

Greenfield commonwealth of massachusetts virtual school

Year 8 accountability review Report

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# About accountability reviews

Virtual school accountability reviews are conducted in accordance with CMR 52.08(2): “(2) Accountability Reviews. The Department may send evaluation teams to visit each Commonwealth of Massachusetts virtual school on an annual or as-needed basis to corroborate and augment the information provided in the annual report. The Department may conduct other accountability reviews, as necessary. Accountability review teams will gather any other evidence relevant to the virtual school's performance. The written reports from these reviews shall become part of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts virtual school's record, along with any written comments that the school wishes to submit.”

In conducting accountability reviews (reviews), the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) is carrying out the requirements of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Virtual Schools (CMVS) regulations (CMR 52.00). Reviews may occur annually or at times when deemed necessary by the Department. Reviews vary in length depending on the size, age, and/or specific conditions of a particular school.

The CMVS Performance Criteria (Criteria) form the foundation of the review process. The Criteria expand upon and give definition to the three areas of CMVS accountability defined in CMR 52.00: faithfulness to certificate, academic program success, and organizational viability. During the review, the school is assessed on all or a subset of the performance indicators contained in the Criteria. The types of site visits conducted by the Department and the methods used to assess a school’s performance are described in the CMVS Accountability Review Protocol.

The product of each review is a report such as this one. Review reports are one of the means by which the Department documents each CMVS’ performance and progress over time, corroborating and augmenting the information reported each year in the CMVS’ annual report. Review reports generated by the Department are important components of the body of evidence used by the commissioner and Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) to make a renewal determination or inform other authorizing actions pertaining to the school.

# Executive Summary

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Commonwealth of Massachusetts Virtual School Performance Criteria | | |
| Faithfulness to Certificate | | Rating[[1]](#footnote-1) |
| **Criterion 2: Access and Equity**  The school ensures program access and equity for all students eligible to attend the school and for all students who attend the school. | | ** Partially Meets** |
| Academic Program Success | |  |
| **Criterion 5: Program Delivery**  The school delivers a high-quality academic program that meets the academic needs of all students. | Key Indicator 5.1: Curriculum and Course Design | ** Partially Meets** |
| Key Indicator 5.3: Assessment and Program Evaluation | ** Partially Meets** |
| Key Indicator 5.4 Support for All Learners | ** Partially Meets** |
| **Criterion 7: Capacity**  The school sustains a well-functioning organizational structure and creates a professional working climate for all staff. | Key Indicator 7.1: School Leadership | ** Meets** |
| Key Indicator 7.2: Professional Climate | ** Meets** |
| Organizational Viability | |  |
| **Criterion 8: Governance**  Members of the board of trustees uphold their responsibilities under Massachusetts law and regulations to act as public agents authorized by the state and provide competent and appropriate governance to ensure the success and sustainability of the school. | | ** Partially Meets** |

# Introduction

## School Profile

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Greenfield Commonwealth Virtual School (GCVS) | | | |
| **Year Opened** | July 1, 2013 | **Current Age of School** | 8 |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 1,050 | **Current Grade Span** | K-12 |
| **Current Enrollment** | 943[[2]](#footnote-2) | **Year(s) Renewed** | 2016, 2019 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | 208[[3]](#footnote-3) | **Location of Administrative Offices** | 238 Main Street  3rd Floor  Greenfield, MA 01301 |
| **Mission Statement:**  The Greenfield Commonwealth Virtual School, a public school of choice, serves students from across Massachusetts who need a learning community that is accessible and flexible. We give our students and their families choices in what, how, when, and where they learn.  As a pioneer of online personalized learning, we empower our educators to tailor learning experiences to each student’s strengths, interests, and challenges. We redefine and change how students and teachers engage through innovative technology, while ensuring mastery of competencies embedded in a rigorous curriculum. | | | |

## School History

* Greenfield Commonwealth Virtual School (GCVS) first opened in 2010 as the Massachusetts Virtual Academy of Greenfield (MAVA) under the innovation school law (G.L.c.71, § 92). On January 2, 2013, Governor Patrick signed into law Chapter 379 of the Acts of 2012, “An Act Establishing Commonwealth Virtual Schools” (Act), most of which is codified as G.L. c. 71, § 94[[4]](#footnote-4). By statute, MAVA ceased to exist on July 1, 2013. Section 6 of the Act required the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) to grant a certificate to operate a Commonwealth of Massachusetts Virtual School (CMVS) to MAVA upon submission of a timely application that addressed the information specified in the statute.
* Greenfield Commonwealth Virtual School received its certificate on June 25, 2013 and opened on July 1, 2013, serving 750 students in grades K through 12.
* On June 2014, the Board voted to place GCVS on probation for the remainder of the school's certificate term (until June 30, 2016) with conditions requiring the school to: submit board of trustees minutes to the Department; submit a final contract with K12, Inc.; align its curriculum with the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks; submit a comprehensive evaluation of its academic program; submit an action plan outlining strategies to improve academic performance; and demonstrate significant academic improvement by 2015. In February 2016, the Board renewed the school’s certificate and extended the school’s probationary status. The probationary conditions required the school to: limit its maximum enrollment to 750 students for grades K through 12; submit board of trustees meeting materials; submit weekly student enrollment reports; submit projected budgets to meet requirement for enrolling at least 5 percent of students from Greenfield; submit a corrective action plan to ensure at least 95 percent of students and student groups participated in MCAS; establish an escrow account to pay for potential closure; and to demonstrate significant and sustained academic improvement by 2017.

In October 2017, the Board approved an amendment for the school to terminate its contract with K12, Inc. and to adopt the Canvas learning management system by Instructure, Inc. The school adopted a new curriculum, including EngageNY (grades K through 5, English language arts (ELA), and mathematics), and Florida Virtual Schools Global (FLVS) (grades 6 through 12, all subjects).

In January 2018, the Commissioner approved an amendment for the school to amend its mission statement.

In March 2018, the Board extended the school’s probationary status, maintained the prior probationary conditions, and added a new condition related to the provision of services for English learners.

* In March 2019, the Board removed the school from probation and renewed the school’s certificate with conditions requiring the school to: submit board of trustees meeting materials and weekly student enrollment reports; enroll a maximum of 750 students; provide the Department with updates on the implementation of its plan for serving English learners; submit a comprehensive evaluation of the school’s mathematics, English language arts, and science programs by 2019; submit a comprehensive action plan for improving academic performance and addressing other areas for improvement by 2019; and demonstrate academic success by providing evidence that the school has exhibited significant and sustained academic improvement in mathematics, English language arts, and science on the statewide assessment for all student subgroups by 2021.

In October 2019, the Commissioner approved a number of amendment requests to change elements of GCVS’ educational program by adding supports for students (an in-person support center for students who struggle to advance in the school’s academic program), adopting two new curricula (Accelerate Education for grades K-5 and Edgenuity for a 9-12 asynchronous program), and offering students dual enrollment at Greenfield Community College (GCC).

In July 2020, the Commissioner approved an amendment to change the school’s curriculum for grades K through 5 from Accelerate Education to the newly released curriculum from Florida Virtual Schools Global (FLVs) for all subjects for synchronous programs. This change allowed the school to implement FLVS across all grades.

In July 2020, the Commissioner approved an amendment to increase the school’s maximum enrollment by an additional 250 seats, for a new maximum enrollment of 1,000 until the end of the school’s current certificate (2022). This granting of additional seats was explicitly conditioned on GCVS demonstrating that its K-12 curriculum is fully aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks by September 15, 2020. After a second request from GCVS, the maximum enrollment was amended again, in September 2020, with an increase of 50 additional seats, for a new maximum enrollment of 1,050 until the end of the current certificate (2022).

* The school’s board of trustees oversees the executive director, who oversees the school administration. The school administration includes the director of business services, the director of teaching and learning (also referred to as the principal for grades K through 12), the flex program director, the director of information technology, the director of special education, the director of instructional technology, the director of accountability and support services, and the family engagement coordinator. The principal oversees the assistant principal for grades K through 8, the assistant principal for grades 9 through 12, and the guidance counselors. The principal and assistant principals share oversight of the general education teachers. The director of accountability and support services oversees English as a Second Language (ESL) and Title I teachers, and the director of special education oversees the special education teachers, the support center coordinator, and the school adjustment officer. The family engagement coordinator oversees the family engagement liaisons.
* The school has implemented leadership changes. In December 2020, GCVS hired a new director of instructional technology.
* The GCVS teachers voted to join a union in June 2019 and are now an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). GCVS has negotiated the teachers’ contract with the AFT. The contract will be submitted for ratification by all teachers and the GCVS Board of Trustees in 2021.

## Demographics

| Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity (2020-21)[[5]](#footnote-5) | |
| --- | --- |
| **Race/Ethnicity** | **Percentage of Student Body** |
| African-American | 7.5 |
| Asian | 5.2 |
| Hispanic | 18.9 |
| Native American | 0.1 |
| White | 61.0 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 0.3 |
| Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic | 7.0 |

| Selected Populations (2020-21)[[6]](#footnote-6) | |
| --- | --- |
| **Title** | **Percentage of Student Body** |
| First Language not English | 7.1 |
| English Language Learner | 2.7 |
| Students with Disabilities | 21.0 |
| High Needs | 61.3 |
| Economically Disadvantaged | 52.8 |

## Methodology

As stated above, the Criteria form the foundation of the accountability review process. During the review, the CMVS is assessed on all or a subset of the performance indicators contained in the Criteria. The *Executive Summary* indicates the criteria and key indicators included within the scope of this review.

The following participants conducted the site visit:

* Alison Bagg, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign (OCSSR)
* Jacqueline Chavez, DESE, OCSSR
* Ruth Hersh, DESE, OCSSR
* Esther Jeong, DESE, OCSSR
* Jared Perrine, Benjamin Banneker Public Charter School

The two-day visit was conducted on December 16 and 17, 2020. This accountability review was conducted remotely.

Team members used the [CMVS Accountability Review Protocol](https://www.doe.mass.edu/cmvs/) to plan for and conduct the review. Prior to the review, team members reviewed documents and other information related to each of the criteria and key indicators listed in the *Executive Summary*. On the day of the review, team members held focus group interviews, reviewed documents, and discussed evidence.

*Key documents and other information reviewed by the team:*

* The school’s most recent annual report
* The school’s website
* The school’s most recent accountability review report
* The school’s most recent Summary of Review
* The school’s most recent accountability plan
* The school’s learning management system
* Recruitment and student/family orientation materials
* Curriculum materials
* Student enrollment data and attendance policy
* A written description of the school’s system of supports for all learners provided by the school
* The school’s special education policies and procedures manual
* The school’s ESL policies and procedures manual
* The school’s District Curriculum Accommodation Plan
* The school’s most recent special education and English learner education program self-evaluations
* The school’s student/family handbook
* Aggregated teacher and student survey data
* Samples of educator and administrator evaluation tools
* Samples of the school’s professional development sessions
* The school’s staff roster
* The school’s organizational chart
* Board of trustees meeting minutes and other board materials

*Focus group interviews held by the team:*

* Board of trustees: The team interviewed two board members, including the board chair and a trustee.
* School leaders/Special education and ESL administrators: The team interviewed the executive director, the director of curriculum, the ESL director, the special education coordinator, the family engagement coordinator, the high school assistant principal, the elementary and middle school assistant principal, and the director of technology and learning.
* General education, special education, and ESL teachers: The team interviewed ten teachers, including teachers representing grades K through 12 and the following content areas: special education, English as a second language, social studies, English language arts, science, and mathematics.
* Students: The team interviewed ten students, including students in grades 4 through 12.
* Families: The team interviewed seven family members, representing students in grades K through 12.

The team’s analysis of the evidence related to each of the criteria and key indicators included in the scope of the review is presented below.

## Review of Progress Made Towards Meeting the Conditions Imposed

As noted above, GCVS is currently operating under conditions. This section of the report lists the conditions and GCVS’s progress towards meeting the conditions.

**Condition 1a:** Until further notice, GCVS must continue to submit to the Department, at [virtualschools@doe.mass.edu](mailto:virtualschools@doe.mass.edu), board meeting agendas and materials prior to each board meeting at the same time that these items are sent to the school’s board members. Further, the school must submit to the Department the minutes of these proceedings as soon as the school’s board approves them. The Department reserves the right to require the submission of additional information, such as quarterly or monthly financial statements, if the board materials do not already include this information. The school must provide such additional information within two business days.

**Status: Ongoing**

The school has submitted board meeting agendas, materials, and minutes for full board and committee meetings. Additionally, submitted board packages contain monthly financial statements, which contain the elements expected in the condition.

**Condition 1b:** GCVS must continue to submit to the Department weekly student enrollment reports.

**Status: Ongoing**

The school has submitted weekly enrollment updates to the Department since the imposition of this condition.

**Condition 2**: Greenfield Commonwealth Virtual School may enroll a maximum of 750 students.

**Status: Suspended**

The impact of COVID-19 on schools greatly increased the parent demand for enrollment in both CMVS. Beginning in March 2020, GCVS experienced a significant increase in enrollment demand as evidenced by large waitlists. In order to provide an option for families during the pandemic and to recognize the situation specific demand, GCVS requested a temporary increase in its enrollment until the end of its certificate term (2022). As noted above, the Commissioner granted a temporary increase in the school’s enrollment through the end of GCVS’ certificate term.

**Condition 3:** Beginning April 1, 2019 and monthly thereafter, GCVS shall provide the Department with an update on the implementation of its plan for serving students who are English learners.

**Status: Ongoing**

GCVS has been submitting updates on the school’s implementation of its plan for serving English learners to the Department on a regular basis. Please see *Key Indicator 5.4: Support for All Learners*, below, for information regarding the school’s plan for serving students who are English learners.

**Condition 4:** By June 30, 2019, GCVS must submit to the Department a comprehensive evaluation of the school’s mathematics, English language arts, and science programs. Additionally, the comprehensive evaluation should address instruction, supports for all learners, and the degree to which all students have equitable access to the school’s academic program. Such comprehensive evaluation must be conducted by an external consultant(s) acceptable to and approved in advance by the Department. The evaluation must be informed by disaggregated performance data from the statewide accountability system and aligned with the CMVS Performance Criteria.

**Status: Met**

In April 2019, GCVS engaged an external consultant, approved in advance by the Department. The external consultant conducted a school quality review in May 2019 and produced a report outlining findings, areas of strength (mission and key design elements; compliance; assessment and program evaluation; social, emotional, and health needs; family and community engagement; and school leadership), and areas needing improvement (access and equity; student performance; curriculum; instruction; diverse learners; and professional climate).

**Condition 5:** By July 31, 2019, the school must submit to the Department for approval a comprehensive action plan (action plan) for improving academic performance and addressing other areas for improvement identified by the comprehensive evaluation. Such action plan must include a needs assessment aligned to the 2018 statewide accountability results for GCVS. The action plan must also specify the evidence-based strategies the school will use to improve performance in mathematics, English language arts, and science for all student subgroups. The plan should also include strategies to improve instruction, supports for all learners, and the degree to which all students have equitable access to the school’s academic program. The action plan must set clear and specific implementation benchmarks, with a clear timetable and deadlines for completion of key tasks, sufficient to allow the school's board of trustees and the Department to monitor implementation. The school must provide evidence that it has shared its improvement plan with the school’s community including, but not limited to, students, parents, and staff.

**Status: Met**

The school requested and was granted an extension to the action plan submittal date; the action plan was submitted on August 20, 2019. The Department requested extensive revisions to the plan so that the goals, objectives, and benchmarks better aligned with the conditions placed on the school. The school completely revised the action plan, and submitted the revised action plan on December 5, 2019. The Department approved the final action plan on December 30, 2019.

**Condition 6:** By December 31, 2021, the school must demonstrate that it is an academic success by providing evidence that the school has exhibited significant and sustained academic improvement in mathematics, English language arts, and science on the statewide assessment for all student subgroups.

**Status: Pending**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) was not administered to any students in the spring of 2020. GCVS’ results from the 2019 MCAS are found in Appendix A.

# Ratings, Findings, and Evidence

## Faithfulness to Charter

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Criterion 2: Access and Equity | |
| The school ensures program access and equity for all students eligible to attend the school and for all students who attend the school. | ** Partially Meets** |

*Finding: GCVS provides information to the public regarding non-discriminatory enrollment practices and the availability of special education programs. However, the school provides limited information about programming for English learners and few translated materials for families whose first language is not English. The school ensures that all students have technological and material access to the educational program.*

* The school provides information to the public regarding non-discriminatory enrollment practices and the availability of specialized programs and services at the school to meet the needs of students with disabilities. The school’s family handbook provides information regarding the school’s non-discriminatory enrollment practices. The school’s website provides a description of special education resources and supports for students. Families reported that once students are enrolled in GCVS, school staff provide detailed information regarding the supports available for students with individualized education programs (IEP) and 504 plans.
* The school’s website and recruitment materials provide limited information to the public about programming for English learners. The school provides limited translated materials for families whose first language is not English. The school’s website does not have the option to translate content into a language other than English.
* The school ensures that all students have technological and material access to the educational program. All stakeholders reported that the school provides the necessary materials for students to be successful including Chromebooks (laptop computers), Internet hotspots, information for discounted Internet providers, hard copies of textbooks, and additional printed course materials. School leaders also reported that the school provides reimbursements for Internet connectivity for families that meet the requirements for free or reduced-price lunch. Digital content is accessible for all learners as required by law. Review team members observed that Canvas, the school’s learning management system (LMS), includes translation tools and other accessibility applications for students.
* The school provides sufficient information to the public explaining the environment required to support online learning. The school’s website includes an overview of online learning elements. School leaders reported that the in addition to the information found on the school’s website, GCVS staff host two virtual open houses each school year to provide the public with information about the school’s online learning platform and with answer to any questions that arise.
* The school provides some supports for students and families to enhance their success in online learning before students begin significant coursework. Review team members found limited evidence that onboarding and orientation supports are translated or provided in multiple modalities. All stakeholders reported conflicting information regarding when the school orientation takes place. Board members, school leaders, and teachers reported that the orientation to students and families is provided before students begin coursework. However, students and families reported that the orientation was provided once students began classes. Students and families reported that the orientation provided by the school is not as robust as students and families need it to be. Families reported that learning coaches often feel underprepared to serve as a learning coach and to help students navigate the LMS. Students reported that students often feel underprepared to start significant coursework. Review team members observed that every course in Canvas includes an orientation module.

*Finding: GCVS has defined and monitored student attendance, participation, and truancy. The school has been successful in recruiting, enrolling, and retaining a population that is demographically comparable to the state except for English learners.*

* School documents outline, and board members and school leaders confirmed, that GCVS defines student attendance as a student completing the required daily instructional hours according to grade level. GCVS has a synchronous and asynchronous learning model. The synchronous model, offered in grades K-12, referred to as the “live program,” includes daily live lessons instructed by teachers. If a student is in the live program, attendance includes logging into Canvas and attending live class sessions every day of the week. The asynchronous model, referred to as the “flex program,” is offered to students in grades 9 through 12. According to the school’s 2019-20 Annual Report, the flex program allows more flexibility in how, when, and where students access courses because students are provided with recorded lessons and other assignments instead of being required to attend live classes. If a student is in the flex program, attendance includes logging into Edgenuity and accessing at least one flex course every day of the school week.
* GCVS verifies student participation in classes by taking attendance at the beginning of every course for students who attend live sessions and by monitoring that students log into Edgenuity in the flex program.
* The school’s 2020-21 family handbook defines truancy as three or more consecutive days of unexcused absences with no parent contact and/or days in which no work has been completed; or, seven or more unexcused absences in a semester or fourteen unexcused absences in a full year; or, seven or more days in which no work has been completed within a six-month period; or, not meeting the state-mandated minimum number of hours per week on a regular basis. According to the 2020-21 family handbook, GCVS addresses truancy in a seven-week procedure. In week one, the truancy issue is identified as one of the four scenarios previously listed and the GCVS’s family engagement coordinator (FEC) conducts a review of the student’s case. In week two, the FEC sends an initial truancy email to the student’s learning coach regarding GCVS’s concern of the student’s attendance. In week three, a family engagement liaison monitors the student for re-engagement and attendance. If the learning coach has not responded to the email from week two, the FEC follows up. If the student’s attendance does not improve, then a letter is sent home during week four. In week five, a truancy meeting is held, and a truancy action plan (TAP) is created. If the student continues to be absent, in week six, the FEC notifies the learning coach that the student will be withdrawn. In week seven, the FEC requests the student be withdrawn.
* The school reported that it does analyze student enrollment, attendance, and attrition data in the aggregate. Board members and school leaders reported that the school does not disaggregate student recruitment, enrollment, attendance, and attrition data by subgroups including students with disabilities and English learners.
* Enrollment of students with disabilities was consistently above statewide rates in 2017 to 2019 and in 2021. In 2020, the enrollment of students with disabilities was below statewide rates.
* Enrollment of English learners increased in 2017 to 2021 but was significantly and persistently below statewide rates.
* Enrollment of students in the economically disadvantaged group was consistently above statewide rates in 2017 to 2021.
* Attrition rates were significantly above statewide rates in 2017 to 2020 for all students and for students in the high needs group.
* Stability rates for all students and for students in the high needs group were significantly below statewide rates in 2017-2020.

In the tables below, percentages for enrollment and stability rates at or above the statewide average are highlighted in green; those below the statewide average are highlighted in red. Percentages for attrition at or below the statewide average are highlighted in green; those above the statewide average are highlighted in red.

*Enrollment*

| Students with Disabilities (Percent Enrolled)[[7]](#footnote-7) | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** | **2021** |
| **GCVS** | 18.1 | 22.2 | 21.2 | 15.4 | 21.0 |
| **Statewide** | 17.4 | 17.7 | 18.1 | 18.4 | 18.7 |

| English Learners (Percent Enrolled)[[8]](#footnote-8) | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** | **2021** |
| **GCVS** | 1.0 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 1.2 | 2.7 |
| **Statewide** | 9.5 | 10.2 | 10.5 | 10.8 | 10.5 |

| Economically Disadvantaged (Percent Enrolled) | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** | **2021** |
| **GCVS** | 47.8 | 52.8 | 48.5 | 54.8 | 52.8 |
| **Statewide** | 30.2 | 32 | 31.2 | 32.8 | 36.6 |

*Retention*

| All Students (Percent Attrition) | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** |
| **GCVS** | 29.8 | 32.4 | 25.7 | 27.5 |
| **Statewide** | 8.5 | 8.6 | 8.4 | 8.4 |

| High Needs (Percent Attrition) | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** |
| **GCVS** | 28.4 | 30.0 | 26.7 | 22.6 |
| **Statewide** | 10.0 | 10.1 | 9.9 | 10.0 |

| All Students (Stability Rate Percentage) | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** |
| **GCVS** | 71.3 | 73.3 | 70.3 | 73.6 |
| **Statewide** | 94.7 | 92.4 | 94.4 | 92.9 |

| High Needs (Stability Rate Percentage) | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** |
| **GCVS** | 68.6 | 73.1 | 69.9 | 70.4 |
| **Statewide** | 91.4 | 90.5 | 91.2 | 91.3 |

*Finding: In 2018 to 2020, the school’s attendance rates for all students were below the statewide average. In 2017 to 2020 the school’s chronic absenteeism rates for all students were above statewide average.*

* *Attendance rates for all students were below the statewide rate in 2017 but were comparable to statewide rates in 2018 to 2020. Attendance rates for students in the high needs group were below the statewide rates in 2019 to 2020.*
* *GCVS’s chronic absenteeism rates for all students and for students in the high needs group were significantly above the statewide rates in 2017 to 2020.*

In the tables below, attendance rates below the statewide average are red and attendance rates at or above statewide average are highlighted in green. Attrition rates above the statewide average are highlighted in red and attrition rates at or below the statewide average are highlighted in green.

| All Students (Attendance Rate) | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** |
| **GCVS** | 86.2 | 91.1 | 90.1 | 90.9 |
| **Statewide Average** | 94.6 | 94.6 | 94.6 | 94.7 |

| High Needs (Attendance Rate) | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** |
| **GCVS** | N/A | 90.0 | 88.8 | 89.9 |
| **Statewide Average** | N/A | 93.2 | 93.3 | 93.5 |

| All students (Chronic Absenteeism) | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** |
| **GCVS** | 44.4 | 34.4 | 36.9 | 28.6 |
| **Statewide Average** | 13.5 | 13.2 | 12.9 | 13 |

| High Needs (Chronic Absenteeism) | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** |
| **GCVS** | N/A | 38.4 | 43.7 | 32.4 |
| **Statewide Average** | N/A | 20.1 | 19.4 | 18.8 |

*Future accountability review teams should examine the extent to which the school has increased attendance rates, decreased chronic absenteeism rates, and decreased attrition rates for all students. Future accountability review teams should also examine if the school’s website can be translated into a language other than English as well as the extent to which the school provides additional translated recruitment materials and information to the public about programming for ELs.*

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| Criterion 3: Compliance | |
| The school operates in compliance with the terms of its certificate and applicable state and federal laws and regulations. | **Not Rated[[9]](#footnote-9)** |

*Finding: The board of trustees (board) operates in a manner that is not fully in compliance with the approved bylaws and the regulations that govern virtual schools in Massachusetts.*

* Board membership does not meet the minimum requirement specified in the board’s bylaws. According to the board’s bylaws, the board must have a minimum of five and a maximum of seven board members. The board has had four members for over a year, at the time of the review, the board was in the process of approving a fifth member.
* Board membership does not meet the minimum requirements outlined in 603 CMR 50.06(2), “[e]very board of trustees shall have at least five members.”
* Board officer positions do not meet the requirement specified in the board’s bylaws. According to the board’s bylaws, the board officers must include a chair, vice chair, secretary, treasurer, and parent representative. School leaders reported that the board currently does not have, and has never had, a board treasurer.

## Academic Program Success

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| Criterion 5: Program Delivery |
| The school delivers a high-quality academic program that meets the academic needs of all students. |

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| Key Indicator 5.1: Curriculum and Course Design | |
| The school’s documented curriculum is vertically and horizontally aligned to state curriculum frameworks and expectations[[10]](#footnote-10); provides lessons and materials that represent a variety of cultures and perspectives; is regularly reviewed and revised; and supports opportunities for all students to master these skills and concepts. Course offerings can be easily navigated, use appropriate technology, provide intervention and acceleration, support active learning and problem solving, are designed with research based principals, include opportunities for both asynchronous and synchronous learning, and meet content copyright law and fair use guidelines. | ** Partially Meets** |

*Finding: The school’s documented curriculum is somewhat aligned to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks (MCF) and expectations. The school is in the process of ensuring full alignment to the MCF as well as vertical and horizontal alignment. The school’s documented curriculum provides limited lessons and materials that represent a variety of cultures and perspectives. The curriculum somewhat supports opportunities for all students to master skills and concepts. The curriculum is currently under review and revision to ensure quality and effectiveness. The course offerings can be easily navigated and provide some intervention and acceleration. The course offerings do include opportunities for both asynchronous and synchronous learning.*

The school’s documented curriculum is somewhat aligned to MCF and expectations. The school is in the process of ensuring full alignment to the MCF as well as vertical and horizontal alignment.

* School leaders and teachers reported that, and curriculum correlation documents provided by the school confirmed that, most of the school’s learning standards are aligned to the MCF. The school provided curriculum documents that outline the school’s scope and sequence for synchronous and asynchronous English language arts, social studies, mathematics, world languages, and science courses. When reviewing the curricular correlation documents, review team members observed that although most of the school’s scope and sequence is aligned to MCF there was not full alignment in the English language arts and mathematics curriculum for grades K through 5. School administrators and teachers reported that because the Florida Virtual Schools Global (FVS) K-5 curriculum was recently adopted in 2020, the school’s curriculum for grades K through 5 is not yet fully aligned to MCF and that the school is working to ensure full alignment. School leaders and teachers reported that the school staff are implementing supplemental materials and instructional strategies to support students in grades K through 5 while the school works to ensure the curriculum in Canvas (GCVS’ LMS), is fully aligned to the MCF. Examples of these supplemental materials and strategies include additional lessons and assignments created by teachers for all students in the elementary grades and early literacy intervention for all students in grades K through 2.
* The curriculum correlation documents provided by the school and created by FLVS connected specific MCF standards to specific GCVS courses at each grade level. When reviewing courses in Canvas, review team members found that course material did not always align with the MCF as stated in the curriculum correlation documents. The review team examined sixteen courses on Canvas for grades K through 12 in subjects such as English language arts and mathematics. Out of sixteen courses, the review team observed five courses were somewhat aligned to the MCF and eleven courses were not aligned to the MCF. In these eleven courses, the lesson objective, content, or assessment contained in the course did not reflect the specific standard found in the correlation document.
* Board members, school leaders, and teachers reported that the school is working to ensure the school’s curriculum is fully aligned to the MCF as well as vertically and horizontally aligned. School leaders and teachers reported, and the school’s 2019 action plan confirmed, that the instructional staff started professional learning communities (PLCs) for each subject area in the 2019-20 school year to begin vertical and horizontal alignment. The PLC meeting agendas, goals, and action plans demonstrate evidence of staff working to fully align the school’s curriculum to the MCF and to ensure alignment across courses at the same grade level and across different grade levels. This year, all PLCs continue to meet twice a week to discuss progress in action plans and goals. Teachers also reported that core subject area teachers are working on curriculum maps and developing supplemental materials to ensure Canvas courses are aligned to MCF and also aligned vertically and horizontally within the school.

The school’s documented curriculum provides limited lessons and materials that represent a variety of cultures and perspectives.

* Review team members found limited evidence of a diverse representation of cultures and perspectives. After reviewing the submitted curriculum documents and list of texts teachers use in English language arts, Advanced Placement (AP) language and composition, AP literature, creative writing, and drama courses in grades 4 through 12, the review team found that most of the school’s texts convey Eurocentric and heteronormative content.
* Students reported that most students do not feel their culture and identity reflected in the course materials. Some students reported that students do see cultures and identities different from their own reflected in course materials. One student reported that in world history students are learning about different religions like Islam and Judaism and that this has been very interesting.
* Although the school enrolls students from the Ar-Raheem Academy, an Islamic school in Waltham, Massachusetts, review team members found limited evidence of Islamic cultural representation in the submitted course materials.

The curriculum somewhat supports opportunities for all students to master skills and concepts.

* School administrators and teachers reported that staff are expected to implement multiple strategies for instruction including small group mini-lessons, small group discussions, conferencing, and circulation.
* The review team did not find any modules, materials, or lesson plans uploaded in Canvas courses for English learners. School leaders reported the school currently does not have an ESL curriculum and that is why the courses cannot be found on Canvas. The school did submit some ESL materials used by the ESL teachers outside of Canvas, like PowerPoints and assignments. See *Key Indicator 5.4: Support for All Learners* for a description of the school’s progress towards creating an ESL curriculum.
* The school uses a synchronous and asynchronous learning model in which each student has a Chromebook and engages in live lessons or recorded lessons and asynchronous coursework. See *Key Indicator 5.4: Supports for All Learners* for a description of the school’s systems of support for student acceleration and intervention.

The curriculum is currently under review and revision to ensure quality and effectiveness.

* As stated above, board members, school leaders, and teachers reported that the curriculum continues to undergo review and revision to ensure MCF alignment and to ensure quality and effectiveness in the school’s programming. For example, the school’s 2019 action plan states, and school leaders confirmed, that the school leadership team is reviewing curriculum for grades K through 5 to ensure full alignment to the MCF and to evaluate the curriculum’s effectiveness by using Curriculum Ratings by Teachers (CURATE) rubrics. The school’s 2019 action plan also states that the school regularly assess areas where current curriculum meets and does not meet identified priority standards and then creates an action plan to close those gaps. School leaders and teachers reported that priority standards per grade level and content area were developed after reviewing 2019 MCAS data and compiling a list of standards being assessed on the MCAS but not included in the current curriculum. Board members, school leaders, and teachers also reported that PLC teams continue to meet twice a week to review the curriculum and ensure vertical and horizontal alignment.

The course offerings can be easily navigated and provide some intervention and acceleration. The course offerings include opportunities for both asynchronous and synchronous learning.

* When navigating the course offerings on Canvas, review team members observed all course offerings could be easily navigated. Review team members observed some supports for intervention within the LMS. For example, Canvas courses offer closed captions, voiceover for text, and tools such as Pictionary in the case a student does not know the meaning of a word. Review team members did not observe opportunities for acceleration within the LMS.
* School leaders reported that within Canvas teachers can create and assign specific tasks or assignments to selected students that may require intervention or acceleration. School leaders also reported that the primary means of offering intervention or acceleration is through the use of supplemental resources such as IXL. Teachers also reported that some teachers may create individual opportunities for acceleration or intervention but that there is not an established system of acceleration or intervention supports in the school.
* The school’s education platform includes live classes for synchronous learning and a flex program for asynchronous learning. Students and families in both the live classes and the flex program reported that courses were easy to navigate.

*Future accountability review teams should examine the extent to which English language arts and mathematics curricula in grades K through 5 are aligned to MCF, the extent to which a variety of cultures and perspectives are represented in course materials, and the extent to which the curriculum provides increased opportunities for intervention and acceleration for all students to master skills and concepts.*

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| Key Indicator 5.3: Assessment and Program Evaluation | |
| **Assessment**   1. The school uses a balanced system of formative, summative, and benchmark assessments to monitor student progress. The assessment system is aligned to and appropriate for learning objectives. 2. The school ensures there is maximum participation in school assessment administrations. 3. The school provides standards for timely, frequent, effective feedback based on assessments to support students in meeting academic goals. 4. The school’s assessments enable students to monitor their own learning progress in order to adjust and improve upon their learning. 5. Teachers and administrators use disaggregated qualitative and quantitative data from multiple assessment sources to assess student learning and modify instruction or supports to improve academic and non-academic outcomes for each student. 6. The school implements strategies to ensure the academic integrity of course assignments and assessments completed by students in order to ensure student accountability. 7. The school disseminates test proctoring protocols to the appropriate credentialled staff per federal and state laws and ensures that tests are proctored in accordance with the protocols. Documentation of the proctoring training and processing of the test materials are kept appropriately.   **Program Evaluation**   1. Ongoing internal evaluations are conducted to regularly collect and analyze school data based on national, state, and/or school test results and metrics. 2. The school uses qualitative and quantitative data to regularly evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the school in serving all students and modifies the academic program accordingly. The regular evaluations use valid and reliable measures to evaluate learner success; data is disaggregated by student group and modifications are made to the academic program to ensure equitable access, opportunity, and success for all student groups. 3. Evaluation results are communicated to school stakeholders. | ** Partially Meets** |

*Finding: Teachers and administrators use qualitative and quantitative data to modify instruction and to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the program; however, school staff do not use disaggregated data. The school implements strategies to ensure academic integrity of assignments and assessments completed in a virtual context and ensures maximum participation in school assessment administration. The school does not have systems and structures in place for appropriate virtual test proctoring.*

Teachers and administrators use qualitative and quantitative data to modify instruction to improve academic and non-academic outcomes for students, but do not use disaggregated data. Students have access to timely, frequent, and effective feedback based on assessments to monitor their own learning progress in order to adjust and improve upon their learning.

* School leaders and teachers listed quantitative data used to modify instruction for students, including course completion in the LMS, MCAS data, Star data, and assessments administered by teachers like pre-assessments, formative and summative assessments, and daily checks-for-understanding. School leaders also reported that teachers and school staff use MCAS data to develop priority standards for each grade and subject area. As mentioned in *Key Indicator 5.1: Curriculum*, school administrators and teachers meet regularly to review and revise curriculum to ensure any gaps between MCAS content and curricular materials is addressed. School leaders and teachers reported that quantitative data is not disaggregated by student subgroups.
* School leaders and teachers reported that school staff also use qualitative data to modify instruction. School support staff and teachers meet regularly to discuss observational trends regarding the behavior, engagement, and socio-emotional learning of individual students or throughout the student body. Then, school support staff and teachers work together to determine if supports or adjustments are needed and what these supports should look like for the entire school and for individual students. School leaders also reported that a student feedback survey is being developed within the LMS so that every student has the opportunity to provide qualitative feedback on courses attended. School leaders and teachers reported that qualitative data is not disaggregated by student subgroups.
* All stakeholders reported that students have access to timely, frequent, and effective feedback. Families reported that automated emails send notification alerts once teachers have provided feedback or posted grades on assignments. Students also reported that teachers provide thorough feedback on assignments and assessments and that teachers are always willing to schedule a meeting to discuss the feedback and necessary next steps.

The school implements strategies to ensure academic integrity of assignments and assessments completed in a virtual context and ensures maximum participation in school assessment administration. The school does not have systems and structures for appropriate virtual test proctoring.

* School leaders reported various software and programs are put in place to ensure academic integrity of assignments and assessments completed in a virtual context. For example, the school uses “Turnitin” which is used to scan submitted work for plagiarism. School leaders also reported that students must complete a module on academic integrity and digital citizenship and that academic integrity is a topic discussed in grade-level assemblies in an effort to ensure students are aware of the importance of academic integrity.
* School leaders reported that teachers are in charge of ensuring maximum participation in school assessments. If a student misses an assessment, the teacher and family engagement team contact the student and learning coach to schedule a make-up test.
* School leaders reported that the school does not have systems and structures in place for appropriate virtual test proctoring.

*Future accountability review teams should examine the extent to which school staff disaggregate data by student subgroups, the extent to which the school implements test proctoring protocols, and the extent to which the school ensures that tests are proctored in accordance with the protocols.*

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| Key Indicator 5.4: Supports for All Learners | |
| 1. The school has a proactive system to effectively identify and address all students’ strengths and needs for academic, behavioral, and social-emotional development through a tiered support model. 2. The school provides supports to meet the academic needs for all students, including, but not limited to, students with disabilities and English learners. 3. Supports are designed with consideration for the virtual environment. 4. The school provides academic advising, social-emotional, and instructional support in an equitable manner to enable students to complete their courses and goals. | ** Partially Meets** |

*Finding: The school has a proactive, data-based system to effectively identify students’ academic strengths and needs and behavioral and social-emotional development. The school implements a multi-tiered system of support to address the strengths and needs of all students. The school provides a range of resources to support students with academic advising, social-emotional, and instructional support. However, the school provides limited academic resources to support English learners; the school is working to increase academic resources to support English learners.* *The school uses data to evaluate and modify its support programming to ensure student success.*

The school has a proactive, data-based system to effectively identify students’ academic strengths and needs and behavioral and social-emotional development.

* A written description of the system of supports for all learners provided by the school stated, and school leaders and teachers confirmed, that the school administers STAR assessments four times a year for mathematics and reading (first piloted in the 2019-2020 school year), the MCAS in grades 3 through 8, classroom based assessments in grades K through 12, student and family feedback forms several times a year, and the data collection process referred to as Dropout Detective in an ongoing process to identify students’ academic strengths and needs. Dropout Detective is a program the school uses to proactively track student attendance, participation, and assignment submission trends. The program alerts the school if a student is at risk of becoming truant or of dropping out so that the staff can proactively reach out to the student and offer support before truancy becomes an issue or before the student decides to drop out.
* The school’s 2019 action plan states that the school conducts student climate surveys, demonstrating that school staff collect behavioral and social-emotional data. School leaders also reported that the school has a system that uses observational data and attendance records, including Dropout Detective, to identify students of concern.
* School leaders reported that all incoming students complete a home language survey to determine whether they need to be screened for English as a second language services. School leaders reported that if a language other than English is listed on the survey, students are assessed for language proficiency using the WIDA screener.

The school implements a multi-tiered system of support to address the strengths and needs of all students, across all subgroups.

* According to a written description of the system of supports for all learners provided by the school, and confirmed by school leaders and teachers, the school implements a tiered support model that addresses the academic strengths and needs of all students. If a student is struggling academically, teachers are expected to implement Tier 1 interventions which include differentiated instruction and providing additional tasks or assignments on the LMS (Canvas for students in the live program and Edgenuity for students in the flex program.) If the student continues to struggle academically, the teacher will submit a Response to Intervention (RTI) referral to the student intervention team (SIT). The SIT consists of the vice principal for grades K through 8, the vice principal for grades 9 through 12, and the family engagement coordinator. The SIT meets every two weeks to review new RTI referrals submitted by teachers, past referrals, and student progress on intervention plans. Once a referral is made, the SIT will create a folder, collect data, and monitor the student’s progress. All of the student’s teachers will have access to this folder to document the student’s progress in response to the tiered interventions and any additional observational data. Once the SIT starts the process, the SIT, teachers, administrators, and family engagement team members will implement Tier 2 interventions for four to six weeks before re-evaluating if the student needs different Tier 2 interventions or Tier 3 interventions. For Tier 2 interventions, the student could receive small-group instruction, guided reading instruction, additional one-on-one instruction, and academic check-ins. If improvement is noted after the four to six weeks of Tier 2 interventions, then the student will continue with the Tier 2 interventions until the student is back on grade level. If progress has not been documented, the teacher will implement different Tier 2 interventions for another four to six weeks. If after this second Tier 2 intervention the student does not demonstrate progress, the SIT team moves to Tier 3 intervention which is one-on-one meetings with the student and learning coach.
* School leaders and teachers inconsistently reported the use of one-on-one support meetings for students receiving Tier 3 interventions. School leaders reported that the one-on-one support meetings were a required part of the RTI system. Some teachers reported that the school communicated the one-on-one meetings were now optional and left to teacher discretion. Other teachers reported that this new communication had not been received by all teachers.
* The written description of the system of supports for all learners states that the family engagement team, school nurse, and the guidance and adjustment counselors are responsible for multi-tiered behavioral interventions. All stakeholders reported that students in grades K through 5 participate in morning meetings and students in grades 6 through 12 participate in homeroom advisory as part of Tier 1 interventions. All stakeholders also reported that the school monitors the Dropout Detective program in Tier 1 to proactively identify any students at risk of truancy or of dropping out. School leaders and teachers reported that if the Dropout Detective signals a student as “at-risk of truancy,” or if a student starts to show signs of disengagement and increased absences the FEC contacts the learning coach and student to create an action plan of support as part of Tier 2 interventions. If disengagement and absences continue and the action plan developed in Tier 2 is not followed, the FEC begins the truancy process as part of Tier 3 interventions. See *Criterion 2: Access and Equity* for a description of the truancy process.
* The written description of the system of supports for all learners states that the adjustment and guidance counselors, school nurse, and teachers are responsible for implementing social-emotional tiered interventions. Tier 1 interventions include teachers communicating concerns to counselors, student climate surveys, teacher observations, and programs for students such as mindfulness Monday, school wide and grade level assemblies centered around themes like cyberbullying, and clubs. Tier 2 interventions include small group meetings with the adjustment counselor and Tier 3 interventions include one-on-one counseling.
* School leaders, teachers, students, and families described multiple instructional practices teachers use to support all learners. School leaders and teachers reported that teachers implement supplemental curriculum materials to revisit topics students struggled with in previous units such as recorded videos and additional worksheets students can opt into depending on students’ needs. Families and students reported that teachers are readily available for small group instruction and extra tutoring outside of live lessons when additional help is needed. Students reported that teachers provide technical support to help students learn how to use the computer; are always available if students have any questions; are always checking if students understand the content; and provide students options for what to do when they need help. Teachers reported that teachers use verbal cues, differentiated worksheets, office hours, visual cues, written directions, sentences frames, and vocabulary cards, and facilitate group discussions to support students.
* School leaders and teachers listed different technology and resources that support students’ academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs. School administrators reported that students have access to Nearpod, Peardeck, Reading A-Z, Google classroom, Zoom, SeeSaw, and Chromebooks to support student learning. All stakeholders also reported that family engagement liaisons and the school nurse are readily available to provide families with resources and information regarding community organizations for additional support.

The school provides a range of resources to support students with academic advising, social-emotional, and instructional support. However, the school provides limited academic resources to support English learners. The school is working to increase academic resources to support English learners.

* All stakeholders reported that the school has increased its staff to better address students’ and families’ needs, including two ESL teachers, an ESL director, a director of accountability, a director of technology and digital learning, Title 1 reading and mathematics teachers, two additional family engagement liaisons, and an adjustment counselor for grades 8 through 12.
* Students and families reported that students and families are grateful to have the family engagement liaisons and that the liaisons have been very helpful in meeting student needs and helping students be successful in courses.
* All stakeholders also reported a series of events and support provided to all students. School wide events take place throughout the year and include monthly themes like anti-bullying and cyber safety. Teachers provide opportunities for social interactions like small group hangouts outside of live lessons, lunch bunch sessions were students and teachers virtually eat lunch together, and a study skills course for students to seek additional academic support. School leaders also reported that a hallway program is being designed so that students have an additional monitored platform to engage with classmates outside of live lessons.
* Review team members observed limited academic resources in the ESL curriculum materials submitted. As previously mentioned in *Key Indicator 5.1: Curriculum and Course Design*, the ESL Canvas courses did not have any materials uploaded. School leaders reported that there are no ESL materials in Canvas because the school does not yet have an ESL curriculum and the materials currently used to instruct ELs are supplemental materials created by teachers. School leaders also reported that the school is working to create an ESL curriculum. In addition, the school submitted examples of ESL teacher lesson plans, course PowerPoints, and handouts provided to students across grades K through 12. The submitted lesson plans did not include the standards or objectives for the lesson and the PowerPoints submitted did not include translations, images for increased understanding, additional resources for translation or understanding, or representation of students’ diverse cultures and perspectives.

The school uses data to evaluate and modify its support programming to ensure student success.

* The school’s most recent special education program self-evaluation was conducted in 2017. The special education program self-evaluation compared the academic performance of general education students to students with disabilities on the MCAS, PARCC, and Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assessments from 2015 to 2017. The school found that students with disabilities in grades 3 and 4 tend to keep pace with general education students in English language arts, but that between grade 4 and 8 students with disabilities score fall below general education students on the MCAS and PARCC.
* Based on the results of the evaluation, the school identified nine goals to increase the percentage of students with disabilities who meet expectations in each content area. The self-evaluation states that the school instituted the Social Express, a socio-emotional program for elementary students, as part of one of the nine goals. The middle school special education teachers attended a five-day mathematics workshop at the Collaborative for Educational Services to learn how to improve mathematics outcomes for elementary and middle school students with disabilities, also one of the nine goals in the self-evaluation. The school also set goals to create a formalized process for amending service delivery grids for high school students who enroll after the school year starts and to use more data to inform instruction.
* The school’s most recent English learner program self-evaluation was conducted in 2017. Because the school only enrolled one EL at the time of the evaluation, the report was limited and did not include goals or a school plan to increase EL enrollment and recruitment or to modify ESL programming. The English learner program self-evaluation included ACCESS scores for English learners from 2015 to 2017. In the monthly updates the school provides to the Department, as outlined in condition 3 imposed on the certificate, school leaders reported that the ESL director is currently working to modify the ESL programming. The monthly updates state, and school leaders confirmed, that although the school does not have an ESL curriculum at the moment, the ESL director is working to create an ESL curriculum and ensure this new curriculum is aligned to guidelines from the Massachusetts Office of Language Acquisition (OLA). School leaders also reported that the ESL director and ESL teachers are working to introduce greater academic and instructional support for ELs including collaboration between ESL and general education teachers and more professional development opportunities for all teachers to learn how to better support ELs.

*Future accountability review teams should examine the extent to which the school implements equitable supports for ELs including an ESL curriculum aligned with OLA guidelines. Future accountability review teams should also observe classrooms to examine if a multi-tiered intervention model is being implemented and providing academic, socio-emotional, and behavioral supports for all students in classrooms.*

## Organizational Viability

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| Criterion 7: Capacity |
| The school sustains a well-functioning organizational structure and creates a professional working climate for all staff. |

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| Key Indicator 7.1: School Leadership | |
| 1. The school’s leadership team implements school academic programming and operations in a manner to meet a clearly defined mission and set of goals. 2. The school defines and delineates clear roles and responsibilities among teachers, staff, management, and board of trustee members, reflecting a culture of shared accountability and providing a collaborative environment for learning and work. 3. The school leadership team establishes clear and well-understood systems for decision-making and communication processes among all members of the school community that are updated regularly. 4. The leadership team has specific preparation and training in understanding the unique dynamics of online learning. 5. The leadership is transparent in its management of the school, providing accurate, regular, and timely information on progress towards attainment of goals, alignment with policies and standards, compliance with laws and regulations, and achievement of student learning outcomes to all stakeholders. 6. Based on data, school leadership takes concrete and ambitious steps to close identified achievement, access, and opportunity gaps. School leadership sets goals and establishes systems and structures for the recruitment, development, and retention of educators reflective of the racial and ethnic composition of the students and families it serves. | ** Meets** |

*Finding: The school’s leadership team implements school academic programing and operations in a manner to meet a clearly defined mission and set of goals. The school has structures to define and delineate roles and responsibilities among leaders, staff, management, and board of trustees members; however, these roles are not always clear to all staff members.*

The school’s leadership team implements school academic programming and operations in a manner that meets a clearly defined mission and set of goals.

* Board members, school leaders, and teachers reported that the school’s leadership team is reflective and working towards implementing the school’s academic programming and operations in a manner that meets a clearly defined mission and set of goals. For example, board members and school leaders reported that the school is aware the curriculum is not fully aligned to the state’s curriculum frameworks and that the school is working to ensure full alignment. Board members and school leaders also reported that the school’s leadership team consistently engages in reflections and dialogue about the school’s areas of growth in regard to academic programming and whether or not the school is meeting the goals set out in GCVS’s accountability plan. For example, the school leadership team hired more staff including an ESL director, family engagement liaisons, and a director of technology and learning after reflecting on student needs for increased support.
* Board members, school leaders, and teachers also reported that the school is working to implement the goals and objectives in the school’s 2019 action plan. For example, the school’s 2019 action plan mentions the creation of PLC teams, priority standards, and the implementation of professional development opportunities around Edwin Analytics and other data software for teachers to better analyze student data and deliver data-driven instruction. Board members, school leaders, and teachers reported that PLCs teams continue to meet and use priority standards, based on student data, to drive instructional goals and curricular revision. Please see *Key Indicator 5.1: Curriculum and Course Design* for information regarding school implementation around PLCs and curriculum revision as stated in the school’s 2019 Action Plan.

The school has structures to define and delineate roles and responsibilities among leaders, staff, management, and members of the board of trustees; however, these roles are not always clear to all staff members.

* School leaders reported that staff are oriented to the staff handbook at the beginning of each school year. School leaders also reported that GCVS staff are provided with a school organizational chart that delineates each department within the school and designates staff roles. School leaders also explained that the leadership team is updating job descriptions for each role in the staff handbook so that the handbook can clearly define staff roles and responsibilities within the school.
* Teachers reported that the roles and responsibilities among staff members are inconsistent and not always clear. Teachers reported that it is often difficult to know which staff member to approach for various issues and some teachers were unaware that the school had an organizational chart. Teachers also reported that there have been instances when a concern or question has been brought up to a specific school leadership team member or administrator and the question or concern was left unaddressed because the task was not the administrator’s responsibility.

The school has clear and well-understood systems for decision-making and communication processes among all members of the school community.

* Board members reported that the executive director and school leadership team have strong and clear communication systems with the board of trustees. Board members also reported that the school leadership team frequently provides reports to the board regarding the school’s status.
* School leaders also reported that the organizational chart is used as a framework for decision-making and communication systems. Teachers meet weekly with their team leaders to discuss any concerns or questions and then these concerns or questions are brought to the leadership team in the weekly teacher/leadership team meeting.

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| Key Indicator 7.2: Professional Climate | |
| 1. The school has structures for regular, frequent collaboration and professional development for faculty and staff, aligned to the National Standards for Quality Online Learning, to improve implementation of the curriculum and instructional practice. 2. The school creates a professional development plan to provide and ensure teacher and administrator participation in training in the unique dynamics related to online learning. 3. The school develops staff capacity to examine and dismantle implicit biases and systemic inequalities in order to create environments in which all students can deeply learn, grow, and thrive. 4. Teachers are provided regularly feedback their performance and student achievement/progress. 5. An objective and transparent system is in place for monitoring individual staff performance against established expectations, which includes a formal process of evaluation for all employees, including teachers. 6. The school has an organization structure with enough qualified professional, administrative and support staff and appropriate student to teacher ratios. 7. The school has an organizational structure with enough qualified professional, administrative and support staff and allows for appropriate student to teacher ratios. 8. The school provides teachers and staff with timely and effective technical support. 9. The school administration sets educator performance standards that are aligned to the NSQ Online Teaching Standards. 10. School staff have been prepared to teach in an online environment specifically via training in both online pedagogy as well as the technologies incorporated into the academic program. | ** Meets** |

*Finding: School staff frequently collaborate and engage in professional development that focuses on improving implementation of the curriculum and instructional practice. The school provides limited professional development for staff to examine implicit biases and systemic inequalities. An objective and transparent system is in place for monitoring individual staff performance against established expectations and includes a formal process of evaluation for all employees.*

School staff frequently collaborate and engage in professional development aligned to National Standards for Quality Online Learning to improve implementation of the curriculum and instructional practice.

* In the 2019-20 school year, GCVS’s added ten days to its school calendar for staff to focus on professional development. School leaders and teachers reported that frequent systems for collaboration and professional development exist at the school. Teachers reported that they engage in monthly professional development sessions, conduct data analysis daily, and participate in grade team meetings twice a week.
* School leaders reported that a staff survey is conducted at the beginning of each school year to determine staff’s preferences for professional development and that in-house professional development offerings are then designed based on those survey results. In-house professional development includes a new teacher training course around the LMS, general training on Dropout Detective, modules centered on instructional practice, data analysis reflections, student discourse and lesson design, student survey design, and how to gather student feedback around instruction.
* GCVS offers teachers a 500-dollar reimbursement for any professional development opportunities outside of the school. Teachers reported that they have often used this opportunity to seek out professional development related to diverse topics and instructional strategies. School leaders reported that GCVS is a member of the Aurora Institute and through such membership teachers have access to multiple resources and services related to online teaching professional development. School leaders also reported that teachers have often participated in a two-day conference in Vermont centered around the National Standards for Quality Online Learning. This school year the Vermont conference was cancelled because of COVID-19 restrictions. School leaders reported that the school is looking for ways to supplement the conference with other virtual professional development opportunities.

The school provides limited professional development for staff to examine implicit biases and systemic inequalities in order to serve all students.

* School leaders and teachers reported that elements encouraging examination of implicit biases and systemic inequalities were embedded in some of the professional development that took place at the beginning of the 2020-21 school year. However, teachers reported that there has not been any dedicated training on examining and dismantling explicit and implicit biases.

The school has an objective and transparent system in place for monitoring individual staff performance against established expectations. The system includes a formal process of evaluation for all employees, including teachers.

* School leaders reported that the school uses the Massachusetts Model System for Educator Evaluation, and the school’s LMS includes a module for teachers that describes the formal process of evaluation in ways that are reflective of that system. School leaders reported that the school uses TeachPoint to conduct and document teacher evaluations. Within TeachPoint teachers complete personal reflections on instruction and establish yearly goals. School leaders and teachers reported that this year teachers worked to align personal instructional goals with the school’s action plan and priority standards. School leaders also reported that part of the formal evaluation process includes unannounced classroom observations. School leaders reported that although the Massachusetts Model System for Educator Evaluation Classroom Teacher Rubric has not been modified by the school for a virtual school setting, supervisors do keep in mind a virtual school lens when evaluating supervisees.
* School leaders reported that the formal process of evaluation is different for certified and non-licensed staff roles. Certified staff are evaluated with the five-step evaluation cycle listed in the Massachusetts Model System for Educator Evaluation, as mentioned above. Family engagement liaisons who are not required to be licensed go through a formal evaluation twice a year in which the liaison and the FEC review specific criteria around punctuality, dependability, productivity, and job performance. The FEC also meets with family engagement liaisons once a week to discuss the current family case load and provide feedback on performance.

School staff have been prepared to teach in an online environment specifically via training in both online pedagogy as well as the technologies incorporated into the academic program. The school has an organizational structure with enough qualified professional, administrative, and support staff.

* As previously mentioned, school staff participate in training related to GCVS’s LMS and virtual learning at the beginning of the school year. School leaders reported that professional development is offered every time a new technology is introduced like Dropout Detective and “Turnitin”. The new teacher training program includes instruction for teachers to navigate the school’s LMS and steps for how to create modules, assignments, quizzes, and other resources for students on Canvas.
* The school submitted an organization chart which demonstrates that the school has enough qualified professional, administrative, and support staff. The student to teacher ratio for GCVS is 15.8 students to one teacher and 100 percent of GCVS teachers are licensed[[11]](#footnote-11). The school has also hired new staff to better meet student needs including two new family engagement liaisons, an ESL d­­irector, and the director of technology and student learning.

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| --- | --- |
| Criterion 8: Governance | |
| Members of the board of trustees uphold their responsibilities under Massachusetts law and regulations to act as public agents authorized by the state and provide competent and appropriate governance to ensure the success and sustainability of the school. | ** Partially Meets** |

*Finding: The board of trustees fulfills many of its legal and fiduciary responsibilities. However, the board does not meet the minimum requirements for membership. The board of trustees demonstrates appropriate oversight of the school leader, financial health, alignment with the terms of the school’s certificate, and of the school’s progress toward meeting academic goals. The board of trustees fosters a culture of collaboration*. *The board of trustees engages in limited strategic and continuous improvement planning.*

The board of trustees fosters a culture of collaboration and board members are active and engaged. Board members indicated that the board does discuss the school’s efforts to be faithful to its mission and the promises in its certificate. The board of trustees currently has four members, which does not meet the minimum requirements outlined in the board’s bylaws and in 603 CMR 50.06(2).

* Current board officers include a chair, vice chair, secretary and parent representative as required by the bylaws. The board does not have a treasurer as required by the bylaws. School leaders reported that the board has never had a treasurer.
* The board has a finance, policy, and negotiations committee. Board meeting minutes indicate that all these committees are active and meet monthly.
* Board meeting minutes from August 2019 to September 2020 demonstrate that the board meets monthly, which is in accordance with their bylaws.
* Board meeting minutes consistently include the date, time, place of meeting, a list of the members present or absent, a sufficient summary of the discussion of each subject, a record of decisions made and actions taken at each meeting, and a list of documents and other exhibits used during the meeting, all requirements of Open Meeting Law (OML).
* All board meeting minutes from March 2017 to September 2020 included evidence of the board approving school policies, such as a new parent and student handbook for the 2017-2018 school year and the addition of a flex program starting in the 2019-2020 school year.
* The board demonstrates appropriate oversight of the school’s efforts to be faithful to the mission and alignment with the terms of the school’s certificate. Board members reported that board meeting topics align with the school’s mission, such as discussion of MCAS and Star student data, the school’s special education program, and the school’s plan to address student learning gaps. Board meeting minutes also show evidence of the board discussing the school’s priorities, including union and contract negotiations.
* Board members reported that the board engages in governance tasks rather than management of day-to-day operations at the school.
* The board oversees the school’s finances with the support of the finance committee. Board meeting minutes confirmed that the finance committee reviews finances, on a monthly basis, with the entire board and also discusses the school’s budget, end of year financial data, financial audits, costs of hiring staff, and student enrollment.
* The board provides appropriate oversight of the school’s academic program. Board members reported, and board meeting minutes confirmed, that the board reviews MCAS and Star assessment data on a regular basis and that the board is aware of students’ low academic performance and the strategies the school is implemented to address this gap. Board members reported that MCAS and Star data is not disaggregated by subgroups.
* The board demonstrates appropriate oversight of the executive director. Board members and school leaders reported that the board holds high expectations for and conducts an annual evaluation of the executive director.
* Board members reported that the board does not conduct an annual self-evaluation and will work towards conducting annual self-evaluations.

The board of trustees fosters a culture of collaboration.

* The board has a clear and well-understood system for communication processes within the board itself and between board members and school leadership. Board members reported that the board welcomes public comments from families and that the board wishes to increase family attendance at board meetings. Board members reported that the board expects the school leaders to communicate information from the board to students, families, and the community. Families reported that families were not aware that the school had a board and did not know the school board’s role in governing the school.
* The board has a clear and well-understood system for decision-making processes. Board members reported that the executive director and school leadership team brief the board chair and committee chairs during board meetings if there is an important decision needed to be made about the school’s programming. Then, the executive director or school leadership team proposes a recommendation, and the full board discusses and votes to approve, deny, or amend the recommendation. The board meeting minutes submitted to the review team confirm this process.
* Board meeting minutes include evidence that meetings foster open, deliberate, and thorough discussions. As required by OML, meeting minutes include a sufficient summary of the discussion of each subject. The board’s meeting schedule, agenda, and minutes are included on the school’s website.

The board of trustees does not engage in strategic and continuous improvement planning.

* Board members reported that the board does not have a strategic plan, but that board members understand the importance of developing a strategic plan and are currently working to create such plan.
* The board has not established clear processes for school leadership succession. Board members reported that the board does not have a school leadership succession plan at this time and that developing a school leadership succession plan is not currently listed as a priority in future board meeting agendas.
* The board has plans for board leadership succession; however, it is unclear whether those plans have been implemented as described to the team during the accountability review. Board members reported that the board’s leadership succession plan is having different members of the board rotate through different officer positions annually.
* Board members reported that the board does not have a plan for recruiting new board members. Board members reported that the board recruits and selects members trustees personally know and board members reported that there is no uniform board training for new members.

*Future accountability review teams should examine the extent to which the board acts in full accordance with its bylaws; adequately monitors the school’s academic performance; and the extent to which the board engages in strategic and continuous improvement planning, recruiting new board members, and developing clear board and school leadership succession plans.*

# Appendix A: Student Performance

The following tables are taken from the [2019 Official Accountability Report for GCVS](https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/accountability/report/school.aspx?linkid=31&orgcode=39010900&orgtypecode=6&&fycode=2019) .

## Overall Results

**Table summarizing 2019 Progress toward improvement targets for all students and lowest performing students in non-high school grades and in high school grades. 
Link for table is 
https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/accountability/report/school.aspx?linkid=31&orgcode=39010900&orgtypecode=6&&fycode=2019
**

## Results for Students in the High Needs Subgroup

Table summarizing 2019 Progress toward improvement targets for students in the high needs subgroup in non-high school grades and in high school grades. 
Link for table is 
https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/accountability/report/school.aspx?linkid=31&orgcode=39010900&orgtypecode=6&&fycode=2019


## Detailed Data for Each Indicator

Table highlighting MCAS average composite scaled score for non-high school student subgroups in English language arts achievement. Weblink for table is
https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/accountability/report/district.aspx?linkid=30&orgcode=39010000&orgtypecode=5&&fycode=2019

Table highlighting MCAS average composite scaled score for high school student subgroups in English language arts achievement. Weblink for table is
https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/accountability/report/district.aspx?linkid=30&orgcode=39010000&orgtypecode=5&&fycode=2019

**Table highlighting MCAS average composite scaled score for non-high school student subgroups in Mathematics achievement. Weblink for table is
https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/accountability/report/district.aspx?linkid=30&orgcode=39010000&orgtypecode=5&&fycode=2019**

**Table highlighting MCAS composite performance index for high school student subgroups in Mathematics achievement. Weblink for table is
https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/accountability/report/district.aspx?linkid=30&orgcode=39010000&orgtypecode=5&&fycode=2019**

**Table highlighting MCAS composite performance index for non-high school student subgroups in science achievement. Weblink for table is
https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/accountability/report/district.aspx?linkid=30&orgcode=39010000&orgtypecode=5&&fycode=2019**

**Table highlighting MCAS composite performance index for high school student subgroups in science achievement. Weblink for table is
https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/accountability/report/district.aspx?linkid=30&orgcode=39010000&orgtypecode=5&&fycode=2019**

**Table highlighting English language arts growth for non-high school student subgroups. Weblink for table is
https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/accountability/report/district.aspx?linkid=30&orgcode=39010000&orgtypecode=5&&fycode=2019**

**Table highlighting English language arts growth for high school student subgroups. Weblink for table is
https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/accountability/report/district.aspx?linkid=30&orgcode=39010000&orgtypecode=5&&fycode=2019**

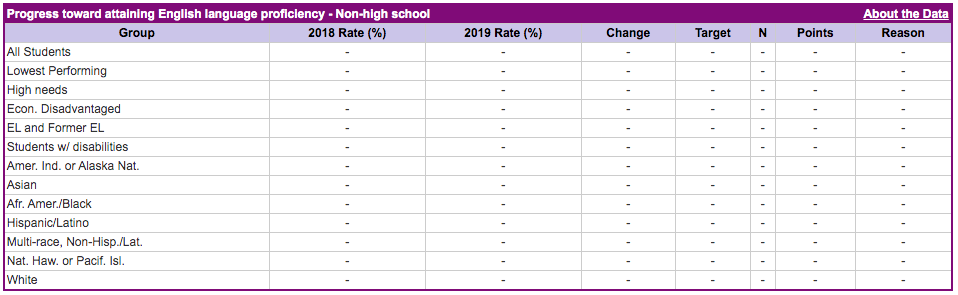
**Table highlighting Mathematics growth for non-high school student subgroups. Weblink for table is
https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/accountability/report/district.aspx?linkid=30&orgcode=39010000&orgtypecode=5&&fycode=2019**

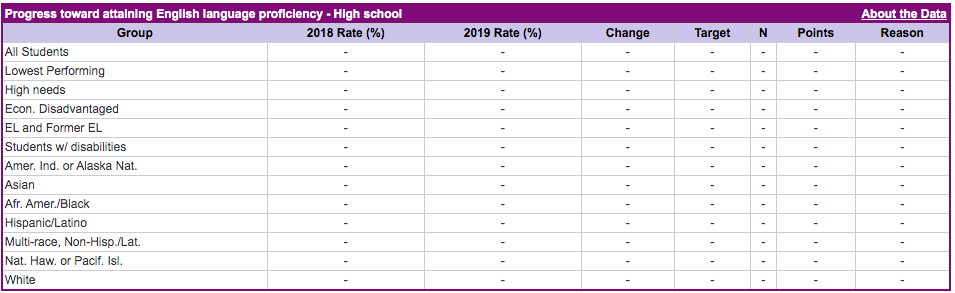
**Table highlighting mathematics growth for high school student subgroups. Weblink for table is
https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/accountability/report/district.aspx?linkid=30&orgcode=39010000&orgtypecode=5&&fycode=2019**

**Table highlighting four-year cohort graduation rates for high school student subgroups in 2017 and 2018.. Weblink for table is
https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/accountability/report/district.aspx?linkid=30&orgcode=39010000&orgtypecode=5&&fycode=2019**

**Table highlighting extended engagement rates for high school student subgroups in 2016 and 2017. Weblink for table is
https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/accountability/report/district.aspx?linkid=30&orgcode=39010000&orgtypecode=5&&fycode=2019**

**Table highlighting annual dropout rates for high school student subgroups in 2017 and 2018. Weblink for table is
https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/accountability/report/district.aspx?linkid=30&orgcode=39010000&orgtypecode=5&&fycode=2019**

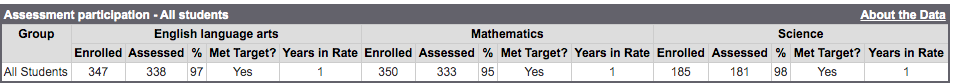
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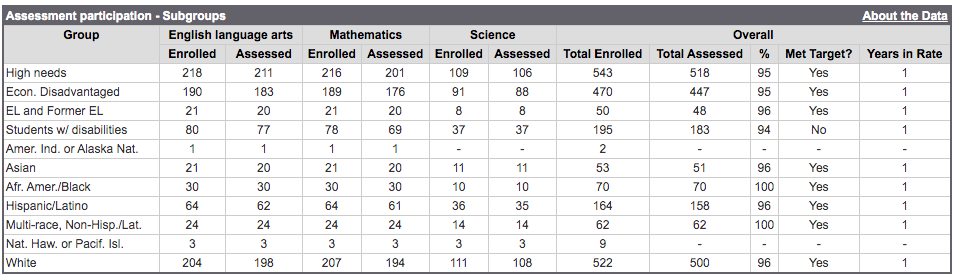
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**Table highlighting chronic absenteeism for non-high school student subgroups for 2018 and 2019. Weblink for table is 
https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/accountability/report/district.aspx?linkid=30&orgcode=39010000&orgtypecode=5&&fycode=2019**

**Table highlighting chronic absenteeism for high school student subgroups for 2018 and 2019. Weblink for table is 
https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/accountability/report/district.aspx?linkid=30&orgcode=39010000&orgtypecode=5&&fycode=2019**

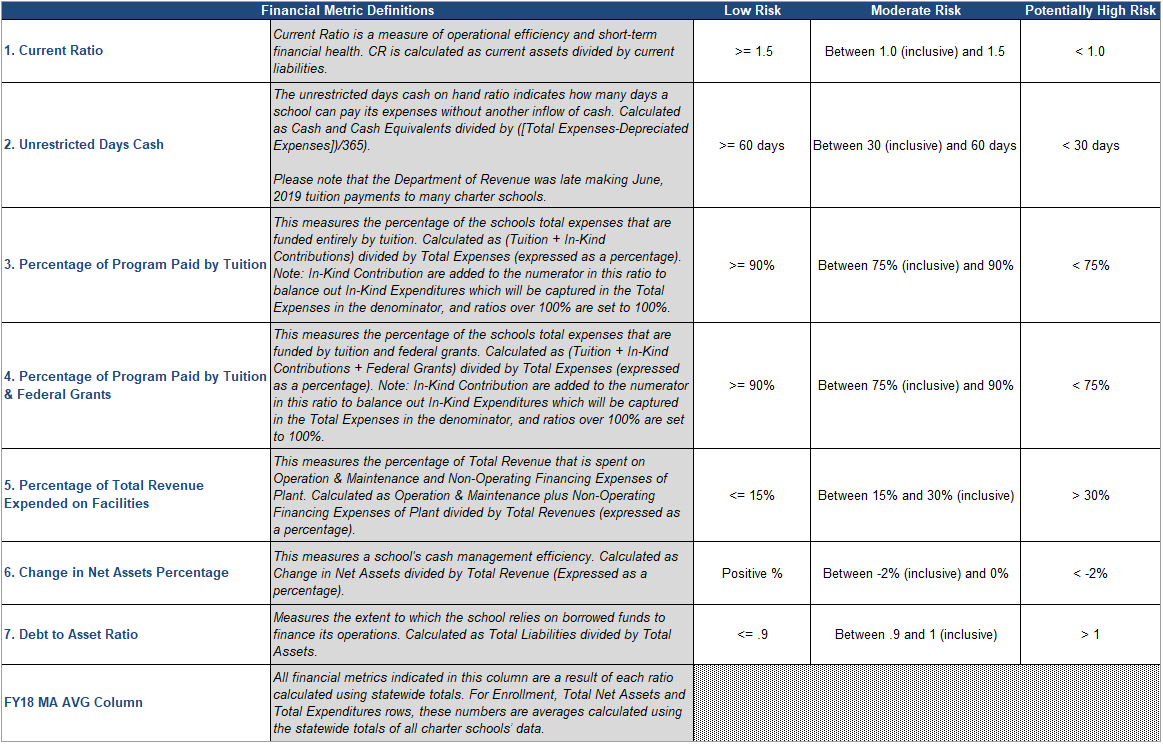
**Table highlighting data on advanced coursework completion for high school student subgroups for 2018 and 2019. Weblink for table is 
https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/accountability/report/district.aspx?linkid=30&orgcode=39010000&orgtypecode=5&&fycode=2019**

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# Appendix B: Finance

5-year financial summary infographic for the school summarizing key financial metrics and audit indicators. 



1. Rating Key:

   **Exceeds:** The school fully and consistently meets the criterion and is a potential exemplar in this area.

   **Meets:** The school generally meets the criterion and/or minor concern(s) are noted.

   **Partially Meets:** The school meets some aspects of the criterion but not others and/or moderate concern(s) are noted.

   **Falls Far Below:** The school falls far below the criterion and/or significant concerns are noted. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This is the number as of October 1, 2020. Source: [Profiles](https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/profiles/student.aspx?orgcode=39010000&orgtypecode=5&) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. This is the number as of December 21, 2020. Source: GCVS Weekly Enrollment Report submitted to the Department in accordance with the conditions imposed on the school’s certificate. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Source: [Profiles](https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/profiles/student.aspx?orgcode=39010000&orgtypecode=5&) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Source: [Profiles](https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/profiles/student.aspx?orgcode=35050000&orgtypecode=5&leftNavId=305&) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. *After the accountability review, the school informed the review team that the school incorrectly reported SIMS data for the 2020 enrollment percentage of students with disabilities. The school reported that the revised SIMS data for the 2020 enrollment percentage of students with disabilities was 22.4 percent for March 2020, 22.7 percent for June 2020, and 14.4 percent for October 2020.*  [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. *In February 2021, the GCVS ESL director and the director of registration addressed errors in the school’s submitted SIMS data for EL enrollment. The school reported that the revised EL roster contained 58 names and was submitted with the March 2021 report to DESE.* [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. No rating is provided for *Criterion 3: Compliance*. Accountability review reports that include a section for this criterion identify specific concerns the school must address. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. The [Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/) for Mathematics and English Language Arts and Literacy issued in 2011, and revised in 2017, incorporate the Common Core State Standards. Additionally, schools are expected to integrate the World-class Design and Assessment English Language Development (WIDA ELD) standards into ELD curriculum materials and content area curricula of classes in which English learners participate. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Source: [Profiles](https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/profiles/teacher.aspx?orgcode=39010000&orgtypecode=5&) [↑](#footnote-ref-11)