



## **Nantucket Public Schools Level 3 District Review**

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September 2011



This document was prepared on behalf of the Center for District and School Accountability of the  
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  
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Commissioner

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# Overview of Level 3 District Reviews

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## ***Purpose***

The Center for District and School Accountability (CDSA) in the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) conducts district reviews under Chapter 15, Section 55A of the Massachusetts General Laws. This review is focused on “districts whose students achieve at low levels either in absolute terms or relative to districts that educate similar populations.” Districts subject to review in the 2010-2011 school year include districts in Level 3<sup>1</sup> of ESE’s framework for district accountability and assistance in each of the state’s six regions: Greater Boston, Berkshires, Northeast, Southeast, Central, and Pioneer Valley. The districts with the lowest aggregate performance and least movement in Composite Performance Index (CPI) in their regions were chosen from among those districts that were not exempt under Chapter 15, Section 55A, because another comprehensive review had been completed or was scheduled to take place within nine months of the planned reviews.

## ***Methodology***

To focus the analysis, reviews collect evidence for each of the six district standards: **Leadership and Governance, Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment, Human Resources and Professional Development, Student Support, and Financial and Asset Management**. The reviews seek to identify those systems and practices that may be impeding rapid improvement as well as those that are most likely to be contributing to positive results. Team members preview selected district documents and ESE data and reports before conducting a two-day site visit in the district and a two-day site visit to schools. The team consists of independent consultants with expertise in each of the standards.

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<sup>1</sup> In other words, as Level 3 is now defined, districts with one or more schools that score in the lowest 20 percent statewide of schools serving common grade levels pursuant to 603 CMR 2.05(2)(a).

# Nantucket Public Schools

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The site visit to the Nantucket Public Schools was conducted from November 15-18, 2010. The site visit included visits to all of the district schools: Nantucket High School (9-12), Cyrus Peirce Middle School (6-8) and Nantucket Elementary School (PK-5). Further information about the review and the site visit schedule can be found in Appendix B; information about the members of the review team can be found in Appendix A.

## ***District Profile<sup>2</sup>***

Nantucket Public Schools enroll a total of 1,297 students in an elementary school, middle school, and high school from a community with a population of about 10,000 during the school year. Because of the island being a premiere tourist attraction the population increases in summer to between 40,000 and 50,000. The island's governance is the responsibility of a board of selectmen and a town manager. The review team learned that there is a cordial relationship between the town and the school district. In addition to the island's three public schools, there are two private schools that serve students in pre-kindergarten through grade 8.

The school committee consists of five members and meets the first and third Tuesdays, with the sessions being taped for television. The review team met with four members of the committee, who are well informed and enthusiastic about the district's upcoming development of a strategic plan, which will involve many members of the community.

The district has a new superintendent who began work in the district in July 2010. His predecessor had been in the district five years and was to serve another year under his contract, but because of major concerns on the part of the school committee a severance agreement was reached between the two parties in June 2010. However, under the terms of the agreement (a public document available on the school committee portion of the district's website) the school committee agreed to pay the previous superintendent severance in installments through the 2010-2011 school year. The school committee told the review team that it regretted the expenditure but that the change in leadership was absolutely necessary.

The district leadership team includes the superintendent, chief financial officer, data coordinator, director of technology, and director of special services (newly appointed this school year) as well as the three principals. A position responsible for curriculum was eliminated from the budget for the 2009-2010 school year; those responsibilities have been delegated to the data coordinator and principals to carry out through the use of content area teams.

Many teachers and parents in focus groups referred to the persistent problem of retaining administrators in the district and its effect on staff morale as well as student achievement. The Nantucket Elementary School had five principals during the six years before the review team's

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<sup>2</sup> Data derived from ESE's website, ESE's Education Data Warehouse, or other ESE sources.

visit. The current interim principal had been in the position for two years. The high school had had a number of principals during the past 28 years. However, the present principal was in his third year in the position in 2010-2011. The middle school principal is new to the district and assumed his responsibilities in July 2010. While there is some teacher turnover in the district it is not as high as the administrative turnover rate: in 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 the teacher turnover rate was 13 percent, just slightly higher than the state rate of 12 percent in 2008-2009 and 11 percent in 2009-2010; in 2010-2011, the district's teacher turnover rate fell to 10 percent, lower than the state rate of 12 percent.

The district has experienced a substantial growth in its English language learner (ELL) population during the past several years. In 2000-2001 there were 19 students designated as ELLs (1.6 percent of Nantucket students). In 2005-2006 there were 41 (3.3 percent). In the 2010-2011 school year the number of ELL students increased to 100 (7.8 percent). The growth of the ELL population over the past ten years has resulted in hiring ESL teachers as well as providing training in sheltered instruction. The district is aware that the needs of ELL students are an ongoing challenge.

The Latino population, which includes some ELL students is 13.1 percent of the total student population. The number of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch rose from 6.7 percent in 2009-2010 to 10.9 percent this year. The percentage of special education students at 14.0 percent is lower than the percentage statewide (17.0 percent).

Table 1 below provides demographics for the 1,297 students enrolled in the district's three schools.

**Table 1: 2010-2011 Nantucket Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity & Selected Populations**

| Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity         | Number | Percent of Total | Selected Populations       | Number       | Percent of Total |
|--------------------------------------|--------|------------------|----------------------------|--------------|------------------|
| African-American                     | 173    | 13.4             | First Language not English | 165          | 12.8             |
| Asian                                | 21     | 1.6              | Limited English Proficient | 100          | 7.8              |
| Hispanic or Latino                   | 169    | 13.1             | Low-income                 | 141          | 10.9             |
| Native American                      | 2      | 0.2              | Special Education*         | 182          | 14.0             |
| White                                | 884    | 68.6             | Free Lunch                 | 119          | 9.2              |
| Native Hawaiian/<br>Pacific Islander | 1      | 0.1              | Reduced-price lunch        | 22           | 1.7              |
| Multi-Race,<br>Non-Hispanic          | 39     | 3.0              | <b>Total enrollment</b>    | <b>1,289</b> | <b>100.0</b>     |

\* Special education number and percentage (only) are calculated including students in out-of-district placements.

Source: School/District Profiles on ESE website and other ESE data

The local appropriation to the Nantucket Public Schools budget for fiscal year 2011 was \$21,734,213, up from the appropriation for fiscal year 2010 of \$21,399,000. School-related expenditures by the town were estimated at \$5,282,825 for fiscal year 2011, down from the estimate for fiscal year 2010 of \$6,401,197. In fiscal year 2010, the total amount of actual school-related expenditures, including expenditures by the district (\$21,159,828), expenditures by the town (\$5,267,300), and expenditures from other sources such as grants (\$2,627,378) was \$29,054,506. Actual net school spending in fiscal year 2010 was \$23,483,162.<sup>3</sup>

## ***Student Performance<sup>4</sup>***

Table 2 below for students uses the Composite Performance Index (CPI) and median student growth percentile (SGP) to compare the achievement in ELA of Nantucket students as a whole and of selected subgroups with the achievement of their peers across the state.<sup>5</sup> The table shows that the Asian students in the district have the highest Composite Performance Index (CPI) of the selected subgroups, 92.5, with ELL students having the lowest CPI, 50.0, and the CPI that shows the greatest discrepancy with the statewide CPI for the same subgroup (59.8). It is not possible to compare the median student growth percentile of Asian students to that of Asian students in the state as the median SGP for Nantucket Asian students is not reported. This is also the case for ELL students and formerly limited English proficient (FLEP) students. A review of the data shows that there is generally not a substantial discrepancy between Nantucket and the state for all students or for subgroups. Asian students and special education students both have CPIs that are higher than those for the same subgroups statewide.

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<sup>3</sup> Net school spending includes municipal indirect spending for schools but excludes capital expenditures, transportation, grants, and revolving funds.

<sup>4</sup> Data derived from ESE's website, ESE's Education Data Warehouse, or other ESE sources.

<sup>5</sup>The "Composite Performance Index" is a 100-point index used to measure district, school, and student performance on the MCAS--the extent to which students are progressing toward proficiency (a CPI of 100) in ELA and mathematics. "Student growth percentiles" are a measure of student progress that compares changes in a student's MCAS scores to changes in MCAS scores of other students with similar performance profiles. The most appropriate measure for reporting growth for a group (e.g., subgroup, school, district) is the median student growth percentile (the middle score if one ranks the individual student growth percentiles from highest to lowest). For more information about the Growth Model, see "MCAS Student Growth Percentiles: Interpretive Guide" and other resources available at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/growth/>.

**Table 2: 2010 Nantucket and State  
Composite Performance Index (CPI) and Median Student Growth Percentile (SGP)  
by Selected Subgroups, for ELA**

|                             | Nantucket |                   | State |                   |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|
|                             | CPI       | <i>Median SGP</i> | CPI   | <i>Median SGP</i> |
| <b>All Students</b>         | 84.7      | <i>56.0</i>       | 86.9  | <i>50.0</i>       |
| Asian (10)                  | 92.5      | <i>N/A</i>        | 89.8  | <i>59.0</i>       |
| African American/Black (84) | 72.6      | <i>42.0</i>       | 76.6  | <i>46.0</i>       |
| Hispanic/Latino (72)        | 70.5      | <i>65.0</i>       | 73.6  | <i>47.0</i>       |
| White (456)                 | 88.7      | <i>54.0</i>       | 90.5  | <i>50.0</i>       |
| ELL ( 23)                   | 50.0      | <i>N/A</i>        | 59.8  | <i>50.0</i>       |
| FLEP ( 9)                   | N/A       | <i>N/A</i>        | 80.1  | <i>55.0</i>       |
| Special Education (112)     | 68.8      | <i>49.5</i>       | 67.3  | <i>41.0</i>       |
| Low Income (51)             | 74.0      | <i>50.0</i>       | 76.5  | <i>46.0</i>       |

Note: 1. Numbers in parentheses are the numbers of students included for the purpose of calculating the CPI. Numbers included for the calculation of the median SGP are different.

2. Median SGP is calculated for grades 4-8 and 10 and is only reported for groups of 20 or more students.

Source: School/District Profiles on ESE website

Table 3 below shows that the CPIs in mathematics for subgroups in Nantucket are lower than those for the state subgroups in all cases. The discrepancy is a substantial one in the case of Asian students (14.0 points), African-American students (14.2 points), and ELL students (15.3 points). But the median SGPs show that many of the subgroups in Nantucket progressed faster in math from 2009 to 2010 than the same subgroups across the state. This is true for all selected subgroups except low-income students: the 2010 median SGP for the state subgroup is 47.0 and for the Nantucket subgroup is 39.0. Again, there is no reported median SGP for Nantucket ELL or FLEP students, so no comparison can be made to the median SGPs for the state subgroups.

**Table 3: 2010 Nantucket and State  
Composite Performance Index (CPI) and Median Student Growth Percentile (SGP)  
by Selected Subgroups, for Mathematics**

|                             | Nantucket  |                   | State |                   |
|-----------------------------|------------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|
|                             | CPI        | <i>Median SGP</i> | CPI   | <i>Median SGP</i> |
| <b>All Students</b>         | 75.3       | 57.0              | 79.9  | 50.0              |
| Asian (11)                  | 75.0       | <i>N/A</i>        | 89.0  | 62.0              |
| African American/Black (83) | 50.9       | 60.0              | 65.1  | 48.0              |
| Hispanic/Latino (68)        | 60.3       | 61.0              | 63.9  | 47.0              |
| White (458)                 | 81.6       | 55.0              | 84.1  | 50.0              |
| ELL (22)                    | 40.9       | <i>N/A</i>        | 56.2  | 53.0              |
| FLEP (9)                    | <i>N/A</i> | <i>N/A</i>        | 73.3  | 55.0              |
| Special Education (112)     | 57.1       | 56.0              | 57.5  | 43.0              |
| Low Income (51)             | 58.3       | 39.0              | 67.1  | 47.0              |

Note: 1. Numbers in parentheses are the numbers of students included for the purpose of calculating the CPI. Numbers included for the calculation of the median SGP are different.

2. Median SGP is calculated for grades 4-8 and 10 and is only reported for groups of 20 or more students.

Source: School/District Profiles on ESE website

In Table 4 below the data shows 2008-2010 proficiency rates and median SGPs in ELA for the district and grades within the district, compared to the state. Both the proficiency rates and median SGPs for 4<sup>th</sup> grade are of concern. The proficiency rate in 2008 was 34 percent with an increase of five percentage points, to 39 percent, in 2009, a rate that remained the same in 2010. Fourth grade students in the state had a proficiency rate of 49 percent in 2008, and 53 percent in 2009, and 54 percent in 2010, 14 or 15 percentage points higher each year than the district 4<sup>th</sup> graders. The median SGP in ELA for Nantucket's 4<sup>th</sup> graders was an extremely low 19.0 in 2008; there was a major increase to 45.0 in 2009, a figure showing moderate growth, but a decrease to 39.0 in 2010.

Nantucket's 5<sup>th</sup> graders present a different picture. Their proficiency rates showed a substantial increase of 13 percentage points (63 percent to 76 percent) from 2008 to 2009. Both of these rates were higher than the proficiency rates of state 5<sup>th</sup> graders (61 percent in 2008 and 63 percent in 2009). However, the proficiency rate dropped to 58 percent in 2010, lower than the rate for state 5<sup>th</sup> graders that year of 63 percent. The median SGP for 5<sup>th</sup> grade students in Nantucket was 68.0 in 2008, 72.0 in 2009, and 65.0 in 2010, all indicating notably rapid progress. Students in Nantucket's 8<sup>th</sup> grade showed the greatest increase in ELA proficiency rates over the three test administrations. The proficiency rates rose steadily: in 2008 71 percent of students in grade 8 achieved proficiency; in 2009 78 percent did, and in 2010 it was 86 percent. The 8<sup>th</sup> graders' median SGP in ELA also rose steadily: it was 53.0 in 2008, 57.5 in 2009, and 61.0 in 2010. In 10<sup>th</sup> grade the ELA proficiency rates were similar to those in the state,

but in 2009 the median SGP for this grade was 72.0, and in 2010 it was 77.0, 22 and 27 points above the statewide median SGP of 50.0.

Districtwide the median SGPs in ELA for 2008-2010 were in the range showing moderate growth at 47.0, 56.5, and 56.0. In 2010 median SGPs were notably high at grades 5, 8, and 10, with the grade 10 median SGP especially notable at 77.0. ELA proficiency rates districtwide rose by four percentage points over the period, from 61 percent proficient to 65 percent, but state proficiency rates in ELA also rose four percentage points (from 64 percent to 68 percent), so the gap between the district and the state remained the same (3 percentage points).

**Table 4: 2008-2010 Nantucket Proficiency Rates, with Median Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs), compared to State: by Grade, for ELA**

| Grade                | % Advanced or Proficient 2008 | Median SGPs 2008 | % Advanced or Proficient 2009 | Median SGPs 2009 | % Advanced or Proficient 2010 | Median SGPs 2010 |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|
| Grade 3—District     | 40                            | NA*              | 48                            | NA*              | 52                            | NA*              |
| Grade 3—State        | 56                            | NA*              | 57                            | NA*              | 63                            | NA*              |
| Grade 4—District     | 34                            | 19.0             | 39                            | 45.0             | 39                            | 39.0             |
| Grade 4—State        | 49                            | 48.0             | 53                            | 50.0             | 54                            | 50.0             |
| Grade 5—District     | 63                            | 68.0             | 76                            | 72.0             | 58                            | 65.0             |
| Grade 5—State        | 61                            | 51.0             | 63                            | 50.0             | 63                            | 50.0             |
| Grade 6—District     | 70                            | 44.0             | 60                            | 49.0             | 71                            | 58.0             |
| Grade 6—State        | 67                            | 50.0             | 66                            | 50.0             | 69                            | 50.0             |
| Grade 7— District    | 70                            | 46.0             | 73                            | 37.0             | 74                            | 40.0             |
| Grade 7— State       | 69                            | 50.0             | 70                            | 50.0             | 72                            | 50.0             |
| Grade 8— District    | 71                            | 53.0             | 78                            | 57.5             | 86                            | 61.0             |
| Grade 8— State       | 75                            | 49.0             | 78                            | 50.0             | 78                            | 50.0             |
| Grade 10— District   | 75                            | N/A              | 85                            | 72.0             | 76                            | 77.0             |
| Grade 10— State      | 74                            | N/A              | 81                            | 50.0             | 78                            | 50.0             |
| All Grades— District | 61                            | 47.0             | 65                            | 56.5             | 65                            | 56.0             |
| All Grades—State     | 64                            | 50.0             | 67                            | 50.0             | 68                            | 50.0             |

Note: The number of students included in the calculation of proficiency rate differs from the number of students included in the calculation of median SGP.

\*NA: Grade 3 students do not have SGPs because they are taking MCAS tests for the first time.

Source: School/District Profiles on ESE website

The data shown below in Table 5 for the period 2008-2010 shows fluctuating proficiency rates in mathematics for practically every grade in the district starting with grade 4. At grade 4 the math proficiency rate in 2008 was 40 percent with a drop to 15 percent in 2009 and an increase to 33 percent in 2010. Grade 5 shows another pattern with 37 percent proficient in 2008; a large increase to 62 percent proficient in 2009, and then a substantial drop to 45 percent proficient in 2010. At grade 6 the proficiency rate fell from 57 percent in 2008 to 47 percent in 2009, with a small increase to 50 percent in 2010. The fluctuation in math proficiency continues in grade 7 with 36 percent proficient in 2008, a rise to 53 percent in 2009, and a decrease to 47 percent in 2010. At grade 8 the proficiency percentage was 45 percent in 2008; there was a drop to 31 percent in 2009 and a major increase in 2010 to 55 percent. The pattern for grade 10 begins with proficiency at 75 percent in 2008; there was an increase to 85 percent in 2009 and then in 2010 a decrease to 65 percent. Statewide, the proficiency rates showed nowhere near this much fluctuation; in grades 5, 6, and 7 there was a steady rise in rates (of from 3 to 6 percentage points), in grades 3, 8, and 10 there was a modest rise in 2010 over 2008 (from 2 to 4 percentage points), and in grade 4 there was a slight decrease over the period (of 1 percentage point).

As with ELA, districtwide proficiency rates rose by four percentage points from 2008 to 2010, from 46 percent to 50 percent, but, again, state proficiency rates rose by the same amount, so that the gap between the district and state rate remained the same (9 percentage points).

Nantucket's median SGPs in mathematics also fluctuated over this time period in several grades (grades 4, 6, and 8). Districtwide, however, median SGPs rose steadily, from 44.0 to 49.0 to 57.0. In 2010, though the median SGP for Nantucket 6<sup>th</sup> graders was notably low at 28.0, median SGPs were notably high at grades 5, 7, 8, and 10, especially at grade 5 where Nantucket students had the very high median SGP of 81.

**Table 5: 2008-2010 Nantucket Proficiency Rates,  
with Median Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs), compared to State:  
by Grade, for Mathematics**

| Grade                | %<br>Advanced<br>or<br>Proficient<br>2008 | <i>Median<br/>SGPs<br/>2008</i> | %<br>Advanced<br>or<br>Proficient<br>2009 | <i>Median<br/>SGPs<br/>2009</i> | %<br>Advanced<br>or<br>Proficient<br>2010 | <i>Median<br/>SGPs<br/>2010</i> |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Grade 3—District     | 35                                        | <i>NA*</i>                      | 44                                        | <i>NA*</i>                      | 59                                        | <i>NA*</i>                      |
| Grade 3—State        | 61                                        | <i>NA*</i>                      | 60                                        | <i>NA*</i>                      | 65                                        | <i>NA*</i>                      |
| Grade 4—District     | 40                                        | <i>46.5</i>                     | 15                                        | <i>21.5</i>                     | 33                                        | <i>44.0</i>                     |
| Grade 4—State        | 49                                        | <i>49.0</i>                     | 48                                        | <i>50.0</i>                     | 48                                        | <i>49.0</i>                     |
| Grade 5—District     | 37                                        | <i>45.0</i>                     | 62                                        | <i>73.0</i>                     | 45                                        | <i>81.0</i>                     |
| Grade 5—State        | 52                                        | <i>51.0</i>                     | 54                                        | <i>50.0</i>                     | 55                                        | <i>50.0</i>                     |
| Grade 6—District     | 57                                        | <i>40.5</i>                     | 47                                        | <i>53.0</i>                     | 50                                        | <i>28.0</i>                     |
| Grade 6—State        | 56                                        | <i>50.0</i>                     | 57                                        | <i>50.0</i>                     | 59                                        | <i>50.0</i>                     |
| Grade 7— District    | 36                                        | <i>41.0</i>                     | 53                                        | <i>56.5</i>                     | 47                                        | <i>64.0</i>                     |
| Grade 7— State       | 47                                        | <i>50.0</i>                     | 49                                        | <i>50.0</i>                     | 53                                        | <i>50.0</i>                     |
| Grade 8— District    | 45                                        | <i>44.0</i>                     | 31                                        | <i>37.0</i>                     | 55                                        | <i>62.0</i>                     |
| Grade 8— State       | 49                                        | <i>51.0</i>                     | 48                                        | <i>50.0</i>                     | 51                                        | <i>51.0</i>                     |
| Grade 10— District   | 75                                        | <i>N/A</i>                      | 85                                        | <i>49.0</i>                     | 65                                        | <i>62.0</i>                     |
| Grade 10— State      | 72                                        | <i>N/A</i>                      | 75                                        | <i>50.0</i>                     | 75                                        | <i>50.0</i>                     |
| All Grades— District | 46                                        | <i>44.0</i>                     | 49                                        | <i>49.0</i>                     | 50                                        | <i>57.0</i>                     |
| All Grades—State     | 55                                        | <i>50.0</i>                     | 55                                        | <i>50.0</i>                     | 59                                        | <i>50.0</i>                     |

Note: The number of students included in the calculation of proficiency rate differs from the number of students included in the calculation of median SGP.

\*NA: Grade 3 students do not have SGPs because they are taking MCAS tests for the first time.

Source: School/District Profiles on ESE website

## ***Findings***

### **Leadership and Governance**

**The Nantucket Public Schools do not have the necessary district structures to systematically raise student achievement.**

The school district's infrastructure of systems in the critical areas of curriculum, instruction, and assessment is underdeveloped, as are the district's systems for supervision and evaluation.

Interviews with teachers and review of curriculum maps and other curriculum documents revealed that there is no written systemwide scope and sequence in any core content area. The system for evaluation is only sporadically implemented, as documented in personnel files and interviews with administrators, teachers, and members of the school committee. Thus, there is no agreement on the curriculum to be taught or the methods to assess student progress, nor any organized supervision to improve instruction.

Administrators are not held accountable for student achievement. Principals reported that they are the facilitators of education while their teachers are the backbone of the system. They expressed the belief that it is the teachers who provide continuity of instruction to students. A review of administrators' performance evaluations confirmed that they are not held accountable for student achievement. However, principals and teachers reported that teachers are also not held accountable for student achievement. Conversations around improvement of instruction and measuring student progress are not routine between administrators and teachers.

Due to fiscal constraints the position of assistant superintendent with responsibilities to provide central coordination and articulation of curriculum and instruction was eliminated in 2009-2010. The duties were assigned to other positions, including the principals and a newly created position of data coordinator. Thus, the system is without unified central coordination and articulation of improvement efforts in curriculum, instruction, and assessment. To begin to address this need the recently hired superintendent has initiated vertical teams within the district in every content area. Each administrator has the responsibility of facilitating a content area team. The purpose of the design is twofold: 1) to begin the process of vertical articulation of content areas across the district; and 2) to distribute instructional leadership across all administrators to provide the district with a more comprehensive view of the instructional programs.

In addition to the underdevelopment of systems there is also a lack of planning within the school district. A review of district documents revealed that there is no District Improvement Plan to address the needs of students. Nantucket Elementary School has a current, well-developed School Improvement Plan. Neither Nantucket High School nor Cyrus Peirce Middle School has a School Improvement Plan with sufficiently detailed objectives and action plans. Because there is no District Improvement Plan, none of the school plans are articulated and coordinated with overall district strategic planning. According to administrators and members of the school committee, the initiatives identified in the former district strategic plan, dated 2004-2009, were allowed to remain unfinished because of an impending change in district leadership. The newly hired superintendent has begun a comprehensive process to develop a five-year plan to address

needs related to curriculum and instruction, student support services, budget development, safety, and the building of trust throughout the school community.

Without planning and coordination of efforts each school acts as an independent entity rather than an integrated part of a whole. The best illustration of this is the purchase of mathematics programs for the elementary and middle schools. Teachers and administrators reported that the elementary mathematics program was chosen to bring some continuity at the elementary level. It was reportedly chosen because it is aligned to the curriculum frameworks. At the middle school, math teachers initiated the purchase of a new math series. They were the sole participants in the determination of need and evaluation of “goodness of fit” for their students. There was no consideration of the articulation of programs between the middle school and either the elementary school or the high school.

Without districtwide systems to determine and address the changing needs of students, individual teachers and administrators have been proceeding under their own direction and at their own pace to address short-term needs that are presented daily. These efforts are disparate, resulting in a patchwork of instruction and incomplete policies and procedures in other critical areas such as professional development and supervision and evaluation. In most cases, the efforts are reactive, rather than being proactively planned strategies to improve student performance. One reactive effort was the choice of the Research for Better Teaching (RBT) model for teacher evaluation as the model that all administrators and teachers were required to be trained in, in reaction to legal action precipitated by the teachers’ union regarding the dearth of performance evaluations of teachers. The consideration of use of supervision and evaluation to improve student performance was not part of the decision-making process. The choice resulted from exposure to this approach through some staff’s participation in graduate studies. Initiatives born of reaction are not conducive to raising student achievement as they do not constitute a systematic approach to curriculum, instruction, and assessment and the supervision of instructional staff.

In the judgment of the review team, although the district has begun initiatives to address its weaknesses, such as the vertical teams and the process to develop the five-year district plan, it currently lacks sufficiently developed systems to ensure consistent, aligned curriculum that is responsive to students’ needs, to track and measure student achievement, to supervise teaching and evaluate teachers, and to use achievement data to improve instruction, modify curriculum, and evaluate programs and services.

**The Nantucket Public Schools have experienced much administrative turnover. This turnover has contributed to the perception in the community that the system is in a state of flux, has resulted in frustration among the staff, and has hindered the improvement of student achievement.**

The district has a history of inordinate turnover among its administrators. According to district records the elementary school has had 5 principals in the past six years. The current interim principal is the sole administrator to serve two consecutive years during this time period. Because of a recent retirement at the middle school level students in grades 6 and 7 have had seven principals since entering school. According to district staff and members of the school

committee the high school has had an unusually large number of different administrators in the past 28 years. (The current principal was in his third year in 2010-2011.) Lastly, although the previous superintendent had been in his position for five years, he reached a severance agreement with the school committee under which he resigned in June 2010, a year before the end of his contract. The terms of the agreement obligate the school committee to pay the previous superintendent installments of a sum of \$100,000 through fiscal year 2011, along with employer contributions for health insurance. In practical terms the Nantucket School Committee is paying double for the superintendency for fiscal year 2011. Members of the school committee stated that, in their opinion, this double payment was necessary to move this school system forward. Nonetheless, this has contributed to the perception, described by parents, teachers, and members of the school committee, that the system has been in a state of flux.

Administrators put forth a number of reasons to explain the administrative turnover in the district, referring to talented administrators who left to advance their careers as well as inept ones who were rightly replaced. Though there was not consensus among the administrators interviewed, several of them did see the administrative turnover, particularly at the elementary school, as having had an effect on the achievement of students. In addition, administrators referred to changing demographics, in particular the substantial increase in the number of ELL students, as creating lower achievement at the elementary school than at the secondary level in comparison with statewide achievement. The superintendent also cited as a consequence of low achievement at the elementary level an increase in the number of more academically able students attending the island's two private schools serving preschool through grade 8. Evidence supporting his statement can be found in ESE data on the numbers and percentages of school-aged residents in Nantucket attending public school: from 2006-2007 to 2009-2010, the number of school-aged residents who do not attend the public schools rose from 138 to 209, and the percentage of school-aged residents who attend them fell from 90 percent to 85 percent.<sup>6</sup>

Teachers expressed frustration at the rate of administrative turnover. Many elementary teachers cited the history of schoolwide initiatives begun in earnest by one principal only to be dropped by the next. They recalled many stops and starts in curriculum and instruction and professional development over the past few years. The lack of consistent leadership and dropped improvement initiatives have been an impediment to the improvement of student achievement. As can be seen from Tables 4 and 5 above, although district proficiency rates in both ELA and mathematics have improved since 2008, and although the proficiency gap between the district and the state has narrowed by two points in ELA and 12 points in math during that time, among Nantucket students, four out of seven grades tested in ELA and six out of seven grades tested in math still had lower proficiency rates in 2010 than students in the same grade statewide. Over the period 2008-2010, the gaps between proficiency rates in Nantucket and state proficiency rates were generally most pronounced at the elementary level. Parents also expressed concern at the turnover, citing the numbers of principals their children had had in elementary school. They said

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<sup>6</sup> See the District Analysis and Review Tool at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sda/dart/districts.xls>. (Choose Nantucket and click on the "Context" tab at the bottom, then scroll down).

that the students felt the changes and that the turnover had not been beneficial for students. They told the review team that the turnover is a topic of conversation among parents.

Members of the school committee concur that the history of administrative turnover has not been beneficial to students. They expressed confidence that the turnover would abate as a result of the hiring of the current superintendent, whom they view as a stabilizing as well as energizing force in the district.

One of the realities of working on the island, the review team heard in interviews with administrators, is that many administrators or aspiring administrators are not able to procure suitable housing. The school system, in conjunction with the town, has some available rental units for staff. Under the district's 2004-2009 strategic plan, the school district was involved in a community-wide Housing Task Force to develop affordable housing options for staff.

The lack of stability among the leadership of the Nantucket Public Schools has resulted in inconsistencies in curriculum and instruction and professional development, has caused frustration among the staff and concern among parents, and has hindered improvement of student achievement.

## **Curriculum and Instruction**

**Without an established process for the regular and timely review and update of the curriculum, the district has not ensured that the taught curricula are aligned to the state curriculum frameworks, that they are vertically or horizontally aligned, or that they meet the needs of district students.**

Because of insufficient curriculum leadership, the district has not ensured that its curriculum is aligned to the state frameworks. Being without sufficient curriculum leadership and oversight, the district has also not ensured that its curriculum is aligned vertically between grades and horizontally across classrooms of the same grade and subject.

Interviews with teachers and school leaders indicated that the district was entirely without curriculum leadership for the 2009-2010 school year. Up to 2009, the district had an assistant superintendent for curriculum. This position was eliminated due to budgetary constraints. After it was eliminated, no other administrator in the district took charge or was assigned the responsibility of curriculum leadership. In addition, there is no system in place for districtwide oversight of the curriculum nor is there a cycle for reviewing and updating curriculum. In interviews, teachers and school leaders reported a real concern about the lack of curriculum review and development in the district and said that they recognized that there are "numerous gaps" in curriculum alignment. Although there was an assistant superintendent for curriculum in the district from 2007 to June of 2009, school leaders told the review team that no direction was given in meetings held in 2008-2009 to discuss vertical alignment in the core subjects. It was further stated that there was "no agenda" for these meetings, which took place four times during the school year, nor was there any tangible outcome. No curriculum documents were created as a result of these vertical alignment meetings. School leaders also stated in interviews that in 2008-

2009 teachers across the district worked on aligning the science and ELA curricula; again, they said that no documents were produced as a result of this effort.

Review of the K-12 curriculum documents for the core subjects, in this case curriculum maps, showed inconsistencies of quality and completeness. In interviews, school leaders stated that the initiative to create curriculum maps began in 2006 and that the maps were largely created in a “backwards” process using a “textbook” as a guide. Although some of the curriculum maps reviewed were matched to the state curriculum frameworks and followed a consistent format, this was not the case in the majority of curriculum maps reviewed. Teachers and school leaders pointed out that there was “much inconsistency” in the curriculum maps due to a lack of supervision in the process of creating them.

Elementary school teachers and school leaders reported that there is “no oversight of the curriculum,” but that grade-level teams are responsible for curriculum, pacing guides, and assessment at their grade level. Teachers further reported that curriculum maps are not used by all grades to inform instruction. A review of the K-5 curriculum documents indicated that there was no curriculum map for math. Teachers are relying on a new textbook, *Math Expressions*, published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, which is correlated to the standards in the state curriculum frameworks for math. According to teachers and school leaders, the process for mapping mathematics began during the 2009-2010 school year when an out-of-district consultant was hired. The consultant worked on pacing guides at the elementary level, but a curriculum map for math for K-5 was not developed at that time. Teachers and school leaders also reported that there is no curriculum document for ELA for K-5 that would ensure vertical alignment. They cited gaps and redundancies in the area of spelling skills because there is no uniform K-5 spelling program. A concern was expressed by teachers that they “lack the skills to write curriculum,” but they said that they “have taken on more responsibilities” which include “trying to create maps” and “developing curriculum on their own.” The review team learned in interviews that teachers in grades 3-5 do have weekly opportunities to meet with the elementary principal to discuss what is being taught at their grade levels but that teachers in grades 1 and 2 do not meet with the principal to discuss what is being taught and also do not have opportunities to meet with other teachers to discuss curriculum.

Middle school teachers stated that they are required to submit curriculum maps to the principal at the close of each school year; however, “no feedback” concerning the maps was given to the teachers. In past years, meetings to discuss vertical alignment were “sporadic” and were overseen by the high school department heads, who acted as facilitators, but not as subject-specific specialists. According to middle school staff, horizontal alignment is more consistent than vertical, but curriculum alignment in general is “not as it should be.” Middle school staff indicated that there has been “no formal curriculum review cycle” in place in the district.

The high school principal and department heads described a “building-based” approach to curriculum with much “autonomy” for department heads. According to school leaders, the curriculum maps are used as guides for instruction, but there is also a heavy reliance on textbooks; cross-curriculum articulation is very “informal.” They stated that there is “no

curriculum review cycle or model in place in the high school.” They commented further that vertical articulation in the past was also a very informal process with “no district-level oversight.” In interviews with the current superintendent and the high school principal, it was learned that the role of the department heads is limited; they do not have any curriculum responsibilities. Likewise, the review team learned in interviews that the district has team leaders in place at both the middle school and elementary level, but that they also do not have any curriculum responsibilities.

School leaders and teachers said that at the start of the 2010-2011 school year, vertical subject area groups for the core subject areas (math, ELA/literacy, science and social studies) were formed with distinct curriculum goals for the year including full vertical articulation for kindergarten through grade 12. District administrators have been assigned, according to their strengths, as facilitators for each of the subject groups. The district’s data coordinator has now taken a leadership role on vertical articulation for all subjects and is also now the subject specialist for math. This initiative is the first step the district has taken in a directed process of aligning the curriculum. In interviews, the new superintendent and teachers cited the fact that each principal now has a leadership responsibility in curriculum.

Consistent curriculum leadership across all grades in the district has not been in place for some time. Without this leadership and a systematic process to continually review and refine the curriculum, there is no assurance that the district’s curriculum is aligned to the state curriculum frameworks or aligned horizontally and vertically, or that it meets the instructional needs of Nantucket students. The district does not have effective curriculum guides with scope and sequence, objectives, essential questions, resources, instructional strategies, timelines, and assessments for all content areas. Without them, teachers are not guided in what to teach or how to teach it, and student learning and student achievement are hindered.

**In many cases, the instructional practice observed in the Nantucket Public Schools did not incorporate a range of instructional techniques, check for understanding by means of on-the-spot formative assessments, or use strategies that call for higher-order thinking skills.**

The review team observed 20-minute segments of 23 lessons at the elementary level, 8 lessons at the middle school, and 15 lessons at the high school for a total of 46 classroom observations. On the basis of its observation in each classroom the team rated a set of characteristics of effective instruction; the ratings were “solid evidence,” partial evidence,” and “no evidence.” At all three levels there was a wide variation in the quality of classroom instruction. Although the district requires teachers and administrators to take a Research for Better Teaching (RBT) course to understand expectations for classroom instruction, the characteristics of effective teaching have not been supported or reinforced enough to lead to consistently effective instruction. An example of the variation in the quality of instruction could be seen at the elementary level in ELA classes. In one class observed, students at first were in a large group where the teacher was using on-the-spot formative assessments to check on students’ understanding; the class then reorganized into four small groups where students worked collaboratively on vocabulary from the four different books they were reading. One group was at a listening station where an audio of their book was

being played. The teacher acted as a facilitator and the students were charge of their learning and working at their own pace. Students were able to explain very clearly what they were doing and why and showed ownership for their learning. In another ELA class observed at the same grade level, students were completing worksheets connected to the ELA text; the teacher called upon students as they completed each sentence on the worksheet; instruction was teacher-centered and students were told specifically not to proceed at their own pace.

The team observed partial or no evidence of the use of a range of instructional techniques in 78 percent of all classes observed—in 74 percent of elementary classes observed, in 75 percent of middle school classes observed, and in 87 percent of high school classes observed. The predominant method of instruction at all three levels was teacher-led direct instruction with students working in unison on activities, completing papers, reading at the direction of the teacher or answering questions posed by the teacher. There were exceptions. In one ELA class observed at the middle school level, the teacher used a variety of instructional techniques to engage students in learning. The class began with a three-minute free-write followed by the teacher asking questions that involved evaluation and analysis on the part of the students; the class then moved into a fishbowl discussion group where the teacher modeled the learning expectations.

At all levels the team found classroom management strategies to be effective, with solid evidence of a classroom climate characterized by respectful behaviors, routines, tone, and discourse in 91 percent, 63 percent, and 73 percent of the classes observed at the elementary, middle and high school levels. The routine of establishing learning objectives for the day's lesson was less evident at all levels, with partial or no evidence of sharing the learning objective with students in 78 percent of all classes observed.

The team found that at the middle and high school levels, there was solid evidence that instruction linked academic concepts to students' prior knowledge and experience in the majority of the classes observed (75 percent and 73 percent respectively); at the elementary level, however, there was partial or no evidence of linking instruction to students' prior knowledge in 65 percent of the classes observed. At all levels, presentation of content was within students' English proficiency and developmental level; but it was not as clear with instructional materials used in the classroom. The team found that in the 46 classes observed, there was partial or no evidence in 54 percent that instructional materials were within students' English proficiency and developmental level.

In 70 percent of all classes observed in the district the team found partial or no evidence that lessons were paced to ensure that students were actively engaged in learning. This finding is linked to the narrow range of instructional techniques found, with teacher-led direct instruction being the predominant mode of instruction in the district. When a limited range of instructional techniques are used, students are not actively engaged in learning.

The team found partial or no evidence of the use by teachers of on-the-spot formative assessments to check for understanding and to inform instruction in 80 percent of high school classes observed. For example, in one classroom observed at the high school, the teacher

frequently checked for understanding, but did not check for individual students' understanding. Instead the teacher's questioning techniques relied on students answering in unison. At the middle school level, the team found partial or no evidence of on-the-spot assessments in 63 percent of the classes observed; and at the elementary level, in 48 percent.

As for characteristics of instructional techniques used by teachers to engage students in higher-order thinking skills, there was often little solid evidence of these in the classes observed. The least solid evidence for this type of characteristic was observed for questions requiring students to engage in a process of application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation: the team found partial or no evidence of that characteristic in 73 percent of high school classes observed; 88 percent of middle school classes observed; and 78 percent of elementary classes observed.

With the variation in quality of the instruction observed in the 46 classes visited, it is evident that the district does not have an effective instructional model in place. Although the district has created a respectful learning climate at all three levels, it has not ensured that high-quality instructional practices are solidly in place throughout.

## **Assessment**

**The district is in the very elementary stages of developing an assessment system that collects relevant student data, makes it accessible to staff, and uses it to continuously monitor student performance, determine individual needs, and modify instruction.**

Key district documents for the 2010-2011 school year, including "Nantucket - Superintendent Goals – 2010-2011" and the "Nantucket District Goals – 2010-2011" identify plans for increased use of assessment data to improve instructional practices and learning outcomes. For example, in his own goals document, Nantucket's new superintendent indicated his intention to "monitor and assess the effectiveness of instruction to ensure that improved student achievement is the driving force of our practices." In addition, he stated that "Data Teams will be created . . . to ensure that assessment data (both formative and summative) drives our decision making with respect to curriculum, instruction and assessment." Objectives in the Nantucket District Goals document for 2010-2011 included review of MCAS scores "to identify the strands of success and the strands of weakness," as well as "on-going assessment of continued at risk students."

Because the superintendent and several other key school and district administrators had only been in their positions for a few months, however, it was difficult at the time of the review for team members to identify much evidence that measurable progress had been made in achieving these assessment goals. For example, through interviews with both administrators and staff, reviewers learned that the creation of data teams, specifically identified as one of the superintendent's 2010-2011 goals, had yet to be completed.

Most of the progress with assessment and assessment data noted at the time of the review had occurred at the Nantucket Elementary School (NES). District and school administrators told reviewers that as part of its response to the elementary school being placed in corrective action as its No Child Left Behind (NCLB) accountability status in 2008, the district focused considerable

attention and resources to develop improved and expanded data collection policies and practices at NES. Interviewees described the extensive work done by the district's data coordinator and school administrators to create a comprehensive and uniform system of formative assessments and benchmark assessments (both standardized and local) by which to collect student performance data, guide instruction, and determine individual learning needs for all students in kindergarten through grade 5. NES's School Improvement Plan includes the improvement of student performance through "data collection, data analysis, and teacher training" as one of its major goals for the 2010-2011 school year. Further, the use of "consistent benchmarks allowing us to analyze math and reading levels and progress over time, across grade levels, and one grade level to the next" was cited as a key strategic objective to achieve that goal.

District administrators provided the review team with an assessment calendar listing the major assessments currently administered to NES students at regular intervals throughout the school year. Among the testing programs introduced at NES during the past few years, district and school leaders identified as the most valuable: Rigby READS (Reading Evaluation and Diagnostic System), grades 1-5; WRAP (Writing and Reading Assessment Profile), grades 1-5; DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment), K-5; Morrison-McCall Spelling Assessment, grades 2 and 5; Words Their Way Elementary Spelling Inventory, grades 3 and 4; as well as a full battery of AIMSweb testing (an on-line benchmark and progress monitoring system) in writing, reading, and mathematics in grades 1-5. NES now has substantially improved practices for the continuous collection, review, and dissemination of data. Administrators also reported that a new standards-based report card was introduced last year at NES that provides more accurate, comprehensive, and timely information about student academic progress and overall achievement. Finally, teachers and school leaders indicated that some professional development training and support had been made available at NES to enhance faculty's data collection and analysis skills and that as a result, administrators and grade-level teacher teams were becoming better able to monitor and appropriately respond to both aggregated and disaggregated student achievement data.

Interviewees acknowledged that the progress noted at the elementary school has not been replicated at either the Peirce Middle School or Nantucket High School. The principals stated that they were having difficulty identifying students' issues and that better assessment practices would be helpful. In the grade 6-8 teacher focus group, a teacher stated that there was not enough looking at test results. With the exception of MCAS results, scant evidence was presented of the systematic collection, analysis, or use of student performance data either to inform instruction or modify the curriculum in grades 6-12. For example, although the high school introduced common mid-year and final examinations for all students in all content areas during the 2009-2010 school year, both school administrators and staff reported to the review team that no formal system or mechanism existed whereby the results of these assessments were collected or analyzed. With the exception of data at the elementary school, district and school leaders could provide reviewers with little evidence to show that any student assessment results or other pertinent data were collected, analyzed, or used in an ongoing or systematic way within the district. Consequently, reviewers concluded that achievement data is not regularly used to drive

district decision-making, prioritize goals, influence the allocation of human and financial resources, or to introduce, modify, or discontinue programs or services. The absence of a comprehensive, centrally coordinated, and readily accessible data system for kindergarten through grade 12 substantially limits the district's ability to use student academic and demographic data to evaluate and improve curriculum and instruction and by doing so improve learning outcomes for all students.

## **Human Resources and Professional Development**

**The district's evaluation practices and instruments for both teachers and administrators are not in compliance with state regulations in that evaluations are not frequent enough, teacher evaluations do not reflect the Principles of Effective Teaching, and administrator evaluations do not reflect the Principles of Effective Administrative Leadership.**

Over the years, a systematic process for evaluation of Nantucket administrators and teachers has been almost completely absent. A review of district documents indicated that the Nantucket Teachers' Association filed grievances in October 2007 concerning an alleged lack of evaluation and absence of appropriate training and continuing professional development of teachers in the principles and theories of teacher evaluation, supervision and instruction. These grievances were settled in arbitration in the summer of 2008. The settlement agreement required all teachers and administrators to complete Research for Better Teaching (RBT) training and provide evidence of completion to the central office for inclusion in personnel records. As a result of the grievances, the school committee became aware that evaluations were not being conducted as required, and became actively involved through monthly monitoring of the district's progress in conducting evaluations.

Through interviews with district personnel and a review of district documents, including all administrator evaluations and a random selection of teacher evaluations, review team members determined that the district's evaluation practices for both teachers and administrators are not in compliance with the procedures for evaluation in 603 CMR 35.00. The regulations at 603 CMR 35.06 require that the district evaluate the performance of all teachers in accordance with the Principles of Effective Teaching, and all administrators in accordance with the Principles of Effective Administrative Leadership. Neither teacher nor administrator evaluations were aligned with the appropriate principles. Also, the district had not complied with the regulations' requirement that it evaluate all administrators and teachers without professional status at least annually, and evaluate teachers with professional status at least once every two years.

### *Teacher evaluations*

During the site visit, review team members had the opportunity to review randomly selected teacher personnel files for 48 teachers (nearly one-third of the 149 district teachers). Of the 48 files reviewed, five were for teachers without professional status. Of those, four were in their first year of service, and their files did not contain any written observations even though under district procedures (see below) informal observations are to be conducted throughout the year for

teachers new to the school, beginning with the second full week of school. Slightly less than half of the 48 files reviewed contained timely evaluations; about 70 percent (31 of 44) had been signed by both parties. The review of files that did not contain timely evaluations showed that up to thirteen years had elapsed between evaluations.

None of the evaluations reviewed showed evidence of alignment with the Principles of Effective Teaching. The overwhelming majority (92 percent) were informative (factual and containing instructional detail), and almost a third was found to be somewhat instructive (including comments intended to improve instruction), though none provided any recommendations for specific professional development. The district's document entitled "Supervision and Evaluation Components – Final Interim Clarifications for School Year 2010-2011" outlined the procedures to be followed in completing the evaluation cycle for teachers. That cycle varies from two to four years depending upon the duration of a teacher's alternative evaluation plan, described below. Teachers are to set a minimum of one instructional goal each year, with others being voluntary. This is to be done concurrently with the development of an Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP).

Teachers without professional teaching status are to receive a minimum of two formal observations in each of the first three years. Informal observations are to be conducted throughout the year for teachers new to the district, beginning with the second full week of school. For all other teachers, informal observations are at the option of the principal or by request of the teacher. Teachers with professional teacher status are required to be formally observed during their Formal Observation Year (year one) at least twice in a twelve-month cycle. At the time of the review, review team members were informed in interviews that the district had come to an agreement with the Nantucket Teachers' Association that by the end of June 2011, all teachers would be on a school-year cycle rather than the twelve-month cycle.

Teachers with professional teacher status who are not in a Formal Observation Year are required to submit a proposal for an alternative evaluation plan, which may be of one, two, or three years in duration, subject to yearly revision. Although 603 CMR requires evaluation of PTS teachers every two years, depending upon the duration of the alternative evaluation plans, the time between Formal Observation Years could be as long as four years.<sup>7</sup> There is no provision for summative evaluation in the district's evaluation system. The "Supervision and Evaluation Components" document's description of teacher self-assessment as "a/k/a Summative Evaluation (or Progress Report)" was the only reference to summative evaluation that review team members were able to find during the site visit. Categories required to be addressed in a self-assessment in a Formal Observation Year include: classroom teaching, contributing member of the staff, communicator with parents and community, performer of routine administrative duties and

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<sup>7</sup> Alternative evaluation plans might include a variety of alternatives including peer observation, participation in a study group, curriculum mapping, developing a new curriculum, aligning curriculum with the state curriculum frameworks, conducting field-based research, analyzing a portfolio of artifacts, keeping a weekly journal, preparing and presenting a professional development program, team-teaching with an administrator or principal, submitting an article for publication, self-analysis of a personal videotape, mentoring, or other options.

obligations, constant learner responsible for his or her own professional development, and progress on goals (goals set at the goal-setting conference). Teachers with professional teacher status may submit a self-assessment while under an alternative plan as well. Categories required in such self-assessments include: progress on the alternative plan and progress on goals. Administrators review and affix comments to the self-assessment and conduct a conference with the teacher about it. The document is signed and dated to indicate awareness of the content and acknowledgment that the document is a part of the teacher's personnel file.

Neither the teacher observation instrument nor the teacher self-assessment form provides for the assessment of teachers' performance in accordance with the Principles of Effective Teaching. Using the district's teacher observation instrument, observations are written in narrative format with a structure that uses a series of claims, evidence, interpretation, judgment and suggestions. The teacher self-assessment form is similarly not aligned with the Principles of Effective Teaching. Using this self-assessment form teachers write, in narrative form, a description and evaluation of their own performance in the areas listed above.

An administrator indicated in an interview that the teacher evaluation process is too time-consuming and complex and needs to be simplified and clarified. As a beginning step toward addressing this perceived need, the district established a supervision and evaluation committee in 2008-2009. This committee created timelines for evaluation in a spreadsheet format. Review team members were told that the new superintendent had indicated to district administrators that teacher evaluation would be revisited.

#### *Administrator evaluations*

The district's evaluation practices and evaluation instrument for administrators do not comply with the requirements of 603 CMR 35.06 that the district evaluate the performance of all administrators annually in accordance with the Principles of Effective Administrative Leadership. There is no formal administrator evaluation instrument. In the team's review of 11 administrator personnel files, it was observed that in one set of evaluations for 2009-2010, administrators had been evaluated by means of a narrative statement of one or more paragraphs that alluded generally to the performance of the administrator during the year past. Comments contained in those evaluations were largely laudatory and very general in nature. Of the 11 administrator personnel files reviewed, 2 contained no evaluations, as the administrators were in their first year in their position in the district. Of the remaining 9, review team members observed that only 5 had up-to-date evaluations, for 2009-2010 and that 4 had not been signed by either the superintendent or the administrator being evaluated. None of the administrator evaluations was aligned with the Principles of Effective Administrative Leadership. Additionally, while 6 of the evaluations were somewhat informative, only 1 evaluation was found to be instructive, containing suggestions to promote growth and overall effectiveness. Review team members learned in interviews with district administrators and union representatives that the district recognizes the need to address the evaluation practices in the district for both teachers and administrators. Administrators also recognized that evaluations in the past consisted of an informal narrative and were inconsistent. They indicated that the new

superintendent's expectation was that a new evaluation template would be designed and be based upon goals.

#### *Evaluation of the superintendent*

As the superintendent was in his first year of service in the district, there were no evaluations in his personnel file. A review of the personnel file of the previous superintendent indicated that he had been evaluated based upon his goals. The evaluation was informative but not instructive, and no suggestions had been made to promote his overall growth and effectiveness.

Nantucket School Committee minutes for March 30, 2010, showed that a school committee composite evaluation was presented of the superintendent's progress, made on the basis of the goals that had been previously established. The superintendent had been evaluated by the committee on categories including student performance and achievement, supervision and evaluation, oversight of the implementation of the "Walker Report," which assessed services provided to students, the district's budget, oversight of searches for new administrators for the district, efforts to increase and enhance community support and involvement in the schools, and improvement in interpersonal skills. There was no reference to there being any connection between the evaluation and either an increase in compensation or continued employment.

#### *Conclusion*

The system of evaluation practices existing in the district at the time of the review does not require timely summative evaluations of teachers to be completed on appropriately designed evaluation instruments aligned with the Principles of Effective Teaching: evaluations of teachers are not summative, are not aligned with the Principles, and for teachers with professional teacher status may be completed as infrequently as every four years. Likewise, annual evaluations of administrative personnel have not been conducted on appropriately designed evaluation instruments aligned with the Principles of Effective Administrative Leadership. The district has not complied with the requirement that districts "establish a rigorous and comprehensive evaluation process for teachers and administrators, consistent with these principles, to assure effective teaching and administrative leadership in the Commonwealth's public schools" 603 CMR 35.01(3). Without a rigorous and comprehensive evaluation process, the district can have little ability to improve the quality of its instruction and its students' performance.

**The district does not have a clearly defined, well-established set of procedures for developing, implementing, and evaluating its annual professional development plan. In the past professional development efforts have been driven primarily by schools and individuals and have not necessarily been aligned with the core goals of the district.**

While the district's professional development program is more than adequately funded, the school system does not have a coordinated districtwide approach to the development of the annual professional development plan that focuses on aligning professional development opportunities with the core goals of the district or its schools in order to improve student achievement. Review of district documents showed that the district spends approximately \$50,000 a year on professional development and reimburses each teacher up to \$3,500 a year for

professional development activities, including course reimbursements. Interviewees told review team members that attendance at off-site professional development offerings had significant associated costs, including travel time and the resulting lack of continuity due to teachers missing class time by virtue of being “off island.”

In interviews, district administrators expressed recognition that there was a need to develop a coordinated districtwide approach to the development, implementation, and evaluation of its professional development activities. They said that the 2010-2011 Professional Development Plan created by the district’s professional development committee was the first such plan developed in the district: before the 2010-2011 school year, professional development activities arose from either individual or site-based requests. Administrators also said that it was intended in this first year of the professional development committee’s existence to use teacher surveys to evaluate the effectiveness of professional development offerings, as part of the process of determining subsequent offerings.

Under the 2010-2011 Professional Development Plan there are seven half-days during the school year and three full days at the beginning of the school year for professional development for all schools. Professional development activities were also offered during the summer months. At the elementary school there are two half-days per month on Wednesdays throughout the year, with the exception of November, which has only parent conference half-days. The Wednesday half-day professional development program at the elementary school came into being as a direct result of the school’s being placed in corrective action. It was intended that the elementary school staff use those half-days to implement strategies to move the school out of corrective action. At the time of the review, the half-days that were instituted originally to respond to corrective action at the elementary school were reported by teachers in interviews as having evolved to be more and more focused on districtwide professional development.

Professional development was provided for all staff on the three days before the opening of the 2010-2011 school year. On the first day, there was a district orientation for all staff followed by classroom set-up and school and department meetings. On the second day, the elementary school staff took part in a response to intervention (RTI) presentation, and all three staffs took part in RBT refresher training. On the third day, the middle and high school staffs took part in anti-bullying training while the elementary school staff took part in classroom set-up, school meetings, and special education meetings. Under the 2010-2011 Professional Development Plan, a menu of selections for teachers to choose from was included in a document entitled “Nantucket Public Schools Professional Development Workshop Descriptions,” which was assembled by the district’s newly created professional development committee. While participation in professional development offerings is mandatory, what selections an individual chooses to participate in is voluntary.

The newly created professional development committee, chaired and monitored by the district’s data coordinator in shared responsibility with the technology director, also includes an elementary assistant principal, an elementary physical education teacher, a teaching assistant, a special education teacher, a speech and language pathologist, a 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, a middle and

high school foreign language teacher who is also the Nantucket Teachers' Association president, and a high school math teacher. This committee considered the perceived needs of staff, which were informally obtained through a survey of staff at the end of the 2009-2010 school year. Returned surveys included what was described in interviews as an "overwhelming request" for vertical K-12 subject meetings in 2010-2011. Also included were requests for professional development in technology, differentiated instruction training, training in professional learning communities, training in CPR, Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) training, an anti-bullying workshop, and a refresher course in RBT. District administrators reported their perception that the creation of this professional development committee represented "a good first step" towards developing a more meaningful and targeted professional development program.

The offerings available to staff in the 2010-2011 school year included:

- Setting up your own individual webpage for your classroom;
- Tech support in developing a webpage;
- Intermediate support on maintaining staff web pages;
- Open workshop on developing a teacher's web page;
- SMARTBoard training (elementary only);
- ENO Board training;
- AIMSweb, TESTwiz, Study Island, and Math Expressions online open workshop;
- Using the Foundations language basics program to improve literacy;
- Using Google Docs & Wikispaces in the classroom;
- American Red Cross First Aid;
- Heartsaver Adult CPR & Automated External Defibrillator (AED);
- Incorporating Nantucket whaling history into the classroom;
- Math problem solving; and
- ELL – category 4b training.

Full-day course offerings included:

- CPI Restraint Training;
- Myths and Mysteries of Addiction;
- Wings Over and On the Water – Field Guide to Birds;
- SUMMIT SAT Prep Training – Reading & Writing; and
- SUMMIT SAT Prep Training– Math.

The district's current process for the development of its annual professional development offerings does not include sufficient central office direction to facilitate not only individual

professional growth but also the attainment of district and school goals connected to improving student achievement. This lack of a coordinated districtwide approach to the development, implementation, and evaluation of the professional development program reduces the district's capacity for the continual improvement of the quality of instruction, a necessity for continual improvement in student performance.

## **Student Support**

**The district has instituted a significant number of supports at its only elementary school in order to improve achievement for all its students and so remove the school from its corrective action status under NCLB.**

In response to the district's only elementary school being placed in corrective action as a result of both students in the aggregate and students in all subgroups not making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for two consecutive years, district and school leaders instituted a number of significant supports in order to improve student achievement.

One of the first issues addressed was the administrative turnover that resulted in students having a different principal each year beginning in 2006-2007. Teachers in a focus group described this yearly administrative turnover as undermining morale as well as fostering a problem with student behavior that threatened to become a schoolwide problem. In the 2009-2010 school year a retired superintendent who had previous experience in the district was appointed as the principal of the school. According to teachers this principal changed expectations for students, and where previously there had been a lack of consequences a plan was put in place to support students with behavioral issues. All teachers were trained in the Responsive Classroom program, which is used at all levels in the school. In addition, guidance counselors provide instruction weekly to students in classes. These classes, which were observed by review team members, are devoted to providing strategies for improving student behaviors. In addition, a partnership was formed with Big Brothers Big Sisters that provides for high school students to meet with elementary students each morning at the Breakfast Buddies program. The program starts at 7:00 a.m. and lasts for 45 minutes. Parents sign up for the program and teachers can also make referrals. There is no directed instruction but students may talk or work on homework.

In order to improve mathematics scores at the elementary school a new program, Math Expressions, was introduced in the 2009-2010 school year. Further, teachers at the school were involved in producing a new standards-based report card. The district realized that much professional development work was needed in both these areas. In order to support teachers the school day was extended by 10 minutes on the other four days so that students could attend school for a half-day each Wednesday. As a result teachers have been able to pursue professional development activities each Wednesday afternoon. In focus groups teachers said that last year they were able to use this time to focus on curriculum issues pertinent to the elementary school, but that this year, when there has been more of a focus on district issues, they have had less time for school issues. Also, parent conferences are scheduled during these Wednesday afternoons.

Another major scheduling change instituted in the 2009-2010 school year changed the times and number of minutes for content instruction and provided time each day for support for at-risk students as well as enrichment for others. In the past, teachers had developed their own schedules. Teachers and school leaders told the review team that a schedule was developed that provides for all content classes at all levels except kindergarten to be taught at the same time for the same number of minutes. According to teachers and school leaders it ensures that students receive adequate time in each content area. They receive 90 minutes of ELA instruction and 85 in math. Further math instruction is provided in the Intervention and Imagination Block (I Block). All grades except kindergarten participate in the I Block, which provides 40 minutes of instructional time. During the I Block students who need extra support are flexibly grouped according to academic needs and receive instruction from one of the teachers for their grade in acquiring identified skills. In addition, the new schedule facilitates the provision of support by special education teachers in inclusion classrooms. Once weekly, the I Block is used for enrichment for selected 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students. Known as the Interest-Based Student Learning and Enrichment program, this program uses the elements of Joseph S. Renzulli and Sally M. Reis's Schoolwide Enrichment Model. Review team members were able to observe students in the program who were working on designing bridges. Students were eager to discuss their work and did so in a most informative manner.

In addition to the above supports the school has a Title I program in ELA for grades 4 and 5. There are three reading teachers who provide extra support in reading, in addition to a special education staff that provides support mostly through inclusion, with some pull-out. The school also has math and reading coaches who work in the classrooms with teachers. However, as described under the first curriculum and instruction finding above, the school does not have complete curriculum documents for math or ELA, needed in order to provide instructional guidance as well as vertical alignment. The district is in the process of writing a K-12 literacy plan as a response to the elementary school's being placed in corrective action. There is much work now being done in data analysis as a result of the district data coordinator's involvement with the elementary teachers in this endeavor.

The school does not offer summer school, as that was discontinued due to budget constraints. Students can receive after-school help at the Boys and Girls Center if their parents have signed them up for after-school care, but at this time there are no other before- or after-school programs devoted to helping students with their work.

Teachers said—and school leaders acknowledged—that time for collaboration among teachers is limited as the result of the interpretation by some teachers of the teachers' contract regarding planning time for teachers. Some teachers take the view that planning time is their time exclusively and does not have to be used to meet with other teachers to discuss student concerns. Other teachers take a different view and use some of the planning time to meet with other teachers and school leaders.

The supports the district and school have provided in order to improve student performance have been successful at some grade levels, but much progress needs to be made, especially in grade 4.

In 2010 only 39 percent of district 4th graders scored Proficient or above in ELA, compared to 54 percent of the state's grade 4 students. The proficiency rate for 4<sup>th</sup> grade students in math was 33 percent, compared to a 48 percent proficiency rate for the state's 4th graders. Further, the median student growth percentile for ELA for the district's fourth graders was 39.0, placing them just below the moderate range for student growth.. The 2010 median SGP in math for district 4<sup>th</sup> graders showed somewhat more progress being made as compared to students with similar test score histories across the state: it was 44.0.

In the judgment of the review team, the district and school have done a great deal to support students at the elementary school academically, but the lack of a complete, consistent, and aligned elementary curriculum in both ELA and mathematics and the limited time for collaboration among elementary teachers are hindrances to the improvement of student performance.

**The district's ELL services do not always meet the needs of its increasing ELL population.**

The ELL population in Nantucket's schools has increased as a result of the growing number of families who have come to work on the island and remained there. During the housing boom in the late 1980s many families from Jamaica, Bulgaria and Hispanic countries came to work in construction jobs on the island and stayed. As a result, in 2001 the Nantucket Public Schools hired an ESL teacher to serve the approximately 20 identified students in the district. At this time, the district's ELL population has grown to 100 students representing about 10 different countries. The ESL teacher at the high school said she also serves informally as the ELL coordinator. A list of administrative positions reviewed by the team did not contain an ELL coordinator position, and the teacher list provided by the district listed the high school ESL teacher as a full-time equivalent of 1.0—in other words, she teaches full-time. In interviews, the high school ESL teacher said that there are two certified ESL teachers and a teaching assistant at the elementary level, one ESL teacher at the middle school, and one teacher at the high school. The high school teacher said that she does not attend district-level meetings but will “sometimes go to a particular principal” to discuss any issues or concerns. Because of her full-time teaching assignment she is not able to fulfill other responsibilities generally associated with an ELL coordinator, such as meeting regularly with ESL staff as well as meeting regularly with district personnel.

In interviews with teachers at an elementary focus group they said that until this year not all ELL students in the school were receiving ESL services, as there was only one ESL teacher. The school now has two teachers, but in interviews the review team was told that ELL students are still not receiving the required hours of ESL instruction. During the visit to the elementary school an ESL class was observed in which students received 30 minutes of pull-out instruction. Students were eager to participate and instruction was geared to their language level. Teachers in the elementary focus group also said that they do not receive results of the Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment (MEPA). As a result they are not aware of the English proficiency levels of their students. The principal at the elementary school said that the progress of ELL students is not as good as that of the other students but that he believes that students are

now receiving sufficient instructional time both in and out of classrooms. The principal and other interviewees also told the review team that this school year (2010-2011) 22 ELL students were scheduled to enter kindergarten without any preschool experience. Through the district's community school program, which provides programs for ELL families, a Summer Boost program was organized in order to provide preschool for these entering kindergartners. Nineteen of the 22 students attended the program, which met four mornings each week for six weeks. The program was staffed by a bilingual teacher and assistant.

ELL students across the state outperform the ELL students in Nantucket on the MCAS. In 2010 Nantucket ELL students had a Composite Performance Index (CPI) of 50.0 in ELA and 40.9 in math while the CPIs for state ELL students were 59.8 and 56.2. A high school administrator said that these lower scores were due to the fact that the Nantucket ELL population tends to be transient: many students enroll in October, leave for the winter, and return in the spring, and are consequently unprepared to take the MCAS. However, no data was presented to support transience as a cause for the proficiency gap between Nantucket and state ELL students. The review team was told that there are few students in Advanced Placement classes, but that students who enroll in the Nantucket schools before grade 6 tend to do better academically. Once again, data was not available, as the district does not keep records on its formerly limited English proficient (FLEP) students. An administrator said that at the middle school level there was a question of the amount of time that students receive ESL instruction that could affect the MCAS scores. The administrator attributed this lack of sufficient instructional time to the way that the middle school schedule is set up.

The high school ESL teacher told the review team that the district had trained a number of teachers in the Sheltered Instructional Observational Protocol (SIOP), but that more needed to be trained. At the time of the site visit information from the high school ESL teacher indicated that 28 teachers had been trained in Category 1 and 40 teachers in Category 2. As of that time, no teacher had been trained in Category 3, but seven teachers were receiving training in Category 4.<sup>8</sup>

A presentation to the school committee was recently made by the high school ESL teacher; during interviews, school committee members said that they had learned a great deal about the program for ELL students in the district. According to the high school ESL teacher the new superintendent, who requested the presentation (the first presentation on the ELL program to the school committee since 2003), is very aware of the needs of the ELL students. During interviews the superintendent spoke about addressing the achievement of ELL students, especially at the elementary school where the challenge is the greatest.

All who were interviewed were aware of the increasing population of ELL students and the challenge that the district has in raising the performance of these students. Continued attention by school and district leaders will do much to improve the achievement of these students.

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<sup>8</sup> See Attachment 1 of the June 15, 2004, ESE memorandum at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/sei/qualifications.pdf>, p. 8, for information about categories of sheltered English immersion (SEI) training.

**The district has personnel and programs in place in order to address the behavioral, emotional, and social needs of its students.**

Each school in the district has personnel and strategies in place to address the behavioral, emotional, and social needs of its students. At the elementary school all teachers have been trained in the Responsive Classroom program, which addresses not only the academic needs but also the social and emotional needs of students. According to teachers in focus groups the program is implemented throughout the school. In addition, the elementary school has a child study team that meets weekly to discuss academic, social, and behavioral student concerns. There is a written procedure, which was provided to the review team. Staff available for student support include guidance counselors, a school psychologist, and a social worker who is a full-time staff member on loan from the island's social services department. In interviews the social worker described her role as a crisis clinician who works with students in the school but also establishes contacts with families. Students in grade 5, as well as middle and high school grades, are able to participate in Nantucket Island's Strong Wings Adventure Program, which is focused on outdoor activities that build character as well as an appreciation of nature. The middle school principal said in interviews that there is a guidance department as well as formal and informal programs in place at the middle school. According to the principal, the middle school does not have a formal program such as the Responsive Classroom program, but there is an advisory program in place that allows for students to meet with their adviser five times a week for a period of 10 minutes. However, advisers do not remain with the same students during the entire three years of middle school. There is also a student support team consisting of the principal, a social worker, the special education liaison, the school psychologist, and a guidance counselor that meets each week to discuss student concerns.

The behavior specialist at the middle school is in charge of the school's behavioral support program, now known as the Ethics and Strategy Center, which was introduced to the middle school in the 2009-2010 school year. It is staffed by this specialist and a behavioral assistant. Since the middle school and high school are located in separate spaces in the same building, this program serves both middle school and high school. In interviews the specialist said that the program primarily serves students whose behavior is disruptive in the classroom, preventing other students from learning. Students who are sent to the student support room have a time to "cool down" and discuss any emotional issues that are preventing them from participating in regular classroom activities.

The district has programming to provide support for students with mental health issues at all three schools. In the Options program for middle and high school students, both special and regular education students may leave their regular classroom and spend a few hours in the Options program space. In this setting, they find support from regular as well as special education teachers and can complete classroom work. One drawback according to interviewees is that the students in the room range from 6<sup>th</sup> graders to 12<sup>th</sup> graders.

The district and its schools had to respond to an unfortunate number of student suicides (three) before the 2008 school year. This woeful situation caused the district to implement a number of

programs and to increase staff in order to meet the emotional and health needs of its students, particularly at the high school level.

In 2008 the high school instituted the Signs of Suicide program (SOS). The SOS is a youth suicide curriculum designed for students in grades 9-12. In its introductory year all four high school grades received the training. According to school administrators, in 2010-2011 the training was to focus on 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders were also to receive the training. Interviewees said that during the course of the training guidance counselors are present at all sessions to answer all student questions. Like the middle school, the high school has a student support team that meets weekly to discuss any student concerns and an advisory program that allows students to meet regularly with their adviser.

The high school instituted a Student Assistance program in the 2009-2010 school year that is under the direction of a certified drug and alcohol specialist. This specialist is not an employee of the school department, but an employee of an outside community agency that accepts responsibility for his salary. In interviews the specialist and school leaders described the services provided by the Student Assistance program. These include services to prevent or address alcohol and drug use, attendance issues, conflicts with peers or staff, family problems, social isolation, anger, stress, depression, suicide, relationship issues, and grief or loss.

Through the Student Assistance program the high school has also developed Peers Helping Peers. Students are nominated by other students and are available to talk to their peers on an informal basis. Nomination involves a commitment to refrain from substance abuse.

The director of the program also provided a 9-hour educational series for parents, professionals, and other adults in the community on “Understanding Alcohol and Other Drug Use.” According to the director 10 adults attended the sessions, which ran for six weeks.

By providing for the emotional, social, and behavioral needs of its students, the district is taking a proactive stance that will help to identify and support all students who are at risk because of these needs.

**The Nantucket school district continues to improve the manner in which student services are organized and implemented.**

In the spring of 2009 the district hired an outside auditing firm to conduct an assessment of the pre-K to grade 12 student services. According to members of the school committee, the Walker Partnership’s Review of Student Support Services, known as the Walker report in the district, was received in a serious manner. The report was very specific in its recommendations, which focused on the organization and delivery of services in all student support programs.

A committee was formed in the fall of 2009 to address these recommendations. As a result, during the 2009-2010 school year the Responsive Classroom program was implemented at the elementary level and the Options program was put in place for middle and high school students. In the fall of 2010 the school committee appointed the director of special services. The director told the review team that there would be ongoing meetings during the year in order to address all the recommendations. “Nantucket District Goals – 2010-2011” lists a strategy focusing on

“review[ing] existing structures for providing student services, clarifying the roles of student support services personnel versus special education personnel, explaining the roles and responsibilities of student services personnel, clearly defining the hierarchy and areas of responsibility within student support services.” And in interviews the superintendent said that an advisory committee had been formed and would continue to examine the organization and delivery of services in the district. The steps the district has taken and its plans show a commendable commitment to carrying out the Walker report’s recommendations and continuing to improve student support.

## **Financial and Asset Management**

**The MUNIS chart of accounts (COA) uses a municipal code structure without integrating conventional ESE codes. As a result, detailed financial information that can be sorted in many different ways is not available to district and school administrators or the school committee, and the translation of the district’s current 10-digit code into compatible ESE codes for the required ESE End-of-Year report takes the financial director an extra three weeks each year.**

The original MUNIS chart of accounts was coded for both town and schools with integrated codes compatible with Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR) data. The district financial director stated in interviews that the ESE coding system, necessary for required reporting to ESE, was not considered when the original COA was designed; this has been mentioned in past audit reports. Accordingly, the current school accounting codes have little similarity to ESE code requirements. The MUNIS COA integrates line item descriptors and codes necessary to financially operate the school system with costs sorted by school location only. Distributed budget information, although reflecting the entire budget, is limited in scope and simplified in form. The MUNIS operating categories appear to be much broader and restrictive than the more detailed and revealing ESE categories. An administrator indicated that district personnel have recognized the need for an improved system for many years.

Fiscal year 2011 budget codes indicate that school expense data reports are sorted by MUNIS appropriate expense subcategories. While some codes are detailed, several “functions” are not. For example, superintendent office expense and financial operations expense are combined and labeled “Central System Instructional Support.” There are only 25 descriptive categories in the fiscal year 2011 budget.

A transitional link, referred to as a crosswalk protocol, is used by the district’s financial director to prepare the End-of-Year report for ESE. The financial director said in interviews that he is proficient in its use and has the confidence of the district in implementing the protocol. However, because of the intricacies of “translating” broad MUNIS codes into the more detailed ESE end-of-year batched codes, he is required to spend an additional three weeks each year in compiling the mass of operating, revolving, and grant expense and revenue data and allocating it among instructional and other programs. The director noted that at the time of the site visit in November

2010 the End-of-Year report for fiscal year 2010 had not yet been filed and was awaiting additional information from the town.

In interviews it was noted that since only the financial director has the expertise to use the “translation” protocol, end-of-year reporting would be delayed should he be unavailable to work on it for an extended period.

In another interview, the town’s chief financial officer related that she had worked with a consultant who has developed a 13-digit expanded code. The revised code would integrate municipal codes with ESE codes. The existing MUNIS software accounting package, supplemented with the district’s report generator, has the ability to subtotal all school budget and off-budget components for any type of reporting. If, therefore, ESE codes were implemented, the district could eliminate the need for the crosswalk protocol.

However, according to an administrator, the financial director and a project consultant for the town recently worked on the expanded codification, but the extensive efforts at the time were unsuccessful because of incomplete data from the town. In addition, according to the town’s chief financial officer, a transition to the expanded code would likely require that the school system operate a dual accounting system for a period.

Transitioning to the expanded code that integrated ESE codes would take time and expense. As things stand, however, the district’s financial director spends three weeks every year translating the current code into ESE codes for reporting purposes, and the district is without the detailed financial information that would be available if the ESE codes were integrated into the COA. The current MUNIS school account codes are not comprehensive in scope and limit the number of “angles” from which financial data may be viewed by school department administrators and the school committee.

**The district does not consistently use student performance data and needs assessment data to analyze cost-effectiveness of programs and services for the purpose of budget development. Its capacity to do so is restricted by the limitations of the current MUNIS school account codes.**

As described in the previous finding, with the district’s current MUNIS coding, budget information is limited in scope and simplified in form. Because of the broad MUNIS codes, the district is without detailed financial information and the number of angles from which financial data may be viewed is limited. These limitations hinder the district’s ability to analyze the cost-effectiveness of programs and services.

In interviews, principals as well as the financial director said that when the final district budget is constructed, the value of instructional programs is not a driving force in decision-making. In the sole reference to data driving the budget, principals said that enrollment data has an impact on class sizes. There is generally an absence of discussion regarding cost of program continuation or data relating to assessment of existing or new programs.

In order to support financial decision-making, administrators need to consider whether programs and services should be eliminated based on an evaluation of whether they are effective.

However, as described above under Assessment, the district has not made much progress at the middle and high school levels in the systematic collection, analysis, and use of student performance data, so student performance data is not used to modify and winnow programs. The district may be spending money on programs that it could learn from staff and from data are not adding value to students' education. In the grade 6-8 focus group, a staff member said that she thought there is "too much in the way of random selection of programs" and teachers agreed that there are too many "band aid" programs rather than a cohesive curriculum.

Some use of data in connection with budget decisions does take place at the elementary level. According to elementary school administrators, there are significant efforts to use MCAS data for the upper elementary grades to justify program budget expense. The administrators were aware, however, that there is a continuing need for programs to be bolstered by clearer data, particularly when there is competition for each budget dollar. The availability of clearer data to use for budget or other decisions will depend on the development of consistently delivered elementary curriculum so that student performance data will be an accurate indication of the value of a particular instructional program.

Administrators said that even with the new superintendent planning to form data teams, the district still appeared to be some time away from fully linking significant analysis of achievement and determination of the cost-effectiveness of programs. Without consistently delivered curriculum and the systematic collection and analysis of student performance data and other data, the district cannot accurately evaluate its programs or services or make a data-based decision on whether or not the financial investment represented by a particular program or service should be continued. And without coding that is more detailed than the current broad MUNIS coding, information on the financial investment the district is making in particular areas may be too broad-brush to be useful.

## ***Recommendations***

### **Leadership and Governance**

**After garnering as much community support as possible for the strategic plan being developed, the district should use it as the district's blueprint for embedding the systems necessary over the next five years to stabilize the school district and to raise student achievement.**

The district does not have the systems needed to improve curriculum, instruction, assessment, and the supervision and evaluation of teachers. There is also a need for better planning in the district. At the time of the site visit, there was no District Improvement Plan, neither the high school nor the middle school had a sufficiently detailed School Improvement Plan, and the district had a Professional Development Plan for the first time. The lack of systems and the lack of planning in the district are exacerbated by the unusual degree of administrative turnover, these three conditions contributing to a sense of a lack of direction throughout the district.

The proposed strategic plan has the potential to embed the needed systems in the district and should be used to do so. The institution of systems for curriculum development; administration of assessments; collection, analysis, and distribution of assessment results; and instructional improvement will make it possible to systematically review and revise instructional programs based upon the student achievement data collected. The regular and purposeful evaluation of principals and teachers is also critical to improving student achievement, along with professional development linked to both district priorities and evaluations.

By formally adopting the strategic plan and committing to its execution the school committee can bring stability to the system by providing teachers and administrators with the systems necessary for order and predictability within the district. The strategic plan should be supported by aligned School Improvement Plans, which should delineate the specific actions individual schools will take to incorporate the needed improvements and the timelines for those actions. Thus the district's systems can be embedded at every level, ensuring consistency in instruction as well as policies and procedures.

Interviews with administrators indicated to the review team that one factor contributing to administrative turnover in the Nantucket Public Schools is that many administrators and aspiring administrators are not able to procure suitable housing. The school system, in conjunction with the town, has some available rental units for staff. This is not a long-term solution. Under the district's 2004-2009 strategic plan, the school district was involved in a communitywide Housing Task Force to develop affordable housing options for staff. The review team recommends that the next strategic plan also provide for the school district to participate with the community at large in trying to develop such options, so as to help attract and retain administrators.

By using the long-range strategic plan as a cornerstone of its decisions, however, the school committee can provide some insulation from any future turnover. The school committee can send

a direct and unmistakable message to the staff, students, and community that there is a plan and that the members of the committee are invested in executing it for the benefit of students.

## **Curriculum and Instruction**

**The district must establish a comprehensive curriculum plan to assure that curriculum guides are in place for all content areas and that the curriculum is aligned, consistently delivered, and continuously improved.**

A review of documents and interviews with teachers and school leaders indicated that the district does not have a comprehensive curriculum plan to assure that the curriculum is aligned, consistently delivered, and continuously improving. Interviews indicated that for a number of years curriculum leadership in the district has not been effective and that in 2009-2010 there was no district curriculum leadership. According to school leaders and teachers, until school year 2010-2011 there was no district oversight of the curriculum and no process for the regular and timely review of the curriculum. A review of curriculum documents showed that the district did not have in place effective curriculum guides or maps for all of the content areas. Through interviews with school leaders and teachers, the review team learned that the district has department heads in the core subjects at the high school level and team leaders both at the middle school and elementary level. Neither have specific curriculum responsibilities.

At the start of the 2010-2011 school year, the district, under the leadership of the new superintendent, began the process of aligning the curriculum by creating vertical alignment teams in the core subject areas (math, ELA/literacy, science, and social studies) for kindergarten through grade 12. The data coordinator has been given the charge of aligning the curriculum. In interviews, school leaders stated that the goal of the vertical alignment teams is to fully align the curriculum K-12.

The review team strongly recommends that the district continue to its completion the initiative begun this school year with the establishment of vertical alignment teams to align the curriculum in the core subjects K-12. The review team further recommends that the district establish a curriculum leadership plan at each level that includes a system for the timely review and revision of the curriculum. The team recommends that the district create curriculum guides or maps for the content areas K-12 that are in line with the state curriculum frameworks and contain pacing guides, objectives, essential questions, teaching resources, and assessments/evaluation activities. In addition, the team encourages the district to consider expanding curriculum oversight responsibilities to department heads at the high school level and team leaders at the both the middle and elementary schools.

With an aligned, consistently delivered curriculum, the district will ensure that all students are being taught to state standards and that they are prepared as they move up through the grades; by establishing a continuous cycle of curriculum review and revision, the district will ensure that the curriculum meets identified student needs, thus raising achievement for all students in the district.

**As it implements a complete, consistent, and aligned curriculum, the district should provide clarity on effective instructional practices, enough common planning time for teachers to collaborate with each other and with instructional leaders, and an effective system of supervision and evaluation to monitor and inform instruction.**

Although the district has created a respectful learning climate at all three levels, the district has not ensured that high-quality instructional practices are solidly in place in the district. There is a direct link between a high quality curriculum and high quality instructional practices. Review of district documents and interviews with teachers and school leaders indicated that the district's curriculum is not sufficiently aligned, completely mapped, or consistently delivered, hindering the development of high-quality instruction in the district. In addition, through review of documents and interviews with teachers, the review team learned that organized and effective teacher supervision, which fosters high-quality instruction, is not in place in the district.

The review team found that in 70 percent of all classes observed in the district there was partial or no evidence of the teacher pacing the lesson to ensure that students were actively engaged in learning. This is linked to another finding of the review team. In 78 percent of classes observed in the district, there was partial or no evidence of a range of instructional techniques in place in classrooms; the predominant mode of instruction observed at all levels was teacher-led instruction. When a limited range of instructional techniques are used, students are not actively engaged in learning. As for characteristics of instructional techniques used by teachers to engage students in higher-order thinking skills, there was often little solid evidence of these in the classes observed. In addition, not all teachers have opportunities to meet with the principal or with each other to discuss curriculum and instruction.

To improve instruction, the district should use professional development, adequate common planning time, and systematic supervision and evaluation to establish consistent understanding by staff of effective instructional practices and to help them master those practices. The district should also strengthen instructional leadership at all levels, making sure that school leaders monitor instruction and provide sufficient guidance and support to teachers to help them improve it. The focus should be on improving instructional techniques and practices and broadening them to include the use of a range of strategies and strategies that elicit higher-order thinking. By doing so the district will improve student engagement along with instruction, leading to higher levels of student achievement.

## **Assessment**

**Expanding and formalizing the promising practices that are being implemented at Nantucket Elementary School, the district should develop and implement a comprehensive K-12 assessment system, with clear and specific policies, procedures, and expectations for continuous data collection, analysis, and dissemination at all of Nantucket's schools and grade levels. It should also develop policies and procedures for incorporating data analysis into all district decision-making.**

Although most of the progress achieved in creating an effective assessment system has thus far taken place at the Nantucket Elementary School (NES), reviewers found evidence in documents laying out goals for the superintendent and district, as well as in interviews with the superintendent and district and school administrators, of administrators' belief in the essential role that student assessment results and other pertinent data should play in informing curriculum and instruction and improving student achievement. Various published district and school plans and numerous interview statements by leadership called for the increased use of assessment data in the 2010-2011 school year to improve instructional practice and learning outcomes.

The review team recommends that the district undertake the concrete steps necessary to follow through on these plans and goals as soon as possible. For example, the superintendent should give the creation of district data teams, identified as one of his key goals for 2010-2011, the highest priority. Under the leadership of the district's data coordinator and with membership from across the district, the district data teams could be of valuable assistance in developing a detailed framework for a comprehensive K-12 assessment system. The district must provide clear, uniform expectations and specific oversight responsibilities for the continuous collection, analysis, and dissemination of academic and demographic data. In addition to using data to assess the progress and learning needs of individual students and student groups, to inform curriculum, and to improve instruction, the district should develop policies and procedures that incorporate data analysis into all aspects of its decision-making, including policy development, goal-setting, and human and fiscal resource allocation. The collection and analysis of data, including both student achievement and other types of data, will allow the district to base its decisions and its improvement initiatives on what is needed, increasing their effectiveness and making the most of the resources available.

**In order to successfully implement a comprehensive K-12 assessment system, the district should provide the faculty in all schools, grades, and content areas with the targeted and sustained training and supports necessary for them to become proficient in the collection, analysis, and use of student achievement data.**

Although some professional development training and support has been made available at NES to enhance the faculty's data collection and analysis skills, so that administrators and teachers are becoming better able to monitor and use student achievement data, this effort has been limited to the elementary school. The review team recommends that the district provide for all elementary and secondary staff greatly expanded, continuous, and targeted professional development

opportunities specifically designed to enhance their ability to employ data collection and analysis techniques as essential instructional tools.

The creation of individual data teams in each of Nantucket's three schools, referred to in interviews by several district leaders, cited in the superintendent's 2010-2011 goals document, and recommended above, would again be of assistance. These school data teams could provide support for data analysis with respect to specific skills, or in specific grades or content areas, as individual circumstances require. At all grade levels and particularly at the middle and high schools where the need has been acknowledged as most significant, professional development programming and supports should be provided to develop the capacity of teachers to analyze and use student assessment results and other pertinent data. This would substantially enhance their ability to monitor educational progress through the balanced use of formative and benchmark assessments, to determine individual students' needs, to use assessment data to modify instruction, and ultimately and most importantly to improve student achievement.

## **Human Resources and Professional Development**

**The district must provide teachers and administrators with fair, effective, and timely evaluation to support professional growth and maintain a high-quality staff as it brings its evaluation procedures and instruments into compliance with the new state regulations for educator evaluation at 603 CMR 35.00<sup>9</sup>. It must then ensure that its new procedures are implemented with fidelity.**

The district has had very little in the way of a systematic process for the evaluation of district administrators and teachers over the years. It has not complied with the requirement of 603 CMR 35.06<sup>10</sup> that it evaluate all administrators and teachers without professional status at least annually, and evaluate teachers with professional status at least once every two years. In fact, some teachers had not been evaluated in as many as 13 years. The evaluation instruments being used did not measure teacher performance against the Principles of Effective Teaching, as formerly required by 603 CMR 35.06.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, the current evaluation procedure has requirements to conduct teacher observations, but no requirement for a formal written summative evaluation other than on the district's instrument for self-assessment, described as "a/k/a Summative Evaluation (or Progress Report)." Similarly, in the case of administrators, the narrative instrument does not measure performance against the Principles of Effective Administrative Leadership as formerly required. This lack of a systematic process to conduct timely and appropriate evaluations of district personnel led to grievances being filed over the matter in 2007 by the Nantucket Teachers' Association. The grievances were settled in an

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<sup>9</sup> On June 28, 2011, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adopted new regulations on Evaluation of Educators to replace the regulations on Evaluation of Teachers and Administrators and accompanying Principles of Effective Teaching and Principles of Effective Administrative Leadership adopted in 1995, at 603 CMR 35.00. The new regulations are available at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr35.html>.

<sup>10</sup> As it appeared before the adoption of the new regulations in June 2011.

<sup>11</sup> Again, as it appeared before the adoption of the new regulations.

arbitration in 2008; the settlement agreement required training for teachers and administrators. Following the arbitration settlement, the school committee assumed the role of monitoring progress made in conducting evaluations monthly. The review team was told in interviews with administrators that the new superintendent recognized the need to revise evaluation procedures for both teachers and administrators.

In June 2011 the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adopted new educator evaluation regulations to replace the previous regulations on Evaluation of Teachers and Administrators and accompanying Principles of Effective Teaching and Principles of Effective Administrative Leadership at 603 CMR 35.00. The district must take action, in accordance with the superintendent's resolve, to bring evaluation procedures and instruments for both teachers and administrators into compliance with the new regulations at 603 CMR 35.00. To attain continual improvement in the practices of educators, leading to improved student performance, it must then ensure that its new evaluation procedures are faithfully implemented and that evaluations are monitored. The district should not wait until it can implement the new procedures, however, to ensure that all teachers and administrators are given formal, written summative evaluations—once every two years for teachers with professional status and every year for teachers without professional status and administrators.

**The district should develop and follow procedures for determining, implementing, and evaluating its annual professional development offerings to ensure that they are aligned with district and school goals connected with improving student achievement.**

A review of district documents indicated that the district more than adequately funds its professional development and provides ample time for professional development activities. At the time of the review team's visit, however, district administrators indicated their recognition of the need to establish a coordinated districtwide approach to determining, implementing, and evaluating professional development in the Nantucket Public Schools. Toward that end, the district had established a professional development committee for the 2010-2011 school year, produced a calendar of varied professional development offerings, and reported the intent to evaluate the effectiveness of those offerings at the end of the school year. In the review team's judgment, the process for determining professional development offerings as of the time of the site visit still did not include sufficient central office direction to produce alignment with district and school goals.

The review team recommends that the district continue to pursue the development and implementation of procedures for determining, implementing, and evaluating professional development offerings to ensure that those offerings advance the attainment of the goals and objectives in the new district strategic plan and the School Improvement Plans aligned with it (see first recommendation above). The district should consider having the superintendent focus the work of the professional development committee by directing that the committee provide for professional development in several specific areas that directly link to district goals. The committee should urge professional development providers both on the island and off to align their offerings with goals in the district. Also, the procedures developed should provide for the

committee to ensure an appropriate balance between professional development linked to district goals and professional development linked to school goals.

Procedures that ensure that professional development offerings link to district and school goals will allow the district to concentrate the professional development its staff receives in areas that advance its priorities for improving student achievement, rather than scattering it over many areas; this concentration of professional development will accelerate the improvement of student achievement.

## **Student Support**

**The district should provide for more administrative overview for ELL students in the district; this will help ensure that they receive enough ESL instruction and that content teachers receive the requisite training and support to meet their needs.**

At this point, there is no structure in place for communication at the district level regarding ELL matters. While principals assume responsibility at each school, there is limited systemwide overview of programs. A full-time teacher is attempting to carry out the responsibilities of an ELL coordinator, with the result that there is little time for collaboration with ESL staff regarding ELL issues. This teacher does not attend district-level meetings.

The number of ELL students in the district has been increasing in recent years, and while staff has been added at the elementary level, teachers there said that students were still not receiving enough ESL instruction. Elementary teachers also said that MEPA scores are not provided to regular education classroom teachers. As a result, regular education teachers are not aware of the English proficiency levels of their students, raising barriers to good content instruction for ELL students. Providing ample ESL instructional time is also an issue at the middle school.

Further, while some regular education teachers have participated in sheltered English immersion training, there is a need for more teachers to do so in order to meet the needs of ELL students in the regular education classroom.

The district should investigate ways to attain both effective coordination of the ELL program and informed oversight of the ELL program at the district level. It should make time available for the staff member coordinating the ELL program to collaborate with ESL staff on ELL issues and provide a means for the information and expertise of this staff member to be communicated to district leadership. The staff member coordinating the ELL program and the central office administrator to whom the coordinator reports should have clearly delineated responsibilities and a formal feedback mechanism to ensure effective communication. These would bring focus to the district's efforts to improve ELL education, including efforts to provide adequate ESL instruction, ensure that content teachers have the needed SEI training, and make the education of ELL students data-driven. Regular evaluation of these individuals' performance of their responsibilities with respect to the ELL program would provide necessary accountability for the district in terms of meeting the needs of ELLs.

## **Financial and Asset Management**

**In conjunction with the town, the district should consider investing the time and expense necessary to implement ESE codes in its chart of accounts to make required reporting easier and provide a higher level of financial information.**

The chart of accounts for Nantucket's MUNIS financial software does not incorporate ESE codes. Required end-of-year reporting to ESE has to be completed using these codes; translating Nantucket's codes into the more detailed ESE codes using a crosswalk protocol takes the financial director three weeks each year. In addition, because they are less detailed than the ESE codes, the codes now in use in the district limit the scope and detail of the financial information available to district administrators and the school committee. Though implementing it would take time and expense on top of that which has already been expended unsuccessfully, an expanded code is available that would integrate Nantucket's current codes with ESE codes.

The existing MUNIS software accounting package, supplemented with the district's report generator, has the capability to subtotal all school budget and off-budget components for any type of reporting. As a result, if ESE codes and descriptors were implemented, the district could eliminate the need for the crosswalk protocol as well as obtaining much improved data sort information. It would also reduce the need for cross-training should the financial director be unavailable for the work of translating the MUNIS codes into the ESE codes required for end-of-year reporting.

The new codes, however, would most likely require running a dual accounting system for a full fiscal year. Additionally, investment in an upgraded MUNIS report generator module would maximize effective use of the revised codes by sorting school financial data by such criteria as instructional functions, revealing budget and expense nuances not currently available.

The design of the ESE account codes reflects the collective expertise of a number of financial specialists, as well as years of enhancements, and is always evolving. If programmed and implemented well using carefully defined report data, the ESE coding system is capable of yielding a high level of financial information to administrators with the responsibility to make critical program decisions, to help them carry it out effectively. The ESE coding system has the ability to sort data to standards which incorporate nine separate administrative and instructional functions. It also has the ability to batch a significant amount of district salary and instructional information by type, as well as by multiple cost centers and programs.

The district should seriously consider the possibility of putting in the further time and expense necessary for transitioning to an expanded code that incorporates the ESE codes, as the time and expense involved may well be justified by the time that would be saved in completing required reports to ESE and, especially, by the high level of financial information that would be available to the district using the ESE codes. Having a high level of financial information available would be useful to the district in many ways, including making it easier to analyze the cost-effectiveness of programs and services, as discussed in the next recommendation.

**As it attains a consistently delivered, aligned curriculum and establishes a comprehensive assessment system, the district should base budget development on the analysis of the cost-effectiveness of programs and services and the assessment of district needs, using student achievement and other data.**

The district does not yet have either aligned and consistently delivered curriculum or a fully developed assessment system. See the recommendations above for a comprehensive curriculum plan and a comprehensive K-12 assessment system. Also, the district does not consistently use student performance data and other data to analyze district needs or the cost-effectiveness of existing programs and services for the purpose of budget development. Before it can make a practice of basing budget development on the assessment of needs and the analysis of cost-effectiveness using data, the district first has to carry out the recommended curriculum development and establish the recommended assessment system. Without consistently delivered curriculum, administrators will not be able to tell whether low student performance is attributable to the curriculum being used or to weaknesses in its delivery; without a fully developed assessment system, administrators will not have enough data to form a full and accurate picture of student performance.

As indicated in the assessment recommendation above, as it develops its assessment system the district should also develop policies and procedures that incorporate data analysis into all aspects of its decision-making, including human and fiscal resource allocation. Those policies and procedures should include policies and procedures for the use of student achievement and other data to analyze the cost-effectiveness of existing programs and services and to assess district needs. Once curriculum, assessment, and data systems are in place—optimally along with the improvement to the district’s coding recommended above—they will make analysis of cost-effectiveness and assessment of district needs possible. The district should then make such analysis and assessment integral to its budget development, so as to make the best use of scarce resources by winnowing out ineffective programs and services and adding those that correspond to needs in the district. Because the assessment system at Nantucket Elementary School is the most developed, the elementary school may be the closest of the district’s schools to having in place the systems that are necessary for budget development to be based on the analysis of cost-effectiveness and the assessment of needs.

## **Appendix A: Review Team Members**

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The review of the Nantucket Public Schools was conducted from November 15, 2010 to November 18, 2010 by the following team of educators, independent consultants to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Dr. Magdalene Giffune, Leadership and Governance

Suzanne Kelly, Curriculum and Instruction

Dr. Frank Sambuceti, Assessment

Dr. William Contreras, Human Resources and Professional Development

Dolores Fitzgerald, Student Support, Review Team Coordinator

Richard Scortino, Financial and Asset Management

## Appendix B: Review Activities and Site Visit Schedule

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### Level 3 Review Activities

The following activities were conducted as part of the review of the Nantucket Public Schools.

- The review team conducted interviews with the following Nantucket financial personnel: Town Manager, Town Treasurer, Selectman Chair, Finance Director and Former Finance Committee Chair
- The review team conducted interviews with the following members of the Nantucket School Committee: Chair of School Committee and three members.
- The review team conducted interviews with the following representatives of the Nantucket Teachers' Association: Two Co Presidents, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary.
- The review team conducted interviews and focus groups with the following representatives from the Nantucket Public Schools central office administration: Superintendent, Data Coordinator, Financial Director, Director of Special Services.
- The review team visited the following schools in the Nantucket Elementary School (Pre K-5), Cyrus Peirce Middle School (6-8) and Nantucket High School.(9-12)
  - During school visits, the review team conducted interviews with school principals, and teachers.
  - The review team conducted 48 classroom visits for different grade levels and subjects across the three schools visited.
- The review team reviewed the following documents provided by ESE:
  - District profile data
  - District Analysis and Review Tool (DART)
  - Data from the Education Data Warehouse (EDW)
  - Latest Coordinated Program Review (CPR) Report and any follow-up Mid-cycle Report
  - Most recent New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) report
  - Any District or School Accountability Report produced by Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA) or ESE in the past three years
  - Teachers' contract, including the teacher evaluation tool
  - Reports on licensure and highly qualified status
  - Long-term enrollment trends
  - End-of-year financial report for the district for 2010

- List of the district's federal and state grants
- Municipal profile
- The review team reviewed the following documents at the district and school levels (provided by the district or schools):
  - Organization chart
  - District Improvement Plan
  - School Improvement Plans
  - School committee policy manual
  - School committee minutes for the past year
  - Most recent budget proposal with accompanying narrative or presentation; and most recent approved budget
  - Curriculum guide overview
  - K-12 ELA, mathematics, and science curriculum documents
  - High school program of studies
  - Matrix of assessments administered in the district
  - Copies of data analyses/reports used in schools
  - Descriptions of student support programs
  - Program evaluations
  - Student and Family Handbooks
  - Faculty Handbook
  - Professional Development Plan and current program/schedule/courses
  - Teacher certification and qualification information
  - Teacher planning time schedules
  - Evaluation tools for central office administrators and principals
  - Classroom observation tools not used in the teacher evaluation process
  - Job descriptions for central office and school administrators and instructional staff)
  - Teacher attendance data
  - All administrator evaluations and certifications
  - Randomly selected teacher personnel files
  - Child study team procedure

## Site Visit Schedule

The following is the schedule for the onsite portion of the Level 3 review of the Nantucket Public Schools, conducted from November 15-18, 2010.

| Monday                                                                                                                                                                    | Tuesday                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Wednesday                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Thursday                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>November 15</p> <p>Orientation with district leaders and principals; interviews with district staff and principals; review of documents, review of personnel files</p> | <p>November 16</p> <p>Interviews with district staff and principals; school visits (Nantucket High School and Cyrus Peirce Middle School) review of personnel files; teacher focus groups; interview with Teachers' Association</p> | <p>November 17</p> <p>Interviews with town or city personnel; school visits (Nantucket Elementary School, Nantucket High School) interviews with school leaders; classroom observations; Interviews with school council parents, interviews with school committee</p> | <p>November 18</p> <p>School visits (Nantucket High School, Nantucket Elementary School, Cyrus Peirce middle School) interviews with school leaders; classroom observations; follow-up interviews emerging themes meeting with district leaders and principals</p> |

# **Appendix C: Finding and Recommendation Statements**

## ***Finding Statements:***

### **Leadership and Governance**

- 1. The Nantucket Public Schools do not have the necessary district structures to systematically raise student achievement.**
- 2. The Nantucket Public Schools have experienced much administrative turnover. This turnover has contributed to the perception in the community that the system is in a state of flux, has resulted in frustration among the staff, and has hindered the improvement of student achievement.**

### **Curriculum and Instruction**

- 3. Without an established process for the regular and timely review and update of the curriculum, the district has not ensured that the taught curricula are aligned to the state curriculum frameworks, that they are vertically or horizontally aligned, or that they meet the needs of district students.**
- 4. In many cases, the instructional practice observed in the Nantucket Public Schools did not incorporate a range of instructional techniques, check for understanding by means of on-the-spot formative assessments, or use strategies that call for higher-order thinking skills.**

### **Assessment**

- 5. The district is in the very elementary stages of developing an assessment system that collects relevant student data, makes it accessible to staff, and uses it to continuously monitor student performance, determine individual needs, and modify instruction.**

### **Human Resources and Professional Development**

- 6. The district's evaluation practices and instruments for both teachers and administrators are not in compliance with state regulations in that evaluations are not frequent enough, teacher evaluations do not reflect the Principles of Effective Teaching, and administrator evaluations do not reflect the Principles of Effective Administrative Leadership.**

7. The district does not have a clearly defined, well-established set of procedures for developing, implementing, and evaluating its annual professional development plan. In the past professional development efforts have been driven primarily by schools and individuals and have not necessarily been aligned with the core goals of the district.

### **Student Support**

8. The district has instituted a significant number of supports at its only elementary school in order to improve achievement for all its students and so remove the school from its corrective action status under NCLB.
9. The district's ELL services do not always meet the needs of its increasing ELL population.
10. The district has personnel and programs in place in order to address the behavioral, emotional, and social needs of its students.
11. The Nantucket school district continues to improve the manner in which student services are organized and implemented.

### **Financial and Asset Management**

12. The MUNIS chart of accounts (COA) uses a municipal code structure without integrating conventional ESE codes. As a result, detailed financial information that can be sorted in many different ways is not available to district and school administrators or the school committee, and the translation of the district's current 10-digit code into compatible ESE codes for the required ESE End-of-Year report takes the financial director an extra three weeks each year.
13. The district does not consistently use student performance data and needs assessment data to analyze cost-effectiveness of programs and services for the purpose of budget development. Its capacity to do so is restricted by the limitations of the current MUNIS school account codes.

## ***Recommendation Statements:***

### **Leadership and Governance**

1. After garnering as much community support as possible for the strategic plan being developed, the district should use it as the district's blueprint for embedding the systems necessary over the next five years to stabilize the school district and to raise student achievement.

### **Curriculum and Instruction**

2. The district must establish a comprehensive curriculum plan to assure that curriculum guides are in place for all content areas and that the curriculum is aligned, consistently delivered, and continuously improved.
3. As it implements a complete, consistent, and aligned curriculum, the district should provide clarity on effective instructional practices, enough common planning time for teachers to collaborate with each other and with instructional leaders, and an effective system of supervision and evaluation to monitor and inform instruction.

### **Assessment**

4. Expanding and formalizing the promising practices that are being implemented at Nantucket Elementary School, the district should develop and implement a comprehensive K-12 assessment system, with clear and specific policies, procedures, and expectations for continuous data collection, analysis, and dissemination at all of Nantucket's schools and grade levels. It should also develop policies and procedures for incorporating data analysis into all district decision-making.
5. In order to successfully implement a comprehensive K-12 assessment system, the district should provide the faculty in all schools, grades, and content areas with the targeted and sustained training and supports necessary for them to become proficient in the collection, analysis, and use of student achievement data.

### **Human Resources and Professional Development**

6. The district must provide teachers and administrators with fair, effective, and timely evaluation to support professional growth and maintain a high-quality staff as it brings its evaluation procedures and instruments into compliance with the new state

regulations for educator evaluation at 603 CMR 35.00. It must then ensure that its new procedures are implemented with fidelity.

7. The district should develop and follow procedures for determining, implementing, and evaluating its annual professional development offerings to ensure that they are aligned with district and school goals connected with improving student achievement.

### **Student Support**

8. The district should provide for more administrative overview for ELL students in the district; this will help ensure that they receive enough ESL instruction and that content teachers receive the requisite training and support to meet their needs.

### **Financial and Asset Management**

9. In conjunction with the town, the district should consider investing the time and expense necessary to implement ESE codes in its chart of accounts to make required reporting easier and provide a higher level of financial information.
10. As it attains a consistently delivered, aligned curriculum and establishes a comprehensive assessment system, the district should base budget development on the analysis of the cost-effectiveness of programs and services and the assessment of district needs, using student achievement and other data.