I. Informed Decision-Making From A More Holistic Perspective

Increasingly over the past ten years, research on effective school and district leadership has highlighted a concerted district-wide focus on aligning all of the district’s systems in service of student achievement. This focus is demonstrated in clear standards for performance and goals for improvement, coupled with an ongoing cyclical process for measuring progress. Engaging a strong cross-district team to examine its systems and processes enables districts to make well-informed decisions about next steps based on a variety of current and relevant data and information. Engaging a strong cross-district team for the process provides districts with an opportunity for a more nuanced view of the interconnectedness of their work. This more holistic perspective helps leaders to identify overlapping needs, duplications of effort, and/or conflicting priorities in a way that should result in recalibrating plans and creating new systemic efficiencies.

A. Support For A Standards-Based District Inquiry Cycle

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education encourages districts to use this District Self-Assessment Tool to assess their systems as part of an ongoing cycle of inquiry for continuous improvement. The District Standards and Indicators (below) that structure the District Self-Assessment Tool offer a scaffold for building district capacity and excellence in a focused and systemic way.

1. Leadership, Governance and Communication
   a. Focused School Committee Governance
   b. Effective District and School Leadership
   c. District and School Improvement Planning
   d. Educationally Sound Budget Development
   e. Effective District Systems for School Support and Intervention

2. Curriculum and Instruction
   a. Aligned, Consistently Delivered, and Continuously Improving Curriculum
   b. Strong Instructional Leadership and Effective Instruction
   c. Tiered Systems of Support

3. Assessment
   a. Data Collection and Dissemination
   b. Data-Based Decision-Making
   c. Student Assessment
4. Human Resource Management and Professional Development
   a. Staff Recruitment, Selection, Assignment
   b. Supervision and Evaluation
   c. Professional Development

5. Student Support
   a. Access and Equity
   b. Educational Continuity and Student Participation
   c. Services and Partnerships to Support Learning
   d. Safety

6. Financial and Asset Management
   a. Comprehensive and Transparent Budget Process
   b. Adequate Budget
   c. Cost-Effective Resource Management
   d. Financial Tracking, Forecasting, Controls, and Audits
   e. Capital Planning and Facility Maintenance

These six standards and their 23 related indicators were developed collaboratively based on input from school and district stakeholders about which systems and system components most directly impact student achievement. Reference to past district assistance tools and processes such as the Educational Quality and Assessment (EQA) indicators and reviews, as well as a growing research base on the impact of effective district systems on school reform, also informed this work.

The District Standards and Indicators on which the tool is based also form the foundation for the state’s Framework for District Accountability and Assistance (see Section B below) and guide District Reviews organized and led each year by the Department’s Center for School and District Accountability.

B. The Framework for District Accountability and Assistance

The Framework for District Accountability and Assistance defines and brings coherence to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's approach to engaging with districts to improve student performance. District accountability and Department assistance must be closely linked in order to produce sustainable improvement. The Framework defines the roles and expectations of the district and the Department based on the performance of the district's schools. Every district in the Commonwealth falls into one of five “levels,” with districts requiring the least state intervention placed in Level 1 while districts requiring the most intervention are in Level 5. At each of the five levels, the Framework distinguishes the Department's role with respect to “accountability” and “assistance and intervention” as well as the districts' responsibilities.

Districts where student performance and growth place them in Level 3 will be given high priority for Department assistance, including resources to assist their efforts to implement the Conditions for School Effectiveness (CSE). These Level 3 districts will be required to complete the district self-assessment
process in order to revise improvement plans and strategies for implementing and monitoring the Conditions for School Effectiveness in their schools.

C. **The Framework for District Accountability and The Conditions for School Effectiveness (CSE)**

The Department’s theory of action is that if state interventions are concentrated on ensuring that the necessary district systems are in place and are focused on establishing and sustaining the Conditions for School Effectiveness in each school, substantial gains in student performance will result. Accordingly, the *Framework for District Accountability and Assistance* is very closely aligned with the Conditions for School Effectiveness (CSE). In fact, the first Condition for School Effectiveness points to the need for the strong district systems of support and practices specified in the District Standards and Indicators.

The District Self-Assessment Tool delineates these systems for school support and intervention to provide districts a measurement aligned with the Conditions for School Effectiveness.

II. **The District Self-Assessment Tool**

A. **Preparing for the District Self-Assessment**

The District Self-Assessment Tool is meant to be used by district teams to support an in-depth collaborative process to measure, track, and enhance the effectiveness of the current district systems in a way that is focused on improving student achievement and consistent with the state’s expectations for accountability and assistance. Like any tool, the District Self-Assessment Tool’s value is measured first by the usefulness of the evidence-based assessment process it promotes; second in the effectiveness of the resulting action steps and goals that process generates; and ultimately, in improved results.

1. **Building a Team**

Fundamental to the success of the self-assessment process is building a strong team, ideally comprised of a representative group of stakeholders such as central office staff, school site administrators, teachers, parents, and community members. Given the variety of perspectives each stakeholder will bring to the process, it is especially helpful to build a district self-assessment team with a diversity of professional backgrounds and experiences. Because the indicators include both operational and instructional components, we recommend that district teams include those with expertise in both areas.

2. **Gathering Data and Information**

This District Self-Assessment is an evidence-based process that will require some planning and sufficient lead time to examine the key questions for each standard in the rubric, determine the best sources of evidence, and then gather the relevant and timely data and information you will need to accurately determine which of the performance levels best matches the district’s current status in relation to the structures, practices, and procedures described for each standard.
The key questions offered in the rubric below will point to the kinds of resources that the District Self-Assessment team could use in completing the District Self-Assessment process using this tool. Suggestions for the kinds of resources that District teams could use in completing the DSA process using this tool are suggested in Appendix A of this document. Teams will utilize any additional sources of information they have at their disposal, such as program evaluations or outside review reports. As your team prepares to engage with the rubric, they may want to add questions especially pertinent to your district’s local context.

B. Using The District Self-Assessment Tool

This District Self-Assessment Tool frames the District Standards and Indicators, along with key questions, in a rubric for conducting a scan of current practice, identifying areas of strength and highlighting areas requiring greater focus. To gain information on strengths and needs, the tool describes the level of development of each condition along the continuum that is described below:

- **1 (Little Evidence)** – A district is demonstrating limited evidence of implementation or progress around an element of the Standard, or implementation is so infrequent that its impact is negligible.

- **2 (Developing)** – Some policies, practices, and procedures are emerging or are in place to support the indicator. However, they are not yet fully developed or implemented with fidelity.

- **3 (Providing)** – The district’s policies, procedures, and practices are established and are implemented consistently, with fidelity.

- **4 (Sustaining)** – The district’s policies, procedures, and practices are in place (with all being implemented at a minimum of Level 3, “Providing”), are aligned to and integrated with one another to the point of being self-sustaining, and are supported by collaborative efforts.

Use the Key Questions to reflect on the current district systems in place around a given indicator, based on evidence. In instances where teams have difficulty choosing a placement because practice straddles two descriptions, those completing the self-assessment should select the lower of the two placements; and then identify specific evidence about what needs to be established in order to move practice to the next level. Through the triangulation of data and other evidence, the team can come to agreement on strengths and prioritize needs, resulting in an evidence-based action plan.

Since this is a self-assessment, team members should be encouraged to speak freely as they examine whether the systems and practices they are considering have the expected impact on teaching and learning in the classrooms across the district.
C. What’s Next?

After completing the self-assessment, district leaders should have a clearer sense of which practices are contributing to success and which might need to be further developed. As districts determine where their support is needed, the Department’s District Data Team Toolkit may be useful to identify root causes [http://www.doe.mass.edu/sda/ucd/](http://www.doe.mass.edu/sda/ucd/), Appendix 4.2.

District teams may want to see where similar districts in the state are showing progress in specific areas to identify possible best practice. The Department’s District Analysis and Review Tool (DART) would be a valuable resource that is organized by the District Standards. [http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/dart/](http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/dart/). A list of other useful tools available on the ESE web site is included in Appendix B of this document.

For more information, or to provide feedback on this or other school/district support resources, visit [http://www.doe.mass.edu/sda/ucd/](http://www.doe.mass.edu/sda/ucd/) or email districtassist@doe.mass.edu.
**Standard I. Leadership, Governance, and Communication:** School committee and district and school leaders establish, implement, and continuously evaluate the effectiveness of policies and procedures that are standards-based, driven by student achievement data, and designed to promote continuous improvement of instructional practice and high achievement for all students. Leadership decisions and actions related to the attainment of district and school goals are routinely communicated to the community and promote the public confidence, community support, and financial commitment needed to achieve high performance by students and staff.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 (Little Evidence)</th>
<th>2 (Developing)</th>
<th>3 (Providing)</th>
<th>4 (Sustaining)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**1. Focused School Committee Governance**

**Key Question:** Does the school committee understand and accept its leadership role, have purposeful direction, and effectively communicate with the superintendent and all appropriate stakeholders to improve student achievement?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Limited evidence of implementation or progress</th>
<th>Some aspects of the indicator in place but remain inconsistent or are not thoroughly implemented</th>
<th>The School Committee demonstrates focused governance by:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Understanding and actively accepting its leadership role, providing district oversight</td>
<td>b. Delegating to the superintendent educational and operational leadership of the district, foregoing direct involvement in the administration of the school system</td>
<td>c. Setting policy and updating the policy in response to district needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Making decisions based on student performance data and district improvement plans</td>
<td>e. Completing an annual evaluation of the superintendent based on mutually agreed goals for the district, and current state laws and regulations</td>
<td>f. Creating a culture of collaboration among local officials, the education community, union leadership, and the public to meet district goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Advocating for the school district in the community in order to meet student needs</td>
<td>h. Effectively communicating and building a strong positive working relationship with the superintendent</td>
<td>i. Accepting an educationally sound budget and developing contracts and agreements that support district operations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**2. Effective District and School Leadership**

**Key Question:** To what extent do district and school accept and execute their responsibility for improving effective instruction and student achievement within the district?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Limited evidence of implementation or progress</th>
<th>Some aspects of the indicator in place but remain inconsistent or are not thoroughly implemented</th>
<th>District and School Leadership demonstrate effectiveness by:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Having a clear vision appropriately expressed by the superintendent</td>
<td>b. Having an established and effective administrative team with the same set of expectations for all principals</td>
<td>c. Exercising educational and operational leadership among administrators and program directors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Annually evaluating administrators based on district goals and current state laws and regulations</td>
<td>e. Facilitating teacher leadership, collaboration, supervision as well as an evaluation of school practices</td>
<td>(Continued)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**3. District and School Improvement Planning**

**Key Question:** Do district and school administrators create, execute, assess, and revise improvement plans that result in clear priorities that impact student achievement?
Limited evidence of implementation or progress | Some aspects of the indicator in place but remain inconsistent or are not thoroughly implemented | **EFFECTIVE DISTRICT AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING IS DEMONSTRATED BY:**

a. A clear vision and data-based determination of priorities articulated within the District Improvement Plan
b. Designated administrators and/or staff with primary responsibility for conducting a continuous improvement planning cycle in the district, including monitoring progress with implementation and tracking effectiveness of planned initiatives
c. Specific, measurable, rigorous and time-bound student performance goals based on analysis of current and relevant performance data, and the assessment/measurement tools that will be used to gauge progress
d. Effective communication of the key priorities in the District Improvement Plan across the district—in ways accessible and appropriate for specific stakeholders or audiences
e. Regular tracking and refinement of the District Improvement Plan via stakeholder input as part of an ongoing cycle of improvement that is duplicated in school level improvement planning
f. A culture of regular analysis of relevant performance data in relation to goals to inform decision making within the district
g. School Improvement Plans that show evidence of alignment to the District Improvement Plan
h. An educator evaluation process in keeping with current laws and regulations, including team and individual educator performance and practice goals (for both teachers and administrators) aligned with school-wide and district goals
i. Frequent communication of progress and achievement of goals to the faculty, school committee, and community

d. Schools are well serviced by central office functions.
e. Struggling schools receive additional monitoring and support.
f. The budget development process is driven by district priorities to improve achievement in all schools and for all subgroups across the district.

4. Educationally Sound Budget Development

**Key Question:** Does the district have a sound budget that meets the needs of students, schools, and improvement plans?

Limited evidence of implementation or progress | Some aspects of the indicator in place but remain inconsistent or are not thoroughly implemented | **AN EDUCATIONALLY SOUND BUDGET IS DEVELOPED BY:**

a. Annual recommendations by the superintendent based on data analysis and improvement plans
b. Allocation of funds that creates equity and addresses the needs of student subgroups
c. Resource allocation based on an ongoing analysis of student assessment data
d. Implementing a clear process for principals and other relevant stakeholders to provide input regarding the district’s budget

5. Effective District Systems for School Support and Intervention

**Key Question:** Does the district have responsive systems that support school need and improvement especially as it relates to struggling schools?

Limited evidence of implementation or progress | Some aspects of the indicator in place but remain inconsistent or are not thoroughly implemented | **EFFECTIVE DISTRICT SYSTEMS FOR SCHOOL SUPPORT AND INTERVENTION ARE DEMONSTRATED BY:**

a. Quick and effective central office responses to staffing, instructional, and operational needs of the schools
b. Identification of schools in need of support through a transparent process
c. A district support role that includes proactive assistance with staffing changes, schedule, governance, to support implementation of a School Improvement Plan that is ambitious, realistic, and includes goals, timelines, and benchmarks
d. District provision of monitoring and support to the lowest achieving and struggling schools
Standard II. Curriculum and Instruction: The district provides a comprehensive, accessible, and rigorous instructional program—aligned with state frameworks and the common core—comprised of curricula and instructional practices that are implemented and monitored effectively, and that lead to high levels of achievement for all students.

1 (Little Evidence) 2 (Developing) 3 (Providing) 4 (Sustaining)

1. Aligned, Consistently Delivered, and Continuously Improving Curriculum

Key Question: Is there a written and consistent plan for student instruction aligned to the state framework throughout the district?

Limited evidence of implementation or progress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strong Instructional Leadership is Demonstrated by:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Curriculum leadership that ensures consistency, standard alignment, and effective delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Curriculum guides for all content areas including objectives, resources, instructional strategies, pacing guides, and measurable outcomes or assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Curriculum documents are aligned to state frameworks horizontally across grade levels within each school and from school to school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Curriculum documents are aligned to state frameworks vertically between all grade levels and from school to school, especially at transition points (e.g., from elementary to middle and middle to high school)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. A system for regularly monitoring the effective use of curriculum materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. A curriculum review and revision process that is comprehensive, with teacher input and valid research, includes regular assessment results reviews, and addresses identified needs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Strong Instructional Leadership and Effective Instruction

Key Question: To what extent are instructional practices executed so that all students will have the opportunity to learn to the best of their ability?

Limited evidence of implementation or progress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strong Instructional Leadership is Demonstrated by:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Leadership and support are in place to support effective instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Clear communication of expectations from district and school leaders to teach the written curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Identification of instructional needs and strengths through monitoring and student assessment data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Instructional practices that are based on research and evidence of their effectiveness and maintain high expectations for students and staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Instructional resources provided for effective implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Teachers have timely access to assessment results to drive instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Sufficient instructional time is allotted, based on analysis of student achievement and other data, to enable all students to reach proficiency in core content areas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Effective Instruction is Demonstrated by:

h. Clear objectives, appropriate instructional materials, and a range of strategies |

i. Differentiated instruction aligned to student’s development levels and learning needs |

j. Planning that is consistently monitored and revised for future instruction based on regular assessment |

k. Maximized learning time |

l. A respectful climate that promotes high levels of student engagement and responsibility |

m. Verbal and written evidence in students’ work of their use of higher order thinking skills
3. Tiered Systems of Support for the High Achievement of All Students

**Key Question:** Does the district provide its students at all levels with adequate support mechanisms—and the necessary time—to effectively access the district curriculum and attain proficiency on state standards-based assessments?

| Limited evidence of implementation or progress | Some aspects of the indicator in place but remain inconsistent or are not thoroughly implemented | Academic Support for High Achievement of All Students is Demonstrated by: |
|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------}|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                | a. **Established policies and practices that promote** student achievement, **support** course completion, **reduce** grade retention, and **encourage** on-time graduation | a. The district provides quality programs for all students that are comprehensive, accessible, and rigorous. |
|                                                | b. **A clear process to identify students below grade level** at each school | b. For students not yet on track to proficiency in core subjects, the school provides **sufficient additional time and support** for individualized tiered instruction. |
|                                                | c. **Additional support provided to students performing below grade level** in ELA or math | c. A data-driven, flexible approach to prevention, early detection, and support for students who experience learning or behavioral challenges, including but not limited to students with disabilities and English Language Learners. |
|                                                | d. **Additional support provided** to students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and other students who experience learning or behavioral challenges | |
|                                                | e. **Tiered systems of support that provide additional instructional time and appropriate interventions for all students when they are needed, including data-driven prevention approaches, early detection, and acceleration** | |
### Standard III. Assessment

District and school leadership use student assessment results, local benchmarks, and other pertinent data to improve student achievement and inform all aspects of its decision-making including: policy development and implementation, instructional programs, assessment practices, procedures, and supervision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 (Little Evidence)</th>
<th>2 (Developing)</th>
<th>3 (Providing)</th>
<th>4 (Sustaining)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### 1. Data Collection and Dissemination

**Key Question:** Does the district have systems and practices in place to use both formative and summative assessments to collect, analyze and communicate student achievement data?

Limited evidence of implementation or progress | Some aspects of the indicator in place but remain inconsistent or are not thoroughly implemented | **Data Collection and Dissemination is Demonstrated by:**

- A purposeful, formalized range of methods to assess and communicate student growth
- District assessment policies and practices that ensure regular collection and distribution of data
- Organized, user-friendly data and reports made available to all staff in a timely manner to measure progress, accompanied by training and support needed to use this data to improve performance
- Dissemination and discussion of internal reports and external review findings to staff and local stakeholders as appropriate

#### 2. Data-Based Decision Making

**Key Question:** Do districts and schools effectively use appropriate data to maximize all local resources and make or revise decisions?

Limited evidence of implementation or progress | Some aspects of the indicator in place but remain inconsistent or are not thoroughly implemented | **Data-Based Decision Making is Demonstrated by:**

- Goal prioritization after annual reviews of student assessment results and external/internal reviews
- Allocation of human and financial resources that are initiated, modified, or discontinued based on multiple measures of data
- Regular monitoring of student achievement data to ascertain goal progress and needed adjustments
- Ongoing and effective staff training and support to regularly use student achievement data to improve performance

#### 3. Student Assessment

**Key Question:** Are assessments regularly used to guide instruction and provide next step strategies to improve student growth?

Limited evidence of implementation or progress | Some aspects of the indicator in place but remain inconsistent or are not thoroughly implemented | **Systems of Student Assessment are Evidenced by:**

- Balanced formative and benchmark systems of assessment that guide instruction
- Remedial and enrichment initiatives that are based on results of balanced system of student assessments
- Assessments administered 4 – 8 times per academic year to benchmark students’ progress toward achievement goals and guide planning and instruction at the school and grade levels
Standard IV. Human Resource Management and Professional Development: The district identifies, attracts, and recruits effective personnel, and structures its environment to support, develop, improve, promote, and retain qualified and effective professional staff members who have shown success in advancing achievement for all students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 (Little Evidence)</th>
<th>2 (Developing)</th>
<th>3 (Providing)</th>
<th>4 (Sustaining)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. Staff Recruitment, Selection, and Assignment

**Key Question:** Does the district have systems and practices in place to ensure that it builds and develops a diverse, highly qualified staff to help students learn and demonstrate their proficiency based on the Standards for Effective Administrative Leadership and Teaching Practice articulated in the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework?

**Human Resource management and professional development is marked by all of the following:**

- The district identifies, attracts, and recruits qualified and effective personnel.
- The district supports, develops, improves, promotes, and retains qualified and effective personnel.

**Limited evidence of implementation or progress**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purposeful Staff Recruitment, Selection, and Assignment are Demonstrated by:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Established hiring procedures and staff trained to guide timely and effective recruitment, selection, and assignment of qualified educators, including the inclusion of appropriate staff and stakeholder input in executing these processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Staff retention practices that include appropriate compensation, incentives, and other strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Assessment of teacher capacity in the hiring process based on the Standards for Effective Administrative Leadership and Teaching Practice articulated in the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Massachusetts state licensure requirements met by all professional staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Limited use of waivers to hire staff for vacant positions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Hiring staff with current licensure in the areas in which they will be teaching for professional positions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Extending new roles and opportunities to effective professional staff as identified through the evaluation process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Hiring decisions based on school improvement plans and current student needs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Supervision and Evaluation

**Key Question:** Does the district effectively supervise staff and support an educator evaluation process that identifies needs and provides assistance to support educators' professional growth and improvement and eliminate ineffective instruction?

**Quality supervision and evaluation of all educators is evidenced by:**

(PERTAINS TO ADMINISTRATORS)

- b. Regular formal and informal supervision of administrators that is informative, instructive, and promotes effective professional growth for teachers and academic growth for students based on the Standards for Effective Administrative Leadership and Teaching Practice articulated in the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework
- c. A direct correlation between compensation of administrators and evidence of effectiveness using clear, measurable data
- d. Regular support to enable administrators to meet expectations and goals aligned to the Standards for Effective Administrative Leadership and Teaching Practice articulated in the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework

(PERTAINS TO TEACHERS)

- e. Reflective supervision practices that identify next steps for professional development, and addressing the needs of struggling staff based on the Standards for Effective Administrative Leadership and Teaching Practice articulated in the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework
- f. Educators who are active participants in an evaluation that uses multiple criteria and is regular, formative, and summative
- g. An educator evaluation system that is aligned to the Standards for Effective Administrative Leadership and Teaching Practice articulated in the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework and is conducted by trained administrators
### h. Regular support to enable teachers to meet expectations and goals aligned to the four Standards of Educator Practice for teachers articulated in the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework

### j. Dismissing or demoting staff who do not meet evaluation criteria after intensive supports

### 3. Professional Development

**Key Question**: Does the district effectively support an educator evaluation process that meets state regulations and promotes ongoing growth and opportunity for all educators through professional development that is embedded in practice and links directly to needs identified through analysis of educator evaluation and student performance results?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Limited evidence of implementation or progress</th>
<th>Some aspects of the indicator in place but remain inconsistent or are not thoroughly implemented</th>
<th>Quality Professional Development demonstrates District Support by:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. District priorities for professional development determined by staff needs process, student achievement data, and assessment of instructional practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Adult learning that builds professional learning communities and ongoing professional improvement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Programs that support educators at all levels of expertise and stages in their careers to build teaching and leadership skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. An investment in new staff exemplified by providing orientation, coaching, mentoring, and support</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Focused, job-embedded learning (e.g., peer observation, action research and coaching) that is responsive to results of educator evaluation and their student work and outcomes and department/grade-level collaboration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Development of teacher leadership and growth by providing opportunities for instructional leadership and mentoring peers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. A cohesive professional development program that builds the capacity of staff at all levels to implement the district’s plan for attaining high levels of achievement for all students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Standard V. Student Supports: The district provides quality programs for all students that are comprehensive, accessible and rigorous. Student academic support services and district discipline and behavior practices address the needs of all students. The district maintains high rates of attendance for students and staff and retains the participation of students through graduation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 (Little Evidence)</th>
<th>2 (Developing)</th>
<th>3 (Providing)</th>
<th>4 (Sustaining)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. Access and Equity

**Key Question:** Does the district actively work to ensure that all students, including English Language Learners, students with disabilities, and students with economic challenges are able to perform to the best of their ability?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Limited evidence of implementation or progress</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Student Access and Equity Issues Are Addressed By:**

- Adjustment of policies and practices to close proficiency gaps using student participation and achievement data
- Use of integrated services to include inclusive classrooms, differentiated supports, and “wraparound” services
- Active school and district collaboration to increase the proportion of underrepresented subgroups in advanced and accelerated programs
- Family engagement that is respectful of language and culture and focused on supporting student learning
- Creation and active use of post secondary and career pathways for all high school graduates

2. Educational Continuity and Student Participation

**Key Question:** To what extent is the district providing support for students to come to school daily, remain in school, and successfully participate despite transitions in school or at home?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Limited evidence of implementation or progress</th>
<th>Some aspects of the indicator in place but remain inconsistent or are not thoroughly implemented</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Education Continuity and Student Participation is Demonstrated By:**

- A user-friendly school attendance process that ensures accurate daily updates and reporting to enable regular and timely response where needed (daily, weekly, etc.)
- Regular reporting and response on staff attendance and participation
- Provisions being made to ensure continuity for students when teachers are absent
- Systemic support for students transitioning from one school, grade level, or program to another
- Prompt assessment and placement of entering and mobile students
- Prompt and equitable access to quality programs for transient and homeless students and support for their needs
- Fair and equitable policies, procedures, and practices that target the reduction of suspensions, exclusions, or other discipline referrals
- A targeted reduction of the dropout rate through active use of district and school policies
- District practices to recover dropouts and return them to an educationally appropriate placement

3. Services and Partnerships to Support Learning

**Key Question:** Does the district engage in both internal and external partnerships to develop and sustain high quality “wraparound” support services for the learning and behavioral health of all students?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Limited evidence of implementation or progress</th>
<th>Some aspects of the indicator in place but remain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Quality Services and Partnerships are Demonstrated By:**

- Regular communication between schools and families regarding students’ academic, social, and emotional development
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Limited evidence of implementation or progress</th>
<th>Some aspects of the indicator in place but remain inconsistent or are not thoroughly implemented</th>
<th>DISTRICT AND SCHOOL SAFETY IS DEMONSTRATED BY:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. District support of schools to maintain a safe environment within district buildings and partnership sites that host students</td>
<td>b. School alignment to a comprehensive district safety plan</td>
<td>c. Annual safety plan reviews in conjunction with local police and fire departments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. School alignment to a comprehensive district safety plan</td>
<td>c. Annual safety plan reviews in conjunction with local police and fire departments</td>
<td>d. Ongoing staff training and opportunities to practice dealing with crises and emergencies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key Question:** Does the district have established practices to create and sustain safe environments, procedures, and plans?

- Some aspects of the indicator in place but remain inconsistent or are not thoroughly implemented
- Limited evidence of implementation or progress

**4. Safety**

- The district is effective in maintaining high rates of attendance for students and staff and retains the participation of students through graduation.
**Standard VI. Fiscal and Asset Management:** The district engages in a participative, well-documented, and transparent budget process that uses student achievement as a factor in the overall budget. The district acquires and uses financial, physical, and competitive capital resources to provide for and sustain the advancement of achievement for all students enrolled in the district. The district regularly assesses the effectiveness and efficiency of its financial and capital assets and has the ability to meet reasonable changes and unanticipated events.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 (Little Evidence)</th>
<th>2 (Developing)</th>
<th>3 (Providing)</th>
<th>4 (Sustaining)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### 1. Comprehensive and Transparent Budget

**Key Question:** Does the district include all appropriate stakeholders in developing a budget that is clear, comprehensive, complete, current, and within all legal requirements?

Limited evidence of implementation or progress

Some aspects of the indicator in place but remain inconsistent or are not thoroughly implemented

A COMPREHENSIVE AND TRANSPARENT BUDGET IS DEMONSTRATED BY:

- District budget presentations and/or budget documents include goals to be met, the impact of proposed changes, and the methods used to assign resources to schools
- District budget development through an open, participatory process by all stakeholders
- A clear, current, and complete budget document that includes detailed line items for each school and the central office, all funding sources clearly accounted for, and summary of trends over several years
- A written agreement with municipal government detailing amounts and/or rates of school-related costs accounted for in the municipal budget and charged back to the schools

### 2. Adequate Budget

**Key Question:** Does the local budget, in combination with supplemental funding, effectively use resources to meet the needs of students, schools, and facilities throughout the district?

Limited evidence of implementation or progress

Some aspects of the indicator in place but remain inconsistent or are not thoroughly implemented

AN ADEQUATE BUDGET IS DEMONSTRATED BY:

- Sufficient local appropriations from communities to maintain and improve educational programs and facilities
- Meeting or exceeding net school spending requirements
- Appropriate allocation of available resources to support effective instructional practices and district operations

### 3. Cost Effective Resource Management

**Key Question:** Does the district have established processes that address review of the budget, grants acquisition, and leveraging existing resources?

Limited evidence of implementation or progress

Some aspects of the indicator in place but remain inconsistent or are not thoroughly implemented

COST EFFECTIVE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IS DEMONSTRATED BY:

- An annual budget development review process that considers student performance data, need, and cost-effectiveness of programs, initiatives, and activities
- District support of principals to strategically and effectively use all available resources
- A district grants management system to pursue, acquire, monitor, and coordinate state, federal, and private competitive grants
- An effective district system to monitor special revenues and revolving accounts to contribute to the advancement of the District Improvement Plan
- Collaboration with external partners including local businesses, colleges/universities, and community agencies to leverage additional resources

**(Continued)**
### 4. Financial Tracking, Forecasting, Controls, and Audits

**Key Question:** Does the district have qualified staff that is able to track and forecast transactions to ensure an accurate budget that complies with external audits and state laws?

**Quality District Financial Tracking, Forecasting, Controls and Audits are Demonstrated by:**

- **a.** Regular and accurate tracking of spending, revenues, assets, and other financial transactions by district staff
- **b.** Forecasting and control procedures that ensure spending remains within budget limits
- **c.** Adequate accounting technology with capabilities needed for tracking and managing funds, integrating program and school financial information into district level budgeting, monitoring and forecasting, and providing useful reports to district leaders, the School Committee, and the municipal government
- **d.** Procurement system in compliance with state procurement laws, and effective management of purchasing and accounts payable
- **e.** Qualified staff who manage their fiscal responsibilities in an accurate and timely fashion
- **f.** Accurate, current, and timely external audits
- **g.** An independent financial audit at least every five years that is shared with the public, with reporting on the implementation on the auditor’s recommendations

**Limited evidence of implementation or progress**

- Some aspects of the indicator in place but remain inconsistent or are not thoroughly implemented

### 5. Capital Planning and Facility Maintenance

**Key Question:** Does the district have an effective capital planning and maintenance system that is aligned to the District Improvement Plan (DIP) and ensures that facilities are clean, safe, and conducive to educational purposes?

**District Capital Planning and Facility Maintenance is Demonstrated by:**

- **a.** A documented preventative maintenance program that protects the district’s capital assets
- **b.** Alarmed and secured buildings with clear evidence of comprehensive safety policies and procedures
- **c.** Clean, safe, well lit, maintained, and adequately staffed buildings that provide appropriate learning environments
- **d.** A long term district capital plan, aligned with the municipal long term capital plan, that reflects future capital development and improvement needs that is reviewed and revised as needed with stakeholder input

**Limited evidence of implementation or progress**

- Some aspects of the indicator in place but remain inconsistent or are not thoroughly implemented
Appendix A

Documents and data that might be used to complete the District Self-Assessment

1. Organization chart
2. District Improvement Plan and School Improvement Plans
3. School committee minutes for past year
4. Most recent budget proposal with accompanying narrative or presentation; and most recent approved budget
5. Curriculum guide overview
6. High school program of studies
7. Matrix of assessments
8. Copies of data analyses/reports used in schools
9. Descriptions of student support programs
10. Program evaluations
11. Student and Family Handbooks
12. Faculty Handbook
13. Professional Development Plan and current program/schedule/courses if available
14. Teacher certification and qualification attachment
15. Teacher planning time schedules
16. Evaluation tools for central office administrators and principals
17. Classroom observation tools not used in the teacher evaluation process
18. Job descriptions for central office and school administrators and instructional staff
19. Numbered list of teachers
20. Teacher attendance data
Appendix B

Models, Tools, and Resources

The following links lead to documents or web pages related to the District Self Assessment. While all available ESE resources are not listed, the list provides key access points from which to further explore what ESE has to offer districts and schools. If you would like to recommend other resources for this list, please email districtassist@doe.mass.edu

Overarching:
- Overview of the ESE Framework for District Accountability and Assistance: http://www.doe.mass.edu/sda/framework/default.html
- District Standards and Indicators: http://www.doe.mass.edu/sda/review/district/

I. Leadership, Governance and Communication
- District Data Team Toolkit: http://www.doe.mass.edu/sda/ucd/
- New Policy Standards for Principals, Superintendents, and Other Leadership Roles: http://www.doe.mass.edu/edleadership/policy/
- Performance Improvement Mapping: http://www.doe.mass.edu/sda/regional/pim/default.html
- School/District Profiles: http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/

II. Curriculum and Instruction
- Characteristics of Standards-Based Teaching and Learning: http://www.doe.mass.edu/sda/ucd/walk/
- Characteristics of a Standards-Based Mathematics Classroom: http://www.doe.mass.edu/omste/news07/mathclass_char.doc
- Characteristics of a Standards-Based Science Classroom: http://www.doe.mass.edu/omste/news07/scitechclass_char.pdf
- Connecting Math and Literature Library by Grade Level: http://www.doe.mass.edu/omste/instructional.html
- English Language Proficiency Benchmarks and Outcomes (ELPBO): http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/curriculum.html
- Guide for Developing Content-Based English as a Second Language (ESL) Curriculum: http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/cdguide/?section=steps
Learning Walkthrough Implementation Guide: http://www.doe.mass.edu/sda/ucd/
MCAS Resource Guide: http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html
Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks: http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html
Massachusetts PreK-12 Literacy Plan: http://www.doe.mass.edu/literacy/nga/
MCAS performance level descriptions: http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/tdd/pld/
Sample Ideas for Summer English Language Education Semester Programs: http://www.doe.mass.edu/sda/framework/level4/SampleSummerPrograms.pdf
Science and Technology/Engineering Strand Maps: http://www.doe.mass.edu/omste/maps/default.html

III. Assessment

- District Analysis and Review Tool (DART): http://www.doe.mass.edu/sda/dart/
- Education Data Warehouse: http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/dw/
- Performance Improvement Mapping (PIM): http://www.doe.mass.edu/sda/regional/pim/
- Student Growth Percentile resources: http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/growth/

IV. Human Resource Management and Professional Development

- Common Planning Time Self-Assessment Toolkit: http://www.doe.mass.edu/sda/ucd/
- Professional Learning Communities Guidance: http://www.doe.mass.edu/sda/ucd/
- Selecting Outstanding Teachers for Level 4 Schools: http://www.doe.mass.edu/sda/framework/level4/SelectingTeachers.pdf

V. Student Support

- Safe and Healthy Learning Environments: http://www.doe.mass.edu/ssce/safety.html
- Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS): http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/
- Bullying Prevention and Intervention Resources: http://www.doe.mass.edu/ssce/bullying/
- Family and Community Engagement Standards: http://www.doe.mass.edu/sda/framework/level4/PCEIstandards.doc
- Massachusetts Family Literacy Consortium: http://www.doe.mass.edu/familylit/
VI. Financial and Asset Management

- An ESE advisory memo on reporting by municipal agencies: http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/account.Reporting.doc
- Chapter 70 trends: http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/chapter70/profile.xls
- DART Staffing and Finance User Guide and updates: http://www.doe.mass.edu/sda/dart
- Massachusetts Department of Revenue site map: http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=dorutilities&L=1&sid=Ador&U=sitemap
- Primer on Levy Limits/Proposition 2 ½ from the Department of Revenue website: http://www.mass.gov/Ador/docs/dls/publ/misc/levylimits.pdf
- State regulations on School Finance and Accountability at 603 CMR 10:00: http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr10.html
- Per-Pupil Expenditures information: http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/statistics/ppx10.html