

# Milford Public Schools

## Comprehensive District Review Report

March 2023

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### **Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education**

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Commissioner  
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## Executive Summary

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In accordance with Massachusetts state law, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) contracted with the American Institutes for Research® (AIR®) to conduct a comprehensive review of Milford Public Schools (hereafter, Milford) in February and March 2023. Data collection activities associated with the review focused on understanding how district systems, structures, and practices operate in support of district continuous improvement efforts. The review focused on the six standards (and related indicators) that DESE has identified as being important components of district effectiveness.<sup>1</sup>

### Leadership and Governance

The school committee and the superintendent are meeting their responsibilities to the district and the town. Milford's superintendent, Dr. Kevin McIntyre, has served in this position for seven years. He reports to and receives support from the school committee. The seven-member elected school committee guides policy and procedure for the district and acts as an advisory and oversight body to the superintendent and the rest of the central office. The school committee provides accountability for the actions of the superintendent and evaluates his performance annually. District documents confirm that the school committee regularly reviews and discusses reports related to finance, human resources, curriculum and instruction, and leadership and governance.

Milford has several strengths. Interviews indicated that the school committee demonstrates a commitment to equity and transparency to community stakeholders by holding televised open meetings and posting school committee recordings and minutes online. The district maintains clear and comprehensive strategic and school improvement plans that align on the district and school levels. City and district-level interviews and district-submitted documents suggest that the budget development process is very regimented and transparent. Lastly, Milford has demonstrated a willingness and ability to be adaptable to evolving student needs. However, increasing opportunities for stakeholder inclusion and teacher input in the strategic plan is an area of growth for Milford.

### Curriculum and Instruction

Milford's curricular review process is new, thorough, and provides the district with a clear process for ongoing evaluation. Milford uses this process to (a) maintain high academic standards and educational opportunities for all students; (b) align to local, state, and national frameworks; and (c) remain current with the best instructional practices and free from any bias. The curricular review process, however, has only been used for mathematics at this point. The district is in the early stages of defining desired instructional practices for English language arts (ELA) and reviewing the ELA curriculum.

Milford's strengths in curriculum and instruction include careful planning and implementation of the mathematics curricula, high prioritization of their growing population of English learners (ELs), student-centered classroom instruction, and an expansive program of studies for high school

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<sup>1</sup> DESE's District Standards and Indicators are at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/district-review/district-standards-indicators.pdf>.

students. Milford has demonstrated significant efforts to support curricular and instructional needs within the district. Milford’s identified areas of growth include establishing consistent curriculum and instructional expectations for most subjects, including having a shared instructional vision in subjects other than mathematics (which has recently completed this process), enhancing instructional rigor for students, and improving equity of access to challenging coursework for all students. The district is currently working to develop this shared instructional vision and is reviewing processes to provide equitable and rigorous opportunities for all students.

Three observers, who focused primarily on instruction in the classroom, visited Milford during the week of February 27, 2023. The observers conducted 72 observations in a sample of classrooms across grade levels, focused on literacy, ELA, and mathematics. The Teachstone Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) protocol, developed by the Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning at the University of Virginia,<sup>2</sup> guided all classroom observations in the district. These observations used the three grade-band levels of the CLASS protocols: K-3, Upper Elementary (4-5), and Secondary (6-8, 9-12). Overall, for the K-5 grade band, instructional observations suggest generally strong evidence of good emotional support, strong classroom organization and student engagement (Grades 4-5), and lower scores for instructional support. For the 6-8 grade band, instructional observations provide evidence of good emotional support, strong classroom organization, mid-range student engagement, and mid-range rigorous instructional support. For the 9-12 grade band, instructional observations provide mixed evidence of strong emotional support, mid-range classroom organization and student engagement, and low levels of rigorous instructional support.

## **Assessment**

Milford has several data collection systems, but inconsistent data use across the district. In Milford, staff have access to multiple assessments and work to create a culture of data use, but this is not yet consistent across all schools. MCAS (Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System) is administered across the district and grade levels annually, and the results are provided the following year. Grades K-8 use iReady adaptive assessments for mathematics and ELA, but lacks robust assessment tools for other disciplines. The ACCESS assessment helps determine English language proficiency for ELs. Grades 9 and 10 use the STAR assessment for mathematics. The district’s participation in the Massachusetts Consortium on Innovative Educational Assessment (MCIEA), a partnership of eight Massachusetts public school districts and their local teachers’ unions, supports the initiative of developing performance assessments—especially at the middle school level—aligned to the Portrait of the Graduate. Teachers share data with students, families, and key stakeholders using Google Classroom and Aspen. In addition, iReady assessment results are available to parents, although several parents reported not being aware of this option and sought earlier communication about student performance declines. Staff reported that, while ample data are available, use of data for interventions is inconsistent because all schools do not have an intervention block.

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<sup>2</sup> For more information on the Teachstone CLASS protocol, visit <https://teachstone.com/class/>.

## Human Resources and Professional Development

Milford has human resource and professional development structures in place, including a process to identify staffing needs, supports for hiring and mentoring, and attention to needs in specialty areas. Focus groups, interviews with teachers and school and district leaders, and document reviews indicated Milford's commitment to staff development through practices such as the three-year mentoring program for new hires, grade- and discipline-level professional development, reimbursement for outside courses, and a partnership with Framingham State University for EL certification. However, the district's growing EL population has created a need for additional professional development and staff. Furthermore, the district faces space constraints and struggles to provide the physical classroom space necessary to adequately support all students.

Milford has some recognition opportunities for teachers. The annual Outstanding Teacher Award through the Senator Louis P. Bertonazzi Foundation is a district incentive. *The Milford Public Schools News* highlights educators honored at the local or regional levels. Leadership opportunities include mentoring, coaching, and serving as curriculum team leads. An area for growth is providing more consistent and actionable feedback within the evaluation process, as well as additional observations and feedback outside of this process.

## Student Support

Milford has plans in place to support students' safety and well-being. The district has a holistic vision for student development in their Portrait of a Graduate, which includes social-emotional development. The four pillars outlined in the Portrait of a Graduate are continuous and lifelong learner, responsible community member, active communicator and collaborator, and creative problem solver.

Milford's goal is to meet the complete range of a student's educational and developmental needs. The district strategic plan reflects a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) issues to ensure that schools equitably support the safety, well-being, and a sense of belonging of all students. In addition to its strong focus on DEI, Milford's strengths include the consistent use of student support teams and multiple collaborative and culturally responsive efforts to support multilingual diverse families. Milford's areas for growth include providing more uniform guidance for positive behavioral approaches for supporting students, a need to assess the efficacy of supports, and strengthening communication with families about district updates. Overall, the district demonstrates an awareness of and a commitment to their mission of providing an equitable learning environment that empowers all students, faculty, and staff.

## Financial and Asset Management

Milford heavily focuses on budgetary transparency and aligning costs to district priorities. District leaders collaborate alongside the school committee to ensure that the allocation and use of funding for other resources improves students' performance, provides culturally responsive opportunities to students and their families, and increases positive outcomes. Milford's strengths include clear and accurate budget documents, increased and stable funding to support high needs students, regular reporting, and alignment between school improvement plans and capital planning. Milford's main area for growth is the town and district's plans on school overcrowding. Milford is currently working

to address the growing student population and is using their funding to support high priority maintenance needs across the district.

# Milford Public Schools: District Review Overview

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## Purpose

Conducted under Chapter 15, Section 55A of the Massachusetts General Laws, comprehensive district reviews support local school districts in establishing or strengthening a cycle of continuous improvement. Reviews carefully consider the effectiveness of systemwide functions, referring to the six district standards used by DESE: Leadership and Governance, Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment, Human Resources and Professional Development, Student Support, and Financial and Asset Management. Reviews identify systems and practices that may be impeding improvement as well as those most likely to be contributing to positive results. The design of the comprehensive district review promotes district reflection on its own performance and potential next steps. In addition to providing information to each district reviewed, DESE uses review reports to identify resources and/or technical assistance to provide to the district.

## Methodology

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

Following the site visit, the team members code and analyze the data to develop a set of objective findings. The team lead and multiple quality assurance reviewers, including DESE staff, then review the initial draft of the report. DESE staff provides recommendations for the district, based on the findings of strengths and areas of growth identified, before AIR finalizes and submits the report to DESE. DESE previews and then sends the report to the district for factual review before publishing it on the DESE website. DESE also provides additional resources to support implementation of DESE's District Standards and Indicators, summarized in Appendix C.

## Site Visit

The site visit to Milford was conducted during the week of February 27, 2023. The site visit included 22 hours of interviews and focus groups with approximately 89 stakeholders, including school committee members, district administrators, representatives from town government, school staff, students, students' families, and teachers' association representatives. The review team conducted five teacher focus groups with 16 elementary school teachers, eight middle school teachers, eight high school teachers, and six EL and special education teachers from various grade levels. The team conducted two student focus groups, one at the middle school level and one at the high school level. The team also held four virtual parent focus groups: two in English, which were attended by seven total parents, and two separate sessions in Portuguese and Spanish, but no parents attended those



two sessions. The site team also conducted 72 observations of classroom instruction in five schools. Certified team members conducted instructional observations using the Teachstone CLASS protocol.

## District Profile

Milford’s superintendent is Dr. Kevin McIntyre, who was appointed superintendent in 2016. He receives support from two assistant superintendents, one who supervises curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and one who supervises business and human resources; three directors who manage grants, EL programs, and social-emotional learning programs; and two supervisors for the mathematics and literacy content areas. The district is governed by a school committee composed of seven members who are elected for three-year terms.

In the 2022-2023 school year, there were 354 teachers in the district, with 4,483 students enrolled in the district’s six schools: five K-12 schools and one early childhood program<sup>3</sup>). Table 1 provides an overview of student enrollment by school.

**Table 1. Schools, Type, Grades Served, and Enrollment, 2022-2023**

School	Type	Grades served	Enrollment
Shining Star Early Childhood Center	Early Childhood	PK	170
Brookside Elementary School	Elementary	K-2	544
Memorial Elementary School	Elementary	K-2	472
Woodland Elementary School	Elementary	3-5	943
Stacy Middle School	Middle	6-8	1,030
Milford High School	High	9-12	1,324
<b>Total</b>			<b>4,483</b>

Note. Enrollment data as of October 1, 2022.

Between 2020 and 2023, overall student enrollment increased by 76 students, with growth of 297 students in the past five years. Enrollment figures by race/ethnicity and high needs populations (i.e., students with disabilities, students from low-income households, and ELs and former ELs) compared with the state are in Tables D1 and D2 in Appendix D. Appendix D also provides additional information about district enrollment, attendance, and expenditures.

The total in-district per-pupil expenditure was similar to the median in-district per-pupil expenditure for K-12 districts of similar size in fiscal year 2021—\$16,086 for Milford compared with \$16,109 for similarly sized districts but less than average state spending per pupil (\$18,560). Actual net school spending was greater than what is required by the Chapter 70 state education aid program, as shown in Table D4 in Appendix D.

<sup>3</sup> Interviews and observations focused on only K-12 classrooms; no early childhood classes were observed as part of this review, and no staff members primarily assigned to early childhood settings were interviewed.

## Student Performance

In ELA in Grades 3-8, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS declined 17 percentage points, from 50 percent in 2019 to 33 percent in 2022 and was below the 2022 state rate of 41 percent. In Grade 10, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations increased by 1 percentage point, from 58 percent in 2019 to 59 percent in 2022, which is greater than the 2022 state rate of 58 percent (see Tables E1 and E2 in Appendix E).

- In Grades 3-8, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations was greater than the state rate by 3 percentage points to 7 percentage points for African American/Black students, Asian students, and Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino students; below the state rate by 11 percentage points for White students; and below the state rate by 1 percentage point to 4 percentage points for every other student group with reportable data.
- In Grade 10, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations was greater than the state rate by 2 percentage points to 8 percentage points for each student group with reportable data, except for ELs and former ELs, which were 3 percentage points below the state rate.

In mathematics in Grades 3-8, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS declined 17 percentage points, from 41 percent in 2019 to 24 percent in 2022 and was below the 2022 state rate of 39 percent. In Grade 10, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations declined 15 percentage points, from 48 percent in 2019 to 33 percent in 2022, which is below the 2022 state rate of 50 percent (see Tables E3 and E4 in Appendix E).

- In Grades 3-8, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations was below the state rate by 9 percentage points to 19 percentage points for White students, African American/Black students, and ELs and former ELs and by 1 percentage point to 7 percentage points for every other student group with reportable data.
- In Grade 10, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations was greater than the state rate by 1 percentage point for students with disabilities; below the state rate by 10 percentage points to 16 percentage points for Hispanic/Latino students, White students, and ELs and former ELs; and below the state rate by 8 percentage points for high needs students and students from low-income households.

In science in Grades 5 and 8, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS declined 16 percentage points, from 51 percent in 2019 to 35 percent in 2022, which was below the state rate of 42 percent. In Grade 10, 37 percent of all students scored Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations in 2022, which is below the state rate of 47 percent (see Tables E5 and E6 in Appendix E).

- In Grades 5 and 8, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations in science was greater than the state rate by 11 percentage points for African American/Black students; greater than the state rate by 1 percentage point and 2 percentage points for Hispanic/Latino students and students with disabilities, respectively;

equal to the state rate for high needs students, ELs and former ELs, and students from low-income households; below the state rate by 3 percentage points for Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino students; and below the state rate by 11 percentage points for Asian students and White students.

- In Grade 10, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations in science was greater than the state rate by 11 percentage points for students with disabilities; greater than the state rate by 1 percentage point to 2 percentage points for Hispanic/Latino students, high needs students, and students from low-income households; and below the state rate by 12 percentage points for White students.

The average student growth percentile (SGP) on the 2022 MCAS in Grades 3-8 was 48.8 in ELA, which represents typical growth, and 39.5 in mathematics, which represents low growth. In Grade 10, SGPs were typical in ELA (52.7) and mathematics (52.1)<sup>4</sup>see Tables E7-E10 in Appendix E).

- SGPs in Grades 3-8 in ELA were typical for each student group with reportable data, ranging from 45.4 to 55.3, except for students with disabilities, which was low. Mathematics SGPs were low for each student group with reportable data, ranging from 35.1 to 39.7, except for ELs and former ELs, which was typical (40.3).
- In 10th grade, ELA SGPs were typical for each student group with reportable data, ranging from 51.6 to 56.3. Mathematics SGPs were typical for each student group with reportable data, ranging from 51.3 to 59.5, except for students with disabilities, which was high (65.8).

Milford's four-year cohort graduation rate for all students decreased 0.8 percentage points, from 85.5 percent in 2020 to 84.7 percent in 2022, which was below the state rate of 90.1 percent. The five-year cohort graduation rate for all students decreased 4.4 percentage points, from 88.9 percent in 2019 to 84.5 percent in 2021, which was below the state rate of 91.8 percent (see Tables E16 and E17 in Appendix E).

- The four-year-cohort graduation rate was greater than the state rate in 2022 by 3.8 percentage points for African American/Black students; below the state rate by 20.4 percentage points and 16 percentage points for ELs and Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino students, respectively; and below the state rate by 3.8 percentage points to 11.3 percentage points for every other student group with reportable data.
- The five-year cohort graduation rate was greater than the state rate in 2021 by 0.5 percentage points and 1.6 percentage points for Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino students and Native American students, respectively; below the state rate by 36.1 percentage points and 14.7 percentage points for ELs and students with disabilities, respectively; and below the state rate by 2.4 percentage points to 10.7 percentage points for every other student group with reportable data.

The district's annual dropout rate increased from 1.7 percent in 2020 to 4.3 percent in 2022, which was more than twice the state rate of 2.1 percent (see Table E20 in Appendix E). The dropout rate in Milford was 0 percent for Asian students and Native American students; equal to the state rate for

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<sup>4</sup> Average SGP ranges: Very Low Growth = 1.0–29.9, Low Growth = 30.0–39.9, Typical Growth = 40.0–59.9, High Growth = 60.0 or higher.

African American/Black students; and greater than the state rate for all other student groups with reportable data, with dropout rates ranging from 3.4 percent to 15.7 percent for ELs.

## Leadership and Governance

Milford’s superintendent, Dr. Kevin McIntyre, has served in this position for seven years. He reports to and receives support from the school committee. Other key positions in the 17-person central office include an assistant superintendent of curriculum, instruction, and assessment and an assistant superintendent of business and human resources; directors of grants, ELs, and social-emotional learning; and supervisors for mathematics and literacy. Milford’s district improvement plan includes a strategic plan with four pillars or strategic objectives that are guiding the district’s work from 2021 to 2024: growth-focused instruction, equity and access, social-emotional learning, and continuous learning. Milford also maintains a Portrait of a Graduate initiative that guides its overarching goals for students’ education and development.

The seven-member elected school committee guides policy and procedure for the district and acts as an advisory and oversight body to the superintendent and his team. The committee provides accountability for the actions of the superintendent and evaluates his performance annually. The school committee also is responsible for managing the school budget, including the capital plan. Recent years have seen an influx of immigrant students and ELs, creating a need for additional student support services and, as a result, funding. To mitigate the needs of the town and the school district, the school committee has used federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds and funds from the state’s Student Opportunity Act to supply supplemental staff and resources for new students while minimizing burdens on local taxpayers.

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

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

Indicator	Strengths	Areas for growth
<a href="#">School committee governance</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School committee members demonstrate a commitment to transparency.</li> <li>School committee members demonstrate a commitment to equity.</li> <li>School committee and town partners described a collaborative and fiscally healthy relationship.</li> </ul>	
<a href="#">District and school leadership</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The district created structures and programs to support the changing needs of the student body.</li> </ul>	
<a href="#">District and school improvement planning</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The district maintains clear and comprehensive strategic and school improvement plans that align on the district and school levels.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunities for teachers to share input in the district strategic planning process</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Budget development</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The district maintains a regimented and transparent budget development process.</li> </ul>	

## School Committee Governance

The school committee is fulfilling its responsibilities to the district and the town, as evidenced by interviews and district-submitted data. School- and district-level interviews confirm that the school committee maintains a culture of collaboration with the superintendent, and a review of school committee minutes indicates that the committee regularly reviews and discusses reports related to finance, human resources, curriculum and instruction, and leadership and governance. The school committee has demonstrated transparency to community stakeholders by holding televised, open meetings, along with posting school committee recordings and minutes online, as confirmed by district-level interviews, school committee interviews, parent interviews, student interviews, and district-submitted documents.

District-submitted documents and interviews indicate that the superintendent is evaluated annually by the entire school committee in an established process based on key indicators. Milford's demonstrated commitment to transparency is a strength of the district.

The school committee and the town maintain clear boundaries about the budget, including indirect cost allocations plus net and non-net school spending, as confirmed by district-level interviews and reviewed documents. The committee revisits the capital plan during the school year and makes revisions based on new district needs, according to district and city interviews. Multiple respondents expressed the sentiment that the town is fiscally responsive to the needs of the district. One district official noted as follows:

I can't say that we've really had a difficult conversation with our fin comm [Finance Committee] in town. I feel very supported here in Milford. It's a very fiscal, healthy community and as long as they understand the need, I've always felt like they supported it—always.

The fiscally responsive and collaborative relationship between the district and town partners is a strength.

Milford also demonstrates a commitment to equity, which is another strength of the district. Several interviewees noted that although the school committee does not demographically reflect the school community, the committee advocates for equity and inclusion initiatives, including those embedded in the strategic plan. One example is the use of ESSER and Student Opportunity Act funds to hire additional staff members—particularly classroom teachers and multilingual learner specialists—to support the district's rapidly changing student demographics, as noted in multiple stakeholder interviews. Multiple administrator-level interviews also described the school committee as deeply familiar with issues happening at the building and town governance levels.

Some staff reported in interviews a need to clarify the roles and the system of checks and balances between the school committee and the superintendent. These interviewees noted that the school committee typically “rubber stamps” the suggestions of the superintendent, rarely consulting with other school stakeholders, leaving teachers to feel silenced and left out of the decision-making process. One teacher explained how this can hinder what feels like a “fair” grievance process.

The school committee is supposed to be an independent board that determines whether or not the superintendent is violating the contract and his implementation of the language. But that's really not what I find. It's essentially whatever [the superintendent] says, and maybe they'll give him some feedback. But it would be nice if there was a little bit more independence there.

## District and School Leadership

The superintendent is fulfilling his district-level responsibilities. According to city-level interviews, the superintendent regularly makes reports and recommendations to the school committee. District-level staff reported that, in crafting plans and recommendations, the superintendent works to engage all members of the community. Leadership meetings with school administrators occur once per month, and the superintendent checks in with multiple committees of teachers on a monthly or bimonthly basis. Any staff member can report health and safety concerns to their building representatives, who then report them to the district central office. Overall, teachers noted a sense of satisfaction in terms of their well-being and administrator support. Regarding parent engagement, a family resource center welcomes new parents into the district, and translators are at every school event.

A noted strength of Milford is its willingness and ability to adapt to the changing needs of its student body, particularly multilingual learners. The student and family demographics of the district have changed swiftly in the past few years, and the district is meeting the needs of the changing community by adding resources and staff and adjusting practices to accommodate new ELs and immigrant students. Several stakeholder interviews, including administrator- and district-level respondents, noted that meeting the needs of the changing student population is a top priority for the district, in addition to pandemic-related recovery efforts and developing and implementing the district's Portrait of a Graduate. One administrator noted as follows:

The district as a whole has undergone an extraordinarily rapid explosion of growth in our English learner population in the district . . . the changes that have happened in the students that we serve in Milford are quite unlike almost any other place in the Commonwealth . . . what this has meant has been a very, very significant restructuring of programing. And the development of new programs [that] did not previously exist . . . Six years ago, we were in a little over 8% English language learners and today we're at approximately 22% English language learners and that's in sort of the span of six years . . . the pace of change and the magnitude of change has required us to really make programmatic adjustments and to develop programs at a really, really fast clip.

Some changes to practice recently implemented include adding more English development courses, adding coteachers to general education classes to allow for a content teacher and an EL teacher, increasing the number of EL faculty, creating a newcomers' academy and a night school program, and expanding career readiness offerings.

Information gathered through focus groups and interviews provides evidence of effective structures for balancing district guidance with building-level authority. District- and administrator-level interviews revealed that principals have some autonomy over their school buildings in terms of their improvement plans and staffing practices. Although district leaders, including the superintendent,

noted that the district's strategic plan should be reflected in individual school plans, principals nonetheless have site-level authority in determining how they incorporate that vision into their school buildings and environments. School-level interviews indicated that the district offers leadership opportunities for teachers, including department head and curriculum leader positions or staffing on various committees.

## District and School Improvement Planning

Milford is in the process of implementing a comprehensive 2021-2024 strategic plan for the district and the schools. The strategic plan includes the district's mission, vision, core values, theory of action, objectives, strategic initiatives, and outcomes. Prioritizations for school-level improvement plans must include at least one of the four pillars: growth-focused instruction, equity and access, social-emotional learning, and continuous learning. A review of district-submitted school improvement plans confirms that these plans note the district's strategic plan priority initiatives and correlate with individual school campus goals. In addition, school improvement plans outline benchmarks and key performance indicators for each goal plus timelines and the individuals responsible.

School improvement plans are thorough and include priorities along with the actions, tasks, and monitoring to support individual school goals. Administrative interviews suggested that in addition to guidance from the district strategic plan, schools use benchmark and assessment data to inform long-term improvement planning and evaluation and create short-term adjustments to curriculum scope and sequence. Milford has department-level improvement plans for specific subject areas. The corresponding improvement planning teams for these content-based department plans have various stakeholders. An example is the EL improvement planning team, which includes EL teachers, EL coordinators, and the assistant superintendent of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. School committee interviews revealed that all school improvement planning must align with the district strategic plan, and any school-level budget requests must show this alignment. In both school- and district-level interviews, Milford's Portrait of a Graduate also was cited as a driving factor for improvement planning, described as an outgrowth or extension of the strategic plan and reported as helping drive district work. This portrait lists four overarching aims, which includes producing students who are continuous lifelong learners, responsible community members, creative problem solvers, and active communicators and collaborators.

A strength of the district is how each individual school's improvement plan aligns with the district's improvement plan. School committee members shared that the district asks school principals to make sure that the plans align. The central office then reviews the plans to ensure alignment with the Portrait of a Graduate plans. According to one school committee member, "Everything that we bring in, whether it's a new initiative or not, has to fall in line with something like that."

Although district leaders suggested that they incorporated teacher input in the development of the district's strategic plan, teacher participants in focus groups reported that this did not occur. Teachers did share that they had input in their campus-level improvement plans. However, evidence indicates limited teacher participation in crafting the district plan, and teachers who were not active participants in the plan development were not aware of opportunities to have their input included, making this an area for growth for Milford.



## Budget Development

City and district-level interviews, as well as district-submitted documents, indicated a very regimented and transparent budget development process, which is a strength for Milford. Interview respondents described the process as beginning each year in October and involving principals and department directors. All participants are asked to keep district priorities in mind. School-level leaders, after planning at the building level, then meet with district leaders, including the assistant superintendent for business and human resources, the assistant superintendent of curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and the directors of ELs and special education. Together they use a zero-based budgeting approach to discuss curriculum materials and staff, capital needs, and justifications and debates about all expenses, particularly new requests. The central office team then uses these proposals to create a set of priorities to share with the school committee. By January, the school committee is discussing with the central office the main priorities for the district. Once the school committee agrees on a budget to share with town partners, meetings take place throughout the spring with the town's Finance Committee subcommittee that liaises with the school committee. Once finalized, the town's representatives vote on the budget in a town meeting.

The school committee maintains its own finance committee, and the meetings are open to the public and televised. School administrators noted that they have considerable agency over their campus budgets and align budget needs to school improvement plans and district priorities. In addition, teacher-level needs inform the budget and the allocation of funds. One district employee described part of the process of how the budget is formulated:

We ask our principals and directors to work with their teams and get feedback and input in terms of what they see as potential needs . . . And they will do an initial budget presentation to our central office team . . . we give anything a principal or director asks for . . . we don't pull anything out, and we basically rank things . . . We also tie each request to our strategic focus areas, so the principals or directors have to be able to defend how does this connect with the longer range vision and mission of the school . . . Then we have an initial meeting with the school committee and review all the requests and come up with an initial proposal.

In terms of supplemental funds, various stakeholder interviews indicated that federal ESSER funds and the state's Student Opportunity Act funds have been tremendously helpful for meeting new budgetary concerns within the district, especially new staffing, while minimizing the short-term impacts on local taxpayers. In response to questions about the temporary nature of ESSER funds, district budget leaders noted that "everybody's been on the same page" in planning for the town and school system to assume those costs when the funding ends.

## Recommendations

- In future iterations of the district's strategic planning process, the district should ensure that teachers' input and voice are represented in the crafting of the vision, priorities, and action steps.

## Curriculum and Instruction

Milford’s robust curricular review process is a new development in the district and provides a clear process for ongoing evaluation. The district is committed to providing exemplary teaching and high-quality curriculum to students to develop the skills and create solutions for a rapidly changing, technologically advanced, and diverse world. Milford’s vision and beliefs about curriculum guide the curricular review process.

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

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

Indicator	Strengths	Areas for growth
<a href="#"><u>Curriculum selection and use</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The district has a well-documented and thorough curricular review process.</li> <li>■ The district thoroughly plans the implementation of curricula.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Select high-quality curricula and implement it with fidelity across the district</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>Classroom instruction</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The district prioritizes the instructional needs of ELs.</li> <li>■ Classroom instruction is student centered.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Instructional rigor for students in the classrooms</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>Student access to coursework</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Milford provides an expansive program of studies at the high school level.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Equity of access for all students to rigorous learning experiences</li> </ul>

### Curriculum Selection and Use

Milford has a well-documented and thoroughly structured curricular review process that provides the district with a systematic evaluation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment across all content areas, which is a strength of the district. Milford is in the early stages of using this process to (a) establish and maintain high academic standards and educational opportunities for all students; (b) align to local, state, and national frameworks; and (c) remain current with the best instructional practices and free from any bias. Although the process is thoroughly documented, its use in mathematics is more mature than in literacy or other subjects, which began more recently.

The *Milford Public Schools Curriculum Review Process* document outlines the five-year cycle that the district uses to plan and review curricula. This process of curriculum design and revision uses the process of backward design. The foundation of backward design of curriculum is to determine first, based on state standards, what students will know and be able to do and clarify these expectations in a written and communicated curriculum map. The curricular review cycle has four phases: Learn and Prepare, Investigate/Select/Launch, Implement/Monitor, and Evaluate. During Phase 1, the analysis of the current curriculum and development of an action plan is a process lasting 10-12 months. The district has a curriculum review process (CRP) team that develops essential questions for the self-study, reviews the articulated curriculum, collects and analyzes relevant documents and data, writes

the self-study review document, and develops a proposed action plan in response to the self-study report. The CRP team includes the assistant superintendent of curriculum, instruction, and assessment; the English language director; the special education director; curriculum supervisors; building administrators (a representative from each building); curriculum team coordinators; curricular team leaders; teachers (minimally two per school but preferably one per grade level); special education teachers; team chairs and staff; EL teachers, coordinators, and staff; specialist instructional coaches; family members; students; and community members and partners.

During Phase 2, the CRP team develops and redesigns the curriculum documents and begins implementing the action steps put in place by the self-study action plan. This phase also takes about 10-12 months to complete. During Phase 3, the CRP team implements the revised curriculum and instructional practices, continues with professional development support, and monitors progress toward the intended results. This phase takes about 2 years to complete. Finally, during Phase 4, the CRP team uses assessment data and assesses the effectiveness of current curriculum, instruction, and assessments. This evaluative phase, which takes about 10-12 months to complete, leads into the launch of the self-study in the following year.

The Milford Mathematics Department recently began using the curricular review process and implementing new curricula. The department is currently in Phase 3 of the process, which is projected to end in 2025. As part of the curricular review process, a districtwide mathematics committee was developed to foster an example of a collaborative culture, help pilot new mathematics programs, and define core values and instructional practices in the department. In interviews, district leaders shared that the mathematics committee reviewed the mathematics program; gathered feedback from students and teachers; discussed the program's shortcomings; and worked collaboratively to develop a new mission, vision, and guiding principles known as pillars for the department. Teachers confirmed in interviews that the mathematics committee comprises administrators such as the assistant superintendent of curriculum, instruction, and assessment; a principal from every school; and teachers from every grade level. The next department to undertake the curriculum review process is the ELA department. A literacy committee, which started last year to follow the steps of the mathematics committee, is working on developing its own mission statements and a scope of work. Teachers also confirmed in interviews that the literacy committee comprises administrators and teachers.

Milford has documentation for which curricular materials are in use. For ELA, Milford uses Foundations for Grades K-3 and a teacher-created curriculum for all other grades, none of which are rated using the CURATE system.<sup>5</sup> For mathematics, Milford uses Imagine Learning's Illustrative Math for Grades K-5 and a teacher-created curriculum for all other grades. Beginning in the 2023-2024 school year, Milford will be using Illustrative Math for Grades 6-8. This curriculum is not rated on CURATE. For science, Milford uses Project Lead the Way and Full Option Science System curricula for Grades K-4, a teacher-created curriculum for Grade 5, and Open SciEd for Grades 6-8. For history and social science, Milford uses a teacher-created curriculum for Grades K-8 (with the supplemental curriculum, Students of History, for Grade 8). For Grades 9-12 across all subject areas, Milford uses a variety of published textbooks and teacher-made materials, none of which are rated on CURATE.

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<sup>5</sup> CURATE: CUrriculum RATings by TEachers. See <https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate>.

History and social science curricula vary by course. Rigorous textbooks and teacher-made materials include subjects such as U.S. history, contemporary world history, psychology, sociology, military history, and law. Milford uses a variety of published textbooks and teacher-made materials in the following subjects: biology, chemistry, physics, environmental science, marine science, engineering, biomedical science, and zoology. None of these materials are rated on CURATE.

A noted area of growth for the district is identifying and implementing curricula at the district level and implementing these programs with consistency and fidelity across the district, similar to the work begun in math. A notable example is ELA curriculum which, according to interviews, lacks an instructional practice guide, a consistent curriculum, and aligned instructional priorities. For instance, one principal explained how the ELA department has “a lot of work to do in having a consistent, guaranteed, [and] viable curriculum.” An instructional leader also shared that “we don’t necessarily have that clearly defined vision with the other [non-math] subject areas.” When asked about the ELA department’s plan to participate in curricular reviews, another principal noted that “the process is getting off the ground.” Several teachers remarked that there is no common ELA curriculum implemented at the middle school level. In Milford, the ELA curricula are teacher created and, according to one teacher, “We have what we’ve put together, but we don’t have anything that’s formal.” Another teacher reported that ELA instruction and lessons depend on the teacher and “it’s better with math, I think it’s more consistent.” The literacy committee is currently navigating through the ELA curricular review process and is working to develop a shared vision of instructional priorities for the ELA department.

## Classroom Instruction

Three observers, who focused primarily on instruction in the classroom, visited Milford during the week of February 27, 2023. The observers conducted 72 observations in a sample of classrooms across grade levels, focused on literacy, ELA, and mathematics. The CLASS protocol guided all classroom observations in the district. These observations used the three grade-band levels of CLASS protocols: K-3, Upper Elementary (4-5), and Secondary (6-12).

The K-3 protocol includes 10 classroom dimensions related to three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support. The Upper Elementary and Secondary protocols include 11 classroom dimensions related to three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support, in addition to Student Engagement. The three domains observed at all levels broadly are defined as follows:

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

When conducting a classroom visit, the observer rates each dimension (including Student Engagement) on a scale of 1 to 7. A rating of 1 or 2 (low range) indicates that the dimension was

never or rarely evident during the visit. A rating of 3, 4, or 5 (middle range) indicates that the dimension was evident but not exhibited consistently or in a way that included all students. A rating of 6 or 7 (high range) indicates that the dimension was reflected in all or most classroom activities and in a way that included all or most students.

In Milford, ratings are provided across three grade bands: K-5, 6-8, and 9-12. For each grade band, ratings are provided across the overarching domains, as well as at individual dimensions within those domains. The full report of findings from observations conducted in Milford is in Appendix B, and summary results are in Tables 17, 18, and 19 in this appendix.

In summary, findings from the Milford observations were as follows:

- **Emotional Support.** Ratings were in the middle range for all grade bands (5.6 for Grades K-5, 5.0 for Grades 6-8, and 4.6 for Grades 9-12).
- **Classroom Organization.** Ratings were in the high range for all grade bands (6.3 for Grades K-5, 6.7 for Grades 6-8, and 6.6 for Grades 9-12).
- **Instructional Support.** Ratings were in the middle range for all grade bands (3.8 for Grades K-5, 4.2 for Grades 6-8, and 3.8 for Grades 9-12).
- **Student Engagement.** For Grades 4 and up, where student engagement was measured as an independent domain, ratings were in the middle range for all grade bands (5.1 for Grades 4-5, 5.6 for Grades 6-8, and 5.3 for Grades 9-12).

As shown by the observation results, classroom organization (including Behavior Management, Productivity, and the absence of Negative Climate) is a strength of the district, with average scores in the high range. Instructional rigor is an area of growth for the district. Overall, in the K-5 grade band, instructional observation scores were in the low-middle range for concept development in the lower elementary grades and in the low range for analysis and inquiry and instructional dialogue in the upper elementary grades. Similarly, average observation scores were in the low range for analysis and inquiry in the upper elementary grades (Grades 4-5), middle grades (Grades 6-8), and high school grades. These findings suggest that instructional rigor is an area for growth across all grades. In addition, several parents expressed the feeling that their children are not challenged enough. For example, one parent shared, “I worry that [my child is] not getting challenged and pushed to where she would be in a different public school.” Another parent detailed concerns that the district no longer requires homework for students in Grades 2 and below.

A notable strength of the district is the prioritization of the instructional needs of their fast-growing population of ELs. Alongside the development of their *District English Learner Department Sustainable Improvement Plan*, the EL department is implementing several initiatives throughout the district to benefit ELs. According to this improvement plan, one objective for the 2022-2023 school year was to implement coteaching for English Language Development (ELD) instruction and/or coteaching Sheltered English Immersion. In focus groups, middle school instructional staff described a “newcomer class”: at every grade level, a class for newly arrived multilingual learners is co-taught by a content specialist and an ELD teacher. At the elementary school level, instructional staff explained how half of the class will split into one homeroom and receive direct ELD instruction, whereas native English speakers receive regular classroom instruction. One staff member shared

that the newcomer classes are subdivided into teams to ensure that students receive up to three periods of direct ELD instruction throughout the day and can engage with an EL teacher delivering instruction throughout the day. Teachers also explained that classrooms are EL focused, with one teacher claiming,

Our ELD curriculum has been revamped so that it's relevant, and it's social studies and science based. So that our students are doing the same things that their peers are doing . . . and they're able to have conversations with their native language or former English learner peers, who are learning the same things.

Another strength of the district is student-centered instruction. District leaders, teachers, and students all described culturally responsive classroom environments as foci of the district, including pedagogies that allow for student voice and for students to work collaboratively. For example, a principal claimed that

we encourage a lot of small-group work, hands-on learning . . . at the [grade] level as much as possible so that students are all able to get what they need within the classroom. And we do our best to provide as much support to classrooms so that teachers are able to break up into small groups as much as possible.

One teacher claimed that the “purpose of those [district priorities] of instruction and focus on active collaboration and communication was to increase student voice in their learning and taking ownership of what they're learning right now.” Moreover, district leaders, teachers, and students all agreed that many classrooms are student centered. A principal added, “We try to promote student-centered constructivist pedagogies.” A student added the following about Milford teachers: “The teachers are very into what they do and take time to put their time into making assignments for you. And there's a lot of free things that you can [do to] write your own story or be creative.”

Milford facilitates culturally responsive practices by having locally created curricula supported by professional development and resources though, as noted above, these materials cannot be evaluated using the CURATE process. This support is embedded in the curricular review process for ELA, mathematics, music, performing arts, and art curricula during Phases 2 and 3, resulting in a significant majority of the content areas supported by ongoing professional development. School and district leaders monitor instruction using regular walkthroughs. Interviews indicated that the assistant superintendent for curriculum, instruction, and assessment and administrators conduct teacher walkthroughs a few times per month.

Social-emotional learning also is a focus in the district. In interviews, a district leader stated,

We've added a ton of resources to our SEL [social-emotional learning curriculum]. We've added counselors. We have multiple partnerships with counseling departments. We have interns coming in all the time . . . We're incorporating some of the work into the general classrooms. . . .

In focus groups, teachers explained an option of piloting the Second Step program in their schools, in which a few classroom blocks were predesignated for social-emotional learning each week. Teachers who did not participate in the pilot indicated that although they have a social-emotional learning

block each week, the resources available to them were not fully culturally responsive or inclusive. Milford offers Project WEAVE (Welcome and Engage to support Adjustment Via Education), which is time offered for new students to talk with Portuguese and Spanish-speaking counselors about coming to an American school and their time traveling to America. Elementary staff members work with the social-emotional director to pilot the Devereux Student Strength Assessment (DESSA) to identify life skills that students have already learned and what skills they might still need to develop. Social-emotional learning lessons are then embedded in the classroom for these skills. Overall, social-emotional learning is a priority of the district, and teachers receive the tools and resources needed to help students develop these skills.

## Student Access to Coursework

Milford ensures that all students have access to a range of rigorous coursework and a variety of content areas. Course variety at the high school level is a strength of the district. In addition to a robust honors and Advanced Placement program, students described many electives, including computer science, chorus, and foreign languages. As shown in the course schedules and mentioned by students, students begin taking foreign language classes in Grade 7, allowing them the opportunity to learn a language other than English through middle and high school. According to one teacher, Milford “offers a lot as far as athletics, extracurriculars, the Best Buddies program, the music program, theater arts, [and] Advanced Placement classes.” Another teacher noted that after noticing changes in the student population, the World Language department determined that their high school community needed a “heritage language track” (or more language courses offered to multilingual learners in their first language) for their Spanish and Portuguese speakers, which was quickly staffed and supported.

In addition, the district developed a *Milford Public Schools Homework Guidelines (K-8)* document to provide teachers, students, and families with clear expectations about homework and how it fits into a comprehensive learning plan for students in prekindergarten through Grade 8. Teachers and students described a focus in the district on preparing students for life after high school. One student remarked, “When you make your schedule to plan out your classes and stuff, your guidance counselor will ask you about your future because they want to help you make the choices that will lead you to that.” A middle school teacher explained that each month, they have a 30-minute period in which the class discusses the overarching theme of topics related to planning for the future.

Currently, the district uses teacher recommendations to determine placement for students in more advanced courses. As one district leader explained, the district starts tracking students in Grade 7. According to the middle school *Program of Studies* document, teachers make course recommendations for students, which are available to students and their families. Students in Grade 8 have the option of applying for vocational education in the subject area of their choice for their Grade 9 year. Representatives of the Blackstone Valley Regional Technical Vocational High School review the applications.

Although course variety is a strength, multiple interview and focus group participants reported that access to rigorous coursework varies across student groups – this is an area for growth. Interview and focus group participants described this as an issue for both multilingual learners and native English speakers, albeit in different ways. Several teachers noted that their ELs do not have as many

opportunities to engage in rigorous learning experiences across all departments. One student support staff member explained as follows:

There are a lot of things that they're doing at our school that are an attempt to reduce barriers to academic achievement. But I also think we have a lot of work to do in bolstering the academic achievement of our students . . . How do you scaffold for kids who are coming in with limited education, but they're really smart?

Among native English speakers, participants frequently cited a need for increased access to rigorous courses, but they disagreed on root causes. In focus groups, some parents shared that they “feel like their kids are losing out because so much emphasis is put on the disadvantaged kids and the EL students.” Other parents and teachers noted that access to rigorous coursework was inconsistent across departments, particularly at the high school. Other staff cited tracking, particularly beginning at the middle school level, as a barrier to rigorous coursework in high school.

## Recommendations

- The district should align its ELA curricula both horizontally and vertically, and consider doing so for other content areas, to ensure continuity of student learning from grade to grade and building to building.
- The district should aim to improve its instructional rigor districtwide, with a particular focus on concept development in the lower elementary grades and analysis and inquiry in upper elementary grades through high school. The District Instructional Observation Report (Appendix B) includes more detail on these domains.
- The district should eliminate barriers for select student groups to participate in rigorous coursework by first reviewing data and diagnosing root causes, and then implementing changes that facilitate student enrollment.



## Assessment

Milford has several data collection systems, but inconsistent data use across the district. In Milford, staff have access to multiple assessments and work to create a culture of data use, but this is not yet consistent across all schools. Focus groups and interviews with teachers, school leaders, and district leaders plus a document review indicated that, in addition to the annual MCAS, Milford administers iReady adaptive assessments for mathematics and ELA for Grades K-8 (twice per year, winter and spring, for kindergarten and three times per year, fall, winter and spring, for Grades 1-8). ACCESS is administered annually to determine English language proficiency for ELs. The STAR assessment for mathematics is administered in Grades 9 and 10. The district’s participation in the MCIEA supports the initiative of developing performance assessments—especially at the middle school level—aligned to the Portrait of a Graduate. Staff reported that, while ample data are available, use of data for interventions is inconsistent because all schools do not have an intervention block.

As reported by students, teachers, and district leaders, teachers use Google Classroom and Aspen to share data with key stakeholders. In addition, iReady assessment results are available to parents, although several parents reported not being aware of this option.

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

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

Indicator	Strengths	Areas for growth
<a href="#">Data and assessment systems</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The district uses data from multiple assessments to address student achievement gaps.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhancing the collection of assessment tools available for tracking progress in disciplines beyond ELA and mathematics</li> <li>Monitoring the implementation of social-emotional learning and associated interventions</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Data use</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The district provides professional development and specific protocols designed to inform educators’ data use practices, especially using iReady data.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring that data use practices are consistent across all schools and grade levels</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Sharing results</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The district makes student data (classroom assignments, assessments, and progress reports) available to parents online and during conferences, providing translation when necessary.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need for earlier communication to parents about student performance declines and data availability</li> </ul>

### Data and Assessment Systems

Milford uses multiple assessments and related data to help teachers provide effective instruction that challenges and supports all students, which is a strength of the district. Milford’s data and assessment systems include state and benchmark assessments, formative assessments that

sometimes include a performance project, and surveys. The superintendent expressed that “MCAS data is the autopsy, and it’s valuable if you look at it over time.” Rather than “overcorrecting based on the last year’s MCAS data,” the district uses a triangulation approach, considering data from iReady, the MCIEA data dashboard, and some common assessments from different grade levels to answer the superintendent’s question: “How does all that information come together so we can make some legitimate recommendations about changing practices?”

According to the district’s 2022-2023 assessment inventory and teacher and district leader interviews, in addition to formative and summative assessments integrated in locally created curricula, teachers administer iReady adaptive diagnostics for mathematics and ELA for Grades K-8, Renaissance STAR assessments for algebra and geometry in Grades 9 and 10, Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills in Grade 6 for oral reading fluency, and ACCESS for ELLs to monitor students’ ELD progress and determine support needs. Currently, teachers in Grades K-5 are in the first year of implementing Illustrative Math, and teachers are using the unit tests provided with the program.

In addition to conventional academic assessment, Milford takes part in the MCIEA, which provides data on student and teacher perceptions for Grades 3-12, specifically concerning student engagement, and is assisting teachers with creating formative and performance-based assessments to align with the district’s Portrait of a Graduate. Finally, district leaders and teachers shared that they have used DESSA, aligned to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning framework, as the social-emotional learning assessment since 2021-2022; they conduct the DESSA at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year to determine need. The sentiment of MCAS as useful but limited was echoed at multiple levels within the district; the district therefore uses a variety of systems to gauge progress and assess student growth and well-being. Teachers supported the use of multiple sources to assess students’ needs and reported that they regularly use STAR student assessment data to inform classroom strategies and instruction.

An area for growth is creating and using formative benchmark assessments in other disciplines beyond ELA and mathematics; teachers and district leaders indicated that this work currently is in progress. High school interview participants noted using an in-house system of formative benchmarks, but also noted that no standardized tracking tool is available. In addition, staff reported that because DESSA has been used for only one year, staff do not yet associate the assessment with identifying and helping to support levels of high social-emotional need. Staff said that the social-emotional learning team would like to find a “more global assessment to identify those kids that are high risk and might not be on the radar.” Monitoring the implementation of social-emotional learning interventions within DESSA also is an area for continued growth for the district.

## Data Use

Data use within the district varies across schools and grade levels; however, effectively using data is a goal for all schools districtwide and integrated into all school improvement plans. Interview participants at all levels described striving to use data to make decisions regarding classroom instruction.

Focus group participants described how they have used iReady data to identify action steps and distribute responsibility for follow-up among school staff. District and school leaders stated that iReady coupled with the new Illustrative Math curriculum scope and sequence can inform which students are still struggling with certain standards so that teachers can determine the appropriate intervention to use. The district also uses digital tools, including Aspen, and the MCIEA dashboard to track student progress and identify needs. The ATLAS Looking at Data Protocol is another tool that schools use, as referenced by staff in interviews. Respondents at the district and school levels reported using MCAS data and bolstering findings with multiple other assessments, especially iReady for Grades K-8. Beyond providing data for staff to use, the district provides ongoing professional development on using the iReady data protocol, which is a strength of the district. This support is provided by grade level. School and district leaders further shared that an aspect of this ongoing professional development are protocols to support grade-level and discipline-specific meetings to review the data.

Reviewed documents and interview data indicated that student outcome data are used to identify student needs and provide supports. The MCAS grade level mathematics item analysis reports provide teachers and school leaders with the test item assessed and the average percentage correct by level in the school/district versus the state average. Similarly, elementary teachers shared that iReady ELA data are used to form reading groups. A teacher described this approach as

fast-paced . . . changing every four to eight weeks . . . reformulating groups to make it working on a skill that was exactly what those kids needed [based on] real-time data, thus addressing one of the superintendent’s concerns that, in some models of support, interventions may not change and adjust to student needs or progress over time.

One of the district’s initiatives is to conduct data meetings. Staff reported that instructional coaches lead the big data meetings after iReady results data become available. Alternative assessment data are used to inform improvement efforts. District leaders indicated that school improvement plans are reviewed to determine how MCIEA tools can help meet the goals in these plans.

An area of growth for the district is ensuring that data use practices are consistent across all schools and grade levels. One challenge that staff noted is that not all elementary schools have an intervention block in Grades K-2. Staff said that schedule structures prevent these blocks from happening. Other staff reported in interviews that the middle school also does not have the intervention block. In addition, the elementary schools do not have the same frequency of meetings for grade-level data review and planning across all schools. As a result, some data-informed practices and interventions cannot take place, as teachers do not always have an opportunity to respond to collected data with supports like small group interventions.

## Sharing Results

School and district staff share results from formative assessments, including iReady, and student progress with students and their families using Aspen or Google Classroom and during parent-teacher conferences. This array of modes for sharing information with parents is a strength of the district. Given the significant EL population in the district, as one teacher put it, interpreters are essential when communicating with EL families, “to make sure that nothing is being

miscommunicated in the process,” whether in person or by telephone. This practice allows families to receive clear and easily understood communication. This communication of student data to parents is a strength of the district.

However, the parent focus group revealed concerns about the timing of communications and inconsistencies in parents’ awareness of data availability, an area of growth for the district. Parents of both elementary and middle school students shared that they learned of a decline in their child’s performance weeks or months after an issue surfaced. Another parent similarly shared wishing they had learned of performance issues earlier on to help mitigate these challenges. Another parent indicated that not all parents know that they can get the iReady results online; others in the group agreed that they would welcome this information. A middle school parent pointed out that all families have access to Aspen to monitor student grades, so long as teachers upload all results to the platform.

Collected data also indicated that results are shared with students. Students at the middle and high school levels have access to online platforms. Teachers also share data with students through Google Classroom and individual conferencing. Middle school students agreed that they appreciate when teachers address them individually, provide information on their progress, and offer extra help or ways to improve their grades. Middle school students also reported that some teachers will email student grades to parents via Google Classroom. One student said, “My mom gets an email about exactly the grade I got in each assignment for each class.” However, this practice was not consistent; parent focus groups revealed the need for more timely communication when student performance issues arise.

## Recommendations

- The district should establish a standardized student data tracking tool for subjects outside of ELA and math.
- The district should monitor the implementation of social-emotional interventions, either through more global assessments or other means.
- Where possible, the district should implement intervention blocks at the elementary and middle school levels to allow for consistent data use and targeted, small-group instruction based on progress monitoring data.
- The district should set expectations around proactively communicating with parents when students’ gaps are identified through progress monitoring, so that families can collaborate with teachers to quickly address any challenges in student learning.

## Human Resources and Professional Development

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Milford has human resource and professional development structures in place, including a process to identify staffing level needs, supports for hiring and mentoring, and attention to needs in specialty areas.

Focus groups, interviews with teachers and school/district leaders, and document reviews indicated Milford's commitment to staff development through practices such as the three-year mentoring program for new hires, grade- and discipline-level professional development, reimbursement for outside courses, and a partnership with Framingham State University for EL certification. In addition, the district has added additional staff and created professional development opportunities to support the growing EL population. Evidence suggests the district carefully considers the assignment of staff. The district considers assignments both based on stated desires to keep class sizes under 25 total—and between 20 and 21 at the elementary level—and to meet the needs of the EL and special education populations. However, these assignment priorities are limited by the challenge of having enough physical space for additional classes, discussed in the Finance section in greater detail.

Milford has some recognition opportunities for teachers. The annual Outstanding Teacher Award through the Senator Louis P. Bertonazzi Foundation is a district incentive. *The Milford Public Schools News* highlights educators honored at the local or regional levels. Leadership opportunities include mentoring, coaching, and serving as curriculum team leads, but the district lacks an articulated career ladder.

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

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

Indicator	Strengths	Areas for growth
<b><u>Infrastructure</u></b>		
<b><u>Recruitment, hiring, and assignment</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The district maintains a clear process for school leaders to present staffing level needs.</li> <li>■ Milford’s partnership with Framingham State University has resulted in free EL certification for teachers.</li> </ul>	
<b><u>Supervision, evaluation, and educator development</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The district has a multiyear mentoring program for support teaching staff.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Inclusion of actionable practices for evaluations</li> <li>■ Increasing feedback for teachers outside the formal evaluation process</li> </ul>
<b><u>Recognition, leadership development, and advancement</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The district has some opportunities for teacher recognition.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Creation of an articulated career ladder</li> </ul>

## Infrastructure

Milford employs transparent human resources policies, procedures, and practices. Sufficient infrastructure appears to be in place. The assistant superintendent for business and human resources supervises a staff of four who oversee accounts payable, oversee staff salary and payroll, and track leave and staff license renewals. The Town of Milford supports the district’s human resources efforts by printing checks and covering health insurance costs and offerings under the district’s net school spending agreement with the town. The district also has school faculty handbooks that cover procedures and policies.

## Recruitment, Hiring, and Assignment

District recruitment, hiring, and assignments are needs based and rely on staffing and enrollment information, as discussed in the preceding section. Staff at all levels reported that these decisions in recent years have been based on growing enrollment, especially the growing EL population. Information gathered from district-level interviews aligned with the processes outlined in the *Hiring Procedures* and *Job Posting Process* documents provided by Milford. The ability of this process to allocate new positions to schools based on need is a strength of the district. In general, using student enrollment projections, school leaders begin determining their staffing needs through their budget development process in October. The district currently has a specific focus on the increased EL and special education enrollment when reviewing the staffing needs of schools; therefore, school leaders must get the respective director’s signature prior to finalizing their staffing requests. The resulting staffing need proposal is submitted to the district’s human resources department in December, which then seeks approval from the superintendent. The approved staffing needs, as part of the school’s overall budget, are then presented to the school committee. District leaders and teacher interviews

conferred that this process has resulted in new teachers added to various grade levels based on the school's enrollment projections.

Once staffing requests are approved, the district's *Job Posting Process* states that positions are announced internally via messages to staff and bulletin board postings and externally through website postings. However, staff at all levels reported two challenges in recruitment: (a) a shortage of qualified applicants for all open positions, particularly EL positions, and (b) limited space for additional classrooms in which new hires could teach. To address the candidate shortage, a successful partnership in 2021-2022 with Framingham State University was funded through the National Professional Development Grant-PROPELL. The partnership provided a free TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) certificate program for nine district staff members from prekindergarten through Grade 7. Participants included a reading interventionist and an EL coordinator. The use of strategies such as this partnership are a strength in the district to address pressing human resources need. Other strategies that the district uses for recruitment include a partnership with Lasell University, in which students receive full scholarships to complete a teacher education program, and an early college program in the high school exposes ELs to the college experience. Staff cited data from their alternative assessment surveys, indicating that teachers report feeling prepared for and supported in their classroom assignments.

## Supervision, Evaluation, and Educator Development

District-provided records suggest that evaluations are conducted for both educators and administrators. A review of the summative evaluation files indicated that teachers received ratings and feedback on their performance based on the Standards and Indicators of Effective Practice. Simple random sampling was used to select the sample of 10 percent of 105 professional teacher status teachers who were scheduled for a summative evaluation in the 2021-2022 school year for review. Of the 11 teacher evaluations selected for review, 10 evaluations were available for review. A majority of the evaluations (80 percent) were marked as complete and not missing required components, including a rating for each standard or an overall rating. A review of the records shows that the expected use of specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely (SMART) goals is not consistent. The review of evaluation documents indicated that only half (50 percent) contained student learning and professional practice SMART goals. One evaluation referenced multiple sources of evidence, such as observations, student work samples, and other evidence to support progress toward student learning goals, professional learning goals, standards, and indicators. All summative evaluations (100 percent) included feedback for each standard, and most of the evaluations (90 percent) included feedback identifying strengths; only one evaluation included feedback identifying areas of improvement. As such, an area of growth for the district is providing more actionable feedback for staff at all levels as part of the evaluation process.

Of the 30 administrator evaluations due for a summative evaluation in 2021-2022, only 17 were available for review, complete with performance ratings and assessment of progress toward goals. Of the summative evaluations reviewed, less than half of the evaluations (42 percent) included student learning goals and professional practice goals. No evaluations included or referenced multiple sources of evidence to assess performance on summative evaluation standards. Nearly all summative administrator evaluations reviewed (16 of 17) included evaluator comments with

feedback identifying each administrator's strengths; however, only three evaluations provided administrators with identified areas for improvement.

In interviews and focus groups, leaders described efforts to calibrate the evaluation process and use consistent tools to support this process. Teachers across grade levels reported that administrators and instructional leaders were a regular presence in classrooms during walkthroughs at all levels. Milford teachers and district leaders all described the walkthrough process as a regular practice with various purposes, including new teacher mentoring or subject area curriculum review, not always for evaluation. A teacher described the process as "always a pulse check going on [of] what's happening in classrooms across the district, across the grade levels, [and] across the schools." However, teachers also reported that feedback was not consistently provided at all levels after walkthroughs. An area of growth for the district, therefore, is providing feedback to teachers outside of the formal evaluation process, particularly for teachers on biannual cycles.

In addition, a teacher focus group shared that some buildings have an instructional coach who is available to observe "in a nonevaluative way and just communicate about how you can improve your own instructional practices or access to resources." Teachers described the coaching cycles as easy and helpful in improving "your own instructional practices or access to resources." Principals lead the evaluation process, and the assistant superintendent for business and human resources plays no role in this process.

Some high school staff reported that the evaluation process was cumbersome and inconsistent in providing actionable feedback, with "inconsistencies in applying the tool" at the high school level. Staff reported that evaluations, walkthroughs, and feedback were less frequent for more experienced teachers. Staff reported in interviews that "the time it takes to fill that stuff out and do it properly, it's just totally unrealistic" given the number of staff to be observed, especially at the high school level. In addition, high school staff reported that the staff assigned to do nonevaluative coaching and feedback do not have a reduced load to allow them to provide true support.

Evidence that showcases Milford's efforts in supporting new staff is exemplified by Milford's three-year mentoring program. This program is for teachers new to the profession or the district. New teachers are paired with a mentee for one-on-one weekly and monthly interactions in addition to two 6-week book studies per year. Two professional development days at the beginning of the school year are set aside for mentoring and induction. In addition to the *Mentoring Handbook*, staff are introduced to technology systems and protocols, the website, policies, and the *Mentoring and Induction Calendar*. Themes change for each of the first three years of new teacher mentoring and are adaptable depending on whether a teacher is new to the profession or only new to the district. The clarity of the expectations and structure of this program are a strength of the district.

Interviewed staff largely described professional development as taking place at the school level. Teachers have access to coaching and instructional support, as described earlier in this section. District leaders and staff reported that elementary school professional development focuses on the implementation of the Illustrative Math curriculum to support higher order thinking and on EL strategies for non-EL teachers, including those found on the WIDA EL professional development platform, ELlevation strategies, and a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS). One focus group expressed concern about the focus on ELs in professional development and wondered if this meant



the curriculum was being “watered down” and what impact this has on non-ELs. New coteaching pairs have professional development to support coteaching models, which has been a focus of the high school summer and afterschool professional development for the last several years.

Two professional development initiatives demonstrate Milford’s commitment to DEI practices. The mission of the committee for race, equity, diversity, and inclusion is to “advocate for justice and institutional change where inequities are identified or when students and their families are marginalized within the Milford Public School (MPS) District.” The mission is exemplified in Milford’s annual recommendations for six areas affecting students, including professional development, and outlined for the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years in the *Action Planning* document. In addition, the Massachusetts Tiered System of Support is offering a yearlong professional development program, the BlackPrint Culturally Responsive Practice Leadership Academy, with a cohort of district leaders, as well as student, parent, and teacher representatives participating in monthly sessions.

District staff also reported that they have planned some K-5 professional development related to the science of reading. Besides district and site-led professional development, during and outside contractual time, staff can apply to receive funding to attend professional development outside the district if they align with the areas for growth outlined in written evaluations.

## Recognition, Leadership Development, and Advancement

Milford recognizes the efforts of staff through multiple avenues. The district nominates staff members for the annual Outstanding Teacher Award through the Senator Louis P. Bertonazzi Foundation. Issue 1, Fall 2022, of the *Milford Public School News* highlighted educators who received recognition at the local, state, regional levels, including a feature on the PBS series *This Old House*. The district also recognizes the efforts of its staff through its school newsletter. However, neither interview nor document data provided more detailed examples of opportunities for staff advancement, though requested, making this indicator an area for growth. In addition, some respondents presented mixed responses when asked about strategies for staff retention. Teacher retention strategies such as tuition reimbursement do not always ensure that teachers will remain in the district, according to some respondents, and some district staff noted that staff mobility is more common now than in previous eras.

## Recommendations

- The district should adopt a culture of feedback in which administrators and staff consistently provide constructive, actionable feedback after walkthroughs, after informal observations, and as part of formal evaluations to provide educators with clear direction on how to improve their practice.
- The district should develop a formal leadership pipeline that provides staff with opportunities for career advancement within the district.

## Student Support

Milford has plans in place to support students’ safety and well-being. The district has set a holistic vision for student development in their Portrait of a Graduate, which includes social-emotional development: “A graduate of Milford Public Schools has the passion, skills, and growth mindset to be a lifelong learner.” This statement represents one of Milford’s four pillars of success: continuous and lifelong learner, responsible community member, active communicator and collaborator, and creative problem solver. District-level interviews and a review of Milford’s strategic plan note that measures for these pillars—called performance tasks—are in development and scheduled to be completed by 2025. The district strategic plan reflects a commitment to meeting all students’ educational and developmental needs and to addressing DEI issues to ensure that schools equitably support the safety, well-being, and sense of belonging for all students.

Milford engages family and community members primarily through its family resource center, an accessible, all-inclusive hub in which families come to thrive—physically and emotionally. Milford strives to cultivate family relationships and community partnerships to achieve successful healthy futures for their students. The district has implemented several initiatives to support the development of student and staff social-emotional competencies. Some families, however, reported a desire for clearer district-level communication.

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

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

Indicator	Strengths	Areas for growth
<a href="#">Safe and supportive school climate and culture</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The district has a strong focus on DEI and accompanying concrete actions.</li> <li>The district has structures to support the development of students’ social-emotional competencies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Milford lacks a districtwide system for positive behavioral approaches</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Tiered systems of support</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Milford has a consistent process for teams to review data and assign student supports at each school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need to assess the effectiveness of tiered systems of support</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Family, student, and community engagement and partnerships</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The district has established multiple collaborative and culturally responsive efforts to support multilingual, diverse families.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicating with families about district updates and providing a centralized place for information and communication at the district level</li> </ul>

### Safe and Supportive School Climate and Culture

Overall, Milford prioritizes the creation of a safe and supportive environment for students. The district’s strong focus on DEI and accompanying concrete actions is a strength of the district. The district strategic plan for 2021-2024 details the district’s mission of providing “an equitable learning environment that empowers all students, faculty, and staff to achieve their short- and long-term goals and prepares each individual in the school community to adapt to the challenges of change in an increasingly complex world.” Milford’s strategic objectives are written into school improvement

plans and connect to strategic initiatives implemented across the district. Examples of actions that are taking place at the school level include providing professional learning for staff on alignment with MTSS, refining inclusive practices to increase academic achievement and support students with diverse backgrounds, expanding and implementing curricula that build school culture and consider diverse perspectives, and increasing access to rigorous courses. Moreover, school leaders shared that the district has worked to support their rapidly growing enrollment by dramatically expanding the number of sections of ELD courses, refining their newcomer and coteaching programs, and expanding their career readiness offerings at the schools.

Results from the Views of Climate and Learning student survey indicate a relatively strong school climate across all school levels and student subgroups, as evidenced by overall school climate scores in the “favorable” range (51 to 70, with a maximum score of 100). The only exception in the district was African American/Black students, whose results indicated an overall school climate score on the high end (48) of the “somewhat favorable” range (31 to 50).

In addition, district staff have surveyed students on their learning experiences. Respondents noted that the emphasis on such efforts to gather student voice was connected to Milford’s participation in the alternative assessment consortium. As a member of MCIEA, Milford and the other partnership districts created a fair and effective accountability system. MCIEA’s accountability system focuses on a School Quality Measures framework that includes multiple measures of student engagement, student achievement, and school environment. A district leader expressed that, in reviewing student survey data, teachers found it powerful when they saw a disconnect between their views and student views of the classroom learning experience: “It was healthy because I think it was a step in recognizing there’s maybe a problem.” One school staff member noted, “They’ve done a number of surveys. They’ve also done [professional development] where they have broken down the data and tried to come up with action plans to support the areas of need,” including changing some procedures and practices in response to student feedback.

In addition, the district’s Culturally Responsive Practice Leadership Academy partnered with BlackPrint to support district leadership in integrating culturally responsive practices and an equity lens into their pedagogy, policies, structures, and systems. The district also convened the committee for race, equity, diversity, and inclusion to lead the district’s work in providing an equitable learning environment. The committee’s areas of focus are communication, data teams, professional development, curriculum materials, extracurricular activities, and student-to-staff connections. In fall 2022, the committee surveyed parents, staff, and students to understand what is going well and identify areas that need attention through the lens of race, equity, diversity, and inclusion. After reviewing the survey data, the committee developed several recommendations and action steps for the district to implement. For instance, to improve student-to-staff connections at the secondary level, the committee determined that schools should create affinity groups for students and staff as it pertains to race, color, religion, ancestry, national or ethnic origin, age, gender, and many more characteristics to increase student connections to the school and individual staff members. Overall, awareness of and commitment to the district’s mission of providing “an equitable learning environment that empowers all students, faculty, and staff” is being spread throughout the district.

The district continues to focus on DEI through Project WEAVE. The objective of the WEAVE is to welcome, engage, and assist ELs with a smooth transition to Milford schools, by “weaving” their culture into their new life in Milford, with the goal of supporting the academic and social-emotional success of the student. Project WEAVE is a six-to eight-week group facilitated in English, Spanish, and Portuguese. Students share aspects of their immigration experiences, discuss school rules, learn to assess their own social-emotional status using the color-coded language of the Zones of Regulation social-emotional learning curriculum, and describe their dreams for the future. Other DEI initiatives include the district’s student opportunity plan. The district outlines their commitments to high needs student subgroups and the EL and students with disabilities task force. Members of the task force participate in a series of professional learning sessions focused on MTSS implementation in tier instruction and intervention.

Another strength of the district is their efforts to support the development of student and staff social-emotional competencies. Social-emotional learning is one of the four main objectives of the district’s strategic plan. Currently, the district is working to embed social-emotional learning into the students’ school day and create a positive school culture for staff and students. School staff shared about a movement for social-emotional learning throughout all grades and tier levels. The district developed a social-emotional learning toolkit that provides guidance on embedding social-emotional concepts into instruction and addresses topics such as zones of regulation, teen depression, suicide prevention, vaping, teacher self-care, and more. In addition, instructional observation ratings in the middle range on the Teacher Sensitivity dimension (average scores of 5.6 for Grades K-5, 5.9 for Grades 6-8, and 5.3 for Grades 9-12) suggest that most teachers are aware of and responsive to student needs most of the time, and many students feel comfortable with the teachers.

At the elementary level, staff described creating welcoming environments by having administrators and teachers develop personal connections with students, using reward systems, and providing opportunities for students to do morning announcements with the school principal. At the high school level, staff shared that culture and climate have been a challenge because their caseloads have grown, and it is challenging to provide a structured way to make students feel important. One staff member shared as follows:

So going from 1,100 to 1,350 [students] in a span of about four to five years is very hard to manage. So, we no longer have peer mediation. We no longer have peer mentoring. Our services have been cut just to survive.

However, a group of students known as Mind Matters host weekly sessions to teach stress reduction and mindfulness strategies. Milford High School also has partnered with several organizations to discuss mental health, create action plans, and provide additional intervention supports.

Milford’s positive behavioral approaches to supporting students is an area of growth for the district, as evidenced by parent and staff focus groups and district documents. District documents do not describe specific ways to implement clear schoolwide positive behavioral systems, indicating that a districtwide system of positive behavioral interventions and supports or a similar approach does not exist. High school staff members reported that behavior expectations are outlined clearly but applied inconsistently. Elementary staff shared that behavioral expectations reside in a “gray area”; certain conduct issues are easier to respond to, whereas others are not. School staff shared that schools

are reviewing school climate data and are working towards training teachers to de-escalate incidents. However, multiple parents and students also described instances in which there were no, or insufficient, responses to misbehavior.

## Tiered Systems of Support

As outlined in the District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) and other district documents such as school-level tiered intervention guides, Milford provides a tiered system to support the needs of all students by using school-level, data-driven decision making to develop appropriate interventions and support. Both documents and interviews indicated that Milford has school-level student assistance teams that regularly review data and help assign supports to students. Across each school, the process typically involves a teacher referral, a review of student data, the development of a support plan, and a review to ensure that the plan is effective. This consistent presence of and process for a team to review data and assign student supports at each school is a strength of the district.

Although languages and protocols vary by school and described by district leaders and school staff, each school has a multidisciplinary team, known as the student/teacher assistance resource team (START team), that meets with classroom teachers to review data and develop appropriate intervention or support plans based on student needs. To connect students with the team, teachers first identify a student for whom they have academic, social, emotional, behavioral, physical, or linguistic concerns. One priority for the district noted in district-, school-, and administrator-level interviews is increasing the student attendance rate. Chronic absenteeism has been an issue in the district, and attendance information is regularly reviewed as well.

Staff reported in interviews that the process generally works as follows: After an initial conversation and data review during teacher collaboration time, the school will provide an appropriate intervention for three to four weeks before the team reconvenes to review updated data; discuss progress; and decide on continuing the support, changing the support, or ending additional support. If staff determine that the student is not making effective progress despite interventions in place, the case manager and teacher(s) will present the student profile and data history at an initial START team meeting. The START team will collaborate with the referring teacher(s) and parents to determine the necessary next steps. Staff interviews indicated that membership on the student support teams varied across schools but included a representative set of stakeholders with authority to make collaborative decisions. Examples of team members across buildings included the school principal or assistant principal, the school psychologist, the guidance counselor, academic interventionists, parent(s)/guardian(s), and the referring teacher(s).

District-sponsored professional development opportunities reflect topics related to student learning among a continuum of needs, including academic, social, and emotional learning. In addition, meeting the needs of regular education, special education, and ELs, as well as investing in diverse teachers and employing culturally responsive teaching, were all identified as foci for the district in school- and district-level interviews. The DCAP describes a proactive MTSS designed to “ensure that all efforts have been made to meet students’ needs in the general education setting and to assist teachers in analyzing students’ needs and accommodating diverse learning styles of all children.” The DCAP describes personnel and interventions that are accessible to all students and families

through general education and also provides an overview of characteristics related to curriculum access, student engagement, assessment, and supporting student learning.

The DCAP also provides a descriptive list of characteristics and structures that support curriculum accommodations for general education students at all levels. At the elementary level (PK-5), general classroom attributes include classes staffed by highly qualified personnel, research-based curricula aligned to the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework, Sheltered English Immersion strategies, differentiated instruction, and Title 1 academic support for identified students in the areas of mathematics and reading. Elementary students also can receive tuition-free full-day kindergarten and participate in a summer school reading or English as a second language program. Teachers also provide 45 minutes of weekly academic support. At the secondary level (Grades 6-12), general classroom attributes include classes staffed by highly qualified personnel, research-based curricula aligned to the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework, Sheltered English Immersion strategies, summer school for identified students, and afterschool academic support. Lastly, the DCAP provides an abundant list of recommended accommodations and strategies that serve as a guide for educators to facilitate learning within the general education setting. Recommended strategies range from preferential seating, delayed response time, and modeling to scaffolding, using grouping, and providing alternative activities. For instance, in focus groups, teachers described using highly qualified personnel, such as retired teachers and academic coaches, to provide coaching to students who need additional academic support. Overall, all students receive Tier 1 instruction and supports, and Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports are available as supplements.

Tiered systems of support are in place for students' mental health needs. At the elementary level, counselors work cooperatively with classroom teachers to coteach lessons during social-emotional learning time, and therapeutic classrooms are available for students who require more support during the school day. Students who have Tier 2 or Tier 3 social-emotional needs receive targeted interventions during counseling sessions. At the middle school level, multiple tiered interventions are available, including counselors who work collaboratively with staff to provide monthly social-emotional lessons as a Tier 1 intervention and as Tier 2 or Tier 3 support. As a result of the Supporting Students' Social-Emotional Learning, Behavioral & Mental Health, and Wellness Competitive Grant, students have access to an outpatient therapist who helps students transition back into mainstream classes after returning from a hospitalization. Lastly, as a Tier 1 intervention, Milford High School partnered with [the NAN Project](#) to discuss mental health and train faculty on signs of suicide and how to respond to students who need help. For students who need Tier 2 or Tier 3 support, Milford High School also started a three-year partnership with the [JED Foundation](#) to create and implement an evidence-based strategic plan to support student mental health, reduce substance misuse, and prevent suicide. In addition, an outpatient clinician also works on-site to provide mental health counseling to students. Overall, students' mental health needs are explicitly supported, and their schools work to foster students' individual cognitive, physical, linguistic, social, and emotional development.

Regarding the efficacy of supports, parent views varied. Some parents described several needs for students and the varying degree to which current supports are addressing those needs. In focus groups, parents explained how their students fell behind, with limited instructional support available to get them back on track. For example, one parent shared as follows:

My son started in kindergarten, following COVID . . . And when he was behind in reading, I felt as though there wasn't an opportunity for us to get extra help in the class . . . because there were a lot of students that were running into the same problem. . .

Another parent noted that “. . . when I went into the class, there were a lot of kids, not [adequately] reading, writing [on grade level]. They were just so far behind.” Consequently, the need to assess the effectiveness of assigned supports is an area of growth for the district.

## Family, Student, and Community Engagement and Partnerships

Milford ensures that families and students have multiple opportunities to engage with the district and support students' academic progress and general well-being. Families have representation on school improvement committees, parent advisory councils, school councils, and parent teacher organizations. In addition, students have representation on the school committee.

A notable strength of the district is their collaborative and culturally responsive efforts to support multilingual, diverse families. As part of Milford's strategic plan to expand equity and access, the district developed the family resource center as a hub for multilingual families, which seeks to ensure that all families and prospective families of Milford students feel welcomed, valued, and supported. The center provides families with an intake process, including access to resources and support related to both schooling and nonacademic community resources, if needed. The center is in the downtown area of Milford to ensure accessibility for all families in the district. Family liaisons, translation interpretation coordinators, and test administrators, who are all multilingual, are examples of the district's efforts to engage in broad and consistent dialogue with all stakeholders about equity.

Milford has bilingual staff in every school throughout the district. ELs have access to all services, and if an event needs an interpreter, the district will supply one; in cases of emergency, bilingual staff may be asked to assist. The district has developed handbooks designed to orient staff to Brazilian and Ecuadorian cultures. These handbooks reflect on staff members' experiences with Brazilian and Ecuadorian students and address topics such as comparing school systems, parent involvement, cultural misunderstandings, culture shock, and feedback from students.

Lastly, the district is piloting a new home visit program, in which schools, students, and caregivers voluntarily come together—as equal partners—in an informal, personalized setting of the caregiver's choosing to build trust and form positive relationships. According to the *Milford Public Schools Home Visit Procedures* document, during a home visit, Milford staff and caregivers collaboratively share new information in the best interest of the student; share hopes, dreams, expectations, and experiences; and work toward an understanding of each other's views and opinions. Student support staff shared that the district has been working to train staff to do home visits, and they are looking at how to use a culturally responsive lens with families.

Schools regularly share newsletters with updates and resources and post information on publicly available websites. Information sent out is translated into English, Spanish, and Portuguese. Teachers and parents also reported that two-way communication is facilitated using the translation service Talking Points, which translates the message into the family's own language. However,

parents noted room for improvement in communicating district updates. Parents interviewed for the district review generally indicated that individual school communications were helpful; however, some shared that they wished the district sent out more information regarding long-term planning, changes in district leadership, and capital improvements. In one case, a parent shared that the information shared on publicly available websites is outdated and hard to navigate. One parent commented that they would like to have a centralized or explicit place to learn about school committee decisions if they cannot watch the school committee meetings. In addition, another parent noted that they had an incident at school and was confused about the organization and structure regarding the “chain of command” about who could resolve her issue. Communicating with families about district updates is, therefore, an area for growth. Some families, for example, suggested providing a centralized place for information and communication regarding district-level communications. The district indicated that information is publicly available online, but parent feedback suggests that Milford may need to do a better job of communicating to parents where that information is and/or making the system easier to navigate.

The Milford Family and Community Network (MFCN) is a Coordinated Family Community Engagement grant that serves families with children from birth to 8 years of age. It is a free and universal program that provides comprehensive early childhood programs and high-quality services in an environment that promotes the physical, social, emotional and cognitive development of young children. The district’s MFCN website provides links to local community organizations that partner with Milford. The MFCN also hosts programs to engage the community, such as playgroups in which families can receive resources and participate in enrichment activities from local community partners.

## Recommendations

- The district should set district-wide expectations for handling inappropriate behavior and consider implementing a system like PBIS or Restorative Justice to ensure equity and vertical continuity across grades.
- The district should conduct a program evaluation around its various supports, to assess their efficacy and ensure the help that students receive is high-quality.
- The district should streamline its district-level communications and website to facilitate parents’ access to information about district updates and decisions.



## Financial and Asset Management

Milford town and district leaders reported a sense of cooperation and a view that the district effectively manages funding. The district heavily focuses on being transparent with their budget and aligning it to district priorities. The budget is documented and available to the public, meets net school spending requirements, and has tracking processes that are available to all stakeholders.

District leaders collaborate alongside the school committee to ensure that the allocation and use of funding and other resources to improve student performance, provide culturally responsive opportunities to students and their families, and increase positive outcomes. School leaders have freedom to prepare a budget proposal for the superintendent and to present a case to the central office for resources, including staffing. District leaders collaborate with town leaders to comprehensively develop the overall budget and external firms complete consistent audits of financial reports and the use of funds.

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

**Table 7. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Financial and Asset Management Standard**

Indicator	Strengths	Areas for growth
<a href="#">Budget documentation and reporting</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Milford has clear, accurate, user-friendly annual budget documents that are publicly available.</li> <li>The district maintains consistency between school goals highlighted as driving budget requests and district improvement goals.</li> </ul>	
<a href="#">Adequate budget</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Milford recently obtained an increase in funding to support high needs students through a variety of sources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not clear to principals why particular budget requests are approved or denied</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Financial tracking, forecasting, controls, and audits</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The superintendent and the school committee receive regular and accurate reports.</li> </ul>	
<a href="#">Capital planning and facility maintenance</a>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need to finalize plans for additional space for the growing student population</li> <li>Planning for ongoing, immediate building maintenance while finalizing long-term capital plans</li> </ul>

### Budget Documentation and Reporting

A noteworthy strength of Milford is the clarity and accessibility of the district’s budget documents. They are clear, accurate, and user-friendly, and Milford works to maintain documents that include

information about all sources of funds and the allocation of resources. District budgets from fiscal years 2019 to 2023 are publicly available on the district website. Milford's budget documents and presentation to the school committee include pertinent information about the allocation of resources and the sources of funds. The current budget document provides information on funding sources, federal and state grant funding, choice fund revenue, circuit breaker revenue, and budget modifications. The presentation also includes historical spending data from 2021-2022 for comparison to the current year's resource allocations, along with enrollment information. Budget presentations and documents contain expenses for fixed costs, health insurance, EL services, and compensation for all staff, and they break down specific budget detail by school. Milford's municipality agreement, known as the *Indirect Cost Allocation Agreement*, details costs paid and managed directly by the municipality and is clearly documented in the budget and financial accounting documents.

District leaders described collaboration between the school committee, town officials, and district central office staff in developing the overall budget. District leaders noted a clear and consistent calculation for determining what percentage of the town's overall budget would be reserved for the school budget each year, which consistently exceeds net school spending requirements and supports the internal district budget planning process. District and municipal interview participants reported that town officials provide monthly budget reports to the district central office, who then provide bimonthly budget reports to the school committee.

Budget documentation includes overall district budget information followed by school-specific budget details. Each school budget section begins with a summary of the educational goals used to develop the budget. These goals align with the goals outlined in the districtwide *Strategic Plan Overview 2021-2024* and the *Student Opportunity Act Plan* documents, which is a strength of the district. Consistency between school goals highlighted as driving budget requests and district improvement goals also is a strength of the district.

## Adequate Budget

District and town officials explained that the base budget document dictates what portion of the overall town budget will be allocated to the district, and this agreed-on method supports an efficient budget development process for both entities. District and town leaders indicated that the overall budget is determined through this process and always exceeds net spending requirements. One official noted, "We have not had to have any supplemental appropriation . . . [the district has] always stayed within [the annual] budget . . . there's a lot of other resources outside of the operational budget."

District and town officials agreed that a good working relationship exists, with district leaders identifying positive relationships with multiple town boards as critical to their success.

District leaders reported that their budget planning in recent years has focused on adding classroom teachers to reduce class sizes and respond to growing enrollment. This focus also appears in most school budget requests, as shown in the budget documents. One district leader estimated that the district added more than 60 new staff positions in the last two budget requests; public figures on the district's state online profile reported 383 teachers in 2022-2023 compared with 328 teachers in

2016-2017. However, although the district has addressed their instructional support needs, district leaders noted that space becomes a new challenge because there is not sufficient room to place the new staff and the growing number of students they serve in existing school buildings.

Regarding the process for allocating new staff, respondents at several levels reported that principals can make requests for additional positions each year, and leaders must “support those requests with evidence and data.” Data on staffing and enrollment are available for leaders to make these decisions. Staff at the district level similarly echoed the existence of an evidence-based process. Staff at all levels, plus annually reported figures to the state, all indicate an increase in total teaching staff in the last two years, with about 62 positions added, in conjunction with overall rising enrollment in the district. School-level leaders, however, noted that it is not always clear why particular requests were approved or denied. Clarifying this process for principals is an area of growth for the district.

A strength of the district is the increase in funding to support high needs students through a variety of sources. According to district leaders, the state’s *Student Opportunity Act Plan* provided much-needed funding to support efforts to close opportunity and achievement gaps in high needs subgroups with minimal additional commitments from local funds. The funding allows the district to implement evidence-based programming and, when relevant, expand their coteaching programs, increase personnel and services, develop early college programs, and increase staffing.

## **Financial Tracking, Forecasting, Controls, and Audits**

The district’s business office provides regular, accurate reports to the superintendent and the school committee on spending from all funding sources and forecasts spending through the end of the year, with adequate school-level information provided to every principal, making this a strength of the district.

According to town leaders, the district finance department reports to the superintendent monthly, and the district central office then sends those reports to the school committee. Town leaders also described how the central office has budgetary autonomy; budget changes are sent to the school committee first for approval. District budget changes receive final approval from municipal officials. The district builds out most of their payroll themselves, which they have their own system of doing. The town manager reports that the district has had to return some grant funds in the past. The district’s end-of-year reporting requirements include closing open encumbrances. The district has met end-of-year reporting requirements without issue.

Scanlon & Associates audits both the town and the district. The district is responsible for its own reporting for the audit. The district currently uses Tyler Technologies Budget Sense for internal monitoring. The assistant superintendent for business and human resources conducts monthly monitoring and brings any potential deficits to the school committee. The most recent audit revealed some discrepancies in reporting, which the district corrected.

## Capital Planning and Facility Maintenance

According to teachers, student support staff, and district leaders, enrollment in the district has grown tremendously, and the student population is outgrowing current buildings. Participants in interviews and focus groups, school committee meeting minutes, and contemporary local news reports all show discussions about the need to address capital and space needs in the district. One teacher reported that they are not supporting the cleanliness of the buildings anymore, and the custodial team is understaffed. Students reported that areas of the school building are falling apart, there are holes in the walls, and the bathrooms do not receive regular maintenance. Although not mentioned in the district's 10-year capital plan, district leaders, teachers, and the town manager all agree a decision is necessary about new facilities for the high school. In addition, the district's elementary schools need extensive repairs. As such, while larger capital questions are decided in the district, creating a plan to address more immediate maintenance issues is an area for growth.

The district has sent statements of interest to the Massachusetts School Building Authority seeking approval for the development of a new high school building. Interview participants reported that, if approved, the new building would likely contain Grade 8 students to relieve crowding at the middle school. The need for more space to accommodate students is an area for growth in the district. In 2022, the district's request to purchase six modular classrooms was approved, and new classrooms will be built at Brookside Elementary School. These additions will free up more space at the elementary schools and should alleviate pressure in existing classrooms. However, to accommodate building growth, a large portion of playground space will be removed.

The town manager reviews and comments on the long-term capital improvement plan for the town and the district. District leaders provided the 2023 capital plan for the district review. The proposals in the plan are reviewed by the select board, the finance committee, the school capital subcommittee, and the town meeting to improve buildings, equipment, and infrastructure. The capital plan describes how funding allocations are divided between each school and the district and also includes a project title and funds requested. The following district projects are planned or underway: painting, flooring, roofing repairs/replacement, fire alarm upgrade/replacement, and water heater replacement.

## Recommendations

- The district should improve the transparency in its decision-making process for principals when approving or denying requests for additional positions.
- The district should continue its capital planning work to update its buildings and accommodate the increasing student population.
- While the district is addressing its long-term capital needs, the district should work with its custodial staff and town leaders to resolve short-term facilities issues to ensure a clean, safe, and healthy learning environment for all students.

## Appendix A. Summary of Site Visit Activities

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The AIR team completed the following activities as part of the district review activities in Milford. The team conducted 72 classroom observations during the week of February 27, 2023, and held interviews and focus groups between February 27 and March 3, 2023. The site visit team conducted interviews and focus groups with the following representatives from the school and the district:

- Superintendent
- Other district leaders
- School committee members
- Teachers' association members
- Principals
- Teachers
- Support specialists
- Parents
- Students
- Town government representative

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

- Student and school performance data, including achievement and growth, enrollment, graduation, dropout, retention, suspension, and attendance rates
- Data on the district's staffing and finances
- Curricular review process and timeline
- Milford curriculum inventory and ratings
- Published educational reports on the district by DESE, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, and the former Office of Educational Quality and Accountability
- District documents such as district and school improvement plans, school committee minutes and policies, curriculum documents, summaries of student assessments, job descriptions, collective bargaining agreements, evaluation tools for staff, handbooks, school schedules, and the district's end-of-year financial reports
- All completed program and administrator evaluations and a random selection of completed teacher evaluations

# Appendix B. Districtwide Instructional Observation Report

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## *Milford Public Schools*

### **Classroom Visits: Summary of Findings**

## **Districtwide Instructional Observation Report**

**February 2023**

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## Introduction

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The *Districtwide Instructional Observation Report* presents ratings for the classroom observations that were conducted by certified observers at American Institutes for Research (AIR) as part of the Massachusetts District Reviews.

Three observers visited Milford Public Schools during the week of February 27, 2023. Observers conducted 72 observations in a sample of classrooms across five schools. Observations were conducted in grades K-12 and focused primarily on literacy, English language arts, and mathematics instruction.

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

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

**Table 1. CLASS K-3 Domains and Dimensions**

Emotional Support	Classroom Organization	Instructional Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Positive Climate</li> <li>■ Negative Climate</li> <li>■ Teacher Sensitivity</li> <li>■ Regard for Student Perspectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Behavior Management</li> <li>■ Productivity</li> <li>■ Instructional Learning Formats</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Concept Development</li> <li>■ Quality of Feedback</li> <li>■ Language Modeling</li> </ul>

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

**Table 2. CLASS Upper Elementary and Secondary Domains and Dimensions**

Emotional Support	Classroom Organization	Instructional Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Positive Climate</li> <li>■ Teacher Sensitivity</li> <li>■ Regard for Student Perspectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Behavior Management</li> <li>■ Productivity</li> <li>■ Negative Climate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Instructional Learning Formats</li> <li>■ Content Understanding</li> <li>■ Analysis and Inquiry</li> <li>■ Quality of Feedback</li> <li>■ Instructional Dialogue</li> </ul>
<b>Student Engagement</b>		

When conducting a visit to a classroom, the observer rates each dimension (including Student Engagement) on a scale of 1 to 7. A rating of 1 or 2 indicates that the dimension was never or rarely

evident during the visit. For example, a rating of 1 or 2 on Teacher Sensitivity indicates that, at the time of the visit, the teacher was not aware of students who needed extra support or attention, was unresponsive to or dismissive of students, or was ineffective at addressing students' problems; as a result, students rarely sought support from the teacher or communicated openly with the teacher. A rating of 3, 4, or 5 indicates that the dimension was evident but not exhibited consistently or in a way that included all students. A rating of 6 or 7 indicates that the dimension was reflected in all or most classroom activities and in a way that included all or most students.

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

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

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

## Positive Climate

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### *Emotional Support domain, Grades K–12*

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

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

#### **Positive Climate District Average\*: 5.6**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-5	0	0	2	2	9	8	10	31	5.7
Grades 6-8	0	0	1	1	7	6	5	20	5.7
Grades 9-12	0	0	1	4	7	2	7	21	5.5

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 3, the district average is computed as:  $([3 \times 4] + [4 \times 7] + [5 \times 23] + [6 \times 16] + [7 \times 22]) \div 72 \text{ observations} = 5.6$

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

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

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

## Teacher Sensitivity

*Emotional Support domain, Grades K–12*

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

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

**Teacher Sensitivity District Average\*: 5.6**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-5	0	0	2	2	7	14	6	31	5.6
Grades 6-8	0	1	0	3	2	5	9	20	5.9
Grades 9-12	0	1	0	4	6	7	3	21	5.3

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 4, the district average is computed as:  $[(2 \times 2) + (3 \times 2) + (4 \times 9) + (5 \times 15) + (6 \times 26) + (7 \times 18)] \div 72 \text{ observations} = 5.6$

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

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

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

## Regard for Student Perspectives

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*Emotional Support domain, Grades K–12*

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

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

### Regard for Student Perspectives District Average\*: 3.5

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-5	1	4	9	4	9	4	0	31	3.9
Grades 6-8	2	5	4	5	1	3	0	20	3.4
Grades 9-12	2	6	6	5	2	0	0	21	3.0

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 5, the district average is computed as:  $([1 \times 5] + [2 \times 15] + [3 \times 19] + [4 \times 14] + [5 \times 12] + [6 \times 7]) \div 72 \text{ observations} = 3.5$

**Ratings in the Low Range.** At the low range, the teacher exhibits an inflexible, rigid adherence to his or her plan, without considering student ideas or allowing students to make contributions. The teacher inhibits student enthusiasm by imposing guidelines or making remarks that inhibit student expression. The teacher may rigidly adhere to a lesson plan and not respond to student interests. The teacher does not allow students any autonomy on how they conduct an activity, may control materials tightly, and may offer few opportunities for students to help out with classroom responsibilities. There are few opportunities for students to talk and express themselves.

**Ratings in the Middle Range.** The teacher exhibits control at times and at other times follows the students’ lead and gives them some choices and opportunities to follow their interests. There are some opportunities for students to exercise autonomy, but student choice is limited. The teacher may assign students responsibility in the classroom, but in a limited way. At times, the teacher dominates the discussion, but at other times the teacher allows students to share ideas, although only at a minimal level or for a short period of time.

**Ratings in the High Range.** The teacher is flexible in following student leads, interests, and ideas and looks for ways to meaningfully engage students. Although the teacher has a lesson plan, students’ ideas are incorporated into the lesson plan. The teacher consistently supports student autonomy and provides meaningful leadership opportunities. Students have frequent opportunities to talk, share ideas, and work together. Students have appropriate freedom of movement during activities.

## Negative Climate

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*Emotional Support domain, Grades K–3*

*Classroom Organization domain, Grades 4–12*

Negative Climate reflects the overall level of expressed negativity in the classroom. The frequency, quality, and intensity of teacher and student negativity are key to this dimension (*CLASS K–3 Manual*, p. 28, *CLASS Upper Elementary Manual*, p. 55, *CLASS Secondary Manual*, p. 55). For the purposes of this report, we have inversed the observers scores, to be consistent with the range scores across all dimensions. Therefore, a high range score in this dimension indicates an absence of negative climate, and a low range score indicates the presence of negative climate.<sup>6</sup>

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

**Negative Climate District Average\*: 6.9**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-5	0	0	0	0	0	1	30	31	7.0
Grades 6-8	0	0	0	0	1	1	18	20	6.9
Grades 9-12	0	0	0	0	0	0	21	21	7.0

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 6, the district average is computed as:  $[(5 \times 1) + (6 \times 2) + (7 \times 69)] \div 72 \text{ observations} = 6.9$

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

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

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

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<sup>6</sup> When observers rate this dimension it is scored so that a low rating (indicating little or no evidence of a negative climate) is better than a high rating (indicating abundant evidence of a negative climate). To be consistent across all ratings, for the purposes of this report we have inversed this scoring.

## Behavior Management

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Classroom Organization domain, Grades K–12

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

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

**Behavior Management District Average\*: 6.5**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-5	0	0	0	1	0	4	26	31	6.8
Grades 6-8	0	0	1	0	2	2	15	20	6.5
Grades 9-12	0	0	0	1	4	5	11	21	6.2

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 7, the district average is computed as:  $([3 \times 1] + [4 \times 2] + [5 \times 6] + [6 \times 11] + [7 \times 52]) \div 72 \text{ observations} = 6.5$

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

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

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

## Productivity

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Classroom Organization domain, Grades K–12

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

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

**Productivity District Average\*: 6.7**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-5	0	0	0	0	2	3	26	31	6.8
Grades 6-8	0	0	0	0	1	5	14	20	6.7
Grades 9-12	0	0	0	1	0	5	15	21	6.6

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 8, the district average is computed as:  $([4 \times 1] + [5 \times 3] + [6 \times 13] + [7 \times 55]) \div 72 \text{ observations} = 6.7$

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

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

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



## Instructional Learning Formats

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Classroom Organization domain, Grades K–3

Instructional Support domain, Grades 4 – 12

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

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

**Instructional Learning Formats District Average\*: 5.3**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-5	0	0	0	4	16	8	3	31	5.3
Grades 6-8	0	0	1	0	13	4	2	20	5.3
Grades 9-12	0	1	0	3	10	6	1	21	5.1

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 9, the district average is computed as:  $([2 \times 1] + [3 \times 1] + [4 \times 7] + [5 \times 39] + [6 \times 18] + [7 \times 6]) \div 72 \text{ observations} = 5.3$

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

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

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

## Concept Development

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*Instructional Support domain, Grades K–3*

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

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

**Concept Development District Average\*: 3.5**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-3**	0	6	7	7	2	2	0	24	3.5

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 10, the district average is computed as:  $([2 \times 6] + [3 \times 7] + [4 \times 7] + [5 \times 2] + [6 \times 2]) \div 24 \text{ observations} = 3.5$

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

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

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

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

## Content Understanding

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*Instructional Support domain, Grades 4 – 12*

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

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

**Content Understanding District Average\*: 4.5**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades 4-5**	0	0	1	3	3	0	0	7	4.3
Grades 6-8	0	4	1	5	3	2	5	20	4.7
Grades 9-12	2	1	1	5	8	2	2	21	4.4

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 11, the district average is computed as:  $([1 \times 2] + [2 \times 5] + [3 \times 3] + [4 \times 13] + [5 \times 14] + [6 \times 4] + [7 \times 7]) \div 48 \text{ observations} = 4.5$

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

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

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

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

## Analysis and Inquiry

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Instructional Support domain, Grades 4 – 12

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

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

**Analysis and Inquiry District Average\*: 2.6**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades 4-5**	1	2	2	1	1	0	0	7	2.9
Grades 6-8	6	5	2	4	2	1	0	20	2.7
Grades 9-12	5	7	3	5	1	0	0	21	2.5

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 12, the district average is computed as:  $([1 \times 12] + [2 \times 14] + [3 \times 7] + [4 \times 10] + [5 \times 4] + [6 \times 1]) \div 48 \text{ observations} = 2.6$

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

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

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

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

## Quality of Feedback

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*Instructional Support domain, Grades K–12*

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

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

**Quality of Feedback District Average\*: 4.0**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-5	0	1	10	8	6	4	2	31	4.3
Grades 6-8	1	3	5	3	1	3	4	20	4.3
Grades 9-12	5	2	3	2	6	3	0	21	3.5

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 13, the district average is computed as:  $([1 \times 6] + [2 \times 6] + [3 \times 18] + [4 \times 13] + [5 \times 13] + [6 \times 10] + [7 \times 6]) \div 72 \text{ observations} = 4.0$

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

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

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

## Language Modeling

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Instructional Support domain, Grades K–3

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

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

**Language Modeling District Average\*: 4.0**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-3**	0	5	4	7	4	2	2	24	4.0

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 14, the district average is computed as:  $([2 \times 5] + [3 \times 4] + [4 \times 7] + [5 \times 4] + [6 \times 2] + [7 \times 2]) \div 24 \text{ observations} = 4.0$

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

**Ratings in the Low Range.** In the low range, there are few conversations in the classroom, particularly between the students and the teacher. The teacher responds to students’ initiating talk with only a few words, limits students’ use of language (in responding to questions) and asks questions that mainly elicit closed-ended responses. The teacher does not or rarely extends students’ responses or repeats them for clarification. The teacher does not engage in self-talk or parallel talk—explaining what he or she or the students are doing. The teacher does not use new words or advanced language with students. The language used has little variety.

**Ratings in the Middle Range.** In this range, the teacher talks with students and shows some interest in students, but the conversations are limited and not prolonged. Usually, the teacher directs the conversations, although the conversations may focus on topics of interest to students. More often, there is a basic exchange of information but limited conversation. The teacher asks a mix of closed- and open-ended questions, although the closed-ended questions may require only short responses. Sometimes, the teacher extends students’ responses or repeats what students say. Sometimes, the teacher maps his or her own actions and the students’ actions through language and description. The teacher sometimes uses advanced language with students.

**Ratings in the High Range.** There are frequent conversations in the classroom, particularly between students and the teacher, and these conversations promote language use. Students are encouraged to converse and feel they are valued conversational partners. The teacher asks many open-ended questions that require students to communicate more complex ideas. The teacher often extends or repeats student responses. Frequently, the teacher maps his or her actions and student actions descriptively and uses advanced language with students.

## Instructional Dialogue

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*Instructional Support domain, Grades 4–12*

Instructional Dialogue captures the purposeful use of content-focused discussion among teachers and students that is cumulative, with the teacher supporting students to chain ideas together in ways that lead to deeper understanding of content. Students take an active role in these dialogues, and both the teacher and students use strategies that facilitate extended dialogue (*CLASS Upper Elementary Manual*, p. 97, *CLASS Secondary Manual*, p. 101).

**Table 15. Instructional Dialogue: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average**

**Instructional Dialogue District Average\*: 3.6**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades 4-5**	0	3	2	2	0	0	0	7	2.9
Grades 6-8	1	5	2	4	3	2	3	20	4.1
Grades 9-12	5	4	2	4	1	3	2	21	3.4

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 15, the district average is computed as:  $([1 \times 6] + [2 \times 12] + [3 \times 6] + [4 \times 10] + [5 \times 4] + [6 \times 5] + [7 \times 5]) \div 48 \text{ observations} = 3.6$

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

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

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

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

## Student Engagement

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*Student Engagement domain, Grades 4–12*

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

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

**Student Engagement District Average\*: 5.4**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades 4-5**	0	0	0	0	6	1	0	7	5.1
Grades 6-8	0	0	1	1	10	1	7	20	5.6
Grades 9-12	0	0	0	2	13	3	3	21	5.3

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 16, the district average is computed as:  $([3 \times 1] + [4 \times 3] + [5 \times 29] + [6 \times 5] + [7 \times 10]) \div 48 \text{ observations} = 5.4$

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

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

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

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



## Summary of Average Ratings: Grades K–5

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

	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average Scores*
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
<b>Emotional Support Domain</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>5.6</b>
Positive Climate	0	0	2	2	9	8	10	31	5.7
Negative Climate**	0	0	0	0	0	1	30	31	7.0
Teacher Sensitivity	0	0	2	2	7	14	6	31	5.6
Regard for Student Perspectives	1	4	9	4	9	4	0	31	3.9
<b>Classroom Organization Domain</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>6.3</b>
Behavior Management	0	0	0	1	0	4	26	31	6.8
Productivity	0	0	0	0	2	3	26	31	6.8
Instructional Learning Formats***	0	0	0	4	16	8	3	31	5.3
<b>Instructional Support Domain</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3.8</b>
Concept Development (K-3 only)	0	6	7	7	2	2	0	24	3.5
Content Understanding (UE only)	0	0	1	3	3	0	0	7	4.3
Analysis and Inquiry (UE only)	1	2	2	1	1	0	0	7	2.9
Quality of Feedback	0	1	10	8	6	4	2	31	4.3
Language Modeling (K-3 only)	0	5	4	7	4	2	2	24	4.0
Instructional Dialogue (UE only)	0	3	2	2	0	0	0	7	2.9
<b>Student Engagement (UE only)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5.1</b>

\*The district average is an average of the scores. For example, for Positive Climate, the district average is computed as:  $([3 \times 2] + [4 \times 2] + [5 \times 9] + [6 \times 8] + [7 \times 10]) \div 31 \text{ observations} = 5.7$

\*\*Negative Climate is rated on an inverse scale. An original score of 1 is given a value of 7. The scoring in the table reflects the normalized adjustment:  $([6 \times 1] + [7 \times 30]) \div 31 \text{ observations} = 7.0$ . In addition, Negative Climate appears in the Classroom Organization Domain for the Upper Elementary Manual.

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

## Summary of Average Ratings: Grades 6–8

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

	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average Scores*
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
<b>Emotional Support Domain</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>5.0</b>
Positive Climate	0	0	1	1	7	6	5	20	5.7
Teacher Sensitivity	0	1	0	3	2	5	9	20	5.9
Regard for Student Perspectives	2	5	4	5	1	3	0	20	3.4
<b>Classroom Organization Domain</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>6.7</b>
Behavior Management	0	0	1	0	2	2	15	20	6.5
Productivity	0	0	0	0	1	5	14	20	6.7
Negative Climate**	0	0	0	0	1	1	18	20	6.9
<b>Instructional Support Domain</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4.2</b>
Instructional Learning Formats	0	0	1	0	13	4	2	20	5.3
Content Understanding	0	4	1	5	3	2	5	20	4.7
Analysis and Inquiry	6	5	2	4	2	1	0	20	2.7
Quality of Feedback	1	3	5	3	1	3	4	20	4.3
Instructional Dialogue	1	5	2	4	3	2	3	20	4.1
<b>Student Engagement</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>5.6</b>

\*The district average is an average of the scores. For example, for Positive Climate, the district average is computed as:  $([3 \times 1] + [4 \times 1] + [5 \times 7] + [6 \times 6] + [7 \times 5]) \div 20 \text{ observations} = 5.7$

\*\*Negative Climate is rated on an inverse scale. An original score of 1 is given a value of 7. The scoring in the table reflects the normalized adjustment:  $([5 \times 1] + [6 \times 1] + [7 \times 18]) \div 20 \text{ observations} = 6.9$

## Summary of Average Ratings: Grades 9–12

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

	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average Scores*
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
<b>Emotional Support Domain</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>4.6</b>
Positive Climate	0	0	1	4	7	2	7	21	5.5
Teacher Sensitivity	0	1	0	4	6	7	3	21	5.3
Regard for Student Perspectives	2	6	6	5	2	0	0	21	3.0
<b>Classroom Organization Domain</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>6.6</b>
Behavior Management	0	0	0	1	4	5	11	21	6.2
Productivity	0	0	0	1	0	5	15	21	6.6
Negative Climate**	0	0	0	0	0	0	21	21	7.0
<b>Instructional Support Domain</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>3.8</b>
Instructional Learning Formats	0	1	0	3	10	6	1	21	5.1
Content Understanding	2	1	1	5	8	2	2	21	4.4
Analysis and Inquiry	5	7	3	5	1	0	0	21	2.5
Quality of Feedback	5	2	3	2	6	3	0	21	3.5
Instructional Dialogue	5	4	2	4	1	3	2	21	3.4
<b>Student Engagement</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>5.3</b>

\*The district average is an average of the scores. For example, for Positive Climate, the district average is computed as:  $([3 \times 1] + [4 \times 4] + [5 \times 7] + [6 \times 2] + [7 \times 7]) \div 21 \text{ observations} = 5.5$

\*\*Negative Climate is rated on an inverse scale. An original score of 1 is given a value of 7. The scoring in the table reflects the normalized adjustment:  $([7 \times 21]) \div 21 \text{ observations} = 7.0$

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

**Table C1. Resources to Support Leadership and Governance**

Resource	Description
<a href="#">Transforming School Funding: A Guide to Implementing Student-Based Budgeting (SBB)</a> from Education Resource Strategies	This guide describes a process to help districts tie funding to specific student needs.
<a href="#">Principal Induction and Mentoring Handbook</a>	A series of modules designed to support novice principals and their mentors in the development of antiracist leadership competencies aligned to the Professional Standards for Administrative Leadership.
<a href="#">Coherence Guidebook</a>	The Coherence Guidebook illustrates a systems-level path toward deeper learning. School system leaders and teams may use the Guidebook, along with its companion self-assessment, to articulate a vision of deeper learning, identify high-leverage instructional priorities, refine tiered supports, and leverage systems and structures—all in service of the articulated vision.

**Table C2. Resources to Support Curriculum and Instruction**

Resource	Description
<a href="#">Curriculum Matters</a> Webpage	A suite of resources to support the use of high-quality curriculum, including <i>IMplement MA</i> , our recommended four-phase process to prepare for, select, launch, and implement new high-quality instructional materials with key tasks and action steps. Also includes <i>CURATE</i> , which convenes panels of Massachusetts teachers to review and rate evidence on the quality and alignment of specific curricular materials and then publish their findings for educators across the Commonwealth to consult.
<a href="#">Curriculum Frameworks Resources</a>	Some of the most frequently used resources include “ <a href="#">What to Look For</a> ” classroom observation guides, the <a href="#">Family Guides</a> to help families understand what students are expected to know and do by the end of each grade, and the Standards Navigator tool and app which can be used to explore the standards, see how they are connected to other standards, related student work samples, reference guides, and definitions.
<a href="#">Mass Literacy</a> Guide	An interactive site with research, information, and resources on evidence-based practices for early literacy that are culturally responsive and sustaining. There is current information on complex text, fluent word reading, language comprehension, students experiencing reading difficulties, equity in literacy, how to support a MTSS for ELA/literacy, and much more.
<a href="#">Coherence Guidebook</a>	The Coherence Guidebook illustrates a systems-level path toward deeper learning. School system leaders and teams may use the Guidebook, along with its companion self-assessment, to articulate a vision of deeper learning, identify high-leverage instructional priorities, refine tiered supports, and leverage systems and structures—all in service of the articulated vision.

**Table C3. Resources to Support Assessment**

Resource	Description
DESE's <a href="#">District Data Team Toolkit</a>	A set of resources to help a district establish, grow, and maintain a culture of inquiry and data use through a district data team.

**Table C4. Resources to Support Human Resources and Professional Development**

Resource	Description
<a href="#">Educator Evaluation Implementation Resources</a>	A suite of resources and practical tools that reflect feedback from educators on how to implement educator evaluation in support of more equitable, culturally responsive schools and classrooms for all. These resources include Focus Indicators, a subset of Indicators from the Classroom Teacher and School Level Administrator Rubrics that represent high-priority practices for the 2022-2023 school year.
<a href="#">Guide to Building Supportive Talent Systems</a>	Resources, considerations, and updates for recruiting, hiring, evaluating, and supporting educators and school staff, with a focus on racial equity.
<a href="#">Professional Learning Partner Guide</a>	A free, online, searchable list of vetted professional development providers who have expertise in specific sets of high-quality instructional materials. Schools and districts can use this guide to easily find PD providers to support the launch or implementation of high-quality instructional materials.

**Table C5. Resources to Support Student Support**

Resource	Description
<a href="#">Safe and Supportive Schools Framework and Self-Reflection Tool</a>	Based on <a href="#">Five Essential Elements</a> , these resources (see <a href="#">At-a-Glance overview</a> ) can help guide school- and district-based teams to create safer and more supportive school climates and cultures. Through a phased process (with preliminary and deeper dive self-reflection options) teams can create plans based on local context and data, and through examination of <a href="#">six areas</a> of school operation.
<a href="#">MTSS Blueprint</a>	This resource offers a framework for how school districts can build the necessary systems to ensure that all students receive a high-quality educational experience.
<a href="#">Prenatal Through Young Adulthood Family Engagement Framework for Massachusetts</a>	This resource offers a roadmap for practitioners and families in health, human services, and education. A companion document is the <a href="#">Family, School and Community Partnership Fundamentals Self-Assessment Version 2.0</a> .
State and local student survey data such as <a href="#">Views of Climate and Learning</a> and <a href="#">Youth Risk Behavior Survey</a>	State and local student survey data can provide information about student experiences, strengths, and needs. They also can help prompt additional local inquiry through focus groups, advisories, and ongoing communication with students, families, staff, and partners to inform continuous improvement efforts.

**Table C6. Resources to Support Financial and Asset Management**

Resource	Description
<a href="#">Spending Money Wisely: Getting the Most From School District Budgets</a> (scroll down to Research section)	A discussion of the top 10 opportunities for districts to realign resources and free up funds to support strategic priorities.
<a href="#">Resource Allocation and District Action Reports (RADAR)</a>	RADAR is a suite of innovative data reports, case studies, and other resources that provide a new approach to resource decisions.
<a href="#">Planning for Success</a>	An inclusive, hands-on planning process designed to build district and school capacity and coherence while also building community understanding and support.
<a href="#">DESE spending comparisons website</a>	A clearinghouse of school finance data reports and other resources available to district users and the public.

## Appendix D. Enrollment, Attendance, Expenditures

**Table D1. Milford Public Schools: Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity, 2022-2023**

Group	District	Percentage of total	State	Percentage of total
All	4,483	100.0%	913,735	100.0%
African American	164	3.7%	85,662	9.4%
Asian	75	1.7%	67,010	7.3%
Hispanic	1,529	34.1%	221,044	24.2%
Native American	69	1.5%	2,155	0.2%
White	2,508	55.9%	496,800	54.4%
Native Hawaiian	5	0.1%	787	0.1%
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	133	3.0%	40,277	4.4%

Note. As of October 1, 2022.

**Table D2. Milford Public Schools: Student Enrollment by High Needs Populations, 2022-2023**

Group	District			State		
	N	Percentage of high needs	Percentage of district	N	Percentage of high needs	Percentage of state
All students with high needs	3,064	100.0%	67.5%	508,820	100.0%	55.1%
Students with disabilities	786	25.7%	17.3%	179,095	35.2%	19.4%
Low-income households	2,489	81.2%	55.5%	386,060	75.9%	42.3%
ELs and former ELs	1,391	45.4%	31.0%	110,554	21.7%	12.1%

Note. As of October 1, 2022. District and state numbers and percentages for students with disabilities and high needs are calculated including students in out-of-district placements. Total district enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 4,537; total state enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 923,349.



**Table D3. Milford Public Schools: Chronic Absence<sup>a</sup> Rates by Student Group, 2020-2022**

Group	N (2022)	2020	2021	2022	State (2022)
All students	4,791	16.5	26.6	32.2	27.7
African American/Black	163	14.7	41.5	32.5	32.0
Asian	70	9.6	14.5	12.9	15.4
Hispanic/Latino	1,625	21.6	36.7	37.5	42.3
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	151	18.4	27.8	32.5	28.4
Native American	70	23.8	32.3	40.0	37.8
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	4	--	--	--	32.1
White	2,708	13.9	20.4	29.3	22.1
High needs	3,360	22.5	36.2	39.4	37.1
Low income <sup>b</sup>	2,854	--	--	40.5	40.6
ELs	1,357	23.0	41.6	41.0	39.9
Students w/disabilities	862	26.6	41.8	48.1	36.9

<sup>a</sup> The percentage of students absent 10 percent or more of their total number of student days of membership in a school. <sup>b</sup> Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a newly defined low-income student group. This change also affects the high needs group

**Table D4. Milford Public Schools: Expenditures, Chapter 70 State Aid, and Net School Spending Fiscal Years, 2020-2022**

	Fiscal Year 2020		Fiscal Year 2021		Fiscal Year 2022	
	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual
<b>Expenditures</b>						
From local appropriations for schools						
By school committee	\$50,550,305	\$50,503,935	\$52,676,720	\$52,474,510	\$55,975,378	\$55,949,090
By municipality	\$19,896,441	\$21,138,617	\$21,606,620	\$20,912,199	\$21,732,449	\$22,610,581
Total from local appropriations	\$70,446,746	\$71,642,552	\$74,283,340	\$73,386,709	\$77,707,827	\$78,559,671
From revolving funds and grants	—	\$8,544,654	—	\$8,408,755	—	\$11,705,166
Total expenditures	—	\$80,187,206	—	\$81,795,464	—	\$90,264,837
<b>Chapter 70 aid to education program</b>						
Chapter 70 state aid <sup>a</sup>	—	\$27,301,939	—	\$31,168,900	—	\$32,446,671
Required local contribution	—	\$24,846,959	—	\$25,435,714	—	\$26,079,517
Required net school spending <sup>b</sup>	—	\$52,148,898	—	\$56,604,614	—	\$58,526,188
Actual net school spending	—	\$60,915,895	—	\$63,865,299	—	\$68,252,483
Over/under required (\$)	—	\$8,766,997	—	\$7,260,685	—	\$9,726,295
Over/under required (%)	—	16.8%	—	12.8%	—	16.6%

Note. Data as of February 10, 2023, and sourced from fiscal year 2022 district end-of-year reports and Chapter 70 program information on DESE website.

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

**Table D5. Milford Public Schools: Expenditures Per In-District Pupil, Fiscal Years 2020-2022**

Expenditure category	2020	2021	2022
Administration	\$384	\$469	\$472
Instructional leadership (district and school)	\$973	\$1,321	\$1,176
Teachers	\$6,532	\$6,998	\$7,342
Other teaching services	\$1,016	\$953	\$1,028
Professional development	\$145	\$130	\$160
Instructional materials, equipment, and technology	\$191	\$310	\$575
Guidance, counseling, and testing services	\$581	\$612	\$670
Pupil services	\$1,338	\$1,276	\$1,520
Operations and maintenance	\$943	\$1,091	\$933
Insurance, retirement, and other fixed costs	\$2,698	\$2,961	\$3,085
Total expenditures per in-district pupil	\$14,802	\$16,120	\$16,961

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

## Appendix E. Student Performance Data

The COVID-19 pandemic had a profound impact on the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years. Data reported in this appendix may have been affected by the pandemic. Please keep this in mind when reviewing the data and take particular care when comparing data across multiple school years.

**Table E1. Milford Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Achievement by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2019-2022**

Group	N (2022)	Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations				Percentage not meeting expectations			
		2019	2021	2022	State (2022)	2019	2021	2022	State (2022)
All	1,898	50	39	33	41	9	20	23	17
African American/Black	73	39	35	33	26	23	22	19	27
Asian	29	74	63	66	63	2	0	3	8
Hispanic/Latino	611	40	29	21	22	12	29	33	31
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	67	49	45	52	48	7	20	18	14
Native American	21	30	27	14	29	15	21	29	25
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	2	—	—	—	43	—	—	—	17
White	1,095	55	44	37	48	8	16	19	11
High needs	1,304	34	25	21	24	16	30	33	28
Low income <sup>a</sup>	1,103	—	—	21	24	—	—	33	28
ELs and former ELs	727	31	21	16	20	16	36	40	34
Students w/disabilities	379	11	13	8	11	34	42	53	46

<sup>a</sup> Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](#). This change also affects the high needs group.

**Table E2. Milford Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2019-2022**

Group	N (2022)	Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations				Percentage not meeting expectations			
		2019	2021	2022	State (2022)	2019	2021	2022	State (2022)
All	277	58	62	59	58	11	15	13	8
African American/Black	9	36	20	—	41	18	40	—	13
Asian	5	—	—	—	79	—	—	—	4
Hispanic/Latino	95	37	49	46	38	19	27	20	17
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	6	73	73	—	62	0	0	—	6
Native American	4	—	—	—	53	—	—	—	8
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	—	45	—	—	—	16
White	158	67	69	67	65	9	10	10	4
High needs	163	35	39	44	38	25	28	22	15
Low income <sup>a</sup>	141	—	—	47	40	—	—	23	14
ELs and former ELs	62	8	20	18	21	60	51	47	30
Students w/disabilities	44	20	20	25	20	25	30	18	26

<sup>a</sup> Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](#). This change also affects the high needs group.

**Table E3. Milford Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2019-2022**

Group	N (2022)	Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations				Percentage not meeting expectations			
		2019	2021	2022	State (2022)	2019	2021	2022	State (2022)
All	1,895	41	23	24	39	12	27	23	17
African American/Black	73	26	11	10	19	21	22	26	31
Asian	28	72	52	68	69	2	0	0	6
Hispanic/Latino	613	29	15	16	18	16	36	31	32
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	67	39	33	42	44	13	29	15	16
Native American	21	40	15	10	27	10	24	24	23
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	2	—	—	—	39	—	—	—	19
White	1,091	46	27	28	47	10	23	20	11
High needs	1,300	25	13	15	22	21	40	32	28
Low income <sup>a</sup>	1,102	—	—	15	20	—	—	32	29
ELs and former ELs	726	25	11	11	21	18	43	36	32
Students w/disabilities	374	7	5	6	12	46	59	56	45

<sup>a</sup> Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](#). This change also affects the high needs group.

**Table E4. Milford Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2019-2022**

Group	N (2022)	Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations				Percentage not meeting expectations			
		2019	2021	2022	State (2022)	2019	2021	2022	State (2022)
All	277	48	42	33	50	10	17	10	10
African American/Black	9	9	10	—	26	36	50	—	20
Asian	5	—	—	—	78	—	—	—	4
Hispanic/Latino	95	29	28	16	26	16	26	18	21
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	6	36	27	—	53	0	9	—	10
Native American	4	—	—	—	37	—	—	—	16
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	—	48	—	—	—	19
White	158	58	51	43	59	7	11	6	6
High needs	161	24	23	20	28	23	31	17	19
Low income <sup>a</sup>	140	—	—	21	29	—	—	16	19
ELs and former ELs	59	8	6	2	17	44	43	31	32
Students w/disabilities	44	8	11	16	15	33	42	27	33

<sup>a</sup> Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](#). This change also affects the high needs group.

**Table E5. Milford Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS Science Achievement by Student Group, Grades 5 and 8, 2019-2022**

Group	N (2022)	Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations				Percentage not meeting expectations			
		2019	2021	2022	State (2022)	2019	2021	2022	State (2022)
All	668	51	35	35	42	8	20	17	18
African American/Black	28	29	17	32	21	29	17	14	31
Asian	13	78	—	54	65	0	—	0	8
Hispanic/Latino	206	39	24	21	20	12	29	26	33
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	22	52	41	45	48	7	5	18	15
Native American	9	45	21	—	28	18	29	—	25
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	1	—	—	—	41	—	—	—	20
White	389	57	41	41	52	6	16	13	10
High needs	456	36	21	24	24	15	32	24	29
Low income <sup>a</sup>	374	—	—	23	23	—	—	25	30
ELs and former ELs	251	33	20	18	18	14	41	28	37
Students w/disabilities	133	16	13	17	15	32	36	39	44

<sup>a</sup> Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](#). This change also affects the high needs group.

**Table E6. Milford Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS Science Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2019-2022**

Group	N (2022)	Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations				Percentage not meeting expectations			
		2019	2021	2022	State (2022)	2019	2021	2022	State (2022)
All	253	—	—	37	47	—	—	17	14
African American/Black	6	—	—	—	25	—	—	—	25
Asian	5	—	—	—	70	—	—	—	6
Hispanic/Latino	83	—	—	24	23	—	—	30	28
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	4	—	—	—	51	—	—	—	12
Native American	4	—	—	—	38	—	—	—	14
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	—	45	—	—	—	23
White	151	—	—	44	56	—	—	11	8
High needs	144	—	—	28	26	—	—	26	24
Low income <sup>a</sup>	125	—	—	28	26	—	—	27	25
ELs and former ELs	49	—	—	6	13	—	—	59	43
Students w/disabilities	41	—	—	27	16	—	—	22	37

<sup>a</sup> Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](#). This change also affects the high needs group.

**Table E7. Milford Public Schools: ELA Mean Student Growth Percentile in Grades 3-8, 2019 and 2022**

Group	N (2022)	2019	2022	State (2022)
All students	1,486	52.0	48.8	49.8
African American/Black	55	52.9	51.1	48.8
Asian	16	58.9	—	58.5
Hispanic/Latino	453	52.7	46.3	46.5
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	56	49.1	55.3	51.5
Native American	18	48.9	—	46.2
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	2	—	—	51.7
White	886	51.8	49.2	50.0
High needs	980	51.1	45.8	46.7
Low income <sup>a</sup>	829	—	45.4	46.5
ELs and former ELs	536	52.9	46.2	47.7
Students w/disabilities	283	46.7	39.8	41.8

<sup>a</sup> Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](#). This change also affects the high needs group.

**Table E8. Milford Public Schools: ELA Mean Student Growth Percentile in Grade 10, 2019 and 2022**

Group	N (2022)	2019	2022	State (2022)
All students	232	58.7	52.7	50.0
African American/Black	7	—	—	49.8
Asian	5	—	—	56.0
Hispanic/Latino	70	54.0	56.3	47.6
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	5	—	—	50.6
Native American	4	—	—	54.1
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	49.5
White	141	58.7	51.6	50.1
High needs	122	54.8	52.4	47.7
Low income <sup>a</sup>	107	—	51.9	47.2
ELs and former ELs	29	—	53.3	50.5
Students w/disabilities	37	48.6	54.0	45.1

<sup>a</sup> Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](#). This change also affects the high needs group.

**Table E9. Milford Public Schools: Mathematics Mean Student Growth Percentile in Grades 3-8, 2019 and 2022**

Group	N (2022)	2019	2022	State (2022)
All students	1,491	47.3	39.5	49.9
African American/Black	55	50.5	38.1	47.0
Asian	16	53.5	—	59.8
Hispanic/Latino	456	47.3	39.7	46.4
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	57	47.0	38.1	51.0
Native American	18	47.8	—	49.5
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	2	—	—	49.9
White	887	46.9	39.4	50.4
High needs	985	46.2	39.1	47.1
Low income <sup>a</sup>	833	—	38.9	46.4
ELs and former ELs	538	49.8	40.3	48.6
Students w/disabilities	284	41.3	35.1	43.3

<sup>a</sup> Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](#). This change also affects the high needs group.



**Table E10. Milford Public Schools: Mathematics Mean Student Growth Percentile in Grade 10, 2019 and 2022**

Group	N (2022)	2019	2022	State (2022)
All students	234	47.1	52.1	50.0
African American/Black	7	–	–	45.6
Asian	5	–	–	57.3
Hispanic/Latino	69	44.1	51.3	44.4
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	5	–	–	50.0
Native American	4	–	–	46.6
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	–	–	–	41.2
White	144	48.2	53.7	51.6
High needs	122	48.0	56.7	46.7
Low income <sup>a</sup>	107	–	54.9	45.6
ELs and former ELs	29	–	59.5	48.9
Students w/disabilities	36	44.9	65.8	47.3

<sup>a</sup> Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](#). This change also affects the high needs group.

**Table E11. Milford Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Achievement by Grade, 2019-2022**

Grade	N (2022)	Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations				Percentage not meeting expectations			
		2019	2021	2022	State (2022)	2019	2021	2022	State (2022)
3	288	51	41	28	44	7	14	25	15
4	300	42	38	27	38	9	20	21	16
5	326	50	44	45	41	7	13	14	13
6	323	54	43	34	41	9	26	31	22
7	318	49	38	35	41	12	23	23	19
8	343	53	32	26	42	10	25	25	18
3-8	1,898	50	39	33	41	9	20	23	17
10	277	58	62	59	58	11	15	13	8

**Table E12. Milford Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Grade, 2019-2022**

Grade	N (2022)	Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations				Percentage not meeting expectations			
		2019	2021	2022	State (2022)	2019	2021	2022	State (2022)
3	287	45	26	30	41	13	35	25	20
4	300	48	30	38	42	11	27	20	17
5	327	42	23	26	36	9	27	20	16
6	322	40	22	19	42	11	28	21	15
7	315	35	15	22	37	15	24	26	19
8	344	36	22	14	36	12	24	28	17
3-8	1,895	41	23	24	39	12	27	23	17
10	277	48	42	33	50	10	17	10	10

**Table E13. Milford Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS Science Achievement by Grade, 2019-2022**

Grade	N (2022)	Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations				Percentage not meeting expectations			
		2019	2021	2022	State (2022)	2019	2021	2022	State (2022)
5	325	55	38	45	43	8	20	15	18
8	343	48	31	25	42	9	20	19	18
5 and 8	668	51	35	35	42	8	2-	17	18
10	253	—	—	37	47	—	—	17	14

Note. Grade 10 results for the spring 2021 STE are not provided because students in the class of 2023 were not required to take the STE test. Information about the competency determination requirements is available at <https://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/graduation.html>. In 2019, 10th graders took the Legacy MCAS science test.

**Table E14. Milford Public Schools: ELA Mean Student Growth Percentile by Grade, 2019 and 2022**

Grade	N (2022)	2019	2022	State (2022)
3	—	—	—	—
4	282	45.1	47.8	50.0
5	304	65.1	63.2	49.9
6	296	53.8	46.1	49.8
7	294	51.3	50.3	49.7
8	310	45.6	36.9	49.7
3-8	1,486	52.0	48.8	49.8
10	232	58.7	52.7	50.0

**Table E15. Milford Public Schools: Mathematics Mean Student Growth Percentile by Grade, 2019 and 2022**

Grade	N (2022)	2019	2022	State (2022)
3	—	—	—	—
4	283	44.8	49.7	50.0
5	305	49.8	41.1	50.0
6	298	43.3	34.8	49.8
7	292	52.1	37.9	49.9
8	313	46.3	34.8	49.8
3-8	1,491	47.3	39.5	49.9
10	234	47.1	52.1	50.0

**Table E16. Milford Public Schools: Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Student Group, 2020-2022**

Group	N (2022)	2020	2021	2022	State (2022)
All students	321	85.5	81.9	84.7	90.1
African American/Black	10	66.7	78.6	90.0	86.2
Asian	5	100	—	—	96.2
Hispanic/Latino	93	75.7	70.5	77.4	81.2
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	11	100	91.7	72.7	88.7
Native American	2	—	85.7	—	82.2
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	—	81.3
White	200	88.1	86.4	88.5	93.2
High needs	211	74.8	70.6	77.3	83.9
Low income <sup>a</sup>	186	73.4	72.7	77.4	83.2
ELs	55	56.8	32.6	52.7	73.1
Students w/disabilities	51	69.8	61.4	66.7	78.0

<sup>a</sup> Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](#). This change also affects the high needs group.

**Table E17. Milford Public Schools: Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Student Group, 2019-2021**

Group	N (2021)	2019	2020	2021	State (2021)
All students	309	88.9	87.2	84.5	91.8
African American/Black	14	—	83.3	85.7	88.1
Asian	4	100	100	—	97.0
Hispanic/Latino	88	86.1	79.7	75.0	84.0
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	12	—	100	91.7	91.2
Native American	7	100	—	85.7	84.1
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	—	87.7
White	184	88.5	88.6	88.0	94.4
High needs	177	81.4	77.5	75.1	85.8
Low income <sup>a</sup>	165	81.7	76.6	76.4	85.1
ELs	43	67.6	62.2	41.9	78.0
Students w/disabilities	44	80.6	69.8	65.9	80.6

<sup>a</sup> Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](#). This change also affects the high needs group.

**Table E18. Milford Public Schools: In-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2020-2022**

Group	N (2022)	2020	2021	2022	State (2022)
All students	4,807	0.1	0.1	1.4	1.6
African American/Black	166	0.0	—	2.4	2.2
Asian	74	—	—	—	0.4
Hispanic/Latino	1,631	0.1	0.1	1.5	2.1
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	151	—	—	1.3	1.8
Native American	71	—	—	—	2.4
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	4	—	—	—	1.9
White	2,710	0.2	0.0	1.4	1.4
High needs	3,375	0.2	0.1	1.8	2.2
Low income <sup>a</sup>	2,871	—	—	1.8	2.3
ELs	1,503	0.2	0.2	1.5	1.4
Students w/disabilities	864	0.5	0.3	4.6	2.8

<sup>a</sup> Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](#). This change also affects the high needs group.

**Table E19. Milford Public Schools: Out-of-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2020-2022**

Group	N (2022)	2020	2021	2022	State (2022)
All students	4,807	2.5	1.8	4.3	3.1
African American/Black	166	5.8	—	9.0	6.2
Asian	74	—	—	—	0.7
Hispanic/Latino	1,631	3.1	2.6	5.0	4.9
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	151	—	—	4.6	3.5
Native American	71	—	—	—	4.3
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	4	—	—	—	3.6
White	2,710	2.0	1.3	3.6	2.1
High needs	3,375	3.2	2.2	5.5	4.6
Low income <sup>a</sup>	2,871	—	—	5.6	5.2
ELs	1,503	1.7	2.1	4.9	3.5
Students w/disabilities	864	5.0	3.7	8.1	5.8

<sup>a</sup> Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](#). This change also affects the high needs group.

**Table E20. Milford Public Schools: Dropout Rates by Student Group, 2020-2022**

Group	N (2022)	2020	2021	2022	State (2022)
All students	1,278	1.7	5.4	4.3	2.1
African American/Black	36	2.8	8.7	2.8	2.8
Asian	23	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6
Hispanic/Latino	426	3.0	8.4	6.3	4.3
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	42	0.0	0.0	4.8	2.4
Native American	22	5.0	11.1	0.0	4.3
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	—	1.2
White	729	1.1	4.0	3.4	1.3
High needs	749	2.7	9.6	7.1	3.6
Low income <sup>a</sup>	642	2.3	9.6	7.2	3.8
ELs	217	4.6	25.7	15.7	7.8
Students w/disabilities	165	2.6	6.1	6.1	3.4

<sup>a</sup> Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](#). This change also affects the high needs group.

**Table E21. Milford Public Schools: Advanced Coursework Completion Rates by Student Group, 2020-2022**

Group	N (2022)	2020	2021	2022	State (2022)
All students	601	69.4	60.8	64.4	64.9
African American/Black	20	42.1	43.5	40.0	55.5
Asian	12	92.3	90.0	100	84.9
Hispanic/Latino	174	55.4	42.5	54.0	49.2
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	19	80.0	68.2	68.4	66.1
Native American	5	69.2	85.7	—	50.0
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	—	65.4
White	371	75.1	68.3	69.0	69.5
High needs	328	49.8	43.1	52.1	49.1
Low income <sup>a</sup>	287	51.8	47.0	54.4	50.1
ELs	70	20.0	12.8	12.9	30.0
Students w/disabilities	73	41.5	18.6	26.0	34.3

<sup>a</sup> Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](#). This change also affects the high needs group.