to bid again.

**Strength Finding**

**1. The district has developed a long-term capital plan and has received approval for the construction of a new elementary school.**

* 1. The district has a comprehensive and detailed capital plan.
     1. The district’s capital plan has 171 completed and proposed projects from 2016 to 2022, including building systems, vehicles, instructional equipment, and technology. The plan includes estimated costs for all proposed projects.
     2. The plan has a rating system that prioritizes the proposed projects.
        1. A risk-based assessment is conducted that rates the likelihood of systems failure. A formula is used to calculate the effects of failure on four components: health and safety, school operations, expenditures, and district vision.

b. A rating of zero to 10 is assigned to each of the 4 components on the likelihood of failure within 36 months and the effects of failure are also rated on a zero to 10 scale with zero representing no impact and 10 representing severe impact with high risk of major injury. The capital plan identifies the proposed funding source and the likelihood of procurement.

* + - 1. Sources of funding include the district’s operating budget, appropriation from the town’s free cash, grants, town capital request, private sources, and the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA).
    1. Town officials said that they invited district administrators to attend meetings of the town’s capital improvement committee to discuss the district’s proposed projects and priorities. The capital improvement committee has decision-making authority on which school projects to include on the town’s list of capital improvements. In fiscal year 2018, Wareham town meeting approved capital improvements for the school district in the amount of $400,000, which was used for technology, HVAC[[31]](#footnote-31) repairs, and furniture replacement.

1. In 2018, district administrators and the school committee successfully advocated for community and state financial support to construct a pre-kindergarten through grade 4 elementary school.
   * 1. In 2015, district administrators began the process of replacing the Minot Forest Elementary School by submitting a Statement of Interest to the MSBA.
        1. Between 2016 and 2018, the district completed a feasibility study, selected a project manager and architectural firm, and received approval from the MSBA to proceed to the schematic design phase.
        2. In April 2015, Wareham town meeting approved an appropriation for the town’s share of funds for the feasibility study with MSBA paying for 71.5 percent of the cost.
        3. School committee members and district administrators told the team that they advocated for the new school through public meetings, community forums, brochures distributed to parents at conferences, attendance at public events such as the Cranberry Harvest and Swan Festivals, and a dedicated website for the building project. The district formed a building subcommittee and an educational working group, which met frequently to address the MSBA building and design requirements as well as the educational vision for the new school.
     2. Wareham town meeting approved the town’s share of the construction appropriation in October 2018 followed by ballot approval of the debt exclusion in November 2018. The district obtained final MSBA approval in December 2018.

**Impact**: The district’s comprehensive and detailed capital improvement plan, along with the advocacy of district officials, has contributed to town support for annual capital improvements and a new school that likely help support health and safety, which can improve all students’ performance, opportunities, and outcomes.

**Challenges and Areas for Growth**

**2. The district is facing increasingly high numbers of students choosing to enroll in other districts.**

**A.** Between 2014 and 2018, the net loss of students to other districts and to a charter school has increased steadily. The number of students choosing to use the school choice option to enroll in other districts has exceeded the number of out-of-district students choosing to enroll in Wareham schools.

1. According to DESE school choice trend data, the number of students that Wareham sends to other districts has increased by 82.8 percent in the last five years (see Table 30 below); 213 students enrolled in other districts in 2018. Tuition costs for these students have increased in the last five years (see Table 31), and were $1,413,884 in 2018.

2. The number of students from other towns choosing to enroll in Wareham has increased over the last five years (see Table 30 below); 48 such students enrolled in the district in 2018. Tuition revenue for these students has increased in the last five years (see Table 31), and was $300,143 in 2018.

3. Over the last five years, the number of students leaving the district to enroll in the local charter school has increased by 79.6 percent, along with the associated tuition expenses (see Tables 30 and 31 below); 68 students enrolled in the charter school in 2018.

4. Between 2014 and 2018, the net loss of students increased from 120 in 2014 to 233 in 2018, an increase of 94 percent, and the district’s net tuition expenses increased by 114 percent.

**Table 30: Wareham Public Schools**

**Number of Students (FTEs) Enrolling in the District and in Other Districts,\* 2014–2018**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** |
| Choice Out | -116.9 | -159.8 | -185.1 | -193 | -213.7 |
| Charter School Out | -38.2 | -47.6 | -48.1 | -61 | -68.6 |
| Choice In | +35.1 | +36.5 | +27 | +41.6 | +48.9 |
| Net Out vs. In | -120 | -170.9 | -206.2 | -212.4 | -233.4 |

\*Source: DESE school choice and charter school trend data

**Table 31: Wareham Public Schools**

**School Choice and Charter Tuition Expenses and Receipts,\* 2014–2018**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** |
| Choice Out Tuition | -$658,544 | -$995,796 | -$1,188,700 | -$1,312,278 | -$1,413,884 |
| Charter School Tuition | -$430,007 | -$546,524 | -$538,684 | -$783,350 | -$850,352 |
| Charter School Reimbursement | +$263,749 | +$145,500 | +$40,072 | +256,289 | +$94,549 |
| Choice In Tuition | +$203,176 | +$226,728 | +$146,058 | +$230,303 | +$300,143 |
| Net Out vs. In | -$621,626 | -$1,170,092 | -$1,541,254 | -$1,609,036 | -$1,869,544 |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

\*Sources: DESE school choice and charter school trend data and district End-of-Year Reports

**B.** During the onsite review, district and school leaders said that they were concerned about students “choicing out” and speculated on why students have made these choices.

The superintendent, teachers, town officials, and students stated that some town residents had a negative perception about discipline in the district. In addition, in 2016–2017 when the district combined schools and grades, transitioning from two elementary schools to one school, some students enrolled in other districts.

District leaders and teachers told the review team that a story about the 2012 NEASC visit gave the impression that the high school was going to lose its accreditation. They said that although the high school did not lose its accreditation, this false impression has lasted for years and resulted in some students leaving the district before entering the high school.

The superintendent and town officials stated that they believed the failure of a 2014 override to increase funding for the operations of the town and its schools resulted in some parents believing that Wareham did not have a commitment to education.

**C**. The review team was told that district leaders have looked at the schools and grades from which students were choicing out. In addition, the district has conducted surveys with families about why families were leaving the district.[[32]](#footnote-32) The team did not find evidence of a committee to study why students are choicing out of the district.

**Impact**: With increasingly high number of students “choicing out,” the district faces continued pressure on planning and budgeting.

***Recommendation***

**District leaders and town officials should continue to work strategically and collaboratively to improve all students’ performance, opportunities, and outcomes. They should take decisive and collaborative action to prepare projections of enrollment, expenditures, and revenue for the next five years, and develop plans to meet the challenges of declining enrollment.**

**A.** District and school leaders should continue to establish, implement, and evaluate policies, procedures, systems, and budgets with a primary focus on achieving districtwide improvement goals, in part through equitable and effective use of resources.

**B.** The district should take decisive and collaborative action to prepare projections of enrollment, expenditures, and revenue for the next five years.

1. In addition, town officials and district leaders should assess the long-term impact of declining enrollment on available revenues and other resources and develop plans to meet the challenge of declining enrollment.

**C.** The district should continue to examine the possible reasons that students “choice out,” and should take steps to address these reasons.

1. The district should consider ways to gather information from students themselves about the reasons they have choiced out or have remained enrolled in the district, for example, through student focus groups.

2. The district should collect school climate data from students and families and determine what steps are necessary to improve school climate (see Student Support recommendation in this report).

3. The district should identify the innovative educational programs, student support, wrap-around services, and extra-curricular programs that students and families might not be aware of, and develop a plan for communicating information about them.

a. For example, the International Baccalaureate (IB) and Global Education programs are advanced educational offerings that are not found in many districts. In addition, the high school has expanded the number of Advanced Placement (AP) courses and has encouraged all students to participate.

**Benefits:** By implementing this recommendation, the district and the town will continue to promote joint responsibility for students’ opportunities and outcomes, build a strong sense of support for public schools within the community, and ensure that the district and the town are effectively supporting district priorities.

**Recommended resources:**

* *At-A-Glance Community Reports* (<http://www.mass.gov/dor/local-officials/dls-newsroom/employee-contacts/dls/at-a-glance-community-reports.html>) are community-specific overviews of key data from the Department of Revenue, including socioeconomic data, cherry sheet data, tax revenue information, and other data.
* ESE’s *School Finance Statistical Comparisons* web page (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/statistics/>) provides comparisons of per-pupil expenditure, long-term enrollment, teacher salaries, and special education direct expenditure trends.
* *DESE’s RADAR Benchmarking* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/radar/>) Districts can use RADAR Benchmarking to compare spending with other districts, visualize district trends over five years, and review staffing levels, per-pupil spending, special education, and more.
* *Transforming School Funding: A Guide to Implementing Student-Based Budgeting* (<https://www.erstrategies.org/cms/files/2752-student-based-budgeting-guide.pdf>), from Education Resource Strategies, describes a process to help districts tie funding to specific student needs.
* *Shifting Resources Strategically to Fund District Priorities* (<https://dmgroupk12.com/solutions/strategic-budgeting>) describes how to reallocate existing funds to support key strategic efforts in three key areas: general education staffing levels, special education services, and federal funds such as Title I, II, and III. It also lists “Ten Mistakes to Avoid” and a list of reflection questions to guide districts’ reallocation.
* In *Spending Money Wisely: Getting the Most from School District Budgets* (<https://dmgroupk12.com/> ; scroll down to Research & Publications section), authors Nathan Levenson, Karla Baehr, James C. Smith, and Claire Sullivan identify and discuss the top ten opportunities for districts to realign resources and free up funds to support strategic priorities. Drawing on the wisdom of leading thinkers, district leaders, and education researchers from across the country, the authors gathered a long list of opportunities for resource reallocation. To distill these down to the ten most high-impact opportunities, each opportunity was assessed based on its financial benefit, its impact on student achievement, its political feasibility, and its likelihood of success relative to the complexity of implementation.
* *Smarter School Spending for Student Success* (<http://smarterschoolspending.org/>) provides free processes and tools to help districts use their resources to improve student achievement.

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

Review Team Members

The review was conducted from December 10–13, 2018, by the following team of independent DESE consultants.

1. Marc Kerble, Leadership and Governance
2. Michele Kingsland-Smith, Curriculum and Instruction
3. Kahris McLaughlin, Assessment
4. William Contreras, Human Resources and Professional Development
5. James Hearns, Student Support, *review team coordinator*
6. Margaret Foster, Financial and Asset management

District Review Activities

The following activities were conducted during the review:

The team conducted interviews with the following financial personnel: business manager, town administrator, town treasurer, and business office administrative staff.

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

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

The team conducted interviews/focus groups with the following central office administrators: the superintendent; the assistant superintendent and Title I director; the business manager; the director of beyond school time, the Collaborative Alternative School (PASS), and 21st century learning,; and the director of family and community engagement and global education.

The team visited the following schools: Wareham Senior High (grades 8–12), Wareham Cooperative Alternative School (grades 9–12), Wareham Middle (grades 5–7), Minot Forest (grades 3–4), and John William Decas (pre-kindergarten, grade 2).

During school visits, the team conducted interviews/focus groups with students, students’ families, and 5 principals, and focus groups with 5 elementary-school teachers, 1 middle-school teacher, and 10 high-school teachers.

The team observed 93 classes in the district: 45 at the 2 high schools, 25 at the 1 middle school, and 23 at the 2 elementary schools.

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

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

Site Visit Schedule

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Monday**  12/10/2018 | **Tuesday**  12/11/2018 | **Wednesday**  12/12/2018 | **Thursday**  12/13/2018 |
| Orientation with district leaders and principals; interviews with district staff and principals; document reviews; interview with school committee; and visits to Decas, Wareham Middle, and Wareham Senior High for classroom observations. | Interviews with district staff and principals; review of personnel files; teacher focus groups; interview with teachers’ association focus groups with students and students’ families; interview with town officials; and visits to Decas, Wareham Middle, and Wareham Senior High for classroom observations. | Interviews with school leaders; visits to Minot, Wareham Middle, and Wareham Senior High for classroom observations. | Follow-up interviews with school leaders; district review team meeting; visits to Wareham Senior High, Wareham Middle, and Minot Forest for classroom observations; district wrap-up meeting with the superintendent. |

Appendix B: Enrollment, Attendance, Expenditures

**Table B1a: Wareham Public Schools**

**2017–2018 Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **District** | **Percent**  **of Total** | **State** | **Percent of**  **Total** |
| African-American | 179 | 7.7% | 86,305 | 9.0% |
| Asian | 25 | 1.1% | 65,667 | 6.9% |
| Hispanic | 163 | 7.0% | 191,201 | 20.0% |
| Native American | 26 | 1.1% | 2,103 | 0.2% |
| White | 1,686 | 72.9% | 573,335 | 60.1% |
| Native Hawaiian | 2 | 0.1% | 818 | 0.1% |
| Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic | 233 | 10.1% | 34,605 | 3.6% |
| All | 2,314 | 100.0% | 954,034 | 100.0% |
| Note: As of October 1, 2017 | | | | |

**Table B1b: Wareham Public Schools**

**2017–2018 Student Enrollment by High Needs Populations**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **District** | | | **State** | | |
| **N** | **Percent of High Needs** | **Percent of District** | **N** | **Percent of High Needs** | **Percent of State** |
| Students w/ disabilities | 618 | 42.4% | 26.2% | 171,061 | 38.0% | 17.7% |
| Econ. Dis. | 1,198 | 82.3% | 51.8% | 305,203 | 67.9% | 32.0% |
| EL and Former EL | 26 | 1.8% | 1.1% | 97,334 | 21.6% | 10.2% |
| All high needs students | 1,456 | 100.0% | 61.7% | 449,584 | 100.0% | 46.6% |
| Notes: As of October 1, 2017. District and state numbers and percentages for students with disabilities and high needs students are calculated including students in out-of-district placements. Total district enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 2,359; total state enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 964,806. | | | | | | |

**Table B2a: Wareham Public Schools**

**Attendance Rates, 2015–2018**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2018)** |
| African American/Black | 201 | 94.5 | 95.3 | 93.6 | 94.4 | -0.1 | 94.1 |
| Asian | 23 | 95.2 | 96.7 | 96.1 | 95.8 | 0.6 | 96.2 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 181 | 93.2 | 94.2 | 93.6 | 93.0 | -0.2 | 92.7 |
| Multi-Race | 257 | 93.2 | 94.5 | 93.5 | 93.4 | 0.2 | 94.4 |
| White | 1,786 | 94.3 | 95.0 | 94.3 | 94.2 | -0.1 | 95.1 |
| High Needs | 1,628 | 93.0 | 94.2 | 93.2 | 93.2 | 0.2 | 93.2 |
| Econ. Dis. | 1,416 | 92.9 | 94.0 | 93.0 | 93.0 | 0.1 | 92.5 |
| SWD | 669 | 92.5 | 94.1 | 92.9 | 92.9 | 0.4 | 92.9 |
| EL | 24 | 96.2 | 97.2 | 95.5 | 93.0 | -3.2 | 93.3 |
| All | 2,478 | 94.1 | 94.9 | 94.1 | 94.0 | -0.1 | 94.5 |
| Notes: The attendance rate is calculated by dividing the total number of days students attended school by the total number of days students were enrolled in a particular school year. A student’s attendance rate is counted toward any district the student attended. In addition, district attendance rates included students who were out placed in public collaborative or private alternative schools/programs at public expense. Attendance rates have been rounded; percent change is based on unrounded numbers. | | | | | | | |

**Table B2b: Wareham Public Schools**

**Chronic Absence Rates,\* 2015–2018**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | | **N (2018)** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2018)** |
| African American/Black | | 201 | 18.9 | 12.1 | 18.1 | 19.4 | 0.5 | 16.4 |
| Asian | | 23 | 22.2 | 6.7 | 17.2 | 17.4 | -4.8 | 7.6 |
| Hispanic or Latino | | 181 | 21.3 | 15.7 | 23.4 | 24.3 | 3.0 | 22.5 |
| Multi-Race | | 257 | 23.3 | 15.0 | 19.9 | 20.2 | -3.1 | 14.2 |
| White | | 1,786 | 15.3 | 12.8 | 15.7 | 16.7 | 1.4 | 10.0 |
| High Needs | | 1,628 | 23.6 | 17.4 | 22.6 | 23.0 | -0.6 | 20.1 |
| Econ. Dis. | | 1,416 | 24.4 | 18.4 | 24.1 | 23.5 | -0.9 | 22.9 |
| SWD | | 669 | 26.7 | 18.1 | 24.5 | 25.9 | -0.8 | 20.7 |
| EL | | 24 | 4.0 | 0.0 | 8.3 | 25.0 | 21.0 | 20.4 |
| All | | 2,478 | 16.9 | 13.3 | 17.1 | 17.9 | 1.0 | 13.2 |
|  |

**Table B3: Wareham Public Schools**

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

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **FY16** | | | **FY17** | | | **FY18** | | |
|  | **Estimated** | | **Actual** | **Estimated** | **Actual** | | **Estimated** | | **Actual** |
| Expenditures | | | | | | | | | |
| From local appropriations for schools: |  | | | | | | | | |
| By school committee | $27,134,655 | $27,045,269 | | $27,952,643 | | $28,067,534 | | $28, 380, 103 | $29,263,927 |
| By municipality | $13,891,969 | $12,880,488 | | $16,694,391 | | $14,150,206 | | $14,612,261 | $15,752,709 |
| Total from local appropriations | $41,026,624 | $39,925,757 | | $44,647,034 | | $42,217,740 | | $42,992,364 | $45,016,636 |
| From revolving funds and grants | -- | $4,879,906 | | -- | | $5,275,860 | | -- | $5,905,932 |
| Total expenditures | -- | $44,805,663 | | -- | | $47,493,600 | | -- | $50,922,568 |
| Chapter 70 aid to education program | | | | | | | | | |
| Chapter 70 state aid\* | -- | $12,558,607 | | -- | | $12,708,042 | | -- | $13,232,180 |
| Required local contribution | -- | $18,285,648 | | -- | | $17,354,464 | | -- | $17,216,125 |
| Required net school spending\*\* | -- | $30,844,255 | | -- | | $30,062,506 | | -- | $30,448,305 |
| Actual net school spending | -- | $35,167,924 | | -- | | $35,995,111 | | -- | $37,788,254 |
| Over/under required ($) | -- | $4,323,669 | | -- | | $5,932,605 | | -- | $7,339,949 |
| Over/under required (%) | -- | 14.0% | | -- | | 19.7% | | -- | 24.1% |
| \*Chapter 70 state aid funds are deposited in the local general fund and spent as local appropriations.  \*\*Required net school spending is the total of Chapter 70 aid and required local contribution. Net school spending includes only expenditures from local appropriations, not revolving funds and grants. It includes expenditures for most administration, instruction, operations, and out-of-district tuitions. It does not include transportation, school lunches, debt, or capital.  Sources: FY16, FY17, and FY18 District End-of-Year Reports, Chapter 70 Program information on ESE website  Data retrieved 11/13/18 and 2/1/19 | | | | | | | | | |

**Table B4: Wareham Public Schools**

**Expenditures Per In-District Pupil**

**Fiscal Years 2015–2017**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Expenditure Category** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** |
| Administration | $429 | $473 | $457 |
| Instructional leadership (district and school) | $1,374 | $1,458 | $1,304 |
| Teachers | $5,274 | $5,387 | $5,737 |
| Other teaching services | $1,012 | $1,167 | $1,275 |
| Professional development | $96 | $73 | $102 |
| Instructional materials, equipment and technology | $137 | $142 | $228 |
| Guidance, counseling and testing services | $332 | $337 | $384 |
| Pupil services | $1,514 | $1,390 | $1,531 |
| Operations and maintenance | $1,035 | $1,048 | $1,068 |
| Insurance, retirement and other fixed costs | $3,102 | $3,144 | $3,294 |
| Total expenditures per in-district pupil | $14,306 | $14,620 | $15,381 |
| Sources: [Per-pupil expenditure reports on ESE website](http://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/statistics/ppx.html)  Note: Any discrepancy between expenditures and total is because of rounding. | | | |

Appendix C: Instructional Inventory

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Focus Area #1: Learning Objectives & Expectations** |  | Insufficient Evidence | Limited Evidence | Sufficient Evidence | Compelling Evidence | Avg Number of points |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (1 to 4) |
| 1. The teacher demonstrates knowledge of the subject matter. | **ES** | 0% | 4% | 96% | 0% | 3.0 |
| **MS** | 0% | 4% | 80% | 16% | 3.1 |
| **HS** | 0% | 7% | 76% | 18% | 3.1 |
| **Total #** | 0 | 5 | 76 | 12 | 3.1 |
| **Total %** | 0% | 5% | 82% | 13% |  |
| 2. The teacher ensures that students understand what they should be learning in the lesson and why. | **ES** | 0% | 26% | 70% | 4% | 2.8 |
| **MS** | 0% | 8% | 80% | 12% | 3.0 |
| **HS** | 0% | 9% | 82% | 9% | 3.0 |
| **Total #** | 0 | 12 | 73 | 8 | 3.0 |
| **Total %** | 0% | 13% | 78% | 9% |  |
| 3. The teacher uses appropriate classroom activities well matched to the learning objective(s). | **ES** | 0% | 9% | 74% | 17% | 3.1 |
| **MS** | 0% | 4% | 76% | 20% | 3.2 |
| **HS** | 0% | 9% | 82% | 9% | 3.0 |
| **Total #** | 0 | 7 | 73 | 13 | 3.1 |
| **Total %** | 0% | 8% | 78% | 14% |  |
| 4. The teacher conducts frequent checks for student understanding, provides feedback, and adjusts instruction. | **ES** | 0% | 26% | 65% | 9% | 2.8 |
| **MS** | 0% | 8% | 80% | 12% | 3.0 |
| **HS** | 0% | 16% | 69% | 16% | 3.0 |
| **Total #** | 0 | 15 | 66 | 12 | 3.0 |
| **Total %** | 0% | 16% | 71% | 13% |  |
| **Total Score for Focus Area #1** | **ES** | 0 | 15 | 70 | 7 | **11.7** |
| **MS** | 0 | 6 | 79 | 15 | **12.4** |
| **HS** | 0 | 18 | 139 | 23 | **12.1** |
| **Total** | 0 | 39 | 288 | 45 | **12.1** |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Focus Area #2: Student Engagement & Higher-Order Thinking** |  | Insufficient Evidence | Limited Evidence | Sufficient Evidence | Compelling Evidence | Avg Number of points |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (1 to 4) |
| 5. Students assume responsibility to learn and are engaged in the lesson. | **ES** | 0% | 30% | 48% | 22% | 2.9 |
| **MS** | 0% | 16% | 68% | 16% | 3.0 |
| **HS** | 0% | 29% | 64% | 7% | 2.8 |
| **Total #** | 0 | 24 | 57 | 12 | 2.9 |
| **Total %** | 0% | 26% | 61% | 13% |  |
| 6. Students engage in higher-order thinking. | **ES** | 0% | 52% | 39% | 9% | 2.6 |
| **MS** | 0% | 20% | 72% | 8% | 2.9 |
| **HS** | 2% | 47% | 49% | 2% | 2.5 |
| **Total #** | 1 | 38 | 49 | 5 | 2.6 |
| **Total %** | 1% | 41% | 53% | 5% |  |
| 7. Students communicate their ideas and thinking with each other. | **ES** | 0% | 48% | 48% | 4% | 2.6 |
| **MS** | 0% | 16% | 76% | 8% | 2.9 |
| **HS** | 0% | 44% | 51% | 4% | 2.6 |
| **Total #** | 0 | 35 | 53 | 5 | 2.7 |
| **Total %** | 0% | 38% | 57% | 5% |  |
| 8. Students engage with meaningful, real-world tasks. | **ES** | 0% | 17% | 78% | 4% | 2.9 |
| **MS** | 0% | 8% | 76% | 16% | 3.1 |
| **HS** | 0% | 31% | 58% | 11% | 2.8 |
| **Total #** | 0 | 20 | 63 | 10 | 2.9 |
| **Total %** | 0% | 22% | 68% | 11% |  |
| **Total Score for Focus Area #2** | **ES** | 0 | 34 | 49 | 9 | **10.9** |
| **MS** | 0 | 15 | 73 | 12 | **11.9** |
| **HS** | 1 | 69 | 100 | 11 | **10.7** |
| **Total** | 1 | 118 | 222 | 32 | **11.1** |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Focus Area #3: Inclusive Practice & Classroom Culture** |  | Insufficient Evidence | Limited Evidence | Sufficient Evidence | Compelling Evidence | Avg Number of points |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (1 to 4) |
| 9. The teacher ensures that students are engaging in challenging tasks regardless of learning needs. | **ES** | 0% | 22% | 70% | 9% | 2.9 |
| **MS** | 0% | 20% | 60% | 20% | 3.0 |
| **HS** | 2% | 33% | 58% | 7% | 2.7 |
| **Total #** | 1 | 25 | 57 | 10 | 2.8 |
| **Total %** | 1% | 27% | 61% | 11% |  |
| 10. The teacher uses a variety of instructional strategies. | **ES** | 0% | 17% | 70% | 13% | 3.0 |
| **MS** | 0% | 12% | 76% | 12% | 3.0 |
| **HS** | 0% | 49% | 44% | 7% | 2.6 |
| **Total #** | 0 | 29 | 55 | 9 | 2.8 |
| **Total %** | 0% | 31% | 59% | 10% |  |
| 11. Classroom routines and positive supports are in place to ensure that students behave appropriately. | **ES** | 0% | 4% | 83% | 13% | 3.1 |
| **MS** | 0% | 4% | 76% | 20% | 3.2 |
| **HS** | 0% | 9% | 71% | 20% | 3.1 |
| **Total #** | 0 | 6 | 70 | 17 | 3.1 |
| **Total %** | 0% | 6% | 75% | 18% |  |
| 12. The classroom climate is conducive to teaching and learning. | **ES** | 0% | 13% | 78% | 9% | 3.0 |
| **MS** | 0% | 4% | 72% | 24% | 3.2 |
| **HS** | 0% | 7% | 71% | 22% | 3.2 |
| **Total #** | 0 | 7 | 68 | 18 | 3.1 |
| **Total %** | 0% | 8% | 73% | 19% |  |
| **Total Score For Focus Area #3** | **ES** | 0 | 13 | 69 | 10 | **11.9** |
| **MS** | 0 | 10 | 71 | 19 | **12.4** |
| **HS** | 1 | 44 | 110 | 25 | **11.5** |
| **Total** | 1 | 67 | 250 | 54 | **11.8** |

1. The percentage of students absent 10 percent or more of their total number of student days of membership in a school. See Table 29 in the Student Performance section of this report for chronic absence rates over time, disaggregated by student group. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See Tables 24 and 25 in the Student Performance section of this report for in-school and out-of-school suspension rates, respectively, disaggregated over time by student group. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. High-quality feedback is specific, timely, and actionable. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. One assistant principal serves half time at Decas Elementary School and half time at Wareham Middle School. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The district’s strategic plan rubric defines transforming learning as learning that “results in college- and career-ready graduates who are lifelong learners.” [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. In observed classrooms, the review team noted a consistently higher quality of instruction for 7 of the 12 characteristics of effective instruction at the middle-school level than at the other levels (see Appendix C, DESE’s Instructional Inventory). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. At the time of the review in December 2018, the district had applied for approval of an IB program at the middle- school level. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. High-quality feedback is specific, timely, and actionable. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Authentic assessment: a set of methods or techniques for assessing the academic achievement of a student that includes activities requiring the application of acquired knowledge and skills to real-world situations and that is often seen as an alternative to standardized testing (*Merriam-Webster Unabridged Dictionary*). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Submitted before the onsite review [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. High-quality feedback is specific, timely, and actionable. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. An informative evaluation is factual and cites instructional details such as methodology, pedagogy, Standards and Indicators of Effective Teaching Practice or instruction of subject-based knowledge that is aligned with the state curriculum frameworks. It does not commit to improvement strategies. An instructive evaluation includes comments intended to improve instruction. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Between 2014 and 2018, enrollment in the district decreased by 15.7 percent. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Although some district and school leaders and teachers told the team that in the 2018–2019 school year the number of students in foster care placement was high and that some students were homeless, DESE was not able to substantiate these statements. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. The district’s four-year graduation rate (2017) was 69.4 percent, compared with the state rate of 88.3 percent. The district’s five-year graduation rate (2016) was 84.4 percent, compared with the state rate of 89.8 percent. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. The percentage of students absent 10 percent or more of their total number of student days of membership in a school. See Table 29 in the Student Performance section of this report for chronic absence rates over time, disaggregated by student group. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. See Tables 24 and 25 in the Student Performance section of this report for suspension rates over time, disaggregated by student group. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. The state law and regulations that took effect in 2014 required DESE to identify schools that suspend or expel a significant percentage of students for more than 10 cumulative days in a school year as well as schools and districts with significant disparities in suspension and expulsion rates among different racial and ethnic groups or among students with and without disabilities. Under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, DESE is responsible for monitoring special education compliance and performance indicators, including Indicator 4B: measuring disciplinary removal rate discrepancies for students with IEPs, by race or ethnicity, for greater than 10 days annually; and determining whether noncompliant district policies, practices, and procedures contribute to the significant discrepancy. Districts identified under Indicator 4B are also included in the group. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Wareham Public Schools, Wareham Senior High, and Wareham Middle School were identified through analysis of discipline data reported by the district/school to DESE through the annual School Safety and Discipline Report (SSDR) due each July. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Flexible grouping is a **way of grouping students together for delivering instruction**. This can be as a whole class, a small group, or with a partner. Flexible grouping creates temporary groups that can last an hour, a week, or even a month. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. FAST stands for Formative Assessment System for Teachers. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Authentic assessment: a set of methods or techniques for assessing the academic achievement of a student that includes activities requiring the application of acquired knowledge and skills to real-world situations and that is often seen as an alternative to standardized testing (*Merriam-Webster Unabridged Dictionary*). [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. The district expects students to attend school regularly. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Once students have been absent for 5 percent of their days in membership in school, the district contacts the families to collaborate to improve students’ attendance. After seven absences in a quarter, students lose course credit. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. In fiscal year 2018, Wareham town meeting approved capital improvements for the school district for technology, HVAC repairs, and furniture replacement. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. According to DESE data, between 2013 and 2017 foundation enrollment decreased from 2,943 in 2013 to 2,717 in 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. According to DESE’s RADAR Benchmarking, between 2014 and 2018 the number of district and school leader FTEs per 100 students in the district decreased by 19 percent, compared with a 4 percent increase statewide. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Between 2014 and 2018, the percentages of students with disabilities were as follows; 22.4 percent in 2014; 23.5 percent in 2015; 23.7 in 2016; 25.5 percent in 2017; and 26.2 percent in 2018, compared with the 2018 state rate of 17.7 percent. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. According to DESE’s RADAR Benchmarking, between 2014 and 2018 the number of special education teacher FTEs per 100 students with disabilities in the district increased from 4.9 to 7.0. Between 2014 and 2018, the number of special education paraprofessional FTEs per 100 students with disabilities increased from 7.2 to 10.4. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. District leaders reported that in April 2019 the district administered to students in grades 3–12 a survey similar to DESE’s Views of Climate and Learning (VOCAL) Student Survey (see [Views of Climate and Learning (VOCAL) Student Survey Project, 2018](http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/vocal/2018/)). In 2018, DESE administered survey items to students in grades 5, 8, and 10. Participating students were asked to share their views on three dimensions and nine topics of school climate. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)