# Northern Berkshire Regional Vocational Technical Comprehensive District Review Report April 2025

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Pedro Martinez

Commissioner

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## Executive Summary

In accordance with Massachusetts state law, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) contracted with the American Institutes for Research® (AIR®) to conduct a comprehensive review of Northern Berkshire Regional Vocational Technical (hereafter, NBRVT) school district in March and April 2025. Data collection activities associated with the review included interviews, focus groups, and document reviews and were designed to understand how districts operate in support of continuous improvement efforts. The review focused on the six standards (and related indicators) that DESE has identified as being important components of district effectiveness. The resulting report provides an in-depth look at district systems, policies, and practices and includes recommendations to promote systemic improvements and advance equitable student outcomes and experiences.

In addition, to collect data on instructional practices, two observers, who focused primarily on instruction in the classroom, visited Charles H. McCann Technical School (hereafter, McCann) during the week of March 31, 2025. The observers conducted 30 observations in a sample of classrooms across grade levels, focused primarily on literacy, English language arts (ELA), and mathematics. The Teachstone Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) protocol, developed by the Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning at the University of Virginia,[[1]](#footnote-2) guided all classroom observations in the district. These observations used the three grade-band levels of the CLASS protocols: K-3, Upper Elementary (4-5), and Secondary (6‑12).

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

NBRVT demonstrates several strengths in leadership and governance that support high-quality teaching and learning. The district benefits from a strong and effective working relationship between the school committee and the superintendent, characterized by clear communication and shared commitment to the district’s mission. This effective partnership is reinforced by the superintendent’s practice of providing committee members with pre-meeting packages, ensuring transparency and preparedness. In addition, the district’s leadership team, which includes the superintendent, principal, assistant principal, and director of student services, works collaboratively to oversee both district and school operations, meeting daily to focus on resource allocation, staffing, program implementation, and operations. The district’s strategic plans and improvement plans are well-aligned with its mission, addressing achievement gaps and including representation from various stakeholders. The district’s long-term leadership stability has fostered strong working relationships with elected officials, district representatives, and school leaders, enabling sustained focus on the district’s mission. The inclusion of teacher and student feedback in school-level decision-making processes further underscores the district’s commitment to collaboration and shared responsibility.

There are several areas in which NBRVT can improve its leadership and governance practices to further enhance stakeholder engagement and effective monitoring of strategic initiatives. The district lacks systems that promote effective stakeholder engagement in school committee business, such as posting meeting dates on the public calendar and maintaining a repository of past meeting minutes and agendas. In addition, the absence of a student representative on the school committee limits student input in decision-making. The district also faces challenges in effectively monitoring progress toward improvement goals, with insufficient opportunities for classroom observations and instructional walkthroughs to measure progress. In addition, the strategic plan does not define specific performance indicators, hindering the ability to evaluate the successful completion of goals. Communicating progress toward district priorities to stakeholders and the broader community is another area for growth, as the district lacks comprehensive strategies to share successes and progress with staff, students, families, and the public. Finally, although the district engages teachers and students in decision-making, there are barriers to incorporating family feedback, such as work schedule conflicts and geographic dispersion.

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

NBRVT has effectively established instructional priorities that center on the needs and experiences of all students. The district has a shared instructional vision to foster continuity between vocational and academic classes, promoting equal access to education and employment skills for all students, including Low Income students and Students with Disabilities. The district's commitment to maintaining high-quality, industry-level standards in vocational classes through continuous equipment upgrades and alignment with industry needs is particularly noteworthy. The district’s emphasis on teacher-created, standards-aligned curricula in subjects where high-quality instructional materials are limited or unavailable is also a strength, ensuring that instructional materials are relevant and reflective of teacher priorities. Additionally, the district effectively leverages the Student Support Team (SST) to match identified students to Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions through a structured and collaborative process, and it strongly supports Students with Disabilities through effective co-teaching instruction in full inclusion classes.

Despite these strengths, NBRVT has several areas for growth related to curriculum and instruction. There is a need for more strategic planning and clarity in implementing instructional priorities to ensure consistency across the school. The district lacks a clear and comprehensive instructional vision, which has resulted in inconsistencies in grading practices and instructional methods. Teachers have expressed concerns about subjectivity and inconsistency in grading practices, indicating gaps in the clear implementation of the instructional vision. The absence of a dedicated instructional leadership team with diverse stakeholder representation to develop, monitor, and enhance the instructional vision is another area for growth. In addition, the district’s reliance on internal evaluations for curricular decisions, without using external resources such as CURATE,[[2]](#footnote-3) EdReports, and WIDA Prime, limits the ability to comprehensively assess the quality of curricula. Furthermore, the district lacks specific evidence-based Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions to support student learning effectively. Enhancing student-centered practices in academic classrooms and promoting higher-order thinking, meaningful feedback, and student-centered dialogue are also areas for growth to improve instructional quality and student engagement.

### [Assessment](#_Assessment)

The NBRVT school district exhibits several strengths in the realm of data collection, use, and sharing. Teachers at McCann are dedicated to designing assessments that allow all students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills, using various formats such as project-based assessments. This inclusive approach is beneficial for all students, including Students with Disabilities, as it provides opportunities for these students to showcase their learning in meaningful ways. In addition, the district has implemented effective systems for sharing data with students and families, using platforms such as Aspen and Otus. This transparency enables students and families to be well informed about academic and behavioral performance, which is further supported by the district’s commitment to engaging students in data reviews and goal setting, promoting student agency.

However, there are notable areas for growth in the NBRVT district’s data and assessment systems. Implementing aligned and effective assessments is necessary to provide more consistent guidance and support for teachers. Furthermore, there is no shared understanding of how data use connects to the district’s strategic priorities, and teachers are not consistently provided with time and resources to access and analyze student data. Incorporating universal screeners and formal academic data review structures, as well as enhancing professional development on data usage, are critical areas for improvement. Additionally, the district lacks a formal assessment plan and does not administer universal screeners or benchmarks to collect comprehensive data on students' academic and nonacademic performance. This absence of a cohesive assessment strategy limits the district's ability to identify schoolwide trends effectively. Lastly, resolving barriers to the consistent implementation of standards-based grading (SBG) is essential to ensure equitable and comprehensive grading practices across the district.

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

NBRVT demonstrates notable strengths in its human resources and professional development practices. The district has the necessary staff and systems to fulfill all human resources functions effectively, supported by a clear division of responsibilities and accessible electronic systems for tracking personnel records and employment information. The district also excels in fostering a positive working environment through effective teacher retention strategies, including competitive salaries, strong rapport and trust between staff and administration, and a collaborative culture that values teacher autonomy. Additionally, NBRVT provides teachers with specialized professional development that aligns with their career goals and industry certifications, and all new educators receive individualized support through a robust mentor program, ensuring a smooth onboarding process and ongoing professional growth. The district's commitment to maintaining high standards and providing opportunities for staff to advance in their careers further contributes to a supportive and motivating work environment.

Several areas for growth were identified in relation to NBRVT’s human resources and professional development practices. The lack of formal policy manuals for hiring, recruitment, and onboarding processes presents a risk, particularly in the event of leadership changes. Codifying these processes would ensure continuity and clarity for future administrators and staff. In addition, although the district’s evaluation system effectively identifies areas of strength for teachers, it falls short in consistently articulating areas for improvement, which is crucial for fostering continuous growth. The district also lacks a system for providing teachers with actionable instructional feedback from informal observations, limiting opportunities for ongoing instructional improvement. Furthermore, though the district offers a range of professional development opportunities, it does not systematically review multiple data sources to determine appropriate offerings or monitor their effectiveness. The district’s limited collaborative planning time for academic teachers, due to scheduling constraints, also impedes regular, structured opportunities for peer collaboration and curriculum development.

### [Student Support](#_Student_Support)

NBRVT excels in creating a safe and supportive school climate and culture. The district sustains consistent advisory programming, integrates social-emotional learning, and leverages its vocational programs to foster a developmentally supportive learning environment. Weekly advisory periods and strong relationships with vocational instructors help students feel seen, supported, and empowered, leading to a cohesive support system. Additionally, the district creates meaningful opportunities for students to exercise voice and leadership at various levels, further enhancing their sense of belonging and engagement. NBRVT also offers comprehensive and standards-aligned health and physical education, enriched by daily opportunities for physical engagement through its vocational programming, promoting overall student well-being. Furthermore, the district maintains strong, multifaceted relationships with community organizations and industry partners, providing services and enriching experiences to students and families. The district's MTSS guidebook provides clear guidance for implementing academic, social-emotional, and behavioral supports, providing opportunities for all students to receive appropriate interventions.  
  
Despite these strengths in NBRVT's student support systems, one area for growth was identified. Chronic absenteeism remains a significant challenge, with a student chronic absenteeism rate of 28.8 percent. Developing and implementing comprehensive, systemwide strategies to improve attendance and student engagement, emphasizing supportive attendance engagement strategies, is an area for growth.

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

NBRVT displays notable strengths in financial and asset management, ensuring the efficient operation and sustainability of its resources. The district is supported by a qualified and adequately staffed team that effectively manages daily operations, annual planning, and financial oversight. Using systems such as BudgetSense and ERP Pro, the district aligns with Massachusetts’s accounting standards, ensuring compliance through annual audits. The district’s collaborative budgeting process includes school leaders, which promotes transparency and shared responsibility. The district is well prepared for unexpected financial events, maintaining reserved funds and a flexible budget adjustment approach. In addition, the district’s proactive planning for potential loss of grant funding underscores its commitment to student support and sustainability. The district’s documented history of building maintenance ensures continuity and consistency of facilities management. Furthermore, the district’s efficient system for managing and tracking capital assets, involving students in inventory management, provides valuable learning experiences while maintaining system integrity. The comprehensive technological support for students and staff, coupled with the strategic procurement of essential services and materials, further highlights the district’s commitment to operational excellence.

One key area for growth was identified for NBRVT’s financial and asset management practices to further enhance its operational efficiency. The district currently lacks explicit documentation to codify operational procedures and fiscal management responsibilities. Although the system operates effectively because of the clear division of responsibilities and strong internal communication, the absence of formal documentation poses a risk in the event of leadership transitions. Developing and maintaining explicit documentation would ensure continuity and provide a clear framework for future administrators and staff.

## Northern Berkshire Regional Vocational Technical: District Review Overview

### Purpose

Conducted under Chapter 15, Section 55A of the Massachusetts General Laws, comprehensive district reviews support local school districts in establishing or strengthening a cycle of continuous improvement. Reviews carefully consider the effectiveness of systemwide functions, referring to the six district standards used by DESE: Leadership and Governance, Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment, Human Resources and Professional Development, Student Support, and Financial and Asset Management.[[3]](#footnote-4) Reviews provide the state, district leaders, and the public with an in-depth look into the systems, structures, and practices of a district and how they affect student experiences and opportunities. District reviews provide information and recommendations to support districts in implementing systemic improvements and advancing equitable student outcomes and experiences.

### Methodology

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

Following the site visit, all interview and focus group data are transcribed using automated transcription. The transcripts are then coded using both deterministic coding, based on the protocol questions, and natural language processing models. Team members analyze the coded data to develop a set of objective findings. The team lead and multiple quality assurance reviewers, including DESE staff, then review the initial draft of the report. DESE staff provide recommendations for the district, based on the findings of strengths and areas for growth identified, before AIR finalizes and submits the report to DESE. DESE previews and then sends the report to the district for factual review before publishing it on the DESE website. DESE also provides additional resources to support implementation of DESE’s District Standards and Indicators, summarized in Appendix C.

### Site Visit

The site visit to NBRVT was conducted during the week of March 31, 2025. The site visit included 14 hours of interviews and focus groups with approximately 35 stakeholders, including school committee members, district administrators, school staff, students, and teachers’ association representatives. The review team conducted one teacher focus group with six high school teachers as well as one focus group with eight high school students. Although a family and caregiver focus group was twice scheduled with participants signed up to attend, no family members participated in either session. Data collection also included distributing a questionnaire to district leaders, as well as to the principal, to gather information about district and school processes and operations; respondents in NBRVT completed both the district questionnaire and the principal questionnaire.

The site team also conducted 30 observations of classroom instruction in the school. Certified team members conducted instructional observations using the Teachstone CLASS protocol.

### District Profile

NBRVT is located in the city of North Adams in the northwest corner of the state and borders the cities of Williamstown and Florida. This one-school district comprises McCann Technical School and is attended by students from nine sending towns: Adams, Cheshire, Clarksburg, Florida, Lanesborough, Monroe, North Adams, Savoy, and Williamstown.

The superintendent of NBRVT is James Brosnan, who was appointed in 1995. Governance of the district is through a 16-member school committee, with each member being elected for a two-year term.

In the 2024-2025 school year, the district served 514 students. Since the 2020-2021 school year, total enrollment has increased by eight 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 |
| Charles H. McCann Technical School | High | 9-12 | 514 |

Figure 1 shows the distribution of NBRVT 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 NBRVT’s students 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 NBRVT than for the state in Grade 10 (ELA, mathematics, science).

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

NBRVT’s High Needs students, who comprise 50.6 percent of the district, met or exceeded expectations on the 2024 MCAS assessments at rates 0 percentage points to 4 percentage points higher than High Needs students across the state (see Figure 4).

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

NBRVT’s 2023 four-year cohort graduation rate (98.4 percent) was 9.2 percentage points higher than the state rate (89.2 percent). NBRVT’s dropout rate in 2023 for each student group with reportable data was lower than the state rate and lower than 1 percent, except for Black or African American students (six students).

Of students who graduated from the district in 2021-2022, 32.7 percent went on to attend college or university by March 2023, which is almost half the state rate of 62.4 percent. In addition, 36.6 percent of 2022-2023 graduates planned on entering the workforce or an apprenticeship after high school, which is similar to other vocational schools, compared with 14.7 percent of students across the state.

In the 2024 statewide accountability results, NBRVT was classified as not requiring assistance or intervention and made substantial progress toward its targets.

In fiscal year 2023, the total in-district per-pupil expenditure for NBRVT was $25,612, which is $348 less than the average in-district per-pupil expenditure in districts with similar demographics ($25,960) and $481 less than the average in-district per-pupil expenditure in districts of similar wealth ($26,093).[[4]](#footnote-5) In-district per-pupil expenditures for NBRVT were $4,356 more than the average state spending per pupil ($21,256). Actual net school spending was slightly greater than what is required by the Chapter 70 state education aid program, as shown in Table D5 in Appendix D.

### Classroom Observations

Two observers visited NBRVT during the week of March 31, 2025. Observers conducted 30 observations in a sample of classrooms (20 academic and 10 vocational) across one school. Observations were conducted in Grades 9-12 and focused primarily on literacy, ELA, and mathematics instruction.

The Secondary protocol includes 11 classroom dimensions related to three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support, in addition to Student Engagement. The three domains observed are broadly defined as follows:

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

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

In NBRVT, ratings are provided across the 9-12 grade band and the overarching domains, as well as at individual dimensions within those domains. Figure 5 shows average ratings by domain. The full report of findings from observations conducted at NBRVT is in Appendix B, and summary results are in Tables 17, 18, and 19 in this appendix.

Figure 5. NBRVT CLASS Domain Averages Across Grades 9-12

Overall, in the 9-12 grade band, instructional observations provide evidence of consistently strong classroom organization and student engagement as well as mixed evidence of consistently strong emotional support and rigorous instructional support.

## Leadership and Governance

This section examines the extent to which school committees, district leaders, school leaders, and advisory council members work collaboratively and strategically to promote high-quality teaching and learning that (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 NBRVT.

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) | * NBRVT’s school committee and superintendent share a strong and effective working relationship. | * Establishing systems that promote effective stakeholder engagement in school committee business |
| [Strategic Planning, Implementation, and Monitoring](#_Strategic_Planning,_Implementation,) | * NBRVT creates strategic plans and improvement plans that are aligned, reflect the district’s mission, address achievement gaps, and include representation from various stakeholders. | * Effectively monitoring progress toward improvement priorities * Communicating progress to stakeholders and the community |
| [District Culture](#_District_Culture) | * NBRVT’s leaders maintain and leverage strong working relationships with elected officials, district officials, and school leaders. * NBRVT implements several strategies to engage teachers and students in school and district decision-making. | * Collecting and using family feedback to inform district decision-making |

### Leadership and Governing Structures

Superintendent James Brosnan oversees NBRVT, a one-school district, with the support of McCann’s principal, assistant principal, and director of student services. In addition, a school committee comprised of 16 elected members from nine participating towns (Adams, Cheshire, Clarksburg, Florida, Lanesborough, Monroe, North Adams, Savoy, and Williamstown) guides the district.

The NBRVT school committee sets educational goals and policy, helps to make budget decisions in support of the district’s priorities, evaluates the superintendent, and engages with McCann’s participating communities, according to a review of the district’s website and interviews with school committee members. Committee members highlighted their main responsibility as establishing policies that benefit the student body. For example, one of the district’s major improvement priorities is a shift to standards-based grading (SBG), which the school committee approved to address inequity under the previous grading policy. Committee members also reported that they revise existing policies at least annually to adapt to the district’s needs, and a review of school committee meeting minutes showed that the committee approved updates to McCann’s cell phone policy and alcohol/drug use policy at the start of the 2024-2025 school year. Regarding their other responsibilities, committee members described conducting formal evaluations of the superintendent every three years and reviewing budget progress during monthly committee meetings. Members of the school committee also emphasized how they work in partnership to garner support for McCann from each participating community, with one member describing how they “all represent different towns . . . but each one of us is really representing all nine communities.” Despite this, a review of the district’s website shows that the school committee does not encourage community engagement by posting meeting dates on the district’s public calendar. In addition, although the district does post agendas for upcoming meetings, they do not maintain a repository of publicly available past school committee meeting minutes and agendas. Also, NBRVT’s school committee does not currently include a student representative to provide student input during committee meetings. NBRVT’s lack of systems that promote effective student and family engagement is an area for growth for the district.

Although there are some barriers to effective stakeholder engagement, the school committee maintains a strong working relationship with the district. The superintendent described this relationship as favorable,noting that the district and school committee have a shared mission and clear division of responsibilities**.** As he described, “We’re really focused on the mission of the school and how it meets the economic needs of the community. . . . We stay focused on that mission and don’t run down the political controversies, budget fights, none of that.”School committee members also highlighted the communication systems between the school committee and the superintendent as a factor in their successful working relationship. They described that, in advance of each school committee meeting, the superintendent sends the committee members a pre-meeting package—comprising the previous meeting’s minutes, upcoming meeting agenda, and any associated documentation—for them to review and ask questions about if necessary. As one committee member stated of this practice, “There are no surprises with [the superintendent]. . . . By the time you get to the meeting, if you’ve had questions, they’re answered. . . . He’s always ahead of the curve.” The effective working relationship between the school committee and superintendent is a strength for NBRVT.

Because the district comprises only one school, the same leadership team oversees both district and school operations and includes the superintendent, principal, assistant principal, and director of student services. According to district leaders, the team meets at least daily, and these meetings focus primarily on resource allocation, staffing, program implementation, and operations.Moreover, the district leadership team further outlined its responsibilities in revising course programming to align with the district’s mission of graduating technically skilled and academically prepared students. One district leader described how the team adjusts academic and vocational programming using MCAS data, college placement data, and feedback from advisory committees (see the Strategic Planning, Implementation, and Monitoring section for more information) to stay up to date with the needs of each industry. As another leader stated, “We’re sending out kids who are employable tomorrow, not 10 years ago. We get a lot of feedback from our industry partners [that helps us understand] ‘Where are the trends? What are the latest skills our kids need to develop?’” District leaders provided examples of both academic and vocational adjustments made in response to industry feedback, including bringing in additional Project Lead The Way courses and purchasing a new alignment machine for the automotive shop.

In addition to discussing the district leadership team’s ability to make appropriate programmatic changes, school-level focus group respondents indicated that they agree that the level of autonomy that the superintendent grants McCann’s leaders enhances their effectiveness in implementing school initiatives aligned with the district’s mission and strategic goals. School leaders described a close working relationship with the superintendent, noting that the superintendent grants them autonomy in making school-level decisions. For example, they reported that the superintendent empowers them to make independent staffing and scheduling decisions in line with students’ educational needs. The superintendent also supports McCann staff by modeling strategies that foster inclusive and collaborative learning environments, which is one of the strategic priorities of the school (see the Strategic Planning, Implementation, and Monitoring section and District Culture section for more information). A school committee member explained that the superintendent “empowers people to be a stakeholder. . . . He’s a leader that brings everybody in.” Similarly, school leaders described the various distributed leadership teams and committees that are active at McCann, which include a data team, student support team (SST), subject area teams, and a school council.

NBRVT supports the convening of required school and parent advisory councils, including McCann’s school council and a Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC). District leaders stated that the SEPAC aims to convene twice per year but meets at a minimum once per year. McCann’s school council comprises the principal, teachers, students, and caregivers and meets on an as-needed basis. One of the main responsibilities of McCann’s school council is providing feedback on the school improvement plan that the principal develops using the council’s input.

### Strategic Planning, Implementation, and Monitoring

According to the district’s website, the mission of NBRVT is “to graduate technically skilled, academically prepared, and socially responsible individuals ready to meet the demands of the 21st century.” Focus group responses indicate that this mission is widely shared across the district, as the superintendent, school committee members, and school staff all discussed completing their work with the district’s mission in mind. McCann’s mission and vision statements, educational philosophy, and goals are posted throughout the school, and staff referenced these materials during focus group discussions.

In support of their mission, NBRVT has developed a Student Opportunity Act (SOA) plan, district strategic plan, and school improvement plan to guide their work. The three-year SOA plan identifies Students with Disabilities and Low Income students as groups that have been targeted for accelerated improvement as well as outlines strategies that the district will take to address disparities in learning outcomes for these groups. The district strategic plan outlines more broadly NBRVT’s priorities to improve outcomes for all students, which include specific educational (e.g., curriculum, instruction, assessment), environmental (e.g., school climate, safety), and operational (e.g., recruitment, facilities, compliance) goals. The strategic plan also outlines strategies to achieve those goals, personnel responsible for leading the strategies, timeframes for completion, and cost estimates, but the plan does not state what outcome measures will be used to determine successful completion of each goal. In focus groups, district leaders reported that they determine the strategic priorities for the district by reviewing feedback from general and program-specific advisory committees, DESE and New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) data, and student and teacher input. McCann’s annual school improvement plan expands on select goals from the district strategic plan that are a focus for the school and district during the 2024-2025 school year. These include (a) continuing implementation of standards-based grading (SBG) and citizenship scores, (b) reviewing and developing the advisory program, (c) reducing achievement gaps, (d) improving school culture, and (e) participating in a community service project. Each broad goal is supported by “district action strategies” that specify lead staff members, completion dates, action steps, and resources needed to complete each strategy, and proof of completion. In focus groups, school leaders described that the school improvement plan is developed in collaboration between McCann’s school council, which includes teacher, student, and caregiver representatives, and the principal. School leaders specifically noted that many of the strategies regarding school climate and culture were developed using student and teacher input. NBRVT creates strategic plans and improvement plans that are aligned, reflect the district’s mission, address achievement gaps, and include representation from various stakeholders, which is a strength of the district.

Discussions with school and district leaders revealed that NBRVT staff implementexisting improvement plans and adjust resource allocations as needed. As noted in the Leadership and Governing Structures section, district leaders consult with advisory committees to engage in continuous improvement cycles and reallocate resources to accelerate progress toward district goals. In addition to assembling a general advisory committee, McCann convenes program advisory committees for each of their 10 vocational programs. According to the district website, these committees meet at least twice per year, once in the fall and once in the spring, and consist of “professionals, parents, and students in each trade area, as well as educators from higher institutes of learning dedicated to continually updating each technical area to current industry standards.” In focus groups, district leaders described that these meetings are used to adapt programming and resources as needed to adequately prepare students for their chosen industry, and they provided examples of adjusting course offerings and purchasing new equipment to accomplish this goal.

Despite the multiple opportunities to discuss district and school plans, school and district staff highlighted barriers to effectively monitoring progress toward district goals, which is an area for growth for NBRVT. Specifically, leaders stated that they do not have sufficient opportunities to conduct classroom observations and instructional walkthroughs to measure progress toward improvement goals, which they labeled as “problematic” and self-identified as an area for improvement for next year. In addition, whereas the school improvement plan identifies key outcome measures for each strategy, the district strategic plan does not define any performance indicators.

District staff identified some methods to communicate progress, including posting the annual DESE School Report Card to their website for stakeholders to view and providing updates on plan implementation during monthly school committee meetings. A review of the school website and school committee meeting minutes supports this assertion, but district leaders did not describe methods to share progress toward improvement goals with staff, students, and families. Similarly, school committee members identified a need for the district to better promote its successes and progress toward its mission with stakeholders and the broader community. For example, they described that the participating communities may hold a negative perception of McCann as just an “auto mechanic school,” whereas they stated that McCann sent more students to four-year colleges than some neighboring high schools. One member shared that the school does not have a method to disseminate data on students’ post-graduation plans to address this misconception, adding that “There’s still that old-school thinking of, ‘Oh, you’re going to McCann,’ unfortunately.” These reports suggest that improving McCann’s public image by communicating progress and successes to stakeholders and the broader community is an area for growth for the district.

### District Culture

A major influence on NBRVT’s current culture is the stability of its leadership team. The superintendent has been in his role for 30 years, and the principal has been in his role for 13 years. In addition, district leaders reported that the majority of school committee members have held their seats “long term.” Because of this leadership stability, NBRVT has been able to sustain district initiatives and maintain a consistent focus on its mission. As the superintendent noted of the district’s leadership stability, “There’s a continuity. There’s respect within it. We’re heightened as to what our mission is.”

NBRVT’s leadership stability has also enabled district leaders to form strong working relationships with elected officials, district representatives, and school leaders. As highlighted in the Leadership and Governing Structures section, partnership between the school committee and the superintendent is highly effective, and it is supported by a shared commitment to the district’s mission and effective communication. In focus group discussions, district and school leaders said that these partnership qualities extend to the district’s relationships with teachers’ association representatives and municipal officials from each sending community. For example, teachers’ association representatives characterized their relationship with district leaders as “very good,” noting that administrators maintain an open-door policy and actively solicit input from union representatives on decisions that will impact teachers. In addition, the superintendent upholds similar communication strategies with municipal officials and the school committee. School committee members shared that during the budget approval process, the superintendent sends out meeting packages to each town manager prior to their in-person budget presentation, which allows municipal officials to review materials, ask questions, and strengthen their understanding of budget requests. NBRVT’s leaders maintain and leverage strong working relationships with elected officials, district officials, and school leaders, which is a strength of the district.

The school committee and district leaders also foster collaboration and shared decision-making with most, but not all, stakeholder groups. NBRVT implements several strategies to engage teachers and students in school and district decision-making, which is a strength of the district. In focus group discussions, district representatives stated that NBRVT’s actions toward their strategic initiatives are “a groundswell, not a dictate,” and emphasized the role that teacher and student feedback plays in district decision-making. For example, members of the teachers’ association described how McCann administrators hold conversations with union representatives to understand teachers’ perspectives on district issues. They also noted that school leaders use surveys to collect feedback from teachers on wide-scale changes, such as adjustments to the grading or discipline policies. In one example, school leaders explained that, at the recommendation of a special education teacher, they instituted a “citizenship bootcamp” advisory period to orient students to skills included in the rubric for the new behavior management system. School leaders described several ways that they have included student input, in addition to teacher feedback, in district decision-making. Student representatives serve on program advisory committees and the school council. In support of McCann’s goal to improve school climate, McCann leaders have also established the Swarm committee—a group of students whose goal is to introduce activities that will increase school pride and engagement. As one student described it, it is a “whole committee of students that see what things could be changed or added to McCann to make it a better place.” According to district leaders, NBRVT also created a three-year rotating survey to gather feedback from teachers, students, and families in response to results from their Tiered Focus Monitoring review. The district has already administered the survey to students and teachers, but they have not yet collected family feedback. District leaders also identified barriers to engaging families in decision-making, including conflicts with work schedules and the geographic dispersion of the district’s sending communities. Although the district has numerous systems to engage teachers and students, they do not currently have the same strategies in place to incorporate family feedback in district decision-making, which is an area for growth.

### DESE Recommendations

* *The school committee should increase student, family, and community engagement by posting meeting dates to the district calendar, maintaining an online repository of past meeting agendas and minutes, and including a student representative on the committee.*
* *The district should include performance indicators in its strategic plan and, as part of that progress monitoring, work with school leaders to implement regular instructional observations.*
* *The district should develop a system for sharing updates on progress toward its strategic goals and student achievement with its broader community.*
* *The district should systematically create opportunities for families to provide feedback and participate in shared decision-making at the district level.*

## Curriculum and Instruction

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

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

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

| Indicator | Strengths | Areas for growth |
| --- | --- | --- |
| [Instructional Leadership](#_Instructional_Leadership) | * The district develops instructional priorities that center on the needs and experiences of all students, such as skill-based standards and course alignment with state standards. | * Developing and implementing a known instructional vision * Establishing an instructional leadership team (or its equivalent) and implementing systems to monitor and continuously improve upon the implementation of the instructional vision |
| [Curriculum and Instructional Materials](#_Curriculum_and_Instructional) | * NBRVT aligns vocational classes with current industry requirements and continuously upgrades equipment and facilities to maintain high-quality, industry-level standards. * NBRVT implements a process that results in teacher-created, standards-aligned curricula, in subjects (and units) in which HQIM are limited or unavailable. | * Using resources, such as CURATE, EdReports, NGSS Design Badge, and WIDA Prime, to evaluate the quality of curricula in its review process * Adopting research-supported, high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) to ensure the effectiveness and rigor of its educational materials |
| [Equitable Practices and Access](#_Equitable_Practices_and) | * The district leverages the student support team (SST) to match identified students to Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions through a structured and collaborative process. * The district demonstrates a strong commitment to recognizing and building on students’ strengths and engaging all students, including Students with Disabilities, in hands-on learning. | * Enhancing and implementing specific evidence-based Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions to support student learning |
| [Effective Instruction and Curricular Implementation](#_Effective_Instruction_and) | * The district fosters an environment conducive to learning by minimizing disruptions and promoting respectful interactions through proactive classroom management practices. | * Increasing the use of student-centered instructional strategies in academic courses that promote higher order thinking, real-world connections, meaningful feedback, and student-centered dialogue |

### Instructional Leadership

The academic curriculum coordinator is responsible for curriculum and instruction at NBRVT and is supported by the building leadership team that includes department heads, teacher representatives, the principal, and the director of student services. The organizational responsibilities of the academic curriculum coordinator involve collaboration with various departments to maintain and update curriculum maps, implement SBG, and provide professional development. The principal and director of student services review curriculum documents and support instructional practices, whereas department heads and teachers are responsible for maintaining curriculum maps and implementing expected instructional practices outlined in the district’s mission statement. According to the superintendent, school leadership staff, and teachers, the district develops instructional priorities that center on the needs and experiences of all students, such as skill-based standards and course alignment with state standards. The establishment of these priorities is a strength of the district and fosters continuity between vocational and academic classes. The superintendent emphasized the school district’s mission “to educate and train the workforce,” providing all students equal access to education and employment skills, including Low Income students and Students with Disabilities. He stated, “No matter what you enter into, we will make sure that you are employable and have a set of skills for your lifetime.” The superintendent also highlighted the importance of aligning lessons with state standards and the continuous efforts to update and improve curriculum maps. Similarly, school leadership noted the instructional focus on SBG and competency-based education, aiming to provide a balanced and supportive learning environment for all students. Teachers have been actively involved in professional development to design and implement SBG, creating skill-based standards based on state curriculum frameworks. They work within their departments to review and adjust these standards periodically, to align with industry best practices and to meet the learning needs of their students.

However, although teachers acknowledged the ongoing work on SBG and project-based learning, they also expressed concerns about subjectivity and inconsistency in grading practices across the school, indicating that the instructional priorities are not clearly implemented. In addition, a review of focus group data revealed that the shift to SBG, along with the implementation of other instructional priorities, did not significantly alter instructional practices. Specifically, the shift to SBG fell short in advancing engaging and high-quality teaching methods such as project-based learning, collaborative group work, and experiential learning in academic classes (see the Effective Instruction and Curricular Implementation section), due to a lack of a clear and comprehensive instructional vision. Thus, developing and implementing a known instructional vision is an area for growth for the district.

The superintendent and the academic curriculum coordinator reported several systems in place to implement, monitor, and continuously improve instructional priorities. These include the curricular review process, strategic planning for vocational classroom industry alignment, and frequent teacher collaboration. The curricular review process at McCann follows a structured four-year cycle in which each grade level undergoes a comprehensive review once every four years. During the designated year for a specific grade, curriculum documentation, including reporting standards, learning targets, and curriculum maps, is updated in collaboration with department heads, teachers, and administrators. Whereas each grade level is formally reviewed once in the cycle, updates to standards and learning targets also occur annually on an as-needed basis. These annual updates are typically driven by teacher feedback and often occur during designated professional development days. Strategic planning for vocational classes includes input from business and industry leaders through program advisory committees, which provide feedback and guidance on improvement plans. In addition, teacher collaboration supports regular feedback and revisions of curricular materials, fostering conversations regarding best practices and implementation.

The district does not have an instructional leadership team (ILT) in place. This lack of ILT also means that authority over instructional decision-making is unclear and systems for monitoring and continuously improving upon the implementation of the district’s instructional priorities are inadequate. Although some teachers reported occasional informal walkthroughs, written feedback and formal reviews were often minimal or entirely absent (see the Human Resources and Professional Development section). In an effort to improve the observation and feedback cycle, building leadership plans to use administrative assistants to aid in scheduling and tracking walkthroughs, among other tasks. Still, the principal noted that the administrative team is “pretty sparse” and has struggled to schedule regular walkthroughs and observations. Taken together, the lack of an ILT and systems to monitor implementation of the instructional vision is an area for growth.

### Curriculum and Instructional Materials

District staff reported primarily using internal processes to evaluate curricular materials. A district leader explained that the curricular review operates on a four-year cycle, focusing on one grade level each year. This involves updating documentation, implementing SBG, and revising learning targets on the basis of teacher feedback. Stakeholders, including department heads, teachers, the principal, and the director of student services, are involved in reviewing the relevant documents to ensure coherence and alignment with standards.

The process begins with the creation of curriculum maps and learning targets based on the Massachusetts frameworks. Each department is responsible for reviewing and updating its respective documents. Academic departments make sure that all subject-specific courses are aligned and coherent. The principal and director of student services then review the documents to provide additional perspectives. Furthermore, throughout the year, feedback is gathered from professional development sessions and teacher input. This feedback is used to make necessary revisions to the curriculum, as the year goes on. This ensures that all instructional materials are relevant, reflect teacher priorities, and fulfill instructional demands to meet the diverse needs of students.

Similarly, the vocational departments focus on updating industry certifications and specific brands and systems used in shop areas. NBRVT aligns vocational classes with current industry requirements and continuously upgrades equipment and facilities to maintain high-quality, industry-level standards. This commitment is a notable strength of the district. One vocational teacher explained,

So we’re trying to get kids on co-op, and we take feedback from our advisory committee, which is community members in the trade, and we work our lesson plans off of what employers are looking for, and it varies from year to year, really.

This approach ensures that students are learning skills that are directly applicable and valuable in the workforce. The superintendent reported making general upgrades to equipment and technology yearly and noted the creation of a new HVAC program at the school with brand new industry-level equipment.

All curricula, across all grades and subjects, currently used at NBRVT are teacher-created and therefore not rated on CURATE or EdReports. All curricula used for 11th grade are currently under review in this year’s curricular review cycle, meaning that those curricular materials will have updated standards and documentation in the following academic year. The district’s curricular review cycle updates prior iterations of grade-level curricula; hence, this process did not note additional curricula in identification, selection, or implementation phases for the next academic school year. District staff added that the district provides formal districtwide professional learning opportunities to support updated curricular implementation for teachers. For example, the district has organized professional development days during which teachers meet with their departments to discuss what has been working and what needs adjustment as part of the review cycle. The district's strong emphasis on teacher collaboration during the curricular review process enables leaders to effectively select and implement instructional materials that are vertically and horizontally aligned across instructional tiers within departments. Furthermore, it is notable that the district gathers feedback from educators regarding its curricular decisions; however, it is unclear whether the district uses student feedback to impact these choices. In addition, the district does not use resources such as CURATE, EdReports, NGSS Design Badge, and WIDA Prime to evaluate the quality of curricula in its review process, which is an area for growth for the district.

Consequently, none of the core subject curricula are rated by CURATE or EdReports, making it difficult to ascertain whether they meet high-quality standards. The district could benefit from adopting research-supported, standardized high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) to ensure the effectiveness and rigor of its educational materials, which is an area for growth. Conversely, NBRVT implements a process that results in teacher-created, standards-aligned curricula, in subjects (and units) in which HQIM are limited or unavailable; this, in turn, is a strength of the district. Examples of these instructional materials include courses such as U.S. History, World History, Environmental Science, Biology, and a wide range of vocational and technical classes. Teachers also noted having developed specialized science units, such as bio forensics and genetic engineering, filling gaps where no suitable high-quality materials exist.

### Equitable Practices and Access

District and school leaders reported several processes and structures to support academic interventions for students at NBRVT. McCann and district leaders reported that Tier 2 academic interventions during the school day include targeted supports in ELA and mathematics. These supports involve classroom accommodations, extra help through before-school or afterschool sessions with teachers, or participating in “Study Swarm” (instructor tutoring). Students also may be assigned a student success coach or receive support from one of five Title I paraprofessionals, depending on the level of need. Although district and school leaders described structures and supports for students, the district lacks specific evidence-based Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions to support student learning, which is an area for growth.

McCann has established several schoolwide processes to promote implementation of the student supports that district leaders described. These include ongoing collaboration and communication among teachers, school counselors, students, and families to identify and address academic concerns. When additional support is needed, students may be referred to the SST, which coordinates the development of targeted intervention plans. The SST process may lead to adjustments in classroom instruction, increased monitoring, or referrals for additional services. These systems are designed so that students receive timely and appropriate support and that interventions align with their individual needs.

As noted above, the district effectively leverages the SST to match identified students to Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions through a structured and collaborative process, which is a strength. Teachers refer students to the SST after exhausting classroom strategies and consulting with parents and school counselors. The SST, composed of the director of student services, a school counselor, two special educators, an academic teacher, and a vocational teacher, collects comprehensive data on the student’s academic performance and attendance and then reviews the referral to discuss the need for interventions. If it is determined that the student needs additional support, a team member is assigned as the liaison to oversee the intervention plan, which includes the student’s input and is shared with relevant teachers. The intervention plan is implemented during a four- to six-week cycle, with regular check-ins to assess progress. At the end of the cycle, the team reevaluates the effectiveness of the interventions and decides whether to continue, modify, or escalate the support.

Despite the success of the SST, teachers reported a lack of sufficient time allocated to review student data, which impacts their ability to identify students for SST referral. Teachers mentioned relying on personal preparation time and occasional professional development sessions for student data analysis. In addition, when asked about the types of student data used for SST referrals, teachers noted solely using subject-specific assessments and grades and not relying on a broader range of academic data sources such as benchmark assessments, portfolio assessments, and formative assessments (see the Assessment sections). The primary reliance on classroom-specific grades and observations may not provide a comprehensive view of students’ needs, potentially leading to some students not being identified for academic interventions.

Similarly, teachers agree that current academic interventions are crucial but emphasized the need for more structured support systems to address gaps in foundational skills such as mathematics and reading. One teacher reported, “It’s not just special education students. All students right now . . . they don’t know fractions. They can’t read a ruler. . . . Even in science, simple bar graphs, they can’t figure out . . . so there’s some gaps there.” Students also recognized the availability of supports, such as afterschool homework help, morning sessions, and assistance from teachers and peers. However, they reported often feeling overwhelmed by their academics. One student noted, “Everything’s like fast-paced and compact. Since we need to do everything in half the time, so a high school diploma, two years. So, it’s constant learning. You’re going to get overwhelmed.” Students also mentioned that teachers are generally responsive and willing to provide extra help when approached, but the informal nature of these supports makes it difficult to consistently access the help they need. One student shared,

I mean, there’s always a little afterschool homework help thing. But, I mean, I don’t feel like you don’t really have much time to actually stay after a class, though, to actually catch up, though. They’ll let you come in in the mornings, too, sometimes if you need extra help. . . . So mostly before and after school time or just sort of like asking teachers or other students for help.

Although the district offers several structures to support interventions, the feedback from both students and teachers regarding gaps in grade-level instruction and feelings of being overwhelmed suggests that not all students are effectively accessing or benefiting from these supports.

Regarding support for historically underserved students, the district provides Students with Disabilities with services through Tier 1 instruction, actively monitors the quality of instructional materials and content delivered as part of specially designed instruction, and continuously evaluates the effectiveness of its special education programs. All academic and vocational classrooms operate under a full inclusion model, guaranteeing that Students with Disabilities learn alongside their peers, with additional pull-out and push-in supports to further aid these students. Relatedly, NBRVT is strongly committed to supporting Students with Disabilities through effective coteaching instruction in full inclusion classes, which is a strength of the district. This approach has been implemented in multiple subject areas, demonstrating the district’s dedication to inclusive education and proactive efforts to enhance the effectiveness of coteaching. This includes providing comprehensive training for teachers, facilitated by a consultant who conducts observations and offers actionable feedback. Similarly, district leadership noted that the district employs five paraprofessionals who provide support across all classes to all students. They also may work with students one on one as part of previously discussed SST interventions. District staff described the role of paraprofessionals:

They are support in all the classes. And so that’s really important. I really look at it as a Tier 1 support because they’re not there for a specific student. We don’t have students currently that need a para in their IEP. They’re funded through our Title I program, so we’re full school, so that they’re helping all students make progress with their curriculum.

Furthermore, the district has a very small English Learner student population (less than 1 percent of students), but the English Learner students in NBRVT receive support from a dedicated English Learner coordinator who consults with experts from neighboring districts. In the rare case of dually identified students (English Learner students with disabilities), discussions are held with the student, family, and teachers to determine the best way to implement supports during the school day. Many English Learner and IEP supports are embedded in the daily programming for these students.

Notably, the review of district curriculum and instructional documents, particularly the DCAP’s guidance on differentiation and the SBG document, highlights the district’s commitment to recognizing and building on all students’ existing strengths in both academic and vocational performance. This guidance and these practices are a strength of the district. The DCAP’s guidance for curricular differentiation includes adjusting the learning environment through strategies such as small groups, preferential seating, and quiet locations to enhance focus and engagement. The DCAP also recommends presenting information through visuals, repetition, and models to cater to diverse learning preferences; incorporating timing accommodations, such as extended time for assignments and breaking tasks into smaller parts, to encourage students to work at their own pace; using response accommodations, including graphic organizers, alternative writing utensils, and technology, to allow students to demonstrate their understanding in various ways; developing flexible grouping to provide targeted support based on individual strengths; and integrating life skills, social interaction skills, multicultural education, and self-advocacy into the curriculum to prepare students for success. Most notably, the DCAP brings project-based and experiential learning into academic classrooms, aligning with the preferred learning commonly found in vocational education. Similarly, SBG has encouraged the use of varied assessment methods, such as project-based assessments, which may engage students more effectively. In addition, the flexibility of SBG allows teachers to personalize learning experiences, adjusting instruction on the basis of individual student progress. This approach moves away from traditional grading systems and fosters holistic development by encouraging critical thinking, problem solving, and practical application of knowledge.

These differentiated instructional methods are especially impactful with Students with Disabilities, who, according to teachers, thrive when given opportunities to engage in hands-on, experiential learning. One teacher shared,

Our special needs students . . . they’re strong, yeah. Most of our special needs kids are ADHD, hyperactive, they can’t sit at desks, they have a hard time focusing in the academic side, but when they get to shop, they’re moving, they’re building.

The superintendent echoed this sentiment, emphasizing how the vocational program empowers students to demonstrate their strengths in dynamic and meaningful ways. He further elaborated on this commitment to equity by explaining that the district makes sure that all students, regardless of gender, disability status, race, or ethnicity, have equal access to all vocational programs. District leadership also emphasized the value of vocational education in offering practical, hands-on learning experiences that tap into the learning preferences of Students with Disabilities, often leading to greater engagement and success, according to district leaders. Likewise, they noted that these programs help students develop a range of skills that are essential for their future careers and highlight these merits for Students with Disabilities, as it provides them with the tools and opportunities to thrive in environments that play to their strengths.

A review of the district’s course catalog indicates that the district provides all students with equitable access to a diverse range of rigorous coursework across most grades. This includes content areas not subject to statewide testing; foundational courses from Project Lead The Way, such as Introduction to Engineering Design and Principles of Engineering; and advanced courses, including AP Computer Science Principles, AP English Literature and Composition, AP Calculus AB, AP Statistics, and AP Physics 1. Students have the opportunity to enroll in advanced or foundational courses starting in the 9th grade. In addition, the district offers a variety of electives, including music, health, computer science, foreign languages (Spanish and French), business education, digital media, robotics, and creative writing. The district also provides comprehensive career and technical education courses such as Advanced Manufacturing Technology, Automotive Technology, Cosmetology, Culinary Arts, Electrical Technology, Health Assisting, Information Technology (IT), Metal Fabrication, Plumbing, and Welding.

### Effective Instruction and Curricular Implementation

Teachers reported that McCann fosters a safe and supportive learning environment in which students can engage in academic and vocational content. Weekly advisory meetings allow teachers to build strong relationships with small groups of students, whereas informal feedback mechanisms—such as end-of-year surveys and daily conversations—help teachers adjust instruction to better meet student needs (see Safe and Supportive School Climate and Culture section).

Students agree that the school fosters safe and supportive learning environments, highlighting a general sense of safety due to the school’s small size and faculty presence. In addition, although behavioral expectations are widely understood, students noted that consequences are inconsistently enforced. Data from CLASS observations provide additional insight into these dynamics. Student perspectives align with classroom observation data, which showed high scores in the Classroom Organization domain across academic and vocational settings, indicating clear expectations and effective behavior management. In addition, consistently high scores in the Negative Climate domain reflect the absence of observed negativity or disrespect in all classrooms. Together, these conditions foster effective classroom management and an environment conducive to learning by minimizing disruptions and promoting respectful interactions—allowing more time and focus to be dedicated to instruction and engagement, which is a strength of the district.

Classroom observation scores in the middle range for Emotional Support dimensions—Positive Climate, Teacher Sensitivity, and Regard for Student Perspectives (RSP)—also generally support teacher and student perceptions of a safe and supportive learning environment. Middle to high scores in Positive Climate and Teacher Sensitivity suggest that most classrooms reflect warm teacher-student relationships and attentiveness to student needs. However, occasional signs of student discomfort and limited teacher-student interaction indicate that not all students feel equally supported. Notably, RSP scores were higher in vocational classrooms (average 4.5) compared with academic classrooms (average 2.6). In vocational classrooms, middle to high RSP scores reflect greater teacher flexibility, with teachers following student interests and creating opportunities for increased student responsibility and participation in classroom activities. In contrast, academic classrooms showed low to middle RSP scores, reflecting more rigid instructional approaches with limited student autonomy, minimal responsiveness to student interests, and few opportunities for student voice. These observations also indicate that lessons often fail to connect to students’ lives outside of school, limiting their ability to see their identities, experiences, and cultures as valued in the classroom. This distinction is further reflected in student engagement scores, with vocational classrooms averaging 5.6 and academic classrooms averaging 4.8, highlighting slightly stronger student involvement in vocational settings. In addition, students reported that academic classes regularly consist of individual work, such as note taking or worksheets, and lessons are not consistently connected to real-world experiences.

According to district leaders, the expectation is that students do the majority of the thinking during each lesson, including critical thinking about the connections between academic content and real-world contexts. However, classroom observation scores in the low to middle range for dimensions in the Instructional Support domain counter these expectations. In academic classrooms, the average score for Instructional Support was 2.7, with particularly low ratings in Analysis and Inquiry (1.5), where students were rarely engaged in higher order thinking or problem solving; Instructional Dialogue (1.9), where classroom talk was dominated by the teacher with few opportunities for extended, content-rich discussion; and Quality of Feedback (2.3), where feedback was often limited to correctness rather than expanding student understanding. Similarly, vocational classrooms averaged 3.2 in this domain, with Instructional Dialogue (2.1) and Analysis and Inquiry (2.5) also scoring low, reflecting similar challenges in promoting student-led discussion and critical thinking. Taken together, these findings suggest a need to increase the use of student-centered instructional strategies, including those that promote higher order thinking, real-world connections, meaningful feedback, and student-centered dialogue, which is an area for growth.

### DESE Recommendations

* *The district should develop and widely disseminate a clear instructional vision that guides instructional strategies across all content areas and grade levels.*
* *Once the instructional vision is in place, the district should assemble an instructional leadership team, or its equivalent, and empower this team to develop systems for consistently monitoring and continuously improving upon the implementation of the instructional vision.*
* *The district should modify its existing curricular review practices to incorporate resources including CURATE, EdReports, NGSS Design Badge, and WIDA Prime, when evaluating and selecting instructional materials.*
* *The district should adopt research-backed high-quality instructional materials in each of its core academic courses.*
* *The district should adopt evidence-based Tier 2 and 3 academic interventions to support students in accessing the general curriculum.*
* *The district should partner with its educators teaching academic courses to incorporate student-centered instructional strategies and increase opportunities for challenging tasks throughout each lesson, such as asking questions that prompt higher-order thinking, highlighting real-world connections, providing meaningful feedback, and facilitating extended content-related dialogue.*

## Assessment

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

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

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

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Indicator | Strengths | Areas for growth |
| [Data Collection](#_Data_Collection) | * Teachers at McCann intentionally design assessments that allow all students opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. | * Implementing aligned and effective assessments |
| [Data Use and Culture](#_Data_Use_and) |  | * Developing a shared understanding of how data use is connected to the district’s strategic priorities * Providing teachers with time and resources to access and analyze student data * Incorporating universal screeners and formal, academic data review structures to identify students in need of tiered interventions |
| [Sharing Data](#_Sharing_Data) | * NBRVT implements effective systems to share available data with students and families. * The district engages students in data reviews and goal setting in a way that promotes student agency. | * Resolving barriers to implementing standards-based grading consistently. |

### Data Collection

NBRVT does not have a districtwide assessment plan and does not administer universal screeners or benchmarks to collect data on students’ academic and nonacademic performance. Instead, the district collects students’ SBG scores or course grades (currently for Grades 9-10 and Grades 11-12, respectively, as the district is in the process of implementing SBG for all students, starting with the class of 2027) as academic performance measures. The district also reviews MCAS scores, which they use to inform strategic planning, and SAT scores, although a staff member stated that “our SAT scores go nowhere” beyond calculating schoolwide averages. For nonacademic data, the district collects attendance data, citizenship scores (a four-level behavioral measure that reflects students’ achievement in each of five identified criteria [respect, effort, accountability, communication, and honor]; see the Safe and Supportive School Climate and Culture section for more information on citizenship scores), discipline data, and observational data from teachers. Staff reported that NBRVT’s approach to data collection is “individualized” and qualitative; they described that the focus of many SST reviews is on reports from parents and observations from and conversations with teachers rather than on quantitative performance data. Staff suggested that this approach is successful in forming a cohesive understanding of individual student achievement and needs, but may be less effective in identifying schoolwide trends and challenges. As one staff member shared, “It’s like we’re helping individual students, but it’s not all coming together in one cohesive unit.”

As the district does not have a formal assessment plan, teachers are responsible for creating or selecting assessment materials for their department. According to McCann staff, the district grants autonomy to teachers in selecting their assessments, with the district’s only guidance being that the assessments are standards-based. Staff shared that they use past MCAS questions, AP exam questions, and competency checklists as resources in designing assessments. However, staff have suggested that they may need more guidance from the district when creating assessments. As one school leader explained,

McCann has prided itself on teacher autonomy, but we’re getting to a point now where even the faculty are saying, “We might need a little bit more universal guidance.” . . . We’ve got kids trying to keep up with, “This teacher’s using this [platform], and this teacher’s using that.” It may be time to start directing some of that stuff.

Similarly, teachers suggested that they may not have adequate support in designing assessments. One staff member stated, “How we’re using assessments in the classroom, what’s an effective assessment versus what’s not, I think personally that’s an area that we may have let drop by the wayside a little bit in recent years.” These reports suggest that implementing aligned and effective assessments is an area for growth for the district.

Despite limited guidance from the district about designing assessments, staff in focus groups discussed a commitment to alternating their modes of assessment to allow all students a chance to demonstrate their knowledge. Both academic and vocational teachers reported that they have embraced project-based assessments, in addition to traditional tests, because they give students, particularly Students with Disabilities, unique opportunities to show what they have learned. One staff member explained that, since the shift to SBG,

teachers have gotten a little bit more creative. . . . They’re doing project-based assessment. One thing we pushed for in the special education department and at IEP meetings is different ways to assess students, because they freeze for these paper-based tests. And I think we have a better idea of the skills that our students have now based on that.

In focus groups, other staff agreed that teachers provide various formats for students to show their knowledge. According to one staff member, they “hit all the different types of students, because some students are really great with tests, and some are great hands-on.” Teachers intentionally design assessments that allow all students opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and skills, which is a strength of the district.

### Data Use and Culture

Discussions with district and school staff reveal that district, school, and classroom-level leaders do not have a shared understanding of how data collection and use are connected to the district’s broader instructional vision and strategic priorities, which is an area for growth. In focus groups, school leaders reported that most data review occurs at the school-leader level, and there are no defined expectations for teacher-level data use. McCann has a data team comprising faculty who receive a stipend for participation, and this team reviews school-level data and individual classroom data upon teacher request. However, McCann staff stated that this team is “underutilized,” noting that although some teachers ask the data team to summarize their data for “individual classroom purposes,” many teachers choose not to use the team at all, and there is no districtwide expectation for how teachers use the data team. In addition, in the district and school improvement plans, NBRVT rarely identifies data sources that will be used to monitor progress toward improvement goals, indicating that the district has not yet positioned data collection and use as a key factor in evaluating improvement efforts.

Although NBRVT does not regularly use data to monitor progress toward improvement goals, the district does review various data sources to inform strategic priorities. According to the superintendent, NBRVT collects student data to inform district planning, decision-making, and policies. The data team and school administrators are primarily responsible for completing this analysis, and they generally include attendance, MCAS, student and faculty surveys, graduate follow-up information, and performance on Perkins Core Indicators in their reviews. According to NBRVT leaders, the team commonly disaggregates data by race or ethnicity, gender, low-income status, disability status, and High Needs status to inform improvement priorities. For example, district leaders reviewed disaggregated attendance data and determined that revising McCann’s attendance and tardy policies will be a priority for the next school year.

At the school level, conversations with school leaders and teachers suggested that the district does not consistently provideeducators with access to relevant data and the resources necessary to understand and analyze the data. Rather, McCann’s data team can analyze and summarize data for teachers, but staff reported that few teachers utilize this resource, and they receive little support in analyzing data themselves. The school does not provide collaborative planning time for teachers to review data with their peers, and teachers reported that professional development regarding data usage to inform professional practice is an area of need. Teachers stated that when they engage in data analysis, it is during their individual preparation time, and they noted that their reviews focus on their own classroom academic data, not students’ behavioral or social-emotional learning data. McCann provides teachers with access to student data through Aspen and Otus, but teachers reported difficulties with using these platforms. As one educator noted, “Specific to the standards-based grading, tracking that data has been a challenge. Being able to navigate the software . . . it’s been a challenge.” District leaders reported that they have offered training in using these platforms in response to staff concerns, but these reports from McCann staff indicate that providing teachers with time and resources to access and analyze student data is an ongoing area for growth for the district.

According to district leaders, district staff regularly use attendance data, SST reports, and IEP data to evaluate students’ social-emotional and behavioral needs, and they review grades quarterly to evaluate students’ academic needs. All data are disaggregated by specific categories, including race or ethnicity, gender, low-income status, and disability status. In focus groups, school staff described both formal and informal data review and monitoring processes.. With regard to nonacademic data, McCann staff described relying on informal, qualitative data to identify students’ social-emotional and behavioral needs. One staff member explained this process:

We don’t use a screening tool. . . . It’s a lot more individualized. A teacher will call and say [the student is] sleeping, or “This seems like something’s going on,” and relaying that message and kind of relaying some of those supports for individual students. Or a parent [will] report, “This is kind of what’s going on with a student at home.” And then [student support staff] do a nice job of notifying the teachers, of painting that picture for them and then also outlining some supports that we can use for students. So very individualized, how we approach that.

The school then implements a formal procedure to monitor students’ progress and adjust interventions as necessary through the SST process (see the Multitiered Systems of Support section for more information). According to school staff, McCann’s SST reviews teacher-collected data on each student’s recommended interventions and academic performance in four-week cycles. They then make recommendations to continue the current supports or introduce new supports as a result of these reviews and in consultation with the student’s teachers. With regard to academic data, teachers complete analyses of their classroom data independently or through the data team, but the district has not set expectations for how often these reviews should occur, nor have they established structures that facilitate these reviews, such as instructional leadership team meetings or collaborative planning time. Moreover, school staff did not describe using data reviews to inform instructional practice. Overall, the district uses a qualitative individual monitoring process to identify students in need of tiered supports, but incorporating universal screeners and formal, academic data review structures to support this process is an area for growth.

### Sharing Data

As noted in the Strategic Planning, Implementation, and Monitoring section, one of McCann’s ongoing strategic priorities is implementing a schoolwide SBG system. As of the 2023-2024 school year, McCann began introducing SBG with each incoming freshman class; currently, Grades 9 and 10 are implementing SBG, and Grades 11 and 12 are implementing a traditional grading system. District leaders described that one of the reasons for implementing SBG is to shift to a more equitable competency-based framework, in which students’ behavior does not factor into their academic performance scores. Thus, McCann’s new grading system consists of an SBG score[—](https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&&p=4e109cc10637349d397423392a5317d47543e0fa2adee533b2d16a6e4df63415JmltdHM9MTc0Njc0ODgwMA&ptn=3&ver=2&hsh=4&fclid=349da73d-a87b-6e84-0ec0-b281a95b6fd0&psq=em+dash&u=a1aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cubWVycmlhbS13ZWJzdGVyLmNvbS9ncmFtbWFyL2VtLWRhc2gtZW4tZGFzaC1ob3ctdG8tdXNl&ntb=1)a four-level academic performance measure given for each learning target identified for each course[—](https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&&p=4e109cc10637349d397423392a5317d47543e0fa2adee533b2d16a6e4df63415JmltdHM9MTc0Njc0ODgwMA&ptn=3&ver=2&hsh=4&fclid=349da73d-a87b-6e84-0ec0-b281a95b6fd0&psq=em+dash&u=a1aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cubWVycmlhbS13ZWJzdGVyLmNvbS9ncmFtbWFyL2VtLWRhc2gtZW4tZGFzaC1ob3ctdG8tdXNl&ntb=1)and a citizenship score[—](https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&&p=4e109cc10637349d397423392a5317d47543e0fa2adee533b2d16a6e4df63415JmltdHM9MTc0Njc0ODgwMA&ptn=3&ver=2&hsh=4&fclid=349da73d-a87b-6e84-0ec0-b281a95b6fd0&psq=em+dash&u=a1aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cubWVycmlhbS13ZWJzdGVyLmNvbS9ncmFtbWFyL2VtLWRhc2gtZW4tZGFzaC1ob3ctdG8tdXNl&ntb=1)a four-level behavioral measure that reflects students’ achievement in each of five identified criteria (respect, effort, accountability, communication, and honor; see the Safe and Supportive School Climate and Culture section for more information on citizenship scores).

Discussions in focus groups revealed that although most McCann staff agree with the rationale behind establishing SBG, the district does not currently implement the SBG system in a way that ensures consistent and comprehensive grading across courses, which is an area for growth for NBRVT. School leaders noted that the SBG system is “a work in progress” and stated that much of educators’ professional development time has been dedicated to grade norming. However, teachers disagreed, stating that not all staff have had the same opportunities to review rubrics and calibrate their scoring with peers, which leads to a system that they view as “subjective” and “very inconsistent.” As one teacher explained, “It’s the teacher’s perception. ‘Well, you seem to know most of the material; I guess you’re proficient.’ We’ve taken out how to accurately measure. . . . It’s not equitable. It’s a guessing game for how the teachers are going to grade.” Teachers suggested that having time to review standards-based rubrics with their departmental peers may alleviate these concerns, but they noted that they have not yet had opportunities to do so. In addition to experiencing these barriers to consistency in grading practices, teachers expressed that the SBG system does not communicate comprehensive information about students’ performance. Currently, SBG reports display only a student’s four-level score for each learning target with no supplemental information about performance. Consequently, school staff described that they are currently in the process of creating a form for teachers to provide additional grading information to student support staff. For example, if a student receives a score of “limited evidence” or “no evidence,” teachers can use this form to note whether the grade was a matter of “work completion versus comprehension and whether [the student] has more opportunities to demonstrate that skill.” However, as the system is currently implemented, staff, students, and families do not have immediate access to this supplemental information. Taken together, these reports indicate that although the SBG system was established to eliminate inequity in grading practices, challenges with calibration and completeness of data prevent it from fulfilling its intended purpose. As one teacher summarized of McCann staff’s perception of the SBG system, “We all understand the idea behind it, but [the implementation] has been very challenging.”

Despite NBRVT’s barriers to implementing the new grading system, the district does communicate clear expectations regarding how and when school staff should share available data with students and family members. NBRVT primarily uses Aspen and Otus to share data with students and families, including grades on assignments, overall course grades, assessment scores, and citizenship scores. Student focus group participants reported that they have easy access to their grades and can review missing assignments. Families also receive access to their student’s Naviance account, where they can view college and career planning activities. The district provides students and families with support in navigating these platforms, including user guides posted to the district website and training sessions for specific platforms. The district has a clear timeline to formally share student progress; students who still participate in a traditional grading system receive mid-quarter progress reports and end-of-quarter report cards, and students participating in SBG receive quarterly progress reports. The district also provides quarterly progress reports to families of Students with Disabilities that reflect the student’s progress toward their IEP goals. In addition to using these formal reports, school staff described communicating with family members frequently through the Remind app, email, and in-person conferences. Staff also noted that students and families have access to the district’s data-sharing platforms throughout the school year, and family members will often contact school staff regarding any concerns with students’ performance.One staff member described, “[Parents] call us and say, ‘What’s going on in math class? I saw that my student is missing three assignments. Can you contact that teacher for me?’ That happens daily. There’s just a lot of connection with the families.” NBRVT implements effective systems to share available data with students and families, which is a strength of the district.

Through these data-sharing systems, NBRVT also engages students in data reviews and goal-setting in ways that promote student agency, another strength of the district. Both staff and students stated that teachers hold individual conferences with students to review their performance. They described that these discussions happen with advisors during weekly advisory meetings and with teachers prior to course selection time. During these meetings, students and staff review academic and behavioral performance data and discuss steps that students can take to improve their achievement. Students also described that teachers contact them over email to discuss their individual performance. In addition, a school leader described an expectation that, under the SBG system, teachers share standards with students ahead of time, such that they are informed: “Here’s a roadmap. . . . Here’s the definition of proficiency. This is what you’re shooting for,” which enables students to set goals for their own learning. These processes enable students to take an active role in their own education, review their achievement, and set personal goals for their performance.

In focus groups, McCann staff described a commitment to maintaining students’ data privacy on the platforms they use to share data with students and families. According to district leaders, there are dedicated staff members responsible for reviewing and monitoring these digital platforms that collect, store, and share student data to ensure ongoing compliance with student data privacy laws and regulations. A school leader described that McCann staff “go to the *n*th degree” to protect students’ data privacy. For example, 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 also maintains a detailed three-year technology policy that is accessible on the district website.

### DESE Recommendations

* *The district should offer professional learning opportunities to teachers that focus on identifying and implementing standards-aligned assessments that accurately measure students’ skills and content knowledge.*
* *The district should begin building a culture of data use by identifying clear progress measures for each of its strategic priorities and providing regular updates to staff and the community.*
* *The district should provide structured opportunities for staff to review data with their peers and should continue offering trainings to support teachers in navigating the district’s data platforms and effectively analyzing student data to inform instructional strategies.*
* *The district should develop a systematic process, which includes universal screeners and ongoing progress monitoring, to inform students’ access to tiered interventions.*
* *The district should continue to refine its expectations around standards-based grading and develop shared rubrics and/or additional guidance to support teachers in assigning accurate and meaningful grades.*

## 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, as well as establishes a culture that fosters collaboration, retention, recognition, and advancement.

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

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

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Indicator | Strengths | Areas for growth |
| [Human Resources Infrastructure, Policies, and Practices](#_Human_Resources_Infrastructure,) |  | * Codifying current human resources practices |
| [Staffing](#_Staffing) | * The district highlights areas of strength for teachers through the evaluation process. * McCann implements effective strategies for teacher retention. * NBRVT effectively balances teacher autonomy, collaboration, and sense of belonging, which promotes a positive and respectful working environment. | * Establishing formal manuals for hiring, recruitment, and onboarding processes * Articulating areas for improvement for all staff to promote continuous growth * Completing all required components in teacher evaluations |
| [Professional Learning](#_Professional_Learning) | * The district facilitates teachers’ participation in specialized professional development that aligns with their career goals, professional practice needs, and industry certifications. * The district provides all educators who are new to McCann with individualized support and access to trained mentors through the mentor program. | * Conducting informal observations and providing teachers with actionable instructional feedback * Conducting systematic data collection on teachers’ professional development needs * Providing teachers with greater opportunities to collaborate |

### Human Resources Infrastructure, Policies, and Practices

NBRVT does not have a formal human resources office; rather, district staff—including the superintendent, executive assistant to the superintendent, principal, assistant principal, director of student services, and payroll and benefits manager—divide responsibility for human resources tasks. According to district leaders, NBRVT has sufficient staff to maintain employee records, control positions, post vacancies, and track employee time and attendance. They noted specifically that because of the relatively small size of the district, with only 80 total employees, managing these responsibilities among district leaders has “been something that we can easily regulate. We haven’t had any difficulties doing it.” In addition to a clear division of responsibilities, NBRVT’s human resources work is supported by effective electronic systems to track personnel records and employment information, such as employee pay and benefits, and these electronic systems are easily accessible to the district’s employees.

While the district has human resources staff and systems in place, evidence suggests that NBRVT's policies, procedures, and expectations are not consistently clear or easily accessible to all district staff. For example, district leaders reported having clear internal processes in place for the district to verify educator licensure and respond to benefit inquiries; however, in the district’s online repository of district policies, there is no employee manual or handbook that outlines processes and expectations for district employees. Staff indicated, though, that because NBRVT is a small district with strong communication systems, the lack of formal and accessible policies and expectations has not resulted in challenges for employees. For example, teachers reported that if they have any questions related to salary, benefits, or leave, they can reach out to the McCann principal, who will address their concern directly or refer them to the appropriate staff member. Moreover, union representatives and district leaders reported that for as long as they have held their roles, there have been no formal grievances filed or instances of staff misconduct that have warranted formal action. They attributed this to the strong communication between school and district administrators, members of the teachers’ association, and McCann staff, through which they are able to resolve conflicts and concerns before they escalate. One teacher described, “There’s a clear chain to how we handle things, which is why we tend not to have those types of situations. We can usually resolve them fairly quickly.” Similarly, district leaders described a collaborative approach to problem-solving, wherein leaders and staff members directly discuss any concerns. These reports from NBRVT’s long-tenured leaders suggest that the district’s lack of formalized human resources policies does not currently result in confusion or unclear expectations for staff. However, in the event of leadership transition, codifying human resources practices can support future administrators and staff in continuing the current effective human resources practices, and is an area for growth for the district.

### Staffing

According to district leaders, NBRVT has effective processes in place to recruit, hire, and onboard new staff, despite a lack of formalized policies. The principal and superintendent determine the need for staff and, as noted in the Human Resources Infrastructure, Policies, and Practices section, the district posts vacancies on SchoolSpring, Indeed, and local online job boards to reach both academic and vocational teachers. District leaders also described notifying all current staff of job openings via email, as McCann staff, especially vocational teachers, may be able to refer contacts to open roles. As one leader stated, “Everybody in the organization knows, ‘Here are the positions,’ so they are part of our recruiters.” McCann staff also described that the school’s reputation among educators in the community reduces the district’s need to actively recruit for open positions. One staff member explained, “We are known in the county as being a school that teachers want to teach at. . . . When there’s openings here, it spreads around the county pretty quick.” When hiring for open roles, district leaders further explained that they do not have an official hiring manual,but because the same individuals have divided responsibility for hiring in the district for more than 15 years, the process and division of responsibilities are clear. District staff described responsibilities for the hiring process as follows: the executive assistant to the superintendent compiles all applications and verifies candidate licensure; the principal, assistant principal, and director of student services conduct interviews and recommend a candidate to the superintendent for hire; and the superintendent conducts a final interview and makes an official offer for the role. District leaders stated that they also include additional staff in the process as appropriate; for example, the director of facilities participates in the interview process when hiring for a custodial role. Staff involved in the hiring process described it as smooth and collaborative, noting that they rarely disagree about hiring decisions. One staff member explained that “97 percent of the time, [the interviewers] go and say, ‘This is the one.’” After filling a vacant position, the superintendentonboards the new hire, including completing paperwork and orienting them to their salary and benefits information. All educators who are new to NBRVT must also complete a two-year mentor program, regardless of their experience level. A McCann staff member described the importance of the mentor program as part of the onboarding process: “We assign every teacher that’s new to the building [a mentor], whether they’re novice or not. They may know teaching, but they don’t know our building, our culture.” A staff member further explained that one of the aims of the program is to communicate to new hires “the philosophy of how we want to educate students here at McCann.” Although the district currently implements consistent and effective practices to complete recruitment, hiring, and onboarding processes, establishing formal manuals for these processes is an area for growth and may promote continuity in the event of leadership changes.

NBRVT promotes a culture of high expectations for its educators through the district’s educator evaluation system. District leaders described NBRVT’s approach to educator evaluation by highlighting how the district uses DESE’s teacher evaluation rubric and how teachers develop goals that align with the school and district’s improvement initiatives. According to one district leader, “Teachers are moving themselves forward with what the school’s trying to move forward at the same time.” McCann teachers added that they receive feedback from formal evaluations, noting that there is “usually a pretty expansive explanation” for their rating and that they have opportunities to debrief their evaluations with their evaluators in person. However, school leaders reported that informal observations do not occur frequently, and actionable feedback to drive instructional improvement is an area in which they would like to improve.

District records suggest that teacher evaluations are consistently completed using Vector Solutions. AIR used simple random sampling to select a sample of 10 teachers due for summative evaluations for the 2023-2024 school year. The majority of teachers (70 percent) selected for review had a summative evaluation available for review, complete and not omitting required components, such as a rating for each standard or an overall rating. More than half (six) of the ten evaluation documents reviewed included a student learning SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely) goal and a professional practice SMART goal. Of those teachers who had SMART goals available for review, all the teachers’ progress toward their student learning and professional goals was evaluated. More than half (six) of the evaluations reviewed 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. The majority of summative evaluations (seven out of ten) included feedback for each standard and overall feedback related to the teacher’s overall rating. Whereas seven evaluations included feedback naming strengths or practices that the teacher should continue, none of the evaluations included feedback indicating areas for improvement.

District records suggest that administrator evaluations are also completed using Vector Solutions. Of the four administrative district staff who were due for a summative evaluation for the 2023-2024 school year, all evaluations were available for review. Of those four evaluations available for review, all were complete with performance ratings and assessment of progress toward goals. All evaluations included student learning and professional practice SMART goals and multiple sources of evidence to assess performance on summative evaluation standards. All four evaluations included feedback for each standard, which included comments with specific, actionable feedback naming each administrator’s strengths; however, none of the evaluations identified areas for improvement for the administrative district staff.

Taken together, the review of teacher and administrator evaluations identified that the strength of the district is in highlighting areas of strength through the evaluation process for teachers. On the other hand, this evidence also demonstrates that an area for growth for the district is consistently articulating areas for improvement for all staff to foster continuous growth. Finally, given that only 70 percent of teacher evaluations reviewed included all required components, completing all required components in teacher evaluations is also an area for growth.

Consistent with the district’s administrator retention, McCann also implements effective strategies for teacher retention, which is a strength of the district. Teachers reported strong rapport and trust between staff and the administration, sufficient opportunities for professional development, and fair compensation as factors in teacher retention and longevity. According to DESE staffing data from 2024-2025, McCann retained 98 percent of their teachers, which is higher than the state average of 83.4 percent. Since 2008-2009, the first year for which data are available, McCann’s teacher retention rate has been consistently above the state average. School staff identified several factors that contribute to high retention rates, including competitive salaries. DESE staffing data from 2023-2024 show that NBRVT’s average teacher salary ($109,233[[5]](#footnote-6)) is greater than both the state average ($91,014) and the average for neighboring districts (e.g., Central Berkshire: $86,371; Hoosac Valley Regional: $71,349; North Adams: $76,435), though the superintendent did flag that staffing requirements differ between vocational schools and comprehensive schools. Vocational teachers also reported a perception that NBRVT adequately compensates them for their industry experience, regardless of prior teaching experience.

McCann staff also noted that the school’s collaborative culture and positive working environments contribute to staff retention. Across focus groups, staff described the autonomy that district leaders grant teachers to make decisions in their classrooms. One vocational teacher explained, “I don’t have someone overseeing me telling me how to teach something that I have expertise in and was given a lot of responsibility to do prior to becoming a teacher,” and a district leader echoed that they try to provide teachers with “as much autonomy in their individual teaching styles as we can,” while still aligning overall curricula. Generally, teachers reported a perception that school and district leaders trust them to manage their classes and are available for support if desired. Teachers also described supportive relationships with families and peers that promote a positive working environment and staff retention. As one teacher explained,

We have really good longevity. It’s a great place to be because of the administration here, because of the collegiality between all of us. Our families are super supportive of us as well. So I think when we’re looking at what is a great system in place, it’s the camaraderie around us and the support that we all provide each other that really allows us to do all of these amazing things.

Although most teachers stated that they feel well supported by the district, some noted a need for additional proactive support to prevent burnout. One teacher described,

We are all so invested in this place, but I fear the burnout and I fear that things are falling through the cracks or are only getting done halfway. Everybody does such a huge and such a good job, but there is some more support that could be provided to those people that are doing those really good jobs.

District leaders described that they currently support educators through collaborative relationships and open-door policies, with one noting that “there’s no setting appointments to come see [the administrators]. It’s ‘Door’s open—come in.’” In addition, district leaders described promoting a sense of belonging for staff through the school’s Swarm initiative (see the Safe and Supportive School Climate and Culture section for more information), which aims to establish a shared identity for McCann staff and students. Overall, NBRVT effectively balances teacher autonomy, collaboration, and sense of belonging, which promotes a positive and respectful working environment, a strength of the district.

### Professional Learning

NBRVT provides teachers with feedback on their performance primarily through the formal evaluation system. District leaders use the DESE rubric for these evaluations, and teachers reported receiving detailed feedback about their progress toward their goals. Educators also noted that formal observations are nonpunitive. One educator stated, “It is repeated regularly that if you don’t hit your goals, that’s okay. The goal is to be proficient or be improving at something.” However, despite the positive perceptions of formal evaluations, McCann’s evaluation system does not consistently identify areas for improvement for teachers, nor do teachers receive instructional coaching aimed at enhancing their practice. Administrators often conduct informal walkthroughs of teachers’ classes, typically for admissions tours rather than performance monitoring. While staff may receive some informal positive feedback following these visits, it is generally perfunctory and rarely actionable. Utilizing informal observations to provide teachers with actionable instructional feedback is an area for growth for the district. Despite the limited instructional feedback that teachers receive through the district’s observation system, NBRVT does provide general professional development opportunities that align with the district’s strategic initiatives and instructional priorities. School leaders stated that the focus of professional development in recent years has been on the implementation of SBG, including how to design rubrics and assessments that address content standards. The district does not outline learning opportunities in advance using a professional development calendar; rather, school leaders and teachers stated that offerings are “largely staff driven,” with McCann administrators developing professional learning sessions based on feedback they receive from teachers about topics for which they need additional support. For example, district leaders described a recent professional development session on how to use the Otus platform for SBG in response to reports that teachers were struggling to navigate the software. In addition, the district facilitates teachers’ participation in specialized professional development that aligns with their career goals, professional practice needs, and industry certifications, which is a strength of the district. Teachers and school leaders described that educators request professional development hours for these opportunities and noted that these requests are almost always approved, with one stating, “You couldn’t walk this building and find a teacher who says, “No, I don’t get my [professional development] supported.’” As noted in the Staffing section, teachers have used these professional development hours to pursue advanced licensure or certification, whereas others stated that they have attended conferences and workshops. Although it is noted that NBRVT gives teachers agency in selecting professional learning opportunities, the current system does not include a process for school and district leaders to review multiple data sources to determine appropriate offerings and monitor their effectiveness. The lack of systematic data collection on professional development needs is an area of growth for the district. District leaders also did not identify any professional development opportunities for noninstructional staff.

In focus groups, teachers reported that the district is committed to supporting their professional learning and pathways to advancement. Teachers described their professional development opportunities as individualized, noting that they request specific programs that align with their career growth goals (see the Professional Learning section for more information on professional development offerings). Teachers described that this approach also extends to advanced certifications and licensures. One teacher stated, “If I need a certification in something, I can just ask and go get it. . . . I’ve never been denied any certification I ever want to go and get.” Vocational teachers, especially, noted that school leaders encourage them to pursue additional credentials, as it can lead to new certifications and learning opportunities for students as well. In addition to providing opportunities for teachers to obtain new certifications, the district also provides some opportunities for educators to pursue leadership roles within the district, although these are limited by NBRVT’s high administrator retention rates. As noted previously, most school and district leaders have maintained their roles long term, but a staff member noted that “when opportunities have provided themselves, folks from within the building have risen to those levels.” District staff provided examples of the academic and vocational curriculum coordinator roles and department head roles, which were all filled by McCann teachers.

Although NBRVT provides a range of professional development offerings, the district does not provide consistent opportunities for collaborative planning time within and across subject areas. Vocational teachers within the same shop share daily preparation time, during which they can review lesson plans and discuss student work. However, academic teachers do not have collaborative planning time with their departmental or grade-level peers built into their schedules. District leaders noted that difficulties with scheduling in a small school have prevented consistent academic collaborative planning time, with one leader stating, “We do our best that we can on the academic side of the house, and it’s just impossible in some situations.” District leaders also reported a perception that departmental collaborative planning may not result in the same “bang for your buck” as other meeting structures. For example, leaders stated that they prioritize aligning planning times for general education and special education co-teachers to prepare for cotaught classes. Overall, district leaders estimated that academic teachers get between 8 and 12 hours of departmental planning time per year—during which they primarily work on curricular review and mapping—although these opportunities are during early dismissal professional development days and are not built into the master schedule. Providing teachers with greater opportunities to collaborate is an area for growth for the district.

Although the district does not provide consistent support through collaborative planning times, NBRVT does have a robust mentor program to support new educators. As described in the Staffing section, all educators new to the district, regardless of experience, participate in a two-year mentor program. The program is led by the mentor coordinator, who intentionally assigns mentors to new hires. School leaders described that academic teachers are matched with departmental peers, whereas vocational teachers are matched with vocational mentors outside of their own shop. One leader described the rationale for these pairings:

We try to match them up as best we can in terms of if it’s a new shop instructor, we try not to partner them with their job-alike shop instructor, just in case there’s any rifts there they need to navigate. The shop teachers work very, very closely together. So we just felt like putting them as a mentor could be problematic.

District leaders reported that McCann maintains a group of eight to 10 certified mentors who are trained through Teachers 21, a professional development provider, which school leaders stated is a sufficient number to meet the district’s needs. Teachers described the mentor program as flexible, noting that mentors are granted agency by administrators to provide support to their mentees as needed. One mentor explained, “If at some point I say [to the principal], ‘I need someone to cover for me for a period because I need to go watch my mentee teach,’ he’s always supportive of that.” Members of the mentor program also described it as individualized and reported that mentors and mentees can decide on meeting frequencies and mentor activities that work best for them. Mentees must submit midyear and end-of-year logs of their mentor hours to the principal, who confirms compliance. Overall, the district provides all educators who are new to McCann with individualized support and access to trained mentors through the mentor program, which is a strength of the district.

### DESE Recommendations

* *The district should document its human resources policies and practices to support ongoing functions in the event of leadership turnover.*
* *The district should develop formal guidance and manuals for hiring, recruitment, and onboarding processes.*
* *The district should set expectations around incorporating greater levels of constructive feedback in evaluations for both teachers and administrators.*
* *The district must align its educator evaluation process with regulatory requirements so that all educators set a minimum of two goals, all educators receive one of four ratings on each Performance Standard, and all educators (teachers and administrators) have a summative evaluation.*
  + *Additional resources for Educator Evaluation can be found* [*here*](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/implementation/default.html)*.*
* *The district administrators and instructional leaders should establish a practice of regularly conducting informal classroom observations and providing teachers with actionable feedback.*
* *The district should leverage data collected in informal observations, evaluations, and feedback from teachers to tailor its professional learning opportunities to the skills and knowledge teachers need to improve instructional practices.*
* *The district should examine its master schedule and identify opportunities to increase the amount of time allotted to teacher collaboration, particularly for academic subjects.*

## Student Support

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

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

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

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Indicator | Strengths | Areas for growth |
| [Safe and Supportive School Climate and Culture](#_Safe_and_Supportive) | * The district sustains consistent advisory programming, social-emotional learning integration, and the vocational program, fostering a safe and developmentally supportive learning environment. * The district creates meaningful opportunities for all students to exercise voice and leadership at the school, district, and community levels. | * Ensuring that the attendance policy includes supportive attendance engagement strategies |
| [Health and Well-Being](#_Tiered_Systems_of) | * NBRVT provides students with consistent, standards-aligned health and physical education, enriched by daily opportunities for physical engagement through its inclusive vocational programming, which is a strength of the district. |  |
| [Family and Community Partnerships](#_Family_and_Community) | * The district maintains strong, multifaceted relationships with community organizations and industry partners to provide services and enriching experiences to students and families during and outside of the school day. |  |
| [Multitiered Systems of Support](#_Multi-Tiered_Systems_of) | * The district provides clear guidance for school leaders on how to implement each component of the MTSS through the district’s MTSS guidebook. |  |

### Safe and Supportive School Climate and Culture

According to district leaders, NBRVT systematically collects and analyzes data on school and district culture through student, faculty, and parent surveys. These data inform ongoing efforts to strengthen school climate and student support systems. The superintendent and other district leaders emphasized that building strong relationships is central to their approach. Weekly advisory periods serve as a cornerstone of this strategy, providing staff with dedicated time to connect with small groups of students, monitor attendance, and offer individualized support. These advisory groups are particularly effective in identifying and addressing student needs early, especially in response to chronic absenteeism. As the superintendent explained,

We have the advisory periods. . . . It’s a way of reaching out and identifying, and it’s that small group where a teacher, administrator can get that relationship built with that student. . . . Because sometimes it’s that relationship that that young person does not have at home.

This sentiment was echoed by one district leader, who described advisory as a consistent, relationship-driven space in which “every staff person has a group of like 10 or less students that they meet with every Wednesday morning.” These sessions blend structured social-emotional learning lessons with informal academic and personal check-ins, helping students feel seen, supported, and empowered. “We really get to know the kids,” the leader noted, “help them get a plan in place so that they feel like they can move forward.” This approach reflects the district’s broader commitment to fostering affirming and developmentally appropriate environments that integrate students’ identities and lived experiences into the school culture.

Vocational programming also plays a vital role in supporting student engagement and confidence. As the director of student services observed, “It’s very empowering to the kids. . . . They’re seeing more of like a shining light here because they’re given that different opportunity.” For students who may struggle in traditional academic settings, hands-on vocational learning offers a meaningful pathway to success and self-efficacy.

Accordingly, students in NBRVT generally report feeling welcome, respected, and safe at school. This sense of security is attributed to the attentiveness of faculty and strong relationships with teachers, particularly shop instructors. One student shared, “I feel like, normally, like nine times out of ten, shop teachers have a good relationship with their students,” whereas another student added,

We’re closer with our shop teachers than our actual teachers. You know, it makes sense, though, because you’re obviously with your shop teachers pretty much all four years that you’re in school. And you don’t have the same academic teachers every year. They always change.

As a result of consistent advisory programming, social-emotional learning integration, and the strong, sustained relationships that students build with vocational instructors, the district has a cohesive support system that fosters a safe and developmentally supportive learning environment, which is a strength of the district.

In addition to providing these relationship-based supports, the district maintains safe and secure facilities that are conducive to healthy development. It collaborates with members of the community to develop, implement, and annually update multihazard evacuation plans for the school. The district also works with school nurses to maintain a medical and behavioral health emergency response plan, updated every year. Faculty, staff, and students receive training and information on procedures for preventing, mitigating, and responding to school-related incidents, reinforcing a culture of preparedness and care. A review of district documents further indicated that the district has a bullying prevention plan and attendance policy, which is updated annually.

The district also provides resources to address intensive behavioral support needs. According to student support staff and district and school leadership staff, Tier 2 interventions are provided under structured intervention plans developed through the SST process and consultations with school counselors, the school nurse, and/or administrative staff. For students requiring more intensive support, Tier 3 interventions include referrals to contracted school psychologists and further SST review. These additional supports are flexible and responsive, particularly in cases of crisis or prolonged absence, ensuring that student needs are met in a timely and personalized manner. Students also may get referrals to the director of student services for possible connections to community supports for assistance with mental health, housing, food, medical care, transportation, disability services, or peer engagement.

Relatedly, district leadership and student support staff affirmed that the district regularly evaluates students’ social and emotional needs and supports educators in fostering a school culture that promotes social-emotional development. Particularly, the nurse plays a critical role as both a first point of contact in crisis situations and a proactive screener for behavioral health concerns. In addition to responding to immediate needs and supporting students in crisis, the nurse also conducts the screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment (SBIRT) screener. This evidence-based tool is used to identify students at risk for substance use and other behavioral health issues through confidential, one-on-one conversations. The SBIRT process helps ensure early identification and connection to appropriate supports, reinforcing the district’s commitment to student well-being. In addition, the district’s MTSS includes universal access to school counselors, weekly advisory programming, and partnerships with community mental health providers such as the Brien Center and Northern Berkshire Community Coalition. Together, these supports help identify and address student needs while building educator capacity to support holistic development.

Chronic absenteeism remains a persistent challenge in NBRVT, despite the student support systems in place. With a student chronic absenteeism rate of 28.8 percent, attendance has become a critical area of concern. School leaders have acknowledged the issue and indicated that both the school and district are actively reviewing their attendance and tardiness policies. As part of this process, the school is analyzing state-provided attendance data and exploring policy revisions. One key inconsistency under review is that students may receive detentions for excessive tardiness but not for absences, a loophole that has led some students to skip school entirely to avoid disciplinary consequences. However, the district has yet to implement comprehensive, systemwide strategies to improve attendance and student engagement. Teachers also voiced concern about the lack of consistency and effectiveness in current practices, with one noting, “Probably one of the biggest things we’re combating right now is just attendance issues across the board and probably a district-wide attendance policy issue.” Students echoed these concerns, particularly in relation to co-op eligibility, which requires strong attendance and punctuality. As one student explained, “You have to show up every day, obviously. A lot of kids struggle with that.” Another added, “You only get a certain amount of lates or else they won’t let you out [on co-op].” These perspectives reflect a shared understanding among staff and students that absenteeism and tardiness are widespread and consequential, underscoring the urgent need for consistent, proactive, and supportive attendance interventions. Ensuring that the attendance policy in place emphasizes supportive attendance engagement strategies represents an area for growth for the district.

Despite the engagement challenges previously noted, the district creates meaningful opportunities for all students to exercise voice and leadership at the school, district, and community levels—an area of strength. School leaders and student support staff described a variety of ways in which students contribute to decision making and school improvement. Students participate in the school council, contribute to the school improvement plan, and take on leadership roles in organizations such as SkillsUSA and Business Professionals of America. They also serve as student representatives on the school’s advisory board, which includes local business partners, providing input on vocational programming and school initiatives. However, as noted in the Leadership and Governing Structures section, the school committee does not include a nonvoting student member to represent McCann’s student body at committee meetings.

A recent initiative, SWARM, has become a central part of efforts to enhance school culture and spirit. As the principal explained,

We’ve sort of emulated what they do, and we’ve got what we call the SWARM, because our mascot is a hornet. And so the SWARM is this idea that like the student body is part of the SWARM, the faculty is part of the SWARM. Anybody that’s affiliated with McCann is part of the SWARM. And so we’ve been trying to sort of leverage that.

Through SWARM, students have helped lead school spirit initiatives and contributed to the development of a school store and branded gear. Students in the focus group affirmed the value of SWARM, describing it as a student-led committee that meets regularly to discuss school conditions and suggest improvements. The district supports school leaders and teachers in developing such systems, with one student noting, “It was, like, his [a teacher] passion project, that, like, the students at McCann were to . . . come up with this whole committee . . . to see what things could be changed or added to McCann to make it a better place.” Student input also has influenced decisions such as prom planning and the implementation of bathroom monitoring protocols in response to student concerns. These examples reflect a school culture in which student voice is both encouraged and impactful, demonstrating that students are active participants in shaping their educational experience.

### Health and Well-Being

NBRVT offers health and physical education aligned with the Massachusetts Comprehensive Health and Physical Education Framework. The district also created a local wellness policy. A review of the district school schedules indicated that students have multiple opportunities to engage in physical activity and strengthen their bodies throughout the school year. According to the student handbook, students in Grades 9 through 12 are enrolled in physical education and health annually, ensuring consistent exposure to wellness education. Physical education classes are graded on a pass/fail basis and are not included in calculations of grade point average, but they are required for graduation, with students earning 0.5 credits per year in physical education and an additional 1 credit in health across four years.

The curriculum is structured around key standards that emphasize not only physical fitness and motor skills but also the development of health literacy, responsible behavior, and informed decision making. Students are expected to demonstrate competency in a variety of motor skills and movement patterns, apply knowledge of movement concepts and strategies, and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical activity and fitness. In cases of medical exemption, alternate grading methods are applied to ensure equitable access to the curriculum. In addition, the school provides instruction in sex education in accordance with Massachusetts law, with opt-out provisions available to families. These comprehensive standards ensure that students are not only physically active but also equipped with the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions about their health and well‑being.

Student access to health and physical education is enriched by daily opportunities for physical engagement through its inclusive vocational programming, which is a strength of the district. School leaders reported that McCann’s approach to health and physical education is deeply embedded in its broader instructional and support systems, particularly through its vocational programming. Vocational education at McCann is inherently physical, offering students daily opportunities to engage in hands-on, movement-based learning that promotes physical development, coordination, and endurance. As one school leader noted, “That’s one of the nice things about shops—it’s really a competency-based education.” This model allows students to progress at their own pace and demonstrate mastery of both technical and physical skills in real-world contexts. It not only supports academic and career readiness but also reinforces physical well-being, confidence, and self-efficacy. School leaders emphasized that all students, including those with disabilities and other historically underserved populations, are provided with equitable access to these programs (see the Equitable Practices and Access section) so that every student can leverage their strengths and participate meaningfully in physically engaging, skill-based learning.

In addition to promoting physical health through structured curricula and vocational learning, McCann also prioritizes students’ physical and mental well-being through a range of support services. According to school leaders and student support staff, McCann actively supports students and their families by providing timely information and referrals to health providers when needed. The school maintains a long-standing partnership with Sullivan Associates Behavioral Health whose clinicians visit the school twice a week to provide short-term mental health support for students. Staff also assist families with connecting to pediatricians and local health offices to facilitate access to ongoing treatment.

### Family and Community Partnerships

The district and McCann have established several strategies to support family communication and engagement. Clear expectations are set for parent access to student records, teacher conferences, and participation in school activities. The student handbook reinforces these expectations by outlining procedures for notifying families about student absences, disciplinary actions, and academic progress. It also encourages parents to use the Aspen parent portal to monitor assignments and grades. To facilitate communication, district leaders primarily use Google Classroom and email, whereas McCann supplements these with updates on its website. The school also offers opportunities for family involvement through open houses and advisory councils. The principal highlighted that parents serve on the school council and contribute to the school improvement planning process via regular email communication and feedback loops. Teachers also noted that training sessions are available to help families navigate new platforms such as Otus, a more suitable interface than Aspen for tracking skill-based progress. Despite these efforts, multiple challenges in family communication and engagement persist. Teachers observed that some parents do not take advantage of training sessions on the school’s grading platforms, which can lead to confusion about student performance. Similarly, the superintendent acknowledged broader issues in family engagement, particularly regarding attendance, expressing concern that some parents appear indifferent to absenteeism (see the Safe and Supportive School Climate and Culture section). Parent and family perspective is not represented in this report because no parents attended two scheduled focus group sessions.

Similarly, a significant structural challenge stems from McCann’s status as a regional vocational high school serving students from multiple sending districts. As a result, students often commute from distant towns, making consistent and timely communication with families more difficult. This geographic spread also limits opportunities for in-person engagement and complicates efforts to build strong school-family partnerships. In addition, families without reliable internet access or comfort with digital tools may struggle to stay engaged.

Conversely, district staff, school leaders, and school committee members reported that the district maintains strong, multifaceted relationships with community organizations and industry partners to provide services and enriching experiences to students and families during and outside of the school day, which is a strength of the district. These include partnerships with local business and industry leaders through program advisory committees, which meet twice annually to provide feedback on equipment needs and workforce trends. For example, feedback from the automotive advisory committee led to the purchase of a modern alignment machine to ensure that students are trained on current industry-standard tools. The superintendent also noted that the school’s new HVAC facility is used by local contractors and manufacturers for corporate training, strengthening ties between the school and the regional workforce. The principal emphasized that many vocational instructors still work in their trades, bringing real-time expertise into the classroom, and that these partnerships are essential to keeping instruction aligned with evolving workforce expectations.

School committee members further highlighted the district’s regional reach and collaborative governance model, noting that McCann serves students from nine different communities. Committee members, many of whom bring professional expertise in fields such as architecture, healthcare, and education, emphasized their role in bridging local needs with districtwide priorities.

School committee members also praised the district’s eighth-grade afterschool exploratory program, which introduces students to vocational pathways through hands-on projects in areas such as computer-aided design, carpentry, and 3D printing. This program is available to all eighth graders from affiliated towns/cities in the area. “It gives them a taste . . . an introduction of, ‘Well, that’s where I want to go,’ and that firms it up,” one member shared. This initiative not only strengthens early engagement but also helps families make informed decisions about high school options.

### Multitiered Systems of Support

The district provides clear guidance for school leaders on how to implement each component of the MTSS, as outlined in the district’s MTSS guidebook and reinforced through professional development and collaborative planning structures. This clear guidance is a strength of the district. The DCAP supports the implementation of MTSS by serving as a foundational resource for identifying and applying Tier 1 interventions. According to district leaders, school administrators, and teachers, McCann implements robust Tier 1 supports in the academic, social-emotional, and behavioral domains, which are further enhanced by universal instructional strategies such as Universal Design for Learning and accommodations outlined in the DCAP. Teachers adapt instruction annually on the basis of student demographics and learning needs and are encouraged to consult the DCAP and collaborate with school counselors and families when concerns arise. In addition, McCann provides Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions for all students needing additional support to access the curriculum or learning environment (see the Equitable Practices and Access section and Safe and Supportive School Climate and Culture section); however, these interventions are not always specific and evidence based (identified as an area for growth in Curriculum and Instruction).

School leaders and educators are expected to use the MTSS guidebook to make sure that all students receive appropriate academic, behavioral, and social-emotional supports. The district also supports implementation through a structured curricular review process, led by the academic curriculum coordinator in collaboration with department heads, the principal, and the director of student services. This process confirms that instructional materials and learning targets align with state standards and are responsive to student needs.

The district monitors the effectiveness of the MTSS system by using a combination of academic and nonacademic data, including MCAS results, student progress in SBG, and Early Warning Indicator System data provided by DESE. Teachers have access to student performance histories and can request additional data through Edwin Analytics to inform instructional decisions. Nonacademic indicators such as citizenship scores and insights from the weekly advisory program also contribute to understanding student needs and guiding interventions. The SST plays a central role in reviewing data, coordinating interventions, and monitoring student progress (see the Equitable Practices and Access section). The SST, composed of the director of student services, a school counselor, two special educators, an academic teacher, and a vocational teacher, collects comprehensive data on the student’s academic performance and attendance and reviews the referral to discuss the need for interventions. In addition, the district fosters a culture of continuous improvement through regular professional development, peer-led instructional seminars, and collaborative planning, ensuring that MTSS implementation remains dynamic and responsive to evolving student needs.

### DESE Recommendations

* *The district should consider revising its attendance policies and implement supportive engagement strategies for students who are chronically absent.*

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

Table 7. 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 has an adequately staffed, qualified team to support daily operations and annual planning and manage the district’s finances. | * Developing explicit documentation regarding fiscal management and responsibilities to codify operations procedures |
| [Budgeting and Budget Process](#_Budgeting_and_Budget) | * The district includes school leaders in the budgeting process. * The district is prepared for unexpected financial events with reserved funds and a flexible budget adjustment approach. |  |
| [Operations](#_Operations) | * The district has a documented 30-year history of building maintenance and regularly reviews maintenance needs and improvements with the support of the region’s nine municipalities, which is a strength of the district. |  |
| [Managing Capital Assets and Capital Planning](#_Managing_Capital_Assets) | * The district has an efficient system for managing and tracking its inventory of capital assets and critical supplies. * The district involves students in inventory management, providing them with valuable learning experiences while ensuring the maintenance of systems. |  |

### Business Office Staffing and Infrastructure

The fiscal office and superintendent’s office are combined into a single entity, staffed by a team of qualified professionals. This team includes an administrative assistant, a district treasurer, a payroll and benefits manager, and a budget & accounts manager, all of whom possess the necessary qualifications, licenses, and credentials. District leaders have reported that the office is adequately staffed to efficiently handle both daily operations and annual planning. School committee members echoed this sentiment and appreciated the district’s effective financial management. A strength of the district is having an adequately staffed, qualified team to support daily operations and annual planning and manage the district’s finances.

The district uses BudgetSense and ERP Pro to monitor and control resources, in alignment with the Uniform Massachusetts Accounting System. The district is audited annually to maintain alignment with Massachusetts requirements. Also, to comply with state and federal requirements, the district has a policy manual outlining detailed responsibilities regarding fiscal management. This document, posted on the district website, covers such items as fiscal accounting and reporting, budget requirements, grants, proposals, special projects, purchasing, and procurement requirements, but it does not provide explicit documentation to codify operational procedures. Although operational procedures are not documented, a district leader explained that “everybody knows their job” but conceded that it would be beneficial to have clearly documented procedures in the event of leadership transition in the future. Developing explicit documentation regarding fiscal management and responsibilities to codify operational procedures is an area for growth for the district.

District staff have a system for managing financial records such as procurement records, invoices, purchase orders, and receipts. The budget & accounts manager is responsible for the accounts receivable and helps with the procurement postings and filings and purchase orders. Hard copies of budget documents are kept readily accessible for two or three years, depending on the requirement. The rest of the documents are in a secured file room and reviewed every seven years or so. There are additional records online, “with financial data going back to 1990-something,” as reported by a district staff member. This staff member went on to say that “during the summer, we ship and file and then we make room with what we can get rid of . . . all in compliance with the state’s retention requirements.”

The district and nine municipalities have a formal, written agreement that had been approved by the member municipalities and DESE in 2012, consistent with law and regulation. This agreement, which is published on the district’s website, indicates that the school committee has no official ties with municipal school committees and operates “like a separate municipality.”

### Budgeting and Budget Process

According to a district leader, the budget process begins in December when the treasurer has each department (i.e., mathematics, English, automotive, electrical) complete a budget sheet with categories broken down by budget line-item numbers. Each department also provides their wish list for capital improvements. Including school leaders in the district’s budgeting process is a strength for NBRVT.

Building on this collaborative foundation, the treasurer gathers all the necessary information, including details from the previous year’s expenditures, such as heating costs, and staffing projections. With these data, they craft a preliminary budget in January. By the end of the month, the district receives crucial financial figures, including Chapter 70 state funds, minimum contributions from the municipalities, and regional transportation dollars. When the preliminary budget is ready, it is presented to the school committee for approval. The district leader explained, “We sit with the budget and finance subcommittee of the school committee and go through the line items,” ensuring a thorough review of the allocations across the nine communities based on student enrollment. To provide context, the district shares budget information from the past five years with the school committee members, allowing them to observe changes over time. The district leader added, “In 30 years, not a single community has not approved our budget. . . . We’ve got a really good idea of what it is to run the operation, to continue with improvements, and be good stewards of the taxpayers’ funds.” Both the published annual report and budget packet provide evidence that the district is transparent in its budgeting decisions. School district committee meeting agendas are posted so the public can learn about budgeting decisions. District leaders and school committee members agree that the review and approval process is timely and culminates in an accessible, publicly available budget.

According to the Chapter 70 district profile, the district exceeded net school spending requirements for fiscal year 2024 by 1 percent. The actual net school spending in fiscal year 2024 ($10,694,961) was $95,190. The NBRVT budget increased by 8.4 percent from fiscal years 2023 to 2024. In fiscal year 2023, per-pupil funding was $25,413 at NBRVT**,** which was $3,528 higher than the state average of $21,885. Additionally, in fiscal year 2023, the average teacher salary ($103,411[[6]](#footnote-7)) was higher than the state average ($89,576), though staffing requirements differ for vocational schools compared to comprehensive schools.

District budget documents clearly identify funds associated with grants, donations, fees, and revolving funds. Leaders added that the district does not have the same concerns about out-of-district special education placements and related transportation costs as many other districts, given that they are a vocational/technical school. According to a district leader, occasionally, there are transportation costs, but they are minimal. The district leader added that there are not a lot of unexpected expenses and the district is prepared for unexpected events. A district leader explained, “We have a series of those accounts, whether it’s [an] out-of-district tuition account that we have and other monies that we have saved that [could be] appropriated by the school committee [in an emergency].” They went on to say that, in the event of a financial emergency, another likely approach would be to adjust the budget. A strength of the district is that it is prepared for unexpected financial events with reserved funds and a flexible approach to budget adjustments.

Teachers and school leaders reported that the district’s budget provides appropriate levels of funding for key instructional resources, both academic and vocational. A district leader spoke of their approach to fiscal equity:

I make sure that everybody has what they need because I trust the professionals to do that. They’re going to deliver the education to the students. They’re the ones that know, hey, you want me to do this, you want me to do it well, this is what I need to get my job done.

The district has a current multiyear financial plan that incorporates projected enrollment and required staffing, cost-of-living adjustments set in its collective bargaining agreements, and anticipated increases in its service contracts.

Budget documents indicate that the district applies for state, federal, and private grants that align with the district’s strategic plan. The district gets the grants such as Title I, but they also are eligible and apply for federal Perkins vocational grants and for equipment grants. In addition, district staff also seek private sector grants whenever possible. To monitor these grants, the district has systems in place to follow grant terms and requirements in a timely manner.

The district also proactively plans for the potential loss of grant funding. Both district leaders and members of the teachers’ association emphasized that meeting students’ needs remains a top priority. For instance, Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief funds, which were temporarily available through federal funding, had been used to provide counseling and mental health support for students. Recognizing the importance of these services, the district and the towns agreed to prioritize their continuation. As a result, these essential services were incorporated into the district’s budget to ensure ongoing support for student well-being.

District leaders explained that the district keeps the school committee and the public informed about budget progress and spending throughout the year. This is achieved through the annual and monthly treasurer’s reports, attendance at every school committee meeting, and occasional presentations at town finance committee meetings. The monthly treasurer’s report provides detailed information on the budget, current expenses, and remaining funds. In addition, the district hires independent financial auditing services annually and promptly implements the recommendations from those audits.

### Operations

As a vocational technical school with limited space, there is an admissions process in place to manage enrollment at McCann. Details are available on the district website, and guidance counselors in public middle schools also share information about options to apply to vocational schools. As stated in the district policy manual,

Any 8th or 9th grade student who expects to be promoted to the grade they seek to enter by their local district is eligible to apply for admissions subject to the availability of openings at McCann Technical School and its admissions timeline.

Students are evaluated on the basis of their prior grades, attendance, discipline, and a recommendation from the sending school’s guidance counselor. The admissions policy was approved by the school committee in 2021. However, given recent regulatory changes around vocational school enrollment, the district is aware that this attendance policy will need to be updated again to comply with new regulations.

According to a district leader, the school building was opened in 1962 and requires ongoing maintenance of facilities. He went on to share that the district has a history of taking excellent care of its building, and the communities recognize this. The district regularly reviews maintenance needs and, with support from all the participating towns, makes improvements every year, upgrading equipment and technology. Teachers’ association members explained that if they have any concerns, they can easily speak with district leaders because they are in the school building. The district has a documented history of building maintenance stretching across 30 years and regularly reviews maintenance needs and improvements with the support of the region’s nine municipalities, which is a strength of the district.

The district is committed to providing comprehensive technological support for both students and staff. According to district leaders, the district equips its community with essential hardware, such as Chromebooks, along with the necessary software, related licenses, and support for everyday learning and daily operations. Detailed information about these resources, including training videos and a repair form, is available on the district’s website. Members of the teachers’ association also emphasized the district’s responsiveness to critical needs. One member noted, “If it’s something that’s really critical . . . a certain technology that’s going to make their students more employable, the district will support that expenditure.” Another teacher echoed this sentiment, stating, “That tends to be the experience I find from all the vocational instructors.”

The district has a structured approach to managing and procuring essential services and materials. District and school office support staff explained that numerous services (e.g., maintaining boilers, cafeteria equipment, lawn care) are set up on multiyear (three- to five-year) bids. The district sends out bid documents and then goes to the school committee with a recommendation. Everything on a bid or a request for proposal must be approved by the school committee. After that, the district moves forward, maintaining documents and sending notification letters. For low-priced services or materials, the budget & accounts manager approves expenditures.

### Managing Capital Assets and Capital Planning

District facilities staff discussed that their district has an efficient system to manage and track its inventory of capital assets and critical supplies. The budget & accounts manager maintains a complete inventory of every piece of equipment and supplies that the district has. A district leader explained that any new equipment purchase is entered into the inventory system and tagged for tracking purposes before it is put into use. The leader offered an example, tying the inventory training to student learning:

Every summer, we have a team that’s both our IT instructors and IT students who work and go through every single system that’s here. It’s a good learning and working experience, but it makes sure that they’re not only verified again in the inventory, but that they’re in serviceable condition to move forward so that we extend the life by doing the maintenance on the systems, so they don’t just crash burn and it doesn’t work anymore.

A strength of the district is its efficient system for managing and tracking its inventory of capital assets and critical supplies.

The district has developed a comprehensive five-year capital and facility improvement plan for 2025-2029 that outlines future capital needs. The published plan states that the district “will prioritize safety of the facility and grounds and vocational equipment and technology upgrades.” District and school leaders provided examples of improvements, which included the installation of a new “jumbotron” screen in the gymnasium, the addition of a unique 3D printer, and various safety improvements in vocational classrooms and shops. The plan is based on future enrollment projections and facility assessments and incorporates input from district leaders, faculty, and school staff, especially those responsible for facilities and grounds, vocational equipment, vehicles and equipment, and technology. Also, as a vocational school, McCann has “an awful lot of professionals in the building.” These staff members report on where there are facility or equipment needs, and they also are able to address some of the maintenance issues, occasionally with the help of their students. Involving students in inventory management not only provides them with valuable learning experiences but also ensures the maintenance of systems, and is a strength of the district.

### DESE Recommendations

* *The district should document its fiscal management and business office operational procedures to support consistency in the event of staff turnover.*

## Appendix A. Summary of Site Visit Activities

The AIR team completed the following as part of the district review activities in NBRVT. The team conducted 30 classroom observations during the week of March 31, 2025, and held interviews and focus groups between March 31 and April 2, 2025. 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
* Students

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
* NBRVT 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

Northern Berkshire Regional Vocational Technical

Classroom Visits: Summary of Findings Instructional Observation Report

March 2025

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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.

Two observers visited Northern Berkshire Regional Vocational Technical school district during the week of March 31, 2025. Observers conducted 30 observations in a sample of classrooms (20 academic and 10 vocational) across one school. Observations were conducted in grades 9-12 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\*: 5.0

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 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 | 30 | 5.0 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 6 | 13 | 7 | 2 | 30 | 5.0 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 3, the district average is computed as:   
([3 x 2] + [4 x 6] + [5 x 13] + [6 x 7] + [7 x 2]) ÷ 30 observations = 5.0

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\*: 5.1

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 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 | 30 | 5.1 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 6 | 10 | 4 | 6 | 30 | 5.1 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 4, the district average is computed as:   
([3 x 4] + [4 x 6] + [5 x 10] + [6 x 4] + [7 x 6]) ÷ 30 observations = 5.1

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\*: 3.1

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 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 | 30 | 3.1 |
| Grades 9-12 | 7 | 7 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 30 | 3.1 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 5, the district average is computed as:   
([1 x 7] + [2 x 7] + [3 x 4] + [4 x 4] + [5 x 4] + [6 x 3] + [7 x 1]) ÷ 30 observations = 3.1

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.[[7]](#footnote-8)

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 | 30 | 7.0 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 30 | 30 | 7.0 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 6, the district average is computed as:   
([7 x 30]) ÷ 30 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\*: 6.2

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 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 | 30 | 6.2 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 10 | 15 | 30 | 6.2 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 7, the district average is computed as:   
([4 x 3] + [5 x 2] + [6 x 10] + [7 x 15]) ÷ 30 observations = 6.2

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\*: 6.0

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 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 | 30 | 6.0 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 6 | 15 | 30 | 6.0 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 8, the district average is computed as:   
([3 x 1] + [4 x 3] + [5 x 5] + [6 x 6] + [7 x 15]) ÷ 30 observations = 6.0

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\*: 5.0

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 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 | 30 | 5.0 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 6 | 16 | 6 | 1 | 30 | 5.0 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 9, the district average is computed as:   
([2 x 1] + [4 x 6] + [5 x 16] + [6 x 6] + [7 x 1]) ÷ 30 observations = 5.0

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.

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\*: 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 | 30 | 3.3 |
| Grades 9-12 | 2 | 8 | 9 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 30 | 3.3 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 11, the district average is computed as:   
([1 x 2] + [2 x 8] + [3 x 9] + [4 x 4] + [5 x 5] + [6 x 2]) ÷ 30 observations = 3.3

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\*: 1.8

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 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 | 30 | 1.8 |
| Grades 9-12 | 15 | 9 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 30 | 1.8 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 12, the district average is computed as:   
([1 x 15] + [2 x 9] + [3 x 3] + [4 x 3]) ÷ 30 observations = 1.8

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

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

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

Quality of Feedback

Instructional Support domain, Grades K− 12

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

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

Quality of Feedback District Average\*: 2.4

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 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 | 30 | 2.4 |
| Grades 9-12 | 12 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 30 | 2.4 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 13, the district average is computed as:   
([1 x 12] + [2 x 5] + [3 x 5] + [4 x 5] + [5 x 3]) ÷ 30 observations = 2.4

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.

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\*: 1.9

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 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 | 30 | 1.9 |
| Grades 9-12 | 16 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 30 | 1.9 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 15, the district average is computed as:   
([1 x 16] + [2 x 6] + [3 x 3] + [4 x 4] + [5 x 1]) ÷ 30 observations = 1.9

\*\*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\*: 5.0

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 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 | 30 | 5.0 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 12 | 3 | 5 | 30 | 5.0 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 16, the district average is computed as:   
([2 x 1] + [3 x 1] + [4 x 8] + [5 x 12] + [6 x 3] + [7 x 5]) ÷ 30 observations = 5.0

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 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 | 7 | 7 | 10 | 16 | 27 | 14 | 9 | 90 | 4.4 |
| Positive Climate | 0 | 0 | 2 | 6 | 13 | 7 | 2 | 30 | 5.0 |
| Teacher Sensitivity | 0 | 0 | 4 | 6 | 10 | 4 | 6 | 30 | 5.1 |
| Regard for Student Perspectives | 7 | 7 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 30 | 3.1 |
| Classroom Organization Domain | 0 | 0 | 1 | 6 | 7 | 16 | 60 | 90 | 6.4 |
| Behavior Management | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 10 | 15 | 30 | 6.2 |
| Productivity | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 6 | 15 | 30 | 6.0 |
| Negative Climate\*\* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 30 | 30 | 7.0 |
| Instructional Support Domain | 45 | 29 | 20 | 22 | 25 | 8 | 1 | 150 | 2.9 |
| Instructional Learning Formats | 0 | 1 | 0 | 6 | 16 | 6 | 1 | 30 | 5.0 |
| Content Understanding | 2 | 8 | 9 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 30 | 3.3 |
| Analysis and Inquiry | 15 | 9 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 30 | 1.8 |
| Quality of Feedback | 12 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 30 | 2.4 |
| Instructional Dialogue | 16 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 30 | 1.9 |
| Student Engagement | 0 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 12 | 3 | 5 | 30 | 5.0 |

\*The district average is an average of the scores. For example, for Positive Climate, the district average is computed as: ([3 x 2] + [4 x 6] + [5 x 13] + [6 x 7] + [7 x 2]) ÷ 30 observations = 5.0

\*\*Negative Climate is rated on an inverse scale. An original score of 1 is given a value of 7. The scoring in the table reflects the normalized adjustment: ([7 x 30]) ÷ 30 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) a | Illustrates a systems-level path toward deeper learning. School system leaders and teams may use the guidebook, along with its companion self-assessment, to articulate a vision of deeper learning, identify high-leverage instructional priorities, refine tiered supports, and leverage systems and structures—all in service of the articulated vision. |
| [New Superintendent Induction Program (NSIP)](https://www.massupt.org/professional-development/annual-programs/new-superintendent-induction-program/) | In partnership with the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, the NSIP is a three-year professional development program for superintendents in their first three years of their position in a Massachusetts school district. The curriculum aligns with DESE’s educational vision and supports new superintendents with developing the skills and competencies to be effective leaders of their school districts. |
| [Principal Induction and Mentoring Handbook](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeffectiveness/mentor/principal.html) | A series of modules designed to support novice principals and their mentors in the development of antiracist leadership competencies aligned to the Professional Standards for Administrative Leadership. |
| [Planning for Success in Massachusetts](https://www.doe.mass.edu/research/success/) | An inclusive, hands-on planning process designed to build district and school capacity and coherence while also building community understanding and support. |

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

Table C2. Resources to Support Curriculum and Instruction

| Resource | Description |
| --- | --- |
| Curriculum frameworks and resources:   * [Curriculum Matters webpage](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/impd/default.html) * [Curriculum Frameworks resources](https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html) * [IMplement MA](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/impd/implement-ma.html) * [CURATE](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate/default.html) * [Supporting Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/culturally-sustaining/default.html) | DESE offers a suite of resources to support the use of high-quality curricula that are culturally and linguistically sustaining. These resources include the curriculum frameworks and IMplement MA, our recommended four-phase process to prepare for, select, launch, and implement new HQIM with key tasks and action steps. In addition, CURATE convenes panels of Massachusetts teachers to review and rate curricula. These ratings are posted publicly to support schools and districts in selected HQIM. Finally, the Supporting Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices webpage provides DESE’s definition of these practices and highlights their importance in our schools and classrooms. |
| [Mass Literacy Guide](https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/) | Mass Literacy is a statewide effort to empower educators with the evidence-based practices for literacy that all students need. Evidence-based instruction, provided within schools and classrooms that are culturally and linguistically sustaining, will put our youngest students on a path toward literacy for life. |
| [Foundations for Inclusive Practice](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/guidebook/) | This guidebook includes tools for districts, schools, and educators that align 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. It highlights art made by people with racial identities that historically have been and continue to be marginalized. |
| [Massachusetts Blueprint for English Learner Success](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/blueprint/default.html) | Framework for English Learner education in Massachusetts, with embedded Quick Reference Guides and other resources to support implementation. |
| Massachusetts curricular resources:   * [Appleseeds](https://sites.google.com/view/appleseedsk2/home) * [Investigating History](https://www.doe.mass.edu/investigatinghistory/) * [OpenSciEd](https://www.doe.mass.edu/stem/ste/openscied.html) | Free, open-source curricular resources aligned 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 instruction in Massachusetts. |
| [Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) Framework](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.doe.mass.edu%2Fcsdp%2Fguidebook%2Fappendix-ilt-framework.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) | District and school teams can use this resource to reflect and identify specific actions that they could take to establish or improve their ILTs. |

Table C3. Resources to Support Assessment

| Resource | Description |
| --- | --- |
| [Assessment Literacy Continuum](https://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/assessment/continuum.pdf) | Tool to help teachers identify what aspects of assessment literacy they should focus on for their own goal setting. |
| [Curriculum-embedded performance assessments](https://www.doe.mass.edu/stem/ste/assess-resources.html) | Pending funding, this program provides resources and professional learning for classroom-based, curriculum-embedded performance tasks in K-8 science with implementation and instructional supports aligned to the Innovative Assessment. |
| [District Data Team Toolkit](http://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/toolkit/) | A set of resources to help a district establish, grow, and maintain a culture of inquiry and data use through a district data team. |
| [Early Literacy Screening](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/screening-assessments/default.html) | Guidance and support for schools and districts to select and use an approved early literacy universal screening assessment. |
| [Student Assessment](https://www.doe.mass.edu/assessment/) | Statewide assessments help parents, students, educators, and policymakers determine where districts, schools, and students are meeting expectations and where they need additional support. |

Table C4. Resources to Support Human Resources and Professional Development

| Resource | Description |
| --- | --- |
| [Early Literacy Observation Tool](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/early-literacy-observation.html) | This tool supports the observation and provision of high-quality feedback to teacher candidates on their practice in evidence-based early literacy. |
| [Educator Evaluation Resources](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/implementation/default.html) | A suite of resources and practical tools for effective and equitable implementation of educator evaluation, including Focus Indicators, a subset of Indicators from the Classroom Teacher and School-Level Administrator Rubrics that represent high-priority practices for the school year. |
| Induction and mentoring:   * [Teacher induction and mentoring](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeffectiveness/mentor/default.html) * [Principal induction and mentoring](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeffectiveness/mentor/principal.html) * [Induction and Mentoring Annual Report](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeffectiveness/mentor/default.html) | Resources that highlight best practices and reinforce the recently updated guidelines and standards for induction and mentoring. |
| [Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL)](https://www.doe.mass.edu/mtel/) | Information on MTEL exams, MTEL alternatives, and licensure requirements for educators. |
| [OPTIC: Online Platform for Teaching and Informed Calibration](https://www.ma-optic.com/) | A professional development tool that supports Massachusetts educators to build a shared understanding of high-quality instruction and improve the feedback that teachers receive. |
| [Professional Learning Partner Guide](https://plpartnerguide.org/) | A free, online, searchable list of vetted professional development providers who have expertise in specific sets of HQIM. Schools and districts can use this guide to easily find professional development providers to support the launch or implementation of HQIM. |
| [Promising Recruitment, Selection, and Retention Strategies for a Diverse Massachusetts Teacher Workforce](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.doe.mass.edu%2Fcsi%2Fdiverse-workforce%2Fteacher-diversification.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) | This guidebook provides a framework to help district and school leaders design and implement a teacher diversification strategy to improve student achievement and create equitable learning experiences. |
| [“What to Look For” Observation Guides](https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/observation/) | Observation tools to help district staff observe instruction. |
| [Talent guide](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeffectiveness/talent-guide/default.html) | An online hub of resources, considerations, and updates for recruiting, hiring, evaluating, and supporting educators and school staff, with a focus on equity. |
| [WIDA professional development](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/prof-learning/wida/default.html) | Provides great information and strategies to support Multilingual Learners in Massachusetts public schools, and WIDA PDPs satisfy educator licensure renewal requirements. These DESE-sponsored courses are available at no cost to participants and are perfect for teams of teachers seeking impactful collaboration to support students’ access to rigorous course content. |

Table C5. Resources to Support Student Support

| Resource | Description |
| --- | --- |
| Dropout prevention and reengagement:   * [Dropout Prevention and Reengagement (DPR) resources](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ccte/sec-supports/massgrad/default.html) * [Early Warning Indicator System (EWIS)](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ccte/sec-supports/ewis/default.html) | DPR efforts support students at risk of not graduating or reengage students who have left school with opportunities to gain the academic, personal/social, and work readiness skills necessary to graduate and lead productive lives. EWIS includes tools for districts to identify students who are at risk and help get them back on track. |
| Educational stability resources:   * [Educational stability for highly mobile students](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/edstability.html) * [Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE) Guidance and Toolkit](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/slife/default.html) * [Resources for Supporting Immigrant and Refugee Students](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/resources/immigrant-refugee.html) | The linked resources provide guidance, technical assistance, professional learning opportunities, grants, and other supports to ensure that students experiencing homelessness, those in foster care, migrant and refugee students, SLIFE, and students in military families have access to a consistent and high-quality public education. |
| Emergency management guidance ([federal](https://rems.ed.gov/?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1) and [state](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/emergencyplan/default.html)) | Guidance and technical assistance for districts and schools related to emergency management planning and implementation. |
| Family partnerships:   * [DESE Family Portal](https://www.doe.mass.edu/families/) * [Strengthening Partnerships: A Framework for Prenatal through Young Adulthood Family Engagement in Massachusetts](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/family-engagement-framework.pdf) | Resources for authentically engaging families in their child’s education and centering families’ voices in school and district decision making. |
| MTSS resources:   * [MTSS Blueprint, Self-Assessment, and Resources](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfss/mtss/) * [Massachusetts Tools for Schools](https://matoolsforschools.com/) | MTSS represent a framework for how school districts can build the necessary systems to ensure that every student receives a high-quality educational experience. |
| Safe and supportive schools:   * [Safe and Supportive Schools Framework and Self-Reflection Tool](https://www.sassma.org/) * [Safe Schools Program for LGBTQ Students](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/lgbtq/) * [Bullying Prevention and Intervention](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/bullying/default.html) * [Rethinking Discipline Initiative](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/discipline/) | These resources can help guide school- and district-based teams to create safer and more supportive school climates and cultures that allow all students to thrive. |
| [School Wellness Initiative for Thriving Community Health (SWITCH)](https://massschoolwellness.org/) | SWITCH provides resources that support and advance wellness efforts for Massachusetts students, schools, and communities. |
| Social-emotional learning:   * [Social and Emotional Learning, and Approaches to Play and Learning (PK/K)](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.doe.mass.edu%2Fsfs%2Fearlylearning%2Fresources%2FSEL-APL-Standards.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) * [Playful Learning Institute, Preschool–3rd Grade](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/earlylearning/pli.html) * [Culturally Responsive Social-Emotional Competency Development](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/sel/sel-all.docx) | These resources provide evidence-based and developmentally appropriate guidance related to supporting social-emotional learning in schools. |

Table C6. Resources to Support Financial and Asset Management

| Resource | Description |
| --- | --- |
| [DESE spending comparisons website](https://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/statistics/default.html) | A clearinghouse of school finance data reports and other resources available to district users and the public. |
| [General resources for federal grant programs](https://www.doe.mass.edu/federalgrants/resources/default.html) | General federal grant resources. |
| [Office for Food and Nutrition Programs](https://www.doe.mass.edu/cnp/) | Resources for school districts, childcare centers, family day care homes, adult day health programs, Summer Eats community organizations, USDA Foods storage and distribution vendors, food banks, and anti-hunger organizations across the Commonwealth. |
| [Planning for Success in Massachusetts](https://www.doe.mass.edu/research/success/) | An inclusive, hands-on planning process designed to build district and school capacity and coherence while also building community understanding and support. |
| [Resource Allocation and District Action Reports (RADAR)](https://www.doe.mass.edu/research/radar/) | RADAR is a suite of innovative data reports, case studies, and other resources that provide a new approach to resource decisions. |
| [Breakfast After the Bell resources](https://www.projectbread.org/resource-directory/breakfast-after-the-bell-resources) | The Breakfast After the Bell Toolkit Series is designed to help with the launch and implementation of alternative breakfast models. |
| [Fueling the Commonwealth School Meals Newsletter](https://us14.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=d8f37d1a90dacd97f207f0b4a&id=d29c4bc847) | Short articles summarizing current events, including changes in federal/state requirements, current grant opportunities, and notable dates. |
| [Summer Eats](https://www.projectbread.org/summer-eats-program?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=summereats_pmax&utm_content=english-2023&utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=summereats_pmax&utm_content=english-2023&gclid=CjwKCAjwzo2mBhAUEiwAf7wjkljB4ngm0uZLSTYsl5hK5QGTkC3mKF_4ae_5AUxyrVs6UiPIIrys1RoCQV0QAvD_BwE) | A free-of-charge program that provides free meals to all kids and teens, ages 18 years and younger, at locations across Massachusetts during the summer months. |

## Appendix D. Enrollment, Attendance, Expenditures

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

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | *N* (District) | Percentage of District | *N* (State) | Percentage of State |
| All students | 514 | 100.0 | 915,932 | 100.0 |
| American Indian or Alaska Native | 0 | 0.0 | 2,272 | 0.2 |
| Asian | 1 | 0.2 | 68,608 | 7.5 |
| Black or African American | 6 | 1.2 | 93,245 | 10.2 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 12 | 2.3 | 236,839 | 25.9 |
| Multi-Race, not Hispanic or Latino | 10 | 1.9 | 42,303 | 4.6 |
| Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander | 2 | 0.4 | 800 | 0.1 |
| White | 483 | 94.0 | 471,865 | 51.5 |

*Note*. As of October 1, 2024.

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

| Group | *N*  (District) | Percentage of High Needs (District) | Percentage of District | *N*  (State) | Percentage of High Needs (State) | Percentage of State |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| High Needs | 260 | 100.0 | 50.6 | 517,093 | 100.0 | 55.8 |
| English Learners | 3 | 1.2 | 0.6 | 127,673 | 24.7 | 13.9 |
| Low Income | 208 | 80.0 | 40.5 | 385,161 | 74.5 | 42.1 |
| Students with Disabilities | 104 | 40.0 | 20.2 | 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 placements is 514; total state enrollment including students in out-of-district placements is 926,057.

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

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | *N* (2024) | 2022 (%) | 2023 (%) | 2024 (%) | State 2024 (%) |
| All students | 520 | 32.8 | 26.0 | 28.8 | 19.7 |
| African American/Black | 7 | — | 16.7 | 57.1 | 22.5 |
| Asian | 2 | — | — | — | 11.8 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 8 | 57.1 | 16.7 | 37.5 | 31.3 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 6 | 75.0 | 62.5 | 33.3 | 20.6 |
| Native American | — | — | — | — | 28.5 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 2 | — | — | — | 24.3 |
| White | 495 | 32.3 | 25.6 | 28.3 | 14.4 |
| High Needs | 277 | 39.7 | 31.1 | 33.9 | 27.2 |
| Low Income | 249 | 40.1 | 31.8 | 36.5 | 30.3 |
| English Learners | 3 | — | — | — | 29.9 |
| Students with Disabilities | 88 | 46.2 | 29.3 | 27.3 | 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 | $9,884,357 | $10,254,581 | $10,673,291 |
| By municipality | — | — | — |
| Total from local appropriations | $9,884,357 | $10,254,581 | $10,673,291 |
| From revolving funds and grants | $2,033,115 | $1,834,376 | $2,124,893 |
| Total expenditures | $11,917,472 | $12,088,957 | $12,798,184 |

*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 | $5,071,520 | $5,316,141 | $6,273,595 |
| Required local contribution | $3,172,855 | $3,268,863 | $3,451,123 |
| Required net school spending b | $8,244,375 | $8,585,004 | $9,724,718 |
| Actual net school spending | $8,602,158 | $9,058,662 | $9,870,058 |
| Over/under required ($) | $357,783 | $473,658 | $145,340 |
| Over/under required (%) | 4.3% | 5.5% | 1.5% |

*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 | $961 | $1,033 | $1,123 |
| Instructional leadership (district and school) | $1,206 | $1,326 | $1,363 |
| Teachers | $9,366 | $9,306 | $9,638 |
| Other teaching services | $615 | $704 | $796 |
| Professional development | $140 | $250 | $313 |
| Instructional materials, equipment, and technology | $2,517 | $1,543 | $2,202 |
| Guidance, counseling, and testing services | $756 | $742 | $881 |
| Pupil services | $3,128 | $2,357 | $2,730 |
| Operations and maintenance | $2,946 | $3,067 | $2,839 |
| Insurance, retirement, and other fixed costs | $3,646 | $3,603 | $3,727 |
| Total expenditures per in-district pupil | $25,281 | $23,932 | $25,612 |

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

## 

## Appendix E. Northern Berkshire Regional Vocational Technical: Student Performance Data[[8]](#footnote-9)

[Table E1. MCAS ELA Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2024 E-2](#_Toc204003371)

[Table E2. MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2024 E-2](#_Toc204003372)

[Table E3. MCAS Science Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2024 E-3](#_Toc204003373)

[Table E4. MCAS ELA Achievement by Grade, 2022-2024 E-3](#_Toc204003374)

[Table E5. MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Grade, 2022-2024 E-4](#_Toc204003375)

[Table E6. MCAS Science Achievement by Grade, 2022-2024 E-4](#_Toc204003376)

[Table E7. MCAS ELA Mean Student Growth Percentile by Student Group, Grades 10, 2022-2024 E-5](#_Toc204003377)

[Table E8. MCAS Mathematics Mean Student Growth Percentile by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2024 E-5](#_Toc204003378)

[Table E9. MCAS ELA Mean Student Growth Percentile by Grade, 2022-2024 E-6](#_Toc204003379)

[Table E10. MCAS Mathematics Mean Student Growth Percentile by Grade, 2022-2024 E-6](#_Toc204003380)

[Table E11. Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023 E-6](#_Toc204003381)

[Table E12. Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Student Group, 2020-2022 E-7](#_Toc204003382)

[Table E13. Annual Dropout Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023 E-7](#_Toc204003383)

[Table E14. In-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2022-2024 E-8](#_Toc204003384)

[Table E15. Out-of-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2022-2024 E-8](#_Toc204003385)

[Table E16. Advanced Coursework Completion Rates by Student Group, 2022-2024 E-9](#_Toc204003386)

[Table E17. Accountability Results, 2024 E-9](#_Toc204003387)

Table E1. 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 | 137 | 45 | 42 | 51 | 57 | 53 | 51 | 41 | 31 | 2 | 6 | 8 | 12 |
| African American/Black | 3 | — | — | — | 42 | — | — | — | 40 | — | — | — | 18 |
| Asian | — | — | — | — | 78 | — | — | — | 16 | — | — | — | 5 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 3 | — | — | — | 36 | — | — | — | 38 | — | — | — | 26 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 2 | — | — | — | 61 | — | — | — | 30 | — | — | — | 9 |
| Native American | — | — | — | — | 48 | — | — | — | 37 | — | — | — | 14 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | — | 58 | — | — | — | 34 | — | — | — | 8 |
| White | 129 | 45 | 43 | 50 | 65 | 54 | 50 | 42 | 28 | 2 | 7 | 8 | 7 |
| High needs | 70 | 38 | 32 | 40 | 37 | 59 | 61 | 47 | 41 | 3 | 7 | 13 | 23 |
| Low income | 59 | 42 | 34 | 46 | 38 | 56 | 60 | 41 | 40 | 2 | 6 | 14 | 23 |
| ELs and former ELs | — | — | — | — | 14 | — | — | — | 38 | — | — | — | 48 |
| Students w/disabilities | 29 | 6 | 13 | 7 | 21 | 88 | 75 | 69 | 45 | 6 | 13 | 24 | 34 |

Table E2. 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 | 137 | 36 | 27 | 35 | 48 | 58 | 65 | 61 | 39 | 6 | 8 | 4 | 13 |
| African American/Black | 3 | — | — | — | 27 | — | — | — | 52 | — | — | — | 21 |
| Asian | — | — | — | — | 79 | — | — | — | 17 | — | — | — | 4 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 3 | — | — | — | 25 | — | — | — | 50 | — | — | — | 25 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 2 | — | — | — | 51 | — | — | — | 39 | — | — | — | 10 |
| Native American | — | — | — | — | 33 | — | — | — | 54 | — | — | — | 13 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | — | 52 | — | — | — | 39 | — | — | — | 10 |
| White | 129 | 34 | 28 | 35 | 58 | 60 | 63 | 62 | 35 | 6 | 9 | 3 | 7 |
| High needs | 70 | 29 | 15 | 27 | 27 | 61 | 74 | 69 | 51 | 10 | 11 | 4 | 23 |
| Low income | 59 | 31 | 16 | 31 | 27 | 62 | 72 | 66 | 50 | 7 | 12 | 3 | 23 |
| ELs and former ELs | — | — | — | — | 14 | — | — | — | 46 | — | — | — | 40 |
| Students w/disabilities | 29 | 7 | 6 | 10 | 14 | 73 | 81 | 86 | 51 | 20 | 13 | 3 | 35 |

Table E3. 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 | 132 | 47 | 43 | 45 | 49 | 47 | 51 | 48 | 40 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 11 |
| African American/Black | 3 | — | — | — | 28 | — | — | — | 53 | — | — | — | 19 |
| Asian | — | — | — | — | 77 | — | — | — | 19 | — | — | — | 5 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 2 | — | — | — | 26 | — | — | — | 52 | — | — | — | 22 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 2 | — | — | — | 53 | — | — | — | 37 | — | — | — | 10 |
| Native American | — | — | — | — | 38 | — | — | — | 53 | — | — | — | 10 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | — | 47 | — | — | — | 45 | — | — | — | 8 |
| White | 125 | 45 | 42 | 46 | 58 | 49 | 52 | 49 | 36 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 6 |
| High needs | 66 | 41 | 34 | 32 | 28 | 52 | 57 | 59 | 52 | 7 | 9 | 9 | 20 |
| Low income | 55 | 45 | 37 | 36 | 28 | 49 | 54 | 55 | 51 | 6 | 10 | 9 | 20 |
| ELs and former ELs | — | — | — | — | 13 | — | — | — | 48 | — | — | — | 39 |
| Students w/disabilities | 29 | 13 | 20 | 10 | 18 | 73 | 73 | 76 | 52 | 13 | 7 | 14 | 31 |

Table E4. 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 | — | — | — | — | 42 | — | — | — | 40 | — | — | — | 18 |
| 4 | — | — | — | — | 37 | — | — | — | 45 | — | — | — | 19 |
| 5 | — | — | — | — | 38 | — | — | — | 46 | — | — | — | 16 |
| 6 | — | — | — | — | 40 | — | — | — | 35 | — | — | — | 25 |
| 7 | — | — | — | — | 36 | — | — | — | 42 | — | — | — | 22 |
| 8 | — | — | — | — | 43 | — | — | — | 34 | — | — | — | 24 |
| 3-8 | — | — | — | — | 39 | — | — | — | 40 | — | — | — | 21 |
| 10 | 137 | 45 | 42 | 51 | 57 | 53 | 51 | 41 | 31 | 2 | 6 | 8 | 12 |

Table E5. 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 | — | — | — | — | 44 | — | — | — | 35 | — | — | — | 20 |
| 4 | — | — | — | — | 46 | — | — | — | 38 | — | — | — | 16 |
| 5 | — | — | — | — | 40 | — | — | — | 46 | — | — | — | 14 |
| 6 | — | — | — | — | 40 | — | — | — | 43 | — | — | — | 17 |
| 7 | — | — | — | — | 37 | — | — | — | 44 | — | — | — | 19 |
| 8 | — | — | — | — | 38 | — | — | — | 42 | — | — | — | 19 |
| 3-8 | — | — | — | — | 41 | — | — | — | 42 | — | — | — | 18 |
| 10 | 137 | 36 | 27 | 35 | 48 | 58 | 65 | 61 | 39 | 6 | 8 | 4 | 13 |

Table E6. 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 | — | — | — | — | 45 | — | — | — | 36 | — | — | — | 20 |
| 8 | — | — | — | — | 39 | — | — | — | 41 | — | — | — | 20 |
| 5 and 8 | — | — | — | — | 42 | — | — | — | 38 | — | — | — | 20 |
| 10 | 132 | 47 | 43 | 45 | 49 | 47 | 51 | 48 | 40 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 11 |

Table E7. MCAS ELA Mean Student Growth Percentile by Student Group, Grades 10, 2022-2024

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # Included (2024) | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | State (2024) |
| All students | 115 | 46 | 45 | 56 | 50 |
| African American/Black | 2 | — | — | — | 48 |
| Asian | — | — | — | — | 55 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 2 | — | — | — | 47 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 1 | — | — | — | 50 |
| Native American | — | — | — | — | 51 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | — | 49 |
| White | 110 | 45 | 45 | 56 | 51 |
| High needs | 61 | 45 | 44 | 55 | 47 |
| Low income | 51 | 45 | 43 | 58 | 47 |
| ELs and former ELs | — | — | — | — | 48 |
| Students w/disabilities | 26 | — | — | 40 | 44 |

Table E8. MCAS Mathematics Mean Student Growth Percentile by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2024

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # Included (2024) | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | State (2024) |
| All students | 115 | 50 | 43 | 46 | 50 |
| African American/Black | 2 | — | — | — | 47 |
| Asian | — | — | — | — | 55 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 2 | — | — | — | 45 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 1 | — | — | — | 49 |
| Native American | — | — | — | — | 50 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | — | 50 |
| White | 110 | 51 | 43 | 47 | 52 |
| High needs | 62 | 50 | 40 | 50 | 47 |
| Low income | 52 | 49 | 41 | 50 | 46 |
| ELs and former ELs | — | — | — | — | 46 |
| Students w/disabilities | 26 | — | — | 51 | 47 |

Table E9. MCAS ELA Mean Student Growth Percentile by Grade, 2022-2024

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade | # Included (2024) | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | State (2024) |
| 3 | — | — | — | — | — |
| 4 | — | — | — | — | 50 |
| 5 | — | — | — | — | 50 |
| 6 | — | — | — | — | 50 |
| 7 | — | — | — | — | 50 |
| 8 | — | — | — | — | 50 |
| 3-8 | — | — | — | — | 50 |
| 10 | 115 | 46 | 45 | 56 | 50 |

Table E10. MCAS Mathematics Mean Student Growth Percentile by Grade, 2022-2024

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade | # Included (2024) | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | State (2024) |
| 3 | — | — | — | — | — |
| 4 | — | — | — | — | 50 |
| 5 | — | — | — | — | 50 |
| 6 | — | — | — | — | 50 |
| 7 | — | — | — | — | 50 |
| 8 | — | — | — | — | 50 |
| 3-8 | — | — | — | — | 50 |
| 10 | 115 | 50 | 43 | 46 | 50 |

Table E11. Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # Included (2023) | 2021 (%) | 2022 (%) | 2023 (%) | State 2023 (%) |
| All | 125 | 93.0 | 94.4 | 98.4 | 89.2 |
| African American/Black | — |  | — | — | 85.6 |
| Asian | 1 | — | — | — | 95.2 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 1 | — | — | — | 78.9 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 2 |  | — | — | 89.3 |
| Native American | — | — | — | — | 82.5 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | — | 89.9 |
| White | 121 | 93.6 | 95.0 | 98.3 | 93.0 |
| High needs | 76 | 89.2 | 92.9 | 97.4 | 82.8 |
| Low income | 63 | 89.8 | 92.3 | 96.8 | 82.2 |
| English learners | — | — | — | — | 67.3 |
| Students w/disabilities | 27 | 80.0 | 94.7 | 96.3 | 76.4 |

Table E12. Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Student Group, 2020-2022

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # Included (2022) | 2020 (%) | 2021 (%) | 2022 (%) | State 2022 (%) |
| All | 107 | 99.1 | 94.8 | 94.4 | 91.9 |
| African American/Black | — | — |  | — | 90.1 |
| Asian | 1 | — | — | — | 96.9 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 3 | — | — | — | 84.4 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 2 | — |  | — | 90.8 |
| Native American | — | — | — | — | 87.1 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | — | 81.3 |
| White | 101 | 99.1 | 95.4 | 95.0 | 94.4 |
| High needs | 70 | 98.5 | 92.3 | 92.9 | 86.8 |
| Low income | 65 | 98.2 | 91.5 | 92.3 | 86.3 |
| English learners | — | — | — | — | 78.0 |
| Students w/disabilities | 19 | 96.4 | 84.0 | 94.7 | 81.8 |

Table E13. Annual Dropout Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # Included (2023) | 2021 (%) | 2022 (%) | 2023 (%) | State 2023 (%) |
| All | 537 | 0.8 | 1.0 | 0.7 | 2.1 |
| African American/Black | 6 | — | — | 16.7 | 2.8 |
| Asian | 2 | — | — | — | 0.6 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 6 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 4.4 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 8 | 0.0 | 12.5 | 0.0 | 1.9 |
| Native American | — | — | — | — | 4.1 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 1 | — | — | — | 3.9 |
| White | 514 | 0.8 | 0.8 | 0.6 | 1.1 |
| High needs | 262 | 0.9 | 1.9 | 0.4 | 3.5 |
| Low income | 231 | — | 2.2 | 0.4 | 3.8 |
| English learners | — | — | — | — | 8.0 |
| Students w/disabilities | 80 | 2.5 | 1.3 | 0.0 | 3.0 |

Table E14. In-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2022-2024

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # Included (2024) | 2022 (%) | 2023 (%) | 2024 (%) | State 2024 (%) |
| All | 521 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.2 | 1.4 |
| African American/Black | 7 | — | — | — | 2.1 |
| Asian | 2 | — | — | — | 0.3 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 8 | — | — | — | 1.9 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 6 | — | — | — | 1.6 |
| Native American | 0 | — | — | — | 1.8 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 2 | — | — | — | 1.9 |
| White | 496 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.2 | 1.1 |
| High needs | 281 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.4 | 1.9 |
| Low income | 250 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.4 | 2.1 |
| English learners | 3 | — | — | — | 1.4 |
| Students w/disabilities | 96 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 2.4 |

Table E15. Out-of-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2022-2024

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # Included (2024) | 2022 (%) | 2023 (%) | 2024 (%) | State 2024 (%) |
| All | 521 | 5.8 | 8.7 | 8.3 | 2.4 |
| African American/Black | 7 | — | — | — | 4.6 |
| Asian | 2 | — | — | — | 0.6 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 8 | — | — | — | 3.8 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 6 | — | — | — | 2.6 |
| Native American | 0 | — | — | — | 3.5 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 2 | — | — | — | 2.5 |
| White | 496 | 5.7 | 8.5 | 8.1 | 1.5 |
| High needs | 281 | 8.0 | 10.7 | 11.4 | 3.6 |
| Low income | 250 | 8.3 | 10.2 | 11.2 | 4.0 |
| English learners | 3 | — | — | — | 2.6 |
| Students w/disabilities | 96 | 12.7 | 13.4 | 11.5 | 4.5 |

Table E16. Advanced Coursework Completion Rates by Student Group, 2022-2024

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # Included (2024) | 2022 (%) | 2023 (%) | 2024 (%) | State 2024 (%) |
| All | 251 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 67.2 |
| African American/Black | 3 | — | — | — | 58.2 |
| Asian | 1 | — | — | — | 86.4 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 2 | — | — | — | 53.7 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 1 | — | — | — | 68.4 |
| Native American | — | — | — | — | 57.1 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 1 | — | — | — | 59.8 |
| White | 243 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 71.9 |
| High needs | 118 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 52.0 |
| Low income | 113 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 53.1 |
| English learners | — | — | — | — | 31.8 |
| Students w/disabilities | 26 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 38.5 |

Table E17. Accountability Results, 2024

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| School | Cumulative Progress Toward Improvement Targets (%) | Percentile | Overall Classification | Reason for Classification |
| District | 50 | — | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Substantial progress toward targets |
| Charles H. McCann Technical School | 50 | 36 | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Substantial progress toward targets |

1. For more information on the Teachstone CLASS protocol, visit <https://teachstone.com/class/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. CURATE: CUrriculum RAtings by TEachers. See <https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate>. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. DESE’s District Standards and Indicators are available at <https://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/district-review/district-standards-indicators.docx>. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Districts with similar demographics and similar wealth are based on Resource Allocation and District Action Reports ([RADAR](https://www.doe.mass.edu/research/radar/)) (retrieved February 2024) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Average teacher salary is based on educators reported to DESE through EPIMS data collection, and does not include postsecondary or postgraduate teachers. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Average teacher salary is based on educators reported to DESE through EPIMS data collection, and does not include postsecondary or postgraduate teachers. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. 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-8)
8. Column headings for Tables E1-E6: M/E = meeting or exceeding expectations; PME = partially meeting expectations; NM = not meeting expectations. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)