Targeted District Review Report

Quabbin Regional School District

Review conducted January 25, 26, and 30, 2018

Office of District Reviews and Monitoring

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Executive Summary

The five-town region served by the Quabbin Regional School District is experiencing profound change. After a long period of growth, the student population declined 27 percent between 2005 and 2016.[[1]](#footnote-1) According to ESE data, between 2013 and 2017 student enrollment declined 13 percent, from 2,589 students in 2013 to 2,248 students in 2017. This trend appears likely to continue: a report by the Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management at UMass Boston states that the school age population of the towns served by the district is expected to decline by 20 percent in the period between 2010 and 2035, even as overall population rises by 17 percent.[[2]](#footnote-2) Further, while the net numbers of students exercising school choice continues to favor Quabbin, fewer students are choosing to attend Quabbin schools from other communities. In addition, the number of local students choosing to go to schools in other districts increased from an average of 25 students from 1993–2003 to 110 students in 2016.[[3]](#footnote-3) [[4]](#footnote-4) These "choice out” numbers include students who attend one of two local vocational technical high schools, a number that reached 152 in 2016.[[5]](#footnote-5)

As the number of the district’s students declines, the families of district students are facing greater economic hardship. Between 2007 and 2014, the proportion of district students from low-income families fluctuated with an overall increase, from 13.8 percent in 2007 to 26 percent in 2014, compared with 38.3 percent of their peers statewide. In 2015, ESE replaced the low-income measure with the economically disadvantaged measure.[[6]](#footnote-6) Between 2015 and 2018, the proportion of economically disadvantaged students in the district increased steadily from 19.3 percent in 2015 to 26.8 percent in 2018, compared with 32 percent across the state.

The central office team of the superintendent and the assistant superintendent have been in their roles in the district since 2013, although the superintendent had previously been superintendent in the district. To address what they saw as serious challenges about curriculum and instruction, they chose to focus improvement efforts on elementary literacy. During the onsite review in January 2018, the review team found in place an established dynamic, real-time system for curriculum, instruction, and assessment in literacy in kindergarten through grade 6, with teacher leaders providing support in carefully delineated roles. Much work remains in curriculum, instruction, and assessment in the district. Elementary literacy is a model for the work ahead, but it would benefit from continued modification. At the time of the onsite review, the superintendent planned to retire in June 2018. Responsibility for future efforts will fall to the next superintendent.

**Instruction**

The team observed 48 classes throughout the district: 16 at Quabbin Regional High School, 14 at the middle school, and 18 at the 5 elementary schools. The team observed 13 ELA classes, 19 mathematics classes, and 16 classes in other subject areas. 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.

In observed classrooms, instruction at the elementary level was generally stronger than instruction at the secondary level. In addition, instruction at the high school was generally less strong than at the middle and elementary schools. In observed lessons, students did not consistently experience engagement and high expectations.

**Strengths**

The superintendent and the assistant superintendent have set the district on the path toward improvement, in part by focusing on the development and implementation of research-based programs that will lead to improved student achievement. They promote higher expectations of students by adults and by students of themselves and one another. They cultivate teacher leadership in the implementation of complex, effective programs.

Teacher leaders work collaboratively with pride in the quality of their work. Academic coordinators at the secondary level have expanded their responsibilities from grades 9–12 to grades 7–12. They participate in professional development on performance assessments and will, as the school year progresses, assume some responsibility for leading professional development. Coaches, primarily at the elementary level, guide the implementation of programs and support teachers in improving classroom instruction. Literacy teacher leaders ensure the implementation of curriculum, and interventionists address the identified needs of students. The middle and high schools are in the early stages of developing high-quality assessments to improve curriculum and instruction at the secondary level.

The district creates and sustains partnerships with external organizations and consultants to build the capacity of district educators to address the academic and social-emotional needs of all students. District leaders and student services personnel have established policies and practices to support the district’s most vulnerable students, and work collaboratively to improve services and programs.

**Challenges and Areas for Growth**

In three major subject areas---English language arts (ELA), mathematics, and science—the district has not completed alignment of its curriculum documents with the current curriculum frameworks. The progress for updating grade-by-grade curriculum maps differs by subject area**.** Except for the Assessment Planning System protocol for K–6 ELA literacy, the district does not have clear processes for planning and implementing the development and revision of its curriculum documents. In observed classrooms, students did not consistently experience engagement and high expectations, which interviewees described as characteristic of effective instruction in the district. The district’s reliance on teacher leaders and academic coordinators for leadership in curriculum and instruction has limited principals’ roles as instructional leaders. Finally, the district does not have in place a multi-tiered system of support for all students K–12.

**Recommendations**

The district should expand its work in curriculum, instruction, and assessment from elementary literacy into content areas and levels not fully addressed. This includes assessment at the secondary level where in-depth work has begun. District leaders and staff should improve and clarify its system for the regular and timely review and revision of curriculum. In addition, the district should take steps to ensure that all students consistently receive instruction that illustrates the district’s emphasis on student engagement and high expectations.Further, the district should clarify expectations for principals’ roles as instructional leaders. Finally, the district should continue to take steps to provide effective instructional and support strategies that meet the needs of all students.

Quabbin 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.[[7]](#footnote-7) 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 Quabbin Regional School District was conducted on January 25, 26, and 30, 2018. The site visit included 16 hours of interviews and focus groups with approximately 53 stakeholders, including school committee members, district administrators, school staff, students, and teachers’ association representatives. The review team conducted one teacher focus group with one middle-school teacher and one high-school teacher.

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 48 classrooms in 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**

Quabbin has a town meeting form of government.[[8]](#footnote-8) The 15 members of the school committee, who are elected officials in their individual towns, meet monthly. The chair of the school committee is nominated and elected by the school committee.

The current superintendent has been in the position since the 2014–2015 school year. The district leadership team includes the assistant superintendent for curriculum, instruction, and assessment; the director of student services; the director of technology; the human resources manager; and the director of administrative services. Central office positions have been mostly stable in number over the past five years. The district has six principals leading seven schools. Other school administrators include the middle school/high school dean of discipline and the middle school/high school guidance director. In 2017–2018 there were 147.5 teachers in the district.

In the 2017–2018 school year, 2, 226 students were enrolled in the district’s 8 schools:

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

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

| **School** | **School Type** | **Grades Served** | **Enrollment** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Hardwick Elementary | ES | K–6 | 194 |
| Hubbardston Center | ES | K–6 | 319 |
| New Braintree Elementary | EES | Pre-K–1 | 54 |
| Oakham Center | ES | 2–6 | 129 |
| Ruggles Lane | ES | K–6 | 464 |
| Quabbin Regional Middle | MS | 7–8 | 396 |
| Quabbin Regional High | HS | 9–12 | 657 |
| IB School | HS | 11–12 | 13 |
| **Totals** | **8 schools** | **Pre-K–12** | **2,226** |
| \*As of October 1, 2017 | | | |

Between 2014 and 2018 overall student enrollment decreased by 10.4 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 below the median in-district per-pupil expenditure for school districts of similar size (2,000–2,999 students) in fiscal year 2017: $14,117 as compared with $14,595 (see [District Analysis and Review Tool Detail: Staffing & Finance](http://www.doe.mass.edu/dart/)). Actual net school spending has been 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 2.3 points in ELA and above the state rate by 0.6 point in math.**

| **Table 2: Quabbin Regional School District**  **Next-Generation MCAS ELA and Math Average Scaled Score (S/S) Grades 3–8 by Subgroup, 2017** | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **N** | **ELA SS** | **State SS** | **N** | **Math SS** | **State SS** |
| High Needs | 471 | 486.9 | 488.5 | 474 | 488.9 | 488.1 |
| Econ. Dis. | 337 | 489.9 | 489.2 | 340 | 491.7 | 488.1 |
| SWD | 240 | 477.4 | 480.0 | 242 | 479.7 | 479.8 |
| ELLs | 9 | -- | 484.9 | 9 | -- | 486.8 |
| All | 1,089 | 496.8 | 499.1 | 1,092 | 498.2 | 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 above the state rate by 2 percentage points in math (46 percent vs. 48 percent).**

* The percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations was below the state rate in ELA for high needs students and students with disabilities by 3 and 5 percentage points, respectively, and was above the state rate by 1 percentage point for economically disadvantaged students.
* The percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectation was above the state rate in math for high needs students and economically disadvantaged students by 1 and 5 percentage points, respectively, and below the state rate by 1 percentage point for students with disabilities.

| **Table 3: Quabbin Regional School District**  **Next-Generation MCAS ELA and Math Percent Meeting or Exceeding (M/E) Expectations Grades 3–8 by Subgroup, 2017** | | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **N** | **ELA M/E** | **State M/E** | **Above/Below State** | **N** | **Math M/E** | **State M/E** | **Above/Below State** |
| High Needs | 471 | 24% | 27% | -3 | 474 | 28% | 27% | 1 |
| Econ. Dis. | 337 | 30% | 29% | 1 | 340 | 32% | 27% | 5 |
| SWD | 240 | 8% | 13% | -5 | 242 | 13% | 14% | -1 |
| ELLs | 9 | -- | 23% | -- | 9 | -- | 26% | -- |
| All | 1,089 | 45% | 49% | -4 | 1,092 | 46% | 48% | -2 |

**The percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on the MCAS assessment in 10th grade was 3 percentage points above the state rate in ELA and 5 percentage points above the state rate in math.**

* In ELA the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced was above the state rate by 1 and 3 percentage points for high needs students and economically disadvantaged students, respectively, and below the state rate by 5 percentage points for students with disabilities.
* In math the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced was above the state rate by 12 and 17 percentage points for high needs students and economically disadvantaged students, respectively, and by 3 percentage points for students with disabilities.

| **Table 4: Quabbin Regional School District**  **MCAS ELA and Math Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grade 10 by Subgroup, 2017** | | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **N** | **ELA** | **State** | **Above/Below State** | **N** | **Math** | **State** | **Above/Below State** |
| High Needs | 41 | 80% | 79% | 1 | 44 | 70% | 58% | 12 |
| Econ. Dis. | 31 | 84% | 81% | 3 | 31 | 77% | 60% | 17 |
| SWD | 19 | 63% | 68% | -5 | 22 | 45% | 42% | 3 |
| ELLs | -- | -- | 59% | -- | -- | -- | 39% | -- |
| All | 144 | 94% | 91% | 3 | 148 | 84% | 79% | 5 |

**Between 2014 and 2017, science proficiency for all students declined by 9 percentage points and declined by 5 and 1 percentage points for high needs students and students with disabilities, respectively.**

| **Table 5: Quabbin Regional School District**  **MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grades 5, 8, and 10 by Subgroup 2014–2017** | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **N (2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr change** | **State (2017)** |
| High Needs | 203 | 32% | 37% | 29% | 27% | -5 | 31% |
| Econ. Dis. | 144 | -- | 42% | 35% | 32% | -- | 32% |
| SWD | 104 | 13% | 26% | 14% | 12% | -1 | 21% |
| ELLs | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 20% |
| All | 532 | 53% | 53% | 47% | 44% | -9 | 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, 5 to 9 percentage points below the state rate in the 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades, and 1 to 4 percentage points in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades.**

**In math, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS assessment was 2 percentage points below the state rate in grades 3–8 as a whole; 7 to 13 percentage points below the state rate in the 3rd, 5th, and 8th grades; and 13 and 6 percentage points above the state rate in the 4th and 6th grades, respectively.**

| **Table 6: Quabbin Regional School District**  **Next-Generation MCAS ELA and Math Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations (M/E) in Grades 3–8, 2017** | | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grade** | **N** | **ELA M/E** | **State ELA** | **Difference** | **N** | **Math M/E** | **State Math** | **Difference** |
| 3 | 172 | 38% | 47% | -9 | 173 | 41% | 49% | -8 |
| 4 | 145 | 43% | 48% | -5 | 146 | 62% | 49% | 13 |
| 5 | 173 | 40% | 49% | -9 | 172 | 39% | 46% | -7 |
| 6 | 170 | 49% | 51% | -2 | 170 | 56% | 50% | 6 |
| 7 | 213 | 46% | 50% | -4 | 213 | 47% | 47% | 0 |
| 8 | 216 | 48% | 49% | -1 | 218 | 35% | 48% | -13 |
| 3–8 | 1,089 | 45% | 49% | -4 | 1,092 | 46% | 48% | -2 |

**Between 2014 and 2017, in science, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on the MCAS assessment declined by 9 percentage points for all students and declined by 18 percentage points in the 5th grade and by 1 and 5 percentage points in the 8th and 10th grades, respectively.**

| **Table 7: Quabbin 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** |
| 5 | 172 | 51% | 48% | 39% | 33% | -18 | 46% |
| 8 | 218 | 40% | 41% | 34% | 39% | -1 | 40% |
| 10 | 142 | 71% | 73% | 69% | 66% | -5 | 74% |
| All | 532 | 53% | 53% | 47% | 44% | -9 | 53% |

**Between 2014 and 2017, in ELA the median student growth percentile (SGP) improved by 12 points in the 4th grade and declined by 13 and 11 points in the 8th and 10th grades, respectively.**

| **Table 8: Quabbin Regional School District**  **ELA Median Student Growth Percentile, 2014–2017** | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grade** | **N (2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr change** | **State (2017)** |
| 3 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 4 | 135 | 37.0 | 49.5 | 53.0 | 49.0 | 12.0 | 50.0 |
| 5 | 155 | 49.0 | 43.0 | 39.0 | 47.0 | -2.0 | 50.0 |
| 6 | 158 | 53.0 | 60.5 | 49.0 | 59.5 | 6.5 | 50.0 |
| 7 | 187 | 48.0 | 44.0 | 62.0 | 48.0 | 0.0 | 50.0 |
| 8 | 209 | 55.0 | 59.0 | 56.0 | 42.0 | -13.0 | 50.0 |
| 10 | 125 | 48.0 | 50.5 | 30.0 | 37.0 | -11.0 | 50.0 |
| Changes in SGP of 10 points or more are considered meaningful. | | | | | | | |

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

| **Table 9: Quabbin Regional School District**  **Math Median Student Growth Percentile, 2014–2017** | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grade** | **N (2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr change** | **State (2017)** |
| 3 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 4 | 135 | 61.0 | 62.0 | 67.0 | 71.0 | 10.0 | 50.0 |
| 5 | 155 | 51.0 | 43.0 | 59.0 | 43.0 | -8.0 | 50.0 |
| 6 | 157 | 58.5 | 57.0 | 60.0 | 59.0 | 0.5 | 50.0 |
| 7 | 188 | 48.0 | 45.0 | 50.0 | 51.5 | 3.5 | 50.0 |
| 8 | 210 | 38.5 | 38.0 | 39.0 | 32.5 | -6.0 | 50.0 |
| 10 | 129 | 49.0 | 47.0 | 42.0 | 38.0 | -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 28 to 56 percent in the 3rd grade; from 37 to 57 percent in the 4th grade; from 33 to 55 percent in the 5th grade; and from 31 to 63 percent in the 6th grade in the district’s four elementary schools with reportable data. The percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations was 48 and 49 percent in the 7th and 8th grades, respectively.**

| **Table 10: Quabbin 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** |
| New Braintree Elementary | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Hardwick | 33% | 37% | 36% | 63% | -- | -- | 42% |
| Hubbardston Center | 46% | 57% | 55% | 63% | -- | -- | 55% |
| Oakham Center | 56% | 50% | 48% | 50% | -- | -- | 51% |
| Ruggles Lane | 28% | 37% | 33% | 31% | -- | -- | 32% |
| Quabbin Regional Middle | -- | -- | -- | -- | 48% | 49% | 48% |
| District | 38% | 43% | 40% | 49% | 46% | 48% | 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 28 to 64 percent in the 3rd grade; from 38 to 71 percent in the 4th grade; from 32 to 48 percent in the 5th grade; and from 45 to 63 percent in the 6th grade in the district’s four elementary schools with reportable data. The percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations was 49 and 35 percent in the 7th and 8th grades, respectively.**

| **Table 11: Quabbin 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** |
| New Braintree Elementary | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Hardwick | 64% | 71% | 32% | 63% | -- | -- | 58% |
| Hubbardston Center | 28% | 69% | 45% | 63% | -- | -- | 51% |
| Oakham Center | 52% | 38% | 48% | 58% | -- | -- | 50% |
| Ruggles Lane | 37% | 70% | 38% | 45% | -- | -- | 46% |
| Quabbin Regional Middle | -- | -- | -- | -- | 49% | 35% | 42% |
| District | 41% | 62% | 39% | 56% | 47% | 35% | 46% |
| 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 Quabbin Regional High was above the state rate by 6 percentage points in ELA and by 9 percentage points in math**.

| **Table 12: Quabbin Regional School District**  **MCAS ELA and Math Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grade 10 by School, 2017** | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **School** | **ELA** | **Math** |
| IB School | -- | -- |
| Quabbin Regional High | 97% | 88% |
| State | 91% | 79% |

**In science, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on the MCAS ranged from 21 to 43 percent in the 5th grade, and was 40 percent in the 8th grade at Quabbin Regional Middle. Science proficiency was 68 percent in the 10th grade at Quabbin Regional High.**

| **Table 13: Quabbin Regional School District**  **MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced by School and Grade, 2017** | | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **School** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **10** | **Total** |
| New Braintree Elementary | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| IB School | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Hardwick | -- | -- | 21% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 21% |
| Hubbardston Center | -- | -- | 43% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 43% |
| Oakham Center | -- | -- | 34% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 34% |
| Ruggles Lane | -- | -- | 35% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 35% |
| Quabbin Regional Middle | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 40% | -- | 40% |
| Quabbin Regional High | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 68% | 68% |
| District | -- | -- | 33% | -- | -- | 39% | 66% | 44% |
| State | -- | -- | 46% | -- | -- | 40% | 74% | 53% |

**In ELA, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS assessment in the district’s elementary schools ranged from 32 to 55 percent and was 48 percent at Quabbin Regional Middle.**

* The percentage of high needs students meeting or exceeding expectations ranged from 20 to 25 percent in the district’s elementary schools, and was 29 percent at Quabbin Regional Middle.
* The percentage of economically disadvantaged students meeting or exceeding expectations ranged from 23 to 32 percent in the district’s elementary schools, and was 37 percent at Quabbin Regional Middle.
* The percentage of students with disabilities meeting or exceeding expectations ranged from 0 to 15 percent in the district’s elementary schools and was 10 percent at Quabbin Regional Middle.

**In math, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS assessment in the district’s elementary schools ranged from 46 to 58 percent and was 42 percent at Quabbin Regional Middle.**

* The percentage of high needs students meeting or exceeding expectations ranged from 18 to 41 percent in the district’s elementary schools and was 21 percent at Quabbin Regional Middle.
* The percentage of economically disadvantaged students meeting or exceeding expectations ranged from 23 to 49 percent in the district’s elementary schools and was 26 percent at Quabbin Regional Middle.
* The percentage of students with disabilities meeting or exceeding expectations ranged from 4 to 34 percent in the district’s elementary schools and was 8 percent at Quabbin Regional Middle.

| **Table 14: Quabbin 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** |
| Hardwick | 42% | 20% | 23% | 0% | -- | 58% | 41% | 49% | 10% | -- |
| Hubbardston Center | 55% | 25% | 32% | 15% | -- | 51% | 38% | 32% | 34% | -- |
| New Braintree Elementary | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Oakham Center | 51% | 24% | 30% | 9% | -- | 50% | 18% | 23% | 4% | -- |
| Ruggles Lane | 32% | 22% | 29% | 6% | -- | 46% | 32% | 41% | 15% | -- |
| Quabbin Regional Middle | 48% | 29% | 37% | 10% | -- | 42% | 21% | 26% | 8% | -- |
| District | 45% | 24% | 30% | 8% | -- | 46% | 28% | 32% | 13% | -- |

**Between 2014 and 2017, ELA proficiency at Quabbin Regional High improved by 2 percentage points for all students and by 6 and 17 percentage points for high needs students and students with disabilities, respectively.**

**Between 2014 and 2017, math proficiency at Quabbin Regional High declined by 2 percentage points for all students and improved by 4 percentage points for high needs students.**

| **Table 15: Quabbin Regional School District**  **MCAS ELA and Math Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grade 10 by School, 2014–2017** | | | | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **ELA** | | | | | **Math** | | | | |
| **School** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** |
| IB School | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Quabbin Regional High | 95% | 96% | 95% | 97% | 2 | 90% | 82% | 80% | 88% | -2 |
| High Needs | 83% | 88% | 90% | 89% | 6 | 74% | 62% | 52% | 78% | 4 |
| Econ. Dis. | -- | 89% | 94% | 93% | -- | -- | 70% | 68% | 86% | -- |
| ELLs | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| SWD | 56% | 81% | 82% | 73% | 17 | 50% | 44% | 27% | 50% | 0 |

**Between 2014 and 2017, in science, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on the MCAS assessment declined by 9 to 26 percent in the district’s 4 elementary schools with reportable data. Science proficiency declined by 1 and 3 percentage points at Quabbin Regional Middle and Quabbin Regional High, respectively.**

* Science proficiency for high needs students declined by 12 to 23 percentage points in 3 of the 4 elementary schools and improved by 10 percentage points at Hubbardston Center, and declined by 5 and improved by 2 percentage points at Quabbin Regional Middle and Quabbin Regional High, respectively.
* In 2017, science proficiency for economically disadvantaged students ranged from 14 to 30 percent in the district’s elementary schools and was 34 and 59 percent at Quabbin Regional Middle and Quabbin Regional High, respectively.
* In 2017, science proficiency for students with disabilities was 31 percent in the district’s elementary school with reportable data and was 23 and 53 percent at Quabbin Regional Middle and Quabbin Regional High, respectively.

| **Table 16: Quabbin 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** |
| New Braintree Elementary | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| IB School | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Hardwick | 28 | 38% | 43% | 57% | 21% | -17 |
| High Needs | 15 | 36% | 33% | 33% | 13% | -23 |
| Econ. Dis. | 14 | -- | 33% | 38% | 14% | -- |
| SWD | 4 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| ELLs | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Hubbardston Center | 44 | 52% | 38% | 35% | 43% | -9 |
| High Needs | 10 | 20% | -- | 36% | 30% | 10 |
| Econ. Dis. | 3 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| SWD | 8 | 10% | -- | 27% | -- | -- |
| ELLs | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Oakham Center | 29 | 60% | 50% | 32% | 34% | -26 |
| High Needs | 12 | 37% | 29% | 14% | 25% | -12 |
| Econ. Dis. | 10 | -- | -- | 18% | 30% | -- |
| SWD | 6 | -- | 31% | -- | -- | -- |
| ELLs | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Ruggles Lane | 60 | 54% | 60% | 40% | 35% | -19 |
| High Needs | 30 | 35% | 47% | 30% | 20% | -15 |
| Econ. Dis. | 22 | -- | 52% | 41% | 18% | -- |
| SWD | 13 | -- | 36% | 8% | 31% | -- |
| ELLs | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Quabbin Regional Middle | 215 | 41% | 44% | 36% | 40% | -1 |
| High Needs | 83 | 28% | 26% | 17% | 23% | -5 |
| Econ. Dis. | 56 | -- | 38% | 17% | 34% | -- |
| SWD | 42 | 7% | 9% | 11% | 2% | -5 |
| ELLs | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Quabbin Regional High | 136 | 71% | 74% | 70% | 68% | -3 |
| High Needs | 36 | 51% | 65% | 46% | 53% | 2 |
| Econ. Dis. | 27 | -- | 77% | 58% | 59% | -- |
| SWD | 17 | 20% | 44% | 24% | 18% | -2 |
| ELLs | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |

**Between 2013 and 2016, the district’s four-year cohort graduation rate improved by 1.3 and 1.5 percentage points for all students and white students and declined by 3.8 to 8.0 percentage points for every other group with reportable data.**

| **Table 17: Quabbin Regional School District**  **Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Subgroup, 2014–2017** | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **N**  **(2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2017)** |
| High needs | 96 | 74.7% | 65.7% | 72.9% | 70.8% | -3.9 | 80.0% |
| Economically Disadvantaged\* | 74 | 74.1% | 68.8% | 72.1% | 70.3% | -3.8 | 79.0% |
| ELLs | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 63.4% |
| SWD | 50 | 71.1% | 50.0% | 60.6% | 66.0% | -5.1 | 72.8% |
| African American | 5 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 80.0% |
| Asian | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 94.1% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 11 | 62.5% | 62.5% | 88.9% | 54.5% | -8.0 | 74.4% |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic Latino | 5 | 100% | 66.7% | -- | -- | -- | 85.2% |
| White | 170 | 83.8% | 85.9% | 85.9% | 85.3% | 1.5 | 92.6% |
| All | 192 | 82.0% | 84.2% | 85.8% | 83.3% | 1.3 | 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 declined by 1.4 percentage points for all students, and by 2.6 to 8.6 percentage points for each subgroup with reportable data.**

| **Table 18: Quabbin Regional School District**  **Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Subgroup, 2013–2016** | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **N**  **(2016)** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2016)** |
| High needs | 85 | 83.9% | 80.0% | 72.9% | 78.8% | -5.1 | 82.9% |
| Economically Disadvantaged\* | 68 | 83.0% | 81.5% | 75.0% | 79.4% | -3.6 | 82.1% |
| ELLs | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 70.9% |
| SWD | 33 | 78.3% | 76.3% | 65.0% | 69.7% | -8.6 | 76.5% |
| African American | 3 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 83.4% |
| Asian | 2 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 94.8% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 9 | -- | 75.0% | 62.5% | 100% | -- | 76.8% |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic Latino | 5 | 100% | 100% | 83.3% | -- | -- | 87.4% |
| White | 185 | 90.7% | 88.6% | 88.0% | 88.1% | -2.6 | 93.5% |
| All | 204 | 90.1% | 87.4% | 86.6% | 88.7% | -1.4 | 89.8% |
| \* Five-year cohort graduation rate for students from low income families used for 2013, and 2014 rates. | | | | | | | |

**Between 2014 and 2017, the in-school suspension rate for all students increased from 0.5 percent to 1.9 percent and increased for each subgroup with reportable data.**

| **Table 19: Quabbin Regional School District**  **In-School Suspension Rates by Subgroup, 2014–2017** | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2017)** |
| High Needs | 0.7% | 1.6% | 2.6% | 3.4% | 2.7 | 2.6% |
| Economically Disadvantaged\* | 0.8% | 1.9% | 2.8% | 3.7% | 2.9 | 2.9% |
| ELLs | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 1.7% |
| SWD | 0.9% | 1.6% | 2.3% | 3.3% | 2.4 | 3.1% |
| African American | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 3.3% |
| Asian | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 0.5% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 0.0% | -- | 1.6% | 1.8% | 1.8 | 2.5% |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic or Latino | 0.0% | 4.0% | 5.4% | 3.6% | 3.6 | 2.1% |
| White | 0.6% | 1.1% | 1.3% | 1.9% | 1.3 | 1.3% |
| All s | 0.5% | 1.1% | 1.4% | 1.9% | 1.4 | 1.7% |

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

**In 2017, the out-of-school suspension rate for all students was 3.6 percent, above the 2017 state rate of 2.8 percent. The out-of-school suspension rate for each subgroup with reportable data ranged from 3.4 percent to 8.9 percent.**

| **Table 20: Quabbin Regional School District**  **Out-of-School Suspension Rates by Subgroup, 2014–2017** | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2017)** |
| High Needs | 4.7% | 4.3% | 2.8% | 5.6% | 0.9 | 4.5% |
| Economically disadvantaged\* | 5.2% | 4.7% | 2.8% | 6.7% | 1.5 | 5.3% |
| ELLs | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 3.8% |
| SWD | 5.3% | 4.5% | 3.7% | 5.5% | 0.2 | 5.5% |
| African American | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 6.3% |
| Asian | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 0.7% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 8.0% | -- | 2.4% | 5.3% | -2.7 | 5.2% |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic or Latino | 11.3% | 8.0% | 5.4% | 8.9% | -2.4 | 3.1% |
| White | 2.7% | 2.4% | 1.8% | 3.4% | 0.7 | 1.6% |
| All | 3.2% | 2.5% | 1.9% | 3.6% | 0.4 | 2.8% |

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

**Between 2014 and 2017, the district’s dropout rates increased and were above the state rates for all students and each subgroup with reportable data except African-American students.**

| **Table 21: Quabbin Regional School District**  **Dropout Rates by Subgroup, 2014–2017** | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2017)** |
| High Needs | 3.1% | 9.0% | 5.4% | 8.9% | 5.8 | 3.5% |
| Economically disadvantaged\* | 3.5% | 12.0% | 6.8% | 12.5% | 9.0 | 3.6% |
| ELLs | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 6.5% |
| SWD | 3.8% | 6.3% | 6.9% | 10.9% | 7.1 | 3.3% |
| African American | 0.0% | 15.4% | 12.5% | 0.0% | 0 | 2.9% |
| Asian | 0.0% | 10.0% | 0.0% | 16.7% | 16.7 | 0.6% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 7.1% | 9.1% | 11.4% | 9.4% | 2.3 | 4.2% |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic or Latino | 4.2% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 4.8% | 0.6 | 1.7% |
| White | 2.1% | 3.5% | 2.7% | 3.0% | 0.9 | 1.1% |
| All | 2.3% | 3.9% | 3.2% | 3.5% | 1.2 | 1.8% |
| \*Drop-out rates for students from low income families used for 2014 rates. | | | | | | |

Curriculum and Instruction

Contextual Background

In recent years, the superintendent and the school committee have consistently focused on promoting equity and excellence. They have selected and introduced rigorous curricula and instructional practices, including the International Baccalaureate, Introduction to Biotechnology, Eureka Math, and Capstone Projects, which elevate for teachers and students the levels of academic performance and prepare district students to pursue a wide range of 21st century college, career, and civic opportunities. Implementing the International Baccalaureate(IB) curriculum is one of the notable ways that the district addresses its goal to provide Quabbin students more challenging curriculum.

Some district staff acknowledged that the IB program was meeting the district’s goals to elevate curricular content: “IB is a program with high expectations and rigor.” They noted, “Because of IB implementation, rigor has increased.” The superintendent told the team that since the district implemented the IB program in 2013 district staff have worked through issues with the implementation and district leaders continue to expand the numbers of students who participate in IB courses.

For designing and implementing high-quality curriculum aligned with current state frameworks, the district provides its staff the twin supports of dedicated development time and a network of internal and external technical support staff. Teachers develop and revise curriculum during structured time in the school day, in half-day release time days, in full-day curriculum days, and in summer workshops. Full-time and part-time staff support teachers in developing, revising, and delivering aligned curriculum. District staff also collaborate with consultants and organizations with expertise in elementary literacy, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), and performance-based assessments. Working closely with school-based staff, consultants strengthen the capacities of district staff to learn and then apply effective, research-based instructional strategies for delivering curriculum content.

The review team’s observation of classroom instruction in Quabbin suggests that continued work is needed in order to ensure that all students consistently receive high-quality instruction. Classroom observation data is summarized in the Instructional Inventory in Appendix C.

A hallmark of the district’s organizational culture is collaboration and teamwork among the school committee, the superintendent, teachers’ association representatives, educational leaders, and faculty. The district’s commitment to distributed leadership has resulted in providing part-time, stipended roles for K–6 teacher leaders in ELA and 7–12 academic coordinators who assume curriculum development duties in addition to classroom teaching. Four coaches are full-time teacher leaders: one literacy and one math coach K–6, one combined literacy and math coach grades K–3, and one math coach in grades 7–12.

The assistant superintendent for curriculum, instruction, and assessment oversees and coordinates curricula, instructional practices, assessments, and professional development. With steady support from the superintendent and the school committee, the assistant superintendent ensures that staff has the resources they need to do the jobs they need to do. She has developed the structures and processes that stimulate and sustain teachers’ continuous and collegial conversations about curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

At the state and district level, major curriculum changes have recently taken place. In April 2016, the state approved the revised Science and Technology/Engineering Framework. In March 2017, the state approved revised frameworks for ELA/Literacy and for math. In September 2017, the district introduced a new math program, Eureka Math, in all math classes in grades 7–12 and began piloting the program at the elementary level.

In recent years, district staff has developed and implemented the Assessment Planning System (APS) protocol for providing students from kindergarten through grade 6 with a dynamic and effective curriculum, instruction, and assessment system in literacy. A team of coaches, teacher leaders, and interventionists at all the elementary schools implement a fine-grained system of attention to students’ progress and response to students’ learning needs. The K–6 literacy APS model requires significant staffing, meeting time, and teachers’ and principals’ time out of classrooms and schools.

When administrators referred to the district’s instructional needs in mathematics, they told the review team that they would address those needs with the same dynamic, resource-rich approach that they have employed in elementary literacy, noting: “The vision for math is to create the structures that currently exist for ELA for math.” The review team commends the district for the development and implementation of the K–6 literacy model and for its ambitious plan to replicate this approach to address its math needs. The team urges the district to consider carefully the time and other resources required for this work.

**Strength Findings**

**1. The district has consistently provided the time and support staff for designing and implementing highly collaborative, teacher-led activities to develop and update curricula.**

1. Interviews and a document review indicated that district teachers perform part-time (K–6 ELA teacher leaders and 7–12 academic coordinators) and full-time (instructional coaches in math and ELA) roles that direct and support their colleagues’ “curriculum conversations” to develop and revise curricula.
2. During the school year, the district schedules professional time when teachers and support staff meet to develop curriculum as one of their activities, including middle-school common planning time, early release days, curriculum days, and summer professional learning time.

1. K–6 grade-level teachers meet with their teacher leaders and grade-level teachers have monthly Assessment Planning System (APS) meetings with teacher leaders and coaches.

a. The district-designed K–6 Assessment Planning System (APS) is a formal protocol that elementary teachers use collaboratively “to revise each upcoming unit of study based on student assessment results and teacher reports from the previous unit of study.”

2. There are monthly Eureka Math review meetings and 7–12 teachers’ bi-monthly subject matter department meetings.

1. Teachers and district leaders spoke of the positive outcomes from the district’s collaborative curriculum development procedures.

1. Some interviewees said that the joint planning of curriculum was “making teachers better teachers.”

2. Teachers reported feeling ownership of the curricula that they were building with support from administrators and other teachers.

3. Overall, teachers interviewed by the review team thought that their district’s professional development activities, which include curriculum development, had improved from “a major negative to a positive.”

**Impact:** Meaningful participation can generate and increase ownership of tasks. Effective teamwork can increase the creativity, depth, and quality of curriculum documents.

**2. Elementary educators have implemented the Assessment Planning System protocol for K–6 ELA literacy.**

**A**. The district has in place a number of positions to lead and support literacy instruction.

1. A K–6 literacy coach, and a K–3 instructional coach support teachers in implementing curriculum and instruction.

2. Interventionists work with students who are not achieving at grade level.

3. Teacher leaders at the elementary schools meet regularly with grade-level teachers to keep them on track with delivery of the established curriculum. Teacher leaders meet monthly with the assistant superintendent to keep her informed about curriculum implementation.

4. Consultants provide expertise to raise teachers’ skill levels.

**B.** Instructional support staff have many opportunities to collaborate as they implement the literacy program.

1. When following the APS (Assessment Planning System) protocol for K–6 ELA literacy, teachers discuss what went well in the previous unit and what to continue or add to the next unit of study. Using Fountas & Pinnell data and other data sources, administrators, coaches, and teacher leaders make instructional decisions.

a. Teachers bring data, including evidence such as student work, to each APS meeting. These samples elicit in-depth conversations about students’ achievement.

2. Interventionists meet with the director of student services every six weeks to review data and discuss students. Participants make decisions together concerning the students needing intervention and the skills and content they need support on.

3. During their regular meetings with grade-level teachers, teacher leaders discuss their progress in curriculum implementation.

**Impact:** Literacy support personnel, administrators, and teachers implement a dynamic system to address elementary literacy. Regular opportunities to reflect on challenges, to plan, and to monitor progress provide teachers with opportunities to participate in the system as leaders.

**Challenges and Areas for Growth**

**3. In three major subject areas---English language arts (ELA), mathematics, and science—the district has not completed alignment of its curriculum documents with the current curriculum frameworks. The progress for updating grade-by-grade curriculum maps differs by subject area.**

**A**. **English Language Arts (K–6):** Interviews and a document review indicated that elementary schools do not have documented curriculum maps for kindergarten through grade 6. District staff continues to develop monthly APS (Assessment Planning System) curriculum maps for K–6 ELA.

1. The APS template contains the following components: objectives, resources, instructional strategies, and assessments. The monthly APS documents also serve as pacing guides.

While district staff indicated that they often review and discuss the Massachusetts frameworks, the district does not have documentation indicating how and where the APS units are aligned with the 2017 Massachusetts ELA/Literacy Framework.

b. The APS template does not indicate the corresponding grade-appropriate standards and skills from the 2017 Massachusetts ELA/Literacy Framework.

c. A staff member indicated that when several teachers came into a new grade, they had issues using the APS documents, which were not user-friendly for those teachers who had not attended the APS meetings.

**B.** **English Language Arts (7–12):** Middle- and high-school staff have begun updating ELA curriculum maps for grades 7, 9, and 10 and for IB Course HL (Higher Level) year 2 and SL (Standard Level) Year 1. Staff has not updated ELA curriculum maps for grade 8 ELA, AP courses (AP Language and Composition, AP Literature and Composition), and high-school elective courses.

1. The Rubicon Atlas template for secondary curriculum maps contains the following components: objectives, resources, instructional strategies, pacing guides and assessments.

2. District staff indicated that they have not developed a formal process to guide the vertical alignment of ELA curriculum between the elementary schools and the middle school.

1. **Math (K–12):** Districtwide, the district’s mathematics curricula are in transition. District leaders and teachers have adopted Eureka Mathat the secondary level and are piloting Eureka Mathat the elementary level.

1. Interviewees said that because secondary teachers and support staff received the Eureka Mathinstructional materials in September 2017 and some elementary teachers will receive them in September 2018, teachers and support staff have not developed updated curriculum maps K–8 and for high-school math courses (e.g., algebra I, algebra II, and geometry).

2. At the time of the site visit in January 2018, the K–12 math curricula were missing vertical articulation.

* 1. **Science (K–6):**  In the elementary schools, in January 2017, district staff began piloting a curriculum development process for integrating the district’s ELA, math, and science curricula.

1. The district is partnering with the Cross-District Science Consortium Mapping (CDSM) Project, which is developing integrated curriculum units.

2. District staff also collaborate with the Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) STEM Education Center to develop the science units.

* 1. **Science (7-12):** The academic coordinator (7–12) and middle-school science teachers have begun to revise and align maps for grades 7 and 8 curriculum with the 2016 Massachusetts Science and Technology/Engineering Framework.

1. High-school science teachers have not revised and aligned curriculum maps with the 2016 Massachusetts Science and Technology/Engineering Framework in courses such as biology, chemistry, environmental science, and advanced placement physics.

**Impact:** When a district’s curriculum does not reflect the current frameworks, it cannot ensure that it is preparing students for higher education, careers, and civic responsibility. Gaps and redundancies in instruction likely hinder students’ acquisition of knowledge and skill development.

**4. Except for the APS protocol for K–6 ELA literacy, the district does not have clear processes for planning and implementing the development and revision of its curriculum documents.**

**A**. The district does not have a current strategic plan, District Improvement Plan (DIP), or School Improvement Plans (SIPs) for identifying, coordinating, and monitoring the progress of curriculum development tasks and activities.

1. The former DIP (2011–2014) included tasks, timelines and designated staff for completing curriculum revisions in all subject areas.

* + 1. While district staff developed a set of 2017–2018 elementary school goals (including goals for curriculum development), these goals did not have associated action plans.

3. At the time of the onsite in January 2018, the superintendent indicated that district staff have begun to use the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s Planning for Success process to design a multi-year strategic plan, an annual DIP, and annual SIPs designed by principals and school councils and aligned with the strategic plan and the DIP.

**B**. Except for the APS (Assessment Planning System) protocol for K–6 ELA literacy, the district does not have a clearly documented process indicating the tasks and activities for comprehensive curriculum development/revision.

1. Responding to a May 2017 survey on professional learning needs, middle- and high-school teachers indicated a high need for “a formal process to collaborate regularly to examine student work, to set goals, and to make curriculum, instruction and/or assessment changes.”

2. A district leader identified the need for “a coherent system of collaboratively working together on curriculum.”

**Impact:** Without an action plan and schedules for curriculum development and revision, district leaders and staff cannot effectively: plan, develop, and revise curriculum; monitor progress toward goals, and ensure that students have access to high-level, grade appropriate curriculum.

**5. The district’s reliance on teacher leaders and academic coordinators for leadership in curriculum and instruction has limited principals’ roles as instructional leaders.**

**A.** Principals described limited roles for themselves as instructional leaders.

1. Elementary principals said that they deferred their responsibility for instructional leadership to teacher leaders and coaches, noting, “Now with coaches, the teachers feel that coaches are the instructional leaders.” Elementary principals also stated that teacher leaders were the experts in their grade level and subject.

2. Secondary principals reported that they relied on academic coordinators to provide instructional leadership.

3. At the same time, district administrators and principals suggested an important role for the principal was ensuring that teachers could attend the numerous meetings that supported their leadership responsibilities.

4. Principals also told review team members that in their role as evaluators they were exerting instructional leadership.

**B.** Administrators, teacher leaders, academic coordinators, coaches, and interventionists assigned responsibility for instructional leadership to various teams and staff. None referred to principals as instructional leaders.

1. At the elementary level, teacher leaders referred to the Math Instructional Team (MIT) and the Literacy Instructional Team (LIT) as instructional leaders in math and literacy, respectively.

a. Principals are members of these teams.

2. Some interviewees said that instructional leadership had mostly fallen to coordinators.

3. Administrators told the team that principals did not lead professional development activities, but rather were “actively learning with teachers.”

**C.** The district has assigned some principals the responsibility of attending some of the three-hour Assessment Planning System meetings and reporting to the remaining principals what took place.

**Impact:**  Although there is value in a distributed leadership structure with shared responsibility, with a limited role as instructional leaders, principals cannot ensure that the intended curriculum is taught and learned by students with equitable instruction across the district.

6. In observed classrooms, students did not consistently experience engagement and high expectations, which interviewees described as characteristic of effective instruction in the district.

**A.** When the review team asked interviewees what effective instruction looked like in the district, administrators and teachers consistently spoke about student engagement and high expectations.

**B.** In observed classes across the district, students were not consistently engaged in the lesson or communicating their ideas and thinking with each other.

1. The team found sufficient and compelling evidence that students assumed responsibility to learn and were engaged in the lesson (characteristic #5) in 50 percent of elementary classrooms, in 67 percent of middle-school classrooms, and in only 45 percent of high-school classrooms.

a. In a grade 11 ELA class in which students assumed responsibility to learn and were engaged in the lesson, highly animated small groups of students rehearsed and performed a series of skits and reflected on each other’s work.

b. In a grade 7 math class in which students did not have opportunities to take responsibility for their learning and were not engaged in the lesson, the teacher did several calculations on the board and the students watched quietly.

2. Observers noted sufficient and compelling evidence that students communicated their ideas and thinking with each other (characteristic # 7) in 73 percent of elementary classes, in only 43 percent of middle-school classes, and just 25 percent of high-school classes.

a. In an example of students communicating their ideas and thinking with each other, in an elementary science class students worked in small groups to categorize types of matter.

b. In contrast, in several high-school classrooms the teacher read the text aloud to the students and stopped twice to ask students a question. When they did not respond the teacher answered the question herself.

**C.** Observers found that students were not consistently engaged in challenging tasks regardless of learning needs at all levels.

1. Review team members saw sufficient and compelling evidence of students engaged in challenging tasks regardless of learning needs (characteristic #9) in 62 percent of elementary school classrooms, in just 21 percent of middle-school classrooms, and in only 25 percent of high-school classrooms.

a. In a classroom with high expectations, students located pictures of solids, liquids, and gases and in small groups decided how to classify them.

b. In a classroom with low expectations, the teacher demonstrated how to do certain operations, and the students simply copied what the teacher had written onto their worksheets.

**Impact:** When students are not experiencing the engagement and high expectations their teachers identify as key elements of effective instruction in the district, they are not being sufficiently prepared to achieve at high levels and to succeed in college, career, and civic involvement.

**Recommendations**

**District leaders and staff should improve and clarify its system for the regular and timely review and revision of curriculum.**

**A.** The district should complete its current planning process, with attention to curriculum alignment and review.

1. Those involved in designing and developing district and school plans should consider addressing curriculum alignment and review/revision in the plans.

a. The district is urged to include specific elements in the plans related to curriculum alignment and review, including SMART goals, tasks/activities, responsible staff, timelines, and interim measurable outcomes that would indicate progress.

b. As part of the planning process, the district should consider specifying the roles that central office staff, principals and school-based staff will perform.

c. Since the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education has adopted the 2018 Massachusetts History and Social Science Framework,[[9]](#footnote-9) the district should also consider how to address curriculum alignment in the future.

1. The superintendent should periodically update the school committee and all staff on the progress made in developing, aligning and revising curriculum documents.

**Benefits:** A carefully planned system for collaboratively designing and revising curriculum documents will help to ensure that all teachers use curriculum materials that are aligned with new state frameworks in ELA/literacy, mathematics and science and technology/engineering and that provide students with a more coherent educational experience.

**2. The district should clarify expectations for principals’ roles as instructional leaders.**

**A.** District leaders, along with principals and guided by the Massachusetts Professional Standards for Administrative Leadership, should clarify and document the district’s expectations for principals as instructional leaders in a distributed leadership environment.

1. Their roles could include leadership of teacher leaders and coaches.

**B.** The district should provide support and guidance to help principals fulfill their roles as instructional leaders.

1. District administrators should play an active role in working with principals, with a particular focus on guiding their work to support teaching and learning.

2. Principal evaluations should prioritize each principal’s growth as an instructional leader.

**Benefits**: By expanding their roles as instructional leaders, principals will become more integrated into the district’s distributed leadership model and will be better able to guide instructional improvement at the schoolwide level.

**3. The district should take steps to ensure that all students consistently receive instruction that illustrates the district’s emphasis on student engagement and high expectations.**

1. The district should leverage existing practices focused on designing and improving curriculum and instruction, such as dedicated time and collaboration opportunities, to further articulate its vision of engaging and rigorous instruction in all subject areas.
2. The district might consider encouraging peer observations of exemplary teachers for the purpose of reinforcing effective student engagement and high expectations.
3. Professional development should include a focus on expectations and strategies for designing rigorous instruction and increasing student engagement.

**Benefits:** By clarifying and promoting its vision of engagement and high expectations, the district will help to ensure that students receive high-quality instruction that demonstrates the district’s priorities and that better prepares them for success beyond high school.

**Recommended resources:**

* *Quick Reference Guide: Establishing an Effective Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) Program* ([http://www.doe.mass.edu/stem/ste/STEprogram.docx](https://mail.doe.mass.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=dwIEOlS9GSTHXNe4UkNghewicANuIyVzsQ_YV3vIFzSXCqKt6NjUCA..&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.doe.mass.edu%2fstem%2fste%2fSTEprogram.docx)): ESE has identified five components districts should attend to when designing a rigorous, coherent and relevant pre-K-12 STE education program. Educators, administrators and curriculum designers can refer to this guide for brief descriptions and resources for each component.
* *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.
* The Massachusetts Science and Technology/Engineering Curriculum Framework web page (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/stem/review.html>) provides links to the current frameworks and supporting documents, including updated strand maps, crosswalks, and other guidance materials.
* *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.
* 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.

Assessment

**Contextual Background**

The superintendent is wholly and enthusiastically committed to the idea that success for the district requires a higher set of expectations of students by adults, and by students of themselves and one another. She has also expressed the belief that educators must ask more of other educators. At the secondary level, assessment figures prominently in this move to higher expectations. The superintendent and other administrators view the introduction of the International Baccalaureate (IB) program as a chance to increase rigor in middle- and high-school curriculum and instruction. They point to the critical role of assessment in the IB program. The IB program tells students what the assessment will be and then structures the course to lead students there. Students know from the beginning the course expectations and can understand their performance at the end of the course in light of the expectations stated at the beginning. The Capstone Project, a graduation requirement, involves a long-term investigative project that culminates in students’ presentations of the project results, a final assessment before graduation of each student’s proficiency. In the 2017–2018 school year, the district is providing year-long in-depth professional development on performance assessment at the middle and high schools to raise expectations of students through rigorous assessments. The review team commends the district for its work at the secondary level to develop high-quality performance assessments and urges the district to continue its efforts to improve curriculum and instruction.

**Strength Finding**

**1. The middle and high schools are in the early stages of developing high-quality assessments to improve curriculum and instruction at the secondary level.**

**A.** During the 2016–2017 school year, an analysis of assessment results, a review of student work, and classroom observations led administrators and teachers to question the level of instructional rigor at the middle and high schools.

1. Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate results raised concerns.

2. Calibration of rating student work showed low expectations.

**B.** Administrators and academic coordinators decided to focus on the development of high-quality performance assessments to raise the level of student achievement at the secondary level.

1. Secondary professional development during the 2017–2018 school year, led by consultants, guided teachers through a year-long assessment cycle.

a. Academic coordinators played a lead role in promoting this initiative.

2. Administrators reviewed sample performance assessments to determine the depth of knowledge and level of rigor expected from students. They also investigated how well classroom instruction prepared students for the rigorous demands of the assessments.

**Impact:** With additional professional development about performance assessments, ongoing review of the rigor of performance assessments, sufficient time to analyze assessment data, and ongoing attention to expectations for the rigor of students’ work, the district likely can increase secondary teachers’ capacity to improve instruction and raise student achievement.

Student Support

**Contextual Background**

Educators in the district are focused on supporting all students who struggle. Many students come to school each day with high programmatic and support needs. In the 2017–2018 school year, 38.9 percent of students are part of the high-needs subgroup because they are in one or more of the following subgroups: economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and English language learners (ELLs) or former ELLs. For example, students with disabilities in the district represent 20.4 percent of the total student population, compared with 17.7 percent of the state, and economically disadvantaged students make up 26.8 percent of enrollment, compared with 32 percent across the state.

District staff spend time and resources to identify students’ needs and to plan ways to provide in-district services to support students. Administrators have identified three areas of need: the mental health hospitalization of students, programming for students with autism, and social-emotional learning at all levels.

The district uses student support teams (SSTs) K–12 as the process for identifying struggling students. There are notable differences between the identification of struggling students at the primary and secondary levels, largely because of a successful instructional model implemented for K–6 ELA that regularly monitors the progress of all students and modifies instruction to meet those needs. This model has not been implemented in other content areas at the elementary level, and not at all at the secondary level.

District leaders and high-school educators have recognized the large number of chronically absent students at the high school. In summer 2017 they developed a policy for improving attendance.[[10]](#footnote-10) The district instituted “social suspension” as a consequence for excessive tardiness or absence. A student on social suspension may attend school, but may not participate in activities such as sports, dances, and field trips.

The district also addresses challenges posed by its responsibility for educating students in a therapeutic residential school for boys that houses 30 students. About 25 students at this school require services that the high school does not provide. Those students are placed in other districts, but are still considered Quabbin students.

**Strength Findings**

**1. The district creates and sustains partnerships with external organizations and consultants to build the capacity of district educators to address the academic and social-emotional needs of all students.**

1. The district’s external partnerships brings resources to bear on the social-emotional learning and healthy development of students.
   1. Staff from CAPS Education Collaborative for occupational and physical therapy and speech services are training many in-district professionals.
   2. The district encourages the engagement of students and families with multiple mental health providers, including YOU, Inc. Students and families also have access to a range of emergency services.
   3. In 2016, Hardwick Elementary and Quabbin High School forged ties with the Listening Center in Barre to offer students training and support in mindfulness practices to reduce anxiety and improve focus.

a. In 2017–2018, in response to data showing the positive effect of this work, the district secured a grant to expand training to counselors in all the district’s elementary schools.

* 1. The middle school has worked with the New England Center for Children to co-develop three classrooms for students on the autism spectrum, in an elementary school and in the middle school.

1. Interviews with parents and a review of a recent comprehensive external review of special education services at the secondary level indicated a high-impact “quality” model that is supporting the social-emotional development and the academic success of students.
2. The district regularly forms partnerships with academic consultants and resource institutions to help district educators to build their skills, design and implement new academic programming, and improve student learning outcomes.

1. Since 2012 the district’s K–6 curriculum, instruction, and assessment leaders, and all ELA teachers K–6 have worked together with a two-person consulting team to develop, launch, and refine the Assessment Planning System (APS).

a. Teachers and curriculum and instruction leaders described the intensive nature of this prolonged collaboration and its positive impact on teaching and learning.

2. The district has partnered with a national resource center to develop the ability of educators to assess student performance at the secondary level.

3. The district participates in the Cross-District Science Curriculum Mapping Project, a 26-district consortium working to develop curriculum units aligned with the 2017 Massachusetts Science and Technology/Engineering Framework.

4. With the Center for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) Education at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, the district has implemented a pilot STEM program through a grant secured by the college for work on curriculum and professional development.

5. The Gateway dropout prevention/recovery programs at Mt. Wachusett Community College and Quinsigamond Community College enroll district students in college courses.

1. The district pro-actively seeks out evaluative feedback from experts and resource institutions. These leading external resource, research, and educational consultants and organizations offer close, detailed input on key areas for growth and recommended action steps for improvement.
2. In 2017, the district independently commissioned a former Massachusetts superintendent and experienced special education consultant to conduct a thorough evaluation of the special education program in the middle and high schools. This comprehensive review yielded detailed critical findings and recommended sweeping changes.[[11]](#footnote-11)
   1. The superintendent has used the report to spur ongoing planning and action.
3. In 2016, through a Community Compact grant from the Commonwealth, the district partnered with the Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management at the University of Massachusetts to develop a comprehensive review of community and school trends in the district’s five towns. The resultant report delineates both the challenges and the opportunities the district faces and offers a range of data and analysis.[[12]](#footnote-12)
4. At the time of the review in January 2018, school committee members, town leaders in all five district towns, and district administrators were actively engaged in using this partnership approach to seek out long-term solutions.

1. The 15-member school committee plays a leadership role in the Quabbin Education Municipal Partnership whose work poses the question: “How can Quabbin partner more effectively, either as a collection of towns or as a district, to leverage resources for schools and students, while helping other towns meet their needs?”

2. Ideas under consideration include continued and new partnerships with districts, community colleges, and other agencies to serve vulnerable students; sharing access to district schools with schools and programs in other communities; and creating high-quality programming for specialized populations of students to attract students and families from other communities.

**Impact:** Partnerships with external consultants and organizations enhance the resources and capacities of partner institutions and individuals, bring new data and analysis to bear on the challenges that students and educators face, and help the district improve the quality of its academic and social-emotional programming. These partnerships also afford educators and students the opportunity to develop skills, raise achievement, and overcome individual and organizational challenges.

**2. District leaders and student services personnel have established policies and practices to support the district’s most vulnerable students, and work collaboratively to improve services and programs.**

1. The district creatively and persistently ensures that supports and services are available and meet the needs of struggling students.

1. The District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP), for example, is a well-detailed set of guidelines about services that teachers should provide in general education classrooms for struggling students. The DCAP also lays out the process for engaging the student support team if a student continues to struggle.

2. The superintendent and community members said that the district’s responsibility for educating students in a local therapeutic residential school for boys, many with Department of Children and Families (DCF) placements, was an ongoing challenge. Interviewees told the team that when the group home opened in 2013, communication between the district’s director of student services and staff and group home administrators and caseworkers was ineffective and “adversarial.” Studying this issue over time improved understanding of DCF mandates about group home students and communication between the district’s special educators and group home administrators and case workers.

3. The superintendent said that the district arranged with an adjacent school district to transport Quabbin students with disabilities needing a specific program offered only at a third district, located on the other side of the adjacent district. The superintendent negotiated with the superintendent of the adjacent district to manage the transportation of students with disabilities from both districts so that they could attend the program together.

4. A parent told the team and a document review confirmed that in response to a student’s need the district implemented a high-quality autism program for students in grades 6–8, that has enabled the student to continue in the district.

**Impact**: Clear policies and practices and persistent efforts to improve services and programs likely enable the district to improve the well-being and achievement of the district’s most vulnerable students.

**Challenges and Areas for Growth**

**3. The district does not have in place a multi-tiered system of support for all students K–12.**

**A.** The team found limited evidence in the middle and high schools of ongoing proactive monitoring of students’ needs and of interventions to support students.

**B.** The district has scheduled specific times during which students may receive support that addresses their needs.

1. The middle and high schools have a 40-minute “flex block” first period of the day. During the flex block, students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) meet with special educators.

a. An administrator stated and a district consultant agreed that this approach for providing services itemized in students’ IEPs was not effectively planned and that, as a result, students on IEPs primarily use this time to complete their homework.

**C.** Principals said that some general education teachers hesitated to provide accommodations for struggling students because an accommodation such as giving more time to a student to complete a test seemed like “cheating” and “might not be fair.”

**D.** In observed classrooms, review team members found sufficient and compelling evidence that the teacher ensures that students engage in challenging tasks regardless of learning needs (characteristic # 9) in only 22 percent of classrooms at the middle school and in just 25 percent of classrooms at the high school.

**E.** Observers found sufficient and compelling evidence that the teacher uses a variety of instructional strategies (characteristic #10) in just 29 percent of classrooms at the middle school and in only 37 percent of observed classrooms at the high school.

**F.** Interviewees, including district leaders, expressed the need for a districtwide co-teaching model featuring teams of highly qualified special education and general education teachers. Currently co-teaching is only taking place in grades 7 and 8 ELA.

**G.** According to ESE data, from 2013 to 2017, the four-year cohort graduation rate of students with disabilities fluctuated within an overall decline, from 73.9 percent in 2013 to 66.6 percent in 2017.

**Impact**: Without a high-quality, tiered system of support across all levels in the district, the most vulnerable students may not have access to the support they need in order to achieve at high levels and be prepared for college, career, and civic responsibility.

**Recommendation**

**1.** Building on the supports already in place, the district should implement a more structured and proactive tiered system of support to effectively identify and address all students’ strengths and needs.

**A.** The district should continue to take steps to provide effective instructional and support strategies that meet the needs of all students (“tier 1”).

**B.** The district should plan and implement systems to ensure that student data is used to identify particular programs and supports that are appropriate for groups and for individual students (“tier 2” and “tier 3”).

1. As part of this effort, the district should identify the programs and supports already in place and note gaps that need to be addressed.

2. The programs and supports should be grounded in evidence-based practices and supported by dedicated, trained staff and resources.

**C.** The district should use student data and other information to systematically evaluates the effectiveness of its tiered system of support.

**Benefits:** A comprehensive, proactive tiered system of support can help to ensure that all students have equal access and equitable support to achieve, grow, and advance, including persisting through graduation and being prepared for success after high school.

**Recommended resources:**

* The System for Student Success (SfSS)(<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfss/>) is a blueprint for school improvement that focuses on systems, structures and supports across the district, school, and classroom to meet the academic and non-academic needs of all students. The SfSS website includes links to a self-assessment and a variety of helpful resources.
* The *Educator Effectiveness Guidebook for Inclusive Practice* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/guidebook/>) includes tools for districts, schools, and educators that are aligned to the MA Educator Evaluation Framework and promote evidence-based best practices for inclusion following the principles of Universal Design for Learning, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, and Social and Emotional Learning.

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

Review Team Members

The review was conducted on January 25, 26, and 30, 2018, by the following team of independent ESE consultants.

1. Dr. James Caradonio, Curriculum

2. Patricia Williams, Instruction, *review team coordinator*

3. Dr. Coral Grout, Assessment

4. Janet Smith, Student Support

5. Dr. Andrew Bundy, Student Support

District Review Activities

The following activities were conducted during the review:

The team conducted interviews with the following members of the school committee: the chair, the vice-chair, and six members.

The review team conducted interviews with the following representatives of the teachers’ association: the president and a building representative.

The team conducted interviews/focus groups with the following central office administrators: the superintendent and a consultant.

The team visited the following schools: New Braintree (Pre-K–1), Hardwick (K–6), Hubbardston Center (K–6), Oakham Center (grades 2–6), Ruggles Lane (K–6), Quabbin Regional Middle School (grades 7–8), and Quabbin Regional High School (grades 9-–12).

During school visits, the team conducted interviews with six principals and one focus group with one middle- and one high-school teacher.

The team observed 48 classes in the district: 16 at the high school, 14 at the middle school, and 18 at the 5 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.
  + Data on the district’s staffing and finances.
  + Published educational reports on the district by ESE, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), and the former Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA).
  + District documents such as district and school improvement plans, school committee policies, curriculum documents, summaries of student assessments, job descriptions, collective bargaining agreements, evaluation tools for staff, handbooks, school schedules, and the district’s end-of-year financial reports.
  + All completed program and administrator evaluations, and a random selection of completed teacher evaluations.

Site Visit Schedule

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Thursday**  01/25/2018/ | **Friday**  01/26/2018 | **Tuesday**  01/30/2018 |
| Orientation with district leaders and principals; interviews with district staff and principals; document reviews; school committee, parent focus group, and visits to Quabbin Regional High School, and the Hubbardston, Hardwick, New Braintree, and Oakham elementary schools for classroom observations. | Interviews with superintendent, district staff and principals, teachers’ association interview, middle-school and high-school teachers’ focus group, and visits to Ruggles Lane Elementary School and Quabbin Regional Middle School for classroom observations. | Standards interview, student focus group, visits to Quabbin Regional High School and the Hardwick, Hubbardston, the New Braintree, and Oakham elementary schools for classroom observations. |

Appendix B: Enrollment, Attendance, Expenditures

**Table B1a: Quabbin Regional School District 2017–2018 Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity**

| **Group** | **District** | **Percent**  **of Total** | **State** | **Percent of**  **Total** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| African-American | 12 | 0.5% | 86,305 | 9.0% |
| Asian | 15 | 0.7% | 65,667 | 6.9% |
| Hispanic | 108 | 4.9% | 191,201 | 20.0% |
| Native American | 3 | 0.1% | 2,103 | 0.2% |
| White | 2,037 | 91.5% | 573,335 | 60.1% |
| Native Hawaiian | 2 | 0.1% | 818 | 0.1% |
| Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic | 49 | 2.2% | 34,605 | 3.6% |
| All | 2,226 | 100.0% | 954,034 | 100.0% |
| Note: As of October 1, 2017 | | | | |

**Table B1b: Quabbin 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 | 463 | 52.3% | 20.4% | 171,061 | 38.0% | 17.7% |
| Econ. Dis. | 596 | 67.3% | 26.8% | 305,203 | 67.9% | 32.0% |
| ELLs and Former ELLs | 6 | 0.7% | 0.3% | 97,334 | 21.6% | 10.2% |
| All high needs students | 885 | 100.0% | 38.9% | 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 2,273; total state enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 964,806. | | | | | | |

**Table B2: Quabbin Regional School District**

**Attendance Rates, 2014–2017**

| **Group** | **N (2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2017)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| High Needs | 919 | 93.1 | 92.4 | 92.2 | 92.4 | -0.7 | 93.1 |
| Econ. Dis. | 628 | -- | 91.6 | 91.2 | 92.1 | -- | 92.6 |
| ELLs | 5 | 92.6 | 0.0 | 94.8 | 0.0 | -92.6 | 93.5 |
| SWD | 482 | 93.1 | 92.8 | 92.3 | 92.9 | -0.2 | 93.0 |
| African American | 16 | 94.6 | 95.8 | 93.6 | 95.0 | 0.4 | 94.0 |
| Asian | 17 | 95.0 | 96.7 | 95.0 | 95.6 | 0.6 | 96.3 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 120 | 93.4 | 93.3 | 93.9 | 92.8 | -0.6 | 92.8 |
| Multi-Race | 57 | 92.6 | 90.9 | 93.1 | 92.5 | -0.1 | 94.5 |
| White | 2,178 | 94.5 | 94.1 | 93.9 | 93.9 | -0.6 | 95.1 |
| All | 2,390 | 94.4 | 94.0 | 93.9 | 93.9 | -0.5 | 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: Quabbin 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 | $32,269,039 | $32,263,656 | | $32,150,360 | | $32,109,222 | | $32,939,638 | | $32,144,954 |
| From revolving funds and grants | -- | $4,896,275 | | -- | | $5,631,886 | | -- | | $4,018,127 |
| Total expenditures | -- | $37,159,931 | | -- | | $37,741,107 | | -- | | $36,163,081 |
| Chapter 70 aid to education program | | | | | | | | | | |
| Chapter 70 state aid\* | -- | $16,286,563 | | -- | | $16,342,038 | | -- | | $16,463,038 |
| Required local contribution | -- | $9,941,651 | | -- | | $10,090,036 | | -- | | $10,064,723 |
| Required net school spending\*\* | -- | $26,228,214 | | -- | | $26,432,074 | | -- | | $26,527,761 |
| Actual net school spending | -- | $28,697,435 | | -- | | $28,780,698 | | -- | | $29,310,437 |
| Over/under required ($) | -- | $2,469,221 | | -- | | $2,348,624 | | -- | | $2,782,676 |
| Over/under required (%) | -- | 9.4% | | -- | | 8.9% | | -- | | 10.5% |
| \*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 website  Data retrieved 12/13/17 and 5/23/18 | | | | | | | | | | |

**Table B4: Quabbin Regional School District Expenditures Per In-District Pupil**

**Fiscal Years 2014–2016**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Expenditure Category** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** |
| Administration | $550 | $582 | $597 |
| Instructional leadership (district and school) | $751 | $729 | $763 |
| Teachers | $4,660 | $4,740 | $4,930 |
| Other teaching services | $1,080 | $1,066 | $1,042 |
| Professional development | $362 | $428 | $468 |
| Instructional materials, equipment and technology | $509 | $469 | $497 |
| Guidance, counseling and testing services | $335 | $359 | $399 |
| Pupil services | $1,539 | $1,643 | $1,758 |
| Operations and maintenance | $1,187 | $1,312 | $1,269 |
| Insurance, retirement and other fixed costs | $1,827 | $2,003 | $2,211 |
| Total expenditures per in-district pupil | $12,800 | $13,330 | $13,932 |
| 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 to 4) |
| 1. The teacher demonstrates knowledge of the subject matter. | **ES** | 0% | 11% | 67% | 22% | 3.1 |
| **MS** | 0% | 8% | 50% | 42% | 3.3 |
| **HS** | 0% | 33% | 44% | 22% | 2.9 |
| **Total #** | 0 | 9 | 26 | 13 | 3.1 |
| **Total %** | 0% | 19% | 54% | 27% |  |
| 2. The teacher ensures that students understand what they should be learning in the lesson and why. | **ES** | 6% | 61% | 33% | 0% | 2.3 |
| **MS** | 0% | 50% | 33% | 17% | 2.7 |
| **HS** | 6% | 28% | 50% | 17% | 2.8 |
| **Total #** | 2 | 22 | 19 | 5 | 2.6 |
| **Total %** | 4% | 46% | 40% | 10% |  |
| 3. The teacher uses appropriate classroom activities well matched to the learning objective(s). | **ES** | 0% | 22% | 72% | 6% | 2.8 |
| **MS** | 0% | 25% | 50% | 25% | 3.0 |
| **HS** | 0% | 50% | 44% | 6% | 2.6 |
| **Total #** | 0 | 16 | 27 | 5 | 2.8 |
| **Total %** | 0% | 33% | 56% | 10% |  |
| 4. The teacher conducts frequent checks for student understanding, provides feedback, and adjusts instruction. | **ES** | 0% | 11% | 72% | 17% | 3.1 |
| **MS** | 0% | 25% | 67% | 8% | 2.8 |
| **HS** | 11% | 44% | 28% | 17% | 2.5 |
| **Total #** | 2 | 13 | 26 | 7 | 2.8 |
| **Total %** | 4% | 27% | 54% | 15% |  |
| **Total Score For Focus Area #1** | **ES** |  |  |  |  | **11.3** |
| **MS** |  |  |  |  | **11.8** |
| **HS** |  |  |  |  | **10.7** |
| **Total** |  |  |  |  | **11.2** |

| **Focus Area #2: Student Engagement & Higher-Order Thinking** |  | Insufficient Evidence | Limited Evidence | Sufficient Evidence | Compelling Evidence | Average Number of points |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (1 to 4) |
| 5. Students assume responsibility to learn and are engaged in the lesson. | **ES** | 0% | 50% | 33% | 17% | 2.7 |
| **MS** | 8% | 25% | 50% | 17% | 2.8 |
| **HS** | 11% | 44% | 39% | 6% | 2.4 |
| **Total #** | 3 | 20 | 19 | 6 | 2.6 |
| **Total %** | 6% | 42% | 40% | 13% |  |
| 6. Students engage in higher-order thinking. | **ES** | 11% | 28% | 56% | 6% | 2.6 |
| **MS** | 0% | 50% | 42% | 8% | 2.6 |
| **HS** | 33% | 39% | 17% | 11% | 2.1 |
| **Total #** | 8 | 18 | 18 | 4 | 2.4 |
| **Total %** | 17% | 38% | 38% | 8% |  |
| 7. Students communicate their ideas and thinking with each other. | **ES** | 6% | 22% | 56% | 17% | 2.8 |
| **MS** | 33% | 25% | 33% | 8% | 2.2 |
| **HS** | 22% | 50% | 22% | 6% | 2.1 |
| **Total #** | 9 | 16 | 18 | 5 | 2.4 |
| **Total %** | 19% | 33% | 38% | 10% |  |
| 8. Students engage with meaningful, real-world tasks. | **ES** | 17% | 50% | 28% | 6% | 2.2 |
| **MS** | 17% | 25% | 42% | 17% | 2.6 |
| **HS** | 28% | 33% | 17% | 22% | 2.3 |
| **Total #** | 10 | 18 | 13 | 7 | 2.4 |
| **Total %** | 21% | 38% | 27% | 15% |  |
| **Total Score For Focus Area #2** | **ES** |  |  |  |  | **10.3** |
| **MS** |  |  |  |  | **10.1** |
| **HS** |  |  |  |  | **8.9** |
| **Total** |  |  |  |  | **9.7** |

| **Focus Area #3:Inclusive Practice & Classroom Culture** |  | Insufficient  Evidence | Limited Evidence | Sufficient Evidence | Compelling Evidence | Avg number of points |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |  |
| 9. The teacher ensures that students are engaging in challenging tasks regardless of learning needs. | **ES** | 11% | 28% | 56% | 6% | 2.6 |
| **MS** | 17% | 58% | 8% | 17% | 2.3 |
| **HS** | 50% | 28% | 17% | 6% | 1.8 |
| **Total #** | 13 | 17 | 14 | 4 | 2.2 |
| **Total %** | 27% | 35% | 29% | 8% |  |
| 10. The teacher uses a variety of instructional strategies. | **ES** | 6% | 28% | 50% | 17% | 2.8 |
| **MS** | 8% | 50% | 42% | 0% | 2.3 |
| **HS** | 22% | 44% | 22% | 11% | 2.2 |
| **Total #** | 6 | 19 | 18 | 5 | 2.5 |
| **Total %** | 13% | 40% | 38% | 10% |  |
| 11. Classroom routines and positive supports are in place to ensure that students behave appropriately. | **ES** | 6% | 11% | 33% | 50% | 3.3 |
| **MS** | 8% | 17% | 17% | 58% | 3.3 |
| **HS** | 0% | 11% | 61% | 28% | 3.2 |
| **Total #** | 2 | 6 | 19 | 21 | 3.2 |
| **Total %** | 4% | 13% | 40% | 44% |  |
| 12. The classroom climate is conducive to teaching and learning. | **ES** | 0% | 28% | 28% | 44% | 3.2 |
| **MS** | 0% | 25% | 17% | 58% | 3.3 |
| **HS** | 6% | 22% | 56% | 17% | 2.8 |
| **Total #** | 1 | 12 | 17 | 18 | 3.1 |
| **Total %** | 2% | 25% | 35% | 38% |  |
| Total Score For Focus Area #3 | **ES** |  |  |  |  | **11.8** |
| **MS** |  |  |  |  | **11.2** |
| **HS** |  |  |  |  | **10.0** |
| **Total** |  |  |  |  | **11.0** |

1. Community and School Trends Report, Quabbin Regional School District, Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management, April 2017, p. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. According to ESE data, in fiscal year 2017, the district received 309 choice-in students and sent 101 students to schools in other communities. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Community and School Trends Report, Quabbin Regional School District, Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management, April 2017, p. 35. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The low-income measure was based on a student’s eligibility for free- and reduced-price lunch. The economically disadvantaged measure is based on based on a student's participation in one or more of the following state-administered programs: the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); the Transitional Assistance for Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC); the Department of Children and Families' (DCF) foster care program; and MassHealth (Medicaid). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Other factors are also taken into consideration when determining the type of review a district will receive. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Quabbin is a five-town regional school district; each town is run by its elected selectboard. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. <http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/StandardsReview/hss.html>) [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Chronic absence is defined as being absent 10 percent or more of “days of membership” in the school district. According to ESE data, for the 2016–2017 school year, the percentages of chronically absent high-school students in Quabbin were as follows: 33.2 percent in grade 9; 26.1 percent in grade 10; 23.7 percent in grade 11; and 28.8 percent in grade 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Quabbin Regional School District Special Education Program Evaluation of the Middle and High School Department of Student Services, by James B. Earley, Ed.D., April 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Community and School Trends Report, Quabbin Regional School District, Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management, April 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)