Targeted District Review Report

Pentucket Regional School District

Review conducted February 12–15, 2018

Office of District Reviews and Monitoring

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Executive Summary

The Pentucket Regional School District serves students from pre-kindergarten through grade 12 from the towns of Groveland, Merrimac, and West Newbury. The Bagnall Elementary School is in Groveland; the Sweetsir and Donaghue elementary schools are in Merrimac; and the Page Elementary School is in West Newbury. Between 2014 and 2018, Pentucket’s enrollment decreased 13.2 percent, from 2,846 in 2013 to 2,469 in 2018. In 2018, economically disadvantaged students made up 11.7 percent of the district, compared with the state rate of 32 percent. The district served a higher percentage of students with disabilities than the state; the district rate was 19 percent, the state rate 17 percent.

In 2017, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS assessment in grades 3–8 was below the state rates in ELA and math in each tested grade, except for grade 7 ELA. The percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on the 10th Grade MCAS assessment was above the state rates in ELA and math. Between 2014 and 2017, in science, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on the MCAS assessment declined in the 5th and 8th grades and improved in the 10th grade.

Before the arrival of the superintendent in 2012, the district had done little to address aligning curriculum with the state curriculum frameworks, and teachers were implementing curriculum units that they had developed on their own. The district has since developed a four-phase process to arrive at a complete curriculum, one that includes personal meaning and adaptive leadership as well as content knowledge. At the time of the site review in February 2018, the district had completed phase I of the process: The Pentucket Curriculum, which specifies core course objectives for all grade levels and disciplines. The Pentucket Curriculum also includes priority standards for each grade, which are aligned with the Massachusetts frameworks. The Pentucket Curriculum is not comprehensive; it does not include pacing guides, timelines, instructional strategies, assessments, and resources. Development of these components is planned for Phase II. At the time of the onsite review, teacher teams were using rubrics to review curriculum options and make recommendations for the adoption of K–8 programs by May 2018. Grades 9–12 will follow suit in subsequent years, as will the remaining phases of the curriculum renewal plan.

The district provides ample staff to support its students’ social-emotional needs. However, these efforts are restricted by the limited time and support provided to teachers to develop data literacy and to analyze and use data to inform instruction.

The voluntary nature of professional development in the district prevents some teachers from developing the necessary skills and knowledge to implement the district’s priorities with fidelity.

**Instruction**

The team observed 62 classes throughout the district: 22 at the high school, 11 at the middle school, and 29 at 3 elementary schools.[[1]](#footnote-1) The team observed 26 ELA classes, 18 mathematics classes, 8 science classes, and 10 classes in other subject areas. Among the classes observed were 21 classes with several adults working with students; 3 of those were identified as co-taught classes. The observations were approximately 20 minutes in length. All review team members collected data using ESE’s Instructional Inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards-based teaching. This data is presented in Appendix C.

The quality of instruction in the 62 observed lessons varied greatly. Observers noted that teachers had established routines and supports to encourage appropriate student behavior, and a positive classroom climate was firmly in place districtwide. While there were exemplars of high-quality, standards-based teaching at the high-school level, the review team found that instruction was generally stronger at the elementary and middle-school levels. Across the district in observed lessons, the review team did not find a high incidence of teachers ensuring that students understood what they were learning and why; student engagement in lessons characterized by rigorous, higher-order thinking and active learning; students communicating their ideas and thinking with each other; lessons built around challenging tasks that addressed students’ diverse learning needs; and teachers’ use of a variety of instructional strategies.

**Strengths**

* The district’s vision for standards-based instruction focuses on developing the whole child. In addition to teaching the knowledge, skills, and understandings embedded in the current Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, the district has articulated the expectation that academic work in all content areas should include opportunities for students to derive personal meaning and develop adaptive leadership skills.
* The district has adopted a focus on social-emotional supports, wellness, and safety for all students.

**Challenges and Areas for Growth**

* The Pentucket Curriculum is missing essential components that would help to ensure the consistent use, alignment, and effective and timely delivery of a curriculum across grade levels in each discipline.
* Participation in professional development (PD) courses is voluntary. A limited number of teachers take advantage of the PD workshops designed to support them as they implement the district’s initiatives.
* The district has not established a common understanding of its expectations for effective, research-based instruction.
* In observed instruction, the quality of instruction was inconsistent. There was a consistently lower incidence of characteristics of effective instruction at the high-school level.
* The district does not have a centralized student information management system to house student achievement data.
* The district does not have sufficient, consistent time or structures for staff to develop data literacy, analyze data, and use data to make decisions about teaching and learning.
* The district has limited assessment data for identification and progress monitoring, limited scheduled time for supplementary academic support, and limited instructional resources.

**Recommendations**

* The district should ensure that its curriculum renewal plan results in a fully documented and aligned curriculum that is expeditiously completed and consistently and effectively delivered districtwide.
* The district should strengthen the data literacy skills of its leaders, educators, and data teams to enable them to make data-driven instructional decisions that can have an impact on teaching and learning.
* The district should develop and implement more extensive and systematic practices to improve and monitor instruction.
* The district should reallocate time and resources to support the use of data to identify and address students’ strengths and needs.

Pentucket Regional School District Targeted District Review Overview

Purpose

Conducted under Chapter 15, Section 55A of the Massachusetts General Laws, targeted district reviews support local school districts in establishing or strengthening a cycle of continuous improvement. In general, districts performing at the 20th percentile or above receive a targeted review, while lower-performing districts receive a comprehensive review.[[2]](#footnote-2) Reviews consider carefully the effectiveness of systemwide functions, with reference to three district standards used by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE). Targeted reviews address one of the following sets of three standards: **Governance and Administrative Systems** (Leadership and Governance, Human Resources and Professional Development, and Financial and Asset Management standards) or **Student-Centered Systems** (Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment, and Student Support standards)—and may include the team’s observations/thoughts about systems and practices in the set of standards not being addressed. All targeted reviews include finding(s) about instruction based on classroom observations. A targeted review identifies systems and practices that may be impeding improvement as well as those most likely to be contributing to positive results. The targeted district review is designed to promote district reflection on its own performance and potential next steps. In addition to being a tool that districts can use to inform their own improvement efforts, review reports may be used by ESE to identify technical assistance and other resources to provide to the district. This targeted review by the Office of District Reviews and Monitoring focused on the following standards: Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment, and Student Support.

Methodology

Reviews collect evidence for each of the three district standards identified as the focus of the targeted review. Team members also observe classroom instructional practice. A district review team consisting of independent consultants with expertise in the district standards reviews documentation, data, and reports for two days before conducting a three-day district visit that includes visits to individual schools. The team conducts interviews and focus group sessions with such stakeholders as school committee members, teachers’ association representatives, administrators, teachers, parents, and students. Subsequent to the onsite review, the team meets for two days to develop findings and recommendations before submitting a draft report to ESE.

Site Visit

The site visit to the Pentucket Regional School District was conducted from February 12–15, 2018. The site visit included 19 hours of interviews and focus groups with approximately 58 stakeholders, including school committee members, district administrators, school staff, students, students’ families, and teachers’ association representatives. The review team conducted two focus groups, one with one elementary-school teacher and another with eight middle-school and high-school teachers.

A list of review team members, information about review activities, and the site visit schedule are in Appendix A, and Appendix B provides information about enrollment, attendance, and expenditures. The team observed classroom instructional practice in 62 classrooms in 5 schools. The team collected data using ESE’s Instructional Inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards-based teaching. This data is contained in Appendix C.

**District Profile**

The Pentucket Regional School district serves students from pre-kindergarten through grade 12 from the towns of Groveland, Merrimac, and West Newbury. The Bagnall Elementary School is in Groveland; the Sweetsir and Donaghue elementary schools are in Merrimac; and the Page Elementary School is in West Newbury.

The Pentucket Regional School District is governed by a nine-member school committee, which meets every two or three weeks. The chair of the school committee is elected.

The current superintendent has been in the position since July 2012. The district leadership team includes the superintendent, the assistant superintendent, the business manager, the director of special education, and the director of information services, the principal of the high school, the principal of the middle school, the principal of the Page Elementary School, the principal of the Bagnall Elementary School, and the principal of the Donaghue and Sweetsir elementary schools. Central office positions have been mostly stable in number over the past six years with one exception. The assistant superintendent position was eliminated in 2014 and reinstated in July 2017. Both the middle school and the high school have an assistant principal. In 2017–2018, there were 194.3 teachers in the district.

In the 2017–2018 school year, 2,469 students were enrolled in the district’s 6 schools:

**Table 1: Pentucket Regional School District,**

**Type, Grades Served, and Enrollment\*, 2017–2018**

| **School**  | **School Type** | **Grades Served** | **Enrollment** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sweetsir  | EES | Pre-K–02 | 218 |
| Bagnall | ES | Pre-K–6 | 505 |
| Donaghue | ES | 3–6 | 241 |
| Page | ES | Pre-K–6 | 241 |
| Pentucket Regional Middle | MS | 7–8 | 422 |
| Pentucket Regional High | HS | 9–12 | 742 |
| **Totals** | **6 schools** | **Pre-K-–12** | **2,469** |
| \*As of October 1, 2017 |

Between 2014 and 2018 overall student enrollment decreased by 13.2 percent. Enrollment figures by race/ethnicity and high needs populations (i.e., students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, and English language learners (ELLs) and former ELLs) as compared with the state are provided in Tables B1a and B1b in Appendix B.

Total in-district per-pupil expenditures were higher than the median in-district per pupil expenditures for 47 K–12 districts of similar size (2,000–2,999 students) in fiscal year 2016:  $13,993 as compared with $13,932 (see [District Analysis and Review Tool Detail: Staffing and Finance](http://www.doe.mass.edu/dart/)). Actual net school spending has been well above what is required by the Chapter 70 state education aid program, as shown in Table B3 in Appendix B.

Student Performance

**Note:** The Next-Generation MCAS assessment is administered to grades 3–8 in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics; it was administered for the first time in 2017. (For more information, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/parents/results-faq.html>.) The MCAS assessment is administered to grades 5 and 8 in science and to grade 10 in ELA, math, and science. Data from the two assessments are presented separately because the tests are different and cannot be compared.

**The average scaled score on the Next-Generation MCAS assessment for all students was below the state rate by 1.9 points in ELA and below the state rate by 3.9 points in math.**

| **Table 2: Pentucket Regional School District****Next-Generation MCAS ELA and Math Average Scaled Score (SS) Grades 3-–8, 2017** |
| --- |
| **Group** | **N** | **ELA SS** | **State SS** | **N** | **Math SS** | **State SS** |
| High Needs | 352 | 485.2 | 488.5 | 353 | 481.8 | 488.1 |
| Econ. Dis. | 156 | 486.2 | 489.2 | 156 | 484.2 | 488.1 |
| SWD | 264 | 482.0 | 480.0 | 265 | 478.6 | 479.8 |
| ELLs | 3 | -- | 484.9 | 3 | -- | 486.8 |
| All | 1,203 | 497.2 | 499.1 | 1,210 | 494.9 | 498.8 |
| Next Generation MCAS Achievement Levels: 440–470 Not Meeting Expectations; 470–500 Partially Meeting Expectations; 500–530 Meeting Expectations; 530–560 Exceeding Expectations |

**The percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS assessment in grades 3–8 was below the state rate by 4 percentage points in ELA (45 percent vs. 49 percent) and below the state rate by 9 percentage points in math (39 percent vs. 48 percent).**

* The percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations was below the state rate in ELA for high needs students and economically disadvantaged students by 8 and 7 percentage points, respectively, and above the state rate by 1 percentage point for students with disabilities.
* The percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectation was below the state rate in math for high needs students and economically disadvantaged students by 11 and 7 percentage points, respectively, and below the state rate by 2 percentage points for students with disabilities by 2 percentage points.

| **Table 3: Pentucket Regional School District****Next-Generation MCAS ELA and Math Percent Meeting or Exceeding (M/E) Expectations Grades 3–8, 2017**  |
| --- |
| **Group** | **N** | **ELA M/E** | **State M/E** | **Above/Below State** | **N** | **Math M/E** | **State M/E** | **Above/Below State** |
| High Needs | 352 | 19% | 27% | -8 | 353 | 16% | 27% | -11 |
| Econ. Dis. | 156 | 22% | 29% | -7 | 156 | 20% | 27% | -7 |
| SWD | 264 | 14% | 13% | 1 | 265 | 12% | 14% | -2 |
| ELLs | 3 | -- | 23% | -- | 3 | -- | 26% | -- |
| All | 1,203 | 45% | 49% | -4 | 1,210 | 39% | 48% | -9 |

**The percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on the MCAS assessment in 10th grade was 7 and 10 percentage points above the state rate in ELA and math, respectively.**

* In ELA, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced was above the state rate by 11 to 19 percentage points for high needs students, economically disadvantaged students, and students with disabilities.
* In math, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced was above the state rate by 11 percentage points for economically disadvantaged students and below the state rate by 3 and 7 percentage points for high needs students and students with disabilities, respectively.

| **Table 4: Pentucket Regional School District****MCAS ELA and Math Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grade 10, 2017** |
| --- |
| **Group** | **N** | **ELA** | **State** | **Above/Below State** | **N** | **Math** | **State** | **Above/Below State** |
| High Needs | 29 | 90% | 79% | 11 | 29 | 55% | 58% | -3 |
| Econ. Dis. | 14 | 100% | 81% | 19 | 14 | 71% | 60% | 11 |
| SWD | 17 | 82% | 68% | 14 | 17 | 35% | 42% | -7 |
| ELLs | -- | -- | 59% | -- | -- | -- | 39% | -- |
| All | 160 | 98% | 91% | 7 | 159 | 89% | 79% | 10 |

**Between 2014 and 2017, science proficiency for all students and students with disabilities declined by 8 percentage points, and science proficiency for high needs students declined by 7 percentage points.**

| **Table 5: Pentucket Regional School District****MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grades 5, 8, and 10, 2014–2017** |
| --- |
| **Group** | **N (2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr change** | **State (2017)** |
| High Needs | 143 | 36% | 27% | 33% | 29% | -7 | 31% |
| Econ. Dis. | 65 | -- | 36% | 39% | 34% | -- | 32% |
| SWD | 96 | 31% | 18% | 23% | 23% | -8 | 21% |
| ELLs | 2 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 20% |
| All | 571 | 63% | 53% | 56% | 55% | -8 | 53% |

**In ELA, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS assessment was 4 percentage points below the state rate in grades 3-–8 as a whole and 6 to 8 percentage points below the state rate in the 3rd through 6th grades, and 3 percentage points below the state rate in the 8th grade.**

**In math, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS assessment was 9 percentage points below the state rate in grades 3-–8 as a whole, 12 to 16 percentage points below the state rate in the 3rd, 4th, and 8th grades, 7 percentage points below the state rate in the 5th grade, and 4 and 2 percentage points below the state rate in the 6th and 7th grades, respectively.**

| **Table 6: Pentucket Regional School District** **Next-Generation MCAS ELA and Math Percent Meeting or Exceeding (M/E) Expectations in Grades 3–8, 2017** |
| --- |
| **Grade** | **N** | **ELA M/E** | **State ELA** | **Difference** | **N** | **Math M/E** | **State Math** | **Difference** |
| 3 | 148 | 39% | 47% | -8 | 150 | 37% | 49% | -12 |
| 4 | 206 | 40% | 48% | -8 | 207 | 33% | 49% | -16 |
| 5 | 184 | 42% | 49% | -7 | 186 | 39% | 46% | -7 |
| 6 | 205 | 45% | 51% | -6 | 207 | 46% | 50% | -4 |
| 7 | 220 | 56% | 50% | 6 | 221 | 45% | 47% | -2 |
| 8 | 240 | 46% | 49% | -3 | 239 | 35% | 48% | -13 |
| 3–8 | 1,203 | 45% | 49% | -4 | 1,210 | 39% | 48% | -9 |

**Between 2014 and 2017, in science, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on the MCAS assessment declined by 8 percentage points in the district as a whole and by 19 and 7 percentage points in the 5th and 8th grades, and improved by 7 percentage points in the 10th grades.**

| **Table 7: Pentucket Regional School District****MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grades 5, 8, and 10, 2014–2017** |
| --- |
| **Grade** | **N (2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2017)** |
| 5 | 186 | 61% | 44% | 48% | 42% | -19 | 46% |
| 8 | 239 | 50% | 36% | 41% | 43% | -7 | 40% |
| 10 | 146 | 85% | 89% | 87% | 92% | 7 | 74% |
| All | 571 | 63% | 53% | 56% | 55% | -8 | 53% |

**Between 2014 and 2017, in ELA the median student growth percentile (SGP) declined by 11 to 14 points in the 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grades and by 19 points in the 4th grade.**

| **Table 8: Pentucket Regional School District****ELA Median Student Growth Percentile, 2014–2017** |
| --- |
| **Grade** | **N (2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2017)** |
| 3 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 4 | 185 | 54.0 | 54.0 | 36.0 | 35.0 | -19.0 | 50.0 |
| 5 | 171 | 54.0 | 61.0 | 46.0 | 41.0 | -13.0 | 50.0 |
| 6 | 197 | 50.0 | 63.0 | 53.0 | 36.0 | -14.0 | 50.0 |
| 7 | 211 | 58.0 | 50.0 | 38.0 | 47.0 | -11.0 | 50.0 |
| 8 | 227 | 49.0 | 53.0 | 42.0 | 36.0 | -13.0 | 50.0 |
| 10 | 151 | 56.0 | 62.0 | 51.5 | 49.0 | -7.0 | 50.0 |
| Changes in SGP of 10 points or more are considered meaningful. |

**Between 2014 and 2017, in math, the median SGP declined by 15 points in the 4th grade, by 18.5 points in the 8th grade, and by 11 points in the 10th grade, and improved by 10 points in the 6th grade.**

| **Table 9: Pentucket Regional School District** **Math Median Student Growth Percentile, 2014–2017** |
| --- |
| **Grade** | **N (2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2017)** |
| 3 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 4 | 186 | 46.0 | 33.0 | 30.0 | 31.0 | -15.0 | 50.0 |
| 5 | 173 | 44.0 | 22.0 | 39.0 | 48.0 | 4.0 | 50.0 |
| 6 | 199 | 48.0 | 54.0 | 54.0 | 58.0 | 10.0 | 50.0 |
| 7 | 209 | 47.0 | 37.0 | 44.0 | 52.0 | 5.0 | 50.0 |
| 8 | 224 | 42.0 | 34.0 | 45.0 | 23.5 | -18.5 | 50.0 |
| 10 | 150 | 58.0 | 58.0 | 54.0 | 47.0 | -11.0 | 50.0 |
| Changes in SGP of 10 points or more are considered meaningful. |

**In ELA, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS assessment ranged from 35 to 44 percent in the 3rd grade, from 23 to 63 percent in the 4th grade, from 22 to 70 percent in the 5th grade, and from 34 to 58 percent in the 6th grade. The percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations in ELA was 56 and 47 percent in the 7th and 8th grades, respectively, at Pentucket Regional Middle.**

| **Table 10: Pentucket Regional School District****Next-Generation MCAS ELA Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations by Grade and School, 2017** |
| --- |
| **School** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **3–8** |
| Bagnall | 44% | 42% | 43% | 34% | -- | -- | 40% |
| Donaghue | 35% | 23% | 22% | 58% | -- | -- | 34% |
| Page | 43% | 63% | 70% | 48% | -- | -- | 56% |
| Pentucket Regional Middle | -- | -- | -- | -- | 56% | 47% | 51% |
| District | 39% | 40% | 42% | 45% | 56% | 46% | 45% |
| State | 47% | 48% | 49% | 51% | 50% | 49% | 49% |

**In math, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS assessment ranged from 32 to 46 percent in the 3rd grade, from 22 to 46 percent in the 4th grade, from 28 to 59 percent in the 5th grade, and from 38 to 58 percent in the 6th grade. The percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations in math was 46 and 35 percent in the 7th and 8th grades, respectively, at Pentucket Regional Middle.**

| **Table 11: Pentucket Regional School District****Next-Generation MCAS Math Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations by Grade and School, 2017** |
| --- |
| **School** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **3–8** |
| Bagnall | 46% | 22% | 37% | 38% | -- | -- | 35% |
| Donaghue | 40% | 46% | 28% | 47% | -- | -- | 40% |
| Page | 32% | 38% | 59% | 58% | -- | -- | 48% |
| Pentucket Regional Middle | -- | -- | -- | -- | 46% | 35% | 40% |
| District | 37% | 33% | 39% | 46% | 45% | 35% | 39% |
| State | 49% | 49% | 46% | 50% | 47% | 48% | 48% |

**On the MCAS assessment in the 10th grade, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced at Pentucket Regional Senior High was 100 percent in ELA and above the state rate by 12 percentage points in math**.

| **Table 12: Pentucket Regional School District****MCAS ELA and Math Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grade 10, 2017** |
| --- |
| **School** | **ELA** | **Math** |
| Pentucket Regional Senior High | 100% | 91% |
| State | 91% | 79% |

**In science, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on the MCAS assessment ranged from 26 to 64 percent in the 5th grade in the three elementary schools with reportable data, and was 42 percent in the 8th grade at Pentucket Regional Middle, and 94 percent in the 10th grade at Pentucket Regional Senior High.**

| **Table 13: Pentucket Regional School District****MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced by School and Grade, 2017** |
| --- |
| **School** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **10** | **Total** |
| Sweetsir | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Bagnall | -- | -- | 43% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 43% |
| Donaghue | -- | -- | 26% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 26% |
| Page | -- | -- | 64% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 64% |
| Pentucket Regional Middle | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 43% | -- | 43% |
| Pentucket Regional Senior High | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 94% | 94% |
| District | -- | -- | 42% | -- | -- | 43% | 92% | 55% |
| State | -- | -- | 46% | -- | -- | 40% | 74% | 53% |

**In ELA, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS assessment ranged from 34 to 56 percent in the district’s schools.**

* The percentage of high needs students meeting or exceeding expectations in ELA ranged from 18 to 24 percent in the district’s schools.
* The percentage of economically disadvantaged students meeting or exceeding expectations in ELA ranged from 12 to 33 percent in the district’s schools.
* The percentage of students with disabilities meeting or exceeding expectations in ELA ranged from 10 to 20 percent in the district’s schools.

**In math, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS assessment ranged from 35 to 48 percent in the district’s schools.**

* The percentage of high needs students meeting or exceeding expectations in math ranged from 11 to 26 percent in the district’s schools.
* The percentage of economically disadvantaged students meeting or exceeding expectations in math ranged from 16 to 33 percent in the district’s schools.
* The percentage of students with disabilities meeting or exceeding expectations in math ranged from 7 to 22 percent in the district’s schools.

| **Table 14: Pentucket Regional School District****Next-Generation MCAS ELA and Math Percent Meeting and Exceeding Expectations by School, 2017** |
| --- |
|  | **ELA** | **Math** |
| **School** | **All** | **High Needs** | **Econ. Dis.** | **SWD** | **ELLs** | **All** | **High Needs** | **Econ. Dis.** | **SWD** | **ELLs** |
| Sweetsir | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Bagnall | 40% | 18% | 23% | 10% | -- | 35% | 11% | 16% | 7% | -- |
| Donaghue | 34% | 16% | 12% | 14% | -- | 40% | 16% | 16% | 14% | -- |
| Page | 56% | 24% | 33% | 20% | -- | 48% | 26% | 33% | 22% | -- |
| Pentucket Regional Middle | 51% | 24% | 32% | 17% | -- | 40% | 19% | 25% | 13% | -- |
| District | 45% | 19% | 22% | 14% | -- | 39% | 16% | 20% | 12% | -- |

**Between 2014 and 2017, ELA proficiency at Pentucket Regional Senior High improved by 2 percentage points for all students and by 9 and 10 percentage points for high needs students and students with disabilities, respectively.**

**Between 2014 and 2017, math proficiency at Pentucket Regional Senior High improved for all students by 1 percentage point and declined by 3 and 4 percentage points for high needs students and students with disabilities, respectively.**

| **Table 15: Pentucket Regional School District****MCAS ELA and Math Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grade 10, 2014-2017** |
| --- |
|  | **ELA** | **Math** |
| **School** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** |
| Pentucket Regional Senior High | 98% | 97% | 97% | 100% | 2 | 90% | 90% | 87% | 91% | 1 |
| High Needs | 91% | 84% | 85% | 100% | 9 | 67% | 56% | 59% | 64% | -3 |
| Econ. Dis. | -- | 89% | 89% | 100% | -- | -- | 78% | 67% | 71% | -- |
| ELLs | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| SWD | 90% | 75% | 75% | 100% | 10 | 50% | 31% | 45% | 46% | -4 |

**Between 2014 and 2017,** **in science, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on the MCAS assessment declined by 13 to 25 percentage points in the three elementary schools with reportable data, by 8 percentage points at Pentucket Regional Middle, and improved by 8 points at Pentucket Regional Senior High.**

* Science proficiency for high needs students declined by 7 to 20 percentage points in the district’s elementary schools, by 8 percentage points at Pentucket Regional Middle, and improved by 17 percentage points at Pentucket Regional Senior High.
* In 2017, science proficiency for economically disadvantaged students was 23 percent at Donaghue, 14 percent at Pentucket Regional Middle, and 85 percent at Pentucket Regional Senior High.
* In 2017, science proficiency for students with disabilities ranged from 7 to 27 percent in the district’s elementary schools, was 16 percent at Pentucket Regional Middle, and 77 percent at Pentucket Regional Senior High.

| **Table 16: Pentucket Regional School District****MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Science by School and Subgroup, 2014-2017** |
| --- |
| **School** | **N (2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** |
| Sweetsir | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Bagnall | 70 | 56% | 42% | 42% | 43% | -13 |
| High Needs | 21 | 31% | 23% | 35% | 24% | -7 |
| Econ. Dis. | 9 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| SWD | 14 | 39% | 19% | 29% | 14% | -25 |
| ELLs | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Donaghue | 66 | 51% | 31% | 38% | 26% | -25 |
| High Needs | 23 | 33% | 17% | 15% | 13% | -20 |
| Econ. Dis. | 13 | -- | 20% | 20% | 23% | -- |
| SWD | 15 | 18% | 11% | 8% | 7% | -11 |
| ELLs | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Page | 45 | 78% | 66% | 68% | 64% | -14 |
| High Needs | 14 | 42% | 42% | 35% | 29% | -13 |
| Econ. Dis. | 5 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| SWD | 11 | 40% | -- | 27% | 27% | -13 |
| ELLs | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Pentucket Regional Middle | 237 | 51% | 36% | 41% | 43% | -8 |
| High Needs | 54 | 25% | 15% | 20% | 17% | -8 |
| Econ. Dis. | 22 | -- | 19% | 28% | 14% | -- |
| SWD | 37 | 17% | 10% | 9% | 16% | -1 |
| ELLs | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Pentucket Regional Senior High | 144 | 86% | 89% | 88% | 94% | 8 |
| High Needs | 24 | 66% | 52% | 66% | 83% | 17 |
| Econ. Dis. | 13 | -- | 75% | 65% | 85% | -- |
| SWD | 13 | 57% | 20% | 53% | 77% | 20 |
| ELLs | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |

**Between 2014 and 2017, the district’s four-year cohort graduation rate for all students improved 2.4 percentage points, from 92.8 in 2014 to 95.2 percent in 2017, above the 2017 state rate of 88.3 percent.**

| **Table 17: Pentucket Regional School District****Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates, 2014–2017** |
| --- |
| **Group** | **N** **(2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2017)** |
| High needs | 45 | 82.0% | 88.1% | 66.0% | 82.2% | 0.2 | 80.0% |
| Economically Disadvantaged\* | 32 | 90.5% | 90.9% | 58.1% | 78.1% | -12.4 | 79.0% |
| ELLs | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 63.4% |
| SWD | 24 | 75.7% | 80.0% | 62.1% | 75.0% | -0.7 | 72.8% |
| African American | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 80.0% |
| Asian | 3 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 94.1% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 5 | -- | 83.3% | -- | -- | -- | 74.4% |
| Multi-Race, non-Hisp./Lat. | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 85.2% |
| White | 178 | 92.3% | 95.5% | 91.5% | 96.1% | 3.8 | 92.6% |
| All  | 188 | 92.8% | 95.1% | 90.5% | 95.2% | 2.4 | 88.3% |
| \* Four-year cohort graduation rate for students from low-income families used for 2014 and 2015 rates. |

**Between 2013 and 2016, the district’s five-year cohort graduation rate decreased by 1.5 percentage points for all students, from 92.0 percent in 2013 to 90.5 percent in 2016, and decreased for each subgroup with reportable data.**

| **Table 18: Pentucket Regional School District****Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates, 2013–2016** |
| --- |
| **Group** | **N** **(2016)** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2016)** |
| High needs | 53 | 82.5% | 82.0% | 93.2% | 66.0% | -16.5 | 82.9% |
| Economically Disadvantaged\* | 31 | 85.7% | 90.5% | 97.0% | 58.1% | -27.6 | 82.1% |
| ELLs | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 70.9% |
| SWD | 29 | 77.8% | 75.7% | 88.6% | 62.1% | -15.7 | 76.5% |
| African American | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 83.4% |
| Asian | 5 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 94.8% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 1 | -- | -- | 83.3% | -- | -- | 76.8% |
| Multi-Race, non-Hisp./Lat. | 4 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 87.4% |
| White | 177 | 93.2% | 92.3% | 97.0% | 91.5% | -1.7 | 93.5% |
| All | 189 | 92.0% | 92.8% | 96.6% | 90.5% | -1.5 | 89.8% |
| \* Four-year cohort graduation rate for students from low-income families used for 2012, 2013, and 2014 rates. |

**Between 2014 and 2017, the district’s in-school suspension rates increased by 1.3 percentage points for all students and by 1.4 to 2.6 percentage points for each subgroup with reportable data.**

| **Table 19: Pentucket Regional School District****In-School Suspension Rates by Subgroup, 2014–2017** |
| --- |
| **Group** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2017)** |
| High Needs | 0.5% | 3.0% | 2.8% | 2.9% | 2.4 | 2.6% |
| Economically disadvantaged\* | -- | 2.9% | 2.4% | 3.9% | -- | 2.9% |
| ELLs | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 1.7% |
| SWD | 0.8% | 3.5% | 3.0% | 3.4% | 2.6 | 3.1% |
| African American | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 3.3% |
| Asian | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 0.5% |
| Hispanic or Latino | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 2.5% |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic or Latino | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 2.1% |
| White | 0.4% | 1.6% | 1.7% | 1.8% | 1.4 | 1.3% |
| All  | 0.4% | 1.7% | 1.6% | 1.7% | 1.3 | 1.7% |

\*Suspension rates for students from low-income families used for 2013 and 2014 rates.

**In 2017, the district’s out-of-school suspension rates were below the state rate for all students and for each subgroup with reportable data.**

| **Table 20: Pentucket Regional School District****Out-of-School Suspension Rates by Subgroup, 2014–2017** |
| --- |
| **Group** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2017)** |
| High Needs | 0.9% | 1.6% | 1.3% | 2.2% | 1.3 | 4.5% |
| Economically disadvantaged\* | -- | 1.4% | 0.9% | 2.4% | -- | 5.3% |
| ELLs | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 3.8% |
| SWD | 1.3% | 1.9% | 1.9% | 2.9% | 1.6 | 5.5% |
| African American/ | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 6.3% |
| Asian | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 0.7% |
| Hispanic or Latino | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 5.2% |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic or Latino | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 3.1% |
| White | 0.4% | 0.6% | 0.7% | 1.0% | 0.6 | 1.6% |
| All  | 0.4% | 0.7% | 0.6% | 1.0% | 0.6 | 2.8% |

\* Suspension rates for students from low-income families used for 2013 and 2014 rates.

**Between 2014 and 2017, the district’s dropout rate declined for each group with reportable data and in 2017 was 0.3 percent for all students, below the 2017 state rate of 1.8 percent. Dropout rates for each subgroup in the district were also below state rates.**

| **Table 21: Pentucket Regional School District****Dropout Rates by Subgroup, 2014–2017** |
| --- |
| **Group** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2017)** |
| High Needs | 1.3% | 0.8% | 5.0% | 0.8% | -0.5 | 3.5% |
| Economically disadvantaged\* | -- | 0.0% | 5.4% | 0.0% | -- | 3.6% |
| ELLs | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 6.5% |
| SWD | 2.2% | 1.3% | 6.7% | 1.2% | -1.0 | 3.3% |
| African American | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 2.9% |
| Asian | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0 | 0.6% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 6.7% | 8.3% | 0.0% | 0.0% | -6.7 | 4.2% |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic or Latino | 9.1% | 25.0% | -- | -- | -- | 1.7% |
| White | 0.7% | 0.4% | 1.3% | 0.3% | -0.4 | 1.1% |
| All  | 0.9% | 0.8% | 1.3% | 0.3% | -0.6 | 1.8% |
| \*Dropout rates for students from low-income families used for 2013 and 2014 rates. |

Curriculum and Instruction

Contextual Background

*Curriculum*

Before the appointment of the superintendent in 2012, the district did not have a documented curriculum for most subjects and grades; textbooks served as curriculum. The superintendent stated that before his arrival teachers were not familiar with the state standards. Teachers told the team that the district had given them wide latitude in the development of their own curriculum materials. They also said that they had assumed that responsibility since they did not have leaders to set expectations for a common curriculum. As a result, when the superintendent arrived in the district, there was little vertical or horizontal alignment of what was taught in the district.

With the arrival of the current superintendent in 2012, district leaders identified curriculum as a crucial need; but, at the time of the review team’s site visit in February 2018, the district was still in the early stages of a four-phase, districtwide curriculum renewal and oversight process.

In fall 2016, the district began phase I of the curriculum renewal process, which was informed by the Pentucket Regional School District’s 2017–2018 District Capacity-Building Plan. The Pentucket Curriculum, which was published in May 2017, spans all grade levels and disciplines. Priority standards for each grade are aligned with the Massachusetts frameworks. The Curriculum specifies core course objectives.

In fall 2017, the district appointed an assistant superintendent after it had been without one for four years. She works with principals and department chairs to oversee curriculum, instruction, assessment, and professional development districtwide. In her first year, the assistant superintendent has focused her efforts concerning curriculum development on kindergarten through grade 8.

Phase II of the curriculum renewal process has been underway during the 2017–2018 school year. Teacher teams are using rubrics to review curriculum options and make recommendations for the adoption of K–8 programs by May 2018. Participation on curriculum teams is voluntary. Grades 9–12 will follow suit in subsequent years, as will the remaining phases of the curriculum renewal plan.

The elementary schools have structured time every school day for teachers to collaborate on curriculum. Teachers stated that there were not vertical curriculum alignment meetings at the elementary level. In grades 7–12, curriculum collaboration takes place informally during monthly team meetings.

*Instruction*

The district uses a distributed leadership model to monitor and improve instruction, with principals as instructional leaders. The superintendent, the assistant superintendent, principals, and department chairs in grades 7–12 all have roles in setting expectations for teaching, monitoring practice, and supporting improvement efforts.

The district’s expectations for effective teaching include three components: (1) 12 characteristics of high-quality instruction that leaders adapted mainly from ESE’s educator evaluation teacher rubric; (2) The Pentucket Curriculum, which requires teachers to include personal meaning and adaptive leadership skills in unit design; and (3) at the elementary level, the instructional protocols of the Workshop Model to teach literacy using *Readers and Writers Workshop*. Aspects of these three components form the main part of a rubric that the leadership team uses in weekly instructional rounds to monitor and lead instructional improvement.

District and school leaders and, sometimes volunteer teachers, conduct weekly instructional rounds--- a series of five-minute lesson observations in classrooms---to gather quantitative data about the quality of teaching districtwide Observed teachers can also request specific feedback from principals if they wish. The review team was told that the five-minute lesson observations during instructional rounds are often the only source of evidence of teaching quality used in developing teachers’ summative evaluations in the educator evaluation process. Teachers told the review team that they rarely received personal feedback from administrators on their individual instructional practices.

Opportunities for teacher leadership to improve practice include leading and participating in weekly grade-level and content-level team meetings during common planning time through grade 10. However, the review team found inconsistencies in the frequency and perceived quality of teacher team meetings at various school levels. In addition, the district did not have a collaborative meeting structure for teachers in grades 11 and 12. Department meetings in grades 7–12 happened infrequently.

A unique feature of the district’s PD program is that the superintendent and other members of the leadership team teach most courses, usually in 3 to 5 90-minute sessions after school. The district’s PD courses are voluntary and topics align well with district priorities. However, because participation in PD courses is voluntary and most teachers do not participate in PD the district cannot ensure that all teachers have the skills and knowledge to implement the district’s priorities consistently with fidelity.

**Strength Findings**

**1. The district’s vision for standards-based instruction focuses on developing the whole child. In addition to teaching the knowledge, skills, and understandings embedded in the current Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, the district has articulated the expectation that academic work in all content areas should include opportunities for students to derive personal meaning and develop adaptive leadership skills.**

**A.** Interviewees and a document review indicated that the district expected students to learn to understand “why” academic topics and skills were important and useful to learn.

1. The district has developed a menu and rubric that defines how students at each school level can find personal meaning in academic work. For example, while working to master lesson objectives, students can also learn to act “purposefully, develop deeper self-understanding, and cultivate empathy, compassion and altruism.”

2. In a letter to staff in October 2017, the superintendent advised teachers to “lead with the ‘why,’ so students would be able to connect lesson objectives and topics to the bigger picture.”

3. The “why” of learning is also included in the 2017–2018 Pentucket Instructional Inventory used to monitor teaching quality.

4. Interviewees told the team that the district expected teachers to include a comprehensive section at the beginning of units to address personal meaning.

5. The review team was told that the district wanted to see students engaged in the “why” of the curriculum by having conversations that related the curriculum to real life.

**B.** The district also has articulated the expectation that students should gain more adaptive leadership skills through their schoolwork. The district defines these skills as the ability to “communicate, collaborate, and think strategically, independently and creatively.”

1. The district has developed a menu and rubric that describes the level of students’ adaptive leadership skills to help teachers in the design and implementation of units.

2. The 2017–2018 Pentucket Instructional Inventory used for instructional rounds includes adaptive leadership skills as an expectation for student learning.

 a. Leaders said that elementary teachers collaborated at grade-level meetings to design units that include building students’ adaptive leadership skills.

 b. Teachers in grades 9 and 10 do similar unit development during weekly common planning time.

**Impact**: By requiring that students have opportunities to derive personal meaning from their schoolwork, the district helps students see the relevance of academic study to their own lives and to the real world. By building and expanding students’ leadership skills, the district cultivates students’ abilities to be empathetic, productive, and contributing members of society.

**2. In observed classrooms, teachers had established routines and supports to encourage appropriate student behavior and a positive classroom climate was firmly in place across the district.**

1. Review team members found sufficient and compelling evidence that classroom routines, rituals, and responses were in place to ensure that students behaved appropriately (characteristic #11) in 88 percent of lessons overall (90 percent at the elementary level, 91 percent at the middle-school level, and 82 percent at the high-school level). This enabled students and teachers to focus on learning and teaching.

1. In observed elementary- and middle-school classes, classroom management techniques such as engaging misbehaving students in lesson activities and immersing students in more active and collaborative learning prevented disruptions.

 2. Review team members noted high-school lessons where routines were in place and students were working on the lesson.

 **B.** Observers saw sufficient and compelling evidence that the classroom climate was conducive to teaching and learning (characteristic #12) in 84 percent of lessons overall (83 percent of elementary classrooms, 82 percent of middle-school classrooms, and 87 percent of high-school classrooms).

1.In these classrooms,students and teachers showed respectful and sometimes warm relationships characterized by active listening and polite exchanges.

 a. In observed elementary lessons, team members found that students knew how to work effectively in groups, and students seemed comfortable contributing and asking questions.

 b. In middle- and high -school lessons, observers saw structured, respectful relationships, and a respectful environment.

**Impact:** Consistent, supportive routines and respectful relationships foster a classroom climate that supports learning and teaching. Positive student-to-student and teacher-to-student interactions encourage students to answer and ask hard questions, share ideas, and take risks.

**Challenges and Areas for Growth**

**3. The Pentucket Curriculum is missing essential components that would help to ensure the consistent use, alignment, and effective and timely delivery of a curriculum across grade levels in each discipline.**

**A**. The Pentucket Curriculum includes the following: priority standards from the Massachusetts frameworks K–12; core course objectives linked to real-life applications K–12; and elective courses at the high-school level, aligned with the district’s Innovation Academies.

**B.** The Pentucket Curriculum refers to the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks at each grade level; however, it does not include key curriculum elements such as pacing guides, resources, instructional strategies, timelines, and assessments.

**C.** The Curriculum does not address concerns about horizontal and vertical alignment of the curriculum, which have been a challenge in the district for years.

1.Teachers expressed concern that the district had not provided assurance that vertical and horizontal alignment would be achieved.

2. Teachers stated that there were no longer vertical curriculum alignment meetings at the elementary level. Those meetings ended when The Pentucket Curriculum document was completed.

3. Teachers stated that with students entering the middle school from three different elementary schools, time must be afforded each year to assess each student’s strengths and knowledge base.

 **D.** Teachers expressed the need for clearer communication and consistent information from the administration on what to do with curriculum materials and data analysis.

**Impact:** Without an aligned, consistently delivered, and continually improving curriculum, and without clear and consistent guidance about curriculum implementation, the district cannot ensure that all students have access to high-quality grade‐level curricula that promote higher levels of achievement and ready them for college, career, and civic involvement.

**4. Participation in professional development (PD) courses is voluntary. A limited number of teachers take advantage of the PD workshops designed to support them as they implement the district’s initiatives.[[3]](#footnote-3)**

**A.** The superintendent, other administrators, volunteer teachers, and students who help teach a diversity PD course teach most PD workshops. Exceptions include consultants who taught the UDL course last summer and the Fundations course. Most workshops provide 3 to 5 90-minute sessions after school. Leaders stated that PD was designed to support teachers in using The Pentucket Curriculum.

1. Participation in PD courses is voluntary.

2. Leaders stated that the district’s goal was to train everyone in Universal Design for Learning (UDL) even though PD for UDL was voluntary.

a. About 20 teachers (about 10 percent of professional staff) participated in a three-day UDL PD in August 2017. The expectation was that those teachers would share their ideas with their teams and provide a UDL voice in unit planning. Additional PD for UDL was offered in January 2018 with 27 teachers attending.

b. Teachers stated that the district’s expectations for UDL were unclear, noting that the PD would be more useful if it were “more directed.”

3. Beginning in the 2017–2018 school year, the district is implementing Scholastic Reading Inventory’s (SRI) Lexile and Quantile assessments three times in grades 1–9 to assess students’ reading and math abilities. The goal of using Lexile and Quantile data and other assessment data is to help teachers to differentiate instruction, target assistance, and apply UDL principles to instruction.

 a. Teachers said that they were not sure how the implementation of Lexile assessments would affect curriculum materials already in place. They said that they favored additional, districtwide Lexile and Quantile training.

 b. When asked about using Lexile and Quantile results, elementary teachers stated that they did not know what to do with the scores, noting that they had already assessed students for comprehension and fluency in reading using **Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills** (DIBELS) and Fountas & Pinnell.

 c. Math teachers were still in the early stages of understanding Quantiles. They had not taught some skills that were being tested at certain grade levels.

 d. District leaders stated that teachers did not have a clear understanding of Lexiles and Quantiles and the data did not provide a clear picture of what students knew.

 e. Interviewees reported that teachers at the middle school did not know enough about how to use Lexiles and Quantiles and at the time of the review in February 2018 were using grades and progress reports to measure achievement and progress. Similarly, at the high school, there had not been a “deep dive” into Lexiles and Quantiles (given only in grade 9).

 f. Teachers stated that the district had initially asked for volunteers to teach staff about using Lexile scores but later said that teachers should develop their own plan to use the Lexile data to inform instruction.

 g. Three district-designed, voluntary PD sessions for using Lexile and Quantile were offered after school between October and December 2017. The superintendent planned an additional 90-minute session for February 2018.[[4]](#footnote-4)

 h. A small group of teachers participated in a Lexile and Quantile PD workshop during the first semester and a second workshop had been planned for all teachers on February 16, 2018. This training would take place after teachers had administered the assessments twice.

 4. While PD was offered to develop new units using The Pentucket Curriculum, teachers said that PD and support was not offered on writing core course objectives (CCOs) and more direction was needed.

 5. Some teachers said that they did not have a clear understanding about how to use the rubric to evaluate students’ development in adaptive leadership skills.

 6. Leaders and teachers told the review team that the concept of personal meaning was still somewhat abstract for some and a challenge for others to implement.

 7.“The Pentucket Curriculum: Linking Learning to Real-World Applications,” was offered in three, district-designed voluntary PD sessions from October to December 2017. Those sessions ran concurrently with the Lexile and Quantile PD workshop, making attendance at both impossible. However, attendance at either option was not required.

8. Teachers stated that the district distributed rubrics and menus via email and that related PD was voluntary.

**B.** Teachers said and administrators agreed that they have had little PD on how to differentiate instruction and that their knowledge was in the developing stage.

**C.** Administrators agreed that teacher attendance at voluntary PD sessions has not met their expectations.

 1. Leaders noted that attendance at workshops was not as high as they wanted. In 2017–2018, PD enrollment ranged from just a handful to about 20 or so staff per workshop.

 2. When the review team asked teachers how PD had matched up with the sweeping changes, they responded, “it did not match up.”

**Impact**: Without established expectations that all educators participate in ongoing professional development aligned with the curriculum, the district cannot ensure that all teachers understand and implement district initiatives consistently and with fidelity. As a result, some students may not benefit from district improvement measures.

**5. The district has not established a common understanding of its expectations for effective, research-based instruction.**

**A.** The district leadership team prioritized 12 expectations for high-quality teaching from ESE’s Educator Evaluation Standards and Indicators of Effective Teaching Practice and communicated them to teachers in an email and at faculty meetings.

1. District leaders stated that teachers were on a “continuum” of practice in meeting the 12 expectations.

2. Teachers stated that the information about teaching expectations came to teachers in an email and they just were just “told to do it.”

**B.** Teachers shared differing understandings of the district’s expectations for effective teaching.

When asked to define the district’s expectations for effective teaching, teachers emphasized student-centered instruction, student collaboration, understanding the “why” as a personal connection to learning, and adaptive leadership and did not mention other key classroom practices from the 12 expectations.

When asked about what the district viewed as effective instruction, teachers and administrators cited curricular goals such as teaching “the what” and “the why” of the lesson, rather than teaching practices.

In discussing the expectation that they address adaptive leadership and personal meaning, some teachers told the review team that both were hard to measure, that the district provided professional development (PD) to help them understand personal meaning and adaptive leadership, but PD was voluntary and not many had participated.

In another interview, when asked what adaptive leadership meant, one teacher stated, “I don’t know.” Another responded that there was no problem measuring adaptive leadership, but measuring students’ gains in personal meaning was hard to do, even though the superintendent gave teachers a rubric.

**Impact**: Without a shared understanding of effective instruction and support of instruction, the district cannot ensure that students have access to high-quality instruction that meets their diverse learning needs and optimizes their potential.

**6. In observed classrooms, the quality of instruction was inconsistent. There was a consistently lower incidence of characteristics of effective instruction at the high-school level.**

**A. Focus Area #1, Learning Objective & Expectations** Observers noted inconsistencies in how well teachers explained lesson content and context, provided clear, student-friendly learning objectives and shared or discussed why lesson content was useful or important to learn. The review team also observed inconsistencies in how well lesson activities matched learning objectives and how frequently or effectively teachers checked for student understanding.

1. The team observed sufficient and compelling evidence that teachers demonstrated knowledge of subject matter by explaining lesson content and context in ways that all students could understand (characteristic #1) in 62 percent of elementary lessons, in 73 percent of middle-school lessons, and in just 37 percent of high-school lessons.

 a. In a strong example of knowledge of subject matter and content, in a grade 6 ELA lesson studying character and voice, the teacher clearly emphasized how characters would show a distinct point of view by tone of voice and the language they used and provided examples to the students.

 b. In a middle-school ELA lesson where students were studying the Holocaust, the teacher helped students understand the concept of starvation by having them research the number of calories they consumed in a day compared to characters in the book *Night*.

 c. In contrast, in a middle-school math lesson, the teacher began the class by going over homework without addressing the context or key points of the assignment.

2.Observers found sufficient and compelling evidence that teachers ensured that students understood what they were learning and why (characteristic #2) in 62 percent of elementary lessons, in only 36 percent of middle-school lessons, and in just 28 percent of high-school lessons.

 a. In a grade 2 math lesson on rectilinear figures, the teacher posted a drawing of a rectangle and explained how students could apply their knowledge of area to find areas of the rooms in a floor plan of a house.

 b. At the beginning of a grade 7 science lesson on animal behavior, the teacher introduced the idea of animal behavior using rich content-based vocabulary but did not address why it was important to understand the topic.

 c. Most high-school teachers provided a posted agenda of activities rather than a clear indication of what students would learn, be able to do, or understand by the end of the lesson or unit.

 3. Review team members observed sufficient and compelling evidence that the teacher used classroom activities well matched to lesson objectives in both content and cognitive demand (characteristic #3) in 66 percent of elementary lessons, in 73 percent of middle-school lessons, and in 50 percent of high-school lessons.

 a. In a grade 2 ELA lesson on organizing one’s writing, the teacher modeled how she organized facts by circling them in different colors and discussed with the students what else they could categorize.

 b. In an example of classroom activities not well matched to lesson objectives in both content and cognitive demand, students in a grade 5 ELA/social studies lesson were cutting and pasting pictures into their books; the teacher told the students that their book should look like her book.

 c. In a high-school lesson about differential equations, students were eager to complete a five-page worksheet to solve and plot equations, but there were no opportunities, either orally or on the worksheet, for them to explore how one would use differential equations.

 4. Observers noted sufficient and compelling evidence that teachers skillfully and consistently checked for student understanding and adjusted teaching (characteristic #4) in 69 percent of elementary lessons, in 72 percent of middle-school lessons, and in only 37 percent of high-school lessons.

 a. In a grade 2 ELA lesson, the teacher frequently used formative assessments such as “thumbs-up” and “turn-and-talk” to ensure that students understood the lesson.

 b. In a grade 4 ELA non-fiction lesson, students and the teacher asked questions and gave feedback to a student on her PowerPoint presentation on coal versus hydropower.

 c. In a middle-school math lesson, students were working on slope-intercept equations while the teacher rotated among students to help them understand, and the students helped each other.

 d. In a grade 12 world language class, students watched a video about a major European city while the teacher corrected papers. There was a limited introduction to the video and no use of teaching strategies to ensure understanding or awareness of cultural significance.

**B. Focus Area #2, Student Engagement & Higher-Order Thinking** examines students’ engagement and thinking in lessons. It explores the development of students’ higher-order thinking skills, the extent to which students share ideas and thinking with each other, and whether students have opportunities to involve themselves in tasks connected to real life and the larger world. At all levels, the review team did not observe a high incidence of these instructional practices.

1.Observers noted sufficient and compelling evidence that students have opportunities to assume responsibility to learn and are engaged in the lesson content (characteristic #5) in 66 percent of observed elementary lessons, in 54 percent of middle-school lessons, and in only 46 percent of high-school lessons.

a. In a grade 5 ELA class, students were consistently engaged in writing a response to literature by choosing their own non-fiction topics, using evidence to support their work, and then collaborating in groups or pairs to complete the task.

 b. In a grade 8 ELA lesson, students were conducting research on the Internet, writing about what they found, and carrying on lively discussions with a partner about their work.

 c. In contrast, in many middle-school and high-school lessons, the teacher did most of the thinking and talking in lessons. Most student engagement consisted of answering questions posed by the teacher (often with short answers) or completing worksheets.

2.Review team members noted sufficient and compelling evidence that students engaged in higher-order thinking (characteristic #6) in 44 percent of observed elementary-school lessons, in 45 percent of middle-school lessons, and in 46 percent of high-school lessons.

 a. In a high-school English class on a Shakespearean play, students analyzed scenes, interpreted them, and then compared their analyses with those of other students.

 b. In a different high-school English class, students engaged in a rigorous writing activity that balanced the conceptual, procedural, and application of knowledge using multiple resources. They used Chromebooks to write a two-paragraph satire on topics or themes from a novel using what they knew from their reading supplemented by online research about the history of the topic.

 c. In another high-school English class where the teacher conducted a question-and-answer session on a reading, almost all questions asked for facts and did not require students to analyze or evaluate or apply the ideas presented in the reading.

 3. Observers noted sufficient and compelling evidence that students communicated their ideas and thinking on lesson content with each other (characteristic #7) in 24 percent of elementary lessons, in 36 percent of middle-school lessons, and in 23 percent of high-school lessons. In many observed lessons, the interactions took place between the teacher and the students (teacher-centered) rather than between and among students (student-centered).

 a. In one grade 4 ELA lesson, students were working in small groups discussing their designs and drawings of the interior and exterior of a house as a way to illustrate how structures and spaces serve a need and reflect the cultural ideals of a specific time and place.

 b. In an elementary science lesson, students were copying text from a book that the teacher projected on the interactive white board.

 **C. Focus Area #3, Inclusive Practice & Classroom Culture** Observers found inconsistent use of multiple instructional approaches to engage students and provide challenging as well as equitable opportunities to learn, regardless of students’ diverse learning needs.

 1. Review team members found sufficient and compelling evidence that the teacher ensured that students engaged in challenging tasks regardless of learning needs (characteristic #9) in only 48 percent of elementary lessons, in 63 percent of middle-school lessons, and in just 18 percent of high-school lessons.

 a. In most observed high-school classes, all students worked on the same task or lesson activity. Most tasks were targeted to the middle range of learners, even in Honors classes.

 i. Supports for students with disabilities were often provided in co-taught classes in both English and math at each level.

 ii. Academic support or differentiated activities for students in need of additional challenge or enrichment were not readily apparent.

 b. More than one adult was present in 17 of 29 observed elementary lessons to assist students; however, other than in co-taught classes, observers did not see the additional adults working with small groups in lessons.

 c. In literacy lessons, students often worked in small groups guided by the teacher or read independently in level-appropriate books. In observed math lessons, however, students were not grouped for instruction; rather, all students were engaged in the same task or were supported one-on-one by another adult.

 2. The team noted sufficient and compelling evidence that teachers used a variety of instructional strategies (characteristic #10) in 45 percent of elementary lessons, in only 36 percent of middle-school lessons, and in just 14 percent of high-school lessons.

 a. One strong example of the use of a variety of instructional strategies took place in a grade 6 STEAM lesson where students worked independently on technical scale drawing, research, and reporting out. Several adults assisted and supported students.

 b. In a grade 7 co-taught ELA lesson, teachers worked individually to support groups of students who were responding to questions about a reading selection.

 c. In most observed high-school lessons, students worked in groups on the same activity, or the teacher presented the lesson to the whole class.

**Impact**: When high-quality, research-based instructional practices are not established at all levels, the district cannot ensure that students are prepared for academic work at the next level of their schooling and for college, careers, and civic participation after high school.

**Recommendations**

**1. The district should ensure that its curriculum renewal plan results in a fully documented and aligned curriculum that is expeditiously completed and consistently and effectively delivered districtwide.**

 **A.** The district should ensure that The Pentucket Curriculum includes clearly identified units of study, updated pacing guides, resources, instructional strategies, timelines, and assessments in core subjects at all levels.

 1.  The district should ensure grade-to-grade and school-to-school curriculum alignment vertically and horizontally, including structured time for teachers to align curriculum. The district should pay particular attention to school transitions between grades 6 and 7 and grades 8 and 9.

 **B.** Attendance at professional development offerings aligned with the goals of the districtwide curriculum renewal plan should be mandatory.

1. The district should develop a realistic calendar for the delivery of that professional development.

 **C.** The district should explore possible ways to make structured meeting time among teachers more frequent and more focused on curriculum review and implementation.

**Benefits:** Implementing this recommendation will promote the effective and efficient completion of the district’s curriculum renewal plan and the consistent use, alignment, and delivery of the district’s curricula. Curriculum maps designed to ensure vertical and horizontal alignment as well as alignment to the standards will facilitate collaboration. Implementation of a fully developed curriculum can lead to more effective, consistent teaching in classrooms and, ultimately, higher student achievement.

**Recommended resources:**

* + - ESE’s Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks web page (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/>) provides information about the 2017 ELA/Literacy and Mathematics Frameworks, including grade-by-grade comparisons between the 2010 and 2017 Frameworks and a slide deck supporting implementation of the 2017 Frameworks.
		- DESE’s STEM home page (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/stem/>) provides the 2016 Science and Technology/Engineering Framework and resources supporting its implementation.
		- DESE’s Instructional Materials and Professional Development page ([www.doe.mass.edu/candi/impd/](http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/impd/)) provides resources for improving and collaborating on curriculum, including quick reference guides and maps designed to facilitate cross-district communication about curriculum.
* *ESE’s STE Quality Review Rubric* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/model/rubrics/STE.pdf>) is designed to help educators determine the quality, rigor, and alignment of lessons and units to the 2016 MA STE Curriculum Framework.
	+ - *Quick Reference Guide: Aligning Curriculum to Massachusetts Standards* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/impd/qrg-aligning-curriculum.pdf>) is designed to support teachers, coaches, administrators, and curriculum developers in the work of considering the ways in which curricular materials may diverge from the Massachusetts standards.
		- EdReports.org (<http://www.edreports.org/>) provides free, independent reviews of K–12 education materials. The reviews focus on alignment to the Common Core and other indicators of high quality as recommended by educators.

**2. The district should develop and implement more extensive and systematic practices to improve and monitor instruction.**

1. To engage teachers in instructional improvement and to ensure more purposeful teacher collaboration, the district should establish structures for reflection specifically focused on instructional effectiveness.

1. The district might consider creating teacher-led professional learning communities (PLCs) that meet regularly and frequently at all schools.

 2. Teacher teams should systematically address elements of the district’s expectations for teaching outlined in the district’s teaching expectations and other aspects of effective teaching practice.

3. Principals and teachers should collaborate to identify and prioritize elements of practice for teachers to investigate and improve, often based on the results of instructional rounds.

4. One recommended strategy is to use an “action research model” in which teachers engage in a continuous cycle of co-planning the use of an instructional strategy, trying it, discussing what worked well and what needs further work, making modifications to implement it a second time, and discussing results and improvements once again.

5. Another possible strategy is to design a protocol for looking at student work and use that as a vehicle to discuss the effectiveness of instructional strategies.

1. To clarify meaning and better calibrate ratings on the district’s instructional inventory, the review team recommends that the district develop descriptors for each element in the instructional inventory rubric.

1. ESE defines descriptors as “observable and measureable statements of educator actions and behaviors” aligned to each element in the rubric.[[5]](#footnote-5)

2. Descriptors can identify the expected level of teaching for each indicator so that observers’ ratings can be well calibrated and teachers will understand more clearly the district’s expectations for high-quality teaching.

1. The review team also recommends that the district reinstitute classroom observations longer than the current five minutes to support teachers’ instructional improvement and professional growth.

While five-minute observations of lessons can provide generalized indications of broad strengths and challenges and can promote interesting conversations about practice, they are insufficient in length and detail to help most teachers to meaningfully improve their instruction.

1. The review team believes that the district’s professional development plan should prioritize and stagger specific PD topics over a multi-year period. Priority topics should be mandatory for all teachers.

All teachers should participate in PD opportunities designed to implement the district’s improvement goals. Participation could include leadership roles for exemplary educators.

**Benefits** from implementing this recommendation will include a more coordinated and results-oriented process to monitor and improve instructional practice:

* Teachers can benefit from the depth and breadth of discussions and inquiry into practice that professional learning communities promote.
* Principals and teachers can find useful qualitative data to foster deeper and more insightful conversations with individual teachers about instructional improvement when conducting longer observations of teaching practice.
* The district’s supervisory and evaluation systems will be strengthened by the addition of descriptors to clarify the rubric used for instructional rounds. Longer observations of instruction will encourage deeper conversations and more personalized feedback during the summative process for educator evaluation.
* Professional development will be more widespread and play a more effective role in improving both teaching and learning.
* The ultimate beneficiaries will be students, who will have access to more engaging, rigorous, and meaningful teaching and learning.

**Recommended resources:**

* ESE’s *Calibration Video Library* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/calibration/>) is a collection of professionally created videos of classroom instruction produced by the School Improvement Network. These videos depict a range of practice (this is NOT a collection of exemplars) to support within-district calibration activities that promote a shared understanding of instructional quality and rigor.
* ESE’s *Online Calibration Training Tool* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/calibration/tool/>) uses videos of classroom instruction from ESE’s Calibration Video Library to simulate brief, unannounced observations. Groups of educators, such as a district leadership team, watch a video together and then individually assess the educator’s practice related to specific elements from the Model Classroom Teacher Rubric and provide the educator with written feedback. Through real-time data displays, the group members can then see how their conclusions compare to each other, as well educators throughout the state.
* ESE’s *"What to Look For" Observation Guides (Updated August 2017)* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/observation/>) describe what observers should expect to see in a classroom at a particular grade level in a specific subject area. This includes the knowledge and skills students should be learning and using (as reflected in state learning standards) and best practices related to classroom curriculum, instruction, and assessment for each subject area. The guides are not designed to replace any evaluation system or tools districts currently use, but are a resource to help classroom observers efficiently identify what teachers and students should be experiencing in specific subjects and grade levels.
* *The Massachusetts Standards for Professional Development* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/pd/standards.pdf>) describe, identify, and characterize what high quality learning experiences should look like for educators.

Assessment

**Contextual Background**

The assessment standard examines the district’s practices in the areas of data collection and dissemination, data-based decision-making, and student assessment. The district has established a system to administer, collect, and analyze various assessments throughout the school year. The district gives Dynamic Indicators of Early Basic Literacy Skills (DIBELS) and Fountas & Pinnell benchmark assessments strategically to students in kindergarten through grade 6. In 2017–2018, the district added Lexile and Quantile assessments to assess all students in grades 1–9 in reading and mathematics. The district also administers district-determined measures to all students. In addition, students participate in the state’s MCAS and Next-Generation assessments.

The district has a student management system for collecting information such as students’ attendance, conduct, discipline, and personal data. However, the district does not have a centralized student information system in place to collect and disseminate student achievement data. Staff use Google documents to share benchmark data.

A district data team meets and discusses assessment results at least monthly. Principals, the special education director, the superintendent, and the assistant superintendent are members of the team. They review attendance rates, discipline referrals, and achievement data, such as DIBELS, Lexile and Quantile assessment data, as well as trends in the instructional rounds inventory.

In its self-assessment submitted in advance of the onsite review, the district rated data collection and dissemination as “Somewhat Well” described by the indicator: “Principals and teachers are trained on using reports to analyze student progress and needs.” Interviewees stated that staff met to discuss student achievement data and to monitor students’ progress. However, data literacy and the process for data analysis in schools varies across the district.

At the elementary schools, formative assessment results are available to help teachers and specialists monitor students’ progress and to provide evidence for reading or math intervention or enrichment. Teachers use assessment data to group students, adjust instructional practice, and guide lessons.

**Challenges and Areas for Growth**

**1. The district does not have a centralized student information management system to house student achievement data.**

* 1. Teachers and administrators do not have a centralized student information management system to access and disaggregate real-time or historical student achievement data. Teachers and administrators access student information from multiple sources, including Edwin Analytics, Google documents, spreadsheets, and students’ cumulative records.
		+ 1. When the superintendent was asked about a system for reviewing multiple sources of data, he told the team that “seeds have started to germinate.”
			2. A principal cited the need for a data dashboard system to improve data literacy among teachers. Teachers and other staff said that a centralized data system was needed.
			3. A teacher said that the district did not have a system for all teachers to access Lexile and Quantile numbers.
			4. Another principal stated, “We are embedding the Lexile data into the tool for data collection we use.”
			5. Teachers told the team that they could not access past student achievement data. If they want historical student achievement data, they had to access students’ cumulative folders.

**Impact**: Without a centralized information management system, staff cannot easily access real time or historical data to gauge student, class, or school progress to inform their work to improve teaching and learning.

1. **The district does not have sufficient or consistent time or structures for staff to develop data literacy, analyze data, and use data to make decisions about teaching and learning.**
	1. Data sharing, analysis, and discussion of best practices are inconsistent across the district.

1. The superintendent told the review team that the district data team met once a month, noting that schools “are beginning to have teams [but] their work isn’t organized yet.”

2. Principals reported that they had teams in their schools that looked at data. However, the functions of the teams vary from school to school.

* + - * 1. All principals meet with key specialists in their schools to review benchmark data and MCAS assessment data. In the Sweetsir and Donoghue elementary schools in Merrimac, there are three data teams, one for math, one for literacy, and one for behavior, attendance, and discipline. At Bagnall, the principal meets once a week with grade-level teams. These meetings tend to focus on students’ academic and social growth and development. The middle-school principal considers the SST to be his school’s data team. The primary focus of middle-school meetings tends to be on students’ social-emotional issues.
				2. The high school does not have regular department meetings and weekly grade- level team meetings in grades 9 and 10. Primarily, these meetings focus on attendance, behavior, and grades for specific students rather than data analysis.

3. Teachers reported that they were sometimes invited to look at MCAS assessment data with administrators. Most of the time, however, teachers share assessment information and discuss assessment results with grade-level colleagues.

4. Teachers told the team that data sharing, analysis, and discussion about best practices were inconsistent across the district. One secondary teacher stated, “Sharing best practices does not really happen.” An elementary teacher said, “When we meet together, we look at benchmark assessment performance … how we group for intervention, and then provide support.”

5. In its self-assessment submitted in advance of the onsite review, the district rated student assessment as “Somewhat Well” described by the indicator “Benchmark data is analyzed by teacher teams.”

* 1. There is variation in principals’ and teachers’ data literacy, as well as their perceptions of their schools’ data cultures.

1. Principals told the review team that they did not give their schools high ratings in data literacy and data culture. On a scale of 1–10 (10 being the highest), data literacy in language arts ranged from 4 to 8 while math ranged from 3 to 6.

 a. Principals and administrators told the review team, “We are still in the beginning stages of training to look at data.”

 b. An administrator said: “A growth area for us is what we do with the information we have.”

 2. One teacher told the team, “We spend a lot of time analyzing data, but I can’t remember PD on how to use it to adjust my teaching.” Another teacher stated that she used data to adjust her teaching all the time.

 3. Data literacy differs among the district’s leaders and teachers.

 a. One principal told the team that he received formal data training at his previous district. Another principal said that he has had EDWIN training and Data Wise training. Other principals did not cite any training but expressed comfort with data.

 b. One principal told the team that teachers in his school understood literacy data quite well, but they were still struggling to understand math data.

**Impact**: Without formal data training for its teachers and administrators, the district is challenged to build and sustain leadership and teacher capacity to understand, analyze, discuss, and use data to improve teaching and learning.

**Recommendation**

**1. The district should strengthen the data literacy skills of its leaders, educators, and data teams to enable them to make data-driven instructional decisions that can have an impact on teaching and learning.**

1. The district data team should provide guidance, protocols, policies, and direction to support and monitor effective school based teams.

1. School leaders should strengthen their school based data teams by working in conjunction with the district data team to build a culture of collaborative inquiry and data use that informs instructional planning.

1. This should include communicating to staff the mission, vision, and meeting policies and procedures of their school data team.
2. It also should include educator participation opportunities, established data team meeting times, and expected outcomes and deliverables.
3. Data team meeting minutes, schoolwide assessment results, and data analyses should be communicated regularly to all school staff.

2. The district should consider reallocating resources to purchase a student information management system that provides real time and historical student data information that includes all or most assessment data.

1. This management system should be user friendly so that all staff can access and organize information easily.
2. It would be helpful if the system creates dashboards or other visual displays that clearly convey student, class, school, and district progress.
3. Parents should have the opportunity to access their children’s assessment results.

**Benefits:** By implementing this recommendation, the district will build a culture of collaborative inquiry and substantive data use that informs decisions that have an impact on teaching and learning. A student information management system can support this culture by increasing the ease with which teachers and parents can get real time access to the most current student information.

**Recommended resources:**

* + - ESE’s *Assessment Literacy Self-Assessment and Gap Analysis Tool* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/ddm/webinar/PartI-GapAnalysis.pdf>) is intended to support districts in understanding where their educators fit overall on a continuum of assessment literacy. After determining where the district as a whole generally falls on the continuum, districts can determine potential next steps.
		- ESE’s *District Data Team Toolkit* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/toolkit/>) is a set of resources to help a district establish, grow, and maintain a culture of inquiry and data use through a District Data Team.
		- *Time for Teachers:* *Leveraging Time to Strengthen Instruction & Empower Teachers* (<http://www.timeandlearning.org/sites/default/files/resources/timeforteachers.pdf>) describes the systems and practices implemented at 17 schools to provide students with more time for learning and teachers with more time to collaborate, reflect, and plan.

Student Support

**Contextual Background**

This district has focused on the social-emotional, behavioral, and safety needs of students and has taken the unusual step of including the identification of personal meaning as a curricular goal. The district has a psychologist on staff in each school, several adjustment counselors, and a behavioral specialist. Student support coordinators at the elementary schools ensure students’ safety, provide support to families, and seek to improve behavior by building children’s skills to deal with stressful situations. Teachers in the middle school and the first two years of high school are scheduled in teams, which focus on students in grade-level groups. Buildings are secure; lockdowns and other safety procedures are practiced routinely.

The administrative staff has been engaged working on curriculum and managing the schools. The district has focused its professional development schedule on curriculum and social-emotional awareness. The training has been sparse and mostly done on a voluntary basis by teachers. New initiatives, one being Universal Design for Learning, offer some promise of bringing research-based practices to the classroom to address academic, social-emotional, and behavioral barriers to learning.

Several factors have hampered the intervention process, particularly beyond kindergarten through grade 2. Teachers have little experience with effective data analysis, and the district has few staff members assigned to provide academic support. In addition, time for remediation during the school day and instructional resources such as software are in short supply. As a result, the district is not adequately addressing the needs of students who need help as they seek to reach their academic goals.

**Strength Finding**

**1. The district has adopted a focus on social-emotional supports, wellness, and safety for all students.**

**A.** Interviews and a document review indicated thatthe district has taken steps to implement its curricular goal of integrating the academic and social-emotional domains.

1. To reduce stress and address students’ needs, in the 2017–2018 school year the district has offered a Community Wellness program for families about issues such as individual differences and the social-emotional needs of students. The district is using this forum to garner feedback from families as the district moves forward in its planning process.

2. Each school has a psychologist on staff for student support and helps teachers find and eliminate stressors in the classroom.

3. The district administers various universal screenings to identify behavioral and emotional issues. One assessment is designed to identify suicidal tendencies. The district also uses the SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment) assessment, in grade 8 to anticipate students’ issues with drugs or alcohol.

4. In addition to the Instructional Support Team (IST) for academic interventions, each school has a Student Support Team (SST) for addressing behavioral, social-emotional, attendance, and disciplinary issues. These teams meet regularly.

5. Each elementary school has a student support coordinator whose role is similar to that of an assistant principal.

 a. The coordinator is in charge of safety drills, and supervises halls and grounds and ensures that the school is properly secured.

 b. The coordinator deals with discipline issues following the Ross Greene behavior system, helping students to learn skills to deal with stressful situations rather than acting out.

 c. The role includes a great deal of communication with families, both informing them of student issues and listening to their concerns about their children’s learning, health, and well-being.

 d. The student support coordinator works with teachers and other staff on an individualized approach to discipline based on the idea that “fairness isn’t always equal.”

**Impact**: By proactively addressing students’ social-emotional, wellness, and safety needs---and involving families in this work---the district develops strong working relationships within the community and improves students’ social-emotional well-being.

**Challenges and Areas for Growth**

**2. The district has limited assessment data for identification and progress monitoring, limited scheduled time for supplementary academic support, and limited instructional resources.**

1. The elementary Instructional Support Team (IST), tasked with reviewing the needs of referred students and providing options for additional support, has limited access to data, especially in math.

The district has limited formative assessment data available for math, except at the Sweetsir and Donoghue elementary schools in Merrimac where there is a Title I math teacher. Teachers are beginning to learn how to use the Quantile assessment that was introduced in the 2017–2018 school year to provide information about students’ level of math knowledge and to identify learning gaps.

The district has more data for literacy in kindergarten through grade 3 because of reading specialists and Title I services (at the Sweetsir and Donoghue elementary schools in Merrimac). All elementary teachers use Fountas & Pinnell and in 2017–2018 the Lexile to assess students’ literacy skills. Although reading specialists work only with K–2 students, one reported entering student literacy data onto a spreadsheet for all grade-level teachers in the school.

1. Secondary IST teams have some summative data but little formative data for referral and progress monitoring.

In addition to MCAS assessment data, teachers said that they were beginning to become more familiar with the Lexile and Quantile assessments, which are available through grade 9.

Teachers see the new Lexile and Quantile assessments as potentially useful for informing middle-school interventions.

Staff have real-time assessments such as tests and at the high school, common mid-years or finals for some classes. These tests are not formative and may not be sufficient for progress monitoring.

The middle school relies on the judgment of the grade-level team to assess students’ progress.

1. The high school uses common planning time within departments to assess students’ progress. In most grades, the district has not allotted scheduled time and sufficient staff to provide supplementary academic support during the school day.

In the elementary schools, the reading specialist and, at the Sweetsir and Donoghue elementary schools in Merrimac, the Title I teacher, are available to assist with literacy interventions. These services are only available in early elementary classrooms. Math intervention is available through a Title I specialist only at the Sweetsir and Donoghue elementary schools in Merrimac.

In 2017–2018, the district implemented a Whatever I Need (WIN) period, a 30-minute daily block. Originally intended to be student-directed time, it is now planned by teachers. Often, teachers choose a single, undifferentiated activity for their class.

Two grade-level teachers who share a reading specialist or special educator can divide the students into targeted groups during this time.

At the secondary level, the schools have provided few options for interventions outside of regular content classes.

Although the district’s Innovation Program offers a large number of electives open to middle-school and high-school students, the district does not offer any academic support options in core subject areas or assign teachers to implement programs that can offer such assistance.

Students can be assigned to the Excel program in the library where a para-educator will help students with organizational skills, encourage them to complete homework, and help students to decide whether they would benefit from teachers’ extra help sessions.

Classes at the high school begin at 7:35 a.m. The high school IST is scheduled to meet before that hour on alternate Tuesdays as necessary. The Student Support Team (SST), which addresses referrals for social-emotional, behavioral, and disciplinary concerns, meets weekly during school hours. This makes it difficult for teachers to attend.

Educational software programs can deliver targeted support to students and provide formative assessment information to educators. These resources are restricted to specific student groups in the district and are often inaccessible to students whose needs might be well served by access.

 Software programs such as Lexia and ST Math (Spatial Temporal Math) are only available to Title I students in the elementary schools and students with disabilities at the middle school.

Other programs such as Moby Math, Kahn Academy, and Zearn are available for homework in the classroom or during the WIN period.

GradPoint is available exclusively to high-school students with disabilities for credit recovery.

**Impact**: With a shortage of resources for academic support, the district cannot meet the challenge of providing differentiated support for students K–12 beyond what is available in the general education classroom, with the exception of literacy in kindergarten through grade 2. This is likely limiting the learning, achievement, and outcomes of some students.

**Recommendation**

**1.** **The district should reallocate time and resources to support the use of data to identify and address students’ strengths and needs.**

**A.** The district should ensure that a comprehensive and varied set of assessments is in place such that teachers have access to student performance data in kindergarten through grade 12 and can use it to monitor progress and identify the need for support and enrichment.

1. Data should be available to teachers in a clear format.

 **B.** The district should reallocate resources to provide for students who need academic support in small groups within or outside of the general education classroom.

1. The district should consider providing staff for math support at all levels and for literacy support in upper elementary grades and the middle school if needed.
2. The district should consider how to provide professional staff for academic support in core content areas at the secondary level. It should make several academic support options available as part of the schools’ elective framework.
3. The district should also train para-educators to work with small student groups inside the classroom.
4. The district should consider how it deploys technology in general education and special education classrooms as well as for intervention. Teachers should be trained in the use of educational software for small groups or at stations as part of their differentiated practice.
5. The district should ensure that support services and staff meetings are held during times when teachers can conveniently participate.

**Benefits:** When students’ strengths and needs are identified in a timely way and staff and resource are available to provide remediation and enrichment, academic success can become a reality for all students.

**Recommended resources:**

* The *Systems for Student Success (SfSS)* ([www.mass.gov/ese/mtss](http://www.mass.gov/ese/mtss)) is a blueprint for school improvement that focuses on system structures and supports across the district, school, and classroom to meet the academic and non-academic needs of all students. It was developed to help guide the establishment of a system that provides high-quality core educational experiences in a safe and supportive learning environment for all students and targeted interventions/supports for students who experience academic and/or behavioral difficulties and students who have already demonstrated mastery of the concept and skills being taught.
* The *Early Warning Implementation Guide* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edwin/analytics/implementation-guide.pdf> ) provides information on how to use early warning data, including the Massachusetts Early Warning Indicator System (EWIS), to identify, diagnose, support and monitor students in grades 1–12. It offers educators an overview of EWIS and how to effectively use these data in conjunction with local data by following a six-step implementation cycle.

Appendix A: Review Team, Activities, Schedule, Site Visit

Review Team Members

The review was conducted from February 12–15, 2018, by the following team of independent ESE consultants.

1. William Blake, Curriculum
2. Linda Greyser, Instruction
3. Marc Kerble, Assessment
4. Katherine Lopez-Natale, Student Support
5. Patricia Williams, *review team coordinator*

District Review Activities

The following activities were conducted during the review:

The team conducted interviews with the following members of the school committee: three members.

The review team conducted interviews with the following representatives of the teachers’ association:

President and two building representatives.

The team conducted interviews/focus groups with the following central office administrators: the superintendent, the assistant superintendent, and the director of special education.

The team visited the following schools: Sweetsir Elementary (Pre-K–2), Bagnall Elementary (Pre-K–6, Donaghue Elementary (grades 3–6), and Page Elementary (Pre-K–6), Pentucket Regional Middle School (grades 7–8), and Pentucket Regional Senior High School (grades 9–12).

During school visits, the team conducted interviews with five principals and focus groups with one elementary-school teacher, and eight middle- and high-school teachers. Since the middle and high schools were on the same schedule, there was one combined middle- and high-school focus group.

The team observed 62 classes in the district: 22 at the high school, 11 at the middle school, and 29 at the 3 elementary schools.

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

* + Student and school performance data, including achievement and growth, enrollment, graduation, dropout, retention, suspension, and attendance rates.
	+ Published educational reports on the district by ESE.
	+ District documents such as district and school improvement plans, school committee policies, curriculum documents, summaries of student assessments, job descriptions, handbooks, and school schedules.

Site Visit Schedule

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Monday**02/12/2018 | **Tuesday**02/13/2018 | **Wednesday**02/14/2018 |
| Orientation with district leaders and principals; interviews with district staff and principals; interview with teachers’ association; elementary teacher focus group, middle school and high school teacher focus group, and visits to Sweetsir Elementary, Pentucket Regional Middle School, and Pentucket Regional Senior High School for classroom observations. | Interviews with district staff, principals, and teachers; parent focus group; school committee interviews; and visits to Bagnall Elementary, Pentucket Regional Middle School, and Pentucket Regional Senior High School for classroom observations. | High school student focus group; visits to Donaghue Elementary, Sweetsir Elementary, Bagnall Elementary, Pentucket Regional Middle School, and Pentucket Regional Senior High School for classroom observations; wrap-up with superintendent.Note: During the onsite visit, the Page School was temporarily closed. The team visited those classrooms in three alternative locations. |

Appendix B: Enrollment, Attendance, Expenditures

**Table B1a: Pentucket Regional School District**

**2017–2018 Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity**

| **Group** | **District** | **Percent****of Total** | **State** | **Percent of****Total** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| African-American | 11 | 0.4% | 86,305 | 9.0% |
| Asian | 38 | 1.5% | 65,667 | 6.9% |
| Hispanic | 97 | 3.9% | 191,201 | 20.0% |
| Native American | -- | -- | 2,103 | 0.2% |
| White | 2,284 | 92.5% | 573,335 | 60.1% |
| Native Hawaiian | -- | -- | 818 | 0.1% |
| Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic  | 39 | 1.6% | 34,605 | 3.6% |
| All  | 2,469 | 100.0% | 954,034 | 100.0% |
| Note: As of October 1, 2017 |

**Table B1b: Pentucket Regional School District**

**2017–2018 Student Enrollment by High Needs Populations**

| **Group** | **District** | **State** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **N** | **Percent of High Needs** | **Percent of District** | **N** | **Percent of High Needs** | **Percent of State** |
| Students w/ disabilities | 501 | 73.4% | 20.0% | 171,061 | 38.0% | 17.7% |
| Econ. Dis. | 290 | 42.5% | 11.7% | 305,203 | 67.9% | 32.0% |
| ELLs and Former ELLs | 5 | 0.7% | 0.2% | 97,334 | 21.6% | 10.2% |
| All high needs students | 683 | 100.0% | 27.3% | 449,584 | 100.0% | 46.6% |
| Notes: As of October 1, 2017. District and state numbers and percentages for students with disabilities and high needs students are calculated including students in out-of-district placements. Total district enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 2,502; total state enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 964,806. |

**Table B2: Pentucket Regional School District**

**Attendance Rates, 2014–2017**

| **Group** | **N (2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2017)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| High Needs | 686 | 95.2 | 94.5 | 94.4 | 94.1 | -1.1 | 93.1 |
| Econ. Dis. | 281 | -- | 94.6 | 93.7 | 93.0 | -- | 92.6 |
| ELLs | 4 | 95.3 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | -95.3 | 93.5 |
| SWD | 523 | 95.4 | 94.6 | 94.4 | 94.1 | -1.3 | 93.0 |
| African American | 12 | 97.0 | 97.1 | 96.5 | 91.4 | -5.6 | 94.0 |
| Asian | 40 | 97.0 | 96.4 | 96.6 | 96.6 | -0.4 | 96.3 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 89 | 95.6 | 95.1 | 95.6 | 94.9 | -0.7 | 92.8 |
| Multi-Race | 40 | 95.2 | 93.1 | 95.8 | 96.0 | 0.8 | 94.5 |
| White | 2,406 | 96.2 | 95.7 | 95.5 | 95.3 | -0.9 | 95.1 |
| All | 2,587 | 96.2 | 95.6 | 95.5 | 95.3 | -0.9 | 94.6 |
| Notes: The attendance rate is calculated by dividing the total number of days students attended school by the total number of days students were enrolled in a particular school year. A student’s attendance rate is counted toward any district the student attended. In addition, district attendance rates included students who were out placed in public collaborative or private alternative schools/programs at public expense. Attendance rates have been rounded; percent change is based on unrounded numbers. |

**Table B3: Pentucket Regional School District**

**Expenditures, Chapter 70 State Aid, and Net School Spending Fiscal Years 2015–2017**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | **FY15** | **FY16** | **FY17** |
|   | **Estimated** | **Actual** | **Estimated** | **Actual** | **Estimated** | **Actual** |
| Expenditures |
| From local appropriations for schools: |  |
| By school committee | $36,253,720 | $36,532,310 | $36,390,319 | $36,363,113 | $38,069,076 | $36,919,751 |
| From revolving funds and grants | -- | $4,153,632 | -- | $3,941,708 | -- | $4,252,446 |
| Total expenditures | -- | $40,685,942 | -- | $40,304,821 | -- | $41,172,197 |
| Chapter 70 aid to education program |
| Chapter 70 state aid\* | -- | $12,770,527 | -- | $12,834,852 | -- | $12,968,282 |
| Required local contribution | -- | $16,086,295 | -- | $16,203,424 | -- | $15,627,476 |
| Required net school spending\*\* | -- | $28,856,822 | -- | $29,038,276 | -- | $28,595,758 |
| Actual net school spending | -- | $32,210,528 | -- | $32,610,093 | -- | $32,933,687 |
| Over/under required ($) | -- | $3,353,706 | -- | $3,571,817 | -- | $4,337,939 |
| Over/under required (%) | -- | 11.6% | -- | 12.3% | -- | 15.2% |
| \*Chapter 70 state aid funds are deposited in the local general fund and spent as local appropriations.\*\*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.Sources: FY15, FY16, and FY17 District End-of-Year Reports, Chapter 70 Program information on ESE websiteData retrieved 12/13/17 and 7/2/18 |

**Table B4: Pentucket Regional School District**

**Expenditures Per In-District Pupil**

**Fiscal Years 2014–2016**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Expenditure Category** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** |
| Administration | $396 | $424 | $494 |
| Instructional leadership (district and school) | $713 | $764 | $775 |
| Teachers | $5,420 | $5,801 | $6,094 |
| Other teaching services | $976 | $1,068 | $1,124 |
| Professional development | $54 | $48 | $27 |
| Instructional materials, equipment and technology | $213 | $278 | $212 |
| Guidance, counseling and testing services | $346 | $366 | $383 |
| Pupil services | $1,187 | $1,232 | $1,339 |
| Operations and maintenance | $913 | $1,072 | $981 |
| Insurance, retirement and other fixed costs | $2,029 | $2,213 | $2,563 |
| Total expenditures per in-district pupil | $12,246 | $13,267 | $13,993 |
| Sources: [Per-pupil expenditure reports on ESE website](http://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/statistics/ppx.html)Note: Any discrepancy between expenditures and total is because of rounding. |

Appendix C: Instructional Inventory

| **Focus Area #1: Learning Objectives & Expectations** |   | Insufficient Evidence | Limited Evidence | Sufficient Evidence | Compelling Evidence | Avg number of points |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |   |
| 1. The teacher demonstrates knowledge of the subject matter. | **ES** | 3% | 34% | 52% | 10% | 2.7 |
| **MS** | 0% | 27% | 55% | 18% | 2.9 |
| **HS** | 14% | 50% | 32% | 5% | 2.3 |
| **Total #** | 4 | 24 | 28 | 6 | 2.6 |
| **Total %** | 6% | 39% | 45% | 10% |   |
| 2. The teacher ensures that students understand what they should be learning in the lesson and why. | **ES** | 0% | 38% | 59% | 3% | 2.7 |
| **MS** | 0% | 64% | 27% | 9% | 2.5 |
| **HS** | 0% | 73% | 23% | 5% | 2.3 |
| **Total #** | 0 | 34 | 25 | 3 | 2.5 |
| **Total %** | 0% | 55% | 40% | 5% |   |
| 3. The teacher uses appropriate classroom activities well matched to the learning objective(s). | **ES** | 0% | 34% | 38% | 28% | 2.9 |
| **MS** | 0% | 27% | 55% | 18% | 2.9 |
| **HS** | 5% | 45% | 41% | 9% | 2.5 |
| **Total #** | 1 | 23 | 26 | 12 | 2.8 |
| **Total %** | 2% | 37% | 42% | 19% |   |
| 4. The teacher conducts frequent checks for student understanding, provides feedback, and adjusts instruction. | **ES** | 3% | 28% | 52% | 17% | 2.8 |
| **MS** | 0% | 18% | 64% | 18% | 3.0 |
| **HS** | 5% | 59% | 32% | 5% | 2.4 |
| **Total #** | 2 | 23 | 29 | 8 | 2.7 |
| **Total %** | 3% | 37% | 47% | 13% |   |
| **Total Score For Focus Area #1** | **ES** |   |   |   |   | **11.1** |
| **MS** |   |   |   |   | **11.3** |
| **HS** |   |   |   |   | **9.5** |
| **Total**  |   |   |   |   | **10.6** |

| **Focus Area #2: Student Engagement & Higher-Order Thinking** |   | Insufficient Evidence | Limited Evidence | Sufficient Evidence | Compelling Evidence | Avg number of points |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |   |
| 5. Students assume responsibility to learn and are engaged in the lesson. | **ES** | 3% | 31% | 59% | 7% | 2.7 |
| **MS** | 0% | 45% | 36% | 18% | 2.7 |
| **HS** | 5% | 50% | 32% | 14% | 2.5 |
| **Total #** | 2 | 25 | 28 | 7 | 2.6 |
| **Total %** | 3% | 40% | 45% | 11% |   |
| 6. Students engage in higher-order thinking. | **ES** | 17% | 38% | 41% | 3% | 2.3 |
| **MS** | 9% | 45% | 36% | 9% | 2.5 |
| **HS** | 18% | 36% | 41% | 5% | 2.3 |
| **Total #** | 10 | 24 | 25 | 3 | 2.3 |
| **Total %** | 16% | 39% | 40% | 5% |   |
| 7. Students communicate their ideas and thinking with each other. | **ES** | 24% | 52% | 21% | 3% | 2.0 |
| **MS** | 0% | 64% | 18% | 18% | 2.5 |
| **HS** | 36% | 41% | 23% | 0% | 1.9 |
| **Total #** | 15 | 31 | 13 | 3 | 2.1 |
| **Total %** | 24% | 50% | 21% | 5% |   |
| 8. Students engage with meaningful, real-world tasks. | **ES** | 17% | 24% | 34% | 24% | 2.7 |
| **MS** | 9% | 36% | 45% | 9% | 2.5 |
| **HS** | 14% | 45% | 32% | 9% | 2.4 |
| **Total #** | 9 | 21 | 22 | 10 | 2.5 |
| **Total %** | 15% | 34% | 35% | 16% |   |
| **Total Score For Focus Area #2** | **ES** |   |   |   |   | **9.7** |
| **MS** | 3% | 31% | 59% | 7% | 2.7 |
| **HS** |   |   |   |   | **9.1** |
| **Total**  |   |   |   |   | **9.6** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

| **Focus Area #3: Inclusive Practice & Classroom Culture** |  | Insufficient Evidence | Limited Evidence | Sufficient Evidence | Compelling Evidence | Average Number of points |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (1 to 4) |
| 9. The teacher ensures that students are engaging in challenging tasks regardless of learning needs. | **ES** | 10% | 41% | 41% | 7% | 2.4 |
| **MS** | 0% | 36% | 45% | 18% | 2.8 |
| **HS** | 27% | 55% | 18% | 0% | 1.9 |
| **Total #** | 9 | 28 | 21 | 4 | 2.3 |
| **Total %** | 15% | 45% | 34% | 6% |   |
| 10. The teacher uses a variety of instructional strategies. | **ES** | 7% | 48% | 38% | 7% | 2.4 |
| **MS** | 0% | 64% | 27% | 9% | 2.5 |
| **HS** | 9% | 77% | 14% | 0% | 2.0 |
| **Total #** | 4 | 38 | 17 | 3 | 2.3 |
| **Total %** | 6% | 61% | 27% | 5% |   |
| 11. Classroom routines and positive supports are in place to ensure that students behave appropriately. | **ES** | 3% | 7% | 66% | 24% | 3.1 |
| **MS** | 0% | 9% | 64% | 27% | 3.2 |
| **HS** | 0% | 18% | 64% | 18% | 3.0 |
| **Total #** | 1 | 7 | 40 | 14 | 3.1 |
| **Total %** | 2% | 11% | 65% | 23% |   |
| 12. The classroom climate is conducive to teaching and learning. | **ES** | 0% | 17% | 52% | 31% | 3.1 |
| **MS** | 0% | 18% | 55% | 27% | 3.1 |
| **HS** | 0% | 14% | 73% | 14% | 3.0 |
| **Total #** | 0 | 10 | 37 | 15 | 3.1 |
| **Total %** | 0% | 16% | 60% | 24% |   |
| **Total Score For Focus Area #3** | **ES** |  |  |  |  | **11.1** |
| **MS** |  |  |  |  | **11.5** |
| **HS** |  |  |  |  | **10.0** |
| **Total** |  |  |  |  | **10.8** |

1. During the time of the site visit, the district had temporarily closed the Page School for maintenance and sent the Page students to other district schools. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Other factors are also taken into consideration when determining the type of review a district will receive. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Courses offered in 2017–2018 included: mentor training, Fundations, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Diversity in the Classroom, Early Literacy, The Daily Five, The Pentucket Curriculum, Lexile Framework for Reading, Quantile Framework for Math, Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) and WIDA [SEL] to support learning across the curriculum, Supporting students with disabilities, Co-teaching, and Social-emotional Responsiveness. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Staff in the Sweetsir and Donoghue elementary schools in Merrimac will be working on their International Baccalaureate Certification Process. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website, Educator Evaluation Rubrics page (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/rubrics/>). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)