

Southbridge District Review

December 15, 2015

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY
EDUCATION



Southbridge Background

- ★ Declared an underperforming district by the Board of Education in 2004
- ★ ESE monitored and managed Accelerated Improvement Plan (AIP) since 2012
- ★ 2014-15 enrollment of 2,228 students in four schools with 165 teachers

Race/Ethnicity	%
White	51.3
Hispanic	44.7
Asian	1.4
African-American	1.2
Multi-race	1.1

Subgroup	%
High Needs	72.0
Econ. Dis.	60.5
Students w. Dis.	20.0
ELL/FELL	17.2
FLNE	26.3



Southbridge Student Performance

Subject	2015 % P/A	State Rank*		2015 % W/F	State Rank*
ELA	41	2 nd lowest		26	2 nd highest
Math	32	2 nd lowest		39	2 nd highest
Science	26	9 th lowest		36	2 nd highest

*Comparison group for ELA and Math are those districts that administered MCAS in grades 3-8 and 10 in 2015. Comparison group for Science is all districts serving grades K-12.

School	ELA % P/A	Math % P/A	ELA SGP	Math SGP	School Percentile
Charlton Street	42	48	47	49.5	8
West Street	33	35	32.5	36	3
Southbridge MS/HS	44	26	32	27	6



Southbridge Student Performance

- ★ Four-year graduation rate of 62.9% as compared to the state rate of 86.1%
- ★ Annual dropout of 4.4% as compared to the state rate of 2.0%
- ★ Over 10% of all Southbridge students and 19% of students at Southbridge Middle/High School were suspended at least once in 2015
- ★ 34% of students at Southbridge Middle/High School failed at least one course in 2015



Southbridge District Review

- ★ Conducted October 19-22, 2015 by team of six independent reviewers
- ★ 33 hours of interviews and focus groups with approximately 111 stakeholders
 - ★ school committee members, district and school administrators, teachers, city officials and teachers' association representatives
- ★ The team observed classroom instructional practice in 68 classrooms in 4 schools
- ★ District given the opportunity to provide factual corrections to report and all were accepted



District Review Standards

Leadership and
Governance

Curriculum and
Instruction

Assessment

Human
Resources and
Professional
Development

Student Support

Financial and
Asset
Management



Leadership and Governance

Strengths

- ★ None identified

Challenges

- ★ Influence of school committee on daily operations
- ★ Failure to conduct a formal superintendent search since 2010
- ★ Erosion of public confidence
- ★ Failure to attract and retain key leaders



Leadership and Governance

Turnover Since 2011		
Position	Transitions	Individuals
Superintendent	7	7
Assistant Superintendent T&L	5	5
Finance Director/Business Manager	4	5
Director of Pupil Personnel Services	1	2
High School Principal	5	7
Middle School Leader	6	7
West St. Principal	3	4
Charlton St. Principal	2	3
Eastford Road Principal	2	3
Total	35	43



Curriculum and Instruction

Strengths

- ★ None identified

Challenges

- ★ Incomplete development and alignment of ELA and math curriculum across the district, particularly at the MS/HS
- ★ Instruction at the MS/HS lacked academic challenge and well-structured lessons
- ★ Limited differentiation of instruction districtwide
- ★ Limited student engagement at the MS/HS
- ★ Classroom climate at the MS/HS



Assessment

Strengths

- ★ Use of data to guide curricular and instructional decisions at the elementary level

Challenges

- ★ Lack of a districtwide assessment system to measure progress and guide decision-making
- ★ No coordinated data use expectations from the district
- ★ Insufficient time devoted to data use at the MS/HS
- ★ No technology plan and inconsistent access to technology



HR and Professional Development

Strengths

- ★ Initial implementation of educator evaluation system
- ★ Quality of reviewed evaluations

Challenges

- ★ Stalled implementation of educator evaluation system
- ★ No comprehensive PD plan, activities calendar or goals/objectives
- ★ Teacher role in district PD process



Student Support

Strengths

- ★ None identified

Challenges

- ★ No districtwide tiered system of support
- ★ Classroom climate and disruptive behavior leading to high suspension rates at the MS/HS
- ★ Needs of English language learners are not being met
- ★ Out of compliance with ELL regulations
- ★ Insufficient staffing to meet the needs of all students



Finance and Asset Management

Strengths

- ★ Maintenance of schools
- ★ Existence of strong capital plan

Challenges

- ★ Financial management and reporting
- ★ Decreasing financial support from the town while high needs population increases

