# Ralph C. Mahar and School Union 73

Comprehensive District Review Report

April 2024

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Office of District Reviews and Monitoring

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Contents

[Executive Summary 1](#_Toc170896575)

[Ralph C. Mahar Regional District and School Union 73: District Review Overview 6](#_Toc170896576)

[Leadership and Governance 12](#_Toc170896577)

[Curriculum and Instruction 21](#_Toc170896578)

[Assessment 27](#_Toc170896579)

[Human Resources and Professional Development 31](#_Toc170896580)

[Student Support 40](#_Toc170896581)

[Financial and Asset Management 45](#_Toc170896582)

[Appendix A. Summary of Site Visit Activities A-1](#_Toc170896583)

[Appendix B. Districtwide Instructional Observation Report B-1](#_Toc170896584)

[Appendix C. Resources to Support Implementation of DESE’s District Standards and Indicators C-1](#_Toc170896585)

[Appendix D. Enrollment, Attendance, and Expenditures D-1](#_Toc170896586)

[Appendix E. Student Performance Data E-1](#_Toc170896587)

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Russell D. Johnston

Acting Commissioner

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## Executive Summary

In accordance with Massachusetts state law, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) contracted with the American Institutes for Research® (AIR®) to conduct a comprehensive review of Ralph C. Mahar and School Union 73 (hereafter, RCM & SU 73) in April 2024. Data collection activities associated with the review included interviews, focus groups, and document reviews and focused on understanding how districts’ systems, structures, and practices operate in support of the superintendency union’s continuous improvement efforts. The review focused on the six standards (and related indicators) that DESE has identified as being important components of district effectiveness.[[1]](#footnote-2)

In addition, to collect data on instructional practices, four observers, who focused primarily on instruction in the classroom, visited RCM & SU 73 (specifically, Ralph C. Mahar Regional School [hereafter, Mahar Regional], Fisher Hill School in Orange [Fisher Hill], and Petersham Center School in Petersham [Petersham Center]) during the week of April 29, 2024. The observers conducted 56 observations in a sample of classrooms in three schools across grade levels, focused on literacy, English language arts (ELA), and mathematics. The Teachstone Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) protocol, developed by the Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning at the University of Virginia,[[2]](#footnote-3) guided all classroom observations in the district. These observations used the three grade-band levels of the CLASS protocols: K-3, Upper Elementary (4-5), and Secondary (6‑12). Overall, for the K-5 grade band, instructional observations suggest generally moderate emotional support and student engagement (Grades 4-5), high classroom organization, and mixed evidence of consistently rigorous instructional support. In the 6-8 grade band, instructional observations provide evidence of generally moderate emotional support and student engagement, high classroom organization, and moderately rigorous instructional support. In the 9-12 grade band, instructional observations similarly provide evidence of generally moderate emotional support and student engagement as well as high classroom organization and some evidence of moderately rigorous instructional support.

### [Leadership and Governance](#_Leadership_and_Governance)

Dr. Elizabeth Zielinski has been the superintendent for RCM & SU 73 since 2020. The superintendent leads the central office of the superintendency union, which includes four communities and three distinct school districts. Ralph C. Mahar is one of these districts and it includes a single school (Ralph C. Mahar Regional) and serves student in Grades 7-12 from the towns of New Salem, Orange, Petersham, and Wendell. The districts of Orange and Petersham are also included in the superintendency union. These are both single-school districts consisting of Fisher Hill in Orange, which serves Grades PK-6, and Petersham Center in Petersham, which serves Grades K-6. Each district in the superintendency union has its own school committee. The Ralph C. Mahar school committee includes ten members, who represent the four towns served by the district, whereas Orange and Petersham’s school committees are elected by each town, respectively. Like other school committees in Massachusetts, members described their roles as managing budgets, setting policy, and hiring and evaluating the superintendent. However, RCM & SU 73’s evaluation process for the superintendent is an area for growth as it has faced several administrative challenges and low engagement. In addition, navigating relationships among three separate school committees is a challenge, particularly for staff from RCM & SU 73’s central office such as the superintendent and director of finance.

The three schools in RCM & SU 73—Mahar Regional, Fisher Hill, and Petersham Center—share collaborative relationships with the superintendent while also maintaining some measures of building-level autonomy. The superintendent’s ability to maintain open and collaborative relationships with school leaders is a strength. Within schools, however, an area for growth is supporting the election of school council members and fostering an open and inclusive environment within school council meetings.

RCM & SU 73’s District Improvement Plan outlines a comprehensive vision and strategic objectives to support academic as well as social-emotional development. The plan emphasizes high-quality instruction, parent and community engagement, professional culture, and efficient management and operations. One strength of the district’s process for developing its strategic improvement plan is the collaborative effort involving various stakeholders, including school committee members, administrators, families, and students. The three member schools have their own plans, and another strength is the alignment of School Improvement Plans (SIPs) for Fisher Hill, Petersham Center, and Mahar Regional with the RCM & SU 73 District Strategic Plan. However, interview respondents reported mixed views on whether these plans were tools that staff actively used throughout the year to guide their work. An area for growth is creating systems for effective follow-up on the district strategic improvement plan, as respondents highlighted gaps in action on feedback, infrequent updates on goals, and limited practical utilization of the plan.

The central office’s comprehensive approach to budgeting aims to ensure that all relevant parties, including the four towns within the union, understand and can support the budget, which is a strength. However, improving the timeliness in which the budget is approved and creating greater consistency around the annual budget approval process is an area of growth for the district. Despite yearly efforts to gather information earlier, the budget process is consistently delayed due to tight local budgets, adjustments and renegotiations, and late town meetings relative to academic calendars.

### [Curriculum and Instruction](#_Curriculum_and_Instruction)

RCM & SU 73 has a clear, formal process for reviewing and selecting curricula. The central office provides guidelines, and schools make their own, independent selections. As a result, although the clear, formal process is a strength, multiple staff highlighted vertical and horizontal alignment, particularly between the regional school and the feeding elementary schools, as an area for growth for the superintendency union.

RCM & SU 73 currently uses a variety of curricula across schools for ELA: Fisher Hill and Petersham Center use McGraw Hill Wonders for Grades K-6, whereas Mahar Regional uses Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH) Into Literature for Grades 7 and 8 and teacher-created resources for Grades 9-12. For mathematics, Petersham Center uses Curriculum Associates i-Ready, whereas Fisher Hill uses Zearn for Grades K-6, meaning the two elementary schools use different mathematics programs. Mahar Regional uses Fishtank Plus Math for Grades 7 and 8 and teacher-created resources for mathematics in Grades 9-12. For science and social studies, the district uses a variety of teacher-developed and published curricula.

RCM & SU 73’s instructional priorities articulated in its district plan and discussions with teachers, the central office, and school leaders revealed a common understanding of these guiding principles. These common instructional goals are a strength. However, the two elementary schools in RCM & SU 73 lack sufficient supports for professional learning and curriculum implementation—such as dedicated coaching positions-- which central office leaders and teachers recognize as an area for growth at the elementary level. Mahar Regional does have a dedicated coach for middle and high school teachers. In addition, the need for additional curriculum-specific training is an area for growth. Classroom observations revealed a strength in classroom organization throughout the superintendency union, indicating that positive management, behavior, and engagement characterized most observed classrooms.

RCM & SU 73 provides a wide range of course offerings and academic pathways to accommodate diverse student needs and interests, which is a strength of the district. There is a four-week summer learning program for elementary students, and Mahar Regional also offers a four-week summer learning program in which rising 7th-grade students can participate in different intensive programs. Mahar Regional also provides Advanced Placement (AP), honors, and college preparatory courses and has dual enrollment through a partnership with Greenfield Community College. Despite its many course offerings, student participation in advanced coursework is below the state rate, which is an area for growth.

### [Assessment](#_Assessment)

RCM & SU 73 uses a variety of screeners to understand students’ reading skills at each school level, including Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), Star Early Literacy, and Star Reading. For mathematics, students are assessed using Star Math and i-Ready Math across grade levels. Data and assessment systems constitute a strength: The three schools in the union have a variety of data sources available, and the central office has obtained and used a new data system to store and make data accessible to schools.

Staff reported that the new data storage and access platform, designed by Open Architects, is a helpful new tool for data use and a strength of the union. However, staff highlighted an area for growth for the superintendency union in providing more consistent professional development and additional protocols for data use across schools, grade levels, and departments.

Schools in RCM & SU 73 have a consistent process and timeline for communicating progress to students and families, which is a strength. The central office has documented procedures, although some students and parents reported mixed opportunities to discuss progress with teachers, which is an area for growth*.*

### [Human Resources and Professional Development](#_Human_Resources_and)

Since 2011, a human resources specialist leads the human resources department at RCM & SU 73. This office manages payroll and human resources functions across Mahar Regional, Fisher Hill, and Petersham Center, supporting principals in recruiting and hiring staff. This office is currently transitioning traditional personnel files to electronic files. The new data platform, also used for student assessment data, will aid this process. In the meantime, the human resources department prepares regular, detailed reports that help identify staffing trends and turnover, and, along with other school committee processes that track staffing, are a strength that supports data-driven decision-making.

The recruitment and hiring process at RCM & SU 73 is a strength because it involves active engagement from key stakeholders. School administrators noted that the process of identifying staffing needs begins with them. The human resources specialist plays a role in managing the administrative aspects of the hiring process, and the superintendent oversees the entire recruitment and hiring process. The superintendent offers final approval. However, the hiring and assignment processes at RCM & SU 73 face several challenges, primarily due to budgeting constraints and the difficulty of finding qualified teachers for specialized subjects, which remains an area for growth.

Implementing teacher evaluations has presented significant challenges due to past practices and resistance to change and remains an area for growth. Since the current superintendent came into her role, RCM & SU 73 has tried to institute a more consistent and robust process, which some teachers had not experienced prior to her arrival. A review of teacher and administration evaluations highlights that a strength of the district is consistently identifying areas of strength through the evaluation process for teachers and administrators. On the other hand, this evidence also highlights that an area for growth for the district is articulating areas for improvement to support ongoing instructional and professional improvement for teachers.

Professional development plans for RCM & SU 73 emphasize continuous training for teachers, specialists, and paraeducators. A strength of the district is that its planned professional development activities align with its goals for academic rigor, collaboration, and community engagement. Schools create an annual professional development calendar, scheduling sessions approximately once a month, with specific focus areas varying throughout the year. However, some areas of teacher support remain areas for growth, including expanding mentoring support for new teachers. In addition, although there are some opportunities for teachers to take on leadership roles in the district, several teachers reported having limited opportunities to take on other leadership roles*.*

### [Student Support](#_Student_Support)

RCM & SU 73 has structures and systems in place to support the academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs of students. RCM & SU 73’s plan for forming a safe and supportive school climate and culture focuses on three district priorities: social-emotional learning, equity, and access and inclusion, and having clear priorities is a strength. Data gathered during classroom observations indicate that the three schools in the superintendency union foster a welcoming and supportive learning environment. However, mixed student reports and data on student suspensions indicate some room for improvement in providing all students with positive learning experiences, an area for growth.

The superintendency union has structures in place to support tiered systems of support, such as student support teams at each school, and has continued to work to strengthen these structures. RCM & SU 73’s efforts around nonacademic needs are a strength. However, consistently implementing tiered academic supports across schools, particularly at the elementary level, is an area for growth.

In partnering with families and the community, RCM & SU 73 offers several means of engaging families and students. The superintendency union’s opportunities for student voice are a strength. However, parents expressed that they have a desire for more frequent and accessible opportunities to provide feedback, which is an area for growth.

### [Financial and Asset Management](#_Financial_and_Asset)

The finance and operations director manages budget development and other fiscal matters for Mahar Regional, Fisher Hill, and Petersham Center, including reporting to their respective school committees. She and her department, alongside the superintendent, report regularly to the Resources and Capacity subcommittees of the three school committees, which serve as the regional finance subcommittees. RCM & SU 73’s commitment to transparency and communication is evident in its efforts to make budget presentations and reports accessible and clearly communicated to the public and other stakeholders across multiple constituencies, which is a strength.

Staff at multiple levels consistently reported concerns about tight budgets. Addressing these issues to offer greater certainty to RCM & SU 73 is an area for growth, particularly in communicating with multiple towns with varying timelines and fiscal capacities. However, the financial oversight process includes thorough review processes, which are a strength. Grant funding management, by strategic use of state and federal grants, in RCM & SU 73 is another strength.

Capital and facilities management in a superintendency union is a complex task involving multiple constituent communities. Fisher Hill recently completed a renovation and construction project for a new, consolidated elementary school. Mahar Regional has forthcoming needs related to its large roof. To manage these varied and complex efforts, RCM & SU 73 employs a strategic approach to long-term planning and budgeting for facility management, which is a strength. For example, Mahar Regional has established a capital stabilization fund, although Fisher Hill and Petersham Center have been thus far unable to establish such funds. Respondents from Fisher Hill and Petersham Center expressed concern about each town’s financial constraints, impacting their ability to address all capital needs, which is an area for growth*.*

## Ralph C. Mahar and School Union 73: District Review Overview

### Purpose

Conducted under Chapter 15, Section 55A of the Massachusetts General Laws, comprehensive district reviews support local school districts in establishing or strengthening a cycle of continuous improvement. Reviews carefully consider the effectiveness of systemwide functions, referring to the six district standards used by DESE: Leadership and Governance, Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment, Human Resources and Professional Development, Student Support, and Financial and Asset Management.[[3]](#footnote-4) Reviews identify systems and practices that may be impeding improvement as well as those most likely to be contributing to positive results. The design of the comprehensive district review promotes district reflection on its own performance and potential next steps. In addition to providing information to each district reviewed, DESE uses review reports to identify resources and/or technical assistance to provide to the district.

### Methodology

A district review team consisting of AIR staff members and subcontractors, with expertise in each district standard, reviews documentation and extant data prior to conducting an on-site visit. On-site data collection includes team members conducting interviews and focus group sessions with a wide range of stakeholders, including school committee members, teachers association representatives, district and school administrators, teachers, students, and students’ families. Virtual interviews and focus groups also are conducted as needed. Information about review activities and the site visit schedule is in Appendix A. Team members also observe classroom instruction and collect data using the CLASS protocol. The Districtwide Instructional Observation Report resulting from these classroom observations is in Appendix B.

Following the site visit, the team members code and analyze the data to develop a set of objective findings. The team lead and multiple quality assurance reviewers, including DESE staff, then review the initial draft of the report. DESE staff provides recommendations for the district, based on the findings of strengths and areas for growth identified, before AIR finalizes and submits the report to DESE. DESE previews and then sends the report to the district for factual review before publishing it on the DESE website. DESE also provides additional resources to support implementation of DESE’s District Standards and Indicators, summarized in Appendix C.

### Site Visit

The site visit to the districts of RCM & SU 73 occurred during the week of April 29, 2024. The visit included 26 hours of interviews and focus groups with approximately 85 stakeholders, including school committee members, local government representatives, administrators from the central office, school staff, students, students’ families, and teachers’ association representatives. The review team conducted four teacher focus groups with nine elementary school teachers, 12 middle school teachers, and 14 high school teachers; two focus groups with five middle school and six high school students; and one family focus group with two parents. Data collection also included distributing a questionnaire to each principal to gather information on district and school processes and operations.

The site team also conducted 56 observations of classroom instruction in three schools. Certified team members conducted instructional observations using the Teachstone CLASS protocol.

### District Profile

Since 2020, Dr. Elizabeth Zielinski is the superintendent of RCM & SU 73, a superintendency union among four communities and three school committees. The union consists of three districts, each with one school: Mahar Regional, which serves students in Grades 7-12 who come from the towns of Orange, Petersham, New Salem, and Wendell; the Orange Public Schools, which includes Fisher Hill and serves students in Grades PK-6; and the Petersham Public Schools, which includes Petersham Center and serves students in Grades K-6.

Dr. Zielinski leads the RCM & SU 73 central office, alongside a director of curriculum, an interim director of student support services, finance director, dean of students, human resources specialist, and attendant staff. The three school committees that form the union proportionally support the operational costs of this central office staff.

Mahar Regional’s school committee has nine members who are elected for three-year terms, with proportional representation from Orange, Petersham, New Salem, and Wendell. The towns of Orange and Petersham also elect their own school committees (with five and three members, respectively) to govern their elementary schools and interact with RCM & SU 73 leadership regarding issues of governance and budget. Petersham’s school committee appoints a member to the Mahar Regional school committee, and the towns of Orange and Petersham elect community members to the Mahar Regional school committee as well.

In the 2023-2024 school year, there were 60 teachers and 504 students at Mahar Regional, 42 teachers and 523 students at Fisher Hill, and 11 teachers and 133 students at Petersham Center. Table 1 provides an overview of student enrollment by school and by district.

Table 1. Schools, Type, Grades Served, and Enrollment, 2023-2024

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| School | Type | Grades served | Enrollment |
| Fisher Hill School (Orange) | Elementary | PK-6 | 523 |
| Petersham Center School (Petersham) | Elementary | K-6 | 133 |
| Ralph C. Mahar Regional School | Middle/High | 7-12 | 504 |
| Total |  |  | 1,160 |

*Note*. Enrollment data as of October 1, 2023.

Between 2021 and 2024, overall student enrollment decreased by 47 students. Enrollment figures by race/ethnicity and high needs populations (i.e., students with disabilities, students from low-income families, and English learners [ELs] and former ELs) compared with the state are in Tables D1 and D2 in Appendix D. Appendix D also provides additional information about district enrollment, attendance, and expenditures.

In Orange, total in-district per-pupil expenditure was less than the median in-district per-pupil expenditure for K-12 districts of similar size in fiscal year 2022—$17,489 for Orange compared with $20,431 for similar districts and less than average state spending per pupil ($19,554). Actual net school spending was roughly equivalent to what is required by the Chapter 70 state education aid program, as shown in Table D4 in Appendix D.

Total in-district per-pupil expenditure was greater in Petersham than the median in-district per-pupil expenditure for K-12 districts of similar size in fiscal year 2022—$19,811 compared with $23,960 for similar districts and less than average state spending per pupil ($19,554). Actual net school spending was greater than what is required by the Chapter 70 state education aid program, as shown in Table D4 in Appendix D.

The total in-district per-pupil expenditure for Mahar Regional was greater than the median in-district per-pupil expenditure for K-12 districts of similar size in fiscal year 2022—$21,906 for Mahar Regional compared with $18,126 for similar districts and greater than average state spending per pupil ($20,134). Actual net school spending was greater than what is required by the Chapter 70 state education aid program, as shown in Table D4 in Appendix D.

### School and Student Performance

The following section includes selected highlights regarding student performance in RCM & SU 73. This section is meant to provide a brief synopsis of data, not a comprehensive analysis of district performance data. For additional details and data on district performance, please see Appendix E and [School and District Profiles (mass.edu)](https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/general/generalstate.aspx?topNavID=1&leftNavId=100&orgcode=00000000&orgtypecode=0) for [Orange](https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/general/general.aspx?topNavID=1&leftNavId=100&orgcode=02230000&orgtypecode=5), [Petersham](https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/general/general.aspx?topNavID=1&leftNavId=100&orgcode=02340000&orgtypecode=5), and [Ralph C. Mahar](https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/general/general.aspx?topNavID=1&leftNavId=100&orgcode=07550000&orgtypecode=5).

#### Achievement

* In ELA, the percentage of the All Students group meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) was below that of their statewide peers in Grades 3-8 and Grade 10 in Fisher Hill and Mahar Regional.
  + In grades 3-6 at Fisher Hill, 16 percent of students met or exceeded expectations, which is 26 percentage points below the state rate of 42 percent.
  + In grades 3-6 at Petersham Center, 45 percent of students met or exceeded expectations, which is 3 percentage points above the state rate of 42 percent.
  + In grades 7-8 at Mahar Regional, 29 percent of students met or exceeded expectations 13 percentage points lower than the state rate of 42 percent in Grades 3-8, and in grade 10, 51 percent met or exceeded expectations, which is 7 percentage points lower than the state rate of 58 percent.
* In mathematics, the percentage of the All Students group meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS was below that of their statewide peers in Grades 3-8 and Grade 10.
  + In grades 3-6 at Fisher Hill, 15 percent of students met or exceeded expectations, which is 26 percentage points below the state rate of 41 percent.
  + In grades 3-6 at Petersham Center, 31 percent of students met or exceeded expectations, which is 10 percentage points below the state rate of 41 percent.
  + In grades 7-8 at Mahar Regional, 32 percent of students met or exceeded expectations 9 percentage points lower than the state rate of 41 percent, and in grade 10, 35 percent met or exceeded expectations, which is 15 percentage points lower than the state rate of 50 percent.
* In science, the percentage of the All Students group meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS was below that of their statewide peers in Grades 5 and 8 at Fisher Hill and Petersham Center, and in Grade 10 at Mahar Regional.
  + In grades 3-6 at Fisher Hill, 20 percent of students met or exceeded expectations, which was 21 percentage points below the state rate of 41 percent.
  + In grades 3-6 at Petersham Center, 33 percent of students met or exceeded expectations, which was 8 percentage points lower than the state rate of 41 percent.
  + In grade 8 at Mahar Regional, 45 percent of students met or exceeded expectations 4 percentage points higher than the state rate of 41 percent in Grades 5 and 8, and in grade 10, 23 percent of students met or exceeded expectations, which was 24 percentage points lower than the state rate of 47 percent in Grade 10.
* In ELA, the percentage of White students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS was below that of their statewide peers in Grades 3-8 and Grade 10.
  + In grades 3-6 at Fisher Hill, 16 percent of White students met or exceeded expectations, which was 34 percentage points lower than the state rate of 50 percent.
  + In grades 3-6 at Petersham Center, 40 percent of White students met or exceeded expectations, which was 10 percentage points below the state rate of 50 percent.
  + In grades 7-8 at Mahar Regional, White students met or exceeded expectations at rates 18 percentage points lower than their statewide peers, and in grade 10 by 15 percentage points.
* In mathematics, the percentage of White students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS was below that of their statewide peers in Grades 3-8 and Grade 10.
  + In grades 3-6 at Fisher Hill, 15 percent of White students met or exceeded expectations, which was 34 percentage points below the state rate of 49 percent.
  + In grades 3-6 at Petersham Center, 35 percent of White students met or exceeded expectations, which was 14 percentage points lower than the state rate of 49 percent.
  + In grades 7-8 at Mahar Regional, White students met or exceeded expectations at rates 14 percentage points lower than their statewide peers, and 22 percentage points lower in Grade 10.

#### Growth**[[4]](#footnote-5)**

* ELA student growth percentiles (SGPs) were typical in 2023 at Fisher Hill, Petersham Center, and Mahar Regional for each student group with reportable data in Grades 4-8, except for Mahar Regional students with disabilities, who had low growth.
* At Mahar Regional, in Grade 10, ELA SGPs were low for the following student groups: All students, White students, high needs students, and students with disabilities.
* Math SGPs in Grades 4-8 were high at Petersham Center for all students and White students.
* Math SGPs in Grades 4-8 were high at Mahar Regional for high needs students and low-income students.

#### Other Indicators

* Mahar Regional’s four-year graduation rates in 2022 ranged from 52.6 to 85.4 percent and were below the state rate for each student group with reportable data by 7.8 percentage points to 26.2 percentage points.
* The annual dropout rate at Mahar Regional in 2022 for all students was 5.6 percent more than twice the state rate of 2.1 percent. The dropout rates for every student group at Mahar Regional with reportable data were two to six times the rate of their statewide peers.
* In 2023, the out-of-school suspension rates at Mahar Regional were three or more times the state rate for every student group with reportable data. White students at Mahar Regional had an out-of-school suspension rate of 9.9 percent, which is six times the state rate of 1.6 percent.
* Advanced coursework completion rates for each student group at Mahar Regional in 2023 ranged from 11.1 to 44.3 percent, 20.8 percentage points to 40.1 percentage points lower than their statewide peers.
* In 2023, the Orange Public Schools district was identified as *requiring assistance or intervention* via the state’s accountability system due to low MCAS participation of its Hispanic students.
* In 2023, Petersham Center was a School of Recognition.

### Classroom Observations

Four observers, who focused primarily on instruction in the classroom, visited three schools in RCM & SU 73 (Mahar Regional, Fisher Hill, and Petersham Center) during the week of April 29, 2024. The observers conducted 56 observations in a sample of classrooms across grade levels, focused on literacy, ELA, and mathematics. The CLASS protocol guided all classroom observations in the district. These observations used the three grade-band levels of CLASS protocols: K-3, Upper Elementary (4‑5), and Secondary (6-12).

The K-3 protocol includes 10 classroom dimensions related to three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support. The Upper Elementary and Secondary protocols include 11 classroom dimensions related to three domains—Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support—in addition to Student Engagement. The three domains observed at all levels are broadly defined as follows:

* Emotional Support. Describes the social-emotional functioning of the classroom, including teacher-student relationships and responsiveness to social-emotional needs.
* Classroom Organization. Describes the management of students’ behavior, time, and attention in the classroom.
* Instructional Support. Describes the efforts to support cognitive and language development, including cognitive demand of the assigned tasks, the focus on higher order thinking skills, and the use of process-oriented feedback.

When conducting a classroom visit, the observer rates each dimension (including Student Engagement) on a scale from 1 to 7. A rating of 1 or 2 (low range) indicates that the dimension was never or rarely evident during the visit. A rating of 3, 4, or 5 (middle range) indicates that the dimension was evident but not exhibited consistently or in a way that included all students. A rating of 6 or 7 (high range) indicates that the dimension was reflected in all or most classroom activities and in a way that included all or most students.

In RCM & SU 73, ratings are provided across three grade bands: K-5, 6-8, and 9-12. For each grade band, ratings are provided across the overarching domains as well as at individual dimensions within those domains. The full report of findings from observations conducted in RCM & SU 73 is in Appendix B, and summary results are in Tables 17, 18, and 19 in this appendix.

In summary, findings from RCM & SU 73 observations were as follows:

* Emotional Support. Ratings were in the middle range for the K-5 and 6-8 grade bands (5.5 and 4.4, respectively) and in the lower middle range for the 9-12 grade band (3.7).
* Classroom Organization. Ratings were in the high range (6.0, 6.7, and 6.3, respectively, for elementary, middle, and high) for all grade bands.
* Instructional Support. Ratings were in the low range for the K-5 grade band (2.9) and the lower middle range for the 6-8 and 9-12 grade bands (3.5 and 3.0, respectively).
* Student Engagement. For Grades 4 and up, in which student engagement was measured as an independent domain, ratings were in the middle range (5.2, 5.2, and 3.8, respectively, for elementary, middle, and high) for all grade bands.

Overall, in the K-5 grade band, instructional observations suggest generally moderate emotional support and student engagement (Grades 4-5), high classroom organization, and mixed evidence of consistently rigorous instructional support. In the 6-8 grade band, instructional observations provide evidence of generally moderate emotional support and student engagement and high classroom organization and evidence of moderately rigorous instructional support. In the 9-12 grade band, instructional observations similarly provide evidence of generally moderate emotional support and student engagement and high classroom organization and some evidence of moderately rigorous instructional support.

## Leadership and Governance

Dr. Elizabeth Zielinski has been the superintendent for RCM & SU 73 since 2020. The central office leadership team consists of key roles supporting the superintendent, including the director of curriculum, dean of students, interim director of student support services, and director of finance. Central office leaders work in collaboration with three school committees—Ralph C. Mahar Regional School Committee, Orange School Committee, and Petersham School Committee—as well as local government officials from New Salem, Orange, Petersham, and Wendell. The three school committees that form the union proportionally manage the operational costs of this central office staff.

RCM & SU 73 comprises a superintendency union among four communities and three school committees, including Mahar Regional, which enrolls Grades 7-12 and is governed by a nine-member committee representing four towns. The superintendency union also includes two single-building elementary school districts—Fisher Hill and Petersham Center—which serve Grades PK-6 and K-6, respectively, and are overseen by each town’s respective school committee. The superintendent collaborates with these three committees to manage budgets, operations, and policies. Subcommittees play a crucial role in governance, handling financial matters, policy reviews, and superintendent evaluations.

Ralph C. Mahar’s school committee has ten members who are elected for three-year terms, with proportional representation from Orange, Petersham, New Salem, and Wendell. The towns of Orange and Petersham also elect their own school committees (with five and three members, respectively) to govern their elementary schools and interact with RCM & SU 73 leadership regarding issues of governance and budget. The Petersham school committee elects one of its members to serve on the regional school committee. In addition, the towns of Orange and Petersham elect a member to serve on the regional school committee.

The RCM & SU 73 District Improvement Plan outlines a comprehensive vision and strategic objectives to support academic as well as social-emotional development. The plan emphasizes high-quality instruction, parent and community engagement, professional culture, and efficient management and operations. Strategic initiatives include improving instruction in literacy and mathematics through professional development, enhancing communication with families, and maintaining a fiscally sound budget. The development process for the improvement plan involved extensive collaboration with stakeholders, including school committees, parents, families, and students, to update the mission, vision, and core values. The SIPs for Fisher Hill, Petersham Center, and Mahar Regional align with the district plan by focusing on professional development, community engagement, and data-driven outcomes to prepare students for a democratic and technological global society.

Table 2 summarizes key strengths and areas for growth in leadership and governance.

Table 2. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Leadership and Governance Standard

| Indicator | Strengths | Areas for growth |
| --- | --- | --- |
| [School committee governance](#_School_Committee_Governance) |  | * Evaluating the superintendent on a regular basis * Navigating relationships among three separate school committees, including challenges in communication and collaboration |
| [District and school leadership](#_District_and_School) | * The superintendent maintains open and collaborative relationships with school leaders. | * Supporting the election of school council members and fostering an open and inclusive environment within school council meetings |
| [District and school improvement planning](#_District_and_School_1) | * The district has a process for developing its strategic improvement plan that is a collaborative effort involving various stakeholders. * The respective SIPs align with the district strategic plan. | * Ensuring effective follow-up on the district strategic improvement plan, as there are gaps in action on feedback, infrequent updates on goals, and limited practical utilization of the plan |
| [Budget development](#_Budget_Development) | * The budget development process is highly structured, involving several steps and including input from all levels from teachers up through administrators and including feedback from stakeholders. * The comprehensive approach aims to ensure that all relevant parties, including the towns within the district, understand and can support the budget. | * Improving the timeliness in which the budget is approved and creating greater consistency around the annual budget approval process |

### School Committee Governance

RCM & SU 73 is a superintendency union among four communities and three school committees. Mahar Regional enrolls students in Grades 7-12 and is governed by its own regional school committee; Mahar Regional enrolls students from four communities: New Salem, Orange, Petersham, and Wendell. RCM & SU 73 also includes the elementary schools in Orange and Petersham, and the superintendent similarly oversees those schools and collaborates with those two communities’ respective school committees.

The Mahar Regional school committee consists of nine members representing the four towns through a combination of members who are directly elected to the regional committee to serve three-year terms and members who are elected to a town school committee, and appointed by their colleagues to represent their town committee on the regional school committee. All three school committees have a role in overseeing the budget, operations, and policies of the schools within their respective towns and contribute to discussions of these same issues in RCM & SU 73.

The Mahar Regional school committee has nine members from four towns: five from Orange, two from Petersham, one from New Salem, and one from Wendell. Orange and Petersham each have a local school committee overseeing the operations and policies of the elementary schools within their respective towns; the Orange school committee has five members, and the Petersham school committee has three. Petersham’s committee appoints one member to the regional school committee, whereas both the greater Orange and Petersham communities elect representatives to the regional committee, providing local representation in the governance of the regional district. Elected members serve three-year terms, and appointed members serve one-year terms or until a successor is appointed. Vacancies are filled by the town moderator from a list of nominees for elected members and by the local school committee for appointed members.

During focus groups, the superintendent and school committee members consistently cited the Massachusetts Association of School Committees to clarify the roles and responsibilities of a school committee. One Petersham school committee member stated, “[Our role] is to set policy, establish the budget, and then hire and evaluate the superintendent,” with which others concurred. To fulfill these roles, each committee has several subcommittees.

The superintendent discussed the role of subcommittees in the governance process, stating, “The real work is done in the subcommittees.” Each subcommittee has a specific focus: The Resources and Capacity subcommittee handles financial matters and oversees budget development and resource allocation; the Communications and Policy subcommittee is responsible for reviewing and updating school policies as well as managing communication and outreach efforts; and the Leadership, Accountability, and Measurement (LAM) subcommittee, which includes members from all three districts, is responsible for evaluating the superintendent.

As designed, the evaluation process gathers input from all relevant stakeholders across multiple communities in RCM & SU 73. All school committee members from Mahar Regional, Fisher Hill, and Petersham Center participate in the evaluation process by completing a survey designed to gather detailed input on the superintendent’s performance, in addition to information gathered by the LAM subcommittee. The LAM subcommittee administers the survey, which that focuses on the superintendent’s goals and relevant indicators, and compiles the results from all school committee members within two weeks. The report is then presented to the school committee members for review and a vote and is sent to DESE after approval.

However, RCM & SU 73’s evaluation process for the superintendent has faced several administrative challenges and low engagement. The LAM subcommittee had difficulty scheduling meetings because the committees struggled to assemble enough members to form a quorum. This resulted in no meetings for about a year and a half, according to interview participants. As one Mahar Regional school committee member noted, “We had a number of years where, given the committee’s makeup, everybody had to be there for it to be a quorum. And we could never get everybody to agree even to a date.” In addition, the survey conducted as part of the evaluation faced issues such as a lack of oversight by the school committee, insufficient responses, and failure to identify respondents, resulting in insufficient and unusable data. One school committee member from Mahar Regional said,

The problem was that [the survey] did not identify the person filling it out. . . . And then we only got the numbers that we got returned were less than half of the numbers of people. In the past, just that [LAM] subcommittee had done the evaluation, but we decided it was time to expand it. . . . We thought it was necessary for everybody to get involved with that. But we didn’t get even half of the people to respond. [And] we didn’t know who they were.

Describing the insufficient survey response rate, the superintendent added, “The survey went out, and out of 17 school committee members [across three committees that were eligible to respond], four evaluated me. They sent the survey out again, and now you had six people—the same four plus two more.”

Furthermore, most members across committees agreed that they did not have much input on the criteria used to evaluate the superintendent. One Fisher Hill school committee member shared,

My understanding of the process is that the superintendent proposed which measures and indicators she would be evaluated on to the [LAM] subcommittee. Then they can make a counter proposal. . . . Right now, most of the people evaluating the superintendent don’t have much input on what she is being evaluated on.

Taken together, these factors related to participation, timeline, and stakeholder involvement impact the district’s ability to conduct a regular, thorough evaluation of the superintendent, making this an area for growth for RCM & SU 73.

In separate focus groups, central office staff and representatives from the three school committees described their governance relationship with the superintendent as often productive but also sometimes challenging and complex. Participants from one school committee described their relationship with the superintendent as collaborative and transparent. They appreciated the superintendent’s efforts in setting meeting agendas and providing detailed “cliff notes” that guided discussions and reduced unexpected issues. “I found that to be very helpful,” said one participant. Another participant added, “She’ll also call us. . . . I will get calls sometimes if an issue has come up,” suggesting that the superintendent maintains proactive communication and makes an effort to keep the school committee well informed.

During another focus group, another school committee member reported an improved relationship with the superintendent, citing increased trust despite initial challenges. As one member noted, RCM & SU 73’s change in superintendent “coincided with an unsettling chapter that lasted for a couple of years.” They added, “There may have been a level of mistrust there.” In another focus group, committee members mentioned that there are limited opportunities for providing input to the superintendent. One participant stated, “There’s free-flowing information back and forth, but I would not describe it as being in an advisory role in one direction or the other.” Navigating relationships with three separate school committees presents a challenge in maintaining consistent communication and collaboration, which is an area for growth

### District and School Leadership

The leadership team of RCM & SU 73 includes the superintendent, the director of curriculum, the dean of students, the interim director of student support services, and the director of finance. Supporting the central office are the accountant and grants manager, the accounts payable coordinator, and the executive administrative assistant to the superintendent. Over her four years in the position, the superintendent has overseen central office operations and human resources, including hiring and evaluation processes. She collaborates closely with the district’s leadership team to set policies, manage budgets, and implement strategic plans.

One of the district’s strengths is the superintendent’s ability to maintain open and collaborative relationships with school leaders. Focus group responses suggest that school leaders have varying degrees of autonomy in making decisions. Some leaders said they are fully involved in all aspects of decision-making, and have autonomy to make decisions, due to the smaller size of their schools, which allows them to participate closely in each step. Other respondents described a more collaborative approach with the superintendent, particularly in budget and hiring decisions, where they contribute input rather than making final decisions totally independently. One school leader said, “We have very informal conversations, I guess, between me and [the superintendent]. . . . Whenever a position needs to be filled, there’s a certain process put in place for advertising, interviewing, checking references, and so forth.” Another leader emphasized the superintendent’s role in budget-related decisions: “When I have questions about that, I go directly to the superintendent because I know that, you know, I have to stay within the budget.” This demonstrates that the superintendent maintains regular communication with school leaders so that their input is considered in decision-making processes.

According to responses to principal questionnaires, the frequency with which school leaders meet with district leaders varies among schools. Fisher Hill school leaders hold meetings with district leaders only when necessary. Petersham Center conducts these meetings quarterly. In contrast, Mahar Regional holds monthly meetings. The common themes across these meetings include updates related to the District Improvement Plan and other districtwide matters, planning activities, and the exchange of feedback with the district. In addition, Petersham Center’s and Mahar Regional’s meetings with the district focus on reviewing student data, according to interview respondents.

The administrative leadership teams at all three schools consist of a diverse blend of administrators and instructional leaders. Each school’s administrative team has the essential roles: principal, assistant principal, and other administrators. Notably, according to principal questionnaire data, both Fisher Hill and Petersham Center have teachers on their respective leadership teams, with Petersham Center having a focus on special education teacher representation. Both Petersham Center and Fisher Hill schools convene their team meetings on a monthly basis. In contrast, Mahar Regional, which also includes an instructional coach on its team, holds weekly meetings.

The three schools in the districts of RCM & SU 73 have school councils as part of their governance structures. An area for growth is supporting the election of school council members and fostering an open and inclusive environment within school council meetings at all schools in RCM & SU 73. The three schools—Fisher Hill, Petersham Center, and Mahar Regional— each have a school council composed of school leaders, teachers, parents and caregivers, community members, and student support staff. The school councils for Fisher Hill and Petersham Center meet monthly, whereas the council for Mahar Regional meets quarterly. A review of district documents indicates that a typical school council meeting agenda includes reviewing and discussing the district’s prioritization plan and conducting walkthroughs and observations to assess culturally responsive and inclusive classroom practices. During focus groups, multiple respondents from one school explained that the principal primarily selected their school council, including a few parents, community members, and selected teachers, even though council members are supposed to be elected. The respondent said,

According to the regulations, school council members are supposed to be elected to represent their respective constituencies. The principal acknowledged this and mentioned that next year, [they] would try to ensure members are elected. However, it appears that [they] continue to select individuals who [they] feel are more supportive of [their] system.

Moreover, a teacher from one focus group described school council meetings as “very prescriptive,” implying that school council members are limited from asking questions or providing input during meetings: “[The principal] would come in with the agenda . . . and you could not ask questions.” Staff in these focus groups described a sense of limited opportunities for shared or distributed leadership (see also Human Resources and Professional Development: Recognition, Leadership Development, and Advancement).

### District and School Improvement Planning

RCM & SU 73’s District Improvement Plan outlines a vision and strategic objectives to foster academic, social, and emotional development. RCM & SU 73’s vision is “to provide all students a challenging, comprehensive learning experience through high-quality instruction that supports each student’s academic, social, and emotional development to prepare students to thrive in a democratic and technological global society for all of their future endeavors.” The plan sets four strategic objectives: Curriculum, Assessment & Instruction; Parent and Community Engagement; Professional Culture; and Management and Operations, and these objectives are the organizing principles behind the plans for all three schools in the superintendency union. RCM & SU 73 proposes the following strategic initiatives under each objective:

* Curriculum, Assessment, & Instruction**:** Initiatives include supporting teachers through coaching in literacy and mathematics, utilizing student data to improve outcomes, and providing curriculum and teaching strategies that ensure equity and nonbiased instruction and learning opportunities for all students.
* Parent and Community Engagement**:** Efforts focus on enhancing communication with families about student progress and engaging the community in school activities, aiming to build support through collaborative involvement.
* Professional Culture**:** The district plans to offer high-quality professional development that reflects staff and program needs, promote collegiality among faculty, and use in-house expertise for leadership opportunities.
* Management and Operations**:** This includes establishing a school facility improvement plan, ensuring safety protocols are up-to-date, and maintaining a fiscally sound budget that meets student needs.

RCM & SU 73’s process for developing its strategic improvement plan is a collaborative effort involving various stakeholders, including school committee members, administrators, families, and students, and is a strength. Upon her hire, the superintendent reviewed the existing strategic framework, highlighting the necessity of updating the school’s mission, vision, and core values, which had remained unchanged for 15 to 20 years, according to interview respondents. This review was followed by the foundational work, which involved arranging virtual meetings with school committees to review and improve these elements.

The superintendent described how they engaged with parents, families, and the community in the earliest stages of the process:

We started doing parent groups and community groups from each of the towns. . . . [We] wanted their input. Every time we had a meeting, I would have the notes about what was said, present it in a PowerPoint, and then we would add those. So, we would change it each iteration. Then, we sent it out to everybody via a survey that said, “Take a look at this; give us some more feedback on this.”

This effort extended to student focus groups. The superintendent shared,

[The students] looked at . . . the mission and the vision. . . . [They said], “It’s missing social justice.” It really was the kids that drove that. So, we tweaked that again till the end result was we had a solid mission [and] vision that everyone’s agreed upon as best you can.

The updated mission and vision informed the development of the strategic improvement plan, a process led by the superintendent and the administrative team. A Mahar Regional school committee member remarked, “There was a lot of input from many different areas on [the strategic plan]. [The superintendent] met with students, parents, [and] with school committees. . . . That was an extensive process that was a year-plus process.” The school committee members explained that after the strategic improvement plan is drafted, it is presented to them for review. This process aims to verify that the final plan is in harmony with the community’s needs and aspirations, demonstrating a collaborative and transparent approach to districtwide improvement.

The strategic plan for RCM & SU 73 fosters cohesion by unifying the focus on the use of evidence-based curricula across all schools. This cohesive approach is evident, as a principal noted, “We’re kind of all on the same page, even though we’re separate.” By emphasizing the use of research-based curricula, the district plan promotes consistency in instructional quality.

Another strength is the alignment of SIPs for Fisher Hill, Petersham Center, and Mahar Regional with the RCM & SU 73 District Strategic Plan, all of which emphasize high-quality instruction through professional development and coaching in literacy and mathematics, fostering parent and community engagement, and ensuring effective use of data to drive student outcomes. Both the SIPs and the District Improvement Plan prioritize creating supportive, inclusive environments that promote academic, social, and emotional development. In addition, they share a vision of preparing students for a rapidly changing world by instilling critical thinking skills, social justice awareness, and a global perspective, ensuring that students are ready for future success in a democratic and technological society.

School leaders and teachers emphasized that developing a SIP is a consistent, collaborative, and inclusive process in RCM & SU 73. As one teacher mentioned,

So everybody in the building is offered an opportunity if you want to lead the School Improvement Plan group. . . . So actually, I guess we do have a lot of those things. . . . Is there anybody that would like to be part of maybe this implementation and be part of this committee, this group . . . ? So teachers are involved in those decisions.

While several staff described a collaborative process for developing plans, multiple staff also reported that follow-up and implementation were not always thorough and effective. An area for growth is ensuring effective follow-up on the strategic improvement plan, as respondents highlighted gaps in action on feedback, infrequent updates on goals, and limited practical utilization of the plan. A participant pointed out, “We had a strategic plan, and we were asked to review it. . . . There were some things on there that some of us questioned . . . but nothing I know of ever came of it.” This statement highlights a gap in effective communication and follow-up. Specifically, it suggests that although feedback was solicited from stakeholders, there was a lack of subsequent action or response to that feedback. When asked if they were familiar with the district strategic improvement plan, a school respondent said, “We get a copy of it at the beginning of the year.” However, when inquired about receiving updates on the goals set in the plan, they replied, “No. Not really.” A district respondent added, “I think it was just developed as sort of a broad range of topics to keep on the radar, so to speak. I’ll be honest—it’s not something we refer back to often.”

### Budget Development

The process for developing the budget in the superintendency union as a whole involves several steps, starting early in the academic year, and is a strength of the superintendency union. According to the superintendent, the process begins with distributing budget planning and request sheets to principals in October. These sheets must be returned by November. The principals’ initial budget requests are scrutinized, and adjustments are made to ensure feasibility. In December, RCM & SU 73 central office and building leaders, which include the superintendent, the finance director, and other key administrators, hold staffing meetings. The superintendent noted, “We use data for everything with the budget,” highlighting the importance of data-driven decision-making. Furthermore, the finance director develops the budget using a bottom-up approach. A district respondent stated, “[The finance director] develops the budget using all input, so it’s from bottom up. [She] gives it to the school administrators who bring it to their coordinators and their teachers to see what they need and what they want for the following year.” The draft budget is then reviewed and refined and subsequently presented to all three school committees in February, followed by multiple presentations to various stakeholders, including faculty, school councils, and representatives from all four town governments. The feedback from these presentations is incorporated into the final budget, which is typically voted on by the school committee in April, or later in May if initial budgets need to be revisited.

The superintendent highlights the importance of transparency and communication throughout this process. The superintendent and finance manager use PowerPoint presentations to convey the budget’s story to stakeholders in all of the constituent communities, including academic performance data, special education needs, and other critical factors. This comprehensive approach aims to ensure that all relevant parties, including the towns and school committees within the superintendency union, understand and can support the budget. The process concludes with public hearings and final adjustments based on town feedback, ensuring that the budget aligns with both educational goals and available resources. The budget can be considered final when all towns finalize their budgets during spring town meetings, which take place in June. The central office’s comprehensive approach to internal budget planning aims to ensure that all relevant parties, including school leaders, have a voice in budget planning and that constituent towns and other stakeholders understand and can support the budget, which is a strength.

Although the process for developing the budget is sound, the timeliness in which the budget is approved, together with the consistency around the approval process, is an area for growth for the district. One challenge is towns’ frequent requests to make budget cuts late in the spring budget cycle. A school committee member noted, “[Often] the town comes back to us and says, ‘No, you didn’t cut enough; we need you to cut more.’ Last year, [requests for further budget reductions] did happen. So we took a second vote,” indicating a recurring issue in which the district must adjust its budget late in the spring to meet the towns’ financial constraints. A related challenge is new or unexpected expenses that arise after the budget has been set, which creates constraints in already tight town budgets. A Petersham school committee member described the addition of a relatively small number of students to the elementary school from a state-run residency program as a significant, and problematic, budget impact. Similarly, reports in the local press in spring 2024 of the Town of Orange receiving over $300,000 in fraudulent municipal invoices in the preceding year resulted in public meetings to discuss further cuts in town services—including schools—in May 2024.

Beyond limited budgets presenting an annual challenge, the constituent communities’ regular budget timeline presents a challenge to the superintendency union’s annual planning. Relative to a typical academic calendar, final approvals come late into the spring, early summer, or later. Even under ideal circumstances, respondents said, the process involves presenting the budget to various stakeholders and receiving feedback late into the spring. Participants reported that, after rounds of feedback, towns can delay final budget approvals until town meetings in June, which interview respondents said was late in the academic budgeting cycle, and this timing can complicate matters such as planning and hiring of new staff. In general, the timing of final decisions and consistent late spring revisions from the towns complicate the budget finalization process and create additional hurdles for timely approval and planning.

### DESE Recommendations

* *The superintendency union should review its process for evaluating the superintendent for timeliness and alignment with DESE’s superintendent rubric.*
* *The superintendency union should develop and implement a plan to improve communication and collaboration across all three school committees.*
* *The superintendency union should develop and/or adapt existing guidance for school councils to ensure that all councils are elected, as required by state law, and that councils are inclusive and productive decision-making bodies.*
* *The superintendency union should evaluate its progress toward strategic plan objectives and regularly share this information with its school committees and the broader community.*
* *The superintendency union should work with the governing bodies of each of its respective towns to identify opportunities to condense the budget approval process at the municipal level.*

## Curriculum and Instruction

RCM & SU 73 has a clear, formal process for reviewing and selecting curricula. The process involves convening central office- and school-based staff to form a curricular review team and gathering feedback from school-based educators. Curricular reviews prioritize alignment with state standards and CURATE[[5]](#footnote-6) ratings in order to guide the selection of resources to best meet student needs.

RCM & SU 73 currently uses a variety of curricula across schools for ELA: Fisher Hill and Petersham Center use McGraw Hill Wonders for Grades K-6, whereas Mahar Regional uses HMH Into Literature for Grades 7 and 8 and teacher-created resources for Grades 9-12. For mathematics, Petersham Center uses Curriculum Associates i-Ready, whereas Fisher Hill uses Zearn for Grades K‑6. Mahar Regional uses Fishtank Plus Math for Grades 7 and 8 and teacher-created resources for mathematics in Grades 9-12. For science and social studies, the districts within RCM & SU 73 use a variety of teacher-developed and published curricula.

Table 3 summarizes key strengths and areas for growth in curriculum and instruction.

Table 3. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Curriculum and Instruction Standard

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Indicator | Strengths | Areas for growth |
| [Curriculum selection and use](#_Curriculum_Selection_and) | * A clear process is in place for reviewing and selecting curricular materials in all subjects. | * Aligning curriculum, both vertically and horizontally, across content areas and schools |
| [Classroom instruction](#_Classroom_Instruction) | * Central office and SIPs clearly articulate aligned instructional goals. * High scores in the classroom organization domain indicate orderly classrooms across all grade bands. | * Improving professional learning structures to support teachers with curriculum implementation * Providing curriculum-specific training |
| [Student access to coursework](#_Student_Access_to) | * The superintendency union provides a wide range of course offerings and academic pathways to accommodate diverse student needs and interests. | * Increasing advanced coursework completion rates |

### Curriculum Selection and Use

For ELA, Fisher Hill and Petersham Center currently use McGraw Hill Wonders for Grades K-6, which meets expectations for CURATE and EdReports. Fisher Hill also uses Appleseeds for ELA, which meets expectations on CURATE but has no rating on EdReports. Mahar Regional uses a combination of teacher-created and published curricula rated by CURATE and EdReports for ELA. Grades 7 and 8 use HMH Into Literature, which meets expectations for CURATE and EdReports. In Grades 9-12, the district uses teacher-created resources, which have no rating on CURATE or EdReports. For mathematics, Fisher Hill uses Zearn for Grades K-6, whereas Petersham Center uses Curriculum Associates i-Ready. Zearn has no rating on CURATE; however, the curriculum meets expectations on EdReports. Curriculum Associates i-Ready meets expectations on CURATE and EdReports. Mahar Regional uses teacher-created resources for Grades 9-12, none of which are rated by CURATE and EdReports. For Grades 7 and 8, Fishtank Plus Math is used, which has no rating on CURATE but meets expectations on EdReports. For science, Fisher Hill uses KnowAtom for Grades K-6, whereas Petersham Center uses Discovery Education Science Techbooks. Mahar Regional uses CPO Science and Earth Science for Grades 7-8 and teacher-created resources for Grades 9-12. None of the science curricula have a rating on CURATE or EdReports. For social studies, Fisher Hill uses Savvas myWorld for Grades K-6, whereas Petersham Center uses TCI’s Alive! Curriculum for social studies. Mahar Regional uses TCI’s History Alive! The Ancient World for Grade 7; TCI Civics Alive! Foundations and Functions for Grade 8; TCI Government Alive! Power, Politics, and You for Grades 9 and 12; TCI History Alive! The United States Through Modern Times for Grade 10; The American Vision Glencoe for Grade 11; and the Choices Program for Grades 10-12. Neither CURATE nor EdReports provides ratings for social studies curricula.

RCM & SU 73 has a clear, formal process for reviewing and selecting curricula, which is a strength. RCM & SU 73 employs structured review cycles to rotate through K-12 content or programs every 5-10 years. For each content area, the process involves convening central office- and school-based staff to form a curricular review team. According to central office leaders and teachers across grade levels, the curricular review teams are predominantly teachers who collectively make decisions on the curriculum program for their school. As described in the *Ralph C. Mahar Regional & School Union 73 Curriculum Review Process* document, this team’s responsibilities include overseeing the review cycle’s five-step process: (a) reflect on the program through an equity lens, (b) set five-year program goals, (c) reflect on the use of assessment and student outcomes, (d) define high-quality instruction, and (e) select materials/curricula to review.

After reviewing the current curricular materials and assessing the areas of strength and need, the review team chooses three to four curricular program materials based on CURATE and EdReports ratings and alignment to DESE standards. After an equity review, the curriculum review team narrows their selections to two. The review team then polls educators in the school regarding the final two selections and simultaneously seeks purchase quotes from the publisher. The review team makes the final selection for the new curriculum, based on educator feedback and the overall cost of the materials, professional development, and implementation, and brings it to district administration for approval and purchase. Across focus groups, central office leaders and elementary school teachers reported that teachers have the option to join their district’s curriculum review team and that the team represents “all of the stakeholders within the school.” One central office leader noted that to ensure that all parties have heard the information being presented during a curriculum review, the team designates a level/content area/specialty representative who communicates everything they are learning back to teachers who could not join the team. Mahar Regional teachers also noted that through the evaluation process and submission of their lesson plans, the central office assesses the teacher-created materials for alignment with the Massachusetts standards.

Instructional staff reported that curricula and mapping are documented through Atlas Rubicon, a curriculum management and lesson planning platform. One central office leader stated that all schools use Atlas to horizontally align their curricula, especially at the middle and high school levels. A Mahar Regional teacher explained that teachers are expected to use the same set of materials documented in Atlas Rubicon and that the software makes it easy to align unit materials to Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.

However, multiple staff highlighted vertical and horizontal alignment, particularly between the regional school and the feeding elementary schools, as an area for growth for the superintendency union. Central office leaders and Fisher Hill teachers expressed that their curricular materials’ vertical and horizontal alignment is a “work in progress” because teachers have not had much time to design curriculum maps for their newly adopted curricula. In focus groups, teachers reported that there were some efforts to align materials between schools; however, efforts have slowed recently. The superintendent explained that although Fisher Hill and Petersham Center are vertically aligned for reading, Mahar Regional teachers must prepare to provide supplemental instruction because Fisher Hill and Petersham Center have different mathematics curricula. One Petersham Center teacher explained that curricular choices depend on available funding and teacher input: “We definitely do have some [input], but curriculum, if [the other elementary school] decided on a curriculum, that doesn’t necessarily mean that this building is using the same curriculum.” Mahar Regional teachers explained that there is not a consistent mathematics curriculum and that they are collaborating with the curriculum review team at Fisher Hill to prioritize the vertical alignment of curricula but stated, “We need to do better.” Many staff recognized a need for additional opportunities to address horizontal and vertical alignment across all content areas.

The superintendency union prioritizes professional development and teacher training to use district curricula effectively. Curriculum-based professional development for teachers is organized by the director of curriculum and the district instructional coach and data analyst. A central office leader shared that professional development is teacher-focused and that “teachers decide what they want to learn.” This process is described in detail in the *Ralph C. Mahar Regional & School Union 73 Professional Development Policy*, which states that educators are required to have an Individual Professional Development Plan. This plan focuses on the educator’s goals for strengthening their content knowledge and professional skills in their license area(s). In a follow-up to the professional development provided, the superintendent noted that administrators conduct walkthroughs and sit in on professional learning community meetings to review the implementation of the curricula.

### Classroom Instruction

The *Ralph C. Mahar Regional & School Union 73 District Improvement Plan* details RCM & SU 73’s instructional priorities, among them being, to “establish an instructional environment that fosters critical and creative thinkers and effective communicators in a technologically rich environment” and to “provide appropriate curricula and teaching strategies that ensure equity and non-bias instruction and learning opportunities for all students.” Discussions with teachers and central office and school leaders revealed a common understanding of these priorities. Stakeholders identified high-quality teaching practices as a priority of the superintendency union. For example, the *Ralph C. Mahar Regional School 2023-2025 School Improvement Plan* emphasizes implementing “more personalized and project-based options for all students,” whereas the *Fisher Hill School 2023-2025 School Improvement Plan* prioritizes the implementation of evidence-based practices. Teachers and school leaders across grade levels reported formal observations and informal walkthroughs to review teachers’ instructional practices. In addition to following RCM & SU 73’s plan, each building creates a SIP that aligns with the central office’s instructional goals but tailors the priorities to the students they serve. The District Improvement Plan and SIPs clearly articulate aligned instructional goals, which is a strength of the superintendency union.

The superintendency union prioritizes professional development and teacher training to use district curricula effectively. Curriculum-based professional development for teachers is organized by the director of curriculum and the district instructional coach and data analyst. A central office leader shared that professional development is teacher-focused and that “teachers decide what they want to learn.” This process is described in detail in the *Ralph C. Mahar Regional & School Union 73 Professional Development Policy*, which states that educators are required to have an Individual Professional Development Plan. This plan focuses on the educator’s goals for strengthening their content knowledge and professional skills in their license area(s). In a follow-up to the professional development provided, the superintendent noted that administrators conduct walkthroughs and sit in on professional learning community meetings to review the implementation of the curricula.

However, elementary teachers explained that curriculum implementation is a challenge because curricula trainings were offered in the summer at the start of the year but not offered during the school year. In addition, these staff reported that district support for implementation “didn’t always feel supportive.” Several Fisher Hill teachers reported that although they receive initial training when adopting a new curriculum, ongoing training for that curriculum—such as coaching—is often lacking. Teachers noted that central office leaders have “asked people who were coaches in the past to support some new teachers [in teaching curricula], but there’s no [formal] role for that.” As a result, teachers who are new to the school teach curricula without receiving adequate training, staff said. One teacher shared that they were not offered any training in the Wonders curriculum and that they didn’t receive adequate guidance from central office leaders about how to receive training. Reports from teachers and central office officials indicated that curriculum implementation at the elementary level is inconsistent, which is an area for growth for RCM & SU 73.

Still, the superintendency union has some structures to support instruction more generally, though not all RCM & SU 73 schools have access to an instructional coach who provides targeted, ongoing support and promotes continuous improvement. As such, some staff need additional resources to support instructional improvement, such as dedicated coaches, which central office leaders and teachers recognize as an area for growth. The need for additional instructional supports is especially prevalent at the elementary level. RCM & SU 73 leaders explained that instead of having a dedicated instructional coach position, the central office provides stipends to former instructional coaches to provide instructional support to elementary-level teachers. Focus group respondents, however, reported that these staff rarely have time or opportunity to offer this support. One elementary principal said, “We don’t have coaches. We don’t have coordinators. It’s just myself and [one other person] . . . making ourselves present. We wear many hats in our building.” When asked if elementary teachers could work directly with an instructional coach, an elementary focus group respondent said, “None of us. We don’t have any,” a sentiment with which other participants agreed. Another teacher explained, “Officially, if I was a new teacher who needed coaching or if I was an experienced teacher who wanted coaching, there’s no one to do that.” One central office leader elaborated that although the former elementary-level literacy and mathematics coaches now function as Title 1 interventionists, they still provide some afterschool training for teachers and attend weekly professional learning community meetings. Fisher Hill teachers reported that they receive informal instructional support from their grade-level peers and former instructional coaches and that they do not feel well supported. Petersham Center teachers shared that they also do not have an instructional coach in the building; however, teachers use the curriculum coordinator and their grade-level peers for additional support. In another focus group, respondents mentioned that although they do not have an instructional coach, they work with the district’s curriculum coordinator, who supports them regularly and is accessible for assistance.

Mahar Regional teachers explained that there is a coach at the school, their instructional coach meets with them regularly, and that “it’s been much more effective to have one person whose dedicated job is to do that type of coaching.” According to one school-level leader, the instructional coach also serves as a data analyst in supporting middle and high school teachers: “All the teachers have access to her to improve their practice.” A high school teacher expressed their appreciation of the personalized and hands-on nature of instructional coaching:

[Our coach] came to my room and showed me how to use some new apps or programs . . . and she came three times, because the first time to show me, the second time to help me make my own, and the third time to watch me do it. And that’s what I needed.

Likewise, one middle school teacher shared, “We have coaching meetings. . . . [The instructional coach] will come into the room and help you out. I’ve utilized that a couple of times, which has been actually really helpful. It has been helpful. Yeah, she’s wonderful.”

Classroom observations revealed a strength in classroom organization throughout the superintendency union. In the CLASS observation system, classroom organization is “the organization and management of students’ behavior time, and attention in the classroom” (Classroom Assessment Scoring System Manual, p. 3). Observations provide evidence that rules and guidelines in RCM & SU 73 classrooms for behavior are clear and consistently reinforced by the teacher, and teachers provide a steady flow of activities to help the classroom run smoothly. Across all grade levels, ratings within the classroom organization domain were in the high range (6.0 for Grades K-5, 6.7 for Grades 6-8, and 6.3 for Grades 9-12). These observation data, combined with the plans described in district documents, indicate that the superintendency union has clear plans and strategies for creating inclusive learning environments and that these plans are improving instructional environments for students.

### Student Access to Coursework

RCM & SU 73 provides a wide range of course offerings and academic pathways to accommodate diverse student needs and interests, which is a strength of RCM & SU 73. Mahar Regional provides courses across three levels: AP, honors, and college preparatory. According to the *2023-2024 Program of Studies*, the school offers eight AP courses across ELA, mathematics, science, history, and art. Mahar Regional also offers dual enrollment through a partnership with a local institution of higher education, Greenfield Community College. Moreover, the school offers the Certificate and Career Pathway program, in which students can gain exposure to certain career fields and certificate opportunities in areas including business, environmental, and tech and design thinking.

In addition to core content offerings, Mahar Regional students can access electives and extracurriculars. Seventh- and eighth-grade students shared that they have the option to take classes in computer science, band, chorus, robotics, coding, and world languages such as French, Spanish, and American Sign Language. According to the *2023-2024 Program of Studies* and student reports, the school also has a partnership with the Virtual High School program, in which students can take courses that are not otherwise offered by the school. For example, one high school student explained that the Virtual High School has “tons of courses” and that “there’s any AP course you want.” Mahar Regional also provides extracurricular activities including athletics, student council, and special interest clubs. According to central office leaders, the superintendency union offers a four-week summer learning program for elementary students. In addition, Fisher Hill and Petersham Center offer summer vacation programs in mathematics and literacy. Mahar Regional also offers a four-week summer learning program, in which rising seventh-grade students can participate in two of three different intensive programs: English, mathematics, and science.

In general, superintendency union staff said in focus groups they felt that the equity of students’ access to advanced coursework was high. Central office leaders said that they use the state’s standards of equity as a foundation for ensuring access for all students and that they use an equity protocol during their walkthroughs to address concerns. Mahar Regional teachers noted that taking the courses can be “a little more challenging for special education students” because they have fewer blocks that can be substituted for an elective, but now everyone “can take 10 different classes a year” and “there is a lot of space in the schedule and a lot of flexibility.” However, high school students expressed concerns about their scheduling blocks. One student explained that they have less time for their AP class because of recent schedule changes. Moreover, data reported to the state indicate that the rate of students completing advanced courses is lower than statewide peers; the percentage of students completing an advanced course did not exceed 30 percent for any subject area or for any student group, based on data from the 2022-23 school year. As such, while virtual and in-person options may present opportunities for students to complete advanced courses, increasing actual advanced coursework completion rates for all groups of students is an area of growth for RCM & SU 73.

### DESE Recommendations

* *The superintendency union should leverage its curricular review process to select curricula for its two elementary schools that are vertically aligned with the curriculum at the secondary school.*
* *The superintendency union should explore ways to increase instructional support for educators, such as reinstating instructional coaching positions at the elementary level.*
* *The superintendency union should provide curriculum-specific professional development to support the successful implementation of curricula.*
* *The superintendency union should examine the root causes for its low advanced coursework participation rates (as compared to the state rate) and modify systems and structures to increase access and participation.*

## Assessment

RCM & SU 73 uses a variety of screeners to understand students’ reading skills at each school level, including DIBELS, Star Early Literacy, and Star Reading. For mathematics, students are assessed using Star Math and i-Ready Math across grade levels. In addition, Fisher Hill teachers administer assessments that gather additional information from targeted student populations, such as the HMH Reading Inventory, HMH Phonics Inventory, and HMH Math Inventory for students in Grades 5 and 6.

Assessment results are accessible to a broad range of educators, including classroom teachers and central office staff, through the Open Architects data system. According to the *Data Sharing Procedure* documents for each school and conversations with school and district leaders, teachers, students, and families, the central office sends out screening letters and Star and i-Ready reports to parents three times per year and high school students have access to assignment level information via PowerSchool*.*

Table 4 summarizes key strengths and areas for growth in assessment.

Table 4. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Assessment Standard

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Indicator | Strengths | Areas for growth |
| [Data and assessment systems](#_Data_and_Assessment) | * The superintendency union uses multiple sources of data to provide a comprehensive picture of student, school, and district performance. * The new data dashboard system has been used to create an efficient way to store, share, and access data. |  |
| [Data use](#_Data_Use) |  | * Addressing the need for more consistent professional development and protocols for data use across schools and content areas |
| [Sharing results](#_Sharing_Results) | * The superintendency union has a consistent process and timeline for communicating progress to students and families. | * Addressing stakeholders’ desire for more opportunities for students and parents to discuss progress with teachers |

### Data and Assessment Systems

RCM & SU 73 data and assessment systems constitute a strength: the superintendency union uses multiple sources of data to provide a comprehensive picture of student, school, and district performance. All schools in the superintendency union use Star Reading (Grades 3-12) to universally screen all students in reading. Fisher Hill uses DIBELS (Grades K-6) and Star Early Literacy (Grades 1-2) assessments. Petersham Center uses i-Ready Math (Grades 1-6), DIBELS (Grades K-6), and Star Early Literacy (Grades 1-2) assessments. Mahar Regional also uses the Star Math (Grades 7-12) assessment. Other summative measures of performance used within the superintendency union are WIDA ACCESS for ELs (Grades 7-12) and MCAS for ELA, mathematics, and science (Grades 3-10). Teachers administer DIBELS, Star assessments, and i-Ready Math three times per year to Tier 1 students as part of progress monitoring. In addition, Fisher Hill teachers administer assessments that gather additional information from targeted student populations, such as the HMH Reading Inventory, HMH Phonics Inventory, and HMH Math Inventory for students in Grades 5 and 6.

The establishment and use of a shared data system that creates a platform for allowing staff to store and access data is a strength of the district. According to central office and school leaders, RCM & SU 73 recently purchased a data dashboard system developed by Open Architects that helps staff to collect and store data as well as design dashboards for the display of several kinds of information and records, including student assessment results. Focus group data from teachers and student support staff indicated that the Open Architects dashboard system is helpful for the storage and dissemination of results among staff and that the platform is a more efficient way to review live data for individual students and groups of students. One middle school teacher shared that the Open Architects system “lets us go on and see data for each individual student throughout their time in Mahar... And so that’s helpful to see, especially if you’re just trying to get all that information.” A student support staff member explained how the Open Architects system is used: “So now we’re going to roll out [the tool developed by] Open Architects which is going to give us live data from IEPs [individualized education programs] . . . PowerSchool, with our attendance, behavior, and grades with Star, with MCAS.”

### Data Use

RCM & SU 73 and school leaders use student performance data to track improvement goals. One central office leader noted that the Open Architects platform is used to review the effectiveness of school intervention programs and to identify students who have demonstrated improvement but have not yet reached their benchmarks. Principals reported having monthly district-level data meetings to review student assessment data and to determine if students are demonstrating readiness. One principal explained that during data meetings, middle school teachers are pulled in to work with guidance counselors and identify which, if any, test preparatory mathematics and English courses are most appropriate for students as they transition from middle school to high school.

In general, school and central office staff highlighted an area for growth for the superintendency union related to addressing a need for more consistent professional development and structured protocols for data use across schools and content areas. Feedback from school-based educators suggests that data use is less consistent at the individual school or teacher levels. School-based educators reported that they regularly administered various assessments and that they used data to inform IEP development for individual students. However, teachers expressed a lack of consistent protocols for analyzing class or grade-level data during common planning time or professional learning community meetings. At Petersham Center, grade-level data meetings occur every other week to analyze results from screener assessments and to change groupings. However, Fisher Hill teachers reported that support for data use, particularly in the mathematics content area, is less consistent. One Fisher Hill teacher explained that professional learning community times, which occur four days a week for 30 minutes, are the blocks of time that all teachers have to review data, but that “there’s no guidance and support from the top, from administration” on how to structure the meetings or analyze data. Mahar Regional teachers reported that although department heads set aside time to review data during monthly meetings, it is not expected for their school to schedule time for teachers to review data. One high school teacher explained that during the department meetings, they have the option to review data together, but it is “not an expectation, requirement, or anything like that.” Staff described participating in some professional development to understand how to access and interpret collected data, but several staff described individually learning more about the data through informal conversations with colleagues. School leaders described different structures in place across schools, including a “data team meeting” structure in one elementary school that does not exist in the high school or the other elementary school.

### Sharing Results

Across focus groups, feedback from staff confirms the sharing of data from student performance with all relevant central office staff and educators. Both central office and school-based staff indicated that they knew where and how they could access student performance data.

Schools in RCM & SU 73 have a consistent process and timeline for communicating progress to students and families, which is a strength. According to the *Data Sharing Procedure* documents for each school and conversations with school and central office leaders, teachers, students, and families, the central office sends out screening letters and Star and i-Ready reports to parents three times per year. As one principal explained,

For DIBELS, if a student’s been flagged as potential for dyslexia, we do send home a formalized letter that we have . . . and then we share what interventions we’re going to put into place and then allow the families to kind of decide if they want to look at further testing and which direction we go.

Students and parents reported mixed opportunities to discuss progress with teachers, and addressing their desire for more opportunities is an area for growth. Parents explained that they have had meetings with teachers to discuss student learning needs but that they had to conduct additional outreach to connect with teachers and school administrators. Middle school students noted that most teachers frequently share information with them about how they’re doing in class; however, some teachers are less consistent. One middle school student explained, “A lot of teachers will be informative with you. If you’re missing assignments, they will bring it to you and say, ‘Hey, you’re missing this, this, and this.’” High school students described how teachers have individual meetings with them to discuss their grades and that they can view their grades through PowerSchool. One high school student explained, “My teachers work with me on a time that works for both of us [so our meeting is] not something that [I] would have to get out of sports for.” However, other high school students noted that some teachers take longer to provide grades for assignments in PowerSchool.

### DESE Recommendations

* *The superintendency union should develop structures and provide professional development around consistent data use at the classroom level across schools and content areas.*

*The superintendency union should clarify expectations and establish consistency around collaborating with families and sharing data about student progress.*

## Human Resources and Professional Development

The human resources department at Mahar and RCM & SU 73, led by a human resources specialist since 2011, manages payroll and human resources functions across Mahar Regional, Fisher Hill, and Petersham Center. The department also supports the superintendent and principals by collaborating with both in recruiting and hiring staff. The department prepares monthly staffing reports to track trends and turnover, although transitioning from physical files to an electronic system remains an ongoing challenge. The recruitment and hiring process is collaborative, involving the superintendent, human resources specialist, principals, and interview teams. Principals identify staffing needs and lead initial candidate selection, whereas the human resources specialist handles administrative tasks and onboarding. Despite these structured processes, challenges such as budget constraints, finding qualified teachers for specialized subjects, and delays in budget finalization affect hiring efficiency.

In RCM & SU 73, the evaluation process involves both centralized and school-level implementation, with the district leadership team conducting structured walkthroughs and providing data-driven feedback. However, challenges persist because of past evaluation practices and resistance to change, particularly among staff not accustomed to the new, more frequent evaluation process. Professional development aligns with district goals, although inconsistencies in instructional coaching and mentoring support, especially at the elementary level, highlight areas for growth. Teachers in some cases reported having limited leadership opportunities and not feeling supported in volunteering or suggesting new ideas, underscoring the need for more support and encouragement for initiative-taking within the district.

Table 5 summarizes key strengths and areas for growth in human resources and professional development.

Table 5. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Human Resources and Professional Development Standard

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Indicator | Strengths | Areas for growth |
| [Infrastructure](#_Infrastructure) | * The central office used data to help identify staffing trends and turnover. |  |
| [Recruitment, hiring, and assignment](#_Recruitment,_Hiring,_and) | * The recruitment and hiring process at RCM & SU 73 involves active engagement from key stakeholders. | * Improving hiring and assignment processes, addressing budgeting constraints and the difficulty of finding qualified teachers for specialized subjects |
| [Supervision, evaluation, and educator development](#_Supervision,_Evaluation,_and) | * RCM & SU 73 consistently highlights areas of strength through the evaluation process for teachers and administrators. * The district’s planned professional development activities align with its goals for academic rigor, collaboration, and community engagement. | * Implementing teacher evaluations in light of previous inconsistent evaluation practices and resistance to change * Articulating areas for improvement to support ongoing instructional and professional improvement for teachers and administrators * Expanding mentoring support for new teachers to include more formal and structured roles for elementary school teachers |
| [Recognition, leadership development, and advancement](#_Recognition,_Leadership_Development) | * Schools designate department coordinators to attend leadership meetings and share information with their department colleagues. | * Expanding teachers’ opportunities to take on leadership roles |

### Infrastructure

The human resources department in RCM & SU 73 is overseen by a human resources specialist, who has been with the district since 2011. Initially, her role focused on Mahar Regional, but it has since expanded to include Fisher Hill and Petersham Center. She manages the entire payroll process for Mahar Regional school and district as well as the RCM & SU 73 central office. However, for Fisher Hill and Petersham Center, the human resources specialist only manages payroll, whereas each town handles its deductions and benefits. The human resources specialist works closely with the central office staff and is responsible for other human resources functions, such as supporting principals across all three districts in recruiting and hiring staff.

The superintendency union is working to transition from physical files to an electronic system. A district respondent explained that RCM & SU 73 primarily maintains employment records in physical personnel files and uses spreadsheets to track license expirations, new hires, and staffing shifts, but is currently transitioning to an electronic system:

We have . . . a folder just like this [referring to a manila folder in the office] for each person that works here. . . . We’re not electronic. We have a spreadsheet of when licenses expire and need to be renewed, and we have a new hire and shift spreadsheet that all the principals and directors have access to.

Nevertheless, a district respondent mentioned that they are currently transitioning to an electronic system:

We’re in the process of merging [personnel files] over into [a digital platform developed by the company] Open Architects. Because some of that information is in PowerSchool. We’ve [also] got a bit in TeachPoint. If you look at [the new platform] now, we have a teacher licensure dashboard, but we’re trying to perfect that one . . . but moving forward from paper to electronic is going to be a multi-year process.

This transition will hopefully result in fewer inefficiencies and combine various systems and otherwise disconnected data points.

The human resources specialist prepares regular, detailed reports that help identify staffing trends and turnover. The human resources specialist prepares three separate monthly staffing reports for Mahar Regional, Fisher Hill, and Petersham Center. These reports display staffing changes, vacant positions, the total number of full-time employees (FTEs) each month, the number of teachers and nonteachers who are FTEs, as well as grant-paid FTEs. A district staff member said, “The [staffing report] helps [RCM & SU 73] identify trends such as why there was a high turnover in a particular department, or why someone joined and left quickly.” Staffing reports undergo an initial review by the Resources and Capacity subcommittee and are then presented separately to the three school committees. Combined with school-level information, this tracking of staffing trends and turnover is a strength of the district.

### Recruitment, Hiring, and Assignment

The recruitment and hiring process at RCM & SU 73 is a strength because it involves active engagement from a variety of key stakeholders, making it a collaborative process. The interview process includes the superintendent, human resources specialist, principals, and interview teams composed of teachers, staff, and parents or family members. School administrators noted that the process of identifying staffing needs begins with them. With support from the human resources department, school leaders monitor resignations, retirements, and budget allocations to determine vacancies. They initiate the process by posting job openings internally, adhering to union contract guidelines, and then externally on SchoolSpring to reach a broader candidate pool. The principals lead the initial stages of candidate selection, forming committees of teachers and staff to ensure a comprehensive evaluation of each candidate. They review applications, conduct preliminary interviews, and shortlist candidates based on their qualifications and fit for the school’s culture.

The human resources specialist plays a role in managing the administrative aspects of the hiring process, ensuring that all procedures comply with all of the districts’ policies and state regulations. A district respondent described the hiring process within RCM & SU 73, explaining that principals or directors make initial hiring decisions and sometimes involve committees, based on their roles. When a candidate is recommended, paperwork is sent to the superintendent’s administrative assistant, who then schedules a final interview with the superintendent.

A review of school committee meeting minutes reveals discussions related to significant staffing challenges, including a teacher shortage across Massachusetts that is impacting the district. According to the documents, schools have been realigning assignments to manage these shortages and vacancies. A Fisher Hill school committee member referred to these reports during the school committee meeting and noted that despite recent high staff turnover, significant progress has been made in staffing. Most vacancies have been successfully filled, with only a few positions remaining open. In addition, long-term substitutes have been brought in to provide further support.

The human resources specialist conducts reference checks, ensures that all necessary documentation is complete—from application materials to new hire paperwork—and oversees the onboarding process. This includes coordinating with various departments, such as technology and facilities, to prepare for the new employee’s arrival, managing benefits enrollment, and providing essential information about district policies and procedures to facilitate a smooth transition for new hires​​.

The superintendent oversees the entire recruitment and hiring process, aligning it with the district’s strategic goals and budget constraints. In line with RCM & SU 73’s “Human Resources Hiring Procedure,” district leaders and staff explained that the RCM & SU 73 hiring process goes through several stages, beginning with principals and human resources identifying needs, principals and hiring committees conducting initial rounds of interviews, the superintendent conducting final interviews, and the human resources office supporting onboarding when a candidate is hired. The superintendent collaborates closely with the human resources specialist and principals to assess staffing needs and approve final hiring decisions. She participates in the final round of interviews to evaluate candidates’ fit with the district’s educational mission and strategic objectives. Her approval is also required for all hiring decisions, providing a final layer of oversight to maintain high standards and consistency across the district.

After a candidate is hired, principals, in collaboration with RCM & SU 73’s human resources, take the lead in assigning them to specific roles based on their qualifications and the needs of the school. They work together to match the candidate’s skills and expertise with the demands of classrooms or subjects. Considerations include the candidate’s certifications, areas of specialization, and experience levels, ensuring the candidate’s placement in a position in which they can be most effective. Principals explained that hiring decisions begin with evaluating candidates’ licensure and their grade-level preferences. Voluntary requests to move to a different grade level are considered, but ensuring the placement meets student needs is the priority.

In addition, departments and licensure play a role in assignments, according to one principal: “And so, they’re assigned based on their licensure; they’re assigned based on their department.” District leaders try to be flexible, allowing teachers to teach elective courses that align with their interests and expertise. One principal explained that teachers often rotate teaching elective courses, including unique and popular offerings that students enjoy.

Although the hiring and assignment processes in RCM & SU 73 are established, the hiring and assignment processes at RCM & SU 73 face several challenges, primarily due to budgeting constraints and the difficulty of finding qualified teachers for specialized subjects, which remains an area for growth. The superintendent mentioned that frequent delays in budget development affect the hiring process: “Right after the budget gets finalized in June is kind of when we know [what the openings are] for sure. And we’ve had budgets not finalized at all . . . which kind of halts you from hiring new staff when you know you might need it.” The delay in finalizing the budget may result in postponed hiring decisions, potentially leaving schools understaffed or in a last-minute scramble to fill positions. The timing of retirements or resignations can also introduce added complexity, often leaving little time to identify and onboard suitable replacements before the start of the school year. A district staff member shared, “Sometimes we don’t know about retirements either, and so on the later side, too. It’s helpful to know early.” In addition, when teachers are hired, assigning them to the appropriate roles also presents challenges, particularly in specialized areas. A principal noted,

Special education is really hard. We have people working on emergency licenses who are in the process of renewing them. . . . But if we’re looking for special education [teachers] particularly, and then I would say it would be math or science next that would be the hardest to fill.

### Supervision, Evaluation, and Educator Development

In RCM & SU 73, the evaluation and feedback process involves both central office and school-level administrators. During focus groups, school leaders emphasized the importance of regular evaluations and observations for teachers. They conduct frequent classroom visits, both announced and unannounced, to stay engaged with the instructional process. One principal noted, “Very few days go by when I don’t get into every one of my classrooms.” Feedback to teachers is a key component of these observations, including feedback from administrators as well as from curriculum coordinators. Teachers reported that observations are conducted both formally and informally. They receive not only written feedback within a few days of receiving formal observation but also informal feedback, particularly from coordinators. One teacher said, 'The nice thing about having coordinators is that they can also just pop in or walk through and say, "Hey, I saw this.” Principals also use methods such as leaving sticky notes with positive comments or suggestions after classroom observations, as well as more structured, formal feedback sessions following observations. One principal explained, “[Teachers] like the little sticky notes that you leave behind that says, ‘Hey, that was a great class,’ ‘Hey, see me,’ or ‘Hey, I like what you’re doing.’” Principals emphasized the collaborative nature of their approach, which involves department coordinators and academic coaches. They hold regular meetings to discuss instructional strategies and review assessment data, such as the STAR testing conducted three times a year. This collaborative and data-driven approach aims to improve teaching practices and student outcomes continually. One principal mentioned, “We have weekly, monthly meetings with the coordinators, department coordinators. And one of the topics that we’ll discuss is instructional strategies.”

Beyond the formal evaluation process, central office staff monitor instruction and conduct walkthroughs. The district’s leadership team, including the superintendent and district administrative members, also conducts structured walkthroughs, providing feedback, and analyzing observation data supported by student assessment data. School leaders lead the evaluation processes at the school level to provide overarching guidance and support. The superintendent and district administrative team members conduct “district leadership walkthroughs.” Following these walkthroughs, the leadership team convenes for a debriefing session to discuss their observations and compile feedback, using a rubric to ensure consistency and clarity in their evaluations. The superintendent then writes feedback to teachers: “I write the letter to the teachers about their strengths and areas for growth. . . . This is us giving [teachers] feedback on what needs to move and change.” Including specific data in the superintendent’s feedback letters enhanced not only teachers’ reception but also their overall impact on instructional practices, as it reinforced persistent accountability and provided clarity to the evaluation process. Although teachers were not uniform in their descriptions of the superintendent’s presence in classrooms, some staff echoed the sentiments of one teacher, who said, “She’s been in my room quite a lot this year.” In describing the process, the superintendent said, “It was the January letter that got a little bit of movement because . . . I put their actual data in.” The superintendent added that these data included results from the STAR assessment, administered three times a year, offering valuable insights into teaching effectiveness: “We had a meeting, and we looked at their data together. . . . They finally realized that [district leadership walkthroughs] would not end. And the veil came off when I put in writing [their] results on the STAR assessment.” A district document illustrates this approach by showing how the superintendent’s feedback letters include observed strengths and suggestions for improvement.

Implementing teacher evaluations has presented significant challenges due to inconsistency in implementing evaluation practices in the past and resistance to change among staff accustomed to that previous system. Therefore, consistently implementing the evaluation system remains an area for growth. At one school, the lack of prior evaluations under a previous principal, who respondents said did not evaluate any teachers for seven years, has resulted in resistance from teachers unfamiliar with the evaluation process. The superintendent noted, “Teachers were not evaluated. . . . So, [they] are having a hard time understanding the evaluation [process].” In addition, there was resistance to the cultural shift toward regular evaluations and setting personal goals for teachers, especially among teachers more accustomed to the way things were in the past. The superintendent explained,

[The previous principal] wrote all the goals for the teachers. They never wrote their own goals. It was not good. So, culturally, there’s a lot of change. . . . [Teachers are] being evaluated for the first time. Some of the more veteran teachers [are being evaluated for the] first time in six or seven years.

The district review process includes a review of teacher evaluations. This review of central office records suggests that teacher evaluations are completed for some staff using Vector Solutions, formerly TeachPoint. Simple random sampling was used to select the sample of 10 teachers due for summative evaluations for the 2022-2023 school year. Nine of 10 teacher evaluations selected for review (90 percent) had a summative evaluation available for review. All nine of the teacher evaluations available for review were complete and did not omit required components, including a rating for each standard or an overall rating. All but one of the evaluations reviewed included student learning and professional practice SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely) goals. All but one teacher randomly selected for review developed student learning and professional practice SMART goals. In addition, evaluators and staff consistently include goals on summative evaluation reports, along with the teacher’s reported progress toward these goals. Nearly all evaluations reviewed (7) included multiple sources of evidence, such as observations, student work samples, or other evidence to support progress toward student learning goals, professional learning goals, standards, and indicators. Nearly all summative evaluations (7) included feedback for each standard or overall feedback related to the teacher’s overall rating that included naming strengths or practices the teacher should continue. However, only five evaluations included feedback indicating areas of improvement.

Administrator evaluations also are completed using Vector Solutions. Of the two administrative district staff who were due for a summative evaluation for the 2022-2023 school year, both evaluations were available for review and complete with performance ratings and an assessment of progress toward goals. Only one evaluation reviewed included a student learning and professional practice SMART goal. Both evaluations reviewed included multiple sources of evidence to assess performance on summative evaluation standards. Both summative evaluations reviewed included feedback for each standard, complete with evaluator comments with specific, actionable feedback naming each administrator’s strengths, and neither evaluation identified areas of improvement for administrative district staff.

Taken together, the review of teacher and administration evaluations highlights that a strength of the district is consistently identifying areas of strength through the evaluation process for teachers and administrators. On the other hand, this evidence also highlights that an area for growth for the superintendency union is articulating areas for improvement to support ongoing instructional and professional improvement for teachers.

Another strength of the district is that its planned professional development activities align with its goals for academic rigor, collaboration, and community engagement. Professional development plans for RCM & SU 73 emphasize continuous training for teachers, specialists, and paraeducators. Schools create an annual professional development calendar, scheduling sessions approximately once a month, with specific focus areas varying throughout the year. The plans address key district objectives such as mental health support, writing skills enhancement, and effective teaching practices. For instance, Mahar Regional’s schedule includes sessions on youth mental health and writing across the curriculum aligning with goals of supporting mental health and enhancing writing skills. Similarly, Fisher Hill’s schedule features professional development on trauma-informed practices, reading and writing, and content areas such as science and social studies. In addition, the district offers out-of-district opportunities, with support for teachers to find sessions that align with their needs. A middle school teacher shared, “There are out-of-district PDs [professional development sessions] often offered throughout the year. [The director of curriculum] will send an email saying, ‘Hey, there’s this PD [professional development topic] that you might be interested in,’ or you find your own and she supports you.”

RCM & SU 73 leaders explained that one of their professional development goals for next year is to determine how to best implement curriculum support at the elementary level. For instance, one central office leader shared that the superintendency union has offered specific academic training for reading instruction and that teachers independently complete training for different academic disciplines. Central office leaders also explained that although the implementation of curricula is expected, curricula training attendance has been low because trainings occur before the start of the school year, at the end of the school day, or during district professional development days, which are one half-day per month. One central office leader added that at the elementary level, teachers receive the most support from their grade-level peers and that some teachers started the school year without having training for newly purchased curricula. Petersham Center teachers commented on the structure of professional development, explaining that curriculum coordinators and literacy coaches offer support by modeling lessons.

Instructional staff who are new to the district engage in onboarding processes that include initial administrative tasks and introductions, followed by building-specific orientation activities. Mentoring of new teachers is a continuous support system in which new teachers are assigned mentors who meet monthly and are available for additional support as needed. As one teacher mentioned, “[My mentee and I] meet monthly. And on top of that, whenever we need to.” However, elementary teachers noted that, although experienced teachers are asked to support new teachers, “there’s no [formal] role for that” and “nobody following through on that.” In addition, the support was voluntary, resulting in inconsistent participation: “Some teachers came; some teachers did not come.” Therefore, another area for district growth is expanding mentoring support for new teachers to include more formal and structured roles for elementary school teachers, since more structured mentoring appears to be available only to middle and high school teachers.

### Recognition, Leadership Development, and Advancement

Across the schools in RCM & SU 73, there are some leadership opportunities for teachers, but these are limited. Some teachers presently act as coordinators, engaging in monthly meetings with principals and other administrators to discuss updates and initiatives, which is a strength. Coordinators facilitate department meetings and lead discussions about curricula and other school-related matters. A middle school teacher explained,

Each department has a designated teacher who . . . go[es] to monthly meetings to hear updates from the principal and different admin and initiatives from the superintendent. And then anything that needs to be brainstormed, that [meeting] is like a think tank. And then we run department meetings. As part of that, each group department breaks off and shares updates from the coordinator’s meeting.

In addition, a high school teacher explained that coordinators carry out evaluations, emphasizing that teachers interact with their coordinators regularly in their classrooms, showcasing their regular engagement with other teachers.

Elementary school teachers receive annual emails inviting them to take charge of coordinating summer school programs. This invitation is open to all teachers and involves a selection process. Teachers can develop and implement enrichment programs that are open to anyone in the building: “the creation of a jumpstart program for February and April that’s offered to anyone in the building.”

However, teachers in the superintendency union reported having limited opportunities to take on other leadership roles or formal recognition, presenting an area for potential growth. Elementary school teachers expressed significant concerns about the lack of leadership opportunities and the negative reception to volunteering or suggesting new ideas, a sentiment that was more prevalent at Fisher Hill than Petersham Center. One teacher noted, “You can’t volunteer to do something because it will not be received well,” highlighting the lack of receptiveness for those who wish to take initiative. Another teacher echoed this sentiment, saying, “You can’t suggest anything,” emphasizing the difficulty in proposing new ideas or changes. A teacher representative also said that there were limited opportunities to help determine school approaches and priorities, but they could request individual professional development opportunities. Similarly, another teacher representative said that, while they were aware of a colleague who received a recent regional award, they were not aware of any formal criteria in their district for recognizing excellence in teaching, saying “I don’t think we have anything specific to our district.”

### DESE Recommendations

* *The superintendency union should annually review the full timeline of its teacher hiring and assignment process, with an eye toward the timing of the budget process, identifying staff departures earlier, and assigning staff in specialized areas.*
* *The superintendency union should provide additional information, data, and resources to help teachers understand and gain confidence in the evaluation process.*
* *The superintendency union should set expectations for all evaluators to include positive and constructive feedback in all teacher and administrative evaluations.*
* *The superintendency union should establish a formalized teacher mentoring program at the elementary level that aligns with* [*state guidelines*](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeffectiveness/mentor/components.html)*.*
* *The superintendency union should work with school leaders to identify and develop opportunities for distributed leadership and teacher-led initiatives across all schools.*

## Student Support

RCM & SU 73 has structures and systems in place to support the academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs of students. These include systems to support data-based matching of students with evidence-based supports. In addition, RCM & SU 73 supports the implementation of restorative practices such as restorative circles. Each school has a child study team that uses multiple sources of data to match students with evidence-based supports and services based on their unique academic, behavioral, or social needs. For students’ social-emotional needs, the superintendency union has recently implemented several strategies at the elementary level including a crisis team, “cool rooms” for students to de-escalate, zones of regulation lessons, and individual check-ins with students.

RCM & SU 73 has several means of engaging families and communities, such as the Special Education Parent Advisory Council, parent-teacher organizations, and school site councils. Local advocacy groups and community organizations conduct home visits, match students to mentors, send board-certified behavior analysts into homes, and help parents structure their schedules. Specialists make referrals so students can access these means of support. Moreover, each school sends out a newsletter to families that includes information about facility maintenance, parent resources, and awards given to students. Middle school students shared that they have been involved in the school committee and that they have opportunities to participate in school council, the National Honor Society, and JROTC, all of which provide leadership opportunities. High school students also explained that they participate in various clubs, career fairs, and the school council.

Table 6 summarizes key strengths and areas for growth in student support.

Table 6. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Student Support Standard

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Indicator | Strengths | Areas for growth |
| [Safe and supportive school climate and culture](#_Safe_and_Supportive) | * The superintendency union has clear priorities identified that focus on social-emotional learning, equity, access, and inclusion. | * Consistently implementing positive behavioral support systems and practices aimed at creating supportive environments for all students |
| [Tiered systems of support](#_Tiered_Systems_of) | * The superintendency union has a wide array of tiered support initiatives in place to meet students’ nonacademic needs. | * Refining tiered academic supports across schools, particularly at the elementary level, to create a more coherent system across tiers |
| [Family, student, and community engagement and partnerships](#_Family,_Student,_and) | * The superintendency union has several opportunities for student voice. | * Creating more frequent and accessible opportunities for two-way communication between parents and schools, specifically for parents to provide feedback to the superintendency union |

### Safe and Supportive School Climate and Culture

RCM & SU 73’s plan for forming a safe and supportive school climate and culture focuses on three district priorities: social-emotional learning, equity, and access and inclusion. Central office and school leaders agreed that these are major focus areas for the superintendency union: “We’re really looking to kind of level the playing field for all students and going through that [strategic planning] process.” Central office and school staff described several strategies used throughout the superintendency union, including revisions to curricula that “[build] those CASEL [Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning] competencies into [everyday instruction]“ implementing restorative practices such as restorative circles, and hosting new student and grade transition meetings.

Generally, the districts in RCM & SU 73 have several efforts in place to try and foster welcoming and supportive learning environments, though these may not be implemented consistently across all three schools. For instance, Petersham Center helps students develop social and emotional competencies through their positive behavior incentive initiative, Fox Bucks. According to one Petersham Center staff member, this is a schoolwide behavioral program in which students, as a class, can earn tickets for exhibiting appropriate behavior, classroom teamwork, and efforts in their academic work. The program encourages kindness between adults and students across all grade levels. In addition, Petersham Center guidance counselors teach a course that helps students learn how to work together as a team and assist teachers with their weekly social-emotional learning lessons. However, Fisher Hill teachers expressed concerns about the consistency of opportunities for students to develop social-emotional competencies in their school. One Fisher Hill staff member noted, “We used to have morning meetings, but now only the younger grades have it...” Fisher Hill teachers also described participating in some professional development to understand trauma and how to speak to children, but several noted that building administration did not attend that professional development or offer implementation support. At Mahar Regional, teachers explained that not only do students participate in monthly advisory blocks but, at the middle school level, a school psychologist comes in once a week to conduct a social skills group with students.

In terms of the effectiveness of these efforts, various data points paint a mixed picture of the districts in RCM & SU 73. Data collected in observations in the three schools within RCM & SU 73 revealed positive ratings for behavior management across all grade spans (Grades K-5, 6.2; Grades 6-8, 6.5; Grades 9-12, 6.3). These ratings suggest that teachers in observed classrooms were effectively setting clear behavior expectations and employing successful methods to prevent and redirect misbehavior across all schools and grade bands. In focus groups, high school students described how they “feel fully safe every day at school” and that “if there was ever something that was wrong, [a student] could go to a counselor, go to a teacher,” yet middle school students still expressed concerns over behavior management. One middle school student explained, “Sometimes students just will ignore the teacher or cause more problems for the teacher... And sometimes the teacher is also not helping the situation.” In line with students at Mahar Regional expressing mixed experiences, suspension rates at the school are higher than in some peer districts. In 2022-23, almost 10 percent of students received an out-of-school suspension, including approximately 10 percent of White students, 11 percent of male students, 14 percent of students classified as high needs, and 17 percent of students with disabilities. Consistently implementing positive behavioral support systems and practices aimed at creating supportive environments for all students is an area for growth for the superintendency union.

### Tiered Systems of Support

RCM & SU 73 has structures and systems in place to support the academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs of all students. The District Curriculum Accommodation Plan explicitly delineates the supports in place across all schools to address students’ academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs. Each school uses the District Curriculum Accommodation Plan, which outlines Tier 1 accommodations and strategies for differentiation to support inclusive learning environments. These supports include systems for data-based decision making to inform the matching of students with evidence-based supports and services. According to interviews with student support specialists, dedicated Title 1 reading and math interventionists are available at both elementary schools to conduct pull-outs with students. Each school also has a student support team that uses multiple sources of data to match students with evidence-based supports and services based on their unique academic, behavioral, or social needs. According to the RCM & SU 73 *Student Support Team Guidelines* document, when a student has been referred to the student support team, members develop strategies to assist the student, which the classroom teacher implements with the support staff and in consultation with appropriate specialists. In addition, special educators and Title 1 paraprofessionals support intervention groups within the classroom.

According to interviews with Fisher Hill student support staff, students receive targeted skill interventions (Tier 2) based on their benchmark data. One Fisher Hill student support staff member highlighted an area for growth in the scheduling of tiered supports, explaining that “there’s a big weakness and flaw in the structure we have right now. . . . Students are being pulled out of their Tier 1 instruction to receive Tier 2 instruction during the Tier 1 time.” Another Fisher Hill student support staff member described a similar issue with Tier 3 supports, noting that Tier 3 interventions at the elementary level do not completely align with the curriculum. Fisher Hill teachers also noted that although they have a lot of Tier 2 supports available to choose from, they have concerns that the implementation of these supports is less consistent. For instance, one Fisher Hill teacher described how Title 1 teachers were pulled from classes to support MCAS testing. Another Fisher Hill teacher explained that students were assigned Tier 2 supports but were not receiving supports for a portion of the year. Petersham Center teachers explained that paraprofessionals are used in every classroom and that students are provided with both targeted skill interventions (Tier 2) and intensive, individualized interventions (Tier 3). Refining delivery of tiered academic supports across schools, particularly at the elementary level, to create a more coherent system across tiers is an area for growth for the superintendency union.

Mahar Regional teachers at the middle school level shared that a Title 1 mathematics paraprofessional and an academic coach are available to support students. Mahar Regional middle school teachers also noted that remediation is built into their instruction, they often conduct coteaching, and they offer afterschool tutoring as supports for students. Mahar Regional high school teachers explained that all teachers are available to students every Monday and Tuesday after school to provide academic support, and that peer tutoring is available in the library.

For students’ nonacademic needs, the superintendency union has a wide array of tiered support initiatives in place, which is a strength. According to central office staff, RCM & SU 73 has recently implemented several strategies at the elementary level to provide tiers of social-emotional intervention, including a crisis team, “cool rooms” for students to de-escalate, zones of regulation lessons, and individual check-ins with students. One Fisher Hill student support staff member explained that these strategies are “really key to managing a lot of the behaviors.” At both elementary schools, students receive weekly social-emotional learning lessons using the Second Step curriculum. Students at Petersham Center also have lunch bunches with the school guidance counselor. However, Fisher Hill staff reported that the implementation of these initiatives is not systematically coordinated as a tiered system. At Mahar Regional, middle and high school students have access to guidance counselors and school psychologists, and 10th graders receive a curriculum around identifying the signs for suicide and specialists monitor and refer students through the program. In addition, Mahar Regional has a partnership with Haywood Hospital to provide telehealth services to students in need of mental health support. High school students also are assigned guidance counselors who reach out to students, discuss their plans, and connect them with courses they may be interested in.

### Family, Student, and Community Engagement and Partnerships

RCM & SU 73 has several means of engaging families and communities, such as the Special Education Parent Advisory Council, parent-teacher organizations, and school site councils. Student support staff noted that they have recently rebuilt a connection with the Special Education Parent Advisory Council to offer training and advertise to every parent in the member districts. Staff stated that “it’s not always easy to get parents to come to those kinds of generic meetings,” so they created advocacy parent groups to increase family engagement and offer additional support to students and parents outside of the school environment.

Focus groups with central office and school-based staff highlighted the superintendency union’s efforts to engage families and partner with community organizations to enhance student supports. Administrators and teachers explained that families are involved in the student support team process: Adjustment counselors reach out to parents, schedule individualized parent meetings, offer training and workshops, and connect families to outside services and supports. For example, Petersham Center has partnerships with Haywood Hospital to provide crisis support to students and partnerships with local preschool programs to ensure quality transitions from early intervention services to preschool services. In addition, advocacy groups and local community organizations conduct home visits, match students to mentors, send board-certified behavior analysts into homes, and help parents structure their schedules.

Staff described several efforts to communicate with and involve parents beyond the community services support process. Staff at Petersham Center described family events like a family dance, field trips, and popsicles on the playground event for families and students. Mahar Regional conducts open house nights and each school sends out a newsletter to families that includes information about facility maintenance, parent resources, and awards given to students. However, parents expressed that more opportunities for two-way communication between families and schools is needed. Families reported that they received more communication from parent-teacher organizations rather than their child’s school or the RCM & SU 73 central office and that their children’s school relies too much on social media to communicate. Parent focus group participants also explained that there are too few opportunities for them to provide feedback to school or RCM & SU 73 administrators, and that “it doesn’t seem like it’s taken very well when there is feedback.” They expressed a desire for more frequent and accessible opportunities to provide feedback, which is an area for growth for RCM & SU 73.

RCM & SU 73 has several opportunities for student voice, which is a strength of the superintendency union. For example, when developing the newly updated improvement plan, the superintendent conducted focus groups with parents and students. The superintendent reported that “when the students came in, they looked, and again we had posted the mission and the vision . . . and the students are like . . . it’s missing social justice. And it really was the kids that drove [the inclusion of] that.” Middle school students shared that they have been involved in the school committee and that they have opportunities to participate in school council, the National Honor Society, and JROTC, all of which provide leadership opportunities. High school students also explained that they participate in various clubs, career fairs, and the school council. According to school committee meeting agendas and reports from Mahar Regional school committee members, student council members provide a report during school committee meetings. One high school student shared that they were able to start their own club, an Outdoor Adventure Club, that is still active at the school, as an example of students having input into school structures and activities.

### DESE Recommendations

* *The superintendency union should analyze the root causes of its high suspension rates and student reports of ineffective behavior management to develop positive behavioral support systems that improve overall culture and climate across its schools.*
* *The superintendency union should work with its elementary school leaders to create greater consistency in its tiered supports, including rearranging schedules so that students do not miss Tier 1 instruction, aligning Tier 2 and 3 curricula, and ensuring sufficient staffing.*
* *The superintendency union should develop and implement a plan to increase two-way communication with families so that families have consistent opportunities to communicate with their child(ren)’s teacher(s) and school administrators and provide feedback to the superintendency union.*

## Financial and Asset Management

The Finance and Operations Department at RCM & SU 73 supports Mahar Regional, Fisher Hill, and Petersham Center. The department’s leader is the director of finance. The team includes a human resources specialist, a payroll clerk, an accountant who also serves as a grants manager, and an accounts payable coordinator. In addition to the finance-specific positions, the operational division of the department includes a director of facilities and a food service director.

The director of finance and operations manages budget development, requisitions, purchase orders, and invoices. They prepare monthly reports for Mahar Regional, Fisher Hill, and Petersham Center, which are reviewed by the respective school committees. These reports cover expenditures, grants, finances, enrollment, and staffing, ensuring transparency and public access to budget information. However, economic constraints at Fisher Hill and Petersham Center present challenges, with tight budgets and limited financial resources meaning that the process can be protracted and often involve reductions to original proposals.

The financial oversight process at RCM & SU 73 is thorough, with the director of finance managing budget development, requisitions, purchase orders, and invoices across three districts. Monthly reports for expenditures, grants, and finances are reviewed by the Resources and Capacity subcommittees and shared with their respective school committees and the public. A grants manager monitors compliance and effective use of funds. End-of-year reporting includes independent audits, which have not identified significant issues but provided recommendations for improvement. The *FY24 Facilities Plan* includes safety and efficiency upgrades, with funding from various sources. However, the towns of Orange and Petersham face financial constraints, impacting their ability to maintain robust stabilization funds. Mahar Regional has such a stabilization fund.

Table 7 summarizes key strengths and areas for growth in financial and asset management.

Table 7. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Financial and Asset Management Standard

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Indicator | Strengths | Areas for growth |
| [Budget documentation and reporting](#_Budget_Documentation_and) | * RCM & SU 73’s commitment to transparency and communication is evident in its efforts to make budget presentations and reports accessible and clearly communicated to the public and other stakeholders across multiple constituencies. |  |
| [Adequate budget](#_Adequate_Budget) |  | * Addressing concerns about the adequacy of the budget, including disagreements between towns, that result in frequent annual reductions or uncertainty |
| [Financial tracking, forecasting, controls, and audits](#_Financial_Tracking,_Forecasting,) | * The financial oversight process includes thorough review processes. * Grant funding management at RCM & SU 73 is characterized by strategic use of both federal and state grants. |  |
| [Capital planning and facility maintenance](#_Capital_Planning_and) | * RCM & SU 73 employs a strategic approach to long-term planning and budgeting for facility management. * Mahar Regional has an adequate budget and established a stabilization fund for future unanticipated capital expenses. | * Securing funds for capital needs in all member towns and districts |

### Budget Documentation and Reporting

The director of finance and operations is responsible for managing budget information and reports at RCM & SU 73. This role includes developing the budget, approving requisitions and purchase orders, and signing off on every invoice. As one district respondent stated,

[The finance director and] I approve requisitions and purchase orders, so [they] know what [is] budgeted. [The finance director] knows what the detail is; the principals know; they also keep track of it, too. So once it gets approved by [the director], it can be ordered and then paid for. [They] look at every invoice; sign off on every invoice.

The finance director prepares three separate monthly reports—one each for Mahar Regional, Fisher Hill, and Petersham Center—for the Resources and Capacity subcommittees, which serve as the regional finance subcommittees, which cover expenditures, grants, finances, enrollment, and staffing for the three school committees. According to one committee member, “So, [the subcommittee] meets monthly from September through June. And every month, [they get] an updated expenditure budget.” According to district staff, “We have three Resources and Capacity committees. . . . And then, those subcommittees report back to their school committees.”

RCM & SU 73’s commitment to transparency and communication is evident in its efforts to make budget presentations and reports accessible and clearly communicated to the public and other stakeholders across multiple constituencies, which is a strength. The finance department regularly posts these documents on the district’s website and ensures that they are updated with the latest information on revenue, expenditures, and the budget. In addition, district respondents highlighted that the public is invited to attend public hearings and that agendas for all school committee and subcommittee meetings are posted to encourage community participation:

We try to post [budget reports] on the [district] website and keep that up to date as far as expenditures and the budget. [The public] also gets invited to the public hearings. They have the agendas posted for every school committee and subcommittee that we have so that they can attend, too.

The fiscal year 2024 budget presentations for Mahar Regional, Fisher Hill, and Petersham Center are clear and user-friendly, following a structured format that includes an introduction, school achievements, curriculum and assessment data, enrollment figures, revenue sources, unbudgeted needs, expenses, and a summary. Each presentation outlines steps from adopting budget goals to final approval. They include key dates and principles focused on responsible budgeting. Detailed data on academic performance, such as MCAS scores and special education trends, along with specific financial needs, such as additional curriculum funding and special education requirements, are presented clearly. The presentations also highlight new developments, such as curriculum updates and infrastructure projects, and provide precise figures for enrollment and revenue.

### Adequate Budget

The Mahar Regional, Fisher Hill, and Petersham Center district and school budgets emphasize enhancing educational quality, infrastructure, and support services. Each budget reflects technology, transportation, and maintenance investments to support the schools’ strategic objectives and improve overall operations.

The fiscal year 2023 budget for Fisher Hill is $7,551,563, marking a 10.77 percent increase from the previous fiscal year, which reflects significant increases to general education IT and special education out-of-district budget needs. The fiscal year 2023 budget for Petersham Center shows a total of $2,120,059, reflecting a 4.01 percent increase from the previous fiscal year. Similarly, the fiscal year 2023 budget for Mahar Regional totals $14,848,233, representing a 3.98 percent increase from the previous year.

Shared expenses between Petersham Center, Fisher Hill, and Mahar Regional reflect a collaborative approach to managing districtwide resources in RCM & SU 73, with various administrative and support roles being shared based on enrollment percentages. These roles include the superintendent, director of finance, human resources specialist, payroll assistant, office assistant, accountant and grants manager, as well as directors of student support services and curriculum. The cost of these shared positions is distributed based on enrollment percentages, with Petersham Center covering approximately 10 percent, Fisher Hill about 45 percent, and Mahar Regional about 45 percent.

Focus group responses reveal significant concerns about the adequacy of the budget for the towns of Orange and Petersham, primarily caused by economic constraints, which frequently result in cuts, uncertainty, and delays in approvals; these impacts collectively represent an area for growth. School committee members revealed that “budget is always [a top concern]” in the town of Orange primarily because of its economic conditions, which limit available financial resources to support the local and regional schools. One school committee member shared,

There’s not a lot of money flowing around. And [Fisher Hill] is such a centerpiece of [the] district, but . . . it doesn’t mean that there’s money to support it. Every year, the town of Orange has come back to RCM & SU 73 administration and said, “We can’t afford that.” So, budget probably is [Fisher Hill]’s biggest concern.

Another respondent highlighted that in the town of Orange, “there is no fluff. . . . There’s just no wiggle room . . . for really any town departments, and it’s only an environment of scarcity and competition between departments,” suggesting that the budget is extremely tight with little room for flexibility.

Respondents from Petersham Center expressed similar budget concerns, reflecting what they characterized as the broader issues faced by small towns. They often must make difficult decisions to prioritize spending within limited resources. A Petersham school committee member said,

No town has enough money to send to their schools. So, it just comes to prioritizing. And we have to trust that we’re being told the right story and that [RCM & SU 73’s] vision aligns with what we feel is important. . . . We have to trust that . . . [the budget] is in the best interest of the student population.

RCM & SU 73 leaders described the thorough process of creating detailed budget presentations for each district, which include academic data, special education needs, and other typical budgetary components. Despite this thoroughness, the superintendent acknowledges the constant need for cuts and adjustments, stating, “[The towns] want us to cut. I don’t [always] know how much; I don’t know where.” Another central office respondent similarly characterized the fiscal situation as tight:

We make do with what we have. The towns are on board. They understand that we need to increase it. . . . In a perfect world, we’d love to get as much money as we can to provide a great education, but that isn’t done.

As discussed in the Budget Development section, these factors create an environment where unexpected changes in town finances—such as the additional students or the fraudulent municipal invoices (see Leadership and Governance: Budget Development)—can exacerbate what respondents described as an already challenging fiscal environment.

### Financial Tracking, Forecasting, Controls, and Audits

The financial oversight process includes thorough review and approval processes, which are strengths in maintaining disciplined financial management. In RCM & SU 73, the director of finance and operations oversees financial tracking across three districts: Mahar Regional, Fisher Hill, and Petersham Center. According to district respondents, financial oversight includes a thorough review and approval process for all invoices and requests.

Budget progress reporting involves a structured process that engages various stakeholders, including the superintendent, three school committees, schools, and the community. The Resources and Capacity subcommittee, functioning like a finance subcommittee, plays a role in this process. A district staff member shared, “[The finance director] meets [with the subcommittee] monthly from September through June. . . . Every month they get an updated expenditures-to-budget-report, grants report, and more.” Focus group responses also suggest that “[a town manager] goes to the [full] school committee meetings . . . so, [they] can report back [to their town].” Comprehensive reports are provided to the school committee and made accessible to the public, maintaining continuous financial oversight. A review of Mahar Regional’s Resources and Capacity subcommittee meeting agenda suggests that meetings are virtual, and the agenda typically includes a facilities update, grants update, and a review of finances covering expenses to budget, revenue, and salary budget analysis.

Managing grant funds in RCM & SU 73 is another strength, characterized by strategic use of both federal and state grants, including the former Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds and other competitive grants. Led by the accountant and grants manager, in collaboration with the director of finance and operations, the RCM & SU 73 finance office handles both federal and state grants, including the former Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) grant and other competitive funds. The accountant and grants manager understands the specific requirements associated with each grant, which allows for appropriate and compliant use of funds. A district respondent noted, “Our accountant [and] grants manager does a phenomenal job. She knows the rules of the grants, what they’re being spent on, and they get signed off by [the director of curriculum] and myself.” The grants manager generates monthly reports to provide financial updates and qualitative insights into the impact of the grants on various projects and initiatives within the district. These reports are reviewed by the school committees and are made accessible to the public, maintaining transparency and accountability. A review of budget information presented to school committees reveals updates regarding grant funds and revenues. For example, for Petersham Center, the fiscal year 2024 budget includes partial salary coverage for an interventionist through Title I and IV grants as well as Circuit Breaker funds used to offset out-of-district tuition expenses. For Fisher Hill, the fiscal year 2024 budget shows a 6.66 percent increase in expenses over the prior year, with grant-funded positions including those covered by Title I, ESSER, and TAG/REAP funds. The budget also leverages Circuit Breaker funds to offset high special education costs. At Mahar Regional, the fiscal year 2024 budget highlights the use of grants to support various initiatives and the impact of these funds on overall budget planning, reflecting the district’s strategic utilization of external funding sources to enhance educational programs and manage operational costs.

The end-of-year reporting process at RCM & SU 73 involves comprehensive financial assessments and the fulfillment of audit requirements, documenting and reporting all financial activities. The director of finance and operations manages the preparation and submission of three separate end-of-year reports for Mahar Regional and all of RCM & SU 73. Each report is prepared to reflect the financial status and activities of the respective member districts, providing a picture of the fiscal operations for the year. In addition to handling the internal preparation of these reports, RCM & SU 73 engages independent auditors to review and verify the financial statements, providing external validation of the district’s financial practices. “We’ve had the same one for the last few years. . . . We probably do [procure independent auditors] that every five years,” said one district respondent. The independent audits help maintain compliance with generally accepted accounting principles and verify the accuracy and integrity of financial reporting. The auditors assess the district’s adherence to financial regulations and standards and offer recommendations for areas of improvement, as illustrated in district documents that provide suggestions for strengthening internal controls and operating efficiency. The end-of-year reports and audit findings are presented to the school committee, keeping all stakeholders informed about the district’s financial status. Furthermore, the insights gained from the end-of-year assessments and audits inform future financial planning and decision-making. The auditors did not identify issues in their review of RCM & SU 73 in 2022. Specifically, they noted no deficiencies in internal control that they considered to be material weaknesses. However, they reiterated prior year recommendations, including adding an additional signatory to bank accounts and recording warrants payable at the end of the fiscal year. The district has addressed these recommendations by voting to make the superintendent an additional authorized signer on bank accounts and by reviewing the process for recording warrants payable.

Interview responses suggest that the finance director uses historical trends and data to project budgetary needs five to 10 years into the future. Forecasting includes a baseline budget established in November or December each year, which is then adjusted based on actual state revenue, such as Chapter 70 funds. However, long-term forecasting of budgetary needs and revenue is difficult to do in RCM & SU 73; instead, the forecasting appears to be largely limited to a year-to-year basis. District staff acknowledged that unexpected factors, such as inflation, can impact these projections but emphasized the importance of presenting these historical trends during budget presentations to guide adjustments and decision-making.

### Capital Planning and Facility Maintenance

RCM & SU 73 employs a strategic approach to long-term planning and budgeting for facility management, which is a strength. Mahar Regional’s FY24 Facilities Plan details improvements for safety, efficiency, and educational environments. Key projects include heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning upgrades in the cafeteria and gymnasium (ESSER funded); library furniture upgrades; and new heating system controllers. Safety upgrades include replacing carpets, creating life skills classrooms, installing maintenance doors, and upgrading athletic field fencing. Ecological projects involve replacing water bubblers with bottle fillers. Major future projects include a boiler plant design replacement, roof replacement, and turf/track replacement, with funding from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, bonds, and grants.

District respondents acknowledged the role that the facilities director plays in managing and planning for the school’s infrastructure needs. This role involves creating and implementing a budget and maintenance plan that spans several years. For instance, RCM & SU 73 central office staff noted, “[The facilities director] came up with a plan for doing the hot water heater and when he was doing the hot water heater, we’re also switching over to propane where we had heating oil. That’s going to save us money in the long run.”

Moreover, Mahar Regional has established a capital stabilization fund to address unexpected major expenses. This fund has already been instrumental in managing unforeseen issues, such as replacing a hot water heater. One district respondent stated,

We do have a capital plan for Mahar. The only major things we have . . . we are looking at replacing. . . . We replaced the hot water heater. We also had one of the three heating [units] go down. So we got capital stabilization to replace that. Our hope is to do that, the other two, this fall, so that’s done. After that, the only major things we have . . . the roof . . . we have four and a half acres of roof. We had a renovation in 2005, so we’re looking at 20 years. We have a plan for that over the next several years.

RCM & SU 73 central office staff also highlighted the regional district’s focus on maintaining a balanced budget and avoiding large financial spikes. This is achieved by spreading out capital expenses over several years. For example, they have planned for a gradual replacement of the school’s heating system and roof to avoid large, onetime expenditures. A district respondent explained, “We’re coming up with a timeline [for capital improvements]. . . . We spread it out where again that budget is not a spike but we do something every year.”

Officials from the town of Petersham described the collaborative approach between the town and Mahar Regional to address capital needs, highlighting the work of the Capital Improvement Planning Committee (CIPC). One respondent explained,

If it comes into the budget, we discuss it. We also have a CIPC, which maybe all towns have, and so they put in some capital improvements that they can’t cover in their budget and ask the town for any excess monies that we would have.

A town official shared that the town of Orange played the lead role in renovating Fisher Hill, stating, “We just had a large remodel at Fisher Hill. And there was a huge part for the town to play. We had to vote on it.” They further explained that this remodel involved consolidating students from Dexter Park into Fisher Hill, noting that “last year was when they . . . got everybody out of Dexter Park. . . . They remodeled . . . and they officially moved everybody last year.”

However, respondents from the towns of Orange and Petersham expressed concern about each town’s financial constraints, impacting their ability, in some cases, to address all capital needs, which is an area for growth. One town respondent said,

We have really depleted our stabilization funds. So it is 2 percent of our budget, which is a really low amount, and it’s for strict emergencies. We have a reserve fund each year that’s about $30,000 . . . available to the school in case of emergencies.

The official added, “We don’t have anything like that [a stabilization fund] here [in our town district] . . . because we’ve just been scrambling to meet basic needs.” Another respondent from a town government mentioned the need to replace a historic school building’s wooden gutters, which had to be deferred because of budget constraints: “They’ve asked us for money to replace those gutters, which we don’t have, so we’ve had to put them off.” This same town respondent also discussed the critical function of the school’s generator, funded by the town because of the school building’s role as an emergency shelter, and the challenge of sharing those costs between town and school sources. In summary, evidence suggests that the fiscal environment makes it difficult for towns to respond to all capital needs. Whereas Mahar Regional reported working to establish a stabilization fund and having a long-term capital plan, representatives from both towns reported fiscal constraints, making efforts like establishing stabilization funds and responding to ongoing capital needs of the elementary schools a challenge, particularly in Petersham.

### DESE Recommendations

* *The superintendency union should continue collaborating with its municipal partners to streamline the budgeting process to minimize confusion and maximize the efficient use of limited financial resources.*
* *The superintendency union should continue working with its municipal partners to secure sufficient capital funds to maintain its facilities.*

## Appendix A. Summary of Site Visit Activities

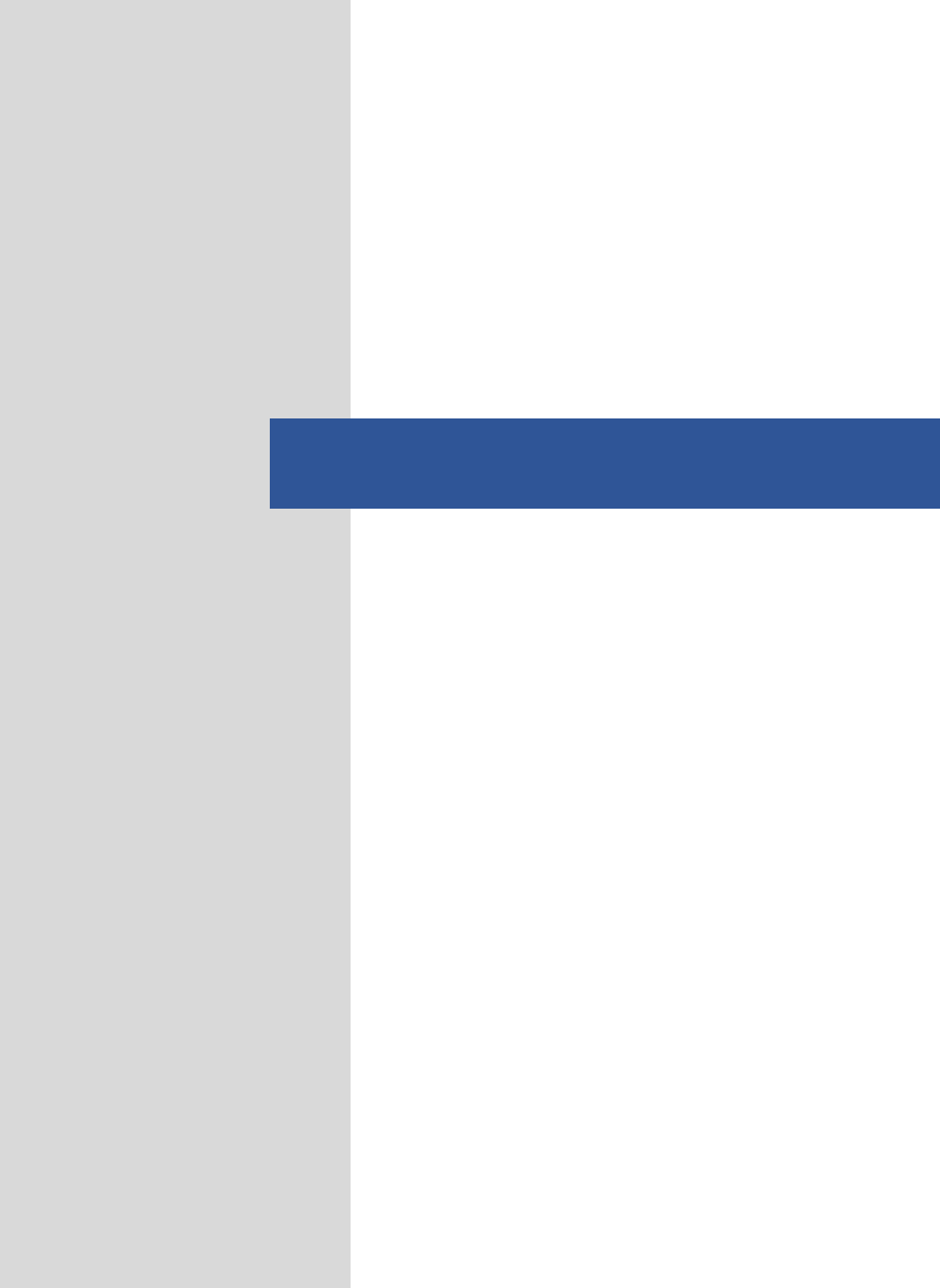
The AIR team completed the following activities as part of the district review activities in RCM & SU 73 (specifically, Mahar Regional, Fisher Hill, and Petersham Center). The team conducted 56 classroom observations during the week of April 29, 2024, and held interviews and focus groups between April 29 and May 3, 2024. The site visit team conducted interviews and focus groups with the following representatives from the school and the district:

* Superintendent
* Other central office leaders from RCM & SU 73
* School committee members from Mahar Regional, Fisher Hill, and Petersham Center
* Teachers association members from Mahar Regional, Fisher Hill, and Petersham Center
* Principals
* Teachers
* Support specialists
* Parents
* Students
* Town representatives from Orange and Petersham

The review team analyzed multiple datasets and reviewed numerous documents before and during the site visit, including the following:

* Student and school performance data, including achievement and growth, enrollment, graduation, dropout, retention, suspension, and attendance rates
* Data on the superintendency union and districts’ staffing and finances
* Curricular review process and timeline
* RCM & SU 73 curriculum unit template
* Published educational reports on the district by DESE, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, and the former Office of Educational Quality and Accountability
* RCM & SU 73 documents such as the District Improvement Plan and SIPs, school committee policies, curriculum documents, summaries of student assessments, job descriptions, collective bargaining agreements, evaluation tools for staff, handbooks, school schedules, and the district’s end-of-year financial reports
* All completed program and administrator evaluations and a random selection of completed teacher evaluations

## Appendix B. Districtwide Instructional Observation Report



Ralph C. Mahar Regional and School Union 73 Public Schools

Classroom Visits: Summary of Findings

Districtwide Instructional Observation Report

April 2024



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Contents

**Page**

[Introduction 4](#_Toc92194253)

[Positive Climate 6](#_Toc92194254)

[Teacher Sensitivity 7](#_Toc92194255)

[Regard for Student Perspectives 8](#_Toc92194256)

[Negative Climate 9](#_Toc92194257)

[Behavior Management 10](#_Toc92194258)

[Productivity 11](#_Toc92194259)

[Instructional Learning Formats 12](#_Toc92194260)

[Concept Development 13](#_Toc92194261)

[Content Understanding 14](#_Toc92194262)

[Analysis and Inquiry 15](#_Toc92194263)

[Quality of Feedback 16](#_Toc92194264)

[Language Modeling 17](#_Toc92194265)

[Instructional Dialogue 18](#_Toc92194266)

[Student Engagement 19](#_Toc92194267)

[Summary of Average Ratings: Grades K-5 20](#_Toc92194268)

[Summary of Average Ratings: Grades 6-8 20](#_Toc92194269)

[Summary of Average Ratings: Grades 9-12 22](#_Toc92194270)

[References 23](#_Toc92194271)

Introduction

The *Districtwide Instructional Observation Report* presents ratings for the classroom observations that were conducted by certified observers at American Institutes for Research (AIR) as part of the Massachusetts District Reviews.

Four observers visited Ralph C. Mahar Regional and School Union 73 Public Schools during the week of April 29, 2024. Observers conducted 56 observations in a sample of classrooms across three schools. Observations were conducted in grades K-12 and focused primarily on literacy, English language arts, and mathematics instruction.

The classroom observations were guided by the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), developed by the Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) at the University of Virginia. Three levels of CLASS Manuals were used: K–3, Upper Elementary, and Secondary. The K–3 tool was used to observe grades K–3, the Upper Elementary tool was used to observe grades 4–5, and the Secondary tool was used to observe grades 6–12.

The K–3 protocol includes 10 classroom dimensions related to three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support (listed in Table 1).

Table 1. CLASS K–3 Domains and Dimensions

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Emotional Support | Classroom Organization | Instructional Support |
| * Positive Climate * Negative Climate * Teacher Sensitivity * Regard for Student Perspectives | * Behavior Management * Productivity * Instructional Learning Formats | * Concept Development * Quality of Feedback * Language Modeling |

The Upper Elementary and Secondary protocols include 11 classroom dimensions related to three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support (listed in Table 2), in addition to Student Engagement.

Table 2. CLASS Upper Elementary and Secondary Domains and Dimensions

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Emotional Support | Classroom Organization | Instructional Support |
| * Positive Climate * Teacher Sensitivity * Regard for Student Perspectives | * Behavior Management * Productivity * Negative Climate | * Instructional Learning Formats * Content Understanding * Analysis and Inquiry * Quality of Feedback * Instructional Dialogue |
| Student Engagement | | |

When conducting a visit to a classroom, the observer rates each dimension (including Student Engagement) on a scale of 1 to 7. A rating of 1 or 2 indicates that the dimension was never or rarely evident during the visit. For example, a rating of 1 or 2 on Teacher Sensitivity indicates that, at the time of the visit, the teacher was not aware of students who needed extra support or attention, was unresponsive to or dismissive of students, or was ineffective at addressing students’ problems; as a result, students rarely sought support from the teacher or communicated openly with the teacher. A rating of 3, 4, or 5 indicates that the dimension was evident but not exhibited consistently or in a way that included all students. A rating of 6 or 7 indicates that the dimension was reflected in all or most classroom activities and in a way that included all or most students.

Members of the observation team who visited the classrooms all received training on the CLASS protocol and then passed a rigorous certification exam for each CLASS protocol to ensure that they were able to accurately rate the dimensions. All observers must pass an exam annually to maintain their certification.

Research on CLASS protocol shows that students in classrooms that rated high using this observation tool have greater gains in social skills and academic success than students in classrooms with lower ratings (MET Project, 2010; CASTL, n.d.). Furthermore, small improvements on these domains can affect student outcomes: “The ability to demonstrate even small changes in effective interactions has practical implications—differences in just over 1 point on the CLASS 7-point scale translate into improved achievement and social skill development for students” (CASTL, n.d., p. 3).

In this report, each CLASS dimension is defined, and descriptions of the dimensions at the high (6 or 7), middle (3, 4, or 5), and low levels (1 or 2) are presented *(definitions and rating descriptions are derived from the CLASS K–3*, *Upper Elementary, and Secondary Manuals).* For each dimension we indicate the frequency of classroom observations across the ratings and provide a districtwide average of the observed classrooms. In cases where a dimension is included in more than one CLASS manual level, those results are combined on the dimension-specific pages. In the summary of ratings table following the dimension-specific pages the averages for every dimension are presented by grade band (K-5, 6-8, and 9-12). For each dimension, we indicate the grade levels for which this dimension is included.

Positive Climate

Emotional Support domain, Grades K−12

Positive Climate reflects the emotional connection between the teacher and students and among students and the warmth, respect, and enjoyment communicated by verbal and nonverbal interactions (*CLASS K–3 Manual*, p. 23, *CLASS Upper Elementary Manual,* p. 21, *CLASS Secondary Manual*, p. 21). Table 3 (as well as tables for the remaining dimensions) includes the number of classrooms for each rating on each dimension and the district average for that dimension.

Table 3. Positive Climate: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average

Positive Climate District Average\*: 4.8

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | | Middle Range | | | High Range | | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 56 | 4.8 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 7 | 5 | 23 | 5.5 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 17 | 4.6 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 16 | 3.9 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 3, the district average is computed as:   
([2 x 6] + [3 x 6] + [4 x 9] + [5 x 16] + [6 x 11] + [7 x 8]) ÷ 56 observations = 4.8

Ratings in the Low Range. All indicators are absent or only minimally present. Teachers and students do not appear to share a warm, supportive relationship. Interpersonal connections are not evident or only minimally evident. Affect in the classroom is flat, and there are rarely instances of teachers and students smiling, sharing humor, or laughing together. There are no, or very few, positive communications among the teacher and students; the teacher does not communicate encouragement. There is no evidence that students and the teacher respect one another or that the teacher encourages students to respect one another.

Ratings in the Middle Range. There are some indications that the teacher and students share a warm and supportive relationship, but some students may be excluded from this relationship, either by the teacher or the students. Some relationships appear constrained—for example, the teacher expresses a perfunctory interest in students, or encouragement seems to be an automatic statement and is not sincere. Sometimes, teachers and students demonstrate respect for one another.

Ratings in the High Range. There are many indications that the relationship among students and the teacher is positive and warm. The teacher is typically in close proximity to students, and encouragement is sincere and personal. There are frequent displays of shared laughter, smiles, and enthusiasm. Teachers and students show respect for one another (e.g., listening, using calm voices, using polite language). Positive communication (both verbal and nonverbal) and mutual respect are evident throughout the session.

Teacher Sensitivity

Emotional Support domain, Grades K−12

Teacher Sensitivity encompasses the teacher’s awareness of and responsiveness to students’ academic and emotional needs. High levels of sensitivity facilitate students’ abilities to actively explore and learn because the teacher consistently provides comfort, reassurance, and encouragement (*CLASS K–3 Manual,* p. 32, *CLASS Upper Elementary Manual,* p. 27, *CLASS Secondary Manual,* p. 27).

Table 4. Teacher Sensitivity: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average

Teacher Sensitivity District Average\*: 5.4

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | | Middle Range | | | High Range | | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 56 | 5.4 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 7 | 8 | 7 | 23 | 5.9 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 17 | 5.5 |
| Grades 9-12 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 16 | 4.5 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 4, the district average is computed as:   
([1 x 1] + [2 x 1] + [3 x 3] + [4 x 5] + [5 x 19] + [6 x 15] + [7 x 12]) ÷ 56 observations = 5.4

Ratings in the Low Range. In these sessions, the teacher has not been aware of students who need extra support and pays little attention to students’ needs. As a result, students are frustrated, confused, and disengaged. The teacher is unresponsive to and dismissive of students and may ignore students, squash their enthusiasm, and not allow them to share their moods or feelings. The teacher is not effective in addressing students’ needs and does not appropriately acknowledge situations that may be upsetting to students. Students rarely seek support from the teacher and minimize conversations with the teacher, not sharing ideas or responding to questions.

Ratings in the Middle Range. The teacher is sometimes aware of student needs or aware of only a limited type of student needs, such as academic needs, not social-emotional needs. Or the teacher may be aware of some students and not of other students. The teacher does not always realize a student is confused and needs extra help or when a student already knows the material being taught. The teacher may be responsive at times to students but at other times may ignore or dismiss students. The teacher may respond only to students who are upbeat and positive and not support students who are upset. Sometimes, the teacher is effective in addressing students’ concerns or problems, but not always.

Ratings in the High Range. The teacher’s awareness of students and their needs is consistent and accurate. The teacher may predict how difficult a new task is for a student and acknowledge this difficulty. The teacher is responsive to students’ comments and behaviors, whether positive or negative. The teacher consistently addresses students’ problems and concerns and is effective in doing so. Students are obviously comfortable with the teacher and share ideas, work comfortably together, and ask and respond to questions, even difficult questions.

Regard for Student Perspectives

Emotional Support domain, Grades K−12

Regard for Student Perspectives captures the degree to which the teacher’s interactions with students and classroom activities place an emphasis on students’ interests, motivations, and points of view and encourage student responsibility and autonomy (*CLASS K–3 Manual,* p. 38, *CLASS Upper Elementary Manual,* p. 35, *CLASS Secondary Manual*, p. 35).

Table 5. Regard for Student Perspectives: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average

Regard for Student Perspectives District Average\*: 3.2

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | | Middle Range | | | High Range | | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 56 | 3.2 |
| Grades K-5 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 23 | 3.7 |
| Grades 6-8 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 17 | 3.2 |
| Grades 9-12 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 16 | 2.6 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 5, the district average is computed as:   
([1 x 5] + [2 x 13] + [3 x 14] + [4 x 14] + [5 x 9] + [6 x 1]) ÷ 56 observations = 3.2

Ratings in the Low Range. At the low range, the teacher exhibits an inflexible, rigid adherence to his or her plan, without considering student ideas or allowing students to make contributions. The teacher inhibits student enthusiasm by imposing guidelines or making remarks that inhibit student expression. The teacher may rigidly adhere to a lesson plan and not respond to student interests. The teacher does not allow students any autonomy on how they conduct an activity, may control materials tightly, and may offer few opportunities for students to help out with classroom responsibilities. There are few opportunities for students to talk and express themselves.

Ratings in the Middle Range. The teacher exhibits control at times and at other times follows the students’ lead and gives them some choices and opportunities to follow their interests. There are some opportunities for students to exercise autonomy, but student choice is limited. The teacher may assign students responsibility in the classroom, but in a limited way. At times, the teacher dominates the discussion, but at other times the teacher allows students to share ideas, although only at a minimal level or for a short period of time.

Ratings in the High Range. The teacher is flexible in following student leads, interests, and ideas and looks for ways to meaningfully engage students. Although the teacher has a lesson plan, students’ ideas are incorporated into the lesson plan. The teacher consistently supports student autonomy and provides meaningful leadership opportunities. Students have frequent opportunities to talk, share ideas, and work together. Students have appropriate freedom of movement during activities.

Negative Climate

Emotional Support domain, Grades K− 3  
Classroom Organization domain, Grades 4− 12

Negative Climate reflects the overall level of expressed negativity in the classroom. The frequency, quality, and intensity of teacher and student negativity are key to this dimension (*CLASS K–3 Manual*, p. 28, *CLASS Upper Elementary Manual,* p. 55, *CLASS Secondary Manual,* p. 55). For the purposes of this report, we have inversed the observers scores, to be consistent with the range scores across all dimensions. Therefore, a high range score in this dimension indicates an absence of negative climate, and a low range score indicates the presence of negative climate.[[6]](#footnote-7)

Table 6. Negative Climate: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average

Negative Climate District Average\*: 6.8

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | | Middle Range | | | High Range | | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 56 | 6.8 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 20 | 23 | 6.8 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 17 | 17 | 7.0 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 13 | 16 | 6.7 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 6, the district average is computed as:   
([5 x 3] + [6 x 3] + [7 x 50]) ÷ 56 observations = 6.8

Ratings in the Low Range.Negativity is pervasive. The teacher may express constant irritation, annoyance, or anger; unduly criticize students; or consistently use a harsh tone and/or take a harsh stance as he or she interacts with students. Threats or yelling are frequently used to establish control. Language is disrespectful and sarcastic. Severe negativity, such as the following actions, would lead to a high rating on negative climate, even if the action is not extended: students bullying one another, a teacher hitting a student, or students physically fighting with one another.

Ratings in the Middle Range. There are some expressions of mild negativity by the teacher or students. The teacher may express irritability, use a harsh tone, and/or express annoyance—usually during difficult moments in the classroom. Threats or yelling may be used to establish control over the classroom, but not constantly; they are used more as a response to situations. At times, the teacher and students may be sarcastic or disrespectful toward one another.

Ratings in the High Range. There is no display of negativity: No strong expressions of anger or aggression are exhibited, either by the teacher or students; if there is such a display, it is contained and does not escalate. The teacher does not issue threats or yell to establish control. The teacher and students are respectful and do not express sarcasm.

Behavior Management

Classroom Organization domain, Grades K−12

Behavior Management refers to the teacher’s ability to provide clear behavioral expectations and use effective methods to prevent and redirect misbehavior (*CLASS K–3 Manual*, p. 45, *CLASS Upper Elementary Manual,* p. 41, *CLASS Secondary Manual*, p. 41).

Table 7. Behavior Management: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average

Behavior Management District Average\*: 6.3

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | | Middle Range | | | High Range | | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 56 | 6.3 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 12 | 23 | 6.2 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 12 | 17 | 6.5 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 10 | 16 | 6.3 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 7, the district average is computed as:   
([2 x 1] + [3 x 1] + [4 x 3] + [5 x 4] + [6 x 13] + [7 x 34]) ÷ 56 observations = 6.3

Ratings in the Low Range. At the low range, the classroom is chaotic. There are no rules and expectations, or they are not enforced consistently. The teacher does not monitor the classroom effectively and only reacts to student disruption, which is frequent. There are frequent instances of misbehavior in the classroom, and the teacher’s attempts to redirect misbehavior are ineffective. The teacher does not use cues, such as eye contact, slight touches, gestures, or physical proximity, to respond to and redirect negative behavior.

Ratings in the Middle Range. Although rules and expectations may be stated, they are not consistently enforced, or the rules may be unclear. Sometimes, the teacher proactively anticipates and prevents misbehavior, but at other times the teacher ignores behavior problems until it is too late. Misbehavior may escalate because redirection is not always effective. Episodes of misbehavior are periodic.

Ratings in the High Range. At the high range, the rules and guidelines for behavior are clear, and they are consistently reinforced by the teacher. The teacher monitors the classroom and prevents problems from developing, using subtle cues to redirect behavior and address situations before they escalate. The teacher focuses on positive behavior and consistently affirms students’ desirable behaviors. The teacher effectively uses cues to redirect behavior. There are no, or very few, instances of student misbehavior or disruptions.

Productivity

Classroom Organization domain, Grades K−12

Productivity considers how well the teacher manages instructional time and routines and provides activities for students so that they have the opportunity to be involved in learning activities (*CLASS K–3 Manual,* p. 51, *CLASS Upper Elementary Manual,* p. 49, *CLASS Secondary Manual*, p. 49).

Table 8. Productivity: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average

Productivity District Average\*: 6.4

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | | Middle Range | | | High Range | | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 56 | 6.4 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 5 | 16 | 23 | 6.6 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 11 | 17 | 6.5 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 7 | 16 | 6.0 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 8, the district average is computed as:   
([4 x 3] + [5 x 5] + [6 x 14] + [7 x 34]) ÷ 56 observations = 6.4

Ratings in the Low Range. At the low level, the teacher provides few activities for students. Much time is spent on managerial tasks (such as distributing papers) and/or on behavior management. Frequently during the observation, students have little to do and spend time waiting. The routines of the classroom are not clear and, as a result, students waste time, are not engaged, and are confused. Transitions take a long time and/or are too frequent. The teacher does not have activities organized and ready and seems to be caught up in last-minute preparations.

Ratings in the Middle Range. At the middle range, the teacher does provide activities for students but loses learning time to disruptions or management tasks. There are certain times when the teacher provides clear activities to students, but there are other times when students wait and lose focus. Some students (or all students, at some point) do not know what is expected of them. Some of the transitions may take too long, or classrooms may be productive during certain periods but then not productive during transitions. Although the teacher is mostly prepared for the class, last-minute preparations may still infringe on learning time.

Ratings in the High Range. The classroom runs very smoothly. The teacher provides a steady flow of activities for students, so students do not have downtime and are not confused about what to do next. The routines of the classroom are efficient, and all students know how to move from one activity to another and where materials are. Students understand the teacher’s instructions and directions. Transitions are quick, and there are not too many of them. The teacher is fully prepared for the lesson.

Instructional Learning Formats

Classroom Organization domain, Grades K−3

Instructional Support domain, Grades 4− 12

Instructional Learning Formats refer to the ways in which the teacher maximizes students’ interest, engagement, and abilities to learn from the lesson and activities (*CLASS K–3 Manual*, p. 57; *CLASS Upper Elementary Manual*, p. 63, *CLASS Secondary Manual,* p. 61).

Table 9. Instructional Learning Formats: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average

Instructional Learning Formats District Average\*: 4.9

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | | Middle Range | | | High Range | | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 56 | 4.9 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 14 | 5 | 2 | 23 | 5.3 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 9 | 4 | 0 | 17 | 4.9 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 16 | 4.2 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 9, the district average is computed as:   
([2 x 1] + [3 x 6] + [4 x 9] + [5 x 26] + [6 x 11] + [7 x 3]) ÷ 56 observations = 4.9

Ratings in the Low Range. The teacher exerts little effort in facilitating engagement in the lesson. Learning activities may be limited and seem to be at the rote level, with little teacher involvement. The teacher relies on one learning modality (e.g., listening) and does not use other modalities (e.g., movement, visual displays) to convey information and enhance learning. Or the teacher may be ineffective in using other modalities, not choosing the right props for the students or the classroom conditions. Students are uninterested and uninvolved in the lesson. The teacher does not attempt to guide students toward learning objectives and does not help them focus on the lesson by providing appropriate tools and asking effective questions.

Ratings in the Middle Range. At the middle range, the teacher sometimes facilitates engagement in the lesson but at other times does not, or the teacher facilitates engagement for some students and not for other students. The teacher may not allow students enough time to explore or answer questions. Sometimes, the teacher uses a variety of modalities to help students reach a learning objective, but at other times the teacher does not. Student engagement is inconsistent, or some students are engaged and other students are not. At times, students are aware of the learning objective and at other times they are not. The teacher may sometimes use strategies to help students organize information but at other times does not.

Ratings in the High Range.The teacher has multiple strategies and tools to facilitate engagement and learning and encourage participation. The teacher may move around, talk and play with students, ask open-ended questions of students, and allow students to explore. A variety of tools and props are used, including movement and visual/auditory resources. Students are consistently interested and engaged in the activities and lessons. The teacher focuses students on the learning objectives, which students understand. The teacher uses advanced organizers to prepare students for an activity, as well as reorientation strategies that help students regain focus.

Concept Development

Instructional Support domain, Grades K−3

Concept Development refers to the teacher’s use of instructional discussions and activities to promote students’ higher order thinking skills and cognition and the teacher’s focus on understanding rather than on rote instruction (*CLASS K–3 Manual*, p. 64).

Table 10. Concept Development: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average

Concept Development District Average\*: 2.4

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | | Middle Range | | | High Range | | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 14 | 2.4 |
| Grades K-3\*\* | 1 | 8 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 2.4 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 10, the district average is computed as:   
([1 x 1] + [2 x 8] + [3 x 4] + [5 x 1]) ÷ 14 observations = 2.4

\*\*Concept Development does not appear in the CLASS Upper Elementary Manual, therefore scores for the Elementary School Level represent grades K-3 only.

Ratings in the Low Range. At the low range, the teacher does not attempt to develop students’ understanding of ideas and concepts, focusing instead on basic facts and skills. Discussion and activities do not encourage students to analyze and reason. There are few, if any, opportunities for students to create or generate ideas and products. The teacher does not link concepts to one another and does not ask students to make connections with previous content or their actual lives. The activities and the discussion are removed from students’ lives and from their prior knowledge.

Ratings in the Middle Range. To some extent, the teacher uses discussions and activities to encourage students to analyze and reason and focuses somewhat on understanding of ideas. The activities and discussions are not fully developed, however, and there is still instructional time that focuses on facts and basic skills. Students may be provided some opportunities for creating and generating ideas, but the opportunities are occasional and not planned out. Although some concepts may be linked and also related to students’ previous learning, such efforts are brief. The teacher makes some effort to relate concepts to students’ lives but does not elaborate enough to make the relationship meaningful to students.

Ratings in the High Range. At the high range, the teacher frequently guides students to analyze and reason during discussions and activities. Most of the questions are open ended and encourage students to think about connections and implications. Teachers use problem solving, experimentation, and prediction; comparison and classification; and evaluation and summarizing to promote analysis and reasoning. The teacher provides students with opportunities to be creative and generate ideas. The teacher consistently links concepts to one another and to previous learning and relates concepts to students’ lives.

Content Understanding

Instructional Support domain, Grades 4− 12

Content Understanding refers to the depth of lesson content and the approaches used to help students comprehend the framework, key ideas, and procedures in an academic discipline. At a high level, this dimension refers to interactions among the teacher and students that lead to an integrated understanding of facts, skills, concepts, and principles (*CLASS Upper Elementary Manual*, p. 70, *CLASS Secondary Manual,* p. 68).

Table 11. Content Understanding: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average

Content Understanding District Average\*: 4.0

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | | Middle Range | | | High Range | | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 42 | 4.0 |
| Grades 4-5\*\* | 0 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 3.8 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 17 | 3.9 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 16 | 4.2 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 11, the district average is computed as:   
([2 x 4] + [3 x 10] + [4 x 13] + [5 x 13] + [6 x 2]) ÷ 42 observations = 4.0

\*\*Content Understanding does not appear in the CLASS K-3 Manual, therefore scores for the Elementary School Level represent grades 4-5 only.

Ratings in the Low Range. At the low range, the focus of the class is primarily on presenting discrete pieces of topically related information, absent broad, organizing ideas. The discussion and materials fail to effectively communicate the essential attributes of the concepts and procedures to students. The teacher makes little effort to elicit or acknowledge students’ background knowledge or misconceptions or to integrate previously learned material when presenting new information.

Ratings in the Middle Range. At the middle range, the focus of the class is sometimes on meaningful discussion and explanation of broad, organizing ideas. At other times, the focus is on discrete pieces of information. Class discussion and materials communicate some of the essential attributes of concepts and procedures, but examples are limited in scope or not consistently provided. The teacher makes some attempt to elicit and/or acknowledge students’ background knowledge or misconceptions and/or to integrate information with previously learned materials; however, these moments are limited in depth or inconsistent.

Ratings in the High Range. At the high range, the focus of the class is on encouraging deep understanding of content through the provision of meaningful, interactive discussion and explanation of broad, organizing ideas. Class discussion and materials consistently communicate the essential attributes of concepts and procedures to students. New concepts and procedures and broad ideas are consistently linked to students’ prior knowledge in ways that advance their understanding and clarify misconceptions.

Analysis and Inquiry

Instructional Support domain, Grades 4− 12

Analysis and Inquiry assesses the degree to which students are engaged in higher level thinking skills through their application of knowledge and skills to novel and/or open-ended problems, tasks, and questions. Opportunities for engaging in metacognition (thinking about thinking) also are included (*CLASS Upper Elementary Manual*, p. 81, *CLASS Secondary Manual*, p. 76).

Table 12. Analysis and Inquiry: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average

Analysis and Inquiry District Average\*: 2.3

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | | Middle Range | | | High Range | | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 42 | 2.3 |
| Grades 4-5\*\* | 1 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 3.0 |
| Grades 6-8 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 17 | 2.2 |
| Grades 9-12 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 16 | 2.1 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 12, the district average is computed as:   
([1 x 12] + [2 x 13] + [3 x 11] + [4 x 3] + [5 x 3]) ÷ 42 observations = 2.3

\*\*Analysis and Inquiry does not appear in the CLASS K-3 Manual, therefore scores for the Elementary School Level represent grades 4-5 only.

Ratings in the Low Range. At the low range, students do not engage in higher order thinking skills. Instruction is presented in a rote manner, and there are no opportunities for students to engage in novel or open-ended tasks. Students are not challenged to apply previous knowledge and skills to a new problem, nor are they encouraged to think about, evaluate, or reflect on their own learning. Students do not have opportunities to plan their own learning experiences.

Ratings in the Middle Range. Students occasionally engage in higher order thinking through analysis and inquiry, but the episodes are brief or limited in depth. The teacher provides opportunities for students to apply knowledge and skills within familiar contexts and offers guidance to students but does not provide opportunities for analysis and problem solving within novel contexts and/or without teacher support. Students have occasional opportunities to think about their own thinking through explanations, self-evaluations, reflection, and planning; these opportunities, however, are brief and limited in depth.

Ratings in the High Range. At the high range, students consistently engage in extended opportunities to use higher order thinking through analysis and inquiry. The teacher provides opportunities for students to independently solve or reason through novel and open-ended tasks that require students to select, utilize, and apply existing knowledge and skills. Students have multiple opportunities to think about their own thinking through explanations, self-evaluations, reflection, and planning.

Quality of Feedback

Instructional Support domain, Grades K− 12

Quality of Feedback refers to the degree to which the teacher provides feedback that expands learning and understanding and encourages continued participation in the learning activity (*CLASS K–3 Manual*, p. 72). In the upper elementary and secondary classrooms, significant feedback also may be provided by peers (*CLASS Upper Elementary Manual*, p. 89, *CLASS Secondary Manual*, p. 93). Regardless of the source, the focus of the feedback motivates learning.

Table 13. Quality of Feedback: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average

Quality of Feedback District Average\*: 2.9

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | | Middle Range | | | High Range | | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 56 | 2.9 |
| Grades K-5 | 2 | 8 | 6 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 23 | 2.9 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 7 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 17 | 3.2 |
| Grades 9-12 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 16 | 2.6 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 13, the district average is computed as:   
([1 x 5] + [2 x 21] + [3 x 15] + [4 x 9] + [5 x 4] + [6 x 1] + [7 x 1]) ÷ 56 observations = 2.9

Ratings in the Low Range. At the low range, the teacher dismisses incorrect responses or misperceptions and rarely scaffolds student learning. The teacher is more interested in students providing the correct answer than understanding. Feedback is perfunctory. The teacher may not provide opportunities to learn whether students understand or are interested. The teacher rarely questions students or asks them to explain their thinking and reasons for their responses. The teacher does not or rarely provides information that might expand student understanding and rarely offers encouragement that increases student effort and persistence.

Ratings in the Middle Range. In the middle range, the teacher sometimes scaffolds students, but this is not consistent. On occasion, the teacher facilitates feedback loops so that students may elaborate and expand on their thinking, but these moments are not sustained long enough to accomplish a learning objective. Sometimes, the teacher asks students about or prompts them to explain their thinking and provides information to help students understand, but sometimes the feedback is perfunctory. At times, the teacher encourages student efforts and persistence.

Ratings in the High Range. In this range, the teacher frequently scaffolds students who are having difficulty, providing hints or assistance as needed. The teacher engages students in feedback loops to help them understand ideas or reach the right response. The teacher often questions students, encourages them to explain their thinking, and provides additional information that may help students understand. The teacher regularly encourages students’ efforts and persistence.

Language Modeling

Instructional Support domain, Grades K− 3

Language Modeling refers to the quality and amount of the teacher’s use of language stimulation and language facilitation techniques (*CLASS K–3 Manual*, p. 79).

Table 14. Language Modeling: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average

Language Modeling District Average\*: 2.9

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | | Middle Range | | | High Range | | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 14 | 2.9 |
| Grades K-3\*\* | 1 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 2.9 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 14, the district average is computed as:   
([1 x 1] + [2 x 4] + [3 x 5] + [4 x 3] + [5 x 1]) ÷ 14 observations = 2.9

\*\*Language Modeling does not appear in the CLASS Upper Elementary Manual, therefore scores for the Elementary School Level represent grades K-3 only.

Ratings in the Low Range. In the low range, there are few conversations in the classroom, particularly between the students and the teacher. The teacher responds to students’ initiating talk with only a few words, limits students’ use of language (in responding to questions) and asks questions that mainly elicit closed-ended responses. The teacher does not or rarely extends students’ responses or repeats them for clarification. The teacher does not engage in self-talk or parallel talk—explaining what he or she or the students are doing. The teacher does not use new words or advanced language with students. The language used has little variety.

Ratings in the Middle Range. In this range, the teacher talks with students and shows some interest in students, but the conversations are limited and not prolonged. Usually, the teacher directs the conversations, although the conversations may focus on topics of interest to students. More often, there is a basic exchange of information but limited conversation. The teacher asks a mix of closed- and open-ended questions, although the closed-ended questions may require only short responses. Sometimes, the teacher extends students’ responses or repeats what students say. Sometimes, the teacher maps his or her own actions and the students’ actions through language and description. The teacher sometimes uses advanced language with students.

Ratings in the High Range.There are frequent conversations in the classroom, particularly between students and the teacher, and these conversations promote language use. Students are encouraged to converse and feel they are valued conversational partners. The teacher asks many open-ended questions that require students to communicate more complex ideas. The teacher often extends or repeats student responses. Frequently, the teacher maps his or her actions and student actions descriptively and uses advanced language with students.

Instructional Dialogue

Instructional Support domain, Grades 4− 12

Instructional Dialogue captures the purposeful use of content-focused discussion among teachers and students that is cumulative, with the teacher supporting students to chain ideas together in ways that lead to deeper understanding of content. Students take an active role in these dialogues, and both the teacher and students use strategies that facilitate extended dialogue (*CLASS Upper Elementary Manual*, p. 97, *CLASS Secondary Manual*, p. 101).

Table 15. Instructional Dialogue: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average

Instructional Dialogue District Average\*: 2.7

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | | Middle Range | | | High Range | | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 42 | 2.7 |
| Grades 4-5\*\* | 3 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 9 | 2.8 |
| Grades 6-8 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 17 | 3.2 |
| Grades 9-12 | 8 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 16 | 2.2 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 15, the district average is computed as:   
([1 x 14] + [2 x 8] + [3 x 7] + [4 x 6] + [5 x 4] + [6 x 2] + [7 x 1]) ÷ 42 observations = 2.7

\*\*Instructional Dialogue does not appear in the CLASS K-3 Manual, therefore scores for the Elementary School Level represent grades 4-5 only.

Ratings in the Low Range. At the low range, there are no or few discussions in the class, the discussions are not related to content or skill development, or the discussions contain only simple question-response exchanges between the teacher and students. The class is dominated by teacher talk, and discussion is limited. The teacher and students ask closed-ended questions; rarely acknowledge, report, or extend other students’ comments; and/or appear disinterested in other students’ comments, resulting in many students not being engaged in instructional dialogues.

Ratings in the Middle Range. At this range, there are occasional content-based discussions in class among teachers and students; however, these exchanges are brief or quickly move from one topic to another without follow-up questions or comments from the teacher and other students. The class is mostly dominated by teacher talk, although there are times when students take a more active role, or there are distributed dialogues that involve only a few students in the class. The teacher and students sometimes facilitate and encourage more elaborate dialogue, but such efforts are brief, inconsistent, or ineffective at consistently engaging students in extended dialogues.

Ratings in the High Range.At the high range, there are frequent, content-driven discussions in the class between teachers and students or among students. The discussions build depth of knowledge through cumulative, contingent exchanges. The class dialogues are distributed in a way that the teacher and the majority of students take an active role or students are actively engaged in instructional dialogues with each other. The teacher and students frequently use strategies that encourage more elaborate dialogue, such as open-ended questions, repetition or extension, and active listening. Students respond to these techniques by fully participating in extended dialogues.

Student Engagement

Student Engagement domain, Grades 4−12

Student Engagement refers to the extent to which all students in the class are focused and participating in the learning activity that is presented or facilitated by the teacher. The difference between passive engagement and active engagement is reflected in this rating (*CLASS Upper Elementary Manual*, p. 105).

Table 16. Student Engagement: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average

Student Engagement District Average\*: 4.6

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | | Middle Range | | | High Range | | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 42 | 4.6 |
| Grades 4-5\*\* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 9 | 5.2 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 6 | 1 | 17 | 5.2 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 16 | 3.8 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 16, the district average is computed as:   
([2 x 4] + [3 x 4] + [4 x 8] + [5 x 15] + [6 x 9] + [7 x 2]) ÷ 42 observations = 4.6

\*\*Student Engagement does not appear in the CLASS K-3 Manual, therefore scores for the Elementary School Level represent grades 4-5 only.

Ratings in the Low Range. In the low range, the majority of students appear distracted or disengaged.

Ratings in the Middle Range. In the middle range, students are passively engaged, listening to or watching the teacher; student engagement is mixed, with the majority of students actively engaged for part of the time and disengaged for the rest of the time; or there is a mix of student engagement, with some students actively engaged and some students disengaged.

Ratings in the High Range. In the high range, most students are actively engaged in the classroom discussions and activities.

Summary of Average Ratings: Grades K–5

Table 17. Summary Table of Average Ratings for Each Dimension in Grades K–5

|  | Low Range | | Middle Range | | | High Range | | n | Average Scores\* |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Emotional Support Domain | 1 | 3 | 7 | 11 | 20 | 18 | 32 | 92 | 5.5 |
| Positive Climate | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 7 | 5 | 23 | 5.5 |
| Negative Climate\*\* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 20 | 23 | 6.8 |
| Teacher Sensitivity | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 7 | 8 | 7 | 23 | 5.9 |
| Regard for Student Perspectives | 1 | 3 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 23 | 3.7 |
| Classroom Organization Domain | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 17 | 17 | 30 | 69 | 6.0 |
| Behavior Management | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 12 | 23 | 6.2 |
| Productivity | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 5 | 16 | 23 | 6.6 |
| Instructional Learning Formats\*\*\* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 14 | 5 | 2 | 23 | 5.3 |
| Instructional Support Domain | 8 | 23 | 26 | 12 | 7 | 2 | 0 | 78 | 2.9 |
| Concept Development (K-3 only) | 1 | 8 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 2.4 |
| Content Understanding (UE only) | 0 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 3.8 |
| Analysis and Inquiry (UE only) | 1 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 3.0 |
| Quality of Feedback | 2 | 8 | 6 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 23 | 2.9 |
| Language Modeling (K-3 only) | 1 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 2.9 |
| Instructional Dialogue (UE only) | 3 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 9 | 2.8 |
| Student Engagement (UE only) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 9 | 5.2 |

\*The district average is an average of the scores. For example, for Positive Climate, the district average is computed as: ([3 x 1] + [4 x 3] + [5 x 7] + [6 x 7] + [7 x 5]) ÷ 23 observations = 5.5

\*\*Negative Climate is rated on an inverse scale. An original score of 1 is given a value of 7. The scoring in the table reflects the normalized adjustment: ([5 x 1] + [6 x 2] + [7 x 20]) ÷ 23 observations = 6.8. In addition, Negative Climate appears in the Classroom Organization Domain for the Upper Elementary Manual.

\*\*\*Instructional Learning Formats appears in the Instructional Support Domain for the Upper Elementary Manual.

Summary of Average Ratings: Grades 6–8

Table 18. Summary Table of Average Ratings for Each Dimension in Grades 6–8

|  | Low Range | | Middle Range | | | High Range | | n | Average Scores\* |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Emotional Support Domain | 1 | 6 | 6 | 12 | 15 | 6 | 5 | 51 | 4.4 |
| Positive Climate | 0 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 17 | 4.6 |
| Teacher Sensitivity | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 17 | 5.5 |
| Regard for Student Perspectives | 1 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 17 | 3.2 |
| Classroom Organization Domain | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 6 | 40 | 51 | 6.7 |
| Behavior Management | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 12 | 17 | 6.5 |
| Productivity | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 11 | 17 | 6.5 |
| Negative Climate\*\* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 17 | 17 | 7.0 |
| Instructional Support Domain | 8 | 21 | 13 | 18 | 17 | 6 | 2 | 85 | 3.5 |
| Instructional Learning Formats | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 9 | 4 | 0 | 17 | 4.9 |
| Content Understanding | 0 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 17 | 3.9 |
| Analysis and Inquiry | 5 | 7 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 17 | 2.2 |
| Quality of Feedback | 0 | 7 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 17 | 3.2 |
| Instructional Dialogue | 3 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 17 | 3.2 |
| Student Engagement | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 6 | 1 | 17 | 5.2 |

\*The district average is an average of the scores. For example, for Positive Climate, the district average is computed as: ([2 x 1] + [3 x 2] + [4 x 5] + [5 x 6] + [6 x 1] + [7 x 2]) ÷ 17 observations = 4.6

\*\*Negative Climate is rated on an inverse scale. An original score of 1 is given a value of 7. The scoring in the table reflects the normalized adjustment: ([7 x 17]) ÷ 17 observations = 7.0

Summary of Average Ratings: Grades 9–12

Table 19. Summary Table of Average Ratings for Each Dimension in Grades 9–12

|  | Low Range | | Middle Range | | | High Range | | n | Average Scores\* |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Emotional Support Domain | 4 | 11 | 10 | 5 | 10 | 5 | 3 | 48 | 3.7 |
| Positive Climate | 0 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 16 | 3.9 |
| Teacher Sensitivity | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 16 | 4.5 |
| Regard for Student Perspectives | 3 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 16 | 2.6 |
| Classroom Organization Domain | 0 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 10 | 30 | 48 | 6.3 |
| Behavior Management | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 10 | 16 | 6.3 |
| Productivity | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 7 | 16 | 6.0 |
| Negative Climate\*\* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 13 | 16 | 6.7 |
| Instructional Support Domain | 17 | 15 | 19 | 11 | 14 | 3 | 1 | 80 | 3.0 |
| Instructional Learning Formats | 0 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 16 | 4.2 |
| Content Understanding | 0 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 16 | 4.2 |
| Analysis and Inquiry | 6 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 16 | 2.1 |
| Quality of Feedback | 3 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 16 | 2.6 |
| Instructional Dialogue | 8 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 16 | 2.2 |
| Student Engagement | 0 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 16 | 3.8 |

\*The district average is an average of the scores. For example, for Positive Climate, the district average is computed as: ([2 x 5] + [3 x 3] + [4 x 1] + [5 x 3] + [6 x 3] + [7 x 1]) ÷ 16 observations = 3.9

\*\*Negative Climate is rated on an inverse scale. An original score of 1 is given a value of 7. The scoring in the table reflects the normalized adjustment: ([5 x 2] + [6 x 1] + [7 x 13]) ÷ 16 observations = 6.7

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## Appendix C. Resources to Support Implementation of DESE’s District Standards and Indicators

Table C1. Resources to Support Leadership and Governance

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Resource | Description |
| [Coherence Guidebook](https://www.doe.mass.edu/csdp/guidebook/coherence-guidebook.pdf) | The guidebook illustrates a systems-level path toward deeper learning. School system leaders and teams may use the guidebook, along with its companion self-assessment, to articulate a vision of deeper learning, identify high-leverage instructional priorities, refine tiered supports, and leverage systems and structures—all in service of the articulated vision. |
| [Principal Induction and Mentoring Handbook](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeffectiveness/mentor/principal.html) | A series of modules designed to support novice principals and their mentors in the development of antiracist leadership competencies aligned to the Professional Standards for Administrative Leadership. |
| [Planning for Success in Massachusetts](https://www.doe.mass.edu/research/success/) | An inclusive, hands-on planning process designed to build district and school capacity and coherence while also building community understanding and support. |

Table C2. Resources to Support Curriculum and Instruction

| Resource | Description |
| --- | --- |
| [Coherence Guidebook](https://www.doe.mass.edu/csdp/guidebook/coherence-guidebook.pdf) | The guidebook illustrates a systems-level path toward deeper learning. School system leaders and teams may use the guidebook, along with its companion self-assessment, to articulate a vision of deeper learning, identify high-leverage instructional priorities, refine tiered supports, and leverage systems and structures—all in service of the articulated vision. |
| [Curriculum Frameworks resources](https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/) | Some of the most frequently used resources include “What to Look For” classroom observation guides; the Family Guides to help families understand what students are expected to know and do by the end of each grade; and the Standards Navigator tool and app, which can be used to explore the standards and see how they are connected to other standards and related student work samples, reference guides, and definitions. |
| [Curriculum Matters webpage](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/impd/default.html) | A suite of resources to support the use of high-quality curriculum, including [IMplement MA](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/impd/implement-ma.html), our recommended four-phase process to prepare for, select, launch, and implement new high-quality instructional materials with key tasks and action steps. Also includes [CURATE](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate/default.html), which convenes panels of Massachusetts teachers to review and rate evidence on the quality and alignment of specific curricular materials and then publish their findings for educators across the Commonwealth to consult. |
| [Digital Literacy and Computer Science (DLCS) Curriculum Guide](https://www.doe.mass.edu/stem/dlcs/curriculum-guide.pdf?v=4/12/2023) | This curriculum guide provides curricular overviews for schools to engage students in learning DLCS concepts and skills aligned to the standards found in the 2016 Massachusetts DLCS Framework. |
| [Early Warning Indicator System](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ccte/ccr/ewis/) | Tools for districts to identify students who are at risk of not meeting important academic goals to help students get back on track. This comprehensive system spans first grade through high school graduation and beyond. |
| [Foundations for Inclusive Practices](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/guidebook/) | This guidebook includes tools for districts, schools, and educators that are aligned to the MA Educator Evaluation Framework and promote evidence-based best practices for inclusion. |
| [Guidebook of Culturally Diverse Artists and Artworks](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.doe.mass.edu%2Finstruction%2Farts%2Fdiverse-arts-guidebook.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) | The purpose of this resource is to promote culturally responsive teaching in the arts through the study of culturally diverse artists and their artworks. This guidebook highlights art made by people with racial identities that historically have been and continue to be marginalized. |
| [Mass Literacy Guide](https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/) | An interactive site with research, information, and resources on evidence-based practices for early literacy that are culturally responsive and sustaining. There is current information on complex text, fluent word reading, language comprehension, students experiencing reading difficulties, equity in literacy, how to support a multitiered system of support (MTSS) for ELA/literacy, and much more. |
| [Massachusetts Blueprint for English Learner Success](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/blueprint/default.html) | Framework for EL education in Massachusetts, with embedded Quick Reference Guides and other resources to support implementation. |
| Massachusetts curricular resources:   * [Appleseeds](https://sites.google.com/view/appleseedsk2/home) * [Investigating History](https://www.doe.mass.edu/investigatinghistory/) * [OpenSciEd](https://www.doe.mass.edu/stem/ste/openscied.html) | Free, open-source curricular resources aligned to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. |
| [Planning for Deeper Learning](https://www.doe.mass.edu/kaleidoscope/planning/default.html) | KCL worked with educators and leaders across the Commonwealth to develop tools, protocols, examples, and professional learning experiences. |
| [Supporting Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/culturally-sustaining/default.html) | Culturally and linguistically sustaining practices are essential for all students in the classroom, regardless of their background, culture, or identity. |
| [Synthesized Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) Framework](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.doe.mass.edu%2Fcsdp%2Fguidebook%2Fappendix-ilt-framework.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) | District and school teams can use this resource to reflect and identify specific actions they could take to establish or improve their ILTs. |

Table C3. Resources to Support Assessment

| Resource | Description |
| --- | --- |
| [Approved early language and literacy assessments for preschool](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/earlylearning/default.html) | DESE’s Early Learning Team in collaboration with the Department of Early Education and Care is working with a vendor to approve preschool language and literacy assessments to support classroom instruction. |
| [Assessment Literacy Continuum](https://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/assessment/continuum.pdf) | Tool to help teachers identify what aspects of assessment literacy they should focus on for their own goal setting. |
| [District Data Team Toolkit](http://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/toolkit/) | A set of resources to help a district establish, grow, and maintain a culture of inquiry and data use through a district data team. |
| [Early Literacy Universal Screening Assessments](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/screening-assessments.html) | Guidance and support for schools and districts to select and use an early literacy universal screening assessment. Grant funding may be available. |
| [Student Assessment](https://www.doe.mass.edu/assessment/) | Statewide assessments help parents, students, educators, and policymakers determine where districts, schools, and students are meeting expectations and where they need additional support. |

Table C4. Resources to Support Human Resources and Professional Development

| Resource | Description |
| --- | --- |
| [Early Literacy Observation Form](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/early-literacy-observation.html) | This tool supports the observation and provision of high-quality feedback to teacher candidates on their practice in evidence-based early literacy. |
| [Educator Evaluation Implementation Resources](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/implementation/default.html) | A suite of resources and practical tools for effective and equitable implementation of educator evaluation, including Focus Indicators, a subset of Indicators from the Classroom Teacher and School Level Administrator Rubrics that represent high-priority practices for the school year. |
| Induction and mentoring:   * [Teacher Induction and Mentoring](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeffectiveness/mentor/default.html) * [Principal Induction and Mentoring](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeffectiveness/mentor/principal.html) | Resources that highlight best practices and reinforce the recently updated guidelines and standards for induction and mentoring. |
| [Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL)](https://www.doe.mass.edu/mtel/) | Information on MTEL exams, MTEL alternatives, and licensure requirements for educators. |
| [OPTIC](https://www.ma-optic.com/) | A professional development tool that supports Massachusetts educators to build a shared understanding of high-quality instruction and improve the feedback that teachers receive. |
| [Professional Learning Partner Guide](https://plpartnerguide.org/) | A free, online, searchable list of vetted professional development providers who have expertise in specific sets of high-quality instructional materials. Schools and districts can use this guide to easily find professional development providers to support the launch or implementation of high-quality instructional materials. |
| [“What to Look For” Observation Guides](https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/observation/) | Observation tools to help district staff observe instruction. |
| [Talent Guide](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeffectiveness/talent-guide/default.html) | An online hub of resources, considerations, and updates for recruiting, hiring, evaluating, and supporting educators and school staff, with a focus on equity. |
| [WIDA Professional Development](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/prof-learning/wida/default.html) | Provides great information and strategies to support multilingual learners in Massachusetts public schools, and WIDA PDPs satisfy educator licensure renewal requirements. These DESE-sponsored courses are available at no cost to participants and are perfect for teams of teachers seeking impactful collaboration to support students’ access to rigorous course content. |

Table C5. Resources to Support Student Support

| Resource | Description |
| --- | --- |
| [Bullying Prevention and Intervention](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/bullying/default.html) | DESE’s Guidance and Technical Assistance for districts/schools related to state requirements regarding bullying prevention and intervention. |
| Emergency management:   * [Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools](https://rems.ed.gov/) (Federal Guidance) * [Emergency Management Planning](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/emergencyplan/default.html) (State Guidance) | Guidance and technical assistance for districts/schools related to emergency management planning and implementation. |
| Family partnerships:   * [DESE Family Portal](https://www.doe.mass.edu/families/) * [Strengthening Partnerships: A Framework for Prenatal through Young Adulthood Family Engagement in Massachusetts](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/family-engagement-framework.pdf) * [Learning Standards For Families](https://www.doe.mass.edu/highstandards/default.html) | Resources for authentically engaging families in their child’s education and centering families’ voices in school and district decision making. |
| [Guidance on Updated Expectations for School and District Leaders Related to Student Discipline](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/discipline/updated-expectations.docx) | Guidance on updated expectations for school and district leaders related to student discipline associated with the 2022 mental health law (G.L. c. 71, §37H¾). |
| MTSS resources:   * [MTSS Blueprint, Self-Assessment, and Resources](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfss/mtss/) * [Massachusetts Tools for Schools](https://matoolsforschools.com/) | MTSS is a framework for how districts can build the necessary systems to ensure that every student receives a high-quality educational experience. |
| [Resources for Supporting Immigrant and Refugee Students](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/resources/immigrant-refugee.html) | An evolving compilation of resources that can support districts in meeting the needs of immigrant and refugee students. |
| [Safe and Supportive Schools Framework and Self-Reflection Tool](https://www.sassma.org/) | These resources can help guide school- and district-based teams to create safer and more supportive school climates and cultures. Through a phased process (with preliminary and deeper dive self-reflection options), teams can create plans based on local context and data and through examination of six areas of school operation. |
| [School Breakfast: Breakfast After the Bell Resources](https://www.projectbread.org/resource-directory/breakfast-after-the-bell-resources) | The goal of the Breakfast After the Bell Toolkit Series is to help with the launch and implementation of alternative breakfast models. |
| [School Wellness Initiative for Thriving Community Health](https://massschoolwellness.org/) (SWITCH) | SWITCH provides resources that support and advance wellness efforts for Massachusetts students, schools, and communities. |
| Social-emotional learning:   * [SEL Resources for Grades 1-3](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/earlylearning/resources/sel1-3/resources-g1-3.docx) * [SEL Guide](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/bullying/selguide.docx) (K-12) * [SEL/APL Standards](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/earlylearning/resources/#standards) (PK/K) * [Playful Learning Institute, Preschool through 3rd Grade](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/earlylearning/pli.html) * [Culturally Responsive Social-Emotional Competency Development](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/sel/sel-all.docx) | These resources provide evidence-based and developmentally appropriate guidance regarding supporting social-emotional learning in schools. |
| [Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/slife/default.html) | Guidance and resources to support districts in meeting the needs of students with limited or interrupted formal education. |

Table C6. Resources to Support Financial and Asset Management

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Resource | Description |
| [DESE Spending Comparisons website](https://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/statistics/default.html) | A clearinghouse of school finance data reports and other resources available to district users and the public. |
| [General Resources for Federal Grant Programs](https://www.doe.mass.edu/federalgrants/resources/default.html) | General federal grants resources. |
| [Massachusetts Farm to School Grant Opportunities](https://www.massfarmtoschool.org/announcement/grant-opportunities/) | A summary of state, regional and national grant opportunities related to farm to school, school gardens, hydroponics, school food and more. |
| [Office for Food and Nutrition Programs](https://www.doe.mass.edu/cnp/) | Resources for school districts, childcare centers, family day care homes, adult day health programs, Summer Eats community organizations, USDA Foods storage and distribution vendors, food banks, and anti-hunger organizations across the Commonwealth. |
| [Planning for Success](https://www.doe.mass.edu/research/success/) | An inclusive, hands-on planning process designed to build district and school capacity and coherence while also building community understanding and support. |
| [Resource Allocation and District Action Reports (RADAR)](https://www.doe.mass.edu/research/radar/) | RADAR is a suite of innovative data reports, case studies, and other resources that provide a new approach to resource decisions. |
| [Spending Money Wisely: Getting the Most From School District Budgets](https://gtlcenter.org/products-resources/spending-money-wisely-getting-most-school-district-budgets) (scroll down to Research section) | A discussion of the top 10 opportunities for districts to realign resources and free up funds to support strategic priorities. |
| [Summer Eats | Free Meals for Kids and Teens in MA](https://www.projectbread.org/summer-eats-program?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=summereats_pmax&utm_content=english-2023&utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=summereats_pmax&utm_content=english-2023&gclid=CjwKCAjwzo2mBhAUEiwAf7wjkljB4ngm0uZLSTYsl5hK5QGTkC3mKF_4ae_5AUxyrVs6UiPIIrys1RoCQV0QAvD_BwE) | Summer Eats is a free-of-charge program that provides free meals to all kids and teens, ages 18 and younger, at locations all across Massachusetts during the summer months. |
| [Transforming School Funding: A Guide to Implementing Student-Based Budgeting from Education Resource Strategies](https://www.erstrategies.org/cms/files/2752-student-based-budgeting-guide.pdf),%20from%20Education%20Resource%20Strategies) | This guide describes a process to help districts tie funding to specific student needs. |

## Appendix D. Enrollment, Attendance, and Expenditures

Table D1a. Orange Public Schools: Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity, 2023-2024

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | District | Percentage of total | State | Percentage of total |
| All | 523 | 100.0% | 914,959 | 100.0% |
| African American | 3 | 0.6% | 88,104 | 9.6% |
| Asian | 8 | 1.5% | 67,847 | 7.4% |
| Hispanic | 49 | 9.4% | 229,930 | 25.1% |
| Native American | 1 | 0.2% | 2,178 | 0.2% |
| White | 434 | 83.0% | 484,692 | 53.0% |
| Native Hawaiian | 1 | 0.2% | 790 | 0.1% |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic | 27 | 5.2% | 41,418 | 4.5% |

*Note*. As of October 1, 2023.

Table D1b. Petersham Public Schools: Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity, 2023-2024

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | District | Percentage of total | State | Percentage of total |
| All | 133 | 100.0% | 914,959 | 100.0% |
| African American | 3 | 2.3% | 88,104 | 9.6% |
| Asian | 0 | 0.0% | 67,847 | 7.4% |
| Hispanic | 10 | 7.5% | 229,930 | 25.1% |
| Native American | 0 | 0.0% | 2,178 | 0.2% |
| White | 118 | 88.7% | 484,692 | 53.0% |
| Native Hawaiian | 0 | 0.0% | 790 | 0.1% |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic | 2 | 1.5% | 41,418 | 4.5% |

*Note*. As of October 1, 2023.

Table D1c. Ralph C. Mahar Public Schools: Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity, 2023-2024

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | District | Percentage of total | State | Percentage of total |
| All | 504 | 100.0% | 914,959 | 100.0% |
| African American | 9 | 1.8% | 88,104 | 9.6% |
| Asian | 4 | 0.8% | 67,847 | 7.4% |
| Hispanic | 46 | 9.1% | 229,930 | 25.1% |
| Native American | 0 | 0.0% | 2,178 | 0.2% |
| White | 425 | 84.3% | 484,692 | 53.0% |
| Native Hawaiian | 0 | 0.0% | 790 | 0.1% |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic | 20 | 4.0% | 41,418 | 4.5% |

*Note*. As of October 1, 2023.

Table D2a. Orange Public Schools: 2023-2024 Student Enrollment by High Needs Populations

|  | District | | | State | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | *N* | Percentage of high needs | Percentage of district | *N* | Percentage of high needs | Percentage of state |
| All students with high needs | 397 | 100.0% | 74.6% | 515,939 | 100.0% | 55.8% |
| Students with disabilities | 130 | 32.7% | 24.4% | 187,160 | 36.3% | 20.2% |
| Low-income | 361 | 90.9% | 69.0% | 385,697 | 74.8% | 42.2% |
| English learners | 4 | 1.0% | 0.8% | 119,749 | 23.2% | 13.1% |

*Note*. As of October 1, 2023. District and state numbers and percentages for students with disabilities and high needs are calculated including students in out-of-district placements. Total district enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 552; total state enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 924,947.

Table D2b. Petersham Public Schools: 2023-2024 Student Enrollment by High Needs Populations

|  | District | | | State | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | *N* | Percentage of high needs | Percentage of district | *N* | Percentage of high needs | Percentage of state |
| All students with high needs | 54 | 100.0% | 40.6% | 515,939 | 100.0% | 55.8% |
| Students with disabilities | 17 | 31.5% | 12.8% | 187,160 | 36.3% | 20.2% |
| Low-income | 43 | 79.6% | 32.3% | 385,697 | 74.8% | 42.2% |
| English learners | 4 | 7.4% | 3.0% | 119,749 | 23.2% | 13.1% |

*Note*. As of October 1, 2023. District and state numbers and percentages for students with disabilities and high needs are calculated including students in out-of-district placements. Total district enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 133; total state enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 924,947.

Table D2c. Ralph C. Mahar Public Schools: 2023-2024 Student Enrollment by High Needs Populations

|  | District | | | State | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | *N* | Percentage of high needs | Percentage of district | *N* | Percentage of high needs | Percentage of state |
| All students with high needs | 349 | 100.0% | 67.0% | 515,939 | 100.0% | 55.8% |
| Students with disabilities | 155 | 44.4% | 29.8% | 187,160 | 36.3% | 20.2% |
| Low-income | 292 | 83.7% | 57.9% | 385,697 | 74.8% | 42.2% |
| English learners | 6 | 1.7% | 1.2% | 119,749 | 23.2% | 13.1% |

*Note*. As of October 1, 2023. District and state numbers and percentages for students with disabilities and high needs are calculated including students in out-of-district placements. Total district enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 521; total state enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 924,947.

Table D3a. Orange Public Schools: Chronic Absencea Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | *N* (2023) | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All students | 552 | 20.2 | 18.2 | 20.8 | 22.2 |
| African American/Black | 9 | 0.0 | — | 33.3 | 25.3 |
| Asian | 8 | — | 14.3 | 25.0 | 13.9 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 57 | 24.4 | 15.7 | 24.6 | 34.5 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 27 | 33.3 | 20.6 | 25.9 | 23.3 |
| Native American | 1 | — | — | — | 33.5 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 1 | — | — | — | 28.3 |
| White | 449 | 19.5 | 18.2 | 19.6 | 17.0 |
| High needs | 447 | 24.1 | 18.8 | 22.8 | 30.3 |
| Low income | 420 | — | 19.4 | 23.8 | 33.5 |
| English learners | 7 | 28.6 | 11.1 | 42.9 | 33.5 |
| Students w/disabilities | 160 | 24.0 | 17.5 | 15.6 | 30.4 |

a The percentage of students absent 10 percent or more of their total number of student days of membership in a school.

Table D3b. Petersham Public Schools: Chronic Absencea Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | *N* (2023) | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All students | 128 | 4.9 | 0.0 | 19.5 | 22.2 |
| African American/Black | — | — | — | — | 25.3 |
| Asian | — | — | — | — | 13.9 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 14 | 30.0 | 0.0 | 35.7 | 34.5 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 4 | — | 0.0 | — | 23.3 |
| Native American | — | — | — | — | 33.5 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | — | 28.3 |
| White | 110 | 1.8 | 0.0 | 18.2 | 17.0 |
| High needs | 57 | 4.8 | 0.0 | 28.1 | 30.3 |
| Low income | 44 | — | 0.0 | 36.4 | 33.5 |
| English learners | 2 | — | — | — | 33.5 |
| Students w/disabilities | 24 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 20.8 | 30.4 |

a The percentage of students absent 10 percent or more of their total number of student days of membership in a school.

Table D3c. Ralph C. Mahar Public Schools: Chronic Absencea Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | *N* (2023) | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All students | 564 | 61.1 | 26.9 | 21.1 | 22.2 |
| African American/Black | 11 | 58.3 | 40.0 | 9.1 | 25.3 |
| Asian | 6 | 45.5 | 28.6 | 0.0 | 13.9 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 53 | 77.6 | 25.6 | 30.2 | 34.5 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 19 | 76.9 | 31.8 | 15.8 | 23.3 |
| Native American | — | — | — | — | 33.5 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 1 | — | — | — | 28.3 |
| White | 474 | 59.1 | 26.3 | 20.7 | 17.0 |
| High needs | 382 | 69.7 | 34.6 | 26.7 | 30.3 |
| Low income | 343 | — | 36.8 | 28.9 | 33.5 |
| English learners | 8 | — | — | 0.0 | 33.5 |
| Students w/disabilities | 157 | 67.5 | 34.8 | 24.8 | 30.4 |

a The percentage of students absent 10 percent or more of their total number of student days of membership in a school.

Table D4a. Orange Public Schools: Expenditures, Chapter 70 State Aid, and Net School Spending, Fiscal Years 2020-2022

|  | Fiscal year 2020 | | Fiscal year 2021 | | Fiscal year 2022 | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Estimated | Actual | Estimated | Actual | Estimated | Actual |
| Expenditures | | | | | | |
| From local appropriations for schools |  | | | | | |
| By school committee | $6,625,072 | $6,268,198 | $6,625,072 | $6,078,333 | $6,817,094 | $6,883,119 |
| By municipality | $6,327,374 | $6,997,973 | $6,381,556 | $7,320,248 | $6,674,919 | $6,911,299 |
| Total from local appropriations | $12,952,446 | $13,266,171 | $13,006,628 | $13,398,581 | $13,492,013 | $13,794,418 |
| From revolving funds and grants | — | $1,171,166 | — | $1,470,956 | — | $1,452,361 |
| Total expenditures | — | $14,437,337 | — | $14,869,537 | — | $15,246,779 |
| Chapter 70 aid to education program | | | | | | |
| Chapter 70 state aida | — | $5,432,046 | — | $5,432,046 | — | $5,448,006 |
| Required local contribution | — | $1,989,628 | — | $2,020,501 | — | $1,964,703 |
| Required net school spendingb | — | $7,421,674 | — | $7,452,547 | — | $7,528,322 |
| Actual net school spending | — | $7,481,984 | — | $7,336,934 | — | $8,078,895 |
| Over/under required ($) | — | $60,310 | — | -$115,613 | — | $550,573 |
| Over/under required (%) | — | 0.8% | — | -1.6% | — | 7.3% |

*Note*. Data as of July 25, 2023, and sourced from fiscal year 2022 district end-of-year reports and Chapter 70 program information on DESE website.

a Chapter 70 state aid funds are deposited in the local general fund and spent as local appropriations. b Required net school spending is the total of Chapter 70 aid and required local contribution. Net school spending includes only expenditures from local appropriations, not revolving funds, and grants. It includes expenditures for most administration, instruction, operations, and out-of-district tuitions. It does not include transportation, school lunches, debt, or capital.

Table D4b. Petersham Public Schools: Expenditures, Chapter 70 State Aid, and Net School Spending, Fiscal Years 2020-2022

|  | Fiscal year 2020 | | Fiscal year 2021 | | Fiscal year 2022 | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Estimated | Actual | Estimated | Actual | Estimated | Actual |
| Expenditures | | | | | | |
| From local appropriations for schools |  | | | | | |
| By school committee | $1,647,575 | $1,308,688 | $1,556,278 | $1,480,936 | $2,038,350 | $1,744,226 |
| By municipality | $967,606 | $1,213,827 | $1,204,102 | $1,178,754 | $1,183,143 | $1,438,622 |
| Total from local appropriations | $2,615,181 | $2,522,515 | $2,760,380 | $2,659,690 | $3,221,493 | $3,182,848 |
| From revolving funds and grants | — | $352,791 | — | $625,892 | — | $518,576 |
| Total expenditures | — | $2,875,306 | — | $3,285,582 | — | $3,701,424 |
| Chapter 70 aid to education program | | | | | | |
| Chapter 70 state aida | — | $435,523 | — | $435,523 | — | $437,533 |
| Required local contribution | — | $571,360 | — | $640,821 | — | $588,398 |
| Required net school spendingb | — | $1,006,883 | — | $1,076,344 | — | $1,025,931 |
| Actual net school spending | — | $1,320,982 | — | $1,511,279 | — | $1,690,589 |
| Over/under required ($) | — | $314,099 | — | $434,935 | — | $664,658 |
| Over/under required (%) | — | 31.2% | — | 40.4% | — | 64.8% |

*Note*. Data as of July 25, 2023, and sourced from fiscal year 2022 district end-of-year reports and Chapter 70 program information on DESE website.

a Chapter 70 state aid funds are deposited in the local general fund and spent as local appropriations. b Required net school spending is the total of Chapter 70 aid and required local contribution. Net school spending includes only expenditures from local appropriations, not revolving funds, and grants. It includes expenditures for most administration, instruction, operations, and out-of-district tuitions. It does not include transportation, school lunches, debt, or capital.

Table D4c. Ralph C. Mahar Public Schools: Expenditures, Chapter 70 State Aid, and Net School Spending, Fiscal Years 2020-2022

|  | Fiscal year 2020 | | Fiscal year 2021 | | Fiscal year 2022 | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Estimated | Actual | Estimated | Actual | Estimated | Actual |
| Expenditures | | | | | | |
| From local appropriations for schools |  | | | | | |
| By school committee | $14,532,241 | $12,546,360 | $13,186,431 | $11,816,221 | $13,467,675 | $13,694,673 |
| From revolving funds and grants | — | $2,145,419 | — | $1,911,128 | — | $1,728,659 |
| Total expenditures | — | $14,691,779 | — | $13,727,349 | — | $15,423,332 |
| Chapter 70 aid to education program | | | | | | |
| Chapter 70 state aida | — | $5,432,010 | — | $5,432,010 | — | $5,450,340 |
| Required local contribution | — | $2,691,122 | — | $2,752,972 | — | $2,902,578 |
| Required net school spendingb | — | $8,123,132 | — | $8,184,982 | — | $8,352,918 |
| Actual net school spending | — | $11,300,734 | — | $10,667,429 | — | $11,542,474 |
| Over/under required ($) | — | $3,177,602 | — | $2,482,447 | — | $3,189,556 |
| Over/under required (%) | — | 39.1% | — | 30.3% | — | 38.2% |

*Note*. Data as of July 25, 2023, and sourced from fiscal year 2022 district end-of-year reports and Chapter 70 program information on DESE website.

a Chapter 70 state aid funds are deposited in the local general fund and spent as local appropriations. b Required net school spending is the total of Chapter 70 aid and required local contribution. Net school spending includes only expenditures from local appropriations, not revolving funds, and grants. It includes expenditures for most administration, instruction, operations, and out-of-district tuitions. It does not include transportation, school lunches, debt, or capital.

Table D5a. Orange Public Schools: Expenditures Per In-District Pupil, Fiscal Years 2020-2022

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Expenditure category | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
| Administration | $725 | $799 | $704 |
| Instructional leadership (district and school) | $1,065 | $1,114 | $1,002 |
| Teachers | $4,957 | $6,205 | $6,163 |
| Other teaching services | $2,662 | $2,136 | $2,322 |
| Professional development | $101 | $169 | $120 |
| Instructional materials, equipment, and technology | $161 | $996 | $695 |
| Guidance, counseling, and testing services | $485 | $728 | $444 |
| Pupil services | $1,701 | $2,208 | $2,601 |
| Operations and maintenance | $702 | $735 | $738 |
| Insurance, retirement, and other fixed costs | $2,561 | $3,026 | $2,700 |
| Total expenditures per in-district pupil | $15,120 | $18,114 | $17,489 |

*Note*. Any discrepancy between expenditures and total is because of rounding. Data are from <https://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/statistics/per-pupil-exp.xlsx>.

Table D5b. Petersham Public Schools: Expenditures Per In-District Pupil, Fiscal Years 2020-2022

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Expenditure category | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
| Administration | $498 | $817 | $618 |
| Instructional leadership (district and school) | $1,516 | $1,444 | $1,543 |
| Teachers | $3,856 | $5,292 | $5,653 |
| Other teaching services | $1,629 | $2,275 | $2,252 |
| Professional development | $82 | $56 | $71 |
| Instructional materials, equipment, and technology | $704 | $1,088 | $845 |
| Guidance, counseling, and testing services | $446 | $458 | $508 |
| Pupil services | $995 | $2,312 | $3,686 |
| Operations and maintenance | $1,156 | $1,993 | $2,102 |
| Insurance, retirement, and other fixed costs | $1,964 | $2,372 | $2,534 |
| Total expenditures per in-district pupil | $12,846 | $18,107 | $19,811 |

*Note*. Any discrepancy between expenditures and total is because of rounding. Data are from <https://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/statistics/per-pupil-exp.xlsx>.

Table D5c. Ralph C. Mahar Public Schools: Expenditures Per In-District Pupil, Fiscal Years 2020-2022

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Expenditure category | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
| Administration | $675 | $670 | $814 |
| Instructional leadership (district and school) | $1,218 | $744 | $1,228 |
| Teachers | $6,629 | $6,333 | $7,523 |
| Other teaching services | $1,039 | $883 | $985 |
| Professional development | $112 | $20 | $61 |
| Instructional materials, equipment, and technology | $270 | $1,278 | $521 |
| Guidance, counseling, and testing services | $805 | $961 | $1,136 |
| Pupil services | $2,958 | $2,466 | $3,459 |
| Operations and maintenance | $1,558 | $1,784 | $2,905 |
| Insurance, retirement, and other fixed costs | $3,429 | $3,304 | $3,887 |
| Total expenditures per in-district pupil | $18,693 | $18,444 | $22,520 |

*Note*. Any discrepancy between expenditures and total is because of rounding. Data are from <https://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/statistics/per-pupil-exp.xlsx>.

## Appendix E. Student Performance Data

[Table E1a. Fisher Hill: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Achievement by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2023 3](#_Toc171685784)

[Table E1b. Petersham Center: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Achievement by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2023 3](#_Toc171685785)

[Table E1c. Mahar Regional: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Achievement by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2023 4](#_Toc171685786)

[Table E2. Mahar Regional: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2023 4](#_Toc171685787)

[Table E3a. Fisher Hill: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2023 5](#_Toc171685788)

[Table E3b. Petersham Center: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2023 5](#_Toc171685789)

[Table E3c Mahar Regional: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2023 6](#_Toc171685790)

[Table E4. Mahar Regional: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2023 6](#_Toc171685791)

[Table E5a. Fisher Hill: Next-Generation MCAS Science Achievement by Student Group, Grades 5 and 8, 2022-2023 7](#_Toc171685792)

[Table E5b. Petersham Center: Next-Generation MCAS Science Achievement by Student Group, Grades 5 and 8, 2022-2023 7](#_Toc171685793)

[Table E5c Mahar Regional: Next-Generation MCAS Science Achievement by Student Group, Grades 5 and 8, 2022-2023 8](#_Toc171685794)

[Table E6. Mahar Regional: Next-Generation MCAS Science Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2023 8](#_Toc171685795)

[Table E7a. Fisher Hill: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Achievement by Grade, 2022-2023 9](#_Toc171685796)

[Table E7b. Petersham Center: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Achievement by Grade, 2022-2023 9](#_Toc171685797)

[Table E7c. Mahar Regional: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Achievement by Grade, 2022-2023 10](#_Toc171685798)

[Table E8a. Fisher Hill: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Grade, 2022-2023 10](#_Toc171685799)

[Table E8b. Petersham Center: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Grade, 2022-2023 11](#_Toc171685800)

[Table E8c. Mahar Regional: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Grade, 2022-2023 11](#_Toc171685801)

[Table E9a. Fisher Hill: Next-Generation MCAS Science Achievement by Grade, 2022-2023 12](#_Toc171685802)

[Table E9b. Petersham Center: Next-Generation MCAS Science Achievement by Grade, 2022-2023 12](#_Toc171685803)

[Table E9c. Mahar Regional: Next-Generation MCAS Science Achievement by Grade, 2022-2023 12](#_Toc171685804)

[Table E10a. Fisher Hill: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Mean SGP by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2023 13](#_Toc171685805)

[Table E10b. Petersham Center: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Mean SGP by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2023 13](#_Toc171685806)

[Table E10c. Mahar Regional: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Mean SGP by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2023 14](#_Toc171685807)

[Table E11. Mahar Regional: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Mean SGP by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2023 14](#_Toc171685808)

[Table E12a. Fisher Hill: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Mean SGP by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2023 15](#_Toc171685809)

[Table E12b. Petersham Center: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Mean SGP by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2023 15](#_Toc171685810)

[Table E12c. Mahar Regional: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Mean SGP by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2023 16](#_Toc171685811)

[Table E13. Mahar Regional: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Mean SGP by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2023 16](#_Toc171685812)

[Table E14a. Fisher Hill: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Mean SGP by Grade, 2022-2023 17](#_Toc171685813)

[Table E14b. Petersham Center: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Mean SGP by Grade, 2022-2023 17](#_Toc171685814)

[Table E14c. Mahar Regional: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Mean SGP by Grade, 2022-2023 17](#_Toc171685815)

[Table E15a. Fisher Hill: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Mean SGP by Grade, 2022-2023 18](#_Toc171685816)

[Table E15b. Petersham Center: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Mean SGP by Grade, 2022-2023 18](#_Toc171685817)

[Table E15c. Mahar Regional: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Mean SGP by Grade, 2022-2023 18](#_Toc171685818)

[Table E16. Mahar Regional: Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Student Group, 2020-2022 19](#_Toc171685819)

[Table E17. Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Student Group, 2019-2021 19](#_Toc171685820)

[Table E18. Annual Dropout Rates by Student Group, 2020-2022 20](#_Toc171685821)

[Table E19a. Fisher Hill: In-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023 20](#_Toc171685822)

[Table E19b. Petersham Center: In-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023 21](#_Toc171685823)

[Table E19c. Mahar Regional: In-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023 21](#_Toc171685824)

[Table E20a. Fisher Hill: Out-of-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023 22](#_Toc171685825)

[Table E20b. Petersham Center: Out-of-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023 22](#_Toc171685826)

[Table E20c. Mahar Regional: Out-of-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023 23](#_Toc171685827)

[Table E21. Mahar Regional: Advanced Coursework Completion Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023 23](#_Toc171685828)

[Table E22a. Fisher Hill: Accountability Percentile and Classification, 2023 24](#_Toc171685829)

[Table E22b. Petersham Center: Accountability Percentile and Classification, 2023 24](#_Toc171685830)

[Table E22c. Mahar Regional: Accountability Percentile and Classification, 2023 24](#_Toc171685831)

Table E1a. Fisher Hill: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Achievement by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2023

| Group | # included (2023) | Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations | | | Percentage partially meeting expectations | | | Percentage not meeting expectations | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All | 283 | 15 | 16 | 42 | 51 | 48 | 39 | 34 | 36 | 19 |
| African American/Black | — | — | — | 26 | — | — | 45 | — | — | 29 |
| Asian | — | — | — | 64 | — | — | 27 | — | — | 9 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 28 | 18 | 25 | 22 | 41 | 43 | 43 | 41 | 32 | 34 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 12 | 8 | 17 | 49 | 69 | 42 | 35 | 23 | 42 | 16 |
| Native American | — | — | — | 29 | — | — | 42 | — | — | 28 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | 45 | — | — | 37 | — | — | 18 |
| White | 234 | 15 | 16 | 50 | 51 | 49 | 37 | 34 | 35 | 13 |
| High needs | 237 | 12 | 14 | 24 | 49 | 46 | 45 | 39 | 41 | 31 |
| Low income | 221 | 13 | 14 | 24 | 51 | 46 | 44 | 36 | 40 | 32 |
| ELs and former ELs | — | — | — | 20 | — | — | 42 | — | — | 38 |
| Students w/disabilities | 100 | 0 | 2 | 12 | 38 | 37 | 40 | 62 | 61 | 48 |

Table E1b. Petersham Center: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Achievement by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2023

| Group | # included (2023) | Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations | | | Percentage partially meeting expectations | | | Percentage not meeting expectations | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All | 74 | 34 | 45 | 42 | 57 | 43 | 39 | 9 | 12 | 19 |
| African American/Black | — | — | — | 26 | — | — | 45 | — | — | 29 |
| Asian | — | — | — | 64 | — | — | 27 | — | — | 9 |
| Hispanic/Latino | — | — | — | 22 | — | — | 43 | — | — | 34 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | — | — | — | 49 | — | — | 35 | — | — | 16 |
| Native American | — | — | — | 29 | — | — | 42 | — | — | 28 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | 45 | — | — | 37 | — | — | 18 |
| White | 63 | 33 | 40 | 50 | 56 | 48 | 37 | 11 | 13 | 13 |
| High needs | 35 | 29 | 34 | 24 | 56 | 43 | 45 | 15 | 23 | 31 |
| Low income | 28 | 35 | 39 | 24 | 50 | 36 | 44 | 15 | 25 | 32 |
| ELs and former ELs | — | — | — | 20 | — | — | 42 | — | — | 38 |
| Students w/disabilities | 16 | 7 | 13 | 12 | 57 | 56 | 40 | 36 | 31 | 48 |

Table E1c. Mahar Regional: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Achievement by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2023

| Group | # included (2023) | Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations | | | Percentage partially meeting expectations | | | Percentage not meeting expectations | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All | 190 | 23 | 29 | 42 | 47 | 44 | 39 | 30 | 27 | 19 |
| African American/Black | — | — | — | 26 | — | — | 45 | — | — | 29 |
| Asian | — | — | — | 64 | — | — | 27 | — | — | 9 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 21 | 11 | 19 | 22 | 56 | 38 | 43 | 33 | 43 | 34 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | — | — | — | 49 | — | — | 35 | — | — | 16 |
| Native American | — | — | — | 29 | — | — | 42 | — | — | 28 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | 45 | — | — | 37 | — | — | 18 |
| White | 158 | 25 | 32 | 50 | 46 | 42 | 37 | 29 | 26 | 13 |
| High needs | 129 | 15 | 18 | 24 | 48 | 46 | 45 | 37 | 36 | 31 |
| Low income | 113 | 16 | 19 | 24 | 50 | 45 | 44 | 35 | 35 | 32 |
| ELs and former ELs | — | — | — | 20 | — | — | 42 | — | — | 38 |
| Students w/disabilities | 52 | 2 | 2 | 12 | 29 | 33 | 40 | 70 | 65 | 48 |

Table E2. Mahar Regional: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2023

| Group | # included (2023) | Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations | | | | Percentage partially meeting expectations | | | Percentage not meeting expectations | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2022 | | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All | 81 | 40 | 51 | | 58 | 44 | 32 | 30 | 16 | 17 | 11 |
| African American/Black | — | — | — | | 42 | — | — | 41 | — | — | 17 |
| Asian | — | — | — | | 79 | — | — | 16 | — | — | 5 |
| Hispanic/Latino | — | — | — | | 36 | — | — | 39 | — | — | 24 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | — | — | — | | 63 | — | — | 29 | — | — | 9 |
| Native American | — | — | — | | 42 | — | — | 41 | — | — | 18 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | | 41 | — | — | 47 | — | — | 11 |
| White | 66 | 42 | 52 | | 67 | 42 | 33 | 27 | 16 | 15 | 6 |
| High needs | 51 | 23 | 37 | | 37 | 51 | 39 | 42 | 26 | 24 | 21 |
| Low income | 43 | 25 | 44 | | 39 | 50 | 40 | 40 | 25 | 16 | 21 |
| ELs and former ELs | — | — | — | | 16 | — | — | 39 | — | — | 45 |
| Students w/disabilities | 27 | 0 | 15 | | 22 | 36 | 44 | 47 | 64 | 41 | 31 |

Table E3a. Fisher Hill: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2023

| Group | # included (2023) | Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations | | | Percentage partially meeting expectations | | | Percentage not meeting expectations | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All | 283 | 15 | 15 | 41 | 41 | 48 | 41 | 44 | 37 | 18 |
| African American/Black | — | — | — | 21 | — | — | 47 | — | — | 32 |
| Asian | — | — | — | 71 | — | — | 23 | — | — | 6 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 27 | 18 | 19 | 19 | 47 | 48 | 47 | 35 | 33 | 34 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 12 | 7 | 17 | 46 | 57 | 50 | 38 | 36 | 33 | 16 |
| Native American | — | — | — | 28 | — | — | 46 | — | — | 26 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | 41 | — | — | 43 | — | — | 16 |
| White | 235 | 15 | 15 | 49 | 39 | 48 | 40 | 46 | 37 | 11 |
| High needs | 237 | 10 | 11 | 23 | 40 | 47 | 47 | 50 | 42 | 30 |
| Low income | 221 | 11 | 11 | 21 | 42 | 49 | 48 | 47 | 40 | 31 |
| ELs and former ELs | — | — | — | 21 | — | — | 44 | — | — | 34 |
| Students w/disabilities | 102 | 2 | 3 | 13 | 25 | 27 | 41 | 73 | 70 | 46 |

Table E3b. Petersham Center: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2023

| Group | # included (2023) | Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations | | | Percentage partially meeting expectations | | | Percentage not meeting expectations | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All | 74 | 16 | 31 | 41 | 66 | 55 | 41 | 18 | 14 | 18 |
| African American/Black | — | — | — | 21 | — | — | 47 | — | — | 32 |
| Asian | — | — | — | 71 | — | — | 23 | — | — | 6 |
| Hispanic/Latino | — | — | — | 19 | — | — | 47 | — | — | 34 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | — | — | — | 46 | — | — | 38 | — | — | 16 |
| Native American | — | — | — | 28 | — | — | 46 | — | — | 26 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | 41 | — | — | 43 | — | — | 16 |
| White | 63 | 19 | 35 | 49 | 60 | 51 | 40 | 21 | 14 | 11 |
| High needs | 35 | 9 | 20 | 23 | 68 | 60 | 47 | 24 | 20 | 30 |
| Low income | 28 | 12 | 18 | 21 | 62 | 64 | 48 | 27 | 18 | 31 |
| ELs and former ELs | — | — | — | 21 | — | — | 44 | — | — | 34 |
| Students w/disabilities | 16 | 0 | 13 | 13 | 71 | 50 | 41 | 29 | 38 | 46 |

Table E3c Mahar Regional: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2023

| Group | # included (2023) | Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations | | | Percentage partially meeting expectations | | | Percentage not meeting expectations | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All | 188 | 26 | 32 | 41 | 49 | 47 | 41 | 25 | 21 | 18 |
| African American/Black | — | — | — | 21 | — | — | 47 | — | — | 32 |
| Asian | — | — | — | 71 | — | — | 23 | — | — | 6 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 21 | 11 | 14 | 19 | 67 | 52 | 47 | 22 | 33 | 34 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | — | — | — | 46 | — | — | 38 | — | — | 16 |
| Native American | — | — | — | 28 | — | — | 46 | — | — | 26 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | 41 | — | — | 43 | — | — | 16 |
| White | 156 | 27 | 35 | 49 | 48 | 44 | 40 | 25 | 21 | 11 |
| High needs | 126 | 17 | 21 | 23 | 49 | 50 | 47 | 34 | 29 | 30 |
| Low income | 110 | 17 | 22 | 21 | 51 | 52 | 48 | 32 | 26 | 31 |
| ELs and former ELs | — | — | — | 21 | — | — | 44 | — | — | 34 |
| Students w/disabilities | 51 | 7 | 4 | 13 | 28 | 41 | 41 | 66 | 55 | 46 |

Table E4. Mahar Regional: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2023

| Group | # included (2023) | Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations | | | Percentage partially meeting expectations | | | Percentage not meeting expectations | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All | 77 | 40 | 35 | 50 | 40 | 55 | 42 | 19 | 10 | 9 |
| African American/Black | — | — | — | 27 | — | — | 58 | — | — | 15 |
| Asian | — | — | — | 80 | — | — | 17 | — | — | 3 |
| Hispanic/Latino | — | — | — | 25 | — | — | 57 | — | — | 18 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | — | — | — | 54 | — | — | 39 | — | — | 8 |
| Native American | — | — | — | 32 | — | — | 59 | — | — | 10 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | 36 | — | — | 57 | — | — | 7 |
| White | 63 | 40 | 38 | 60 | 40 | 54 | 36 | 20 | 8 | 4 |
| High needs | 49 | 21 | 24 | 27 | 49 | 63 | 57 | 31 | 12 | 16 |
| Low income | 41 | 23 | 27 | 27 | 49 | 61 | 57 | 29 | 12 | 16 |
| ELs and former ELs | — | — | — | 14 | — | — | 58 | — | — | 28 |
| Students w/disabilities | 25 | 0 | 12 | 16 | 33 | 64 | 59 | 67 | 24 | 25 |

Table E5a. Fisher Hill: Next-Generation MCAS Science Achievement by Student Group, Grades 5 and 8, 2022-2023

| Group | # included (2023) | Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations | | | Percentage partially meeting expectations | | | Percentage not meeting expectations | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All | 70 | 9 | 20 | 41 | 44 | 43 | 40 | 47 | 37 | 19 |
| African American/Black | — | — | — | 21 | — | — | 47 | — | — | 32 |
| Asian | — | — | — | 65 | — | — | 27 | — | — | 8 |
| Hispanic/Latino | — | 0 | — | 20 | 20 | — | 45 | 80 | — | 35 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | — | — | — | 47 | — | — | 37 | — | — | 15 |
| Native American | — | — | — | 31 | — | — | 44 | — | — | 25 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | 43 | — | — | 41 | — | — | 16 |
| White | 57 | 10 | 16 | 50 | 48 | 44 | 38 | 41 | 40 | 11 |
| High needs | 57 | 5 | 16 | 23 | 42 | 42 | 46 | 53 | 42 | 31 |
| Low income | 51 | 5 | 18 | 22 | 42 | 45 | 46 | 53 | 37 | 32 |
| ELs and former ELs | — | — | — | 18 | — | — | 43 | — | — | 39 |
| Students w/disabilities | 26 | 0 | 4 | 14 | 29 | 38 | 40 | 71 | 58 | 45 |

Table E5b. Petersham Center: Next-Generation MCAS Science Achievement by Student Group, Grades 5 and 8, 2022-2023

| Group | # included (2023) | Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations | | | Percentage partially meeting expectations | | | Percentage not meeting expectations | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All | 12 | 50 | 33 | 41 | 44 | 50 | 40 | 6 | 17 | 19 |
| African American/Black | — | — | — | 21 | — | — | 47 | — | — | 32 |
| Asian | — | — | — | 65 | — | — | 27 | — | — | 8 |
| Hispanic/Latino | — | — | — | 20 | — | — | 45 | — | — | 35 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | — | — | — | 47 | — | — | 37 | — | — | 15 |
| Native American | — | — | — | 31 | — | — | 44 | — | — | 25 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | 43 | — | — | 41 | — | — | 16 |
| White | — | 53 | — | 50 | 40 | — | 38 | 7 | — | 11 |
| High needs | — | — | — | 23 | — | — | 46 | — | — | 31 |
| Low income | — | — | — | 22 | — | — | 46 | — | — | 32 |
| ELs and former ELs | — | — | — | 18 | — | — | 43 | — | — | 39 |
| Students w/disabilities | — | — | — | 14 | — | — | 40 | — | — | 45 |

Table E5c Mahar Regional: Next-Generation MCAS Science Achievement by Student Group, Grades 5 and 8, 2022-2023

| Group | # included (2023) | Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations | | | Percentage partially meeting expectations | | | Percentage not meeting expectations | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All | 97 | 37 | 45 | 41 | 42 | 38 | 40 | 21 | 16 | 19 |
| African American/Black | — | — | — | 21 | — | — | 47 | — | — | 32 |
| Asian | — | — | — | 65 | — | — | 27 | — | — | 8 |
| Hispanic/Latino | — | 30 | — | 20 | 40 | — | 45 | 30 | — | 35 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | — | — | — | 47 | — | — | 37 | — | — | 15 |
| Native American | — | — | — | 31 | — | — | 44 | — | — | 25 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | 43 | — | — | 41 | — | — | 16 |
| White | 85 | 38 | 48 | 50 | 40 | 36 | 38 | 22 | 15 | 11 |
| High needs | 59 | 31 | 32 | 23 | 40 | 42 | 46 | 30 | 25 | 31 |
| Low income | 50 | 32 | 36 | 22 | 40 | 42 | 46 | 28 | 22 | 32 |
| ELs and former ELs | — | — | — | 18 | — | — | 43 | — | — | 39 |
| Students w/disabilities | 24 | 11 | 8 | 14 | 26 | 38 | 40 | 63 | 54 | 45 |

Table E6. Mahar Regional: Next-Generation MCAS Science Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2023

| Group | # included (2023) | Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations | | | Percentage partially meeting expectations | | | Percentage not meeting expectations | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All | 71 | 37 | 23 | 47 | 55 | 72 | 42 | 8 | 6 | 11 |
| African American/Black | — | — | — | 26 | — | — | 55 | — | — | 20 |
| Asian | — | — | — | 75 | — | — | 21 | — | — | 4 |
| Hispanic/Latino | — | — | — | 24 | — | — | 52 | — | — | 24 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | — | — | — | 51 | — | — | 39 | — | — | 10 |
| Native American | — | — | — | 30 | — | — | 58 | — | — | 12 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | 31 | — | — | 54 | — | — | 15 |
| White | 56 | 37 | 25 | 55 | 54 | 71 | 39 | 9 | 4 | 6 |
| High needs | 46 | 15 | 15 | 26 | 70 | 76 | 54 | 15 | 9 | 21 |
| Low income | 38 | 17 | 16 | 26 | 71 | 74 | 53 | 13 | 11 | 21 |
| ELs and former ELs | — | — | — | 13 | — | — | 50 | — | — | 38 |
| Students w/disabilities | 26 | 0 | 12 | 16 | 60 | 73 | 53 | 40 | 15 | 31 |

Table E7a. Fisher Hill: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Achievement by Grade, 2022-2023

| Grade | # included (2023) | Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations | | | Percentage partially meeting expectations | | | Percentage not meeting expectations | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| 3 | 68 | 16 | 21 | 44 | 52 | 50 | 40 | 33 | 29 | 16 |
| 4 | 70 | 16 | 7 | 40 | 54 | 47 | 43 | 30 | 46 | 17 |
| 5 | 71 | 10 | 15 | 44 | 55 | 54 | 40 | 35 | 31 | 16 |
| 6 | 74 | 19 | 22 | 42 | 42 | 42 | 34 | 39 | 36 | 24 |
| 7 | — | — | — | 40 | — | — | 40 | — | — | 19 |
| 8 | — | — | — | 44 | — | — | 34 | — | — | 22 |
| 3-8 | 283 | 15 | 16 | 42 | 51 | 48 | 39 | 34 | 36 | 19 |
| 10 | — | — | — | 58 | — | — | 30 | — | — | 11 |

Table E7b. Petersham Center: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Achievement by Grade, 2022-2023

| Grade | # included (2023) | Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations | | | Percentage partially meeting expectations | | | Percentage not meeting expectations | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| 3 | 20 | 35 | 70 | 44 | 52 | 15 | 40 | 13 | 15 | 16 |
| 4 | 26 | 0 | 23 | 40 | 73 | 62 | 43 | 27 | 15 | 17 |
| 5 | 12 | 44 | 25 | 44 | 56 | 58 | 40 | 0 | 17 | 16 |
| 6 | 16 | 47 | 63 | 42 | 53 | 38 | 34 | 0 | 0 | 24 |
| 7 | — | — | — | 40 | — | — | 40 | — | — | 19 |
| 8 | — | — | — | 44 | — | — | 34 | — | — | 22 |
| 3-8 | 74 | 34 | 45 | 42 | 57 | 43 | 39 | 9 | 12 | 19 |
| 10 | — | — | — | 58 | — | — | 30 | — | — | 11 |

Table E7c. Mahar Regional: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Achievement by Grade, 2022-2023

| Grade | # included (2023) | Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations | | | Percentage partially meeting expectations | | | Percentage not meeting expectations | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| 3 | — | — | — | 44 | — | — | 40 | — | — | 16 |
| 4 | — | — | — | 40 | — | — | 43 | — | — | 17 |
| 5 | — | — | — | 44 | — | — | 40 | — | — | 16 |
| 6 | — | — | — | 42 | — | — | 34 | — | — | 24 |
| 7 | 93 | 33 | 20 | 40 | 42 | 57 | 40 | 25 | 23 | 19 |
| 8 | 97 | 16 | 38 | 44 | 51 | 31 | 34 | 33 | 31 | 22 |
| 3-8 | 190 | 23 | 29 | 42 | 47 | 44 | 39 | 30 | 27 | 19 |
| 10 | 81 | 40 | 51 | 58 | 44 | 32 | 30 | 16 | 17 | 11 |

Table E8a. Fisher Hill: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Grade, 2022-2023

| Grade | # included (2023) | Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations | | | Percentage partially meeting expectations | | | Percentage not meeting expectations | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| 3 | 70 | 9 | 19 | 41 | 33 | 50 | 39 | 58 | 31 | 20 |
| 4 | 69 | 13 | 7 | 45 | 43 | 39 | 37 | 43 | 54 | 18 |
| 5 | 72 | 10 | 17 | 41 | 47 | 54 | 46 | 43 | 29 | 13 |
| 6 | 72 | 27 | 18 | 41 | 39 | 49 | 42 | 33 | 33 | 17 |
| 7 | — | — | — | 38 | — | — | 40 | — | — | 22 |
| 8 | — | — | — | 38 | — | — | 42 | — | — | 20 |
| 3-8 | 283 | 15 | 15 | 41 | 41 | 48 | 41 | 44 | 37 | 18 |
| 10 | — | — | — | 50 | — | — | 42 | — | — | 9 |

Table E8b. Petersham Center: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Grade, 2022-2023

| Grade | # included (2023) | Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations | | | Percentage partially meeting expectations | | | Percentage not meeting expectations | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| 3 | 20 | 9 | 50 | 41 | 61 | 30 | 39 | 30 | 20 | 20 |
| 4 | 26 | 9 | 23 | 45 | 82 | 65 | 37 | 9 | 12 | 18 |
| 5 | 12 | 11 | 17 | 41 | 67 | 75 | 46 | 22 | 8 | 13 |
| 6 | 16 | 40 | 31 | 41 | 60 | 56 | 42 | 0 | 13 | 17 |
| 7 | — | — | — | 38 | — | — | 40 | — | — | 22 |
| 8 | — | — | — | 38 | — | — | 42 | — | — | 20 |
| 3-8 | 74 | 16 | 31 | 41 | 66 | 55 | 41 | 18 | 14 | 18 |
| 10 | — | — | — | 50 | — | — | 42 | — | — | 9 |

Table E8c. Mahar Regional: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Grade, 2022-2023

| Grade | # included (2023) | Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations | | | Percentage partially meeting expectations | | | Percentage not meeting expectations | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| 3 | — | — | — | 41 | — | — | 39 | — | — | 20 |
| 4 | — | — | — | 45 | — | — | 37 | — | — | 18 |
| 5 | — | — | — | 41 | — | — | 46 | — | — | 13 |
| 6 | — | — | — | 41 | — | — | 42 | — | — | 17 |
| 7 | 91 | 25 | 34 | 38 | 51 | 43 | 40 | 24 | 23 | 22 |
| 8 | 97 | 27 | 31 | 38 | 48 | 51 | 42 | 26 | 19 | 20 |
| 3-8 | 188 | 26 | 32 | 41 | 49 | 47 | 41 | 25 | 21 | 18 |
| 10 | 77 | 40 | 35 | 50 | 40 | 55 | 42 | 19 | 10 | 9 |

Table E9a. Fisher Hill: Next-Generation MCAS Science Achievement by Grade, 2022-2023

| Grade | # included (2023) | Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations | | | Percentage partially meeting expectations | | | Percentage not meeting expectations | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| 5 | 70 | 9 | 20 | 42 | 44 | 43 | 40 | 47 | 37 | 19 |
| 8 | — | — | — | 41 | — | — | 40 | — | — | 19 |
| 5 and 8 | 70 | 9 | 20 | 41 | 44 | 43 | 40 | 47 | 37 | 19 |
| 10 | — | — | — | 47 | — | — | 42 | — | — | 11 |

Table E9b. Petersham Center: Next-Generation MCAS Science Achievement by Grade, 2022-2023

| Grade | # included (2023) | Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations | | | Percentage partially meeting expectations | | | Percentage not meeting expectations | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| 5 | 12 | 50 | 33 | 42 | 44 | 50 | 40 | 6 | 17 | 19 |
| 8 | — | — | — | 41 | — | — | 40 | — | — | 19 |
| 5 and 8 | 12 | 50 | 33 | 41 | 44 | 50 | 40 | 6 | 17 | 19 |
| 10 | — | — | — | 47 | — | — | 42 | — | — | 11 |

Table E9c. Mahar Regional: Next-Generation MCAS Science Achievement by Grade, 2022-2023

| Grade | # included (2023) | Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations | | | Percentage partially meeting expectations | | | Percentage not meeting expectations | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| 5 | — | — | — | 42 | — | — | 40 | — | — | 19 |
| 8 | 97 | 37 | 45 | 41 | 42 | 38 | 40 | 21 | 16 | 19 |
| 5 and 8 | 97 | 37 | 45 | 41 | 42 | 38 | 40 | 21 | 16 | 19 |
| 10 | 71 | 37 | 23 | 47 | 55 | 72 | 42 | 8 | 6 | 11 |

Table E10a. Fisher Hill: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Mean SGP by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2023

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # included (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All students | 189 | 41.8 | 46.9 | 49.7 |
| African American/Black | — | — | — | 48.0 |
| Asian | — | — | — | 56.4 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 18 | 33.9 | — | 47.5 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 9 | — | — | 50.0 |
| Native American | — | — | — | 46.7 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | 50.5 |
| White | 156 | 43.4 | 46.7 | 50.0 |
| High needs | 156 | 39.3 | 46.7 | 47.3 |
| Low income | 144 | 40.0 | 46.2 | 47.0 |
| ELs and former ELs | — | — | — | 49.7 |
| Students w/disabilities | 69 | 32.6 | 46.0 | 43.7 |

Table E10b. Petersham Center: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Mean SGP by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2023

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # included (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All students | 50 | 63.2 | 59.7 | 49.7 |
| African American/Black | — | — | — | 48.0 |
| Asian | — | — | — | 56.4 |
| Hispanic/Latino | — | — | — | 47.5 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | — | — | — | 50.0 |
| Native American | — | — | — | 46.7 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | 50.5 |
| White | 42 | 63.7 | 58.6 | 50.0 |
| High needs | 25 | — | 58.6 | 47.3 |
| Low income | 19 | — | — | 47.0 |
| ELs and former ELs | — | — | — | 49.7 |
| Students w/disabilities | 13 | — | — | 43.7 |

Table E10c. Mahar Regional: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Mean SGP by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2023

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # included (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All students | 170 | 48.1 | 48.9 | 49.7 |
| African American/Black | — | — | — | 48.0 |
| Asian | — | — | — | 56.4 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 18 | — | — | 47.5 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | — | — | — | 50.0 |
| Native American | — | — | — | 46.7 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | 50.5 |
| White | 144 | 48.1 | 49.1 | 50.0 |
| High needs | 113 | 46.9 | 46.0 | 47.3 |
| Low income | 98 | 47.5 | 46.7 | 47.0 |
| ELs and former ELs | — | — | — | 49.7 |
| Students w/disabilities | 44 | 37.4 | 38.9 | 43.7 |

Table E11. Mahar Regional: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Mean SGP by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2023

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # included (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All students | 65 | 30.7 | 36.2 | 49.5 |
| African American/Black | — | — | — | 45.5 |
| Asian | — | — | — | 56.2 |
| Hispanic/Latino | — | — | — | 45.1 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | — | — | — | 51.3 |
| Native American | — | — | — | 46.4 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | 45.2 |
| White | 51 | 30.4 | 36.7 | 50.7 |
| High needs | 42 | 26.6 | 38.1 | 44.7 |
| Low income | 35 | 28.3 | 41.0 | 44.9 |
| ELs and former ELs | — | — | — | 42.1 |
| Students w/disabilities | 24 | — | 33.7 | 39.9 |

Table E12a. Fisher Hill: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Mean SGP by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2023

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # included (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All students | 187 | 40.2 | 51.4 | 49.8 |
| African American/Black | — | — | — | 47.8 |
| Asian | — | — | — | 57.7 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 17 | 38.8 | — | 47.5 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 9 | — | — | 50.3 |
| Native American | — | — | — | 47.1 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | 51.5 |
| White | 156 | 38.9 | 51.7 | 50.1 |
| High needs | 154 | 38.5 | 50.9 | 47.8 |
| Low income | 142 | 39.4 | 51.6 | 47.3 |
| ELs and former ELs | — | — | — | 49.3 |
| Students w/disabilities | 69 | 34.4 | 43.3 | 44.8 |

Table E12b. Petersham Center: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Mean SGP by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2023

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # included (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All students | 50 | 42.8 | 65.8 | 49.8 |
| African American/Black | — | — | — | 47.8 |
| Asian | — | — | — | 57.7 |
| Hispanic/Latino | — | — | — | 47.5 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | — | — | — | 50.3 |
| Native American | — | — | — | 47.1 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | 51.5 |
| White | 42 | 43.8 | 63.7 | 50.1 |
| High needs | 25 | — | 58.2 | 47.8 |
| Low income | 19 | — | — | 47.3 |
| ELs and former ELs | — | — | — | 49.3 |
| Students w/disabilities | 13 | — | — | 44.8 |

Table E12c. Mahar Regional: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Mean SGP by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2023

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # included (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All students | 168 | 57.4 | 58.8 | 49.8 |
| African American/Black | — | — | — | 47.8 |
| Asian | — | — | — | 57.7 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 17 | — | — | 47.5 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | — | — | — | 50.3 |
| Native American | — | — | — | 47.1 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | 51.5 |
| White | 142 | 56.5 | 58.0 | 50.1 |
| High needs | 110 | 55.6 | 60.1 | 47.8 |
| Low income | 95 | 55.6 | 62.3 | 47.3 |
| ELs and former ELs | — | — | — | 49.3 |
| Students w/disabilities | 43 | 40.9 | 51.4 | 44.8 |

Table E13. Mahar Regional: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Mean SGP by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2023

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # included (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All students | 63 | 31.9 | 42.9 | 49.6 |
| African American/Black | — | — | — | 41.4 |
| Asian | — | — | — | 55.9 |
| Hispanic/Latino | — | — | — | 41.8 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | — | — | — | 51.1 |
| Native American | — | — | — | 45.4 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | 56.1 |
| White | 50 | 31.1 | 42.4 | 52.9 |
| High needs | 41 | 23.8 | 46.8 | 43.9 |
| Low income | 34 | 24.4 | 45.4 | 43.2 |
| ELs and former ELs | — | — | — | 40.2 |
| Students w/disabilities | 23 | — | 46.0 | 41.7 |

Table E14a. Fisher Hill: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Mean SGP by Grade, 2022-2023

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade | # included (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| 3 | — | — | — | — |
| 4 | 57 | 36.8 | 36.1 | 49.4 |
| 5 | 63 | 38.8 | 41.7 | 49.8 |
| 6 | 69 | 50.2 | 60.5 | 49.9 |
| 7 | — | — | — | 49.9 |
| 8 | — | — | — | 49.7 |
| 3-8 | 189 | 41.8 | 46.9 | 49.7 |
| 10 | — | — | — | 49.5 |

Table E14b. Petersham Center: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Mean SGP by Grade, 2022-2023

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade | # included (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| 3 | — | — | — | — |
| 4 | 24 | — | 49.7 | 49.4 |
| 5 | 11 | — | — | 49.8 |
| 6 | 15 | — | — | 49.9 |
| 7 | — | — | — | 49.9 |
| 8 | — | — | — | 49.7 |
| 3-8 | 50 | 63.2 | 59.7 | 49.7 |
| 10 | — | — | — | 49.5 |

Table E14c. Mahar Regional: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Mean SGP by Grade, 2022-2023

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade | # included (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| 3 | — | — | — | — |
| 4 | — | — | — | 49.4 |
| 5 | — | — | — | 49.8 |
| 6 | — | — | — | 49.9 |
| 7 | 81 | 56.7 | 47.2 | 49.9 |
| 8 | 89 | 41.8 | 50.5 | 49.7 |
| 3-8 | 170 | 48.1 | 48.9 | 49.7 |
| 10 | 65 | 30.7 | 36.2 | 49.5 |

Table E15a. Fisher Hill: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Mean SGP by Grade, 2022-2023

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade | # included (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| 3 | — | — | — | — |
| 4 | 58 | 36.0 | 39.2 | 49.6 |
| 5 | 64 | 40.6 | 53.1 | 50.0 |
| 6 | 65 | 44.2 | 60.7 | 49.9 |
| 7 | — | — | — | 49.9 |
| 8 | — | — | — | 49.7 |
| 3-8 | 187 | 40.2 | 51.4 | 49.8 |
| 10 | — | — | — | 49.6 |

Table E15b. Petersham Center: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Mean SGP by Grade, 2022-2023

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade | # included (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| 3 | — | — | — | — |
| 4 | 24 | — | 64.9 | 49.6 |
| 5 | 11 | — | — | 50.0 |
| 6 | 15 | — | — | 49.9 |
| 7 | — | — | — | 49.9 |
| 8 | — | — | — | 49.7 |
| 3-8 | 50 | 42.8 | 65.8 | 49.8 |
| 10 | — | — | — | 49.6 |

Table E15c. Mahar Regional: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Mean SGP by Grade, 2022-2023

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade | # included (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| 3 | — | — | — | — |
| 4 | — | — | — | 49.6 |
| 5 | — | — | — | 50.0 |
| 6 | — | — | — | 49.9 |
| 7 | 80 | 56.4 | 66.0 | 49.9 |
| 8 | 88 | 58.1 | 52.3 | 49.7 |
| 3-8 | 168 | 57.4 | 58.8 | 49.8 |
| 10 | 63 | 31.9 | 42.9 | 49.6 |

Table E16. Mahar Regional: Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Student Group, 2020-2022

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # included (2022) | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | State (2022) |
| All | 94 | 79.8 | 90.2 | 80.9 | 90.1 |
| African American/Black | 2 | — | — | — | 86.2 |
| Asian | 1 | — | — | — | 96.2 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 1 | 100 | 78.6 | — | 81.2 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 8 | — | 83.3 | 62.5 | 88.7 |
| Native American | — | — | — | — | 82.2 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | — | 81.3 |
| White | 82 | 77.6 | 92.0 | 85.4 | 93.2 |
| High needs | 68 | 76.7 | 84.4 | 73.5 | 83.9 |
| Low income | 64 | 77.8 | 83.9 | 75.0 | 83.2 |
| English learners | 1 | 100 | — | — | 73.1 |
| Students w/disabilities | 19 | 53.6 | 82.6 | 52.6 | 78.0 |

Table E17. Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Student Group, 2019-2021

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # included (2021) | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | State (2021) |
| All | 102 | 90.6 | 85.6 | 90.2 | 91.8 |
| African American/Black | 5 | — | — | — | 88.1 |
| Asian | 2 | — | — | — | 97.0 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 14 | 78.6 | 100 | 78.6 | 84.0 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 6 | — | — | 83.3 | 91.2 |
| Native American | — | — | — | — | 84.1 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | — | 87.7 |
| White | 75 | 92.6 | 84.7 | 92.0 | 94.4 |
| High needs | 64 | 86.8 | 84.9 | 84.4 | 85.8 |
| Low income | 62 | 86.6 | 84.1 | 83.9 | 85.1 |
| English learners | 5 | — | 100 | — | 78.0 |
| Students w/disabilities | 23 | 80.8 | 71.4 | 82.6 | 80.6 |

Table E18. Annual Dropout Rates by Student Group, 2020-2022

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # included (2022) | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | State (2022) |
| All | 337 | 3.3 | 3.6 | 5.6 | 2.1 |
| African American/Black | 6 | 0.0 | 25.0 | 16.7 | 2.8 |
| Asian | 3 | 14.3 | — | — | 0.6 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 23 | 5.7 | 0.0 | 21.7 | 4.3 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 16 | 9.5 | 5.9 | 6.3 | 2.4 |
| Native American | 1 | — | — | — | 4.3 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | — | 1.2 |
| White | 288 | 2.5 | 3.0 | 4.2 | 1.3 |
| High needs | 210 | 3.2 | 4.9 | 8.6 | 3.6 |
| Low income | 194 | — | — | 7.2 | 3.8 |
| English learners | 1 | — | — | — | 7.8 |
| Students w/disabilities | 74 | 1.4 | 5.7 | 13.5 | 3.4 |

Table E19a. Fisher Hill: In-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # included (2023) | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All | 542 |  | 1.4 | 0.0 | 1.4 |
| African American/Black | 8 |  | — | — | 2.1 |
| Asian | 8 |  | — | — | 0.3 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 57 |  | — | — | 1.8 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 27 |  | — | — | 1.6 |
| Native American | 1 |  | — | — | 1.5 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 1 |  | — | — | 1.4 |
| White | 440 |  | 1.7 | 0.0 | 1.2 |
| High needs | 438 |  | 1.5 | 0.0 | 2.0 |
| Low income | 412 |  | 1.6 | 0.0 | 2.1 |
| English learners | 7 |  | — | — | 1.3 |
| Students w/disabilities | 154 |  | 2.8 | 0.0 | 2.5 |

Table E19b. Petersham Center: In-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # included (2023) | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All | 127 | — | — | — | 1.4 |
| African American/Black | 0 | — | — | — | 2.1 |
| Asian | 0 | — | — | — | 0.3 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 14 | — | — | — | 1.8 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 4 | — | — | — | 1.6 |
| Native American | 0 | — | — | — | 1.5 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 0 | — | — | — | 1.4 |
| White | 109 | — | — | — | 1.2 |
| High needs | 56 | — | — | — | 2.0 |
| Low income | 43 | — | — | — | 2.1 |
| English learners | 2 | — | — | — | 1.3 |
| Students w/disabilities | 23 | — | — | — | 2.5 |

Table E19c. Mahar Regional: In-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # included (2023) | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All | 545 | — | 3.7 | 1.8 | 1.4 |
| African American/Black | 10 | — | — | — | 2.1 |
| Asian | 6 | — | — | — | 0.3 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 53 | — | 11.9 | 3.8 | 1.8 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 19 | — | — | — | 1.6 |
| Native American | 0 | — | — | — | 1.5 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 1 | — | — | — | 1.4 |
| White | 456 | — | 2.8 | 1.5 | 1.2 |
| High needs | 364 | — | 4.8 | 2.7 | 2.0 |
| Low income | 325 | — | 5.0 | 3.1 | 2.1 |
| English learners | 7 | — | — | — | 1.3 |
| Students w/disabilities | 140 | — | 8.1 | 0.7 | 2.5 |

Table E20a. Fisher Hill: Out-of-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # included (2023) | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All | 542 | — | 3.9 | 1.8 | 2.5 |
| African American/Black | 8 | — | — | — | 5.0 |
| Asian | 8 | — | — | — | 0.6 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 57 | — | — | — | 3.9 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 27 | — | — | — | 3.0 |
| Native American | 1 | — | — | — | 4.1 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 1 | — | — | — | 3.1 |
| White | 440 | — | 4.1 | 2.3 | 1.6 |
| High needs | 438 | — | 4.5 | 2.3 | 3.8 |
| Low income | 412 | — | 4.5 | 2.4 | 4.3 |
| English learners | 7 | — | — | — | 2.7 |
| Students w/disabilities | 154 | — | 6.8 | 3.9 | 4.7 |

Table E20b. Petersham Center: Out-of-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # included (2023) | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All | 127 | — | — | — | 2.5 |
| African American/Black | 0 | — | — | — | 5.0 |
| Asian | 0 | — | — | — | 0.6 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 14 | — | — | — | 3.9 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 4 | — | — | — | 3.0 |
| Native American | 0 | — | — | — | 4.1 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 0 | — | — | — | 3.1 |
| White | 109 | — | — | — | 1.6 |
| High needs | 56 | — | — | — | 3.8 |
| Low income | 43 | — | — | — | 4.3 |
| English learners | 2 | — | — | — | 2.7 |
| Students w/disabilities | 23 | — | — | — | 4.7 |

Table E20c. Mahar Regional: Out-of-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # included (2023) | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All | 545 | — | 10.2 | 9.7 | 2.5 |
| African American/Black | 10 | — | — | — | 5.0 |
| Asian | 6 | — | — | — | 0.6 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 53 | — | 21.4 | 11.3 | 3.9 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 19 | — | — | — | 3.0 |
| Native American | 0 | — | — | — | 4.1 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 1 | — | — | — | 3.1 |
| White | 456 | — | 8.5 | 9.9 | 1.6 |
| High needs | 364 | — | 13.2 | 14.0 | 3.8 |
| Low income | 325 | — | 14.4 | 14.2 | 4.3 |
| English learners | 7 | — | — | — | 2.7 |
| Students w/disabilities | 140 | — | 16.1 | 17.1 | 4.7 |

Table E21. Mahar Regional: Advanced Coursework Completion Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # included (2023) | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All | 138 | 50.0 | 47.5 | 43.5 | 65.8 |
| African American/Black | 1 | 66.7 | — | — | 57.3 |
| Asian | 2 | — | — | — | 84.9 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 9 | 25.0 | — | 11.1 | 51.2 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 4 | 33.3 | 30.0 | — | 67.4 |
| Native American | — | — | — | — | 50.6 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | — | 60.0 |
| White | 122 | 53.4 | 50.0 | 44.3 | 70.4 |
| High needs | 76 | 33.0 | 37.8 | 28.9 | 49.8 |
| Low income | 67 | — | 39.5 | 29.9 | 50.7 |
| English learners | — | — | — | — | 31.7 |
| Students w/disabilities | 27 | 6.7 | 12.5 | 11.1 | 36.0 |

Table E22a. Fisher Hill: Accountability Percentile and Classification, 2023

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| School | Progress toward improvement targets (%) | Percentile | Overall classification | Reason for classification |
| District | 71 | — | Requiring assistance or intervention | In need of focused/targeted support for low participation rate for Hispanic students |
| Fisher Hill | — | — | Insufficient data | Insufficient data |
| Dexter Park | 69 | 13 | Requiring assistance or intervention | In need of focused/targeted support for low participation rate for Hispanic students |

Table E22b. Petersham Center: Accountability Percentile and Classification, 2023

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| School | Progress toward improvement targets (%) | Percentile | Overall classification | Reason for classification |
| District | 89 | — | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Meeting or exceeding targets |
| Petersham Center | 86 | 54 | Not requiring assistance or intervention | School of Recognition |

Table E22c. Mahar Regional: Accountability Percentile and Classification, 2023

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| School | Progress toward improvement targets (%) | Percentile | Overall classification | Reason for classification |
| District | 42 | — | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Moderate progress toward targets |
| Mahar Regional | 35 | 30 | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Moderate progress toward targets |

1. DESE’s District Standards and Indicators are at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/district-review/district-standards-indicators.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. For more information on the Teachstone CLASS protocol, visit <https://teachstone.com/class/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. DESE’s District Standards and Indicators are at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/district-review/district-standards-indicators.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Average SGP ranges: Very Low Growth = 1.0-29.9, Low Growth = 30.0-39.9, Typical Growth = 40.0-59.9, Exceeded Typical Growth = 60.0 or higher. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. CURATE: CUrriculum RAtings by TEachers. See <https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate>. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. When observers rate this dimension it is scored so that a low rating (indicating little or no evidence of a negative climate) is better than a high rating (indicating abundant evidence of a negative climate). To be consistent across all ratings, for the purposes of this report we have inversed this scoring. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)