# Woburn Public Schools

Comprehensive District Review Report

January 2025

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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 Woburn Public Schools (hereafter, Woburn) in January 2025. Data collection activities associated with the review included interviews, focus groups, and document reviews and were designed to understand how districts operate in support of continuous improvement efforts. The review focused on the six standards (and related indicators) that DESE has identified as being important components of district effectiveness.[[1]](#footnote-2) The resulting report provides an in-depth look at district systems, policies, and practices and includes recommendations to promote systemic improvements and advance equitable student outcomes and experiences.

In addition, to collect data on instructional practices, six observers, who focused primarily on instruction in the classroom, visited Woburn during the week of January 21, 2025. The observers conducted 105 observations in a sample of classrooms across grade levels, focused on literacy, English language arts (ELA), and mathematics. The Teachstone Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) protocol, developed by the Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning at the University of Virginia,[[2]](#footnote-3) guided all classroom observations in the district. These observations used the three grade-band levels of the CLASS protocols: K-3, Upper Elementary (4-5), and Secondary (6‑12).

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

Woburn demonstrates a strong commitment to equity and strategic alignment in its governance and leadership, as demonstrated by the school committee’s analysis of resource allocation through an equity lens and the engagement of diverse stakeholder groups in policy reviews. In addition, district and school leaders explained that the district’s strategic plan is comprehensive; grounded in equity; and includes feedback from relevant stakeholders, with school leaders developing school improvement plans that align with these priorities. Moreover, clear delineation of roles among district and municipal officials fosters a collaborative culture that supports district initiatives that focus on student needs. Additional evidence of this collaborative spirit is the universal agreement of district and municipal leaders on strong working relationships and a shared dedication to advancing student learning and support.

The district has several areas for growth to further enhance the effectiveness of district leadership and governance. Creating a more collaborative and constructive professional learning culture within schools is essential for improving teachers’ understanding and clarity regarding school leadership roles and the purpose of instructional feedback. The district also faces challenges in effectively communicating strategic plan progress to families and the community. An additional need is to provide more meaningful opportunities for teacher and family participation in decision-making, particularly from underrepresented groups. Furthermore, despite reported efforts, recruiting more leaders to better reflect the diversity of the student body and community it serves is an area for growth.

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

Woburn demonstrates a clear instructional vision with a districtwide framework aligned with its district strategic priorities, focusing on equity, consistent curricula, and inclusive professional practices. The district’s commitment to culturally and linguistically sustaining practices is evident in its efforts to provide students who are historically underserved with individualized supports and services necessary to access the curriculum, which is particularly important given the district’s growing population of English Learners. In addition, the district offers an array of tiered interventions to support student learning.

Despite these strengths, Woburn faces challenges in consistently implementing its instructional framework across all schools. Notably, not all teachers within the district have a uniform grasp of the instructional framework or are implementing it in the same manner. Comments from school leaders and teachers supported this notion, indicating that disparity exists in understanding and applying the framework, especially at different educational levels—elementary, middle, and high schools. Improving teachers’ ability to use the district’s instructional framework is an area for growth. Regarding curricular materials, the district has yet to standardize the selection and implementation of high-quality instructional materials that meet expectations across all subjects and grades. Reviewing curricular materials for alignment with statewide expectations is an area for growth for Woburn. Although the district has systems in place for academic interventions and support, a need exists to engage families more meaningfully in decision-making processes for the delivery of tiered supports. With regard to effective instructional practices, providing consistent opportunities for students to engage in deeper learning across all classrooms to promote higher-order thinking skills and student-driven dialogue are areas for growth.

### [Assessment](#_Assessment)

Woburn has a strong foundation for a data-centered culture that advances equitable student experiences and outcomes. Gathering both academic and nonacademic data to inform student achievement and instruction is a strength for the district. District, school, and classroom leaders have a shared understanding about the importance of data in supporting strategic priorities, such as the district’s ability to collect and disaggregate data to inform decision-making and policy development. The district also provides robust professional development, resources, and access to data analysis tools, which enable teachers to effectively review and use student data to tailor instruction and support.

Woburn has several areas for growth to enhance its assessment practices. Although the district collects both academic and nonacademic data, these data are reviewed separately, which may limit the district’s ability to select and implement supports that holistically address students’ needs. In terms of student engagement with data, the district has yet to establish districtwide expectations for engaging students in goal-setting and data review in ways that promote student agency, which is an area of growth for the district. With noted inconsistencies in grading systems, particularly at the middle and high school levels, the lack of a transparent and equitable grading system hinders clear communication of expectations and standards to students, which also is an area of growth for Woburn.

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

Woburn has appropriate staffing to fulfill the necessary human resources responsibilities. The district also has a clearly defined hiring process that includes training and support for hiring, promoting consistency and professionalism throughout the process—a notable strength. Woburn’s educator evaluation process consistently highlights teacher strengths and maintains high expectations through a clear and well-communicated system. The district excels in providing professional learning opportunities for staff, allowing teachers to select offerings that align with their goals, and offers valuable support to new teachers through the Woburn mentor program.

Despite these strengths, Woburn has several opportunities for growth in its human resources and professional development practices. The district lacks clear and accessible human resources policies and procedures, particularly concerning staff conflict resolution and grievance handling. A significant area for growth is recruiting a diverse workforce, as current efforts have not yet resulted in a staff demographic that reflects the student population. The district also does not consistently provide timely and constructive feedback to administrators through the evaluation system. Similarly, while teachers receive feedback through the evaluation process, the district does not consistently provide positive and constructive feedback, including informal and ongoing feedback, which could support instructional improvement. There is also a need to foster a culture of collaboration and support where staff feel respected and heard.

### [Student Support](#_Student_Support)

Woburn has demonstrated a commitment to fostering safe and supportive school climates that nurture students’ academic, social, emotional, and behavioral development. The district implements clear schoolwide behavioral support systems, expectations, and interventions, though there are some inconsistencies in policy enforcement and communication across school levels. Woburn consistently incorporates students’ backgrounds and culture into classroom lessons and uses various surveys to collect regular feedback from students.

In addition, Woburn’s integration of tiered mental and behavioral health services underscores its dedication to supporting students’ well-being. The district maintains strong partnerships with community organizations, enriching students’ experiences and providing essential services during and beyond the school day. Multilingual communication systems are in place to ensure all families can engage meaningfully in their students’ education.

Woburn provides clear guidance for school leaders on implementing its multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) through instructional support teams (ISTs), establishing a structured process for identifying and addressing individual student needs. However, the district has room to grow in developing a clear and consistent definition of Tier 3 supports and interventions. Additionally, efforts to expand the tiered support system to provide appropriate interventions for all students, regardless of their specific needs, remain an area for growth. Finally, developing consistent communication policies and engagement strategies that position families as equal partners in their children’s education is another area for growth.

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

Woburn has effective financial and asset management practices for the strategic allocation of resources to meet the district’s needs and support student performance. The district employs financial staff with deep content expertise alongside the necessary technology to manage its resources. A collaborative relationship between the district and city officials further strengthens the district’s financial management, enabling joint efforts in budgeting, payroll, and purchasing. The budgeting process is comprehensive, with a systematic review of requests, enrollment projections, and past budget data. Further, active oversight by the school committee and city officials demonstrates transparency and accountability in budgetary decisions. The district also evaluates prior investments, ensuring adequate funding for key instructional resources. Operations are managed effectively, with the district investing in up-to-date and well-maintained technology and utilizing an established purchasing process that complies with state laws. The district’s capital plan is developed with input from a broad range of stakeholders and based on assessments and future projections, a practice that demonstrates foresight and engagement in capital planning.

Although Woburn exhibits robust financial management practices, the district has areas for growth to enhance the efficiency and clarity of its operations. Although collaborative, no formal written agreement exists between the district and the city to detail the budget incorporation process, roles, and responsibilities, which could streamline communication and expectations.

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

### Methodology

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

Following the site visit, all interview and focus group data are transcribed using automated transcription. The transcripts are then coded using both deterministic coding, based on the protocol questions, 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 implementation of DESE’s District Standards and Indicators, summarized in Appendix C.

### Site Visit

The site visit to Woburn occurred during the week of January 21, 2025. The site visit included 17 hours of interviews and focus groups with approximately 50 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 eight elementary school teachers, 12 middle school teachers (split into two groups), and six high school teachers; three focus groups with 12 middle school students (split into two groups) and six high school students; and one family focus group with 20 parents or other caregivers. Data collection also included distributing a questionnaire to district leaders, as well as to each principal, to gather information on district and school processes and operations. Respondents in Woburn completed the district questionnaire and all 10 principal questionnaires.

The site team also conducted 105 observations of classroom instruction in 10 schools. Certified team members conducted instructional observations using the Teachstone CLASS protocol.

### District Profile

The City of Woburn is north of Boston and borders the towns of Burlington, Lexington, Reading, Stoneham, Wilmington, and Winchester. According to [census data](https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/woburncitymassachusetts%2CMA/PST045224), Woburn’s median income from 2019 to 2023 was $107,754, which is above the state median income of $101,341. In 2023, Woburn had an estimated 41,647 residents.

Dr. Matthew Crowley has been the superintendent of Woburn since his appointment in 2018. Governance of the district is through a seven-member school committee who are elected for either four- or two-year terms.

In the 2024-2025 school year, the district served 4,520 students across its 10 schools. Since the 2020-2021 school year, total enrollment has increased by 241 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 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Clyde Reeves Elementary School | Elementary  | PK-5  | 451  |
| Shamrock Elementary School | Elementary  | PK-5  | 284  |
| Goodyear Elementary School | Elementary  | K-5  | 352  |
| Hurld Wyman Elementary School  | Elementary  | K-5  | 418  |
| Linscott Rumford Elementary School | Elementary  | K-5  | 209  |
| Malcolm White Elementary School | Elementary  | K-5  | 323  |
| Mary D. Altavesta Elementary School | Elementary | K-5  | 248  |
| Dr. Daniel L. Joyce Middle School | Middle  | 6-8  | 455  |
| John F. Kennedy Middle School | Middle  | 6-8  | 521  |
| Woburn Memorial High School | High  | 9-12  | 1,259  |
|   |   | Total  | 4,520  |

Figure 1 shows the distribution of Woburn’s students by race/ethnicity. Figure 2 shows student makeup for selected populations compared with state averages. 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 Woburn’s All Students group meeting or exceeding expectations on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), compared with the statewide percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on MCAS. In 2024, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations was lower for Woburn than for the state in Grades 3-8 (ELA and mathematics), 5 and 8 (science), and 10 (ELA). In 2024, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations was higher for Woburn than for the state in Grade 10 (mathematics and science).

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

Woburn’s High Needs students, who comprise 56.8 percent of the district, met or exceeded expectations on the 2024 MCAS assessments at rates of 2 percentage points to 3 percentage points below High Needs students across the state for Grades 3-8 ELA and mathematics and Grade 10 ELA and 2 percentage points to 6 percentage points above High Needs students across the state for Grades 5 and 8 science and Grade 10 mathematics and science (see Figure 4).

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

Woburn’s 2023 4-year cohort graduation rate (89.7 percent) was 0.5 percentage points higher than the state rate (89.2 percent). Furthermore, the district’s dropout rate (1.8 percent) is 0.3 percentage points lower than the state rate (2.1 percent).

Of students who graduated from the district in 2022-2023, 72.9 percent went on to attend a college or university by March 2024, which is higher than the state rate of 63.2 percent. In addition, 11.7 percent of 2022-2023 graduates planned on entering the workforce or an apprenticeship after high school, compared with 14.7 percent of students across the state.

In 2024 statewide accountability results, only one school (John F. Kennedy Middle School) was identified as “requiring assistance or intervention” for low participation rates for Students with Disabilities. Overall, the district is classified as “not requiring assistance or intervention” and is making moderate progress toward targets.

In fiscal year 2023, the total in-district per-pupil expenditure for Woburn was $21,936, which is $1,758 more than the average in-district per-pupil expenditure in districts with similar demographics ($20,178) and $3,309 more than the average in-district per-pupil expenditures in districts of similar wealth ($18,627).[[3]](#footnote-4) In-district per pupil expenditures for Woburn were $680 more than the average state spending per pupil ($21,256). Actual net school spending was greater than what is required by the Chapter 70 state education aid program, as shown in Table D5 in Appendix D.

### Classroom Observations

Six observers, who focused primarily on instruction in the classroom, visited Woburn during the week of January 21, 2025. The observers conducted 105 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 Woburn, 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 Woburn is in Appendix B, and summary results are in Tables 17, 18, and 19 in this appendix.

Figure 5. CLASS Domain Averages by Grade Band

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

## Leadership and Governance

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

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

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

| Indicator | Strengths | Areas for growth |
| --- | --- | --- |
| [Leadership and Governing Structures](#_Leadership_and_Governing) | * The school committee analyzes resource allocation through an equity lens and engages stakeholder groups in policy reviews.
 | * Creating collaborative and constructive school learning cultures
 |
| [Strategic Planning, Implementation, and Monitoring](#_Strategic_Planning,_Implementation,) | * The district’s strategic plan includes clear strategic priorities, is grounded in equity, and incorporates feedback from all relevant stakeholders.
* All school leaders have developed a School Improvement Plan (SIP) that aligns with the district’s strategic plan.
 | * Sharing progress regarding district improvement goals with families on a regular basis
 |
| [District Culture](#_District_Culture) | * Municipal officials, district leaders, and the school committee maintain clearly defined roles and strong working relationships.
 | * Recruiting and retaining diverse leaders
* Providing opportunities for teachers and families to participate in decision-making
 |

### Leadership and Governing Structures

Woburn has various leadership and governance structures to support district operations. At the highest level, Woburn’s superintendent is Dr. Matthew T. Crowley, who was appointed in 2018; the assistant superintendent of student services; and the assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction. The school committee includes seven electedmembers representing Woburn, including one chairperson and one vice chair. According to the district’s website, school committee members divide their responsibilities across six main subcommittees: Policy, Community Relations, Resources and Capital Planning, Student Services and Achievement, Finance and Personnel, and Curriculum and Data Trends. The committee also invites three nonvoting student representatives to attend committee meetings and provide reports on school events.

A review of the district’s website and interviews with school committee members reveal that the committee has a functioning governance structure, sets educational goals, and implements policies that provide all students with equitable opportunities to excel. Committee members highlighted their responsibilities in conducting policy reviews, aligning resource allocations with strategic goals, evaluating the superintendent’s performance, and engaging with the community to incorporate diverse stakeholder input. As one member described of these responsibilities, “In terms of how we think about policy, how we think about budget, it’s geared towards making sure that we’re supporting the [district’s] strategic vision as it’s laid out by the superintendent and staff.” For example, in focus groups, school committee members identified a focus on allocating resources equitably to improve outcomes for historically underserved groups. They explained that Woburn is in the process of redistricting to address the inequitable distribution of High Needs students, or as Woburn district staff members call them, “high resilience” students, across buildings. In addition, committee members described that their Student Services and Achievement and Curriculum and Data Trends subcommittees work with representatives from parent advisory councils to monitor resources for historically underserved groups, review student achievement data, and adjust allocations as needed; a review of 2024-2025 subcommittee meeting minutes supported this claim. The school committee analyzes resource allocation through an equity lens and engages stakeholder groups in policy reviews, which is a strength of the district.

The school committee’s fulfillment of their responsibilities is reflected in the working relationships between the school committee and district. The superintendent described this relationship as favorableand noted that the school committee has a clear process to evaluate his performance.He further described the school committee as proactive and “supportive of all of our kids” through the budgeting process and their support of district initiatives. In focus groups, the school committee and teachers’ association members identified a strained working relationship following a labor strike in 2023 during contract negotiations. However, both groups reported making efforts to rebuild the relationship. As one committee member stated:

I think there’s been a really honest effort on the part of everyone, on the part of [the teachers’ association], on the part of admin, on the part of the school committee, building leadership, to come back together towards that common goal. We’ve been able to reach some really critical agreements. We solved some lingering issues regarding contracts through really productive sessions . . . There’s leftover bad feelings; there’s going to be. But I think everyone has made a really strong effort to try to work through it, and we’ve made a lot of progress.

Municipal officials added that they share a “very strong” relationship with the school committee. In weekly meetings with municipal officials, representatives of the school committee share conversations from the Finance and Personnel subcommittee meetings, such that “we’re not on parallel tracks where each other doesn’t know what the other is doing. It’s collaborative.”

The superintendent has a leadership team structure that includes three teams (the superintendent’s cabinet, the district leadership team, and the macro district leadership team), which enables the district to attend to strategic planning, monitoring, and professional development. The superintendent’s cabinet meets every other week and includes the superintendent; the assistant superintendent of student services; the assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction; and directors of facilities, technology, human resources, finance and operations, multilingual learners, and nursing*.* The focus of these meetings is primarily on strategic planning, resource allocation, staffing, program implementation, and operations. According to the superintendent, the district leadership team meets monthly and consists of the cabinet and building principals. Most school leaders reported meeting with district staff monthly, though the reported meeting frequency varied by school. The focus of these meetings is generally on co-observing classrooms, reviewing student data and student work aligned with district priorities, planning and attending instructional leadership team (ILT) meetings, and planning and revising school improvement plans. The district also holds monthly macro district leadership team meetings, which includes the district leadership team, coordinators, and assistant principals. These meetings focus on professional development through the Equity Initiative and Research for Better Teaching (RBT), and the meetings provide calibrated guidance for district leaders to monitor classroom instruction. One district leader further explained that “whatever we’re working on as a district leadership team is infused as the focus of [building walkthroughs],” and this leader identified RBT’s The Skillful Teacher protocols and Universal Design for Learning frameworks as current walkthrough focuses.

In focus groups with staff from across the district**,** participants agreed that the district empowers school leaders to form effective leadership teams, including ILTs at all levels that focus on curriculum and instruction and teacher leadership teams at the middle and high school levels that focus on management and operations. They noted that the level of autonomy granted to these teamsenhances their effectiveness in implementing school initiatives aligned with the district’s educational vision and strategic goals. School leaders reported having the necessary autonomy to make staffing, scheduling, and budgeting decisions for their buildings. The district supports school leaders in making staffing decisions by providing training on the hiring process. District leaders provided examples of how the district supports school leadership teams by modeling walkthrough protocols and reviewing curriculum maps in professional learning communities (PLCs). School personnel shared their experiences, stating that the district created “pods” consisting of district- and school- level staff who conduct joint walkthroughs of every school building**.** Participation from district staff in school-level instructional leadership activities typically occurs monthly, according to school leaders, and the focus of these interactions is typically on co-observing classrooms and reviewing student data. School leaders also described the various teams or committees that are active at schools across the district and allow instructional staff to engage in leadership activities, which include ILTs, data teams, student support teams (SSTs), grade-level teams, and school councils.

Although the district supports schools in establishing effective leadership teams, teacher focus group discussions revealed that not all school leadership teams have collaborative and constructive relationships with staff in their buildings. Focus group respondents reported tension between teachers and building administrators, such that teachers are “leery” of administrators performing informal observations and providing feedback. As one respondent explained, “The trust is not where it should be for an administrator to come in. People, I think, are always waiting for the ‘gotcha,’ which is unfortunate, because they could be provided with positive feedback.” Instead, focus group participants reported that teachers are more open to feedback from peer walkthroughs. In addition, teachers reported that a lack of understanding of leadership role responsibilities has caused “strife” among teachers. One teacher noted, “We find a lot of frustration on the part of teachers when they feel ‘all this work has been dumped on me, and here are these people wandering around . . . what do they really do?’” Creating a collaborative and constructive professional learning culture is an area of growth for school leadership teams in the district.

Woburn's district and school leaders actively engage various parent advisory councils to ensure compliance with state regulations and to incorporate community input into educational initiatives. District leaders reported that Woburn has representative school and parent advisory councils, including school councils, parent teacher organizations, a Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC), and an English Learner Parent Advisory Council (ELPAC). Consequently, all school leaders reported havingtheir own representative school councils that align with district initiatives; comply with state statutes and regulations; and include building administrators, teachers, and caregivers. All school leaders reported having a SEPAC that convenes at least quarterly, and all but two school leaders reported having an ELPAC. As noted previously, the school committee solicits input from parent advisory councils, especially for discussions in the Student Services and Achievement subcommittee.

### Strategic Planning, Implementation, and Monitoring

According to the district’s public website, Woburn’s mission is as follows:

Woburn Public Schools is an innovative district dedicated to the success of all students. Our students are diverse and resilient with a strong sense of community who are inspired to create change in the world. All stakeholders effectively communicate and advocate for the resources necessary to maintain and expand our technology, building infrastructures, personnel, and curriculum to prepare our students for their best future.

Focus group responses indicate that this mission is shared across the district, with staff articulating that all school improvement goals align to support the district’s vision. In addition, school committee members and school and district leaders emphasized how the majority of Woburn’s budget supports student-facing resources.

The district has a three-year District Strategic Plan in support of its vision. The superintendent described the process for creating the plan, stating that the district first hired a consultant to conduct an equity audit. Building leaders then discussed the findings from the audit with their school staff using the World Café method, a format for hosting large group dialogue. The district leadership team then worked collaboratively with a community stakeholder group—consisting of teachers from all levels, families, students, and parent advisory council members—to form strategic initiatives based on these conversations; a financial operations review; DESE’s tiered focus monitoring reports; and student data, including MCAS, Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), and attendance. As stated in the strategic plan, the district’s three initiatives are as follows: (a) Incorporate routine collaboration time into the day to promote horizontal and vertical planning, instructional practices, and data analysis; (b) build tiered systems of support that are data informed, comprehensive, and culturally and linguistically supportive; and (c) build systems and structures to support deeper learning and the instructional framework. The strategic plan identifies the impact of each initiative on students and specifies yearly action steps to support the initiative. Consistent with the strategic plan, district leaders identified the district’s main priorities for the current school year as creating opportunities for staff collaboration and creating explicit tiered systems of support for students. Members of the district leadership team noted having a process to formally review progress toward the strategic plan multiple times throughout the school year. During the summer leadership team retreat, leaders revisit the action steps from each strategic initiative to determine the extent of completion. One leader explained as follows: “If there’s any new issues or areas that we don’t feel like are highlighted, then that gets added into year two and prioritized.” The district’s strategic plan, which includes clear strategic priorities, is grounded in equity, and incorporates feedback from all relevant stakeholders, is a strength for Woburn.

All school leaders have developed individual SIPs that align with the district’s strategic plan, which is another strength of the district. These plans include instructional priorities and strategies for reducing disparities in student opportunities and outcomes, such as integrating Sheltered English Immersion practices in instruction for English Learners at the elementary and middle school levels and using student data to inform placement within a tiered system of support. In focus groups, school leaders explained aligning their plans with broader district goals, stating that all school-level goals are “under the umbrella” of one of the three district initiatives. In addition, school leaders noted that they appreciated being able to work with their school council to customize goals based on individual school needs, while still maintaining the same districtwide priorities.A review of the district’s SIPs confirmed that all school-level goals explicitly connect to a district initiative, and each goal has specific action steps, roles responsible for each action step, implementation timelines, and data to measure effectiveness.

Discussions with school leaders and the superintendent revealed that district and school leaders implement existing improvement plans and have formal processes to assess their effectiveness, but they do not have established processes for communicating progress more broadly to all families and community members. District leaders described that, in addition to the annual summer leadership retreat, midyear checkpoints monitor progress toward district and school improvement goals. In addition, district and school leaders reported conducting frequent instructional walkthroughs and using the results to inform professional development opportunities. Similarly, school leaders noted that their ILTs conduct reviews of student data and walkthrough data to assess progress toward instructional priorities. District leaders also adjust resource allocations as necessary in response to monitoring efforts; for example, the district hired two Multilingual Learner coaches and introduced the platform Ellevation to assist teachers in supporting English Learners. However, despite the progress monitoring steps that the district takes, focus group discussions revealed that Woburn does not have formal systems for sharing progress updates with families. District leaders self-identified this as an area for improvement, stating, “I think we do a lot, and we may not communicate a lot of what we do well enough.” They further explained that the majority of family communication occurs at the school level through weekly newsletters, but did not identify any systems for communicating district-level progress. Moreover, 75 percent of the family focus group participants disagreed or strongly disagreed that they are well informed about what is happening in the district. Regularly sharing progress toward district improvement goals with families is an area for growth for the district.

### District Culture

The school committee and district administrators foster collaboration and shared decision-making to improve opportunities and outcomes for all students. In interviews, school committee members explained how the committee, district leaders, union representatives, and school staff may have “different priorities . . . but the same goal” of advancing student learning, progress, and support. Similarly, stakeholders from across these groups reported working collaboratively toward their goals.

Elected officials, district leaders, and school leaders have clearly defined roles, as described in interviews and indicated by a review of district administrators’ evaluations. In interviews, leaders explained that they will direct communications from stakeholders to the appropriate channels if they receive requests that fall outside their purview. They also maintain strong working relationships with Woburn’s municipal officials to support district initiatives. In focus groups, district and municipal officials described several systems for building trusting, respectful relationships, including inviting the superintendent and the school committee chair to weekly city department head meetings; inviting district representatives to monthly “Wu-Stat” meetings (meetings held in partnership with the Collins Center, during which city departments review data to support budget planning); holding office hours between school committee members and city councilors; and inviting school committee members to city events. In addition, school committee members, district leaders, and municipal officials all described their weekly building walkthroughs as a crucial factor in maintaining their strong working relationship. Every Friday, these officials, in addition to city councilors, tour one of Woburn’s school buildings and speak with staff and students. They all highlighted these walkthroughs as a critical factor in successfully passing a 14 percent budget increase in fiscal year 2024-2025. As one official described,

Not only does it let us see what’s happening in the schools firsthand, but it also allows members of the city council who ultimately have to approve the budget, members of the school committee who are formulating the budget, to see where the dollars are being spent, to see what needs are being addressed, and to prepare for the next cycle to be as informed as we can when we’re discussing the budget and effectively selling the budget to the community.

Overall, elected officials and district leaders described their relationships as trusting, respectful, and collaborative. Maintaining clearly defined roles and strong working relationships among municipal officials, district leaders, and school committees is a strength for Woburn.

School committee members and district leaders also reported improved relationships with the teachers’ association. Following the 2023 labor strike, one school committee member reported a focus on “being able to understand each other, work productively, solve problems together, and be honest with each other.” Members of the teachers’ association agreed that this relationship has since improved, specifically noting that the superintendent has an “open door policy” and holds a standing monthly meeting with union representatives, both of which have enabled more effective communication. They reported that although their relationship with district officials can still improve, “there has been a concerted effort on everyone’s part to [mend the working relationship].”

District staff outlined Woburn’s strategies for recruiting and retaining diverse leaders. Specifically, the recruitment strategy includes membership with the Massachusetts Partnership for Diversity in Education, through which human resources staff can attend meetings and hiring fairs. District leaders also reported working to develop a “grow your own” program with paraprofessionals in the district (see *Staffing* for more information). However, district leaders noted that despite these strategies, it has been challenging to recruit diverse leaders. Consistent with this, according to DESE’s 2023 Employed Educators data, 97 percent of Woburn’s administrators were White compared to 60 percent of the student body. Recruiting and retaining diverse leaders remains a self-identified area for growth for the district.

Despite reported difficulties with hiring diverse leaders, Woburn effectively promotes leadership stability and sustains district initiatives in the event of leadership turnover. Focus group discussions revealed that the majority of school and district administrators have held their positions for several years. District leaders reported that in positions with turnover, they were able to “overlap” the incoming and outgoing staff for several weeks to provide a training period. They also offer both in-district and out-of-district mentors to new principals through the ACCEPT Education Collaborative.

As district leaders work to meet the district’s vision, family and teacher focus group members noted that Woburn does not effectively partner with key stakeholders and intentionally seek input from underrepresented groups in decision-making. Despite the intentional design of councils to inform decision-making, many teachers and families expressed that these opportunities did not produce meaningful contributions at the school or district levels.

District staff outlined Woburn’s efforts to engage the broader community through the school committee’s Community Relations subcommittee, the district’s Family and Community Engagement program, and school committee members attending SEPAC meetings. However, family focus group participants reported that they do not have opportunities to provide feedback that contributes to district decision-making. One participant stated, “We were never asked to give any input,” and another noted that membership to school councils “appears to be by invite only . . . it’s not clear to the community how you would [join].” Moreover, family focus group participants who have been members of a school council reported that “we don’t get to do much in terms of decision-making or planning. It’s more of a ‘checking the box, we have some community members that are part of the school council.’ There’s not much room for community input.” Overall, most family focus group members disagreed or strongly disagreed that they have opportunities to contribute to district and school planning and decision-making. In addition, teachers reported that although the district solicits educator feedback through surveys, they do not feel as if school and district leaders use the responses meaningfully. Consequently, teachers reported that “when a survey comes out, by and large, people feel less like, ‘Oh, gee, I have an ability to share my voice,’ and more like ‘This is another task for me to complete that is not valued.’” These focus group responses indicate that providing meaningful opportunities for families and teachers to participate in decision-making is an area for growth for Woburn.

### Recommendations

* *The district should continue working with its teachers’ association and with school leaders to identify and address roadblocks to establishing a professional culture in which staff feel supported and valued by district leaders and building administrators.*
* *The district should develop and implement a system for regularly sharing progress toward district-level improvement goals with families.*
* *The district should re-evaluate its current strategies to recruit and retain diverse leaders and adjust course, as needed.*
* *The district should work with its existing parent and community advisory groups (SEPAC, school councils, etc.) to solicit additional feedback from underrepresented groups in the community and deepen family engagement in school- and district-level decision-making.*

## Curriculum and Instruction

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

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

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

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Indicator | Strengths | Areas for growth |
| [Instructional Leadership](#_Instructional_Leadership) | * Woburn has a districtwide instructional framework that aligns with the district’s strategic priorities.
 | * Implementing the instructional framework consistently across all schools
 |
| [Curriculum and Instructional Materials](#_Curriculum_and_Instructional_1) |  | * Identifying, selecting, and implementing high-quality instructional materials
 |
| [Equitable Practices and Access](#_Equitable_Practices_and) | * The district provides students who are historically underserved, particularly those marginalized based on race, ethnicity, disability status, and linguistic background, with the individualized supports and services they need to access the curriculum.
* Woburn offers an array of tiered interventions to support student learning.
 | * Engaging families in meaningful decision-making about the delivery of tiered supports and transparently monitoring student progress
 |
| [Effective Instruction and Curricular Implementation](#_Effective_Instruction_and) |  | * Consistently providing opportunities for students to engage in deeper learning
 |

### Instructional Leadership

The assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction is responsible for overseeing Woburn’s curriculum and instruction. The support team comprises a grants manager, a Title I director, and six curriculum coordinators organized by both grade levels and subject areas: K-5 STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) and humanities, 6-8 STEM and humanities, and 9-12 STEM and humanities. Department heads and lead teachers also participate in decision-making. The multilingual learner department, which includes a director and two coaches, provides oversight where appropriate.

Woburn has a districtwide instructional framework that aligns with the district’s strategic priorities, which is a strength of the district. The district has three main priorities in its strategic plan: equity for all students, a consistent and rigorous curriculum, and inclusive and effective professional practices. These objectives are pursued through strategic initiatives that target implementation and development across grades and classrooms. The instructional framework, which aims to provide grade-level, deeper learning experiences for all students that are real world, relevant, and interactive, seeks to promote a culturally affirming, inclusive, joyful, and supportive environment. This framework aligns with the improvement plan by aiming to integrate the strategic priorities into the learning experiences of all students.

The phrase “firm goals, flexible means” encapsulates the framework by emphasizing high expectations for all students while recognizing the diverse backgrounds and readiness levels they bring to school. This motto comes from the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) curriculum design, development, and delivery framework. According to the superintendent, school leaders, and teachers, the district actively promotes UDL strategies by modeling UDL principles during professional development opportunities and having a dedicated UDL coach from the SEEM Collaborative.[[4]](#footnote-5)

Principals and teachers expressed support for the district’s instructional framework and confirmed that it prioritizes the needs and experiences of all students, particularly those from historically underserved groups and communities. However, implementation of this framework and its UDL components is not consistently understood or effectively communicated across all levels, resulting in individual schools adapting it to meet their specific day-to-day needs. Implementing the instructional framework consistently across all schools is an area for growth for the district. One school leader reflected on this issue, as follows:

Yes, we have our instructional vision, instructional framework . . . We have highlighted things that are considered best practices . . ., [but we] need to standardize those things and increase their efficacy and their use. And that might look different depending on the level of the school. But there is a vision that’s tied into the strategic plan. . . . One of the things that we have to do at our level is just making sure to articulate vision into practice. Like, okay, yes, joy is terrific, but what does it look like for students? I think just delineating what the instructional vision means to teachers on a real-time basis is part of the process.

School leaders added that UDL strategies are not being clearly and consistently defined. One leader noted, “UDL is a big push, and that ‘firm Goals, flexible Means’ comes right from UDL. That’s our model. That’s our instructional model. Some people know what that means. Some people don’t.” This statement highlights the variability in understanding and implementing UDL across the district. Similarly, mixed teacher perceptions of UDL implementation underscore the in how the framework is understood and applied across different educational levels. For example, high school teachers feel that adapting instructional materials to meet UDL principles often is left to individual classroom interpretations. One teacher explained that individual teachers “adapt it. . . . [but] there’s not like a coordinated support effort to say, how do we bring this material into student life, students’ experiences?” Conversely, elementary school teachers reported feeling that the district provides clear guidance and support for implementing the UDL framework, with it modeled and supported through professional development opportunities, collaborative planning time, and coaching opportunities.

Despite reported inconsistencies with UDL practices, school and district leaders agreedthat the district has systems to monitor and continuously improve various aspects of the instructional framework, including a structured curriculum adoption process, comprehensive implementation plans for literacy and mathematics, data-informed MTSS, and regular walkthroughs and observations. District leaders reported that the district promotes collaboration through PLCs and grade-level collaborative time, facilitating teachers’ ability to share best practices and receive support from specialists. Data-driven instruction is a central focus of the district, with regular reviews of assessment data to inform instructional practices, professional development, and coaching. School-level ILTs lead these monitoring and improvement efforts, with guidance from the district ILT. Principals and other district officials agreedthat the district providesguidance and has systems in place to empower ILTs at the district level and at each school. According to school and district leaders, school-level ILTs include principals, assistant principals, teachers, English Learner specialists, special education teachers, and guidance counselors, who oversee decisions and monitor the implementation of curriculum and instruction at each school in the district. The inclusion of representatives from diverse stakeholder groups demonstrates that school and district leaders consider a wide range of perspectives and expertise in decision-making processes and promotes a shared sense of responsibility and accountability among staff.

### Curriculum and Instructional Materials

An examination of Woburn’s curricular review cycle and reports from district leaders indicates that the district uses a four-phase, structured process for curricular selection and review that involves multiple school stakeholders. The four phases are planning, investigation and selection, piloting, and implementation. The district begins by planning the curriculum adoption process, conducting an inventory of current materials, and identifying curricular priorities based on the instructional framework and strategic goals. Staff explained that the district establishes a “curriculum council” and working groups for each adoption process so that all stakeholders are aware of their review year well in advance. The process includes a “year zero” review phase, followed by a multiyear cycle of review and adoption.

During the investigation and selection phase, the district thoroughly reviews potential curriculum options, which includes an examination of current educational research, effective practices, and materials from various curricular programs. The curriculum council engages in detailed discussions with representatives from these programs to gather comprehensive information and assess the suitability of each curriculum. Staff also noted that in recent years, this process has emphasized using CURATE,[[5]](#footnote-6) EdReports, and student data to inform areas of need and evaluate curricular decisions. Although the district has emphasized these curriculum ratings in their initial selection process, multiple staff agreed that final decisions to move programs forward were not based on rating alone. If a curriculum does not meet the standards provided by CURATE and EdReports, the district supplements and adjusts the curriculum based on identified deficiencies. District staff explained that when the district used a program not identified as high quality on the state lists, the district took the time to understand why and adapt their materials to address challenges rather than overhaul the program all together.

Teacher focus groups echoed that the flexibility and adaptability of certain curricula are key reasons for their retention. Teachers explained that the process values teachers’ experience and opinions on materials, which can sometimes conflict with high-quality ratings. For instance, teachers reported choosing a writing program because it served as a flexible framework that they could adapt to match students’ needs. One teacher noted, “We really liked the program because it was really flexible so it was a great starting point, and our department head stressed that this is like a framework that we can work around and change to match our students.” This sentiment among teachers illustrates that the district highly values adaptability and suitability of materials in its approach to selecting curricula.

Prior to making a final decision, the district conducts a pilot field test of the selected curriculum. This phase involves professional development for teachers, collecting feedback from piloting staff, and reviewing the implementation process so that the curriculum meets the district’s standards and requirements. After selecting a curriculum, implementation across the grade level or school begins. Despite these established processes and the district’s implementation of suitable and adaptable supplementary materials, Woburn has yet to identify, select, and implement standardized high-quality instructional materials that meet CURATE and/or EdReports expectations across all grades and subject matter. This represents an area for growth for the district.

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

Table 4. Curricula Used in Woburn

| Grade level(s) | Subject | Curriculum | Type | CURATE Rating | EdReports Rating |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| K-6 | ELA | Fountas and Pinnell | Comprehensive | NR | DNME |
| K-5 | ELA | Units of Study | Comprehensive | NR | DNME |
| K-3 | ELA | Wilson Fundations | Supplemental | NR | PME |
| K-1 | ELA | Heggerty | Supplemental | NR | NR |
| K | ELA | Lively Letter | Supplemental | NR | NR |
| 3-5 | ELA | Morphology Anthology | Supplemental | NR | NR |
| 4-8 | ELA | Morpheme Magic | Supplemental | NR | NR |
| 7-8 | ELA | Units of Study | Comprehensive | NR | NR |
| 6-12 | ELA | CommonLit360 | Supplemental | NR | ME[[6]](#footnote-7) |
| 6-8 | Digital Literacy/ Computer Science | Project Lead the Way | Comprehensive | NR | NR |
| K-5 | Mathematics | Reveal Math (2022) | Comprehensive | NR | ME |
| K-5 | Mathematics | Math Expressions (2013) | Comprehensive | NR | PME |
| K-5 | Mathematics | Math in Practice | Supplemental | NR | NR |
| K-2 | Mathematics | Lord Math | Supplemental | NR | NR |
| 1-5 | Mathematics | IXL | Supplemental | NR | NR |
| 6-8 | Mathematics | Amplify Desmos | Comprehensive | NR | ME |
| 9-12 | Mathematics | Reveal Math | Comprehensive | ME | ME |
| 6-7 | History/SS | TCI History/ Geographic Alive | Comprehensive | NR | NR |
| 6-7 | History/SS | History Alive | Comprehensive | NR | NR |
| 8 | History/SS | Democratic Knowledge Project | Comprehensive | NR | NR |
| 9-12 | History/SS | Choices (Brown University) | Supplemental | NR | NR |
| 9-12 | History/SS | Digital Inquiry Group | Supplemental | NR | NR |
| 9-12 | History/SS | Facing History | Supplemental | NR | NR |
| K-5 | Science | STEMscopes | Comprehensive | NR | NR |
| 6-8 | Science | STEMscopes NGSS | Comprehensive | NR | DNME |
| 9-12 | Science | Project Lead the Way | Comprehensive | NR | NR |
| 6-8 | Other | Next Generation Personal Finance | Comprehensive | NR | NR |

*Note*. ELA = English language arts; NR = not rated; CURATE = Curriculum Ratings by Teachers; DNME = does not meet expectations; PME = partially meets expectations; ME = meets expectations; SS = social studies; NGSS = Next Generation Science Standards.

As part of the structured curricular review cycle, the district is currently piloting a new mathematics curriculum, Reveal Math (2022), at the elementary level that meets expectations and a new social studies curriculum, Democratic Knowledge Project, for eighth grade. The district selected the social studies curriculum Choices (Brown University) for implementation at the high school level for the next cycle. All remaining identified curricula are currently in varying stages of the implementation phase.

District leaders reported a focus on curricular alignment. To support this work, the district issues grade-specific curriculum expectation documents to ensure instructional practices are consistent and coherent both within and across grade levels. The district also asks teachers to conduct self-assessments of curriculum maps using Plan, Do, Study, Act templates embedded in student learning and professional practice goals. The Atlas curriculum hub further supports vertical alignment by allowing teachers to view standards and expectations from previous and subsequent grade levels to promote coherent student learning progressions.

School leaders and teachers emphasized the importance of alignment efforts and noted that special education programs at the high school now vertically align with the rest of the district. Additionally, the district promotes horizontal alignment through regular communication and collaboration among teachers across different schools and grade levels to support consistency in instructional materials and practices.

Despite these efforts, alignment challenges persist. The district currently uses several different curricula across subjects and grade bands, suggesting that different schools and classrooms may implement different instructional materials. School leaders acknowledged that vertical alignment remains an ongoing process and cited significant teacher autonomy over curricular materials as a limitation. Similarly, teachers expressed concerns about the lack of vertical alignment, particularly at the high school level. One teacher noted, “We really need to create a skills progression based on WIDA levels of what each standard looks like at different WIDA levels.” These reports suggest inconsistencies in the instructional practices and materials used to support English Learners as they move through grade levels.

### Equitable Practices and Access

Woburn’s *Student Services Department Procedures Manual* and the District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) outline how the district uses an adaptable MTSS to implement academic interventions for students. School leaders reported that the district implements specific academic interventions with a strong focus on literacy, for both ELA and mathematics, across almost all grade levels and tiers. Woburn offers an array of tiered interventions to support student learning, which is a strength for the district.

School leaders reported that the following academic interventions are available:

Table 5. Tiered Academic Interventions

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Level** | **Subject** | **Tier 2** | **Tier 3** |
| Elementary | ELA | Foundational skills reading group, reading specialist, small-group instruction, DIBELS progress monitoring, Lively Letters, Walk to Read, Lexia, RAVE-O, and Seeing Stars | Lexia, Lively Letters, Wilson Reading |
| Elementary | Math | IXL Math, Lord Math, and small-group instruction/reteaching | Touch Math, IXL Math, and Lord Math |
| Middle School | ELA | Reading Skills class, leveled readings | Reading Interventionist |
| Middle  | Math | Math Skills class | 1:1 instruction focused on building foundational skills |
| High School | ELA | ELA Foundations, Learning Center Support | Small-group instruction |
| High School | Math | Math Foundations, Learning Center Support | Small-group instruction |

Despite having clear communication processes, family focus group members agreed that the district attempts at engaging them in decision-making, but the delivery of tiered supports is often brief and ineffective. Further, family focus group participants reported that the district provides little communication about the efficacy of tiered supports. Engaging families in meaningful decision-making about the delivery of tiered supports and transparently monitoring student progress is an area for growth for the district.

Teacher focus groups revealed that the district supports schools in developing schedules that provide teachers with sufficient time and staff support to implement Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions and adapt them to meet students’ needs. Elementary teachers highlighted the use of blocked scheduling and structured literacy groups based on DIBELS testing, allowing them to focus on specific students’ needs. Middle school teachers discussed their WIN block schedule and Study Skills course, emphasizing the importance of regular data meetings with reading specialists, content specialists, English Learner teachers, special education staff, and principals. This collaboration among educators and specialists enhances the implementation of interventions, fostering a cohesive approach to addressing student needs and encouraging continuous improvement and responsiveness to student progress (see *Student Support* for more information).

The district demonstrates a strong commitment to fostering collaboration between educators and specialists, particularly through its districtwide emphasis on inclusive teaching practices and academic accommodations outlined in the DCAP. Teachers receive support from peers, content specialists, mentoring programs, and expert consultation to enhance their instructional practices. Through such efforts, the district provides students who are historically underserved, particularly those marginalized based on race, ethnicity, disability status, and linguistic background, with the individualized supports and services they need to access the curriculum, which is a strength of the district. For example, UDL practices, such as providing choices in learning activities, varying activities to be culturally responsive and age appropriate, and creating opportunities for peer interactions aim to make sure that all students, especially those from historically underserved populations, receive the necessary support to succeed. Teachers are encouraged to display information flexibly, provide visual aids, and use electronic translation tools to accommodate diverse learning styles. These practices recognize and build on students’ existing strengths and address the immediate educational needs of students while also promoting long-term academic growth and equity.

The district employs a range of academic accommodations, including pre-teaching and reteaching concepts, vocabulary, and symbols; embedding visual supports such as checklists and schedules; and using cues to draw attention to critical features. The district also emphasizes alternatives for physical responses and using manipulatives and assistive technology (e.g., text-to-speech and speech-to-text tools). District leaders reported these Tier 1 instruction efforts help provide English Learners and Students with Disabilities with additional access to the services they need in the least restrictive setting. The district also actively monitors the quality of instructional materials and content delivered as part of specially designed and English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction and the effectiveness of its ESL and special education programs. Middle school teachers noted strong working relationships and collaboration with the parents of English Learners and an English Learner coach who supports secondary grades. One teacher described, “We have parents who go into the classroom a couple times a week. And then about once a month, we’ll meet with the ML [Multilingual Learner] teacher to discuss specific students, their progress.” Teachers also emphasized their commitment to continuously evaluating the effectiveness of support programs by reviewing school-specific data. One teacher reported as follows:

We use DIBELS a lot to assess for nonsense word fluency, oral reading fluency, word reading fluency. We have three benchmarks throughout the year that we’re all aligned to. And then we also have access to the progress monitoring, which we can do to chart their growth. And that helps us form our groups for our small-group literacy instruction.

Principals and other officials within the district emphasized using data to continuously monitor the experiences and outcomes of all students, particularly students who are historically underserved. Principals highlighted the importance of daily monitoring of instruction through walkthroughs and observations and underscored the role of instructional support teams (ISTs) in discussing and implementing classroom interventions for Students with Disabilities and English Learners. District student support staff also reported significantly improving their data collection and analysis processes in recent years, which has enabled school leaders to better support students, for example, school-level ILTs hold regular data meetings to closely monitor student progress and adjust as needed. Staff reported using MClass and Amplify to monitor student progress and outcomes and discussed the district’s heavy investments in high-quality professional development for teachers to better support all learners (See *Professional Learning* for more information). One staff member noted as follows:

Woburn has definitely had increasing numbers of both special education students and multilingual students. And we’ve really worked hard to provide an astronomical amount of very high-quality professional development so that we’re building capacity in our educators to work with the students and provide access based on what they need to work with all learners.

In addition to differentiated instructional strategies and progress monitoring processes, school leaders reported implementing supplementary curricula tailored for English Learners and Students with Disabilities depicted in Table 6 below.

**Table 6. Supplemental Curricula for English Learners and Students with Disabilities**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Level** | **Subject** | **English Learners** | **Students with Disabilities** |
| Elementary | ELA | REACH Curriculum, with some schools also using the National Geographic Learning | Wilson Reading and Fluency, RAVE-O, Visualizing and Verbalizing, Seeing Stars, Just Words, ReadWorks, Lexia, A to Z, PCI, PLC Reading, Lively Letters, and Becky Lord |
| Elementary | Math | None reported | Touch Math and Becky Lord |
| Middle School | ELA | National Geographic Inside Curriculum and the Ellii English Language Development Curriculum | Language! Live |
| Middle School | Math | None reported | VMathLive, Transmath  |
| High School | ELA | National Geographic ESL Curriculum for English Learners | None reported |
| High School | Math | None reported | None reported |

A review of Woburn Memorial High School’s program of studies and focus group data indicates that the district provides students with equitable access to a range of rigorous coursework in most grades. This coursework includes content areas not subject to statewide testing, advanced courses, electives, and career and technical education courses. For example, the high school offers Advanced Placement (AP) courses in Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Environmental Science, Calculus, Statistics, Computer Science, World History, U.S. History, African American Studies, Psychology, Macroeconomics, and Spanish Language and Culture. Honors courses also are available in a wide range of subjects, including English, mathematics, science, social studies, world languages, and business education. College preparatory (CP) courses are available to all students in the core subjects of ELA, mathematics, science, social studies, world languages, and business education. In addition to CP classes, the high school offers Foundations courses to students needing acceleration in ELA and mathematics. The high school has elective courses in business, the performing arts, visual arts, wellness/physical education, and technology; dual enrollment courses with community colleges to earn college credit prior to graduating also are available. The program of studies offers criteria for student placement in AP and honors courses so that students placed in those courses are well prepared and capable of succeeding. The inclusion of pathways for reconsideration and input from students and parents help mitigate barriers caused by strict criteria.

In terms of honors, AP, and dual enrollment courses, students appreciated the availability of advanced courses. One student focus group participant shared, “I feel like Woburn does a great job offering [AP] courses with things like art, and then music, and then computer science as well.” Other student focus group participants mentioned access to the dual enrollment courses, noting that these opportunities allow them to earn college credit while still in high school. However, students expressed a desire for more AP course options earlier in their high school careers because, currently, most AP courses are available to only juniors and seniors. One student reflected on the accessibility of advanced coursework: “We have a lot of dual enrollment things, too, except for APs though because we can only take APs basically our junior and senior year.” Another student highlighted the structured nature of AP courses, stating, “I actually like the way the AP classes are set up because all the units are laid out for you.” Students reported that this structured approach helps them feel more independent and confident in their studies. Overall, students appreciated the range of advanced coursework available, but they identified room for improvement in expanding access to AP courses earlier in their high school experience and providing more structured support for honors and CP classes.

### Effective Instruction and Curricular Implementation

Teachers from across the district largely agreed that Woburn provides support for developing a safe and supportive learning environment in which most students can engage in academic content. These supports include professional development opportunities, such as half days dedicated to collaboration and learning from colleagues. Teachers have common planning time to collaborate and develop lessons that align with grade-level content standards. Teachers also receive building-based feedback from learning walkthroughs and visits from instructional coaches and administrators.

Middle school teachers confirmed many of these sentiments. They agreed that professional development is frequent and beneficial, with curriculum coordinators playing a significant role in supporting teachers. Middle school teachers also emphasized the use of PLC meetings twice per month to discuss grade-level standards and instructional practices.

High school teachers also agreed that the district provides support for developing a safe and supportive learning environment. They highlighted the importance of professional development, mentioning pathways for English Learners and the Elevation platform to track WIDA levels and provide practical strategies for teaching English Learners. They also emphasized the role of curriculum coordinators in supporting instructional practices and the implementation of high-quality instructional materials, such as the Reveal math curriculum. In addition, teachers discussed that the high school eliminated separated ESL classes and incorporated all students into general classes, which prompted general education teachers to implement UDL strategies.

Students generally agree that they have a safe and supportive learning environment in which they can engage in academic content without significant interruptions. Students described their teachers as effective and engaging, often using fun and interactive methods to teach subjects. One student mentioned, “The teachers are really good, and I think what they teach us is pretty good also.” Students appreciate the variety of instructional methods, such as group projects, individual work, and the use of technology, which help maintain their interest and engagement. Another student shared, “They engage you in . . . learning, and it’s fun.” Even though students noted some isolated instances of disruptive behaviors or less effective teaching methods, the overall sentiment was positive, with students feeling supported and able to focus on their academic work. CLASS observations scores in the middle-high range for the Positive Climate and Teacher Sensitivity dimensions in the Emotional Support domain are consistent with student reports. These scores indicate that most students experience respectful, encouraging, and supportive relationships with their teachers. However, scores in the low-middle range for Regard for Student Perspectives throughout the district suggest that teachers often exhibit an inflexible, rigid adherence to their lesson plans, without considering student ideas or allowing students to make contributions. Moreover, these scores indicate that during instruction, students have few opportunities to talk and express themselves, with limited student choice.

Both middle and high school teachers acknowledged the importance of data to inform instruction. Middle school teachers specifically mentioned using STAR assessments and IXL to monitor student progress and set goals. High school teachers discussed the challenges of monitoring course enrollment to ensure that it reflects the school’s demographics plus the need for prerequisites to maintain rigor in both honors and AP classes. High school teachers also highlighted the importance of equitable grading practices, mentioning efforts to align grading practices within departments and implementing a minimum quarter grade so that students do not receive grades below 50 percent.

In addition to these data-driven practices, the district requires that teachers identify both content and language objectives for all lessons and expects teachers to identify strategies for providing supports that enable students to engage in grade-level content. Middle and high school students agreed, adding that teachers effectively communicate class objectives and tasks. For example, students mentioned that teachers write the objectives on the board and refer to them throughout a lesson. This method helps students understand the expectations for each day. Students also noted that teachers provide clear instructions and use a variety of instructional methods and tools, such as group projects, Pear Deck (for interactive presentations), and note-taking. Students appreciated that some teachers are receptive to feedback and often ask for their input on lessons and activities. This collaborative approach ensures that students feel supported and engaged in their learning. However, elementary school teachers noted that the practice of posting or stating objectives is inconsistent among teachers and schools throughout the district. CLASS observation scores for Instructional Learning Formats in the middle range for the elementary grade levels reflected this inconsistency, indicating that student engagement and awareness of learning objectives vary across classrooms.

Middle school students highlighted that teachers use a variety of instructional methods and encourage them to explain their thinking, which helps prepare them for more rigorous coursework in high school. They appreciated the mix of group projects, individual work, and the use of technology in their classes. One student mentioned, “We do groups when we do projects. Like for social studies, we do a bunch of projects.” Another noted, “In math, we primarily practice, but we also take notes occasionally.” Students value the opportunities to examine data, brainstorm, and construct hypotheses, particularly in science and English classes. They reported having access to diverse reading materials and electives, which allow them to explore their interests and prepare for advanced courses. However, CLASS observation scores primarily in the low-middle range for dimensions in the Instructional Support domain indicate that teachers do not consistently engage all students in deeper learning. For example, scores in the low-middle range[[7]](#footnote-8) for Concept Development (district average = 3.2) and Analysis and Inquiry (district average = 2.6) suggest that lessons typically involve rote instruction rather than providing opportunities for students to engage in higher-order thinking skills and content application. Similarly, Language Modeling (district average = 3.3) and Instructional Dialogue (district average = 3.6) scores indicate that most lessons are teacher driven, not student driven, and students have few opportunities to engage in extended, content-related dialogues. In addition, Quality of Feedback (district average = 3.9) scores reflect that teachers did not consistently scaffold student learning and encourage student persistence. Taken together, consistently providing opportunities for students to engage in deeper learning is an area for growth for the district.

### Recommendations

* *The district should identify concrete examples of its instructional vision and framework in practice and work with school leaders and teachers to consistently incorporate UDL principles into each lesson across all school levels.*
* *The district should prioritize selecting high quality instructional materials, with strong consideration of those rated “meets expectations” on CURATE and/or EdReports, across all grades and subject areas.*
* *The district should expand its communication with families around the delivery of tiered supports and progress monitoring updates.*
* *The district should partner with its educators to incorporate opportunities for challenging tasks throughout each lesson, such as asking questions that prompt higher-order thinking, facilitating extended content-related dialogue, scaffolding tasks, and actively encouraging academic persistence.*

## Assessment

This section examines the extent to which, through the establishment of strategic data and assessment systems, the district supports a robust, data-centered culture that advances equitable student experiences and outcomes. It also addresses how the district collects an array of data and uses it to inform decisions at the classroom, school, and district levels. 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 7 summarizes key strengths and areas for growth in assessment for Woburn Public Schools.

Table 7. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Assessment Standard

| Indicator | Strengths | Areas for growth |
| --- | --- | --- |
| [Data Collection](#_Data_Collection) | * The district gathers multiple types of academic and nonacademic data to inform student achievement and instruction.
 | * Integrating academic and nonacademic data to foster a holistic understanding of student needs
 |
| [Data Use and Culture](#_Data_Use_and) | * District, school, and classroom leaders have a shared understanding of how to use data to support school- and district-level strategic priorities.
* Woburn implements systems and structures (e.g. professional development, collaboration time) for teachers to meaningfully review student data, a strength of the district.
 |  |
| [Sharing Data](#_Sharing_Data) |  | * Providing students with developmentally appropriate ways to set learning goals and review their own data
* Establishing equitable and transparent grading systems at the middle and high school levels
 |

### Data Collection

The assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction is responsible for assessment in the district, and she receives support from the director of multilingual learners, curriculum coordinators, and building principals. Woburn has an assessment plan and schedule but does not share it publicly.

Woburn gathers multiple types of academic (e.g., STAR, DIBELS, Assessment and Learning in Knowledge Spaces [ALEKS]) and nonacademic (e.g., Devereux Student Strengths Assessment [DESSA], YRBS, attendance) data to inform student achievement and instruction, which is a strength for the district. In focus group discussions, school leaders, teachers, and district staff expressed that the collected data providesa comprehensive understanding of each student. However, district leaders also noted that they have not yet fully integrated students’ academic and nonacademic data to holistically assess students’ needs. Rather, staff review academic data in data meetings and nonacademic IST meetings, respectively. Although teacher representatives are included on both teams, the district does not have systems in place to facilitate holistic data review and integration, which is an area for growth.

Across focus groups, district- and school-level staff described a systematic process for selecting and implementing formal and informal assessment systems to align to Woburn’s instructional vision. School staff reported that the district intentionally selected universal screeners recommended by DESE, although some staff reported that they did not always receive the necessary training to administer the screeners effectively. Teachers also reported using informal assessments, including quizzes and exit tickets that are part of their curriculum. For subjects without set curricula, staff reported using common resources, such as past MCAS questions, to assess learning progress. Teachers across grade levels reported aligning assessments with classroom content and MCAS standards.

Woburnbut lacks a formal process for systematically reviewing assessment tools for bias and alignment with the district’s commitment to equity. As one district leader noted, “I don’t know how much we necessarily monitor [bias in the assessment strategy] yearly. I would say that exists through the work that’s happening with PLCs and coordinators.” District leaders also shared that the assessment selection process is embedded within the curriculum selection process because assessment is a key component of their curriculum selection rubric. Likewise, the district does not have a formal system to collect feedback and use the input to refine its assessment strategy.

### Data Use and Culture

Drawing from district and school staff focus groups and interviews, district, school, and classroom leaders have a shared understanding of data use in the district**.** For example, the superintendent reported that he modeled reviewing disaggregated student data on the Open Architects platform with school leaders to identify student achievement gaps. In addition, school leaders and elementary teachers reported that they engage in frequent data review cycles to inform student placement in MTSS, which relates directly to their SIP goals and the District Strategic Plan. At the middle and high school levels, school leaders and teachers reported that although they do not engage in the same structured data review cycles, building administrators and ILTs review student achievement data, attendance, and walkthrough data to inform MTSS placement and small-group instruction, in line with their SIP goals. District, school, and classroom leaders have a shared understanding of how to use data to support school- and district-level strategic priorities, which is a strength of the district.

According to the superintendent, Woburn collects multiple data points and disaggregates student group data to inform district planning, decision-making, policies, and practices. For example, disaggregated MCAS and DIBELS data influenced the district’s focus on literacy and informed their comprehensive literacy plan. He described that these data also impacted Woburn’s budgetary decisions, with the district hiring a reading specialist for each elementary and middle school building in the past two years. In addition, district leaders reported that disaggregated student data and the results of Woburn’s 2021 equity audit highlighted a need to provide additional supports for English Learners and Students with Disabilities. Consequently, the district hired two English Learner coaches, purchased a new curriculum for English Learners, and established the Structured Opportunities and Resources program for Students with Disabilities.

According to school leaders and teachers, the districtprovidesteachers with access and resources to understand and analyze student data. District and school staffexplained that the districtsupports teacher understanding and data use through professional development, access to data analysis tools, planning and collaborative time, and access to data dashboards. The district uses Open Architects for their data dashboard, and district staff reported that the assistant superintendent of teaching and learning includes information in her monthly newsletters about what data staff have access to, where to access it, and how to use it. In addition, the district introduced Ellevation this year, a platform that allows classroom teachers and specialists to view the WIDA levels of English Learners, their progress toward WIDA standards, and Language Assessment Systems (LAS) Links progress monitoring data. The district offered professional development to familiarize staff with how to use the platform and access data, and teachers reported that this training “was very helpful; a strong asset to supporting our MLs [Multilingual Learners].” District leaders also reported embedding data analysis in professional development offerings; for example, staff used their own classroom data in a professional development session about targeted small-group instruction. Moreover, school leaders and teachers at all levels reported that they have discussions in PLCs and departmental meetings regarding data analysis and use. Overall, Woburn implements systems and structures (e.g. professional development, collaboration time) for teachers to meaningfully review student data, a strength of the district.

According to district leaders, district staff report using grades, attendance data, SST reports, and office referrals to evaluate students’ academic, social-emotional, and behavioral needs at least monthly. The district disaggregates all data, excluding office referrals, by specific categories, such as race and/or ethnicity, gender, low-income status, disability status, and English Learner status. In focus groups, school staff further explained that the district sets expectations regarding student data review and has structures that facilitate regular data review cycles and adjustments to instruction. School leaders and staff reported that at the elementary level, school leaders hold data meetings five times per year with classroom teachers, reading specialists, content specialists, English Learner teachers, and special education teachers. A district-provided Benchmark Protocol Template provides guidance for discussing student data at these meetings. In addition, the district provides data protocols for ongoing progress monitoring meetings.

These data cycles are exclusive to the elementary schools, but staff across all grade levels reported that they review classroom achievement and benchmark assessment data in departmental meetings, professional development sessions, and PLCs. At all levels, staff described using this time to identify gaps in student learning and adjust instruction accordingly. For example, some teachers reported using exit tickets or “do-nows” to identify concepts to reteach. Others reported that when they review student data on Ellevation, the platform provides suggestions for differentiated instructional strategies that they can implement in the classroom. Teachers noted the effective use of this time, but staff, especially at the high school level, noted that they would benefit from additional time to review data.

In addition to using data to adjust Tier 1 instruction, Woburn uses diagnostic assessment data (e.g., STAR, IXL) and nonacademic data (e.g., attendance, DESSA screener) to inform student placement within a tiered system of support. School leaders described that, in alignment with the District Strategic Plan and SIPs, there has been “a push for using data for structured small-group instruction across all classrooms.” Consistent with this sentiment, elementary staff reported using student data to inform students’ placement in structured literacy groups, and middle school staff reported using student data to inform content placement during WIN blocks.

### Sharing Data

The district primarily uses Google Classroom and PowerSchool to share data with students and families, and district leaders reported that overall course grades and grades on assignments are accessible to students and families on these platforms. Students identified these platforms as some of the main ways they learn about their academic performance. However, several students noted that inconsistencies in how teachers use these platforms limit their efficacy. One student described that “on PowerSchool, it just shows me the letter grade, but it doesn’t show me what I got on each individual [assignment]. So I don’t know what I’m being successful in or not being successful in.” In addition to PowerSchool and Google Classroom, the district communicates student performance through three progress reports and two parent-teacher conferences annually. Staff also stated that they will meet with families more often if necessary, and both teachers and families reported using the Remind app to maintain communication.

Teacher and student focus group participants reported that Woburn has no districtwide expectations for engaging students in goal setting and data review in developmentally appropriate ways to promote student agency, although some teachers employ their own systems to engage with students. For example, teachers and students explained that some teachers will hold one-on-one conferences with students to discuss their performance or will reach out individually via email. Middle school teachers reported having students reflect on their own MCAS or benchmark assessment responses. Despite some teachers employing these practices, students identified concerns with how teachers engage them in goal setting and data review. Several students reported that instead of holding individual conferences with students, some teachers state their grades publicly in class, which they described as “rude” and “exposing.” In addition, students across grade levels reported that teachers do not consistently provide assignment rubrics that allow them to set goals for their own performance. Providing students with developmentally appropriate ways to set learning goals and review their own data is an area for growth for the district.

According to teachers, school leaders, and district staff, Woburn does not currently implement a transparent and accessible grading system at all levels. At the elementary level, students receive standards-based report cards calibrated across schools that communicate students’ progress and performance. Conversely, district leaders self-identified establishing equitable grading systems at the middle and high school levels as an area for growth for the next school year. Teachers at these levels reported that they sometimes use common rubrics or common assessments to calibrate expectations for students; however, as one teacher reported, “how we set up our grade books is individual,” and each teacher may weight assignments differently. Students added that, under the current system, grading practices are not transparent. In addition to not consistently seeing grades on individual assignments, students noted that they often do not know the expectations for an assignment prior to submitting it. One student explained as follows:

I feel like it’s a lack of communication. If there’s ever an issue with grading, we have to go to [the teacher]. And it’s never like they can express a rubric of what we need to accomplish, which has been a common theme for me and most teachers. I’ll get a grade that I think doesn’t satisfy my work ethic, and I’ll confront them about it, and they’ll be like, ‘Well, you just didn’t meet my standards.’ But I don’t know what your standards are.

The district recently began redesigning its grading system to address some of these teacher and student concerns and make grading more equitable. District leaders reported that they attended a professional development program about grading for equity with curriculum coordinators and department heads, and high school staff completed a book study on the topic. In addition, teachers reported that the district surveyed them for feedback on potential grading systems. They described that the goal of adapting the grading process is to create equity, “both in terms of teachers grading with the same scheme so students know what to expect and also equity towards demographic groups and different needs of students.” Although the district is beginning to address its inconsistent grading practices, establishing equitable and transparent grading systems at the middle and high school levels remains a self-identified area for growth for Woburn.

According to district leaders, dedicated staff are responsible for reviewing and monitoring the digital platforms that collect, store, and share student data and verify ongoing compliance with student data privacy laws and regulations. In addition, district staff reported that the district offers professional learning for staff concerning student data privacy law, policies, and best practices for safeguarding student information. The district’s technology policy, including responsible use guidelines and resources for data privacy, are available on the district website.

### Recommendations

* *The district should create a data review structure in which staff review both academic and nonacademic together, so that staff can develop a holistic understanding of each student’s strengths and needs.*
* *The district should set expectations around consistently sharing academic data and collaboratively setting goals with students to promote agency over learning.*
* *The district should support its instructional leaders and teachers at the middle and high school level to develop common grading systems and student-friendly rubrics for assignments.*

## 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 8 summarizes key strengths and areas for growth in human resources and professional development in Woburn.

Table 8. 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) | * The district has the necessary staff to fulfill human resources responsibilities.
 | * Maintaining formal and accessible policies
 |
| [Staffing](#_Staffing) | * Woburn’s hiring process is clearly defined, includes training to support hiring leads, and undergoes yearly reviews.
* The district consistently highlights areas of strength for teachers through the educator evaluation process.
 | * Establishing effective strategies to recruit diverse educators
* Consistently providing feedback (both positive and constructive) to administrators through the evaluation system
* Consistently providing constructive feedback to teachers through the evaluation system
* Fostering a culture of collaboration in which staff feel respected and heard
 |
| [Professional Learning](#_Professional_Learning_1) | * Woburn provides teachers with ongoing, relevant professional development opportunities and allows them agency in selecting offerings that are appropriate for their learning goals.
* Woburn provides novice educators with the resources to be successful through the Woburn mentor program.
 | * Consistently providing educators with informal feedback
 |

### Human Resources Infrastructure, Policies, and Practices

The human resources staff includes the human resources director, the payroll supervisor, an administrative assistant, and a newly created position for a payroll and benefits generalist. According to Woburn’s human resources director and other human resources staff, although the district maintains employee files as physical copies rather than digitally, the district has the necessary staff to maintain employee records, control positions, post vacancies, and track employee time and attendance, which is a strength of the district. Woburn conducts payroll through the city’s MUNIS system. Even though employees do not have a self-service portal to view their paystubs and benefits, teachers reported that they contact human resources staff directly with any questions. They noted that the human resources office is “impressive in their response time” regarding any requests they receive.

Although Woburn has the infrastructure to support human resources functions, not all human resources policies and procedures in Woburn are clear and accessible. A review of district documents indicated that the only clearly defined human resources policy is a hiring process overview that includes a verification of candidate licensure through DESE’s Educator Licensure and Renewal portal, but this policy is not publicly available online. In discussions with human resources staff, they noted that the human resources director, who is in his first year in this role, is working to establish formal policies and procedures. For example, he digitized the district’s onboarding process, which allowed Woburn to process applications and hire candidates more efficiently. Despite efforts to formalize policies, however, the district does not currently have an employee handbook that outlines relevant policies. Of note are the district’s lack of formal procedures to address grievances and staff misconduct. Staff reported that the human resource office handles grievances “on a case-by-case basis” and based on district precedent. Members of the teachers’ association noted a perception that the process to investigate potential staff misconduct is “run very poorly in this district.” Specifically, they noted that the process seems “interminable,” with lengthy waits for a resolution impacting staff’s mental health and damaging relationships with their schools. These reports indicate that although the human resources staff is in the process of developing districtwide policies, maintaining and implementing formal and accessible policies that set expectations for Woburn staff is a continued area for growth for the district.

### Staffing

The human resources director reported Woburn has effective policies and processes in place to recruit, hire, and onboard new staff. These policies and processes are mostly in accordance with DESE’s hiring guide. Woburn’s recruitment strategies include attending hiring fairs, a “grow your own” program for the district’s paraprofessionals, and posting job opportunities on SchoolSpring. The district has identified a need to recruit educators who reflect the diversity of their student population; the DESE Staffing Report data for 2024-2025 shows that although 18.8 percent of Woburn students are Hispanic or Latino, only 0.9 percent of the teachers are Hispanic or Latino, and 96.9 percent of all educators are White.

Woburn has adapted its recruitment systems to attract diverse educators. For example, the district is part of the Massachusetts Partnership for Diversity in Education and participates in the organization’s hiring fairs. In addition, district leaders reported that as part of their involvement with the Equity Imperative, the leadership team reviewed the hiring process and materials for inclusive and inviting language. Hiring leads also participated in professional development regarding unconscious bias in the hiring process. Moreover, district leaders reported that Woburn has had more success with hiring diverse paraprofessionals, and the “grow your own” program provides pathways to licensure for these staff members. Although Woburn changed its recruitment strategies, these efforts have not yet led to greater staff diversity. Staff across focus groups acknowledged this discrepancy and identified several barriers to effective recruitment. For example, district leaders reported that because the city’s budget is typically not approved until June, Woburn has a delayed hiring timeline relative to neighboring districts. Staff also reported that they are competing with higher paying districts for the same pool of qualified candidates. Across focus groups, Woburn staff identified establishing effective strategies to recruit diverse educators as an area for growth for the district.

Woburn’s hiring process is clearly defined, includes training to support hiring leads, and undergoes yearly reviews, which is a strength of the district. According to focus group respondents, school leaders assess building-level staffing needs; request positions; and vet, interview, and recommend candidates. District staff are responsible for creating job postings, approving recommendations, and conducting background checks. School leaders expressed that the district clearly defines these responsibilities. District leaders reported that prior to the beginning of each hiring season, the district leadership team convenes to calibrate expectations for incoming candidates and align expectations to the hiring process, such that “no matter what building you’re hiring in, whether it’s a district or school position, it’s the same format, same process.” In support of these goals, the district created an interview question bank and common rubric to standardize the hiring process and conducted a book study on *The Ideal Team Player* (Lencioni, 2016) to articulate their roles in the hiring process. In addition, at the conclusion of each hiring season, the leadership team reflects on the strengths and weaknesses of the hiring process. District leaders reported that these reflections have impacted Woburn’s process; for example, the district justified creating the director of human resources position to address delays in processing applications that had previously meant that the district missed out on qualified candidates.

In focus groups, teachers described the district’s onboarding process as clear and effective and indicated that the process provides new staff with the information and resources they need to be successful in their role. Staff described that the division of onboarding responsibilities between human resources staff and building principals is clear and well defined. In the past year, the district also implemented a digital onboarding system through PowerSchool. Human resources staff reported that this system enables new hires to more efficiently receive and complete all necessary onboarding paperwork. All staff hired before the school year attend a New Teacher Orientation in August and have meetings with their curriculum coordinator beginning in September. In addition, each new hire has a one-on-one meeting with the superintendent or one of the assistant superintendents as the final step of their onboarding process. Although most focus group participants described the onboarding process as effective, some participants reported that the amount of information provided during orientation can be overwhelming. Teachers suggested it would be beneficial for the district to hold check-ins throughout the year for additional support, but they have not yet raised this concern to school and district leaders. Teachers described that historically the district has been responsive to feedback about the onboarding process. For example, at the request of union representatives, the district instituted monthly orientations for staff hired during the school year and thus did not participate in the August induction event.

During the onboarding process for instructional staff, human resources staff provide staffing supports for building leaders. The district monitors the equitable distribution of licensed, effective educators across its schools. Woburn regularly assesses staffing needs throughout the district in weekly cabinet meetings with department directors and monthly leadership team meetings with building principals. As a result of these discussions, district leaders reported they will add positions midyear to address “heightened areas of need.” For example, the district hired an elementary reading specialist midyear to provide additional support to students.

District staff described that the district conducts all educator evaluations in accordance with DESE requirements. Evaluations are guided by the district’s *Educator Evaluation Manual*, which the assistant superintendent of teaching and learning reviews and revises annually with teachers’ association representatives. School leaders and teachers agreed that the district’s evaluation systems are clear and reflect a culture of high expectations for educators. As one teacher noted of the evaluation process,

They’ve been very clear, as a district and in the school, what indicators that we’re focused on, because they’re written into our goals. There’s no surprises . . . I know what they’re looking for, I know what I’m supposed to be doing. And I think that’s very transparent.

Members of the teachers’ association added that the feedback that teachers receive from evaluations has become “significantly better” in recent years, which they credit to the district’s focus on calibrating feedback across evaluators. To this point, district and school leaders reported that the district provides training that supports effective, equitable evaluation practices. For example, all evaluators conduct building walkthroughs as a member of a “pod” and calibrate feedback with other pod members, and part of the district’s summer leadership retreat centers on developing a common understanding of evaluation indicators.

District records suggest that teacher evaluations are consistently completed using TalentEd. AIR used simple random sampling to select a sample of 10 percent of 380 teachers (38 teachers) due for summative evaluations for the 2023-2024 school year. All teachers selected for review (100 percent) had a summative evaluation available for review. However, three teacher evaluations available for review were incomplete and omitted required components, including a rating for each standard or an overall rating. Nearly all evaluation documents reviewed (92 percent) included a student learning SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely) goal and a professional practice SMART goal. In addition, all the teachers’ progress toward their student learning and professional goals were evaluated. Nearly all evaluations reviewed (95 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. Nearly all summative evaluations (90 percent) included feedback for each standard and overall feedback related to the teacher’s overall rating. Of the 34 teacher evaluations that included feedback, all named strengths or practices the teacher should continue; however, only six evaluations (18 percent) included feedback indicating areas of improvement.

District records suggest that administrator evaluations also are completed using TalentEd. Of the 21 administrative district staff due for a summative evaluation for the 2023-2024 school year, all evaluations were available for review. However, only slightly more than half (55 percent) were complete with performance ratings and assessment of progress toward goals. A majority of the evaluations (64 percent) included student learning and professional practice SMART goals, and only 60 percent included a school improvement SMART goal. Only one third of the evaluations (33 percent) reviewed included multiple sources of evidence to assess performance on summative evaluation standards and included feedback for each standard. In addition, 11 of 21 administrator evaluations (52 percent) reviewed included comments with specific, actionable feedback naming each administrator’s strengths and identified areas of improvement.

Taken together, the review of teacher and administrator evaluations shows that the district consistently highlights areas of strength for teachers, which is a strength of the district. However, the evidence also reveals two areas for growth: providing feedback to administrators—nearly half did not receive comments identifying strengths or areas for improvement—and offering constructive feedback to teachers, rather than focusing solely on strengths. These gaps suggest a need for more comprehensive and balanced feedback practices across all roles.

To support teachers’ continuous growth, Woburn provides staff with resources to promote professional learning and provides pathways to advancement. The district provides up to $100,000 annually in tuition reimbursement for staff and encourages paraprofessionals pursuing advanced licensure through a partnership with William James College. District leaders also noted that Woburn partners with the ACCEPT Education Collaborative to support staff seeking director, supervisor, or principal licensure. In addition, district leaders reported a focus on providing leadership opportunities to internal candidates as they arise. They described promoting assistant principals to interim principal positions and having paraprofessionals fill long-term substitute positions. Moreover, they reported that five of the seven curriculum coordinator positions were filled by in-district teachers. One district leader noted that “we tend to look in-house before we hire externally when we’re looking for natural progressions in people’s careers.”

In addition to providing pathways for professional growth, Woburn provides staff with adequate resources and support to perform their job responsibilities. District leaders noted that Woburn hired additional assistant principals at the elementary level, has the curriculum coordinators hold weekly check-ins with teachers, and holds monthly joint labor-management committee meetings to understand teachers’ experiences. District leaders reported that in response to feedback from these meetings, they hired additional Board-Certified Behavioral Analysts (BCBAs) and instituted a climate and culture committee at the high school to provide staff with more support and improve work culture. Despite these measures, however, teacher focus group participants identified a lack of support and workplace morale as two main reasons for educators leaving the district. Although district leaders stated that additional administrators were hired to support teaching staff, some teachers reported feeling “micromanaged” and noted a perception that “there’s a lot of people telling [us] to go in a lot of different directions.” One teacher stated that “the workload has increased, and seemingly the support and appreciation has not.” Despite a discrepancy between district leaders’ and teachers’ perspectives, DESE staffing data shows that for the past two years, Woburn’s teacher retention rate (2023, 89.2 percent; 2024, 91.2 percent) has been higher than the statewide average (2023, 84.6 percent; 2024, 85.8 percent).

District principals reported that Woburn fosters a positive, productive, and inclusive work environment for all staff through efforts such as holding annual, districtwide events and unifying staff by working toward a common vision and goal. Teachers agreed that the district has a strong sense of camaraderie. However, educators reported that they do not always feel supported and valued by school and district leaders. For example, school leaders reported offering frequent opportunities for teacher voice, but teachers reported that these opportunities are not meaningful. They noted that the district rarely responds to educator feedback, which limits staff’s desire to spend time completing feedback surveys and can lead to “disingenuous” data (see *District Culture* for more information). Similarly, teachers reported that the method the district uses to solicit teachers’ input limits their ability to communicate their opinions. As one teacher explained of an employee wellness survey, “The way it was written, I’m hard-pressed to understand how [district leaders] would use what we gave them to really create something meaningful for people.” Staff also reported a lack of information regarding the purpose of new district initiatives, such as PLCs, which limits staff buy-in and can cause frustration for educators. One teacher explained this perception as follows:

[PLCs] came out of nowhere. Now, after the fact, I know why they’re happening, but it’s not like anyone said, “Here’s why you suddenly have to start doing this.” They just said, “This is for your best good. Here you go.” . . . Just tell us what you’re doing and why you’re doing it. . . . The intentions are good, but I don’t always feel that they’re as transparent as they could be.

### Professional Learning

Woburn provides educators with multiple opportunities for professional learning. District and school leaders use the district protocol to provide educators feedback by focusing on look-fors that align with the district’s instructional framework (see *Instructional Leadership* for more information). The protocol also includes aspects of the district’s professional development focuses on UDL and RBT’s The Skillful Teacher. Across the district, school and district leaders—including building principals, curriculum coordinators, and central office staff—conduct walkthroughs in pods using this protocol. School leaders reported reviewing the data from these walkthroughs with their ILTs to determine how to support educators in delivering effective instruction. In addition, curriculum coordinators use these data to provide coaching to instructional staff.

School leaders and teachers provided mixed opinions about informal observations and feedback across the district. Most principals reported conducting informal classroom observations daily and providing verbal feedback to the teachers on what they observed. However, principals at some levels stated that “I don’t think there’s a huge culture of feedback . . . I think there’s still some nervousness and threat with admin walking through,” which is consistent with what teachers’ association members reported regarding teachers being “leery” of administrator observations (see *Leadership and Governing Structures* for more information). Moreover, teachers reported having frequent observations from administrators but noted that they rarely receive actionable feedback following these observations. Consistently providing educators with informal feedback is an area for growth for the district.

An additional source of support for Woburn staff includes ongoing evidence-based, data-informed, and relevant professional development opportunities that align with the Massachusetts Professional Development Standards. According to teacher focus group participants, district leaders, and the 2024-2025 *Professional Development Plan*, Woburn offers high-quality professional development opportunities that align to the key components of the district’s instructional framework (real-world, relevant learning; culturally affirming and inclusive environments; and student-centered success). The district’s professional development joint labor-management committee works collaboratively to determine the annual professional development offerings, which are divided among building-based, departmental, and choice days. Consistent with this, school leaders and teachers agreed that teachers have agency in selecting the offerings that best suit their needs as an educator. During choice days, educators can select offerings from one of five specific pathways for inclusive practice: social-emotional learning; UDL; literacy; race, equity, diversity, and inclusion; and specialized instruction. Teachers agreed that “there’s a lot of options” for professional development, and several noted that they valued the opportunity to select offerings during choice days that aligned with their professional goals. In addition, educators reported that the district encourages and supports them in attending conferences in line with their own professional interests. Woburn provides teachers with ongoing, relevant professional development opportunities and allows them agency in selecting offerings that are appropriate for their learning goals, which is a strength of the district.

District leaders reported that they monitor the effective implementation of professional development offerings through classroom walkthroughs and educator feedback surveys. Curriculum coordinators use the results of these walkthroughs to determine discussion topics for collaborative time, and district leaders provide updates on professional development implementation through biweekly newsletters. In focus groups, some teachers indicated that although they often value the content of their professional development offerings, they may not have sufficient support with implementing content into their practice. One teacher explained that “the PD [professional development] is wonderful but getting it into the school day can be a challenge.” Despite this, district leaders agreed that Woburn’s professional development plan is sustainable because the district has developed several in-house trainers for their professional development programs.

District leaders and school staff reported that the district provides structure and guidance for PLCs through the curriculum coordinators. Across all building levels, curriculum coordinators hold PLCs biweekly, and staff reported that the focus of the meetings includes lesson planning and curriculum review, integrating professional development into instructional practice, reviewing student data, and developing common assessments. In addition, the district’s new English Learner coaches push into PLC meetings as requested to provide educators support with instructional strategies for English Learners. Teachers generally reported that they find PLCs valuable for improving their practice.

In contrast, teachers provided mixed reports about the time they have to collaborate across subject areas and grade levels at their school, which varies by building level. At the elementary level, teachers have 45-minute grade-level common planning time (CPT) an average of four days per week. At the middle school level, teachers have two 51-minute CPT blocks per day; one with their grade-level team and one with their subject area peers. At the high school, teachers have 45-minute blocks every other week to meet with subject area peers. High school teachers noted that this schedule does not provide sufficient time for educators to meet across grade levels, with some noting that they have grade-level peers whom they “can never talk to.” School leaders acknowledged that improved collaboration is an area of focus for the next school improvement plan, and they plan to revise the bell schedule to provide more time for educators to collaborate with department and grade-level peers.

Teachers’ reports of the efficacy of their collaborative planning times varied. Some educators stated that they spend too much time out of the classroom and would like greater balance between professional learning and instructional time. Others, however, noted that the district added formal CPTs to the schedule in response to teachers’ requests, and they feel that through CPT, “[the district] is giving us that opportunity to be teachers and collaborate as we need, as we feel is needed during that time . . . they’ve given us the opportunity to do whatever we need to professionally with [our peers].” Consistent with this, district leaders noted that they created the schedule for collaborative planning in response to feedback from teachers requesting “application and practice time together.”

When novice educators start in the district, teacher focus group participants indicated that Woburn provides these educators with the resources to be successful through the Woburn mentor program, which is a strength of the district. Two mentor program coordinators lead the mentor program, with oversight by the assistant superintendent of teaching and learning. Members of the teachers’ association noted that the program coordinators are “very mindful” about matching mentors and mentees, and all mentors receive program-specific training. The program is guided by the *Mentor Program Handbook*, which outlines the program’s mission and goals, the meeting structure for each year of the program, and the responsibilities of each participant. The handbook also includes resources such as a meeting log, new teacher self-assessment, classroom observation form, and recommended meeting topics, and teachers stated that they “live by” the mentor program handbook. According to district leaders, the program has undergone several changes since the assistant superintendent of teaching and learning started in the role, including creating the *Mentor Program Handbook* and formalizing the mentor training. District leaders have recognized these revisions have substantially increased the effort required for mentors to effectively provide mentorship and district leaders and union representatives noted that they will review the program this summer and renegotiate the stipend to better align mentors’ compensation with their increased workload. In addition, the program coordinators check in with union representatives frequently to discuss districtwide trends to address through the mentor program. Overall, teachers in focus groups reported that “it’s a great program” and reported only positive experiences with it. Teachers’ association members similarly reported positive experiences but noted a delay in assigning mentors to teachers who join the staff during the school year.

District leaders stated that Woburn provides adequate training and professional development opportunities for their non-instructional staff (e.g., administrative support staff, food service employees, custodians, technology staff). They noted that administrative staff receive training on PowerSchool in addition to other job-related training. The nurse leader prepares professional learning for the nursing staff throughout the year that is “very tailored to their needs.” In addition, non-instructional staff are included in district- and schoolwide security and safety trainings.

### Recommendations

* *The district should continue its efforts to develop, disseminate, and implement an employee handbook that outlines all relevant human resources policies and procedures.*
* *The district should continue its efforts to diversify its teaching staff by addressing underlying challenges, such as delayed hiring timelines.*
* *The district should work with evaluators to ensure that all administrator evaluations include multiple sources of evidence and feedback on each standard.*
* *The district should set expectations around incorporating greater levels of constructive feedback on evaluations for both teachers and administrators.*
* *The district should evaluate its current tools for gathering staff feedback, so that administrators receive authentic staff feedback, and then proactively communicate changes to elicit buy-in for new initiatives.*
* *The district should work with building leaders to provide actionable feedback from informal observations for teachers.*

## 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 9 summarizes key strengths and areas for growth in student support in Woburn.

Table 9. 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) |  | * Implementing clear and consistent schoolwide behavioral support systems, expectations, and interventions at all levels
* Consistently incorporating students' backgrounds and culture into classroom lessons
* Consistently collecting feedback from students and adjusting instruction accordingly is an area for growth for the district
 |
| [Health and Well-Being](#_Tiered_Systems_of) | * Woburn has numerous tiered mental and behavioral health services that support students’ mental and emotional wellness.
 |  |
| [Family and Community Partnerships](#_Family_and_Community) | * The district has multilingual communication systems that allow all families the opportunity to engage in their student’s education.
* Woburn maintains strong relationships with numerous organizations in its community to provide services and enriching experiences to students during and outside the school day.
 | * Developing consistent communication policies and engagement strategies that position families as equal partners in their students’ education
 |
| [Multi-Tiered Systems of Support](#_Multi-Tiered_Systems_of) | * Woburn sets clear guidance for school leaders about how to implement their multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) process through instructional support teams (ISTs) and connect students to supports.
 | * Developing a clear and consistent definition of Tier 3 supports and interventions
* Developing a tiered support system that provides appropriate interventions to all students
 |

### Safe and Supportive School Climate and Culture

Woburn has made several efforts to promote safe and supportive school environments for its students, with a particular focus on addressing students’ emotional and intensive behavioral support needs. Staff, families, and students recognized these efforts, but they also identified areas for continued growth regarding the services and supports that the district provides.

According to the district leader questionnaire, Woburn maintains policies that facilitate safe environments. The district updated its multihazard evacuation plan within the past 3 years, but a review of the district’s website revealed that it is not publicly accessible. The district also has emergency response and bullying prevention plans, both of which undergo yearly review and updates. These policies are publicly accessible on the district’s website, and the bullying prevention plan is translated into multiple languages.

The district also collects and uses the results of student surveys and screeners to regularly monitor school and district culture and promote safe and supportive learning environments. These include the Views of Climate and Learning survey, the YRBS System, and DESSA. Overall, students reported that they generally feel welcome, respected, and safe at their schools. Consistent with this sentiment, CLASS observation scores in the middle-high range for Positive Climate (district average = 5.2) indicate that most students and teachers share respectful and supportive relationships.

Although CLASS data and focus group discussions indicate that students generally perceive their schools as a safe space, reports from student focus groups indicate that Woburn does not consistently foster learning environments that embrace the diverse identities of all students. Some students reported feeling included thanks to visible affirmations of acceptance, such as posters in multiple languages and diverse flags displayed on walls, but this is not a universal experience. The high school established a “school culture team” that identifies opportunities to discuss diversity and culture with students, but this team does not exist at other school levels. In addition, teachers reported that their curricula are “inclusive and welcoming” of students of different socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds, but students reported that they rarely have lessons that incorporate their personal background or culture. Consistent with student reports, family focus group participants stated that Woburn schools do not effectively integrate students’ identities into the school environment. As one parent reflected, “I have observed some really poor cultural proficiency across my years of being a parent here.” Consistently incorporating students' backgrounds and culture into classroom lessons is an area for growth for the district.

District leaders described that lowering absenteeism rates is both a challenge and a priority for Woburn. According to 2023-2024 attendance data, Woburn’s chronic absenteeism rate (20.3 percent) was slightly above the state rate (19.7 percent). District leaders reported that students’ familial responsibilities are a main factor contributing to increases in absenteeism, noting that the district’s Family and Community Engagement program liaisons are responsible for conducting outreach to families whose students have difficulties with attendance. Similarly, school leaders reported that Woburn provides attendance counseling at all grade levels, although counseling is not available at all schools. In addition, Woburn’s elementary, middle, and high schools have clearly outlined attendance policies in the school level’s respective student handbooks, which are available on the district’s website. Despite these efforts to promote attendance, family focus group members reported confusion regarding attendance policies. Specifically, they noted that attendance policies are inconsistent across schools and stated that family members are unable to adequately monitor their students’ absences using PowerSchool.

Woburn uses several screeners to evaluate students’ social and emotional strengths and needs, including the YRBS System; DESSA; and Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT). In addition, some schools have dedicated time in their schedule to address social-emotional learning competencies. At the elementary level, teachers use the Responsive Classroom approach during morning meetings, and at the middle school level, students attend a social-emotional learning class for one semester each year. Focus group discussions and document reviews suggest a lack of dedicated time to address social-emotional learning at the high school level, and school-level staff suggested that teachers may not be supported in effectively addressing students’ social-emotional learning needs. One staff member noted that although the district offers specific professional development for social-emotional learning, “a lot of teachers need training on it,” and another stated, “I feel like the teachers that embrace SEL [social-emotional learning] day-to-day, it’s a personal choice as opposed to an expectation that this is what being an educator in this district is.”

Woburn implements schoolwide behavioral systems that emphasize alternatives to exclusionary practices. According to DESE’s 2023-2024 discipline data, Woburn’s in- and out-of-school suspension rates (0.1 percent and 1.0 percent, respectively) were below the state average (1.4 percent and 2.4 percent, respectively). District leaders described their behavioral discipline policy as focusing on “keeping the child in school” and offering alternative remedies, such as restorative practices, before removing or suspending a student from school.

Woburn maintains alternatives to exclusionary practices as a districtwide expectation, yet students and staff reported that schoolwide behavioral expectations and consequences are not consistent at all levels. At the elementary level, staff reported that each school creates its own Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) system that all staff understand and consistently implement within schools. Teachers reported that students learn behavioral expectations through assemblies and staff modeling expected behaviors. At the middle school level, the student handbook outlines the schoolwide code of conduct, and students reported that classroom expectations are clear and similar across classrooms. They noted, however, that behavioral support systems do not always feel effective in limiting student misbehavior. As one student described, “[Misbehavior] is a pretty constant thing. It’s always the same people . . . and [consequences] don’t really stop the behavior.” The high school’s student handbook outlines a levelled system for student infractions and consequences, but focus group discussions suggest that staff do not adhere to this system. Students reported that teachers enforce behavioral expectations less strictly for upperclassmen and students taking advanced coursework, noting overall that “there’s a lot of favoritism.” Similarly, school staff reported that inconsistent enforcement of behavioral policies can impact staff’s adherence to the school’s behavioral support system. One teacher described as follows:

I think the kids get written up, and I’m not sure there’s any follow-up with the admin, and I think that frustrates teachers. So, when they’re dealing with a situation with the same student again, they’re just like ‘I’m done. I’m not dealing with that because nothing happens anyway.’

Other middle and high school staff members shared the perception that the school’s discipline policy is not implemented consistently, noting that “things are handled very differently by different people.” Similarly, two-thirds of the family focus group respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that their child’s school has clear definitions of the expected student behavior and the consequences for misbehavior. These reports suggest that implementing clear and consistent schoolwide behavioral support systems, expectations, and interventions at all levels is an area for growth for the district.

According to school and district staff, Woburn leverages staff including adjustment counselors, school psychologists, guidance counselors, assistant principals, and BCBAs to address students’ intensive behavioral support needs. District and school staff noted that Woburn has made substantial increases to the number of behavioral support staff across the district in recent years, but some staff still reported not having sufficient personnel to address “in-the-moment” intensive behavioral support needs. Moreover, they suggested that teachers are not adequately supported in understanding and responding to the underlying causes of student behavior, especially for students who have experienced trauma.

Determining support for all students includes identifying meaningful ways for students to exercise leadership in their schools. School staff described opportunities such as student ambassador programs, mentoring younger students, and planning school events. However, students reported that they are rarely asked to provide feedback about schoolwide improvement efforts, and they do not feel that the district has made changes in response to student feedback. At the classroom level, students described having opportunities to exercise agency and provide feedback to teachers, though these opportunities were not consistent. For example, students reported they can sometimes choose what books they read and how they complete assignments, but other teachers are more rigid in allowing for student choice. Similarly, across grade levels, students reported that teachers ask for their feedback at the end of the year, but few consistently solicit students’ input. The teachers who regularly ask for student feedback do so through informal check-ins and Google Forms, and students reported that these teachers do adjust their practice in response to student feedback. As one student noted of teachers asking for feedback, “One or two of my teachers have done that, and I think it shows because they’re probably two of my favorite teachers. They actually wanted to know how they were doing.” Consistent with student reports, CLASS observation scores in the low-middle range for Regard for Student Perspectives (district average = 3.4) indicate that teachers sometimes provide opportunities for students to contribute ideas, exercise autonomy, and take responsibility in the classroom, but not all teachers regularly offer these opportunities. Consistently collecting feedback from students and adjusting instruction accordingly is an area for growth for the district.

### Health and Well-Being

According to school leaders, the district offers health and physical education, aligned with the Massachusetts Comprehensive Health and Physical Education Frameworks, to all students. Elementary students receive a full year of physical education and health education, middle school students receive a full year of physical education and either a full year or semester of health education, and high school students receive a semester each of physical education and health education annually. A review of school schedules indicated that the district provides some students with multiple opportunities to engage in physical activity and strengthen their bodies while attending school, depending on their grade level. Elementary students have consistent opportunities for physical activity through recess and physical education, but middle and high school students have physical education only.

Woburn supports students and families by providing them with pertinent physical health information. A review of the district’s website shows that Woburn maintains a clear allergy collection and verification protocol that aligns with U.S. Department of Agriculture guidelines, and they monitor the physical health needs of all students via routine health screenings pursuant to state statute. The district also maintains a local wellness policy as required by law. According to school leaders and other 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’s *Student Services Department Procedural Manual* outlines the process and timeline for student referrals, and district support staff noted that the district works closely with state agencies to support students’ physical and mental health needs.

In addition to support for physical health, Woburn has numerous tiered mental and behavioral health services that support all students’ mental and emotional wellness, which is a strength of the district. As noted previously, the district uses YRBS, DESSA, and SBIRT screeners to evaluate students’ support needs and engages in an IST process to match students with appropriate supports. One district leader described how ISTs “look holistically at the child and invite appropriate people to team meetings when there is assistance that’s needed beyond the scope of the schools.” Consistent with this, Woburn leverages community partnerships to provide specialized supports, including with the Home for Little Wanderers, an organization that provides individualized counseling, and Advocates, a nonprofit organization that provides mobile crisis intervention. District leaders also reported having adequate mental and behavioral support staff to address students’ needs, noting specifically that Woburn added a district-level mental health coordinator position. Woburn also implements some Tier 1 social and emotional supports for students. As noted previously, the elementary and middle schools include social-emotional learning opportunities in the daily schedule, and the middle school implements Signs of Suicide for seventh- and eighth-grade students. Woburn does not provide explicit social-emotional learning opportunities in the daily schedule at the high school level.

### Family and Community Partnerships

Woburn has implemented several strategies to communicate with families, including school newsletters; parent-teacher conferences; school-organized events; and individual teacher updates via communication apps, email, or in-person check-ins. In response to changing demographics within Woburn, the district also established multilingual communication systems that allow all families the opportunity to engage in their student’s education, which is a strength for Woburn. District leaders reported using the Remind app and Smore newsletters, which allow for translation, as the primary means of communication with families. In addition, the district uses Language Line, a communication tool that provides real-time interpretation services, to communicate with multilingual families. According to district leaders, Woburn also employs two Family and Community Engagement specialists who are certified interpreters, and 12 additional staff members are training to become certified. The district holds adult ESL classes for community members taught by Woburn staff. One district leader said of the district’s multilingual communication strategies:

I think that’s something we’ve worked hard to do. I think we’ve done a much better job with translation—with having everything translated appropriately so that we’re getting accurate input from families, which also helps to get more accurate assessments and more accurately identify students.

Although Woburn uses communication tools that allow all families the opportunity to engage, focus group discussions indicate that the district and its schools do not provide teachers guidance on family communication, which limits families’ roles as equal partners in their students’ education. The district does not have clear expectations for schools and teachers regarding the mode and frequency of family communication. Consequently, family focus group members reported that their engagement with their children’s teachers and school varies widely, with little consistency across grades and buildings. School staff reported the same inconsistency, with one educator stating, “It varies by teacher how engaged they are and how they choose to communicate with individual parents or grades or classes.” In addition, family members reported that the district does not offer inclusive opportunities for families to participate in school- and district-level decision-making (see *District Culture* for more information). Developing consistent communication policies and engagement strategies that position families as equal partners in their students’ education is an area for growth for the district.

Woburn maintains strong relationships with numerous organizations in the community and provides various services and enriching experiences to students during and outside the school day, which is a strength of the district. These partnerships provide physical and mental health services and food and clothing assistance through organizations such as the Home for Little Wanderers, the William James Interface, the Woburn Council of Social Concern, Woburn Pediatrics, and Food Link. Similarly, several schools in the district offer students assistance through food and clothing pantries (e.g., Tanners Closet and Joyce Xchange) located within their buildings. School staff also described partnerships with the Boys and Girls Club and the YMCA, which offer out-of-school enrichment for students. The district’s website provides information on community resources that offer assistance with suicide prevention, grief and loss, and support for LGBTQ+ students, and district leaders reported that Woburn works closely with state agencies to connect students and their families with any necessary supports.

According to the superintendent, the district identifies and connects students with wraparound services through their schools’ IST process, counseling staff referrals, and results from screening assessments**.** District leaders agreed that they “still probably have room to grow,” but their current systems and available services meet the needs of their student population. Specifically, they noted that the increase in the number and type of mental and social-emotional health supports the district offers has enabled them to better address students’ needs. In contrast to district leader reports, some school staff noted that the IST referral process is not followed consistently, especially at the high school level, which can overburden student support staff.

### Multi-Tiered Systems of Support

Woburn sets clear guidance for school leaders about how to implement their MTSS process and connect students to supports, which is a strength of the district. According to the *Student Services Department Procedures Manual*, the district’s MTSS framework is carried out through the IST process. The manual details the district’s robust progress monitoring procedures that facilitate access to and movement throughout the three tiers of instruction. The manual explains how the MTSS uses ISTs within each school. Guided by the DCAP, ISTs aim to “ensure that all students are provided with the tools and strategies to be successful within the general education environment.” In addition to DCAP Tier 1 strategies, teachers refer students with progress concerns to the IST, managed by the principal or a designee, to initially provide Tier 2 interventions also aimed at supporting students within the general education setting. After analyzing disaggregated data from literacy and mathematics assessments, including IXL, DIBELS, and STAR among others, the IST recommends targeted push-in interventions that are consistent with the common curriculum. These interventions are implemented for approximately six weeks, after which a student’s progress is reviewed. If necessary, the IST may begin the process for special education evaluation. The IST process requires notifying parents, collecting data, and continuing interventions during evaluations. The district conducts screenings for preschool, kindergarten, and early literacy to identify students needing evaluations for special education services early in their academic experiences. Referrals for special education evaluations can be made by parents, guardians, or professionals, with the district seeking consent to proceed with evaluations.

The manual further outlines the IST process, which at each level consists of an initial teacher referral, recommendations for accommodation in the general education classroom, a minimum of six weeks of progress monitoring, and a follow-up meeting in which teachers report on the students’ progress and the IST determines next steps. In focus groups, school leaders reported that their MTSS processes align with this guidance. The district also provides guidance for ISTs, including meeting protocols, what data to collect, how to involve parents in the process, and a timeline for when to complete forms. Although district documents and discussions with school leaders suggest a clear definition for the MTSS process, discussions with school staff indicate that some components could be more explicit. For example, one educator reported that ISTs are run “completely different” in different buildings, noting that “there’s a lack of consistency in who’s included.” Some staff, such as interventionists are “consistently included in one building and not at all in another.” This sentiment indicates that although most aspects of the MTSS process are clearly defined, additional guidance could improve the implementation of the district’s MTSS system.

In accordance with the District Strategic Plan (see *Strategic Planning, Implementation, and Monitoring* for more information), district leaders reported that explicitly defining the three tiers of support has been a priority for Woburn. However, the district’s MTSS documents do not provide clear definitions of each tier. Despite the lack of a district-articulated definition, discussions in focus groups indicated a districtwide understanding that Tier 1 academic supports include general classroom curriculum and differentiated instructional practices and Tier 2 academic supports involve small-group targeted instruction. Focus group discussions indicated an inconsistent understanding of Tier 3 supports across the district. For example, district leaders reported that Woburn “provides Tier 3 support or programming to any student that identifies or presents [as needing additional intensive supports]. It doesn’t need to be an identified special education student,” whereas many school staff conflated Tier 3 supports with special education services. In addition, one school leader reported that “kids end up referred to special education if needed, but we don’t have that individual Tier 3 intervention really available.” As such, the district’s MTSS guidance document identifies special education evaluation as the next step in the MTSS process after implementing Tier 2 interventions. Moreover, although several buildings’ SIPs include goals related to strengthening Tier 1 and Tier 2 supports, no SIPs reference Tier 3 supports. Creating a clear and consistent definition of Tier 3 supports and interventions is an area for growth for the district.

District leaders reported that the district provides tiered supports to all students and selects interventions with attention to equity. As one district leader described, “We’ve made a really concerted effort when we’re selecting, whether it’s curriculum, programs, interventions, to think about all of our learners and the best tool that will work for all of our students.” Despite the district’s implementation of these strategies, school staff reported that the district’s current staffing structure and scheduling may not be sufficient to meet all students’ needs. As one educator said, “There’s a lot of gaps. I think [the district] has done a nice job of adding in these intervention positions, which can help, but there are a lot of students that are still needing support.” Although the district has implemented some strategies to ensure that students receive all necessary services, developing a tiered support system that provides appropriate interventions to all students is an area for growth.

### Recommendations

* *The district should work with its school leaders to establish consistent behavioral expectations and management strategies across the district and provide additional in-the-moment supports for assisting students with intensive behavioral needs.*
* *The district should establish consistent, districtwide practices to integrate students’ diverse identities into classroom instruction and school culture to ensure all students feel seen, respected, and included in their learning environments.*
* *The district should establish consistent systems for collecting student feedback and using it to inform classroom instruction and schoolwide improvement efforts.*
* *The district should develop guidance for teachers around family communication and work with its family engagement specialists to support teachers to consistently communicate with families using accessible and culturally responsive methods.*
* *The district should establish a consistent definition of Tier 3 supports that clarifies the difference between tiered supports and special education and ESL services.*
* *The district should address barriers, including staffing and scheduling challenges, to fully and effectively implement its tiered systems of support.*

## Financial and Asset Management

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

Table 10 summarizes key strengths and areas for growth in financial and asset management in Woburn Public Schools.

Table 10. 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 employs deep content expertise, alongside the necessary technology to manage its resources.
* The district and city have a positive working relationship.
 | * Developing a formal written agreement that describes the process and timeline for incorporating the school committee’s budgeting process into the municipality’s budgeting process
 |
| [Budgeting and Budget Process](#_Budgeting_and_Budget_1) | * The district reviews school leader and department leader requests, enrollment projections, and past budgets to create the basis for budget requests and evaluates the efficacy of previous investments to make budget decisions.
* The district’s budget provides appropriate levels of funding for key instructional resources.
* The school committee and city officials provide active oversight of the district budget.
 |  |
| [Operations](#_Operations) | * The district invests in keeping technology up-to-date and well-maintained.
* The district has an established process for purchasing supplies and services that aligns with state laws and effectively manages those contracts with vendors.
 |  |
| [Managing Capital Assets and Capital Planning](#_Managing_Capital_Assets) | * The capital plan is based on future enrollment projections and facility assessments and incorporates input from district stakeholders.
 |  |

### Business Office Staffing and Infrastructure

The Woburn business office staff includes the director of finance, an assistant to the director, a payroll coordinator, an accounts payable clerk, and a half-time support person for payroll. According to reports from district leaders, the business office has sufficient staff to support daily operations and annual planning. The director of finance has a public accounting license, and all staff in the office have business licenses and the Massachusetts Certified Public Purchasing Official (MCPPO) designation, which indicates knowledge of Massachusetts procurement laws and best practices District staff described the system as being in alignment with the Uniform Massachusetts Accounting System (UMAS). The fact that the district has deep content expertise, alongside the necessary technology to manage its resources, is a strength of the district.

The school committee page on the district’s website includes an online policy manual that provides high-level guidance on fiscal management, including the annual budget, budget planning, and fiscal accounting and reporting. However, business office representatives do not have detailed written policies and procedures that document their ongoing work, which would enable them to provide continuity to operations when staffing disruptions arise.

District staff outlined their system for preserving, categorizing, and, when permissible, destroying financial documents in accordance with their financial policies and procedures, ensuring full compliance with state guidelines. Staff expressed views that the systems were efficient, and clear procedures were followed to make sure that appropriate procedures are consistently followed.

District staff emphasized their close collaboration with town officials to uphold policies and procedures. They also explained that they had 13 years of experience working for the city with the city auditor, city treasurer, and the city’s chief procurement officer, which “certainly helps being able to go to them with questions and vice versa for them to come to me with questions, too.” Both district and town officials spoke positively about their collaborative relationship. In another conversation, a municipal leader stated, “I have a strong relationship with the school committee and the school department, the school administration.” The positive working relationship between district and city officials is a strength of the district.

The district and city do not have a formal, written agreement that describes the process and timeline for incorporating the school committee’s budgeting process into the municipality’s budgeting process, as well as the roles, responsibilities, and costs assumed by each party. However, district and city officials explained that through the cooperative and extensive relationship between the district and the city, municipal engagement and oversight have grown in recent years. A city official described visiting schools every Friday to “see what’s happening in the schools . . . to see what needs are being addressed [and] the dollars are being spent.” A district leader described the city’s new approach: “This past budget cycle . . . there was a change in practice [with city officials asking more questions].” This required district staff to explain and justify budget decisions more thoroughly. Despite the strong cooperative relationship between the district and municipality, developing a formal written agreement that describes the process and timeline for incorporating the school committee’s budgeting process into the municipality’s budgeting process is an area for growth.

In addition to working together on the budget, the district and city work closely on payroll and purchasing. The payroll official in the district reviews the payroll numbers so that each biweekly payroll is adequately funded. After the director of finance reviews the numbers, it is sent to city hall. City hall uploads the information so that district employees get the coverage for which they enrolled. Likewise, the accounts payable clerk works hand-in-hand with the city auditor’s office. The city procurement officer publishes the district’s bids on their site after working with the district so that the bid is accurate and meets the district’s needs. A business office staff member explained,

[The city official] and I have probably the closest jobs on the school side and the city side, so for deposits and things like that—they’re all cross-referencing everything I bring up. I’m signing off on it on this end. They’re signing off on it on their end, along with any reporting.

### Budgeting and Budget Process

As described by a district leader, the budget process begins with sending requests for information and budget requests from principals and program directors. In 2023, the process started in December given the recent arrival of the director of finance. Principals and directors sent their proposed budgets to the business office at the end of January. With this information in hand, the director of finance developed a budget draft by the end of February. Informed by conversations with school leaders and directors and projections of available resources, district leaders and business office staff prioritize requests and create another budget draft. They then present the budget to the school committee—first to Finance and Personnel subcommittee members and, ultimately, the full school committee. In all, district leaders meet with the school committee “anywhere from two to five times” before a public hearing. District leader reported, during the current fiscal year, the budget process began earlier, and district leaders spent more time learning about school needs. To keep the public informed, the school committee posts dates and times of their meetings as well as agendas and meeting notes.

School committee members described the process once they vote to approve the budget: “The mayor has to take our budget and make an official recommendation of what the funding will be for the schools … to the city council.” School committee members went on to explain that the city council receives frequent updates throughout the season and can cut but not add to the budget. Members shared, “The superintendent is always at city hall with his assistant superintendents to . . . advocate for the needs of the school.”

District leaders systematically review requests from school and department leaders, analyze enrollment projections, and consider historical budget data to form the foundation of budget requests. They evaluate the effectiveness of prior investments to inform future budgetary decisions. School leaders reported that they have autonomy to request positions and supplies or to solicit other budgetary adjustments as needed. School leaders also meet as a team to review school budgets from all schools in the district. As a district leader explained, “People are willing to work together to prioritize what the district needs over their individual school needs, which is great.” District leaders and school committee members agree that the review and approval process is timely and culminates in an easily accessible, publicly available budget document that is posted on the district website. This comprehensive budgeting process is a strength of the district.

According to DESE data, the district exceeded net school spending requirements of $65,492,150 by 46.7 percent in FY24. In the previous year, FY23, the district exceeded net school spending requirements of $60,994,708 by 49.2 percent and, also in FY23, per pupil funding was $23,320,which was higher than the state average of $21,855. 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 provides appropriate levels of funding for key instructional resources, which is a strength of the district. For example, one teacher shared, “It feels like if we see something we want, or we like, or feel it’s going to work, or we’ve had any experience with, [the district] seems to try to get it for us—if not that moment, when the budget allows them.” Similarly, one school leader explained, “In budgeting . . . it has to align to the strategic plan, but otherwise we have carte blanche to gather feedback and propose whatever needs to be proposed.” The average teacher salary was $92,159 in FY23, which, as with the district’s per pupil funding, is slightly higher than the FY23 state average of $89,576.

The district has a new grant coordinator position this year that will oversee grants going forward, as individual directors (e.g., special education director, director of multilingual learners) used to identify and apply for competitive grants. Budget documents indicate that the district applies for state and federal grants that align with the district’s strategic plan. Blending these grants with other funding, restricted and unrestricted, helps support district initiatives to maximize benefits to students. Leaders provided the example of using funds from the circuit breaker program[[8]](#footnote-9) and the operating budget to cover expenses for out-of-district tuitions. The business office monitors these grants along with all district spending to comply with regulations. Grants are also cross-referenced with the city auditor’s office, with additional systems also in place, including annual audits by independent financial auditing services, to make sure that grant terms and requirements are followed in a timely manner.

When asked about sustainability plans for grant-funded initiatives, district leaders explained that they find funds in the budget to cover initiatives after the grants end. One leader described this approach: “Procedurally, I’d say that we go through the budget process and try to maintain those levels outside of the grant.” The district also has a stabilization fund, but they have not had to use it.When the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief funds were no longer available, the district raised additional local revenue to cover the costs of the staff previously hired under the grant.

District leaders also shared that the district budgets for anticipated out-of-district special education placements and related transportation costs and has a sustainable funding source to cover unexpected increases. Specifically, the district uses funds from the circuit breaker program, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and the city to cover special education expenses, such as out-of-district special education placements and related transportation costs.

In addition to having plans to address expected and unexpected budget needs, district leaders and school committee members expressed their belief that the city would figure out a way to support the school budget if district leaders were able to clearly articulate the needs.

The district did not discuss having a current multi-year financial plan, and none appears on the district’s website. However, district leaders did share what they consider when planning for future budgets, including student enrollment, trends for the past five years (with greater emphasis on the most recent year), utility expenses, and contractual obligations (e.g., teacher compensation, transportation). They also get help with projects from the city that provide projections of growth in student enrollment related to new housing developments.

Evidence from school committee meeting minutes and reports from district leaders shows that the district provides monthly budget updates to the school committee and works with budget managers to track and adjust current-year spending. District leaders shared that, in addition to meetings with school committee members, the district and the school committee share a Google Drive so that school committee members can ask questions of district staff. A school committee member on the Finance and Personnel subcommittee corroborated this information, stating, “We’re keeping pretty constant tabs on where the current fiscal year budget is. When it’s budget season, we get very regular updates on where the proposed budget for the next fiscal year is.” The district also meets with the city monthly to review the budget and performance metrics. A district leader explained, “There’s collaboration and there’s certainly safeguards in place to make sure we’re properly spending.” A strength of the district is the active oversight of the budget by the school committee and city officials.

### Operations

The central office, which oversees school registration, is undertaking a significant redistricting effort to address imbalances in school populations and ensure equitable access to resources and opportunities for all students. Students register for and are assigned to schools based on their home address. A “street directory” is available on the district website to help families determine a child’s school. Online forms to complete school registration are also available on the district website. Current school attendance boundaries were set more than 30 years ago, but that will be changing. A school leader explained that, given significant development in the past 30-plus years, the current distribution of students among schools needs to change and a redistricting process is now in place. The leader went on to explain, “At some of the elementary schools, it’s more crowded than others, and the newer school, now six years old, is full.” A school committee member corroborated this, describing the “long and deeply painful” redistricting process that is taking place. He reported that some schools have higher concentrations of “students who are lower income, students who are learning English, and students who are non-White.” According to a school committee presentation (published on the “WPS K-8 Redistricting” webpage), the redistricting effort seeks to “pursue class size equity in all schools” and be “equitable in terms of demographics (High Needs students).”

The new facilities director at Woburn is implementing strategic measures to enhance preventive maintenance and improve operational efficiency across the district's school. For example, as an efficiency measure, the facilities director orders custodial and maintenance supplies at the start of the school year and halfway through the year. The facilities department monitors what is needed by reaching out to the individual head custodians at each school. A city official explained that the district and city split the responsibility of caring for grounds. They said, “Schools will mow that patch of ground right in front of the building and DPW [Department of Public Works] or Parks will have other responsibilities. . . . [There is a] basic agreement in place—a fixed dollar amount in the budget to account for some services that [the city] performs through its parks department.” The official went on to describe an ongoing effort to have all those involved (i.e., schools, Parks, DPW) review the workload of each agency and determine if any agreements need revisiting to increase efficiency. To maintain district facilities, school and district leaders make formal requests through the budget process. District leaders also visit buildings regularly to review requests and note future needs.

The district has a contract for transportation services. Bus contractors and taxi contractors are responsible for the safe operation of school buses and comply with all applicable state laws and regulations. The district website homepage has a link to a bus schedule for transportation to and from each school.

Providing healthy food to students is another role of the district. According to the district website, the district contracts with Aramark for food services and provides students with a variety of free breakfast and lunch options. The website posts Woburn’s policy for addressing meal debt and all efforts to collect overdue meal balances are directed to parents/guardians, but all students receive a regular lunch each day regardless of overdue balances. Students are not told about their balances unless they ask.

District operations also include verifying that students and staff receive appropriate information technology (IT) support. According to a district leader, the district provides its students and staff with the hardware, software, and related licenses and support for everyday learning and daily operations. Also, the district’s website includes a link to low-cost internet services. Further, no families, teachers, or students raised concerns about access to technology. The district’s investment in keeping technology up-to-date and well-maintained is a strength in Woburn.

As explained by district staff, Woburn an established process for purchasing supplies and services that aligns with state laws, which is another strength of the district. District staff added that, with its municipal partners, the district executes and manages contracts with its vendors. Woburn also established timelines to proactively track the end of contracts and provides sufficient time for renewal or re-bidding for core district services. A business office staff member explained that they keep books with “the date ranges, when they’re going to come up, so [they] are not surprised.” City officials agreed that the current process for purchasing supplies and services is effective, but they are working to find ways to centralize some purchasing to achieve cost savings. The district and the city collaborate on procurement and work closely with the chief procurement officer at city hall when they go out to bid. A district leader shared, “The city’s chief procurement officer has been doing procurement for many, many years, so it’s good to have a second set of eyes on things.”

### Managing Capital Assets and Capital Planning

District leaders shared that Woburn is currently identifying asset management software to track capital assets. The IT director, who is also new to his position, is planning to upgrade the current asset management tag system so that the district can tag additional equipment such as Chromebooks. District staff expect new electronic tracking systems for facilities and IT will improve their current system of tracking the disposal of goods.

The district’s five-year capital plan for fiscal years 2025 through 2029 includes facilities (e.g., classroom furniture, HVAC [heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning] maintenance, added parking, security upgrades), technology (e.g., replacement computers for teachers, laser projectors, telephone upgrades), and the elementary mathematics curriculum. According to district leaders, the capital plan is developed with input from district leaders, district directors (IT, facilities, curriculum), and school leaders. A district leader described the planning process. The first step is asking the principals, the facilities director, and others what they need. The business office staff then prioritizes school needs and builds out a five-year plan that considers what is more urgent, and what can be “pushed off without being a detriment to student learning.” A strength of the district is that it has a capital plan that describes future capital needs, is based on future enrollment projections and facility assessments, and incorporates input from district stakeholders.

### Recommendations

* *The district should develop a formal written agreement with the city that outlines the process, timeline, roles, responsibilities, and cost allocations involved in incorporating the school committee’s budgeting process into the municipality’s budgeting process.*

## Appendix A. Summary of Site Visit Activities

The AIR team completed the following activities as part of the district review activities in Woburn. The team conducted 105 classroom observations during the week of January 21, 2025, and held interviews and focus groups between January 21 and January 24. 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
* Woburn curriculum unit template
* Published educational reports on the district by DESE, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, and the former Office of Educational Quality and Accountability
* District documents such as district and school improvement plans, school committee policies, curriculum documents, summaries of student assessments, job descriptions, collective bargaining agreements, evaluation tools for staff, handbooks, school schedules, and the district’s end-of-year financial reports
* All completed program and administrator evaluations and a random selection of completed teacher evaluations

## Appendix B. Districtwide Instructional Observation Report

Woburn Public Schools

Classroom Visits: Summary of Findings

Districtwide Instructional Observation Report

January 2025

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[www.air.org](http://www.air.org)

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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.

Six observers visited Woburn Public Schools during the week of January 7, 2025. Observers conducted 105 observations in a sample of classrooms across ten schools. Observations were conducted in grades K-12 and focused primarily on literacy, English language arts, and mathematics instruction.

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

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

Table 1. CLASS K–3 Domains and Dimensions

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

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

Table 2. CLASS Upper Elementary and Secondary Domains and Dimensions

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

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

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

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

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

Positive Climate

Emotional Support domain, Grades K−12

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

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

Positive Climate District Average\*: 5.2

| Grade Band | Low Range | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High Range | n | Average |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 105 | 5.2 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 14 | 11 | 4 | 35 | 5.4 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 21 | 11 | 2 | 41 | 5.1 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 29 | 5.2 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 3, the district average is computed as:
([3 x 7] + [4 x 16] + [5 x 41] + [6 x 28] + [7 x 13]) ÷ 105 observations = 5.2

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

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

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

Teacher Sensitivity

Emotional Support domain, Grades K−12

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

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

Teacher Sensitivity District Average\*: 5.8

| 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 | 105 | 5.8 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 8 | 13 | 9 | 35 | 5.7 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 9 | 8 | 9 | 13 | 41 | 5.5 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 8 | 14 | 29 | 6.1 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 4, the district average is computed as:
([2 x 1] + [3 x 3] + [4 x 14] + [5 x 21] + [6 x 30] + [7 x 36]) ÷ 105 observations = 5.8

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

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

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

Regard for Student Perspectives

Emotional Support domain, Grades K−12

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

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

Regard for Student Perspectives District Average\*: 3.4

| 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 | 105 | 3.4 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 12 | 6 | 6 | 9 | 2 | 0 | 35 | 3.5 |
| Grades 6-8 | 1 | 8 | 12 | 9 | 9 | 1 | 1 | 41 | 3.6 |
| Grades 9-12 | 3 | 13 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 29 | 2.9 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 5, the district average is computed as:
([1 x 4] + [2 x 33] + [3 x 22] + [4 x 18] + [5 x 22] + [6 x 5] + [7 x 1]) ÷ 105 observations = 3.4

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.[[9]](#footnote-10)

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

Negative Climate District Average\*: 7.0

| 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 | 105 | 7.0 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 32 | 35 | 6.9 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 40 | 41 | 7.0 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 29 | 29 | 7.0 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 6, the district average is computed as:
([6 x 4] + [7 x 101]) ÷ 105 observations = 7.0

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

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

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

Behavior Management

Classroom Organization domain, Grades K−12

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

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

Behavior Management District Average\*: 6.4

| 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 | 105 | 6.4 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 22 | 35 | 6.3 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 9 | 25 | 41 | 6.3 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 23 | 29 | 6.8 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 7, the district average is computed as:
([3 x 3] + [4 x 5] + [5 x 5] + [6 x 22] + [7 x 70]) ÷ 105 observations = 6.4

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

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

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

Productivity

Classroom Organization domain, Grades K−12

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

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

Productivity District Average\*: 6.2

| Grade Band | Low Range | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High Range | n | Average |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 105 | 6.2 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 5 | 20 | 35 | 6.1 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 9 | 23 | 41 | 6.2 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 18 | 29 | 6.4 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 8, the district average is computed as:
([3 x 3] + [4 x 6] + [5 x 15] + [6 x 20] + [7 x 61]) ÷ 105 observations = 6.2

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

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

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

Instructional Learning Formats

Classroom Organization domain, Grades K−3

Instructional Support domain, Grades 4− 12

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

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

Instructional Learning Formats District Average\*: 5.4

| 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 | 105 | 5.4 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 17 | 11 | 3 | 35 | 5.4 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 5 | 18 | 8 | 8 | 41 | 5.4 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 6 | 9 | 9 | 4 | 29 | 5.3 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 9, the district average is computed as:
([3 x 3] + [4 x 15] + [5 x 44] + [6 x 28] + [7 x 15]) ÷ 105 observations = 5.4

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

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

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

Concept Development

Instructional Support domain, Grades K−3

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

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

Concept Development District Average\*: 3.2

| Grade Band | Low Range | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High Range | n | Average |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 26 | 3.2 |
| Grades K-3\*\* | 1 | 9 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 26 | 3.2 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 10, the district average is computed as:
([1 x 1] + [2 x 9] + [3 x 5] + [4 x 5] + [5 x 6]) ÷ 26 observations = 3.2

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

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

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

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

Content Understanding

Instructional Support domain, Grades 4− 12

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

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

Content Understanding District Average\*: 4.7

| 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 | 79 | 4.7 |
| Grades 4-5\*\* | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 4.8 |
| Grades 6-8 | 1 | 1 | 13 | 7 | 10 | 7 | 2 | 41 | 4.3 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 8 | 4 | 11 | 4 | 29 | 5.2 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 11, the district average is computed as:
([1 x 1] + [2 x 1] + [3 x 17] + [4 x 18] + [5 x 15] + [6 x 19] + [7 x 8]) ÷ 79 observations = 4.7

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

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

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

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

Analysis and Inquiry

Instructional Support domain, Grades 4− 12

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

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

Analysis and Inquiry District Average\*: 2.6

| Grade Band | Low Range | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High Range | n | Average |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 79 | 2.6 |
| Grades 4-5\*\* | 1 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 2.4 |
| Grades 6-8 | 15 | 11 | 8 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 41 | 2.2 |
| Grades 9-12 | 3 | 8 | 8 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 29 | 3.1 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 12, the district average is computed as:
([1 x 19] + [2 x 22] + [3 x 21] + [4 x 9] + [5 x 7] + [6 x 1]) ÷ 79 observations = 2.6

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

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

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

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

Quality of Feedback

Instructional Support domain, Grades K− 12

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

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

Quality of Feedback District Average\*: 3.9

| 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 | 105 | 3.9 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 8 | 10 | 8 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 35 | 3.7 |
| Grades 6-8 | 2 | 7 | 6 | 7 | 13 | 3 | 3 | 41 | 4.0 |
| Grades 9-12 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 1 | 29 | 3.9 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 13, the district average is computed as:
([1 x 4] + [2 x 19] + [3 x 22] + [4 x 20] + [5 x 23] + [6 x 12] + [7 x 5]) ÷ 105 observations = 3.9

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

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

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

Language Modeling

Instructional Support domain, Grades K− 3

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

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

Language Modeling District Average\*: 3.3

| 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 | 26 | 3.3 |
| Grades K-3\*\* | 5 | 4 | 3 | 7 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 26 | 3.3 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 14, the district average is computed as:
([1 x 5] + [2 x 4] + [3 x 3] + [4 x 7] + [5 x 6] + [7 x 1]) ÷ 26 observations = 3.3

\*\*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\*: 3.6

| Grade Band | Low Range | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High Range | n | Average |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 79 | 3.6 |
| Grades 4-5\*\* | 1 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 4.0 |
| Grades 6-8 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 10 | 7 | 4 | 1 | 41 | 3.5 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 11 | 4 | 7 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 29 | 3.5 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 15, the district average is computed as:
([1 x 7] + [2 x 17] + [3 x 12] + [4 x 20] + [5 x 15] + [6 x 5] + [7 x 3]) ÷ 79 observations = 3.6

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

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

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

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

Student Engagement

Student Engagement domain, Grades 4−12

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

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

Student Engagement District Average\*: 5.1

| Grade Band | Low Range | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High Range | n | Average |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 79 | 5.1 |
| Grades 4-5\*\* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 4 | 0 | 9 | 5.4 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 20 | 12 | 3 | 41 | 5.2 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 10 | 9 | 7 | 1 | 29 | 4.8 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 16, the district average is computed as:
([3 x 4] + [4 x 14] + [5 x 34] + [6 x 23] + [7 x 4]) ÷ 79 observations = 5.1

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

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

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

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

Summary of Average Ratings: Grades K–5

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

|  | Low Range | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High Range | n | Average Scores\* |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |  |  |
| Emotional Support Domain | 0 | 12 | 7 | 16 | 31 | 29 | 45 | 140 | 5.4 |
| Positive Climate | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 14 | 11 | 4 | 35 | 5.4 |
| Negative Climate\*\* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 32 | 35 | 6.9 |
| Teacher Sensitivity | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 8 | 13 | 9 | 35 | 5.7 |
| Regard for Student Perspectives | 0 | 12 | 6 | 6 | 9 | 2 | 0 | 35 | 3.5 |
| Classroom Organization Domain | 0 | 0 | 4 | 8 | 25 | 23 | 45 | 105 | 5.9 |
| Behavior Management | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 22 | 35 | 6.3 |
| Productivity | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 5 | 20 | 35 | 6.1 |
| Instructional Learning Formats\*\*\* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 17 | 11 | 3 | 35 | 5.4 |
| Instructional Support Domain | 8 | 24 | 26 | 26 | 20 | 6 | 4 | 114 | 3.5 |
| Concept Development (K-3 only) | 1 | 9 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 26 | 3.2 |
| Content Understanding (UE only) | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 4.8 |
| Analysis and Inquiry (UE only) | 1 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 2.4 |
| Quality of Feedback | 0 | 8 | 10 | 8 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 35 | 3.7 |
| Language Modeling (K-3 only) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 7 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 26 | 3.3 |
| Instructional Dialogue (UE only) | 1 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 4.0 |
| Student Engagement (UE only) | **0** | **0** | **0** | **0** | **5** | **4** | **0** | **9** | **5.4** |

\*The district average is an average of the scores. For example, for Positive Climate, the district average is computed as: ([4 x 6] + [5 x 14] + [6 x 11] + [7 x 4]) ÷ 35 observations = 5.4

\*\*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 3] + [7 x 32]) ÷ 35 observations = 6.9. In addition, Negative Climate appears in the Classroom Organization Domain for the Upper Elementary Manual.

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

Summary of Average Ratings: Grades 6–8

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

|  | Low Range | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High Range | n | Average Scores\* |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |  |  |
| Emotional Support Domain | 1 | 9 | 16 | 22 | 38 | 21 | 16 | 123 | 4.7 |
| Positive Climate | 0 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 21 | 11 | 2 | 41 | 5.1 |
| Teacher Sensitivity | 0 | 1 | 1 | 9 | 8 | 9 | 13 | 41 | 5.5 |
| Regard for Student Perspectives | 1 | 8 | 12 | 9 | 9 | 1 | 1 | 41 | 3.6 |
| Classroom Organization Domain | 0 | 0 | 2 | 5 | 9 | 19 | 88 | 123 | 6.5 |
| Behavior Management | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 9 | 25 | 41 | 6.3 |
| Productivity | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 9 | 23 | 41 | 6.2 |
| Negative Climate\*\* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 40 | 41 | 7.0 |
| Instructional Support Domain | 24 | 25 | 36 | 34 | 50 | 22 | 14 | 205 | 3.9 |
| Instructional Learning Formats | 0 | 0 | 2 | 5 | 18 | 8 | 8 | 41 | 5.4 |
| Content Understanding | 1 | 1 | 13 | 7 | 10 | 7 | 2 | 41 | 4.3 |
| Analysis and Inquiry | 15 | 11 | 8 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 41 | 2.2 |
| Quality of Feedback | 2 | 7 | 6 | 7 | 13 | 3 | 3 | 41 | 4.0 |
| Instructional Dialogue | 6 | 6 | 7 | 10 | 7 | 4 | 1 | 41 | 3.5 |
| Student Engagement | 0 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 20 | 12 | 3 | 41 | 5.2 |

\*The district average is an average of the scores. For example, for Positive Climate, the district average is computed as: ([3 x 3] + [4 x 4] + [5 x 21] + [6 x 11] + [7 x 2]) ÷ 41 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: ([6 x 1] + [7 x 40]) ÷ 41 observations = 7.0

Summary of Average Ratings: Grades 9–12

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

|  | Low Range | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High Range | n | Average Scores\* |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |  |  |
| Emotional Support Domain | 3 | 13 | 9 | 10 | 15 | 16 | 21 | 87 | 4.8 |
| Positive Climate | 0 | 0 | 4 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 29 | 5.2 |
| Teacher Sensitivity | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 8 | 14 | 29 | 6.1 |
| Regard for Student Perspectives | 3 | 13 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 29 | 2.9 |
| Classroom Organization Domain | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 12 | 70 | 87 | 6.7 |
| Behavior Management | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 23 | 29 | 6.8 |
| Productivity | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 18 | 29 | 6.4 |
| Negative Climate\*\* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 29 | 29 | 7.0 |
| Instructional Support Domain | 5 | 23 | 21 | 30 | 29 | 26 | 11 | 145 | 4.2 |
| Instructional Learning Formats | 0 | 0 | 1 | 6 | 9 | 9 | 4 | 29 | 5.3 |
| Content Understanding | 0 | 0 | 2 | 8 | 4 | 11 | 4 | 29 | 5.2 |
| Analysis and Inquiry | 3 | 8 | 8 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 29 | 3.1 |
| Quality of Feedback | 2 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 1 | 29 | 3.9 |
| Instructional Dialogue | 0 | 11 | 4 | 7 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 29 | 3.5 |
| Student Engagement | 0 | 0 | 2 | 10 | 9 | 7 | 1 | 29 | 4.8 |

\*The district average is an average of the scores. For example, for Positive Climate, the district average is computed as: ([3 x 4] + [4 x 6] + [5 x 6] + [6 x 6] + [7 x 7]) ÷ 29 observations = 5.2

\*\*Negative Climate is rated on an inverse scale. An original score of 1 is given a value of 7. The scoring in the table reflects the normalized adjustment: ([7 x 29]) ÷ 29 observations = 7.0

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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 three 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 curricula that are culturally and linguistically sustaining. These resources include the curriculum frameworks and IMplement MA, our recommended four-phase process to prepare for, select, launch, and implement new high-quality instructional materials with key tasks and action steps. Additionally, CURATE convenes panels of Massachusetts teachers to review and rate curricula. These ratings are posted publicly to support schools and districts in selecting high-quality instructional materials. Finally, the Supporting Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices webpage provides DESE’s definition of these practices and highlights their importance in our schools and classrooms.  |
| [Mass Literacy Guide](https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/) | Mass Literacy is a statewide effort to empower educators with the evidence-based practices for literacy that all students need. Evidence-based instruction, provided within schools and classrooms that are culturally and linguistically sustaining, will put our youngest students on a path toward literacy for life. |
| [Foundations for Inclusive Practices](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/guidebook/) | This Guidebook includes tools for districts, schools, and educators that align to the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework and promote evidence-based best practices for inclusion. |
| [Guidebook of Culturally Diverse Artists and Artworks](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.doe.mass.edu%2Finstruction%2Farts%2Fdiverse-arts-guidebook.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) | This resource promotes culturally responsive teaching in the arts through the study of culturally diverse artists and their artworks. 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 Massachusetts, 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 in building a shared understanding of high-quality instruction and improving the feedback that teachers receive. |
| [Professional Learning Partner Guide](https://plpartnerguide.org/) | A free, online, searchable list of vetted professional development providers who have expertise in specific sets of high-quality instructional materials. Schools and districts can use this guide to easily find professional development providers to support the launch or implementation of high-quality instructional materials. |
| [Promising Recruitment, Selection and Retention Strategies for a Diverse Massachusetts Teacher Workforce](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.doe.mass.edu%2Fcsi%2Fdiverse-workforce%2Fteacher-diversification.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) | This guidebook provides a framework to help district and school leaders design and implement a teacher diversification strategy to improve student achievement and create equitable learning experiences. |
| [“What to Look For” Observation Guides](https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/observation/) | Observation tools to help district staff observe instruction. |
| [Talent Guide](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeffectiveness/talent-guide/default.html) | An online hub of resources, considerations, and updates for recruiting, hiring, evaluating, and supporting educators and school staff, with a focus on equity. |
| [WIDA Professional Development](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/prof-learning/wida/default.html) | 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, students who are migrants and refugees, 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 about 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 districts, childcare centers, family day care homes, adult day health programs, Summer Eats community organizations, USDA foods storage and distribution vendors, food banks, and antihunger organizations across the Commonwealth. |
| [Planning for Success](https://www.doe.mass.edu/research/success/) | An inclusive, hands-on planning process designed to build district and school capacity and coherence while also building community understanding and support. |
| [Resource Allocation and District Action Reports (RADAR)](https://www.doe.mass.edu/research/radar/) | RADAR is a suite of innovative data reports, case studies, and other resources that provide a new approach to resource decisions. |
| [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. Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity, 2024-2025

| Group | District | Percentage of District | State | Percentage of State |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| All students | 4,520 | 100.0% | 915,932 | 100.0% |
| American Indian or Alaska Native | 63 | 1.4% | 2,272 | 0.2% |
| Asian | 293 | 6.5% | 68,608 | 7.5% |
| Black or African American | 432 | 9.6% | 93,245 | 10.2% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 851 | 18.8% | 236,839 | 25.9% |
| Multi-Race, Not Hispanic or Latino | 181 | 4.0% | 42,303 | 4.6% |
| Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander | 5 | 0.1% | 800 | 0.1% |
| White | 2,695 | 59.6% | 471,865 | 51.5% |

*Note*. As of October 1, 2024.

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

| Group | *N*(District) | Percentage of High Needs(District) | Percentage of District | *N*(State) | Percentage of High Needs(State) | Percentage of State |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| High Needs | 2,616 | 100.0% | 56.8% | 517,093 | 100.0% | 55.8% |
| English Learners | 707 | 27.0% | 15.6% | 127,673 | 24.7% | 13.9% |
| Low Income | 1,831 | 70.0% | 40.5% | 385,161 | 74.5% | 42.1% |
| Students with Disabilities | 1,078 | 41.2% | 23.4% | 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 4,602; total state enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 926,057.

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

| Group | *N* (2024) | 2022 (%) | 2023 (%) | 2024 (%) | State 2024 (%) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| All students | 4,731 | 23.7 | 22.4 | 20.3 | 19.7 |
| African American/Black | 461 | 23.8 | 20.3 | 16.9 | 22.5 |
| Asian | 314 | 19.2 | 20.1 | 19.4 | 11.8 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 880 | 32.2 | 31.4 | 30.6 | 31.3 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 172 | 29.7 | 29.8 | 27.3 | 20.6 |
| Native American | 73 | 30.6 | 45.1 | 35.6 | 28.5 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 6 | 50.0 | 42.9 | 33.3 | 24.3 |
| White | 2,825 | 22.0 | 19.7 | 16.9 | 14.4 |
| High Needs | 2,831 | 32.1 | 30.3 | 27.1 | 27.2 |
| Low Income | 2,165 | 33.8 | 33.2 | 30.3 | 30.3 |
| English Learners | 741 | 27.3 | 31.6 | 28.6 | 29.9 |
| Students with Disabilities | 1,102 | 35.9 | 29.3 | 27.0 | 27.5 |

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

Table D4. Total Expenditures Fiscal Years, 2021-2023

| Expenditures | FY 2021 | FY 2022 | FY 2023 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| By school committee | $62,498,346 | $70,123,908 | $73,719,117 |
| By municipality | $19,389,531 | $21,716,472 | $22,010,008 |
| Total from local appropriations | $81,887,877 | $91,840,380 | $95,729,125 |
| From revolving funds and grants | $10,237,748 | $8,895,674 | $9,598,991 |
| Total expenditures | $92,125,625 | $100,736,054 | $105,328,116 |

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

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

| Chapter 70 aid to education program | FY 2021 | FY 2022 | FY 2023 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Chapter 70 state aid a | $9,555,857 | $9,687,377 | $12,693,670 |
| Required local contribution | $45,049,041 | $45,258,536 | $48,301,038 |
| Required net school spending b | $54,604,898 | $54,945,913 | $60,994,708 |
| Actual net school spending | $78,479,735 | $87,957,013 | $90,981,006 |
| Over/under required ($) | $23,874,837 | $33,011,100 | $29,986,298 |
| Over/under required (%) | 43.7% | 60.1% | 49.2% |

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

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

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

| Expenditure category | FY 2021 | FY 2022 | FY 2023 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Administration | $606 | $865 | $684 |
| Instructional leadership (district and school) | $1,071 | $1,486 | $1,283 |
| Teachers | $7,495 | $7,549 | $8,047 |
| Other teaching services | $1,823 | $1,590 | $2,080 |
| Professional development | $173 | $216 | $338 |
| Instructional materials, equipment, and technology | $730 | $456 | $446 |
| Guidance, counseling, and testing services | $629 | $738 | $763 |
| Pupil services | $1,547 | $1,832 | $2,004 |
| Operations and maintenance | $1,573 | $1,750 | $1,761 |
| Insurance, retirement, and other fixed costs | $3,979 | $4,447 | $4,531 |
| Total expenditures per in-district pupil | $19,627 | $20,929 | $21,936 |

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

##

## Appendix E. Student Performance Data

[Table E1. MCAS ELA Achievement by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2024 E-2](#_Toc196141379)

[Table E2. MCAS ELA Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2024 E-2](#_Toc196141380)

[Table E3. MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2024 E-2](#_Toc196141381)

[Table E4. MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2024 E-3](#_Toc196141382)

[Table E5. MCAS Science Achievement by Student Group, Grades 5 and 8, 2022-2024 E-3](#_Toc196141383)

[Table E6. MCAS Science Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2024 E-4](#_Toc196141384)

[Table E7. MCAS ELA Achievement by Grade, 2022-2024 E-4](#_Toc196141385)

[Table E8. MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Grade, 2022-2024 E-5](#_Toc196141386)

[Table E9. MCAS Science Achievement by Grade, 2022-2024 E-5](#_Toc196141387)

[Table E10. MCAS ELA Mean Student Growth Percentile by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2024 E-7](#_Toc196141388)

[Table E11. MCAS ELA Mean Student Growth Percentile by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2024 E-7](#_Toc196141389)

[Table E12. MCAS Mathematics Mean Student Growth Percentile by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2024 E-8](#_Toc196141390)

[Table E13. MCAS Mathematics Mean Student Growth Percentile by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2024 E-8](#_Toc196141391)

[Table E14. MCAS ELA Mean Student Growth Percentile by Grade, 2022-2024 E-9](#_Toc196141392)

[Table E15. MCAS Mathematics Mean Student Growth Percentile by Grade, 2022-2024 E-9](#_Toc196141393)

[Table E16. Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023 E-9](#_Toc196141394)

[Table E17. Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Student Group, 2020-2022 E-10](#_Toc196141395)

[Table E18. Annual Dropout Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023 E-10](#_Toc196141396)

[Table E19. In-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2022-2024 E-11](#_Toc196141397)

[Table E20. Out-of-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2022-2024 E-11](#_Toc196141398)

[Table E21. Advanced Coursework Completion Rates by Student Group, 2022-2024 E-12](#_Toc196141399)

[Table E22. Accountability Results, 2024 E-12](#_Toc196141400)

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 | 1,922 | 41 | 40 | 35 | 39 | 44 | 42 | 44 | 40 | 15 | 18 | 22 | 21 |
| African American/Black | 155 | 25 | 30 | 27 | 24 | 53 | 48 | 46 | 46 | 22 | 22 | 26 | 31 |
| Asian | 99 | 49 | 55 | 47 | 62 | 39 | 35 | 40 | 29 | 11 | 9 | 12 | 10 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 285 | 25 | 22 | 15 | 20 | 48 | 42 | 44 | 44 | 27 | 36 | 41 | 36 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 72 | 38 | 42 | 38 | 46 | 44 | 42 | 42 | 37 | 18 | 17 | 21 | 17 |
| Native American | 30 | 38 | 21 | 13 | 25 | 38 | 45 | 53 | 43 | 25 | 33 | 33 | 32 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 4 | — | — | — | 39 | — | — | — | 39 | — | — | — | 21 |
| White | 1,277 | 45 | 45 | 39 | 47 | 43 | 41 | 44 | 40 | 12 | 14 | 17 | 13 |
| High needs | 1,115 | 24 | 25 | 20 | 22 | 51 | 46 | 45 | 45 | 25 | 30 | 35 | 33 |
| Low income | 838 | 26 | 25 | 20 | 21 | 51 | 47 | 46 | 45 | 23 | 28 | 34 | 34 |
| ELs and former ELs | 330 | 20 | 21 | 12 | 17 | 45 | 40 | 44 | 43 | 35 | 39 | 45 | 41 |
| Students w/disabilities | 467 | 8 | 10 | 10 | 11 | 50 | 45 | 40 | 40 | 42 | 45 | 51 | 50 |

*Note*. M/E = meeting or exceeding expectations; PME = partially meeting expectations; NM = not meeting expectations.

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 | 280 | 59 | 56 | 54 | 57 | 32 | 33 | 31 | 31 | 8 | 11 | 15 | 12 |
| African American/Black | 23 | 53 | 61 | 35 | 42 | 42 | 29 | 52 | 40 | 5 | 11 | 13 | 18 |
| Asian | 19 | 72 | 71 | 84 | 78 | 28 | 24 | 11 | 16 | 0 | 6 | 5 | 5 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 47 | 56 | 34 | 21 | 36 | 28 | 28 | 36 | 38 | 15 | 38 | 43 | 26 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 9 | — | — | — | 61 | — | — | — | 30 | — | — | — | 9 |
| Native American | 3 | — | — | — | 48 | — | — | — | 37 | — | — | — | 14 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 1 | — | — | — | 58 | — | — | — | 34 | — | — | — | 8 |
| White | 178 | 59 | 60 | 61 | 65 | 34 | 35 | 29 | 28 | 7 | 5 | 10 | 7 |
| High needs | 153 | 38 | 32 | 35 | 37 | 46 | 46 | 39 | 41 | 16 | 23 | 27 | 23 |
| Low income | 123 | 42 | 35 | 36 | 38 | 44 | 42 | 41 | 40 | 13 | 23 | 24 | 23 |
| ELs and former ELs | 33 | 17 | 13 | 15 | 14 | 39 | 45 | 24 | 38 | 43 | 42 | 61 | 48 |
| Students w/disabilities | 54 | 15 | 13 | 19 | 21 | 62 | 52 | 35 | 45 | 23 | 36 | 46 | 34 |

*Note*. M/E = meeting or exceeding expectations; PME = partially meeting expectations; NM = not meeting expectations.

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 | 1,931 | 38 | 36 | 34 | 41 | 47 | 45 | 47 | 42 | 14 | 19 | 18 | 18 |
| African American/Black | 156 | 24 | 20 | 18 | 22 | 51 | 50 | 59 | 49 | 25 | 30 | 23 | 30 |
| Asian | 101 | 55 | 55 | 54 | 71 | 39 | 38 | 38 | 23 | 5 | 6 | 8 | 6 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 284 | 21 | 17 | 18 | 20 | 57 | 49 | 52 | 48 | 22 | 33 | 30 | 32 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 72 | 36 | 30 | 32 | 47 | 42 | 47 | 44 | 37 | 21 | 22 | 24 | 16 |
| Native American | 31 | 32 | 28 | 10 | 27 | 44 | 50 | 65 | 46 | 24 | 22 | 26 | 27 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 4 | — | — | — | 39 | — | — | — | 41 | — | — | — | 20 |
| White | 1,283 | 41 | 41 | 39 | 49 | 47 | 44 | 46 | 40 | 12 | 15 | 15 | 11 |
| High needs | 1,123 | 24 | 21 | 20 | 23 | 52 | 48 | 51 | 48 | 24 | 30 | 29 | 28 |
| Low income | 845 | 26 | 22 | 20 | 21 | 52 | 49 | 51 | 49 | 22 | 29 | 29 | 30 |
| ELs and former ELs | 332 | 21 | 16 | 15 | 21 | 53 | 51 | 53 | 46 | 26 | 33 | 32 | 33 |
| Students w/disabilities | 467 | 8 | 10 | 10 | 13 | 46 | 44 | 43 | 43 | 46 | 46 | 46 | 44 |

*Note*. M/E = meeting or exceeding expectations; PME = partially meeting expectations; NM = not meeting expectations.

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 | 277 | 43 | 41 | 49 | 48 | 47 | 51 | 39 | 39 | 9 | 8 | 12 | 13 |
| African American/Black | 23 | 16 | 33 | 35 | 27 | 84 | 56 | 57 | 52 | 0 | 11 | 9 | 21 |
| Asian | 19 | 61 | 65 | 84 | 79 | 33 | 35 | 11 | 17 | 6 | 0 | 5 | 4 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 45 | 33 | 20 | 13 | 25 | 53 | 54 | 49 | 50 | 15 | 26 | 38 | 25 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 8 | — | 40 | — | 51 | — | 50 | — | 39 | — | 10 | — | 10 |
| Native American | 3 | — | — | — | 33 | — | — | — | 54 | — | — | — | 13 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 1 | — | — | — | 52 | — | — | — | 39 | — | — | — | 10 |
| White | 178 | 46 | 45 | 57 | 58 | 45 | 51 | 36 | 35 | 9 | 4 | 7 | 7 |
| High needs | 150 | 21 | 18 | 31 | 27 | 62 | 65 | 48 | 51 | 17 | 16 | 21 | 23 |
| Low income | 121 | 23 | 20 | 33 | 27 | 63 | 62 | 48 | 50 | 14 | 18 | 19 | 23 |
| ELs and former ELs | 33 | 5 | 6 | 15 | 14 | 59 | 60 | 33 | 46 | 36 | 34 | 52 | 40 |
| Students w/disabilities | 53 | 11 | 8 | 13 | 14 | 58 | 71 | 57 | 51 | 30 | 21 | 30 | 35 |

*Note*. M/E = meeting or exceeding expectations; PME = partially meeting expectations; NM = not meeting expectations.

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 | 650 | 49 | 41 | 40 | 42 | 37 | 42 | 41 | 38 | 14 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| African American/Black | 66 | 20 | 24 | 24 | 21 | 49 | 49 | 53 | 46 | 31 | 27 | 23 | 33 |
| Asian | 36 | 72 | 54 | 47 | 64 | 25 | 42 | 42 | 26 | 3 | 4 | 11 | 9 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 86 | 17 | 21 | 28 | 21 | 59 | 42 | 42 | 43 | 24 | 36 | 30 | 36 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 25 | 44 | 18 | 56 | 49 | 37 | 64 | 24 | 34 | 19 | 18 | 20 | 17 |
| Native American | 11 | — | — | 9 | 26 | — | — | 45 | 43 | — | — | 45 | 32 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 1 | — | — | — | 43 | — | — | — | 34 | — | — | — | 23 |
| White | 425 | 55 | 47 | 44 | 51 | 34 | 40 | 40 | 36 | 11 | 14 | 16 | 12 |
| High needs | 365 | 30 | 25 | 26 | 24 | 45 | 45 | 44 | 44 | 24 | 30 | 30 | 32 |
| Low income | 282 | 32 | 25 | 28 | 22 | 46 | 47 | 44 | 44 | 22 | 28 | 28 | 34 |
| ELs and former ELs | 96 | 22 | 14 | 17 | 17 | 46 | 43 | 46 | 41 | 33 | 43 | 38 | 42 |
| Students w/disabilities | 133 | 17 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 41 | 37 | 38 | 38 | 43 | 50 | 48 | 46 |

*Note*. M/E = meeting or exceeding expectations; PME = partially meeting expectations; NM = not meeting expectations.

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 | 255 | 53 | 53 | 56 | 49 | 37 | 38 | 35 | 40 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 11 |
| African American/Black | 19 | 31 | 44 | 32 | 28 | 69 | 32 | 53 | 53 | 0 | 24 | 16 | 19 |
| Asian | 16 | 61 | 69 | 81 | 77 | 33 | 25 | 19 | 19 | 6 | 6 | 0 | 5 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 35 | 56 | 33 | 14 | 26 | 28 | 44 | 57 | 52 | 16 | 22 | 29 | 22 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 9 | — | — | — | 53 | — | — | — | 37 | — | — | — | 10 |
| Native American | 3 | — | — | — | 38 | — | — | — | 53 | — | — | — | 10 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 1 | — | — | — | 47 | — | — | — | 45 | — | — | — | 8 |
| White | 172 | 54 | 56 | 65 | 58 | 37 | 38 | 30 | 36 | 10 | 6 | 5 | 6 |
| High needs | 131 | 30 | 27 | 34 | 28 | 50 | 52 | 49 | 52 | 20 | 20 | 17 | 20 |
| Low income | 105 | 34 | 30 | 37 | 28 | 52 | 50 | 48 | 51 | 14 | 20 | 15 | 20 |
| ELs and former ELs | 24 | 0 | 22 | 13 | 13 | 56 | 35 | 54 | 48 | 44 | 43 | 33 | 39 |
| Students w/disabilities | 46 | 14 | 11 | 17 | 18 | 52 | 60 | 48 | 52 | 34 | 29 | 35 | 31 |

*Note*. M/E = meeting or exceeding expectations; PME = partially meeting expectations; NM = not meeting expectations.

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 | 321 | 49 | 43 | 41 | 42 | 42 | 41 | 42 | 40 | 9 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| 4 | 330 | 40 | 46 | 31 | 37 | 45 | 38 | 48 | 45 | 15 | 16 | 22 | 19 |
| 5 | 321 | 44 | 42 | 38 | 38 | 45 | 44 | 49 | 46 | 11 | 15 | 13 | 16 |
| 6 | 299 | 38 | 40 | 30 | 40 | 43 | 35 | 42 | 35 | 19 | 26 | 28 | 25 |
| 7 | 320 | 35 | 36 | 34 | 36 | 48 | 48 | 41 | 42 | 17 | 16 | 25 | 22 |
| 8 | 331 | 40 | 36 | 33 | 43 | 41 | 45 | 40 | 34 | 19 | 19 | 27 | 24 |
| 3-8 | 1,922 | 41 | 40 | 35 | 39 | 44 | 42 | 44 | 40 | 15 | 18 | 22 | 21 |
| 10 | 280 | 59 | 56 | 54 | 57 | 32 | 33 | 31 | 31 | 8 | 11 | 15 | 12 |

*Note*. M/E = meeting or exceeding expectations; PME = partially meeting expectations; NM = not meeting expectations.

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 | 323 | 47 | 36 | 41 | 44 | 39 | 42 | 38 | 35 | 15 | 22 | 21 | 20 |
| 4 | 331 | 37 | 42 | 30 | 46 | 46 | 41 | 50 | 38 | 17 | 17 | 20 | 16 |
| 5 | 323 | 38 | 40 | 38 | 40 | 51 | 50 | 53 | 46 | 12 | 10 | 10 | 14 |
| 6 | 301 | 39 | 39 | 36 | 40 | 51 | 41 | 46 | 43 | 10 | 20 | 18 | 17 |
| 7 | 323 | 28 | 29 | 32 | 37 | 53 | 48 | 47 | 44 | 19 | 23 | 21 | 19 |
| 8 | 330 | 41 | 29 | 30 | 38 | 46 | 51 | 50 | 42 | 14 | 19 | 20 | 19 |
| 3-8 | 1,931 | 38 | 36 | 34 | 41 | 47 | 45 | 47 | 42 | 14 | 19 | 18 | 18 |
| 10 | 277 | 43 | 41 | 49 | 48 | 47 | 51 | 39 | 39 | 9 | 8 | 12 | 13 |

*Note*. M/E = meeting or exceeding expectations; PME = partially meeting expectations; NM = not meeting expectations.

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 | 324 | 46 | 47 | 48 | 45 | 40 | 35 | 36 | 36 | 13 | 18 | 16 | 20 |
| 8 | 326 | 52 | 35 | 33 | 39 | 34 | 48 | 46 | 41 | 15 | 18 | 21 | 20 |
| 5 and 8 | 650 | 49 | 41 | 40 | 42 | 37 | 42 | 41 | 38 | 14 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 10 | 255 | 53 | 53 | 56 | 49 | 37 | 38 | 35 | 40 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 11 |

*Note*. M/E = meeting or exceeding expectations; PME = partially meeting expectations; NM = not meeting expectations.

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 | 1,468 | 47 | 47 | 44 | 50 |
| African American/Black | 117 | 49 | 44 | 46 | 49 |
| Asian | 71 | 56 | 56 | 52 | 57 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 183 | 44 | 44 | 41 | 48 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 61 | 50 | 51 | 43 | 51 |
| Native American | 20 | — | — | 40 | 48 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 2 | — | — | — | 51 |
| White | 1,014 | 46 | 47 | 44 | 50 |
| High needs | 818 | 44 | 44 | 43 | 48 |
| Low income | 615 | 44 | 45 | 43 | 47 |
| ELs and former ELs | 216 | 45 | 46 | 45 | 50 |
| Students w/disabilities | 342 | 37 | 40 | 42 | 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 | 249 | 55 | 48 | 50 | 50 |
| African American/Black | 19 | — | 51 | — | 48 |
| Asian | 16 | — | — | — | 55 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 31 | 57 | 44 | 34 | 47 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 9 | — | — | — | 50 |
| Native American | 2 | — | — | — | 51 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 1 | — | — | — | 49 |
| White | 171 | 53 | 47 | 53 | 51 |
| High needs | 126 | 51 | 39 | 46 | 47 |
| Low income | 101 | 51 | 41 | 46 | 47 |
| ELs and former ELs | 16 | — | — | — | 48 |
| Students w/disabilities | 45 | 46 | 32 | 45 | 44 |

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

| Group | # included (2024) | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | State (2024) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| All students | 1,478 | 49 | 45 | 45 | 50 |
| African American/Black | 118 | 51 | 43 | 46 | 49 |
| Asian | 71 | 57 | 54 | 56 | 58 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 188 | 47 | 46 | 47 | 48 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 61 | 48 | 42 | 43 | 50 |
| Native American | 20 | — | — | 40 | 48 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 2 | — | — | — | 52 |
| White | 1,018 | 48 | 45 | 43 | 50 |
| High needs | 831 | 47 | 44 | 45 | 48 |
| Low income | 627 | 47 | 44 | 45 | 47 |
| ELs and former ELs | 222 | 48 | 48 | 50 | 50 |
| Students w/disabilities | 345 | 41 | 42 | 42 | 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 | 246 | 47 | 38 | 46 | 50 |
| African American/Black | 19 | — | 38 | — | 47 |
| Asian | 16 | — | — | — | 55 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 29 | 46 | 39 | 42 | 45 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 8 | — | — | — | 49 |
| Native American | 2 | — | — | — | 50 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 1 | — | — | — | 50 |
| White | 171 | 47 | 37 | 47 | 52 |
| High needs | 123 | 44 | 35 | 47 | 47 |
| Low income | 99 | 43 | 34 | 45 | 46 |
| ELs and former ELs | 16 | — | — | — | 46 |
| Students w/disabilities | 44 | 45 | 30 | 57 | 47 |

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

| Grade | # included (2024) | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | State (2024) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 3 | — | — | — | — | — |
| 4 | 296 | 48 | 51 | 45 | 50 |
| 5 | 298 | 49 | 45 | 45 | 50 |
| 6 | 273 | 46 | 48 | 41 | 50 |
| 7 | 295 | 44 | 48 | 47 | 50 |
| 8 | 306 | 47 | 42 | 41 | 50 |
| 3-8 | 1,468 | 47 | 47 | 44 | 50 |
| 10 | 249 | 55 | 48 | 50 | 50 |

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

| Grade | # included (2024) | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | State (2024) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 3 | — | — | — | — | — |
| 4 | 297 | 41 | 41 | 38 | 50 |
| 5 | 300 | 53 | 52 | 49 | 50 |
| 6 | 275 | 48 | 44 | 44 | 50 |
| 7 | 301 | 46 | 40 | 46 | 50 |
| 8 | 305 | 54 | 49 | 45 | 50 |
| 3-8 | 1,478 | 49 | 45 | 45 | 50 |
| 10 | 246 | 47 | 38 | 46 | 50 |

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

| Group | # included (2023) | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| All | 291 | 90.5 | 93.1 | 89.7 | 89.2 |
| African American/Black | 18 | 87.0 | 100.0 | 88.9 | 85.6 |
| Asian | 21 | 95.5 | 95.2 | 100.0 | 95.2 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 45 | 82.9 | 75.5 | 64.4 | 78.9 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 4 |   | 71.4 | — | 89.3 |
| Native American | 1 | — | — | — | 82.5 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — |   | — | — | 89.9 |
| White | 202 | 92.3 | 96.6 | 94.1 | 93.0 |
| High needs | 176 | 84.5 | 87.9 | 83.0 | 82.8 |
| Low income | 141 | 81.8 | 85.0 | 81.6 | 82.2 |
| English learners | 44 | 78.1 | 71.4 | 65.9 | 67.3 |
| Students w/disabilities | 57 | 78.7 | 89.5 | 80.7 | 76.4 |

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

| Group | # included (2022) | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | State (2022) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| All | 335 | 88.1 | 93.9 | 94.0 | 91.9 |
| African American/Black | 19 | 91.3 | 95.7 | 100.0 | 90.1 |
| Asian | 21 | 94.4 | 95.5 | 95.2 | 96.9 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 49 | 66.7 | 87.8 | 79.6 | 84.4 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 7 | — |  | 71.4 | 90.8 |
| Native American | 2 | — | — | — | 87.1 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 1 | — |  | — | 81.3 |
| White | 236 | 91.9 | 95.3 | 97.0 | 94.4 |
| High needs | 190 | 79.0 | 90.4 | 89.5 | 86.8 |
| Low income | 153 | 81.2 | 89.2 | 86.9 | 86.3 |
| English learners | 35 | 61.1 | 90.6 | 74.3 | 78.0 |
| Students w/disabilities | 76 | 74.3 | 84.3 | 92.1 | 81.8 |

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

| Group | # included (2023) | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| All | 1,173 | 1.3 | 1.5 | 1.8 | 2.1 |
| African American/Black | 93 | 1.3 | 0.0 | 1.1 | 2.8 |
| Asian | 74 | 1.2 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.6 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 177 | 5.2 | 4.8 | 4.5 | 4.4 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 32 | 0.0 | 3.3 | 6.3 | 1.9 |
| Native American | 7 | — | — | 14.3 | 4.1 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 3 | — | — | — | 3.9 |
| White | 787 | 0.7 | 0.9 | 1.1 | 1.1 |
| High needs | 552 | 2.8 | 2.5 | 3.3 | 3.5 |
| Low income | 427 | — | 3.1 | 3.5 | 3.8 |
| English learners | 103 | 11.7 | 7.8 | 6.8 | 8.0 |
| Students w/disabilities | 173 | 2.5 | 2.2 | 1.2 | 3.0 |

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

| Group | # included (2024) | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | State (2024) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| All | 4,691 | 0.0 | 0.4 | 0.1 | 1.4 |
| African American/Black | 460 | — | — | 0.4 | 2.1 |
| Asian | 312 | — | — | — | 0.3 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 884 | — | — | 0.0 | 1.9 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 169 | — | — | — | 1.6 |
| Native American | 73 | — | — | — | 1.8 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 6 | — | — | — | 1.9 |
| White | 2,787 | 0.0 | 0.3 | 0.1 | 1.1 |
| High needs | 2,809 | 0.0 | 0.6 | 0.2 | 1.9 |
| Low income | 2,149 | 0.0 | 0.7 | 0.3 | 2.1 |
| English learners | 748 | — | — | 0.0 | 1.4 |
| Students w/disabilities | 1,081 | 0.0 | 0.9 | 0.1 | 2.4 |

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

| Group | # Included (2024) | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | State (2024) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| All | 4,691 | 0.6 | 0.7 | 1.0 | 2.4 |
| African American/Black | 460 | — | — | 1.7 | 4.6 |
| Asian | 312 | — | — | — | 0.6 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 884 | — | — | 1.0 | 3.8 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 169 | — | — | — | 2.6 |
| Native American | 73 | — | — | — | 3.5 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 6 | — | — | — | 2.5 |
| White | 2,787 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.8 | 1.5 |
| High needs | 2,809 | 0.7 | 1.1 | 1.4 | 3.6 |
| Low income | 2,149 | 0.6 | 1.2 | 1.6 | 4.0 |
| English learners | 748 | — | — | 0.8 | 2.6 |
| Students w/disabilities | 1,081 | 0.9 | 1.4 | 1.6 | 4.5 |

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

| Group | # included (2024) | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | State (2024) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| All | 636 | 61.5 | 60.3 | 55.3 | 67.2 |
| African American/Black | 62 | 66.7 | 55.6 | 43.5 | 58.2 |
| Asian | 36 | 82.9 | 75.0 | 80.6 | 86.4 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 122 | 32.1 | 39.3 | 36.9 | 53.7 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 18 | 58.3 | 63.6 | 44.4 | 68.4 |
| Native American | 2 | — | — | — | 57.1 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 1 | — | — | — | 59.8 |
| White | 395 | 64.7 | 63.9 | 61.5 | 71.9 |
| High needs | 314 | 38.9 | 43.8 | 36.0 | 52.0 |
| Low income | 252 | 41.8 | 47.5 | 36.1 | 53.1 |
| English learners | 67 | 10.3 | 18.4 | 14.9 | 31.8 |
| Students w/disabilities | 101 | 22.1 | 27.6 | 26.7 | 38.5 |

Table E22. Accountability Results, 2024

| School | Cumulative progress toward improvement targets (%) | Percentile | Overall classification | Reason for classification |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| District | 33% | — | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Moderate progress toward targets |
| Clyde Reeves Elementary School | 63% | 74 | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Substantial progress toward targets |
| Goodyear Elementary School | 37% | 28 | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Moderate progress toward targets |
| Hurld Wyman Elementary School | 27% | 48 | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Moderate progress toward targets |
| Linscott Rumford Elementary School | 40% | 60 | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Moderate progress toward targets |
| Malcolm White Elementary | 37% | 27 | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Moderate progress toward targets |
| Mary D. Altavesta Elementary School | 59% | 60 | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Substantial progress toward targets |
| Shamrock Elementary School | 51% | 30 | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Substantial progress toward targets |
| Dr. Daniel L. Joyce Middle School | 34% | 32 | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Moderate progress toward targets |
| John F. Kennedy Middle School | 24% | 26 | Requiring assistance or intervention | Low participation rate: Students with disabilities |
| Woburn Memorial High School | 48% | 38 | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Moderate progress toward targets |

1. DESE’s District Standards and Indicators are available at <https://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/district-review/district-standards-indicators.docx>. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. For more information on the Teachstone CLASS protocol, visit <https://teachstone.com/class/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Districts with similar demographics and similar wealth are based on [Resource Allocation and District Action Reports (RADAR)](https://www.doe.mass.edu/research/radar/) (retrieved February 2025). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. The SEEM Collaborative, formerly known as the Southeastern Educational Collaborative, is a nonprofit public educational entity that serves students with disabilities in northeastern Massachusetts by providing quality-driven, affordable educational programs and services. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. CURATE: Curriculum Ratings by Teachers. See <https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate>. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Rated only for Grades 6-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Scores on the CLASS tool range from 1–7. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Massachusetts’s special education reimbursement program providing financial assistance to public school districts to offset the costs of high-cost special education services. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. 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-10)