# Chicopee Public Schools

Comprehensive District Review Report

April 2025

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Office of District Reviews and Monitoring

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Pedro Martinez

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 Chicopee Public Schools (hereafter, Chicopee) in April 2025. Data collection activities associated with the review included interviews, focus groups, and document reviews and were designed to understand how districts operate in support of continuous improvement efforts. The review focused on the six standards (and related indicators) that DESE has identified as being important components of district effectiveness. The resulting report provides an in-depth look at district systems, policies, and practices and includes recommendations to promote systemic improvements and advance equitable student outcomes and experiences.

In addition, to collect data on instructional practices, seven observers, who focused primarily on instruction in the classroom, visited Chicopee during the week of April 7, 2025. The observers conducted 143 observations in a sample of classrooms across grade levels, focused primarily 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,[[1]](#footnote-2) 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).

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

The superintendent of schools leads Chicopee, and the district leadership team, consisting of the assistant superintendent for instruction and accountability, the assistant superintendent for student support services, the director of special education, the director of budget and finance, and the director of human resources, supports the superintendent. In addition, Chicopee has a 12-member school committee, which the city’s mayor leads. District leaders and school committee members described positive and collaborative working relationships between the two, with frequent communication and clear roles and responsibilities.

The district leadership team has regular meetings that focus primarily on the five strategic priorities outlined in the one-year strategic plan: addressing chronic absenteeism, improving ELA instruction and mathematics scores for English Learners and Students with Disabilities, using restorative approaches to student conduct, and addressing students’ social-emotional learning needs. At the time of the district review, the district’s steering committee was in the process of drafting a three- or five-year strategic plan. The development of a new strategic plan has actively involved perspectives from across the district, including teachers, families, students, and school and district leaders. More broadly, the superintendent intentionally scheduled a series of town hall meetings and community forums to hear and leverage feedback from stakeholders. understand key issues within the district and inform district initiatives.

New this year, all schools are expected to have an instructional leadership team (ILT). Although schools had the autonomy to identify which of the five priorities they would primarily focus on, all schools conducted at least one learning walk by the time of the district review to monitor instruction. As ILTs are a new expectation, the district is continuing to explore and refine processes to ensure consistency and effectiveness across schools.

The district lacks a clear strategy to recruit and retain diverse leaders. A previous effort to develop such a plan was never completed, and at the time of the district review, the district was just beginning to revisit this work. The district is also working to improve efforts to engage the broader community through representative school and parent advisory councils, including school councils, parent-teacher organizations, a Special Education Parent Advisory Council, and an English Learner Parent Advisory Council. However, parental participation remains low, particularly for those that would involve ongoing leadership commitments.

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

The assistant superintendent for instruction and accountability is responsible for curriculum and instruction in Chicopee, supported by the professional development and instructional support liaison and instructional data specialist. At the time of the district review, the district did not have a documented instructional vision. However, across focus groups, staff clearly articulated five focus areas aligned with the district’s improvement plan.

In addition, the district has a documented process for reviewing and selecting new curricula, led by a curriculum review committee composed of leaders and teachers. The district has comprehensive core curricula for both ELA and mathematics from Kindergarten – Grade 12 that meet expectations according to CURATE[[2]](#footnote-3) or EdReports, and there are efforts to vertically and horizontally align curricula across buildings and grade levels. However, teachers reported concerns about Amplify CKLA and enVision, and a need to supplement gaps in both curricula.

Chicopee has curriculum mapping committees that adopt curriculum maps and work to vertically and horizontally align subject area core content to the Massachusetts frameworks to make sure that all students, regardless of which school in the district they attend, are accessing the same core content. The district also supports effective implementation of curricula through a variety of districtwide professional learning opportunities, including coaching supports on evidence-based instructional strategies.

The district has many opportunities for middle and high school students to access diverse and rigorous learning opportunities, including the REACH (Resources for Enrichment and Advancement in Chicopee) program at the middle school level, honors and Advanced Placement (AP) courses, a variety of electives, and career and technical education (CTE) offerings. At the elementary level, students have access to some specials (e.g., art, music, physical education).

### [Assessment](#_Assessment)

Chicopee uses multiple data sources to gain a comprehensive understanding of each student, including both academic (e.g., Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System [MCAS], ACCESS, NWEA Measures of Academic Progress [MAP], Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills [DIBELS], AP, and SAT) and nonacademic (e.g., attendance, Panorama, behavioral evaluations, office referrals, and suspension rates) data. However, teachers expressed concern with both curriculum-based and standardized assessments’ usefulness, noting that they do not find the district's standardized assessments useful for their instruction and had concerns about the cultural responsiveness of assessments.

At the district level, leaders are committed to ensuring data security and privacy by developing districtwide policies about data sharing and providing staff with regular training. The district also has a strong culture of data collection and use. District staff use Open Architects to analyze across data sources for broader trends and patterns and disaggregate data to examine student groups. However, at the school level, ILTs are in various stages of consistently reviewing both academic and nonacademic data. Further, processes and procedures for reviewing data vary across schools.

The district primarily uses ParentSquare and Talking Points to generally communicate with students and families, and grades are shared via SchoolBrains and Google Classroom. Regarding student grades, the district implements a transparent and accessible grading system that is calibrated across schools and content areas and communicates students’ progress and performance. Teachers across grade levels identified their schools’ grading expectations, and that the district determined both the activity types and the weight of assignments.

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

Chicopee’s human resources department consists of the director of human resources, an administrative secretary, two clerks, and a substitute personnel liaison. The human resources department supports the hiring and onboarding of new staff, resolving staff disputes, and maintaining staff records. Within the past two years, Chicopee has switched over to using a digital platform for employee onboarding and managing staff information. At the time of the district review, district staff were still in the process of digitalizing files to PowerSchool and were about 75 percent to 80 percent of the way through the conversion process. The district has processes to support hiring new staff and recognizing exemplary teachers. However, overseeing staff investigations and disciplinary actions is less defined, with school staff describing a need to clarify and streamline policies and procedures regarding this process.

District records suggest that school-level evaluators consistently complete teacher evaluations. A review of evaluations indicates that teacher evaluations consistently include SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely) goals, multiple sources of evidence, and feedback for each standard. School leaders generally reported that they desired more guidance from the district concerning evaluations, specifically regarding conducting observations.

To support implementation of high-quality instructional practices, the district offers a variety of professional development opportunities, as well as the ability for staff to choose professional development sessions. District leaders regularly review professional development opportunities and feedback from teachers to make sure they meet staff needs. The district also partners with local universities, most notably Elms College, to provide opportunities for educators to grow professionally within the district. These opportunities target unlicensed staff (e.g., paraprofessionals, staff on waivers) by providing courses at a reduced cost. The district also provides opportunities for coaching and support on passing the Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL). For new staff, the district has a mentoring program that includes monthly meetings and 50 hours of mentoring.

### [Student Support](#_Student_Support)

The assistant superintendent for student support services is responsible for overseeing student support in the district, along with the director of special education and the director of ELL services and new educator development. Students also have opportunities to exercise leadership and decision making, such as serving on the systemic improvement team for the district. The district emphasizes family and community partnerships, led by the family and community engagement (FACE) team. This team is responsible for organizing the district’s efforts and initiatives to engage families and the surrounding community, including both social (e.g., back-to-school extravaganza, bingo nights, game nights) and academic (e.g., parent academy workshop series) opportunities. The district also partners with local community organizations to provide services to students and families during and outside of the school day, including clothing assistance, food and housing support, and mental health services. However, school staff reported some challenges in communicating with families, particularly given the language diversity of the district’s families. Additionally, the district does not yet have a systematic process for identifying, establishing, and managing community partnerships.

The district has several areas of growth related to providing a safe and supportive learning environment across schools. At the middle and high school levels, students and staff reported that responses to several behavioral incidents during the school year did not appear to address the underlying causes of these behaviors. Further, although one of the district’s priorities is to use restorative practices, their implementation was not clear. The district also is prioritizing strategies to increase attendance, such as letters home, phone calls, and student meetings. Despite approaches used to improve students’ attendance, the district’s chronic absenteeism rate is higher than the state average, indicating that efforts are not yet effectively addressing underlying causes.

Chicopee uses various surveys and screeners, including Panorama, Views of Climate and Learning (VOCAL), and the Youth Risk Behavior Survey to assess the social, emotional, and mental health needs of students. The district also uses the TRAILS to Wellness Social and Emotional Learning curriculum. Whereas the district has some tiered mental and behavioral health services that support students’ mental and emotional wellness, according to school staff, available resources do not meet the students’ growing needs. In addition, time in the schedule for middle and high school students to receive Tier 2 and 3 interventions is limited. Lastly, while each building has a school-based multitiered systems of support (MTSS) team to develop, review, and adjust interventions for students, teams varied in how frequently they met.

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

The director of budget and finance leads the business affairs office and is responsible for overseeing financial and business decisions in the district. The office has five staff members overseeing the district budget (including grants), accounts payable, and payroll. District leaders described the office as being well staffed and proactive in addressing needs within the district. The district has a close relationship with the city, and the two share resources efficiently (e.g., the technology director is a shared position between the two). The district uses MUNIS cash management to monitor and control resources, although district leaders are hoping to adjust their account codes to more easily complete the end of year report.

The district has a transparent budgeting process, which includes involvement of school leaders, detailed timelines, and public notices of meetings, and district leaders regularly communicate about the budget to the school committee. The district carefully considers potential grants to make sure that they align with the district’s strategic plan, and school leaders are proactively involved in the grant-seeking process. To ensure sustainability of efforts originally made using grant funding, district leaders prioritize one-time expenses or develop sustainability plans if grant funds are used for personnel. To keep the school committee and broader community updated on the budget, the district provides budget updates on a quarterly basis and works with budget managers to track and adjust current year spending at every payroll cycle.

The district’s facilities department monitors potential needs and regularly reviews its preventative maintenance plan. To make sure that maintenance requests are quickly and efficiently addressed, the district has two processes for school leaders and directors to request services, and these requests are centrally tracked at the district level. Food services are managed in-house by the district, and efforts are made to get students’ input on food choices by engaging with student councils at the high schools and sending out surveys.

The district has an inventory support system to support asset tracking and replacement. However, the district does not have a capital plan to communicate larger capital needs. At the time of the district review, the district was in the early stages of developing a capital plan with the city.

## Chicopee Public Schools: 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 provide the state, district leaders, and the public with an in-depth look into the systems, structures, and practices of a district and how they affect student experiences and opportunities. District reviews provide information and recommendations to support districts in implementing systemic improvements and advance equitable student outcomes and experiences.

### 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 municipal staff, school committee members, teachers’ association representatives, district and school administrators, teachers, students, and students’ families. Reviewers also conduct focus groups and virtual interviews 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, all interview and focus group data are transcribed using automated transcription. The transcripts are then coded using both deterministic coding, based on the protocol questions, and natural language processing models. Team members analyze the coded 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 provide 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 Chicopee occurred during the week of April 7, 2025. The site visit included 23 hours of interviews and focus groups with approximately 130 stakeholders, including school committee members, district administrators, school staff, students, students’ families, and teachers’ association representatives. The review team conducted four teacher focus groups with 18 elementary school teachers, eight middle school teachers, and eight high school teachers; two focus groups with 12 middle school and 10 high school students; and one family focus group with seven parents. Data collection also included distributing a questionnaire to district leaders, as well as to each principal, to gather information about district and school processes and operations; respondents in Chicopee completed the district questionnaire and 13 of 13 principal questionnaires.

The site team also conducted 143 observations of classroom instruction in 13 schools. Certified team members conducted instructional observations using the Teachstone CLASS protocol.

### District Profile

The city of Chicopee is located in western Massachusetts, just north of Springfield. According to [census data](https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/chicopeecitymassachusetts,MA/PST045223), Chicopee’s median income from 2019 to 2023 was $66,927, which is below the state median income of $101,341. In 2023, Chicopee had an estimated 38,319 residents.

The superintendent of Chicopee is Dr. Marcus Lee Ware, who was appointed in July 2023. Governance of the district is through an 12-member school committee, of which two at-large members are elected for non-concurrent four-year terms and nine ward members are elected for two-year terms, with the city’s mayor as chairperson.

In the 2024-2025 school year, the district served 6,755 students across its 15 schools. Since the 2020-2021 school year, total enrollment has decreased by 95 students. Table 1 provides an overview of student enrollment by school for the 2023-2024 school year.

Table 1. Schools, Type, Grades Served, and Enrollment, 2024-2025

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| School | Type | Grades served | Enrollment |
| Szetela Early Childhood Center | Prekindergarten | PK | 222 |
| Barry | Elementary | K-5 | 359 |
| Belcher | Elementary | PK-2 | 245 |
| Bowe | Elementary | K-5 | 411 |
| Bowie | Elementary | PK-5 | 260 |
| Fairview Elementary | Elementary | PK-5 | 387 |
| Gen. John J. Stefanik | Elementary | K-5 | 392 |
| Lambert-Lavoie | Elementary | PK-5 | 246 |
| Streiber Memorial School | Elementary | K-5 | 229 |
| Litwin | Elementary | K-5 | 343 |
| Bellamy Middle | Middle | 6-8 | 776 |
| Dupont Middle | Middle | 6-8 | 683 |
| Chicopee Academy | Middle/High | 7-12 | 92 |
| Chicopee Comprehensive High School | High | 9-12 | 1,192 |
| Chicopee High | High | 9-12 | 918 |
|  |  | Total | 6,755 |

Figure 1 shows the distribution of Chicopee’s students’ race/ethnicity. Full enrollment figures compared with the state are in Tables D1 and D2 in Appendix D. Appendix D also provides additional information about district enrollment, student attendance, and expenditures.

Figure 1. Distribution of Students, by Race/Ethnicity (2024-2025)

Figure 2. Distribution of Students, by Selected Populations (2024-2025)

Figure 3 shows the percentage of Chicopee’s students meeting or exceeding expectations on MCAS, compared with the statewide percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on MCAS. In 2024, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations was lower for Chicopee than for the state in Grades 3-8 (ELA and mathematics), 5 and 8 (science), and 10 (ELA, mathematics, science).

Figure 3. Percentage of Students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations, MCAS, 2024

Chicopee’s High Needs students, who comprise 72.2 percent of the district, met or exceeded expectations on the 2024 MCAS assessments at rates 1 percentage point to 7 percentage points below High Needs students across the state in ELA and mathematics and Grade 10 science (see Figure 4). However, Chicopee’s High Needs students in Grades 5 and 8 met or exceeded expectations on the 2024 science MCAS at a rate 5 percentage points higher than High Needs students across the state.

Figure 4. Percentage of High Needs Students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations, MCAS, 2024

Most high school students in Chicopee attend either Chicopee High School or Chicopee Comprehensive High School, but the district offers an alternative for secondary students via Chicopee Academy. Across these three settings, Chicopee’s 2023 four-year cohort graduation rate (86.9 percent) is 2.3 percentage points lower than the state rate (89.2 percent). Furthermore, the district’s dropout rate of 3.8 percent is 1.7 percentage points higher than the state rate of 2.1 percent. Notably, the dropout rate in 2023 for Multi-Race, Not Hispanic or Latino students (5.1 percent) and White students (3.2 percent) in Chicopee is more than twice the state rate for Multi-Race, Not Hispanic or Latino students (1.9 percent) and White students (1.1 percent).

Of students who graduated from the district in 2022-2023, 51.3 percent went on to attend a college or university by March 2024, which is lower than the state rate of 63.2 percent. In addition, 14.3 percent of 2022-2023 graduates planned on entering the workforce or an apprenticeship after high school, similar to the state rate of 14.7 percent.

In 2024 statewide accountability results, three schools were identified as requiring assistance or intervention: one for low student group performance (Edward Bellamy Middle School), one for performing among the lowest 10 percent of schools statewide and low student group performance (Chicopee High School), and one for low assessment participation among several student groups (Chicopee Academy). Overall, the district made moderate progress toward achieving its accountability targets as set by DESE. Furthermore, Barry Elementary School, Bowe Elementary School, Bowie Elementary School, 1st Sgt. Kevin A. Dupont Memorial Middle School, Gen. John J. Stefanik Elementary School, Lambert-Lavoie School, Sgt. Robert R. Litwin School, and Hugh Scott Streiber Memorial School made substantial progress toward their targets in 2024.

In fiscal year 2023, the total in-district per-pupil expenditure for Chicopee was $21,716, which is $2,249 more than the average in-district per-pupil expenditure in districts with similar demographics ($19,467) and $2,423 more than the average in-district per-pupil expenditure in districts of similar wealth ($19,293).[[4]](#footnote-5) In-district per-pupil expenditures for Chicopee were $460 more than the average state spending per pupil ($21,256). Actual net school spending was greater than what is required by the Chapter 70 state education aid program, as shown in Table D5 in Appendix D.

### Classroom Observations

Seven observers, who focused primarily on instruction in the classroom, visited Chicopee during the week of April 7, 2025. The observers conducted 143 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 Chicopee, 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. Figure 5 shows average ratings, by domain, for each grade band. The full report of findings from observations conducted in Chicopee is in Appendix B, and summary results are in Tables 17, 18, and 19 in this appendix.

Figure 5. Chicopee CLASS Domain Averages by Grade Band

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

## Leadership and Governance

This section examines the extent to which school committees, district leaders, school leaders, and advisory council members work collaboratively and strategically to promote high-quality teaching and learning that (a) is antiracist, inclusive, multilingual, and multicultural; (b) values and affirms each student and their families; and (c) creates equitable opportunities and experiences for all students, particularly those historically underserved. It also focuses on the extent to which districts establish, implement, and evaluate policies, plans, procedures, systems, and budgets by focusing on achieving districtwide strategic objectives through the equitable and effective use of resources, which ultimately lead to high-quality teaching and learning for all students.

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

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

| Indicator | Strengths | Areas for growth |
| --- | --- | --- |
| [Leadership and Governing Structures](#_Leadership_and_Governing) | * There is a positive and collaborative working relationship between the school committee and the superintendent. * The district leadership team has regularly occurring meetings that focus primarily on the five strategic priorities outlined in the one-year strategic plan, using data to identify areas of need and focus. | * Continuing to pilot and standardize ILT processes across schools * Promoting parent engagement in district and school leadership opportunities |
| [Strategic Planning, Implementation, and Monitoring](#_Strategic_Planning,_Implementation,) | * The district is actively involving teachers, families, students, and school and district leaders in the development of the new strategic plan. |  |
| [District Culture](#_District_Culture) | * District leaders are intentionally leveraging stakeholder feedback to inform district initiatives. | * Developing a comprehensive process for recruiting diverse leaders |

### Leadership and Governing Structures

The district leadership team comprises the superintendent of schools, the assistant superintendent for instruction and accountability, the assistant superintendent for student support services, the director of special education, the director of budget and finance, and the director of human resources. In addition, Chicopee has an in-house council attorney, who meets regularly with the district leadership team to ensure that student support and special education services comply with state and federal requirements. According to district leaders, the district leadership team meets weekly for three to four hours at a time, and these meetings focus primarily on the five specific priority topics established in the district’s current one-year strategic plan (see the Strategic Planning, Implementation, and Monitoring section for more information).

Chicopee also has a school committee comprising 12 members and the mayor: two at-large members are elected for non-concurrent four-year terms, and nine ward members are elected for two-year terms. The school committee has several subcommittees, including the Strategic Planning Subcommittee, the Policy and Human Resources Subcommittee, the Finance Subcommittee, the Facilities Subcommittee, and the Curriculum Subcommittee. A review of the district’s website and a focus group with school committee members show that the committee has a functioning governance structure, sets educational goals, and creates policies that provide students with equitable opportunities to excel. During the focus group, school committee members provided many examples of their responsibilities throughout the district, including collaborating with district leadership on strategic planning, managing union contract negotiations, and facilities planning. Multiple school committee members discussed their involvement in many other district leadership efforts, including the current teachers’ union negotiations, developing the district’s budget for the upcoming school year, and working with the Massachusetts School Building Authority for a new Barry Elementary School facility.

The school committee fulfills its responsibilities and priorities through positive and collaborative working relationships between the school committee and the district superintendent, a strength of the district. As highlighted in the school committee focus group, the members of the school committee and the district superintendent have a positive working relationship and regularly communicate and work with each other to focus on and improve student outcomes in the district. A school committee member described how the superintendent “makes himself available via phone calls, text messages, and meetings. He has an open-door policy.” The superintendent similarly described his communication strategies, further elaborating that he has intentionally asked for each school committee member’s preferred communication method and regularly uses their preferred form. Similarly, the mayor, as a member of the school committee, is in regular contact with the superintendent, and their relationship is highly collaborative and positive. According to interviews, the mayor and the superintendent have a regularly scheduled meeting and are “focused on working together.” Both described how, “communication has never been better” between the two, as they work to support the schools in Chicopee. Across focus groups, district leaders and school committee members agreed that there is clarity in roles and responsibilities and that there is strong collaboration between the two. Overall, school committee members and the superintendent described a “tight knit,” highly collaborative relationship, with the superintendent being “very responsive” to the needs of the school committee.

Across various focus groups, staff agreed that district leaders communicated effectively and efficiently. The teachers’ association highlighted one exception: a lack of communication between themselves and the district leadership team, as well as between the school leadership teams and the district leadership team. This lack of communication was specifically related to processes for staff disciplinary meetings (for more information, see the Human Resources Infrastructure, Policies, and Practices section).

At the district level, the district leadership team meets weekly to discuss the five strategic priority areas; however, there is space to discuss other pressing needs within the district as they come up. In addition to conducting the weekly meetings, district leaders noted that the district leadership team also has monthly data dives, in which they focus on one of the five strategic areas and review related student data to identify trends and troubleshoot problems. For example, district leaders in interviews reported that during one of these monthly data meetings, they reviewed chronic absenteeism data (one of the five strategic priority areas) by overlaying student attendance records with students’ corresponding geographic home location within the city to identify broader absentee trends. Then they reviewed the local transportation options for that area, intending to identify patterns and solutions. The regular meeting cadence of the district leadership team, the use of data in these district leadership team meetings, and the focused topics of discussion that directly correspond to the district’s five strategic priorities are areas of strength in Chicopee.

At the school level, participants across focus groups agreed that school ILTs have been an area of focus in Chicopee. District leaders expected all schools to have an ILT this year, a new requirement, although some schools did have ILTs previously. Regarding expectations of the ILT, school leaders reported that they had the freedom to choose their areas of focus as long as they were aligned with the district’s five strategic priorities. However, this freedom to choose their own specific leadership goals received mixed reviews from school leaders. As one school leader noted, “I feel like [district leaders] gave us a broad ability to discuss with our ILT members what we wanted our focus to be. I could use a little more guidance on [what to focus on with] my ILT, to be 100% clear.” Other school leaders agreed that they desired more guidance from the district on where to focus their ILTs.

In contrast, some principals reported enjoying the freedom to focus on their school’s specific areas of need. For example, one principal reported that they were able to use the meeting time to look at attendance data and send out questionnaires related to social-emotional learning. Another principal reported using the time to focus on mathematics and review data from their mathematics ILT classroom observations. However, some school leaders reported that they did not currently review data during these ILT meetings. Because the expectation for all schools to have ILTs is new this year, an area for growth is continuing to establish district expectations and standardize ILT processes for data review within each ILT. In terms of district and school leadership collaboration, principals reported that district leaders were present for some of their school meetings and were “available for consultation” when specific needs arose. For example, one principal noted that district leaders have “come down to observe and help with some of the behavioral [challenges] happening” in their school. In addition, school leaders described how district leadership members were present during their attendance data meetings. According to district leaders, they were involved with each school’s ILT, with one leader stating that they have “visited the ILT meetings [monthly] to actually see what the conversation is around data and curriculum, as well as what the walkthroughs are looking like within each building,” particularly with the district’s focus on learning walks. District leaders have also conducted many learning walks across schools this year and provided general feedback. In addition, with the newness of the ILT structure this year, district leaders have been focused on calibration of ILT activity across schools, making sure that each ILT is doing similar work. However, as mentioned earlier, this standardization is still a work in progress.

In terms of parent involvement in the district, district leaders reported that Chicopee has established representative school and parent advisory councils, including school councils, parent-teacher organizations, a Special Education Parent Advisory Council, and an English Learner Parent Advisory Council. As reported by school leaders, the frequency of school council meetings varies across buildings from monthly to quarterly throughout the school year. According to parent focus group participants, attendance and parent involvement are low, as parents do not have time to attend all offered meetings. Similarly, district leaders described low parent participation in council meetings, and that when they do attend, they would rather not have a leadership role (e.g., on the Special Education Parent Advisory Council or English Learner Parent Advisory Council). Promoting parent engagement in district and school leadership opportunities is an area of growth.

### Strategic Planning, Implementation, and Monitoring

Chicopee’s mission statement, available publicly on its website, states,

It is the mission of Chicopee Public Schools to maintain high standards and expectations for all students by involving teachers, parents, and community in the education of our students. The Chicopee Public Schools will reflect a climate in which staff, parents, and the community foster on-going growth and change necessary to provide students with the knowledge, skills, and values they will need to lead meaningful lives in the 21st century.

Focus group responses indicate that this mission/vision is widely shared across the district, with elementary and secondary principals highlighting Chicopee’s commitment to growth and development. All school leaders mentioned that the district was currently focused on improving student attendance, supporting social-emotional learning, and addressing challenging behaviors. Elementary teachers notably mentioned family engagement as a district priority and frequently provided specific examples of school-level efforts and events.

As referenced earlier in the Leadership and Governing Structures section, at the time of the district review, Chicopee had a one-year district strategic plan, which bridged the gap between the previous strategic plan from the prior administration and the new strategic plan that the district’s steering committee was developing. The one-year strategic plan has five main priorities that guide district and school efforts:

1. Addressing chronic absenteeism
2. Improving English Language Arts (ELA) instruction for multilingual learners and Students with Disabilities
3. Improving math scores for multilingual learners and Students with Disabilities
4. Utilizing restorative approaches to student conduct
5. Addressing students’ social-emotional learning (SEL) needs within the district

District leaders emphasized that many district, school, and community perspectives have been included in the development of the new strategic plan. As described by district leadership, at the time of the district review, the district’s steering committee was currently in the process of drafting a three- or five-year strategic plan. To develop this plan, the district partnered with the Collaborative for Educational Services (CES) out of Northampton. According to district leadership, CES gathered feedback on the strategic plan through listening sessions with various stakeholders and parent surveys. Many teachers, students, and families in focus groups reported participating in these discussions. The involvement of families, students, teachers, and school and district leaders in the development of the new strategic plan is a strength of Chicopee.

In terms of school improvement planning, all school leaders have developed a school improvement plan that aligns with the district’s current one-year strategic plan. These school improvement plans include instructional priorities and strategies for reducing disparities in student opportunities and outcomes, such as improving attendance and increasing ELA and mathematics academic achievement, particularly for multilingual learners and Students with Disabilities. In focus groups, school leaders reported that they have implemented their existing improvement plans and established formal processes to assess their effectiveness and communicate progress to the broader community (see the District Culture section for more information about ILT data use). In addition, school leaders reported that ILTs often conduct learning walks to monitor the instructional goals set forth in the school improvement plans. District and school leaders described learning walks as a large district priority this year and set an expectation that each school’s ILT would conduct at least one learning walk prior to the time of the district review. Although district leaders described ILTs conducting learning walks at varying frequencies, all had conducted at least one by Spring 2025.

### District Culture

In terms of working relationships, district leaders described how they, the school committee, and municipal leaders have clearly defined roles. In addition, district leaders have developed strong working relationships with other leaders in the district. This is further supported by the superintendent’s yearly evaluation for the 2023-2024 school year, in which collaboration and communication across leadership levels were highlighted by the school committee as a strength. For example, the school committee members reported that the superintendent has participated in learning walks across schools to advance practices focused on enhancing instruction. However, teachers in focus groups had mixed perceptions of the district leadership’s presence and feedback in their classrooms. Some teachers were skeptical of feedback received during these short observations, as one teacher noted, “Seeing a class for 15 minutes doesn’t actually determine how rigorous [instruction] is.” Teachers also reported feeling like district leadership lacked context when sitting in their classrooms, which contributed to the teacher-driven comments about the lack of connection between the district leadership team and classroom teachers.

In addition, at the time of the district review, the Chicopee Education Association was going through collective bargaining negotiations with the school committee for all staffing units, including Unit A (classroom teachers, librarians, counselors), Unit B (vice principals, coordinators, content specialists), Unit E (teaching assistants), and Unit D (secretaries, clerks). At the time of the review, the contracts were set to expire on June 30, 2025. All units are focused on critical topics identified by association members, including teacher health and safety related to student assault on staff members, staff compensation, and benefits such as sick and personal time. According to interviews with district leaders and teacher association members, district leadership is currently meeting with the education association to facilitate conversations on the new contract. Both were hopeful about coming to an agreement on all the topics mentioned before the current contract expired.

In terms of leadership stability and recruitment, interviews with district leaders revealed that the district lacks a clear strategy to recruit and retain diverse leaders. A previous effort to develop such a plan was never completed, and at the time of the district review, the district was just beginning to revisit this work. According to district leaders, early efforts include trying to use more diverse recruitment platforms, such as broadcasting job opportunities on the local Spanish radio. However, this work is in the preliminary stages, a purposeful decision from the superintendent. A district leader described,

[We were] very strategic in not pushing too hard [for diverse recruitment strategies] in the first year or two of the superintendency, especially as a man of color, so that it wouldn’t be just [the superintendent’s] initiative. We want it to be a community initiative.

Developing a comprehensive process for the recruitment of diverse leaders within Chicopee is an area for growth within the district.

In addition to the superintendent and assistant superintendent being relatively new to the district, at the school level, one principal was new to the district during the 2024-2025 school year. Families described how, in order to select the new principal, the district created a parent committee to provide input throughout the hiring process. However, according to the family focus group participants, this parent committee had a low turnout.

Being relatively new to the district, a major focus of district leadership has been in understanding the perspectives of school staff and community members throughout the district. According to the school committee, the superintendent has intentionally scheduled a series of town hall meetings and community forums to hear feedback from stakeholders and understand key issues within the district. This has been a particular focus for the new superintendent during the past two years. As described by the superintendent, “I try to get to as many local events as I possibly can. . . . I’m at events. I’m in schools. The community has seen me out and about. . . . I want to maintain that authentic connection.” As referenced earlier, another example of gathering feedback from stakeholders is in the development of the district’s new strategic plan. The district has intentionally collaborated with an outside agency that gives parents, community members, students, teachers, and school and district leaders the opportunity to weigh in about what they view to be key priorities within the district (see the Strategic Planning, Implementation, and Monitoring section). Family members in focus groups reported that they were part of the districtwide strategic planning committee, where they provided input to inform the new strategic plan. Many family members in the focus group described their involvement in this committee as meaningful. Overall, the district leadership and superintendent in Chicopee are intentional about leveraging stakeholder feedback in meaningful ways to develop key district priorities, a strength of the district.

### Recommendations

* *The district should continue to implement ILTs at each school and develop standardized expectations for how these teams operate.*
* *The district should work with its councils to identify, address, and resolve barriers to parent engagement in district and school advisory and leadership opportunities.*
* *The district should align its existing recruitment efforts under one comprehensive plan for recruiting and retaining diverse school and district leaders.*

## Curriculum and Instruction

This section examines the extent to which district leaders have established a shared instructional vision, anchored in culturally and linguistically sustaining practices, that guides all curricular and instructional decisions toward equitable outcomes for all students. It also focuses on the extent to which the district pairs high-quality curricula and instructional materials and high expectations for all students with individualized supports so that every student can engage in deeper learning and develop the knowledge and skills that will prepare them to succeed in college and/or the workplace.

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 |
| [Instructional Leadership](#_Instructional_Leadership) | * There is strong alignment with, and a clear focus on, the five priorities at both the district and school levels. | * Creating a written districtwide instructional vision |
| [Curriculum and Instructional Materials](#_Curriculum_and_Instructional) | * Efforts are made to vertically and horizontally align curricula through the districtwide curriculum mapping committee. * Opportunities are available to support teachers with curriculum implementation through professional development. |  |
| [Equitable Practices and Access](#_Equitable_Practices_and_1) | * Extensive options are available for students to pursue advanced coursework, electives, and career pathways (including CTE) at the high school level. | * Supplementing gaps in Amplify CKLA and enVision curricula at the elementary level |
| [Effective Instruction and Curricular Implementation](#_Effective_Instruction_and_1) | * Strong coaching supports are provided for teachers to implement evidence-based instructional strategies and supports. |  |

### Instructional Leadership

The assistant superintendent for instruction and accountability is responsible for curriculum and instruction in the district. The professional development and instructional support liaison as well as the instructional data specialist support the assistant superintendent for instruction and accountability.

According to the superintendent, principals, and teachers, the district does not have a written instructional vision, which is an area for growth. Although the district does not have a clear instructional vision, district and secondary school leaders agree that they have a focus on student discourse as well as culturally responsive classrooms throughout all schools. Nearly all focus groups, when asked about their district priority areas this year, referenced the superintendent’s five priority areas (see the [Strategic Planning, Implementation, and Monitoring](#_Strategic_Planning,_Implementation,) section). These focus areas align with the district’s improvement plan and strategic priorities and are anchored in culturally and linguistically sustaining practices, such as improving ELA and mathematics scores for Students with Disabilities and English Learners as well as focusing on social-emotional learning and chronic absenteeism. The district also requires all subjects to have curriculum implementation guides, which have a focus on setting expectations for implementing lessons that reflect grade-level standards and WIDA English Language Development standards. The alignment with and clear focus on these five priorities at both the district and school levels are a strength of the district.

The superintendent, school leaders, and curriculum/teaching and learning leaders agree that the district has systems in place to implement, monitor, and continuously improve on the efforts related to the five priorities for Chicopee schools. Principals and other officials within the district share that the district has guidance and systems in place to empower an ILT or its equivalent at the district level and at each school. At the time of the district review, most school and district staff also reported that structures and systems for building-level ILTs are in place; however, schools were in different stages of following through with district expectations because these were being implemented for the first time systematically at the beginning of this school year. District leaders regularly review ILT agendas and minutes to monitor their tasks. Other examples of district monitoring include elementary principals describing district leaders sitting in on their ILT meetings and participating in their classroom walkthroughs. The district also reported that learning walks are conducted three to four times a year, and a districtwide tool, based on DESE’s observation tool, is used to give feedback to teachers. Principals agree that the district sets expectations for the ILT’s authority and scope of work, including frameworks for reviewing student data (MAP, student work, classroom walkthrough data) in relation to standards and implementing the DESE tool for classroom walkthroughs at the high school level. As an example, secondary principals reported that their ILTs are focused on three priority areas: student discourse, feedback, and culturally responsive classrooms. The ILT at each school includes representation from diverse stakeholders, including special educators, principals, assistant principals, general educators across all grade levels, and administrators. Although Chicopee is still in the process of standardizing processes and monitoring building-level ILTs, there are systems in place for school leaders to monitor data and instructional practices.

### Curriculum and Instructional Materials

District staff use CURATE and EdReports to evaluate curricular decisions, describe their protocols for piloting new curricula, and include most stakeholders in curriculum review and selection processes. Elementary school leaders and staff report that they take part in the selection process for new curricula, whether serving on the curriculum selection committee or participating in district surveys related to their expectations for a new curriculum. Most recently, the district went through the selection process for a new ELA curriculum, as this marks the first year of the district using HMH for Grades 6–12. District leaders explain that a selection committee with representatives from all buildings and grade levels—including special education and English Learner teachers—is formed. The committee researches different options based on current CURATE ratings and reaches out to vendors for samples and demonstration lessons for teachers to pilot. One district leader clarifies that, in some instances, two separate committees are formed: one made up of district staff and instructional coaches who screen vendor materials and narrow down curriculum options to three or fewer, and another composed of teachers who pilot and provide recommendations based on their classroom experiences. In addition, teachers bring updates back to colleagues in their building to ensure everyone has an opportunity to offer feedback related to curriculum selection. Typically, these committee members create a vision and establish parameters around what they want their new curriculum to be and/or include. One district leader explains how they approach this conversation:

[We discuss] the weaknesses of our current program. These are our wish list items. And what kind of mission statement or vision do we see for our new program? So, we look at it through that lens, and then we also look at it through the lens through supporting our special education students and Multilingual Learners as well.

Table 4 summarizes the status of all districtwide curricula being used.

Table 4. Summary of Districtwide Curricula Being Used

| Grade level(s) | Subject | Curriculum | Type | CURATE rating | EdReports rating |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| PK-1 | ELA | Heggerty Phonemic Awareness (2020) | Supplemental | NR | NR |
| K-5 | ELA | Amplify CKLA (2022) | Comprehensive | ME | ME |
| 6-12 | ELA | HMH Into Literature (2020) | Comprehensive | ME | ME |
| K-5 | Mathematics | Savvas enVision (2020) | Comprehensive | ME | ME |
| 6-12 | Mathematics | McGraw Hill Reveal Math (2020) | Comprehensive | ME | ME |
| 9-12 | Mathematics | McGraw Hill Miller Precalculus (2024) | Comprehensive | NR | NR |
| K-5 | History/social studies | District/teacher created | Comprehensive | NR | NR |
| 6-7 | History/social studies | National Geographic World Cultures & Geography (2017) | Comprehensive | NR | NR |
| 8 | History/social studies | McGraw Hill United States & Massachusetts Government & Civic Life (2020) | Comprehensive | NR | NR |
| 8 | History/social studies | iCivics | Supplemental | NR | NR |
| 9-12 | History/social studies | HMH American History (2018) | Comprehensive | NR | NR |
| 9-12 | History/social studies | HMH Modern World History (2018) | Comprehensive | NR | NR |
| K-5 | Science | Mystery Science | Supplemental | NR | NR |
| K-5 | Science | Generation Genius | Supplemental | NR | NR |
| 6-8 | Science | Amplify Science (2018) | Comprehensive | PM | ME |
| 10 | Science | Savvas Miller & Levine Biology | Comprehensive | NR | NR |
| 11 | Science | McGraw Hill Inspire Chemistry | Comprehensive | NR | NR |
| 11-12 | Science | Pearson Essentials of Human Anatomy & Physiology | Comprehensive | NR | NR |
| 10-12 | Other | Advanced Placement | Comprehensive | NR | NR |

*Note*. CURATE = CUrriculum RAtings by TEachers; NR = not rated; ME = meets expectations; PM = partially meets expectations.

A review of curricular resources, including CURATE or EdReports, found that the district has comprehensive core curricula for both ELA and mathematics from Kindergarten – Grade 12 that meet expectations. National Geographic World Cultures & Geography (2017), Savvas Miller & Levine Biology (2018), and district/teacher-created curricula for K-5 history are currently in the review phase. iCivics, HMH Into Literature (2020), McGraw Hill Reveal Math (2020), and McGraw Hill Miller Precalculus (2024) are currently in the early implementation phase.

The district makes efforts to vertically and horizontally align its curricula across buildings and grade levels. The district generally selects and implements instructional materials that vertically and horizontally align across all tiers of instruction. According to the district leaders, Chicopee also has curriculum mapping committees that adopt curriculum maps and work to vertically and horizontally align subject area core content to the frameworks for Massachusetts across grade levels to make sure that all students, regardless of which school in the district they attend, are accessing the same core content. The curriculum mapping committee represents a variety of grade levels and creates rollout plans, including setting common expectations and providing professional development and ongoing support through coaching and feedback mechanisms. Building ILTs also are responsible for updating curriculum maps on the basis of teacher insights and student performance data to improve alignment with standards. The extent to which the district has structures in place to ensure that the curricula align with state standards is a strength.

District staff added that the district provides formal districtwide professional learning opportunities to support effective curriculum implementation for the K-12 ELA and mathematics curricula that are new this year as well as concerning state standards and grade-appropriate content and language objectives. Teachers at all levels agree that professional development related to curriculum implementation and classroom instruction has been helpful in allowing them to implement these new curriculum materials, with middle school teachers specifically praising the district-hired mathematics consultant and her work regarding observation and feedback for teachers to improve their classroom instruction. Elementary teachers also confirmed that they work with this mathematics consultant and said that this was helpful for their professional growth. According to teacher feedback, the district’s professional learning opportunities aimed at supporting the implementation of high-quality instructional materials are a strength.

### Equitable Practices and Access

Across schools in the district, district and school leaders reported that several academic interventions are available to support students. Table 5 summarizes the interventions being implemented.

Table 5. Summary of Academic Interventions Being Used

| Grade level(s) | Subject | Tier | Intervention |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Elementary | ELA | 2, 3 | Lindamood-Bell |
| Elementary | ELA | 2, 3 | University of Florida Literacy Institute (UFLI) |
| Elementary | ELA | 2, 3 | Specialized Program Individualizing Reading Excellence (SPIRE) |
| Elementary | ELA | 2 | Heggarty Phonemic Awareness |
| Elementary | ELA | 2 | ReadWorks |
| Elementary | ELA | 2 | Really Great Reading |
| Elementary | ELA | 2 | Text Connections |
| Elementary | ELA | 2 | Amplify CKLA: Intervention Toolkit |
| Elementary | ELA | 3 | Orton-Gillingham |
| Elementary | ELA | 2 | Boost Reading |
| Elementary | ELA | 2 | Language for Learning |
| Elementary | ELA | 2 | Scholastic News |
| Elementary | ELA | 3 | Visualizing and Verbalizing |
| Elementary | Mathematics | 2 | Flocabulary |
| Elementary | Mathematics | 2 | Reflex |
| Elementary | Mathematics | 2, 3 | Bridges |
| Elementary | Mathematics | 3 | Envisions |
| Elementary | Mathematics | 2 | eSpark |
| Elementary | Mathematics | 2 | XtraMath |
| Elementary | Mathematics | 2 | MathFactLab |
| Elementary | Mathematics | 2 | Prodigy |
| Elementary, Middle | ELA | 2 | Read Naturally |
| Elementary, Middle | ELA | 3 | Seeing Stars |
| Elementary, High | ELA | 3 | Read 180 |
| Middle | ELA | 2, 3 | Lexia |
| Middle | ELA | 3 | HD Word |
| Middle | ELA, Mathematics | 3 | TeachTown |
| Middle | Mathematics | 2 | ALEKS |
| Middle | Mathematics | 3 | SuccessMaker |

At all levels, MAP data are used and disaggregated to monitor student progress toward grade-level standards. Elementary principals and other staff agree that they use disaggregated, student-centered data from MAP, other benchmarks, and unit assessments to select academic intervention materials that align with the common curriculum. At the high school level, school leaders reported that they conduct learning walks to monitor progress toward district instructional priorities related to student discourse, feedback, and culturally responsive classrooms using a standardized districtwide rubric. The ILT compares data gathered from these observations and walkthroughs to monitor progress toward district instructional goals.

Students at elementary, middle, and high school levels have access to a variety of coursework, but access varies across schools and grade levels depending upon the curricula used. Elementary school teachers shared concerns about the accessibility of the Amplify CKLA curriculum in ELA. They explained that in kindergarten and first grade, teachers love the foundational skills; however, in the upper grades, teachers do not always feel that the content aligns with standards. Teachers also mentioned that there is not a strong writing component attached to Amplify CKLA and that it can be challenging to engage students because of the focus on whole-group instruction for extended periods of time. Similarly, teachers agree that enVision for mathematics instruction is sometimes too challenging for students and does not offer adequate opportunities for students to practice their skills. Teachers reported that they often must supplement the curriculum with other materials to meet the academic needs of their students because of these gaps in the curriculum. Additionally, multiple teachers expressed concern regarding the subject matter discussed in a handful of lessons and feel that some of this content is not appropriate for fourth and fifth graders. Overall, supplementing gaps in both Amplify CKLA and enVision is an area for growth.

At the elementary level, teachers reported a variety of specials that are available, such as art, music, and gym. Middle school students take several exploratory classes (similar to specials at the elementary level) such as gym, band, art, health, Spanish, and cooking. In addition, Chicopee offers the REACH (Resources for Enrichment and Advancement in Chicopee) program to select academically advanced middle school students, which provides students with a variety of problem-solving and research opportunities. Middle school students also have opportunities for career exploration and preparation through pathways and CTE programs. In middle school, each student spends two weeks on each pathway, and midway through eighth grade, students decide on which pathway they want to enter when they get to Chicopee High School. The pathways program is advertised to students as an opportunity to gain knowledge and readiness skills within the fields of business, criminal justice, education, hospitality, graphic communication, TV/video production, cosmetology, and health science. Students described a ranking process for getting into the pathways program; staff will consider attendance, grades, and student interest as factors when deciding where to place students in the pathways program. Whereas the pathways program is available for students at Chicopee High School, the CTE program is offered at Chicopee Comprehensive High School. Middle school students explained that they also have similar opportunities to explore the CTE programs, but that the process of acceptance into these programs is competitive, and not every student is guaranteed a spot. When asked about acceptance criteria, high school teachers explained that there are a mix of factors that are considered, such as grades and attendance.

A review of the district’s course catalogues for Chicopee High School and Chicopee Comprehensive High School indicated that the district provides all students with equitable access to a range of rigorous coursework. This coursework includes AP classes such as environmental science, microeconomics, statistics, world history, and computer science, as well as electives such as forensics, legal studies, ceramics and sculpture, music appreciation, and child development. High school principals discussed examining AP enrollment data to see which students are taking advantage of these advanced opportunities and have made changes to their history curriculum to expose freshman students to AP U.S. history to encourage greater participation. The availability of extensive options available for students to pursue advanced coursework, electives, and career pathways (including CTE) is a strength for Chicopee.

### Effective Instruction and Curricular Implementation

District efforts to foster student engagement are evident in both teacher and student feedback. According to teachers, supports include providing culturally relevant materials and adjusting lessons to meet the needs of individual students. Students in focus groups support this point, saying that the content in most of their courses felt relevant to their lives. Classroom observation scores in the middle range for dimensions in the Emotional Support domain in the K-5 grade band (average 4.7) and in the middle range in the 6-8 (average 4.8) and 9-12 grade bands (average 4.6) partially support these depictions. In contrast, lower scores in Regard for Student Perspectives (averages 2.6 in K-5, 2.8 in 6-8, and 3.6 in 9-12) suggest that student choice is incorporated into lessons, but not on a consistent basis.

The district provides curricular guides aligned with grade-level and WIDA standards to support lesson implementation. For example, the HMH curriculum was selected for its supplementary resources for English Learners. Across all adopted curricula, district leaders prioritize having differentiation tools like read-alouds and printable materials. While teachers aren’t required to identify both content and language objectives, students report that classroom goals are often visible, and expectations are clear. District leaders expect teachers to use strategies that support access to grade-level content, such as having access to extra intervention time through a What I Need WIN blocks or after-school help at the secondary level.

In addition, the district brought in external consultants to make sure that teachers are supported in differentiating instruction and focused on evidence-based strategies in their classrooms. Teachers added that they have consultants focused on mathematics instruction to support teachers in accessing and implementing the curriculum. Teachers had mixed perceptions on the usefulness of the ELA professional development, but praised the writing and reasoning-based session that they recently attended. Teachers also are able to work with ELA and mathematics coaches within their buildings; those coaches mainly support teachers in lesson planning and implementation instructional strategies as well as through classroom observation and feedback. Evidence of strong coaching supports for teachers to implement evidence-based instructional strategies and supports is a strength.

According to elementary school teachers, the district generally supports them in implementing evidence-based instructional practices that meet the needs of all students.This is primarily achieved through scaffolds and modifications aligned with individualized education program (IEP) goals and using benchmark data to inform student groupings and curriculum modifications. Classroom observation scores in Grades K-5 consistently in the middle range for dimensions in the Instructional Support domain supports some of these depictions. Grades K-5 saw middle range scores for Instructional Learning Formats (5.4) and Concept Development (3.2) and low range scores for Quality of Feedback (2.7) and Analysis and Inquiry (Grades 4 and 5; 2.3).

At the middle and high school levels, classroom observation scores were more mixed. Grades 6-12 scored in the middle range for Instructional Learning Formats (5.6 in Grades 6-8; 4.9 in Grades 9-12); the middle school level scored slightly higher in Content Understanding (5.6 in Grades 6-8), whereas Grades 9-12 scored lower (3.5). The middle school level also scored slightly higher in Quality of Feedback (3.2 for Grades 6-8; 2.6 for Grades 9-12) and Analysis and Inquiry (3.1 for Grades 6-8; 2.4 for Grades 9-12). The ratings for these two dimensions suggest that teachers sometimes scaffold student learning and that students are occasionally given opportunities for higher-order thinking skills, but this does not occur consistently.

### Recommendations

* *The district should develop a clear and coherent vision for instruction that guides instructional strategies across all schools and grade levels.*
* *The district should support teachers in scaffolding rigorous curricula, particularly Amplify CKLA and enVision, so that all students have access to challenging, grade-level content.*

## Assessment

This section examines the extent to which, through the establishment of strategic data and assessment systems, the district supports a robust, data-centered culture that advances equitable student experiences and outcomes. It also addresses how the district collects an array of data to inform decisions at the classroom, school, and district levels. By analyzing assessment results and other data, educators can develop an understanding of the whole student, examine trends across student groups, and adjust their instruction accordingly.

Table 5 summarizes key strengths and areas for growth in assessment in Chicopee.

Table 5. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Assessment Standard

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Indicator | Strengths | Areas for growth |
| [Data Collection](#_Data_Collection) | * The district uses multiple data sources to gain a comprehensive understanding of each student and identify trends and patterns. | * Ensuring that the assessments selected are meaningful at the classroom level |
| [Data Use and Culture](#_Data_Use_and) | * At the district level, there is a strong culture of data collection and use. | * Ensuring that academic and nonacademic data are consistently reviewed within each school’s ILT * Continuing to standardize procedures for data review across schools |
| [Sharing Data](#_Sharing_Data) | * The district implements a transparent and accessible grading system that is calibrated across schools and content areas and communicates students’ progress and performance. * Chicopee is committed to ensuring data security and privacy |  |

### Data Collection

The assistant superintendent for instruction and accountability oversees assessment in Chicopee. The assistant superintendent is supported by the director of English language learners and new educator development, the director of instructional technology, the data instructional specialist, the professional development and instructional support liaison, and several district content specialists.

Throughout the year, Chicopee gathers multiple types of academic (e.g., MCAS, ACCESS, MAP, DIBELS, AP, and SAT) and non-academic (e.g., attendance, Panorama, behavioral evaluations, office referrals, and suspension rates) data for each student. In focus groups, district staff highlighted ways that the district leverages data management and visualization platforms, such as Open Architects, to analyze across data sources and gain a comprehensive understanding of each student. A district leader noted that through Open Architects, there are currently 31 data dashboards at the district level that staff can “click and filter. . . . So if you go in with a question, then you can get the data right at your fingertips and it incorporates data from a variety of different sources.” For example, district leaders noted that, using their dashboards, they are able to draw connections between chronically absent students and lower scores on assessments, such as MCAS and ACCESS. The district’s use of multiple data sources to gain a comprehensive understanding of each student and identify trends and patterns is an area of strength in Chicopee.

When describing the assessment selection process, district staff shared that they strategically select and implement formal and informal assessments that align with instructional content, and the district publicly shares the assessment plan and schedule. However, teachers across focus groups expressed concern with both curriculum-based and standardized assessments’ usefulness. For example, teachers noted that curriculum-focused assessments were at times “not appropriate for students” for their current skill set. Many teachers across focus groups also noted that they do not find the district's standardized assessments useful for their instruction. For example, one teacher stated, but multiple teachers agreed,

I think the MAP assessments provide limited reliable data because the students have no real incentive to do well on it, and most of them just click through it, at least in my experience. And it’s a lot of chasing them around to get them to sit down with it.

However, district leaders discussed the importance of these assessments, stating that they were one data source used to place students into advanced courses, CTE programs, and pathways programs. District leaders also used data from standardized test scores to identify patterns in student achievement. Likewise, district leaders emphasized equity when reviewing data trends at the district level, including attendance data and student enrollment in AP classes. Still, teachers in focus groups expressed concerns about the cultural responsiveness of assessments and how assessments can be a barrier for encouraging equitable performance across all students. Ensuring that assessments provide meaningful results at the classroom level is an area for growth.

### Data Use and Culture

There is a strong culture of data use at the district level, an area of strength in Chicopee. In focus groups, district leadership described how data are regularly used for district planning, decision-making, policies, and practices. The district leadership team discussed creating dashboards to review MCAS scores, ACCESS scores, NWEA MAP scores, and DIBELS scores, as well as disaggregating the data by demographics to identify trends. A district leader also noted that they have begun creating “teacher facing dashboards for classroom teachers, so they can see . . . all of their current students, plus the students from last year, and how they perform on individual questions and overall performance [on MCAS, i-Ready, DIBELS, and MAP assessments, as applicable].” However, not all teachers reported currently being able to access these dashboards. The district leadership team also uses Open Architects to compile and compare multiple data sources on individual students. One way this is done is by reviewing dashboards of students’ attendance records and identifying patterns in students who are chronically absent. This allows the district leadership team to identify pockets of chronically absent students and focus on those students on the basis of demographic and geographic information. This data review process is currently present at the district leadership level and is discussed in monthly district leadership data meetings. At the time of the district review, this attendance data review process was not yet happening at the school level, although there were plans to begin shortly after.

As mentioned in the Leadership and Governance standard, the district leadership team conducts monthly data dives. However, as ILT levels of development and activity vary, data use is not consistent and standardized across each school’s ILT. School leaders varied in their reports of reviewing data as an ILT; some regularly review data, such as MAP and DIBELS on ELA and mathematics instruction, and disaggregate these data by student subgroups to identify trends, whereas others reported infrequently looking at academic data. School leaders consistently described reviewing nonacademic data, such as attendance and behavioral data. Ensuring that academic and nonacademic data are consistently reviewed within each school’s ILT is an area for growth in Chicopee.

At the school level, school leaders reported mixed opinions about data culture and use across schools. For example, some principals reported that they did not have a regularly established process for reviewing data during their school’s ILT meetings. In contrast, some teachers across focus groups discussed using and disaggregating the data to identify patterns in assessment scores and identify needed support. Additionally, school leaders at the elementary level reported that they had instructional support team meetings, in which teachers participated in three grade-level “data mining” meetings a year, following assessments. As one teacher in a focus group described the usefulness of these data mining meetings, “I feel like that’s an easy way for teachers to kind of have to sit down and look at their data because we [otherwise] just don’t have time to look at our data.” Across schools, district leaders reported that principals at the elementary and secondary levels have an administrative meeting once a month. At those meetings, district data is presented and discussed collectively after the fall, winter, and spring assessments. Continuing to standardize procedures for data review across schools in the district is an area for growth in Chicopee.

Chicopee also has systems surrounding data use for nonacademic data. In focus groups, district leadership described how data are regularly used for district planning, decision-making, policies, and practices. For example, district leaders described their process for collecting behavioral data within schools. According to district leaders, teachers can fill out conduct reports based on behaviors they observe in the classroom. Then, these conduct reports are collected in a school database and are combined into the master database across schools for the assistant superintendent to review. A district leader described the process as follows:

Every Monday morning, [the assistant superintendent] gets an automatic email with a dashboard of each school and what happened that week and, the number of incidents a kid had that week and then year to date. And that also can be used—so at the building level, that report gets generated automatically, and it’s sent to the teacher who submitted it, guidance counselors, principal at that building, and they get a document that they can edit. They can respond to how they handled the situation and what kind of support was provided by the administration. Teachers also can say, this is just an FYI. I don’t need you to handle it—just [adding the entry] for data collection. We have a whole database for that, and all the schools are using it.

The assistant superintendent then brings data trends to the district leadership team, and they review the big-picture data during district leadership team meetings. School leaders described this process in focus groups and noted that the district has put an increased emphasis this year on making sure that data are being tracked in a consistent way across schools for the district team to review.

### Sharing Data

The district primarily uses ParentSquare and Talking Points to communicate with students and families. In terms of sharing data with families, district leaders reported that students’ assessment scores in ELA and mathematics are shared consistently with parents at the elementary level. For example, after early literacy screening during fall, winter, and spring of every year, parents get notified of how their students performed. Throughout the year, district leaders expect teachers to communicate with families about student performance by posting grades regularly and during parent-teacher conferences. The district uses several systems, including SchoolBrains, Open Architects, and Google Classroom, to enable families to monitor student academic data, including grades on assignments and overall course grades. In addition, district leaders reported that the district expectation is that during parent-teacher conference time, teachers will review student data and assessment scores with parents in order to discuss students’ progress and growth. More broadly, teachers and families noted that the district regularly communicates evidence of student, school, and district performance.

Teacher and student focus group participants reported that some students are engaged in goal setting and data review. For example, students at the high school level reported that students begin to take more ownership of their grades at the high school level, and there are fewer communications sent out to parents regarding student grades. Although parents have access to check grades, this “becomes more of a student responsibility once they hit freshman year” as students are expected to regularly monitor their grades and missing assignments. In terms of standardized assessments, a teacher at the middle school noted that students have access to data folders, where they can “track their progress monitoring, MAP scores, MCAS scores and create goals for themselves.” According to middle school teachers, students regularly access this information and review their standardized testing results and benchmark assessments. However, teachers at the high school indicated that their students did not have access to their standardized testing results in detail. As one high school teacher reported, and many other high school teachers echoed,

Students are curious about their scores. My students are always like, oh, how did I do? And they want to look at the graph. They don’t have, as far as I know, as I’m aware, they don’t have access to it. So, they cannot see it on their own. They can only see it through their math or English teacher.

According to teachers, school leaders, and district staff, the district implements a transparent and accessible grading system that is calibrated across schools and content areas and communicates students’ progress and performance, a strength of the district. In focus groups, teachers across grade levels identified their schools’ grading expectations. For example, all high school teachers agreed that both the activity types and weight were determined by the district. High school teachers identified that they needed to administer a minimum of four assessments and quizzes and 15-20 assignments over the course of the school year. In addition, teachers agreed that their grades were weighted as 45 percent for tests, 45 percent for classwork and quizzes, and 10 percent for finals. Likewise, the middle school teachers also identified their grading weights as 45 percent for assessments, 45 percent for classwork, and 10 percent for homework.

According to district leaders, there are dedicated staff responsible for reviewing and monitoring the digital platforms that store, collect, and share student data. In particular, the director of instructional technology oversees the development of the student information system, educational platforms, and data dashboards within the district. Chicopee has many ways that they share information related to data security with teachers and administrators throughout the district. One method, as described by district leaders, is through Chicopee’s Tech Tip Tuesday initiative. This initiative provides teachers with information and resources related to the effective and private use of technology to store student data. Reportedly, the most recent iteration of Tech Tip Tuesday focused on the use of artificial intelligence across the district, an area of focus. According to district leaders, the district offers a variety of training related to staff’s use of artificial intelligence. No student information can be shared or imported into any software that is not district approved, to ensure student privacy. According to district leaders, the district has a list of tools on their website that they allow for storing student information.

In addition, classroom teachers have access to only their own students’ data. According to district leaders, when teachers have customized dashboards with student information through Open Architects, they see information for only the students whom they work with. As one district leader described,

A regular classroom teacher [is] able to see all those dashboards so they have a customized dashboard just for the students that they work with, whereas the coach, they might have access to all the students and see all the special ed students and see all the 504 students, so that way, they can drill down further to see trends in the building across the building but, like, classroom teachers, they won’t have that wide access.

Multiple district leaders described a clear emphasis on data privacy throughout Chicopee. This was evidenced by regular review and monitoring of digital platforms and applications as well as professional learning for all staff related to privacy and safeguarding student information. For example, the district incentivized teachers to complete Grow with Google training by providing professional development points for completion of the training. In focus groups, teachers described additional annual training related to data security (e.g., Global Compliance Network). Finally, the district maintains a list of platforms and applications that are approved for use in the district. This list is available to staff via the district website, and additional policies are in place that prevent the sharing or importing of any student information into applications or platforms that are not formally approved by district leaders. Chicopee’s commitment to ensuring data security and privacy is a strength of the district.

### Recommendations

* *The district should engage its teachers to better understand the root causes behind the perspective that current assessments are not useful for driving instruction, and make adjustments to selection, implementation, or training where necessary.*
* *The district should set an expectation that all ILTs review student academic and nonacademic data and provide teams with tools to facilitate this data review.*
* *The district should work with its principals to standardize processes for reviewing data at each school.*

## Human Resources and Professional Development

This section examines the extent to which the district has established systems, policies, and practices that allow administrators to effectively recruit, hire, onboard, and support a highly effective, diverse, and culturally responsive workforce. It also focuses on the systems and structures that the district uses to provide all educators with ongoing access to high-quality professional learning and actionable feedback and establishes a culture that fosters collaboration, retention, recognition, and advancement.

Table 6 summarizes key strengths and areas for growth in human resources and professional development in Chicopee.

Table 6. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Human Resources and Professional Development Standard

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Indicator | Strengths | Areas for growth |
| [Human Resources Infrastructure, Policies, and Practices](#_Human_Resources_Infrastructure,) |  | * Creating and streamlining more transparent policies and procedures related to staff investigations and disciplinary actions |
| [Staffing](#_Staffing_1) | * Teacher evaluation records show consistency in having SMART goals, multiple sources of evidence, and feedback for each standard. | * Clarifying and standardizing the evaluation process and training evaluators in classroom observations |
| [Professional Learning](#_Professional_Learning_1) | * The district offers a variety of professional development opportunities as well as the ability for staff to choose professional development sessions. * District leadership regularly reviews professional development opportunities to make sure that they meet the needs of teachers. * The district partners with local universities to provide opportunities for educators to professionally grow within the district. |  |

### Human Resources Infrastructure, Policies, and Practices

As detailed on the district website, the human resources department consists of the director of human resources, an administrative secretary, two clerks, and a substitute personnel liaison. According to district leaders, the district has the necessary staff to maintain employee records; control positions; post vacancies; support principals in hiring, orientation, and onboarding; and manage substitute placements throughout the district. However, the district reportedly does not have the full capacity to take on some larger projects in the district related to the human resources department, such as converting all paper files into electronic and designating numbers to each employee to easily track and control positions within the human resources system. These updates will create greater efficiencies within the department. One area that the human resources department does not oversee is staff benefits, which are managed at the city level. Because of this distinction, there is a lot of coordination between the director of human resources at the district level and their counterpart in the city.

Within the past two years, Chicopee has switched over to using a digital platform for employee onboarding and managing staff information. Since July 2024, all new employees within Chicopee have been assigned electronic files. The human resources department reportedly vetted several different systems before settling on PowerSchool for onboarding processes both within the school district and within the city. According to human resources personnel, at the time of the district review, they were still in the process of uploading files to PowerSchool and were about 75 percent to 80 percent of the way through the digital conversion process. A district leader described this process as taking a long time because of the limited number of staff available to work on this task.

Along with using PowerSchool, the district also uses MUNIS for their payroll system. Staff can access MUNIS for their necessary employment information such as paystubs and W-2s. Benefits are managed by the city through a separate platform, the CitySide Employee Service Platform. District employees also have access to a self-service platform, where they can update their information and manage their benefits.

Regarding licensure status, after a candidate is selected for an open position, they reportedly go through an electronic droplet system process, which is a standardized digital form used within the hiring process to document and authorize staffing requests. Then, principals and human resources staff confirm the new staff member’s credentials before they are officially hired. To manage all the licensure data, the human resources department uses the state’s license lookup portal. District staff are aware that there are still many staff who have emergency licenses within the district. According to DESE data in 2024, 1.9 percent of district staff have a waiver, higher than the state average of 0.6 percent. In these cases, the human resources department and the district’s curriculum and instruction office collaborate and work with the unlicensed staff members to make sure that they are getting the support they need for licensure. For example, human resources department staff reported that the district’s curriculum and instruction office refers staff to local colleges and universities with which they have mutual agreements so that staff members can take courses at a reduced cost. In addition, human resources staff noted that several staff members were having issues passing the MTEL. Therefore, the district provided a class for staff to get practice and preparation help for taking the MTEL. Principals in focus groups also discussed this support for teachers in taking the MTELs.

Creating and streamlining more transparent policies and procedures related to staff investigations and disciplinary actions is an area for growth. Multiple teachers and students described recent events that illustrated confusion and a lack of clarity regarding this process. Specifically, multiple students mentioned that they had reported staff for inappropriate conduct and felt that these reports were not taken seriously by their school administrators, with students feeling as though no follow-up or action was taken on the basis of their reports. In contrast, teachers noted lengthy and at times redundant investigatory processes that interrupted time in the classroom. As described by teacher leaders, at the time of the district review, there were “six investigations currently happening at schools throughout the district.” According to teachers’ association members, each school conducted an initial investigation, but then the district team conducted a separate investigation at a later time after the school’s investigation had been concluded, further removing teachers from classrooms.

### Staffing

According to district leaders, the district primarily uses full-time equivalent data as well as demographic data (specifically High Needs students, English Learners, Students with Disabilities, and Low Income students) to assess staffing needs across schools. The director of human resources confirmed that the district has effective policies and practices in place to recruit, hire, and onboard new staff. At the time of the district review, the district had developed the *Chicopee Public Schools Hiring Manual* within the past year to define policies and procedures related to hiring new staff. According to district staff, these policies and processes are fully in accordance with DESE’s hiring guide.

According to district principals and the *Chicopee Public Schools Hiring Manual* for principals, central office staff must review all new positions, and the director of human resources, the director of budget and finance, and the superintendent must sign off on them before they are officially created and posted. To start this process, principals are responsible for submitting the Request to Post and Recommendation for Hire forms, which are then reviewed by district administrators and ultimately approved. After they are approved, the human resources department posts the position on PowerSchool. Hiring administrators—typically, the school principal or department head—must adhere to the Chicopee bargaining units’ requirements, with all positions having to be posted for between 7 and 14 days, depending on the unit. During this time, the hiring administrator determines which staff will participate on the interview team, reviews candidates’ applications, sets up and conducts at least two rounds of interviews, reviews a lesson demonstration (if possible and appropriate for the position), checks references for finalists, and then makes a determination. After a final selection has been made, the human resources department discusses salary information with the potential new hire and takes over all hiring responsibilities, such as verifying years of experience, working with the candidate to complete a Criminal Offender Record Information form, and coordinating with the payroll department and City Hall for salary and benefit information, as needed.

School leaders in focus groups noted that the hiring process is straightforward, and they have autonomy in recommending and hiring staff for existing positions in the district but less autonomy in recommending new positions within their schools. Principals across multiple focus groups also noted that they have had difficulty in filling vacant positions, particularly for special education and advanced placement teachers. Teachers and school leaders noted that the current round of contract negotiations is focused on increasing pay for teachers with the intention of attracting more candidates to fill vacant positions.

Regarding evaluations, district records suggest that teacher evaluations are consistently completed using Vector Solutions. Simple random sampling was used to select the sample of about 10 percent of 187 teachers (20 teachers) due for summative evaluations for the 2023-2024 school year. All of the teacher evaluations selected for review had a summative evaluation available for review. All of the teacher evaluations (20) available for review were complete and did not omit required components, including a rating for each standard or an overall rating. All evaluation documents reviewed included a student learning SMART goal and a professional practice SMART goal. All the teachers’ progress toward their student learning and professional SMART goals were evaluated. Nearly all evaluations reviewed (90 percent) 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. All summative evaluations (20) included feedback for each standard and overall feedback related to the teacher’s overall rating. All feedback provided to teachers named strengths or practices that the teacher should continue; however, only slightly more than half of evaluations (55 percent) included feedback indicating areas for improvement. Overall, teacher evaluation records show consistency in having SMART goals, multiple sources of evidence, and feedback for each standard, which is a strength of the district.

District records suggest that administrator evaluations also are completed using the paper-based DESE “End-of-Cycle Summative Evaluation Report: Principal/School” form. Of the 12 administrative district staff members who were due for a summative evaluation for the 2023-2024 school year, all evaluations (100 percent) were available for review and complete with performance ratings and assessment of progress toward goals. Of the 12 summative evaluations reviewed, all included student learning and professional practice SMART goals; however, only one evaluation included a school improvement goal. All evaluations reviewed included feedback for each standard, including evaluator feedback naming each administrator’s strengths and areas for improvement for administrative district staff.

In focus groups, school leaders generally reported that they desired more guidance from the district regarding evaluations. To provide guidance to evaluators on how to conduct observations, the district has an Observation Form, which was updated in 2024. The form includes two standards for evaluation: Curriculum, Planning, and Assessment as well as Teaching All Students. Underneath these two broad standards, there is a series of indicators as well as a four-point scale for evaluations that ranges from *unsatisfactory* to *exemplary*. Despite this guidance, school leaders would like more support for and calibration on conducting observations. As one school leader noted, “I requested to have more supports in place, and I asked for bi-weekly meetings [with district leaders] to understand how to evaluate.” Several other school leaders noted that they received training from the district in “a specific technique for observing” but that they had not been retrained in it in several years, and the district had moved away from that observational technique. Several other school leaders noted that they believed that the district was currently focused on conducting efficient evaluations over training and calibration. Likewise, many school leaders reported that there were currently no district-led efforts to calibrate observations for evaluations across the district and within schools. Standardizing and calibrating the evaluation process and training evaluators in classroom observations are areas for growth for the district.

Chicopee has a teacher retention rate slightly higher than the state average; according to DESE data for the 2023-2024 school year, the district has an 87 percent teacher retention rate, which is slightly higher than the state’s average rate of 86 percent. Further, according to DESE data, 82 percent of the district’s teachers are considered experienced, similar to the statewide average of 81 percent. District leadership attributes retention rates to the trust built between teachers and administration as well as supportive relationships within schools.

Likewise, the district has many methods of recognizing exemplary teachers. The district offers annual area awards to teachers in recognition of their superior efforts. For these awards, district leadership reported that they partner with the Harold Grinspoon Foundation. This year, eight of their staff were nominated for the awards: seven veteran teachers and one new teacher. These teachers receive a $250 prize for their work, in addition to some gifts. In May, the district holds a banquet in celebration of these exemplary teachers. In addition, many school leaders referenced school-based methods they use to show staff appreciation. For example, one school has monthly assemblies at which two staff members are acknowledged, one chosen by the administrative team and the other by staff. Other school leaders reported having “staff person of the month” announcements and positive mentions in newsletters. According to school leaders, daily interactions and building wide announcements also contribute to positive staff morale.

### Professional Learning

To support school leaders in conducting informal observations, the district provides guidelines through “what to look for documents” for school leaders to ensure consistent expectations. The number of instructional learning walks conducted varied by school, although at the time of the district review in April, district leaders expected all schools to have conducted at least one. Teachers reported receiving general feedback at the school level following instructional learning walks instead of individualized feedback. Across focus groups, teachers had mixed perceptions of the feedback they received during these learning walks, with more positive perceptions of those conducted internally by school staff compared with those conducted by district leaders. A teacher explained, “[For] school-based [observations], we get a lot of feedback. We have learning walks where we then have meetings where they talk about the data they collected, and everybody knows in advance what they’re looking for.” However, when describing district learning walks, teachers reported either not receiving feedback or that feedback was unhelpful. Teachers across focus groups felt as though district-level staff were unaware of the context of the classroom when providing feedback, which limited its usefulness.

Chicopee has a professional development and instructional support liaison, who leads professional development in the district. As described by district leaders, each year, the district puts a professional development plan in place with multiple options for teachers. The first full professional development day is generally in August, with several more professional development sessions throughout the year. Some professional development days offer targeted sessions based on role (e.g., reviewing dropout data and creating action plans for high school administrators and counselors, ACCESS testing training for English Learner teachers, how to use Goalbook for special educators). In addition, the district offers one day of professional development for paraprofessionals, addressing topics such as roles and responsibilities and how to maximize their impact. Teachers across focus groups reported being satisfied with the professional development offerings. One teacher described their full-day professional development experience:

We’ll have this big menu of afternoon and evening professional development options. . . . It is really, really, really helpful to be able to select where you want to go and what you want to do versus however many years ago, you might be told to go to a PD that maybe didn’t pertain to you. So the menus, it’s always nice to be site based because you’re in your home base, but the menus where you have to choose them is very, very helpful.

In addition to offering these regularly scheduled professional development days and sessions, the district also invites external experts into schools and classrooms throughout the year. If the district finds the expert to be particularly strong and well received by staff, the district “might ask for them to be an [external] coach” to support implementation. Experts who become coaches go into schools during professional learning community times, conduct classroom observations, and provide feedback. For example, the district had experts from HMH Into Literature come to the middle schools in January/February to conduct observations and provide individualized feedback to teachers to support implementation. The variety of professional development opportunities as well as the ability to choose professional development sessions are areas of strength in Chicopee.

An additional area of strength is that district leadership regularly reviews teacher feedback on professional development opportunities to make sure that sessions are useful and meet teachers’ needs. According to district leadership, professional development opportunities are reviewed constantly throughout the year, and data are collected regularly from teachers. During monthly district leadership team meetings, district leaders review data collected from surveys after each professional development opportunity. Then, district leaders make decisions about future professional development opportunities based on teacher feedback.

For new, licensed teachers starting in the district, there is a mentoring program. According to district leadership, mentor teachers are recruited across the district. New teachers are matched with both an individual mentor and a site-based mentor, who oversees all the new educators in each school building. Each site-based mentor has monthly meetings with all new staff in the building and gives new staff tours of their building when they start. In addition to the site-based mentor, new staff are matched with a professionally licensed mentor in their subject area. Mentors and mentees are required to complete 50 hours of mentoring, documented in a log of activities, within the first three years of their employment. In addition, district leadership holds six to eight new educator workshops throughout the year, each one focused on a different topic area. For example, the most recent educator workshop focused on classroom management; a panel of teachers shared different classroom management strategies that they use in their classrooms. Other recent topics of focus have included English Learner instruction and reviewing new individualized education programs. Despite this support, teachers expressed mixed opinions about the quality of the supports provided through the mentorship program.

In terms of supports for new staff, including those who are unlicensed (e.g., paraprofessionals, staff on waivers), the district partners with Elms College in Chicopee to support paraprofessionals working on their first bachelor’s degree or master’s degree in education to become licensed teachers. A new development this year is that the district expanded the number of slot courses available for this program from 40 to 60 “to meet the needs of the number of new educators in our district.” Educators participating in this partnership can enroll in up to two courses each semester at a subsidized rate. In addition, staff can also select other community colleges in the area with a similar discounted rate if Elms College does not work for them (see the Human Resources Infrastructure, Policies, and Practices section for more information). District leaders reported providing unlicensed and support staff with opportunities for coaching and support on passing their MTEL to become licensed teachers (see the Human Resources Infrastructure, Policies, and Practices section for more information). Providing support for educators to professionally grow within the district is an area of strength.

### Recommendations

* *Where appropriate, the district should establish or clarify its policies and procedures around staff conduct, investigations, and disciplinary actions, and ensure they are broadly disseminated.*
* *The district should provide training and resources to evaluators to support calibration and consistent implementation of its educator evaluation system.*

## Student Support

This section focuses on the extent to which the district supports the whole student by creating safe and supportive environments, meeting students’ health and well-being needs, and engaging all families. It also focuses on the extent to which these supports are built on robust MTSS that flexibly assess and address each student’s academic, social-emotional, and behavioral strengths and needs.

Table 7 summarizes key strengths and areas for growth in student support in Chicopee.

Table 7. 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 district provides a variety of opportunities for high school students to exercise leadership and decision-making. | * Implementing effective behavior management strategies that address repeated behaviors at the middle and high school levels * Implementing alternatives to in-school and out-of-school suspension, where appropriate * Continuing to address the underlying causes of chronic absenteeism throughout the district |
| [Health and Well-Being](#_Health_and_Well-Being) |  | * Identifying and implementing appropriate services to support students’ expansive mental and behavioral health needs |
| [Family and Community Partnerships](#_Family_and_Community) | * The district creates many opportunities for family engagement through community events. * Chicopee staff have developed meaningful school-level community partnerships that meet many student and family needs. | * Establishing a systematic process for identifying, establishing, and managing community partnerships |
| [Multitiered Systems of Support](#_Multi-Tiered_Systems_of) |  | * Ensuring that all schools have teams that can meet at least monthly to monitor student progress * Creating intentional time in the schedule for middle and high school students to receive Tier 2 and 3 interventions |

### Safe and Supportive School Climate and Culture

The assistant superintendent for student support services is responsible for overseeing student supports in the district. The director of special education and the director of ELL services and new educator development also work with the assistant superintendent to coordinate and monitor student services throughout Chicopee.

The district is also in the process of developing various plans and protocols in place to ensure the safety of students and staff. According to district leaders, a multi-hazard evacuation plan and an emergency response plan are currently in development at the district level. However, the district also has a bullying prevention plan, but it has not been updated within the past three years.

District staff primarily use Panorama to measure and monitor social-emotional learning needs. Across the district, schools use a common social-emotional learning curriculum (TRAILS to Wellness) and check-in/check-out programs for Tier 1 behavior and social-emotional learning interventions. There have also been efforts to implement restorative practices that are yet to be fully effective, and some elementary and middle schools reported using positive behavioral interventions and supports systems to encourage and reward positive behavior. At the elementary level, school leaders described school rules intended to ensure consistent expectations and consequences. In addition, district staff said that they have hired more school adjustment counselors and social workers during the past few years, as well as a director of counseling and social-emotional learning for the district.

For Tier 2 behavioral and social-emotional learning needs, the district’s MTSS guide provides some restorative classroom interventions as well as other referral options (e.g., to school-based outpatient therapy, to a district-level behavioral interventionist or social worker). For Tier 3 needs, the guidance document suggests some restorative options, including a positive reinforcement menu and “the praise game. However, staff reported that “there are more and more needs” and insufficient staff or strategies to support those needs. According to teachers, students, and families, students feel somewhat welcome, respected, and safe in their schools; however, there have been some concerning behavioral incidents in recent years. Panorama data from fall 2024 showed that Chicopee students across all grades reported feeling supported through their relationships with friends, families, and adults at school at rates comparable with others nationally. However, during focus groups, middle and high school students reported instances of unsafe behavior in the hallways regularly; teachers at all grade levels concurred, reporting several behavior incidents throughout the year. Middle school students agree that fights between students have happened multiple times this year, and teachers sometimes struggle to intervene. When fights occur, middle school students reported that other students often record them using their phones and that videos can circulate afterward. However, students also confirmed that if students are caught in possession of a video, there are consequences. Chicopee High School students discussed witnessing unsafe behavior in the hallways as well, such as vaping. Students from Chicopee High School agree that assistant principals and other administrators often do not appear to address the underlying causes of these behaviors with students, leading to repeated problematic behaviors. Because of this prevalence, implementing effective behavior management strategies that address repeated behaviors at the middle and high school levels has been identified as an area for growth.

One of the district’s priorities is to use restorative approaches to student conduct. The district has several documents and presentations to define these restorative approaches for staff, including an Alternatives to Suspension Chart and Presentation. The Alternatives to Suspension Chart maps student behavior with restorative practices, reflective activities, instructional practices, and further actions. For example, students who are truant may complete in-school community service, complete a truancy contract, and be taught time management skills. However, staff in focus groups rarely described restorative approaches. Further, the district’s 2023-2024 in-school and out-of-school suspension rates were nearly double the state averages (2.8 percent district in-school suspension rate compared with 1.4 percent statewide; 4.3 percent district out-of-school suspension rate compared with 2.4 percent statewide). Implementing effective behavior management strategies that use alternatives to in-school and out-of-school suspension, where appropriate and allowable by regulation, is an area for growth for the district.

According to 2023-2024 data, Chicopee’s chronic absenteeism rate is higher than the state average (27.3 percent within the district compared with 19.7 percent statewide). The district’s attendance procedures outline both district and school-level strategies to increase attendance and engagement to prevent and mitigate the effects of chronic absenteeism. According to these documented procedures, as well as school and district leaders, attendance strategies include letters home, phone calls, and student meetings: first with the school counselor, then the vice principal, and finally, the principal. In addition, school staff are encouraged to recognize good attendance and attendance improvements with rewards and positive family communication. If these interventions are not effective at improving student attendance, students are assigned to the district’s truancy officer, who contacts the family and begins to meet regularly with the student. School leaders from several schools also reported using attendance groups and incentives to encourage student attendance as well as attendance teams that meet weekly to talk about chronically absent students and family liaisons who work with families to understand why a student may be absent. Beginning in summer 2025, every school will engage in home visits to build positive relationships with new families and with families whose students have historically been chronically absent. School leaders and staff at all levels indicated that home visits are expected across all schools in the district. According to a presentation on home visits that was shared by the district, district and school attendance teams will work together to plan for these visits, and staff are expected to provide “diligent documentation of communication and visits to families.” The presentation on home visits does not explicitly indicate how staff will ensure that visits are culturally responsive or sensitive. Although efforts are underway to improve student attendance, chronic absenteeism rates remain higher than the state average. Continuing to address the underlying causes of chronic absenteeism throughout the district has been identified as an area for growth for the district.

According to district leaders, the district collects and uses data to regularly monitor school and district culture. The superintendent and other district leaders added that Panorama data are taken into consideration when determining student counseling groups as well as professional development for staff. In addition, the Youth Risk Behavior Survey is taken by students in Grades 9-11. Some high school students added that there are opportunities for some students to provide feedback quarterly to the superintendent, and all students are invited to complete an annual survey. In addition, high school students mentioned some opportunities for them to exercise leadership and decision-making, such as participating in the district strategic planning committee with the superintendent and assistant superintendents. Students at the high school level participate in a 10th-grade civics project that asks them to engage their communities in how to address real issues in the community, such as changing the policy regarding excused absences related to mental health days. School staff also report that students are asked to participate in strategic planning meetings with school officials to discuss changes they would like to see within their schools. Overall, the district provides a variety of opportunities for high school students to exercise leadership and decision-making, which is a strength for Chicopee.

### Health and Well-Being

Chicopee provides services and instruction concerning health and well-being to support students in accessing appropriate care and developing the knowledge and skills needed to lead healthy lives. Although Chicopee staff, students, and families describe instruction as sufficient and aligned with state standards, they also indicate a need for more mental and behavioral health services and supports, both in school and outside of school, to address growing needs among the student population.

The district maintains a local wellness policy, as required by law, as well as a wellness committee responsible for developing, implementing, and monitoring the wellness policy through regular meetings and progress reports. The policy outlines the district’s commitment to promoting student wellness through nutrition, physical health, and social-emotional well-being. In terms of ensuring access to health and physical education, both the wellness policy and the district’s program of studies indicate that Chicopee offers health and physical education, aligned with the Massachusetts Comprehensive Health and Physical Education Frameworks, to all students. According to school leaders and teachers, students at all schools and grade levels have access to some health and physical education, although the length of instruction varies by grade level. For example, students in Grades K-5 receive a full year of physical education but no more than a semester of health education; students in Grades 6-8 receive less than a semester each of physical and health education annually; and students in Grades 9-12 receive only a semester each of physical and health education annually.

According to the district’s wellness policy, health services are provided at each school through school-based nursing staff. In addition, the wellness policy outlines the district’s approach to navigating food allergies; district leaders also reported having and using consistent protocols related to food allergies. According to school leaders, support staff, and staffing lists, each school has a school-based nurse, and several schools indicated that the school nurse participates in attendance team meetings. A staff list provided by district leaders shows that the district also has three floating nurses and two vision and hearing specialists. In addition, the district supports students and their families and caregivers who may need more intensive or individualized supports by providing information on and referrals to health providers. Relatedly, some school leaders indicated that they have established partnerships with local dentists to provide students with dental services. Additionally, a review of district documents indicated that Chicopee has an allergy collection and verification protocol and local wellness policy that are updated annually.

Chicopee uses various surveys and screeners, including Panorama, VOCAL, and the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, to assess the social, emotional, and mental health needs of students. The district also uses the TRAILS to Wellness Social and Emotional Learning curriculum. In discussions with district principals, they stated that their district has some tiered mental and behavioral health services that support students’ mental and emotional wellness; however, the available resources do not meet the district’s growing student needs. For example, most elementary school leaders reported using the TRAILS to Wellness Social and Emotional Learning curriculum. School leaders reported using other nonacademic strategies and interventions, although these varied by school. Strategies and interventions identified included zones of regulation, check-in/check-out, small group mentoring, individual counseling, and individualized behavior plans. According to the district’s school counselors, the district also has several community partnerships specifically related to mental health and/or emotional wellness support, including partnerships with River Valley Counseling Center and Care Solace, and most school leaders also named these organizations as key partners. The district’s wellness policy also indicates that school-based staff will make mental health services available to all students who need them, which includes referring students to external providers. Teachers who participate in focus groups generally agree that mental and behavioral health supports are available to students primarily through these external partnerships, but they are struggling to fully meet growing student needs. Identifying and implementing appropriate services to support students’ expansive mental and behavioral health needs is an area for growth for the district.

### Family and Community Partnerships

The district creates many opportunities for family engagement through community events, a strength of Chicopee. With this goal in mind, the district uses an active family and community engagement (FACE) team to build positive relationships with students and their families and to meet student and family needs. During the 2024-2025 school year, the FACE team organized several social events including a back-to-school extravaganza that included a movie night and backpack giveaway, a family cook-off, cultural celebrations, planting events, bingo nights, and game nights. The team also organized several learning events including a parent academy workshop series designed to provide opportunities for parents to share tips and ideas as well as individual learning sessions focused on mindfulness and stress reduction, nutrition, and finances and budgeting. FACE team representatives attend all school open houses and set up resource tables for families; they also hosted a Spring Resource Fair. FACE team members indicated that they already communicate directly with families, and they plan to conduct a parent focus group to ensure that parent voices and perspectives are reflected in the team’s activities for next year.

To facilitate communication, district leaders reported primarily using ParentSquare and Talking Points, in English and other languages. Parents at the elementary and middle school levels reported generally feeling satisfied with the communication, especially praising teachers’ inclusion of photos from classroom activities and monthly newsletters from principals. However, school staff reported some challenges in communicating with families. Specifically, they expressed frustration with the lack of adequate tools and supports for communicating with families in all the languages needed given the increasing language diversity of the district’s families. Parents also have varying opinions on how useful the superintendent newsletter is, explaining that this information is not always relevant to the more personalized updates about their child’s school or performance.

District staff and school leaders reported that their district maintains relationships with organizations within the broader community to provide services to students and families during and outside of the school day. Most schools in the district reported partnering with River Valley Counseling Center and Care Solace for mental health services and Catie’s Closet for clothing assistance; some schools reported partnering with Farm to School (a University of Massachusetts extension program) and the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts for food and housing assistance; and a few schools reported community partners for dental services. However, across the district, most community partnerships are established directly between community organizations and individual schools. For example, one school described a backpack program they recently started that allowed the school to send food home to more than 100 families. Developing meaningful school-level partnerships that meet student and family needs is a strength of the district.

District staff described additional partnerships with the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, the public library, Elm College, Families First, and the Valley Opportunity Council. District staff indicated that several of the district’s community partners attend the quarterly English Learner Parent Advisory Council meetings to help connect families with available supports. However, an area for growth is that there is no systematic process in place for identifying, establishing, and managing community partnerships, and there is no evidence that the district used data to evaluate the extent to which partnerships are meeting students’ needs. School-level staff say that more staff are needed to coordinate these partnerships.

### Multitiered Systems of Support

Chicopee has an MTSS guide that is publicly available and clearly defines the systems’ three tiers of support and details how to implement interventions for students. According to district leaders, school leaders, and teachers, the district implements Tier 1 academic supports through common districtwide curricula (see the Curriculum and Instructional Materials section for more information). In addition, several school leaders reported using some of the Tier 1 social-emotional and behavioral supports described in the MTSS guidebook, including the TRAILS to Wellness Social and Emotional Learning curriculum. The district also provides Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions for students who need additional support to access the curriculum or learning environment. The MTSS guide organizes Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports by type and grade level. Although the guide includes several interventions for each type and grade level, district and school-based staff each reported primarily using only a few of them. For example, district leaders described a few Tier 2 digital interventions (e.g., Imagine Learning, Flashlight Learning, and Off2Class). According to district leaders, at the elementary level, staff primarily use a push-in model to provide intervention support; at the secondary level, they often have to pull students out to provide supports because of more complicated scheduling considerations.

The district provided some guidance for school leaders concerning how to implement each component of the MTSS, for example, through the training provided by Panorama Education in the early fall. Teachers added that they receive training on any new interventions; for example, they recently received training on Imagine Learning, a Tier 3 digital support designed for English Learners. In addition, according to district staff, they contract with coaches affiliated with the intervention provider who can support teachers in implementation whenever possible. Still, both district staff and school leaders indicated that additional training on implementing the MTSS is needed. “We need to continue to do professional development with our staff on what the level of interventions are, and which ones are for which,” a district staff person explained.

The district monitors the effectiveness of the MTSS primarily through the Panorama system as well as school-based MTSS teams that meet regularly to review student progress and needs. Both district and school leaders described reviewing disaggregated data each month, especially for the Tier 2 and Tier 3 digital interventions, “to make sure things are working.” School leaders, however, reported reviewing the effectiveness of interventions with varying frequency. For example, some school leaders reported meeting monthly to review student data and adjust intervention assignments, whereas others reported meeting only a few times per year. District staff also described the way in which schools collect and review behavioral data in Panorama now, so that teachers and school leaders can systematically monitor incidents and responses, as notable progress that the district has made recently. The District Accommodation Plan indicates that families and students are involved in decision making about the need for and delivery of tiered supports.

When it comes to Students with Disabilities and English Learners, district leaders indicated that their district ensures that these students are receiving the necessary services and maintains a District Accommodation Plan that describes possible accommodations for various student needs. According to district leaders, Chicopee operates a specialized program for Students with Disabilities in all except one building and maintains a spreadsheet for tracking entry and exit criteria for all of the students served. District leaders explained that keeping as many students in district as possible is a goal, as is ensuring that opportunities for inclusion are maximized. English Learners in Chicopee have English Learner Success Plans to document specific needs and, therefore, appropriate interventions. District and school leaders reported that at the elementary level, English Learners receive supports primarily through push-in services; at the middle and high school levels, some of these students (those with lower English proficiency levels) are pulled out for language support services. District leaders added that they have begun using Ellevation as well to help monitor the needs of English Learners, in particular.

According to elementary staff, each school leverages student support teams, referred to as instructional support teams in Chicopee, to match students to Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions to meet students’ needs. The instructional support team will typically meet every six weeks to figure out which students need interventions using data such as DIBELS and MAP testing. Team makeups vary by school, but elementary teachers agree that these teams usually include the curriculum specialists, classroom teachers (if they bring a referral for a team for a student in their class), a reading specialist, and guidance counselors. Elementary teachers also reported that they use professional learning community time or data meetings (varies by school) to discuss student data, similar to what is discussed in instructional support team meetings; however, not all schools use the same cadence in terms of how often this happens. Ensuring that all schools have teams that can meet at least monthly to monitor student progress and needs is an area for growth for the district.

At the elementary level, Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions are provided by interventionists via push-in support during a 30- to 45-minute WIN block. Although there is dedicated time for interventions at the elementary school level, upper elementary grade teachers reported that they do not have as much staff support during these times compared with K-2. In the middle and high school levels, there is no WIN block, and teachers said that there is no time built in for interventions. Some students do have access to a tutorial block, which acts as a class period in their schedule to reteach core content, but this is not available to all students. Creating intentional time in the schedule for middle and high school students to receive Tier 2 and 3 interventions is an area for growth for Chicopee.

### Recommendations

* *At the middle and high school levels, the district should diagnose the root causes behind repeated student behaviors and proactively reduce antecedents (where feasible).*
* *The district should leverage its existing documents and presentations on restorative approaches to expand implementation of those practices and, where appropriate under regulation, increase reliance on alternatives to suspension and expulsion.*
* *The district should examine the frequent causes of chronic absenteeism among students and devise solutions to address them.*
* *The district should determine ways to expand and improve upon its current offerings to support students’ mental health and social and emotional needs, whether through internal efforts or leveraging community partners.*
* *The district should structure its approach to establishing, managing, and evaluating its partnerships with community organizations.*
* *The district should set consistent expectations around the frequency with which student support teams meet.*
* *Where logistically feasible, the district should establish intentional Tier 2 and 3 intervention time in middle and high school schedules.*

## Financial and Asset Management

This section focuses on the extent to which, through its policies, systems, and procedures, the district strategically allocates and uses funding and other resources in alignment with applicable laws to improve all students’ performance, opportunities, and outcomes. It also focuses on how the district collaborates with its partners to run daily operations, manage its assets, and develop long-term plans for sustainability.

Table 8 summarizes key strengths and areas for growth in financial and asset management in Chicopee.

Table 8. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Financial and Asset Management Standard

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Indicator | Strengths | Areas for growth |
| [Business Office Staffing and Infrastructure](#_Business_Office_Staffing) | * The business affairs office is well staffed and proactive. * The district and city have a collaborative relationship and share services efficiently. | * Aligning the financial reporting system with DESE function codes |
| [Budgeting and Budget Process](#_Budgeting_and_Budget) | * The district’s budget process is transparent and inclusive, with school leaders being engaged throughout. * The district strategically uses grants to progress district goals. |  |
| [Operations](#_Operations) | * Maintenance requests are managed through multiple channels and tracked systematically. * Food services are student focused and engage in efforts to get student input. |  |
| [Managing Capital Assets and Capital Planning](#_Managing_Capital_Assets) | * The inventory control system supports asset tracking and replacement. | * Developing a multi-year capital plan with clear timelines and priorities |

### Business Office Staffing and Infrastructure

The director of budget and finance leads the business affairs office and is responsible for overseeing financial and business decisions in the district. The office has five staff members overseeing the district budget (including grants), accounts payable, and the payroll, including an administrative secretary, two payroll managers, and two staff members responsible for accounts payable. The district also has a grants office with a district grants administrator and two grant clerks who manage the district’s grants. According to multiple district leaders, the business affairs office has sufficient staff to support daily operations and annual planning. One leader shared that the business affairs and grants offices have “the best staff.” They went on to say, “They do more than what they’re asked many times, and they take it upon themselves to enrich themselves and to get better at what they do.” Based on reports from district staff, the business affairs office is well-staffed and proactive, which is a strength of the district.

The district’s comprehensive policies and procedures on fiscal management are documented in the policy manual that is publicly available on the school committee page of the district’s website. The policies covered include detailed guidance on revolving accounts, purchasing policy, fiscal accounting and reporting, audits, federal funds “supplement, not supplant” policies, and the annual budget. These policies are designed to ensure compliance with state and federal requirements, establish an internal system of checks and balances, and provide continuity to operations when staffing disruptions arise.

The district uses MUNIS to monitor and control resources. District staff described having the system as a big advantage, but hope to adjust their system to be in a better position to more easily “match to the end-of-year report.” District leaders identified crosswalking the financial reporting system with DESE function codes as an area for growth.

District leaders explained how their system for preserving, categorizing, and, when permissible, destroying financial documents meets all requirements for records management, including keeping documents (e.g., payroll records, end-of-year reports, accounting records) for the required length of time. As a district leader commented,

I proudly say that you can go into our back closet storage room, and you could find any grant from the last seven years stored in boxes, labeled in boxes. . . . In terms of archive and records, we have everything both paper-based and electronic-based in terms of our ledgers.

District leaders also keep careful records of grant documents. One district staff member said, “I have a little buffet of grant documents that are available to the executive team . . . kind of ‘grants at a glance.’ It shows the current grants that we have and any grants that were investigated.” The staff also discussed how they are “getting more online” and are now beginning to use systems to their full potential.

The district and town have a formal, written agreement that describes the process and timeline for incorporating the school committee’s budgeting process into the municipality’s budgeting process, as detailed in the policy manual posted on the district website. According to a city official, there is also a formal agreement between the municipality and the school district for services such as transportation, with a reciprocal percentage for facility use. For example, while the transportation director oversees operations, including managing routing and contracts, the city pays for transportation contracts. A city official and a district leader each spoke about how responsibilities are clearly split between the city and the school district. For example, the city handles benefits and transportation costs, but school resource officers are managed by the school department. The information technology director is a shared position between the city and district, but each entity manages its own facilities department. They also listed other services provided by the city, such as managing the MUNIS system, taking care of some fields (through the city’s parks and recreation department), and covering benefits for staff not covered by the Massachusetts Teachers’ Retirement System. In addition, the city is responsible for capital improvements, such as roofs and boilers.

School committee members, district staff, and town officials described their working relationship as collaborative. A district leader said, “City Hall helps us a lot.” Similarly, a city official said, “I think we have a great relationship.” They went on to say, “I’m very content with the way things are going and the direction that Dr. Ware is taking the district. . . . We are very fortunate to have him as our superintendent.” The district and city have a collaborative relationship and share services efficiently, a strength of the district.

### Budgeting and Budget Process

According to district leaders, Chicopee has a transparent budgeting process. School committee meeting agendas and meeting notices are posted on the district website, and meetings are available for viewing live on local TV channels, Facebook, and YouTube. The district has a 131-page budget book with a “budget preparation calendar,” including budget activities and related time frames, critical meeting dates, and milestones. A district leader described creating a “rolling budget” as early as October or November. The rolling budget includes staff salaries and expected adjustments due to retirement and so forth. The next step is to meet with school leaders and department heads to review the budget and determine what additional changes are needed on the basis of changes in enrollment and other variables. School leaders are expected to understand their budgets, so district leaders spend time providing guidance. School leaders agree that they have opportunities to request positions and supplies or to solicit other budgetary adjustments. One school leader provided an example, speaking of how they might determine what to request on the basis of data trends, such as “struggling math scores leading to a focus on math support.” Another school leader explained that they did not have total autonomy in terms of adding additional staff members, but if they come with a request and are able to provide rationale for why additional positions were required, they will be heard.

District leaders then meet to bring all the data together, set priorities informed by the district’s strategic plan, and, in late March, present the budget for the school board finance and budget subcommittee’s review and input. The next version of the budget goes back to principals and district leaders for review in April. Later in the month, the district receives city costs, and the finance and budget subcommittee reviews grant funding. After additional meetings with the finance and budget subcommittee and additional revisions to the budget, the school committee hosts a public hearing and presentation of the proposed budget in early June. The district makes a final presentation of the proposed budget to the city council by June 30. District leaders and city officials agree that the review and approval process culminates in an easily accessible budget and budget documentation. Overall, a strength of the districts is that the budget process is transparent and inclusive, with school leaders engaged throughout.

According to DESE data, in fiscal year 2023, the district’s net school spending was $123,008,415, which exceeded net school spending requirements by 9.0 percent. According to school leaders, the district’s budget provides appropriate levels of funding for key instructional resources. Per-pupil spending in fiscal year 2023 was $21,097, just slightly lower than the state average of $21,885. In the same year, fiscal year 2023, the average teacher salary of $85,058 was also slightly lower than the state average of $89,576. District budget documents clearly identify funds associated with grants, student activities and organizations, fees, and revolving funds. District leaders added that the district budgets for anticipated out-of-district special education placements and related transportation costs and has a sustainable funding source to cover unexpected increases within the operating budget. As a district leader summarized, “the general fund can support [unexpected increases] and be sustainable. That's one of the drivers for us is being sustainable.”

District leaders reported that they believe the district’s budget is equitable across schools. They explained that school leaders receive support from the administration on how to understand their budgets, and they “have a say” in their school’s budgets. Because of this, they can ensure that student needs, such as staffing needs for special education or English Learner teachers, are met. A district leader shared that federal Title I funds, social-emotional grants, and homeless support grants also play a role in ensuring equity. However, teacher leaders pointed out visible differences between schools based on locale within the district, with some schools being perceived as having more resources than others. One teacher leader described an example of this regarding sports at the high school level:

One team comes in and the coaches have brand new headphones, brand new equipment, brand new uniforms for the students. And then [school name] has old uniforms, barely has a full team to be able to have offense and defense. [Yet] we’re in the same city and we have the same athletic director.

Teacher leaders also described examples at the elementary and middle school levels, such as some schools having more specials (e.g., art, music) than others. However, these disparities were not identified in other focus groups by school leaders, students, or families.

Budget documents indicate that the district applies for state and federal grants that align with the district’s strategic plan and that there are systems in place to ensure that grant terms and requirements are followed in a timely manner. District leaders explained how the district relies on restricted and unrestricted funds to maximize benefits to students. According to district documentation, the salaries of 94 school staff were covered by grant funding for a total of $4,897,875 in fiscal year 2024 using funds from Title I, Title II, Title III, Title IV, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, and an HVAC grant. School leaders are involved in the grant-seeking process. One leader shared their positive experience working with the grant director. They first wrote the grant and then submitted the application through the district’s droplet tool for review by the grant director. The submission had to align with the district’s goals and involved collaborating with school leadership. The district’s strategic use of grants to progress district goals is a strength.

To ensure the sustainability of efforts originally made using grant funding, district leaders described developing sustainability plans, such as using grant funds for personnel only when they know that the general fund can support those positions in the future. Leaders also mentioned using grant funds that would not be renewed to update the HVAC system and purchase security cameras that were one-time expenses.

The district’s financial planning incorporates projected enrollment and required staffing, cost-of-living adjustments, and anticipated increases in service contracts. A district leader added that they “are trying to work with the money and the means that we have.” The district also has a stabilization fund consisting of monies left over from not being able to fill certain staff positions. The stabilization fund is used “to supplement and help with the budget—to get more staff and more product to our students.” At the time of the district review, district leaders and members of the teachers’ association mentioned that they were in the middle of ongoing contract negotiations, and that a final agreement would impact long-term financial planning.

To keep the school committee and broader community updated on the budget, the district provides budget updates on a quarterly basis and works with budget managers to track and adjust current-year spending at every payroll cycle. The district hires independent financial auditing services each year and implements recommendations from those audits in a timely manner. District leaders spoke about the need to monitor the budget closely, given that some costs, such as special education, can be unpredictable. However, regular financial updates and audits ensure accountability and responsiveness.

### Operations

The district website provides families with clear, accessible information about registering for school and school assignment. According to the “School Attendance Zones” document accessible on the district website, which school students attend is based on their home address. As described in the district’s policy manual, parents/guardians may request assignment to a school out of their normal attendance zone by applying for an out-of-attendance-zone transfer. Such requests will be granted only if space is available in the receiving school. Consideration for approving these requests may include the following:

* unusual circumstance or a hardship case;
* childcare responsibilities; or
* if the legal residence of a child changes from one attendance area to another during the school year and the parents/guardians wish for the child to remain in his or her former school (in which case, permission will not extend beyond the current school year).

The ultimate decision in granting or denying a parent/guardian request rests with the superintendent. If a transfer is granted on the basis of parent request, transportation is not provided.

The district’s policy manual includes a transportation policy, including the following requirements for being provided with transportation to and from school:

In Grades K-5, pupils residing one (1) mile or more from school will be furnished transportation; in Grades 6, 7, and 8, pupils residing one and one-half (1.5) miles or more from school will be furnished transportation; and in Grades 9-12, pupils residing two (2) miles or more will be furnished transportation.

Further, when the administration assigns a student to a school outside of their normal attendance zone, transportation is provided. District leaders reported that the district has a contract with Five Star Bus to provide reliable transportation services so that students can safely get to and from school on time. The business affairs office helps with any billing issues, and the district’s transportation director works with administrative staff and Five Star Bus to arrange for student transportation.

The district’s facilities department monitors potential needs and regularly reviews its preventative maintenance plan. According to district leaders, the district has two processes in place for school leaders and directors to request maintenance services and other assistance. The first process is during yearly budget discussions between district and school leaders, when principals can make specific requests. The maintenance director then takes this information and sets up a schedule to address the concerns. The second way to request maintenance is by completing a droplet form. District staff explained that the droplet collects the appropriate signatures and approvals, and the maintenance department has queue software to manage requests. They described what happens next: “The craftsman or custodian, depending on who and what it has to be, will [check the queue] and be directed towards a particular project.” Having maintenance requests managed through multiple channels and tracked systematically is a strength of the district.

Regarding food services, the district manages nutrition “in house,” with 105 employees. District leaders reported that the district provides a diverse variety of free breakfast and lunch options that include locally purchased food, to the extent possible**.** The district had a federal grant to buy local food, but, unfortunately, it ended. One leader shared,

There’s a lot of great meals they serve, fresh salads. And the other thing is they usually have a garden outside most schools. So, they’ll take some of those when the food is harvested and bring it into the cafeteria and prepare it in some way and let [students] have an opportunity to taste it or even serve it as one of the side dishes, yeah, and that’s all typically grown by students at that school or through the garden club.

District leaders also spoke of food services’ efforts to get input from students. They meet with the student council at the high schools and send out surveys to find out what foods the students enjoy. Food services’ efforts to get student input is a strength of the district.

Regarding technology, the district and municipality share a technology director, and one staff member spoke positively about the “techs that are supporting everything.” The district provides students and staff with hardware, software, and related licenses and support for everyday learning and daily operations. District staff mentioned including the one-to-one programs with Chromebooks and staff laptops in budget forecasts, given their limited lifespan.

District staff explained that the district has an established process for purchasing supplies and services in alignment with state laws and effectively manages those contracts with vendors. District staff and city officials discussed the process of rebidding contracts for core district services and agree that the school district typically writes contract specifications and requirements, whereas the city purchasing department reviews and publishes bids, using required thresholds for obtaining quotes and going out to bid. A district leader explained, “In a nutshell, we want to make sure people are making the sound business decision, right? So, we are getting three quotes and, if it’s a state contract, we’re going through the proper procedure.” District staff also mentioned the need to make sure that there is a purchase order in place before placing orders, to keep appropriate records, and to carefully vet all vendors.

### Managing Capital Assets and Capital Planning

District staff spoke of the district’s inventory control system used to manage and track its inventory of capital assets and critical supplies. School clerks and principals support this process by assessing and tracking their needs for items such as office supplies. As described by district staff, the facilities department keeps an inventory of core structures and core assets, “whether it be vehicles or custodial supplies.” With that information, they build out a replacement schedule, which is put forth as part of the capital request. District staff also explained that the district contracts out for a review of all facilities every few years, “to get a more granular picture of what is needed in terms of asset replacement.” Through these efforts, the district ensures that the system meets its obligations to replace or dispose of goods. The inventory control system, supporting asset tracking and replacement, is a strength of the district.

Neither the district nor the city has a readily accessible published capital plan that describes future capital needs. However, according to a district leader, the district is “actively monitoring student enrollments and needs, aiming to be less reactionary and more proactive in planning for the future.” More specifically, the district, with support from the city, is developing a long-term capital plan to address anticipated needs, such as technology upgrades. The district will be incorporating data from a potentially outdated 2018 audit that examined building conditions, upgrades, and declining enrollment into their capital planning. A published capital plan that communicates priorities and timelines for capital improvements is an area for growth.

### Recommendations

* *The district should collaborate with its municipal partners to align its account codes with DESE function codes and the End of Year Report.*
* *The district should continue its effort to develop a long-term capital plan that identifies priorities and clear project timelines.*

## Appendix A. Summary of Site Visit Activities

The AIR team completed the following as part of the district review activities in Chicopee. The team conducted 143 classroom observations during the week of April 7, 2025, and held interviews and focus groups between April 7 and April 10. The site visit team conducted interviews and focus groups with the following representatives from the school and the district:

* Superintendent
* Other district leaders
* School committee members
* Teachers’ association members
* Principals
* Teachers
* Support specialists
* Parents
* Students
* City representative

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 district’s staffing and finances
* Curricular review process and timeline
* Chicopee 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
* District documents such as district and school improvement plans, 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

Chicopee Public Schools

Classroom Visits: Summary of Findings

Districtwide Instructional Observation Report

April 2025

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Waltham, Massachusetts  
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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.

Seven observers visited Chicopee Public Schools during the week of April 7, 2025. Observers conducted 143 observations in a sample of classrooms across thirteen 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\*: 5.2

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High Range | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 143 | 5.2 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 7 | 22 | 15 | 5 | 52 | 5.2 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 9 | 16 | 8 | 40 | 5.5 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 1 | 6 | 9 | 16 | 13 | 6 | 51 | 5.0 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 3, the district average is computed as:   
([2 x 1] + [3 x 13] + [4 x 19] + [5 x 47] + [6 x 44] + [7 x 19]) ÷ 143 observations = 5.2

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\*: 5.6

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High Range | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 143 | 5.6 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 7 | 12 | 23 | 9 | 52 | 5.6 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 7 | 16 | 15 | 40 | 6.1 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 1 | 6 | 9 | 15 | 10 | 10 | 51 | 5.1 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 4, the district average is computed as:   
([2 x 1] + [3 x 7] + [4 x 18] + [5 x 34] + [6 x 49] + [7 x 34]) ÷ 143 observations = 5.6

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\*: 3.0

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High Range | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 143 | 3.0 |
| Grades K-5 | 9 | 19 | 14 | 6 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 52 | 2.6 |
| Grades 6-8 | 10 | 12 | 6 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 0 | 40 | 2.8 |
| Grades 9-12 | 8 | 11 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 8 | 3 | 51 | 3.6 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 5, the district average is computed as:   
([1 x 27] + [2 x 42] + [3 x 27] + [4 x 16] + [5 x 18] + [6 x 10] + [7 x 3]) ÷ 143 observations = 3.0

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.[[5]](#footnote-6)

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

Negative Climate District Average\*: 6.8

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High Range | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 143 | 6.8 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 48 | 52 | 6.9 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 37 | 40 | 6.9 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 6 | 40 | 51 | 6.7 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 6, the district average is computed as:   
([5 x 9] + [6 x 9] + [7 x 125]) ÷ 143 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\*: 6.1

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High Range | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 143 | 6.1 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 7 | 20 | 22 | 52 | 6.2 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 14 | 16 | 40 | 6.1 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 6 | 9 | 9 | 26 | 51 | 6.0 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 7, the district average is computed as:   
([3 x 3] + [4 x 9] + [5 x 24] + [6 x 43] + [7 x 64]) ÷ 143 observations = 6.1

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\*: 6.2

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High Range | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 143 | 6.2 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 11 | 13 | 28 | 52 | 6.3 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 12 | 24 | 40 | 6.5 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 12 | 10 | 22 | 51 | 5.9 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 8, the district average is computed as:   
([2 x 1] + [3 x 1] + [4 x 5] + [5 x 27] + [6 x 35] + [7 x 74]) ÷ 143 observations = 6.2

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\*: 5.3

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High Range | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 143 | 5.3 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 26 | 22 | 1 | 52 | 5.4 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 10 | 20 | 5 | 40 | 5.6 |
| Grades 9-12 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 8 | 24 | 10 | 3 | 51 | 4.9 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 9, the district average is computed as:   
([1 x 1] + [2 x 1] + [3 x 7] + [4 x 13] + [5 x 60] + [6 x 52] + [7 x 9]) ÷ 143 observations = 5.3

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\*: 3.2

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High Range | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 36 | 3.2 |
| Grades K-3\*\* | 4 | 8 | 7 | 11 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 36 | 3.2 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 10, the district average is computed as:   
([1 x 4] + [2 x 8] + [3 x 7] + [4 x 11] + [5 x 6]) ÷ 36 observations = 3.2

\*\*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\*: 4.4

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High Range | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 107 | 4.4 |
| Grades 4-5\*\* | 1 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 16 | 4.4 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 6 | 6 | 18 | 8 | 40 | 5.6 |
| Grades 9-12 | 2 | 12 | 13 | 8 | 12 | 4 | 0 | 51 | 3.5 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 11, the district average is computed as:   
([1 x 3] + [2 x 13] + [3 x 19] + [4 x 16] + [5 x 21] + [6 x 25] + [7 x 10]) ÷ 107 observations = 4.4

\*\*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\*: 2.6

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High Range | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 107 | 2.6 |
| Grades 4-5\*\* | 4 | 7 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 16 | 2.3 |
| Grades 6-8 | 4 | 13 | 8 | 9 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 40 | 3.1 |
| Grades 9-12 | 20 | 11 | 6 | 9 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 51 | 2.4 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 12, the district average is computed as:   
([1 x 28] + [2 x 31] + [3 x 17] + [4 x 19] + [5 x 7] + [6 x 5]) ÷ 107 observations = 2.6

\*\*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\*: 2.8

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High Range | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 143 | 2.8 |
| Grades K-5 | 2 | 25 | 15 | 9 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 52 | 2.7 |
| Grades 6-8 | 4 | 7 | 19 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 40 | 3.2 |
| Grades 9-12 | 16 | 11 | 11 | 6 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 51 | 2.6 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 13, the district average is computed as:   
([1 x 22] + [2 x 43] + [3 x 45] + [4 x 19] + [5 x 5] + [6 x 7] + [7 x 2]) ÷ 143 observations = 2.8

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\*: 3.1

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High Range | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 36 | 3.1 |
| Grades K-3\*\* | 4 | 9 | 7 | 11 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 36 | 3.1 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 14, the district average is computed as:   
([1 x 4] + [2 x 9] + [3 x 7] + [4 x 11] + [5 x 4] + [6 x 1]) ÷ 36 observations = 3.1

\*\*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\*: 3.0

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High Range | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 107 | 3.0 |
| Grades 4-5\*\* | 3 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 16 | 2.8 |
| Grades 6-8 | 2 | 8 | 8 | 10 | 8 | 3 | 1 | 40 | 3.7 |
| Grades 9-12 | 19 | 9 | 8 | 11 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 51 | 2.5 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 15, the district average is computed as:   
([1 x 24] + [2 x 21] + [3 x 22] + [4 x 22] + [5 x 11] + [6 x 6] + [7 x 1]) ÷ 107 observations = 3.0

\*\*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\*: 5.1

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High Range | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 107 | 5.1 |
| Grades 4-5\*\* | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 9 | 5 | 1 | 16 | 5.3 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 14 | 17 | 3 | 40 | 5.3 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 12 | 17 | 13 | 4 | 51 | 5.0 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 16, the district average is computed as:   
([2 x 2] + [3 x 7] + [4 x 15] + [5 x 40] + [6 x 35] + [7 x 8]) ÷ 107 observations = 5.1

\*\*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 | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High Range | n | Average Scores\* |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |  |  |
| **Emotional Support Domain** | 9 | 19 | 18 | 20 | 40 | 40 | 62 | 208 | 5.1 |
| Positive Climate | 0 | 0 | 3 | 7 | 22 | 15 | 5 | 52 | 5.2 |
| Negative Climate\*\* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 48 | 52 | 6.9 |
| Teacher Sensitivity | 0 | 0 | 1 | 7 | 12 | 23 | 9 | 52 | 5.6 |
| Regard for Student Perspectives | 9 | 19 | 14 | 6 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 52 | 2.6 |
| **Classroom Organization Domain** | 0 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 44 | 55 | 51 | 156 | 6.0 |
| Behavior Management | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 7 | 20 | 22 | 52 | 6.2 |
| Productivity | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 11 | 13 | 28 | 52 | 6.3 |
| Instructional Learning Formats\*\*\* | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 26 | 22 | 1 | 52 | 5.4 |
| **Instructional Support Domain** | 18 | 54 | 42 | 35 | 15 | 6 | 2 | 172 | 3.0 |
| Concept Development (K-3 only) | 4 | 8 | 7 | 11 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 36 | 3.2 |
| Content Understanding (UE only) | 1 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 16 | 4.4 |
| Analysis and Inquiry (UE only) | 4 | 7 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 16 | 2.3 |
| Quality of Feedback | 2 | 25 | 15 | 9 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 52 | 2.7 |
| Language Modeling (K-3 only) | 4 | 9 | 7 | 11 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 36 | 3.1 |
| Instructional Dialogue (UE only) | 3 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 16 | 2.8 |
| **Student Engagement (UE only)** | **0** | **0** | **1** | **0** | **9** | **5** | **1** | **16** | **5.3** |

\*The district average is an average of the scores. For example, for Positive Climate, the district average is computed as: ([3 x 3] + [4 x 7] + [5 x 22] + [6 x 15] + [7 x 5]) ÷ 52 observations = 5.2

\*\*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 2] + [7 x 48]) ÷ 52 observations = 6.9. 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 | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High Range | n | Average Scores\* |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |  |  |
| Emotional Support Domain | 10 | 12 | 10 | 8 | 23 | 34 | 23 | 120 | 4.8 |
| Positive Climate | 0 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 9 | 16 | 8 | 40 | 5.5 |
| Teacher Sensitivity | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 7 | 16 | 15 | 40 | 6.1 |
| Regard for Student Perspectives | 10 | 12 | 6 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 0 | 40 | 2.8 |
| Classroom Organization Domain | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 14 | 27 | 77 | 120 | 6.5 |
| Behavior Management | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 14 | 16 | 40 | 6.1 |
| Productivity | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 12 | 24 | 40 | 6.5 |
| Negative Climate\*\* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 37 | 40 | 6.9 |
| Instructional Support Domain | 10 | 28 | 39 | 32 | 29 | 46 | 16 | 200 | 4.2 |
| Instructional Learning Formats | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 10 | 20 | 5 | 40 | 5.6 |
| Content Understanding | 0 | 0 | 2 | 6 | 6 | 18 | 8 | 40 | 5.6 |
| Analysis and Inquiry | 4 | 13 | 8 | 9 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 40 | 3.1 |
| Quality of Feedback | 4 | 7 | 19 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 40 | 3.2 |
| Instructional Dialogue | 2 | 8 | 8 | 10 | 8 | 3 | 1 | 40 | 3.7 |
| Student Engagement | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 14 | 17 | 3 | 40 | 5.3 |

\*The district average is an average of the scores. For example, for Positive Climate, the district average is computed as: ([3 x 4] + [4 x 3] + [5 x 9] + [6 x 16] + [7 x 8]) ÷ 40 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 2] + [6 x 1] + [7 x 37]) ÷ 40 observations = 6.9

Summary of Average Ratings: Grades 9–12

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

|  | Low Range | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High Range | n | Average Scores\* |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |  |  |
| Emotional Support Domain | 8 | 13 | 19 | 25 | 38 | 31 | 19 | 153 | 4.6 |
| Positive Climate | 0 | 1 | 6 | 9 | 16 | 13 | 6 | 51 | 5.0 |
| Teacher Sensitivity | 0 | 1 | 6 | 9 | 15 | 10 | 10 | 51 | 5.1 |
| Regard for Student Perspectives | 8 | 11 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 8 | 3 | 51 | 3.6 |
| Classroom Organization Domain | 0 | 1 | 2 | 11 | 26 | 25 | 88 | 153 | 6.2 |
| Behavior Management | 0 | 0 | 1 | 6 | 9 | 9 | 26 | 51 | 6.0 |
| Productivity | 0 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 12 | 10 | 22 | 51 | 5.9 |
| Negative Climate\*\* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 6 | 40 | 51 | 6.7 |
| Instructional Support Domain | 58 | 44 | 42 | 42 | 44 | 22 | 3 | 255 | 3.2 |
| Instructional Learning Formats | 1 | 1 | 4 | 8 | 24 | 10 | 3 | 51 | 4.9 |
| Content Understanding | 2 | 12 | 13 | 8 | 12 | 4 | 0 | 51 | 3.5 |
| Analysis and Inquiry | 20 | 11 | 6 | 9 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 51 | 2.4 |
| Quality of Feedback | 16 | 11 | 11 | 6 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 51 | 2.6 |
| Instructional Dialogue | 19 | 9 | 8 | 11 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 51 | 2.5 |
| Student Engagement | 0 | 1 | 4 | 12 | 17 | 13 | 4 | 51 | 5.0 |

\*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 6] + [4 x 9] + [5 x 16] + [6 x 13] + [7 x 6]) ÷ 51 observations = 5.0

\*\*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 5] + [6 x 6] + [7 x 40]) ÷ 51 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) a | 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. |
| [New Superintendent Induction Program (NSIP)](https://www.massupt.org/professional-development/annual-programs/new-superintendent-induction-program/) | In partnership with the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, the NSIP is a three-year professional development program for superintendents in their first three years of their position in a Massachusetts school district. The curriculum aligns with DESE’s educational vision and supports new superintendents with developing the skills and competencies to be effective leaders of their school districts. |
| [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. |

a The Coherence Guidebook may be useful across multiple standard areas including Leadership and Governance, Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment, and Student Support.

Table C2. Resources to Support Curriculum and Instruction

| Resource | Description |
| --- | --- |
| Curriculum frameworks and resources:   * [Curriculum Matters webpage](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/impd/default.html) * [Curriculum Frameworks resources](https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html) * [IMplement MA](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/impd/implement-ma.html) * [CURATE](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate/default.html) * [Supporting Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/culturally-sustaining/default.html) | DESE offers a suite of resources to support the use of high-quality curricula that are culturally and linguistically sustaining. These resources include the curriculum frameworks and IMplement MA, our recommended four-phase process to prepare for, select, launch, and implement new high-quality instructional materials with key tasks and action steps. In addition, CURATE convenes panels of Massachusetts teachers to review and rate curricula. These ratings are posted publicly to support schools and districts in selecting high-quality instructional materials. Finally, the Supporting Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices webpage provides DESE’s definition of these practices and highlights their importance in our schools and classrooms. |
| [Mass Literacy Guide](https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/) | Mass Literacy is a statewide effort to empower educators with the evidence-based practices for literacy that all students need. Evidence-based instruction, provided within schools and classrooms that are culturally and linguistically sustaining, will put our youngest students on a path toward literacy for life. |
| [Foundations for Inclusive Practice](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/guidebook/) | This guidebook includes tools for districts, schools, and educators that align with the Massachusetts 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) | This resource promotes culturally responsive teaching in the arts through the study of culturally diverse artists and their artworks. It highlights art made by people with racial identities that historically have been and continue to be marginalized. |
| [Massachusetts Blueprint for English Learner Success](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/blueprint/default.html) | Framework for English Learner 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 with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. |
| [Massachusetts Dyslexia Guidelines](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/dyslexia-guidelines.pdf) | Clear and practical guidelines for early screening, instruction, and intervention for students with reading difficulties and neurological learning disabilities, including dyslexia. |
| [Next Generation ESL Toolkit](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/esl-toolkit/default.html) | The ESL Toolkit provides a common entry point for educators to learn about Next Generation ESL instruction in Massachusetts. |
| [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 on and identify specific actions that they could take to establish or improve their ILTs. |

Table C3. Resources to Support Assessment

| Resource | Description |
| --- | --- |
| [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. |
| [Curriculum-embedded performance assessments](https://www.doe.mass.edu/stem/ste/assess-resources.html) | Pending funding, this program provides resources and professional learning for classroom-based, curriculum-embedded performance tasks in K-8 science with implementation and instructional supports aligned with the Innovative Assessment. |
| [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 Screening](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/screening-assessments/default.html) | Guidance and support for schools and districts to select and use an approved early literacy universal screening assessment. |
| [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 Tool](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 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) * [Induction and Mentoring Annual Report](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeffectiveness/mentor/default.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: Online Platform for Teaching and Informed Calibration](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. |
| [Promising Recruitment, Selection, and Retention Strategies for a Diverse Massachusetts Teacher Workforce](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.doe.mass.edu%2Fcsi%2Fdiverse-workforce%2Fteacher-diversification.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) | This guidebook provides a framework to help district and school leaders design and implement a teacher diversification strategy to improve student achievement and create equitable learning experiences. |
| [“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 |
| --- | --- |
| Dropout prevention and reengagement:   * [Dropout Prevention and Reengagement (DPR) resources](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ccte/sec-supports/massgrad/default.html) * [Early Warning Indicator System (EWIS)](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ccte/sec-supports/ewis/default.html) | DPR efforts support students at risk of not graduating or reengage students who have left school with opportunities to gain the academic, personal/social, and work readiness skills necessary to graduate and lead productive lives. EWIS includes tools for districts to identify students who are at risk and help get them back on track. |
| Educational stability resources:   * [Educational stability for highly mobile students](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/edstability.html) * [Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE) Guidance and Toolkit](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/slife/default.html) * [Resources for Supporting Immigrant and Refugee Students](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/resources/immigrant-refugee.html) | The linked resources provide guidance, technical assistance, professional learning opportunities, grants, and other supports to ensure that students experiencing homelessness, those in foster care, migrant and refugee students, SLIFE, and students in military families have access to a consistent and high-quality public education. |
| Emergency management guidance ([federal](https://rems.ed.gov/?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1) and [state](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/emergencyplan/default.html)) | Guidance and technical assistance for districts and 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) | Resources for authentically engaging families in their child’s education and centering families’ voices in school and district decision making. |
| MTSS resources:   * [MTSS Blueprint, Self-Assessment, and Resources](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfss/mtss/) * [Massachusetts Tools for Schools](https://matoolsforschools.com/) | MTSS represent a framework for how school districts can build the necessary systems to ensure that every student receives a high-quality educational experience. |
| Safe and supportive schools:   * [Safe and Supportive Schools Framework and Self-Reflection Tool](https://www.sassma.org/) * [Safe Schools Program for LGBTQ Students](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/lgbtq/) * [Bullying Prevention and Intervention](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/bullying/default.html) * [Rethinking Discipline Initiative](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/discipline/) | These resources can help guide school- and district-based teams to create safer and more supportive school climates and cultures that allow all students to thrive. |
| [School Wellness Initiative for Thriving Community Health (SWITCH)](https://massschoolwellness.org/) | SWITCH provides resources that support and advance wellness efforts for Massachusetts students, schools, and communities. |
| Social-emotional learning:   * [Social and Emotional Learning, and Approaches to Play and Learning (PK/K)](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.doe.mass.edu%2Fsfs%2Fearlylearning%2Fresources%2FSEL-APL-Standards.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) * [Playful Learning Institute, Preschool–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 related to supporting social-emotional learning in schools. |

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 grant resources. |
| [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 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. |
| [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. |
| [Breakfast After the Bell resources](https://www.projectbread.org/resource-directory/breakfast-after-the-bell-resources) | The Breakfast After the Bell Toolkit Series is designed to help with the launch and implementation of alternative breakfast models. |
| [Fueling the Commonwealth School Meals Newsletter](https://us14.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=d8f37d1a90dacd97f207f0b4a&id=d29c4bc847) | Short articles summarizing current events, including changes in federal/state requirements, current grant opportunities, and notable dates. |
| [Summer Eats](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) | A free-of-charge program that provides free meals to all kids and teens, ages 18 years and younger, at locations across Massachusetts during the summer months. |

## Appendix D. Enrollment, Attendance, Expenditures

Table D1. Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity, 2024-2025

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | District | Percentage of District | State | Percentage of State |
| All Students | 6,755 | 100.0% | 915,932 | 100.0% |
| American Indian or Alaska Native | 8 | 0.1% | 2,272 | 0.2% |
| Asian | 126 | 1.9% | 68,608 | 7.5% |
| Black or African American | 426 | 6.3% | 93,245 | 10.2% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 3,100 | 45.9% | 236,839 | 25.9% |
| Multi-Race, Not Hispanic or Latino | 254 | 3.8% | 42,303 | 4.6% |
| Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander | 5 | 0.1% | 800 | 0.1% |
| White | 2,836 | 42.0% | 471,865 | 51.5% |

*Note*. As of October 1, 2024.

Table D2. 2024-2025 Student Enrollment by High Needs Populations

| Group | *N*  (District) | Percentage of High Needs  (District) | Percentage of District | *N*  (State) | Percentage of High Needs  (State) | Percentage of State |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| High Needs | 4,909 | 100.0% | 72.2% | 517,093 | 100.0% | 55.8% |
| English Learners | 588 | 12.0% | 8.7% | 127,673 | 24.7% | 13.9% |
| Low Income | 4,401 | 89.7% | 65.2% | 385,161 | 74.5% | 42.1% |
| Students with Disabilities | 1,484 | 30.2% | 21.8% | 190,967 | 36.9% | 20.6% |

*Note*. As of October 1, 2024. 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 6,795; total state enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 926,057.

Table D3. Chronic Absencea Rates by Student Group, 2022-2024

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | *N* (2024) | 2022 % | 2023 % | 2024 % | State 2024 % |
| All students | 7,258 | 41.7 | 33.7 | 27.3 | 19.7 |
| African American/Black | 435 | 37.1 | 32.1 | 26.4 | 22.5 |
| Asian | 132 | 33.9 | 22.3 | 19.7 | 11.8 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 3,288 | 52.0 | 43.1 | 35.6 | 31.3 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 280 | 42.3 | 33.6 | 30.4 | 20.6 |
| Native American | 7 | -- | -- | 42.9 | 28.5 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 4 | -- | -- | -- | 24.3 |
| White | 3,112 | 32.8 | 25.1 | 18.8 | 14.4 |
| High Needs | 5,524 | 48.0 | 39.7 | 32.8 | 27.2 |
| Low Income | 5,120 | 49.2 | 41.1 | 34.0 | 30.3 |
| English Learners | 616 | 51.8 | 44.4 | 37.2 | 29.9 |
| Students w/Disabilities | 1,578 | 51.6 | 42.1 | 35.9 | 27.5 |

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

Table D4. Total Expenditures Fiscal Years, 2021-2023

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Expenditures | FY 2021 | FY 2022 | FY 2023 |
| By school committee | $86,065,290 | $88,691,753 | $106,993,674 |
| By municipality | $24,401,639 | $26,309,343 | $27,511,413 |
| Total from local appropriations | $110,466,929 | $115,001,096 | $134,505,087 |
| From revolving funds and grants | $15,574,151 | $26,841,941 | $22,972,890 |
| Total expenditures | $126,041,080 | $141,843,037 | $157,477,977 |

*Note*. Expenditures from the School Finance Dashboard sourced from [Resource Allocation and District Action Reports (RADAR)](https://www.doe.mass.edu/research/radar/default.html) last updated April 2025.

Table D5. Chapter 70 State Aid, and Net School Spending Fiscal Years, 2021-2023

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Chapter 70 aid to education program** | **FY 2021** | **FY 2022** | **FY 2023** |
| Chapter 70 state aida | $69,078,032 | $72,495,979 | $80,784,014 |
| Required local contribution | $30,903,112 | $31,307,943 | $32,109,426 |
| Required net school spendingb | $99,981,144 | $103,803,922 | $112,893,440 |
| Actual net school spending | $103,572,600 | $105,474,862 | $123,008,415 |
| Over/under required ($) | $3,591,456 | $1,670,940 | $10,114,975 |
| Over/under required (%) | 3.6% | 1.6% | 9.0% |

*Note*. Chapter 70 aid to education from Chapter 70 District Profiles sourced from [Chapter 70 Program - School Finance](https://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/chapter70/default.html) last updated August 8, 2024.

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 D6. Expenditures Per In-District Pupil, Fiscal Years 2021-2023

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Expenditure category | FY 2021 | FY 2022 | FY 2023 |
| Administration | $645 | $747 | $890 |
| Instructional leadership (district and school) | $899 | $993 | $976 |
| Teachers | $6,963 | $7,475 | $7,519 |
| Other teaching services | $1,448 | $1,612 | $2,209 |
| Professional development | $167 | $344 | $487 |
| Instructional materials, equipment, and technology | $857 | $1,191 | $1,816 |
| Guidance, counseling, and testing services | $335 | $338 | $414 |
| Pupil services | $1,854 | $2,256 | $2,645 |
| Operations and maintenance | $1,471 | $1,645 | $1,954 |
| Insurance, retirement, and other fixed costs | $2,678 | $2,736 | $2,806 |
| Total expenditures per in-district pupil | $17,318 | $19,338 | $21,716 |

*Note*. Any discrepancy between expenditures and total is because of rounding. Expenditures from the School Finance Dashboard sourced from [Resource Allocation and District Action Reports (RADAR)](https://www.doe.mass.edu/research/radar/default.html) last updated April 2025.

## 

## Appendix E. Chicopee Public Schools: Student Performance Data[[6]](#footnote-7)

[Table E1. MCAS ELA Achievement by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2024 E-2](#_Toc192156510)

[Table E2. MCAS ELA Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2024 E-2](#_Toc192156511)

[Table E3. MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2024 E-3](#_Toc192156512)

[Table E4. MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2024 E-3](#_Toc192156513)

[Table E5. MCAS Science Achievement by Student Group, Grades 5 and 8, 2022-2024 E-4](#_Toc192156514)

[Table E6. MCAS Science Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2024 E-4](#_Toc192156515)

[Table E7. MCAS ELA Achievement by Grade, 2022-2024 E-5](#_Toc192156516)

[Table E8. MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Grade, 2022-2024 E-5](#_Toc192156517)

[Table E9. MCAS Science Achievement by Grade, 2022-2024 E-5](#_Toc192156518)

[Table E10. MCAS ELA Mean Student Growth Percentile by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2024 E-6](#_Toc192156519)

[Table E11. MCAS ELA Mean Student Growth Percentile by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2024 E-6](#_Toc192156520)

[Table E12. MCAS Mathematics Mean Student Growth Percentile by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2024 E-7](#_Toc192156521)

[Table E13. MCAS Mathematics Mean Student Growth Percentile by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2024 E-7](#_Toc192156522)

[Table E14. MCAS ELA Mean Student Growth Percentile by Grade, 2022-2024 E-8](#_Toc192156523)

[Table E15. MCAS Mathematics Mean Student Growth Percentile by Grade, 2022-2024 E-8](#_Toc192156524)

[Table E16. Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023 E-8](#_Toc192156525)

[Table E17. Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Student Group, 2020-2022 E-9](#_Toc192156526)

[Table E18. Annual Dropout Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023 E-9](#_Toc192156527)

[Table E19. In-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023 E-10](#_Toc192156528)

[Table E20. Out-of-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023 E-10](#_Toc192156529)

[Table E21. Advanced Coursework Completion Rates by Student Group, 2022-2024 E-11](#_Toc192156530)

[Table E22. Accountability Results, 2024 E-12](#_Toc192156531)

Table E1. MCAS ELA Achievement by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2024

| Group | # Included (2024) | % M/E 2022 | % M/E 2023 | % M/E 2024 | % M/E 2024 State | % PME 2022 | % PME 2023 | % PME 2024 | % PME 2024 State | % NM 2022 | % NM 2023 | % NM 2024 | % NM 2024 State |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| All | 2,963 | 27 | 29 | 27 | 39 | 48 | 44 | 46 | 40 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 21 |
| African American/Black | 182 | 20 | 21 | 23 | 24 | 49 | 51 | 46 | 46 | 31 | 28 | 32 | 31 |
| Asian | 49 | 43 | 46 | 35 | 62 | 45 | 41 | 43 | 29 | 12 | 13 | 22 | 10 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 1,325 | 20 | 22 | 21 | 20 | 50 | 47 | 48 | 44 | 30 | 31 | 31 | 36 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 110 | 37 | 39 | 35 | 46 | 40 | 37 | 44 | 37 | 23 | 23 | 21 | 17 |
| Native American | 1 | — | — | — | 25 | — | — | — | 43 | — | — | — | 32 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 2 | — | — | — | 39 | — | — | — | 39 | — | — | — | 21 |
| White | 1,294 | 32 | 37 | 33 | 47 | 48 | 41 | 44 | 40 | 20 | 22 | 23 | 13 |
| High needs | 2,272 | 21 | 23 | 21 | 22 | 49 | 45 | 46 | 45 | 30 | 32 | 33 | 33 |
| Low income | 2,103 | 22 | 24 | 22 | 21 | 50 | 45 | 46 | 45 | 28 | 31 | 32 | 34 |
| ELs and former ELs | 369 | 15 | 15 | 11 | 17 | 47 | 43 | 46 | 43 | 38 | 42 | 43 | 41 |
| Students w/disabilities | 652 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 11 | 34 | 34 | 33 | 40 | 63 | 63 | 62 | 50 |

Table E2. MCAS ELA Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2024

| Group | # Included (2024) | % M/E 2022 | % M/E 2023 | % M/E 2024 | % M/E 2024 State | % PME 2022 | % PME 2023 | % PME 2024 | % PME 2024 State | % NM 2022 | % NM 2023 | % NM 2024 | % NM 2024 State |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| All | 562 | 45 | 45 | 43 | 57 | 46 | 41 | 39 | 31 | 8 | 14 | 17 | 12 |
| African American/Black | 24 | 53 | 33 | 42 | 42 | 41 | 43 | 33 | 40 | 6 | 24 | 25 | 18 |
| Asian | 7 | 57 | 64 | -- | 78 | 21 | 18 | -- | 16 | 21 | 18 | -- | 5 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 263 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 36 | 51 | 45 | 40 | 38 | 12 | 18 | 21 | 26 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 11 | 58 | 48 | 55 | 61 | 29 | 39 | 36 | 30 | 13 | 13 | 9 | 9 |
| Native American | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 48 | -- | -- | -- | 37 | -- | -- | -- | 14 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | -- | -- | -- | -- | 58 | -- | -- | -- | 34 | -- | -- | -- | 8 |
| White | 256 | 50 | 52 | 47 | 65 | 46 | 38 | 39 | 28 | 4 | 10 | 14 | 7 |
| High needs | 385 | 36 | 33 | 35 | 37 | 52 | 46 | 42 | 41 | 12 | 20 | 24 | 23 |
| Low income | 360 | 37 | 34 | 37 | 38 | 52 | 46 | 41 | 40 | 10 | 20 | 23 | 23 |
| ELs and former ELs | 43 | 12 | 9 | 9 | 14 | 52 | 39 | 37 | 38 | 36 | 52 | 53 | 48 |
| Students w/disabilities | 96 | 8 | 9 | 7 | 21 | 62 | 39 | 43 | 45 | 30 | 52 | 50 | 34 |

Table E3. MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2024

| Group | # Included (2024) | % M/E 2022 | % M/E 2023 | % M/E 2024 | % M/E 2024 State | % PME 2022 | % PME 2023 | % PME 2024 | % PME 2024 State | % NM 2022 | % NM 2023 | % NM 2024 | % NM 2024 State |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| All | 2,961 | 25 | 26 | 29 | 41 | 52 | 50 | 48 | 42 | 22 | 23 | 23 | 18 |
| African American/Black | 182 | 13 | 13 | 20 | 22 | 55 | 58 | 45 | 49 | 32 | 29 | 36 | 30 |
| Asian | 49 | 53 | 61 | 43 | 71 | 41 | 28 | 39 | 23 | 6 | 11 | 18 | 6 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 1,321 | 18 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 55 | 53 | 53 | 48 | 27 | 29 | 28 | 32 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 109 | 26 | 27 | 35 | 47 | 53 | 52 | 44 | 37 | 21 | 21 | 21 | 16 |
| Native American | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 27 | -- | -- | -- | 46 | -- | -- | -- | 27 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 2 | -- | -- | -- | 39 | -- | -- | -- | 41 | -- | -- | -- | 20 |
| White | 1,297 | 33 | 35 | 38 | 49 | 50 | 47 | 45 | 40 | 17 | 18 | 16 | 11 |
| High needs | 2,270 | 20 | 20 | 22 | 23 | 53 | 52 | 50 | 48 | 27 | 28 | 28 | 28 |
| Low income | 2,101 | 21 | 21 | 22 | 21 | 54 | 52 | 51 | 49 | 25 | 27 | 27 | 30 |
| ELs and former ELs | 367 | 18 | 17 | 16 | 21 | 51 | 48 | 51 | 46 | 30 | 35 | 32 | 33 |
| Students w/disabilities | 651 | 5 | 5 | 8 | 13 | 39 | 38 | 36 | 43 | 56 | 57 | 56 | 44 |

Table E4. MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2024

| Group | # Included (2024) | % M/E 2022 | % M/E 2023 | % M/E 2024 | % M/E 2024 State | % PME 2022 | % PME 2023 | % PME 2024 | % PME 2024 State | % NM 2022 | % NM 2023 | % NM 2024 | % NM 2024 State |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| All | 558 | 37 | 33 | 28 | 48 | 47 | 52 | 51 | 39 | 16 | 15 | 22 | 13 |
| African American/Black | 22 | 24 | 19 | 14 | 27 | 65 | 67 | 59 | 52 | 12 | 14 | 27 | 21 |
| Asian | 8 | 64 | 45 | -- | 79 | 7 | 45 | -- | 17 | 29 | 9 | -- | 4 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 259 | 25 | 22 | 19 | 25 | 54 | 56 | 56 | 50 | 21 | 22 | 26 | 25 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 12 | 38 | 30 | 33 | 51 | 42 | 60 | 42 | 39 | 21 | 10 | 25 | 10 |
| Native American | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 33 | -- | -- | -- | 54 | -- | -- | -- | 13 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | -- | -- | -- | -- | 52 | -- | -- | -- | 39 | -- | -- | -- | 10 |
| White | 256 | 47 | 45 | 38 | 58 | 42 | 46 | 45 | 35 | 11 | 9 | 18 | 7 |
| High needs | 381 | 26 | 22 | 20 | 27 | 52 | 57 | 52 | 51 | 22 | 20 | 28 | 23 |
| Low income | 355 | 27 | 23 | 20 | 27 | 52 | 58 | 53 | 50 | 21 | 19 | 26 | 23 |
| ELs and former ELs | 45 | 11 | 6 | 13 | 14 | 41 | 59 | 31 | 46 | 48 | 34 | 56 | 40 |
| Students w/disabilities | 93 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 14 | 48 | 45 | 40 | 51 | 49 | 49 | 56 | 35 |

Table E5. MCAS Science Achievement by Student Group, Grades 5 and 8, 2022-2024

| Group | # Included (2024) | % M/E 2022 | % M/E 2023 | % M/E 2024 | % M/E 2024 State | % PME 2022 | % PME 2023 | % PME 2024 | % PME 2024 State | % NM 2022 | % NM 2023 | % NM 2024 | % NM 2024 State |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| All | 972 | 32 | 33 | 36 | 42 | 45 | 45 | 41 | 38 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 20 |
| African American/Black | 56 | 13 | 14 | 20 | 21 | 62 | 61 | 41 | 46 | 25 | 25 | 39 | 33 |
| Asian | 21 | 36 | 47 | 62 | 64 | 50 | 42 | 14 | 26 | 14 | 11 | 24 | 9 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 427 | 24 | 23 | 25 | 21 | 48 | 48 | 48 | 43 | 28 | 29 | 28 | 36 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 26 | 32 | 41 | 46 | 49 | 36 | 41 | 38 | 34 | 32 | 18 | 15 | 17 |
| Native American | -- | -- | -- | -- | 26 | -- | -- | -- | 43 | -- | -- | -- | 32 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | -- | -- | -- | -- | 43 | -- | -- | -- | 34 | -- | -- | -- | 23 |
| White | 442 | 43 | 44 | 47 | 51 | 41 | 39 | 35 | 36 | 17 | 17 | 18 | 12 |
| High needs | 758 | 24 | 25 | 29 | 24 | 48 | 48 | 42 | 44 | 28 | 27 | 29 | 32 |
| Low income | 704 | 25 | 27 | 30 | 22 | 48 | 48 | 42 | 44 | 27 | 25 | 28 | 34 |
| ELs and former ELs | 117 | 14 | 18 | 17 | 17 | 47 | 49 | 38 | 41 | 39 | 33 | 45 | 42 |
| Students w/disabilities | 217 | 6 | 5 | 11 | 15 | 37 | 43 | 36 | 38 | 56 | 52 | 53 | 46 |

Table E6. MCAS Science Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2024

| Group | # Included (2024) | % M/E 2022 | % M/E 2023 | % M/E 2024 | % M/E 2024 State | % PME 2022 | % PME 2023 | % PME 2024 | % PME 2024 State | % NM 2022 | % NM 2023 | % NM 2024 | % NM 2024 State |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| All | 499 | 32 | 27 | 33 | 49 | 52 | 54 | 46 | 40 | 16 | 18 | 21 | 11 |
| African American/Black | 19 | 30 | 19 | 26 | 28 | 60 | 44 | 47 | 53 | 10 | 38 | 26 | 19 |
| Asian | 6 | 46 | -- | -- | 77 | 23 | -- | -- | 19 | 31 | -- | -- | 5 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 222 | 18 | 18 | 26 | 26 | 59 | 60 | 47 | 52 | 23 | 23 | 27 | 22 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 12 | 38 | 35 | 42 | 53 | 46 | 53 | 33 | 37 | 17 | 12 | 25 | 10 |
| Native American | -- | -- | -- | -- | 38 | -- | -- | -- | 53 | -- | -- | -- | 10 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | -- | -- | -- | -- | 47 | -- | -- | -- | 45 | -- | -- | -- | 8 |
| White | 240 | 42 | 35 | 40 | 58 | 48 | 51 | 44 | 36 | 10 | 14 | 15 | 6 |
| High needs | 331 | 24 | 18 | 24 | 28 | 54 | 57 | 48 | 52 | 22 | 25 | 28 | 20 |
| Low income | 309 | 25 | 19 | 24 | 28 | 54 | 57 | 48 | 51 | 21 | 24 | 28 | 20 |
| ELs and former ELs | 29 | 3 | 10 | 7 | 13 | 52 | 50 | 52 | 48 | 45 | 40 | 41 | 39 |
| Students w/disabilities | 84 | 8 | 3 | 10 | 18 | 41 | 49 | 36 | 52 | 51 | 48 | 55 | 31 |

Table E7. MCAS ELA Achievement by Grade, 2022-2024

| Grade | # Included (2024) | % M/E 2022 | % M/E 2023 | % M/E 2024 | % M/E 2024 State | % PME 2022 | % PME 2023 | % PME 2024 | % PME 2024 State | % NM 2022 | % NM 2023 | % NM 2024 | % NM 2024 State |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 3 | 472 | 29 | 30 | 33 | 42 | 52 | 51 | 49 | 40 | 19 | 19 | 19 | 18 |
| 4 | 518 | 24 | 26 | 27 | 37 | 55 | 55 | 51 | 45 | 20 | 19 | 23 | 19 |
| 5 | 475 | 30 | 35 | 27 | 38 | 56 | 47 | 55 | 46 | 15 | 18 | 19 | 16 |
| 6 | 486 | 26 | 25 | 27 | 40 | 42 | 37 | 39 | 35 | 33 | 38 | 34 | 25 |
| 7 | 511 | 25 | 25 | 22 | 36 | 41 | 43 | 44 | 42 | 34 | 32 | 33 | 22 |
| 8 | 501 | 26 | 35 | 27 | 43 | 45 | 33 | 38 | 34 | 29 | 32 | 36 | 24 |
| 3-8 | 2,963 | 27 | 29 | 27 | 39 | 48 | 44 | 46 | 40 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 21 |
| 10 | 562 | 45 | 45 | 43 | 57 | 46 | 41 | 39 | 31 | 8 | 14 | 17 | 12 |

Table E8. MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Grade, 2022-2024

| Grade | # Included (2024) | % M/E 2022 | % M/E 2023 | % M/E 2024 | % M/E 2024 State | % PME 2022 | % PME 2023 | % PME 2024 | % PME 2024 State | % NM 2022 | % NM 2023 | % NM 2024 | % NM 2024 State |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 3 | 471 | 31 | 26 | 29 | 44 | 42 | 50 | 45 | 35 | 27 | 24 | 26 | 20 |
| 4 | 516 | 34 | 36 | 34 | 46 | 46 | 45 | 46 | 38 | 20 | 19 | 20 | 16 |
| 5 | 476 | 33 | 35 | 37 | 40 | 57 | 55 | 52 | 46 | 10 | 10 | 11 | 14 |
| 6 | 488 | 26 | 24 | 29 | 40 | 53 | 52 | 50 | 43 | 20 | 24 | 21 | 17 |
| 7 | 510 | 15 | 20 | 19 | 37 | 56 | 46 | 53 | 44 | 30 | 34 | 29 | 19 |
| 8 | 500 | 15 | 19 | 23 | 38 | 58 | 52 | 45 | 42 | 27 | 29 | 32 | 19 |
| 3-8 | 2,961 | 25 | 26 | 29 | 41 | 52 | 50 | 48 | 42 | 22 | 23 | 23 | 18 |
| 10 | 558 | 37 | 33 | 28 | 48 | 47 | 52 | 51 | 39 | 16 | 15 | 22 | 13 |

Table E9. MCAS Science Achievement by Grade, 2022-2024

| Grade | # Included (2024) | % M/E 2022 | % M/E 2023 | % M/E 2024 | % M/E 2024 State | % PME 2022 | % PME 2023 | % PME 2024 | % PME 2024 State | % NM 2022 | % NM 2023 | % NM 2024 | % NM 2024 State |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 5 | 476 | 32 | 33 | 38 | 45 | 49 | 48 | 42 | 36 | 20 | 18 | 20 | 20 |
| 8 | 496 | 33 | 32 | 34 | 39 | 42 | 41 | 39 | 41 | 25 | 27 | 27 | 20 |
| 5 and 8 | 972 | 32 | 33 | 36 | 42 | 45 | 45 | 41 | 38 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 20 |
| 10 | 499 | 32 | 27 | 33 | 49 | 52 | 54 | 46 | 40 | 16 | 18 | 21 | 11 |

Table E10. MCAS ELA Mean Student Growth Percentile by Student Group, Grades 3-8,   
2022-2024

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # Included (2024) | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | State (2024) |
| All students | 2,219 | 47 | 48 | 50 | 50 |
| African American/Black | 121 | 44 | 47 | 50 | 49 |
| Asian | 36 | 61 | 52 | 52 | 57 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 975 | 46 | 46 | 49 | 48 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 78 | 51 | 46 | 49 | 51 |
| Native American | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 48 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 51 |
| White | 1,007 | 47 | 49 | 50 | 50 |
| High needs | 1,658 | 45 | 47 | 49 | 48 |
| Low income | 1,539 | 46 | 47 | 49 | 47 |
| ELs and former ELs | 235 | 48 | 49 | 51 | 50 |
| Students w/disabilities | 435 | 40 | 42 | 45 | 45 |

Table E11. MCAS ELA Mean Student Growth Percentile by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2024

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # Included (2024) | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | State (2024) |
| All students | 465 | 44 | 50 | 49 | 50 |
| African American/Black | 20 | -- | -- | 51 | 48 |
| Asian | 5 | -- | -- | -- | 55 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 218 | 45 | 48 | 49 | 47 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 9 | 43 | 46 | -- | 50 |
| Native American | -- | -- | -- | -- | 51 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | -- | -- | -- | -- | 49 |
| White | 213 | 42 | 52 | 48 | 51 |
| High needs | 316 | 43 | 47 | 48 | 47 |
| Low income | 295 | 43 | 46 | 48 | 47 |
| ELs and former ELs | 22 | 48 | 38 | 46 | 48 |
| Students w/disabilities | 75 | 39 | 41 | 45 | 44 |

Table E12. MCAS Mathematics Mean Student Growth Percentile by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2024

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # Included (2024) | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | State (2024) |
| All students | 2,227 | 48 | 48 | 49 | 50 |
| African American/Black | 122 | 44 | 44 | 45 | 49 |
| Asian | 36 | 54 | 55 | 56 | 58 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 972 | 47 | 45 | 46 | 48 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 77 | 46 | 50 | 52 | 50 |
| Native American | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 48 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 52 |
| White | 1,018 | 49 | 50 | 51 | 50 |
| High needs | 1,666 | 46 | 47 | 47 | 48 |
| Low income | 1,546 | 47 | 47 | 47 | 47 |
| ELs and former ELs | 246 | 46 | 47 | 52 | 50 |
| Students w/disabilities | 433 | 40 | 45 | 46 | 46 |

Table E13. MCAS Mathematics Mean Student Growth Percentile by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2024

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # Included (2024) | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | State (2024) |
| All students | 466 | 39 | 44 | 43 | 50 |
| African American/Black | 19 | -- | -- | -- | 47 |
| Asian | 6 | -- | -- | -- | 55 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 216 | 38 | 38 | 41 | 45 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 10 | 35 | -- | -- | 49 |
| Native American | -- | -- | -- | -- | 50 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | -- | -- | -- | -- | 50 |
| White | 215 | 40 | 50 | 45 | 52 |
| High needs | 316 | 38 | 39 | 42 | 47 |
| Low income | 294 | 38 | 39 | 42 | 46 |
| ELs and former ELs | 24 | 41 | -- | 36 | 46 |
| Students w/disabilities | 78 | 39 | 31 | 34 | 47 |

Table E14. MCAS ELA Mean Student Growth Percentile by Grade, 2022-2024

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade | # Included (2024) | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | State (2024) |
| 3 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 4 | 463 | 49 | 49 | 54 | 50 |
| 5 | 421 | 48 | 52 | 51 | 50 |
| 6 | 431 | 45 | 39 | 46 | 50 |
| 7 | 461 | 44 | 46 | 49 | 50 |
| 8 | 443 | 47 | 52 | 48 | 50 |
| 3-8 | 2,219 | 47 | 48 | 50 | 50 |
| 10 | 465 | 44 | 50 | 49 | 50 |

Table E15. MCAS Mathematics Mean Student Growth Percentile by Grade, 2022-2024

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade | # Included (2024) | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | State (2024) |
| 3 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 4 | 468 | 57 | 50 | 52 | 50 |
| 5 | 421 | 59 | 59 | 58 | 50 |
| 6 | 432 | 40 | 37 | 45 | 50 |
| 7 | 458 | 42 | 42 | 41 | 50 |
| 8 | 448 | 39 | 52 | 48 | 50 |
| 3-8 | 2,227 | 48 | 48 | 49 | 50 |
| 10 | 466 | 39 | 44 | 43 | 50 |

Table E16. Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # Included (2023) | 2021 (%) | 2022 (%) | 2023 (%) | State 2023 (%) |
| All | 503 | 87.3 | 85.9 | 86.9 | 89.2 |
| African American/Black | 24 | 88.0 | 73.7 | 91.7 | 85.6 |
| Asian | 8 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 87.5 | 95.2 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 198 | 82.6 | 79.6 | 81.3 | 78.9 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 17 | 72.7 | 77.8 | 94.1 | 89.3 |
| Native American | -- |  | -- | -- | 82.5 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | -- | -- | -- | -- | 89.9 |
| White | 256 | 89.5 | 90.7 | 90.2 | 93.0 |
| High needs | 398 | 85.0 | 81.7 | 83.4 | 82.8 |
| Low income | 385 | 84.2 | 81.3 | 83.1 | 82.2 |
| English learners | 31 | 87.2 | 86.4 | 77.4 | 67.3 |
| Students w/disabilities | 90 | 82.1 | 75.3 | 70.0 | 76.4 |

Table E17. Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Student Group, 2020-2022

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # Included (2022) | 2020 (%) | 2021 (%) | 2022 (%) | State 2022 (%) |
| All | 516 | 87.5 | 88.7 | 88.8 | 91.9 |
| African American/Black | 19 | 91.7 | 88.0 | 84.2 | 90.1 |
| Asian | 7 | 87.5 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 96.9 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 191 | 78.2 | 84.2 | 82.7 | 84.4 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 9 | 90.0 | 72.7 | 77.8 | 90.8 |
| Native American | -- | -- |  | -- | 87.1 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | -- | -- | -- | -- | 81.3 |
| White | 290 | 93.1 | 91.0 | 93.1 | 94.4 |
| High needs | 372 | 82.3 | 86.6 | 85.2 | 86.8 |
| Low income | 363 | 81.7 | 85.9 | 84.8 | 86.3 |
| English learners | 22 | 78.1 | 89.7 | 90.9 | 78.0 |
| Students w/disabilities | 85 | 76.0 | 83.9 | 82.4 | 81.8 |

Table E18. Annual Dropout Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # Included (2023) | 2021 (%) | 2022 (%) | 2023 (%) | State 2023 (%) |
| All | 2,185 | 1.7 | 3.5 | 3.8 | 2.1 |
| African American/Black | 90 | 1.3 | 5.3 | 3.3 | 2.8 |
| Asian | 42 | 1.8 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.6 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 938 | 2.3 | 4.8 | 4.5 | 4.4 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 78 | 3.3 | 2.7 | 5.1 | 1.9 |
| Native American | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 4.1 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | -- | -- | -- | -- | 3.9 |
| White | 1,036 | 1.2 | 2.6 | 3.2 | 1.1 |
| High needs | 1,438 | 2.4 | 4.9 | 4.9 | 3.5 |
| Low income | 1,338 | -- | 5.1 | 5.1 | 3.8 |
| English learners | 99 | 1.1 | 7.4 | 7.1 | 8.0 |
| Students w/disabilities | 345 | 1.6 | 7.1 | 6.7 | 3.0 |

Table E19. In-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2022-2024

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # Included (2024) | 2022 (%) | 2023 (%) | 2024 (%) | State 2024 (%) |
| All | 7,267 | 2.9 | 2.8 | 2.8 | 1.4 |
| African American/Black | 441 | 4.7 | 2.7 | 4.5 | 2.1 |
| Asian | 132 | -- | -- | -- | 0.3 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 3,296 | 3.5 | 3.7 | 3.2 | 1.9 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 278 | 3.9 | 4.5 | 3.6 | 1.6 |
| Native American | 7 | -- | -- | -- | 1.8 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 4 | -- | -- | -- | 1.9 |
| White | 3,109 | 2.2 | 1.9 | 2.1 | 1.1 |
| High needs | 5,544 | 3.3 | 3.4 | 3.3 | 1.9 |
| Low income | 5,128 | 3.3 | 3.4 | 3.5 | 2.1 |
| English learners | 629 | 0.9 | 1.8 | 1.6 | 1.4 |
| Students w/disabilities | 1,605 | 4.4 | 4.1 | 3.4 | 2.4 |

Table E20. Out-of-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2022-2024

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # Included (2024) | 2022 (%) | 2023 (%) | 2024 (%) | State 2024 (%) |
| All | 7,267 | 6.1 | 4.6 | 4.3 | 2.4 |
| African American/Black | 441 | 7.4 | 6.6 | 6.3 | 4.6 |
| Asian | 132 | -- | -- | -- | 0.6 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 3,296 | 8.0 | 5.5 | 5.6 | 3.8 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 278 | 7.4 | 5.7 | 4.3 | 2.6 |
| Native American | 7 | -- | -- | -- | 3.5 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 4 | -- | -- | -- | 2.5 |
| White | 3,109 | 4.3 | 3.6 | 2.7 | 1.5 |
| High needs | 5,544 | 7.1 | 5.7 | 5.1 | 3.6 |
| Low income | 5,128 | 7.3 | 5.8 | 5.2 | 4.0 |
| English learners | 629 | 4.1 | 2.9 | 3.5 | 2.6 |
| Students w/disabilities | 1,605 | 9.0 | 6.8 | 6.0 | 4.5 |

Table E21. Advanced Coursework Completion Rates by Student Group, 2022-2024

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # Included (2024) | 2022 (%) | 2023 (%) | 2024 (%) | State 2024 (%) |
| All | 1,050 | 36.6 | 41.2 | 46.7 | 67.2 |
| African American/Black | 40 | 35.9 | 54.8 | 35.0 | 58.2 |
| Asian | 25 | 41.2 | 54.5 | 64.0 | 86.4 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 448 | 26.5 | 32.5 | 39.1 | 53.7 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 44 | 34.6 | 51.3 | 43.2 | 68.4 |
| Native American | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 57.1 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | -- | -- | -- | -- | 59.8 |
| White | 492 | 43.7 | 45.7 | 54.1 | 71.9 |
| High needs | 693 | 26.1 | 31.7 | 36.4 | 52.0 |
| Low income | 645 | 26.7 | 33.0 | 36.3 | 53.1 |
| English learners | 56 | 6.7 | 16.7 | 16.1 | 31.8 |
| Students w/disabilities | 149 | 6.0 | 6.6 | 19.5 | 38.5 |

Table E22. Accountability Results, 2024

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| School | Cumulative Progress Toward Improvement Targets (%) | Percentile | Overall Classification | Reason for Classification |
| District | 44 | --- | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Moderate progress toward targets |
| Szetela Early Childhood Center | -- | -- | Insufficient data | Insufficient data |
| Barry | 52 | 40 | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Substantial progress toward targets |
| Belcher | -- | -- | Insufficient data | Insufficient data |
| Bowe | 58 | 17 | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Substantial progress toward targets |
| Bowie | 71 | 64 | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Substantial progress toward targets |
| Fairview Elementary | 47 | 16 | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Moderate progress toward targets |
| Gen John J. Stefanik | 66 | 47 | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Substantial progress toward targets |
| Lambert-Lavoie | 50 | 41 | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Substantial progress toward targets |
| Litwin | 55 | 45 | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Substantial progress toward targets |
| Streiber Memorial School | 63 | 54 | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Substantial progress toward targets |
| Bellamy Middle | 34 | 13 | Requiring assistance or intervention | Low student group performance: African American/Black students |
| Dupont Middle | 55 | 15 | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Substantial progress toward targets |
| Chicopee Comprehensive High School | 42 | 30 | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Moderate progress toward targets |
| Chicopee High | 25 | 7 | Requiring assistance or intervention | Among the lowest performing 10% of schools |
| Chicopee Academy | -- | -- | Requiring assistance or intervention | Low participation rate: low income, Hispanic/Latino, High Needs, and all students |

1. For more information on the Teachstone CLASS protocol, visit <https://teachstone.com/class/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. CURATE: CUrriculum RAtings by TEachers. See <https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate>. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. DESE’s District Standards and Indicators are available at <https://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/district-review/district-standards-indicators.docx>. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Districts with similar demographics and similar wealth are based on [Resource Allocation and District Action Reports (RADAR)](https://www.doe.mass.edu/research/radar/) (retrieved February 2025).  [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. 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-6)
6. Column labels for Tables E1-E9: M/E=Percent meeting or exceeding expectations, PME=Partially meeting expectations, NM= Not meeting expectations [↑](#footnote-ref-7)