

# Andover Public Schools

## Comprehensive District Review Report

December 2021

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## Executive Summary

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The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) contracted with the American Institutes for Research® (AIR®) to conduct a comprehensive review of Andover Public Schools (hereafter, APS) in December 2021. Data collection activities associated with the review focused on understanding how district systems, structures, and practices operate to support the district's continuous improvement efforts. The review focused on the six standards (and related indicators) that DESE identified as being important components of district effectiveness.

All data collection procedures for this report took place during the 2021-2022 academic year. This year represents the third year affected by the global COVID-19 pandemic, which has had a significant impact on educational systems since March 2020. The districts reviewed during the 2021-2022 school year experienced school closures, significant illness among staff and students, shortages of instructional and noninstructional staff, transportation issues, and other challenges during the two preceding school years, and some of these challenges continued during 2021-2022 as these districts were reviewed. Site visit and report writing teams considered these factors as they collected data and wrote reports.

### Leadership and Governance

Dr. Magda Parvey was appointed the superintendent of APS in July 2021. The prior superintendent resigned in October 2020, after serving since 2015. He remained in the position through December 2020, at which time an interim superintendent was appointed to oversee the district until Dr. Parvey was appointed. Dr. Parvey's leadership team consists of an assistant superintendent for teaching and learning; an assistant superintendent of student services; an assistant superintendent for finance and administration; directors of strategic innovation, communications, as well as data and accountability; a new director of human resources; and academic department heads. APS is governed by a five-member school committee that is elected townwide, each for a three-year term.

The new superintendent is currently gathering data, including input from the district community, as a basis for a new district improvement plan. Some inconsistencies among school-level planning processes are evident and could potentially be mitigated once a district plan is in place. The review team noted an absence of evidence that the school committee's decisions were informed by a careful a frequent review of data. This lack of evidence is especially problematic given the discrepancies in access and outcomes among student groups (see the District Review Overview section).

Although many stakeholders expressed optimism about the new superintendent's leadership, at the time of the site visit, multiple interviewees reported "palpable" tension between the teachers' association and the school committee and between the instructional assistants' association and the school committee. These tensions appeared to come from both the specific content of negotiations as well as the process used for this purpose. District and school leaders said that an "adversarial" relationship between the teachers' association and the school committee "elongated the process of getting something done" and "stood in the way of teaching and learning." Stakeholders stated that a

regular meeting between the superintendent and the teachers' association was not in place and that grievances were a regular occurrence and each required a meeting.

## Curriculum and Instruction

The superintendent and district leadership team are currently setting a direction for the district relative to curriculum and instruction. During the district review visit in December 2021, the superintendent distributed an early guiding document, called the Principles of Learning. This document conveys several key concepts that leaders wish to see in APS classrooms and forms the basis for an instructional vision for the district. With these concepts in mind, the district plans to review the curriculum and its implementation to identify areas in which the current efforts may be enhanced and adjusted to align with this vision. Overall, the district is in the early stages of establishing this vision and aligning materials to it.

Interviews and a review of district documents showed an absence of consistent, vertically aligned curriculum that met DESE's definition of a high-quality curriculum. Because of the pandemic and turnover of staff in curricular leadership positions, the district's earlier efforts to conduct a curricular review for standards alignment was interrupted. The district plans to review some key components of the curriculum to address a need cited by school and district staff: ensuring that a standards-aligned, grade-level curriculum and instruction are consistently available districtwide. Vacancies in key leadership positions have presented challenges to the curriculum review and support for instructional quality. Although feedback from students, families, and staff about instruction is generally positive, the review team's observations of instruction found evidence of inconsistent rigor and limited opportunities for students' ownership, choice, and autonomy. APS has not established a robust approach to ensuring equity of access to advanced coursework.

## Assessment

The district established a culture that values collecting data and supports structures for collaboratively discussing data to improve teaching, learning, and decision making. The APS data inventory, submitted for this review, includes various assessments that can inform instruction. However, descriptions of assessment data use (e.g., team meetings) vary across levels in the district and may be an area for further development. District and school leaders ensure that systems are in place for the efficient and purposeful collection of data, but limited evidence of districtwide protocols for data use exists, including specific approaches to address gaps in access and outcomes among groups of students. The district has increased its communication with families about students' progress and has taken steps to ensure that students can access evidence of their own performance.

## Human Resources and Professional Development

The superintendent of APS is new to her role, as are many of her leadership team members. This new administration has been methodical in uncovering and understanding past processes, including human resources processes. Historically, human resources was a shared role between the district and the town, with heavy responsibility for hiring delegated to the school leader. With the anticipated division of human resources into two departments, one for the district and one for the town, APS expects to build efficiency and increase the accuracy of employment records.

The district is taking steps toward diversifying its workforce and deploying existing staff to better meet students' needs. However, improvement is needed in using data to inform teacher assignments. Professional development offerings are not implemented consistently districtwide. The review team's analysis of teacher and administrator files showed an absence of feedback provided through the educator evaluation system, and the feedback provided was generally not actionable.

## Student Support

APS prioritizes a school climate that ensures the safety, well-being, and sense of belonging of all students. Stakeholders identified programs and practices that demonstrate the district's commitment to advocating for an inclusive and culturally responsive environment, especially regarding issues of sexuality and gender. The district has established systems to support strong adult-student relationships. However, some stakeholders reported that not all students feel equally comfortable in school environments, and disparities in discipline exist in both the reported experience of students and discipline data. Formal plans to address this are still in development, early in the superintendent's tenure. Further, the district does not currently have sufficient classroom interventions available for students who do not have an individualized education program (IEP) but who would benefit from additional supports. In addition, even though all student groups outperform the state averages for those groups, academic achievement gaps exist between student groups within the district.

## Financial and Asset Management

With assistance from the district's accountant and oversight from the superintendent, the assistant superintendent for finance leads APS's financial management. These district staff members work together with school leaders to estimate and plan for annual staffing needs, based on enrollment data and staff salaries. In addition, they compile monthly budget reports for the superintendent and the school committee. Finance staff said that they met more frequently with the current superintendent than with previous district leaders because the current superintendent initiated weekly meetings. APS maintains clear, accurate, and publicly available budget documents. However, it is unclear from the documents how student data inform district priorities. The district exceeds net school spending requirements, but stakeholders question whether funds are allocated effectively.

## District Review Overview

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### Purpose

Conducted under Chapter 15, Section 55A of the Massachusetts General Laws, 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 standards used by the DESE: Leadership and Governance, Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment, Human Resources and Professional Development, Student Support, and Financial and Asset Management.<sup>1</sup> Reviews identify systems and practices that may be impeding improvement as well as those most likely to be contributing to positive results. In addition, the design of the district review promotes district reflection on its own performance and potential next steps. In addition to providing information to each district reviewed, DESE uses the 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 the 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. Team members also observe classroom instruction and collect data using 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> Virtual interviews and focus groups also are conducted as needed. Following the site visit, the AIR team coded and analyzed 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 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.

### Site Visit

The site visit to the APS occurred on December 13–15, 2021. The site visit included approximately 25 hours of interviews and focus groups with approximately 80 stakeholders, including school committee members, district administrators, school principals, school staff, middle- and high-school students, students' families, and teachers' association representatives. The review team conducted five teacher focus groups, including two virtual focus groups with five elementary-school teachers each, as well as focus groups at the high school (seven high-school teachers) and at two middle schools with five and seven middle-school teachers, respectively. Additional school staff interviews included focus groups with four high-school specialized support providers (e.g., special educators, English learner [EL] specialists, and school counselors) and two focus groups of specialized support providers at the middle-school level, with five staff members in each group. These specialized roles

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

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



were in virtual focus groups with other teaching staff in the two elementary focus groups. Three school administrator focus groups included sessions for the high-school principal, the three-middle school principals, and the five elementary-school principals.

The site team also conducted 68 observations of classroom instruction in nine schools.<sup>3</sup> The team conducted instructional observations using the CLASS protocol.

Additional information is in the appendices. A list of review team members, information about review activities, and the site visit schedule are in Appendix A. Appendix B provides information about district enrollment, attendance, and expenditures. The districtwide instructional observation report is in Appendix C. Appendix D contains resources to support implementation of DESE’s *District Standards and Indicators*. Lastly, Appendix E contains student performance tables.

## District Profile

APS is a school district in northeastern Massachusetts comprising 10 schools: five elementary schools, three middle schools, one high school, and an early childhood center. APS has a five-member school committee that is elected townwide to three-year terms. The superintendent started her position in July 2021 and was in her first year in this role at the time of the visit. Her previous position was outside Massachusetts. The district office also includes an assistant superintendent for student services and several academic department heads. Human resources services were shared between the town and the school district until February 2022, at which point services were officially separated into two distinct departments.

In the 2021-2022 school year, the district had 483 teachers, with 5,456 students enrolled in the district’s 10 schools. Table 1 provides an overview of student enrollment by school.

**Table 1. Andover Public Schools: Level, Grades Served, and Enrollment, 2021-2022**

School	Type	Grades served	Enrollment
Andover High School	High school	9–12	1,679
Andover West Middle	Middle school	6–8	530
Bancroft Elementary	Elementary school	K–5	514
Doherty Middle	Middle school	6–8	455
Henry C. Sanborn Elementary	Elementary school	K–5	328
High Plain Elementary	Elementary school	K–5	531
Shawsheen School	Early childhood center	Prekindergarten	77
South Elementary	Elementary school	K–5	435
West Elementary	Elementary school	K–5	541
Wood Hill Middle	Middle school	6–8	366
<b>Total</b>			<b>5,456</b>

Note. Data come from <https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/>, as of October 1, 2021.

<sup>3</sup> DESE exempted the early childhood center from instructional observations.

Between 2016 and 2021, overall student enrollment decreased by 10 percent (from 6,075 to 5,456). In 2022, students from low-income backgrounds made up 12.3 percent of the district. (The state rate was 43.8 percent.) The district served a similar percentage of students with disabilities as the state (19.9 percent versus 18.9 percent) and smaller percentages of ELs (3.0 percent versus 11 percent) and students whose first language is not English (16.6 percent versus 23.9 percent).<sup>4</sup> Additional enrollment figures by race/ethnicity and high-need populations (i.e., students with disabilities, those who are disadvantaged, ELs, and former ELs) compared with the state are in Tables B1 and B2 in Appendix B.

The total in-district per-pupil expenditure was greater than the median in-district per-pupil expenditure for 32 K–12 districts of similar size (5,000–7,999 students) in fiscal year 2018: \$16,876 versus \$14,042. Actual net school spending was equal to the requirement in the Chapter 70 state education aid program (Table B4 in Appendix B).

## Student Performance<sup>5</sup>

APS has two schools identified as Schools of Recognition<sup>6</sup> (High Plain Elementary and South Elementary), and no school needs additional supports.

The percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Gen MCAS (Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System) is higher than the average state rate for all tested grades and subject areas. Tables 2–4 provide an overview of student performance in English language arts (ELA), mathematics, and science by grade level between 2018 and 2021.

**Table 2. Next-Generation MCAS English Language Arts: Percentage Meeting or Exceeding Expectations, 2018-2021**

Grade	N (2021)	2018	2019	2021	Change	State (2021)	District above/below state
3	397	71	77	73	2	51	22
4	415	71	70	71	0	49	22
5	455	70	73	68	-2	47	21
6	445	73	68	67	-6	47	20
7	448	55	66	57	2	43	14
8	477	71	71	53	-18	41	12
3–8	2,637	68	71	65	-3	46	19
10	429	—	84	80	—	64	16

<sup>4</sup> Source: <https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/profiles/student.aspx?orgcode=00090000&orgtypecode=5&leftNavId=305&>

<sup>5</sup> All data in this section are from DESE’s School and District Profiles: <https://profiles.doe.mass.edu>.

<sup>6</sup> Refers to a subset of schools classified as not requiring assistance or intervention that are recognized for their academic accomplishments. Schools of recognition are identified for high achievement, high growth, and exceeding targets.

**Table 3. Next-Generation MCAS Math: Percentage Meeting or Exceeding Expectations, 2018-2021**

Grade	N (2021)	2018	2019	2021	Change	State (2021)	Above/below
3	398	64	67	56	-8	33	23
4	415	61	72	53	-8	33	20
5	455	65	72	60	-5	33	27
6	447	64	64	63	-1	33	30
7	449	63	64	55	-8	35	20
8	477	65	64	57	-8	32	25
3-8	2,641	64	67	57	-7	33	24
10	429	—	81	74	—	52	22

**Table 4. MCAS Science: Percentage Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Grades 5 and 8, 2019-2021**

Grade	N (2021)	2019	2021	3-year change	State	Above/below
5	455	78	68	-10	42	26
8	408	71	58	-13	41	17
5 and 8		74	63	-11	42	21
10	—	—	—	—	—	—

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

In addition, the district's four- and five-year graduation rates, 95.2 percent and 97.3 percent, respectively, are both greater than the state averages of 89 percent and 90.1 percent, respectively.

## Leadership and Governance

There was a recent change in district leadership as of the 2021-2022 school year. Dr. Magda Parvey was appointed superintendent of APS in July 2021. The prior superintendent resigned in October 2020, after serving since 2015. He remained in the position through December 2020, at which time an interim superintendent was appointed to oversee the district until Dr. Parvey was appointed. Dr. Parvey's leadership team consists of an assistant superintendent for teaching and learning; an assistant superintendent of student services; an assistant superintendent for finance and administration; directors of strategic innovation, communications, as well as data and accountability; a new human resources director; and academic department heads. APS is governed by a five-member school committee that is elected townwide, each for a three-year term. Table 5 summarizes key strengths and areas for growth in leadership and governance.

**Table 5. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Leadership and Governance Standard**

Indicator	Strengths	Areas for growth
<b>School committee governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school committee has clear processes for evaluating the superintendent's performance annually, approving budgets, securing adequate funding, and advocating in the community for the needs of schools.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review disaggregated student data to focus its work.</li> </ul>
<b>District and school leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The new superintendent has engaged with the school committee and district departmental leaders to establish a calendar of meetings to maintain budget processes and formulate plans for improving the curriculum, instruction, and data use.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The district should carefully consider the effectiveness of its collective bargaining and negotiation strategies.</li> </ul>
<b>District and school improvement planning</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide frequent, timely, and thorough information to staff, students, families, and the community on progress toward the achievement of plan goals.</li> </ul>
<b>Budget development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transparent budget development process, with opportunities for public comment and budget details made readily available.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allocate resources purposefully to address equity and effectiveness in closing achievement, access, and opportunity gaps among student groups.</li> </ul>

### School Committee Governance

Interviews with district leaders and a review of documents, including school committee meeting minutes, indicated that the APS school committee has clear processes for evaluating the superintendent's performance annually, approving budgets, securing adequate funding, and advocating in the community for the needs of schools. However, the review team found limited

evidence that the school committee regularly used disaggregated student data to focus its work on improving student outcomes and closing achievement and opportunity gaps. Despite reported challenges between the school committee and the teachers' association, it is clear from stakeholder interviews that the school committee is fulfilling its legal and fiduciary duties, as defined by state law, though not explicitly focusing on closing achievement gaps.

**Focuses on Improvement (Strength and Area for Growth).** Both school committee members and the superintendent reported—and a document review corroborated—that school committee members facilitated an annual evaluation of the superintendent's performance, focused on sharing feedback about the superintendent's performance. School committee meeting minutes included evidence of the committee reviewing the superintendent's goals and providing feedback, of the superintendent revising these goals based on the committee's feedback, and of the committee approving these revised goals. However, when asked about the school committee's work and primary responsibilities beyond approving budgets and evaluating the superintendent, school committee members did not describe reviewing data as part of their duties.

Although one district office team member described a specific situation in which the school committee supported further funding for a particular program based on evidence of progress presented to the committee by district office staff, this type of decision-making process driven by data was not the norm as depicted by stakeholders. For these reasons, focusing on improvement is an area for growth for the school committee, which might be easier to accomplish once a new district improvement plan is in place.

**Establishes a Culture of Collaboration. (Strength and Area for Growth)** The superintendent, school committee members, and district leaders all described reciprocally supportive relationships. One strategy to facilitate the supportive relationship is weekly superintendent meetings with the school committee chairperson. The meetings allow the school committee to share opinions and emerging concerns with the superintendent and other district leaders prior to regular school committee meetings. In addition, the school committee hosts regular open forums at the public library for community members to raise issues that may not be formal committee agenda items. In the 2020-2021 school year, the school committee also engaged family members through surveys and participation on the hiring committee for the new superintendent.

Although stakeholders described positive and supportive relationships between the administration and school committee, some stakeholders described an "acrimonious" relationship between the teachers' association and the school committee that distracted from the work of teaching and learning and prolonged the process of "getting something done" in the district. Further, a review of school committee meeting minutes indicated limited evidence that the school committee actively encouraged student participation or sought student input.

**Fulfills Its Legal and Fiduciary Responsibilities, as Defined in Massachusetts State Law.** The school committee, district leaders, and the superintendent described specific legal and fiduciary responsibilities that the committee fulfilled consistently using clear processes, including securing adequate funding for schools, maintaining clear roles, and taking an active role in collective bargaining. In terms of funding, interviews and a review of school committee meeting minutes indicated that the district established annual budget assumption guidelines to shape the budgeting

process, created an annual budget planning calendar, and conducted joint meetings with partners in town government as part of the annual budget planning and review process. In addition, budget updates or amendments are regularly presented, discussed, and voted upon.

Even though the district has had some of the lowest overall student-to-teacher ratios in the state (11.5:1 in 2021) and the student-to-teacher ratio is at its lowest point since 2014, the number of students that some staff are responsible for has risen slightly in recent years. Some stakeholders reported that staffing increases have been in more specialized positions, and, as a result, class sizes—especially at the middle and secondary levels—have not been meaningfully reduced for some time. Further, both committee members and teachers’ association representatives cited a previous protracted collective bargaining process as an area of concern affecting relationships between the local association and the school committee. The teachers’ association specifically cited concerns with having most of their interactions with district counsel and less interaction with the school committee than desired. School committee members described a similar process with limited direct interaction, whereby teachers’ association representatives worked more with district administrators than with the school committee. Particular areas of disagreement included the allocation, status, and wages of local instructional assistants. Although the school committee is technically fulfilling its legal and fiduciary responsibilities, the effectiveness of collective bargaining and negotiation strategies might be questionable.

## District and School Leadership

District and school leadership processes were in transition during the district review team’s visit because APS had experienced turnover in key leadership positions, including in the superintendent role. The new superintendent has engaged with the school committee and district departmental leaders to establish a calendar of meetings to maintain budget processes and formulate plans for improving the curriculum, instruction, and data use. District staff described existing continuous improvement processes as well as initial planning for changes to follow the new strategic plan that was under development.

**Leadership and Engagement (Strength).** District administrators on the superintendent’s leadership team reported that since the superintendent began in her role in July 2021, she has set a clear vision and communicated a mission for the district focused on areas it needs to excel. Some of these goals have been communicated publicly via the district’s website. The superintendent’s strategy to meet with the school committee chairperson ensures that she is aware of emerging issues and can share information about initiatives and challenges in the district early and obtain feedback. The superintendent is supported by a leadership team that oversees curriculum and instruction, student services, human resources, finance, data and innovation, and communications. District leadership team members understand their roles and responsibilities. The formal and informal connections between the district team and with the school committee are important to addressing the needs of both students and staff. One area of need identified by principals and teachers is at the school level. Some schools have instructional leadership teams, but others do not; thus, it may be difficult to consistently implement some key instructional and culture building strategies.

**Focus on Improvement.** To move the district toward closing achievement gaps and improving outcomes for students overall, district leaders focus on using data as a critical part of continuous

improvement cycles. District leaders report using multiple data-driven strategies that align with continuous improvement cycles. For example, principals and teachers in elementary schools are focused on using curriculum and assessment resources to improve literacy skills among students as a key foundation for accessing other content areas. In addition, elementary-school principals said that benchmark and formative assessment data were used to target coteaching supports in inclusion classes. A long-term strategic plan was not in place at the time of the district review team's visit. However, district leaders described in interviews a process for creating such a plan. In addition, district leaders described the development of a dashboard to allow leadership regular access to data to drive improvement. Relatedly, school committee meeting minutes discuss the annual presentation of MCAS data, as well as a process for using a data-informed, phased approach for returning to school during the pandemic to "help students and families to meet grade-level expectations" (School Committee Minutes, October 7, 2021). Teachers in the elementary schools have received professional development in using Fountas and Pinnell literacy curriculum, and principals and teachers said that teachers recently began using the associated Benchmark Assessment System (BAS) to track progress toward improving student outcomes.

Data use is embedded into the strategies that are driving the district's efforts to address the disproportionality in opportunity and achievement between White students and Black, Hispanic, and other students in the district as well as between students receiving special education services and those who do not. White students and those who are not economically disadvantaged score higher on MCAS for all subjects and for all tested grade levels than their Black, Hispanic/Latino, and economically disadvantaged peers. The strategy to address this starts issue at the top, with the district leadership team conducting a districtwide analysis focusing on areas of need and root causes. One outcome is the district's effort to implement several strategies—which are monitored with key data indicators—including differentiated instruction and multitiered systems of support. In addition, the district is using a large grant to support students' social-emotional needs. At the school level, principals must set personal goals for themselves and their schools to close gaps in state assessment scores for mathematics and reading/English language arts (ELA). The district is establishing systems to conduct curriculum reviews, using a set of protocols to ensure accessibility, readability, and equity; at the time of the on-site review, the mathematics curriculum was under review districtwide. The superintendent established an instructional vision, characterized by research-based principles of learning, that will inform curriculum and instruction plans. At the same time, a districtwide committee, the cultural climate committee, is working with schools to deepen cultural proficiency and promote the use of books that represent multiple cultures for students. Teachers said that each school had a cultural climate committee to further this work; at one school, teachers said that the committee met monthly and "talks about different ways to ensure all are included."

**Leadership Development and Support.** APS has had three different superintendents, including an interim superintendent, since the previous superintendent left in December 2020. Evidence from interviews and focus groups suggests that teachers generally favor the current superintendent. Two district staff members said that the new superintendent seemed to be more "hands-on" in terms of administrator evaluations and school monitoring. Some staff in interviews reported a high level of involvement in meaningful leadership opportunities. Related, agendas from leadership team meetings from fall 2021 all describe group contributions as a norm and include opportunities for



staff to have input into shaping the district's new strategic plan. Principals reported that the district allowed school leaders autonomy to make decisions about staff selection, the school schedule, and how to use the allotted budget. Principals reported having the opportunity to set professional goals with the superintendent relevant to their students and school contexts. Administrators' evaluations have been delayed during the superintendent's transition period.

## District and School Improvement Planning

APS's previous five-year strategic plan expired in 2020, just as the previous superintendent exited (at the end of December 2020). As a participant in the New Superintendent Induction Program,<sup>7</sup> the superintendent is gathering information about the district. Findings from this information-gathering phase will be reported to the school committee and will inform the district's new strategic plan. Stakeholders varied in terms of their awareness of the superintendent's efforts to gather data, and most were unaware of the current status or timeline for the new strategic plan.

**Stakeholder Engagement and Reflection (Area for Growth).** District leaders reported engaging in the superintendent's efforts to review current district practices as part of her first-year entry process. The superintendent's information-gathering process includes conducting focus groups and surveys with family members, students, and staff. According to the superintendent, her intention is for this phase to be "a shared process." School leaders agreed with the superintendent's sentiment; however, other stakeholders, including teachers and family members, were unclear about the process or the status of planning. Leadership team agendas from the 2021-2022 school year include multiple calls to solicit stakeholder input.

At the school level, improvement plans are generally in place. Several principals reported that there was a common improvement plan across schools, and principals have "been doing it together" by establishing shared goals across all schools. At the time of the site visit, some schools engaged a school council to inform decision making, whereas others did not. Establishing school councils at each school in the district, as a vehicle to ensure regular and effective stakeholder engagement in and reflection on district and school improvement plans, is an area of growth for the district.

**Improvement Plan Elements.** The superintendent reported that a variety of data were being used in the planning process, including Panorama, MAP (Measures of Academic Progress), DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills), and the BAS. Although the plan is still in development, several stakeholders indicated that the superintendent is sharing her overall vision for improvement, for example during open "office hours." For example, a parent and a principal both described an emphasis on social-emotional learning, including a specific focus on student belonging. In addition to the previous strategic plan, which is still available on the district's website, principals said the district had a common school improvement plan, which includes goals focused on progress monitoring and student belonging. The district's three middle schools share an improvement plan that focuses on these two areas, along with developing an effective schedule. The elementary schools have plans that focus on similar goals. Interviewees did not share additional details describing using data for the school improvement plan goals or assessments of resource allocation to support the plan. With the

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<sup>7</sup> The New Superintendent Induction Program is a collaboration between the DESE and the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents.



current planning process in progress, it is not clear how district leaders will align the budget to improvement goals and strategies. However, school principals and district staff reported having control of their budgets and aligning their resources with their school's needs.

## Budget Development

The district uses a budget development process that includes input from various stakeholders, including the school committee, the town finance committee, the town select board, teachers' association members, school leaders, and the community. In the last several years before the on-site review, the budget process has been increasingly transparent, and stakeholders reported an increase in trust in the school committee as a result. One area for growth is a more systemic budgeting approach to conducting routine reviews of programs for cost-effectiveness and aligning budget allotments to support efforts targeting issues related to disproportionality.

**Budget Development and Monitoring (Strength).** The district budget development and review process begins months before the town meeting to approve the budget. The school committee routinely reviews budgets as part of its regular meetings, including planning for the upcoming school year beginning in winter with a preliminary overview prepared by the superintendent. The superintendent presents the budget to the school committee and reviews options for allocating funds at the district and school levels. Once the budget is complete, the school committee and superintendent present the budget to the town finance committee, followed by the town select board for approval. In addition, the overall district budget is available for public review on the district's website, and state-mandated public budget hearings also are held. The school committee routinely monitors expenditures for the current school year, including unforeseen needs, in weekly meetings with the superintendent. School committee members described the budget development process as increasingly transparent in the last several years before the on-site review, with opportunities for public comment and details about the budget readily available. Although there was no indication that reviewing programs for cost-effectiveness was a regular and explicit part of the budget development process, principals described a process for using student data to demonstrate budgetary needs. For example, one principal said: "We have to demonstrate through data what our needs are. . . . We use the budget process, and we have to demonstrate through data that we've got this need and how [resources] would be used."

District staff stated that district spending was tracked regularly through weekly meetings with the superintendent, the assistant superintendent for finance and administration, and the accountant, and adjustments were made as needed. In terms of school-level budgeting autonomy, district leaders noted that principals had bottom-line autonomy over their school budgets and made decisions on how to spend resources based on school need; school leaders also had the autonomy to shift resources as needed. For example, one stakeholder said, "Things might be shifting from a contracted service to a supply or vice versa and that's allowable." However, school committee approval is required when expenses are reallocated to salaries as well as from the school level to the district budget.

**Resource Allocation (Area for Growth).** Budget development and resource allocation practices are being reviewed and will be revised by the new superintendent in collaboration with the school committee. One area that was clearly identified for improvement was the use of data to drive

decisions about the budget. For example, the superintendent specifically cited funding digital learning coaches at each elementary school as one example of ineffective resource allocation. She suggested that a better strategy might be allocating funds for mathematics and literacy coaches, adding, “It doesn’t appear that in the past there’s been a close examination of data to drive resources.”<sup>8</sup>

Resource allocation is an area of growth for the district because of limited evidence—based on a review of documents, interviews, and focus groups—that the district’s approach to resource allocation purposefully addresses equity or effectiveness in closing achievement, access, and opportunity gaps among student groups.

## Recommendations

- The school committee should prioritize its efforts to use the district’s soon-to-be-revised strategic plan and the regular review of disaggregated student data to guide its deliberations and inform its policies, maintaining a particular focus on closing achievement gaps for students of color, students who are economically disadvantaged, ELs, and students with disabilities.
- Under the superintendent’s leadership, the district should continue to use data to inform goals and priorities in the new strategic plan and in all school improvement plans.
  - Decisions on the allocation of resources should be based on student achievement and other data and the strengthened district and school improvement plans.
  - Resources, including funds, staff, materials, and time, should be allocated to ensure improved performance, opportunities, and outcomes for all students, with an emphasis on equity and effectiveness to close achievement, access, and opportunity gaps for students of color, students who are economically disadvantaged, ELs, and students with disabilities.
- District and school leaders should provide frequent, timely, and thorough information to the school committee, staff, students, families, and the community on the progress toward achieving the plan goals and seek significant and meaningful feedback to guide the ongoing refinement of the plans.
- The district should carefully consider the effectiveness of its collective bargaining and negotiation strategies, with the aim of reciprocally supportive collaboration between the school committee and the teachers’ association to improve teaching and learning in the district.

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<sup>8</sup> According to DESE data, APS employed 8.4 instructional coaches in 2020, or 1 coach for every 697 students (based on 2020 enrollment).

# Curriculum and Instruction

The superintendent and district leadership team are currently setting a direction for the district relative to curriculum and instruction. At the time of the district review visit in December 2021, the superintendent had distributed an early guiding document, the Principles of Learning. This document conveys several key concepts that leaders wish to see in APS classrooms and forms the basis for an instructional vision for the district. With these concepts in mind, the district plans to review the curriculum and its implementation to identify areas in which to enhance current efforts and make adjustments to align to this vision. Overall, the district is in the early stages of establishing this vision and aligning materials to it.

Because of the pandemic and turnover of staff in curricular leadership positions, the district’s earlier efforts to conduct a curricular review for standards alignment was interrupted. The district plans to review some key components of the curriculum to address a need cited by school and district staff: ensuring standards-aligned, grade-level curriculum and instruction are consistently available districtwide. Other areas noted include social-emotional learning supports and culturally responsive practices. Staff identified these two areas as specific needs for additional professional development. Table 6 summarizes key strength and areas for growth in curriculum and instruction.

**Table 6. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Curriculum and Instruction Standard**

Indicator	Strengths	Areas for growth
<b>Curriculum selection and use</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Highly collaborative decision-making processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ensure that curriculum materials are high quality, cohesive, aligned with appropriate standards, and aligned vertically and horizontally.</li> <li>■ Ensure coordinated oversight of instructional practices.</li> </ul>
<b>Classroom instruction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Teachers’ use data from assessments and course grades to track student performance and adjust instruction.</li> <li>■ Heterogenous groups and project-based instruction encourage more rigorous and challenging learning activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ensure that all teachers provide research- and evidence-based instruction that challenges and supports all students.</li> </ul>
<b>Student access to coursework</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ APS offers a wide range of academic experiences relevant for students’ goals, especially at the high-school level, including dual enrollment, Advanced Placement courses, and a small technical education program.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ensure that all students have equitable access to a range of academic coursework.</li> </ul>

## Curriculum Selection and Use

District leaders recognize a need to develop a more coherent curricular and instructional strategy. They said that the pandemic thwarted a recent effort to improve standards alignment and support. Although some of these plans are still in process, such as the mathematics curriculum review and a three-year plan for K–5 literacy released, other areas are planned for subsequent years. One key challenge identified by stakeholders was an absence of standards-aligned curricular materials at the middle- and high-school levels. Most teachers reported that students received instruction based on teacher-developed units.

**Decision-Making Processes (Strength).** APS’s processes for making decisions about curriculum selection are evident: The district is reviewing its mathematics curricula to improve alignment with DESE’s mathematics standards. District leaders and principals said that district curriculum leads, principals, teachers, and students participated in committees related to making decisions about curricular changes. Teachers agreed that the process was “highly collaborative.” District staff and teachers pointed to efforts to improve representation in curriculum materials. As one staff member said, “I think increasingly we have been thinking about who our students are and doing curriculum work around providing those students with experiences and to read stories about their own experiences and backgrounds.”

**Documented Curriculum (Area for Growth).** The superintendent, district leaders, and principals agreed that improving the district’s documented curriculum was a growth area. District staff and principals said that curriculum updates were “overdue,” and most middle- and high-school subjects are presented through teacher-created units. The superintendent stated that “There is not an articulated curriculum for all subjects and grade levels at this time.”<sup>9</sup> A document required by DESE for this review that lists the district’s curricula confirms this problem and shows that most curricula used the district are either not rated by DESE’s CURATE system or rated as “does not meet expectations.”<sup>10</sup> A principal said, “Our teachers are very much content area experts, but . . . we’ve never really focused in on those curriculum documents, really codifying and being very clear on what we’re doing.” Stakeholders identified some exceptions to these statements, including the existence of curriculum maps at the elementary level and a high-school ELA curriculum. District leaders said that COVID-19 pandemic interrupted an intended transition to a standards-based curriculum, and schools have not recovered momentum on that work: “There were critical moments that may have been missed in terms of diving deep into the standards and really understanding what the shifts were and what they meant for instructional practice.” District staff see vertical alignment as an area for growth, describing challenges in district-level subject area departments; the mathematics lead is pulled toward addressing the high school’s needs, reducing focus on systemwide alignment, and the social studies department is currently without a leader, resulting in individualized curriculum development within schools or grade bands. Other district staff agreed that progress has been made on horizontal alignment to bring consistency to middle-school curricula in some subjects, but vertical alignment has “not been a focus.”

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<sup>9</sup> APS did not submit examples of a districtwide curriculum for this review.

<sup>10</sup> For more information, see <https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate/>.

**Taught Curriculum (Area for Growth).** Interviewees said that coherence and consistency in taught curricula were a challenge. Specifically, the absence of documented curricula and staff to fill vacant curriculum director roles at the district level are hindering the district’s ability to improve. Further, the superintendent connected the absence of a documented curriculum with her concerns about instruction, noting a need for more and consistent lesson planning and accountability for delivering grade-level instruction to students. Teachers and district leaders agreed that the current vacancies for district-level curriculum directors drastically reduced instructional support for teachers. For example, one teacher stated, “No one is driving the curriculum” and “I feel there is no unity” in subject area teaching across the district. Teachers described adapting curricula for diverse learners, but district leaders reported that guidance for supporting diverse learners was not clear, and delivery was, consequently, not consistent across schools and classrooms in the district.

Family members who participated in focus groups reported satisfaction with the current curriculum and described their students’ academic experience in APS as generally positive.

## Classroom Instruction (Strengths and Areas for Growth)

Four observers visited APS and focused primarily on instruction in the classroom during the week of December 13, 2021. They conducted 68 observations in a sample of classrooms across grade levels, focused on literacy, ELA, and mathematics.

The CLASS protocol guided all classroom observations. There are three levels of CLASS manuals: K–3, Upper Elementary, and Secondary. The K–3 tool is used to observe Grades K–3, the Upper Elementary tool is used to observe Grades 4–5, and the Secondary tool is 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. The Upper Elementary and Secondary protocols include 11 classroom dimensions related to three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support (see Table 2 in Appendix C), 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 APS, 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 the levels of individual dimensions within those domains. Student engagement is in all ratings but varies by tool level on whether it is its own dimension or within the Instructional Support domain.

The complete findings from APS are in Appendix C. In summary, findings from the observations were as follows:

- **Emotional Support.** Ratings were in the high range at the elementary (K–5) level, and the high end of the middle range for both the middle (6–8) and secondary (9–12) levels.
- **Classroom Organization.** Ratings fell in the high range for all levels.
- **Instructional Support.** Ratings fell in the middle range for all levels.
- **Student Engagement.** For grade levels where student engagement was an independent domain (upper elementary grades and above), ratings fell in the high range at the upper elementary level and the high end of the middle range for both the middle and secondary levels.

Overall, at the elementary level, instructional observations illustrated generally strong emotional support, classroom organization, and student engagement (Grades 4–5), but more mixed evidence of consistently rigorous instructional support. At the middle- and high-school grade levels, instructional observations provided evidence of strong emotional support and classroom organization and more mixed evidence of consistently rigorous instructional support and strong student engagement.

Family members, students, and school leaders’ reflections about instruction in APS are positive. For example, students described teachers’ efforts to engage them and their peers. School leaders as well as EL and special education leaders consistently reported observing classrooms with rigorous instruction. Finally, family members who participated in focus groups reported satisfaction with the instruction that children receive.

Most areas of growth mentioned by the interviewees focus on improving strategies to engage students deeply in learning. These include developing and improving culturally responsive teaching practices and social-emotional learning, as well as improving the alignment of professional development with these and other district-determined instructional expectations. Finally, some interviewees noted that students who were excelling at advanced levels needed for more opportunities for a challenging curriculum before entering high school.

**Learning Experiences for Students.** Students’ learning experiences in APS are mixed, with both strengths and areas for growth. Students’ engagement with academic content is high. Students reported that most teachers made efforts to make connections across content areas and connections to students’ lives, offering project-based learning. One student said, “My English class goes very well with my history class, because in history we’re learning about imperialism and in English, we’re reading this graphic novel from an Iranian woman about imperialism.” Consistent with these reports, instructional observation scores in the high range for Grades 4 through 5 and the high middle range for Grades 6–12 for engagement<sup>11</sup> suggest that most students are actively engaged in

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<sup>11</sup> Engagement is determined based on scores on the Engagement domain of the CLASS tool.



the classroom discussions and activities. Family members who participated in focus groups were generally satisfied with their children’s learning experiences. As one parent said, “My experience with our [APS] staff has been phenomenal. I have friends [with children] in other elementary schools, and I think everybody has only nice things to say about their schools as well.”

The new superintendent and district curriculum leaders plan to build on these strengths and address areas of growth identified in the instructional observations and through the superintendent’s review of the district curriculum and implementation. Instructional observation scores in the middle range for instructional supports<sup>12</sup> and rigor across all grade levels suggest that instructional practices are inconsistently rigorous. When they are rigorous, they are only rigorous for some students. District staff said that the superintendent was developing a new vision for instruction and professional development plans to address identified shortfalls in curriculum and instruction, including alignment to the standards, a documented curriculum to encourage vertical alignment, and supports to ensure teaching to grade level.

Social-emotional learning content is included in physical education and health courses, and advisory periods support social-emotional skills through the delivery of content and creating supportive adult–student relationships. In addition, Responsive Classroom is in use at the elementary level. A review of district leadership team meeting minutes showed that students’ social-emotional well-being and mental health were being discussed at the leadership level. Principals and district staff said that a challenge was that not all teachers have been trained in social-emotional learning and culturally responsive practices. Teachers and other instructional support staff described inclusive programs and practices. For example, teachers work with special educators and EL teachers to meet diverse learners’ needs, and the capstone course is designed to include all students, regardless of language, learning, or other special needs. However, district staff and the superintendent noted that social-emotional and cultural competencies were not supported systematically across the district.

Overall, teachers and other instructional support staff suggested that the district’s intense academic focus may have had unintended consequences. Teachers believe that the district culture is “performance focused” versus learning focused, and other instructional support staff believe that social-emotional learning is undervalued in favor of academics. One staff member said, “What is privileged is academics. Social and emotional learning is not privileged, at least not here. I don’t feel it ever.” This staff person illustrated their experience as a low priority by remarking that they were consistently at the end of school and district agendas to discuss policies and practices related to students’ social and emotional needs. A review of leadership team agendas from fall 2021 found social-emotional learning to be consistently included in meetings, most often in the second half of the meeting. Further, specialized support providers reported their view that the community exerts “a lot of pressure for achievement.”

**Adjustments to Practice (Strength).** Principals and teachers described teachers’ use of data from assessments and course grades to track student performance and adjust instruction. Special educators and EL teachers meet with teachers to identify strategies and adjust activities to ensure that all students can access the content. Students and teachers reported that many teachers went beyond textbooks and taught from a “world-based” perspective. Students stated that most teachers varied instructional styles and used project-based approaches. Students also said that teachers

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<sup>12</sup> This finding is based on scores on the Instructional Support domain of the CLASS tool.

supported students who were struggling by meeting with students outside regular class time. Families of students with special needs reported that the interventions were appropriate, and the teachers were attentive to individual student needs.

However, the superintendent would like to see strengthened differentiation skills among teachers, including providing more challenging work for advanced students. Instructional observation scores in the middle range for Regard for Student Perspectives, Analysis and Inquiry, and Concept Development dimensions support the need for this goal. Regard for Student Perspectives demonstrates the degree to which classroom activities emphasize students' interests and motivations. Analysis and Inquiry (in the upper grades) and Concept Development (Grades K–3) scores capture how teachers engage students in activities that require higher order thinking and understanding, rather than focusing on rote instruction or closed-ended tasks. Relatedly, some families would like more opportunities, such as advanced courses or gifted and talented programming, for high-performing students in elementary and middle school.

**Learning Environment (Strength).** Teachers and students described heterogenous groups and project-based instruction that encouraged more rigorous, challenging learning activities. Students described participating in “book clubs” in ELA and analyzing political cartoons in small groups in social studies. As one student stated, “In my classes, I’m in all groups. In ELA, we switch it up depending on what we’re doing. . . , but we’re definitely more in groups than we are alone because they all like us to share our opinions with other kids.” Further details about students’ experience in their learning environments, such as taking academic risks and experiencing ownership of their learning, were not consistently expressed by interviewees across levels or academic departments. Principals and teachers reported the learning environment as rigorous and academically demanding, but students’ ownership of concepts was raised only with regard to efforts in some elementary and middle schools to integrate subject areas so that students “see things are connected and not in a little box.” Instructional observation scores in the middle range for the Regard for Student Perspectives dimension also illustrate that students may have limited opportunities for ownership, choice, and autonomy in many classrooms.

## Student Access to Coursework

In APS, students have access to a variety of academic offerings and receive strong guidance counseling to support postsecondary planning. However, equity of student access to advanced coursework and nontested subject areas (subjects other than mathematics, ELA, and science) could be improved because access is limited to those students who are recommended by teachers to enroll in Advanced Placement courses and who are in strong academic standing to participate in enrichment opportunities.

**Variety of Academic Offerings (Strength).** Stakeholders agree, and the Andover High School Program of Studies confirms, that the district offers a wide range of academic experiences relevant for students’ goals, especially at the high-school level, including dual enrollment, Advanced Placement courses, and a small technical education program.<sup>13</sup> One student described course availability as follows: “They have intro to music theory, music production. They have basically anything you want, which is awesome.” Guidance staff

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<sup>13</sup> According to the district’s program of studies guide, APS offers the following additional programs: Global Pathway Scholars program, AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination), and digital Learning Innovations courses (including Global Business, Video-Media Communications, Research and Design/Engineering, and Digital Information Systems/Computer Science).



meet with all students individually to discuss college and career goals throughout high school. There are advanced learning opportunities for students earlier than high school, such as the Math Olympiad, although these opportunities are reportedly quite limited before high school; the only opportunity is advanced mathematics in middle school. To improve on the variety of academic offerings, the district could strengthen communication to students and family members about the career technical education program. Some stakeholders reported that these courses, while of interest to students, were not always well advertised to students and families because, according to the interviewees, the district primarily focused on the academic and college preparatory path for students. One student said, “I didn’t [participate in the technical education program] myself because I didn’t really know what it was. I feel like [we’re] not really shown much about this, but I’ve heard a lot of people love it. It’s basically giving you a job, obviously you’re not paid for it or anything, it’s still a class, but it basically gives you more of an outline of what you want to do.”

**Equity of Access (Area for Growth).** Interviewees reported that access to advanced courses for students from historically marginalized groups was limited. Principals pointed out that advanced mathematics classes, including the scheduling and the specialized nature of the content, clashed with efforts to create block schedules with integrated learning opportunities, which is a barrier to creating accelerated courses at some levels, particularly middle school. Further, a teachers’ association representative said that students with IEPs often are prohibited from taking advanced coursework because of the logistics of the school’s schedule. At the high-school level, teachers, and other staff stated that students needed a recommendation to enroll in Advanced Placement courses. This process may hinder equity of access because of possible teacher biases. The district is attempting to address access issues by instituting a waiver process involving a conversation between the student and a guidance counselor that will enable students who are not recommended by a teacher an opportunity to request access to the advanced course, but it is unclear whether the need for a waiver will serve as an additional barrier. The high school offers an “accessible” Advanced Placement English course that implies that any student can enroll; however, as described in the district’s program of studies guide, students can enroll in enrichment courses only if they are “caught up on academics.” Although the district is attempting to address equity of access in some areas, it is an area of growth for the district.

## Recommendations

- The district should take steps to ensure that curriculum materials are high quality, cohesive, aligned with appropriate standards, and aligned vertically between contiguous grades and horizontally across grades and schools.
- The district should ensure coordinated oversight of instructional practices.
- The district should ensure that all students are prepared for and have equitable access to a range of academic coursework. The district’s cultural climate committee should help develop priorities related to equity and access to address in the district’s new strategic plan.
- The district should ensure that all teachers provide research- and evidence-based instruction that challenges and supports all students.

## Assessment

The district has established and supports a culture that values collecting and discussing data. APS’s assessment inventory, submitted for this review, includes various assessments that can inform instruction. However, descriptions of assessment data use (e.g., team meetings) vary across levels in the district and may be an area for further development. District and school leaders ensure that systems are in place for the efficient and purposeful collection of data but use and some sharing of data from a variety of assessments may vary in their ability to guide decision making at the district, school, and classroom levels. Table 7 summarizes the key strengths and areas for growth in assessment.

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

Indicator	Strengths	Areas for growth
<b>Data and assessment systems</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multiple data sources across grade levels provide information about students’ academic performance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Align classroom-based assessments with state standards.</li> </ul>
<b>Data use</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff at district, school, and classroom levels use data to identify trends in students’ strengths and areas of need.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a more systematic process to ensure the effective use of data districtwide.</li> </ul>
<b>Sharing results</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District and school staff members have multiple opportunities to review and discuss student data.</li> <li>The revised report card and conference schedule increases families’ access to information about students’ performance.</li> <li>Staff keep students apprised of their own performance data, especially at the higher grades, and help them improve if they are struggling.</li> </ul>	

### Data and Assessment Systems

APS uses assessments for formative, benchmark, and summative data collection purposes to measure academic performance and track students’ engagement and social-emotional perspectives. Specifically, a review of the assessment inventory provided indicated that APS uses Fountas and Pinnell BAS (Grades K–3), DIBELS (Grades K–5), Lexia (Grades K–5), Assessing Math Concepts Anywhere (Grades K–2), MAP ELA (Grades 3–9), and MAP Math (Grades 3–10). They also use WIDA for ELs (Grades K–12). Data are collected consistently, and some sources are aligned with academic standards, but there is limited evidence that expectations for using these assessments are systematized districtwide or that classroom-based assessments are aligned to state standards.

**Data Selection (Strength).** Principals, teachers, and other instructional support staff described multiple data sources across grade levels that provide information about student academic performance. Several teachers reported using informal understanding checks with students, unit tests for summative data, and MAP as a quarterly progress benchmark. Elementary-level classrooms

also use DIBELS, the BAS in ELA to track early literacy progress, and a universal screener for literacy. Teachers use progress reports and MAP data to track student performance and identify strategies for providing individualized supports for students. District data presentations and interviewees said that teachers, school leaders, and district staff reviewed MCAS data annually. In addition to the sources of academic performance data, the district uses several social-emotional and behavioral surveys, including Panorama and DESE's Views of Climate and Learning survey.

**Assessment Alignment (Area for Growth).** The standardized formative assessment instruments used in APS include MAP for middle and upper grades and DIBELS and the BAS for elementary grades. Teachers and principals said that these assessments align to general grade-level standards and were administered consistently throughout the district. Because most curricula in the district are not clearly aligned with state standards, there is limited evidence that classroom-based assessments align with state standards.

## Data Use

Staff at the district, school, and classroom levels use data to identify trends in student strengths and areas of need in APS. Interviews and a document review indicated that the district used multiple assessments to measure students' academic needs and collected survey data (Views of Climate and Learning, Panorama, and student risk surveys) about students' social and emotional perspectives and sense of belonging. However, stakeholders said that data discussions did not explicitly incorporate aspects of equitable learning and achievement gaps at all levels in the system. Further systematizing of data access, analysis, and decision making will strengthen data use practices in the district.

**District Data Use (Strength and Area for Growth).** APS district and school staff members have access to student data and have structures in place, such as school-based instructional support teams and collaborative planning times, to review, analyze, and make data-based decisions. Teachers and principals set and track improvement goals using student performance assessments. Teachers and principals described using MAP data to track progress quarterly and, in some schools, to make decisions about how to use intervention time. Principals also said that teachers prepared for instructional support team meetings by collecting data for specific students from formative and summative sources before the meetings. Specialized support providers use progress reports to track growth for lower performing students, meeting with teachers to discuss strategies to individualize instruction. At the district level, the superintendent's office is creating a dashboard to enable central office staff to review multiple data sources, including DIBELS, MAP, and BAS, in monthly data meetings to identify patterns in student performance in relation to the state standards. The district completes an annual review of MCAS data and delivers an annual report of this information to the school committee. However, the superintendent reported room for improvement in the district's use of data, from creating plans to standardize the approach to looking at data districtwide, and with an asset-based lens that focuses less on student deficits and more on what the data suggest about instruction. This area of growth is confirmed by an absence of documentation of standardized approaches to data use. Teachers and other instructional support staff acknowledged that there were student outcome gaps that follow socio-economic and racial lines, and the new superintendent described plans to develop processes to better use data to understand and address these gaps.

**Support for Data Use (Area for Growth).** Stakeholders' description of monthly district-level data meetings and teachers' common planning time meetings suggest that APS promotes a culture of shared responsibility and accountability for assessing performance. Teachers reported that they received professional development from the district for reviewing MAP data. Elementary-school principals described a growing culture of data use. Illustrating these statements, one school leader said, "I'll give [the teachers] a lot of credit. They have really embraced the data. They come very well informed when they come to the [instructional support team] meetings, collecting their own data."

Both district and school level leaders noted that the availability and ease of using data to make decisions could be improved in APS. The superintendent spoke of needing to improve the availability of data dashboards for staff to review data easily. Elementary teachers reported using data sources such as DIBELS to group students and track progress. However, some middle-school staff reported that the amount of data collected was difficult to manage. Some staff reported a need to develop systems and structures for analyzing data and assisting in tracking student progress. One school-level staff member said, "If we had a unit of teachers and administrators that would [analyze student data], that would almost drive the tiered system of support from the district." District staff plan to provide targeted professional development to educators on taking action, especially in the areas of instructional strategies, based on data analyses, which is especially needed at the middle- and high-school levels.

## Sharing Results

Stakeholders reported that district staff routinely shared assessment results with school leaders and teachers and focused on identifying patterns and trends as well as individual students' progress. Families receive information on their children's development through progress reports and email communications. Teachers discuss data with students primarily when students need extra support.

**Communication With District Staff (Strength).** District and school staff members have multiple opportunities to review and discuss student data. Teachers, specialized support providers, and principals described using data in department meetings or planning time without mention of any barriers to accessing the data they need for these meetings. District staff specifically engage with elementary-level teams in monthly data meetings that include a process of communicating findings.

**Communication With Families (Strength).** The district has multiple avenues for providing access to student grades to parents and guardians. Parents and guardians have access to an online grading system called Schoology. Teachers and family members reported that the district recently revised the report card and conference schedule to increase families' access to information about student performance. Specifically, schools provide progress reports and report cards so that families receive grade information quarterly instead of three times per year. In addition, school staff reach out to families when a student receives a grade of D or below on a progress report. Schools also adjusted the calendar so that parent/teacher conferences take place two times per year rather than only once. Family members said that elementary-school teachers sent follow-up emails after the conferences that detail areas where students needed to focus additional attention. Special education staff communicate with parents and guardians multiple times per week. The district does not have a system for communicating MAP, DIBELS, BAS, or MCAS results to families, although some

teachers did describe having consistent “open communication” with families about student results, particularly in “red flag” situations, or situations where students were struggling.

**Communication With Students (Strength).** Staff help keep students apprised of their own performance data, especially at higher grades, and help them improve if they are struggling. Students can access their performance data via Schoology. School staff said that high-school students who showed declining academic performance met with guidance and other staff to discuss their performance and develop an academic success plan. At the high school, students who are struggling have the option to attend the “Learning Lab” as an elective during the school day for academic support. In focus groups, students described working with individual teachers on guiding their work in response to grades or MAP scores. One student said, “For the MAP test, my teacher showed me my scores so she could assign me some IXLs to do that would help me with my reading.” IXL refers to a personalized learning resource that teachers can use to provide students with an assignment aligned to their individual learning needs.

## Recommendations

- District and school leaders should establish a more systematic process to ensure the effective use of data districtwide.
- To create a more effective system for collecting, analyzing, and sharing data, the district should create two data teams—one at the elementary level and one at the secondary level—with representation from both leadership and teaching staff from all subjects.

## Human Resources and Professional Development

The superintendent of APS is new to her role, as are many of her leadership team members. This new administration has been methodical in reviewing and understanding past processes, including human resources processes. Historically, human resources was a shared role between the district and the town, with heavy responsibility for hiring delegated to the school leader. With the expected division<sup>14</sup> of human resources into two departments, one for the district and one for the town, a new model for hiring, development, and retention will be implemented. The review team found that educator evaluation systems and professional development offerings were not implemented consistently districtwide and varied by school. Table 8 summarizes strengths and areas for growth for human resources and professional development.

**Table 8. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Human Resources and Professional Development Standard**

Indicator	Strengths	Areas for growth
<b>Infrastructure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transition underway to separate the shared human resources departments to improve district systems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen the district's employment-related records.</li> </ul>
<b>Recruitment, hiring, and assignment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The district has established a consistent process for hiring school staff, and principals have autonomy to make hiring decisions with input from teachers and family members and to make teacher assignment decisions based on students' learning needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that teacher assignment is based on students' learning needs.</li> </ul>
<b>Supervision, evaluation, and educator development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mentoring and induction systems, which include a one-year intensive program, are in place for new teachers.</li> <li>Professional development offerings include training on Responsive Classroom, how to respond to microaggressions and stereotyping, a push for technology, an emphasis on social-emotional learning, implementing the Workshop Model, blended learning, reading programs, trauma-informed teaching, and teacher retreats.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistently provide constructive, growth-oriented feedback to teachers.</li> <li>Provide professional development districtwide on data analysis and promote a standard approach to interpreting data throughout the district.</li> </ul>
<b>Recognition, leadership development, and advancement</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider developing a career-ladder pipeline and a formal recognition program for educators</li> </ul>

<sup>14</sup> At the time of the on-site visit, the separation was anticipated to take place in early 2022.

## Infrastructure

APS currently shares some components of human capital management with the town of Andover. At the time of this review, a transition to separate the human resources departments to improve district systems was underway.

**Accurate Employment Records (Strength and Area for Growth).** The district currently struggles with the accuracy of its employment-related records. Human resources staff told the team that APS used the Munis system to track and maintain payroll for both the town and the district, noting that this shared system would be maintained after the transition to separate departments. However, the district and the town will each have their own payroll office, ensuring that every employee is paid each week. The human resources department is actively looking for new software that covers personnel record retention, which will help organize all hiring and human resources forms into one location. Newly hired human resources staff spurred this move after discovering errors in the employment records, including inaccurate subscriptions in the health insurance and retirement programs. The department plans to strengthen practices with improved software that will consolidate and streamline systems.

## Recruitment, Hiring, and Assignment

APS has experienced turnover among district staff in recent years. Despite turnover at the district level, according to DESE data, principal retention has remained at 80 percent or higher since 2017, and teacher retention has been similar to the state rate (91.8 percent in 2021, which is greater than the state rate of 88.4 percent). The number of instructional staff has increased in the past five years (from 470 total teachers in 2017-2018 to 484 teachers in 2020-2021), even though student enrollment has decreased. District staff raised concerns about the fit between existing teachers and students' needs. The district has established a consistent process for hiring school staff, and principals have autonomy to make hiring decisions with input from teachers and family members and to make teacher assignment decisions based on student learning needs. A team from APS also is participating in DESE's Teacher Diversification Professional Learning Community, designed to support districts in recruiting and retaining a more diverse workforce.

**Recruitment Systems.** The district is working to match educator roles with student needs and is maintaining but not growing the size of its teacher workforce. School committee members and principals stated that student enrollment decreased 9.2 percent in the past six years from 6,009 in 2017 to 5,456 in 2022, according to DESE data. The district's strategy to retain as many staff as possible, despite enrollment trends, is to develop teachers into specialized support providers or instructional coaches to help address the interrupted learning caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Principals reported that they had sufficient teachers; however, both teachers and principals indicated a need for more coaches, social workers, and counselors to adequately meet the needs of their students. Human resources staff said that all job postings now include the statement "We encourage diverse hiring and diverse people within our school system" to signal the district's commitment to diversifying its workforce. Staff also said they were developing plans to hire a diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) director who will work with human resources to further improve recruitment efforts. Specialized support providers and district staff said that the districtwide cultural climate committee, which fosters inclusivity, equity, and appreciation of cultural diversity, also



contributed to efforts to diversify district staff. Given the current staffing surplus and lower student enrollment, the district is not actively generating a pool of educators to fill vacancies at the time of this review.

**Hiring Systems (Strength).** Teachers' association representatives, district leaders, and school staff said that the hiring process for a school had a consistent structure that began with a request to the school committee for additional staff. If the school committee approves the request for additional staff, the district's human resources office posts a job listing. Principals have autonomy in making hiring decisions, and teachers and family members participate on hiring committees. To further promote consistency in the hiring process, a districtwide "Hiring Toolkit for School Administrators" supports principals in this process. The toolkit includes resources for "assessing and selecting the very best talent for APS." Licensing and certification verification takes place once a candidate is selected for hire, and recertification requirements are monitored as needed once a candidate has been hired. The superintendent noted that prior hiring practices were more subjective: The "New Hire Procedures" document, updated November 2021, outlines the new, more objective process.

The human resources department also works closely with principals to retain staff. Despite high turnover rates among district-level staff, individual principals noted low teacher turnover rates and lauded the overall teaching quality across the district. Illustrative of the shared sentiment across several principals, one principal said, "I think this district is really fortunate though. We have exceptional teachers. I mean obviously there are always people who need to work on certain things, but our teachers are really hard working."

**Assignment (Area for Growth).** District leaders said that teacher assignments were based on the principal's discretion even for staff transfers into open positions. District staff raised concerns about identifying positions and assigning teachers and other instructional support roles. Building on this shared sentiment, one staff member said that some school administrators were more skilled than others when it comes to staffing. The superintendent stated, "It doesn't appear that in the past, there's been a close examination of data to drive resources." She noted that the five elementary schools shared two mathematics coaches and did not have literacy coaches, even though each had a dedicated digital technology coach.

District leaders believed that educators were equitably distributed throughout the district without favoritism but observed that some principals may be more "strategic" with their hiring practices than others. A review of DESE's 2020-2021 Student Learning Experience summary report indicated that assignment of educators in APS was not equitable. Students who are economically disadvantaged are 1.71 times more likely to have inexperienced or out-of-field teachers than those who are not economically disadvantaged.

## Supervision, Evaluation, and Educator Development

APS has a documented evaluation system in place that is differentiated based on role. A document review indicated that teachers received frequent, structured evaluations, instructional assistants received evaluations on a two-year cycle, and specialized support providers were evaluated on an irregular schedule. The evaluation system provides feedback that supplements the professional development of educators. The district does not employ a districtwide professional development



plan, but school-based professional development has focused on literacy. School-based staff reported participating in various types of districtwide professional development related to data use, social-emotional learning, and instructional practices. Mentoring and induction systems, which include a one-year intensive program described in detail on the APS Induction and Mentoring website, are in place for new teachers, and the new superintendent is participating in the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents' New Superintendent Induction Program.

**Supervision and Evaluation Systems (Area for Growth).** Teachers and principals said that it was standard practice in the district for teachers to receive formal and informal feedback from observations of classroom lessons. However, district leaders indicated that the evaluation process was not implemented with fidelity across the district, and educators' experiences in receiving feedback were uneven. In addition, teachers' association representatives said that the formal evaluations for instructional assistants, submitted through the educator evaluation system, often did not align with informal feedback received throughout the year. Specialized support providers described formal evaluations as irregular, but the feedback was not especially useful to improving their practice. Elementary teachers reported that coaching and other kinds of feedback—both formal and formative—were available and generally helpful. For example, one teacher described opportunities, regardless of professional status, to make presentations to colleagues and administrators and receive feedback as part of team time: “It’s something new you want to try out and get that direct feedback. It’s nice to know that opportunity is there.”

A review of the educator evaluation system, which is stored using Frontline Education, 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 (19) of 189 Professional Teacher Status teachers with complete summative evaluations for the 2020-2021 school year. Although the sample of teacher evaluations reviewed were all (100 percent) marked as complete, most evaluations were missing required components. Fifty-eight percent of the summative evaluations reviewed were incomplete, meaning the educator did not receive a rating for each standard or an overall rating. In addition, evaluations did not always include observation evidence or feedback identifying strengths or areas of improvement. In a review of feedback provided by standard, evaluated educators received feedback only about 48 percent to 58 percent of the time. The standards for which feedback was not provided did not include a rationale for their individual ratings or observation evidence related to the standard. In terms of actionable feedback, none (0 percent) of the educator evaluation files reviewed provided areas of improvement for educators, and 37 percent of the evaluations identified strengths or practices that teachers should continue in the overall feedback section. The review of evaluation documents indicated that all educators were not developing student learning and professional practice SMART goals. Only 42 percent of the evaluations reviewed contained student learning SMART goals, and 58 percent of the reviewed evaluations contained professional practice SMART goals on the “Educator Plan and Goal Setting” or the “Teacher Summative Evaluation Report” forms.

A review of the summative evaluations for 2020-2021 for all (42) administrative-level staff showed that 97.6 percent of the evaluations were not complete. Evaluations were missing ratings to assess progress toward goals. The review of evaluation documents indicated that all administrators were not developing student learning, professional practice, or school improvement SMART goals. Of the

summative evaluations reviewed, 47.6 percent of the student learning goals, 54.8 percent of the professional practice goals, and 2.4 percent of the school improvement goals were present. Of the summative administrator evaluations reviewed, 40 of the 42 (95.2 percent) administrators received an overall summative rating from an evaluator. One administrator did not have a complete evaluation because of a medical leave. Of the summative administrator evaluations reviewed, 18 of 42 (42.85 percent) administrators received an overall summative rating of *Proficient*, and 52.38 percent (22 of 42) of administrators received an overall rating of *Exemplary*. Although the form requires evaluator comments for those administrators with overall ratings of *Exemplary*, *Needs Improvement*, or *Unsatisfactory*, 87.2 percent of the evaluations included evaluator comments, and only 36.1 percent of the comments were found to be specific, actionable feedback identifying administrators' strengths and areas of improvement.

**Professional Development Systems (Strength and Area for Growth).** District staff said that the district did not have a strategic plan for professional development tied to student and educator data and aligned to district, school, and/or educator goals, noting that "Building a comprehensive [professional development] plan is a huge priority." District leaders reported that they were developing a strategic plan that would codify decisions about how professional development was delivered, along with its priorities and how it connects to the districtwide vision. The district has adopted some of the Institute for Learning's conceptual ideas related to instructional practice and pedagogical expectations, and district leaders reported that APS staff would participate in the Institute for Learning's districtwide professional development.

Classroom teachers and other instructional support staff said that they felt well supported with the professional development they received. Professional development offerings include training on Responsive Classroom, how to respond to microaggressions and stereotyping, a push for technology, an emphasis on social-emotional learning, implementing the Workshop Model, blended learning, reading programs, trauma-informed teaching, and teacher retreats. Teachers also have received training on various assessments to ensure that they are prepared to use a universal screener and benchmark, formative, and summative assessment data. Several teachers reported that available time was a challenge related to professional development, with some teachers noting challenges in attending afternoon professional development sessions as a result of changes in school schedules. Principals and district leaders noted that school-based professional development often had a literacy focus, whereas districtwide professional development has been more wide ranging. For example, teachers said that they received professional development on implementing the Fountas and Pinnell curriculum and various reading trainings to support their students. District staff said that there was a districtwide need to focus professional development at all levels on data interpretation and to have a standard approach to interpreting data throughout the district.

Some teachers, teachers' association representatives, and principals said that although the district offered professional development, conditions for participating in these sessions was not always optimal because of the need to provide coverage for classrooms while teachers attended professional development and the reduced time that teachers' had to achieve curricular milestones. However, principals said they supported teachers taking professional time "to meet the needs of the learners."

**Induction and Mentoring Systems (Strength).** The district has a documented induction and mentoring plan for teachers and administrators. Principals, teachers' association representatives, and teachers reported positively on the mentoring program for newly hired teachers. A review of the district's annual mentoring and induction report indicated that the district hired and supported 48 new teachers in the 2020-2021 school year through a virtual new teacher induction orientation. These participants also received one-on-one mentorship from a veteran APS teacher. Teachers stated that they received adequate support from mentors on curriculum, and other colleagues "always help each other out." However, an interview with teachers' association representatives and a review of the program's website and manual indicated that instructional assistants did not receive the same mentoring support as new teachers. These representatives suggested that this discrepancy and low wages may have contributed to turnover among those staff.

## Recognition, Leadership Development, and Advancement (Area for Growth)

Teachers receive details about growth and recognition opportunities through the APS teachers' collective bargaining agreement. Areas covered include salary increases related to advancements in teachers' education and requesting leaves for professional growth and sabbaticals. Teachers' association representatives noted that teachers previously were able to facilitate professional development courses for other teachers as an optional way to "move across a salary scale and advance," but those opportunities have reportedly been more limited in recent years. Although leaves and sabbaticals are still available to teachers, as part of their collective bargaining agreement, teachers' association representatives could not recount any recent requests from teachers for sabbaticals or other growth-related leaves. School-level staff stated that professional growth opportunities may change based on students' needs, but educators said that they were unaware of any opportunities for furthering their careers. These statements imply an absence of mutual understanding between district administrators and staff. A district leader stated that instructional assistants had opportunities for professional growth by participating in a micro-credential program; this program was offered in partnership with a community organization, leading to additional certification that would lead to a change in salary. Other career-ladder pipeline or formal recognition programs were not described in interviews, included in district documents, or found on the district's website.

## Recommendations

- The district should leverage its educator evaluation system to strengthen instruction by consistently providing constructive, growth-related feedback to teachers.
- The district should ensure that teacher assignment is based on students' learning needs.
- The district's master schedules should result in the equitable distribution of educator skill across grades and content areas, as well as student skill levels, ensuring appropriate supports for all students and programs.
- The district should consider developing a career-ladder pipeline and a formal recognition program that offers educators a pathway to advancement and the district an opportunity to recognize and retain educators, developing leaders in the process.
- The district should provide professional development districtwide on data analysis and promote a standard approach to interpreting data throughout the district.
- The district should continue to strengthen its human resources record-keeping.

## Student Support

APS prioritizes a school climate that ensures the safety, well-being, and sense of belonging of its students. Stakeholders identified programs and practices that demonstrate the district’s commitment to advocating for an inclusive and culturally responsive environment, especially about issues of sexuality and gender. Some stakeholders reported that not all students felt equally comfortable in school environments. Formal plans to address this issue are still in development, early in the superintendent’s tenure. Further, the district does not currently have sufficient classroom interventions available for students who do not have an IEP but would benefit from additional supports. Even though all student groups outperform the state averages for those groups, academic achievement gaps exist between student groups within the district. Table 9 summarizes the key strengths and areas for growth for student support.

**Table 9. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Student Support Standard**

Indicator	Strengths	Areas for growth
<b>Safe and supportive school climate and culture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Structures for responding to student behaviors all begin with building strong adult–student relationships.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ensure that behavior management/discipline policies, practices, and procedures are inclusive, developmentally appropriate, unbiased, equitable, supportive, and aligned to the needs of all students.</li> <li>■ Continue to develop staff capacity to examine and dismantle implicit biases and systemic inequalities and create environments where all students can deeply learn, grow, and thrive, including the work of the DEI student advisory council.</li> </ul>
<b>Tiered systems of support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Administrators and instructional staff use data from scientifically validated assessments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provide tiered, evidence-based, culturally responsive supports for students.</li> <li>■ Use a systemic planning process that includes representative stakeholders with authority to make collaborative decisions.</li> <li>■ Evaluate school leadership teams use of tiered systems of support.</li> <li>■ Provide high-quality, ongoing support and professional development to support the use of tiered models and build expertise in academic, behavioral, and social emotional learning.</li> </ul>
<b>Family, student, and community engagement and partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Practices reflect the importance of building relationships with families and the broader community primarily through regular communication with families and students and involvement in community events.</li> </ul>	

## Safe and Supportive School Climate and Culture

The district emphasizes the physical, emotional, and intellectual safety of its students and values students' voices. Students, families, and teachers reported that schools were supportive and welcoming. The district is committed to DEI, as evidenced by both interviewees and a review of related documents. Stakeholders noted opportunities for regular open engagement with students, including their DEI student advisory council, which is meant to elevate student voices. Diversity in gender identity and sexuality are celebrated, but students and teachers said the district culture can be overly competitive and insufficiently supportive of students of color and students from low-income backgrounds.

**Safe and Supportive Environment (Strength).** Students, teachers, and family members reported that schools had a welcoming environment. Students in focus groups noted, "You can always find somebody who you can talk to, and if you have a question, you can always ask somebody." Students and teachers also described open-ended class discussions that made them feel more "engaged" with their curriculum. They described the school environments as inclusive, particularly in terms of gender and sexuality. Students said that school administrators took action against sexual assault and "hurtful comments or even jokes that are made" to the LGBTQ+ community. Consistent with these statements, data from APS's 2020-2021 Views of Climate and Learning survey, administered to students in Grades 4, 5, 8, and 10, showed relatively strong school climate scores for elementary- and middle-school students and typical school climate scores for high-school students.<sup>15</sup> However, teachers and students reported a competitive culture focused on performance and results, not on learning, that "could be a detriment to health" for some students. Interviewees did not describe specific strategies for addressing this shared concern.

**Access, Equity, Engagement, and Student Voice (Strength and Areas for Growth).** Interviews indicated strengths and areas for growth in terms of prioritizing access, equity, engagement, and student voice. Students described positive, supportive relationships with adults and other students at their schools, noting that counselors were a support that they "can count on." Teachers reported that staff were endeavoring to use more "inclusive gender language." The district has shown a commitment to embedding DEI and student voice into its structures through the DEI student advisory council. The council sends out surveys to students and receives constructive feedback on what essential questions the council should prioritize. However, teachers and other instructional support staff consistently reported a divide in needed learning supports and student outcomes between students from lower income backgrounds and the majority who are more affluent: "We've got wealth and privilege and tremendous poverty . . . [students from low-income backgrounds] stick out and they know it and they feel it." Specialized support providers reported that the districtwide implicit bias and microaggression training for staff that took place before the pandemic was not immediately successful; they believed that teachers were not ready to grapple with these issues. Since the return to school in the 2021-2022 school year, APS staff have begun trying to address these issues at the school level rather than districtwide. Students said they thought that racist remarks or actions by students did not always merit consistent consequences.

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<sup>15</sup> According to DESE guidance for interpreting Views of Climate and Learning data, scores between 51 and 99 are considered "relatively strong," between 41 and 50 are considered "typical," and between 0 and 40 are considered "relatively weak."

**Positive Behavioral Approaches (Strength and Area for Growth).** APS’s structures for responding to student behaviors vary across grade levels, but all begin with building strong adult–student relationships. The high school uses an advisory period as a key strategy to build adult capacity to identify, understand, and respond to underlying causes of student behavior. During the daily advisory period, a small group of students meets to request additional, more individualized support from teachers. Teachers and other instructional support staff reported social-emotional learning as a primary focus of their recent professional development, including implementing Responsive Classroom at the elementary level. Family members and school-level staff said that discipline was focused on talking through problematic behavior; as one parent said, “There’s a much more ‘let’s talk about what’s going on, what was driving this’ in a very conversational way versus ‘I’m in charge and this is the punishment.’” Students and some school staff stated that discipline was not consistent. They noted that discipline depended on who was carrying out the discipline and who was receiving it. Data support these statements; for example, according to 2020 DESE data, the in-school suspension rate for Hispanic/Latino students is higher than for other student groups (1.9 percent compared with 0.3 percent for White students) and higher than the statewide average for Hispanic/Latino students (1.6 percent). Still, districtwide instructional observation scores in the high range across all grade levels for the Behavior Management dimension of the CLASS tool suggest that rules and guidelines for behavior are clear and consistently reinforced by teachers.

## Tiered Systems of Support

The district does not have a documented comprehensive multitiered system of support for students. Teachers and specialized support providers explained that the qualification process for receiving additional services is inconsistently administered through what stakeholders describe as an “unarticulated tiered intervention model.” In addition, teachers and specialized support providers described an absence of communication between each other, making their roles feel disjointed instead of collaborative. These school-level staff also identified a need for more Tier 2 interventions, particularly for students who are struggling but who are not considered to have needs severe enough to qualify for special education services. In APS, these often are students of color and students from lower income backgrounds. There also is clear and consistent evidence from students and teachers, as well as school websites, that a variety of extracurricular activities enable students to explore their identities and interests.

**Tiered, Evidence-Based, Culturally Responsive Supports for Students (Area for Growth).** School-level staff, principals, and district staff agreed that APS did not have a fully developed tiered system of supports for students. Staff said that Tier 2 interventions were insufficient in terms of services available; as one staff member said, “It’s kind of like if you’re not identified in special ed[ucation], there’s nothing for you here.” District staff said that schools had their own approaches to identifying student needs and strategies for supporting them, creating a “gray area” when determining which students become eligible for intervention services.<sup>16</sup> Also, principals and specialized support providers identified a need for more interventionists to help address the problem of not having enough support for students who need more personalized attention.

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<sup>16</sup> A district-led analysis identified instances of overidentification of SWDs, which led to a revision of the screening process for students to receive special education services. No additional information was provided about this analysis.



**A Systemic Planning Process With Representative Stakeholders Having Authority to Make Collaborative Decisions (Area for Growth).** Interviews show that the systematic planning process for providing tiered supports is an area of improvement for the district. Teams, comprising teachers, specialized support providers, family members, and social workers, at each school identify student needs, and each school has a protocol to guide this process. However, these processes have not been calibrated or implemented systematically across the district, and specialized support providers reported wanting more collaboration with teachers when implementing planned supports. Specialized support providers and teachers described a strict division between who was responsible for each aspect of a child’s support, which they considered insufficiently collaborative. These school-level staff also described ineffective processes for developing plans to support students who were struggling academically, including infrequent meetings and few strategies to guide teachers in their support for these students.

**Scientifically Validated Assessments for Screening, Diagnostic, and Progress Monitoring (Strength and Area for Growth).** Administrators and instructional staff use data from scientifically validated assessments. Specialized support providers and teachers are trained to administer student Lexile assessments. District staff and teachers reported using nationally available assessments for monitoring students, including MAP, DIBELS, and the Preschool Early Literacy Indicators, to determine eligibility for additional services and monitor students’ progress. The district administers the Panorama and Views of Climate and Learning surveys to gather information about students’ social-emotional well-being and school climate but does not use any screeners or diagnostic tools to identify individual social-emotional needs.

**School Leadership Teams Evaluate Tiered Systems of Support (Area for Growth).** School administrators acknowledged that schools in the district did not have fully developed tiered systems, and specialized support providers and teachers identified school leadership teams’ role in evaluating the tiered systems of support as an area for growth for the district. These school-level staff indicated a need for more professional development on their schools’ approach to providing tiered services. District staff said that additional professional development in creating and maintaining a tiered system is an identified need, and staff were developing plans to deliver trainings, but it is “a long work in progress.”

**High-Quality, Ongoing Support and Professional Development for Tiered Models Building Expertise in Academic, Behavioral, and Social-Emotional Learning (Area for Growth).** Multiple district leaders recognize that teachers need more professional development to support the implementation of interventions. For example, one district leader reported that the district had a district trainer who was training general education teachers to implement literacy interventions but noted that this training was a “work in progress.” District staff also said that individual teachers have pursued trainings for social- emotional supports, but districtwide supports for building expertise in behavioral and social-emotional learning were not systematized.

## Family, Student, and Community Engagement and Partnerships

Clear and consistent evidence from stakeholder interviews and focus groups indicate that APS practices reflect the importance of building relationships with families and the broader community primarily through regular communication with families and students and involvement in community events. The school committee runs a public meeting to facilitate an open dialogue with the

community. The district also is connected through community partnerships, such as the Boston Early Literacy Project. Families, students, and teachers all reported that the new grading dashboard, Schoology, was an effective way to keep families involved and informed about the academic progress of their children.

**Family and Student Engagement (Strength).** Family members, teachers, and students said that APS was focused on family and student engagement. Family members and teachers reported that Schoology facilitated effective communication with families about students' grades and classroom performance. The superintendent also offers virtual office hours with families, and the school committee has open access meetings once a month. The assistant superintendent of student services drafts a magazine, called Access Ability, to give general updates to families and includes an opportunity for families to participate in surveys or ask questions. Brochures for the Community Parents' Advisory Council are distributed at all IEP team meetings to recruit more—and a broader range of—family members to the advisory body. Specialized support providers also have regular meetings with families about IEPs and to address any questions about guidance counseling.

**Community Engagement (Strength).** Teachers and district leaders both identified community engagement as a district strength. School principals host community events; for example, one school organized an event for families of ELs to share about their cultures. Another school had its students prepare Christmas and Thanksgiving cards for the elderly. The school committee also attends other committees' cultural arts presentations to better inform its own community initiatives. The district also has several community partnerships, including with the Boston Early Literacy Project to develop literacy tutor modules and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology neuroscience lab to develop targeted cognitive interventions for students. In addition, the school committee holds monthly open-access meetings at the public library for community members to ask questions and raise concerns.

## Recommendations

- District leaders, teachers, and staff should develop a well-defined, horizontally and vertically aligned tiered system of support across the district.
- The district should put practices into place to ensure that all students are provided with instruction and supports that meets their needs.
- The district should continue to develop staff capacity to examine and dismantle implicit biases and systemic inequalities and to create environments where all students can deeply learn, grow, and thrive, including the work of the DEI student advisory council.
- The district should ensure that behavior management/discipline policies, practices, and procedures are inclusive, developmentally appropriate, unbiased, equitable, supportive, and aligned to the needs of all students.



## Financial and Asset Management

With assistance from the district’s accountant and oversight from the superintendent, the assistant superintendent for finance leads APS’s financial management. These district staff members work together with school leaders to estimate and plan for annual staffing needs, based on enrollment data and staff salaries. In addition, they compile monthly budget reports for the superintendent and the school committee. Finance staff reported meeting more frequently with the current superintendent than with previous district leaders because the current superintendent has initiated weekly meetings. Table 10 presents the key strengths and areas for growth for financial and asset management.

**Table 10. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Financial and Asset Management Standard**

Indicator	Strengths	Areas for growth
<b>Budget documentation and reporting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear and accurate budget documents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that budget documents make explicit connections to district and school improvement planning.</li> </ul>
<b>Adequate budget</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adequate funds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carefully consider how current resource allocation directly supports strategic improvement and what reallocations may be needed.</li> </ul>
<b>Financial tracking, forecasting, controls, and audits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Efficient business office systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spend down grant funds.</li> </ul>
<b>Capital planning and facility maintenance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appropriate preventive maintenance</li> <li>Long-term capital plan</li> </ul>	

### Budget Documentation and Reporting

APS maintains clear and accurate budget documents that include information about all sources of funds and the allocation of resources. The current district budget is posted for the public on the district’s website.

**Budget Documents (Strength and Area for Growth).** APS’s budget documents include pertinent information to guide spending in the district, including information about budget drivers such as contractual obligations and utilities, as well as key initiatives such as K–8 mathematics support and free kindergarten. Budget documents also include historical spending data for comparison. Although budget documents include proposed expenses for each budget by area (e.g., administration, teachers, supplies), they do not include expenses by school. Although the fiscal year 2022 proposed budget includes student enrollment data, including for special populations, there are no connections between student groups and budget drivers or initiatives, so it is not clear from the budget documents if or how student performance data and equity factors are used to set budget priorities.

School committee presentations related to the budget include key highlights, such as new initiatives, the increase over the current budget, cost savings, and outside funding. District stakeholders involved in the budgeting process told the team that district finance staff built the budget based on

staff salary and benefits because these constituted 80 percent of the district’s budget. Finance staff typically work with a grant manager who assists in costing out proposals and providing periodic financials and updates or amendments. However, with the recent loss of the grants manager position, this area has reportedly been a challenge.

**Municipal Agreement.** Municipal agreements fall under the purview of the assistant superintendent of finance, who was unable to participate in the district review. As a result, the review team had limited evidence related to municipal agreements. Still, at least one stakeholder spoke of a shared service agreement between the district and the town to support custodial service needs, which suggested that the two entities had some agreements in place.

## Adequate Budget

Interviews with key stakeholders and a review of budget documents indicated that APS had adequate funds each year to exceed net school spending and other costs.

**Provision and Use of Resources (Strength and Area for Growth).** District leaders and teachers’ association representatives agreed that the community provided sufficient funds each year to cover district expenses. However, disagreement exists about how effectively the funds are used. One teachers’ association representative said that the town could “do better at supporting schools financially.” A district leader noted, “My take is that there’s probably plenty of money pumping through the school system, [but it] is not being spent the way it probably should be spent.”

Interviewees said that district leaders regularly reviewed staffing by generating staffing reports for schools and monitoring staff and class sizes across all schools. District finance staff manage, monitor, and track staffing changes based on recommendations from district leaders. District leaders stated that finance staff used projected enrollment data to estimate the per school budget for “consumables,” which include curricular materials and licenses that need to be purchased or renewed. Teachers reported that curricula in the district moved to digital purchases only, so their hard copy textbooks were diminishing; however, the need for hard copy textbooks still existed but was not funded.

## Financial Tracking, Forecasting, Controls, and Audits

Finance staff provide regular spending reports to the superintendent and school committee members, which is documented in school committee meeting minutes when applicable. The town of Andover maintains responsibility for financial auditing services.

**Business Office (Strength and Area for Growth).** District leaders said that the superintendent received monthly spending reports from the district’s finance department in addition to meeting weekly with finance staff to discuss budget updates. A review of school committee meeting minutes indicated that the school committee received monthly reports from the finance department on salaries, expenses, and key revolving accounts to review during school committee meetings. Interviewees said that finance staff also ran payroll reports after each pay period and managed discrepancies. This process reportedly runs smoothly as a result of proper approval of pay authorizations. Principals stated that they had access to the financial software, Munis, to track their own spending but did not regularly receive financial reports from the district’s finance department.

District leaders described the initial move toward implementing distributed entry of purchase orders as a work in process. The disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic caused delays, but district leaders said that they were back on track at implementing this process. District leaders stated that the finance department was testing the workflow, but eventually it would be distributed to purchasing and accounts payable on the expense side, and other staff would assist with payroll for part of the week.

District leaders told the team that spending down grants has been a challenge because the grants manager position has been vacant since July 2021. The grants manager typically oversees grants, with support from finance leaders, but the finance department has had to be more involved since the departure of the grants manager.

End-of-year reporting requirements are completed by the finance accountant, who prepares the reports and coordinates collecting data from the town and the transportation coordinator. The town provides auditing services, which include the comprehensive annual financial reports. The school district is treated as one “department” of the town for the financial audit. As part of the annual auditing process, major grants, the end-of-year financial report, and the high school are reviewed. Middle and elementary schools are reviewed less frequently but at least once every three years.

## Capital Planning and Facility Maintenance

Although APS has no formal preventive maintenance plan in place, stakeholders said that they were satisfied with the town’s responsiveness to identified needs. The district has a long-term capital plan in place, as well as a process for ranking buildings in need of renovation or replacement.

**Preventive Maintenance (Strength).** District leaders said that APS had no formal preventive maintenance program. However, principals said that they believed that the district performed appropriate maintenance on buildings and reported that needs were responded to quickly. Consistent with principal reports, one district leader added, “I feel that our business office and the superintendent have worked pretty nicely with the town and [in] relaying our needs and understanding the limitations on both sides.” District and town leaders described effective communication when preparing to present projects to the school committee. The superintendent feels involved and informed, and the town manager and the director of facilities for the town and district respond to all requests.

**Long-Term Capital Plan (Strength).** Andover’s town manager maintains a long-term capital improvement plan that is publicly available on the town’s website. The town has a system in place for ranking buildings for renovation or replacement. West Elementary, for example, was identified as a building needing renovation. To address this need, a building committee was convened to start working with architects on designs. Staff from the town manager’s office also costed out the amount needed to run the old building, and the superintendent has been involved in all phases.

## Recommendations

- The budget development process should carefully consider whether current resource allocation directly supports strategic improvement, including what reallocations may be needed to fully implement the strategic plan and supporting plans.
- The district’s finance department should continue its work to help the district spend down grant funds as the district seeks to fill the grants management position.

## 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 APS. The team conducted 68 classroom observations and held interviews and focus groups between December 13 and 15, 2021. 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 representatives
- Principals
- Teachers
- Specialized support providers
- Family members
- Students

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

- Student and school performance data, including achievement and growth, enrollment, graduation, dropout, retention, suspension, and attendance rates for 2017-2021
- Data on the district's staffing and finances
- 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 the previous district strategic plan, school committee policies, curriculum documents, summaries of student assessments, job descriptions, collective bargaining agreements, evaluation tools for staff, handbooks, school schedules, and the district's end-of-year financial reports
- The new superintendent's instructional vision and principles of learning document
- School-level improvement plans
- All completed program and administrator evaluations and a random selection of completed teacher evaluations

## Appendix B. Enrollment, Attendance, Expenditures

**Table B1. Andover Public Schools: Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity, 2021-2022**

Group	District	Percentage of total	State	Percentage of total
All	5,456	100.0%	911,529	100.0%
African American	140	2.6%	84,970	9.3%
Asian	1,019	18.7%	65,813	7.2%
Hispanic	464	8.5%	210,747	23.1%
Native American	11	0.2%	2,060	0.2%
White	3,592	65.8%	507,992	55.7%
Native Hawaiian	3	0.1%	788	0.1%
Multiracial, Non-Hispanic	227	4.2%	39,159	4.3%

Note. As of October 1, 2021.

**Table B2. Andover Public Schools: Student Enrollment by High-Need Populations, 2021-2022**

Group	District			State		
	N	Percentage of high need	Percentage of district	N	Percentage of high need	Percentage of state
All high-need students	1,779	100.0%	32.3%	512,242	100.0%	55.6%
Students with disabilities	1,100	61.8%	19.9%	174,505	34.1%	18.9%
Low income	673	37.8%	12.3%	399,140	77.9%	43.8%
EL and former EL	161	9.1%	3.0%	100,231	19.6%	11.0%

Note. As of October 1, 2021. District and state numbers and percentages for students with disabilities and high-need students are calculated, including students in out-of-district placements. Total district enrollment, including students in out-of-district placement, is 5,516; total state enrollment, including students in out-of-district placement, is 920,971.

**Table B3. Andover Public Schools: Chronic Absence<sup>a</sup> Rates by Student Group, 2018-2021**

Group	2018	2019	2020	2021	4-year change	State (2021)
All	8.0	6.0	7.9	7.3	0.7	17.7
African American/Black	7.1	2.9	5.3	8.4	1.3	24.1
Asian	5.5	4.8	7.8	2.9	-2.6	7.2
Hispanic/Latino	16.1	10.7	13.3	22.0	5.9	29.0
Multiracial, non-Hispanic/Latino	8.1	6.9	11.3	6.2	-1.9	18.9
White	8.0	6.0	7.3	6.9	-1.1	13.2
High need	13.9	11.4	13.2	13.7	-0.2	26.3
Economically disadvantaged <sup>a</sup>	20.3	16.9	18.7	23.4	3.1	30.2
EL	10.7	8.8	12.6	9.2	-1.5	29.0
Students with disabilities	14.3	12.7	14.0	14.8	0.5	26.8

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

**Table B4. Andover Public Schools: Expenditures, Chapter 70 State Aid, and Net School Spending Fiscal Years 2019-2021**

	2019		2020		2021	
	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual
<b>Expenditures</b>						
From local appropriations for schools						
By school committee	\$82,277,406	\$82,451,713	\$85,723,239	\$85,867,903	\$89,040,131	\$88,476,691
By municipality	\$31,650,256	\$29,857,843	\$32,474,104	\$29,639,425	\$33,748,236	\$29,413,212
Total from local appropriations	\$113,927,662	\$112,309,556	\$118,197,343	\$115,507,328	\$122,788,367	\$117,889,903
From revolving funds and grants	—	\$9,487,884	—	\$8,912,051	—	\$10,021,861
Total expenditures	—	\$121,797,440	—	\$124,419,379	—	\$127,911,764
<b>Chapter 70 aid to education program</b>						
Chapter 70 state aid <sup>a</sup>	—	\$10,595,662	—	\$11,668,291	—	\$11,668,291
Required local contribution	—	\$49,950,979	—	\$52,178,457	—	\$52,995,883
Required net school spending <sup>b</sup>	—	\$60,546,641	—	\$63,846,748	—	\$64,664,174
Actual net school spending	—	\$99,251,747	—	\$103,732,627	—	\$107,032,822
Over/under required (\$)	—	\$38,705,106	—	\$39,885,879	—	\$42,368,648
Over/under required (%)	—	63.9%	—	62.5%	—	65.5%

Note. Data retrieved April 15, 2022, from fiscal year 2020 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.



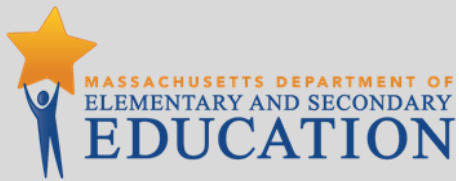
**Table B5. Andover Public Schools: Expenditures Per In-District Pupil Fiscal Years 2019-2021**

Expenditure category	2019	2020	2021
Administration	\$422.36	\$468.61	\$547.07
Instructional leadership (district and school)	\$1,112.33	\$1,168.93	\$1,259.38
Teachers	\$7,115.96	\$7,484.36	\$8,169.16
Other teaching services	\$1,950.15	\$2,005.45	\$2,083.00
Professional development	\$221.34	\$251.53	\$215.83
Instructional materials, equipment and technology	\$326.22	\$367.86	\$381.02
Guidance, counseling and testing services	\$647.18	\$693.58	\$736.69
Pupil services	\$1,360.75	\$1,305.46	\$1,753.21
Operations and maintenance	\$1,594.73	\$1,799.96	\$1,836.13
Insurance, retirement and other fixed costs	\$2,844.49	\$2,936.51	\$3,187.05
Total expenditures per in-district pupil	\$17,595.51	\$18,482.23	\$20,168.55

Note. Any discrepancy between expenditures and total is because of rounding. Data are from [Per-pupil expenditure reports on DESE website](#).

# Appendix C. Districtwide Instructional Observation Report

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## Andover Public Schools

Classroom Visits: Summary of Findings

Districtwide Instructional Observation Report

December 2021



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## Introduction

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

Andover was visited by four observers during the week of December 13, 2021. The observers conducted 68 observations in a sample of classrooms across grade levels, focused on literacy, English language arts, and mathematics.

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. There are three levels of CLASS Manuals: K–3, Upper Elementary, and Secondary. The K–3 tool is used to observe grades K–3, the Upper Elementary tool is used to observe grades 4–5, and the Secondary tool is 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\*: 6.0**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-5	0	0	0	0	3	6	19	28	6.6
Grades 6-8	0	0	0	5	8	5	4	22	5.4
Grades 9-12	0	0	0	1	5	7	5	18	5.9

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 3, the district average is computed as:  $([4 \times 6] + [5 \times 16] + [6 \times 18] + [7 \times 28]) \div 68 \text{ observations} = 6.0$

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

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

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

## Teacher Sensitivity

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*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\*: 5.9**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-5	0	0	0	0	3	15	10	28	6.3
Grades 6-8	0	0	0	3	10	7	2	22	5.4
Grades 9-12	0	0	0	2	2	11	3	18	5.8

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 4, the district average is computed as:  $([4 \times 5] + [5 \times 15] + [6 \times 33] + [7 \times 15]) \div 68 \text{ observations} = 5.9$

**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\*: 4.3**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-5	0	0	3	6	13	6	0	28	4.8
Grades 6-8	0	1	7	5	2	7	0	22	4.3
Grades 9-12	0	4	6	4	3	1	0	18	3.5

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 5, the district average is computed as:  $([2 \times 5] + [3 \times 16] + [4 \times 15] + [5 \times 18] + [6 \times 14]) \div 68 \text{ observations} = 4.3$

**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>17</sup>

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

**Negative Climate District Average\*: 7.0**

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	0	28	28	7.0
Grades 6-8	0	0	0	0	0	0	22	22	7.0
Grades 9-12	0	0	0	0	0	0	18	18	7.0

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 6, the district average is computed as:  $([7 \times 68]) \div 68 \text{ observations} = 7.0$

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

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

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

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<sup>17</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\*: 6.6**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-5	0	0	0	0	1	7	20	28	6.7
Grades 6-8	0	0	0	0	0	11	11	22	6.5
Grades 9-12	0	0	0	0	0	5	13	18	6.7

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 7, the district average is computed as:  $([5 \times 1] + [6 \times 23] + [7 \times 44]) \div 68 \text{ observations} = 6.6$

**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\*: 6.6**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-5	0	0	0	0	1	7	20	28	6.7
Grades 6-8	0	0	0	0	3	9	10	22	6.3
Grades 9-12	0	0	0	0	0	4	14	18	6.8

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 8, the district average is computed as:  $([5 \times 4] + [6 \times 20] + [7 \times 44]) \div 68 \text{ observations} = 6.6$

**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\*: 5.5

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-5	0	0	0	0	10	14	4	28	5.8
Grades 6-8	0	0	0	2	11	9	0	22	5.3
Grades 9-12	0	0	0	0	12	6	0	18	5.3

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 9, the district average is computed as:  $([4 \times 2] + [5 \times 33] + [6 \times 29] + [7 \times 4]) \div 68 \text{ observations} = 5.5$

**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\*: 4.7**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-3**	0	0	1	8	4	5	0	18	4.7

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 10, the district average is computed as:  $([3 \times 1] + [4 \times 8] + [5 \times 4] + [6 \times 5]) \div 18 \text{ observations} = 4.7$

\*\*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\*: 4.8**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades 4-5**	0	0	1	2	3	4	0	10	5.0
Grades 6-8	0	0	4	7	8	2	1	22	4.5
Grades 9-12	0	0	0	6	7	5	0	18	4.9

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 11, the district average is computed as:  $([3 \times 5] + [4 \times 15] + [5 \times 18] + [6 \times 11] + [7 \times 1]) \div 50 \text{ observations} = 4.8$

\*\*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\*: 3.6**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades 4-5**	0	1	3	3	2	1	0	10	3.9
Grades 6-8	1	3	9	1	4	4	0	22	3.7
Grades 9-12	3	1	7	3	3	1	0	18	3.3

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 12, the district average is computed as:  $([1 \times 4] + [2 \times 5] + [3 \times 19] + [4 \times 7] + [5 \times 9] + [6 \times 6]) \div 50 \text{ observations} = 3.6$

\*\*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\*: 4.9**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-5	0	0	3	3	7	13	2	28	5.3
Grades 6-8	0	2	4	8	2	6	0	22	4.3
Grades 9-12	0	2	0	3	6	7	0	18	4.9

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 13, the district average is computed as:  $([2 \times 4] + [3 \times 7] + [4 \times 14] + [5 \times 15] + [6 \times 26] + [7 \times 2]) \div 68 \text{ observations} = 4.9$

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

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

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

## Language Modeling

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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\*: 4.9**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-3**	0	1	0	4	9	3	1	18	4.9

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 14, the district average is computed as:  $([2 \times 1] + [4 \times 4] + [5 \times 9] + [6 \times 3] + [7 \times 1]) \div 18 \text{ observations} = 4.9$

\*\*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\*: 4.1**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades 4-5**	0	0	2	2	3	3	0	10	4.7
Grades 6-8	1	4	5	4	6	1	1	22	3.8
Grades 9-12	4	1	0	3	6	3	1	18	4.1

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 15, the district average is computed as:  $([1 \times 5] + [2 \times 5] + [3 \times 7] + [4 \times 9] + [5 \times 15] + [6 \times 7] + [7 \times 2]) \div 50 \text{ observations} = 4.1$

\*\*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\*: 5.7**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades 4-5**	0	0	0	0	2	6	2	10	6.0
Grades 6-8	0	0	0	1	11	9	1	22	5.5
Grades 9-12	0	0	0	0	6	7	5	18	5.9

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 16, the district average is computed as:  $([4 \times 1] + [5 \times 19] + [6 \times 22] + [7 \times 8]) \div 50 \text{ observations} = 5.7$

\*\*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>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>6.2</b>
Positive Climate	0	0	0	0	3	6	19	28	6.6
Negative Climate**	0	0	0	0	0	0	28	28	7.0
Teacher Sensitivity	0	0	0	0	3	15	10	28	6.3
Regard for Student Perspectives	0	0	3	6	13	6	0	28	4.8
<b>Classroom Organization Domain</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>6.4</b>
Behavior Management	0	0	0	0	1	7	20	28	6.7
Productivity	0	0	0	0	1	7	20	28	6.7
Instructional Learning Formats***	0	0	0	0	10	14	4	28	5.8
<b>Instructional Support Domain</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>4.9</b>
Concept Development (K-3 only)	0	0	1	8	4	5	0	18	4.7
Content Understanding (UE only)	0	0	1	2	3	4	0	10	5.0
Analysis and Inquiry (UE only)	0	1	3	3	2	1	0	10	3.9
Quality of Feedback	0	0	3	3	7	13	2	28	5.3
Language Modeling (K-3 only)	0	1	0	4	9	3	1	18	4.9
Instructional Dialogue (UE only)	0	0	2	2	3	3	0	10	4.7
<b>Student Engagement (UE only)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6.0</b>

\*The district average is an average of the scores. For example, for Positive Climate, the district average is computed as:  $([5 \times 3] + [6 \times 6] + [7 \times 19]) \div 28 \text{ observations} = 6.6$

\*\*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:  $([7 \times 28]) \div 28 \text{ observations} = 7.0$ . 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>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>5.0</b>
Positive Climate	0	0	0	5	8	5	4	22	5.4
Teacher Sensitivity	0	0	0	3	10	7	2	22	5.4
Regard for Student Perspectives	0	1	7	5	2	7	0	22	4.3
<b>Classroom Organization Domain</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>6.6</b>
Behavior Management	0	0	0	0	0	11	11	22	6.5
Productivity	0	0	0	0	3	9	10	22	6.3
Negative Climate**	0	0	0	0	0	0	22	22	7.0
<b>Instructional Support Domain</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>4.3</b>
Instructional Learning Formats	0	0	0	2	11	9	0	22	5.3
Content Understanding	0	0	4	7	8	2	1	22	4.5
Analysis and Inquiry	1	3	9	1	4	4	0	22	3.7
Quality of Feedback	0	2	4	8	2	6	0	22	4.3
Instructional Dialogue	1	4	5	4	6	1	1	22	3.8
<b>Student Engagement</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>5.5</b>

\*The district average is an average of the scores. For example, for Positive Climate, the district average is computed as:  $([4 \times 5] + [5 \times 8] + [6 \times 5] + [7 \times 4]) \div 22 \text{ observations} = 5.4$

\*\*Negative Climate is rated on an inverse scale. An original score of 1 is given a value of 7. The scoring in the table reflects the normalized adjustment:  $([7 \times 22]) \div 22 \text{ observations} = 7.0$

## Summary of Average Ratings: Grades 9-12

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

	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average Scores*
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
<b>Emotional Support Domain</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>5.1</b>
Positive Climate	0	0	0	1	5	7	5	18	5.9
Teacher Sensitivity	0	0	0	2	2	11	3	18	5.8
Regard for Student Perspectives	0	4	6	4	3	1	0	18	3.5
<b>Classroom Organization Domain</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>6.8</b>
Behavior Management	0	0	0	0	0	5	13	18	6.7
Productivity	0	0	0	0	0	4	14	18	6.8
Negative Climate**	0	0	0	0	0	0	18	18	7.0
<b>Instructional Support Domain</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>4.5</b>
Instructional Learning Formats	0	0	0	0	12	6	0	18	5.3
Content Understanding	0	0	0	6	7	5	0	18	4.9
Analysis and Inquiry	3	1	7	3	3	1	0	18	3.3
Quality of Feedback	0	2	0	3	6	7	0	18	4.9
Instructional Dialogue	4	1	0	3	6	3	1	18	4.1
<b>Student Engagement</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>5.9</b>

\*The district average is an average of the scores. For example, for Positive Climate, the district average is computed as:  $([4 \times 1] + [5 \times 5] + [6 \times 7] + [7 \times 5]) \div 18 \text{ observations} = 5.9$

\*\*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:  $([7 \times 18]) \div 18 \text{ observations} = 7.0$

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

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**Table D1. Resources to Support Leadership and Governance**

Resource	Description
<a href="#">Transforming School Funding: A Guide to Implementing Student-Based Budgeting</a> from Education Resource Strategies	Describes a process to help districts tie funding to specific student needs

**Table D2. Resources to Support Curriculum and Instruction**

Resource	Description
<a href="#">Quick Reference Guide: The Case for Curricular Coherence</a>	This guide describes three types of curricular coherence that support student learning: vertical coherence, aligned tiers of instruction, and cross-subject coherence.
<a href="#">Increasing Access to Advanced Coursework</a>	Describes how school districts can use the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to expand access to advanced coursework and increase students’ achievement in these courses.
<a href="#">CURATE</a>	CURATE convenes panels of Massachusetts teachers to review and rate evidence on the quality and alignment of specific curricular materials, then publish their findings for educators across the Commonwealth to consult.

**Table D3. 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 D4. Resources to Support Human Resources and Professional Development**

Resource	Description
<a href="#">Quick Reference Guide: Opportunities to Streamline the Evaluation Process</a>	<p>This guide will help districts reflect on and continuously improve their evaluation systems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What’s working? What are the bright spots?</li> <li>■ How can we streamline the process to stay focused on professional growth and development?</li> <li>■ What do we need to adjust to ensure our system is valuable to educators and students?</li> </ul>

<a href="#"><u>Identifying Meaningful Professional Development</u></a>	A video in which educators from three Massachusetts districts discuss the importance of targeted, meaningful professional development and the ways districts can use the evaluation process to identify the most effective professional development supports for all educators.
<a href="#"><u>The Educator Effectiveness Guidebook for Inclusive Practice</u></a>	This guide includes tools for districts, schools, and educators aligned to the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework. It promotes evidence-based best practices for inclusion following the principles of Universal Design for Learning, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, and social-emotional learning.
<a href="#"><u>Making Inclusive Education Work</u></a> by Richard A. Villa and Jacqueline S. Thousand	The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development is a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization that develops programs, products, and services essential to the way educators learn, teach, and lead.

**Table D5. Resources to Support Student Support**

Resource	Description
<a href="https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfss/mtss/"><u>https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfss/mtss/</u></a>	A multitiered system of support is a framework for how school districts can build the necessary systems to ensure that all students receive a high-quality educational experience.

**Table D6. Resources to Support Financial and Asset Management**

Resource	Description
<a href="#"><u>Spending Money Wisely: Getting the Most From School District Budgets</u></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.

## Appendix E. Student Performance Tables

The COVID-19 pandemic had a profound impact on the 2020-2021 school year. 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. Andover Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Scaled Scores in Grades 3–8, 2018-2021**

Group	N (2021)	2018	2019	2021	Change	State (2021)	Above/ below
All	2,637	509.4	511.6	507.7	1.7	496.5	11.2
African American/Black	71	503.2	505.1	497.7	-5.5	486.4	11.3
Asian	501	517.1	519.6	515.7	-1.4	508.5	7.2
Hispanic/Latino	203	501.6	500.0	494.6	-7	484.3	10.3
Multiracial	87	512.5	517.3	515.5	3	499.7	15.8
White	1,769	508.0	510.6	507.1	-0.9	501.3	5.8
High need	937	495.8	497.0	494.2	-1.6	485.9	8.3
Economically disadvantaged <sup>18</sup>	283	496.6	495.1	491.6	-5	485.2	6.4
EL and former EL	275	503.7	504.5	500.4	-3.3	482.8	17.6
Students with disabilities	597	490.0	490.9	488.8	-1.2	478.1	10.7

Note. Next Generation MCAS Achievement Levels: 440–469, Not Meeting Expectations; 470–499, Partially Meeting Expectations; 500–529, Meeting Expectations; 530–560, Exceeding Expectations

**Table E2. Andover Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS Math Scaled Scores in Grades 3–8, 2018-2021**

Group	N (2021)	2018	2019	2021	Change	State (2021)	Above/ below
All	2,641	507.9	509.4	504.1	-3.8	489.7	14.4
African American/Black	71	496.8	500.0	492.6	-4.2	477.3	15.3
Asian	502	524.1	525.2	520.2	-3.9	508.6	11.6
Hispanic/Latino	205	494.2	493.3	485.9	-8.3	476.5	9.4
Multiracial	87	509.0	513.5	509.5	0.5	492.1	17.4
White	1,770	505.0	506.7	501.8	-3.2	494.3	7.5
High need	939	493.9	495.8	491.0	-2.9	479	12
Economically disadvantaged	285	491.4	490.1	485.5	-5.9	477.4	8.1

<sup>18</sup> **Economically Disadvantaged (2015 to 2021):** Calculated based on a student's participation in one or more of the following state-administered programs: the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); the Transitional Assistance for Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC); the Department of Children and Families' (DCF) foster care program; and MassHealth (Medicaid).

EL and former EL	275	507.2	508.0	502.7	-4.5	477.8	24.9
Students with disabilities	599	487.3	489.2	484.5	-2.8	472.5	12

Note. Next Generation MCAS Achievement Levels: 440–469, Not Meeting Expectations; 470–499, Partially Meeting Expectations; 500–529, Meeting Expectations; 530–560 Exceeding Expectations

**Table E3. Andover Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Percentage Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Grades 3–8, 2018-2021**

Group	N (2021)	2018	2019	2021	Change	State (2021)	Above/ below
All	2,637	68	71	65	-3	51	14
African American/Black	71	57	61	48	-9	31	17
Asian	501	80	82	78	-2	71	7
Hispanic/Latino	203	54	52	41	-13	31	10
Multiracial	87	77	81	71	-6	54	17
White	1,769	67	70	64	-3	58	6
High need	937	40	43	39	-1	31	8
Economically disadvantaged	35	42	42	283	241	32	251
EL and former EL	275	58	62	55	-3	30	25
Students with disabilities	597	27	29	28	1	14	14

**Table E4. Andover Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Percentage Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Grades 3–8, 2018-2021**

Group	N (2021)	2018	2019	2021	Change	State (2021)	Above/ below
All	2,641	64	67	57	-7	33	24
African American/Black	71	46	58	37	-9	14	23
Asian	502	87	89	80	-7	64	16
Hispanic/Latino	205	40	36	28	-12	14	14
Multiracial	87	64	69	63	-1	37	26
White	1,770	60	64	55	-5	40	15
High need	939	37	40	35	-2	16	19
Economically disadvantaged	285	34	30	25	-9	14	11
EL and former EL	275	66	65	56	-10	17	39
Students with disabilities	599	24	27	24	0	10	14



**Table E5. Andover Public Schools: Next Generation MCAS ELA and Mathematics Scaled Scores in Grade 10, 2021**

Group	ELA				Mathematics			
	N (2021)	2021	State	Above/below	N (2021)	2021	State	Above/below
All	429	517.7	507.3	10.4	429	513.7	500.6	13.1
African American/Black	8	—	494.6	—	8	—	486.7	—
Asian	76	521.9	518.2	3.7	76	529.7	520.9	8.8
Hispanic/Latino	25	499.4	491.9	7.5	25	494.8	485.3	9.5
Multiracial	12	523.2	510.6	12.6	12	515.7	503.9	11.8
White	306	518.2	512.5	5.7	306	511.8	504.9	6.9
High need	96	495.5	493.3	2.2	96	490.5	486.5	4
Economically disadvantaged	44	497.2	493.7	3.5	44	489.6	486.6	3
EL and former EL	10	493.8	477.9	15.9	10	499.9	477.6	22.3
Students with disabilities	72	491.2	487.2	4	72	485.7	479.6	6.1

**Table E6. Andover Public Schools: Next Generation MCAS ELA and Mathematics Percentage Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Grade 10, 2021**

Group	ELA				Mathematics			
	N (2021)	2021	State	Above/below	N (2021)	2021	State	Above/below
All	429	80	64	16	429	74	52	22
African American/Black	8	—	41	—	8	—	27	—
Asian	76	83	80	3	76	86	80	6
Hispanic/Latino	25	56	39	17	25	36	26	10
Multiracial	12	92	67	25	12	83	55	28
White	306	81	73	8	306	75	60	15
High need	96	42	39	3	96	28	26	2
Economically disadvantaged	44	50	41	9	44	30	27	3
EL and former EL	10	50	19	31	10	40	15	25
Students with disabilities	72	29	25	4	72	18	14	4

**Table E7. Andover Public Schools: Next Generation MCAS Science Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Grades 5 and 8, 2019-2021**

Group	N (2021)	2019	2021	State (2021)	Above/below
All	863	74	63	42	21
African American/Black	21	68	33	19	14
Asian	154	86	73	62	11
Hispanic/Latino	65	41	46	20	26
Multiracial, non-Hispanic/Latino	27	81	74	47	27
White	593	74	64	50	14
High need	313	47	41	23	18
Economically disadvantaged	100	40	35	21	14
EL and former EL	75	59	59	18	41
Students with disabilities	206	36	32	15	17

Note. Grade 10 results for spring 2021 STE are not provided because students in the class of 2023 were not required to take the STE test. Information about CD requirements is available at <https://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/graduation.html>.

**Table E8. Andover Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Percentage Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Grades 3–10, 2018-2021**

Grade	N (2021)	2018	2019	2021	Change	State (2021)	Above/below
3	397	71	77	73	2	51	22
4	415	71	70	71	0	49	22
5	455	70	73	68	-2	47	21
6	445	73	68	67	-6	47	20
7	448	55	66	57	2	43	14
8	477	71	71	53	-18	41	12
3-8	2,637	68	71	65	-3	46	19
10	429	—	84	80	—	64	16

**Table E9. Andover Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS Math Percentage Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Grades 3–10, 2018-2021**

Grade	N (2021)	2018	2019	2021	Change	State (2021)	Above/below
3	398	64	67	56	-8	33	23
4	415	61	72	53	-8	33	20
5	455	65	72	60	-5	33	27
6	447	64	64	63	-1	33	30
7	449	63	64	55	-8	35	20
8	477	65	64	57	-8	32	25
3-8	2,641	64	67	57	-7	33	24
10	429	—	81	74	—	52	22

**Table E10. Andover Public Schools: MCAS Science Percentage Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Grades 5 and 8, 2019-2021**

Grade	N (2021)	2019	2020	2021	3-yr change	State (2021)
5	455	78	—	68	-10	42
8	408	71	—	58	-13	41
5 and 8	863	74	—	63	-11	42
10	—	—	—	—	—	—

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

**Table E11. Andover Public Schools: English Language Arts and Mathematics Mean Student Growth Percentile in Grades 3–10, 2021**

Grade	ELA				Mathematics			
	N (2021)	2019	2021	State (2021)	N (2021)	2019	2021	State (2021)
3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
4	—	57.7	—	—	—	63.5	—	—
5	424	58.9	43.6	34.9	425	70.0	46.0	31.9
6	420	54.9	43.7	37.3	423	44.8	40.6	26.3
7	389	47.3	36.5	36.1	390	48.1	39.9	35.8
8	442	65.2	35.0	34.8	442	57.9	41.7	27.4
3–8	1,675	56.8	39.7	35.8	1,680	56.5	42.1	30.4
10	397	54.9	59.0	52.5	395	61.7	49.0	36.5

**Table E12. Andover Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Percentage Meeting or Exceeding Expectations by Grade and School, 2021**

School	3	4	5	6	7	8	3–8	10
Shawsheen School	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bancroft Elementary	68	67	65	—	—	—	67	—
Henry C Sanborn Elementary	73	73	56	—	—	—	67	—
High Plain Elementary	73	72	89	—	—	—	78	—
South Elementary	89	81	66	—	—	—	78	—
West Elementary	67	64	64	—	—	—	65	—
Andover West Middle	—	—	—	63	56	49	56	—
Doherty Middle	—	—	—	66	60	58	61	—
Wood Hill Middle	—	—	—	75	57	56	63	—
Andover High	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	81
District	73	71	68	67	57	53	65	80
State	51	49	47	47	43	41	46	64

**Table E13. Andover Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Percentage Meeting or Exceeding Expectations by Grade and School, 2021**

School	3	4	5	6	7	8	3-8	10
Shawsheen School	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bancroft Elementary	35	52	54	—	—	—	47	—
Henry C Sanborn Elementary	82	55	52	—	—	—	62	—
High Plain Elementary	60	64	82	—	—	—	69	—
South Elementary	60	56	65	—	—	—	61	—
West Elementary	55	45	50	—	—	—	50	—
Andover West Middle	—	—	—	63	61	62	62	—
Doherty Middle	—	—	—	53	50	50	51	—
Wood Hill Middle	—	—	—	75	56	62	64	—
Andover High	—	—	—	—	—	—	75	—
District	56	53	60	63	55	57	57	74
State	33	33	33	33	35	32	33	52

**Table E14. Andover Public Schools: Science Next-Generation MCAS Percentage Meeting or Exceeding Expectations by Grade and School, 2021**

School	5	8	5 and 8	10
Shawsheen School	—	—	—	—
Bancroft Elementary	68	—	68	—
Henry C Sanborn Elementary	59	—	59	—
High Plain Elementary	80	—	80	—
South Elementary	61	—	61	—
West Elementary	71	—	71	—
Andover West Middle	—	62	62	—
Doherty Middle	—	53	53	—
Wood Hill Middle	—	63	63	—
Andover High	—	—	—	—
District	68	58	63	—
State	42	41	42	—

Note. Grade 10 results for spring 2021 STE are not provided because students in the class of 2023 were not required to take the STE test. Information about CD requirements is available at <https://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/graduation.html>.

**Table E15. Andover Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Percentage Meeting and Exceeding Expectations in Grades 3–8 by School, 2021**

School	All	High need	Economically disadvantaged	Students with disabilities	EL and former EL	African American	Asian	Hispanic	Multiracial	White
Shawsheen School	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Bancroft Elementary	67	39	32	28	60	–	81	37	71	68
Henry C Sanborn Elementary	67	37	33	22	57	–	80	55	–	64
High Plain Elementary	78	51	48	51	48	67	78	62	75	82
South Elementary	78	66	47	56	83	–	90	–	–	77
West Elementary	65	43	47	29	59	–	76	45	–	64
Andover West Middle	56	28	32	18	33	36	69	39	77	55
Doherty Middle	61	33	29	18	61	–	84	37	57	61
Wood Hill Middle	63	36	21	23	57	–	77	39	75	57
District	65	39	35	28	55	48	78	41	71	64
State	46	28	27	16	24	28	66	26	51	54

**Table E16. Andover Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS Math Percent Meeting and Exceeding Expectations in Grades 3–8 by School, 2021**

School	All	High need	Economically disadvantaged	Students with disabilities	EL and former EL	African American	Asian	Hispanic	Multiracial	White
Shawsheen School	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Bancroft Elementary	47	27	8	23	47	–	71	16	50	48
Henry C Sanborn Elementary	62	34	28	24	48	–	75	36	–	61
High Plain Elementary	69	50	33	49	54	42	79	38	67	70
South Elementary	61	49	41	35	76	–	80	–	–	58
West Elementary	50	24	17	18	44	–	71	20	–	48
Andover West Middle	62	35	36	19	56	50	82	36	62	61
Doherty Middle	51	29	16	17	55	–	82	26	64	49
Wood Hill Middle	64	39	18	27	64	–	84	39	69	57
District	57	35	25	24	56	37	80	28	63	55
State	33	16	14	10	17	14	64	14	37	40

**Table E17. Andover Public Schools: Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in ELA in Grade 10, 2021**

School	All	High need	Economically disadvantaged	Students with disabilities	EL and former EL	African American	Asian	Hispanic	Multiracial	White
Andover High	81	42	50	28	—	—	83	58	92	82
District	80	42	50	29	50	—	83	56	92	81
State	64	39	41	25	19	41	80	39	67	73

**Table E18. Andover Public Schools: Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Mathematics in Grade 10, 2021**

School	All	High need	Economically disadvantaged	Students with disabilities	EL and former EL	African American	Asian	Hispanic	Multiracial	White
Andover High	75	28	29	17	—	—	86	38	83	76
District	74	28	30	18	40	—	86	36	83	75
State	52	26	27	14	15	27	80	26	55	60

**Table E19. Andover Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS Science Percentage Meeting and Exceeding Expectations in Grades 5–8 by School, 2021**

School	All	High need	Economically disadvantaged	Students with disabilities	EL and former EL	African American	Asian	Hispanic	Multiracial	White
Shawsheen School	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bancroft Elementary	68	34	—	30	—	—	—	—	—	74
Henry C Sanborn Elementary	59	38	—	25	—	—	81	—	—	50
High Plain Elementary	80	68	—	59	77	—	92	—	—	80
South Elementary	61	48	—	44	—	—	73	—	—	62
West Elementary	71	53	—	52	64	—	75	—	—	71
Andover West Middle	62	36	41	25	33	—	57	45	—	65
Doherty Middle	53	21	19	9	—	—	64	27	—	55
Wood Hill Middle	63	36	65	25	—	—	71	50	—	58
District	63	41	35	32	59	33	73	46	74	64
State	42	23	21	15	18	19	62	20	47	50

**Table E20. Andover Public Schools: Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Student Group, 2017-2020**

Group	N (2020)	2017	2018	2019	2020	4-yr change	State (2020)
All	441	95.8	94.4	96.7	95.2	-0.6	89.0
African American/Black	9	84.6	75.0	100	100	15.4	83.1
Asian	66	100	96.9	100	97.0	-3.0	95.0
Hispanic/Latino	23	100	73.9	71.4	95.7	-4.3	77.2
Multiracial, non-Hispanic/Latino	10	100	100	100	100	0.0	88.6
White	327	95.1	95.7	97.4	96.3	1.2	93.2
High need	145	87.2	81.7	89.8	85.5	-1.7	81.1
Economically disadvantaged <sup>a</sup>	62	89.3	74.0	87.5	82.3	-7.0	80.6
EL	1	100	87.5	—	—	—	68.3
Students with disabilities	113	81.7	75.6	86.5	83.2	1.5	74.9

<sup>a</sup> Four-year cohort graduation rate for students from low-income families used for 2017, 2018, and 2019 rates.

**Table E21. Andover Public Schools: Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Student Group, 2016-2019**

Group	N (2019)	2016	2017	2018	2019	4-yr change	State (2019)
All	452	96.3	96.9	95.9	97.3	1.0	90.1
African American/Black	9	—	92.3	87.5	100	—	84.1
Asian	66	100	100	96.9	100	0.0	96.3
Hispanic/ Latino	21	94.4	100	82.6	81.0	-13.4	78.5
Multiracial, non-Hispanic/Latino	11	100	100	100	100	0.0	90.3
White	345	95.7	96.2	96.3	97.7	2.0	93.9
High need	137	88.4	89.5	85.8	92.0	3.6	82.4
Economically disadvantaged	56	86.0	91.1	82.0	91.1	5.1	82.0
EL	4	—	100	87.5	—	—	71.1
Students with disabilities	104	84.5	84.9	81.4	89.4	4.9	78.2

**Table E22. Andover Public Schools: In-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2017-2020**

Group	2017	2018	2019	2020	4-yr change	State (2020)
All	0.6	0.9	0.6	0.4	-0.2	1.2
African American/Black	—	—	—	—	—	2.4
Asian	—	0.4	—	—	—	0.3
Hispanic/Latino	—	1.1	2.1	1.9	—	1.6
Multiracial, non-Hispanic or Latino	—	—	—	—	—	1.5
White	0.7	1.0	0.5	0.3	-0.4	1.0
High need	1.0	1.6	1.0	0.9	-0.1	1.8
Economically disadvantaged	1.2	1.7	1.7	1.7	0.5	2.0
EL	—	1.0	—	—	—	1.2
Students with disabilities	1.3	1.7	1.2	1.2	-0.1	2.3

**Table E23. Andover Public Schools: Out-of-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2017-2020**

Group	2017	2018	2019	2020	4-yr change	State (2020)
All	0.9	1.0	0.9	0.8	0.1	2.0
African American/Black	—	—	—	—	—	4.2
Asian	—	0.5	—	—	—	0.5
Hispanic/Latino	—	1.4	1.6	1.9	—	3.4
Multiracial, non-Hispanic or Latino	—	—	—	—	—	2.5
White	1.0	1.2	0.9	0.3	-0.7	1.3
High need	1.4	1.6	1.6	0.9	-0.5	3.2
Economically disadvantaged	1.6	2.5	3.5	1.7	0.1	3.8
EL	—	1.0	—	—	—	2.4
Students with disabilities	1.9	1.5	1.7	1.9	0.0	4.1



**Table E24. Andover Public Schools: Dropout Rates by Student Group, 2017-2020**

Group	N (2020)	2017	2018	2019	2020	4-yr change	State (2020)
All	1,761	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.2	-0.1	1.6
African American/Black	36	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.2
Asian	334	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.3	0.5
Hispanic/Latino	108	2.2	0.0	2.0	0.9	-1.3	3.5
Multiracial, non-Hispanic/Latino	39	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.6
White	1,239	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.1	-0.1	0.9
High need	413	0.8	0.6	0.5	0.7	-0.1	2.9
Economically disadvantaged	166	1.0	0.0	1.6	0.6	-0.4	3.1
EL	7	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.3	14.3	5.6
Students with disabilities	283	1.1	0.8	0.4	0.7	-0.4	2.6

**Table E25. Andover Public Schools: Advanced Coursework Completion Rates by Student Group, 2018-2020**

Group	N (2020)	2018	2019	2020	3-yr change	State (2020)
All	875	85.9	80.9	80.7	-5.2	65.7
African American/Black	19	73.7	70.0	63.2	-10.5	54.2
Asian	164	95.4	90.2	93.3	-2.1	84.0
Hispanic/Latino	50	51.4	60.5	64.0	12.6	50.0
Multiracial, non-Hispanic/Latino	21	89.5	90.0	71.4	-18.1	65.6
White	621	86.2	80.4	79.5	-6.7	70.0
High need	201	54.0	47.3	49.3	-4.7	47.3
Economically disadvantaged	86	67.2	58.8	64.0	-3.2	48.9
EL	5	66.7	—	—	—	27.1
Students with disabilities	131	42.6	36.7	34.4	-8.2	33.2