# Fall River Public Schools

Comprehensive District Review Report

November 2024

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Office of District Reviews and Monitoring

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Interim 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 Fall River Public Schools (hereafter, Fall River) in November 2024. 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.[[1]](#footnote-2)

In addition, to collect data on instructional practices, eight observers, who focused primarily on instruction in the classroom, visited Fall River during the weeks of November 18 and November 25. The observers conducted 192 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,[[2]](#footnote-3) guided all classroom observations in the district. These observations used the three grade-band levels of the CLASS protocols: K-3, Upper Elementary (4-5), and Secondary (6‑12).

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

Fall River is led by a new superintendent and assistant superintendent and chief academic officer, both of whom worked previously in the district in other roles. District leaders have established several effective distributed leadership structures, including senior staff meetings, “core four” meetings, district instructional leadership team (ILT) meetings, principal meetings, and empowered ILTs at each building. In Fall River, working relationships between the school committee and district leaders are in the early stages and can sometimes be tense; building rapport between the two is an area for growth. Additionally, at the time of the district review, teachers characterized their relationships with leaders as more tense than usual due to contract negotiations. Improving working relationships between the teachers’ association and school committee is also an area for growth. The school committee is composed of multiple subcommittees to fulfill their responsibilities; school committee agendas and video recordings were publicly available on the district’s website, but minutes were not. Leaders were mixed on whether Fall River has established representative school councils, including school councils at all schools, though it is a common stakeholder engagement goal. Many school leaders and staff also reported that school councils are inconsistent across the schools and not regularly involved in school policy decisions.

At the time of the district review, the district did not have a current strategic plan. The district has several other current plans, including a District Instructional Prioritization Plan for the 2024-2025 school year, developed in partnership with DESE’s Statewide Systems of Support (SSoS) office, and Student Opportunity Act Plan. Additionally, each school has a current improvement plan that is updated annually with family input from school councils. These plans include consistent priorities across schools as well as the flexibility to address the unique needs and contexts of each building. The district is focusing on implementation, monitoring, and continuous improvement and has established formal processes to assess its effectiveness and communicate progress, including through data dives and school walkthroughs. To monitor the implementation of the school improvement plans on an ongoing basis, the district has prioritized the creation and execution of short-term goals in each school. The district actively partners with school leaders to monitor progress. Together, district leaders and school leaders collaborate to support students and improve outcomes.

District staff identified few strategies for recruiting and retaining diverse leaders to ensure stability during leadership turnover. When possible and appropriate, the district makes an effort to hire internally, as indicated by several new district leaders. The district is also working to improve efforts to engage the broader community, such as by soliciting parent feedback on district priorities through surveys. However, there was no clear process for incorporating the data from these surveys into decision-making processes. Additionally, parents reported the desire to be more involved with district decision-making.

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

District leaders described an instructional vision for the district, although school leaders and teachers were unaware of this vision. Despite this, the district has clearly defined priorities outlined in the District Instructional Prioritization Plan. To monitor progress toward meeting these priorities and to determine the effectiveness of improvement efforts, the district leverages each school’s ILT. Further, the district supports each school’s ILT to ensure they are effective structures that support school improvement.

Over the past several years, the district has prioritized purchasing and implementing high-quality instructional materials. Although most curricular materials have been in place for several years, the district has a comprehensive process in place for reviewing and adopting new curricula, including reviewing CURATE and EdReports ratings, completing an equity protocol, and piloting materials for at least one year across multiple staff. With most curricula in place, the district is focusing on supporting teachers in their implementation of instructional materials. The district has a variety of formal structures to support teachers, including training and coaching by curriculum publishers and regular professional learning communities. Yet teachers described concerns about curricular adaptations and insufficient time in certain academic blocks to follow the district’s pacing guidance.

Fall River is dedicated to providing students with equitable access to courses, particularly English Learners and Students with Disabilities. Additionally, the district is working to improve its multitiered systems of support (MTSS) using a grant provided by DESE. As part of the MTSS system, the high school utilizes a collaborative teaming structure whereby students are regularly actively involved in decision making about the supports they receive. All schools have dedicated time during the day to provide students with interventions and supports. The district also places a strong emphasis on supporting historically underserved students by providing the individualized supports and services they need and using data to monitor outcomes and adjust as needed. However, there are some barriers to accessing opportunities for English Learners and Students with Disabilities. Required English as a second language courses or other interventions can conflict with specials/unified arts opportunities (e.g., music, chorus), limiting English Learners’ ability to participate. For Students with Disabilities, ensuring that students receive appropriate supports in the least restrictive environment, are served by credentialed staff, and have equitable access to a high-quality education are barriers.

The district offers a wide range of opportunities to take classes beyond core academic subjects, allowing students to explore their interests and passions. However, parents are not always aware of the opportunities available to their child, particularly at the high school level. In classroom instruction, Fall River supports teachers in implementing evidence-based instructional practices by providing professional development, offering instructional coaching, and conducting walkthroughs on a regular basis.

### [Assessment](#_Assessment)

Fall River utilizes a variety of data, including both academic and nonacademic information for each student. To triangulate these various data sources, the district utilizes online platforms including DnA for academic data and Educlimber for nonacademic data. However, teachers identified several concerns about the quality, pacing, and alignment of the district benchmarks that negatively impact their usefulness for driving instruction. To support data-based decision making across all schools, the district supports schools in completing multiple data dives per year to inform their short-term action plans. The district has also implemented a structured data inquiry process to identify and address equity gaps across all schools. District leaders have established many formal structures to support data use across the district and schools, including professional learning communities, professional development, coaching, and observation and feedback cycles, which are crucial to gauging progress toward schools’ short-term goals.

Fall River expects teachers to communicate with families about student performance and they have systems and processes in place for this communication. Teachers utilize a variety of methods to communicate about student progress toward grade-level standards, including report cards, Parent Square, Aspen, and Google Classroom, and parents had positive impressions of these communication methods. The district also supports students in taking ownership of their own learning by having them set academic goals. Teachers then check in with students on their progress toward attaining these goals throughout the school year.

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

Fall River’s human resources department is led by a new executive director of human resources who started in July 2024. The human resources department supports the hiring and onboarding of new staff, resolving staff disputes, and maintaining staff records, although the office lacks documentation of its standard operating procedures. Furthermore, the district does not currently have effective policies and procedures to recruit and hire new staff and lacks a teacher and school leader retention strategy. Given the district’s staffing challenges, some new hires sometimes require emergency waivers because they do not have the appropriate credentials or licensures; supporting staff and new hires in attaining appropriate credentials is an area of growth. Lastly, there can be a lengthy period between when a candidate accepts a position and when the onboarding process begins, which sometimes results in the district losing candidates and is a barrier to hiring.

District records suggest that school-level evaluators consistently complete teacher evaluations. A review of evaluations indicates that teacher evaluations consistently include SMART goals, multiple sources of evidence, and feedback for each standard. Although teacher evaluations are thoroughly completed, district records suggest that administrator evaluations do not consistently articulate areas for improvement, which are important for supporting school improvement. The district offers a variety of professional development opportunities to staff that are ongoing, evidence-based, data-informed, and relevant. These professional opportunities address general topics important for all and differentiated topics that address the needs of specific staff roles. However, experienced teachers reported the need for more targeted professional development that meets their specific learning needs. The district also has a new staff mentoring program and recently expanded this program to ensure that staff hired midyear would still be assigned to mentors. Staff praised how the district addressed this need within the mentoring program.

### [Student Support](#_Student_Support)

Fall River prioritizes providing a safe and supportive school environment for its students and staff, with an emphasis on improving student attendance and promoting positive behavior approaches in all schools. The district has a robust approach to addressing student absenteeism, which includes a variety of support staff responsible for student attendance; implementing individualized attendance plans and incentives; conducting home visits; and purchasing vehicles for school staff to bring students to school if needed. At the high school level, the district has implemented supportive programming for students struggling with substance abuse. Despite having student representatives on the school committee, members would like more opportunities for student representatives to exercise their voice and leadership on the committee.

The district offers health and physical education, aligned with the Massachusetts Comprehensive Health and Physical Education Framework, although offerings are inconsistent across grades. To identify students with behavioral or mental health concerns, the district uses a variety of tools and screeners, including administering the Satchel Pulse universal screener to all students in Kindergarten through Grade 12. The district partners with various community organizations, proactively connects families with these supports, and annually reviews each partnership to ensure meeting needs as intended. The district also has community liaisons at each school who are responsible for maintaining community partnerships and assisting families in accessing resources. However, the district does not have an active English Learner Parent Advisory Council (ELPAC), and participation in its Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) is limited.

The district is working to improve its MTSS framework and is leveraging the GLEAM grant to help build strong tiered systems. Additionally, each school has collaborative teaming structures through which students are connected with academic and nonacademic supports.

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

The Finance Office and Facilities and Operations Office in Fall River efficiently manage various operations as well as financial services. Although there are enough staff for these offices to complete the responsibilities, district leaders identified a need to continue training existing members and hire qualified staff with financial expertise. The district utilizes MUNIS cash management to monitor and control resources, including managing financial records, procurement records, invoices, and purchase orders. The district has a transparent budgeting process, with community involvement, detailed timelines, and public notices of meetings, and district leaders regularly communicate about the budget to the school committee. However, despite some opportunities for feedback, the district is looking to engage families more purposefully in the budget process and could edit its budget book to be more accessible to the general public. The district makes effective use of state and federal grants but has generally not met net school spending requirements in recent history.

The district’s Operations Office manages all operational elements, including facilities maintenance, transportation, food services, and information technology. The district supports technology use among staff and students, through technology facilitators and Chromebooks for every student. However, the district also does not currently have a preventative maintenance plan. Additionally, specific city and district requirements slow down the district’s ability to pay vendors for services rendered.

The district has a newly adopted, five-year capital plan that describes future district capital needs, based on future enrollment projections and facility assessments, and incorporates input from district and community stakeholders. This year, the district made two major capital improvement investments: the opening of an early education school for three- and four-year olds and Westall Elementary School, a neighborhood school. The district prioritized these larger capital improvement investments to address increases in student enrollment and declines in available spacing.

## Fall River 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 advancing 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 virtual focus groups and 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, as well as 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 provides recommendations for the district, based on the findings of strengths and areas of 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 the implementation of DESE’s District Standards and Indicators, summarized in Appendix C.

### Site Visit

The site visit to Fall River was conducted during the weeks of November 18 and 25, 2024. The site visit included 23 hours of interviews and focus groups with approximately 100 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 15 elementary school teachers, 10 middle school teachers, and seven high school teachers; two student focus groups with 10 middle school and nine high school students; one family focus group with 15 parents; and one interview with a town official. 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 Fall River completed the district questionnaire and 15 of 16 principal questionnaires.

The site team also conducted 192 observations of classroom instruction across 16 schools. Certified team members conducted instructional observations using the Teachstone CLASS protocol.

### District Profile

The City of Fall River is located in southeast Massachusetts and borders the cities of Swansea, Massachusetts, and Tiverton, Rhode Island. According to [census data](https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/fallrivercitymassachusetts%2CMA/PST045223), Fall River’s median income from 2019-2023 was $53,933, which is below the state median income of $101,341. In 2023, Fall River had an estimated 93,840 residents.

The superintendent of Fall River Public Schools is Dr. Tracy Curley, who was appointed in July 2024. Additionally, the district is governed by a school committee composed of seven members who are elected for two-year terms.

In the 2024-2025 school year, the district served 11,089 students across its 19 schools. Since the 2020-21 school year, total enrollment has increased by 1,091 students. Table 1 provides an overview of student enrollment by school for the 2024-2025 school year.

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

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| School  | Type | Grades served | Enrollment |
| Early Learning Center | Elementary | PK | 164 |
| FRPS Early Learning Center | Elementary | PK | 53 |
| Mary Fonseca Elementary School | Elementary | PK-5 | 598 |
| North End Elementary School | Elementary | PK-5 | 655 |
| Spencer Borden | Elementary | PK-5 | 575 |
| William S. Greene | Elementary | PK-5 | 733 |
| John J Doran | Elementary | Pk-8 | 525 |
| Letourneau Elementary School | Elementary | K-5 | 566 |
| James Tansey | Elementary | K-5 | 280 |
| Carlton M. Viveiros Elementary School | Elementary | K-5 | 712 |
| Samuel Watson | Elementary | K-5 | 287 |
| Westall Elementary School | Elementary | K-5 | 276 |
| Henry Lord Community School | K-8 | K-8 | 817 |
| Matthew J. Kuss Middle School | Middle | 6-8 | 646 |
| Morton Middle School | Middle | 6-8 | 751 |
| Talbot Innovation School | Middle | 6-8 | 582 |
| B.M.C. Durfee High School | High | 9-12 | 2,642 |
| Stone Community Day School | Alternative | 2-12 | 56 |
| Resiliency Preparatory Academy | Alternative | 7-12 | 171 |
|  |  | Total | 11,089 |

Figure 1 shows the distribution of Fall River’s students’ race/ethnicity. Figure 2 shows student makeup for selected populations as compared to state averages. In the 2024-2025 school year, 31.8 percent spoke a first language other than English, and 26.4 percent were English Learners (ELs). 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 Fall River’s students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), as compared to the statewide percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on MCAS. In 2024, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations was lower for Fall River 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



Fall River’s High Needs students, who comprise 86.0 percent of the district in 2024, met or exceeded expectations on the 2024 MCAS assessments at rates 6 to 18 percentage points below High Needs students across the state (see Figure 4).

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

Most high school students in Fall River attend B.M.C. Durfee High School, but the district offers alternative settings for secondary students via the Resiliency Preparatory Academy and Stone Community Day School. Across these three settings, Fall River’s 2023 four-year cohort graduation rate (74.5 percent) was 14.7 percentage points lower than the state rate (89.2 percent). Furthermore, the district’s dropout rate is more than twice the state rate and more than five times the state rate for White students.

Of students who graduated from the district in 2022-2023, 35.9 percent went on to attend college or university by March 2024, which is slightly more than half the state rate of 63.2 percent. Additionally, 31.5 percent of 2022-2023 graduates planned on entering the workforce or an apprenticeship after high school, compared to 13.8 percent of students across the state.

In 2024 statewide accountability results, six schools (B.M.C. Durfee High School, Mary Fonseca Elementary School, Matthew J. Kuss Middle School, Talbot Innovation School, Morton Middle, and William S. Greene) were identified as requiring assistance or intervention due to being among the lowest performing 10 percent of schools statewide; three schools (Carlton M. Vivieros Elementary School, Henry Lord Community School, and Samuel Watson) were identified as requiring assistance or intervention due to low performance of their White student group; and two schools (Stone PK-12 and Resiliency Preparatory Academy) were identified as requiring assistance or intervention due to the low assessment participation of several student groups (All Students, Low Income, High Needs, and Students with Disabilities). However, the district made moderate progress toward achieving its accountability targets as set by DESE. Furthermore, John J. Doran School, Letourneau Elementary School, North End Elementary School, and Spencer Borden Elementary School made substantial progress toward their targets in 2024.

In fiscal year 2023, the total in-district per-pupil expenditure for Fall River was $21,341, which is $1,459 less than the average in-district per-pupil expenditure in districts with similar demographics ($22,800), and $94 more than the average in-district per-pupil expenditures in districts of similar wealth ($21,247).[[4]](#footnote-5) In-district per pupil expenditures for Fall River were $574 more than the average state spending per pupil ($20,767). Actual net school spending was slightly below what is required by the Chapter 70 state education aid program, as shown in Table D5 in Appendix D.

### Classroom Observations

Eight observers, who focused primarily on instruction in the classroom, visited Fall River during the weeks of November 18 and November 25. The observers conducted 192 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 broadly are 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 of 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 Fall River, 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 Fall River is in Appendix B, and summary results are in Tables 17, 18, and 19 in this appendix.

Figure 5. Fall River 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 consistently strong classroom organization and mixed evidence of consistently strong emotional support, student engagement, and 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 is antiracist, inclusive, multilingual, and multicultural; that values and affirms each student and their families; and that creates equitable opportunities and experiences for all students, particularly those who have been historically underserved. It also focuses on the extent to which districts establish, implement, and evaluate policies, plans, procedures, systems, and budgets with a primary focus on achieving districtwide strategic objectives, in part through equitable and effective use of resources, that 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 Fall River.

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

| Indicator | Strengths | Areas for growth |
| --- | --- | --- |
| [Leadership and Governing Structures](#_School_Committee_Governance) | * The district’s shared, distributed leadership structures are effective.
 | * Posting school committee notes on the district’s website in a timely manner
* Building rapport between district leaders and school committee members
* Improving working relationships between the teachers’ association and school committee
* Having active school councils at all schools that are involved in school policy decisions
 |
| [Strategic Planning, Implementation, and Monitoring](#_Strategic_Planning,_Implementation,) | * All schools have current improvement plans that are updated annually and include family input from school councils.
* The district actively partners with school leaders to monitor progress via short-term goals aligned to their school improvement plans.
 | * Developing a district strategic plan
 |
| [District Culture](#_District_Culture_1) | * Together, district leaders and school leaders collaborate to support students and improve outcomes.
 | * Establishing strategies for recruiting, onboarding, and retaining district leaders
* Involving families in shared decision making
 |

### Leadership and Governing Structures

Fall River has various leadership and governance structures in place that support district operations. At the highest level, Fall River is led by the superintendent of schools, three assistant superintendents (including the chief academic officer, the assistant superintendent of student support and strategic integration, and the assistant superintendent of special education), as well as many directors and department heads, such as the chief financial officer, chief operating officer, chief information officer, and director of human resources. In addition to these district-level leadership positions, the district is also guided by a school committee. Fall River’s school committee consists of seven core members, including the mayor, who serves as chair of the committee. According to the district’s website and school committee members, the seven school committee members divide their responsibilities across five main subcommittees: the Evaluation and Accelerated Improvement Plan subcommittee, the Finance subcommittee, the Grievances subcommittee, the Instructional and Special Education subcommittee, and the Parent Community Outreach subcommittee, though according to a district leader, these descriptions have not been recently updated. According to the district website, this Evaluation and Accelerated Improvement Plan subcommittee also liaises with DESE “for the purpose of providing evidence to DESE of progress by the Committee in achieving the mandates of the [Accelerated Improvement] Plan.” Another subcommittee of note is the district’s Finance subcommittee, which oversees budget preparation and the budget calendar. This subcommittee was also mentioned at length in interviews in terms of the school committee’s large responsibilities surrounding budget preparation, planning, and monitoring. Despite these various subcommittees mentioned in focus groups and on the district’s website, no meeting notes from the larger school committee meetings or any subcommittee meetings are publicly posted on the district’s website. According to guidance from the state of Massachusetts, all public bodies are required to create and approve minutes for all open session meetings within 30 days or the next three public body meetings. At the time of this district review, no school committee meeting notes had been posted for the 2024-2025 school year. Posting school committee notes on the district’s website in a timely manner is an area for growth in the district.

Fall River’s school committee has a functioning governance structure that works to fulfill its responsibilities to evaluate the superintendent, create district policy, and review and approve the district’s budget. In interviews, committee members highlighted their responsibilities in overseeing the superintendent’s evaluation, explaining that they were midway through the process of developing and approving the superintendent’s goals for the upcoming year, performing a self-evaluation of the school committee, and approving a timeline for the superintendent’s upcoming evaluation. The timeline for approving the superintendent’s goals and evaluating the superintendent was adjusted this year due to the superintendent being new to the role as of July 2024. Moving forward, school committee members also reported that they “made a motion to add comments to the superintendent’s evaluation tool” for all scoring categories to allow all members to explain their scoring decisions. This comments section will be a new addition to the superintendent's evaluation rubric for the 2024-2025 school year.

According to focus groups, working relationships between district leaders and school committee members are still in early stages and are sometimes tense. As mentioned above, the superintendent is new to her role and began leading the district in July 2024 and, as such, a formal evaluation has not yet been completed. According to interviews, the superintendent is still working through her formal entry plan into the district and trying to “build a little bit more of a network and relationships with the school committee.” However, district leaders also reported that the current superintendent faced opposition from several members of the school committee upon her promotion to superintendent from her previous role as assistant superintendent and chief academic officer. Currently, there are still reported tensions between the school committee and the district superintendent, and both agreed that there was occasionally “strain” in the relationship regarding the best way to collaboratively fulfill their responsibilities and benefit the district. Despite this, in interviews and focus groups, both parties reiterated their commitment to Fall River and their desire to collaborate effectively to improve the district and outcomes for all students. Building rapport between both parties is an area for growth in Fall River.

At the time of the district review, members of the teachers’ association characterized their working relationship with the school committee as strained and disconnected, due in large part to the negotiations surrounding a new teacher contract. According to teacher focus groups, the teacher contract had expired on August 31, 2024, and at the time of the district review, a new contract was not yet in place. Teachers in focus groups expressed great dissatisfaction with the negotiations process, while members of the school committee reported giving the teacher association a fair offer that was not accepted. School committee members also noted that they were trying to avoid layoffs and that the district did not have the budget to give the teachers’ association members the salary increases they were requesting without cutting support staff. In the time since the onsite visit, the district has finalized a new three-year teacher contract with the teachers’ association. Still, maintaining working relationships between the teachers’ association and school committee remains an area of growth for the district.

According to district leaders, there are several district teaming structures that meet regularly and are a strength of the district: (a) the senior staff team composed of the superintendent, chief academic officer, chief operations officer, chief information officer, chief financial officer, and executive director of human resources, which meets weekly to collaborate across departments on resource allocation, staffing, program implementation, and operations; (b) the “core four team” composed of the superintendent, chief academic officer, assistant superintendent of student services and strategic integration, and assistant superintendent of special education, which meets every two weeks and focuses on the district’s instructional priorities; (c) the district instructional leadership team (ILT) composed of the superintendent, chief academic officer, principals, and directors, which meet every two weeks and focuses on building the capacity of team members to lead instruction in the schools (e.g., through learning walks, reviewing student work samples); and (d) monthly principal meetings focused on professional development for school leaders (e.g., completing a book study, debriefing observations of classrooms and common planning times, reviewing student data and work samples aligned to the district instructional priority and other district priorities). To ensure these teams are effective, district leaders described how each prioritized opportunities for thought partnership and collaboration across departments and schools versus general information sharing and updates.

In focus groups with staff from across the district, participants agreed that the district empowers school leaders and school ILTs to establish an inclusive environment and foster positive and collaborative learning. They noted that the level of autonomy granted by the district enhances their effectiveness in implementing school initiatives aligned with the district’s educational vision (see Strategic Planning, Implementation, and Monitoring for information about the educational vision). District leaders provided examples of how the district supports ILTs in strengthening their teaching and learning practices, such as when they share data with school leaders “at different points during the school year through the weekly newsletter from the district.” In addition, school leaders described collaborative structures with building-based coaches and department heads, leading to targeted professional learning opportunities. School leaders also described the various teams or committees that are active at schools across the district, which include the ILTs, data teams, student support teams, grade-level teams, administrative leadership teams, and the school council.

District leaders were mixed on whether Fall River has established representative school and parent advisory councils, including school councils at all schools, a Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC), and an English Learner Parent Advisory Council (ELPAC). Many school leaders specifically reported not havingtheir own active school councils that are involved in school policy decisions. Similarly, some parents reported being aware of these school councils, although accounts varied regarding how school leaders utilized them. Having active school councils at all schools that are involved in school policy decisions is an area of growth for the district.

### Strategic Planning, Implementation, and Monitoring

According to the district’s public website, the district’s mission is “to provide a value-added, high-quality, all-encompassing educational experience, ensuring preparation for successful transition to college and/or career so that all students will attain their fullest potential and become responsible members of society.” Focus group responses from school leaders indicate that this mission iswidely shared across the district. This sentiment was evident in focus groups, with staff articulating that the district has a successful career and technical education program (CTE) as well as opportunities for students to enroll in Advanced Placement (AP) classes and dual enrollment classes.

One area for growth for Fall River is that the district has not yet developed a district strategic plan, with its most recent plan having expired in 2021. With the newly hired superintendent, district leaders reported that the district review will help with the development of a new strategic plan that is representative of all stakeholders. Fall River has several other current plans, including a Student Opportunity Act Plan, approved in 2020 and updated in 2024, and a District Instructional Prioritization Plan for the 2024-2025 school year, developed in partnership with DESE’s Office of Statewide System of Support. According to the District Instructional Prioritization Plan, the district’s main goals for the year are:

Middle school mathematics educators will unpack the standards of Carnegie lessons and intentionally engage students in grade-appropriate oral and written discourse that supports the language development of SWD and MLLs so that students acquire and are able to use academic language to communicate their understanding of grade-level work.

In interviews, district leaders also reported goals to engage all students with high-quality instructional materials and appropriate instructional support, create a sense of belonging so that students feel valued and engaged socially and academically in their school community, and authentically engaging with the families of their English Learners and Students with Disabilities to improve benchmark data.

Although there is no formal districtwide strategic plan, all school leaders have developed a school improvement plan for the 2024-2025 school year. These plans include instructional priorities and strategies for reducing disparities in student opportunities and outcomes, aligned with the District Instructional Prioritization Plan where appropriate. In focus groups, school leaders described collaborating with the district to align their plans with broader district goals, stating that every spring, they have a meeting with the district team to develop their school improvement plans for the upcoming year. A review of all the school improvement plans found the following three common goals across schools, with additional school-specific goals as needed:

1. Intentionally engage students in grade-appropriate oral and written discourse that supports the language development of Students with Disabilities and English Learners so that students acquire and are able to use academic language to communicate their understanding of grade-level work.
2. Effectively engage multiple stakeholders in monitoring progress toward school improvement goals for the 2024-2025 as well as in developing a data-informed, results-oriented School Improvement Plan for the 2025-2026 school year as evidenced by the following:
	1. Facilitation of ILT meetings aligned with the district vision for effective ILTs resulting in appropriate short-term goals
	2. Establishment of a school council that comes together at least quarterly and is meaningfully engaged in the process of adopting educational goals for the school that are consistent with local educational policies and statewide student performance standards identifying the educational needs of students attending the school
	3. Reviewing the annual school building budget
	4. Formulating a school improvement plan
3. Reduce chronic absenteeism rates.

The development of these school improvement plans, with consistent priorities across schools, is a strength of the district.

Discussions with the school leaders and the superintendent revealed that district and school leaders implement existing annual school improvement plans and have established formal processes to assess their effectiveness and communicate progress to the district community. For example, in focus groups, school leaders explained that the district ILT looks at the district’s priority goals and conducts data dives and walkthroughs with principals to ensure that those goals are being prioritized. To monitor the implementation of the school improvement plans on an ongoing basis, district and school leaders described how the district has prioritized the creation and execution of short-term goals in each school. As mentioned by school leaders in focus groups, the chief academic officer works with principals throughout the district to create short-term goals and then analyze data to measure their effectiveness. For example, one principal mentioned that their school was currently focused on achieving a goal to improve student discourse in the classroom, so they prioritized the inclusion of English Learners and Students with Disabilities in their classrooms. In general, school leaders explained that these short-term goals were intended to take about six weeks and then principals would measure their success through data collected during principals’ classroom walkthroughs and other data sources. The district’s active partnership with school leaders to monitor progress via short-term goals aligned to their school improvement plans is a strength of the district.

In addition to the aforementioned annual school improvement plans and short-term goals, district leaders reported that they had created a “school partnership model [throughout the district] this year, where each director [is assigned to] a cluster of schools.” These directors have offices within the schools that they partner with, and they are required to have at least three interactions a month with the school principal and their team. During these interactions, directors “become thought partners” with the principals and together they plan all-school activities with principals, aligned with the schools’ improvement goals. For example, directors and principals plan school-based data meetings together, observe classrooms together, or visit professional learning time together, depending on the schools’ needs and their improvement goals.

### District Culture

As mentioned earlier in the Strategic Planning, Implementation, and Monitoring section, district administrators foster collaboration and shared decision making to improve opportunities and outcomes for all students through collaborative data meetings and school partnership models, which is a strength of the district. Additionally, elected, district, and school leaders have clearly defined roles, as described in interviews and indicated by a review of district administrators’ evaluations. They also maintain working relationships with each other, which are described in evaluations as strong and productive, facilitating their ability to advance school improvement plans. Specifically, in interviews, school leaders noted a positive relationship with district leaders and reported having a good balance of autonomy and district support, specifically regarding analyzing student data and developing subsequent action plans.

However, as previously described, there were mixed reports from various stakeholders across interviews regarding the working relationship between the school committee and district leaders. District leaders specifically noted that tensions between school committee members and the superintendent sometimes impeded district leaders’ ability to develop and prioritize efforts in the district. For example, one district leader referenced that the superintendent was often called into situations to answer specific historical questions, such as information relating to “the last ten years of mold inspections” after a mold issue was identified at one of the district’s schools (see Operations for additional information). According to interviews with district leaders, time allotted to respond to these historical questions detracted from the superintendent’s ability to manage current situations and priorities.

In terms of district leadership turnover, Fall River struggles to recruit and retain staff in the district, and this extends to the district’s leadership. As of this year, the district’s superintendent, chief academic officer, and director of human resources are all new to their positions. In interviews, district staff did not outline a clear strategy for recruiting and retaining diverse leaders, and this lack of strategy does not ensure stability or sustain initiatives during leadership turnover. For recruitment, district leaders described that they posted job openings on TalentEd and SchoolSpring for all positions, including district leaders. Although the district’s superintendent and chief academic officer are new to their roles, both previously held leadership roles in the district, indicating that the district considers internal staff to fill leadership vacancies. Establishing strategies for recruiting, onboarding, and retaining diverse district leaders is an area for growth for the district.

In terms of stakeholder engagement, Fall River partners with key stakeholders and intentionally seeks input from underrepresented groups in decision making in a few key areas, with room for growth and further involvement of stakeholder engagement in the district. Parents in focus groups noted that the district uses ParentSquare and emails as well as Facebook and X to communicate with parents. Additionally, one parent in a focus group shared a positive experience, noting that their school ran a school-level event that provided parents with information on how that school compared to other schools in the state. Generally, parents agreed that communication was effective and that they appreciated opportunities to get involved. Some parents in focus groups described attending school-level parent advisory councils at their child’s school as well as the SEPAC and ELPAC (see Family and Community partnerships for more information on the SEPAC and ELPAC).

The school committee, district staff, and superintendent outlined the district’s efforts to engage the broader community. District leadership noted that they intentionally solicited parent feedback on district priorities through two surveys that were administered on ParentSquare throughout the school year: a survey on the conditions for learning for parents and for students, and a survey on budget priorities. Yet, district personnel did not describe a clear process for incorporating the data from these surveys into decision-making processes and did not provide examples of how the data have been used in the past. Additionally, in focus groups, many parents reported the desire to be more involved with district decision-making, such as through participation on committees like the superintendent search committee. According to parents, the district does not consistently communicate about these opportunities for parental involvement. Parents who reported participating in these opportunities knew that they could get involved and asked to do so. Actively involving parents in shared decision-making across the district is an area for growth.

### Recommendations

* *The district should post minutes from all school committee meetings to the district website in a timely manner.*
* *The superintendent and school committee should identify opportunities to build rapport, clarify the division of responsibilities, and intentionally strengthen their partnership in support of positive outcomes for the district.*
* *The school committee should leverage the successful finalization of a three-year teacher contract to continue improving and maintaining a productive relationship with the teachers’ association.*
* *The district should issue clear guidance to school leaders around the expectation to convene a school council at each school in the district and provide ongoing assistance to ensure that these councils meet regularly and inform school-level decision-making.*
* *The district should develop a strategic plan that guides the district’s work and is representative of all stakeholders.*
* *The district should develop a strategy for recruiting and retaining diverse and effective district leaders.*
* *The district should systematically create opportunities for families to participate in shared decision-making at the district level.*

## 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 curriculum 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 in Fall River.

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

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Indicator | Strengths | Areas for growth |
| [Instructional Leadership](#_Instructional_Leadership) | * The district is focusing on implementation, monitoring, and continuous improvement.
* Each school has an ILT composed of diverse stakeholders who meet regularly. The district supports these ILTs to ensure they are effective structures that support school improvement.
 | * Creating a consistent instructional vision that is known throughout the district
 |
| [Curriculum and Instructional Materials](#_Curriculum_and_Instructional) | * The district has prioritized purchasing and implementing high-quality instructional materials, with these instructional materials in place for several years.
* The district has a comprehensive adoption process for new curricula, including extensive piloting before final selections are made.
* The district has a variety of formal structures to support teachers with implementing high-quality instructional materials (e.g., training and coaching by publishers, PLCs).
 | * Addressing teacher concerns about curricular adaptation and insufficient time in certain academic blocks to follow the district’s pacing guidance
 |
| [Equitable Practices and Access](#_Equitable_Practices_and) | * At the high school level, students are regularly involved in decision-making and the delivery of tiered supports through the pod structure.
* Having dedicated time during the school day at each building provides students with interventions and supports.
* The district offers students opportunities to take classes other than their core academic classes.
 | * Enabling English Learners to have more equitable access to unified arts opportunities
* Ensuring that Students with Disabilities receive appropriate supports in the least restrictive environment, are served by credentialed staff, and have equitable access to a high-quality education
* Communicating with parents about the opportunities available to their children at the high school level
 |
| [Effective Instruction and Curricular Implementation](#_Effective_Instruction_and) | * The district supports teachers in implementing evidence-based instructional practices by providing professional development, coaching, and conducting walkthroughs and observations on a regular basis.
 |  |

### Instructional Leadership

The chief academic officer has primary responsibility for overseeing decisions about curriculum and instruction for the district. Although he has been a Fall River employee for many years, including 11 years as a middle school principal, at the time of the district review, he had been in the role for only a few months. The chief academic officer is supported by a team of content directors (ELA, mathematics, science, social studies, fine arts, and physical education) as well as the director of grants, the multilingual learner coordinator, and the coordinator of data, assessment, and accountability.

According to school leaders, teachers, and other school staff, the district does not have a clear districtwide instructional vision. In interviews, the superintendent described a vision for instruction centered around providing equitable access to grade-appropriate instruction for all students by focusing on the subgroups with the highest need, particularly English Learners and Students with Disabilities (see Strategic Planning, Implementation, and Monitoring). Although school leaders seemed to be generally aware of this vision, they agreed that it has not yet been communicated or implemented across schools or departments. Principals reported that some schools and departments have a shared instructional approach, such as the reading department utilizing the pathways model and elementary schools using the workshop model, but this is not yet consistent across all schools and departments. Formalizing and communicating an instructional vision across the district is an area for growth.

The superintendent, school leaders, and the chief academic officer agreed thatthe district has systems in place to implement, monitor, and continuously improve on the district’s instructional priorities. The district provides additional monitoring efforts to particular schools, with those in the state’s lowest 10 percent of schools (according to state accountability data) receiving monthly instructional walkthroughs by district and school leaders. For other schools, the district also conducts monitoring efforts although less frequently. As a school leader summarized, “other schools have the same process, just not as often.” Leaders, at both the school- and district-levels, agreed that this system has been effective at ensuring instructional quality. The district’s focus on implementation, monitoring, and continuous improvement is a strength.

According to the District Instructional Prioritization Plan, the district leverages each school’s ILT to engage in progress monitoring to determine the effectiveness of improvement efforts. Principals and other district officials reported the district has guidance and systems in place to empower each school’s ILT. Principals agreed that the district sets expectations for the ILTs’ authority and scope of work. Specifically, school-level ILTs are responsible for developing an annual improvement plan with short-term goals unique to each school, which are reviewed and approved by the district ILT. For example, one school reported setting a goal of a 10 percent increase in benchmark assessments by the end of the year, with interim measures along the way. Principals also reported that the district has a long-term partnership with The New Teacher Project, and their recent work has focused on revamping ILTs to provide more structure, including implementation of improvement cycles. Each school’s ILT includes representation from diverse stakeholders including special educators, English as a second language (ESL) teachers, general educators across all grade levels, and administrators. These teams currently meet twice per month. The establishment of an ILT at each school, and district support of these ILTs to ensure they are effective structures to support school improvement, is a strength of the district.

To support the district’s improvement efforts, Fall River participates in many initiatives sponsored by DESE, including working with the statewide system of support (SSoS) team; receiving a variety of grants such as the school turnaround assistance grant, a GLEAM grant for middle school mathematics, a 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant for before- and afterschool programs, and an intensive assistance grant for Talbot Middle School; and participating in the Universal Design for Learning Academy to ensure accessibility for English Learners.

### Curriculum and Instructional Materials

District staff reported primarily using CURATE, EdReports, and equity protocols provided by Mass Ready to evaluate curricular decisions and described their protocols for selecting and piloting new curricula. Staff at all levels explained that the district has selected high-quality instructional materials for Grades K-12 in ELA, mathematics, and science and that these curricular materials have been in place for several years, which is a strength of the district. When the district reviews new curricular materials, there is a comprehensive process in place. District leaders explained that they begin by establishing a committee of diverse stakeholders from across the district, including district leaders, administrators, and teachers (general education, ESL, and special educators). The committee reviews CURATE and EdReports to determine which curricula they will investigate further. To ensure that materials are diverse and representative of students, the committee also completes an equity protocol to examine the texts being used and perspectives that are represented. Once the committee has narrowed down the selection process, all potential curricula are piloted for at least one year across multiple staff. In some cases, full year pilots are conducted with several curricula being considered to ensure the right fit for the district. For example, when selecting the most recent middle school ELA curriculum, middle school teachers piloted both Amplify and Springboard, with different teachers teaching each option for a full year. Afterward, the district collected extensive feedback from students, faculty, and parents before a final selection was made. The clearly designed curriculum selection process, which includes extensive piloting and a variety of perspectives, is a strength of the district. Table 4 summarizes the status of all districtwide curricula being used.

Table 4. Curricula Used in Fall River

| Grade level(s) | Subject | Curriculum | Type | CURATE Rating | EdReports Rating |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| K-5 | ELA | McGraw-Hill Wonders | Comprehensive | ME | ME |
| K-5 | Mathematics | Illustrative Math | Comprehensive | ME | ME |
| K-5 | Mathematics | Imagine Learning | Comprehensive | ME | ME |
| K-5 | Science | Project Lead the Way | Comprehensive | NR | NR |
| 6-8 | ELA | Amplify | Comprehensive | ME | ME |
| 6-12 | Mathematics | Carnegie Learning | Comprehensive | PM | ME |
| K-12 | Science | OpenSciEd | Comprehensive | PM | NR |

Note. ME = meets expectations; PM = partially meets expectations; NR = not rated; CURATE = CUrriculum RAtings by TEachers; OpenSciEd is DESE developed/informed.

All of the curricula listed in Table 4 are currently in the implementation phase. Fall River generally selects and implements instructional materials that are vertically and horizontally aligned across all tiers of instruction and is working to improve alignment as necessary; for example, the district is implementing OpenSciEd at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.

School leaders and teachers reported using the same corecurricula at each level. In general, school leaders agreed that the curricula meet the needs of their students, particularly in the four core areas. However, school leaders and teachers expressed reservations about being able to adjust the curricula for diverse leaners, particularly English Learners and Students with Disabilities at the elementary and middle school levels. Teachers also stated that maintaining the district’s pacing guidelines can be challenging and that lessons often take longer than is allocated, particularly in schools with shorter academic blocks. For example, middle school teachers identified this as a challenge with the Amplify curriculum, as some schools have shortened blocks (56 minutes versus 90 minutes at other schools), which is not enough time to get through an entire lesson. As one teacher explained, “I’ve parsed a lot of lessons into two days, but then there’s pushback about why I’m two and a half weeks behind where the district would like me to be based on the district pacing calendar.” Addressing concerns about curricular adaptation and insufficient time in certain academic blocks to follow the district’s pacing guidance is an area for growth.

District staff added that the district provides a variety of professional learning opportunities to support effective curriculum implementation. School leaders agreed, mentioning that curriculum providers come into their schools to provide training and individualized, ongoing support to teachers. One example provided was a summer training in a phonics intervention integrated with Wonders. The intervention was developed at the University of Connecticut, and elementary school teachers stated that their staff were “very involved” in both the initial training and follow-up support. Additionally, each school has weekly professional learning communities (PLCs), which are formal structures used to support teachers in implementing high-quality instructional strategies. The extent of supports provided is a strength of the district.

### Equitable Practices and Access

Staff at all levels agreed that the district is making an intentional effort to focus on serving marginalized students, particularly English Learners and Students with Disabilities. Additionally, the district is working to improve its multitiered systems of support (MTSS) utilizing the GLEAM grant to support all learners. Still, staff agreed that there is room for improvement in ensuring equitable practices for all students.

The district has a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) that details how the district applies an adaptable MTSS to implement academic interventions for students. The DCAP also details progress monitoring procedures that support access to and movement throughout the three tiers of instruction. At the high school level, the district intentionally engages students in decision making and the delivery of tiered supports through the pod structure, where cross-disciplinary teams meet with the student to identify the underlying root causes of their academic and nonacademic struggles. Families are also invited to participate, but are reportedly not involved as consistently. As a support staff member explained, “[Pods allow for] conversations about this is why this is happening and now everybody has an understanding on this kid’s team of what's going on.” The intentional involvement of high school students in decision making and the delivery of tiered supports is a strength of the district.

According to district and school leaders, the following academic interventions are available in ELA and mathematics:

* Elementary school–level interventions: Fundations (Tier 2), Graham Fletcher Fluency Kits (Tier 2), Lexia (Tier 2), Quick Reads (Tier 2), i-Ready (Tiers 2 and 3), Add+Vantage (Tier 3), Linguistics (Tier 3), Project Read (Tier 3), Wilson’s Reading Program (Tier 3)
* Middle school–level interventions: Rewards Plus (Tier 2), i-Ready (Tiers 2 and 3), Project Read (Tier 3), Rewards (Tier 3)
* High school–level interventions: What I Need ELA supports (Tier 2), credit recovery (Tier 3), ELA Strategies (Tier 3), tutoring (Tier 3)

Elementary specialists noted that they have the flexibility to use whatever intervention best meets their students’ needs as long as they are trained in it. In addition to the interventions above, teachers and specialists mentioned using Enhanced Core Reading Instruction, Science of Reading, Writing Revolution, and Heggerty for ELA; Math Stream and Mathia for mathematics; and Gizmo for engineering. The support model focuses primarily on literacy because the district considers this skill foundational for all subject areas. Specialists characterized training opportunities for these intervention programs as inconsistent, with some being well-structured while others are “second-hand” or minimal. This variation was largely attributed to staff turnover, resulting in leftover intervention materials and staff with varying levels of familiarity with these programs to provide training.

School leaders, district leaders, and teachers agree that they give students universal screeners followed by targeted screeners as needed. The current screening system was first developed when Fall River received a GLEAM grant to pilot a comprehensive MTSS system in Talbot Middle School. District leaders explained that MAZE is used as a universal literacy screener, followed with DIBELS and the Quick Phonics Screener as needed to determine which students needed Tier 2 or Tier 3 literacy interventions. For mathematics, i-Ready is used for screening at elementary and middle school levels.

All elementary schools report having dedicated time for interventions, whether through a separate intervention block (called What I Need [WIN]) or extra time for interventions allocated in their core blocks. At the middle school level, there is also dedicated time for interventions, either during a WIN Block or Skills or Strategies Block (the name varies by school). During this time, extra supports are provided based on student need through small groups, push-in, or pull-out. The high school also has a WIN intervention block for ELA support and advisory, and school support staff report that they provide social-emotional learning (SEL) supports during the advisory time. There are also multiple credit recovery pathways once a student fails a class, including both in-school supports and an online course called Imagine. Having dedicated time during the school day at each building to provide students with interventions and supports is a strength of the district.

The superintendent stated that the district has made an intentional effort to focus on serving marginalized students:

For years, we would literally say “all students.”... And then we [realized that] when we say all, we mean none, because we are not focusing our energy anywhere. [That realization] got us to a place where we were calling out specific subgroups and saying that out loud.… That’s such a big move, and…[it’s] where our commitment is.

Fall River’s Student Opportunity Act Plan for 2024 and District Instructional Prioritization Plan both focus on English Learners and Students with Disabilities. However, teachers across the district reported challenges with the curriculum materials for both populations. For example, at the middle school level, teachers described how curricular materials are predominantly virtual, with few options for paper and pencil, which would be easier for some English Learners and Students with Disabilities to access. They also described challenges with modifying the curriculum to meet the needs of Students with Disabilities, with one teacher summarizing, “You can’t modify Carnegie [math program] in an appropriate way for these students.”

The district is working to improve access to needed services for English Learners and Students with Disabilities, although district staff identified several challenges. District staff reported that this year, they transitioned to fully inclusive kindergarten classrooms for Students with Disabilities and English Learners, expanding on the already fully inclusive prekindergarten classrooms. Teachers expressed concern about this plan at first, but district staff said that the response has been very positive overall. Fall River is a member of the Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE) Community of Practice through DESE, which provides educators from across the state with opportunities to collaborate, share best practices, and engage in professional learning about meeting the needs of newcomer students who experienced interrupted schooling in their home countries. District staff said that their ML population has “increased drastically” over the last 10 years, split almost evenly between Spanish and Portuguese speakers.

Regarding supports for Students with Disabilities, Fall River has a continuum of settings and services available, but state data indicates systemic challenges with providing an equitable education for Students with Disabilities. According to DESE data, in 2023, students aged 6 through 21 in Fall River were placed in substantially separate classrooms at a rate 18.5 percentage points higher than the state rate (31.7 percent versus 13.2 percent), and students aged three through five were placed in substantially separate classrooms at a rate 19.5 percentage points higher than the state rate (40.6 percent versus 21.2 percent). Additionally, the 2023 4-year cohort graduation rate for Students with Disabilities in the district was 48.6 percent, which is 27.8 percentage points lower than the state rate. District officials attributed challenges with equitably serving Students with Disabilities to several factors: (a) larger class sizes, which make it challenging for Students with Disabilities to have opportunities for inclusion during portions of the day, (b) underqualified staff who do not have much experience and training for working with Students with Disabilities, and (c) staff vacancies leaving positions open for long periods of time. In 2023-2024, Fall River received a designation of Needs Intervention through the Local Education Agencies’ Special Education Determinations and is working with a technical assistance provider around key data points. Ensuring that Students with Disabilities receive appropriate supports in the least restrictive environment, are serviced by credentialed staff, and have equitable access to a high-quality education is an area for growth for the district.

When possible, teachers and specialists use the general education curriculum for English Learners and Students with Disabilities. In some instances, school leaders reported using additional curricula for multilingual students that varied slightly by level:

* Elementary: American Reading Company in dual-language elementary classrooms, Wonders using the systemic functional linguistics (SFL) approach
* Middle: Time Zones, Impacts, and the SFL approach
* High: Newcomers Academy, Edge Competency-Based Pathway, and National Geographic Cengage

In nearly all cases, special educators used the same curricula as the general education classrooms, supplementing as needed. The Life Skills Program and Autism Program both used different curricula to meet their students’ needs. District and school leaders reported using data to continuously monitor the experiences and outcomes of these students, using disaggregated data and student feedback to adjust coursework offerings, enrichment opportunities, and school-level systems**.** Moving forward, one of the district’s goals, as laid out in the Student Opportunity Act Plan, is to ensure that all curricula include scaffolding that better enables English Learners and Students with Disabilities to access grade-level work.

Fall River elementary schools vary in their offerings of nonacademic coursework. Teachers report that all schools offer art, music, and gym, but at some schools, students alternate between having art in one semester and music in another. Other elementary schools have up to six specials per week, including health, technology, and STEM. Special offerings vary based on teacher staffing and, in some cases, parent willingness to volunteer their time. Parents noted that extracurricular activities are available after school, but transportation is a challenge.

At the middle school level, teachers and students mentioned specials (referred to as unified arts in Fall River) available in chorus, band, orchestra, technology, computer science, health, and “helping classes,” in which middle school students provide mentoring to younger students. This year, the middle schools transitioned to students choosing their unified arts classes for the first time. This change has been positively received by students, with one teacher describing the change as “a game changer” for student satisfaction. One area for growth for the district is that middle school teachers described how English Learners do not always have equitable access to the unified arts classes because the forms used for elective selection are not always translated prior to their release. The delay between the release of selection forms sometimes causes English Learners to receive the forms late, so options are limited as other students have already made their selections. Additionally, unified arts classes sometimes conflict with students’ required ESL course or other intervention supports they need. As a teacher summarized, “If [English Learners] qualify for an ESL class and then also qualify for a math or ELA intervention class, now both of their UA [unified arts] classes are taken.”

A review of the Durfee High School Program of Studies indicated that the school provides students with a broad range of rigorous coursework across grades, which is a strength of the district. At Durfee, college preparation courses are offered as the standard for all students, as well as selected honors courses and over 20 AP courses across both core and elective subject areas. Elective topics include Media Studies, Computer Science, Astronomy, Forensics, Social Studies, World Culture, Visual Arts, and Performing Arts. Language courses are offered in French, Portuguese, Spanish, and Arabic. To earn college credit at Bristol Community College, Bridgewater State University, or UMass Dartmouth, students may take dual-enrollment courses or participate in the Early College program, which has pathways in health science/medical, business, education, social services, criminal justice, STEM, art/fashion design, and medical interpretation. Durfee also has several CTE programs in construction craft laborer, cosmetology, criminal justice, culinary arts, early education and care, engineering, environmental science and technology, health assisting, marketing, visual design, and television production. Additional opportunities include the Naval Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (NJROTC), a community service course for credit, and internships for both CTE and non-CTE students. For students who need a different approach, the Durfee-based Evolve Academy provides a competency-based pathway with project-based classes using individualized instruction,

For students in Grades 7-12 seeking alternative options, Resiliency Preparatory Academy (RPA) provides student-centered personalized learning paths, workforce development, and credit recovery to reduce the dropout rate. A review of RPA’s Program of Studies indicated that students select one of two pathways: (a) the comprehensive pathway, where they attend RPA full-time for live instruction of traditional academic and credit-recovery courses, or (b) the flex pathway, where students attend in person for part of the school day and then complete the second part of the school day through employment, Urban Youth Workforce Development Opportunities, or Edgenuity on-demand for credit-recovery courses. Students still have access to a variety of courses in English; mathematics; science; social studies; visual and performing arts; wellness, health, and physical education; culinary arts; and workforce development and postsecondary readiness. During the 2024-2025 school year, 184 students were enrolled at RPA.

Secondary principals agreed that students are supported on different pathways, both career and academic, and that these possibilities are clearly communicated to younger students. One middle school leader explained:

I think the connection that we have [with our high schools] is really exciting.… [Our students are] already on their fourth trip to Durfee to see the CTE programming and other resources. We also have the high schools coming in to our schools to do presentations…and then also tailoring our programs [so] that [students on a] CTE pathway also have that academic foundation if you choose to go to two-year, four-year college.

Students agreed that many courses are available to them. In contrast, parents described feeling uninformed about the different options for their students and wishing for a centralized location for this information. As one parent noted:

I think there’s a tremendous amount of opportunities at Durfee that the parents are not aware of. Like when the student is going into their freshman year, all of the opportunities, whether it be different tracks that are available [such as] Advanced Placement, early college, trades.... [I’d like to have] one place where you can go to.... You can’t easily navigate the information.

Communicating with parents about the opportunities available to their children at the high school level is an area for growth for the district.

### Effective Instruction and Curricular Implementation

Teachers, school leaders, and district staff generally agreed that their district prioritizes providing supports for developing a safe and supportive learning environment in which all students can engage in academic content. These supports include providing culturally relevant materials and adjusting lessons to meet the needs of individual students. Students agreed, saying that the content in most of their courses felt relevant to their lives. High school students particularly appreciated the opportunity to select research projects on topics that interested them.Classroom observation scores in the middle to high range for dimensions in the Emotional Support domain in the K-5 grade band (average 5.2) and in the middle range in the 6-8 and 9-12 grade bands (averages 4.0 and 4.2, respectively) partially support these depictions. In contrast, lower scores in Regard for Student Perspectives (averages 3.1 in K-5, 2.5 in 6-8, and 2.9 in 9-12) suggest that student choice is limited in lessons.

The district provides detailed curriculum implementation guides for ELA at all levels, for mathematics and science in Grades K-8, and for selected courses in the arts, CTE, and social sciences. Teachers noted that these guides do not always reflect the reality of class period lengths and the timing of benchmarks, so they find following these pacing guides to be challenging (see Curriculum and Instructional Materials). Teachers reported the district requires that teachers identify both content and language objectives for all lessons and to share these objectives with their students in accessible terms. School leaders and teachers agreed that they develop and share these objectives in PLCs, which exist at all schools and meet weekly. Students agreed that most teachers share objectives but noted a few exceptions, with one student saying, “Some teachers [are better than others at] explaining not just the lesson but the core you’re supposed to get out of it.”

According to teachers across the district, the district supports teachers in implementing evidence-based instructional practices by providing professional development from curriculum providers (e.g., Amplify, Carnegie, The Hill for Literacy) and on instructional practices, having coaching available, and conducting walkthroughs and observations on a regular basis. As mentioned previously, all teachers participate in weekly PLCs facilitated by department leaders to engage regularly in lesson and unit internalization protocols to support teachers with lesson planning and supporting diverse learners. Additionally, walkthroughs focus primarily on schools identified in the state’s lowest performing 10 percent of schools (Fonseca Elementary School, Greene Elementary School, Kuss Middle School, Morton Middle School, Talbot Innovation School, and Durfee High School). District and school leaders conduct these walkthroughs, using DESE’s content-agnostic observation tool to support high-quality learning as their rubric and look-fors. District leaders, school leaders, and teachers all cited these walkthroughs as helpful for improving instructional practices. The availability of these supports for teachers to implement evidence-based instructional practices is a strength of the district.

Yet classroom observation scores in the low to middle range for dimensions in the Instructional Support domain across all grade bands indicate that instructional practices continue to be an area for improvement. These ratings indicate inconsistencies across teachers, such as teachers sometimes facilitating student engagement in lessons; occasionally facilitating feedback loops with students to expand their thinking; including few opportunities for students to create or generate ideas and engage in higher order thinking skills; limiting meaningful discussion and explanation of broad, organizing ideas; and providing few opportunities for discussions in the classrooms.

### 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 address disparities in the time allotted for curricular implementation across schools to ensure that teachers have enough time to teach the required lessons according to the district pacing guide.*
* *The district should examine and address the scheduling and staffing constraints that prevent English Learners from having equitable access to elective courses.*
* *The district should further investigate the root causes of its challenges around equitably serving Students with Disabilities and leverage support from its technical assistance provider to improve outcomes and opportunities for this student group.*
* *The district should develop a centralized system for informing students and families of the various opportunities, pathways, and programs available to high school students.*

## 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 focuses on the extent to which the district collects an array of data and uses those data to inform decisions at the classroom, school, and district levels as well as the ways in which, by analyzing assessment results and other data, educators develop an understanding of the whole student, can examine trends across student groups, and can adjust their instruction accordingly.

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

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

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Indicator | Strengths | Areas for growth |
| [Data Collection](#_Data_Collection) | * The district gathers a range of data, both academic and non-academic, for each student.
* The district has online platforms (DnA for academic data, Educlimber for nonacademic data) that allow for triangulation of data sources.
* The district has implemented a structured data inquiry process to identify and address equity gaps across all schools.
 | * Addressing teachers’ concerns about the quality, pacing, and alignment of benchmark data to ensure it is a useful data source to drive instruction
 |
| [Data Use and Culture](#_Data_Use_and_1) | * The district has established many formal structures to support data use across the district and schools.
* The district utilizes a variety of data sources to examine student performance.
 |  |
| [Sharing Data](#_Sharing_Data) | * Students can take ownership of their learning by setting their own academic goals.
* Teachers use a variety of methods to communicate student progress toward grade-level standards.
 |  |

### Data Collection

The chief academic officer oversees the coordinator of data accountability research and assessment, who is responsible for supporting data collection and use in the district. The district gathers multiple types of academic (e.g., district benchmarks, i-Ready, MAZE, DIBELS) and nonacademic data (e.g., Conditions for Learning survey, Satchel Pulse screener) about each student, which is a strength of the district.

According to district leaders, Fall River creates its own district academic benchmark assessments and administers these to students through the Illuminate DnA platform three times per year in ELA and mathematics. Each benchmark is created using past MCAS questions; a district leader explained that they pay to access a question bank of MCAS questions in the Illuminate DnA platform, and the content directors use these questions along with student MCAS performance data to create their district benchmark assessments for the year. Outside of the district benchmarks, teachers have access to the Illuminate DnA platform and are encouraged to create their own assessments in the platform. Additionally, Fall River uses the Educlimber platform, part of the same suite of tools as Illuminate, to triangulate and review student academic, nonacademic, and intervention data to look at trends across course performance and MCAS outcomes. For example, ELA benchmark assessment data can be compared to how students score on MCAS to help staff paint a holistic picture of a student’s academic performance. These two online platforms allow for the triangulation of data sources, which is a strength of the district.

Teachers at all levels had mixed opinions about the usability of district-created benchmarks. At the elementary level, teachers expressed concern about the accuracy of these data, stating that their students do not typically do well on tests and tend to get burnt out, so it is hard to tell if the data are a true reflection of students’ progress toward grade-level standards. At the secondary level, teachers expressed concerns about curriculum pacing because what is being taught does not always align with the content of district benchmarks (see Curriculum and Instructional Materials section). One high school teacher explained:

Maybe it’s a timing issue, but [district-created benchmarks] don’t tend to produce data that’s helpful to teachers… Especially with the weekly check-ins that we do, the weekly formatives, we do pick apart the data for that. So, we spend time looking at the data and trying to figure out what went wrong, what went right, and trying to know if we need to reteach something or what have you, but those are also department created [as opposed to district created].

To address this, some teachers described how they teach lessons out of sequence in order for the benchmarks to be valid. As mentioned above, many of these teachers reported relying more on department-created assessments for modifying instruction and creating small groups. Addressing teachers’ concerns about the quality and usefulness of benchmark data to ensure it is a useful data source to drive instruction is an area for growth.

Outside of the district-created benchmarks, Fall Riverstrategically selects and implements formal andinformal assessments that align with instructional content. For example, in science for Grades 3-12, students complete curriculum-based unit assessments. These unit assessments typically count toward students’ grades, and district and school staff use these data to track student achievement toward content standards. In mathematics, district and school leaders reported that teachers use Mathia’s and Amplify’s online unit assessments to monitor student progress. At the secondary level, the director of the social studies department is currently reviewing ways to consistently assess middle and high school students. A district leader also noted that teachers use Nearpod and Google Classroom occasionally to administer quick formative assessments. Fall River shares its assessment schedule and plan with school staff so that they understand when and how often they should be assessing their students.

In focus groups, district and school leaders and teachers expressed that the collected data providea comprehensive understanding of each student. For example, staff at the secondary level explained various ways that they are using data to guide pod meetings to which students are referred if data indicate they need more intensive support. In these meetings, teachers from different content areas (including special education and English Learner specialists and/or attendance monitors, if applicable) discuss students who are struggling, including their strengths and weaknesses, ways to support them, and short-term goals for monitoring progress. Progress is monitored over time, and the students are brought back for follow-up meetings.

Fall River centersassessments and student data as critical components of its commitment to equity. According to both district and school leaders, the district regularly engages with schools to complete multiple data dives per year to inform its short-term action plans. Similarly, school leaders agreed that the data dives are used to inform their short-term goals, which drive their improvement efforts. As a school leader summarized, “I honestly like the process this year because it forced you to look at a multitude of different pieces of data and to get to a point of ‘aha.’” District leaders emphasize that PLCs, professional development, coaching, and observation and feedback cycles are crucial in gauging progress toward schools’ short-term goals. The district’s use of a structured data inquiry process to identify and address equity gaps is a strength of the district.

### Data Use and Culture

Drawing from district leader and school staff focus groups and interviews, it is evident that district, school, and classroom-level leaders havea shared understanding of how data collection and use are connected to the district’s broader strategic priorities. One district leader described participating in PLC meetings and explained that teachers frequently request support from district staff to help interpret data. They reported that in the classroom, data are being used to follow the progress of individual students. As previously mentioned, the triangulation of data is possible through Illuminate DnA and Educlimber, which have been beneficial in guiding conversations in teacher PLCs. According to the district superintendent, Fall River collectsmultiple sources of data and disaggregates by student groups to inform district planning, decision making, policies, and practices.

The district has established many formal structures to support data use across the district and schools, which is a strength of the district. As previously mentioned, the district supports schools in data dives multiple times a year. This process involves district leaders sending Boston University’s Lynch School’s equity protocol to each school principal to examine data through an equity lens. The principal convenes a team, typically their administrative team or ILT, to complete the protocol by reviewing multiple sources of data. As a district leader explained, “They’re going to look at multiple sources of data, but get really narrow,” to create their short-term goals. The team then presents their findings to district leaders for thought partnership and feedback. A district leader provided an example of what this looked like in practice:

At [elementary school], they’re heavily focused on fourth-grade multilingual learners. So, they found that they have issues there around [ML] attendance, they have issues there around academic achievement. So, we were really unpacking like, how many students [are struggling]?... What does the teaching staff look like? Through these data dives and through my walk[throughs], all my feedback…is really around like interrogating your system. So, when you think about your short-term goal, like what is it about PLC, professional development, coaching, observations, feedback? What is it about those pieces that is going to be different [to address] your short-term goal?

District and school staff members unanimously agreed that data gathered from district benchmarks and formative assessments are being used in PLC meetings to inform instruction. In focus groups, elementary teachers described how their PLCs are “heavily data-based” and how they are expected to review assessment data to plan their classroom instructional activities. Elementary teachers also reported that there is a professional learning team specifically focused on SEL once a month, where school support staff will review survey and screener data to determine intervention groups.

At the middle school level, administration of district screeners (supported by the GLEAM grant) has resulted in a more targeted MTSS process of connecting students with the academic support that aligns best with their needs. One district leader described this process at the elementary level:

We started with a universal screener for all kids; we were administering MAZE to students. From there, … we were determining who was high risk and needed additional screening, so we were administering DIBLES to kids.… [We] also administer a quick phonics screener, so we have a few tiers of screening. Then based on where those kids landed, they would have a menu of interventions available for them.

This same leader explained that students receive 30 or 60 minutes of intervention three to four times a week. Systems for monitoring student academic and nonacademic progress also exist at the high school level through pod meetings, where teachers and support staff come together to identify, assign to interventions, and monitor students who have been identified as needing extra support.

According to school leaders and teachers, the districtprovides educators with access to relevant resources necessary to understand and analyze data. One district leaderexplained that the districtsupports teacher understanding and use of data throughprofessional development, access to data analysis tools, planning and collaborative time, and access to data dashboards. School and district leaders described that professional learning focused on how to use student data is typically done in PLCs, where district leaders come in to work with teacher groups or individuals upon request. Using these specific situations, district staff guide teachers on how to best leverage the data they have in order to build their capacity to analyze student data. One district staff member explained, “I feel like the just-in-time stuff works so much better, because it’s so overwhelming if you’re just sort of sitting there and trying to take it in if you don’t have a purpose.” Overall, this approach to supporting teachers in understanding student data appears to be a productive use of time during PLCs.

In addition to using data to support individual students, Fall River utilizes a variety of data sources to examine student performance across the district. According to district leaders, they regularly use multiple and varied data points to evaluate students’ academic, social-emotional, and behavioral needs. Most data, including grades, attendance, student support team reports, individualized education programs (IEPs), behavioral evaluations, office referrals, suspensions, MCAS, ACCESS, AP scores, and ACT/SAT scores, are disaggregated by specific categories. These categories include race and/or ethnicity, gender, English Learner status for current English Learners, and disability status for students with an IEP. Additionally, MCAS data are disaggregated by High Needs status. The district’s utilization of a variety of data sources to examine student performance is a strength.

### Sharing Data

Teacher focus group participants reported that the district has expectations for teachers to engage students in goal setting and data review in developmentally appropriate ways to promote student agency, which is a strength of the district. One elementary teacher described these goal-setting sessions in detail: “So every child is setting their own goal.… You take a standard and then break it apart into four steps, or five steps, depending on what the standard is.” Teachers are then expected to check in with students about their progress toward these goals throughout the year. The district primarily uses Aspen to share data with middle and high school students and families. High school students confirm that they receive a progress report halfway through the trimester to show how they are doing, so that they can see how they can improve before their final report card comes out at the end of the trimester. Some teachers also use Google Classroom and use it to communicate progress.

Responses from district and school staff confirm that leaders expect teachers to communicate with families about student performance. To this point, teachers and families noted that the district regularly communicatesevidence of student, school, and district performance. The district hasa transparent system (Aspen) that enables families to monitor student academic data, including grades on assignments, overall course grades, assessment scores, and other data. For all other communications with their child’s school(s), the district uses ParentSquare, where all messages can be automatically translated into parents’ preferred language. Because elementary parents do not have access to Aspen, parents in focus groups reported being kept up to date on their child’s performance by teachers through ParentSquare. Illuminate DnA has the capacity to create various letters that can be autogenerated and are geared toward families. One teacher described how after every district benchmark, they send home a letter with details about a student’s results and what they mean in terms of progress toward achieving grade-level standards. Teachers also described how they try their best to explain DIBELS and other screener results to parents during parent-teacher conferences; however, time constraints can often make this discussion difficult because conferences are almost always about five minutes long. Teachers’ use of a variety of methods to communicate student progress toward grade-level standards is a strength of the district.

Parents agreed that the level of communication they receive is transparent enough for them to understand their students’ progress in academics. Teachers at the secondary level are also expected to communicate through ParentSquare, although there is some disagreement about the frequency and accessibility of the information that is shared. One teacher explained that they often use ParentSquare but has found that some parents are not responsive on there, so they have moved to calls and emails as alternative methods. In focus groups, some parents agreed that communication at the high school level is not as consistent as at other grade levels.

According to teachers, school leaders, and district staff, the district implementsa transparent and accessible grading system that is calibrated across schools and communicatesstudents’ progress and performance. According to the district’s Grading Policy document, the school committee requires a number of efforts to measure and report student academic progress. These efforts include requirements for parents/guardians to be regularly informed four times a year about their child’s progress, as well as school staff explaining the meaning of grades and outcomes to parents. At the elementary level, students receive competency-based report cards, whereas at the middle and high school levels, students receive traditional report cards to communicate student performance. Additionally, at the high school level, teachers talked specifically about ways that they are making sure grading practices are consistent across classrooms. Examples include using rubrics from College Board for AP classes and MCAS for college prep classes to systematize the way teachers score assignments.

According to district leaders, digital platforms that collect, store, and share student data are reviewed and monitored regularly to ensure ongoing compliance with student data privacy laws and regulations. In addition, district staff reported that the district offers annual professional learning for staff on student data privacy law, policies, and best practices for safeguarding student information. The district maintainsa detailed technology policy that specifies that student data is protected by permissions. A district leader explained that teachers have access to only their classroom-level data and principals have access only to data about their buildings, whereas the district is able to review data at all levels.

### Recommendations

* *The district should critically examine its benchmark assessment system and engage teachers in the process, aligning the pacing calendar, school schedules, and district-wide benchmark assessments to increase the usefulness of benchmark data for teachers and district leaders.*

## 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 Fall River.

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,) |  | * Developing and maintaining standard operating procedures documentation
 |
| [Staffing](#_Staffing_1) | * Teacher evaluation records show consistency in having SMART goals, multiple sources of evidence, and feedback for each standard, which included strengths and areas of growth.
 | * Developing effective policies and processes to recruit and hire new staff
* Supporting staff and new hires in attaining appropriate credentials
* Decreasing the wait time for onboarding new staff members
* Articulating areas for improvement more consistently in the administrator evaluation process to support school improvement
* Developing teacher and school leader retention strategies
 |
| [Professional Learning](#_Professional_Learning_1) | * Fall River provides a variety of professional learning opportunities to staff on general topics and differentiated to various staff roles.
* The district expanded the new staff mentoring program to include support for staff who start midyear.
 | * Providing professional development that addresses the specific needs of experienced teachers so they can continue refining their instructional practices
 |

### Human Resources Infrastructure, Policies, and Practices

As detailed in district documents, the human resources department consists of the executive director of human resources (new as of July 2024), the human resource manager, two executive assistants, a human resources coordinator, and a human resources clerk. According to district leaders, the district has the necessary staff and systems to post vacancies and maintain employee records in collaboration with the district’s payroll and finance department.

In interviews, district leaders reported that the district uses both MUNIS and Aspen to house individual employee information, such as payroll records, tax records, and personal information, as well as physical files to house other human resources data. However, human resources staff noted that they have difficulties accessing and transferring information across platforms and that this makes it challenging to efficiently complete human resources processes and procedures. For maintaining employee records, district leaders reported that the human resources department works closely with the payroll department, which sits within the district finance office and provides employees with important employee documents, such as W-2s.

Though many human resources processes were discussed in interviews, district leaders identified developing standardized documentation of human resources processes as a need. District leaders described that there was a limited organizational system for standardized procedure documents after the previous director of human services retired last year. The lack of a comprehensive document organizational system led to challenges when the new director of human resources transferred into the district, and made it difficult for the human resources department to identify in interviews which, if any, process documents needed to be updated or created to reflect human resources policies and procedures. In interviews, district leaders mentioned that the district has “contracted with the Collins Center [at the same time as this district review] to do a review of human resources and facilities and operations” and that they hope this review can help establish “processes for monitoring work, process for setting goals and monitoring those goals and things like that,” which were previously not maximized in the district. Developing and maintaining standard operating procedures documentation (e.g., timelines, onboarding processes) is an area for growth in Fall River.

As described in various interviews and focus groups with school and district leaders, the human resources department has been heavily involved in managing allegations and launching investigations against teachers and staff at schools from other staff members, parents, or students. According to various sources, several allegations against staff have been filed during the 2024-25 school year, and the associated teacher or staff members have been “put on administrative leave for months at a time” following these allegations. Teachers in focus groups reported that this has decreased morale in the schools for teachers and staff.

### Staffing

District and school leaders generally agreed that Fall River does not currently have effective policies and processes to recruit and hire new staff, which is an area for growth for the district. Currently, the district’s primary strategy for hiring is advertising all open positions on TalentEd and School Spring to recruit staff. However, as described by district and school leaders and indicated by the number of vacant positions across the district, this strategy is insufficient. School leaders noted that the district does not have adequate infrastructure to intentionally focus on actively recruiting staff into the district. As one school leader explained:

I will say I feel like we really need a lot more support and we just don’t have it, not for anyone’s fault, simply because we don’t have the HR department size that we need. There really isn’t much in terms of recruitment. I’m not aware, and I’ve now been in Fall River [for a long time], of a really clear, comprehensive recruitment strategy on the ground, kind of pounding the pavement. And I think that’s simply for the sake of there isn’t the staff to do that. So really, we rely on postings on School Spring.

District leaders also noted that Fall River’s recruitment strategies were not sufficient to address the staffing needs in the district. As one district leader noted, “It has become very apparent to me that…we need to look at our systems and…go beyond more traditional recruitment efforts.” At the time of the district review, district leaders were in the early stages of planning to attend regional job fairs in the spring and planning to partner with local universities’ educational programs to advertise for Fall River.

Despite these challenges, school leaders agreed that they felt supported by district leaders as they navigated difficulties in hiring staff. As one school leader summarized:

I think that we have a very collaborative working relationship with the district leadership [in hiring] so whether it’s principals bouncing off ideas with staff members or with central office them giving perspectives or ideas. When at all possible, I think that central office will also say, “Hey, there’s a candidate you might want to look at because we are all limited in staffing, and we all are understaffed with open positions.” So, I think that the district is really trying to support us [as principals] to make sure all positions are staffed and staffed with quality professionals. I think that that’s been a big push.

However, Fall River still has many vacant positions that it is working to fill. Because recruitment is an ongoing area of focus for the district, the superintendent makes a monthly report to the school committee on the district’s progress in filling vacant positions. According to the current job openings on the district website, at the time of the district review, there were over 100 vacancies for a variety of positions, including content teachers, special educators, interventionists/coaches, team chairs, paraprofessionals, long-term substitutes, and more.

Due to the difficulty in recruiting new staff to fill vacant positions within the district generally, the human resources department has developed a process for hiring and onboarding job candidates without proper credentials and “requesting a waiver or an emergency license from DESE.” According to one district leader, “If somebody doesn’t have the proper credentials, but they’re a really viable candidate, the administrative assistants will either request a waiver or an emergency license from DESE.” This leads to Fall River hiring a large number of new educators with a waiver or emergency license. According to data from DESE, 19 percent of Fall River teachers havea waiver or provisional license, compared to 7 percent statewide. To support staff in attaining proper credentials, the district does offer educators $1,000 per semester to continue their education. At the time of district review, the district was in early stages of looking into purchasing Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL) preparation courses from the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth or Bridgewater State to provide support to paraprofessionals interested in becoming teachers or teachers on emergency waivers. Supporting staff and new hires in attaining appropriate credentials is an area for growth in Fall River.

In terms of the timeline for the hiring process, according to district leaders, the school principals, directors, and/or supervisors are responsible for identifying hiring needs in their schools or areas of responsibility. Once they identify a need, the principal, director, or supervisor submits a form to request that the human resources department posts the position. From there, the human resources administrative assistants will confirm the vacancy in the position and confirm that there is an up-to-date job description for the role, and then post the position to SchoolSpring or TalentEd. Once a candidate is identified, the hiring manager is responsible for confirming that they have the appropriate credentials. Then, the administrative assistants in the human resources department set up an initial meeting with the prospective candidate and begin the process of onboarding new staff into the district. During these onboarding meetings, the administrative assistants receive licensure data and credentials.

According to interviews with city and district leaders, one of the main issues in hiring and retaining quality staff throughout the district is the pay scale, which is lower than neighboring communities, making it difficult to attract and retain quality educators. According to data from DESE, the average teacher salary in 2021 in Fall River was $12,001 less than the state average ($74,117 for the district versus $86,118 statewide), though leaders reported this disparity was somewhat lessened more recently with the new contract. An additional recruitment challenge reported by district and school leaders is that prospective job candidates sometimes receive their offer letter, accept the position, but then do not officially start their roles in Fall River. School leaders in focus groups reported several potential reasons for this. First, school leaders and teachers acknowledged in focus groups that prospective candidates sometimes “shop” for jobs in Fall River, receive their offer letter, and then move on to search for jobs in another school district due to pay or other reasons. Second, school leaders identified that they lost potential new hires due to a lengthy wait time between submitting their letter for recommendation and onboarding the new staff into the district. As one school leader in a focus group summarized:

To be honest, I think there is a little bit of a disconnect that once you onboard someone, you submit the paperwork for recommendation, that turnaround time can be very different depending on the person. So, for example, if I hire someone today, once they make the appointment and meet with HR and then follow through fingerprints and paperwork and then give their notice and they find out what the salary range is and benefits, sometimes that could be a month to a month and a half later. And then many times what we have found, unfortunately, and this is no fault of anyone, is that someone will be very interested in the position, follow through paperwork, get everything done, and then they’ll give an anticipated start date and then the day before, they’ve decided to part ways. So, we’ve held that position. We haven’t interviewed for it for a month and a half, two months. And then the day before, we’re expecting that person to start. And that’s happened many times this year. Not just the day before, but that turnaround has been challenging.

Taking steps to decrease the wait time for onboarding new hires is an area of growth for the district.

District records suggest that teacher evaluations are consistently completed using Vector Solutions. AIR used simple random sampling to select the sample of 10 percent of 533 teachers (54 teachers) due for summative evaluations for the 2023-2024 school year. Nearly all teacher evaluations selected for review (52 of 54; 96 percent) had a summative evaluation available for review. All of the teacher evaluations available for review (52) 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 (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely) goal and a professional practice SMART goal. However, progress reported toward the student learning and professional practice SMART goals are not consistently included in the summative evaluation report. All the teachers’ progress toward their student learning and professional goals were evaluated. Nearly all evaluations reviewed (96 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 but one of the summative evaluations (51) included feedback for each standard and overall feedback related to the teacher’s overall rating. Of those evaluations that included feedback (51 of 52), all named strengths or practices the teacher should continue, and 47 evaluations (92 percent) included feedback indicating areas of improvement. 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 administration evaluations are also completed using Vector Solutions. Of the 120 administrative district staff who were due for a summative evaluation for the 2023-2024 school year, 87 evaluations (73 percent) were available for review, and nearly all evaluations (86 of 87) were complete with performance ratings and assessment of progress toward goals. Of the 87 summative evaluations reviewed, all included student learning and professional practice SMART goals; however, only 93 evaluations (78 percent) included a school improvement goal. Nearly all the evaluations reviewed (93) included multiple sources of evidence to assess performance on summative evaluation standards, and the majority of the summative evaluations reviewed (68; 78 percent) included feedback for each standard. All evaluations with feedback included evaluator comments with specific, actionable feedback naming each administrator’s strengths; however, less than half of the evaluations reviewed (43) identified areas of improvement for administrative district staff. Consistently articulating areas for improvement for administrators to foster continuous growth and enhance their leadership effectiveness is an area for growth for the district.

District staff reported that the district’s approach to educator evaluation set high expectations for teachers and promoted growth. School leaders and teachers agreed that the district’s evaluation systems reflect a culture of high expectations for most educators. School leaders in focus groups reported that they were currently making efforts to incorporate Google Docs into their walkthrough evaluation process “so that when we go into the classroom, that’s instant feedback to that teacher.” However, some teachers felt the formal evaluation process was highly variable based on the evaluator, with one teacher commenting, “I’ve had evaluators in the system that I felt like it was a mutual process, and I felt like I was being grown as a teacher. It’s not always that.” According to school leaders, the district provides training that supports effective, equitable evaluation practices.

In terms of recognition and advancement, district leaders noted that there are limited districtwide processes for recognizing exceptional staff in Fall River. For example, district leaders reported that the superintendent recognizes exceptional staff and students in the district during meetings with the school committee and also through social media posts. However, teachers and school leaders did not mention other methods of exceptional staff recognition, though district leaders cited the Crystal Apple awards in a subsequent conversation. Additionally, when it comes to advancement in their careers, teachers felt that the district has limited resources to support their professional learning or pathways to advancement.

District and school leaders did not list any specific strategies for retention in the district, identifying staff retention as an area for growth. Teachers and school leaders reported that staff frequently leave the district after a short employment period and that staff resign from their positions throughout the school year. According to the district’s profile on the state’s website, the teacher retention rate for Fall River is 75.8 percent, which is lower than the state average of 85.8 percent. Additionally, for principals, this rate is 70.6 percent, which is lower than the state at 81.7 percent. Overall, teacher retention is a challenge in the district, and the development of explicit retention strategies is an area for growth.

School leaders generally agreed that the district fosters a positive, productive, and inclusive work environment for some staff through various activities designed to benefit teachers. Teachers agreed, mentioning specific school-level activities they participated in that increased teacher camaraderie and positivity. For example, some teachers participated in relaxing activities organized by their principal or participating in weekend outings that were organized by other teachers. Additionally, many teachers across focus groups reported that their principals “pulled out all the stops” for teacher appreciation week, such as giving them ice cream or other tokens of appreciation. However, these aforementioned positive activities were not representative of all teachers’ experience in Fall River, and opportunities to experience these activities appeared to be building-specific and not districtwide, according to teacher focus groups.

District leaders also indicated that the district typically provides some mental health and wellness support to teachers. For example, district leaders mentioned that they had a partnership with telehealth providers to allow staff access to mental health counseling and support, as well as an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). However, according to district and school leaders, more mental health support would be beneficial to staff, especially given that a common reason for leaving the district is due to mental health concerns. As one district leader noted, when they asked teachers why they were leaving the district, a common response was that “they left the district because they were taking time off for mental health every week and the stress of the job was just too much, and they just wanted to get out of it.” From exit interviews, district leaders noted that staff frequently identified student behavior and low pay as contributing to challenging work environments in Fall River.

### Professional Learning

Fall River offers many options for professional learning, consisting of teacher observations and feedback, a variety of professional development offerings, PLCs, and a growing mentorship program. Overall, teachers and district leaders reported positive perceptions of the district’s various opportunities for professional learning, with some identified areas for continued growth and improvement.

In terms of classroom observations, district leaders, school leaders, and teachers describe frequent observations of classrooms across the district. A district-provided rubric and evaluation handbook provides school and district leaders with guidelines for observation and feedback cycles. According to the evaluation handbook, Fall River follows DESE’s model system for educator evaluation and uses the DESE walkthrough tool for evaluation. District and school leaders conduct these walkthroughs using DESE’s diagnostic tool to support high-quality learning as their rubric and look-fors. District leaders, school leaders, and teachers all cited these walkthroughs as helpful for improving instructional practices.

Principals agreed that the district provides guidance for observation and feedback, which supports administrators and coaches in providing support to educators. Teachers also agreed that they were observed regularly, although the quality of feedback varied. Some teachers found the observations and feedback to be collaborative and helpful, but others reported that the quality feedback from observations varied depending on the evaluator. School leaders and evaluators described the district’s recent efforts to move observational feedback to Google Docs so that teachers could receive immediate, actionable feedback after a walkthrough.

In focus groups, teachers and instructional leaders described a coaching process in Fall River, though many admitted that the process has “faded out” over the past few years throughout their schools. Historically, this coaching process consisted of “eight-week coaching cycles” where “strong teachers in the building were paired up with other teachers” formally throughout the district. Currently, this process is not widespread across the district, but some targeted schools receive coaching feedback from their department heads and instructional coaches for six-week cycles. Specifically, these coaching sessions were targeted toward the lowest performing 10 percent of schools according to state accountability data: Fonseca Elementary School, Greene Elementary School, Kuss Middle School, Morton Middle School, Talbot Innovation School, and Durfee High School. According to school leaders, during these six-week cycles, the first week consists of observation, the second week consists of modeling, and then, depending on need, the remaining weeks consist of co-teaching and feedback. These coaching models were reportedly robust and highly targeted. Teachers in targeted schools were paired one-on-one with district, school, or instructional leaders to receive customized support. Due to the time-intensive nature of these six-week coaching cycles, not all teachers were given the same chance to participate in coaching across the district.

In terms of professional development, district leaders reported offering many opportunities that are ongoing, evidence-based, data-informed, relevant, and aligned with the Massachusetts Standards for Professional Development, which is a strength of the district. Every year, the district dedicates several full days to educator professional development. The first full day of professional development is at the beginning of the school year and is mandated for new teachers but optional for returning teachers; however, returning teachers receive a stipend for attending. In addition, the district has two other full professional development days in November and February. According to district leaders, at the time of this district review, Fall River offered “close to 120 professional development offerings” for teachers to choose from during their professional development time this year. During the November professional development day, offerings addressed content areas (ELA, mathematics, unified arts, science, social studies, special education, and early childhood) as well as specific roles (school counselors, technology teachers). Examples of topics included working with English Learners in ELA classrooms, integrating behavioral supports into the classroom, using the Illuminate assessment platform, helping students with ST Math for paraprofessionals, fostering student discourse in science classrooms, unpacking disability definitions and eligibility, and more. Most of the district’s professional development opportunities are specifically tailored to educators’ roles and responsibilities, although school leaders and teachers agreed that teachers had some agency in selecting the offerings that best suit their needs as educators. For the upcoming February professional development, the district plans to provide more opportunities for teachers to lead sessions for other teachers, as well as have general education and ESL teachers present together. After each professional development session, teachers have the opportunity to provide feedback.

However, teachers in focus groups reported a few challenges with the current offerings. First, some teachers reported that they could not choose their professional development opportunities and were pre-enrolled to take specific options. As one teacher in a focus group recounted, “I think last year I remember signing up to one of them and then being kicked out of that one and placed in one because that’s what they wanted us there.” Another teacher reported that teachers “don’t have a say in what type of professional development is offered.” Second, in focus groups, experienced teachers reported that there were limited useful professional development options available to them at their instructional level, with most of the professional development oriented toward new teachers or those early in their careers. As a result, experienced teachers described much of the professional development as repetitive and not relevant. Providing professional development that addresses the specific needs of experienced teachers so they can continue refining their instructional practices is an area of growth for the district.

School leaders agreed that their district provides them with protocols for how to effectively facilitate staff collaboration across subject areas and grade levels. These protocols include guidelines for weekly PLCs. During these PLCs, district leaders push into the schools and review data with teachers and school leaders, looking for instances where instruction needs to be supplemented to achieve higher student outcomes. During PLCs, teachers reported that they looked at data to see how well students were doing in the classroom across subject areas, as well as examples of student work. Teachers specified that PLCs were subject-specific and that most teachers participated in multiple PLCs, both covering their subject area as well as other target areas, such as SEL. Teachers also reported that instructional goals set in PLCs had a large impact on how they taught material to students in the classroom. Overall, there were mixed reports on PLC time across schools and subject areas, with most teachers reporting that PLC time was helpful to their instruction, although teachers in two separate focus groups reported that they experienced a negative climate during PLC time due to the disrespectful tone of a specific department leader. In addition to PLC meetings, teachers get preparation time outside of PLCs to plan for their lessons and collaborate with other teachers.

When novice educators start in the district, teacher focus group participants indicated that the district provides these educators with the resources to be successful, such as partnering them with a mentor. Additionally, district leadership reported that some schools with higher staff turnover also developed “pretty structured models for new teacher support,” including hosting monthly meetings for new educators on relevant topics, such as curriculum, classroom management, or other instructional tips. School leaders in focus groups described that the district had a robust, systematized mentorship program, which has “really helped with fidelity across the district.” However, school leaders also noted that many staff are hired midyear to fill vacant positions but there is currently no system for these staff members to receive a mentor midyear. As one school leader summarized:

If you are hired after [the first day of school], then it is fully reliant on the school to develop whatever they want to develop for an onboarding plan for the teachers. I think that is an area that could definitely be supported and systematized from the district level, because we [as principals] are just kind of coming up with what’s that onboarding process. And as new people get hired all the time throughout the year, we’re taking them through that process at the school level.

In response to this feedback, district leaders noted that this year, Fall River has expanded its established mentorship program, which included a three-day training program for new staff, to occur both at the beginning of the school year and in the middle of the school year to accommodate staff who join the district midyear. District leadership also emphasized that the mentorship program has expanded in recent years to intentionally include a larger number of ESL and special education teachers as mentors. The expansion of this mentoring program to include support for staff who start midyear is a strength of the district.

### Recommendations

* *The district should establish and document all standard operating procedures and core human resources functions/processes.*
* *The district should develop staff recruitment strategies that prioritize hiring diverse and effective staff.*
* *The district should continue exploring and implementing resources to support staff in attaining the appropriate credentials for their position.*
* *The district should identify opportunities to shorten the onboarding process for new staff in the district.*
* *The district should issue guidance and provide additional oversight around administrator evaluations to increase the percentage of administrators receiving constructive feedback in their evaluations.*
* *The district should develop a comprehensive strategy for retaining diverse and effective teachers and school leaders.*
* *The district should develop and implement a professional development plan that offers differentiated professional development opportunities and better supports experienced teachers in growing their practices.*

## 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 a robust MTSS that flexibly assesses and addresses each student’s academic, social-emotional, and behavioral strengths and needs.

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

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) | * At the high school level, supports are available for students struggling with substance abuse.
* The district has a robust approach to addressing student absenteeism.
 | * Creating opportunities for the student representative to exercise voice and leadership on the school committee
 |
| [Health and Well-being](#_Tiered_Systems_of) | * The district offers all students a variety of health and physical education, aligned with the Massachusetts Comprehensive Health and Physical Education Frameworks.
* The district uses a variety of tools and screeners to identify students who have behavioral and mental health concerns.
 |  |
| [Family and Community Partnerships](#_Family_and_Community) | * Each school has a community liaison who is responsible for maintaining community partnerships and assisting families in accessing resources.
* The district partners with various community organizations, proactively connects families with these supports, and annually reviews each partnership to ensure meeting needs as intended.
 | * Building the Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) and English Learner Parent Advisory Council (ELPAC) to be useful district supports for parents
 |
| [Multitiered Systems of Support (MTSS)](#_Multi-Tiered_Systems_of) | * The strategic utilization of grants to improve MTSS processes at schools across the district.
* Each school has collaborative teaming structures to connect students with academic and non-academic supports.
 |  |

### Safe and Supportive School Climate and Culture

Fall River prioritizes providing a safe and supportive school environment for its students and staff, with a particular emphasis on improving student attendance and promoting positive behavior approaches in all schools. Overall, teachers, parents, and students recognized the district’s efforts in this area while also identifying some areas for continued growth in services and supports.

According to district leaders, the district has a multihazard evacuation plan, an emergency response plan, and a bullying prevention plan, each of which is reviewed and updated annually.The most recent publicly posted bullying prevention plan on the district website was approved in the 2021-2022 school year; other plans are not publicly available. District staff reported using data from their bullying needs assessment to update the bullying policy annually.

The district also collects and uses data from the Conditions for Learning (CFL) survey and the Views of Climate and Learning (VOCAL) survey to monitor school and district culture. The CFL survey is given to students and parents twice each year, and district officials reported reviewing data from the VOCAL survey annually. According to students and their families in focus groups, students generally feel respected and supported by their teachers and school staff, but high school students noted that behavior issues from other students can make them feel unsafe.

School leaders discussed some meaningful ways that students give feedback in their schools, such as through the CFL survey. For example, one school leader described how students reported being bored in class as an area for growth in the CFL survey last year. As a result, school leaders provided professional development to teachers on increasing student engagement, specifically encouraging teachers to talk less and let students talk more. School leaders also mentioned gathering student input before implementing a “no cell phones” policy.

School committee members confirmed that three high school student representatives attend committee meetings but noted these representatives don’t actively participate in discussions. As one member said:

[The role of] student representative on the school committee is not to sit there, read off a piece of paper [about] the three events that have happened over the last month, say that’s an update, and then get up and leave.... It’s all for show. It’s all to check a box and say we have a student representative. It’s not for [embedding them] into the discussions that we have.

Committee members agreed that district leadership should make these roles more meaningful for both the students’ personal growth and the inclusion of student voice in school committee decisions, which is an area for growth for the district.

School leaders agreed that most Fall River elementary schools and some middle schools implement some type of positive behavioral interventions and supports system, in which students earn points to reinforce positive behavior. Additionally, multiple elementary staff members, including school leaders, teachers, and support staff, mentioned implementing Responsive Classroom, a system in which all classrooms start with a morning meeting with the expectations carried through the day. Elementary staff spoke highly of this program and suggested it should be implemented across the district; according to school staff, it is currently an optional summer professional development that teachers can elect to be trained on.

At the middle and high school levels, schools are implementing restorative justice practices. For example, secondary support staff mentioned referring students who are caught vaping nicotine to an afterschool smoking cessation program called I Decide rather than suspending them. For students who are caught vaping marijuana, they are suspended and then referred to the I Decide program when they return. As a support staff member summarized, “We avoid suspending as much as possible.” DESE data supports this; in 2024, 1.6 percent of all students received an in-school suspension and 2.9 percent received an out-of-school suspension (compared to 1.4 and 2.4 percent statewide, respectively). At the time of the district review, the district was planning to begin a PASS Program in January 2025 for students who had been suspended for drug use, possession, or selling in school. The program will be housed at the Boys and Girls Club in partnership with Star, a local recovery and therapeutic treatment center. District staff were excited about this program, as one explained, “Fall River has zero resources for youth when it comes to opioids, addiction, and recovery resources so our ability to bring Star in as a pilot and co-facilitator for this group with us, is a big, big deal.” Providing these supports for students struggling with substance abuse is a strength of the district.

School and district leaders agreed that reducing student absenteeism and implementing attendance tracking systems has been a priority at the district and school levels for some years. In the 2023-24 school year, the chronic absenteeism rate is 10.7 points higher than the state rate and higher for each student group except ELs, according to DESE data. At the center of the district’s efforts is building relationships with families to learn the underlying reasons for absenteeism and providing support to remove barriers. A wide variety of support staff, including school adjustment counselors, guidance counselors, and behavior therapists, are all responsible for student attendance, as one explained:

We are all attendance monitors, so on a daily basis we have to check students’ attendance. If they’re not here, we have to make daily calls [home], document reasons for their absences, have meetings with families if students are not coming to school and then proceed with whatever it is that’s needed to ensure that the kids are here at school.

After multiple absences from school, these support staff conduct home visits to speak directly with students and their families. To address students’ transportation challenges getting to school, the district purchased six cars that support staff use to provide rides to students when needed. Teachers and school leaders reported using individualized attendance plans to encourage students to come to school, conducting small-group counseling sessions to address chronic absenteeism, and providing incentives such as raffles for students who are in school and special events for students with perfect attendance for several days in a row. Parents also described an attendance “buy-back” program, in which secondary students can make up time that they missed by arriving to class on time five days in a row. School leaders agreed that this practice exists, along with makeup classes on Saturdays and during school holidays. School leaders and support staff report reviewing attendance data often, as frequently as daily, and district and school staff agreed that attendance data are reviewed in student support team meetings. Although attendance is still below state averages, the existence of robust systems and attention to root causes of chronic absenteeism is a strength of the district.

### Health and Well-being

At the time of the district review, the district and school committee had just approved a new wellness policy as of October 21, 2024. This new policy, which is publicly posted on the district’s website, “promotes comprehensive physical and nutritional as well as social and emotional wellness initiatives as an integral part of the learning environment.”

The district offers a variety of health and physical education (PE) options, aligned with the Massachusetts Comprehensive Health and Physical Education Frameworks, to all students, which is a strength of the district. A review of school schedulesindicated that the district provides students at all schools and grade levels with opportunities to learn about healthful practices. At the elementary school level, leaders reported that students received a full year of PE although teachers reported that the frequency varied (weekly for the lower elementary grades and every other week for the upper elementary grades). At the middle school level, each grade level has access to a PE and health class, although the length of this class was unclear from scheduling documents (i.e., if the course was for one term or for the school year). At the high school level, students have several courses they can take for one term, including fitness concepts, PE, yoga and stress management, PE buddies through Learn to Serve (where students have an opportunity to work with high school students with physical needs in PE or adapted PE classes), swimming for fitness, and CPR/first aid/lifeguard training.

A review of the district website showed that the district provides students with multiple opportunities to engage in physical activity and strengthen their bodies while attending school. At the elementary level, all schools have a daily scheduled recess period. According to the district’s new wellness policy, recess is not to be withheld from students for classroom misbehavior or remedial work such as interventions, tutoring or other academic work, or music lessons. At the high school level, sports are available in the fall (e.g., field hockey, soccer, volleyball, cross country, golf), winter (e.g., basketball, ice hockey, wrestling, swimming/diving), and spring (e.g., softball, baseball, tennis, outdoor track and field). At the middle school level, sports are available, but the district’s online athletics page was not available for review. Teachers, school leaders, and students all agreed that sports and other activities are provided at all grade levels and schools.

According to school leaders and support staff, the district supports students and their families and caregivers by providing information on and referrals to health providers when requested or needed. The district has a partnership with South Coast Hospitals; Cartwheel, a telehealth provider; and district staff reported a “direct connection” with the mobile crises center for emergency mental health referrals. Staff are eligible for these services as well through the Employee Assistance Program.

District officials indicated that the district has an allergy collection and verification protocol in place that was reviewed and updated in the last three years. Families agreed that the district has these policies in place. One parent whose child has a severe airborne allergy spoke highly of the support they received from the school in communicating the need for caution to teachers, other parents, and other students: “[My child’s] school allowed me to go into the school and read books to the parents and the children so that they understood, like, this is our lifestyle because he is airborne. His school went above and beyond.”

Fall River uses a variety of tools and screeners to identify students in need of behavioral and mental health services, which is a strength of the district. The district administers Satchel Pulse, a universal screener, to all students in Kindergarten through Grade 12 to identify students in need of Tier 2 or Tier 3 behavioral or SEL/mental health supports. Additionally, the CFL survey touches on related issues. For students in Grades 6, 8, and 10, the district administers the Signs of Suicide screener and received a grant to roll it out to other grades this year. Lastly, district leaders mentioned monitoring students’ use of district computers and receiving Light Speed alerts if students are searching for terms that indicate they may self-harm or harm others.

Regarding services provided, most schools have interventions based on the Satchel screener that can be delivered at Tier 2 and Tier 3 levels. School leaders and staff noted that school adjustment counselors have relationships with local mental health providers and Family Services, so they can provide referrals as necessary. School adjustment counselors mentioned developing trackers for individual students to set academic and behavioral goals as needed as well as running small groups, such as mindfulness groups, bilingual groups to help newcomers transition to the country, and a support group for boys. Along with interventionists, some teachers reported having SEL liaisons available, although these positions are not currently at all schools. These positions are intended to help address students’ needs, such as by facilitating small group counseling sessions and helping with attendance monitoring, although staff reported that the responsibilities of these positions vary widely. In some schools, SEL liaisons reportedly are responsible for administrative duties (e.g., lunch and recess monitoring) or fill-in as one-on-one paraprofessionals, which is not the intention of this role. Yet school leaders and school staff had positive impressions of these positions. As a testament to the need for these positions, a district leader reported that when principals were asked to make staff cuts in response to a budget shortfall, no one identified the SEL liaison as a position to eliminate.

### Family and Community Partnerships

School leaders and teachers agreed that the district sets expectations for teachers to regularly communicate with parents and that this communication takes place primarily using ParentSquare. Staff, school leaders, teachers, and parents agreed that ParentSquare is a helpful tool for sharing information among families, schools, and the district. Teachers noted that ParentSquare provides a number of options, such as text messaging or phone calls, which allows them to tailor communication to parent needs and preferences. ParentSquare also includes automatic translation capabilities, and parents agreed that the district has lately improved its efforts to provide official communications and documents in the family’s home language. One school leader stated that they monitor communications on ParentSquare to ensure that teachers are sharing information such as DIBELS scores and progress on other benchmarks. District support staff noted that much of their communication with families is related to student attendance issues. Parents also mentioned X, Facebook, and email as avenues of communication from the district and schools. Although parents generally felt that the district does a good job of providing general updates, some expressed a desire for more frequent and specific information about their child’s performance. Additionally, parents reported that translators are not always provided for in-person events.

In terms of gathering feedback from families, parents agreed that they receive the CFL survey on a regular basis. The district has an active SEPAC, although there were conflicting reports about the presence of an ELPAC. The SEPAC is advertised on the district’s website, meets monthly, and invites different speakers to present at events. Additionally, the district administers surveys to better encourage parent engagement in the SEPAC. However, according to a district leader, “[Attendance] really ebbs and flows,” and district leaders are trying to encourage more virtual options for families during the winter months when attendance is especially poor. The ELPAC is reportedly very limited, is not advertised or promoted on the district’s website, and does not represent the large number of English Learners in the district. Consistently establishing an ELPAC and increasing SEPAC participation is an area for growth for the district.

Regarding community partnerships, district staff, school leaders, staff, and parents reported that the district maintains relationships with organizations in the community to provide services and enriching experiences to students and families during and outside of the school day. In addition to the health and wellness programs discussed above (see Health and Well-being), district staff mentioned community partnerships with the Children’s Advocacy Center, which works with students experiencing abuse or neglect; Youth Court, which is a school suspension alternative program; and the local police department. School leaders also mentioned partnerships with Full Plate Project and Stop and Shop for food support as well as the YMCA and Boys and Girls Club for before- and afterschool programs. Every school has at least one community facilitator who maintains these partnerships and helps students and parents access the resources they need, which is a strength of the district. School leaders also reported that many of the community facilitators are bilingual in Spanish and/or Portuguese.

According to the district website, the Parent and Community Engagement Center serves as a central clearinghouse for information on community supports. The district runs the Family and Community Engagement program, which offers wellness workshops, adult English classes, and assistance with state and federal benefit applications. The district invites these community partners to attend schools’ open houses to increase parental awareness of the support available. Parents agreed that they were knowledgeable of the services available and that they felt generally supported by district and school staff when they needed help. One parent new to the district mentioned that they were asked whether they needed assistance when they signed their child up for school. Others noted that the CFL survey includes questions about needing help, and the adjustment counselors or parent center reaches out in response.

According to schools’ student services leads, the district reviews their community partnerships annually pertaining to “their outcomes as it relates to the contract we signed with them.” As one district leader described the process, “We do become a bit reliant on some of the data [the community partners] provide because it’s not data that we see in our student information system, but we can see the correlation of the outcomes of their services to the needs of our students.” The district’s partnerships with community organizations, proactive outreach to families to connect them with support, and annual review to ensure the partnership is working as intended are strengths of the district.

### Multitiered Systems of Support

The district is working to improve its MTSS framework across schools. The district providesguidance for school leaders on how to implement each component of MTSS via the DCAP, although this document was not referenced in interviews or focus groups. Teachers, leaders, and support staff described tiered interventions and the processes to identify students who need further support. As discussed earlier in Curriculum and Instruction, the current MTSS model was first refined at Talbot Middle School using the GLEAM grant and the Intensive Assistance Grant, starting with universal screening using MAZE and moving to more targeted screeners as necessary. According to district leaders, the pilot has now expanded to other middle schools, with future plans to expand further to other grade levels. The strategic utilization of grants to improve MTSS processes at other schools in the district is a strength.

According to the DCAP, the district’s tiered system of support includes support for academic and social-emotional needs. Teachers and school staff report that they monitor the effectiveness of this system by meeting to review student data. In the elementary schools, these are called MTSS meetings or teacher assistant team meetings, where they create six-week learning plans for students who need them, based on data from screeners such as DIBELS, i-Ready, and Satchel. In secondary schools, counselors have pod meetings that involve individual students, in which they develop individualized success plans that can cover both academic and nonacademic areas. These collaborative teaming structures to connect students with academic and nonacademic supports is a strength of the district. Schools then have time built into their schedules through WIN or Strategies Blocks (the name varies by school) and other times during the day (e.g., advisory) to implement assigned interventions for students (see Equitable Practices and Access for more information).

### Recommendations

* *The school committee should work with its student representatives to increase student voice, agency, and participation in school committee meetings.*
* *The district should apply the strategies it uses for its SEPAC to establish an active and effective ELPAC through which families can participate in district decision-making regarding English Learners. Once established, the district should focus on increasing family involvement in these bodies.*

## Financial and Asset Management

This section focuses on the extent to which, through its policies, systems, and procedures, the district strategically allocates and utilizes funding and other resources in alignment with applicable laws to improve all students’ performance, opportunities, and outcomes. It also focuses on the ways in which 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 Fall River.

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 district uses MUNIS and has a fully electronic system to manage financial records, procurement records, invoices, and purchase orders.
 | * Attracting and hiring qualified staff to enhance expertise in the finance office
 |
| [Budgeting and Budget Process](#_Budgeting_and_Budget_1) | * The district maintains a transparent budgeting process with community involvement, detailed timelines, and public notices of meetings.
* The district makes effective use of state and federal grants, with a director of grants ensuring compliance.
* District leaders regularly communicate the status of the budget to the school committee.
 | * Engaging families more purposefully in the budget process
* Making the budget book more user friendly (e.g., additional narrative, more visuals)
 |
| [Operations](#_Operations_1) | * The district supports technology use among staff and students.
 | * Establishing a preventative maintenance plan
* Updating the accounts payable process on both the city and district sides to ensure timely vendor payments
 |
| [Managing Capital Assets and Capital Planning](#_Managing_Capital_Assets) | * The district has a newly adopted five-year capital improvement plan for 2025-2029.
* The district has prioritized several larger capital improvement investments including the creation of a new elementary school.
 |  |

### Business Office Staffing and Infrastructure

The finance department provides oversight and management of school district finances, budget, payroll, grants management, purchasing, vendor payments, financial reporting, and monitoring all district spending. This office includes the chief financial officer, director of grants, finance manager, procurement specialist, five bookkeeping clerks, payroll manager, and three payroll clerks. Additionally, the Facilities and Operations Office is responsible for building and ground maintenance (including security), transportation, food services, and custodial services. The number of individual staff who fall under Facilities and Operations is approximately 200.

One area that district leaders hope to improve is the level of expertise in the accounting department. Due to low salary scales, the district has reportedly had difficulty attracting highly qualified bookkeepers and payroll staff in the past. Although some processes are currently in place to support the onboarding of new staff members to help them develop the expertise needed, district leaders identified being able to attract and hire more qualified bookkeeping and payroll staff as an area for growth.

The finance department has documentation to support district infrastructure. In July 2024, the district approved an updated Policy Manual, which is posted publicly on the district website. Section D of the manual addresses fiscal management and includes comprehensive written policies and procedures that are designed to ensure compliance with state and federal requirements, establish an internal system of checks and balances, and provide a roadmap to operations when staffing disruptions arise.

The district uses MUNIS cash management to monitor and control resources, as does the city of Fall River. District staff agreed that the system is aligned with the Uniform Massachusetts Accounting System. District leaders explained that they have a fully electronic system to manage financial records, procurement records, invoices, and purchase orders, and that all documentation associated with purchases is attached to the record. Having MUNIS and a fully electronic system to manage records is a strength of the district.

Interview and focus group participants from both the district and the city characterized the two entities as having a good working relationship over the last several years. According to district staff and city officials, the district and the city of Fall River have a formal written agreement in place that describes the relationship between the city and the school district. This written agreement describes the roles, responsibilities, and costs assumed by each party. The city is responsible for transportation costs and crossing guards. Occasionally, the city also helps with plowing parking lots and ground maintenance, although these costs are typically covered by the district.

### Budgeting and Budget Process

Fall River’s budget process is transparent, includes community involvement, and follows an established schedule, which is a strength of the district. District leaders and city officials confirmed that the district’s budgeting process follows district charter rules on the annual budget calendar. The budget process begins in the fall when the finance office sends a survey to principals and department heads about their needs. Following the survey, district financial leaders meet with all principals and department heads “to give everybody a turn to tell us about what’s going on, what their priorities are, what their needs are.” School leaders also write a narrative justifying their requests, taking into account student enrollment numbers. School leaders agreed that they have opportunities to request positions and supplies or to solicit other budgetary adjustments. District leaders also examine a variety of data, including information from school leaders, academic and SEL data, enrollment data, and actual salaries to determine how to fund schools. District leaders put together all the information, including survey results, to determine budget priorities.

Parents are surveyed to identify budget priorities but according to a district official, the information “isn’t always the best.” A district leader expanded on this:

Where we don’t get a lot of good information [from the family financial surveys] is really around the *how*. I would attribute that to the fact that we don’t engage people on a regular basis so folks don’t necessarily know how that could really happen. That’s not to say people in our community don’t have good ideas, but I think that sometimes, you know, any ideas that are generated are kind of far removed or they’re too general. You have to get families more involved.

Parents in focus groups agreed that they do receive surveys asking for their input on district priorities, but are unsure how that data is used. Engaging families more purposefully in the budget process is an area for growth for the district.

Each year in December, the school committee adopts an annual budget calendar that lays out critical meeting dates and milestones for the budget approval process. District priorities are also presented to the school committee in December and are adopted in January. Once the governor’s budget is finalized, district leaders reported having two weeks to finalize the budget and get it to the school committee before February vacation. Throughout this process, the school committee has multiple finance meetings with district and school leaders to ask questions before providing feedback on the budget. The budget is released to the public and the school committee hosts a public hearing in April. By charter, the school committee must pass the budget by April 15. This gives the city enough time to build the district budget into the overall city budget. District leaders meet with the city council in early June. District leaders, school committee members, and the city mayor all described the budget process as an involved process that relies on close collaboration**.**

The district’s financial plan covers the next fiscal year. Each year, the city budgets meeting 100 percent of the Net School Spending (NSS) requirement of the state. However, according to DESE data, the district *did not meet* net school spending requirements (–0.5 percent below required NSS) for FY24, nor did it meet the requirement in FY23 (–2.9 percent below required NSS) or FY21. At the time of the review, the FY25 budget projected meeting the NSS requirement.

Although budget documents are publicly available, they are not currently easily understood by the general public. Currently, the budget is structured in difficult-to-read spreadsheets, including the proposed budget by cost center, unfunded positions, analysis of city-side costs, breakdowns of budget by school and departments (37 in total), and more. These budgets include line items with limited narrative text to describe the content of the spreadsheets. Making the budget book more user-friendly is an area for growth for the district.

Budget documents also indicate that the district applies for state and federal grants that are aligned with the district’s priorities and that systems are in place to ensure that grant terms and requirements are followed in a timely manner, which is a strength of the district. District leaders shared that they “review the DESE website grants page pretty consistently to vet the grants.” District leaders also addressed the need to plan for funding programs or staff when grant funding runs out. They described their “sustainability plans” as seeking supplemental grants from DESE or support from community partners to continue grant-funded programming even after grants end. District leaders did not mention whether sustainability plans are documented.

In the budget presentation for FY25, district leaders identified budgetary concerns, including transportation, charter school/school choice expenses, out-of-district special education tuition, utilities, capital infrastructure, health insurance, and contract negotiations. The district uses the state’s Circuit Breaker to fund a portion of the out-of-district special education tuition and transportation, although it is a struggle for the district to cover unexpected increases. A district leader shared their concern:

We need better systems in terms of our financial management because we have said yes so much in the past three years, and we have been able to fund things through state grants around curriculum or the ESSER [Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief] money.… And now we need a real system because we operate in a way that all year long people go, “I have this great idea.”

City officials expressed concern that reductions in federal funds may lead to difficulties with the budget in a few years.

Regarding regular budget updates to the school committee, district leaders and school committee members agreed that budget updates are provided on a regular basis. In addition to gathering budget information at school committee meetings, school committee members often request information from the district. A school committee member explained their role:

I would say that we have, over the years, we’ve created policies where the superintendent doesn’t have the authority to spend money wherever. So, we have organizationally put in place checks and balances to make sure that we have to approve transfers from one area to another so that we have our input. When they do a budget, they just can’t do whatever they want. We have to approve it.

The regular communication between the district and school committee on the status of the budget is a strength of the district.

District budget documents clearly identify funds associated with grants, student activities and organizations, fees, and revolving funds. According to school leaders and teachers, the district’s budget does not include an appropriate and competitive pay scale for teachers. Across all levels (district leaders, school leaders, and school staff), many staff respondents identified competitive teacher compensation as a key issue. As a result, the district has funded positions but is unable to hire and retain staff to fill these positions, particularly EL teachers. The average teacher salary is $79,846 as of FY2023, which is $9,730 lower than the state average of $89,576. In the time since the district review, the district has finalized a new three-year teacher contract with the teachers’ association, which includes wage increases between 18 and 21 percent over the life of the deal.

### Operations

The district has several operational elements that are all managed under the Facilities and Operations Office, allowing for generally effective coordination of these operations.

Maintenance is overseen by the district’s director of maintenance, who then manages the various disciplines (e.g., carpenters, painters, electricians, HVAC technicians, plumbers). The district is responsible for all maintenance of its buildings. According to district leaders, an established process is in place for schools to make maintenance requests whereby custodians submit a work order to the district. The work orders are then tracked in a system and prioritized by the district for completion. However, there is currently no preventative maintenance plan. According to a school committee member, the committee has been “pressuring [facilities] to have a preventive maintenance plan.” Establishing a preventative maintenance plan is an area for growth for the district.

One maintenance challenge that was identified in several interviews and focus groups is an issue with mold at one of the buildings, where mold was present in several classrooms. At the time of the district review, the mold issue had been reportedly rectified, although school staff described the district as taking too much time to address this particular challenge.

Operational needs are guided, in part, by student enrollment. Over the last decade, enrollment in Fall River has steadily increased. As of October 2024, the total enrollment for the district was 11,089. This included an increase of approximately 400 students compared to the prior school year. Additionally, Fall River continuously receives new student enrollments throughout the school year. Across the district, student assignment to schools is neighborhood-based, space permitting. According to the district’s parent information center, elementary and middle school students are assigned to a school based on their address. Parents can look up the school zone they reside in on the center website. If the neighborhood school is full, the center assists in student placement. Other factors for school assignment include requirements due to an IEP or 504 plan for placements in special programs or placements for English Learners.

District leaders reported that the city provides reliable transportation services so that students can safely get to and from school on time. Seven schools do not have regular transportation: Doran, Greene, Letourneau, Tansey, Viveiros, Watson, and Westall. For others, the district oversees 33 bus routes through Amaral Bus Company. In order to ride on a bus, students must have a current bus ID tag, which helps enforce safety standards (e.g., if needed, a parent is present to get the student on and off the bus, compliance with space limitations, assigning bus monitors). The department also schedules and supervises transportation for students in special programs if the student’s program is outside of their residential area.

However, according to school staff, afterschool transportation is not consistently provided. Elementary school teachers reported that transportation is not offered for afterschool programs or summer school–based programs; instead, parents are responsible for picking up their child. As a result, not all students can access afterschool opportunities. According to parents, high school students must rely on city buses to get to school, but there are late buses that pick up students just outside of school property.

Nutrition also falls under the Facilities and Operations Office. District leaders reported that food services has a five-year contract with an outside operator, Whitsons Culinary Group, to provide meals to students and staff. Fall River serves daily breakfast and lunch meals free of charge for all students. Meals consist of healthy whole grains, fruit, and vegetables, with milk available. The district also offers a summer food program. At the high school level, Durfee’s culinary arts program also runs Granite Grill, the on-site restaurant where community members can engage with students. High school students discussed their disappointment with the school food and did not mention being asked to provide input on the menus.

All technology needs fall under the Technology Services Office. All students in Fall River get a Chromebook laptop to support their learning. The district website provides information on how to access technical supports for students, parents, and staff. Additionally, the district has several technology facilitators to support the integration of technology into classrooms. Fall River’s support of technology for staff and students is a strength of the district.

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. A “procurement specialist oversees all the contracting that goes on in the district.” District staff and city officials explained that managing contracts with vendors, such as for food services, is a joint operation between the two. However, because of city and district requirements, vendors often have to wait for payment. A district leader described this challenge as longstanding:

The slow churn of trying to get things done has been always there. You double it, having to get approved on this side [by the district] and then everything going to be approved on the other side [by the city]. I think it's difficult on us, but I think it's much more difficult on our vendors who are waiting longer than they used to.

Updating the accounts payable process on both the city and district sides to ensure timely vendor payments is an area for growth.

### Managing Capital Assets and Capital Planning

District facilities staff reported that the district has a system to manage and track its inventory of capital assets and critical supplies. A district official explained that individual directors are responsible for reviewing and maintaining inventory:

For instance, the custodial director would be in charge of all of the equipment, not the consumables, but all of the equipment that would probably be anything over $1,500 on today’s pricing. So, $1,500 and above, they would be responsible for any maintenance on the vehicle, but also any forecasting for renewals.

The city has a current capital plan, approved by the city council on March 12, 2024. This plan describes future district capital needs, based on future enrollment projections and facility assessments, and incorporates input from district and community stakeholders. Examples of planned needs include replacing existing windows and upgrading the electrical system at Talbot Middle School, a roof replacement on one of the auditorium buildings and at Letourneau School, playground improvements at Letourneau and Viveiros Schools, and more. This current capital improvement plan is a strength of the district.

Two major capital assets for this school year were the opening of an early education school for three- and four-year olds and Westall Elementary School, a neighborhood school serving approximately 300 students. Westall Elementary took over the building from Stone K-12 Day School, which relocated to a new, much larger building. According to a district leader, the creation of Westall Elementary “took a lot of work, a lot of meetings, a lot of time to gather all the information, a lot of money to make it happen, but it was all in an effort to try to help with the [student] enrollment.” The prioritization of these larger capital improvement investments to address increases in student enrollment and declines in available spacing is a strength of the district.

### Recommendations

* *The district should continue its efforts to train current business office staff and develop a strategy for recruiting qualified staff to support district financial management.*
* *The district should increase the frequency with which families are engaged in budgeting and work toward facilitating purposeful and specific conversations around allocating district funds.*
* *The district should develop a new budget book template that includes more narrative explanations, graphics, and other elements that will make it more accessible to a general audience.*
* *The district should establish a preventative maintenance plan and a system for quickly addressing maintenance issues as they arise.*
* *The district should work with the city to update its accounts payable process to ensure vendors get paid in a timely manner.*

## Appendix A. Summary of Site Visit Activities

The AIR team completed the following activities as part of the district review activities in DISTRICT. The team conducted 192 observations of classroom instruction across 16 schools during the weeks of November 18 and November 25 and held interviews and focus groups between November 18 and 21. 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
* Town 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
* 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



Fall River Public Schools

Classroom Visits: Summary of Findings

Districtwide Instructional Observation Report

November 2024



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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.

Eight observers visited Fall River Public Schools during the week of November 18 and November 25, 2024. Observers conducted 192 observations in a sample of classrooms across sixteen schools. Observations were conducted in grades K-12 and focused primarily on English language arts and mathematics instruction.

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

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

Table 1. CLASS K–3 Domains and Dimensions

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

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

Table 2. CLASS Upper Elementary and Secondary Domains and Dimensions

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

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

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

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

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

Positive Climate

Emotional Support domain, Grades K−12

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

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

Positive Climate District Average\*: 4.7

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 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 | 190 | 4.7 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 1 | 7 | 11 | 40 | 15 | 10 | 84 | 5.1 |
| Grades 6-8 | 1 | 4 | 20 | 14 | 18 | 9 | 5 | 71 | 4.3 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 7 | 14 | 6 | 0 | 35 | 4.5 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 3, the district average is computed as:
([1 x 1] + [2 x 5] + [3 x 35] + [4 x 32] + [5 x 72] + [6 x 30] + [7 x 15]) ÷ 190 observations = 4.7

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\*: 5.5

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 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 | 190 | 5.5 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 7 | 29 | 20 | 26 | 84 | 5.7 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 14 | 26 | 13 | 15 | 71 | 5.3 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 13 | 9 | 6 | 35 | 5.3 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 4, the district average is computed as:
([2 x 1] + [3 x 8] + [4 x 24] + [5 x 68] + [6 x 42] + [7 x 47]) ÷ 190 observations = 5.5

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\*: 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 | 190 | 2.8 |
| Grades K-5 | 6 | 25 | 20 | 21 | 11 | 1 | 0 | 84 | 3.1 |
| Grades 6-8 | 17 | 24 | 18 | 5 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 71 | 2.5 |
| Grades 9-12 | 5 | 8 | 14 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 35 | 2.9 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 5, the district average is computed as:
([1 x 28] + [2 x 57] + [3 x 52] + [4 x 29] + [5 x 20] + [6 x 2] + [7 x 2]) ÷ 190 observations = 2.8

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\*: 6.7

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 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 | 190 | 6.7 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 11 | 72 | 84 | 6.8 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 17 | 46 | 71 | 6.4 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 30 | 35 | 6.9 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 6, the district average is computed as:
([2 x 1] + [3 x 1] + [4 x 3] + [5 x 4] + [6 x 33] + [7 x 148]) ÷ 190 observations = 6.7

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\*: 5.7

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 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 | 190 | 5.7 |
| Grades K-5 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 10 | 12 | 25 | 32 | 84 | 5.8 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 3 | 7 | 5 | 15 | 20 | 21 | 71 | 5.5 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 6 | 9 | 15 | 35 | 6.0 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 7, the district average is computed as:
([1 x 1] + [2 x 4] + [3 x 10] + [4 x 20] + [5 x 33] + [6 x 54] + [7 x 68]) ÷ 190 observations = 5.7

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\*: 6.3

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 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 | 190 | 6.3 |
| Grades K-5 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 8 | 9 | 15 | 48 | 84 | 6.1 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 6 | 11 | 50 | 71 | 6.5 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 9 | 18 | 35 | 6.1 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 8, the district average is computed as:
([1 x 1] + [3 x 4] + [4 x 15] + [5 x 19] + [6 x 35] + [7 x 116]) ÷ 190 observations = 6.3

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

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

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

Instructional Learning Formats

Classroom Organization domain, Grades K−3

Instructional Support domain, Grades 4− 12

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

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

Instructional Learning Formats District Average\*: 4.9

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High Range | *n* | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 190 | 4.9 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 13 | 30 | 23 | 12 | 84 | 5.3 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 3 | 8 | 17 | 30 | 11 | 2 | 71 | 4.6 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 1 | 7 | 5 | 17 | 3 | 2 | 35 | 4.6 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 9, the district average is computed as:
([2 x 4] + [3 x 21] + [4 x 35] + [5 x 77] + [6 x 37] + [7 x 16]) ÷ 190 observations = 4.9

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

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

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

Concept Development

Instructional Support domain, Grades K−3

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

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

Concept Development District Average\*: 2.9

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 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 | 54 | 2.9 |
| Grades K-3\*\* | 2 | 19 | 22 | 7 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 54 | 2.9 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 10, the district average is computed as:
([1 x 2] + [2 x 19] + [3 x 22] + [4 x 7] + [5 x 3] + [6 x 1]) ÷ 54 observations = 2.9

\*\*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 | 136 | 4.4 |
| Grades 4-5\*\* | 2 | 5 | 3 | 8 | 7 | 5 | 0 | 30 | 3.9 |
| Grades 6-8 | 1 | 3 | 13 | 13 | 23 | 13 | 5 | 71 | 4.6 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 3 | 7 | 5 | 13 | 4 | 3 | 35 | 4.5 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 11, the district average is computed as:
([1 x 3] + [2 x 11] + [3 x 23] + [4 x 26] + [5 x 43] + [6 x 22] + [7 x 8]) ÷ 136 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\*: 2.8

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 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 | 136 | 2.8 |
| Grades 4-5\*\* | 5 | 10 | 4 | 9 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 30 | 2.8 |
| Grades 6-8 | 14 | 18 | 21 | 10 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 71 | 2.8 |
| Grades 9-12 | 8 | 11 | 7 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 35 | 2.7 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 12, the district average is computed as:
([1 x 27] + [2 x 39] + [3 x 32] + [4 x 24] + [5 x 7] + [6 x 3] + [7 x 4]) ÷ 136 observations = 2.8

\*\*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\*: 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 | 190 | 3.2 |
| Grades K-5 | 3 | 21 | 26 | 14 | 14 | 5 | 1 | 84 | 3.4 |
| Grades 6-8 | 9 | 20 | 23 | 10 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 71 | 2.9 |
| Grades 9-12 | 5 | 4 | 11 | 3 | 10 | 2 | 0 | 35 | 3.4 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 13, the district average is computed as:
([1 x 17] + [2 x 45] + [3 x 60] + [4 x 27] + [5 x 33] + [6 x 7] + [7 x 1]) ÷ 190 observations = 3.2

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\*: 3.2

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 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 | 54 | 3.2 |
| Grades K-3\*\* | 4 | 12 | 16 | 15 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 54 | 3.2 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 14, the district average is computed as:
([1 x 4] + [2 x 12] + [3 x 16] + [4 x 15] + [5 x 5] + [6 x 2]) ÷ 54 observations = 3.2

\*\*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 | 136 | 3.0 |
| Grades 4-5\*\* | 1 | 8 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 30 | 3.7 |
| Grades 6-8 | 20 | 14 | 17 | 14 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 71 | 2.7 |
| Grades 9-12 | 11 | 3 | 4 | 11 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 35 | 3.1 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 15, the district average is computed as:
([1 x 32] + [2 x 25] + [3 x 25] + [4 x 32] + [5 x 11] + [6 x 9] + [7 x 2]) ÷ 136 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\*: 4.9

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 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 | 136 | 4.9 |
| Grades 4-5\*\* | 0 | 1 | 1 | 7 | 6 | 11 | 4 | 30 | 5.2 |
| Grades 6-8 | 1 | 2 | 8 | 19 | 19 | 17 | 5 | 71 | 4.7 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 11 | 9 | 7 | 4 | 35 | 4.9 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 16, the district average is computed as:
([1 x 1] + [2 x 4] + [3 x 12] + [4 x 37] + [5 x 34] + [6 x 35] + [7 x 13]) ÷ 136 observations = 4.9

\*\*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 Range1 | Low Range2 | Middle Range3 | Middle Range4 | Middle Range5 | High Range6 | High Range7 | n | Average Scores\* |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Emotional Support Domain** | 6 | 26 | 29 | 39 | 81 | 47 | 108 | 336 | 5.2 |
| Positive Climate | 0 | 1 | 7 | 11 | 40 | 15 | 10 | 84 | 5.1 |
| Negative Climate\*\* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 11 | 72 | 84 | 6.8 |
| Teacher Sensitivity | 0 | 0 | 2 | 7 | 29 | 20 | 26 | 84 | 5.7 |
| Regard for Student Perspectives | 6 | 25 | 20 | 21 | 11 | 1 | 0 | 84 | 3.1 |
| **Classroom Organization Domain** | 2 | 1 | 12 | 31 | 51 | 63 | 92 | 252 | 5.7 |
| Behavior Management | 1 | 1 | 3 | 10 | 12 | 25 | 32 | 84 | 5.8 |
| Productivity | 1 | 0 | 3 | 8 | 9 | 15 | 48 | 84 | 6.1 |
| Instructional Learning Formats\*\*\* | 0 | 0 | 6 | 13 | 30 | 23 | 12 | 84 | 5.3 |
| **Instructional Support Domain** | 17 | 75 | 75 | 60 | 36 | 18 | 1 | 282 | 3.3 |
| Concept Development (K-3 only) | 2 | 19 | 22 | 7 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 54 | 2.9 |
| Content Understanding (UE only) | 2 | 5 | 3 | 8 | 7 | 5 | 0 | 30 | 3.9 |
| Analysis and Inquiry (UE only) | 5 | 10 | 4 | 9 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 30 | 2.8 |
| Quality of Feedback | 3 | 21 | 26 | 14 | 14 | 5 | 1 | 84 | 3.4 |
| Language Modeling (K-3 only) | 4 | 12 | 16 | 15 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 54 | 3.2 |
| Instructional Dialogue (UE only) | 1 | 8 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 30 | 3.7 |
| **Student Engagement (UE only)** | **0** | **1** | **1** | **7** | **6** | **11** | **4** | **30** | **5.2** |

\*The district average is an average of the scores. For example, for Positive Climate, the district average is computed as: ([2 x 1] + [3 x 7] + [4 x 11] + [5 x 40] + [6 x 15] + [7 x 10]) ÷ 84 observations = 5.1

\*\*Negative Climate is rated on an inverse scale. An original score of 1 is given a value of 7. The scoring in the table reflects the normalized adjustment: ([5 x 1] + [6 x 11] + [7 x 72]) ÷ 84 observations = 6.8. In addition, Negative Climate appears in the Classroom Organization Domain for the Upper Elementary Manual.

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

Summary of Average Ratings: Grades 6–8

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

|  | Low Range1 | Low Range2 | Middle Range3 | Middle Range4 | Middle Range5 | High Range6 | High Range7 | n | Average Scores\* |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Emotional Support Domain | 18 | 29 | 40 | 33 | 50 | 22 | 21 | 213 | 4.0 |
| Positive Climate | 1 | 4 | 20 | 14 | 18 | 9 | 5 | 71 | 4.3 |
| Teacher Sensitivity | 0 | 1 | 2 | 14 | 26 | 13 | 15 | 71 | 5.3 |
| Regard for Student Perspectives | 17 | 24 | 18 | 5 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 71 | 2.5 |
| Classroom Organization Domain | 0 | 4 | 8 | 12 | 24 | 48 | 117 | 213 | 6.1 |
| Behavior Management | 0 | 3 | 7 | 5 | 15 | 20 | 21 | 71 | 5.5 |
| Productivity | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 6 | 11 | 50 | 71 | 6.5 |
| Negative Climate\*\* | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 17 | 46 | 71 | 6.4 |
| Instructional Support Domain | 44 | 58 | 82 | 64 | 68 | 28 | 11 | 355 | 3.5 |
| Instructional Learning Formats | 0 | 3 | 8 | 17 | 30 | 11 | 2 | 71 | 4.6 |
| Content Understanding | 1 | 3 | 13 | 13 | 23 | 13 | 5 | 71 | 4.6 |
| Analysis and Inquiry | 14 | 18 | 21 | 10 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 71 | 2.8 |
| Quality of Feedback | 9 | 20 | 23 | 10 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 71 | 2.9 |
| Instructional Dialogue | 20 | 14 | 17 | 14 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 71 | 2.7 |
| Student Engagement | 1 | 2 | 8 | 19 | 19 | 17 | 5 | 71 | 4.7 |

\*The district average is an average of the scores. For example, for Positive Climate, the district average is computed as: ([1 x 1] + [2 x 4] + [3 x 20] + [4 x 14] + [5 x 18] + [6 x 9] + [7 x 5]) ÷ 71 observations = 4.3

\*\*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: ([2 x 1] + [3 x 1] + [4 x 3] + [5 x 3] + [6 x 17] + [7 x 46]) ÷ 71 observations = 6.4

Summary of Average Ratings: Grades 9–12

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

|  | Low Range1 | Low Range2 | Middle Range3 | Middle Range4 | Middle Range5 | High Range6 | High Range7 | n | Average Scores\* |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Emotional Support Domain | 5 | 8 | 26 | 13 | 30 | 16 | 7 | 105 | 4.2 |
| Positive Climate | 0 | 0 | 8 | 7 | 14 | 6 | 0 | 35 | 4.5 |
| Teacher Sensitivity | 0 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 13 | 9 | 6 | 35 | 5.3 |
| Regard for Student Perspectives | 5 | 8 | 14 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 35 | 2.9 |
| Classroom Organization Domain | 0 | 0 | 1 | 8 | 10 | 23 | 63 | 105 | 6.3 |
| Behavior Management | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 6 | 9 | 15 | 35 | 6.0 |
| Productivity | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 9 | 18 | 35 | 6.1 |
| Negative Climate\*\* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 30 | 35 | 6.9 |
| Instructional Support Domain | 24 | 22 | 36 | 29 | 45 | 12 | 7 | 175 | 3.6 |
| Instructional Learning Formats | 0 | 1 | 7 | 5 | 17 | 3 | 2 | 35 | 4.6 |
| Content Understanding | 0 | 3 | 7 | 5 | 13 | 4 | 3 | 35 | 4.5 |
| Analysis and Inquiry | 8 | 11 | 7 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 35 | 2.7 |
| Quality of Feedback | 5 | 4 | 11 | 3 | 10 | 2 | 0 | 35 | 3.4 |
| Instructional Dialogue | 11 | 3 | 4 | 11 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 35 | 3.1 |
| Student Engagement | 0 | 1 | 3 | 11 | 9 | 7 | 4 | 35 | 4.9 |

\*The district average is an average of the scores. For example, for Positive Climate, the district average is computed as: ([3 x 8] + [4 x 7] + [5 x 14] + [6 x 6]) ÷ 35 observations = 4.5

\*\*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: ([6 x 5] + [7 x 30]) ÷ 35 observations = 6.9

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

Table C1. Resources to Support Leadership and Governance

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Resource | Description |
| [Coherence Guidebook](https://www.doe.mass.edu/csdp/guidebook/coherence-guidebook.pdf)\* | The guidebook illustrates a systems-level path toward deeper learning. School system leaders and teams may use the guidebook, along with its companion self-assessment, to articulate a vision of deeper learning, identify high-leverage instructional priorities, refine tiered supports, and leverage systems and structures—all in service of the articulated vision.  |
| [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 New Superintendent Induction Program (NSIP) is a three-year professional development program for superintendents in their first 3 years of their position in a Massachusetts school district. The curriculum is aligned to 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/) | Planning for Success (PfS) is an inclusive, hands-on planning process designed to build district and school capacity and coherence while also building community understanding and support. |

\*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 curriculum that is 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. Additionally, CURATE convenes panels of Massachusetts teachers to review and rate curriculum. These ratings are posted publicly to support schools and districts in selected 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 Practices](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/guidebook/) | This Guidebook includes tools for districts, schools, and educators that are aligned to the MA Educator Evaluation Framework and promote evidence-based best practices for inclusion. |
| [Guidebook of Culturally Diverse Artists and Artworks](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.doe.mass.edu%2Finstruction%2Farts%2Fdiverse-arts-guidebook.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) | The purpose of this resource is to promote culturally responsive teaching in the arts through the study of culturally diverse artists and their artworks. This guidebook highlights art made by people with racial identities that historically have been and continue to be marginalized. |
| [Massachusetts Blueprint for English Learner Success](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/blueprint/default.html) | Framework for English learner education in MA, with embedded Quick Reference Guides (QRGs) and other resources to support implementation. |
| Massachusetts Curricular Resources * [Appleseeds](https://sites.google.com/view/appleseedsk2/home)
* [Investigating History](https://www.doe.mass.edu/investigatinghistory/)
* [OpenSciEd](https://www.doe.mass.edu/stem/ste/openscied.html)
 | Free, open-source curricular resources aligned to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. |
| [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 (NGESL) instruction in Massachusetts. |
| [Synthesized ILT Framework](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.doe.mass.edu%2Fcsdp%2Fguidebook%2Fappendix-ilt-framework.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) | District and school teams can use this resource to reflect and identify specific actions they could take to establish or improve their instructional leadership teams (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 will provide resources and professional learning for classroom-based, curriculum-embedded performance tasks in K-8 science with implementation and instructional supports aligned to the Innovative Assessment (STE).  |
| [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 Tools](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/early-literacy-observation.html) | This tool supports the observation and provision of high-quality feedback to teacher candidates on their practice in evidence-based early literacy. |
| [Educator Evaluation Implementation Resources](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/implementation/default.html) | A suite of resources and practical tools for effective and equitable implementation of educator evaluation, including Focus Indicators, a subset of Indicators from the Classroom Teacher and School Level Administrator Rubrics that represent high-priority practices for the school year. |
| Induction and Mentoring* [Teacher Induction and Mentoring](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeffectiveness/mentor/default.html)
* [Principal Induction and Mentoring](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeffectiveness/mentor/principal.html)
* [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](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 PD 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) | WIDA professional development 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 are designed to 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)
* [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, those with limited or interrupted formal education, 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/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 is 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:* [SEL/APL Standards (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 through 3rd Grade](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/earlylearning/pli.html)
* [Culturally Responsive Social-Emotional Competency Development](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/sel/sel-all.docx)
 | These resources provide evidence-based and developmentally appropriate guidance around 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 grants 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 (PfS)](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. |
| [School Breakfast: 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.  |
| [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 | Free Meals for Kids and Teens in MA](https://www.projectbread.org/summer-eats-program?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=summereats_pmax&utm_content=english-2023&utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=summereats_pmax&utm_content=english-2023&gclid=CjwKCAjwzo2mBhAUEiwAf7wjkljB4ngm0uZLSTYsl5hK5QGTkC3mKF_4ae_5AUxyrVs6UiPIIrys1RoCQV0QAvD_BwE) | Summer Eats is a free-of-charge program that provides free meals to all kids and teens, ages 18 and under, at locations all across Massachusetts during the summer months. |

## Appendix D. Enrollment, Attendance, Expenditures

Table D1. Fall River Public Schools: Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity, 2024-2025

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | District | Percentage of District | State | Percentage of Total |
| All Students | 11,089 | 100.0% | 915,932 | 100.0% |
| American Indian or Alaska Native | 25 | 0.2% | 2,272 | 0.2% |
| Asian | 299 | 2.7% | 68,608 | 7.5% |
| Black or African American | 1,610 | 14.5% | 93,245 | 10.2% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 3,752 | 33.8% | 236,839 | 25.9% |
| Multi-Race, Not Hispanic or Latino | 913 | 8.2% | 42,303 | 4.6% |
| Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander | 10 | 0.1% | 800 | 0.1% |
| White | 4,480 | 40.4% | 471,865 | 51.5% |

*Note*. As of October 1, 2024.

Table D2. Fall River Public Schools: 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 | 9,647 | 100.0% | 86.1% | 517,093 | 100.0% | 55.8% |
| English Learners | 2,925 | 30.3% | 26.4% | 127,673 | 24.7% | 13.9% |
| Low Income | 8,682 | 90.0% | 78.3% | 385,161 | 74.5% | 42.1% |
| Students with Disabilities | 2,900 | 30.1% | 25.9% | 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 11,208; total state enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 926,057.

Table D3. Fall River Public Schools: Chronic Absencea Rates by Student Group, 2022-2024

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | *N* (2024) | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | State (2024) |
| All students | 11,687 | 48.4 | 37.3 | 30.4 | 19.7 |
| African American/Black | 1,536 | 41.8 | 32.4 | 23.0 | 22.5 |
| Asian | 333 | 32.2 | 22.6 | 20.7 | 11.8 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 3,914 | 53.5 | 41.8 | 33.8 | 31.3 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 1,031 | 50.3 | 38.9 | 32.5 | 20.6 |
| Native American | 25 | 28.6 | 35.0 | 32.0 | 28.5 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 12 | 83.3 | -- | 41.7 | 24.3 |
| White | 4,836 | 47.2 | 35.8 | 30.2 | 14.4 |
| High Needs | 10,335 | 50.7 | 39.1 | 32.0 | 27.2 |
| Low Income | 9,690 | 51.4 | 39.9 | 32.7 | 30.3 |
| English Learners | 2,909 | 44.4 | 30.8 | 26.2 | 29.9 |
| Students with Disabilities | 2,912 | 55.1 | 42.1 | 38.6 | 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. Fall River Public Schools: Expenditures, Fiscal Years, 2021-2023

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Expenditures** | **FY 2021** | **FY 2022** | **FY 2023** |
| By school committee | $123,085,162 | $134,844,268 | $152,431,288 |
| By Municipality | $56,943,360 | $61,145,518 | $64,553,196 |
| Total from local appropriations | $180,028,522 | $195,989,786 | $216,984,484 |
| From revolving funds and grants | $27,417,781 | $34,271,739 | $47,244,745 |
| Total expenditures | $207,446,303 | $230,261,525 | $264,229,229 |

*Note*. Expenditures from the School Finance Dashboard sourced from [Spending Comparisons - School Finance](https://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/statistics/default.html) last updated October 2024.

Table D5. Fall River Public Schools: Expenditures, 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 | $137,016,364 | $145,182,843 | $168,421,258 |
| Required local contribution | $32,906,432 | $34,286,248 | $36,332,032 |
| Required net school spendingb | $169,922,796 | $179,469,091 | $204,753,290 |
| Actual net school spending | $169,734,637 | $181,022,709 | $200,512,646 |
| Over/under required ($) | -$188,159 | $1,553,618 | -$4,240,644 |
| Over/under required (%) | -0.1% | 0.9% | -2.1% |

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. Fall River Public Schools: Expenditures Per In-District Pupil, Fiscal Years 2021-2023

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Expenditure category | FY 2021 | FY 2022 | FY 2023 |
| Administration | $457 | $461 | $575 |
| Instructional leadership (district and school) | $1,447 | $1,637 | $2,023 |
| Teachers | $5,589 | $5,852 | $6,062 |
| Other teaching services | $1,141 | $1,401 | $1,735 |
| Professional development | $94 | $143 | $234 |
| Instructional materials, equipment, and technology | $797 | $587 | $1,025 |
| Guidance, counseling, and testing services | $701 | $792 | $948 |
| Pupil services | $1,527 | $2,201 | $2,722 |
| Operations and maintenance | $1,704 | $1,717 | $2,194 |
| Insurance, retirement, and other fixed costs | $3,382 | $3,605 | $3,823 |
| Total expenditures per in-district pupil | $16,839 | $18,395 | $21,341 |

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

##

## Appendix E. Student Performance Data[[6]](#footnote-7)

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[Table E2. MCAS ELA Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2024 E-1](#_Toc195024270)

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[Table E4. MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2024 E-2](#_Toc195024272)

[Table E5. MCAS Science Achievement by Student Group, Grades 5 and 8, 2022-2024 E-3](#_Toc195024273)

[Table E6. MCAS Science Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2024 E-3](#_Toc195024274)

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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 | 4,856 | 22 | 22 | 20 | 39 | 45 | 41 | 44 | 40 | 33 | 37 | 37 | 21 |
| African American/Black | 612 | 21 | 19 | 16 | 24 | 39 | 39 | 45 | 46 | 39 | 41 | 38 | 31 |
| Asian | 130 | 28 | 38 | 31 | 62 | 47 | 43 | 52 | 29 | 25 | 19 | 17 | 10 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 1,594 | 16 | 16 | 14 | 20 | 44 | 39 | 42 | 44 | 40 | 45 | 44 | 36 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 478 | 23 | 21 | 21 | 46 | 48 | 44 | 46 | 37 | 29 | 35 | 32 | 17 |
| Native American | 9 | -- | -- | -- | 25 | -- | -- | -- | 43 | -- | -- | -- | 32 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 4 | -- | -- | -- | 39 | -- | -- | -- | 39 | -- | -- | -- | 21 |
| White | 2,026 | 25 | 26 | 24 | 47 | 47 | 43 | 43 | 40 | 28 | 31 | 33 | 13 |
| High needs | 4,305 | 18 | 18 | 16 | 22 | 46 | 42 | 44 | 45 | 36 | 40 | 40 | 33 |
| Low income | 4,018 | 19 | 18 | 16 | 21 | 46 | 42 | 44 | 45 | 36 | 40 | 40 | 34 |
| ELs and former ELs | 1,506 | 11 | 10 | 9 | 17 | 39 | 37 | 36 | 43 | 49 | 53 | 55 | 41 |
| Students w/disabilities | 1,272 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 11 | 32 | 29 | 29 | 40 | 63 | 67 | 67 | 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 | 715 | 34 | 38 | 31 | 57 | 43 | 39 | 39 | 31 | 23 | 23 | 30 | 12 |
| African American/Black | 84 | 19 | 45 | 29 | 42 | 54 | 39 | 37 | 40 | 27 | 16 | 35 | 18 |
| Asian | 27 | 48 | 63 | 48 | 78 | 45 | 21 | 37 | 16 | 6 | 16 | 15 | 5 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 228 | 25 | 27 | 22 | 36 | 39 | 44 | 43 | 38 | 36 | 30 | 35 | 26 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 65 | 33 | 37 | 26 | 61 | 53 | 46 | 42 | 30 | 14 | 17 | 32 | 9 |
| Native American | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 48 | -- | -- | -- | 37 | -- | -- | -- | 14 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 58 | -- | -- | -- | 34 | -- | -- | -- | 8 |
| White | 309 | 42 | 43 | 38 | 65 | 40 | 37 | 38 | 28 | 18 | 20 | 25 | 7 |
| High needs | 601 | 27 | 30 | 24 | 37 | 45 | 42 | 41 | 41 | 28 | 28 | 35 | 23 |
| Low income | 564 | 28 | 30 | 25 | 38 | 44 | 43 | 41 | 40 | 27 | 27 | 34 | 23 |
| ELs and former ELs | 199 | 10 | 13 | 8 | 14 | 42 | 38 | 37 | 38 | 47 | 49 | 55 | 48 |
| Students w/disabilities | 164 | 3 | 5 | 6 | 21 | 37 | 44 | 37 | 45 | 60 | 51 | 57 | 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 | 4,878 | 20 | 19 | 20 | 41 | 47 | 44 | 46 | 42 | 33 | 37 | 35 | 18 |
| African American/Black | 618 | 15 | 17 | 15 | 22 | 43 | 39 | 42 | 49 | 42 | 44 | 43 | 30 |
| Asian | 131 | 33 | 36 | 37 | 71 | 50 | 41 | 49 | 23 | 17 | 22 | 14 | 6 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 1,605 | 14 | 14 | 15 | 20 | 46 | 43 | 46 | 48 | 39 | 43 | 39 | 32 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 474 | 17 | 18 | 20 | 47 | 47 | 45 | 45 | 37 | 36 | 37 | 35 | 16 |
| Native American | 10 | -- | -- | 10 | 27 | -- | -- | 50 | 46 | -- | -- | 40 | 27 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 4 | -- | -- | -- | 39 | -- | -- | -- | 41 | -- | -- | -- | 20 |
| White | 2,032 | 24 | 24 | 23 | 49 | 49 | 46 | 47 | 40 | 28 | 31 | 30 | 11 |
| High needs | 4,323 | 16 | 16 | 16 | 23 | 47 | 44 | 46 | 48 | 37 | 40 | 38 | 28 |
| Low income | 4,035 | 16 | 16 | 16 | 21 | 47 | 44 | 46 | 49 | 37 | 40 | 38 | 30 |
| ELs and former ELs | 1,529 | 12 | 10 | 12 | 21 | 44 | 41 | 43 | 46 | 44 | 48 | 45 | 33 |
| Students w/disabilities | 1,275 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 13 | 33 | 29 | 31 | 43 | 63 | 66 | 63 | 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 | 703 | 24 | 22 | 15 | 48 | 49 | 59 | 47 | 39 | 27 | 20 | 38 | 13 |
| African American/Black | 84 | 14 | 18 | 11 | 27 | 63 | 67 | 45 | 52 | 24 | 14 | 44 | 21 |
| Asian | 25 | 32 | 47 | 28 | 79 | 59 | 37 | 36 | 17 | 9 | 16 | 36 | 4 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 229 | 16 | 11 | 10 | 25 | 46 | 64 | 45 | 50 | 39 | 25 | 45 | 25 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 60 | 15 | 28 | 7 | 51 | 55 | 44 | 53 | 39 | 30 | 28 | 40 | 10 |
| Native American | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 33 | -- | -- | -- | 54 | -- | -- | -- | 13 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 52 | -- | -- | -- | 39 | -- | -- | -- | 10 |
| White | 303 | 32 | 26 | 19 | 58 | 46 | 58 | 50 | 35 | 23 | 15 | 31 | 7 |
| High needs | 590 | 17 | 13 | 10 | 27 | 51 | 63 | 47 | 51 | 32 | 24 | 43 | 23 |
| Low income | 550 | 17 | 14 | 10 | 27 | 52 | 62 | 48 | 50 | 31 | 24 | 43 | 23 |
| ELs and former ELs | 201 | 5 | 2 | 5 | 14 | 51 | 66 | 38 | 46 | 44 | 33 | 57 | 40 |
| Students w/disabilities | 164 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 14 | 29 | 52 | 35 | 51 | 67 | 47 | 63 | 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 | 1,627 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 42 | 44 | 45 | 41 | 38 | 37 | 37 | 42 | 20 |
| African American/Black | 197 | 12 | 18 | 14 | 21 | 42 | 39 | 39 | 46 | 46 | 43 | 47 | 33 |
| Asian | 47 | 24 | 23 | 26 | 64 | 53 | 49 | 47 | 26 | 22 | 28 | 28 | 9 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 525 | 13 | 11 | 14 | 21 | 43 | 45 | 37 | 43 | 44 | 43 | 48 | 36 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 160 | 25 | 18 | 15 | 49 | 41 | 45 | 45 | 34 | 34 | 37 | 40 | 17 |
| Native American | 2 | -- | -- | -- | 26 | -- | -- | -- | 43 | -- | -- | -- | 32 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | -- | -- | -- | -- | 43 | -- | -- | -- | 34 | -- | -- | -- | 23 |
| White | 693 | 21 | 22 | 21 | 51 | 45 | 47 | 43 | 36 | 34 | 31 | 37 | 12 |
| High needs | 1,415 | 15 | 14 | 14 | 24 | 44 | 45 | 40 | 44 | 41 | 41 | 46 | 32 |
| Low income | 1,311 | 15 | 14 | 14 | 22 | 45 | 45 | 39 | 44 | 41 | 41 | 47 | 34 |
| ELs and former ELs | 501 | 8 | 8 | 9 | 17 | 42 | 42 | 33 | 41 | 50 | 50 | 58 | 42 |
| Students w/disabilities | 397 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 15 | 31 | 33 | 24 | 38 | 64 | 62 | 70 | 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 | 597 | 25 | 22 | 17 | 49 | 40 | 52 | 53 | 40 | 36 | 26 | 30 | 11 |
| African American/Black | 53 | 17 | 19 | 9 | 28 | 53 | 51 | 64 | 53 | 30 | 30 | 26 | 19 |
| Asian | 24 | 32 | 39 | 29 | 77 | 42 | 50 | 46 | 19 | 26 | 11 | 25 | 5 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 195 | 13 | 15 | 13 | 26 | 36 | 52 | 51 | 52 | 51 | 33 | 35 | 22 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 56 | 19 | 20 | 11 | 53 | 42 | 53 | 50 | 37 | 39 | 27 | 39 | 10 |
| Native American | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 38 | -- | -- | -- | 53 | -- | -- | -- | 10 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 47 | -- | -- | -- | 45 | -- | -- | -- | 8 |
| White | 267 | 32 | 26 | 22 | 58 | 39 | 51 | 53 | 36 | 29 | 23 | 25 | 6 |
| High needs | 495 | 16 | 14 | 12 | 28 | 42 | 53 | 54 | 52 | 42 | 32 | 34 | 20 |
| Low income | 458 | 17 | 15 | 12 | 28 | 43 | 53 | 54 | 51 | 41 | 31 | 34 | 20 |
| ELs and former ELs | 153 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 13 | 30 | 46 | 51 | 48 | 65 | 48 | 44 | 39 |
| Students w/disabilities | 147 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 18 | 29 | 37 | 45 | 52 | 69 | 59 | 53 | 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 | 804 | 25 | 24 | 22 | 42 | 48 | 45 | 47 | 40 | 27 | 31 | 30 | 18 |
| 4 | 883 | 21 | 20 | 20 | 37 | 52 | 48 | 48 | 45 | 27 | 32 | 32 | 19 |
| 5 | 859 | 24 | 26 | 21 | 38 | 50 | 46 | 50 | 46 | 26 | 27 | 30 | 16 |
| 6 | 746 | 20 | 18 | 14 | 40 | 40 | 33 | 39 | 35 | 40 | 49 | 47 | 25 |
| 7 | 797 | 20 | 20 | 15 | 36 | 40 | 40 | 42 | 42 | 39 | 39 | 42 | 22 |
| 8 | 767 | 22 | 22 | 24 | 43 | 41 | 34 | 34 | 34 | 37 | 43 | 42 | 24 |
| 3-8 | 4,856 | 22 | 22 | 20 | 39 | 45 | 41 | 44 | 40 | 33 | 37 | 37 | 21 |
| 10 | 715 | 34 | 38 | 31 | 57 | 43 | 39 | 39 | 31 | 23 | 23 | 30 | 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 | 809 | 25 | 24 | 24 | 44 | 41 | 42 | 42 | 35 | 34 | 34 | 33 | 20 |
| 4 | 887 | 29 | 29 | 30 | 46 | 42 | 39 | 42 | 38 | 28 | 32 | 28 | 16 |
| 5 | 860 | 15 | 21 | 19 | 40 | 56 | 56 | 56 | 46 | 29 | 23 | 25 | 14 |
| 6 | 753 | 19 | 13 | 16 | 40 | 49 | 43 | 50 | 43 | 32 | 44 | 34 | 17 |
| 7 | 795 | 14 | 14 | 11 | 37 | 46 | 41 | 44 | 44 | 40 | 45 | 45 | 19 |
| 8 | 774 | 15 | 14 | 16 | 38 | 49 | 42 | 41 | 42 | 36 | 44 | 43 | 19 |
| 3-8 | 4,878 | 20 | 19 | 20 | 41 | 47 | 44 | 46 | 42 | 33 | 37 | 35 | 18 |
| 10 | 703 | 24 | 22 | 15 | 48 | 49 | 59 | 47 | 39 | 27 | 20 | 38 | 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 | 856 | 23 | 23 | 23 | 45 | 43 | 44 | 42 | 36 | 35 | 33 | 35 | 20 |
| 8 | 771 | 14 | 12 | 12 | 39 | 45 | 46 | 40 | 41 | 41 | 42 | 49 | 20 |
| 5 and 8 | 1,627 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 42 | 44 | 45 | 41 | 38 | 37 | 37 | 42 | 20 |
| 10 | 597 | 25 | 22 | 17 | 49 | 40 | 52 | 53 | 40 | 36 | 26 | 30 | 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 | 3,517 | 45 | 46 | 48 | 50 |
| African American/Black | 404 | 47 | 45 | 50 | 49 |
| Asian | 104 | 48 | 54 | 49 | 57 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 1,144 | 44 | 45 | 47 | 48 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 345 | 46 | 43 | 49 | 51 |
| Native American | 3 | -- | -- | -- | 48 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 51 |
| White | 1,516 | 44 | 46 | 48 | 50 |
| High needs | 3,080 | 44 | 45 | 47 | 48 |
| Low income | 2,857 | 44 | 45 | 47 | 47 |
| ELs and former ELs | 1,012 | 44 | 47 | 48 | 50 |
| Students w/disabilities | 865 | 37 | 39 | 40 | 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 | 536 | 41 | 45 | 45 | 50 |
| African American/Black | 51 | 38 | 47 | 45 | 48 |
| Asian | 22 | 36 | -- | 58 | 55 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 168 | 40 | 44 | 44 | 47 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 52 | 43 | 48 | 47 | 50 |
| Native American | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 51 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | -- | -- | -- | -- | 49 |
| White | 242 | 42 | 44 | 44 | 51 |
| High needs | 444 | 41 | 44 | 44 | 47 |
| Low income | 415 | 41 | 44 | 45 | 47 |
| ELs and former ELs | 115 | 40 | 37 | 44 | 48 |
| Students w/disabilities | 123 | 33 | 36 | 40 | 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 | 3,539 | 43 | 43 | 45 | 50 |
| African American/Black | 407 | 44 | 45 | 46 | 49 |
| Asian | 105 | 47 | 46 | 48 | 58 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 1,153 | 43 | 43 | 45 | 48 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 342 | 40 | 42 | 42 | 50 |
| Native American | 5 | -- | -- | -- | 48 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 52 |
| White | 1,526 | 42 | 42 | 45 | 50 |
| High needs | 3,097 | 42 | 42 | 44 | 48 |
| Low income | 2,876 | 42 | 42 | 44 | 47 |
| ELs and former ELs | 1,044 | 46 | 43 | 45 | 50 |
| Students w/disabilities | 857 | 37 | 39 | 41 | 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 | 527 | 36 | 34 | 34 | 50 |
| African American/Black | 50 | 31 | 42 | 33 | 47 |
| Asian | 21 | 34 | -- | 31 | 55 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 170 | 37 | 30 | 32 | 45 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 49 | 29 | 33 | 37 | 49 |
| Native American | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 50 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | -- | -- | -- | -- | 50 |
| White | 236 | 38 | 33 | 36 | 52 |
| High needs | 437 | 37 | 34 | 35 | 47 |
| Low income | 407 | 36 | 34 | 34 | 46 |
| ELs and former ELs | 115 | 41 | 31 | 33 | 46 |
| Students w/disabilities | 121 | 38 | 30 | 36 | 47 |

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

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade | # Included (2024) | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | State (2024) |
| 3 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 4 | 756 | 46 | 46 | 48 | 50 |
| 5 | 761 | 46 | 48 | 50 | 50 |
| 6 | 643 | 42 | 42 | 40 | 50 |
| 7 | 679 | 44 | 45 | 50 | 50 |
| 8 | 678 | 45 | 46 | 51 | 50 |
| 3-8 | 3,517 | 45 | 46 | 48 | 50 |
| 10 | 536 | 41 | 45 | 45 | 50 |

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

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade | # Included (2024) | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | State (2024) |
| 3 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 4 | 767 | 47 | 48 | 50 | 50 |
| 5 | 764 | 45 | 43 | 45 | 50 |
| 6 | 646 | 39 | 36 | 40 | 50 |
| 7 | 677 | 38 | 43 | 44 | 50 |
| 8 | 685 | 43 | 43 | 44 | 50 |
| 3-8 | 3,539 | 43 | 43 | 45 | 50 |
| 10 | 527 | 36 | 34 | 34 | 50 |

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

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # Included (2023) | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All | 697 | 79.7 | 78.8 | 74.5 | 89.2 |
| African American/Black | 81 | 80.7 | 82.4 | 85.2 | 85.6 |
| Asian | 27 | 96.6 | 93.3 | 92.6 | 95.2 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 200 | 75.6 | 78.5 | 73.5 | 78.9 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 39 | 76.0 | 70.6 | 69.2 | 89.3 |
| Native American | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 82.5 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | -- | -- | -- | -- | 89.9 |
| White | 349 | 80.6 | 77.6 | 71.6 | 93.0 |
| High needs | 643 | 76.5 | 76.2 | 72.8 | 82.8 |
| Low income | 626 | 77.0 | 76.5 | 72.7 | 82.2 |
| English learners | 172 | 74.8 | 76.9 | 74.4 | 67.3 |
| Students w/disabilities | 142 | 58.1 | 61.3 | 48.6 | 76.4 |

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

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # Included (2022) | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | State (2022) |
| All | 647 | 73.6 | 81.8 | 80.4 | 91.9 |
| African American/Black | 74 | 69.8 | 82.5 | 83.8 | 90.1 |
| Asian | 30 | 84.8 | 96.6 | 93.3 | 96.9 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 181 | 68.2 | 76.7 | 79.0 | 84.4 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 34 | 80.0 | 76.0 | 73.5 | 90.8 |
| Native American | 2 | -- | -- | -- | 87.1 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | -- | -- | -- | -- | 81.3 |
| White | 326 | 74.6 | 83.7 | 79.8 | 94.4 |
| High needs | 568 | 67.9 | 78.9 | 78.0 | 86.8 |
| Low income | 557 | 69.1 | 79.6 | 78.3 | 86.3 |
| English learners | 117 | 55.4 | 77.0 | 77.8 | 78.0 |
| Students w/disabilities | 142 | 48.1 | 62.9 | 64.8 | 81.8 |

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

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # Included (2023) | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All | 2,660 | 3.7 | 6.7 | 5.0 | 2.1 |
| African American/Black | 291 | 5.1 | 5.5 | 3.4 | 2.8 |
| Asian | 107 | 0.0 | 1.8 | 0.0 | 0.6 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 812 | 4.0 | 5.9 | 4.9 | 4.4 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 209 | 3.1 | 13.0 | 4.8 | 1.9 |
| Native American | 6 | -- | -- | 0.0 | 4.1 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 2 | -- | -- | -- | 3.9 |
| White | 1,233 | 3.6 | 7.1 | 6.0 | 1.1 |
| High needs | 2,160 | 4.4 | 7.6 | 5.7 | 3.5 |
| Low income | 2,029 | -- | 7.5 | 5.7 | 3.8 |
| English learners | 527 | 4.7 | 8.6 | 5.9 | 8.0 |
| Students w/disabilities | 502 | 5.1 | 9.4 | 8.6 | 3.0 |

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

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # Included (2024) | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | State (2024) |
| All | 11,754 | 2.7 | 0.4 | 1.6 | 1.4 |
| African American/Black | 1,549 | 3.6 | 0.4 | 2.1 | 2.1 |
| Asian | 338 | 1.1 | -- | 0.9 | 0.3 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 3,960 | 2.7 | 0.4 | 1.8 | 1.9 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 1,026 | 4.1 | 1.1 | 1.7 | 1.6 |
| Native American | 25 | -- | -- | -- | 1.8 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 11 | -- | -- | -- | 1.9 |
| White | 4,845 | 2.3 | 0.2 | 1.2 | 1.1 |
| High needs | 10,405 | 3.0 | 0.4 | 1.7 | 1.9 |
| Low income | 9,746 | 3.0 | 0.4 | 1.8 | 2.1 |
| English learners | 2,957 | 2.7 | 0.4 | 1.0 | 1.4 |
| Students w/disabilities | 2,975 | 4.6 | 0.5 | 2.6 | 2.4 |

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

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # Included (2024) | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | State (2024) |
| All | 11,754 | 8.5 | 2.5 | 2.9 | 2.4 |
| African American/Black | 1,549 | 11.8 | 2.8 | 4.0 | 4.6 |
| Asian | 338 | 4.2 | -- | 1.8 | 0.6 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 3,960 | 8.8 | 2.4 | 2.9 | 3.8 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 1,026 | 10.9 | 3.6 | 3.1 | 2.6 |
| Native American | 25 | -- | -- | -- | 3.5 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 11 | -- | -- | -- | 2.5 |
| White | 4,845 | 7.4 | 2.2 | 2.4 | 1.5 |
| High needs | 10,405 | 9.2 | 2.6 | 3.1 | 3.6 |
| Low income | 9,746 | 9.4 | 2.7 | 3.2 | 4.0 |
| English learners | 2,957 | 6.7 | 1.3 | 1.9 | 2.6 |
| Students w/disabilities | 2,975 | 14.1 | 3.7 | 4.8 | 4.5 |

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

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # Included (2024) | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | State (2024) |
| All | 1,228 | 51.3 | 63.0 | 56.8 | 67.2 |
| African American/Black | 156 | 54.7 | 58.5 | 50.6 | 58.2 |
| Asian | 56 | 67.8 | 77.0 | 67.9 | 86.4 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 388 | 45.0 | 58.7 | 49.5 | 53.7 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 93 | 55.6 | 68.0 | 61.3 | 68.4 |
| Native American | 3 | -- | -- | -- | 57.1 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 59.8 |
| White | 531 | 52.1 | 64.8 | 61.8 | 71.9 |
| High needs | 970 | 47.1 | 58.5 | 52.0 | 52.0 |
| Low income | 907 | 47.5 | 59.1 | 53.5 | 53.1 |
| English learners | 267 | 41.7 | 50.0 | 29.6 | 31.8 |
| Students w/disabilities | 209 | 18.8 | 29.7 | 29.7 | 38.5 |

Table E22. Accountability Results, 2024

| School | Cumulative Progress Toward Improvement Targets (%) | Percentile | Overall Classification | Reason for Classification |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| District | 46 | -- | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Moderate progress toward targets |
| Early Learning Center | -- | -- | Insufficient data | Insufficient data |
| FRPS Early Learning Center | -- | -- | Insufficient data | Insufficient data |
| Carlton M. Viveiros Elementary School | 47 | 12 | Requiring assistance or intervention | Low student group performance: White |
| Henry Lord Community School | 44 | 12 | Requiring assistance or intervention | Low student group performance: White |
| James Tansey | 37 | 39 | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Moderate progress toward targets |
| John J. Doran | 51 | 18 | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Substantial progress toward targets |
| Letourneau Elementary School | 53 | 20 | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Substantial progress toward targets |
| Mary Fonseca Elementary School | 58 | 6 | Requiring assistance or intervention | In need of broad/comprehensive support: Underperforming schoolLow student group performance: White |
| North End Elementary | 61 | 40 | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Substantial progress toward targets |
| Samuel Watson | 32 | 11 | Requiring assistance or intervention | Low student group performance: White |
| Spencer Borden | 56 | 51 | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Substantial progress toward targets |
| William S. Greene | 44 | 7 | Requiring assistance or intervention | Among the lowest performing 10% of schoolsLow student group performance: White |
| Matthew J. Kuss | 53 | 3 | Requiring assistance or intervention | Among the lowest performing 10% of schoolsLow student group performance: Asian, White, Students with disabilities, Low income, Hispanic/Latino, EL and former EL, and High needs |
| Morton Middle | 28 | 2 | Requiring assistance or intervention | Among the lowest performing 10% of schoolsLow student group performance: African American/Black, White, Students with disabilities, Low income, Hispanic/Latino, EL and former EL, and High needs |
| Talbot Innovation School | 72 | 7 | Requiring assistance or intervention | Among the lowest performing 10% of schoolsLow student group performance: White, and Students with disabilities |
| B.M.C. Durfee High | 24 | 6 | Requiring assistance or intervention | Among the lowest performing 10% of schoolsLow student group performance: White |
| Resiliency Preparatory Academy | -- | -- | Requiring assistance or intervention | Low participation rate: Low income, High needs, and All students |
| Stone PK-12 School | 5 | -- | Requiring assistance or intervention | Low participation rate: Students with disabilities, Low income, High needs, and All students |

1. DESE’s District Standards and Indicators are at http://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/district-review/district-standards-indicators.pdf. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. For more information on the Teachstone CLASS protocol, visit <https://teachstone.com/class/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. DESE’s District Standards and Indicators are 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 2024).  [↑](#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)