District Review Report

Comprehensive review conducted October 22–25, 2018

Office of District Reviews and Monitoring

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148-4906

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

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



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

Jeffrey C. Riley

Commissioner

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75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148-4906

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

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Executive Summary

Leadership in the North Adams Public Schools has turned over substantially in the recent past. At the time of the site visit in October 2018, a majority of the district leaders were new to their roles between 2016 and 2018, including the superintendent, the school committee chair who is also the sitting mayor, all but one of the members of the school committee, and most of the eight members of the district’s instructional leadership team.

The district’s instructional leadership team (ILT) consists of: the superintendent; the director of curriculum, instruction and assessment; the director of student support services; the business administrator; and the four principals. The superintendent, the director of curriculum, instruction and assessment, and the director of student support services began work in the district in 2016. The business administrator, the only part-time person on the ILT, started work in the district in 2018. Of the school leaders, one principal has served for more than two decades in her role, two principals are long-time district staff who have been in their current roles since the fall of 2016, and the other principal began working in the district at the start of the 2018–2019 school year.

Since the fall of 2016, educators and students have participated in a districtwide reconfiguration of grades 7 and 8, transforming all four schools: three from a K–7 elementary/middle model to a Pre-K–6 elementary model, and one from a 8–12 to a 7–12 high-school model. Because of space issues at the former K–7 school level, grades 7 and 8 have been reconfigured. In academic year 2017–2018, grade 8 was moved to Drury High School. At the start of academic year 2018–2019, grade 7 joined the high school as well, forming the grades 7 and 8 Academy at the high school. With this reconfiguration, high-school teachers are teaching all middle-school classes. Educators have also adopted and implemented new research-based ELA curricula K–8 and new mathematics curricula K–11, introduced a new assessment system K–8, and closed the district’s prekindergarten center, relocating prekindergarten programming to the three elementary schools.

Leaders are engaged in substantial work with external partners. High-school staff and central office leaders have worked closely with their Statewide System of Support team members, including regional support staff and other external partners to design and implement their comprehensive turnaround efforts. Additional leadership work includes coordination of the Berkshire Arts and Technology (BART) charter school partnership on data analysis; in-depth work with Momenta on literacy efforts; and professional development supported by the publishers of the newly adopted ELA and mathematics curricula.

Leaders recognized that raising expectations involved taking risks as an educator, and could involve asking parents and students to take risks as well. One leader reported a conversation with a parent who had become a vocal advocate for her child. The parent expressed the view that some members of her community were hostile to her efforts. This parent expressed the opinion that having and expressing high expectations of one’s child and of one’s family was a form of risk taking, because it could be perceived as rejecting or disrespecting others, possibly triggering hostility. This educator said: “Raising expectations means taking risks.” Administrators acknowledged the reluctance of some teachers to engage with the use of new data, as doing so would require them to run the risk of having the impact of their own performance called into question, and experiencing their identity as an effective teacher potentially shaken.

Creating a culture of collaboration and joint responsibility for student learning requires the development of trust among educators, each of whom is functioning in a newly reconfigured school, and many new district leaders. Together, these educators have taken up the challenge of adopting multiple new curricula and programs, all in the three years before the onsite review in October 2018. When asked about continuing low levels of academic performance, some leaders observed that it was “too soon” or that changes were “still too new” for systemwide impact to have been achieved. One leader expressed the view that the district, like a struggling student in the middle of a daunting learning task, was questioning its belief in its abilities, a challenge that can only be met through experience. This leader said, “You have to push through, when it is hard to believe you will succeed,” noting “Then you can believe it. That is where the district is.”

***Instruction***

The team observed 60 classes throughout the district: 20 in grades 9–12 of the high school, 9 in grades 7–8 of the high school, and 31 at the 3 Pre-K–6 elementary schools. The team observed 22 ELA classes, 17 mathematics classes, and 21 classes in other subject areas. Students with disabilities were active participants in multiple observed classrooms, and push-in, classroom-based instruction of students with disabilities took place in multiple observed classrooms. Observations were approximately 20 minutes in length. All review team members collected data using DESE’s Instructional Inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards-based teaching. This data is presented in Appendix C.

In observed lessons, classroom instruction varied in quality and consistency. Teachers sometimes communicated learning objectives or checked effectively for student understanding, but this was not true in many classrooms. Student engagement and responsibility for learning varied substantially districtwide. Classroom climate ranged from respectful and engaged behaviors, particularly in elementary classrooms, to middle- and high-school classrooms with significant disruptions and limited routines and positive supports.

In some observed classrooms, students participated in purposeful, active learning opportunities that stretched their thinking. In many classrooms, however, students did not actively participate, and teachers' voices dominated the lessons. Although in some observed classes teachers organized students to work in small groups collaboratively, the groups were often off task. In a significant number of classrooms, the team observed a low incidence of effective teaching practices and classroom management, and disruptive student behavior, particularly at the middle-school level.

***Strengths***

* The superintendent, the school committee, the district leadership team (DLT), the teachers’ association, educators throughout the district, and a range of community partners have worked closely to establish a districtwide culture of collaboration that stresses shared responsibility and accountability for student learning.
* Through collaboration with school and district leaders, the superintendent and the recently hired business administrator are developing a more data-driven and transparent budget process. Working with district and school leaders, they are making strategic reallocations of resources to build system capacity and advance student learning.

The district has developed an inclusive and collaborative process to select and implement curricula and has adopted a suite of research-based ELA and mathematics programs.

The district has made strides in fostering a culture of academic data collection and data-driven decision-making.

The district has established a K–6 system for collecting student-level data from formative assessments. It is making these results readily available to teachers while providing them with structured time to share and discuss the data.

* The district has prioritized resources and staffing to engage parents and families. Through district initiatives and collaborations with local organizations and agencies, the district is working to respond to the social emotional and material needs of its community.
* The district has developed some initiatives to reduce expenditures and to generate new revenue.

***Challenges and Areas for Growth***

* District planning documents are not consistently focused on student achievement, emphasize process and activity of educators over outcomes for students, and have a limited degree of stakeholder involvement and support beyond school staff.
* In observed classrooms districtwide, the quality of instruction was inconsistent. The quality of instruction in grades 7 and 8 was consistently lower than at the K–6 and 9–12 grade levels.
* The high school has not established uniform structures and practices for the continuous collection and analysis of student performance and formative assessment data at all grade levels.
* The district has not developed an effective way to share progress monitoring and assessment results with students’ families and to engage families in their children’s learning.

The district does not prioritize opportunities for educators to receive high-quality feedback that helps them to improve their practice.

* The district does not have a professional development program that is informed by student and educator data, aligned with district and educator goals, and focused on student outcomes**.**

The district has not established a coordinated districtwide approach to support the well-being of students and staff.

* The district is facing declining enrollment and a high number of students choosing to enroll in other districts.
* The district and the city do not have an up-to-date, written agreement on municipal expenditures in support of the schools. The district has not developed a long-term capital plan.

***Recommendations***

* The district should ensure that its District Improvement Plan and School Improvement Plans have clear student outcomes goals that are based on analysis of historical, longitudinal, and current student achievement data. The district as a whole and each school should include stakeholders beyond district educators in the ongoing refinement of the DIP and each SIP.
	+ - * The district should ensure that all teachers provide effective instruction that challenges and supports all students.
* The district should develop uniform and integrated policies, structures, and practices for the efficient and purposeful collection, use, and sharing of a range of assessments at the 9–12 grade levels.
* The district should develop student achievement reporting that is personalized, timely, and easy to understand, and redouble its efforts to engage families in supporting their children’s learning.

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

* The district should develop a professional development program that has clear goals and objectives and is aligned with district priorities, school goals, and the needs of students and educators.
* The district should establish a coordinated and strategic approach to supporting students’ well-being.
* In compliance with 603 CMR 10.05, district administrators and city officials should update the written agreement that details the calculation process and/or amounts to be used in calculating municipal expenditures that are provided to the district.
	+ - The district and the city should develop a plan to ensure that the long-term capital needs of all district buildings are addressed.
		- The district should collect feedback from stakeholders to determine why students are choosing to attend school elsewhere, analyze results, and make recommendations for change. District leaders and town officials 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 challenge of declining enrollment.

North Adams Public Schools District Review Overview

Purpose

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

Methodology

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

Site Visit

The site visit to the North Adams Public Schools was conducted from October 22—25, 2018. The site visit included 30.5 hours of interviews and focus groups with approximately 85 stakeholders, including school committee members, district administrators, school staff, students, students’ families, and teachers’ association representatives. The review team conducted two focus groups with eight elementary-school teachers in one, and seven middle- and high-school teachers in the other.

A list of review team members, information about review activities, and the site visit schedule are in Appendix A, and Appendix B provides information about enrollment, attendance, and expenditures. The team observed classroom instruction in 60 classrooms in 4 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**

The city of North Adams has a mayoral form of government, and the mayor chairs the school committee. The seven members of the school committee meet monthly.

The superintendent has been in the position since July 1, 2016. The district leadership team includes the superintendent; the director of curriculum, instruction and assessment; the director of student support services; the business administrator; and the principals of the three Pre-K–6 schools and the 7–12 high school. Central office positions have been mostly stable in number over the past several years. In addition to the four principals, there are five deans of students, one in each of the Pre-K–6 schools and two in the high school. In the 2017–2018 school year, there were 123.6 teachers in the district.

In the 2017–2018 school year, 1,439 students were enrolled in the district’s schools:

**Table 1: North Adams Public Schools**

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

| **School** | **Type** | **Grades Served** | **Enrollment** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Brayton Elementary School | ES | Pre-K–6 | 260 |
| Colegrove Park Elementary School  | ES | Pre-K–6 | 361 |
| Greylock Elementary School | ES | Pre-K–6 | 296 |
| Drury High School | MS/HS | 7–12 | 522 |
| **Totals** | **4 schools** | **Pre-K–12** | **1,439** |
| \*As of October 1, 2017 |

Between 2014 and 2018 overall student enrollment decreased by 5.8 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.

In fiscal year 2017, 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 (1,000–1,999 students): $16,264 as compared with $14,233. (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: North Adams Public Schools****Accountability Percentile, Criterion Reference Target (CRT) Percentage, Reason for Classification** |
| **School** | **Accountability Percentile** | **CRT Percentage** | **Overall Classification** | **Reason For Classification** |
| Brayton | 26 | 73% | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Partially meeting targets |
| Colegrove Park Elementary | 8 | 55% | Requiring assistance or intervention | In need of focused/targeted support: Among the lowest performing 10% of schoolsLow subgroup performance: White |
| Greylock | 39 | 58% | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Partially meeting targets |
| Drury High | 3 | 18% | Requiring assistance or intervention | In need of focused/targeted support: Among the lowest performing 10% of schoolsLow subgroup performance: White, Economically disadvantaged, high needs |
| District | -- | 43% | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Partially meeting targets |

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| **Table 3: North Adams Public Schools****Next-Generation MCAS ELA Scaled Scores Grades 3–8, 2017–2018** |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **State** | **Above/Below** |
| African American/Black | 22 | 483.8 | 487.8 | 4.0 | 490.3 | -2.5 |
| Asian | 3 | -- | -- | -- | 511.6 | -- |
| Hispanic or Latino | 35 | 491.8 | 495.0 | 3.2 | 489.7 | 5.3 |
| Multi-Race | 45 | 489.7 | 490.0 | 0.3 | 502.8 | -12.8 |
| White | 548 | 490.7 | 492.6 | 1.9 | 504.2 | -11.6 |
| High Needs | 468 | 486.9 | 488.3 | 1.4 | 490.1 | -1.8 |
| Econ. Dis. | 421 | 487.7 | 489.1 | 1.4 | 490.2 | -1.1 |
| SWD | 164 | 479.7 | 478.7 | -1.0 | 480.8 | -2.1 |
| EL | 7 | 488.3 | -- | -- | 488.4 | -- |
| All | 655 | 490.5 | 492.5 | 2.0 | 500.5 | -8.0 |
| 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: North Adams Public Schools****Next-Generation MCAS Math Scaled Scores Grades 3–8, 2017–2018** |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **State** | **Above/Below** |
| African American/Black | 22 | 481.8 | 482.0 | 0.2 | 486.9 | -4.9 |
| Asian | 3 | -- | -- | -- | 514.3 | -- |
| Hispanic or Latino | 35 | 495.9 | 491.8 | -4.1 | 487.4 | 4.4 |
| Multi-Race | 46 | 488.7 | 482.5 | -6.2 | 499.7 | -17.2 |
| White | 548 | 490.4 | 488.9 | -1.5 | 501.8 | -12.9 |
| High Needs | 469 | 487.5 | 484.2 | -3.3 | 488.2 | -4.0 |
| Econ. Dis. | 422 | 487.8 | 484.2 | -3.6 | 487.7 | -3.5 |
| SWD | 164 | 482.2 | 477.5 | -4.7 | 479.2 | -1.7 |
| EL | 7 | 497.2 | -- | -- | 488.5 | -- |
| All | 656 | 490.4 | 488.5 | -1.9 | 498.4 | -9.9 |
| 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 5: North Adams Public Schools****Next-Generation MCAS ELA Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations Grades 3–8, 2017–2018** |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **State** | **Above/Below** |
| African American/Black | 22 | 19% | 23% | 4 | 31% | -8 |
| Asian | 3 | -- | -- | -- | 71% | -- |
| Hispanic or Latino | 35 | 36% | 40% | 4 | 31% | 9 |
| Multi-Race | 45 | 28% | 29% | 1 | 54% | -25 |
| White | 548 | 29% | 38% | 9 | 58% | -20 |
| High Needs | 468 | 21% | 28% | 7 | 31% | -3 |
| Econ. Dis. | 421 | 22% | 29% | 7 | 32% | -3 |
| SWD | 164 | 11% | 16% | 5 | 14% | 2 |
| EL | 7 | 18% | -- | -- | 30% | -- |
| All | 655 | 29% | 37% | 8 | 51% | -14 |

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| **Table 6: North Adams Public Schools****Next-Generation MCAS Math Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations Grades 3–8, 2017–2018** |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **State** | **Above/Below** |
| African American/Black | 22 | 12% | 14% | 2 | 26% | -12 |
| Asian | 3 | -- | -- | -- | 74% | -- |
| Hispanic or Latino | 35 | 30% | 34% | 4 | 27% | 7 |
| Multi-Race | 46 | 28% | 17% | -11 | 49% | -32 |
| White | 548 | 27% | 27% | 0 | 55% | -28 |
| High Needs | 469 | 21% | 18% | -3 | 28% | -10 |
| Econ. Dis. | 422 | 21% | 18% | -3 | 27% | -9 |
| SWD | 164 | 13% | 13% | 0 | 14% | -1 |
| EL | 7 | 27% | -- | -- | 30% | -- |
| All | 656 | 27% | 26% | -1 | 48% | -22 |
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| **Table 7: North Adams Public Schools****MCAS ELA Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grade 10, 2017–2018** |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **State** | **Above/Below** |
| African American/Black | 3 | -- | -- | -- | 85% | -- |
| Asian | -- | -- | -- | -- | 95% | -- |
| Hispanic or Latino | 3 | -- | -- | -- | 78% | -- |
| Multi-Race | 5 | -- | -- | -- | 93% | -- |
| White | 65 | 88% | 77% | -11 | 94% | -17 |
| High Needs | 47 | 80% | 72% | -8 | 79% | -7 |
| Econ. Dis. | 45 | 84% | 71% | -13 | 81% | -10 |
| SWD | 14 | 56% | 43% | -13 | 69% | -26 |
| EL | -- | -- | -- | -- | 64% | -- |
| All | 77 | 87% | 81% | -6 | 91% | -10 |

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| **Table 8: North Adams Public Schools****MCAS Math Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grade 10, 2017–2018** |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **State** | **Above/Below** |
| African American/Black | 3 | -- | -- | -- | 60% | -- |
| Asian | -- | -- | -- | -- | 91% | -- |
| Hispanic or Latino | 2 | -- | -- | -- | 56% | -- |
| Multi-Race | 5 | -- | -- | -- | 79% | -- |
| White | 62 | 67% | 55% | -12 | 85% | -30 |
| High Needs | 43 | 48% | 35% | -13 | 57% | -22 |
| Econ. Dis. | 41 | 55% | 34% | -21 | 59% | -25 |
| SWD | 12 | 19% | 17% | -2 | 40% | -23 |
| EL | -- | -- | -- | -- | 44% | -- |
| All | 73 | 66% | 53% | -13 | 78% | -25 |

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| **Table 9: North Adams 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 | 7 | -- | 0% | 20% | -- | -- | 30% |
| Asian | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 68% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 13 | 17% | 17% | 50% | 46% | 29 | 30% |
| Multi-Race | 19 | 33% | 14% | 38% | 37% | 4 | 54% |
| White | 250 | 37% | 30% | 24% | 34% | -3 | 60% |
| High Needs | 197 | 20% | 19% | 20% | 27% | 7 | 31% |
| Econ. Dis. | 183 | 22% | 20% | 19% | 28% | 6 | 32% |
| SWD | 69 | 12% | 7% | 8% | 13% | 1 | 21% |
| EL | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 20% |
| All | 292 | 35% | 27% | 27% | 34% | -1 | 53% |

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| **Table 10: North Adams Public Schools****Next-Generation MCAS ELA Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Grades 3–8, 2017–2018** |
| **Grade** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **State** | **Above/Below** |
| 3 | 97 | 43% | 39% | -4 | 52% | -13 |
| 4 | 115 | 31% | 52% | 21 | 53% | -1 |
| 5 | 135 | 24% | 48% | 24 | 54% | -6 |
| 6 | 118 | 18% | 33% | 15 | 51% | -18 |
| 7 | 102 | 35% | 10% | -25 | 46% | -36 |
| 8 | 88 | 21% | 33% | 12 | 51% | -18 |
| 3–8 | 655 | 29% | 37% | 8 | 51% | -14 |

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| **Table 11: North Adams Public Schools****Next-Generation MCAS Math Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Grades 3–8, 2017–2018** |
| **Grade** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **State** | **Above/Below** |
| 3 | 97 | 45% | 35% | -10 | 50% | -15 |
| 4 | 114 | 27% | 30% | 3 | 48% | -18 |
| 5 | 135 | 24% | 20% | -4 | 46% | -26 |
| 6 | 118 | 21% | 31% | 10 | 47% | -16 |
| 7 | 103 | 23% | 14% | -9 | 46% | -32 |
| 8 | 89 | 18% | 29% | 11 | 50% | -21 |
| 3–8 | 656 | 27% | 26% | -1 | 48% | -22 |

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| **Table 12: North Adams 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 | 135 | 26% | 25% | 21% | 36% | 10 | 47% |
| 8 | 89 | 18% | 10% | 12% | 16% | -2 | 35% |
| 10 | 68 | 69% | 59% | 60% | 56% | -13 | 74% |
| All | 292 | 35% | 27% | 27% | 34% | -1 | 52% |

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| **Table 13: North Adams Public Schools****English Language Arts and Math Mean Student Growth Percentile, 2018** |
|  | **ELA** | **Math** |
| **Grade** | **N (2018)** | **2018** | **State 2018** | **N (2018)** | **2018** | **State (2018)** |
| 3 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 4 | 106 | 52.4 | 50.0 | 106 | 32.6 | 50.1 |
| 5 | 125 | 48.1 | 50.1 | 126 | 35.4 | 50.0 |
| 6 | 109 | 45.2 | 50.1 | 109 | 51.0 | 50.0 |
| 7 | 95 | 29.0 | 50.0 | 96 | 32.9 | 50.0 |
| 8 | 76 | 42.8 | 50.0 | 77 | 49.7 | 50.0 |
| 10 | 60 | 30.3 | 49.9 | 57 | 34.3 | 49.9 |

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| **Table 14: North Adams 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** |
| Brayton | 45% | 47% | 49% | 37% | -- | -- | 45% |
| Colegrove Park Elementary | 34% | 44% | 40% | 21% | -- | -- | 35% |
| Greylock | 46% | 64% | 58% | 44% | -- | -- | 53% |
| Drury High | -- | -- | -- | -- | 10% | 33% | 21% |
| District | 39% | 52% | 48% | 33% | 10% | 33% | 37% |
| State | 52% | 53% | 54% | 51% | 46% | 51% | 51% |

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| **Table 15: North Adams 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** |
| Brayton | 27% | 25% | 23% | 37% | -- | -- | 27% |
| Colegrove Park Elementary | 44% | 26% | 6% | 23% | -- | -- | 22% |
| Greylock | 42% | 42% | 39% | 36% | -- | -- | 40% |
| Drury High | -- | -- | -- | -- | 13% | 29% | 21% |
| District | 35% | 30% | 20% | 31% | 14% | 29% | 26% |
| State | 50% | 48% | 46% | 47% | 46% | 50% | 48% |

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| **Table 16: North Adams Public Schools****MCAS ELA and Math Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grade 10, 2018** |
| **School** | **ELA** | **Math** |
| Drury High | 82% | 53% |
| State | 91% | 78% |

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| **Table 17: North Adams Public Schools****MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced by School and Grade, 2018** |
| **School** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **10** | **Total** |
| Brayton | -- | -- | 41% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 41% |
| Colegrove Park Elementary | -- | -- | 21% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 21% |
| Greylock | -- | -- | 50% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 50% |
| Drury High | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 16% | 57% | 33% |
| District | -- | -- | 36% | -- | -- | 16% | 56% | 34% |
| State | -- | -- | 47% | -- | -- | 35% | 74% | 52% |

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| **Table 18: North Adams 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** |
| Brayton | 45% | 38% | 38% | 31% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 20% | 50% |
| Colegrove Park Elementary | 35% | 24% | 24% | 15% | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 36% |
| Greylock | 53% | 44% | 44% | 21% | -- | -- | -- | 73% | 27% | 54% |
| Drury High | 21% | 14% | 15% | 0% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 33% | 21% |
| District | 37% | 28% | 29% | 16% | -- | 23% | -- | 40% | 29% | 38% |
| State | 51% | 31% | 32% | 14% | 30% | 31% | 71% | 31% | 54% | 58% |

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| **Table 19: North Adams 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** |
| Brayton | 27% | 22% | 21% | 34% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 30% | 28% |
| Colegrove Park Elementary | 22% | 17% | 17% | 4% | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 21% |
| Greylock | 40% | 33% | 29% | 24% | -- | -- | -- | 36% | 18% | 42% |
| Drury High | 21% | 9% | 11% | 0% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 8% | 22% |
| District | 26% | 18% | 18% | 13% | -- | 14% | -- | 34% | 17% | 27% |
| State | 48% | 28% | 27% | 14% | 30% | 26% | 74% | 27% | 49% | 55% |

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| **Table 20: North Adams 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** |
| Drury High | 85% | 85% | 88% | 82% | -3 | 72% | 64% | 68% | 53% | -19 |
| African American/Black | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Asian | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Hispanic | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Multi-race | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| White | 84% | 88% | 89% | 79% | -5 | 76% | 67% | 69% | 55% | -21 |
| High Needs | 76% | 77% | 80% | 75% | -1 | 46% | 53% | 50% | 34% | -12 |
| Econ. Dis. | 79% | 84% | 85% | 74% | -5 | 50% | 58% | 59% | 33% | -17 |
| SWD | 46% | 38% | 54% | 45% | -1 | 15% | 17% | 23% | 20% | 5 |
| EL | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |

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| **Table 21: North Adams Public Schools****MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Science by School and Student Group, 2015–2018** |
| **School/Group** | **N (2018)** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **4-yr Change** |
| Brayton | 39 | 12% | 26% | 32% | 41% | 29 |
| African American/Black | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Asian | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Hispanic | 3 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Multi-race | 3 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| White | 32 | 14% | 30% | 27% | 41% | 27 |
| High Needs | 32 | 8% | 23% | 37% | 34% | 26 |
| Econ. Dis. | 30 | 8% | 23% | 37% | 37% | 29 |
| SWD | 8 | 17% | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| EL | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Colegrove Park Elementary | 52 | 23% | 14% | 14% | 21% | -2 |
| African American/Black | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Asian | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Hispanic | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Multi-race | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| White | 49 | 22% | 17% | 15% | 22% | 0 |
| High Needs | 41 | 16% | 15% | 9% | 20% | 4 |
| Econ. Dis. | 38 | 27% | 13% | 6% | 21% | -6 |
| SWD | 14 | 0% | 9% | 6% | 14% | 14 |
| EL | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Greylock | 38 | 50% | 34% | 23% | 50% | 0 |
| African American/Black | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Asian | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Hispanic | 4 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Multi-race | 4 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| White | 28 | 48% | 38% | 20% | 50% | 2 |
| High Needs | 21 | 40% | 20% | 19% | 38% | -2 |
| Econ. Dis. | 19 | 42% | 22% | 12% | 37% | -5 |
| SWD | 8 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| EL | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Drury High | 154 | 41% | 30% | 31% | 33% | -8 |
| African American/Black | 4 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Asian | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Hispanic | 5 | 17% | -- | 55% | -- | -- |
| Multi-race | 11 | -- | -- | 41% | 27% | -- |
| White | 133 | 45% | 32% | 28% | 33% | -12 |
| High Needs | 95 | 21% | 20% | 22% | 24% | 3 |
| Econ. Dis. | 89 | 23% | 22% | 24% | 26% | 3 |
| SWD | 34 | 12% | 3% | 2% | 0% | -12 |
| EL | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |

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| **Table 22: North Adams Public Schools****Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates, 2014–2017** |
| **Group** | **N** **(2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2017)** |
| African American/Black | 1 | -- | 71.4 | -- | -- | -- | 80.0 |
| Asian | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 94.1 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 6 | 33.3 | -- | 77.8 | 83.3 | 50.0 | 74.4 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hisp./Lat. | 7 | -- | -- | 100.0 | 42.9 | -- | 85.2 |
| White | 79 | 82.3 | 86.3 | 78.3 | 78.5 | -3.8 | 92.6 |
| High needs | 65 | 69.6 | 80.8 | 72.6 | 66.2 | -3.4 | 80.0 |
| Economically Disadvantaged\* | 61 | 68.8 | 79.7 | 73.8 | 67.2 | -1.6 | 79.0 |
| SWD | 17 | 62.9 | 73.1 | 59.4 | 41.2 | -21.7 | 72.8 |
| EL | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 63.4 |
| All | 93 | 79.6 | 84.1 | 81.0 | 76.3 | -3.3 | 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: North Adams Public Schools****Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates, 2013–2016** |
| **Group** | **N** **(2016)** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2016)** |
| African American/Black | 5 | 66.7 | -- | 85.7 | -- | -- | 83.4 |
| Asian | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 94.8 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 9 | 77.8 | 66.7 | -- | 88.9 | 11.1 | 76.8 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hisp./Lat. | 10 | -- | -- | -- | 100.0 | -- | 87.4 |
| White | 92 | 78.2 | 85.4 | 87.4 | 81.5 | 3.3 | 93.5 |
| High needs | 84 | 70.3 | 75.4 | 83.6 | 77.4 | 7.1 | 82.9 |
| Economically Disadvantaged\* | 80 | 72.3 | 75.0 | 82.6 | 76.3 | 4.0 | 82.1 |
| SWD | 32 | 48.6 | 68.6 | 73.1 | 68.8 | 20.2 | 76.5 |
| EL | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 70.9 |
| All | 121 | 77.0 | 84.1 | 85.8 | 84.3 | 7.3 | 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: North Adams Public Schools****In-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2015–2018** |
| **Group** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2018)** |
| African American/Black | 8.0 | -- | 13.0 | 20.4 | 12.4 | 3.4 |
| Asian | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 0.6 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 5.3 | -- | 7.4 | 10.3 | 5 | 2.4 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic or Latino | 3.8 | 6.7 | 11.9 | 12.7 | 8.9 | 2.3 |
| White | 2.3 | 2.4 | 5.4 | 7.2 | 4.9 | 1.4 |
| High Needs | 3.9 | 4.2 | 7.6 | 9.8 | 5.9 | 2.7 |
| Economically disadvantaged\* | 3.5 | 3.6 | 7.8 | 9.8 | 6.3 | 2.9 |
| SWD | 8.0 | 9.7 | 9.2 | 11.3 | 3.3 | 3.3 |
| EL | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 1.8 |
| All | 2.8 | 2.8 | 6.3 | 8.2 | 5.4 | 1.8 |

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| **Table 25: North Adams 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 | 12.0 | -- | 16.7 | 20.4 | 8.4 | 6.0 |
| Asian | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 0.7 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 5.3 | -- | 9.3 | 8.2 | 2.9 | 5.1 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic or Latino | 7.6 | 8.7 | 7.3 | 19.1 | 11.5 | 3.3 |
| White | 1.9 | 3.2 | 6.7 | 7.4 | 5.5 | 1.9 |
| High Needs | 3.8 | 5.1 | 8.7 | 10.9 | 7.1 | 4.6 |
| Economically disadvantaged\* | 3.7 | 4.7 | 9.1 | 11.2 | 7.5 | 5.4 |
| SWD | 6.2 | 10.0 | 11.2 | 12.7 | 6.5 | 5.8 |
| EL | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 3.7 |
| All | 2.8 | 3.7 | 7.2 | 8.7 | 5.9 | 2.9 |

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| **Table 26: North Adams Public Schools****Dropout Rates by Student Group, 2014–2017** |
| **Group** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2017)** |
| African American/Black | 0.0 | 0.0 | 15.4 | 15.4 | 15.4 | 2.9 |
| Asian | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 0.6 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 0.0 | 5.0 | 8.3 | 23.8 | 23.8 | 4.2 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic or Latino | 4.0 | 3.7 | 3.7 | 9.5 | 5.5 | 1.7 |
| White | 4.0 | 4.1 | 4.4 | 7.3 | 3.3 | 1.1 |
| High Needs | 5.9 | 7.3 | 8.8 | 14.8 | 8.9 | 3.5 |
| Economically disadvantaged\* | 6.1 | 6.6 | 7.9 | 14.5 | 8.4 | 3.6 |
| SWD | 5.7 | 6.8 | 12.3 | 19.0 | 13.3 | 3.3 |
| EL | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 6.5 |
| All | 3.8 | 4.2 | 5.3 | 8.8 | 5.0 | 1.8 |
| \*Dropout rates for students from low-income families used for 2014 rates. |

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| **Table 27: North Adams Public Schools****Advanced Coursework Completion, 2017–2018** |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **Target** |
| African American/Black | 6 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Asian | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Hispanic or Latino | 10 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic or Latino | 12 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| White | 121 | 62.8 | 72.7 | 9.9 | 67.9 |
| High Needs | 79 | 31.2 | 44.3 | 13.1 | 38.2 |
| Economically disadvantaged | 68 | 33.8 | 47.1 | 13.3 | 42.9 |
| SWD | 27 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| EL | 2 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| All | 149 | 59.5 | 68.5 | 9.0 | 64.1 |

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| **Table 28: North Adams Public Schools****Progress toward Attaining English Language Proficiency, 2017–2018** |
|  | **Non-high school** | **High school** |
| **Group** | **N** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **Target** | **N** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **Target** |
| EL | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| All | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |

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| **Table 29: North Adams 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 | 34 | -- | -- | -- | -- | 13 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Asian | 5 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Hispanic or Latino | 57 | -- | -- | -- | -- | 20 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Multi-Race, non-Hisp./Lat. | 65 | -- | -- | -- | -- | 29 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| White | 766 | 11.2 | 11.7 | -0.5 | 10.2 | 291 | 29.5 | 22.3 | 7.2 | 28.5 |
| High needs | 673 | 15.9 | 16.2 | -0.3 | 14.0 | 219 | 42.7 | 35.2 | 7.5 | 40.8 |
| Economically Disadvantaged | 571 | 16.1 | 17.5 | -1.4 | 13.5 | 176 | 46.3 | 35.2 | 11.1 | 43.7 |
| SWD | 227 | -- | -- | -- | -- | 79 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| EL | 18 | -- | -- | -- | -- | 2 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| All | 929 | 12.5 | 13.3 | -0.8 | 11.4 | 354 | 32.4 | 24.6 | 7.8 | 31.3 |
| \* The percentage of students absent 10% or more of their total number of student days of membership in a school |

Leadership and Governance

***Contextual Background***

The district’s instructional leadership team (ILT) consists of: the superintendent; the director of curriculum, instruction, and assessment; the director of student support services; the business administrator; and the four principals. In addition, the Title I and literacy coordinator, the English language learner coordinator, and the director of high-school curriculum and instruction provide core academic leadership. The district also has full-time directors of facilities and IT.

The ILT meets every two weeks. The district leadership team, which consists of the superintendent, the business administrator, the directors of curriculum, instruction, and assessment and of student support services, and the Title I and literacy coordinator, meets once a month. The district data team, which includes all members of the ILT, meets once a month.

Each of the Pre-K–6 elementary schools has a dean of students with academic and administrative responsibilities. At the high school, a director of curriculum and instruction leads a team of team leaders covering four areas: the grades 7 and 8 Academy, humanities 9–12, STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) 9–12, and arts and wellness.

Teacher leadership takes several forms in North Adams. The leaders of the teachers’ association have engaged in non-traditional, interest-based bargaining with the school committee and the superintendent. Teachers serve as team leaders in the high school, coordinating professional development efforts, organizing peer observations, and evaluating other teachers as a part of the educator evaluation system.

In many conversations across the district, and particularly within the leadership team, the review team encountered evidence of high levels of motivation to bring about effective improvements. Many stakeholders recognized that in order for students in North Adams to do better, changes must be made in longstanding practices at every level of the district. A variety of stakeholders told the review team multiple stories about the struggles that leaders, teachers, students, and family members were encountering. Many stakeholders seemed uncertain how best to individually and collectively set and meet higher expectations of themselves, of one another, and of the schools and district in which they participated.

In one interview, a leader described observing a teacher who prepared students for a worksheet but then told them they did not have to do the hardest problem. Lest students get frustrated or demoralized, the educator chose to set aside the most rigorous learning opportunity. In a further illustration of the dilemma in which the district finds itself, that same observer, feeling dismay at this approach, chose not to offer the educator any direct feedback about it, out of a desire not to discourage this teacher. These two forms of reticence—for educators to ask more of students, and for educators to ask more of their fellow educators, especially when making these requests is difficult, or may trigger a negative response—remain a challenge for many leaders and educators in the district.

***Strength Findings***

1. **The superintendent, the school committee, the district leadership team (DLT), the teachers’ association, educators throughout the district, and a range of community partners have worked closely to establish a districtwide culture of collaboration that stresses shared responsibility and accountability for student learning.**
	1. The superintendent works closely with the school committee to build its capacity to work with, and base its decision-making on, consideration of student performance and budget data. School committee members, all but one of whom are new in their role in the three years before the onsite review, described the superintendent as “collaborative,” “constructive,” and “non-adversarial.” They also credited her with building “a strong team,” and for holding her staff accountable for results.
	2. The superintendent has worked closely with the DLT, the majority of whom have been in their roles for fewer than three years, to develop a high level of collaboration and build trust and mutuality in their practice.[[1]](#footnote-1)

1. Central office leaders described the superintendent’s vision, her commitment to improvement, and her directness with them about her expectation, noting, “We know where we stand.” They also stated repeatedly that they could be completely frank in their interactions with her.

* 1. Principals pointed out that the superintendent regularly asked them to raise their expectations of a team or a process, or apply a higher standard to a key element of their work. They said, “She wants us to call people in, rather than call them out.” They also spoke of how readily she has backed up the changes and choices that they and their teams have made in the schools.
	2. The superintendent and multiple representatives of the teachers’ association stated that the most recent collective bargaining process was highly productive. They said that they used an interest-based bargaining approach, and noted how respectful and open meetings with the superintendent have been.

1. The superintendent stated that association representatives made decisions based on students’ needs.

2. One association representative said of the superintendent, “She addresses the issues and we talk through solutions.” Another observed, “Now, any meetings we have with the administration are more open and respectful; we feel like an equal partner.”

3. While appreciative of the superintendent, teachers’ association members maintained a balanced perspective, noting, “She is not perfect, and neither are we.”

**Impact:** An effective, collaborative culture helps to build a strong sense of support for public schools in the community. When a district leader builds an effective leadership team, the district is well positioned to focus on improving student learning.

1. **Through collaboration with school and district leaders, the superintendent and the recently hired business administrator are developing a more data-driven and transparent budget process. Working with district and school leaders, they are making strategic reallocations of resources to build system capacity and advance student learning.**
2. The superintendent stated that the new business administrator has brought a new management style to budgeting, and was working with the instructional leadership team and other staff to allocate resources where they were needed.
3. District and school leaders are increasingly engaged in the development of the district budget, and the use of student performance data to develop and adjust the budget is becoming more common.
	* 1. District leaders told the team that the budget process was now much more transparent. They stated that the business administrator has brought them into the budget process in ways that are inclusive and new. School leaders told the team the budget was being built on what was needed for student learning and for equity, such as new curriculum and a new K–8 assessment system.
		2. School committee members told the review team that they regularly saw data in the District Improvement Plan, School Improvement Plans, and the superintendent’s evaluation. One member stated that they saw academic data three or four times a year, and that the quality of budget data has improved.
		3. Members stated that they received monthly budget reports and have noticed staff adjusting budget presentation documents to increase transparency. For example, staff recently added a column to the budget to clarify the meaning of the document, and to help school committee members understand an issue.

 4. School committee members told the team that since the new business administrator was hired, the budget process has gone smoothly. They said that when they begin to build the fiscal year 2020 budget they would be more prepared.

 5. School committee members and city officials stated that they had a high degree of confidence in the district and city finance team, and the district and the city would be working collaboratively to develop the next budget.

1. The superintendent offered multiple examples of how the district worked to reallocate resources to ensure improved student outcomes, to conserve funds, to end ineffective practices, and to achieve greater program impact.

 1. The superintendent said that relocation of the district office to city hall, a move planned for spring 2019, would allow the district to reallocate $75,000 to other purposes.

 2. The district reallocated funds to provide a better level of student support, build a competitive salary structure for nurses, and increase retention. The superintendent told the team that this has made the district more competitive when seeking candidates within the local health care sector workforce.

 3. The district hired a school adjustment counselor at the high school, in place of a less effective behavioral specialist staffing pattern.

**Impact**: When district leaders work collaboratively to develop a budget through a participatory and transparent process, allocate resources efficiently, and focus on providing services based on all students’ needs, the district can ensure improved performance, opportunities, and outcomes for all students.

**Challenges and Areas for Growth**

1. **District planning documents are not consistently focused on student achievement, emphasize process and activity of educators over outcomes for students, and have a limited degree of stakeholder involvement and support beyond school staff.**

**A.** The 2016–2019 Draft Strategic District Improvement Plan (DIP) does not focus on student outcomes, instead concentrating on a re-organization of programs and processes.

 1. While the DIP includes goals for adopting new curriculum and assessment programs, providing educators with professional development, and establishing systems of student support and family communication, there is very limited evidence that the goals in the DIP are based on an analysis of student data. All the outcomes concern the design and completion of programs and activities. For example, the strategic objectives for curriculum, instruction and assessment are as follows:

 a. NAPS [North Adams Public Schools] educators will design, revise, or adopt, and implement standards-based units that promote higher order thinking skills that reflect real-world challenges by integrating effective individual effort and collaborative work with groups of diverse peers.

 b. NAPS educators will improve student learning through the use of feedback and dialog with students and families that is effective, constructive, and consistent regarding mastery of grade-level standards.

 c. NAPS educators will use an assessment system that reflects best practice in data-driven decision making to promote student learning.

**B.** The DIP and the SIPs do not consistently use SMART goals[[2]](#footnote-2); when used, these SMART goals are often incomplete. While both the DIP and the SIPs make regular use of goals that include persons who are responsible and timelines, and there is a large volume of activity planned, these documents generally emphasize adult and school process and activity, rather than measurable benchmarks tied to students, particularly student outcomes.

1. The DIP outlines a set of expected results over three years, but it does not contain expected results in the form of SMART goals, with benchmarks that include student outcomes.

2. The Greylock and Colegrove Park 2017–2018 SIPs contain student outcomes goals, but they do not include all the elements of a SMART goal; in particular, both SIPs set out goals without offering benchmarks to assess progress and allow for course correction.

3. The Brayton 20172018 SIP document does not include any goals related to student outcomes or any SMART goals.

4. However, the Drury High Turnaround Plan includes SMART goals and benchmarks for both student and educator outcomes, in four areas: leadership, improving instruction, support for students, and school culture and climate.

 **C.** Interviews and a document review indicated that the inclusion of parents, community members, and other stakeholders in the development and implementation of district and school plans was uneven, and the use of the SIPs was limited almost entirely to educators.

1.The inclusion of families and other stakeholders in the development of district planning documents, while documented, does not appear to extend to sustained, hands-on action or involvement.

2. While school councils at all three elementary schools participated in the preparation of SIPs, it was not clear to the review team that parents were involved in ongoing refinement of SIPs.

 3. The high school does not have a formal SIP. A faculty team supported by the Statewide System of Support staff has developed and annually updated a turnaround plan as required by DESE for schools in need of focused support. The review team did not find evidence of involvement by parents or other stakeholders in the development of the turnaround plan.

4. Of the four schools, all but one have their 2016-–2017 SIPs posted on their webpage.

**Impact:** When the district’s plans for improvement focus on the process and procedures of educators rather than on the outcomes that students will achieve, they tend to impair, rather than increase, the district’s chances of achieving strong student gains. When district planning processes are not inclusive, the district is missing an opportunity to help stakeholders to better understand and participate in the changes needed to improve student outcomes. Plans and planning processes, as well as the process of implementing a plan and seeing it through to successful inclusion, are more likely to be informed, adaptable, and successful when they include and draw on the insights and capacities of stakeholders beyond the staff and students.

***Recommendation***

**The district should ensure that its District Improvement Plan and School Improvement Plans have clear student outcomes goals that are based on analysis of historical, longitudinal, and current student achievement data. The district as a whole and each school should include stakeholders beyond district educators in the ongoing refinement of the DIP and each SIP.**

1. The district should convene a representative group of stakeholders to develop benchmarks (including progress benchmarks and final outcomes) for its District Improvement Plan (DIP).

 1. The goals should be based on an analysis of historical, longitudinal, and current disaggregated student achievement data.

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

1. Principals, in collaboration with school councils, should ensure that each School Improvement Plan (SIP) includes specific student-focused goals to determine the progress of school-based initiatives.

 1. Similar to the DIP, these all goals should be SMART.

 2. Principals should use the SIP to inform their self-assessment and goal setting process when creating the Educator Plan, and progress toward Educator Plan goals should be used as evidence during implementation.

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

 1. The district should establish procedures to review the DIP regularly. Strategic activities and benchmarks should be adjusted when necessary to meet current conditions.

 2. The superintendent and the school committee should consider aligning some goals in the Superintendent’s Educator Plan (as part of the district’s educator evaluator system) with the goals in the DIP.

**Benefits:** By developing, communicating, and using measureable goals that are focused on students’ outcomes, and based on disaggregated student achievement data and other data sources, the district will ensure that it is putting its work on process and procedures in service to core student outcomes. By making a commitment to the yearly targets for change in student outcomes, the district will be able to plan and monitor the impact of key improvement strategies, instructional practices, and the use of resources on student performance, opportunities, and outcomes.

**Recommended resources:**

* ESE’s *Planning for Success* tools (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/success/>) support the improvement planning process by spotlighting practices, characteristics, and behaviors that support effective planning and implementation and meet existing state requirements for improvement planning. In particular, the resources called *Setting Outcomes for the District Plan* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/success/PfS-SettingOutcomes.docx>) and *Selecting Outcome Measures and Setting Targets* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/success/PfS-SelectingOutcomes.docx>) might be useful as the district establishes measures of progress and success.
	+ *What Makes a Goal Smarter?* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/presentations/SMARTGoals/Handout5.pdf>) is a description of SMART goals with accompanying examples. The handout was designed to support educators in developing goals as part of the educator evaluation system, but could also be a useful reference for the district as it develops or refines its DIP and SIPs.
		- *District Accelerated Improvement Planning - Guiding Principles for Effective Benchmarks* (<http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/accountability/turnaround/level-4-guiding-principles-effective-benchmarks.pdf>) provides information about different types of benchmarks to guide and measure district improvement efforts.

Curriculum and Instruction

***Contextual Background***

While the superintendent plays a central role in setting district priorities relating to a rigorous curriculum and high-quality standards-based instruction, the director of curriculum, instruction, and assessment has direct responsibility for the district's curriculum. The director of curriculum oversees the work of the K–12 literacy and Title I coordinator and the English language learner director. The district does not have a math coordinator or a set of math coaches at the elementary level.

There are three elementary principals and one 7–12 high-school principal in the district. One elementary principal is in her first year (2018–2019) in the district.

The superintendent and several administrators and teachers told the review team that before academic year 2016–2017 the district did not have a comprehensive curriculum, and was missing a commitment to regular curricular review and revision. In response to this need, during the 2017–2018 and 2018–2019 school years, the district adopted and implemented multiple new research-based programs, including ELA programs K–8, and math programs grades 9–11. This commitment to curricular improvement has been demanding. Interviewees said that the adoption of new programs, associated professional development, and adaptation to new online and print materials have consumed educators and students alike.

While grades 9–12 at the high school have developed an instructional guide for teachers to use in planning lessons and a tool for classroom observations, the review team did not find evidence of shared, cohesive expectations for high-quality teaching at the elementary or middle-school levels. Many elementary and middle-school level classrooms use group rotations of activities as a core instructional design.

***Strength Finding***

The district has developed an inclusive and collaborative process to select and implement curricula and has adopted a suite of research-based ELA programs.

1. Interviews with district leaders and teachers and a document review indicated that the director of curriculum, instruction, and assessment and the district literacy coordinator worked with a team of teacher volunteers to select ELA programs K–8.

 1. In 2017–2018, the district adopted the K–6 ReadyGen ELA program by Pearson, and in 2018–2019, the 7–8 MyPerspectives ELA program, also by Pearson.

1. The district purchased both hard copy and online access for all these new curricula. Online access provides brief videos and hyperlinks to professional development (PD) for implementation of the programs.
2. Grade-level leaders, department chairs, and instructional leadership teams now provide leadership for the implementation of curriculum in each school.

**Impact**: The adoption of research-based curricula advances the district’s efforts to ensure that all students have access to a comprehensive curriculum. Online support and PD tools provide the support that educators need to use those materials consistently and skillfully. With continued leadership and collaboration, the district likely can monitor and revise curricula in a timely way.

***Challenges and Areas for Growth***

1. **In observed classrooms districtwide, the quality of instruction was inconsistent. The quality of instruction in grades 7 and 8 was consistently lower than at the K–6 and 9–12 grade levels.**
2. **Focus Area #1: Learning Objectives & Instruction** In observed classrooms, teachers demonstrated varying levels of knowledge of the subject matter. There was variation in the provision and use of learning objectives.
3. Observers found sufficient and compelling evidence that teachers demonstrated knowledge of their subject matter (characteristic #1) in 61 percent of observed elementary classes, in only 33 percent of middle-school level classes, and in 65 percent of high-school level classes.
4. The team saw sufficient and compelling evidence that teachers provided and referred to clear learning objectives and that students understood what they should be learning and why (characteristic #2) in only 38 percent of observed elementary classes, in 0 percent of middle-school level classes, and in 50 percent of high-school level classes.

a. In a grade 6 math class, students told observers what they were learning and why.

 b. In contrast, in a grade 1 ELA class, although the lesson focus was written on the board, the teacher did not make clear the purpose of the lesson with students.

1. Review team members noted sufficient and compelling evidence that the teacher used appropriate classroom activities well matched to the learning objective (characteristic #3) in 51 percent of observed elementary classrooms, in just 22 percent of middle-school level classrooms, and in 65 percent of high-school level classrooms.
2. The team saw sufficient and compelling evidence that the teacher conducted frequent checked for student understanding, provided feedback, and adjusted instruction (characteristic #4) in just 45 percent of observed elementary classes, in only 11 percent of middle-school level classes, and in 55 percent of high-school level classes.
3. In a grade 5 classroom, a team member noted the teacher and the teaching assistant were going student to student checking for understanding and giving specific feedback.

b. In contrast, in a grade 9 language class, the teacher infrequently checked for understanding and gave limited feedback.

1. **Focus Area #2: Student Engagement & Higher-Order Thinking** Classroom observations showed variation in student engagement, how well lessons encouraged higher-order thinking, and how well students assumed responsibility for their own learning.

Observers noted sufficient and compelling evidence of students taking responsibility to learn and being engaged in the lesson (characteristic #5) in 51 percent of observed elementary classes, in just 22 percent of middle-school level classes, and in 50 percent of high-school level classes.

1. In a grade 12 math classroom, students worked individually and together. An observer noted that all students appeared engaged.

b. In a grade 7/8 math classroom in which observers noted little student engagement in the lesson, the teacher directed almost all the activity and did nearly all the talking.

1. Team members observed sufficient and compelling evidence of students engaging in higher- order thinking (characteristic #6) in 29 percent of observed elementary classes, in 0 percent of middle-school level classes, and in 35 percent of high-school level classes.
2. The team observed sufficient and compelling evidence of students communicating their ideas and thinking with each other (characteristic #7) in 19 percent of observed elementary lessons, in 33 percent of middle-school level classrooms, and in 30 percent of high-school level classrooms.
3. In a grade 7 history classroom, students worked in pairs communicating ideas and thinking with each other.

b. In contrast, in a grade 4 ELA classroom, students responded to teachers’ questions but did not discuss their ideas and thinking with each other.

1. Team members observed sufficient and compelling evidence of students engaged with meaningful, real-world tasks (characteristic #8) in 35 percent of observed elementary classes, in 11 percent of middle-school level classes, and in 35 percent of high-school level classes.
2. **Focus Area #3: Inclusive Practice & Classroom Culture** Classroom observations indicated variation in the levels of inclusive practice, the use of various instructional strategies, opportunities for students to collaborate, and classroom routines to ensure appropriate behavior.
3. Observers noted sufficient and compelling evidence of teachers ensuring that students were engaged in challenging tasks regardless of learning needs (characteristic #9) in 42 percent of observed elementary classrooms, in 11 percent of middle-school level classrooms, and in 35 percent of high-school level classrooms.

a. In a grade 12 physics class, the experiment was accessible to students of different abilities.

b. In a grade 5 ELA classroom in which students were not engaged in challenging tasks regardless of learning needs, all students were doing the same task during the observation.

1. Team members observed sufficient and compelling evidence that teachers used a variety of instructional strategies (characteristic #10) in 48 percent of observed elementary classes, in 0 percent of middle-school level classes, and in 50 percent of high-school level classes.
2. Observers noted sufficient and compelling evidence that classroom routines and positive supports were in place to ensure that students behaved appropriately (characteristic #11) in 80 percent of observed elementary classes, in only 33 percent of middle-school level classes, and in 50 percent of high-school level classes.
3. In a grade 4 ELA classroom, the teacher positively redirected students during morning meeting.

b. In contrast, in a grade 7 classroom, observers noted lots of off-task talking and socializing and the volume of noise getting louder as time went on during the observation.

1. Team members observed sufficient and compelling evidence that the classroom climate was conducive to teaching and learning (characteristic #12) in 74 percent of observed elementary classes, in only 33 percent of middle-school level classes, and in 62 percent of high-school level classes.
2. In a grade 2 enrichment class, the observer noted that the classroom climate was one of happiness and enthusiasm.

b. In a grade 10 science classroom in which the climate was not conducive to teaching and learning, students were chatting loudly and not attending to the lesson.

1. On its district self-assessment submitted in advance of the onsite review, the district rated learning experiences for students as “Somewhat Well” described by the indicator “Instruction allows students to access and engage with grade-appropriate text every day, with meaningful real-world problems every day, and in scientific conversations using data every week. It enables students to develop social and emotional competencies (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making). The possible ratings are “Very Well,” “Well, “Somewhat Well,” and “Not at all Well.”
2. On its self-assessment submitted in advance of the onsite review, the district rated the learning environment as "Somewhat Well" described by the indicator “Classroom climate and structures support all students to learn collaboratively, take academic risks, and take ownership of their learning.” The possible ratings are “Very Well,” “Well,” “Somewhat Well,” and “Not at all Well.”

**Impact:** Inconsistent delivery of effective, research-based instruction in all grades and subjects prevents the district from providing high-quality instruction to all students. Students’ learning experiences over time are likely not fully preparing them for careers, college, and civic involvement.

***Recommendation***

* + - 1. **The district should ensure that all teachers provide effective instruction that challenges and supports all students.**
1. Drawing on work that teachers and administrators are already doing in each school to improve instruction, a representative group of teachers, instructional leaders, and students should convene to define the characteristics of effective instruction.
2. The recommended product of these meetings is a set of expectations that establishes a classroom climate that is conducive to teaching and learning, and challenges and engages students to develop and use higher-order thinking and to communicate their ideas and thinking with each other.
3. The district might consider using the existing high-school instructional guide to inform this work.
4. Once a set of instructional expectations has been defined, district leaders should develop a plan to share these expectations with staff.

1. Using professional days, staff meetings, grade-level meetings, and collaboratives, the district should provide opportunities for educators to discuss ideas and strategies from the set of instructional expectations.

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

 **C.** Teachers should receive appropriate guidance and feedback as they implement instructional expectations.

1. Principals and other instructional leaders should ensure that teachers have the information and support needed to meet the district's expectations for high-quality instruction.
2. The district should continue to provide teachers with frequent, constructive feedback that helps them to improve instruction.

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

 **D.** District leaders should design an annual process through which teachers and administrators reflect on how teaching practices are ensuring that students are engaged in rigorous, challenging tasks appropriate to their grade levels. Educators should engage students in regular dialogue and inquiry about their experiences as learners.

**Benefits:** Implementing this recommendation will mean clear and articulated expectations for teachers and administrators for best instructional practices. A district that provides high-quality instruction for all students and ongoing professional supports for teachers and administrators creates and sustains a culture of continuous improvement, resulting in professional growth and increased student achievement.

**Recommended resources:**

* ESE’s *Learning Walkthrough Implementation Guide* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/educators/title-iia/ImplementationGuide2016.pdf>) is a resource to support instructional leaders in establishing a *Learning Walkthrough* process in a school or district. It is designed to provide guidance to those working in an established culture of collaboration as well as those who are just beginning to observe classrooms and discuss teaching in a focused and actionable manner. (The link above includes a presentation to introduce Learning Walkthroughs.)
* 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.
* ESE’s *Calibration Video Library* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/calibration/>) is a collection of professionally created videos of classroom instruction produced by the School Improvement Network. These videos depict a range of practice (this is NOT a collection of exemplars) to support within-district calibration activities that promote a shared understanding of instructional quality and rigor.
* ESE’s *Online Calibration Training Platform* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/calibration/>) uses videos of classroom instruction to simulate brief, unannounced observations. Groups of educators, such as a district leadership team, watch a video together and then individually assess the educator’s practice related to specific elements from the Model Classroom Teacher Rubric and provide the educator with written feedback. Through real-time data displays, the group members can then see how their conclusions compare to each other, as well educators throughout the state.

Assessment

***Contextual Background***

The district’s director of curriculum, instruction, and assessment oversees data collection, use, and sharing for the district. The district’s literacy and Title I coordinator joins collaborative team meetings at the elementary schools, offers professional development, models teaching practices in selected classrooms, and meets individually with teachers to answer questions as they arise.

The district is devoting time and resources to support educators in using data to improve teaching, learning, and decision-making and has set up collaborative meeting time, predominately K–­6, to review assessment results and monitor students’ progress. A district data team, which includes the superintendent, central curriculum, instruction, and assessment leaders, and all four principals, meets monthly to review and analyze student progress data. The district has adopted the Data Wise process for structuring team and schoolwide conversations and protocols around effective data inquiry.

Data collection, use, and sharing practices vary considerably among school levels, with the strongest and most consistent practices at the elementary level in English language arts. Elementary and middle-school level teachers use FastBridge Learning assessments to measure student progress in reading and math. The district does not have common or regularly used formative assessment tools in place in grades 9–12.

Curriculum-based lesson and unit assessments are administered and reviewed across all grade levels, while standardized assessments such as MCAS, SAT, and AP exams are used at the high-school level. District leaders said that the data system needed to expand at the middle-school level and be established at the high-school level. A focus on using data to support math achievement is a priority for the 2018–2019 school year.

Important areas of growth remain. District administrators recognized that there was room for improvement in the overall collection, analysis, and decision-making processes involving student assessment data, and acknowledged that this would take time.

***Strength Findings***

**The district has made strides in fostering a culture of academic data collection and data-driven decision-making.**

* 1. The district has made a commitment to train and support educators in collecting, reviewing, and discussing data and assessments.
		1. District leaders said that all staff in grades 7–12 have been trained to use Data Wise. The program, developed by of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, provides the district with models and protocols for effective data inquiry.
		2. Between 2016 and 2018, the district established a district data team, which promotes changes in planning practices, and attempts to build some momentum for new data practices in schools.
			1. A review of documents indicated that the superintendent and her district leadership team have attended data team meetings and have modeled ways to incorporate the Data Wise process into the planning work of school- and grade-level teams.
			2. Meeting notes show strong monthly attendance of the data team; the team develops its agendas using Data Wise meeting templates and focuses on reviewing and analyzing student progress data.

c. An administrator noted that more educators were now using a common language around data and having discussions in schools about the positive results that could take place when data-driven decisions were made.

* + 1. Interviewees said that the district literacy coordinator spent time with educators K–6 supporting the review and discussion of FastBridge Learning assessment results. These educators stated that this support has been high quality and crucial to the progress that they have made in using data since the beginning of the 2017–2018 school year.

**Impact**: By establishing a culture of data literacy and building districtwide capacity to collect data for improvement, leaders and teachers can access and analyze student performance, opportunities, and outcomes to improve teaching, learning, and decision-making.

**The district has established a K–6 system for collecting student-level data from formative assessments. It is making these results readily available to teachers while providing them with structured time to share and discuss the data.**

 **A.** Formative assessments developed by FastBridge Learning and administered via their online platform are consistently administered three times per year to K–6 students.

**B.** Interviews and a document review indicated thatthe districthas established structures for elementary teachers to meet to review assessment results and monitor the progress of students.

* + 1. School staff said that collaborative meeting time was used as necessary to review assessment data and monitor student progress. At Colegrove Park Elementary School, team time is built into the weekly schedule every Monday, Tuesday, and Friday, while at Brayton and Greylock elementary schools team time takes place during teachers’ collaborative time, in the mornings before students arrive.

a. One administrator noted that once teachers took ownership of progress monitoring, they developed a better understanding of their students. Looking at Lexile levels, fluency, and other evidence equips teachers with critical and timely data, and helps them feel empowered.

* + 1. District and school leaders stated that classroom teachers and student support staff had ready access to FastBridge Learning progress monitoring results and other relevant student data electronically and in real-time.

**Impact**: The district's approach to data collection and analysis K–6 likely moves forward its efforts to use student assessments to guide decision-making. When educators use high-quality formative data, they are better able to identify the causes of low student performance, realign resources, and adjust practices and conditions so that the performance of all students improves.

***Challenges and Areas for Growth***

**3. The high school has not established uniform structures and practices for the continuous collection and analysis of student performance and formative assessment data at all grade levels.**

1. In contrast to practices K–8, the collection and analysis of student assessment data in grades 9–12 is focused almost exclusively on standardized tests and assessments such as MCAS, SAT, and AP.
2. Interviews with district leaders and teachers and a document review indicated that the district has not accomplished key assessment-related aspects of the high-school turnaround plan.

The plan states that Fast Bridge Learning assessments, which are now used from kindergarten through grade 8, were to be fully implemented in grades 9–12 in the fall of 2017. This did not happen. Other benchmarks in the plan included using collected data to develop specific action plans to improve instruction and using student-level data to establish a baseline of student performance to guide the work of future data cycles. None of these goals was met.

When asked what about the greatest assessment need in the district, one interviewee responded “the robust use of data at the high school” and another stressed the need for “better assessment 9–12.” A third educator responded, “9-12 assessment structures.”

**Impact:** The absence of coordinated policies, structures, and practices for the continuous collection and analysis of student performance data at the high school hinders the school’s ability to make appropriate and timely adjustments to its programs, instruction, and professional development offerings. Without a comprehensive set of assessments, teachers do not have sufficient information to improve instruction and respond effectively to the diverse learning needs of all students.

**4. The district has not developed an effective way to share progress monitoring and assessment results with students’ families and to engage families in their children’s learning.**

 **A.** Multiple interviewees characterized the district’s current approaches for sharing academic progress information with families/guardians as ineffective, inefficient, and frustrating.

 1. Parents reported that the information they received about their children’s academic progress and achievement was technical, impersonal, and not easily understood.

 **B.** Educators expressed frustration that they have not been able to engage parents/guardians sufficiently in their children’s learning, citing low turnout at school-based events,[[3]](#footnote-3) and limited responses to letters home and other communications containing information about student achievement.

**Impact**: Ineffective communication with families and an inability to share the results of student efforts with parents and guardians can prevent families from understanding their children’s progress toward attaining grade level performance. It may also limit families’ effectiveness in supporting children to perform at higher levels.

***Recommendations***

**The district should develop uniform and integrated policies, structures, and practices for the efficient and purposeful collection, use, and sharing of a range of assessments at the 9–12 grade levels.**

**A.** The superintendent, principals, and program leaders, in collaboration with teachers, should develop specific strategies, timelines, and clear expectations for the use of data in grades 9–12.

1. The district should ensure that educators in grades 9-–12 use data strategically to inform instruction, ongoing curriculum revision, program evaluation, and the educator evaluation system.

**B.** Ongoing targeted training in the collection, analysis, and use of student performance data should be provided to all 9–12 staff, with a special emphasis on the Data Wise process.

 **C.** The 9–12 data system should provide all professional staff with convenient, real-time access to student performance data, as well as to other relevant and demographic data, as appropriate.

**Benefits:** Implementing this recommendation will mean clarity and consistency in grades 9–12 use of data for decision-making. It will provide high school educators with professional development for the analysis and use of data to improve instructional skills and raise student achievement. It will help all stakeholders to evaluate programs texts, and services, offering all 9–12 students improved learning opportunities and academic outcomes.

**Recommended resources:**

* + - ESE’s *Assessment Literacy Self-Assessment and Gap Analysis Tool* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/ddm/webinar/PartI-GapAnalysis.pdf>) is intended to support districts in understanding where their educators fit overall on a continuum of assessment literacy. After determining where the district generally falls on the continuum, districts can determine potential next steps.
		- ESE’s *Student Growth Model* web page (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/growth/>) provides links to tutorials and documents that explain the Student Growth Model, along with research supporting the model, materials to help education leaders present the model, and links to student growth data.
		- ESE’s *District Data Team Toolkit* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/toolkit/>) is a set of resources to help a district establish, grow, and maintain a culture of inquiry and data use through a District Data Team.

**2. The district should develop student achievement reporting that is personalized, timely, and easy to understand, and redouble its efforts to engage families in supporting their children’s learning.**

1. The district should convene a representative group of families and educators to gather input on ways to foster home-school connections, communication, and trust. This should include developing a practice of student achievement reporting that is personalized and easy to understand.

**B.** Specific action steps should be developed and implemented.

**Benefits** from implementing this recommendation will include stronger relationships between classroom teachers and parents/guardians, leading to a greater shared understanding of each child’s academic progress, and increasing the involvement of families in supporting their children’s learning at home, in the community, and at school.

**Recommended resources:**

* *Parents’ Guides to Student* *Success* (<http://pta.org/parents/content.cfm?ItemNumber=2583>) are grade-specific guides from the National PTA (available in English and Spanish) with specific descriptions for parents of what children should be learning once Common Core standards are fully implemented, along with suggestions for helping students at home and communicating with teachers.
* *Family, School, and Community Partnership Fundamentals* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/boe/sac/parent/FSCPfundamentals.pdf>) provide a framework for family engagement, along with a self-assessment tool.
* Massachusetts Executive Office of Education’s Parent Engagement and Family Support web page (<http://www.mass.gov/edu/birth-grade-12/early-education-and-care/parent-and-family-support/>) provides links to resources for families related to education and learning, food and diet, and health and safety, as well as parent and family support publications.
* *Parents’ Guides to Student* *Success* (<http://pta.org/parents/content.cfm?ItemNumber=2583> ) are grade-specific guides from the National PTA (available in English and Spanish) with specific descriptions for parents of what children should be learning once Common Core standards are fully implemented, along with suggestions for helping students at home and communicating with teachers.

Human Resources and Professional Development

***Contextual Background***

The district has systems in place to recruit, hire, and retain staff, though attracting highly qualified teaching staff, particularly in specialized areas such as special education, presents a challenge, and the district has had to apply for licensure waivers. The district’s entry-level salary scale is relatively low in comparison with surrounding districts and the location makes it difficult to draw teachers.

The district keeps an evaluation folder in the personnel file of its educators with most evidence retained separately by educators. There is a desire on the part of administrators and some teachers to move toward an online system.

As part of its turnaround plan, the high school has adopted a set of instructional expectations and guide, and non-evaluative classroom walk-throughs using that guide are an integral part of that plan. The elementary schools also use non-evaluative classroom walk-throughs.

The district provides a range of professional development sessions to improve educators’ skills and competencies, and grant funding has often enhanced offerings for the district. The district convenes four full days of professional development (PD), including one in collaboration with Berkshire County. Of 11 half days, about 7 are allocated to PD. Regularly scheduled collaborative time takes place at all levels, including faculty meetings and collaborative periods in elementary schools. Multiple staffing structures, including head teachers, curriculum coordinators, and team leaders, provide embedded PD. The district also offers course reimbursement, which creates an incentive for educators to pursue their own PD.

The district has a two-year mentoring program for teachers new to teaching and for those new to the district. In their induction year, mentees meet with their assigned mentors twice per month until May, observe their mentors in the classroom, are observed by their mentors as they teach, and attend five workshops. In the second year, mentees attend five workshops and meet with their mentors for at least one hour per month. When recommended by administrators, teachers can receive a third year of mentoring.

***Challenges and Areas for Growth***

**The district does not prioritize opportunities for educators to receive high-quality feedback that helps them to improve their practice.**

* 1. The team reviewed the 2016–2018 evaluative documentation of 30 teachers randomly selected from across the district.

1. Although some teachers’ evaluations contained instructive[[4]](#footnote-4) feedback, 13 of the 30 evaluations did not. Few teachers’ evaluations contained high-quality feedback[[5]](#footnote-5) that would improve practice. In some cases, the feedback was broad, without a connection to practice.

 a. Administrators said that this educator evaluation feedback was designed to be useful but was “not as valuable as more regular feedback” that they could give in walk-throughs.

2. Teachers’ folders largely contained formative assessments/evaluations and summative evaluations, which were evidence-based and addressed teachers’ performance in the four Massachusetts Standards of Effective Teaching Practice. In most cases, the folders did not contain a self-assessment, goals that were SMART,[[6]](#footnote-6) and evidence.

* 1. The superintendent, other district leaders, and teachers said that some forms were made optional in an agreement reached between the North Adams Teachers’ Association and the superintendent. This was done to adjust teachers’ obligations within the evaluation system, while preserving its effectiveness. The superintendent stated that the continuing requirement that each teacher engage in goal setting necessitated consideration of one’s recent work, rendering the loss of a formal self-assessment acceptable.

 3. Administrators stated that the evaluation system, while greatly improved, was not “improving instruction as much as it needed to be [improved],” adding that teacher evaluations may have taken place “too late” in the year, and were often seen as “punitive.”

 4. Some teachers expressed the view that the educator evaluation system was “not the best tool to move high expectations forward,” especially for teachers who needed support and reinforcement.

 5. Several teachers expressed different opinions about the education evaluation system. One educator said that some “evaluators have been completing the evaluations to just check it off.” Another educator acknowledged having received “good feedback” from an evaluator. A third stated that evaluator feedback helped “to gather evidence.”

 6. Principals reported dissatisfaction with the quality of their interaction with teachers on the subject of instruction, and with the relative infrequency of their classroom observations. Principals pointed to others—mentors, team leaders, central office administrators—who provide instructional leadership, but expressed frustration with their own levels of involvement.

 a. One principal cited their discussion with the superintendent about the ideal number of classroom observations the principal should perform; they eventually agreed on a target number of observations substantially lower than originally proposed by the principal, in acknowledgement of other pressing obligations.

**B.** During the onsite review, teachers and administrators repeatedly called into questions the quality, consistency, and reliability of evaluations.

 1. Administrators said that some teachers have challenged evaluator assignments, which are made at the discretion of principals. Some teachers expressed the opinion that a difficult relationship between a teacher and an evaluator could jeopardize the quality of the feedback and limit the value of the experience, noting “That can be unprofessional; it can be personal.”

 2. Multiple teachers expressed the view that while the evaluation process was often experienced as fair, “evaluators are inconsistent at times.”

 3. Both administrators and teachers expressed the belief that a shared understanding of practice among educators and the consistent calibration of observations and evaluations was an area “needing work.”

4. The district has given evaluator assignments to a variety of administrators and teacher leaders. The North Adams Teacher Evaluation System states that primary evaluators include the superintendent, district administrators, and principals. Supervising evaluators for professional status teachers on self-directed growth plans may include head teachers, team leaders, deans, directors, assistant principals, and coordinators. While this effort to distribute leadership is consistent with the leadership approach of the superintendent, it enlarges the number of evaluators in need of training and supervision, at a time when educator evaluation has yet to become a strength of the district.

 5. The district has provided training on the educator evaluation system, and the Mentoring Program includes training on the educator evaluation system for new staff, but some teachers said that they had not received training on educator evaluation.

1. Interviewees stated that it was important that the evaluator participated in the training, especially when the evaluator was someone other than the principal.

**C.** Evaluations of administrators, when reviewed by the team, were generally incomplete, insufficiently specific, or not actionable.

1. The team reviewed the evaluative documentation of all district administrators; all but one administrator received a summative evaluation.

 2. Most of the administrators’ evaluation folders contained SMART goals, but few included self-assessments or formative evaluations.

In some cases, the feedback on summative evaluations was instructive, but, in general, such feedback was neither specific nor actionable.

 **D.** The team did not find evidence of the use of educators’ impact on student learning in the educator evaluation process.[[7]](#footnote-7)

 **E.** The district has not taken action on the components of the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework that require the collection and use of multiple sources of evaluative evidence.

1. As of the 2015–2016 school year, state educator evaluation regulations (603 CMR 35.07) call for all districts to collect and use student feedback as evidence in the teacher evaluation process and staff feedback in the administrator evaluation process.

 2. District leaders told the review team that collecting student and staff feedback was not a required component of the district’s educator evaluation system.

**Impact**: Consistent, high-quality supervision and evaluation practices are critical to improving instruction and advancing student learning. The absence of high-quality (specific, timely, and actionable) feedback, designed to contribute to the professional growth of teachers and administrators lessens the district’s ability to help educators build their skills and improve students’ learning experiences and outcomes.

**2. The district does not have a professional development program that is informed by student and educator data, aligned with district and educator goals, and focused on student outcomes.**

 **A.** The district does not have a professional development (PD) plan linked to district and educator goals.

 1. The district has developed a Three-Year District Professional Development Focus Plan, with PD “themes” aligned with the District Improvement Plan, but the plan does not include clear goals and objectives related to desired student outcomes.

 2. Similarly, the district has developed the North Adams Public Schools - Professional Development Calendar for 2017–2018. The calendar details a variety of offerings at various schools and at the district level, but does not include goals related to student outcomes.

 3. District leaders and school staff said that often the district first identified themes and then developed PD at the school level.”

 4. Some interviewees stated that except for new curriculum training each school provided its own PD.

 **B.** Educators in the district regarded the formal professional development (PD) offerings as ineffective; teachers did not report that they had a meaningful role in PD planning or programs.

 1. District leaders and school staff stated that some PD was planned and coordinated by the district leadership team, and some PD was planned at the school level.

 2. When asked whether they gave feedback on PD offerings, teachers responded “not always.”

 3. Teachers expressed frustration with PD offerings, particularly related to new curricula.

4. Some teachers expressed the belief that the district should offer more PD; others said that the times PD was offered were not optimal.

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

***Recommendations***

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

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

1. Evaluators should participate in calibration training and activities to ensure quality and accuracy and reflect fairness and consistency in the evaluation process and documentation.

2. The district should put policies and procedures in place to ensure that formative assessments/evaluations and summative evaluations comply with ESE’s Standards and Indicators of Effective Teaching Practice. Evaluators should provide feedback that is specific, timely, instructive, and actionable to enhance professional growth and student achievement.

 a. Evaluators should consider developing common calibration practices by viewing videos of classroom instruction together, and then using the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework rubric or Drury High School observation tools to form impressions, reflect about and debate differing views, and develop common practices.

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

**B.** The Instructional Leadership Team, working with a representative group of educators, should develop a plan that specifically prioritizes, and makes time for, increased principal work with teachers on instruction.

 1. The design and practice of increasing principal time in classrooms will likely vary by school, but should embody commitments to three things:

 a. The increased presence of principals in classrooms

 b. The engagement of principals and educators in substantive, ongoing, classroom-specific conversations about teaching and learning

 c. The development of a schoolwide culture of collaborative leadership for improvement.

**C.** The district should consider requiring all instructional leaders, including ILT members, principals, team leaders at the high school, deans, and others, to undertake a specific leadership challenge, as a part of their fulfillment of their roles in the DIP and applicable SIPs, which would require them to improve their instructional leadership practice.

 1. Such challenges would vary based on people’s roles, experiences and duties, but they might include: increasing the time spent observing teachers and giving feedback; teaching in the classroom of a teacher who needs modeling; offering a concrete set of instructional supports to a struggling team or new professional learning community; or helping individual educators or teams to make more effective and reliable use of data as a guide to instruction.

 2. This added leadership practice, if undertaken throughout the district as a deliberate demonstration of an ambitious approach to improving instruction, should also be framed as a concrete demonstration of the principles of high expectations and concrete step-taking that the district leadership has embraced as a part of this recommendation.

**D.** The district should implement all components of the state’s Educator Evaluator Framework.

The district should re-instate the use of the self-assessment portion of the educator evaluation system, to promote self-reflection on the part of the educator and to ensure that this critical part of the process takes place. If the district prefers not to use the model self-assessment document provided by the state, it should develop a new, reflective goal-setting form, or take a similar measure to ensure that this critical reflection routinely takes place.

The district’s educators should use student performance data to complete their self-assessment work, and develop student learning and professional practice goals in SMART format based on student data.

a. Performance ratings for all educators should be based in part on educators’ impact on student learning.

**E.** The district is urged to implement the state educator evaluation regulations (603 CMR 35.07) requiring all Massachusetts districts to use student feedback in the teacher evaluation process and staff feedback in the administrator evaluation process.

1. The district should develop a procedure to ensure that student and staff feedback is collected and used in teachers’ and administrators’ evaluations.

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

**Recommended resources:**

* *A Protocol for developing S.M.A.R.T Goal Statements* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/implementation/EducatorEvaluation.pdf>) is designed to support educators in developing S.M.A.R.T. goal statements using the appropriate evaluation rubric and an ESE-developed protocol.
* *The Evidence Collection Toolkit* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/implementation/CollectionToolkit.pdf>) is designed to help districts establish clear and consistent expectations for evidence collection and promote a meaningful process for the collection, analysis, and sharing of high-quality artifacts. The toolkit Includes: brief guidance, examples of district strategies, a worksheet for district decision-making, and a handout of Evidence Collection Tips for Educators.
* *On Track with Evaluator Capacity* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/pln/OnTrack-EvaluatorCapacity.pdf>) is an interactive document that provides specific strategies, lessons learned, and links to district-created resources. It was produced by eight districts that were part of a Professional Learning Network for Supporting Evaluator Capacity.
* *Quick Reference Guide: Opportunities to Streamline the Evaluation Process* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/QRG-Streamline.pdf>) is designed to help districts reflect on and continuously improve their evaluation systems:
	+ What’s working? What are the bright spots?
	+ How can we streamline the process to stay focused on professional growth and development?
	+ What do we need to adjust to ensure our system is valuable to educators and students?
* ESE’s Educator Evaluation Training Workshops (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/training/teachers/default.html>) provide a general overview to the educator evaluation framework as well as opportunities to engage in activities associated with the first three steps of the 5-Step Cycle. This is a particularly helpful resource for educators new to the educator evaluation framework.
* ESE’s Evaluator Calibration Training resources (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/calibration/>) include tools, protocols, and videos to support evaluator calibration around perceptions of practice aligned to ESE’s model rubrics as well as high quality feedback.
* *Quick Reference Guide: Student and Staff Feedback* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/QRG-Feedback.pdf>) provides information about how to select feedback instruments and use feedback as part of the educator evaluation system, along with links to relevant resources.
* ESE’s *Online Calibration Training Tool* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/calibration/tool/>) uses videos of classroom instruction from ESE’s Calibration Video Library to simulate brief, unannounced observations. Groups of educators, such as a district leadership team, watch a video together and then individually assess the educator’s practice related to specific elements from the Model Classroom Teacher Rubric and provide the educator with written feedback. Through real-time data displays, the group members can then see how their conclusions compare to each other, as well educators throughout the state.

**2. The district should develop a professional development program that has clear goals and objectives and is aligned with district priorities, school goals, and the needs of students and educators.**

**A.** The district should develop a PD plan that is aligned with district and school priorities.

1. The plan should address specific PD needs and determine how they should be met.

a. The PD plan should address needs identified by student performance data and instructional competencies identified in teacher evaluations.

b. All SIPs should include goals of the PD plan.

**Benefits:** Thedevelopment of a coordinated and aligned PD plan will ensure that the necessary resources, time, and support to implement district initiatives are in place. The collaboration of teachers and administrators who are invested in the district’s PD process will likely create a culture of shared leadership and improved student achievement.

**Recommended resources:**

* *The Massachusetts Standards for Professional Development* ([www.doe.mass.edu/pd/standards.pdf](http://www.doe.mass.edu/pd/standards.pdf)) identify, describe, and characterize what high quality PD experiences for educators should look like.
* *Identifying Meaningful Professional Development* (<https://youtu.be/zhuFioO8GbQ>) is a video in which educators from three Massachusetts districts discuss the importance of targeted, meaningful professional development and the ways districts can use the evaluation process to identify the most effective PD supports for all educators.
* Professional development case studies (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/pd/CaseStudies/>) highlight districts implementing meaningful professional development programs that support educators throughout the entire career continuum. Watch examples of PD programs that are job-embedded, teacher-led, data-driven, and aligned to educator and district needs.

Student Support

***Contextual Background***

Many North Adams students come to school each day with unique programmatic and support needs. In 2017–2018, 67 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 ELs or former ELs. Students with disabilities in the district represent 25.6 percent of the total student population, compared with 18 percent of the state; ELs make up 1 percent of enrollment, compared with 10.2 percent across the state; and 58.7 percent of students come from economically disadvantaged households, compared with 32 percent across the state. As the number of the district’s students declines, the families are facing greater economic hardship. Between 2016 and 2018, the proportion of economically disadvantaged students has fluctuated with an overall increase, from 51 percent in 2016 to 59.1 percent in 2017 to 58.7 percent in 2018. At the time of the onsite, the district had submitted data to DESE indicating that 61 students were in a foster care placement and 55 students were homeless.[[8]](#footnote-8) In 2018, the district’s rate of chronic absence was 15.7 percent, compared with the state rate of 13.2 percent. The percentages of chronically absent students in the district were as follows: 26.3 percent in grade 9; 33.8 percent in grade 10; 23.1 percent in grade 11; and 23.6 percent in grade 12.

Several groups of interviewees told the team that staff did not have a shared understanding of the experiences of children and adults living in poverty, or the effects of poverty on learning. Leaders cited the adjustments to instruction and behavioral strategies that teachers could make once they understood the experience of children and adults living in poverty and the effects of poverty on learning.

The district has begun to train its teachers in teaching students who have experienced trauma. This training, however, has not been coordinated or consistent.

All schools are dealing with issues of behavior; each school has adopted Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS), incorporated parts of PBIS, or designed its own system. The district has set up a student support system in each school, where a trained teacher’s assistant staffs a room to which a student who can no longer function in the classroom can go for de-escalation and behavioral triage and support. Use of the student support system yields actionable behavioral data that is discussed at regular meetings of the core team. A detailed District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) provides staff with a clear set of approaches and guidelines for addressing the needs of all students across a full spectrum of learning and behavior.

At the elementary level, the district has focused on inclusive practice with both Title I staff and special education staff, using a push-in model wherever possible. Special programs exist for students with autism and students with behavioral disabilities. The district has not provided training in tiered instruction, but the rotating small-groups teaching model adapted by the schools enables the teacher to differentiate Tier 1 and provide Tier 2 teaching. Title I reading specialists also provide Tier 2 instruction, and special education teachers provide Tier 3 instruction. Educators monitor progress by reviewing assessment data, with FastBridge three times a year, and with NextGen assessments and the AMath assessment.

The high school has adopted a co-teaching model, in which special education teachers are paired with classroom teachers. While the design of the model follows the district’s commitment to inclusive practice, teachers have not received comprehensive training in this model, and limited proficiency in its use was evident during classroom observations.

The district is working to involve families more inclusively in each school community. School improvement plans all include action plans to improve two-way communication with families. The district has set up two welcome centers to provide families support and services: one in an elementary school and the other in the high school. Participation can be a challenge: district leaders said that despite evidence of successful programming and participation of school families in the elementary welcome center, families from the other two elementary schools seemed reluctant to visit the elementary welcome center. The welcome center at the high school has lower participation of families than the welcome center at the elementary school. The district works to provide clothing and food to students throughout the school year. While the district has taken steps to engage and support students’ families, family members interviewed expressed a desire for more connection and sense of community.

The district recently created the position of community outreach director. District leaders said that the district hoped to grow its roster of partnerships, which includes the YMCA, the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, Williams College, the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, as well as multiple local social agencies, which provide services for many families.

***Strength Finding***

1. **The district has prioritized resources and staffing to engage parents and families. Through district initiatives and collaborations with local organizations and agencies, the district is working to respond to the social emotional and material needs of its community.**
2. The district has created the position of community outreach coordinator.
3. The community outreach coordinator oversees service learning, the district’s welcome centers, coordination with outside agencies, and the linking of families to outside agencies.
4. Interviews and a document review indicated that the district has created welcome centers at Drury High School and the Brayton Elementary School, which are staffed by district personnel.
	* 1. The welcome centers are designed to bring parents and families into the school during the school day. The centers provide information on community resources and offer a range of services to parents and families.

a. These include a lending library, with books related to parenting and child development.

b. Computers are available for families to use for writing resumes and conducting job searches.

c. A clothing exchange enables families to receive clothing and to share clothing that their children no longer need.

* + 1. District leaders stated that they would like to create welcome centers in all three elementary schools, because families appeared to be less likely to visit a school their children did not attend. District leaders also see a need to market the welcome centers more effectively to families.
		2. The welcome centers actively survey families about what services should be offered at the welcome center.
			1. At school events, district staff survey families about the welcome centers.
1. The district’s planning documents include action steps that relate to multiple methods of communicating with families.
	* 1. The District Improvement Plan details multiple action steps to increase communication between families and the schools. These include identifying and evaluating communication tools and developing an implementation plan.
			1. All four schools have a strategic action step in their School Improvement Plans (SIPs) or turnaround plan that refers to improving communication.
		2. Families told the review team that levels of communication varied from school to school.
			1. PowerSchool is used in grades 2 to 12 to communicate grades and other information to families. Some teachers use REMIND to alert students and families about homework and other information.

**D.** The district has created many community partnerships and has pursued grant funding to increase opportunities for students and families.

1. The district’s 21st Century Community Learning Center grant funds an after-school enrichment program in the elementary schools. The Brayton School hosts the program, and elementary students attend from other schools. The program offers a choice of options to students. These include activities in English, math, and science, art, dance, and photography. The program runs five days a week.
2. The district has obtained grant funding to extend its free breakfast and lunch programming to include free dinner for students less than 18 years of age. In addition, this program offers dinner to adult family members, at a reduced price. Combined with the after-school program, this provides wraparound services for students and supports for their families.

 3. The district coordinates with social agencies such as Child Care of the Berkshires, Early Intervention, and The Family Place, and health organizations such as the Brien Center for Mental Health and Substance Abuse and Tapestry Health.

* 1. Regular meetings are held between the district, district mental health professionals, and representatives of the various agencies who work with students.

 4. The district has collaborated with the YMCA to set up a mentoring program for at-risk students in grades 7–8. Under this program, students are matched with trained adult mentors.

 5. The district has collaborated with Williams College and the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA). Some 21st Century Community Learning Center grant activities take place on the MCLA campus. An art project includes Williams College, MCLA, and the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MassMOCA). Student teachers and student volunteers also work in the district.

 6. The district participates in a DESE-led dissemination grant awarded to the Berkshire Arts and Technology Charter School (BART), a local charter school, to support innovation in both the North Adams and Adams-Cheshire districts, and collaboration between charter and district schools. The purpose of this grant is to improve middle- school mathematics outcomes through the use of data and the Data Wise cycle, and the providers of this technical assistance and support are local charter school educators who a work with North Adams staff.

7. The superintendent emphasized the importance of partnerships, stating that they can fill the gaps created by variables outside the control of the school district and can help create wraparound services for students.

**Impact**: By engaging students’ families and seeking out partner agencies whose work can supplement the efforts of the district, leaders are likely increasing the capacity of teams, schools, and the district to support student well-being and learning.

***Challenges and Areas for Growth***

**The district has not established a coordinated districtwide approach to support the well-being of students and staff.**

* 1. Some district planning documents refer to school climate and social and emotional learning (SEL), but the district does not have an overarching coordinated plan to support the well-being of students and staff.
1. For example, the Brayton and the Greylock School Improvement Plans feature strategies for student support using the well-established SEL program, Second Step, and the high-school turnaround plan pledges to implement School Connect, Life Skills, and Get Real.
	1. In some cases, the increased use of SEL practices is planned, but not realized. The district’s three-year professional development (PD) focus plan lists “trauma and informed response” as a priority. This work supports students who have experienced trauma by developing a cohort of educators who understand the effects of trauma on learning and behavior. In this plan, this work is listed as a secondary focal point, at the elementary level in 2017-18, and at the elementary and secondary levels in 2018–2019. However, the review team did not find evidence of implementation of this focus.

1. District leaders said that in 2018–2019 they would provide PD for self-regulated strategy development (SRSD), and PD to address trauma.

 **C.** The 2017–2018 PD calendar does not list any trainings about SEL, or about understanding and working effectively with students who have experienced trauma. While there appear to be conversations about social-emotional health at the school level, in “collaboratives” or in faculty meetings, the district does not have a consistent and strategic approach.

At the time of the onsite in October 2018, the district planned to bring in a coach to work on SEL K–2.

2.A supportive schools grant provided specific PD on trauma in two elementary schools, where the staff received training about “non-negotiables” in working with young students who have experienced trauma. The other elementary school shared some of the materials from that PD on trauma and at the time of the onsite review had applied for the supportive schools grant.

 **D.** Through its turnaround plan, the high school has developed a coordinated focus on instruction. This includes some components of positive behavioral supports and the progress monitoring of social-emotional health and behavior through the high school’s weekly engagement surveys, which students and teachers complete.

 **E.** District schools are using different programs with no evident coordination between schools.

 1. The Colegrove Park School has implemented some restorative circles for discipline and Zones of Regulation, a program that teaches students self-regulation.

a. A district leader stated that the district was rolling out tools for self-regulation, including the Zones of Regulation book, which is “becoming more popular throughout the district.”

At the Greylock School, staff have received training in Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), and have read a book about children of trauma.

Some elementary schools are using Second Step program; in some cases, the teacher teaches the program, and in other cases, a specialist.

a. District leaders stated that this curriculum was “used in different ways at each school.” Another district leader stated that while each school has taken on SEL, there was nothing consistent and training was unevenly available.

**Impact**: A range of approaches to supporting students’ well-being, and the absence of clear direction from the district, means uneven support for students. This makes it challenging for the district and its schools to improve students’ well-being and student achievement in a cohesive way.

***Recommendation***

**1. The district should establish a coordinated and strategic approach to supporting students’ well-being.**

1. The district should consider establishing a committee to evaluate practices and curricula and develop a coordinated districtwide approach to supporting students’ well-being that is aligned with district and school priorities.

1. This committee should include a representative group of administrators, teachers, and students, where possible.

1. The approach should address specific needs and determine how they should be met.
2. Comprehensive professional development should be given to all teachers, administrators, and staff to ensure consistency of approach districtwide, with variations by school as indicated by data and other information.

**Benefits:** In schools that have a common approach to supporting students’ well-being, students gain the benefits of continuity from class to class. By implementing a coordinated approach to supporting students’ well-being, the district likely can ensure that as students move from school to school they will adapt well to their new environment. In addition, educators will have a shared understanding of how best to support all students’ safety, well-being, and sense of belonging.

**Recommended resources:**

* The National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments’ *School Climate Survey Compendia* (<http://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/topic-research/school-climate-measurement/school-climate-survey-compendium>) is a collection of valid and reliable surveys, assessments, and scales of school climate that can assist educators in their efforts to identify and assess their conditions for learning. Additional surveys and scales are added continually.
* *Making the Case for the Importance of School Climate and Its Measurement* (<http://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/events/webinar/making-case-importance-school-climate-and-its-measurement>) is a recorded webinar, along with a detailed PowerPoint presentation, that addresses: the linkages between school climate and students’ development; models of school climate; best practices in communicating the importance of school climate to stakeholders; and characteristics of good school climate measures.
* *School Climate Practices for Implementation and Sustainability* (<http://www.schoolclimate.org/publications/documents/SchoolClimatePracticeBriefs-2013.pdf>), from The National School Climate Center, is a set of Practice Briefs focused on improving school climate.
* The *Wraparound Replication Cookbook* (<https://sites.google.com/site/masswazcookbook/>) is a practical guide focused on improving academic performance by systematically addressing students’ social emotional and non-academic needs. It is based on the experience of several Massachusetts districts, and is organized according to the following key strategy areas:
	+ Addressing School Culture and the Social Emotional Aspects of Learning
	+ Rethinking Systems for Identifying and Addressing Academic and Social Emotional Needs
	+ Creating Focused Partnerships & Coalitions
* *Guiding Principles: A Resource Guide for Improving School Climate and Discipline* (<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/guiding-principles.pdf>) highlights ways in which states and school districts can promote academic excellence by creating safe and productive learning environments for all students.
* *Safe and Healthy Learning Environments* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/safety/>) is a web page outlining a number of ESE programs and related resources that can help school districts and communities build safe and healthy learning environments for all students.
* The *Behavioral Health and Public Schools Framework* (<http://bhps321.org/viewframework.asp>) is a guidance document to help schools establish supportive environments with collaborative services that will enable all students – including those with behavioral health needs – to achieve at their highest potential.
* The Global Family Research Project’s overview of resources (<https://globalfrp.org/Articles>) includes links to several articles and videos related to empowering families in children’s learning.
* *Joining Together to Create a Bold Vision for Next-Generation Family Engagement: Engaging Families to Transform Education* (<https://globalfrp.org/Articles/Joining-Together-to-Create-a-Bold-Vision-for-Next-Generation-Family-Engagement-Engaging-Families-to-Transform-Education>) is a report from the Global Family Research Project that identifies five areas that can serve as “building blocks” for family engagement strategies and recommendations for the future of family engagement.

Financial and Asset Management

***Contextual Background***

Between 2000 and 2018, student enrollment in the North Adams public schools declined by about one-third, a loss of 866 students.[[9]](#footnote-9) Between 2014 and 2018, enrollment declined 5.8 percent, a loss of 89 students. The superintendent reported that the region was projected to continue to lose student enrollment over the next two decades, and town officials agreed that the district faced a serious population challenge. The district has reduced school instructional staff as enrollment has declined.

Many students who reside in North Adams are choosing to enroll in other area public school districts and the local charter school. Conversely, not as many students from other school districts are choosing to attend North Adams public schools.

Interviews and a document review indicated that the district’s budget documents were clear, accurate, user-friendly, and directly connected to district and school improvement planning. The district’s business office provided reliable financial tracking, forecasting, controls, and audits, and provided the school committee, the superintendent, school leaders, and other directors with needed support to plan and to execute their respective duties.

***Strength Finding***

**1. The district has developed some initiatives to reduce expenditures and to generate new revenue.**

**A.** The district’s business manager, a recent arrival in March of 2018, works half time for North Adams and half time for the North Berkshire School Union #43; this enables the district to avail itself of the services of a professional with a high level of experience and responsibility, without paying a full-time salary.

**B.** In the year before the onsite review in October 2018, the food service director developed an innovative food service program out of a Collaborative for Education Services (CES) grant. The district now contracts for food services with the local charter school and the Savoy school district. While this initiative has allowed 43 students outside the district to receive daily meals, it has generated very little net revenue; however, it has positioned the district as a provider of a valued resource and as an entrepreneurial partner and problem-solver. Over time, the superintendent hopes to see this approach yield greater financial benefits, as other partnership opportunities emerge.

**Impact:** The district is using funding, collaboration, and access to other resources effectively to support student performance, opportunities, and outcomes.

***Challenges and Areas for Growth***

**2. The district is facing declining enrollment and a high number of students choosing to enroll in other districts.**

1. From 2014 to 2018, the enrollment of students in the district decreased 5.8 percent, from 1,528 in 2014 to 1,439 in 2018.
2. The net loss of students to other districts and to a charter school has remained relatively stable over the past five years. However, the number of students choosing to use the school choice option to enroll in other districts exceeds the number of out-of-district students choosing to enroll in North Adams schools.
3. In the last five years, the number of resident students choosing to enroll in other districts has been stable, the number of out-of-district students choosing to enroll in North Adams schools has increased, and the number of resident students choosing to enroll in the local charter school has increased.
4. According to DESE trend data about school choice, the number of students North Adams sends to other districts has remained relatively stable in the last five years (see Table 30 below); 125 students enrolled in other districts in 2018. Tuition costs for these students has decreased in the last five years (see Table 31 below), and was $706,229 in 2018.
5. The number of students from other towns choosing to enroll in North Adams has increased over the last five years (see Table 30 below); 53 such students enrolled in the district in 2018. Tuition revenue for these students has increased in the last five years (see Table 31 below), and was $336,898 in 2018.

Over the last five years, the number of students leaving the district to enroll in the local charter school has fluctuated with an overall increase, with a low point in 2016 and a sharp increase in 2018, along with the associated tuition expense (see Tables 30 and 31 below); 73 students enrolled in the charter school in 2018.

Between 2014 and 2018, the net loss of students increased from 139 in 2014 to 145 in 2018, an increase of 4.3 percent, and the district’s net tuition expenses increased by 5.3 percent.

**Table 30:** **North Adams Public Schools**

**Number of Choice In and Choice Out Students, 2014–2018**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** |
| **Choice Out** | -121 | -118 | -113 | -119 | -125 |
| **Charter School Out** | -58 | -54 | -52 | -55 | -73 |
| **Choice In** | +40 | +44 | +44 | +35 | +53 |
| **Net Out vs. In** | -139 | -128 | -121 | -139 | -145 |

**Table 31: North Adams Public Schools**

**Tuition Expenses and Receipts, 2014–2018**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** |
| **Choice Out Tuition** | -$744,453 | -$707,892 | -$652,644 | -$671,255 | -$706,229 |
| **Charter School Tuition** | -$768,660 | -$720,367 | -$704,275 | -$757,571 | -$841,953 |
| **Charter School Reimbursement Aid** | +$84,700 | +$48,273 | +$46,695 | +$93,577 | +$104,584 |
| **Choice In Tuition** | +$293,641 | +$290,526 | +$323,759 | +$239,209 | +$336,898 |
| **Net Out vs. In** | -$1,134,772 | -$1,089,460 | -$986,465 | -$1,096,040 | -$1,195,092 |

6. During the onsite review, district and school leaders speculated on reasons why students have left the district, including nearby smaller and newer high schools; highly regarded vocational and charter schools; and value choices made by some parents. Interviewees said that students also might enroll in other districts because of administrator turnover and student performance data.

7. The review team did not find evidence that the district had collected feedback, either about why families were leaving the district, or about why a greater number of students chose to attend the local charter school in 2018.

 **C.** According to DESE’s RADAR Benchmarking,[[10]](#footnote-10)the district’s in-district per-pupil spending is relatively high compared with similar districts[[11]](#footnote-11) and the state for teachers, district and school leaders, paraprofessionals, and clerical/technical support.

 1. For example, compared with similar districts, North Adams is the highest spending in instructional leaders, paraprofessionals, and other teaching services, and the fifth highest spending in teachers.

**Impact:** The district faces continued pressure because of decreasing enrollment driven in part by a high number of students enrolling outside the district. In-district per-pupil costs have been increasing with relatively flat expenditure totals. Given this context, the district cannot maintain its current allocation of resources and achieve its goal of teaching and learning excellence.

**3. The district and the city do not have an up-to-date, written agreement on municipal expenditures in support of the schools. The district has not developed a long-term capital plan.**

1. The district and the city do not have an up-to-date, written agreement on a method for determining the cost of municipal services that are provided to the district by the city, as required by state regulation CMR 10.05.
2. The document submitted by the district entitled “Letter of agreement between the city of North Adams and the North Adams school committee regarding municipal net school spending” is undated and signed by a former mayor and superintendent.
3. District leaders and city officials told the review team that the document was probably written between 2010 and 2016.
4. District leaders and town officials agreed that this document was outdated and of limited utility, noting that it should be reviewed and revised.
5. The district does not have a long-term capital plan that describes the capital needs of the district.
6. District leaders stated that the district did not have a long-term capital plan; however, $120,000 was included annually in the district budget for capital improvements. District leaders also said that annually a disproportionately large part of the capital improvement budget goes toward upkeep at the Greylock School, which constantly requires repairs.
7. A statement of interest has been submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) for possible renovation or replacement of the Greylock School.
8. A review of the 2016 MSBA school condition survey showed that three of the four North Adams schools had an environmental rating of 1. The Greylock School is rated 3. According to the MSBA, a general environment rating of 1 or 2 means that the schools provide an adequate physical environment in which to teach and learn. A rating of 3 or 4 means that the site and building conditions require moderate to extensive renovation or are in poor conditions that will need to be addressed soon.
9. Interviewees told the team that it has been a balancing act paying for repairs and other capital improvements.
10. The district’s facilities director manages a preventative maintenance program. He manages a staff of 11, which includes 3 maintenance staff and 8 custodians. Interviewees stated that these staff took care of all general maintenance of building and grounds, including fields. Only HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) services are contracted to a private company.

1. Interviewees told the team that the facilities director was retiring, and the new facilities director would be charged with developing a long-term capital plan for the district.

**Impact:** Without an up-to-date, signed written agreement between the district and the city on municipal expenditures in support of the schools the district cannot effectively monitor and internally audit costs for education-related services and ensure the accuracy of these expenditures. Not having a long-term capital plan prevents the district from ensuring that school buildings are

***Recommendations***

**The district should collect feedback from stakeholders to determine why students are choosing to attend school elsewhere, analyze results, and make recommendations for change. District leaders and town officials 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 challenge of declining enrollment.**

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

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

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

**B.** 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 examine its current resource allocation and consider possible changes to reduce expenditures or make them more efficient.

 1. DESE’s RADAR Benchmarking reports could be a useful starting point for this analysis.

 2. The district should continue to consider regionalization, partial regionalization, or other collaborative options as recommended by DESE in a study of rural districts and by the Berkshire County Education Task Force.

 3. The district should continue to build on shared services agreements and consider sharing administrators and other duplicated personnel (for example, human resources staff) with the city.

 4. The district should investigate the possible expansion of its collaborative food service program with the Savoy school district.

**Benefits**: By implementing this recommendation, the district and the city will reduce their expenditures or make them more efficient, focus the direction of their schools, and ensure that they are effectively supporting district priorities.

**Recommended resources:**

* *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.
* Research Report: Fiscal Conditions in Rural Districts January 2018 (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/reports/2018/01rural-schools.docx>)
* Berkshire County Education Task Force Report (<http://www.donahue.umassp.edu/documents/UMass_Berkshire_County_Ed_Task_Force_Phase_1_Final_Report_10.31.16.pdf>; <http://0104.nccdn.net/1_5/183/03c/233/7.18.17-BCETF-Phase-II-Final-Report.pdf>)
* *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.

**2. In compliance with 603 CMR 10.05, district administrators and city officials should update the written agreement that details the calculation process and/or amounts to be used in calculating municipal expenditures that are provided to the district.**

1. District administrators and city officials should draft an up-to-date agreement that details the calculations process and/or amounts to be used in calculating indirect charges to the district from the city.

 1. For services that require allocation, such as auditing, data processing or other administrative services, district administrators and city officials should agree on an allocation method.

 2. For actual expenditure categories such as debt and employee benefits, district administrators and city officials should develop a method to determine the actual expenditures.

1. The mayor, the superintendent, and the chair of the school committee should review and sign the agreement.

**Benefits**: By implementing this recommendation, the district’s budget documents will be aligned with state regulation 603 CMR 10.05; the district and the city will have a clear understanding of municipal expenditures that are provided to the district; and the district will be able to monitor and internally audit costs for education-related services and ensure the accuracy of these expenditures.

**Recommended resources:**

* ESE’s webpage on school finance laws and regulations (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr10.html?section=04>) provides a list of municipal payments commonly made on behalf of school districts.
* ESE Chart of Accounts (Criteria for Financial Reporting): <http://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/accounting/eoy>

**3. The district and the city should develop a plan to ensure that the long-term capital needs of all district buildings are addressed.**

1. The district and the city should develop a long-term capital plan.

The short-term capital priority of the district should continue to be the renovation or replacement of the Greylock School.

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

**Recommended resources:**

* ESE’s *School Building Issues* web page (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/sbuilding/>) includes funding opportunities, guidelines, and resources related to school buildings.
* MSBA Planning and Maintenance Guidelines: <http://www.massschoolbuildings.org/building/prerequisites/maintenance_cap_planning>
* *Planning Guide for Maintaining School Facilities* (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2003347>), from the National Center for Education Statistics, is intended to help school districts plan for efficient and effective operations. It addresses various topics, including conducting a facilities audit, planning and evaluating maintenance, and managing staff and contractors.
* *The Massachusetts School Checklist* (<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/environmental-health/exposure-topics/iaq/iaq-methods/the-mass-school-checklist.html>) is a list of the most important environmental health and safety issues for schools to address. It includes regulations and industry standards/guidelines related to elements on the checklist, as well as additional resources.

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

Review Team Members

The review was conducted from October 22–25, 2018, by the following team of independent ESE consultants.

1. Andrew Bundy, Leadership and Governance, *review team coordinator*
2. Judith Evans, Curriculum and Instruction
3. Lonnie Kaufman, Assessment
4. Maureen Murray-Adamson, Human Resources and Professional Development
5. John Retchless, Student Support
6. Jim Hearns, 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 administrator, accounts payable clerks, city auditor, city treasurer and tax collector, human resources payroll clerk, and human resources clerk.

The team conducted interviews with the following members of the school committee: chair, vice-chair, and secretary.

The review team conducted interviews with the following representatives of the teachers’ association: co-presidents, secretary, treasurer, assistants to the president at the high school and the elementary school, and members of the executive board.

The team conducted interviews/focus groups with the superintendent: the director of curriculum, instruction, and assessment; the director of student support services; the director of behavior intervention; the facilities director; the IT director; the literacy and Title I coordinator; the English learner coordinator; the community outreach coordinator; the administrative assistant to the school committee and to the superintendent; and the student support services clerk.

The team visited the following schools: Brayton Elementary School (Pre-K–6), Colegrove Park Elementary School (Pre-K–6), Greylock Elementary School (Pre-K–6), and Drury High School (grades 7–12).

During school visits, the team conducted interviews/focus groups with students, students’ families, all four principals, and focus groups with 8 elementary-school teachers and 7 middle-school and high-school teachers.

The team observed 60 classes throughout the district: 20 in grades 9–12 at the high school, 9 in grades 7–8 at the high school, and 31 at the 3 Pre-K–6 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**October 22, 2018 | **Tuesday**October 23, 2018 | **Wednesday**October 24, 2018 | **Thursday**October 25, 2018 |
| Orientation with district leaders and principals; interviews with district staff and principals; review of personnel files; document reviews; and visits to Brayton and Colegrove Park elementary schools for classroom observations. | Interviews with district staff, principals; review of personnel files; interview with school committee members; teacher focus groups; interview with teachers’ association; interviews with city personnel; student focus group; visits to Greylock Elementary School and Drury High School for classroom observations. | Interviews with school leaders; interview with school committee members; students’ families focus group; visits to Brayton, Colegrove Park, and Greylock elementary schools and Drury High School for classroom observations. | Interviews with school leaders; follow-up interviews; interview with school committee members; district review team meeting; visits to Brayton and Colegrove Park elementary schools and Drury High School for classroom observations; district wrap-up meeting with the superintendent. |

Appendix B: Enrollment, Attendance, Expenditures

**Table B1a: North Adams Public Schools**

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

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **District** | **Percent****of Total** | **State** | **Percent of****Total** |
| African-American | 46 | 3.2% | 86,305 | 9.0% |
| Asian | 5 | 0.3% | 65,667 | 6.9% |
| Hispanic | 90 | 6.3% | 191,201 | 20.0% |
| Native American | 3 | 0.2% | 2,103 | 0.2% |
| White | 1,197 | 83.2% | 573,335 | 60.1% |
| Native Hawaiian | 2 | 0.1% | 818 | 0.1% |
| Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic  | 96 | 6.7% | 34,605 | 3.6% |
| All | 1,439 | 100.0% | 954,034 | 100.0% |
| Note: As of October 1, 2017 |

**Table B1b: North Adams 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 | 372 | 38.2% | 25.6% | 171,061 | 38.0% | 17.7% |
| Econ. Dis. | 845 | 86.8% | 58.7% | 305,203 | 67.9% | 32.0% |
| EL and Former EL | 15 | 1.5% | 1.0% | 97,334 | 21.6% | 10.2% |
| All high needs students | 974 | 100.0% | 67.0% | 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 1,454; total state enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 964,806. |

**Table B2a: North Adams Public Schools**

**Attendance Rates, 2015–2018**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2018)** |
| African American/Black | 51 | 91.8 | 94.0 | 93.2 | 93.4 | 1.6 | 94.1 |
| Asian | 5 | 99.4 | 97.4 | 96.7 | -- | -- | 96.2 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 98 | 90.4 | 93.0 | 92.6 | 93.1 | 2.7 | 92.7 |
| Multi-Race | 111 | 92.1 | 93.3 | 92.7 | 93.9 | 1.8 | 94.4 |
| White | 1,288 | 93.9 | 94.3 | 94.3 | 94.1 | 0.2 | 95.1 |
| High Needs | 930 | 92.5 | 93.4 | 93.4 | 93.5 | 1.0 | 93.2 |
| Econ. Dis. | 918 | 92.3 | 93.3 | 93.2 | 93.0 | 0.7 | 92.5 |
| SWD | 388 | 92.6 | 93.1 | 93.0 | 92.7 | 0.1 | 92.9 |
| EL | 16 | 91.2 | 94.5 | 94.1 | 91.2 | 0.0 | 93.3 |
| All  | 1,558 | 93.5 | 94.1 | 94.0 | 94.0 | 0.5 | 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: North Adams Public Schools**

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

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2018)** |
| African American/Black | 48 | 28.3 | 21.3 | 26.8 | 29.2 | 0.9 | 16.4 |
| Asian | 5 | 0.0 | 9.1 | 12.5 | 20.0 | 20.0 | 7.6 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 98 | 28.4 | 22.9 | 26.9 | 21.4 | -7.0 | 22.5 |
| Multi-Race | 110 | 30.8 | 22.1 | 24.5 | 21.8 | -9.0 | 14.2 |
| White | 1,262 | 18.5 | 15.4 | 16.2 | 15.1 | -3.4 | 10.0 |
| High Needs | 1,069 | 25.1 | 20.6 | 22.2 | 21.0 | -4.1 | 20.1 |
| Econ. Dis. | 972 | 27.0 | 20.8 | 22.9 | 21.7 | -5.3 | 22.9 |
| SWD | 379 | 23.4 | 21.4 | 24.8 | 23.2 | -0.2 | 20.7 |
| EL | 16 | 33.3 | 22.2 | 12.5 | 37.5 | 4.2 | 20.4 |
| All  | 1,528 | 20.1 | 16.6 | 17.9 | 16.6 | -3.5 | 13.2 |
| \* The percentage of students absent 10% or more of their total number of student days of membership in a school |

**Table B3: North Adams 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 | $16,415,880 | $16,415,879 | $16,744,198 | $16,744,199 | $17,079,082 | $16,744,199 |
| By municipality | $7,110,829 | $12,685,121 | $7,519,982 | $8,299,456 | $7,628,119 | $8,299,455 |
| Total from local appropriations | $23,526,709 | $29,101,000 | $24,264,180 | $25,043,655 | $24,707,201 | $25,043,654 |
| From revolving funds and grants | -- | $3,399,571 | -- | $3,780,265 | -- | $3,780,265 |
| Total expenditures | -- | $32,500,571 | -- | $28,823,920 | -- | $28,823,919 |
| Chapter 70 aid to education program |
| Chapter 70 state aid\* | -- | $13,595,418 | -- | $13,676,653 | -- | $13,721,833 |
| Required local contribution | -- | $5,074,150 | -- | $5,063,315 | -- | $5,100,302 |
| Required net school spending\*\* | -- | $18,669,568 | -- | $18,739,968 | -- | $18,822,135 |
| Actual net school spending | -- | $19,287,665 | -- | $19,861,579 | -- | $20,637,215 |
| Over/under required ($) | -- | $618,097 | -- | $1,121,611 | -- | $1,815,080 |
| Over/under required (%) | -- | 3.3% | -- | 6.0% | -- | 9.6% |
| \*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 websiteData retrieved 11/13/18 and 12/10/18 |

**Table B4: North Adams Public Schools**

**Expenditures Per In-District Pupil**

**Fiscal Years 2015–2017**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Expenditure Category** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** |
| Administration | $564 | $599 | $529 |
| Instructional leadership (district and school) | $1,431 | $2,161 | $1,697 |
| Teachers | $5,393 | $4,861 | $5,336 |
| Other teaching services | $1,513 | $1,356 | $1,525 |
| Professional development | $104 | $108 | $126 |
| Instructional materials, equipment and technology | $214 | $260 | $330 |
| Guidance, counseling and testing services | $364 | $377 | $382 |
| Pupil services | $1,576 | $1,536 | $1,712 |
| Operations and maintenance | $1,109 | $1,085 | $1,106 |
| Insurance, retirement and other fixed costs | $3,231 | $3,324 | $3,521 |
| Total expenditures per in-district pupil | $15,499 | $15,667 | $16,264 |
| 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** | 3% | 35% | 48% | 13% | 2.7 |
| **MS** | 33% | 33% | 11% | 22% | 2.2 |
| **HS** | 10% | 25% | 40% | 25% | 2.8 |
| **Total #** | 6 | 19 | 24 | 11 | 2.7 |
| **Total %** | 10% | 32% | 40% | 18% |   |
| 2. The teacher ensures that students understand what they should be learning in the lesson and why. | **ES** | 10% | 52% | 35% | 3% | 2.3 |
| **MS** | 22% | 78% | 0% | 0% | 1.8 |
| **HS** | 5% | 45% | 50% | 0% | 2.5 |
| **Total #** | 6 | 32 | 21 | 1 | 2.3 |
| **Total %** | 10% | 53% | 35% | 2% |   |
| 3. The teacher uses appropriate classroom activities well matched to the learning objective(s). | **ES** | 6% | 42% | 48% | 3% | 2.5 |
| **MS** | 22% | 56% | 22% | 0% | 2.0 |
| **HS** | 5% | 30% | 35% | 30% | 2.9 |
| **Total #** | 5 | 24 | 24 | 7 | 2.6 |
| **Total %** | 8% | 40% | 40% | 12% |   |
| 4. The teacher conducts frequent checks for student understanding, provides feedback, and adjusts instruction. | **ES** | 6% | 48% | 35% | 10% | 2.5 |
| **MS** | 44% | 44% | 11% | 0% | 1.7 |
| **HS** | 10% | 35% | 50% | 5% | 2.5 |
| **Total #** | 8 | 26 | 22 | 4 | 2.4 |
| **Total %** | 13% | 43% | 37% | 7% |   |
| **Total Score For Focus Area #1** | **ES** |   |   |   |   | **10.0** |
| **MS** |   |   |   |   | **7.7** |
| **HS** |   |   |   |   | **10.7** |
| **Total %** |  |  |  |  |   |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **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** | 13% | 35% | 48% | 3% | 2.4 |
| **MS** | 33% | 44% | 22% | 0% | 1.9 |
| **HS** | 10% | 40% | 50% | 0% | 2.4 |
| **Total #** | 9 | 23 | 27 | 1 | 2.3 |
| **Total %** | 15% | 38% | 45% | 2% |   |
| 6. Students engage in higher-order thinking. | **ES** | 23% | 48% | 29% | 0% | 2.1 |
| **MS** | 44% | 56% | 0% | 0% | 1.6 |
| **HS** | 20% | 45% | 30% | 5% | 2.2 |
| **Total #** | 15 | 29 | 15 | 1 | 2.0 |
| **Total %** | 25% | 48% | 25% | 2% |   |
| 7. Students communicate their ideas and thinking with each other. | **ES** | 26% | 55% | 19% | 0% | 1.9 |
| **MS** | 44% | 22% | 33% | 0% | 1.9 |
| **HS** | 40% | 30% | 30% | 0% | 1.9 |
| **Total #** | 20 | 25 | 15 | 0 | 1.9 |
| **Total %** | 33% | 42% | 25% | 0% |   |
| 8. Students engage with meaningful, real-world tasks. | **ES** | 10% | 55% | 35% | 0% | 2.3 |
| **MS** | 56% | 33% | 11% | 0% | 1.6 |
| **HS** | 20% | 45% | 30% | 5% | 2.2 |
| **Total #** | 12 | 29 | 18 | 1 | 2.1 |
| **Total %** | 20% | 48% | 30% | 2% |   |
| **Total Score For Focus Area #2** | **ES** |   |   |   |   | **8.7** |
| **MS** |   |   |   |   | **6.9** |
| **HS** |   |   |   |   | **8.7** |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **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** | 16% | 42% | 42% | 0% | 2.3 |
| **MS** | 22% | 67% | 11% | 0% | 1.9 |
| **HS** | 20% | 45% | 35% | 0% | 2.2 |
| **Total #** | 11 | 28 | 21 | 0 | 2.2 |
| **Total %** | 18% | 47% | 35% | 0% |   |
| 10. The teacher uses a variety of instructional strategies. | **ES** | 23% | 29% | 42% | 6% | 2.3 |
| **MS** | 44% | 56% | 0% | 0% | 1.6 |
| **HS** | 15% | 35% | 50% | 0% | 2.4 |
| **Total #** | 14 | 21 | 23 | 2 | 2.2 |
| **Total %** | 23% | 35% | 38% | 3% |   |
| 11. Classroom routines and positive supports are in place to ensure that students behave appropriately. | **ES** | 0% | 19% | 45% | 35% | 3.2 |
| **MS** | 33% | 33% | 33% | 0% | 2.0 |
| **HS** | 15% | 35% | 25% | 25% | 2.6 |
| **Total #** | 6 | 16 | 22 | 16 | 2.8 |
| **Total %** | 10% | 27% | 37% | 27% |   |
| 12. The classroom climate is conducive to teaching and learning. | **ES** | 3% | 23% | 42% | 32% | 3.0 |
| **MS** | 33% | 33% | 33% | 0% | 2.0 |
| **HS** | 19% | 19% | 52% | 10% | 2.5 |
| **Total #** | 8 | 14 | 27 | 12 | 2.7 |
| **Total %** | 13% | 23% | 44% | 20% |   |
| **Total Score For Focus Area #3** | **ES** |   |   |   |   | **10.8** |
| **MS** |   |   |   |   | **7.4** |
| **HS** |   |   |   |   | **9.6** |
| **Total** |   |   |   |   | **9.9** |

1. DLT members include the superintendent; the director of student support services; the director of curriculum, instruction, and assessment; the Title I and literacy coordinator; and the business administrator. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. SMART goals are Specific and Strategic; Measurable; Action-Oriented; Rigorous, Realistic, and Results Focused; and Timed and Tracked. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Research-based best practices of family engagement include students learning anywhere, anytime, rather than only in school; the district determining the goals of family engagement and providing engagement activities to meet these goals; and the district and families actively co-creating opportunities for family engagement. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. 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-4)
5. High-quality feedback is specific, timely, and actionable. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. SMART goals are specific and strategic; measurable; action-oriented; rigorous, realistic, and results-focused; and timed and tracked. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. On Tuesday, February 28, 2017, after collecting public comment since November 2016, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education voted 9-1 to amend the educator evaluation regulations. The most significant change in the regulations is the elimination of a separate student impact rating. Under the [amended regulations](http://www.doe.mass.edu/boe/docs/FY2017/2017-02/item6.html), evaluators do not have to make a separate judgment about an educator’s impact on student learning. Instead, student learning is embedded as an indicator within one of the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework’s four standards. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. According to the high school turnaround plan, data provided by the North Adams school adjustment counselors indicates that 31 percent of the students in the district have current or known case status with the Department of Children and Families for abuse or neglect. DESE is unable to substantiate this data. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. According to DESE data, between 1998 and 2018 enrollment in the district has decreased by 886 students, from 2,325 students in 1998 to 1,439 students in 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. RADAR stands for Resource Allocation and District Action Reports. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. The comparison districts in this analysis are Adams-Cheshire, Athol-Royalston, Palmer, Spencer-E. Brookfield, Ware, Winchendon, Wareham, Webster, Gardner, and Greenfield. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)