



Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

District Standards and Indicators

Introduction

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (DESE's) *District Standards and Indicators* are the agency's definition of effective school district policy and practice. The 6 standards and their 21 related indicators were developed based on research and on input from school-, district-, and state-level stakeholders about policies, systems and practices, which, if implemented well, are likely to lead to improved student performance, opportunities, and outcomes.¹ In particular, the document describes the focus on equity that all school districts must embrace to ensure they are effectively serving all students.

Definitions of terms used frequently in this document

All students: Given that some student groups have been historically underserved, and also that any student can be particularly "vulnerable" at any moment in time, it is important to consider practices and outcomes beyond the aggregate to ensure that all students are challenged and supported to learn and grow. The phrase "all" in this document refers to equity for and attention to students from all backgrounds and identities and experiences. These include but are not limited to all races and ethnicities, all genders and gender identities, all sexual orientations, all disabilities, all nationalities, all types of citizenship or immigration status, all religions, all family structures, all family housing situations, all medical/health needs, and all traumatic experiences.

Culturally responsive: Cultural responsiveness is an approach to viewing culture and identity as assets, including students' race, ethnicity, or linguistic assets, among other characteristics. Culturally responsive policies and practices acknowledge and actively draw upon diverse backgrounds, identities, strengths, and challenges of administrators, students, staff, and community as a way to deepen connections between the school and its community.

Disaggregated student data: Aggregate student data that is broken down into smaller parts in order to learn about the performance, opportunities, and outcomes of specific student populations; for example, schools, grade levels, and student groups. All data analysis described in this document should be conducted in accordance with all applicable laws pertaining to the confidentiality of student data.

Equity: Educational equity means that all students have access to the educational resources, opportunities, and rigor they need at the right moment in their education across race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, sexual orientation, family background and/or family income to meet high expectations for cognitive, behavioral, and social-emotional growth and development.²

¹ While some indicators refer to state laws or regulations, the purpose of this document is to describe effective district policies, systems, and practices.

² Adapted from Leading for Equity: Opportunities for State Education Chiefs, <https://ccsso.org/equity> and National Equity project, <http://nationalequityproject.org/about/equity>

Safe and supportive environment: A safe and supportive whole-school learning environment is positive, healthy, and inclusive and effectively integrates services and aligns initiatives that promote students' behavioral health. These services and initiatives include social and emotional learning, bullying prevention, trauma sensitivity, dropout prevention, truancy reduction, children's mental health, foster care and homeless youth education, inclusion of students with disabilities, and positive behavioral approaches that reduce suspensions and expulsions.

Student group: Any group of students who share similar characteristics, such as racial or ethnic identification, gender identification, socioeconomic status, physical or learning disabilities, or language skills.³ This includes, but is not limited to, the groups of students for which DESE issues annual performance determinations.

³ Adapted from EdGlossary.org, <https://www.edglossary.org/student-subgroup/>

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Leadership and Governance

School committee members and district and school leaders work collaboratively and strategically to improve all students' performance, opportunities, and outcomes. They establish, implement, and evaluate policies, procedures, systems, and budgets with a primary focus on achieving districtwide improvement goals, in part through equitable and effective use of resources.

1. School Committee Governance: The school committee upholds its responsibilities under Massachusetts laws and regulations, including the Massachusetts Education Reform Act; focuses on improving outcomes for all students; and acts as the primary advocate in the community for meeting students' needs. The committee:

- Focuses on improvement
 - Purposefully uses the district's vision and improvement plan to guide its policies, deliberations, and decisions
 - Regularly reviews disaggregated student data
 - Maintains a particular focus on closing achievement, access, and opportunity gaps for students of color, economically disadvantaged students, English learners, and students with disabilities
 - Evaluates the superintendent's performance annually as required by law
- Establishes a culture of collaboration
 - Ensures that members develop and sustain a collaborative working relationship with each other and with the superintendent
 - Actively creates opportunities to engage stakeholders in working together to improve student outcomes
 - Promotes positive working relationships between district and municipal leaders
 - Provides opportunities for students to share meaningful input into policies and decision-making as appropriate
- Fulfills its legal and fiduciary responsibilities as defined in Massachusetts state law
 - Takes responsibility for securing adequate funding for the district
 - Operates with transparency and maintains a clear and appropriate division of roles between municipal officials, the committee, and the superintendent
 - Ensures prudent financial management and spending in accordance with the budget it has approved
 - Equitably distributes available resources to improve student outcomes
 - As the employer of record on all collective bargaining agreements, takes an active and constructive role in developing timely and effective strategies for collective bargaining and managing negotiations

2. District and School Leadership: The superintendent promotes a culture of collaboration, trust, accountability, and joint responsibility for student learning among administrators, teachers, and other staff members. The superintendent engages with the school committee and the community to support district improvement.

- Leadership and engagement
 - The superintendent advises and makes recommendations to the school committee for sound educational policies, prudent budgeting, and effective collective bargaining
 - The superintendent, in collaboration with the school committee, actively builds a strong sense of support for public schools within the community

- The district provides clear and appropriate lines of internal and external communication and demonstrates responsiveness to feedback from stakeholders
- The superintendent establishes and leads an effective leadership team and ensures that leadership roles are appropriate for the district's needs
- The district ensures that each school has an effective leadership team that assures staff understanding and commitment to the school's mission and strategies; supports teacher leadership and a collaborative learning culture; focuses staff time and resources on improving student learning; and ensures an inclusive, respectful environment for all staff
- Focus on improvement. District and school leaders:
 - Demonstrate instructional leadership by focusing on improving teacher practice and student learning outcomes
 - Take concrete and ambitious steps to close achievement, access, and opportunity gaps for students of color, economically disadvantaged students, English learners, and students with disabilities
 - Use historical, longitudinal, and current disaggregated student data to plan and regularly monitor the impact of key improvement strategies, instructional practices, and the use of resources on student outcomes
 - Ensure that programs are evidence-based to the extent possible; maintain focus on high-quality implementation
 - Identify persistently low-performing or struggling schools and programs for intervention and improvement planning, with responsibility shared between district and school leaders for making measurable and sustained improvement
- Leadership development and support
 - The superintendent ensures that all administrators are evaluated annually
 - School leaders make strategic use of staffing, scheduling, and budgeting autonomies to support their school improvement plan and improve student outcomes
 - District and school leaders identify and support potential leaders and provide educators with meaningful leadership development opportunities
 - Systems and structures promote stability and help to sustain district initiatives during leadership turnover

3. District and School Improvement Planning: Using a clear, thoughtful, and inclusive process, the district develops a three- to five-year district improvement plan, strategic plan, or district strategy and an annual district action plan, and each school develops an annual school improvement plan aligned with the district's plan. The plans drive the development, implementation, and modification of educational programs and practices.

- Stakeholder engagement and reflection
 - District leaders, school leaders, teachers, students, families, and community are engaged in developing and implementing the district's plan/strategy and annual action plan
 - District and school leaders provide frequent, timely, and thorough information to the school committee, staff, students, families, and community on progress toward the achievement of plan goals, and seek significant and meaningful feedback to guide the plans' ongoing refinement
 - The district ensures that each school engages a representative School Council to develop a school improvement plan and has a clear process for reviewing school improvement plans

- The district implements and refines an ongoing, participatory process for reflection on progress toward plan goals, analyzing what was implemented, whether it worked, and why; modifications are made as needed to ensure progress toward goals
 - Plan elements. Improvement plans:
 - Have clear goals and ambitious strategies for improving performance, opportunities, and outcomes for all students
 - Are based on analysis of historical, longitudinal, and current disaggregated student data
 - Reflect careful consideration of the ways in which the district can impact student outcomes
 - Include realistic assessments and equitable allocation of available staffing, financial, material, and operational resources
- 4. Budget Development:** The district’s budget recommendations to the school committee are educationally sound and address the goals and strategies of the district’s improvement plans, benchmarking data available from DESE and elsewhere, and analysis of disaggregated student data.
- Budget development and monitoring
 - District and school leaders, including the district’s business manager, work together to develop a budget through a participatory and transparent process
 - As part of budget development, administrators review the cost-effectiveness of programs, initiatives, and activities, referencing student data
 - The district plans for the effective use of grant funds, revolving accounts, and other funds, in alignment with its improvement goals
 - District administrators regularly track spending and other financial transactions throughout the year, including special revenue funds, revolving accounts and related fees, and make changes and adjustments as needed
 - Principals have some discretion to make spending decisions during the school year, and have access to the information they need to make them
 - Resource allocation
 - Resources including funds, staff, materials, and time are allocated to ensure improved performance, opportunities, and outcomes for all students, with an emphasis on equity and effectiveness to close achievement, access, and opportunity gaps for students of color, economically disadvantaged students, English learners, and students with disabilities
 - Resources are allocated based on students’ needs at each school and program
 - The district seeks ways to expand capacity and resources through shared services agreements and other collaborations with external partners
 - Using student outcomes and other information, the district monitors the staffing, financial, material, and operational needs of schools, and addresses them in a timely, effective, and equitable way

Curriculum and Instruction

The district ensures effective implementation of high-quality, standards-aligned curricular materials⁴ that have undergone rigorous, research-based review such as that of the CURATE project;⁵ instruction that challenges and supports all students to meet Massachusetts standards; and a variety of academic offerings preparing all students for college, career, and civic participation.

- 1. Curriculum Selection and Use:** The district ensures that all teachers have access to standards-aligned curricular materials that meet the definitions of high-quality as set forth by ratings systems such as CURATE, and the support needed to implement those materials consistently and skillfully.
 - Decision-making processes. Curriculum reviews:
 - Are regular, rigorous, transparent, consistent, and inclusive
 - Consider specific district needs (e.g., areas of low performance, cultural relevance for students)
 - Align to relevant definitions of high-quality instructional materials, such as CURATE
 - Documented curriculum. Curricular materials:
 - Are readily available and feasible to implement for all teachers
 - Align to the content and rigor of the appropriate Massachusetts curriculum frameworks and to definitions of high-quality instructional materials, such as those set forth by CURATE
 - Align vertically, with coherent student learning progressions
 - Are complementary across content areas
 - Support teachers to challenge and support all students
 - Taught curriculum. Curriculum implementation:
 - Is consistent and coherent within and across classrooms and schools
 - Includes skillfully adapting and supplementing materials based on individual student needs and strengths, as appropriate
 - Is supported effectively by inclusive professional learning structures for all educator roles

- 2. Classroom Instruction:** The district ensures that all teachers provide effective instruction that challenges and supports all students.
 - Learning experiences for students. Instruction:
 - Allows students to engage with grade-appropriate text every day, with meaningful real-world problems every day, and in scientific conversations using data every week
 - Supports students to acquire and use complex knowledge and subject-specific skills and vocabulary
 - Enables students to develop social and emotional competencies (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making) as they progress academically
 - Is designed inclusively to account for differences in students' learning needs, competencies, interests, and levels of readiness
 - Centers on challenging, engaging tasks with measurable outcomes for all students

⁴ Resources teachers use to facilitate sequences of learning experiences (e.g., lesson and unit plans, texts); also called adopted or written curriculum.

⁵ <https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate/default.html>

- Adjustments to practice. Instructional decisions are informed by:
 - Differences in students' learning needs, skill levels, interests, and levels of readiness
 - A variety of assessments to measure student progress toward intended outcomes
 - Research-based differentiated interventions and enhancements for students
 - High-quality feedback from students, peers, coaches, and evaluators
- Learning environment. Classroom climate and structures:
 - Provide opportunities for all students to learn collaboratively in purposeful, flexible, diverse groups
 - Support all students to take academic risks (e.g., by attempting challenging tasks, eliciting feedback on their work)
 - Support all students to take ownership of their learning (e.g., by persevering effectively and asking for help when necessary)

3. Student Access to Coursework: The district ensures that all students have access to a range of rigorous coursework.

- Variety of academic offerings. Courses of study:
 - Support all students to become college and career ready and prepared for civic engagement, by developing the knowledge and skills that are necessary to successfully complete entry-level, credit-bearing college courses; participate in certificate or workplace training programs; enter economically viable career pathways; and engage as active and responsible participants in our democracy
 - Provide opportunities for all students to pursue rigorous learning experiences aligned to their ambitions and interests, such as accelerated learning pathways, Advanced Placement courses, and instruction in computer science, foreign languages, health, and the arts
- Equity of access. Students from historically marginalized groups, including students of color, those receiving special education services, and economically disadvantaged students:
 - Have equitable access to advanced coursework, such as accelerated learning pathways and Advanced Placement courses
 - Have equitable access to instruction in areas not subject to statewide testing, such as computer science, foreign languages, health, history, and the arts

Assessment

The district establishes and supports a culture that values the use of data in improving teaching, learning, and decision-making. District and school leaders ensure that systems are in place for the efficient and purposeful collection, use, and sharing of data from a variety of assessments to guide decision making at the district, school, and classroom levels and to improve all students' performance, opportunities, and outcomes.

- 1. Data and Assessment Systems:** The district has a clear purpose and system for reviewing state-level data and efficiently collecting district and school level assessment and outcome data.
 - Data selection. The district ensures that:
 - Data collected provides a comprehensive picture of student, school, and district performance based on multiple sources of data
 - Each data source (e.g., assessments, classroom grades) complements information from other measures
 - Assessment Alignment. The district ensures that:
 - Data systems support the consistent administration of a variety of informal and formal assessment methods, including screeners, diagnostic tools, and common interim assessments
 - Assessments are aligned across grade levels and subject areas to the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks, with particular attention to the practices or anchor standards for ELA and Literacy.

- 2. Data Use:** The district fosters a culture of data use to drive continuous improvement at all levels and ensures that educators, including district and school leaders, use collected data to guide instructional practice.
 - District data use. District and school leaders:
 - Set and track improvement goals using assessment of student performance including the performance of the district's most struggling students
 - Use data on the performance of student groups to provide actionable information to close achievement, access, and opportunity gaps for students of color, economically disadvantaged students, English learners, and students with disabilities
 - Use data to compare district performance with peer districts and/or state averages and identify strengths and weaknesses
 - Support for data use. District leaders:
 - Promote and sustain a culture of shared responsibility and accountability for assessing performance and taking actions that lead to improved outcomes for all students
 - Ensure that important data is readily available to end users
 - Oversee systems and structures that support the regular use of data to inform decision making at the classroom level
 - Demonstrate a commitment to professional development designed to improve the use of data and assessments to inform the practice of all educators
 - Provide opportunities for educators and others, including their evaluators, to work together to establish anticipated student learning gains prior to administering common and classroom assessments and compare student results on those assessments to anticipated gains

- 3. Sharing Results:** The district shares assessment results with students, teachers, and students' families in ways that are clear, timely, and easily understood and utilized.
- Communication with district staff. District leaders:
 - Share data and analysis connected to district goals with educators in ways that are clear, understandable, and actionable
 - Ensure that individual educators have easy access to all relevant data that can support classroom level decision making
 - Communication with families. The district:
 - Regularly communicates with families evidence of the school and district's performance, and the effectiveness of current strategies
 - Provides timely and effective information to families about their students' progress toward attaining grade-level standards and whether they are on track to being college and career ready
 - Ensures that information shared with families helps them understand how to support their students to perform at a high level
 - Communication with students. The district ensures that:
 - Evidence of a student's performance is shared with students in meaningful and appropriate ways
 - Data shared with students promotes engagement and personal effort

Human Resources and Professional Development

The district strategically designs, implements, and oversees human resource and inclusive professional development efforts in a way that supports an aligned human capital management system and results in the employment, development and retention of effective educators who are successful in advancing all students' performance, opportunities, and outcomes.

- 1. Infrastructure:** The district employs effective human resources policies, procedures, and practices.
 - The district maintains and reports accurate employment-related records
 - The district routinely analyzes and provides reports to principals for use in their planning and decision-making

- 2. Recruitment, Hiring, and Assignment:** The district proactively cultivates a pipeline of educators such that there is a qualified pool of applicants for all vacancies. It has hiring timelines, policies, and processes which are rigorous and efficient such that schools are able to employ effective educators. The district has developed systems and processes to identify and address equitable access to excellent educators.
 - Recruitment systems:
 - Target projected supply and demand issues across schools
 - Seek to diversify the workforce
 - Employ a variety of short-term and longer-term strategies
 - Proactively generate a pool of educators to fill vacancies as needed
 - Hiring systems:
 - Empower and support hiring managers to make hiring decisions based on district priorities and to meet the learning needs of individual schools' student populations
 - Establish a consistent process for selection
 - Encompass both internal hiring (e.g., promotions, transfers, shared staff) and external hiring
 - Verify appropriate licensure, endorsements, background checks, and waivers
 - Are continually evaluated and refined through systematic data collection on program design, implementation, and outcomes, including student learning outcomes and educator retention rates
 - Assignment. The district ensures that:
 - Teacher assignment is based on students' learning needs
 - Master schedules result in the equitable distribution of educator skill across grades and content areas, as well as student skill levels, ensuring appropriate supports for all students and programs
 - Teachers teaching outside of their licensure area do so for no more than 20 percent of their time⁶

⁶ The out-of-field allowance was increased to 50 percent for the 2020-21 school year, and this flexibility was extended for the 2021-22 school year. The 50 percent allowance excludes educators in roles requiring any of the following licenses: Teacher of Moderate Disabilities, Teacher of Severe Disabilities, Teacher of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ASL/TC), Teacher of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (Oral/Aural), Teacher of Visually Impaired, Teacher of Speech, Language and Hearing Disorders, school nurse, or English as a Second Language.

- 3. Supervision, Evaluation, and Educator Development:** The district ensures that supervision and evaluation inform a comprehensive approach to the identification, development, and retention of effective educators. It ensures that educators at all stages of their careers receive appropriately targeted and differentiated professional development that improves their knowledge, skills, and ability to meet the learning needs of all students. The district provides high-quality induction and mentoring support to all new hires such that it is able to develop, support, and retain effective educators.
- Supervision and evaluation systems:
 - Prioritize opportunities for educators to receive high-quality feedback (specific, timely, and actionable) that improves their practice
 - Ensure evaluators receive training, support, and development in effective, bias-free supervision and evaluation that impacts educator effectiveness
 - Provide all educators with performance ratings related to the Standards of Effective Teaching or the Standards for Effective Administrative Leadership Practice based on:
 1. evidence of practice,
 2. impact on student learning,
 3. student or staff feedback, and
 4. goal attainment
 - Result in setting a high bar for professional teaching status, the recognition of excellence, and the dismissal of educators who do not meet evaluation criteria within specified timeframes for improvement
 - Professional development systems are:
 - Aligned with MA Standards for Professional Development and the district’s vision/mission
 - Described in a professional development plan for all professional staff that is consistent with DESE’s guidelines
 - Intentionally varied, including but not limited to teacher-led PD and job-embedded, content-based, and individually pursued learning, with structures for collaboration that enable teachers to improve implementation of standards-aligned curricula and instructional practice
 - Informed by student and educator data and aligned to district, school, and/or educator goals, such that connections between theory and practice are explicit and programming directly impacts educator effectiveness and student learning
 - Aligned to the instructional materials used in the district
 - Induction and mentoring systems:
 - Include an orientation, a support team, and an intentionally matched, trained mentor
 - Ensure all beginning teachers and administrators receive mentoring support beyond the induction year (minimum of 50 hours), in alignment with DESE guidelines
 - Provide sufficient release time to engage in regular classroom observations and other mentoring activities
 - Ensure that mentors are well-qualified, extensively trained, carefully selected educators who have demonstrated effectiveness with students and colleagues
 - Are continually evaluated and refined through systematic data collection on program design, implementation, and outcomes, including student learning outcomes and educator retention rates

- 4. Recognition, Leadership Development, and Advancement:** The district provides differentiated roles and opportunities for growth, including distributed leadership opportunities and an articulated career ladder, such that it can effectively build leadership skills and retain effective professional staff and maximize their impact.

Student Support

The district ensures that schools equitably support all students' safety, well-being, and sense of belonging; systematically identify and address students' needs; and engage families and community partners to improve all students' performance, opportunities, and outcomes. The district assesses the programs and practices used across schools to ensure that students experience educational continuity and are well supported through school transitions.

- 1. Safe and Supportive School Climate and Culture:** The district prioritizes the physical, intellectual, and emotional safety of all students and adults, and creates an environment that helps students develop social, emotional, and academic knowledge, skills, and competencies. It supports schools to foster safe, positive, healthy, inclusive, engaging, and welcoming learning environments that cultivate supportive, authentic relationships and a strong sense of belonging and connection, and that value the diverse assets and voices of all students, staff, families, and partners.
 - Safe and supportive environment. The district:
 - Has comprehensive plans to support the safety and well-being of students and staff that are developed with input from representative stakeholders and aligned with and integrated into district and school improvement plans
 - Ensures that all school and classroom environments are supportive, culturally responsive, welcoming, respectful, trauma-sensitive, gender- and sexuality-inclusive, reflective of the community and students' cultures and identities, and well-maintained
 - Access, equity, engagement, and student voice. The district:
 - Demonstrates a commitment to access and equity for all students, and to developing staff capacity to examine and dismantle implicit biases and systemic inequalities and to create environments in which all students can deeply learn, grow, and thrive
 - Ensures that schools promote meaningful student engagement and leadership; provides opportunities for all students to participate in and/or influence education decisions and experiences, with a particular focus on engaging students who have been historically underserved
 - Positive behavioral approaches. The district:
 - Builds adult capacity to identify, understand, and respond to the underlying causes of student behavior
 - Engages students and families in developing positive behavioral systems
 - Implements clear schoolwide positive behavioral systems and expectations, in which specific rules, behaviors, and expectations are taught, modeled, and reinforced, while using an ongoing data-monitoring system to evaluate progress and inform practices
 - Ensures that behavior management/discipline policies, practices, and procedures are inclusive, developmentally appropriate, unbiased, equitable, supportive, and aligned to the needs of all students
- 2. Tiered Systems of Support:** The district has a proactive approach and system designed to meet the needs of all students by ensuring that schools use data-driven decision making, progress monitoring, and evidence-based supports and strategies with increasing intensity to sustain students' academic, behavioral, and social-emotional growth. The district:

- Provides tiered, evidence-based, culturally responsive supports for students (e.g., instruction, enrichment and extracurricular opportunities, interventions, etc.)
 - All students receive tier 1 instruction and supports. Tier 2 and 3 supports are focused on specific goals and needs, are of greater intensity, and are part of a continuum of services. All students, including but not limited to students with 504 plans or IEPs and English learners, can receive support across all three tiers
 - The district provides supports to general education teachers to address the needs of students with diverse learning styles through a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan or other guidance document
 - Universally designed practices (UDL) are utilized across all tiers and for all students
 - Schedules and resource allocation are designed to ensure that tier 2 and 3 supports supplement but do not replace core instruction
- Uses a systematic planning process that includes representative stakeholders with authority to make collaborative decisions
- Uses scientifically-validated assessments for screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring
- Ensures that school leadership teams:
 - Systematically evaluate the effectiveness of tiered systems of support, including evaluating the effectiveness of Tier 1 instruction, to inform planning
 - Have a process to determine whether interventions are structured and assigned equitably
 - Use a process for reviewing individual, group, and aggregate data (e.g., formative assessments, attendance, chronic absenteeism, discipline, etc.) to assess the impact of interventions, understand trends in results, make changes as needed, and identify broader school improvement needs
 - Have protocols for engaging students, families, and partners in the tiered support process, including gathering input from students to make decisions about the supports they receive
- Provides high-quality, on-going support and professional development to support the use of tiered models, and to build expertise in academic, behavioral, and social emotional learning

3. Family, Student, and Community Engagement and Partnerships: The district ensures that each school develops strong collaborative relationships with families, students, community partners, and other stakeholders in order to support students' academic progress and behavioral, social, emotional, and physical development and well-being.

- Family and student engagement. The district:
 - Establishes systems and practices that reflect the importance of building relationships with families and that position them as equal partners in their students' education
 - Partners with families and students in a way that is strengths-based, culturally responsive, and collaborative, and that demonstrates an appreciation of different languages, norms, family structures, and values
 - Ensures that students and families have a voice in planning and decision-making, including gathering and using their feedback to improve school practices, communication, and climate
 - Establishes opportunities for student and family leadership (beyond required committees and councils), and ensures that participants in those leadership roles are representative of the community served

- Ensures that schools support two-way communication and access for all students' families, including providing interpretation and translation services to families, as appropriate
- Allocates resources to support family and community partnering activities and analyzes data to ensure effectiveness
- Leverages community partners to support families' needs, as appropriate
- Community engagement. The district:
 - Has a clear process to find, establish, and manage partnerships and other community resources to engage during in-school and out-of-school time
 - Conducts a comprehensive mapping of partners and resources, and assesses family and student needs, with a goal of equitable support and responsiveness for communities, schools, and families
 - Works with schools to evaluate partnership effectiveness and make appropriate changes
 - Communicates key priorities widely, including to municipal officials, to ensure a shared understanding of goals and strategies; provides guidance to schools on effective practices for managing partnerships

Financial and Asset Management

District leaders manage the equitable allocation and effective use of funding and other resources to improve all students' performance, opportunities, and outcomes, support the district's improvement plan, and secure community support.

1. Budget Documentation and Reporting

- Budget documents:
 - Are clear, accurate, and user-friendly
 - Are explicitly connected to district and school improvement planning
 - Demonstrate how student performance data, particularly data related to performance, access, and opportunity outcomes and gaps, have been used to set budget priorities
 - Include information about allocation of resources (money, people, and time) and about all sources of funds, including local revolving funds and grants
 - Provide historical spending data for comparisons and sufficient detail for stakeholders to understand the current year's resource allocations
- Municipal agreement:
 - Costs paid and managed directly by the municipality are described in a current written agreement and clearly documented in the budget and financial accounting

2. Adequate Budget

- Provision and use of resources
 - The community provides sufficient general appropriation funds each year to meet or exceed required net school spending and cover other costs such as transportation
 - The district uses all available funding effectively to support student performance, opportunities, and outcomes
 - The district annually reviews staffing and scheduling to plan for the effective use of people and time

3. Financial Tracking, Forecasting, Controls, and Audits

- The business office:
 - Provides regular, accurate reports to the superintendent and school committee on spending from all funding sources, and forecasts spending through the end of the year, with adequate school-level information provided to every principal
 - Ensures that business office personnel are trained and supervised, and systems are in place for procurement in accord with state laws and regulations, timely payment of invoices, and accurate payrolls
 - District spends down grant funds (including promptly using entitlement rollovers) so no grant funds revert to the state
 - Meets end of year reporting requirements in a timely and accurate way
 - Uses modern and comprehensive accounting technology for monitoring and control of resources
 - Competitively procures independent financial auditing services at least every five years, implements audit recommendations, and complies with other regulations as applicable

4. Capital Planning and Facility Maintenance

- Preventative maintenance
 - The district has a formal preventative maintenance program to prolong the effective life of the district's capital assets
 - The district ensures that educational and program facilities are accessible, clean, safe, secure, well-lit, well-maintained, and conducive to student learning, including adequate access to technology
- Long-term capital plan
 - The district has a long-term capital plan that describes future capital development and improvement needs, including adequate-sized facilities based on enrollment projections
 - The plan is reviewed and revised as needed with input from all appropriate stakeholders