

# Mendon-Upton Regional School District

## Comprehensive District Review Report

November 2022

---

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

Office of District Reviews and Monitoring

75 Pleasant Street  
Malden, MA 02148-4906  
781-338-3000  
[www.doe.mass.edu](http://www.doe.mass.edu)

### **American Institutes for Research**

Education Systems and Policy

201 Jones Road, Suite 100  
Waltham, MA 02451  
202-403-5000  
[www.air.org](http://www.air.org)



# Contents

- Executive Summary ..... 1
- Mendon-Upton Regional School District: District Review Overview ..... 4
- Leadership and Governance ..... 8
- Curriculum and Instruction ..... 14
- Assessment ..... 20
- Human Resources and Professional Development ..... 24
- Student Support ..... 30
- Financial and Asset Management ..... 35
- Appendix A. Summary of Site Visit Activities ..... A-1
- Appendix B. Districtwide Instructional Observation Report ..... B-1
- Appendix C. Resources to Support Implementation of DESE’s District Standards and Indicators .... C-1
- Appendix D. Enrollment, Attendance, Expenditures ..... D-1
- Appendix E. Student Performance Data ..... E-1



This document was prepared by the American Institutes for Research, in collaboration with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Jeffrey C. Riley  
Commissioner  
**Published April 2023**

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, an affirmative action employer, is committed to ensuring that all of its programs and facilities are accessible to all members of the public. We do not discriminate on the basis of age, color, disability, national origin, race, religion, sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation. Inquiries regarding the Department's compliance with Title IX and other civil rights laws may be directed to the Human Resources Director, 75 Pleasant St., Malden, MA 02148-4906. Phone: 781-338-6105.

© 2023 Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

*Permission is hereby granted to copy any or all parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes. Please credit the "Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education."*

This document printed on recycled paper.

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148-4906  
Phone: 781-338-3000 TTY: N.E.T. Relay 800-439-2370  
[www.doe.mass.edu](http://www.doe.mass.edu)

## Executive Summary

---

In accordance with Massachusetts state law, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) contracted with the American Institutes for Research® (AIR®) to conduct a comprehensive review of Mendon-Upton Regional School District (hereafter, MURSD) in November 2022. Data collection activities associated with the review focused on understanding how district systems, structures, and practices operate in support of district continuous improvement efforts. The review focused on the six standards (and related indicators) that DESE has identified as being important components of district effectiveness.<sup>1</sup>

### Leadership and Governance

MURSD is led by Dr. Maureen Cohen, who was appointed superintendent in 2022. Although this is Dr. Cohen's first year officially serving as the superintendent, it is her 10th year in the district. She previously served as the interim superintendent for the 2021-2022 school year and as the assistant superintendent for curriculum, instruction, and assessment. She receives support from the assistant superintendent, the director of finance and operations, the director of student support services, the director of technology integration, and the director of technology operations. District strengths include strong communication between the school committee, district staff, students, and community members; strong communication between the school committee and the superintendent; an effective and efficient district leadership team; clear processes grounded in data to develop district and school improvement plans; representative school councils; equitable resource development; and a participatory and transparent budget development process. Areas for growth include opportunities for teacher involvement with school committee, and central office capacity.

### Curriculum and Instruction

MURSD uses teacher-created curriculum maps as their primary curricula. In addition, the district uses Wonders as instructional materials for English Language Arts (ELA) in Grades K-4 and Foundations in Grades K-2. The district uses Bridges in Mathematics as instructional materials for mathematics in grades K-5, supplementing the curriculum maps. The district implements regular and rigorous curriculum reviews for all core content areas. The curriculum review process is on a five-year cycle, which includes four stages. The curriculum review process is well documented and structured to ensure regular formalized reviews that align with the district's vision for the curricula. Strengths for the district include a well-documented and structured curriculum review process; concrete strategies to ensure alignment across elementary school curricula; Atlas software to document curriculum and support new staff; project-based learning (PBL) to support deep and authentic learning environments; the recently revised District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP), which lays out strategies for ensuring inclusive learning environments; increased access to advanced coursework; and emphasis on rigor through differentiation rather than course leveling or alternate coursework. Areas for growth for the district are to review the implementation and

---

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

effectiveness of instructional strategies for students with disabilities, and increase district support for instructional coaching to support high quality instruction along a continuum of student need.

Three observers, who focused primarily on instruction in the classroom, visited MURSD during the week of November 14, 2022. The observers conducted 62 observations in a sample of classrooms across grade levels, focused on literacy, ELA, and mathematics. The Teachstone Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) protocol, developed by the Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning at the University of Virginia,<sup>2</sup> guided all classroom observations in the district. These observations used the three grade-band levels of the CLASS protocols: K-3, Upper Elementary (4-5), and Secondary (6-12). Overall, for all grade bands, instructional observations suggest mixed evidence of emotional support, student engagement, and rigorous instructional support and generally strong evidence of classroom organization.

## **Assessment**

MURSD ensures that multiple sources of data are collected throughout the year. The district administers both formative and summative assessments to monitor progress and determine if students have achieved the various learning objectives for the units. In addition to academic assessments, the district uses assessments of students' social-emotional competencies, well-being, and sense of belonging to inform their planning and student supports. Strengths for the district include using multiple sources of data; strong alignment between data systems and curriculum; and district and school leaders who review student performance data to identify goals for closing achievement, access, and opportunity gaps. Areas for growth for the district include developing and implementing a clear process for using data across all school levels, and identifying consistent practices for communicating student performance data and progress with students and families.

## **Human Resources and Professional Development**

MURSD provides clear and effective practices and procedures to support human resources and the professional development of staff. The district has a newly hired manager of human resources and payroll, who reports to the director of finance and operations. Principals lead in the staffing, scheduling, and budgeting of staff within their schools, with support from district-provided guidance and protocols. Strengths for the district include an improved infrastructure for hiring and payroll; a consistent and equitable hiring process; professional development opportunities that include teacher-led and job-embedded, content-based, and individually pursued learning and structures for collaboration; educators who consistently upload multiple sources of evidence to support progress toward goals; comprehensive induction programming, including mentorship; and differentiated roles and opportunities for growth. Areas for growth are to increase district support for the recruitment, hiring, and retention of diverse educators, and to provide all educators with specific, actionable feedback on each standard and areas for improvement.

---

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

## Student Support

MURSD prioritizes equitable and inclusive student supports. Although specific initiatives vary by school, classroom observations support the presence of strong behavioral management strategies across all schools. The district recently convened a team of school-based staff to revise the DCAP and has provided district-wide professional development opportunities to ensure that all staff are familiar with the inclusive Tier 1 practices designed to meet the needs of all learners. Each school has a multidisciplinary team that meets to review student data and develop targeted (i.e., Tier 2) and/or intensive (i.e., Tier 3) supports as needed, as well as an active school council composed of school leaders, faculty, parents, and community members that contribute to conversations about school improvement planning, including budgeting/staffing. Parents and community members also are actively engaged in hiring processes and parent teacher organizations (PTOs) at the elementary and middle schools. Strengths for the district include the prioritization of student support, well-being, and belongingness as critical to academic success; District Instructional Observation Report scores for emotional support on the high end of the middle range; a DCAP revision led by a committee of school-based educators; district emphasis on providing professional development to ensure that all educators are familiar with the revised DCAP strategies and accommodations; and the Smore app, which allows for translations to support the accessibility of family communications. Areas for growth include increasing structures around social, emotional and behavioral supports across the elementary and middle schools, and increasing support for families of EL students to access and engage in parent teacher conferences.

## Financial and Asset Management

The MURSD Regional Agreement includes an agreement with each town to provide the minimum local contribution required and to cover the cost of transportation. Budget development is led by the director of finance and operations and the district leadership team, including the superintendent. The budget development process involves active participation from school councils, school leaders, district leadership team members, and the school committee, and it reflects a commitment to the goals and objectives outlined in the district and school improvement plans. MURSD is currently using a private firm to conduct a capital assessment to inform their long-term capital planning. District leaders described maintaining an internal list of capital improvements needed, but they are seeking an external opinion to ensure that all capital needs are assessed and support the prioritization of improvement projects. Strengths for the district include budget documents that are clear, accurate, and user-friendly; the effective use of all available funding to support students; a local community that provides sufficient general appropriation funds each year to meet required net school spending; regular and accurate reports to the superintendent and the school committee on spending and forecasting; school-level information provided to principals; and the annual procurement of financial auditing services. Areas for growth for the district include the development of a long-term capital plan that describes future capital development and improvement needs, including adequate-sized facilities based on enrollment projections, as well as a plan to address potential future finance limitations.

# Mendon-Upton Regional School District: District Review Overview

---

## Purpose

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

## Methodology

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

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

## Site Visit

The site visit to MURSD was conducted during the week of November 14, 2022. The site visit included 17.5 hours of interviews and focus groups with approximately 80 stakeholders, including school committee members, district administrators, school staff, students, students' families, and teachers' association representatives. The review team conducted four teacher focus groups with five elementary school teachers, six middle school teachers, and nine high school teachers.

The site team also conducted 62 observations of classroom instruction in four schools. Certified team members conducted instructional observations using the Teachstone CLASS protocol.

## District Profile

MURSD is led by Dr. Maureen Cohen, who was appointed superintendent in 2022, as well as an assistant superintendent, a director of finance and operations, a director of student support services, a director of technology integration, and a director of technology operations. Although this is Dr. Cohen’s first year officially serving as the superintendent, it is her 10th year in the district. She previously served as interim superintendent for the 2021-2022 school year and as the assistant superintendent for curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The district is governed by a school committee composed of six members who are elected for 3-year terms.

In the 2022-2023 school year, there were 154 teachers in the district, with 2,105 students enrolled in the district’s four schools. Table 1 provides an overview of student enrollment by school.

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

School	Type	Grades served	Enrollment
Henry P. Clough Elementary School	Elementary	K-4	353
Memorial Elementary School	Elementary	K-4	518
Miscoe Hill Middle School	Middle	5-8	635
Nipmuc Regional High School	High	9-12	599
<b>Total</b>			<b>2,105</b>

Note. Enrollment data as of October 1, 2022.

Between 2020 and 2023, overall student enrollment decreased by 147 students. Enrollment figures by race/ethnicity and high-need populations (i.e., students with disabilities, students from low-income families, and English learners [ELs] and former ELs) compared with the state are in Tables D1 and D2 in Appendix D. Appendix D also provides additional information about district enrollment, attendance, and expenditures.

The total in-district per-pupil expenditure, which was less than the median in-district per-pupil expenditure for K-12 districts of similar size in fiscal year (FY) 2021, was \$16,610.07 for MURSD compared with \$17,145 for similar districts and less than average state spending per pupil (\$18,521). Actual net school spending was greater than what is required by the Chapter 70 state education aid program, as shown in Table D4 in Appendix D.

## School and Student Performance

In ELA in grades 3-8, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS declined 14 percentage points, from 57 percent in 2019 to 43 percent in 2022, which is above the 2022 state rate of 41 percent. In grade 10, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations declined by 11 percentage points, from 77 percent in 2019 to 66 percent in 2022, which is above the 2022 state rate of 58 percent. (Tables E1 and E2)

- In grades 3-8, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations was above the state rate by 22 and 14 percentage points for Hispanic/Latino



students and English learners (EL) and former EL students and by 2 percentage points for Multi-race, non-Hispanic/Latino students. The percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations was below the state rate by 15 percentage points for Asian students and by 1 to 5 all other groups with reportable data.

- In grade 10, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations was above the state rate by 12 percentage points for Hispanic/Latino students. The percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations was below the state rate by 5 percentage points for Low Income students and by 11 and 12 percentage points for Students with Disabilities and High Needs students, respectively.

In math in grades 3-8, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS declined 10 percentage points, from 50 percent in 2019 to 40 percent in 2022, which is above the 2022 state rate of 39 percent. In grade 10, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations declined by 21 percentage points, from 75 percent in 2019 to 54 percent in 2022, which is above the 2022 state rate of 50 percent. (Tables E3 and E4)

- In grades 3-8, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations was above the state rate by 11 to 12 percentage points African American/Black students, Hispanic/Latino students, and Multi-race, non-Hispanic/Latino students. The percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations was below the state rate by 14 percentage points for Asian students and by 3 to 7 percentage points for Students with Disabilities, High Needs students, and White students.
- In grade 10, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations was above the state rate by 14 percentage points for Hispanic/Latino students and below the state rate by 4 to 6 percentage points for Students with Disabilities, White students, Low Income students, and High Needs students.

In science in grades 5 and 8, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS declined by 3 percentage points, from 55 percent in 2019 to 52 percent in 2022, which is above the 2022 state rate of 42 percent. In grade 10, 51 percent of all students scored Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations in 2022, which is above the state rate of 47 percent. (Tables E5 and E6)

- In grades 5 and 8, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations in science was above the state rate by 20 and 22 percentage points for Hispanic/Latino students and EL and former EL students, respectively. The percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectation was above the state rate by 12 percentage points for Low Income students, and by 1 to 7 percentage points for High Needs students, Students with Disabilities, and White students. The percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations below the state rate by 25 percentage points for Asian students.
- In grade 10, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations in science was below the state rate by 4 to 12 percentage points for White students, Students with Disabilities, High Needs students, and Low Income students.

Student growth on the MCAS assessments in grades 3-8 ELA and math was typical for all students. In the grade 10, student growth in ELA and math was high for all students. (Tables E7-E10)

- In ELA, student growth on the MCAS assessments in grades 3-8 was typical for Asian students, Hispanic/Latino students, White students, High Needs students, and Students with Disabilities. Student growth was low for Low Income students and EL and former EL students. In grade 10, student growth was high for White students, and typical for Low Income and Students with Disabilities.
- In math, student growth on the MCAS assessments in grades 3-8 was typical for Hispanic/Latino students, White students, High Needs students, Low Income students, EL and Former EL students, and Students with Disabilities. Student growth in math in grades 3-8 was low Asian students. In grade 10, student growth was high for White students, and typical for High Needs students and Students with Disabilities.

Mendon-Upton's four-year cohort graduation rate for all students was stable and was 98.0 percent in 2020 and 98.2 percent in 2022. The five-year cohort graduation rate for all students improved 0.6 percentage points from 93.9 percent in 2019 to 94.5 percent in 2021. (Tables E16 and E17)

- The four-year-cohort graduation rate was above the state rate for each student group with reportable data by 4.9 to 18.8 percentage points.
- The five-year cohort graduation rate was above the state rate by 0.2 to 4.9 percentage points for Low Income students, White students, and Hispanic/Latino students, and below the state rate by 1.7 to 7.9 for High Needs students, Students with Disabilities, and Multi-race, non-Hispanic/Latino students.

The district's annual dropout rate was 1.0 percent in 2022, below the state rate of 2.1 percent. (Table E20)

- The annual dropout rate for each student groups was below or similar to the state rate, except for Hispanic/Latino students which was 6.3 percent compared to the state rate of 4.3 percent.

## Leadership and Governance

---

MURSD is led by Dr. Maureen Cohen, who was appointed superintendent in 2022. Although this is Dr. Cohen's first year officially serving as the superintendent, it is her 10th year in the district. She previously served as interim superintendent for the 2021-2022 school year and as an assistant superintendent for curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The superintendent oversees the established leadership at all four schools in the district. She receives support from the assistant superintendent, the director of finance and operations, the director of student support services, the director of technology integration, and the director of technology operations. These district officials, particularly the superintendent, work closely with the elected school committee members, who represent residents of Mendon and Upton through their oversight of the district. The school committee has six members, including a chairperson, a vice chairperson, a secretary/member, and three additional members, each serving a 3-year term.

The school committee partners with district and community leaders to uphold Massachusetts laws and regulations, communicates with multiple education stakeholder groups, and maintains fiduciary responsibilities to the district. The school committee meetings offer opportunities to highlight success in the schools, while also building understanding, awareness, and context for what is happening in the district. The committee also engages in review and analysis based on qualitative data (feedback from stakeholders) and quantitative data. As described by the superintendent, the school committee is involved in reviewing the goals of the district and the superintendent, guided by the district's vision and improvement plan.

The MURSD District Action Plan clearly outlines and tracks the district's strategic objectives, initiatives, and goals, as well as a thorough outline of the action steams, timeline, responsible person(s), and progress updates for each strategic goal. The district leadership team, school committee, and principals are involved in discussing district and improvement planning, ensuring alignment in the goals for all stakeholders.

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

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

Indicator	Strengths	Areas for growth
<a href="#">School committee governance</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ There is strong communication between the school committee, district staff, students, and community members.</li> <li>■ There is strong communication between the school committee and the superintendent.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Increased opportunities for teacher involvement with school committee</li> </ul>
<a href="#">District and school leadership</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The district leadership team, which includes school leaders, is effective and efficient and includes functional communication systems that align to the district action plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Delineation and clarification of roles and responsibilities of central office administration to ensure all pertinent areas are addressed consistently</li> </ul>
<a href="#">District and school improvement planning</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ District and school plans are developed in a clear, thoughtful process that is grounded in data and incorporates representation and input from staff, families, and students.</li> <li>■ School councils are consistently engaged in the development and review of school improvement plans.</li> </ul>	
<a href="#">Budget development</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Resources are equitably distributed to schools and programs to ensure improved performance, opportunities, and outcomes for all students.</li> <li>■ District and school leaders develop the budget using a participatory and transparent process, and they review programs, initiatives, and activities with student data.</li> </ul>	

## School Committee Governance

The school committee has established a culture of collaboration, both internally and with the superintendent, school leaders, and the local community. The superintendent emphasized the school committee’s intentionality of building trust across partners. Trust is built by, for example, maintaining transparency in meetings and offering virtual attendance to expand access and inclusivity in the meetings. As evidenced by the meeting agenda; meeting minutes; and interviews with the superintendent, the school committee, and school leaders, the school committee also features student presentations during committee meetings, which serve as opportunities for students to engage with the committee and share meaningful input to impact policies and decision making, as appropriate. Some teachers expressed desire to be more involved in the school committee, such as through subcommittee membership. They described a sense of disconnect between the school committee and teachers, as well as a disconnect between administrators and teachers. However, the teacher association agreed that the superintendent plays an important role in advising and making recommendations to the school committee in relation to staffing and collective bargaining agreements. As one teacher noted, the superintendent is “very willing to work with both sides and very willing to

stand up for the [teacher] association during negotiations, which is really good.” A participant in the school committee focus group emphasized a similar positive relationship, stating,

I think we have a very good relationship with the superintendent and the administrative staff and the central office. I don't think there's any resistance to being able to reach out to anybody to get information. She, herself, is very proactive in terms of communicating with us.

Participants in the school committee focus group expressed appreciation for this strong communication between the committee and the superintendent, which is a clear strength for the district.

At least twice a year, the superintendent presents relevant data to and discusses goals with the school committee. The superintendent mentioned protocols, such as a root-cause analysis and SWOT (strengths-weaknesses-opportunities-threats) analysis to work through reflection on performance and opportunities for improvement. The school committee evaluates the performance of the superintendent using a clear process aligned to the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework. In interviews, the superintendent noted that with her interim status during the 2021-2022 school year, the typical process was slightly delayed. However, now that she is formally in the role of superintendent, she indicated that the standard process is underway for the 2022-2023 school year. The superintendent also noted that the school committee has slightly adjusted the timeline to ensure that evaluations are completed prior to local elections, ensuring continuity in the evaluation team.

## District and School Leadership

The superintendent maintains strong and clear communication with the school committee about progress, policies, budgeting, and collective bargaining, which allows for opportunities to incorporate student and family voices into the strategic decision-making process. As a unit, the district leadership team is effective and efficient and includes functional communication systems that align to the district action plan. For example, one school leader shared in the focus group that the district leadership team meets every two weeks to discuss progress on the district improvement plan. The team monitors progress on the strategic five-year plan and develops specific actions articulating the next steps in progressing through the strategic plan.

Although the district leadership team includes the most relevant staff across the district, district staff acknowledged that the leadership team is smaller in size and solely responsible for a greater responsibility in their roles for the district compared with other nearby districts of similar size. Multiple district and school leaders described how additional administrative positions to provide nonevaluative instructional coaching could support the district in achieving its goals related to strengthening instruction. Similarly, some staff expressed concern in the limited capacity and bandwidth in the district leadership team structure. For example, one district staff member described the central office staff as “a little bit barebones here in some ways” because there are individuals—rather than teams of people—responsible for major areas of work, such as all curriculum and instruction or student supports. Despite a well-structured and efficient district leadership team, district leaders also noted occasional challenges when central office staff are pulled away from regularly scheduled meetings to address crises. As one district staff described, “It's not a lack of trying or not a matter of adding more meetings to the DLT [district leadership team] structure. It's just . . . there's not enough bandwidth.”

The school leaders noted that the district has had a clear focus in recent years on emphasizing “MTSS [multitiered systems of support], building common language, looking at best practices, and building resources in the practices that teachers need in order to be successful in [those] areas.” School leaders also described a recent shift to focus more intentionally on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), which has been well received by staff. School leaders continually reflect on the five-year strategic plan to consider new metrics for success. According to school leaders, the district “has been committed to some forward-thinking ideas about doing school differently, formalized with the support of the community.” The school committee focus group seemed aligned with this sentiment. Although there have been unexpected disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, district leaders described progress realized through their focus on the strategic plan, as well as a community-wide investment in maintaining the priorities, aspirations, and goals that were originally set out in the five-year strategic plan.

One school leader noted feeling fortunate that MURSD school leaders are supported in developing unique staff roles to support their school improvement efforts. One example was the creation of a career community innovations coordinator at the secondary level. With the autonomy and latitude given, school leaders appreciate the opportunity to be innovative in their leadership and try new strategies outside of “the norm.” As stated by one school leader,

There’s a willingness to say if it aligns with who we want to be at our best, and if it is good for kids, try it and learn from it, and see how you can make it better. And if that doesn’t work out, try the next thing. And that’s something I truly appreciate.

## District and School Improvement Planning

A presentation to the school committee in May 2022 illustrated alignment between the goals of the district, the superintendent, the school committee, the principal, educators, and the school improvement strategic plan goals. The evidence for this alignment was strengthened through interviews with the superintendent, school leaders, and the school committee. The school committee noted strong communication between the committee and the district leadership team, which contributes to transparency in sharing information and discussing improvement plans during school committee meetings. School committee presentations and meeting agendas reflect the district and school improvement priorities.

The district and school leadership team meets as a group every two weeks to discuss the strategic plan and monitor implementation and progress. According to district action plans and school leaders in the focus group, the district and school leadership teams spend time discussing specific action plans, measuring progress, and articulating next steps to achieve the goals. The team also spends time evaluating progress to ensure alignment across schools and clarity on next steps and action items. A strength within the district is how the strategic plans are seen through in clear and thoughtful processes and grounded in data and continuous feedback from leadership and the school committee.

Another strength for the district is the consistency with which school councils meet to discuss schoolwide policies and budgets. School councils for each school include representation from school leaders, faculty, students, and families, and they meet regularly for each school to discuss school improvement plans and budgeting. School leaders expressed feeling supported to develop school

improvement plans that align with the district improvement plan, while also meeting the unique needs of their school community. To support alignment and equity, the elementary schools use a common school improvement plan, with each school community adding one unique priority to the shared plan. District leaders spoke to the usefulness of this strategy to support collaboration and share resources across sites.

Across focus groups and interviews, several staff indicated feeling that the district has a lot of initiatives and/or priorities. District and school staff expressed mixed opinions; although some felt that there were too many, others spoke to the importance of each one. For example, one school leader commented as follows:

I would love permission to do one thing really well, like to dig into something all of us together and get really good at it. And I know that that's not the job, that's not the world we live in . . . probably every district you talk to, every teacher, every administrator feels that sense of where they are over initiated. There's too much that's important that we're supposed to excel at.

District leaders were aware of these concerns from staff, and spoke to efforts to improve alignment and coordination across district initiatives to support cohesion and clarity throughout the district.

School leaders in the focus group noted some areas for continued improvement, aligned with the progress made in the final year of the five-year strategic plan. School leaders agreed that they sought out opportunities to support central office staff, given the limited number of staff in departments such as the Special Education department. Although there are strong staff in the central office roles, school leaders acknowledged concerns about staff often being “stretched so thin,” overseeing many units and responsibilities.

## Budget Development

School leaders align their budget decisions with the strategic plan and the school improvement plans, ensuring the equitable distribution of resources to schools and programs. There is transparency in the budget development process, involving district leaders and the school committee. As described in the fiscal year 2023 Budget Proposal Open Budget Hearing presentation and the fiscal year 2023 Budget Book, the budget cycle, which takes place annually, is allocated to each site based on student enrollment and needs, and the programs and services required at each site. As evidenced by the budget presentations and interviews with district administrators, the needs of school sites and students, the return on investment, and the programs and initiatives proposed are considered in the budget development process. School leaders referenced student data and track spending throughout the year, and no recommendations came from the annual audits.

School leaders work collaboratively to develop a new budget annually, using a cyclical process. Budget preparation occurs in September-October, with the establishment of timelines and parameters. In November-December, initial revenue and expenses are estimated, along with initial enrollment projections. January-February is the opportunity to review, refine, and present, including initial budget presentations and a prioritization process. The budget hearing occurs in March of each year. In May-June, the budget is formally adopted, and forecasts and revenue projects are updated. The budget calendar, budget presentations, budget subcommittee meeting minutes, and the line-

item budgets are publicly available and accessible from the MURSD district website. This clear and transparent process is a strength of the district.

The collaborative nature of resource allocation extends across and beyond school sites, as noted by the district leadership team. School leaders described a reallocation of support staff based on evolving student and school needs as an example of how the district considers and uses its funds. There also is evidence of strong collaboration across both elementary schools, including the use of a shared improvement plan. The elementary schools share support staff across both buildings to support the needs of students. Furthermore, the district partners with the town of Upton to joint-fund a technology staff position and provide consultation from the district technology director to the town. One school leader described the collaborative relationship between school leaders and the school committee, in which school leaders feel supported in discussing and proposing where they would like to allocate funds.

## Recommendations

- District leadership should identify increased opportunities for teacher involvement in school committee business.
- The district should ensure that the delineation and clarification of roles and responsibilities of central office staff are well-documented to ensure all pertinent areas are addressed consistently.



## Curriculum and Instruction

MURSD implements regular and rigorous curriculum reviews for all core content areas. The curriculum review process is on a five-year cycle, which includes four stages (outlined later in this section). The curriculum review process is well documented and structured to ensure regular formalized reviews, aligned with the district’s vision for the curricula. MURSD uses teacher-created curriculum maps as their primary curricula. In addition, the district uses Wonders as instructional materials for English Language Arts (ELA) in Grades K-4 and Foundations in Grades K-2. The district uses Bridges in Mathematics as instructional materials for mathematics in grades K-5, supplementing the curriculum maps.

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

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

Indicator	Strengths	Areas for growth
<a href="#"><u>Curriculum selection and use</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The curriculum review process is well documented and structured to ensure regular reviews for all content areas, while also allowing for reviews that may be necessary outside the regular review schedule.</li> <li>■ The district has identified concrete strategies to ensure alignment across elementary school curricula.</li> <li>■ The district uses Atlas software to document curriculum, support new staff, and ensure consistency.</li> </ul>	
<a href="#"><u>Classroom instruction</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The district prioritizes deep and authentic learning environments, including project-based learning supports for middle school and high school staff.</li> <li>■ The District Curriculum Accommodation Plan lays out districts’ strategies for ensuring inclusive learning environments that support differences in student learning needs, interests, and readiness.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Reviewing the implementation and effectiveness of instructional strategies used for students with disabilities, including co-teaching</li> <li>■ Increased district level support for instructional coaching to support high quality instruction along a continuum of student need</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>Student access to coursework</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ MURSD holds a districtwide partnership with Mass Insight to increase equitable access to advanced coursework.</li> <li>■ At the elementary and middle school levels, the district emphasizes rigor through differentiation rather than course leveling or alternate coursework.</li> </ul>	

## Curriculum Selection and Use

Teacher-created curricula are used for ELA in Grades K-12 and are not rated on CURATE. For ELA in grades K-4, MURSD supplements their district-created curricula with instructional materials from Wonders that are rated as “meets expectations” on CURATE.<sup>3</sup> Foundations, which is also used as instructional materials for ELA in Grades K-2, partially meets expectations on EdReports. For mathematics in Grades K-5, MURSD’s teacher-created curricula are supplemented with instructional materials from Bridges in Mathematics, rated as “partially meets expectations” on CURATE. The mathematics curriculum in Grades 6-8 is not yet rated but is expected to receive a rating in January 2023. Grades 9-11 mathematics curricula include Pearson Envision, which overall “partially meets expectations” on CURATE. Grades 11-12 use Cengage Learning, which is not rated on CURATE. Science, social studies, and history are guided by locally created curricula or materials, such as Advanced Placement (AP) courses, and, as such, are not reviewed by CURATE.

A strength of the district is the *Mendon-Upton Regional School District Curriculum Review Process*, which outlines the four stages of the curriculum review process based on a five-year cycle: (a) *Self-Study*: Analysis of the current curriculum and development of action plan; (b) *Develop/Redesign*: Development and revision of curriculum; (c) *Implement/Monitor*: Implementation and monitoring of curriculum (2 years); and (d) *Evaluate*: Evaluation of data/outcomes. This process allows for the district to engage in an ongoing review and assessment of the curriculum, to allow for continued revision and improvement in content and instructional practices. The design and revision of the curricula is based on the framework and process of backward design. In addition to the regular review schedule, the review process also allows for feedback and more informal reviews that may be necessary outside scheduled reviews. For example, the superintendent shared that teacher training sessions and other professional development opportunities have been helpful opportunities to consider and discuss the implementation of curriculum and instruction in past years and identify opportunities for improvement.

The curriculum team began its first phase of the curriculum review cycle (Self-Study) during the 2018-2019 academic year on the Social Studies Wellness (Health/Physical Education) curriculum focus area, assessing the current curriculum and identifying potential areas for growth. Although the COVID-19 pandemic during the 2019-2020 academic year disrupted the review cycle, the curriculum team took the opportunity to reflect more deeply on the structure and alignment of the curriculum and consider a new and different approach to identify challenges. Currently, the district is addressing vertical alignment within each school level and noted that it has been challenging logistically to identify opportunities to bring together larger groups representative of the entire K-12 sequence within each content area.

Another strength of the district is how MURSD leaders have prioritized instructional equity by aligning curricular materials at both elementary school sites. As mentioned previously, the use of a shared school improvement plan supports continued collaboration and alignment in instructional experiences across each school. For example, elementary school leaders spoke of planned

---

<sup>3</sup> CURATE: CUrriculum RATings by TEachers. See <https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate>.

professional development experiences that bring together teachers from each school to focus on the ELA curricular resources and observe high-quality ELA instruction in other districts.

MURSD uses Understanding by Design (UbD) as a framework for creating its curriculum units across all grade levels. Guided by the state curriculum standards and the district's vision for the curriculum, the expectations and outcomes for students are outlined and clearly mapped onto curriculum maps. At each grade level, the curriculum team mapped out the scope and sequence of content and then aligned the curricula vertically. The team has been using Atlas curriculum management software since 2014 to document curricula and engage in the curriculum mapping development process. Through Atlas, new and returning staff can easily and readily access all curriculum materials, including curriculum maps, directly from the database.

## Classroom Instruction

Two observers, who focused primarily on instruction in the classroom, visited MURSD during the week of November 14, 2022. The observers conducted 62 observations in a sample of classrooms across grade levels, focused on literacy, ELA, and mathematics. The CLASS protocol guided all classroom observations in the district. These observations used the three grade-band levels of CLASS protocols: K-3, Upper Elementary (4-5), and Secondary (6-12).

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

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

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

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

In summary, results from the MURSD observations were as follows:

- **Emotional Support.** Ratings were in the upper middle range for the K-5 grade band (5.5) and in the middle range for the 6-8 and 9-12 grade bands (4.6 and 4.7, respectively).
- **Classroom Organization.** Ratings were in the high range (e.g., 6.1) for all grade bands.
- **Instructional Support.** Ratings were in the lower middle range for all grade bands (e.g., 3.4).
- **Student Engagement.** For Grades 4 and up, where student engagement was measured as an independent domain, ratings were in the upper middle range for Grades 4-5 (5.3) and Grades 6-8 (5.2) and in the middle range for Grades 9-12 (4.6).

Across multiple focus groups and interviews, co-teaching and PBL both emerged as instructional strategies and/or approaches that were very frequently referenced throughout the district. The recently revised DCAP lays out MURSD's strategies for ensuring inclusive learning environments that support differences in student learning needs, interests, and readiness, and reflects a strength for the district. District leaders described professional development that supported the initial implementation of a co-teaching model to support all learners within the general-education setting, but they noted that recent staff turnover presented an opportunity to revisit that training and ensure that all staff had a consistent understanding of the vision and structure for effective co-teaching. Feedback from teachers across focus groups suggested mixed opinions; although some spoke about the importance of co-teaching as one element for Tier 1 inclusive practices, others described a need for additional opportunities for pull-out or more individualized instructional supports to support learners who were struggling.

District leaders described PBL as meeting the need for deeper, authentic learning that leverages student interest and agency. The district partnered with PBL Works to join a network of schools implementing PBL strategies. Through this partnership, staff from the middle and high schools have had opportunities to learn more about PBL and develop authentic approaches to implementing PBL in their unique environments.

Middle school teachers noted that their lessons allow students to engage in more collaborative work and collaborative learning. Middle school teachers appreciated using a combination of intentional, strategic grouping and randomized grouping for student group work, which has allowed students to have broader and more diverse opportunities to work with one another and to take on diverse roles in collaborative work. As one middle school teacher noted, "One of the things [about groupings] is that they don't fall into those assumed roles . . . they're put into a position to kind of go outside of what is assumed of them." The structures provided for teachers to engage students in collaborative learning and group work provides opportunities for students to practice and develop social-emotional competencies. Teachers shared that they've noted a recent shift in beginning to see the classrooms as a place in which social-emotional learning is "embedded in everything that we do." This has allowed for regular opportunities for individualized support for students who may be struggling, while modeling for other ways to be supportive, kind, and respectful in the classroom.

High school and middle school student focus groups provided additional insight into the learning experiences for students. One student shared that teachers continually check-in with students to ensure that all students are understanding the content or project. Students agreed that teachers

encourage students to ask questions and receive feedback while learning. Middle school students added that within the classroom settings, they could learn about some of the different cultures, backgrounds, and experiences of students attending their school. For example, one student shared that learning about India in his geography class helped him better understand his friend's culture and religion. Family members in the family focus group expressed mixed opinions about teachers' ability to understand their child's interests. Parents agreed that there was great variability between teachers, but one parent noted, "Some teachers will go the extra mile, and I have seen the magic that happens when they do."

Statewide MCAS testing revealed decreases in overall student performance in ELA and mathematics between 2019 and 2022. Despite decreases in overall student performance, the district's overall ELA and mathematics performance remains at or above statewide averages in all grades tested. However, disaggregated data reveals that decreases in student performance among students with disabilities has resulted in performance levels that are below state averages for ELA and mathematics (all grades tested). On the other hand, students with disabilities in MURSD outperform the state in elementary science. District leaders noted these trends, and they discussed an internal equity audit conducted that revealed gaps related to students with disabilities. As noted earlier, some teachers have conflicting views on co-teaching and other supportive instructional techniques, and district leaders noted existing efforts to strengthen inclusive Tier 1 programming districtwide and systematic use of data to inform instruction and intervention. District leaders identified a need to revisit co-teaching theory, expectations, and best practices to support improved performance among students with disabilities following a higher degree of staff turnover. Several district and school leaders also noted a desire for additional district level staff who could provide nonevaluative curriculum and instructional coaching to classroom teachers and specialists, particularly to ensure high-quality instruction along a continuum of student need. The need to address the implementation and effectiveness of instructional strategies used for students with disabilities is an area of growth for the district.

## Student Access to Coursework

MURSD holds a districtwide partnership with Mass Insight to increase equitable access to AP and other advanced coursework for students. This initiative supported the revision of course enrollment policies to allow any interested student to enroll in AP or advanced coursework and encourage all students to attempt advanced coursework. Teachers described opportunities for students to enroll in an AP course and convert the course to an honors level course if they find that the AP structure is not a good fit. In addition, high interest course sequences have been designed to foster increased and equitable access to advanced coursework. For example, the district developed a computer science pathway that is open to all students and designed intentionally to facilitate access into computer science studies.

District staff across focus groups described elective courses as one vehicle for leveraging deeper, authentic learning that reflects student interests. Staff described the opportunity that electives present to really engage students in authentic learning experiences, while also noting the scheduling challenges that multiple elective courses present. District leaders remarked that MURSD teachers have endless ideas for engaging and rigorous elective courses that they would like to offer, but they noted that the district needs to balance offerings with scheduling and class size restraints. High

school teachers elaborated that sometimes they opted not to pursue an elective offering of interest because doing so would mean that their department colleagues would have larger class sizes.

At the elementary and middle school levels, the district emphasizes rigor through differentiation, rather than course leveling or alternate coursework. District staff described this as an intentional approach to provide equitable and inclusive access to students in the variety of subject areas. The elementary level offers music, art, digital literacy, and physical education. The schedule is rotated so that students can experience all activities. At the middle school level, the electives become more expansive and more specialized, allowing students to have some options within the electives while sharing core experiences.

In addition to accessing coursework, there are many opportunities for students to engage in deep, authentic learning experiences, which also connect to career and college readiness, such as Project Lead the Way. Project Lead the Way provides modules of curriculum geared toward facilitating pathways into STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) fields. The activities, which are embedded in core science and technology classes for all middle school students and computer science classes at the high school, offer engaging, hands-on activities in STEM. In addition, the middle school features an innovation center, which includes technology maker tools to support the Project Lead the Way courses and other STEM activities. This space also has allowed for engagement with families through “family workshops,” as well as collaboration and networking with local business partners. The superintendent expressed pride in the district focusing on student agency, voice, and choice and offering broad experiences, access, and opportunities to students and families. High school students in the focus group expressed appreciation for the courses supporting their career and academic interests, as well as the opportunities to form clubs or sessions aligned with students’ interests.

## Recommendations

- The district should establish a process by which it can review the implementation and effectiveness of instructional strategies used for students with disabilities to better support their improved performance.
- The district should consider increasing district-level support for instructional coaching to support high quality instruction along a continuum of student need.

# Assessment

MURSD ensures that multiple sources of data are collected throughout the year. The district administers both formative and summative assessments to monitor progress and determine if students have achieved the various learning objectives for the units. In addition to academic assessments, the district uses assessments of students’ social-emotional competencies, well-being, and sense of belonging to inform their planning and student supports.

The district ensures that educators have access to assessment results to support ongoing inquiry and planning. In addition, students and parents can access information about assignments, grades, and performance through Google Classroom and PowerSchool. District staff are actively meeting to strengthen systems to support the communication of benchmark assessment results with parents and families.

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

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

Indicator	Strengths	Areas for growth
<a href="#">Data and assessment systems</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The district uses multiple sources of data to provides a comprehensive picture of student, school, and district performance.</li> <li>■ There is strong alignment between data systems and curriculum.</li> </ul>	
<a href="#">Data use</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ District and school leaders review student performance data to identify goals for closing achievement, access, and opportunity gaps.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Development and implementation of clear processes for using data on all school levels</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Sharing results</a>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Consistency in sharing student performance data and progress with students and families</li> </ul>

## Data and Assessment Systems

MURSD uses assessments and related data to ensure that all teachers provide effective instruction that challenges and supports all students. The district ensures that multiple sources of data are collected to provide a comprehensive picture of student, school, and district performance. According to the Assessment Inventory for 2022-2023, teachers administer i-Ready adaptive diagnostics, DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills), Lexia, and WIDA. In addition to these assessments, one district leader explained about the formative assessments integrated into the locally created curricula between benchmark assessments. Curriculum units include formative and summative assessments for use throughout instruction to monitor progress and determine whether students have achieved the learning objectives for the unit. To complement data obtained through academic assessments, the district uses Panorama and Thrively to collect universal information

about students' social-emotional competencies, well-being, and sense of belonging. This varied data collection and analysis is a strength of the district.

The district uses a district assessment and inquiry calendar for Grades K-12. This calendar specifies when each assessment is taking place for the different grade levels and schools from August to June. The assessment calendar has windows for K-8 assessments, state assessments, as well as EL, AP, ACT, and SAT testing. MURSD also has built-in days in the calendar to account for makeup testing days.

## Data Use

Effectively using data to identify district strengths and weaknesses is a priority for MURSD. A strength for the district is that district and school leaders review student performance data to identify goals for closing achievement, access, and opportunity gaps and monitoring progress. The assistant superintendent presents to the school committee regarding MCAS data and the different results and trends observed. District leader team minutes and the MURSD District Action Plan indicate that there is a clear process of reviewing data at the district level.

In addition to using student performance data at the district level, the district leadership team is actively focused on strengthening systems to support the use of student data within schools. One of the district's priorities this year is to further support the regular and systematic use of student assessment data across schools. This priority is reflected in the district assessment and inquiry calendar, which identifies specific dates for teams to review assessment results that immediately follow each assessment administration. In addition, the assistant superintendent collaborates with school leaders and an instructional coach to support the elementary and middle schools with systematic use of student assessment data to inform classroom instruction and supports. District and school leaders described meeting recently to develop additional supports to facilitate teachers' conversations with parents about benchmark assessment results.

Data use through the schools is not as consistent as at the district level and varies by levels. At the elementary schools, student data are reviewed by teachers during grade-level team meetings. Teachers share a curriculum coach who provides support to the review of student data by creating spreadsheets that bring different sources of data (e.g., i-Ready, DIBELS) together, supporting the team in completing an inquiry cycle, and building intervention groups based on student performance data. A formal inquiry cycle was recently introduced in one school and will include a five-week cycle in which teachers review student learning data to generate a short-term goal and action plan. Teams will collaboratively implement the action plan and come back together after five weeks to review new student learning data and assess whether their action plan was effective. District staff noted that the newly hired instructional coach will be supporting the elementary and middle schools to strengthen and align data protocols across each school.

At the middle school, teachers come together during grade-level team meetings, and in smaller grade-level curriculum meetings, which allow pairs of teachers teaching the same content area in each grade to meet to plan instruction. The middle school has department coordinators, who are full-time teachers who receive a stipend to support curriculum within major content areas; however, the schedule does not currently provide time for teachers within each curriculum department to meet



during the school day. District leaders hope that this role can support additional efforts related to inquiry cycles and curricular alignment and is actively meeting to identify solutions and systems to support this work at the middle school. In addition, the district instructional coach recently began supporting the middle school in addition to elementary schools. District staff described an emphasis on aligning districtwide assessments with what teachers refer to as “street data” to support ongoing use of and confidence in formal benchmark assessments. District staff and middle school teachers noted that the district instructional coach recently began attending meetings related to the school improvement plan but has not yet started working individually with teachers or grade-level teams.

At the high school, teachers meet for department meetings according to their curriculum content area. The high school has designated full-time teachers who serve as department chairs, which includes a stipend to facilitate department meetings throughout the year. Within this structure, teachers shared that there is variability in how each department meeting is run. Some content areas administer common assessments and review data as a department, whereas others more informally discuss different data sources together as a team to inform instruction. Feedback from staff suggests that although protocols and structures vary across departments, there is an active commitment to reviewing student data within each department, including data regarding student well-being and belonging.

## Sharing Results

District leaders support the sharing of results among educators. Teacher and district staff feedback provided throughout interviews and focus groups indicated familiarity with accessing and using student assessment results from each common assessment. A district leader described that having each assessment housed in its own platform or website can be challenging to support the triangulation of data across sources; however, this leader indicated that they collaborate with the newly hired instructional coach to make spreadsheets and displays available as needed or requested to support school-based inquiry cycles and data review. The district also indicated interest in identifying platforms that incorporate the use of dashboards, visualizations, and other features to support the triangulation of data from multiple sources in one place. Despite these challenges, teachers generally agreed that data are readily accessible and regularly reviewed by grade-level teams, department teams, and student support teams.

District staff and parents agreed that sharing the results of benchmark assessments with parents is an area for growth throughout the district. During the family focus groups, parents expressed mixed opinions. Some parents indicated that they had been told that the school doesn’t share results of the i-Ready tests with parents, whereas others mentioned that they did receive results when they specifically requested the information. A common theme throughout the parent focus groups, however, was that parents would appreciate a clearer process for communication about this information. As mentioned in the data use section, district staff are actively developing additional supports to facilitate this information sharing in a way that is better aligned with their district emphasis on inclusive Tier 1 practices. For example, it was mentioned that one of the assessments uses descriptive categories for students’ results based on how far behind grade level (in years) they might be. District and school staff noted concerns about sharing this language with parents in ways foster and support Tier 1 inclusive practices.

Although the communication of benchmark assessments with parents is in development, the district does communicate student progress to parents through regular report cards, progress reports, and parent teacher conferences. Students and parents also have access to Google Classroom and PowerSchool to stay updated about student performance and attendance data. In the focus groups, some parents of students with disabilities noted some challenges with timely progress reports and updates from their students' individualized education programs teams; however, other parents described not experiencing challenges with this.

## Recommendations

- District and school leaders should develop and implement a clear process for using data at all school levels to inform decision-making and instructional practices.
- The district should establish and clearly communicate expectations and protocols for consistently communicating with families about student performance and academic progress.

## Human Resources and Professional Development

---

MURSD provides clear and effective practices and procedures to support human resources and the professional development of staff. The district has a newly hired manager of human resources and payroll, who reports to the director of finance and operations. Principals lead in the staffing, scheduling, and budgeting of staff within their schools and receive support from district-provided guidance and protocols.

The assistant superintendent convenes a district-level professional development committee composed of building-based staff to plan and evaluate professional learning opportunities. Professional development at MURSD includes opportunities that include teacher-led and job-embedded, content-based, and individually pursued learning realized through presentations, workshops, and collaborative opportunities throughout the school year. The district provides a comprehensive mentoring program for new educators, which includes training for mentors, new teacher orientation, and ongoing assessments on the effectiveness of the program.

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

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

Indicator	Strengths	Areas for growth
<a href="#"><u>Infrastructure</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ There is improved infrastructure for hiring and payroll through central office staffing and technology.</li> </ul>	
<a href="#"><u>Recruitment, hiring, and assignment</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Consistent and equitable hiring process that includes multiple stakeholders exists.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Increased support for the recruitment, hiring, and retention of diverse educators</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>Supervision, evaluation, and educator development</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The district provides professional development opportunities that include teacher-led and job-embedded, content-based, and individually pursued learning and structures for collaboration.</li> <li>■ Consistent documentation of multiple sources of evidence to support progress toward evaluation goals across educators is occurring.</li> <li>■ Comprehensive induction programming, including mentorship, takes place.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Providing all educators with specific, actionable feedback on each standard and areas for improvement</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>Recognition, leadership development, and advancement</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ There are differentiated roles and opportunities for growth, including distributed leadership opportunities to build leadership skills and retain and maximize the impact of effective professional staff.</li> </ul>	

## Infrastructure

MURSD employs effective human resources policies, procedures, and practices. District leaders provided several documents illustrating the district’s human resources functions, including hiring procedures, teacher induction and onboarding processes, and mentoring program materials. The director of finance and operations supervises the manager of human resources and payroll, whereas the assistant superintendent leads professional development, mentoring, and induction. School leaders shared that there has been a “rejuvenation in human resources and a fine tuning of processes” in the past year. School leaders remarked that strong partnerships with district staff and new protocols have contributed to school leaders feeling more supported.

In January 2022, MURSD hired a new manager of human resources and payroll. This new managerial position was a shift from the previous structure, so some tasks related to human resources and payroll (e.g., banking reconciliations) have transferred to the director of finance and operations. With the restructuring of this position, the district seeks to streamline and improve processes and procedures. For example, in the past, hiring procedures, such as the distribution of offer letters, were carried out at each school individually. To better streamline and standardize, the district’s Human Resources office is seeking to centralize any procedure pertaining to human

resources, beyond just payroll. The office also is streamlining the payroll process to transition to all online forms and processes, to avoid the use of paper timesheets. District staff noted that this transition to an online platform is a goal the district hopes to achieve by 2023-2024.

Although the manager of human resources and payroll supports specific aspects related to staffing, overall staff planning is managed through the annual budgeting process and by the principals at each school. The administrative assistant of the superintendent maintains a spreadsheet database to track staffing, hiring, and payroll. The manager of human resources and payroll noted that the office is currently upgrading their current software program that allows for the compilation of human resources information and data. With this new version, the Human Resources office hopes to improve tracking of staff throughout the district.

The superintendent shared that, typically, if any issues arise with staffing or human resources, the district leadership team discusses them at their regular meetings to ensure that the appropriate supports are provided to resolve situations. The leadership team meeting has been a productive space to work through any issues with staffing or human resources, as well as a space to develop and discuss new procedures. The superintendent provided an example of developing a new hiring protocol, along with questions, processes, and monitoring procedures, during the past year as part of the agenda in leadership team meetings.

## **Recruitment, Hiring, and Assignment**

Generally, MURSD demonstrates adequate recruitment and hiring strategies to meet needs across all district schools. As mentioned by the superintendent and the human resources staff during interviews, the district leadership team has developed protocols and procedures, such as the “Hiring Manual,” to guide the staff hiring process. School leaders noted that the leadership team has autonomy in making decisions about staffing, scheduling, and budgeting. One school leader in the focus group stated, “If I’ve had a need for additional staffing during the school year, it has been well received, and budgeting wise, the central office has tried to make it happen.” The principal leads the hiring process, without direct involvement from the Human Resources office, but the Human Resources office takes over supporting the management of staffing after hire.

Despite facing challenges filling positions with far fewer applicants in the last year, district staff described overall success in recruiting staff to fill vacancies. Both district and school staff identified a need to increase diversity among district staff and noted that recent participation in hiring fairs has been one strategic approach to recruiting a more diverse candidate pool for positions. School leaders expressed that the hiring of diverse teaching staff remains an area for focus and growth for the district, which is particularly driven by the superintendent.

School leaders and the school committee noted a “dynamic environment” in filling staffing vacancies in the past year. Members of the school committee shared that they were impressed with the leadership team’s ability to fill numerous vacancies, while making a concerted effort to align with the values of the DEI task force. One school leader stated that although the high school has been fortunate throughout the hiring process, there are existing challenges in filling the roles of paraprofessionals because of a lack of qualified applicants. The team was able to fill most roles at the start of the academic year, but it has been more challenging to retain the paraprofessional staff

positions, making the process to continue to fill the roles a “stressor” for the district. However, regardless of the number of applicants for vacant positions, the district has upheld existing protocols and processes, which includes a committee of teachers, students, and parents. This has contributed to establishing a consistent and equitable hiring process.

Staffing support has adjusted to meet changing student needs. For example, the district recently hired additional behavioral support staff including BCBA's, adjustment counselors and an in-district school psychologist to increase district capacity to support students. However, this may not yet be at the pace necessary to accommodate the needs of all students. The focus group of teacher specialists, including special needs teachers, expressed some concern in the challenges of staffing at the high school. Although specialist teachers described their appreciation for working at the district and the growth they have witnessed, they feel additional staffing is necessary to truly support all students’ needs across subject areas and courses.

## **Supervision, Evaluation, and Educator Development**

MURSD uses the Vector Evaluations/TeachPoint evaluation system to collect, document, and review evaluation and feedback on teachers in the district. The educator evaluation continuous improvement cycle includes self-assessment; analysis, goal setting, and plan development; implementation of the plan; formative assessment/evaluation; and summative evaluation aligned to the Massachusetts educator evaluation framework. School leaders noted that the educator evaluation process allows for goal setting, reflection, and progress monitoring, in addition to instructional monitoring. According to educator evaluation documents and comments from members in the teachers’ association focus group, the educator evaluation begins with goal setting for the academic year. Teachers use TeachPoint to conduct a self-assessment, develop goals, and monitor progress.

MURSD’s records suggest that administrator and teacher evaluations are consistently uploaded to Vector Evaluations+, formally known as TeachPoint. District leaders explained that because of the interim superintendent status and hiring process, the evaluation process for administrators was started (e.g., administrators completed a self-assessment and entered goals into Vector Evaluations+), but summative evaluations were not completed. As a result, only teacher evaluations were reviewed for this report. A review of the records shows that the expected use of specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely (SMART) goals is consistent. A review of the educator evaluation system indicated that teachers received ratings and feedback on their performance based on the Standards and Indicators of Effective Practice. Only 50 educators required a summative evaluation for 2021-2022, so the evaluation team used simple random sampling to select the sample of 10 professional teacher status teachers. All 10 evaluations (100 percent) were marked as complete and did not miss any of the required components, including a rating for each standard or an overall rating. All but one evaluation (90 percent) included multiple sources of evidence, such as observations, student work samples, or other evidence to support progress toward student learning goals, professional learning goals, standards, and indicators. A majority of the summative evaluations (70 percent) included feedback for each standard and feedback on the educator’s overall performance rating, whereas the remaining 30 percent of evaluations included feedback only on the educator’s overall performance rating. All evaluations (100 percent) included feedback identifying strengths, and 70 percent of the evaluation feedback included areas of

improvement. The review of evaluation documents indicated that all educators were developing both student learning and professional practice SMART goals, which were clearly stated and included on the summative evaluation report.

Professional development systems align with the Massachusetts Standards for Professional Development. These professional development opportunities include teacher-led and job-embedded, content-based, and individually pursued learning and structures for collaboration. The assistant superintendent convenes a district-level professional development committee composed of building-based staff to plan and evaluate professional learning opportunities. The District Professional Development Planning 2022-2023 document provides a working documentation of the goals and plans for professional development at the district and school levels for the 2022-2023 school year. According to this document, the goal statement from the spring professional development committee has been for educators to “develop an understanding of and apply Tier I inclusive practices (including but not limited to co-teaching, culturally proficient teaching, Universal Design for Learning, data inquiry, Sheltered English Immersion, social-emotional learning, PBL, and PBIS [positive behavioral interventions and supports]) within their classrooms.” This goal is to be achieved through presentations, workshops, and collaboration opportunities throughout the school year.

As discussed in the professional development documentation and kickoff event slides, the district aligns professional development activities with the professional learning framework: understand, support, and engage. Aligned with these documents and supported in the interview with the assistant superintendent, the district prioritizes multitiered systems of support (MTSS) and Tier 1 inclusive practices. Furthermore, the district emphasizes the “Portrait of a Learner,” which has contributed to action steps for the district in strengths-based opportunities for students and staff, such as Project Lead the Way and PBL. The assistant superintendent also emphasized during the interview that the district is working toward embedding DEI in “everything that we’re doing in some way, shape, or form.” One way in which the leadership team anchors its equity work is through shared book readings. The book they read this past year, *Your Students, My Students, Our Students*, focused on reframing the idea of inclusion. The assistant superintendent spoke about explicitly incorporating DEI in their work and mapping onto all aspects of professional development activities.

To collect feedback from educators on the utility of the professional development offerings, the district relies on surveys and networking. The diversity of the professional development committee, composed of educators from different groups within the district, contributes to ensuring that more voices, experiences, and needs are included in the development and implementation of professional development activities.

In alignment with the Massachusetts induction program requirements for teachers, MURSD provides a comprehensive approach to support new educators, including a mentoring program with training for mentors, instruction workshops for new and veteran teachers, new teacher orientation, and ongoing assessments on the effectiveness of the program. As described in the *Mentor Handbook 2022-2023*, the mission of the mentoring program for teachers is to

maximize the potential of each new teacher to become an integral member of our school community by providing multiple levels of support, advice, and education. The program will

increase reflection, collegiality, effective teaching practices, and greater student learning throughout the district.

New teachers are matched with trained mentors, and several stakeholders have roles and responsibilities in supporting the mentoring relationships. The *Mentor Handbook 2022-2023* outlines the roles and responsibilities of new teachers, mentors, principals, the superintendent and the school committee, the district mentor coordinator, and the lead mentor, ensuring clarity and communication in the purpose and mission in carrying out a successful and supportive mentoring program. A middle school teacher in the focus group expressed appreciation for the mentoring program, adding that regardless of years of teaching experience, the mentoring program provides helpful support in learning and adjusting to teaching in the district.

## Recognition, Leadership Development, and Advancement

The district provides differentiated roles and opportunities for growth, including distributed leadership opportunities, to build leadership skills and retain and maximize the impact of effective professional staff. Across focus groups and interviews, district staff indicated a strategic use of distributed leadership to both support systemic priorities and leverage school-based expertise to support the relatively small central office team. Although distributed leadership is a district strength, one district leader noted interest in ensuring that teacher leadership roles can “be malleable to the goals of the district,” acknowledging the challenge of balancing the strong structure of leadership while remaining nimble and adjusting roles when needed.

High school teachers remarked that the district provides opportunities to develop professionally and become involved in many new and existing committees. There are professional development days, as well as resources and support to attend and present at conferences. Middle school teachers noted additional instrumental support from school leaders:

I feel checked in on a lot . . . there is an awareness that we’ve got a lot on our plates . . . There is a mindfulness of “you’ve got to take care of yourselves” . . . When people need support, I feel like we’re often getting what they need.

Teachers also shared feeling especially acknowledged and supported during the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. One middle school teacher shared,

I felt like we were hugely well taken care of during the pandemic. I felt like from talking to other people online from different areas of the state and other places that . . . our health and well-being and the emotional health and well-being of us and the students and families was way up there.

## Recommendations

- The district should continue to explore opportunities to increase the recruitment, hiring, and retention of diverse educators.
- District and school leaders should ensure that evaluations provide all educators with specific, actionable feedback on each standard and area for improvement.



## Student Support

MURSD prioritizes equitable and inclusive student supports. Although specific initiatives vary by school, classroom observations support the presence of strong behavioral management strategies across all schools. The district recently convened a team of school-based staff to revise the DCAP and provided districtwide professional development opportunities to ensure that all staff are familiar with the inclusive Tier 1 practices designed to meet the needs of all learners. Each school has a multidisciplinary team that meets to review student data and develop targeted (e.g., Tier 2) and/or intensive (e.g., Tier 3) supports as needed. In response to feedback from the DCAP revision committee about variability across schools, the district enrolled in the DESE-sponsored Systemic Student Support (S3) Academy to strengthen the districtwide approach to student support.

Each district school has an active school council consisting of school leaders, faculty, parents, and community members that contribute to conversations about school improvement planning, budgeting, and staffing. Parents and community members also are actively engaged in hiring processes, PTOs at the elementary and middle schools, and a community advisory board for the high school. Regular district and school communications are distributed in Smore, an online platform selected by the district because it can easily support translations as needed.

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

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

Indicator	Strengths	Areas for growth
<a href="#"><u>Safe and supportive school climate and culture</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The district prioritizes student support, well-being, and belongingness as critical to academic success.</li> <li>■ Districtwide Instructional Observation Report scores for the Emotional Support domain are on the high end of the middle range.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Increased structure around social, emotional, and behavioral supports in the elementary and middle schools to support sustainability</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>Tiered systems of support</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A committee of school-based educators led the DCAP revision.</li> <li>■ District emphasis on providing professional development ensures that all educators are familiar with the revised DCAP and the strategies and accommodations included.</li> </ul>	
<a href="#"><u>Family, student, and community engagement and partnerships</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The Smore app allows for translations to support the accessibility of family communications.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Increased support for families of EL students to access and engage in parent teacher conferences</li> </ul>

## Safe and Supportive School Climate and Culture

Overall, MURSD prioritizes the creation of a safe and supportive environment for students. At the district level, both long- and short-term action plans incorporate strategic goals, objectives, and initiatives related to student support and school climate. The district has implemented several initiatives related to authentic learning in service of equity, engagement, and student voice. Despite relatively low levels of formal PBIS implementation, data from classroom observations indicates that strong behavior management strategies (overall district average is 6.1, with a maximum score of 7) are evident across schools, marking a strength for the district. Student feedback from the Views of Climate and Learning student survey provides additional support for relatively strong school climates across schools, with scores in the high end of the “somewhat favorable” range.

The district’s strategic plan (2018-2023) includes a strategic objective to “support social-emotional learning so our schools are safe, healthy, and balanced learning environments.” In addition, the 2022-2023 district action plan reflects strategic goals related to student support, such as “Review, evaluate and implement formal processes to access and use student data to understand the unique strengths, challenges, needs, and interests of our learners;” “Enhance the district’s multi-tiered systems of support by providing targeted professional development, and enriching inclusive, Tier I practices and supports;” and “Design opportunities for students and staff to engage in authentic learning experiences that allow them to understand and practice the [portrait of a learner] competencies.” To address these objectives, the district implemented multiple initiatives. The district convened a group of school-based educators to revise the DCAP, which summarizes the curriculum accommodations provided districtwide to meet the needs of all learners within the general education setting. Following this revision, the district provided professional development for all educators to support consistent implementation of these accommodations and strategies to support learners within the general education setting. The district also convened teams of school and district staff to participate in professional development opportunities related to PBL (PBLWorks) and MTSS (S3 Academy) to further support this work. The district leverages data from assessments of students’ well-being, belonging, and interests (Thrively and Panorama) and partnered with Project Lead the Way to develop a series of computer science electives at the middle and high schools that are open to all students and provide an opportunity for authentic deep learning in a high interest area for students. At the high school level, the school is piloting a mastery transcript program that supports students in developing a high school transcript aligned to competencies—to accompany traditional transcripts—that will be submitted with college applications.

Across interviews and focus groups, district staff described previously participating in the first cohort (2017) of the Excellence through Social Emotional Learning (exSEL) Network sponsored by the Rennie Center. Central office and school-based staff spoke about this initiative as instrumental in building awareness and emphasizing the value of social-emotional learning throughout the district. While participating in exSEL, each MURSD school convened teams that brought together educators, school leaders, and parents to develop schoolwide social-emotional learning structures, including schoolwide PBIS, and review social-emotional learning curricular options. District leaders indicated that these teams no longer exist, but the work has been incorporated into other existing school teams, such as school councils. Documents describe PBIS use at both elementary and middle schools; however, school and district staff suggested that there are few formal programs or

structures in place. At the high school, all students are assigned to an advisory period that meets for 30 minutes per week. This period is used to incorporate various curricular programs and opportunities related to student well-being and social-emotional learning. Student support staff at the high school have developed an extensive array of options and recommended lesson plans for teachers to use. In addition, student support staff use this period to provide formal programs about social, emotional, and behavioral well-being, such as the Signs of Suicide program, and administer Thrively and Panorama surveys. Advisors loop with students to promote continuity in relationships. High school leaders described dedicating the first few weeks of school to intentionally build strong relationships between students and their advisors and indicated that they felt this investment has paid off: “So their advisor is really kind of that person for them. And we’ve noticed in a couple of occasions that those students are really going back to that advisor now that we’ve built that foundation.” Teachers described that the advisory structure led to increased communication with parents of students in their advisory to support the return to in-person learning.

Despite relatively low levels of formal PBIS implementation, data from classroom observations indicates that strong behavior management strategies (district average is 6.1, with a maximum score of 7) are evident across schools. However, results from the Views of Climate and Learning student survey (maximum score is 100) indicate Mendon-Upton students’ perception of school climate was “somewhat favorable”, as evidenced by overall school climate scores in the high end (48) of the range (31 to 50), compared to the state average of “favorable” (52). The only exception was in the district subgroup of students who fell into the Asian racial category, whose results indicated an overall school climate score in the “favorable” range (51 to 70). District data disaggregated by student groups suggests that students from low-income backgrounds and students who fall into the “other” racial category reported the least favorable views of overall school climate, with average scores falling, respectively, 3 and 7 points lower than the districtwide average.

## Tiered Systems of Support

MURSD provides a tiered system to support the needs of all students by using data-driven decision making to develop appropriate interventions and support. As previously described, the district identified a priority concerning Tier 1 inclusive practices and ensuring that all staff are familiar with the strategies and accommodations described in the revised DCAP. Each school has a multidisciplinary team that meets to review student data and develop targeted (e.g., Tier 2) and/or intensive (e.g., Tier 3) supports as needed. In response to feedback from the DCAP revision committee about variability across schools, the district enrolled in the S3 Academy to strengthen the districtwide approach to student support.

A presentation to the school committee detailed the district’s revisions to the DCAP. The presentation summarizes substantive enhancements to the DCAP to emphasize the MTSS framework and additional interventions, as well as structural enhancements to improve readability, such as the addition of a table of contents and embedded links. The DCAP revision committee also created an additional Resource Guide—linked in the DCAP—to help support teachers in understanding the suggested accommodations and strategies described to support learners. Additional professional development related to the DCAP has been implemented districtwide to further support the implementation of the accommodations described in the DCAP. School staff engagement with the DCAP and the related revisions is a strength for MURSD.

The MURSD elementary and middle school schedules include a What I Need block that is designed to provide an opportunity to deliver interventions and supports to students as needed in a way that supplements—rather than supplants—core instruction. At the high school level, teachers described occasionally using the advisory period to meet this need and balance more complex schedule parameters at the secondary level.

Documents provided by the district provide an overview of the student support process at each school. The language for this work differs; for example, the elementary schools refer to this team as a Child Study Team, whereas the middle and high schools refer to response to intervention teams or student intervention teams. As noted by district leaders, a team of school-based educators is participating in the S3 academy sponsored by DESE to improve alignment across these systems in each school.

In 2019, the district commissioned a review of district structures to support learners who are struggling. This review, conducted by Futures, was organized according to education delivery systems concerning (a) related services, (b) certified special education teachers and paraprofessionals, and (c) central office personnel. The review resulted in recommendations in each area, and a presentation to the school committee provided evidence that the district had made progress implementing most of the recommendations.

## **Family, Student, and Community Engagement and Partnerships**

MURSD ensures that schools support two-way communication and access for all students' families, including providing interpretation and translation services to families, as appropriate. Family members receive a weekly newsletter from the schools that is sent out via the Smore website, which district leaders describe using because it provides translation services to increase accessibility of the information with all families. In addition to weekly communications from school leaders, the superintendent sends a monthly newsletter to families through Smore. The use of the Smore application for translations is a strength for the district as it increases accessibility to information for families.

In addition to districtwide communication, parents and students have access to Google Classroom and PowerSchool. Parent feedback via focus groups indicated familiarity with accessing PowerSchool to view grades and attendance; however, some parents did not know how to access assignment level information via Google Classroom. Parents noted that student assessment results were not available in PowerSchool, and some parents expressed difficulty accessing information regarding their student's performance on districtwide assessments such as i-Ready. Parents and district staff also described parent teacher conferences as an opportunity to hear more about students' strengths and weaknesses. Although parents noted that the middle school conference schedule restricts conversations to seven minutes, parents generally felt that conferences provided a meaningful opportunity to communicate with educators. Parents expressed gratitude for a recent return to in-person parent-teacher conferences. School-based staff shared frustration with the scheduling for parent-teacher conferences, noting that some parents (e.g., parents of ELs) have difficulty scheduling conferences because time slots fill up so quickly. Support staff described facilitating translation services as needed to support parent teacher conferences, as well as advocating to open

additional time slots for parents of ELs to ensure that they too had access to this opportunity to meet teachers and discuss their students' progress.

Each MURSD school has an active school council consisting of school leaders, faculty, parents, and community members that contribute to conversations about school improvement planning, budgeting, and staffing. Parents and community members also are actively engaged in hiring processes, PTOs at the elementary and middle schools, and a community advisory board for the high school. In addition, MURSD has two student representatives who attend school committee meetings and provide an update at each school committee meeting on behalf of MURSD students.

## Recommendations

- The district should formalize its practices and expectations around social, emotional, and behavioral supports in the elementary and middle schools to support sustainability.
- District and school leaders should continue to explore ways in which families of EL students can access and engage in parent teacher conferences.

# Financial and Asset Management

---

The MURSD Regional Agreement includes an agreement with each town to provide the minimum local contribution required and cover the cost of transportation. Budget development is led by the director of finance and operations and the district leadership team, including the superintendent. The budget development process involves active participation from school councils, school leaders, district leadership team members, and the school committee and reflects a commitment to the goals and objectives outlined in the district and school improvement plans.

MURSD currently has a private firm conducting a capital assessment to inform their long-term capital planning. District leaders described maintaining an internal list of capital improvements needed, but the district is seeking an external opinion to ensure that all capital needs are assessed and to support with the prioritization of improvement projects.

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

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

Indicator	Strengths	Areas for growth
<a href="#"><u>Budget documentation and reporting</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Budget documents are clear, accurate, and user-friendly and provide historical spending data for comparisons and sufficient detail for stakeholders to understand resource allocations.</li> </ul>	
<a href="#"><u>Adequate budget</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The district uses all available funding effectively to support student performance, opportunities, and outcomes.</li> <li>■ The community provides sufficient general appropriation funds each year to meet required net school spending.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Development of a plan to address potential future finance limitations</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>Financial tracking, forecasting, controls, and audits</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The district provides regular, accurate reports to the superintendent and the school committee on spending from all funding sources and forecasts spending through the end of the year, with adequate school-level information provided to every principal.</li> <li>■ The district competitively procures independent financial auditing services annually, implements audit recommendations, and complies with other regulations as applicable.</li> </ul>	
<a href="#"><u>Capital planning and facility maintenance</u></a>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Development of a long-term capital plan that describes future capital development and improvement needs, including adequate-sized facilities based on enrollment projections</li> </ul>

## Budget Documentation and Reporting

MURSD maintains clear and accurate budget documents that include information about all sources of funds and the allocation of resources. Information presented at the Open Budget Hearing on March 14, 2022, regarding the proposed fiscal year 2023 budget included an overview of the budget development process, district and school improvement priorities, investment requests, and detailed information regarding trends and projections for revenue and expenditures. Budget priorities, described on page 12, include (a) meeting the critical needs of our students, (b) maintaining level services, (c) advancing [the district] strategic plan, and (d) complying with external mandates and regulation. These documents are strengths of the district.

District leaders described regular meetings with the budget subcommittee of the school committee, as well as school leaders to support budget development timelines. District leaders described meeting with town budget officials to discuss budget development and noted that this year conversations began earlier than usual, which was seen as an improvement in that collaboration. School leaders described feeling supported and autonomous throughout the budget development process. In addition to individual school-level budget meetings and conversations, the overall district budget development also is discussed at district leadership team meetings, presenting an opportunity for a collaborative understanding of district needs and priorities.

## Adequate Budget

The district uses all available funding effectively to support student performance, opportunities, and outcomes. The fiscal year 2023 proposed budget estimated a total operating budget of \$39,909,817, which represents a 2.1 percent increase from fiscal year 2022. In addition, the district reported \$3,560,022 in grant funding. The fiscal year 2023 budget proposal included a plan to increase the use of the districts' Excess and Deficiency fund from \$600,000 to \$700,000 to support the budget.

District leaders described funding revenue as a particular challenge that the district faces because state funding remains quite stable despite increases in costs. As a result, the district relies on local funding to cover rising costs. The district is supported by funds provided by each town through overrides. The director of finance and operations estimates that even without the additional override funding, the district would continue to meet net school spending requirements. However, he noted that as costs rise, the override funding becomes increasingly critical to maintain level services and meet the needs of students, but continued funding depends on voters in each community.

As part of the fiscal year 2023 budget development process, the district conducted a SWOT analysis. This analysis indicated a weakness in limited recurring funds allocated for technology replacement. Additional financial threats were noted, such as “reduced state aid, limiting funding beyond fixed costs, and the negative impact of uncertain budgets on staffing, enrollment, resources and culture.”

## Financial Tracking, Forecasting, Controls, and Audits

The director of finance and operations provides regular revenue and expenditure reports to the superintendent and the school committee. District leaders described recent changes to the format of the revenue and expenditure reports based on school committee requests. For example, they are now sharing reports that summarize monthly revenue/spending amounts, as well as a five-year historical report to demonstrate trends across time for comparison. The director also prepares similar reports for school leaders throughout the year, including during the budget development process.

The director of finance and operations supervises a staff member who handles all accounts payable and receivable, as well as the manager of human resources and payroll. Together, the team has systems established to ensure that funds are received and paid appropriately, including securing prior approvals and receipts of goods or services. School leaders directly enter purchase orders into the district's software system, and they are restricted to the amount of funding allocated to their school budget. However, the director of finance and operations monitors all accounts “almost every



day” to ensure that funds are used and documented appropriately and describes occasionally catching and correcting minor errors in data entry.

MURSD leaders secure annual external auditing to ensure that financial tracking, forecasting, and control systems are accurate and effective. The results of external audits reveal minimal recommendations. The fiscal year 2021 audit included a recommendation that the district renew leases on each elementary school, which would have expired in December 2021. As elaborated on in the next section regarding facilities, the district had made progress implementing this recommendation by the time of the district review.

## Capital Planning and Facility Maintenance

Currently, the district does not have a long-term capital plan to guide facility maintenance and improvements. However, the district is working with a private firm to conduct a capital assessment to guide their long-term capital planning efforts. District leaders described maintaining an internal list of projects and updates that are recommended by the director of grounds and maintenance. However, they described this private assessment as instrumental in guiding their prioritization of these projects, as well as communicating the long-term plan back to the communities.

Despite the lack of a capital plan, district leaders have prioritized facility repairs and identified funding strategies to complete needed projects efficiently. For example, district leaders described that by refinancing debt from the high school renovation, they benefitted from two extra years of reimbursement from the School Building Authority after the debt was paid off. With town approval, these funds were used to make repairs to the boilers at Nipmuc High School.

The MURSD regional agreement stipulates that each town owns the elementary school properties and leases them to the district. The town of Mendon recently voted to renew their lease, which had been in place for 20 years and expired in 2021. The leases stipulated that the district is responsible for all utilities and certain other operating costs. District leaders indicated that the renewed leases would likely have similar terms.

## Recommendations

- District leadership should work with the school committee and other community members to develop a plan to address potential future finance limitations.
- The district should develop a long-term capital plan that describes future capital development and improvement needs, including adequate-sized facilities based on enrollment projections.

## Appendix A. Summary of Site Visit Activities

---

The AIR team completed the following activities as part of the district review activities in MURSD. The team conducted 62 classroom observations during the week of November 14, 2022, and held interviews and focus groups between November 14 and 16. The site visit team conducted interviews and focus groups with the following representatives from the school and the district:

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

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

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

# Appendix B. Districtwide Instructional Observation Report

---

## *Mendon-Upton Public Schools*

### Classroom Visits: Summary of Findings

## Districtwide Instructional Observation Report

November 2022



# Contents

	<b>Page</b>
Introduction .....	1
Positive Climate.....	3
Teacher Sensitivity.....	4
Regard for Student Perspectives .....	5
Negative Climate .....	6
Behavior Management .....	7
Productivity.....	8
Instructional Learning Formats .....	9
Concept Development .....	10
Content Understanding.....	11
Analysis and Inquiry .....	12
Quality of Feedback .....	13
Language Modeling .....	14
Instructional Dialogue.....	15
Student Engagement .....	16
Summary of Average Ratings: Grades K-5 .....	17
Summary of Average Ratings: Grades 6-8 .....	18
Summary of Average Ratings: Grades 9-12 .....	19
References .....	20



## Introduction

---

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

Two observers visited Mendon-Upton Public Schools during the week of November 14, 2022. Observers conducted 62 observations in a sample of classrooms across four schools. Observations were conducted in grades K-12 and focused primarily on literacy, English language arts, and mathematics instruction.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

## Positive Climate

---

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

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

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

#### **Positive Climate District Average\*: 5.4**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
								<b>62</b>	<b>5.4</b>
Grades K-5	0	0	1	7	6	8	5	27	5.3
Grades 6-8	0	0	0	2	6	3	3	14	5.5
Grades 9-12	0	0	1	3	9	4	4	21	5.3

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 3, the district average is computed as:  $([3 \times 2] + [4 \times 12] + [5 \times 21] + [6 \times 15] + [7 \times 12]) \div 62 \text{ observations} = 5.4$

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

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

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

## Teacher Sensitivity

---

*Emotional Support domain, Grades K–12*

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

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

**Teacher Sensitivity District Average\*: 5.4**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-5	0	0	0	7	7	10	3	27	5.3
Grades 6-8	0	2	1	2	1	5	3	14	5.1
Grades 9-12	0	0	1	2	5	9	4	21	5.6

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 4, the district average is computed as:  $([2 \times 2] + [3 \times 2] + [4 \times 11] + [5 \times 13] + [6 \times 24] + [7 \times 10]) \div 62 \text{ observations} = 5.4$

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

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

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

## Regard for Student Perspectives

---

*Emotional Support domain, Grades K–12*

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

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

**Regard for Student Perspectives District Average\*: 3.7**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-5	1	2	5	5	11	3	0	27	4.2
Grades 6-8	0	4	4	4	1	1	0	14	3.4
Grades 9-12	0	7	7	3	3	1	0	21	3.2

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 5, the district average is computed as:  $([1 \times 1] + [2 \times 13] + [3 \times 16] + [4 \times 12] + [5 \times 15] + [6 \times 5]) \div 62 \text{ observations} = 3.7$

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

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

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

## Negative Climate

---

*Emotional Support domain, Grades K–3*

*Classroom Organization domain, Grades 4–12*

Negative Climate reflects the overall level of expressed negativity in the classroom. The frequency, quality, and intensity of teacher and student negativity are key to this dimension (*CLASS K–3 Manual*, p. 28, *CLASS Upper Elementary Manual*, p. 55, *CLASS Secondary Manual*, p. 55). For the purposes of this report, we have inversed the observers scores, to be consistent with the range scores across all dimensions. Therefore, a high range score in this dimension indicates an absence of negative climate, and a low range score indicates the presence of negative climate.<sup>1</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	1	26	27	7.0
Grades 6-8	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	14	7.0
Grades 9-12	0	0	0	0	0	0	21	21	7.0

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 6, the district average is computed as:  $([6 \times 1] + [7 \times 61]) \div 62 \text{ observations} = 7.0$

**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.

---

<sup>1</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

---

*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\*: 6.1**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-5	0	0	1	2	3	5	16	27	6.2
Grades 6-8	0	0	5	0	0	1	8	14	5.5
Grades 9-12	0	0	0	1	3	3	14	21	6.4

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 7, the district average is computed as:  $([3 \times 6] + [4 \times 3] + [5 \times 6] + [6 \times 9] + [7 \times 38]) \div 62 \text{ observations} = 6.1$

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

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

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

## Productivity

---

*Classroom Organization domain, Grades K–12*

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

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

**Productivity District Average\*: 6.1**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-5	0	0	0	0	5	7	15	27	6.4
Grades 6-8	0	0	0	2	4	2	6	14	5.9
Grades 9-12	0	0	0	2	5	5	9	21	6.0

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 8, the district average is computed as:  $([4 \times 4] + [5 \times 14] + [6 \times 14] + [7 \times 30]) \div 62 \text{ observations} = 6.1$

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

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

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

## Instructional Learning Formats

---

Classroom Organization domain, Grades K–3

Instructional Support domain, Grades 4 – 12

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

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

**Instructional Learning Formats District Average\*: 5.0**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-5	0	0	0	2	19	6	0	27	5.1
Grades 6-8	0	0	1	0	11	2	0	14	5.0
Grades 9-12	0	1	2	2	14	2	0	21	4.7

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 9, the district average is computed as:  $([2 \times 1] + [3 \times 3] + [4 \times 4] + [5 \times 44] + [6 \times 10]) \div 62 \text{ observations} = 5.0$

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

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

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



## Concept Development

---

*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\*: 2.5**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-3**	4	6	4	5	0	0	0	19	2.5

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 10, the district average is computed as:  $([1 \times 4] + [2 \times 6] + [3 \times 4] + [4 \times 5]) \div 19 \text{ observations} = 2.5$

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

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

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

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

## Content Understanding

---

*Instructional Support domain, Grades 4 – 12*

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

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

**Content Understanding District Average\*: 3.6**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades 4-5**	0	1	2	4	0	1	0	8	3.8
Grades 6-8	0	3	4	1	5	1	0	14	3.8
Grades 9-12	0	2	11	6	2	0	0	21	3.4

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 11, the district average is computed as:  $([2 \times 6] + [3 \times 17] + [4 \times 11] + [5 \times 7] + [6 \times 2]) \div 43 \text{ observations} = 3.6$

\*\*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

---

Instructional Support domain, Grades 4 – 12

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

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

**Analysis and Inquiry District Average\*: 2.7**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades 4-5**	0	1	2	3	2	0	0	8	3.8
Grades 6-8	6	4	1	0	1	2	0	14	2.4
Grades 9-12	6	5	7	1	1	1	0	21	2.5

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 12, the district average is computed as:  $([1 \times 12] + [2 \times 10] + [3 \times 10] + [4 \times 4] + [5 \times 4] + [6 \times 3]) \div 43 \text{ observations} = 2.7$

\*\*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

---

*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\*: 3.2**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-5	3	9	7	0	6	2	0	27	3.1
Grades 6-8	3	4	3	1	1	1	1	14	3.0
Grades 9-12	1	6	5	5	2	2	0	21	3.3

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 13, the district average is computed as:  $([1 \times 7] + [2 \times 19] + [3 \times 15] + [4 \times 6] + [5 \times 9] + [6 \times 5] + [7 \times 1]) \div 62 \text{ observations} = 3.2$

**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

---

*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\*: 3.5**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-3**	0	2	8	7	2	0	0	19	3.5

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 14, the district average is computed as:  $([2 \times 2] + [3 \times 8] + [4 \times 7] + [5 \times 2]) \div 19 \text{ observations} = 3.5$

\*\*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

---

*Instructional Support domain, Grades 4–12*

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

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

**Instructional Dialogue District Average\*: 3.3**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades 4-5**	1	1	2	1	2	1	0	8	3.6
Grades 6-8	2	3	2	2	4	1	0	14	3.4
Grades 9-12	3	6	5	3	2	2	0	21	3.0

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 15, the district average is computed as:  $([1 \times 6] + [2 \times 10] + [3 \times 9] + [4 \times 6] + [5 \times 8] + [6 \times 4]) \div 43 \text{ observations} = 3.3$

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

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

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

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

# Student Engagement

---

Student Engagement domain, Grades 4–12

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

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

**Student Engagement District Average\*: 4.9**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades 4-5**	0	0	0	0	6	2	0	8	5.3
Grades 6-8	0	0	0	2	7	5	0	14	5.2
Grades 9-12	0	0	2	6	12	1	0	21	4.6

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 16, the district average is computed as:  $([3 \times 2] + [4 \times 8] + [5 \times 25] + [6 \times 8]) \div 43 \text{ observations} = 4.9$

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

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

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

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

## Summary of Average Ratings: Grades K–5

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

	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average Scores*
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
<b>Emotional Support Domain</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>5.5</b>
Positive Climate	0	0	1	7	6	8	5	27	5.3
Negative Climate**	0	0	0	0	0	1	26	27	7.0
Teacher Sensitivity	0	0	0	7	7	10	3	27	5.3
Regard for Student Perspectives	1	2	5	5	11	3	0	27	4.2
<b>Classroom Organization Domain</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>5.9</b>
Behavior Management	0	0	1	2	3	5	16	27	6.2
Productivity	0	0	0	0	5	7	15	27	6.4
Instructional Learning Formats***	0	0	0	2	19	6	0	27	5.1
<b>Instructional Support Domain</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>3.2</b>
Concept Development (K-3 only)	4	6	4	5	0	0	0	19	2.5
Content Understanding (UE only)	0	1	2	4	0	1	0	8	3.8
Analysis and Inquiry (UE only)	0	1	2	3	2	0	0	8	3.8
Quality of Feedback	3	9	7	0	6	2	0	27	3.1
Language Modeling (K-3 only)	0	2	8	7	2	0	0	19	3.5
Instructional Dialogue (UE only)	1	1	2	1	2	1	0	8	3.6
<b>Student Engagement (UE only)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5.3</b>

\*The district average is an average of the scores. For example, for Positive Climate, the district average is computed as:  $([3 \times 1] + [4 \times 7] + [5 \times 6] + [6 \times 8] + [7 \times 5]) \div 27 \text{ observations} = 5.3$

\*\*Negative Climate is rated on an inverse scale. An original score of 1 is given a value of 7. The scoring in the table reflects the normalized adjustment:  $([6 \times 1] + [7 \times 26]) \div 27 \text{ observations} = 7.0$ . 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>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>4.6</b>
Positive Climate	0	0	0	2	6	3	3	14	5.5
Teacher Sensitivity	0	2	1	2	1	5	3	14	5.1
Regard for Student Perspectives	0	4	4	4	1	1	0	14	3.4
<b>Classroom Organization Domain</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>6.1</b>
Behavior Management	0	0	5	0	0	1	8	14	5.5
Productivity	0	0	0	2	4	2	6	14	5.9
Negative Climate**	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	14	7.0
<b>Instructional Support Domain</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>3.5</b>
Instructional Learning Formats	0	0	1	0	11	2	0	14	5.0
Content Understanding	0	3	4	1	5	1	0	14	3.8
Analysis and Inquiry	6	4	1	0	1	2	0	14	2.4
Quality of Feedback	3	4	3	1	1	1	1	14	3.0
Instructional Dialogue	2	3	2	2	4	1	0	14	3.4
<b>Student Engagement</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>5.2</b>

\*The district average is an average of the scores. For example, for Positive Climate, the district average is computed as:  $([4 \times 2] + [5 \times 6] + [6 \times 3] + [7 \times 3]) \div 14 \text{ observations} = 5.5$

\*\*Negative Climate is rated on an inverse scale. An original score of 1 is given a value of 7. The scoring in the table reflects the normalized adjustment:  $([7 \times 14]) \div 14 \text{ observations} = 7.0$

## 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>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>4.7</b>
Positive Climate	0	0	1	3	9	4	4	21	5.3
Teacher Sensitivity	0	0	1	2	5	9	4	21	5.6
Regard for Student Perspectives	0	7	7	3	3	1	0	21	3.2
<b>Classroom Organization Domain</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>6.5</b>
Behavior Management	0	0	0	1	3	3	14	21	6.4
Productivity	0	0	0	2	5	5	9	21	6.0
Negative Climate**	0	0	0	0	0	0	21	21	7.0
<b>Instructional Support Domain</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>3.4</b>
Instructional Learning Formats	0	1	2	2	14	2	0	21	4.7
Content Understanding	0	2	11	6	2	0	0	21	3.4
Analysis and Inquiry	6	5	7	1	1	1	0	21	2.5
Quality of Feedback	1	6	5	5	2	2	0	21	3.3
Instructional Dialogue	3	6	5	3	2	2	0	21	3.0
<b>Student Engagement</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>4.6</b>

\*The district average is an average of the scores. For example, for Positive Climate, the district average is computed as:  $([3 \times 1] + [4 \times 3] + [5 \times 9] + [6 \times 4] + [7 \times 4]) \div 21 \text{ observations} = 5.3$

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

## References

---

- Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning. (n.d.). *Measuring and improving teacher-student interactions in PK–12 settings to enhance students' learning*. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia. Retrieved from <http://www.teachstone.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/class-mtp-pk-12-brief.pdf>
- MET Project. (2010). *The CLASS protocol for classroom observations*. Seattle, WA: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Retrieved from [http://metproject.org/resources/CLASS\\_10\\_29\\_10.pdf](http://metproject.org/resources/CLASS_10_29_10.pdf)
- Pianta, R. C., Hamre, B. K., & Mintz, S. (2012). *Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Manual, Secondary*. Charlottesville, VA: Teachstone.
- Pianta, R. C., Hamre, B. K., & Mintz, S. (2012). *Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Manual, Upper Elementary*. Charlottesville, VA: Teachstone.
- Pianta, R. C., La Paro, K. M., & Hamre, B. K. (2008). *Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Manual, K–3*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

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

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

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

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

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

**Table C3. Resources to Support Assessment**

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

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

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

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

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

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

Resource	Description
<a href="#"><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.
<a href="#"><u>Resource Allocation and District Action Reports (RADAR)</u></a>	RADAR is a suite of innovative data reports, case studies, and other resources that provide a new approach to resource decisions.
<a href="#"><u>Planning for Success</u></a>	An inclusive, hands-on planning process designed to build district and school capacity and coherence while also building community understanding and support.
<a href="#"><u>DESE spending comparisons website</u></a>	A clearinghouse of school finance data reports and other resources available to district users and the public.

## Appendix D. Enrollment, Attendance, Expenditures

**Table D1. Mendon-Upton Regional School District: Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity, 2022-2023**

Group	District	Percentage of total	State	Percentage of total
All	2,105	100.0%	913,735	100.0%
African American	22	1.0%	85,662	9.4%
Asian	62	2.9%	67,010	7.3%
Hispanic	149	7.1%	221,044	24.2%
Native American	2	0.1%	2,155	0.2%
White	1,828	86.8%	496,800	54.4%
Native Hawaiian	0	0.0%	787	0.1%
Multi-race, Non-Hispanic	42	2.0%	40,277	4.4%

Note. As of October 1, 2022.

**Table D2. Mendon-Upton Regional School District: 2022-2023 Student Enrollment by High-Need Populations**

Group	District			State		
	<i>N</i>	Percentage of high need	Percentage of district	<i>N</i>	Percentage of high need	Percentage of state
High needs students	644	100.0%	30.4%	508,820	100.0%	55.1%
Students with disabilities	346	53.7%	16.3%	179,095	35.2%	19.4%
Low Income students	331	51.4%	15.7%	386,060	75.9%	42.3%
ELs and former ELs	79	12.3%	3.8%	110,554	21.7%	12.1%

Note. As of October 1, 2022. District and state numbers and percentages for students with disabilities and high needs are calculated including students in out-of-district placements. Total district enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 2,120, total state enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 923,349.

**Table D3. Mendon-Upton Regional School District: Chronic Absence<sup>a</sup> Rates by Student Group, 2019-2022**

Group	N (2022)	2020	2021	2022	State (2022)
All	2,213	10.6	11.4	19.1	27.7
African American/Black	22	20.0	23.5	9.1	32.0
Asian	59	5.3	8.3	28.8	15.4
Hispanic/Latino	143	19.0	26.1	26.6	42.3
Multi-race, non-Hispanic/Latino	46	20.6	9.8	19.6	28.4
Native American	3	--	--	--	37.8
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	--	--	--	--	32.1
White	1,940	9.9	10.5	18.4	22.1
High needs	688	16.8	21.8	30.4	37.1
Low Income*	369	--	--	37.1	40.6
ELs	77	12.5	26.4	26.0	39.9
Students with disabilities	384	19.0	19.5	27.6	36.9

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

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



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

	2020		Fiscal year 20201		Fiscal year2022	
	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual
<b>Expenditures</b>						
From local appropriations for schools						
By school committee	\$36,591,292	\$36,021,660	\$37,839,185	\$36,925,521	\$39,423,840	\$38,926,119
From revolving funds and grants	--	\$4,312,322	--	\$3,896,110	--	\$5,098,682
Total expenditures	--	\$40,333,982	--	\$40,821,631	--	\$44,024,801
<b>Chapter 70 aid to education program</b>						
Chapter 70 state aid <sup>a</sup>	--	\$12,448,756	--	\$12,448,756	--	\$12,511,846
Required local contribution	--	\$15,888,903	--	\$16,799,739	--	\$17,240,401
Required net school spending <sup>b</sup>	--	\$28,337,659	--	\$29,248,495	--	\$29,752,247
Actual net school spending	--	\$32,262,260	--	\$32,980,621	--	\$34,491,965
Over/under required (\$)	--	\$3,924,601	--	\$3,732,126	--	\$4,739,718
Over/under required (%)	--	13.8%	--	12.8%	--	15.9%

Note. Data as of June 1, 2022, and sourced from fiscal year 2022 district end-of-year reports and Chapter 70 program information on DESE website.  
<sup>a</sup> Chapter 70 state aid funds are deposited in the local general fund and spent as local appropriations. <sup>b</sup> Required net school spending is the total of Chapter 70 aid and required local contribution. Net school spending includes only expenditures from local appropriations, not revolving funds, and grants. It includes expenditures for most administration, instruction, operations, and out-of-district tuitions. It does not include transportation, school lunches, debt, or capital.

**Table D5. Mendon-Upton Public Schools: Expenditures Per In-District Pupil, Fiscal Years 2019-2021**

Expenditure category	2019	2020	2021
Administration	\$412	\$422	\$430
Instructional leadership (district and school)	\$806	\$884	\$893
Teachers	\$5,768	\$5,978	\$6,156
Other teaching services	\$1,412	\$1,359	\$1,474
Professional development	\$80	\$65	\$73
Instructional materials, equipment, and technology	\$321	\$295	\$610
Guidance, counseling and testing services	\$396	\$403	\$450
Pupil services	\$2,094	\$1,914	\$1,910
Operations and maintenance	\$1,537	\$1,420	\$1,487
Insurance, retirement, and other fixed costs	\$2,728	\$2,855	\$3,126
Total expenditures per in-district pupil	\$15,552	\$15,595	\$16,610

Note. Any discrepancy between expenditures and total is because of rounding. Data are from [per-pupil-exp.xlsx \(live.com\)](#)

## Appendix E. Student Performance Data

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

**Table E1. Mendon-Upton Regional School District: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Achievement by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2019-2022**

Group	N (2022)	Percentage meeting or exceeding				Percentage not meeting			
		2019	2021	2022	State (2022)	2019	2021	2022	State (2022)
All	985	57	50	43	41	8	11	10	17
African American/Black	9	—	—	—	26	—	—	—	27
Asian	29	86	73	48	63	0	7	14	8
Hispanic/Latino	50	47	39	44	22	11	18	14	31
Multi-race, non-Hispanic/Latino	18	53	74	50	48	0	4	11	14
Native American	1	—	—	—	29	—	—	—	25
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	—	43	—	—	—	17
White	878	57	50	43	48	8	10	10	11
High needs	310	25	25	21	24	26	28	28	28
Low income <sup>a</sup>	149	—	—	22	24	—	—	29	28
ELs and former ELs	50	50	31	34	20	21	31	26	34
Students w/disabilities	192	13	15	10	11	35	36	39	46

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

**Table E2. Mendon-Upton Regional School District: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2019-2022**

Group	N (2022)	Percentage meeting or exceeding				Percentage not meeting			
		2019	2021	2022	State (2022)	2019	2021	2022	State (2022)
All	159	77	69	66	58	4	4	7	8
African American/Black	2	—	—	—	41	—	—	—	13
Asian	1	—	—	—	79	—	—	—	4
Hispanic/Latino	10	—	—	50	38	—	—	20	17
Multi-race, non-Hispanic/Latino	5	—	—	—	62	—	—	—	6
Native American	—	—	—	—	53	—	—	—	8
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	—	45	—	—	—	16
White	141	78	66	67	65	3	5	6	4
High needs	47	26	30	26	38	21	10	23	15
Low income <sup>a</sup>	23	—	—	35	40	—	—	22	14
ELs and former ELs	3	—	—	—	21	—	—	—	30
Students w/disabilities	33	18	17	9	20	27	13	33	26

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

**Table E3. Mendon-Upton Regional School District: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2019-2022**

Group	N (2022)	Percentage meeting or exceeding				Percentage not meeting			
		2019	2021	2022	State (2022)	2019	2021	2022	State (2022)
All	984	50	31	40	39	9	15	9	17
African American/Black	10	—	—	30	19	—	—	10	31
Asian	29	89	81	55	69	0	0	7	6
Hispanic/Latino	50	40	24	30	18	11	27	20	32
Multi-race, non-Hispanic/Latino	18	47	39	56	44	3	17	0	16
Native American	1	—	—	—	27	—	—	—	23
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	—	39	—	—	—	19
White	876	49	30	40	47	9	15	8	11
High needs	311	20	15	18	22	27	34	25	28
Low income <sup>a</sup>	151	—	—	21	20	—	—	22	29
ELs and former ELs	51	33	25	27	21	10	27	20	32
Students w/disabilities	191	12	7	9	12	37	43	37	45

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

**Table E4. Mendon-Upton Regional School District: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2019-2022**

Group	N (2022)	Percentage meeting or exceeding				Percentage not meeting			
		2019	2021	2022	State (2022)	2019	2021	2022	State (2022)
All	156	75	61	54	50	2	9	9	10
African American/Black	2	—	—	—	26	—	—	—	20
Asian	1	—	—	—	78	—	—	—	4
Hispanic/Latino	10	—	—	40	26	—	—	20	21
Multi-race, non-Hispanic/Latino	5	—	—	—	53	—	—	—	10
Native American	—	—	—	—	37	—	—	—	16
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	—	48	—	—	—	19
White	138	78	59	55	59	1	10	8	6
High needs	46	35	23	22	28	12	23	28	19
Low income <sup>a</sup>	24	—	—	25	29	—	—	33	19
ELs and former ELs	3	—	—	—	17	—	—	—	32
Students w/disabilities	32	23	8	13	15	14	33	41	33

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

**Table E5. Mendon-Upton Regional School District: Next-Generation MCAS Science Achievement by Student Group, Grades 5 and 8, 2019-2022**

Group	N (2022)	Percentage meeting or exceeding				Percentage not meeting			
		2019	2021	2022	State (2022)	2019	2021	2022	State (2022)
All	337	55	52	52	42	7	7	10	18
African American/Black	1	—	—	—	21	—	—	—	31
Asian	10	58	—	40	65	0	—	10	8
Hispanic/Latino	20	41	47	40	20	6	7	20	33
Multi-race, non-Hispanic/Latino	9	—	—	—	48	—	—	—	15
Native American	1	—	—	—	28	—	—	—	25
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	—	41	—	—	—	20
White	296	55	51	53	52	7	7	9	10
High needs	112	25	24	31	24	20	19	23	29
Low income <sup>a</sup>	52	—	—	35	23	—	—	25	30
ELs and former ELs	20	21	10	40	18	14	20	30	37
Students w/disabilities	66	21	19	20	15	25	24	32	44

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

**Table E6. Mendon-Upton Regional School District: Next-Generation MCAS Science Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2019-2022**

Group	N (2022)	Percentage meeting or exceeding				Percentage not meeting			
		2019	2021	2022	State (2022)	2019	2021	2022	State (2022)
All	151	—	—	51	47	—	—	14	14
African American/Black	2	—	—	—	25	—	—	—	25
Asian	1	—	—	—	70	—	—	—	6
Hispanic/Latino	8	—	—	—	23	—	—	—	28
Multi-race, non-Hispanic/Latino	5	—	—	—	51	—	—	—	12
Native American	—	—	—	—	38	—	—	—	14
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	—	45	—	—	—	23
White	135	—	—	52	56	—	—	12	8
High needs	44	—	—	14	26	—	—	43	24
Low income <sup>a</sup>	22	—	—	14	26	—	—	55	25
ELs and former ELs	1	—	—	—	13	—	—	—	43
Students w/disabilities	34	—	—	9	16	—	—	47	37

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

**Table E7. Mendon-Upton Regional School District: ELA Mean Student Growth Percentile in Grades 3-8, 2019-2022**

Group	N (2022)	2019	2022	State (2022)
All students	777	45.0	44.9	49.8
African American/Black	3	—	—	48.8
Asian	24	51.1	46.4	58.5
Hispanic/Latino	39	42.3	45.0	46.5
Multi-race, non-Hispanic/Latino	15	48.9	—	51.5
Native American	—	—	—	46.2
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	51.7
White	696	44.8	44.9	50.0
High needs	235	40.9	41.1	46.7
Low income <sup>a</sup>	106	—	39.8	46.5
ELs and former ELs	34	44.5	37.9	47.7
Students w/disabilities	154	39.9	40.4	41.8

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

**Table E8. Mendon-Upton Regional School District: ELA Mean Student Growth Percentile in Grade 10, 2019-2022**

Group	N (2022)	2019	2022	State (2022)
All students	140	60.4	61.6	50.0
African American/Black	2	—	—	49.8
Asian	1	—	—	56.0
Hispanic/Latino	6	—	—	47.6
Multi-race, non-Hispanic/Latino	5	—	—	50.6
Native American	—	—	—	54.1
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	49.5
White	126	61.5	61.9	50.1
High needs	36	37.1	53.6	47.7
Low income <sup>a</sup>	15	—	—	47.2
Els and former Els	2	—	—	50.5
Students w/disabilities	26	—	47.9	45.1

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

**Table E9. Mendon-Upton Regional School District: Mathematics Mean Student Growth Percentile in Grades 3-8, 2019-2022**

Group	N (2022)	2019	2022	State (2022)
All students	777	41.9	48.1	49.9
African American/Black	4	—	—	47.0
Asian	24	52.2	36.3	59.8
Hispanic/Latino	39	41.8	46.2	46.4
Multi-race, non-Hispanic/Latino	15	51.1	—	51.0
Native American	—	—	—	49.5
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	49.9
White	695	41.3	48.1	50.4
High needs	236	37.5	43.4	47.1
Low income <sup>a</sup>	109	—	43.5	46.4
ELs and former ELs	35	33.9	40.6	48.6
Students w/disabilities	153	37.1	43.3	43.3

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

**Table E10. Mendon-Upton Regional School District: Mathematics Mean Student Growth Percentile in Grade 10, 2019-2022**

Group	N (2022)	2019	2022	State (2022)
All students	136	51.3	61.9	50.0
African American/Black	2	—	—	45.6
Asian	1	—	—	57.3
Hispanic/Latino	6	—	—	44.4
Multi-race, non-Hispanic/Latino	5	—	—	50.0
Native American	—	—	—	46.6
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	41.2
White	122	52.0	61.7	51.6
High needs	34	52.4	55.7	46.7
Low income <sup>a</sup>	15	—	—	45.6
Els and former Els	2	—	—	48.9
Students w/disabilities	24	—	52.1	47.3

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

**Table E11. Mendon-Upton Regional School District: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Achievement by Grade, 2019-2022**

Grade	N (2022)	Percentage meeting or exceeding				Percentage not meeting			
		2019	2021	2022	State (2022)	2019	2021	2022	State (2022)
3	162	57	63	49	44	7	6	5	15
4	162	63	65	43	38	7	6	7	16
5	144	56	44	38	41	3	7	8	13
6	161	52	47	37	41	10	17	19	22
7	161	57	52	48	41	11	12	11	19
8	195	58	38	44	42	9	13	12	18
3-8	985	57	50	43	41	8	11	10	17
10	159	77	69	66	58	4	4	7	8



**Table E12. Mendon-Upton Regional School District: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Grade, 2019-2022**

Grade	N (2022)	Percentage meeting or exceeding				Percentage not meeting			
		2019	2021	2022	State (2022)	2019	2021	2022	State (2022)
3	160	55	38	55	41	10	11	3	20
4	163	58	40	63	42	7	11	6	17
5	144	41	23	27	36	7	19	12	16
6	160	53	33	26	42	7	15	13	15
7	162	43	26	41	37	10	16	9	19
8	195	50	30	31	36	10	18	9	17
3-8	984	50	31	40	39	9	15	9	17
10	156	75	61	54	50	2	9	9	10

**Table E13. Mendon-Upton Regional School District: Next-Generation MCAS Science Achievement by Grade, 2019-2022**

Grade	N (2022)	Percentage meeting or exceeding				Percentage not meeting			
		2019	2021	2022	State (2022)	2019	2021	2022	State (2022)
5	144	51	47	55	43	5	8	9	18
8	193	58	55	50	42	8	6	11	18
5 and 8	337	55	52	52	42	7	7	10	18
10	151	—	—	51	47	—	—	14	14

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

**Table E14. Mendon-Upton Regional School District: ELA Mean Student Growth Percentile by Grade, 2019-2022**

Grade	N (2022)	2019	2022	State (2022)
3	—	—	—	—
4	157	53.8	49.0	50.0
5	135	35.6	38.9	49.9
6	153	34.7	43.8	49.8
7	151	60.9	53.4	49.7
8	181	42.2	39.8	49.7
3-8	777	45.0	44.9	49.8
10	140	60.4	61.6	50.0

**Table E15. Mendon-Upton Regional School District: Mathematics Mean Student Growth Percentile by Grade, 2019-2022**

Grade	N (2022)	2019	2022	State (2022)
3	—	—	—	—
4	158	50.3	61.5	50.0
5	135	29.3	33.2	50.0
6	153	41.3	38.4	49.8
7	150	48.4	49.5	49.9
8	181	41.4	54.4	49.8
3-8	777	41.9	48.1	49.9
10	136	51.3	61.9	50.0

**Table E16. Mendon-Upton Regional School District: Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Student Group, 2020-2022**

Group	N (2022)	2020	2021	2022	State (2022)
All students	171	98.0	93.9	98.2	90.1
African American/Black	2	—	—	--	86.2
Asian	3	100	—	--	96.2
Hispanic/Latino	7	—	88.9	100	81.2
Multi-race, non-Hispanic/Latino	1	—	83.3	--	88.7
Native American	--	—	—	--	82.2
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	--	—	—	--	81.3
White	158	98.5	95.1	98.1	93.2
High needs	39	93.5	81.8	92.3	83.9
Low income*	25	93.5	85.3	96.0	83.2
Els	--	—	—	--	73.1
Students w/disabilities	20	90.5	70.8	85.0	78.0

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

**Table E17. Mendon-Upton Regional School District: Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Student Group, 2019-2021**

Group	N (2021)	2019	2020	2021	State (2021)
All students	163	93.9	98.0	94.5	91.8
African American/Black	2	—	—	--	88.1
Asian	--	—	100	--	97.0
Hispanic/Latino	9	100	—	88.9	84.0
Multi-race, non-Hispanic/Latino	6	—	—	83.3	91.2
Native American	2	—	—	--	84.1
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	--	—	—	--	87.7
White	144	93.3	98.5	95.1	94.4
High needs	44	83.0	93.5	84.1	85.8
Low income <sup>a</sup>	34	78.3	93.5	85.3	85.1
ELs	3	—	—	--	78.0
Students w/disabilities	24	78.1	90.5	75.0	80.6

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

**Table E18. Mendon-Upton Regional School District: In-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2020-2022**

Group	N (2022)	2020	2021	2022	State (2022)
All students	2,197	0.1	0.8	2.3	1.6
African American/Black	23	—	—	—	2.2
Asian	58	—	—	—	0.4
Hispanic/Latino	143	—	—	4.2	2.1
Multi-race, non-Hispanic/Latino	45	—	—	—	1.8
Native American	3	—	—	—	2.4
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	0	—	—	—	1.9
White	1,925	0.0	0.8	2.2	1.4
High needs	680	0.3	1.8	4.7	2.2
Low income <sup>a</sup>	364	—	—	5.5	2.3
ELs	77	—	—	—	1.4
Students w/disabilities	377	—	2.2	6.1	2.8

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

**Table E19. Mendon-Upton Regional School District: Out-of-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2020-2022**

Group	N (2022)	2020	2021	2022	State (2022)
All students	2,197	0.9	0.9	1.7	3.1
African American/Black	23	–	–	–	6.2
Asian	58	–	–	–	0.7
Hispanic/Latino	143	–	–	2.8	4.9
Multi-race, non-Hispanic/Latino	45	–	–	–	3.5
Native American	3	–	–	–	4.3
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	0	–	–	–	3.6
White	1,925	0.7	0.9	1.6	2.1
High needs	680	1.5	2.7	3.4	4.6
Low income <sup>a</sup>	364	–	–	2.7	5.2
ELs	77	–	–	–	3.5
Students w/disabilities	377	–	3.5	4.5	5.8

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

**Table E20. Mendon-Upton Regional School District: Dropout Rates by Student Group, 2020-2022**

Group	N (2022)	2020	2021	2022	State (2022)
All students	631	0.6	0.8	1.0	2.1
African American/Black	5	0.0	0.0	–	2.8
Asian	13	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6
Hispanic/Latino	32	0.0	3.2	6.3	4.3
Multi-race, non-Hispanic/Latino	15	0.0	6.3	0.0	2.4
Native American	–	–	–	–	4.3
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	–	–	–	–	1.2
White	566	0.7	0.5	0.7	1.3
High needs	160	2.6	1.6	3.1	3.6
Low income <sup>a</sup>	83	3.5	3.3	4.8	3.8
ELs	5	–	–	–	7.8
Students w/disabilities	94	4.2	1.4	2.1	3.4

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

**Table E21. Mendon-Upton Regional School District: Advanced Coursework Completion Rates by Student Group, 2020-2022**

Group	N (2022)	2020	2021	2022	State (2022)
All students	309	76.4	83.8	80.3	64.9
African American/Black	3	—	—	--	55.5
Asian	10	100.0	—	100	84.9
Hispanic/Latino	14	30.8	61.1	71.4	49.2
Multi-race, non-Hispanic/Latino	5	90.0	100.0	--	66.1
Native American	--	—	—	--	50.0
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	--	—	—	--	65.4
White	277	78.3	85.4	80.5	69.5
High needs	63	41.9	60.0	49.2	49.1
Low income <sup>a</sup>	35	48.6	64.5	54.3	50.1
ELs	--	—	—	--	30.0
Students w/disabilities	36	31.3	41.4	47.2	34.3

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