***Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education***

 *75 Pleasant Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148-4906 Telephone: (781) 338-3000*

*TTY: N.E.T. Relay 1-800-439-2370*

 Jeffrey C. Riley

*Commissioner*

September 21, 2023

Dear District Leaders:

I hope this message finds you well, having had a positive start to the school year. As you know, on Tuesday, September 19, 2023, accountability results were released by the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (DESE). You are receiving this memo because a school or schools in your district are identified by the 2023 Massachusetts Accountability System as “Requiring Assistance or Intervention.” This memo provides important information on required and recommended actions relative to this identification, as well as an overview of DESE’s 202324 assistance efforts aligned to the 2023 Massachusetts Accountability System.

**CSDP support available in 2023-24 for all schools**

The Center for School and District Partnership (CSDP) within DESE, which includes the

Statewide System of Support (SSoS), the Kaleidoscope Collective, the Office of Language

Acquisition, the Office for Effective Partnerships and Impact (OEPI), and the Office of

Educational Technology, is committed to assisting districts and schools across Massachusetts to implement systems and practices that advance equity and result in positive outcomes and learning experiences for all students, particularly those who have been historically marginalized. This year our support to districts focuses on improving the delivery of culturally responsive grade-appropriate instruction and fostering a sense of belonging for all students in alignment with DESE’s [Educational Vision.](https://www.doe.mass.edu/commissioner/vision/) To that end, CSDP offers a variety of supports to districts, including financial resources, professional development such as the MTSS Academies and Learning Acceleration Network, a selection of tools, and targeted assistance from Statewide System of Support (SSoS) regional staff and Office of Effective Partnerships and Impact (OEPI) staff. Your district will receive priority admission to these supports and programs; to access the catalog of supports from CSDP please click [HERE.](https://www.doe.mass.edu/csdp/)

**Differentiated district assistance and action steps based on designation**

Although many CSDP supports are and will continue to be available to all districts, prioritized assistance will be provided to districts with schools with a designation of “Requiring Assistance or Intervention” on the 2023 Massachusetts State Accountability System. As we transition back to a full implementation of our accountability system for the first time since 2019, we are differentiating our support to districts. While all districts with schools requiring assistance and intervention are prioritized for CSDP professional development and networking [supports,](https://www.doe.mass.edu/csdp/) some districts will also receive direct assistance from CSDP staff, either from the Statewide System of Support or the Office of Effective Partnerships and Impact.

All districts in receipt of this letter, regardless of eligibility for direct assistance, should review accountability data with all schools and, based on a review of the resources and next steps detailed below, determine the best course of action to improve outcomes for students least-well served by your system.

Districts that will receive direct assistance will hear directly from their assigned assistance team next week to provide more details on the specifics of the support they will receive from SSoS or OEPI.

# Underperforming schools that are supported by SSoS

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What supports are available for these schools and their districts?  | Next steps for these schools and their districts  |
| All schools that meet this criteria as defined in [**M.G.L. Chapter 69 1J**](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter69/Section1j) receive direct assistance from SSoS staff and are prioritized for all agency supports and resources. 2023 decisions about underperforming school status will be made by the Commissioner later this fall.   | * Required: school [signs up](https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/7468841/Commissioner-School-Visit-Scheduling-SY23-24) for a visit from Chief Schools Officer Komal Bhasin
* Required: school submits an updated turnaround plan to SSoS by Jan 31
* Required: School schedules

Progress Monitoring Visit with AIR * Recommended: apply for [Targeted Assistance Grant (TAG)](https://www.doe.mass.edu/grants/2024/222-325/) funding by October 31st
* DESE action step: email outreach will come from SSoS to district leadership by Monday 9/25

  |

# Schools performing among the bottom 10% of schools

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What supports are available for these schools and their districts?  | Next steps for these schools and their districts  |
| Districts with schools performing in bottom 10% of schools within their grade span statewide are provided with direct support from CSDP assistance staff in SSoS and OEPI. Districts with schools that meet this criteria should work with their respective assistance teams to engage in comprehensive data analysis disaggregated by student groups, and develop focused instructional priorities anchored in culturally responsive grade appropriate instruction and sense of belonging to rapidly improve education outcomes for students in these schools. Districts with schools meeting this criteria are also  | * Required: engage with SSoS or OEPI assistance team to update school and/or district-level improvement plans, either through

District Submissions (if SSoS or OEPI affiliated) or Targeted Assistance Grant (TAG) funding * Required: Some schools will be selected to receive a Progress Monitoring Visit from AIR – more details to come in October
 |
| prioritized for targeted assistance [grant funding,](https://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/redesign/default.html) [professional development,](https://www.doe.mass.edu/csdp/) and networking opportunities provided by CSDP. Districts should also take into consideration schools that are at risk of falling into the lowest 10% of schools (those with percentile ranks of 11-15) when developing district priorities and selecting participation in CSDP course offerings to ensure improved outcomes for students in these schools as well.  | * Recommended: apply [for Targeted Assistance Grant (TAG)](https://www.doe.mass.edu/grants/2024/222-325/) funding by October 31st
* Recommended: Reference [Coherence Guidebook](https://www.doe.mass.edu/csdp/guidebook/coherence-guidebook.pdf) & [CSDP Supports](https://www.doe.mass.edu/csdp/default.html)
* DESE action step: email outreach will come from SSoS to district leadership by Monday 9/25

  |

# Schools with low performing student groups

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What supports are available for these schools and their districts?  | Next steps for these schools and their districts  |
| Districts with schools with one or more low performing student groups (among the lowest performing 5 percent of like student groups statewide, as measured by the student group percentile) should analyze disaggregated state and local data for all student groups to ensure district and school-level interventions and supports are appropriately aligned to address needs. When one or more student groups are among the lowest performing 5 percent of like student groups statewide, this often signals that other student groups in the school are low performing and as such, the school needs to improve systems to ensure that high-quality grade appropriate and culturally responsive instruction reaches every student in the school.  | * Required: update school and/or district-level improvement plans
* Required: Some schools will be selected to receive a Progress Monitoring Visit from AIR – more details to come in October
* Recommended: if eligible, apply for [Targeted Assistance Grant (TAG)](https://www.doe.mass.edu/grants/2024/222-325/) funding by October 31st
* Recommended: Reference [Coherence Guidebook](https://www.doe.mass.edu/csdp/guidebook/coherence-guidebook.pdf) & [CSDP Supports](https://www.doe.mass.edu/csdp/default.html)
* DESE action step: based on performance and distribution, some districts will receive targeted assistance – these district leaders will receive outreach from SSoS or

OEPI by Monday 9/25  |

# Schools with federal designations

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What supports are available for these schools and their districts?  | Next steps for these schools and their districts  |
| Schools that receive a federal designation of Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI), Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI), and Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI) most often are also schools performing among the lowest 10% of schools  | ❑ Required: update school and/or district-level improvement plans, either through District Submissions (if SSoS-affiliated) or Targeted Assistance Grant (TAG) funding  |
| and/or have low performing student groups. Districts with schools meeting this criteria should analyze disaggregated state and local data for all student groups to ensure district and school-level interventions and supports are appropriately aligned to address needs.  | * Required: Some schools will be selected to receive a Progress Monitoring Visit from AIR – more details to come in October
* Recommended: apply for [Targeted Assistance Grant (TAG)](https://www.doe.mass.edu/grants/2024/222-325/) funding by October 31st
* Recommended: Reference [Coherence Guidebook](https://www.doe.mass.edu/csdp/guidebook/coherence-guidebook.pdf) & [CSDP](https://www.doe.mass.edu/csdp/default.html)

[Supports](https://www.doe.mass.edu/csdp/default.html)  |

# Schools with a graduation rate below 66.7%

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What supports are available for these schools and their districts?  | Next steps for these schools and their districts  |
| Schools with graduation rates below 66.7% should analyze disaggregated state and local data for all student groups to ensure district and school-level interventions and supports are appropriately aligned to address needs. Particular attention should be paid to local data on student engagement, attendance, dropout rates, and graduation rates.  | * Required: Update school improvement plans to include strategies to improve graduation rates
* Recommended: Consult DESE’s

[Office of College, Career, and Technical Education (CCTE)](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ccte/) for a wide variety of secondary school supports  |

# Schools with low participation rates

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What supports are available for these schools and their districts?  | Next steps for these schools and their districts  |
| DESE has a firm commitment to providing a high-quality education that meets state standards for all students, including those that have been historically marginalized due to disability, English language proficiency, race, and poverty. MCAS and ACCESS testing provide a critical set of common data from districts and schools across the Commonwealth that helps us assess how we are doing as a state in meeting that commitment to students. Districts and schools should address root causes of low testing participation by referencing the resource in next steps.  | ❑ Required: Refer to [this resource guide](https://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/lists-tools/low-participation-guidance.docx) to identify root cause and develop strategies to address them. For reference, the guide can be found on [the DESE website](https://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/lists-tools/default.html) under Supporting Materials section.  |

Thank you for your commitment to the students in your learning communities. We look forward to partnering with you this year to deliver meaningful and positive learning experiences for all students in Massachusetts.

Sincerely,

Komal Bhasin

Chief Schools Officer

Center for School and District Partnership