Targeted District Review Report

Avon Public Schools

Review conducted April 25–26, 2017

Office of District Reviews and Monitoring

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Executive Summary

Avon is a small district[[1]](#footnote-1) that has had some leadership transitions in recent years. In 2016, a new principal assumed leadership at the middle high school, and new assistant principals at the elementary and middle high schools. In 2013, a new superintendent was hired and the assistant superintendent began her tenure. The district has a Level 1 elementary school and a Level 2 middle high school. The district is designated Level 2 because the middle high school has not met certain cumulative progress and performance targets in narrowing achievement gaps in ELA, math, or science. The school is in the 29th percentile of middle high schools.

While the district receives strong financial support from the town, the superintendent and the school committee face challenges to stabilize enrollment and to ensure organizational viability as a standalone district. One challenge is related to the district’s dependence on enrollment of students who choose to attend school in Avon rather than in the district where they live. In 2017, 188 students, who make up 26.3 percent of the enrollment, live outside of Avon. This challenge is exacerbated by limited residential development in Avon that restricts opportunities for families with children to move to Avon and enroll in the school district.

Another challenge facing district leaders is student attrition. While many students from other towns choose to attend school in Avon, many do not remain enrolled in grades 9–12. Various interviewees attributed about 75 percent of the enrollment decrease over the past several years to students in grades 9–11 leaving the district to attend vocational, technical, private, charter, or other area schools.[[2]](#footnote-2) During the onsite, interviewees offered varying reasons for this and a district survey of parents was inconclusive.

**Instruction**

The team observed 25 classes throughout the district: 13 at the middle high school and 12 at the elementary school. The team observed 10 ELA classes, 10 mathematics classes, and 5 classes in other subject areas. The observations were approximately 20 minutes in length. All review team members collected data using ESE’s Instructional Inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards-based teaching. This data is presented in Appendix C.

In observed classrooms, the team found that the characteristics of high-quality instruction, including rigor, critical thinking, and meeting students’ diverse needs, were inconsistently implemented among levels in the district. Instruction was generally strongest at the elementary level.

**Strengths**

* Elementary school leaders and teachers use ELA and math assessment data to guide instructional decision making.
* The district’s two-year, teacher-directed mentoring program offers new teachers a range of ongoing, structured support services and activities.
* School facilities are in good condition and well maintained. The district has a long-term capital plan and a capital budget.
* The district has a positive working relationship with the town and the town’s support of the district has historically exceeded required net school spending.
* District and municipal leaders agree on a method for assigning education-related municipal expenditures in support of the schools.

**Challenges and Areas for Growth**

* The District Improvement Plan and the School Improvement Plans do not include specific, measurable benchmarks based on student achievement data to gauge progress and indicate that priorities have been met.
* The district does not have a comprehensive, fully articulated curriculum.
* In observed classrooms, the characteristics of high-quality instruction, including rigor, critical thinking, and meeting students’ diverse needs, were inconsistently implemented among levels in the district.
* The district has not achieved quality and consistency in the implementation of its educator evaluation system.
* The district has not taken action on the more recent components of the state Educator Evaluation Framework.
* The district’s professional development program is missing collaborative leadership; a comprehensive, data-driven, and clearly articulated plan; and sustained alignment with district priorities.
* The budget document does not have clear links to district priorities.

**Recommendations**

* The district should revise its DIP and SIPs to ensure that they are focused, specific, measurable and informed by student achievement data.
* Instruction should be informed by a high-quality, aligned, documented and usable curriculum in all subjects at all levels. It should include standards, objectives, instructional strategies, resources, timelines, and assessments.
* The district should ensure that there is a common understanding of high-quality instructional practices characterized by rigor and well-structured lessons that are differentiated to meet the needs of all students.
* The district should fully and effectively implement all components of the state’s Educator Evaluation Framework.
* The district should develop an improved professional development model characterized by strong and collaborative leadership responsible for the planning, coordination, and oversight of professional development programs.

Avon Public Schools Targeted District Review Overview

Purpose

Conducted under Chapter 15, Section 55A of the Massachusetts General Laws, targeted district reviews support local school districts in establishing or strengthening a cycle of continuous improvement. Reviews consider carefully the effectiveness of system wide functions, regarding district standards used by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE). Targeted reviews address one of the following sets of three standards: **Governance and Administrative Systems** (Leadership and Governance, Human Resources and Professional Development, and Financial and Asset Management standards) or **Student-Centered Systems** (Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment, and Student Support standards). All targeted reviews include finding(s) about instruction based on classroom observations. A targeted review identifies systems and practices that may be impeding improvement as well as those most likely to be contributing to positive results. In addition, the targeted district reviews are designed to promote district reflection on its own performance and potential next steps.

Districts whose performance level places them in Level 2 of ESE’s framework for district accountability and assistance will typically participate in a targeted district review (Level 3 and Level 4 districts typically receive a comprehensive review). Other relevant factors are taken into consideration when determining if a district will participate in a targeted or comprehensive review.

The targeted review by the Office of District Reviews and Monitoring focused on three standards: Leadership and Governance, Human Resources and Professional Development, and Financial and Asset Management.

Methodology

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

Site Visit

The site visit to the Avon school district was conducted from April 25–26, 2017. The site visit included approximately 25 hours of interviews and focus groups with approximately 50 stakeholders, including school committee members, district administrators, school staff, students, and teachers’ association representatives. The review team conducted 2 focus groups with 6 elementary-school teachers, and 17 middle- and high-school teachers.

A list of review team members, information about review activities, and the site visit schedule are in Appendix A, and Appendix B provides information about enrollment, student performance, and expenditures.

The team observed 25 classes in two schools: 13 at the middle high school, and 12 at the elementary school. The team observed 10 ELA classes, 10 mathematics classes, and 5 classes in other subject areas. The observations were approximately 20 minutes in length. All review team members collected data using ESE’s Instructional Inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards-based teaching. This data is presented in Appendix C. Observations were conducted over a two-day period.

**District Profile**

Avon has a town administrator form of government and the chair of the school committee is elected. The five members of the school committee meet once or twice a month and serve on multiple sub-committees. Meetings are televised.

The superintendent has been in the position since August 2013. The district leadership team includes the superintendent, the assistant superintendent/special education director/professional development coordinator, the coordinator of business, the elementary principal, the middle high school principal, the elementary assistant principal, the middle high school assistant principal, and the technology director. The team meets twice monthly and the coordinator of business and the technology director attend as necessary. Central office positions have been mostly stable in number over the past three years. The district has two principals leading two schools. There are two other school administrators, two assistant principals. In 2016–2017 there were 66 teachers in the district.

In the 2016–2017 school year, 714 students were enrolled in the district’s 2 schools:

**Table 1: Avon Public Schools**

**Schools, Type, Grades Served, and Enrollment\*, 2016–2017**

| **School Name** | **School Type** | **Grades Served** | **Enrollment** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Ralph Butler Elementary | ES | Pre-K–6 | 395 |
| Avon Middle High School | MS/HS | 7–12 | 319 |
| **Totals** | **2 schools** | **Pre-K–12** | **714** |
| \*As of October 1, 2016 |

Between 2012 and 2017 overall student enrollment decreased by 5.5 percent. Enrollment figures by race/ethnicity and high needs populations (i.e., students with disabilities, students from economically disadvantaged families, and English language learners (ELLs) and former ELLs) as compared with the state are provided in Tables B1a and B1b in Appendix B.

Total in-district per-pupil expenditures were lower than the median in-district per-pupil expenditures for 15 K–12 districts of similar size (<1,000 students) in fiscal year 2015:  $14,047 as compared with $15,398 (see [District Analysis and Review Tool Detail: Staffing & Finance](http://www.mass.gov/edu/government/departments-and-boards/ese/programs/accountability/tools-and-resources/district-analysis-review-and-assistance/dart-for-districts-and-dart-for-schools.html). Actual net school spending has been well above what is required by the Chapter 70 state education aid program, as shown in Table B6 in Appendix B.

Student Performance

**Avon is a Level 2 district because Avon Middle High is in Level 2 for not meeting its gap narrowing targets for all students and high needs students.**

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| **Table 2: Avon Public Schools****District and School PPI, Percentile, and Level 2013–2016** |
| **School** | **Group** | **Annual PPI** | **Cumulative PPI** | **School****Percentile** | **Accountability****Level** |
| **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** |
| Butler | All | 75 | 75 | -- | 50 | 61 | 63 | 1 |
| High Needs  | 69 | 88 | 88 | 63 | 76 |
| Avon Middle High | All | 32 | 43 | 0 | 75 | 60 | 29 | 2 |
| High Needs  | 25 | 54 | 54 | 54 | 51 |
| District | All | 46 | 64 | -- | 61 | 60 | -- | 2 |
| High Needs | 42 | 67 | 67 | 50 | 58 |

**Between 2015 and 2016, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations improved by 16 percentage points in ELA and by 8 percentage points in math.**

* The percentage of high needs students meeting or exceeding expectations improved by 17 percentage points in ELA and by 11 percentage points in math.
* The percentage of students from economically disadvantaged families meeting or exceeding expectations improved by 13 percentage points in ELA and by 14 percentage points in math.
* The percentage of ELL and former ELL students meeting or exceeding expectations improved by 46 percentage points in ELA and declined by 2 percentage points in math.
* The percentage of students with disabilities meeting or exceeding expectations improved by 13 percentage points in ELA and by 9 percentage points in math.

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| **Table 3: Avon Public Schools****ELA and Math Meeting or Exceeding Expectations (Grades 3–8) 2015–2016** |
| **Group** | **ELA** | **Math** |
| **2015** | **2016** | **Change** | **2015** | **2016** | **Change** |
| All students | 52% | 68% | 16 | 46% | 54% | 8 |
| High Needs | 36% | 53% | 17 | 31% | 42% | 11 |
| Economically Disadvantaged | 47% | 60% | 13 | 38% | 52% | 14 |
| ELL and former ELL students | 17% | 63% | 46 | 40% | 38% | -2 |
| Students with disabilities | 5% | 18% | 13 | 7% | 16% | 9 |

**Between 2013 and 2016, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced in science declined by 1 percentage point for all students and by 3 percentage points for students with disabilities, and improved by 1 percentage point for high needs students. In 2016, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced in science was 9 percentage points below the 2016 state rate for the district as a whole and by 1 and 16 percentage points for high needs students and students with disabilities, respectively.**

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| **Table 4: Avon Public Schools****Science Percent Proficient or Advanced by Subgroup 2013–2016** |
| **Group** |  | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **4-Year Trend** | **Above/Below****State (2016)** |
| All students | District | 46% | 51% | 47% | 45% | -1 | -9 |
| State | 53% | 55% | 54% | 54% | 1 |
| High Needs | District | 29% | 35% | 35% | 30% | 1 | -1 |
| State | 31% | 33% | 31% | 31% | 0 |
| Economically Disadvantaged | District | -- | -- | 38% | 39% | -- | 7 |
| State | -- | -- | 34% | 32% | -- |
| ELL and former ELL students | District | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| State | 19% | 18% | 19% | 19% | 0 |
| Students with disabilities | District | 8% | 5% | 22% | 5% | -3 | -16 |
| State | 21% | 21% | 22% | 21% | 0 |

**The district did not reach its 2016 Composite Performance Index (CPI) targets in ELA, math, and science for any group except students from economically disadvantaged families in ELA.**

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| **Table 5: Avon Public Schools****2016 CPI and Targets by Subgroup** |
|  | **ELA** | **Math** | **Science** |
| **Group** | **2016 CPI** | **2016 Target** | **Rating** | **2016 CPI** | **2016 Target** | **Rating** | **2016 CPI** | **2016 Target** | **Rating** |
| All students | 90.1 | 93.9 | Improved Below Target | 80.8 | 89.8 | Improved Below Target | 75.0 | 90.1 | No Change |
| High Needs | 81.0 | 90.6 | Improved Below Target | 68.7 | 84.1 | Improved Below Target | 65.2 | 84.2 | No Change |
| Economically Disadvantaged[[3]](#footnote-3) | 85.1 | 80.4 | Above Target | 72.5 | 75.5 | No Change | 71.6 | 74.1 | No Change |
| ELLs | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Students with disabilities | 62.5 | 84.0 | Improved Below Target | 47.8 | 74.4 | Improved Below Target | 40.5 | 76.7 | Declined |

**In 2016, students’ growth in ELA and math was moderate compared with their academic peers statewide for all students, high needs students, and students from economically disadvantaged families, and growth for students with disabilities was moderate in ELA and low in math compared with the academic peers.**

**Table 6: Avon Public Schools**

**2016 Median ELA and Math SGP by Subgroup**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **2016 Median ELA SGP** | **2016 Median Math SGP** |
| **District** | **Rating** | **Growth Level** | **District** | **Rating** | **Growth Level** |
| All students | 56.0 | On Target | Moderate | 43.0 | On Target | Moderate |
| High Needs | 49.0 | On Target | Moderate | 42.0 | Below Target | Moderate |
| Econ. Disad. | 49.0 | On Target | Moderate | 42.0 | Below Target | Moderate |
| ELLs | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| SWD | 50.0 | Above Target | Moderate | 40.0 | On Target | Low |

**The district’s out-of-school suspension rates were higher than the state rates for all students but lower for high needs students, students from economically disadvantaged families and students with disabilities. The in-school suspension rates were lower than the state rates for all students, high needs students, students from economically disadvantaged families, and students with disabilities.**

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| **Table 7: Avon Public Schools****Out-of-School and In-School Suspension Rates by Subgroup 2013–2016** |
| **Group** | **Type of Suspension** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **State (2016)** |
| High Needs | ISS | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 1.3% | 2.9% |
| OSS | 3.7% | 7.7% | 4.9% | 3.5% | 4.9% |
| Economically disadvantaged\* | ISS | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 1.4% | 3.2% |
| OSS | 3.2% | 7.8% | 5.1% | 4.1% | 5.6% |
| ELLs | ISS | -- | -- | -- | -- | 1.9% |
| OSS | -- | -- | -- | -- | 4.0% |
| Students with disabilities | ISS | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.7% | 3.5% |
| OSS | 7.1% | 8.1% | 5.6% | 4.3% | 5.9% |
| All Students | ISS | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 1.3% | 1.9% |
| OSS | 1.7% | 5.5% | 4.6% | 3.5% | 2.9% |

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

**Between 2013 and 2016, the district’s four-year cohort graduation rate declined by 11.2 percentage points for all students and by 6.0 to 17.6 percentage points for high needs students, students from low income families, and students with disabilities. The district reached the four-year cohort graduation target for all students.**[[4]](#footnote-4)

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| **Table 8: Avon Public Schools****Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates 2013–2016** |
| **Group** | **Number Included (2016)** | **Cohort Year Ending** | **Change 2013–2016** | **Change 2015–2016** | **State (2016)** |
| **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **Percentage Points** | **Percent Change** | **Percentage Points** | **Percent Change** |
| High needs | 32 | 92.9% | 63.6% | 78.3% | 81.3% | -11.6 | -12.5% | 3.0 | 3.8% | 79.1% |
| Low income | 28 | 91.7% | 66.7% | 88.9% | 85.7% | -6.0 | -6.5% | -3.2 | -3.6% | 78.4% |
| ELLs | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 64.1% |
| SWD | 15 | 90.9% | 37.5% | 50.0% | 73.3% | -17.6 | -19.4% | 23.3 | 46.6% | 71.8% |
| All students | 48 | 94.5% | 83.9% | 86.7% | 83.3% | -11.2 | -11.9% | -3.4 | -3.9% | 87.5% |

**Between 2012 and 2015, the district’s five-year cohort graduation rate improved by 14.8 percentage points for all students, and by 6.9 and 8.9 percentage points for high needs students and students from low income families, respectively. The district reached the five-year cohort graduation target for all students.**[[5]](#footnote-5)

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| **Table 9: Avon Public Schools****Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates 2012–2015** |
| **Group** | **Number Included (2015)** | **Cohort Year Ending** | **Change 2012–2015** | **Change 2014–2015** | **State (2015)** |
| **2012** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **Percentage Points** | **Percent Change** | **Percentage Points** | **Percent Change** |
| High needs | 23 | 71.4% | 92.9% | 68.2% | 78.3% | 6.9 | 9.7% | 10.1 | 14.8% | 82.0% |
| Low income | 18 | 80.0% | 91.7% | 66.7% | 88.9% | 8.9 | 11.1% | 22.2 | 33.3% | 81.6% |
| ELLs | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 70.2% |
| SWD | 10 | 50.0% | 90.9% | 50.0% | 50.0% | 0.0 | 0.0% | 0.0 | 0.0% | 74.5% |
| All students | 45 | 74.1% | 94.5% | 85.7% | 88.9% | 14.8 | 20.0% | 3.2 | 3.7% | 89.4% |

**In 2016, the district’s drop-out rate for all students was 3.1 percent above the 2016 state rate of 1.9 percent. The district’s drop-out rate for high needs students and students from economically disadvantaged families was also higher than the 2016 state rate.**

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| **Table 10: Avon Public Schools****Drop-out Rates by Subgroup 2013–2016** |
| **Group** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **State (2016)** |
| High Needs | 3.1% | 3.0% | 2.9% | 4.0% | 3.7% |
| Econ. Disad.[[6]](#footnote-6) | 4.0% | 3.9% | 2.2% | 5.7% | 4.1% |
| ELLs | -- | -- | -- | -- | 6.6% |
| SWD | 2.6% | 4.5% | 3.8% | 2.9% | 3.1% |
| All students | 2.4% | 1.9% | 3.0% | 3.1% | 1.9% |

**Grade and School Results**

**Between 2013 and 2016, ELA CPI for all students was 90.0 in 2013 and 90.1 in 2016, above the 2016 state CPI of 87.2. ELA CPI also improved in the 3rd, 5th, 6th, 8th, and 10th grades.**

* ELA CPI improved by 6.5 points in the 3rd grade, by 6.5 points in the 5th grade, by 0.4 point in the 6th grade, by 0.7 point in the 8th grade, and by 0.1 point in the 10th grade.
	+ ELA CPI in the 10th grade was 96.2 in 2016, 0.5 point below the 2016 state CPI of 96.7.
* ELA CPI declined by 8.1 points in the 4th grade and by 2.7 points in the 7th grade.

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| **Table 11: Avon Public Schools****ELA Composite Performance Index (CPI) by Grade 2013–2016** |
| **Grade** | **Number** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **State (2016)** | **4-Year Trend** | **2-Year Trend** |
| 3 | 50 | 88.6 | 86.4 | 76.7 | 95.1 | -- | 6.5 | 18.4 |
| 4 | 57 | 84.4 | 81.6 | 75.0 | 76.3 | -- | -8.1 | 1.3 |
| 5 | 56 | 87.7 | 90.9 | 82.0 | 94.2 | -- | 6.5 | 12.2 |
| 6 | 63 | 89.3 | 90.9 | 90.8 | 89.7 | -- | 0.4 | -1.1 |
| 7 | 65 | 92.7 | 84.6 | 80.9 | 90.0 | -- | -2.7 | 9.1 |
| 8 | 60 | 91.8 | 95.4 | 85.4 | 92.5 | -- | 0.7 | 7.1 |
| 10 | 46 | 96.1 | 97.5 | 99.0 | 96.2 | 96.7 | 0.1 | -2.8 |
| All | 399 | 90.0 | 89.5 | 84.0 | 90.1 | 87.2 | 0.1 | 6.1 |

**The percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations in ELA was 86 percent in the 3rd grade, 56 percent in the 4th grade and 69 and 68 percent in the 5th and 6th grades, respectively, at Butler, and 67 and 64 percent, respectively, in the 7th and 8th grades at Avon Middle High. The percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced in ELA was 95 percent in the 10th grade at Avon Middle High.**

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| **Table 12: Avon Public Schools****ELA Meeting or Exceeding Expectations by School and Grade 2015–2016[[7]](#footnote-7)** |
| **School** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **10** | **Total** |
| Butler | 86% | 56% | 69% | 68% | -- | -- | -- | 69% |
| Avon Middle High | -- | -- | -- | -- | 67% | 64% | 95% | --- |
| District | 84% | 56% | 70% | 67% | 68% | 65% | 91% | -- |

**Between 2013 and 2016, ELA CPI improved by 0.8 point at Butler and by 0.6 point at Avon Middle High.**

* ELA CPI for high needs students improved by 2.1 points at Butler and declined by 1.0 point at Avon Middle High.
* ELA CPI for students with disabilities declined by 11.3 points at Butler, and improved by 3.4 points at Avon Middle High.

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| **Table 13: Avon Public Schools****ELA Composite Performance Index (CPI) by School and Subgroup 2013–2016** |
| **School** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **4-Year Trend** |
| Butler | 87.8 | 87.4 | 82.6 | 88.6 | 0.8 |
| High Needs | 77.6 | 78.2 | 73.4 | 79.7 | 2.1 |
| Econ. Disad. | -- | -- | 80.2 | 83.8 | -- |
| ELLs | -- | -- | -- | 87.5 | -- |
| SWD | 69.1 | 63.7 | 44.5 | 57.8 | -11.3 |
| Avon Middle High | 93.6 | 92.6 | 88.1 | 93.0 | 0.6 |
| High Needs | 85.5 | 88.1 | 79.9 | 84.5 | -1.0 |
| Econ. Disad. | -- | -- | 84.2 | 88.3 | -- |
| ELLs | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| SWD | 67.0 | 73.4 | 62.9 | 70.4 | 3.4 |

**Between 2013 and 2016, math CPI declined by 4.7 points for all students, from 85.5 in 2013 to 80.8 in 2016, below the state rate of 81.5. Math CPI also declined in the 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th grades between 2013 and 2016.**

* Math CPI declined by 1.1 points in the 3rd grade, by 21.3 points in the 4th grade, by 1.9 points in the 5th grade, by 7.6 points in the 6th grade, and by 3.4 points in the 7th grade.
	+ In 2016, math CPI in the 10th grade was 87.8, 1.9 points below the 2016 state CPI of 89.7.
* Math CPI improved by 3.5 points in the 8th grade and by 1.3 points in the 10th grade.

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| **Table 14: Avon Public Schools****Math Composite Performance Index (CPI) by Grade 2013–2016** |
| **Grade** | **Number** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **State (2016)** | **4-Year Trend** | **2-Year Trend** |
| 3 | 50 | 91.8 | 91.2 | 81.1 | 90.7 | -- | -1.1 | 9.6 |
| 4 | 60 | 85.5 | 80.8 | 76.3 | 64.2 | -- | -21.3 | -12.1 |
| 5 | 56 | 88.5 | 91.8 | 80.6 | 86.6 | -- | -1.9 | 6.0 |
| 6 | 63 | 88.9 | 90.1 | 85.8 | 81.3 | -- | -7.6 | -4.5 |
| 7 | 64 | 82.7 | 75.8 | 74.2 | 79.3 | -- | -3.4 | 5.1 |
| 8 | 60 | 76.5 | 72.7 | 61.4 | 80.0 | -- | 3.5 | 18.6 |
| 10 | 45 | 86.5 | 89.2 | 90.1 | 87.8 | 89.7 | 1.3 | -2.3 |
| All | 400 | 85.5 | 84.2 | 78.9 | 80.8 | 81.5 | -4.7 | 1.9 |

**The percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations in math was 73 percent in the 3rd grade, 35 percent in the 4th grade, and 53 and 58 percent in the 5th and 6th grades, respectively, at Butler, and 54 and 56 percent in the 7th and 8th grades, respectively, at Avon Middle High. The percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced in math was 75 percent in the 10th grade at Avon Middle High.**

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| **Table 15: Avon Public Schools****Math Meeting or Exceeding Expectations by School and Grade 2015–2016[[8]](#footnote-8)** |
| **School** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **10** | **Total** |
| Butler | 73% | 35% | 53% | 58% | -- | -- | -- | 54% |
| Avon Middle High | -- | -- | -- | -- | 54% | 56% | 75% | -- |
| District | 72% | 35% | 52% | 57% | 55% | 55% | 73% | -- |

**Between 2013 and 2016, math CPI declined by 8.0 points at Butler and by 0.3 point at Avon Middle High.**

* Math CPI for high needs students declined by 4.9 points at Butler and by 3.6 points at Avon Middle High.
* Math CPI for students with disabilities declined by 8.2 points at Butler and by 4.9 points at Avon Middle High.

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| **Table 16: Avon Public Schools****Math Composite Performance Index by School and Subgroup 2013–2016** |
| **School** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **4-Year Trend** |
| Butler | 88.5 | 88.4 | 81.7 | 80.5 | -8.0 |
| High Needs | 75.9 | 79.4 | 69.7 | 71.0 | -4.9 |
| Econ. Disad. | -- | -- | 75.0 | 74.3 | -- |
| ELLs | -- | -- | -- | 75.0 | -- |
| SWD | 59.9 | 66.9 | 44.4 | 51.7 | -8.2 |
| Avon Middle High | 81.9 | 79.3 | 76.0 | 81.6 | -0.3 |
| High Needs | 69.3 | 68.7 | 64.8 | 65.7 | -3.6 |
| Econ. Disad. | -- | -- | 75.0 | 69.7 | -- |
| ELLs | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| SWD | 48.2 | 50.8 | 40.2 | 43.3 | -4.9 |

**Between 2013 and 2016, science proficiency rates declined by 1 percentage point in the district as whole, from 46 percent in 2013 to 45 percent in 2016, 9 percentage points below the 2016 state rate of 54 percent.**

* 5th grade science proficiency rates decreased by 17 percentage points from 51 percent in 2013 to 34 percent in 2016, 13 percentage points below the 2016 state rate of 47 percent.
* 8th grade science proficiency rates improved by 13 percentage points from 30 percent in 2013 to 43 percent in 2016, 2 percentage points above the 2016 state rate of 41 percent.
* The 10th grade science proficiency rate improved by 1 percentage point from 64 percent in 2013 to 65 percent in 2016, 8 percentage points below the 2016 state rate of 73 percent.

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| **Table 17: Avon Public Schools****Science Percent Proficient or Advanced by Grade 2013–2016** |
| **Grade** | **Number** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **State (2016)** | **4-Year Trend** | **2-Year Trend** |
| 5 | 56 | 51% | 62% | 50% | 34% | 47% | -17% | -16% |
| 8 | 61 | 30% | 26% | 30% | 43% | 41% | 13% | 13% |
| 10 | 40 | 64% | 72% | 67% | 65% | 73% | 1% | -2% |
| All | 157 | 46% | 51% | 47% | 45% | 54% | -1% | -2% |

**In 2016, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced in science was 35 percent in the 5th grade at Butler, 12 percentage points below the 2016 state rate of 47 percent. At Avon Middle High science proficiency was 42 percent in the 8th grade, 1 percentage point above the 2016 state rate, and 65 percent in the 10th grade, 8 percentage points below the 2016 state rate.**

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| **Table 18: Avon Public Schools****Science Percent Proficient or Advanced by School and Grade 2015–2016** |
| **School** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **10** | **Total** |
| Butler | -- | -- | 35% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 35% |
| Avon Middle High | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 42% | 65% | 52% |
| District | -- | -- | 34% | -- | -- | 43% | 65% | 45% |
| State | -- | -- | 47% | -- | -- | 41% | 73% | 54% |

**Between 2013 and 2016, science proficiency rates declined by 15 percentage points at Butler and improved by 9 percentage points at Avon Middle High.**

* Science proficiency rates for high needs students declined by 7 percentage points at Butler and improved by 7 percentage points at Avon Middle High.
* Science proficiency rates for students with disabilities declined by 9 percentage points at Avon Middle High.

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| **Table 19: Avon Public Schools****Science Percent Proficient or Advanced by School and Subgroup 2013–2016** |
| **School** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **4-Year Trend** |
| Butler | 50% | 62% | 51% | 35% | -15% |
| High Needs | 33% | 46% | 44% | 26% | -7% |
| Econ. Disad. | -- | -- | 44% | 33% | -- |
| ELLs | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| SWD | 8% | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Avon Middle High | 43% | 46% | 47% | 52% | 9% |
| High Needs | 26% | 31% | 32% | 33% | 7% |
| Econ. Disad. | -- | -- | 36% | 43% | -- |
| ELLs | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| SWD | 9% | 0% | 18% | 0% | -9% |

Leadership and Governance

Contextual Background

 The district has experienced some leadership transitions in recent years. The district hired a new superintendent in 2013. He had been a district level administrator for more than 10 years. The assistant superintendent has oversight for curriculum and assessment, and is the director of pupil services and the professional development coordinator. Department head positions at the middle high school were eliminated in 2014. The district does not have a plan to replace these positions. Individual teachers have undertaken pieces of the department heads’ jobs, including developing curriculum materials and purchasing classroom resources. The superintendent reported that the middle high school administrative team and the assistant superintendent for pupil services cover most of the department heads’ responsibilities.

New leaders at the middle high school have recognized the need to document the curriculum. To that end, curriculum development and documentation has been a primary focus during the 2016–2017 school year, professional development has been devoted to this work, and teachers are beginning to develop units. District and school leaders and teachers stated that with new leadership at the middle high school beginning in the 2016–2017 school year, there has been more emphasis on using data to plan curriculum and instruction. District leaders and school leaders told the review team that their goal is to replicate the model for data-driven instruction that has been established at the elementary level where teachers meet in professional learning communities during common prep time to analyze data and to identify their students’ strengths and needs. To that end, at the time of the onsite in April 2017, elementary- and middle-school teachers were meeting weekly during a common prep period to discuss data. However, at the high-school level, teachers did not have structured time to meet to discuss data. The superintendent reported that a revised schedule with structured time for high-school staff would be implemented for the 2017–2018 school year.

Many interviewees spoke in positive and hopeful terms of their new educational leaders. The review team urges these new leaders and their colleagues to carefully consider the concerns and recommendations contained in this report. By working in a thoughtful and systematic collaboration with teachers, they will have an opportunity to become change agents at a time when change is most needed.

**Challenges and Areas for Growth**

**1. The district’s planning documents do not provide a clearly defined vision for improvement for the district as a whole and for each school individually**.

 **A.** The District Improvement Plan (DIP) has three overarching goals for 2014–2017:

 1. Fully implement with fidelity a tiered system of supports and services to meet all learner needs.

 2. Improve student outcomes by emphasizing the importance of student growth and engagement.

 3. Ensure that all professional development engaged in by staff is of high quality and has a direct and substantial impact on student growth and achievement.

 **B.** The goals in the School Improvement Plans (SIPs) are aligned with DIP goals.

 **C.** DIP and SIP goals are not in the “SMART” format.[[9]](#footnote-9)

1. Although the district has highlighted three strategic goals, it has not identified staff responsible for implementing specific strategies and assessing progress.

 2. The district has not established timelines for completion of priorities beyond the proposed completion date. In many cases, planning documents indicate that the work is “ongoing.”

 3. The DIP and the SIPs do not specify measurable benchmarks based on student achievement and other data to indicate that priorities have been met.

4. The DIP and SIPs do not include needed resources, including budgetary considerations.

**D.** In the district self-assessment submitted in advance of the onsite, the district rated district and school improvement planning as “Not at all well” described by the indicators “The plan specifies rigorous, detailed student performance goals for the year” and “The plan specifies the assessment measurement tools that will be used to gauge progress and when and how data will be reviewed during the year.” The district rated district and school improvement planning as “Somewhat well” described by the indicator “Principals, instructional leaders, and teachers use interim and annual data to monitor progress, make adjustments to instruction as needed, and track the effect of district and school initiatives.” (Possible responses were “Not at all well,” Somewhat well,” “Well,” and Very Well.”)

 **E.** Interviews and a document review indicated that the DIP was developed over one year.

 1. The district gathered data from a variety of stakeholders.

2. The DIP and the SIPs were presented to the school committee for review.

3. Members of the school committee approved the DIP and the SIPs after the presentations by the superintendent and each school administrator.

 **F.** Administrators reported using the DIP as the basis for the SIPs.

**Impact:** Without comprehensive, actionable improvement plans with SMART goals that identify specific, measurable benchmarks, responsible staff, timelines, and necessary resources, the district cannot systematically implement, monitor, and refine continuous improvement initiatives and the district cannot ensure accountability for meeting improvement priorities.

**Recommendation**

**1. The district should revise its District Improvement Plan to ensure a focus on ambitious, measurable benchmarks and to include other important elements.**

**A.** The superintendent should convene a representative group of district stakeholders to review and revise the existing District Improvement Plan (DIP).

1. The group should identify process and outcome benchmarks that would indicate meaningful progress toward achieving the overarching goals in the plan.

a. The benchmarks should be SMART (Specific and Strategic; Measurable; Action Oriented; Rigorous, Realistic, and Results-Focused; and Timed and Tracked).

b. The benchmarks should be based on student achievement and other data.

c. Once specific benchmarks are identified, strategies in the DIP might need to be refined.

2. The group should also ensure that the DIP includes clear action steps, along with personnel responsible and resources needed.

3. The DIP should also include clear timelines, including a plan for when relevant data will be reviewed to analyze progress toward goals and to identify challenges.

**B.** The district should consider creating an annual action plan to support the implementation of the DIP.

**C.** The DIP should drive and inform the district’s budget priorities.

**D.** Annual School Improvement Plans (SIPs) should align with the updated benchmarks and timelines in the DIP.

**E.** The DIP and the SIPs should be monitored consistently and used as tools for continuous improvement.

1 The district and schools should establish procedures to periodically review progress toward DIP and SIP goals. Adjustments should be made to action steps and timelines based upon the review.

2. The superintendent should meet regularly with principals to review the progress of the implementation of the SIPs and the improvement of student achievement.

3. Principals should use SIPs to inform their self-assessment and goal setting process as a part of their educator plans, and teachers’ educator plans should be aligned with their school’s SIP and the DIP.

**Benefits**: By implementing this recommendation, the district will develop measurable goals and a specific action plan for achieving them. Thus, there will be a path to continuous improvement and more coherent and effective district systems.

**Recommended resources:**

* ESE’s *District Standards and Indicators* (<http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/accountability/district-standards-indicators.pdf>) identify the characteristics of effective districts in supporting and sustaining school improvement.
* The *District Self-Assessment* (<http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/accountability/district-reports/district-self-assessment.pdf>) frames the District Standards and Indicators, along with key questions, in a rubric for conducting a scan of current practice, identifying areas of strength and highlighting areas requiring greater focus.
* *Elements of a Well-Written Measure* and *Crafting Meaningful Measures Checklist* describe how to articulate clear measures of implementation (output) and change (outcomes). They are part of ESE’s *District Data Team Toolkit* (<http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/accountability/dart/district-data-toolkit.pdf>).
	+ ESE’s *Planning for Success* tools (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/success/>) support the improvement planning process by spotlighting practices, characteristics, and behaviors that support effective planning and implementation and meet existing state requirements for improvement planning.
		- *District Accelerated Improvement Planning - Guiding Principles for Effective Benchmarks* (<http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/accountability/turnaround/level-4-guiding-principles-effective-benchmarks.pdf>) provides information about different types of benchmarks to guide and measure district improvement efforts.
* *What Makes a Goal Smarter?* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/presentations/SMARTGoals/Handout5.pdf>) is a description of SMART goals with accompanying examples. The handout was designed to support educators in developing goals as part of the educator evaluation system, but could also be a useful reference for the district as it develops or refines its DIP and SIPs.

Instruction

Contextual Background

Principals and assistant principals at the elementary and middle high schools oversee curriculum and instructional practices at their respective schools. The district has eliminated the position of department head at the middle high school.

Members of the leadership team told the review team that administrators conduct learning walks at the beginning of the monthly administrative team meeting. They last approximately 30 minutes and are followed by group discussion of observed instruction. The district does not have in place a formal protocol for learning walks and teachers are not included in the learning walks. At the time of the onsite in April 2017, four learning walks had been conducted in the 2016–2017 school year. Administrators said that during the first learning walk in 2016–2017 they focused on observing safety, routines, and classroom setup. The superintendent reported that he and the assistant superintendent also visit schools each week.

Of note is the district’s introduction of a computer programming initiative at the elementary level called Code to the Future (CTTF). In the summer of 2016, elementary teachers participated in a three-day workshop in the program and have received ongoing training and coaching to implement the program in K–6 classrooms. In observed classrooms at the elementary level, team members noted that technology was consistently integrated into learning experiences. The district plans to expand CTTF first to the middle-school level and later to the high-school level.

An overarching challenge facing the district is the absence of a comprehensive, fully articulated curriculum to support instruction. At the elementary level (K–6), the district does not have a uniform literacy program or a cohesive math program. The district is participating in a multi-year K–1 literacy program sponsored by ESE and it is extending the program to grades 2 and 3. Elementary ELA and math teachers collaborate in grade-level teams using the standards, materials, and various other resources to plan instruction. Scope and sequence documents at all levels have been teacher developed and are not interconnected. New leaders at the middle high school have recognized the need to document the curriculum. To that end, curriculum development and documentation has been a primary focus during the 2016–2017 school year and professional development has been devoted to this work. The district has not aligned curriculum with the 2016 Massachusetts Science and Technology/Engineering Framework. In its self-assessment submitted in advance of the site visit, the district indicated the status of alignment of K–6 curriculum with the 2016 Massachusetts Science and Technology/Engineering Framework as “Not begun.” The district indicated the status of alignment of curriculum with the Framework in grades 7–12 as “In progress.”

In observed classrooms, the characteristics of effective instruction, including rigor, critical thinking, and meeting students’ diverse needs were inconsistently evident among levels in the district. At the elementary level, observers noted a more consistent use of high-quality instructional practices. An established data culture at the elementary level drives most instruction with flexible grouping of students according to their learning needs. While the district administers formative assessments to grades 6–11 in ELA, math and science, the assessments have not been used to drive instruction. The principal at the middle high school has recognized the use of data to inform instruction and curriculum development as an emerging need. However, high-school teachers have not had structured time to meet to collaborate about assessments and instructional practices.

Overall, the absence of a coherent and sequenced curriculum has hindered the development of rigorous instructional practices.

**Strength Finding**

**1. Elementary teachers consistently collect, analyze, and use data to plan ELA and math instruction to meet the needs of all learners.**

* 1. At the elementary level, teachers regularly collect, analyze, and use student performance data in ELA and math to guide instructional decision making.

1. Regularly administered formative assessments include: Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) in kindergarten through grade 3 and Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) in ELA and math in kindergarten through grade 6.

a. DIBELS and MAP assessments are administered three times a year. Teachers told the team that DIBELS is used continually to monitor progress.

2. Interviews and the team’s observation of elementary classrooms indicated that teachers use MAP and DIBELS assessments to differentiate instruction.

a. Teachers use the MAP tool, the Learning Continuum, to group students according to their skills and needs. Teachers create centers with flexible groups based on MAP assessments for math and on DIBELS and MAP assessments for ELA.

b. Teachers stated that regrouping takes place three or more times a year.

3. Students’ Lexile levels also determine reading groups and interventions.

**B**. District and school leaders and teachers formally meet in professional learning communities (PLCs) during common prep time to analyze data and to identify the strengths and needs of their students.

* + 1. Grade-level PLCs composed of teachers, administrators, and special education teachers meet in a six-week rotation following the administration of the MAP assessments.
		2. District leaders stated that teachers also use PLC time to align best practices and to look at student work. For example, grade 4 teachers and district and school leaders recently used PLC time to review student writing and to determine what educators could do differently. These PLC conversations helped grade 4 teachers reconfigure how they approach writing.
1. Elementary teachers learn data analysis from other teachers and from the train-the-trainer model.
2. Elementary teachers told the review team that they learn a lot about data analysis and using data from their colleagues. In addition, they reported that teachers “go out and get trained” and return to the school to train their colleagues.
3. Elementary teachers told the team they observe other teachers who have been noted for data use.
	* + 1. The team noted that some classrooms at the elementary and middle high schools had symbols on their doors to show that visitors are welcome. District and school leaders and teachers stated that a newly formed teacher leadership group is promoting peer observation.

**Impact:** By developing and implementing a culture of data use at the elementary level, the district has helped to ensure that math and ELA instruction is tailored to individual students’ learning needs and is focused on continual improvement of student learning outcomes. The district has also taken steps to ensure that instruction in ELA and math at the elementary level is appropriately differentiated to meet the needs of all learners.

**Challenges and Areas for Growth**

**2. In observed classrooms, the team found that characteristics of high-quality instruction, including rigor, critical thinking, and meeting students’ diverse needs, were inconsistently implemented. Instruction was strongest at the elementary level.**

 The team observed 25 classes throughout the district: 13 at the middle high school and 12 at the elementary school. The team observed 10 ELA classes, 10 mathematics classes, and 5 classes in other subject areas. The observations were approximately 20 minutes in length. All review team members collected data using ESE’s Instructional Inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards-based teaching. This data is presented in Appendix C. Observations were conducted over a two-day period.

**A.** **Focus Area #1-Learning Objectives & Instruction**. In almost all observed classrooms, teachers demonstrated knowledge of the subject matter and content and planned lessons with appropriate instructional strategies. At the same time, there was a variation among levels in the use of clear learning objectives and implementing lessons that defined high expectations for student work.

1. In observed classes, team members found moderate and strong evidence of teachers providing and referring to clear learning objectives (characteristic #2) in 84 percent of elementary classes, in 60 percent of middle-school level classes, and in 75 percent of high-school level classes.

a. For example, in a grade 4 ELA class, the team noted a clear objective that was posted and followed throughout the lesson, “Students will paraphrase informational text to make a paragraph.”

b. In contrast, at the middle-school level, the team noted classes where a clear objective was not provided or reinforced during the observation to help students make meaning of the learning experience.

1. Team members found moderate and strong evidence of teachers implementing a well-structured lesson that defined high expectations for student work aligned with the learning objective (characteristic # 3) in 84 percent of observed elementary classes, in 60 percent of middle-school level classes, and in 51 percent of high-school level classes.

a. One example of a well-structured lesson was observed in a grade 2 math class where the stated objective was “Measuring in inches and in centimeters.” Students received an exemplar and guided practice in measuring from the teacher and from a classroom volunteer classroom to help them achieve the goal of the lesson.

b. Another strong example took place in a high-school level physics class. After sharing the objective of the lesson, the teacher provided guided practice to help students understand how to deal with “distracters” and “confusers” in test problems.

c. In contrast, the team observed lessons at the middle- and high- school levels with no or low expectations for student work. For example, at the start of one middle-school level class, students were told to finish a worksheet. In a high-school level class, the teacher shared an agenda for the class but did not state an expectation for how students would demonstrate their learning.

**B.** **Focus Area #2: Student Engagement & Critical Thinking.** District and school leaders and teachers identified student engagement as one of the key instructional practices that supervisors look for in classrooms. While the team found in observed classrooms that most students were motivated and engaged in lesson content, at all three levels the content and tasks required did not consistently encourage students to develop and engage in critical thinking. At the same time, observers found that students were taking responsibility for their own learning at higher incidences at the elementary- and middle-school levels than at the high-school level.

In 76 percent of observed classes overall, the team found moderate and strong evidence that students were motivated and engaged in the lesson (characteristic # 5); students were actively participating in activities and volunteering responses and questions.

 a. The team noted that elementary classrooms were organized in four centers focused on a common goal with students assuming an active role in their learning individually, in pairs, or in small groups.

 b. In most observed classes at the middle- and high-school levels, students volunteered responses and asked questions. To keep students engaged in a high-school level science class, the teacher effectively used the “cold call” engagement strategy.

The team observed moderate and strong evidence that the teacher facilitated tasks that encouraged students to develop and engage in critical thinking, analysis, or application of new knowledge (characteristic # 6) in 67 percent of observed elementary classes, in 60 percent of middle-school level classes, and in only 38 percent of high-school level classes.

In classes where the team found limited or no evidence of tasks encouraging critical thinking, teachers did not state expectations that students should answer questions fully and explain their answers. “Why” or probing questions were not evident. For example, in one middle- school level ELA class, students copied notes from the board. In a high-school level ELA class, the teacher read a text and did all the analysis so students missed the opportunity to practice critical-thinking skills.

The team found moderate and strong evidence that students assumed responsibility for their own learning (characteristic # 7) in 100 percent of observed elementary classes, in 80 percent of middle-school level classes, and in 63 percent of high-school level classes.

In observed classrooms, the team noted that elementary teachers structured classes so that students worked in centers and were accountable for their own learning individually, in pairs, or in small groups. Students rotated through the centers with one group rotating to meet with the teacher for direct instruction.

b. Team members observed teacher-centered instruction in many high-school level classes, which limited students’ opportunities to assume responsibility for their own learning.

1. **Focus Area #3-Differentiated Instruction & Classroom Culture.** In most observed classes, the team found that teachers had established a positive academic environment (characteristic # 10). Although district and school leaders and teachers stated that differentiation is an expected districtwide instructional practice, in observed classrooms team members found that only the elementary level has significantly developed differentiation strategies to make lesson content accessible to all learners. Of concern is the wide variation among levels in the appropriate use of differentiation. Observers found higher incidences of the effective use of formative assessments to check for understanding and to provide feedback to students at the elementary and middle-school levels than at the high-school level.

The team found moderate and strong evidence that lessons were structured to be accessible to most learners and account for differences in learning needs, interests, and level of readiness (characteristic # 8) in 83 percent of observed elementary classes, in just 20 percent of middle-school level classes, and in 0 percent of high-school level classes.

The team found that in almost all observed classrooms at the elementary level a workshop model was in place in math and in ELA with students grouped intentionally and flexibly, based on assessments. Students worked in centers appealing to their multiple modalities where they were accessing content through technology, listening stations, and reading, writing, speaking, and drawing.

b. At the middle- and high-school levels, the team noted that many lessons were not structured to account for differences in the learning needs of students. In these lessons, instruction was teacher centered with all students doing the same task.

The team found moderate and strong evidence of teachers using appropriate resources to meet the needs of all learners (characteristic # 9) in 83 percent of elementary classes, in 60 percent of middle-school level classes, and in 50 percent of high-school level classes.

The team found observed elementary classrooms to be well-equipped with a range of resources to meet the needs of all or almost all learners. Students used iPads in kindergarten through grade 1 and MacBooks in grades 2–6 to enhance their learning and to experience integrated technology learning through coding. Most classrooms were literacy rich with organized stations, leveled readers, manipulatives, posters, and games.

* + - 1. In observed classes at the middle- and high-school levels the team noted that students used iPads for writing and calculators in math classes; in some classes teachers used interactive white boards to enhance learning. Whiteboards were used to convey information to students and three classes had support personnel. Middle- and high-school level science labs were well equipped.
		1. The team found moderate and strong evidence that teachers conducted appropriate formative assessments to check for understanding and provide feedback to students (characteristic #11) in 83 percent of observed elementary classes, in 80 percent of middle-school level classes, and in 63 percent of high-school level classes.

 a. At the elementary level, the team noted examples of teachers providing individual feedback to students during small-group work, circulating during whole- group work, using strategies such as “Thumbs up, middle or down,” and summarizing at the end of a lesson.

 b**.** Formative assessments noted by the team at the middle-school level included a teacher logging into students’ Google accounts to provide feedback on a writing project; at the middle- and high-school levels teachers circulated to provide feedback to students while they worked on assignments.

c.In contrast, in several observed high-school level classes, teachers called on students only if they raised their hands. In a number of observed classes, the team did not observe formative assessment strategies such as the use of exit tickets (demonstrating learning at the end of a class) or clickers (student response systems) to give immediate feedback on student learning.

**Impact:** Without the consistent establishment of clear learning goals districtwide, students are challenged to make meaning of their learning experiences. When students are not provided with sufficient tasks that require critical thinking and analysis, they are not given the instruction and support that they need to achieve at high levels. Because classroom assessments are inextricably linked to differentiation, without them lessons cannot account for learning differences and meet the needs of all students.

**3. The district does not have a comprehensive, fully articulated curriculum, and the use of research-based high-quality instructional practices varies among levels. The use of student performance data to plan instruction is an emerging need at the middle high school.**

1. The district has a common instructional model.
2. District leaders, including the superintendent and assistant superintendent, as well as school leaders and teachers identified the following as the instructional practices that are expected to be implemented districtwide: differentiation, effective classroom management, student engagement in learning and collaboration, clarity in lesson goals, meeting the needs of all learners, technology integration, and alignment with the standards.

 **B.** Classroom observations by the review team indicated that the use of effective, research-based instructional practices varies among levels (see Challenge finding above).

 1. Among the three levels, there is a variation in instructional rigor and alignment with the standards and in creating differentiated learning environments. Districtwide, students are not consistently engaged in tasks that require critical thinking.

 **C.** Structured time to collaborate and share best practices varies among levels. Interviewees stated that elementary teachers use their common prep time to meet in grade-level meetings, while middle-school teachers meet weekly for a meeting during their common prep time. Apart from monthly, hour-long staff meetings at the elementary and middle high schools, high-school teachers do not have structured time to meet to discuss instruction.

**D.** Teachers do not have access to a fully articulated curriculum as a resource for instructional planning and to ensure rigor and coherence in the classroom. Scope and sequence documents are teacher developed and in some cases have not been updated to ensure alignment with the standards. The district does not have a unified literacy or math program at the elementary level.

When the team asked district leaders what teachers used to plan instruction, they stated that teachers use a variety of materials, including standards, “old leftover curriculum” at the elementary level and some scope and sequence documents, which vary by grade. District leaders said that the curriculum in the district needs to be revamped from the perspective of how it is used to plan instruction.

School leaders and teachers told the team that the district does not have a cohesive approach to curriculum documentation.

a. School leaders and teachers at all levels stated that the district has some teacher-developed scope and sequence documents. School leaders expressed concern about learning gaps because of this uncoordinated approach to curriculum.

b. Middle- and high-school level teachers told the team that they were “on their own” regarding curriculum documentation because they do not have a content person to go to for support and oversight. With 33 teachers writing curriculum, teachers expressed concern about the standardization of the curriculum.

 i. The new administration at the middle high school has made curriculum documentation a paramount focus during the 2016–2017 academic year and has provided some guidance in curriculum writing during professional development (PD) time and staff meetings, and teachers are beginning to develop units.

 ii. Teachers at the middle high school have used PD time to document curriculum and store it on a shared drive on Google docs.

The team was told that the district does not have a unified literacy program. The district is participating in a K–1 early literacy program, and researched-based literacy practices are extending to grades 2 and 3. In grades 3–6, teachers follow the standards and use multiple resources and *Reading Street*. All elementary teachers have been trained in Orton Gillingham’s phonics program. The superintendent reported that at the time of the onsite in April 2017 the district was considering several literacy programs and by the end of the 2016–2017 school year had chosen one.

The team was told that the elementary level needs a unified math program. Grade-level teams develop their own math curriculum based on the standards and assessment data. When elementary teachers were asked about the biggest challenge they faced in getting their job done, they expressed a need for scope and sequence documents and updated math, science, and social studies curricula. School leaders stated that the biggest challenge they face at the elementary level is the absence of a cohesive math program.

 **E.** At the middle high school the use of data to plan instruction and to differentiate instruction is an emerging practice.

 1. Although district and school leaders identified differentiation as one of the district’s instructional goals, in observed lessons at the middle high school, the team found that many lessons were not structured to account for differences in students’ learning needs (see Challenge finding above).

2. District and school leaders and teachers stated that with new leadership at the middle high school beginning in the 2016–2017 school year, there has been more emphasis on using data to plan curriculum and instruction.

3. District leaders and school leaders stated that their goal is to replicate the model for data- driven instruction that has been established at the elementary level.

a. At the time of the review, teachers and school leaders stated that teachers had not been trained in data analysis in four years. School leaders stated that while MAP assessments were administered, data was not analyzed.

b. District and school leaders stated that teachers are to be trained by an external consultant and are to use the train-the-trainer model to learn how to use assessment data to differentiate instruction. Teachers reported that they had not received formal training on differentiation in the two years before the onsite review.

**Impact:** Without comprehensive, coherent, and sequenced curriculum, and without sufficient structured time to collaborate about assessment results and best practices, teachers are not receiving the resources and support they need to provide a curriculum that is guaranteed and viable for all students.

**Recommendations**

* + 1. **The district should ensure that there is a common understanding and consistent implementation of effective instructional practices.**
1. Drawing on the existing instructional model, a representative group should further articulate the district’s specific expectations for high-quality teaching practices.

Particular attention should be paid to instructional strategies that promote rigor and critical thinking and that assess student learning in real time in order to address students’ learning needs.

Expectations for high-quality instructional practices should be clarified for teachers in various settings, such as faculty meetings, common preparation time, grade level meetings and professional development meetings.

The district should provide ongoing professional development focused on particular instructional strategies so that teachers and administrators have the support and guidance necessary to meet the district’s instructional expectations.

1. The district should develop a shared understanding of differentiated instruction and should link differentiation to the use of effective class formative assessment strategies.
	* 1. The district should continue with its plan to use the train-the-trainer model to support differentiation. It should also consider proving additional professional development to the middle- and high-school teachers in differentiated instruction to support a connection between classroom formative assessments, district administered assessments, and differentiated instruction.
		2. The district should continue to provide opportunities for middle- and high-school teachers to observe elementary classrooms that are appropriately differentiated and provide opportunities for middle- and high-school teachers to observe grade level PLC meetings where assessment analysis takes place.
2. The district should take steps to establish and support sufficient common planning time apart from common preparation time at all levels as a way to provide teachers with a structured opportunity to collaboratively reflect on and plan instruction.

**Benefits** from implementing this recommendation will include a shared understanding of high-quality, research-based teaching and learning practices at all levels so that high expectations aligned with learning objectives will be consistently present districtwide. Student voice will be evident across the district with students assuming responsibility for their learning in tasks that require critical thinking. Teachers will use frequent formative assessments to consistently create learning environments that are appropriately differentiated to effectively meet the needs of all learners.

**Recommended resources:**

* + ESE’s Learning Walkthrough Implementation Guide (<http://www.mass.gov/edu/government/departments-and-boards/ese/programs/accountability/tools-and-resources/district-analysis-review-and-assistance/learning-walkthrough-implementation-guide.html>) is a resource to support instructional leaders in establishing a Learning Walkthrough process in a school or district. It is designed to provide guidance to those working in an established culture of collaboration as well as those who are just beginning to observe classrooms and discuss teaching and learning in a focused and actionable manner. (The link above includes a presentation to introduce Learning Walkthroughs.)
	+ Appendix 4, Characteristics of Standards-Based Teaching and Learning: Continuum of Practice (<http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/accountability/dart/walkthrough/continuum-practice.pdf>) is a framework that provides a common language or reference point for looking at teaching and learning.
	+ ESE’s Calibration Video Library (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/calibration/>) is a collection of professionally created videos of classroom instruction produced by the School Improvement Network. These videos depict a range of practice (this is NOT a collection of exemplars) to support within-district calibration activities that promote a shared understanding of instructional quality and rigor.

**The district should develop and document a high-quality, aligned, usable curriculum for all subjects and levels.**

1. The district should provide oversight to ensure that teacher-developed scope and sequence documents are vertically interconnected and aligned with the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks by subject, grade, and course.

1. The district might consider collaborating with nearby districts to develop coherent scope and sequence documents.

2. The district should consider forming a science curriculum committee to develop a comprehensive plan and timeline for implementation of the 2016 Massachusetts Science and Technology/Engineering Framework.

1. The district should provide teachers with ongoing training and support to collaboratively develop curriculum.

The district should provide expert training to teachers on how to develop curriculum.

Whenever possible, the district should consider adopting ESE’s model curriculum units to serve as exemplars for as teachers as they develop additional units.

The district should consider reviewing reputable and free online curricula that could be adapted to align to the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks.

The district should consider providing teachers with additional time during the summer and/or after school to collaborate on curriculum development, perhaps offering teachers opportunities to earn professional development points for this work.

1. The district is urged to prioritize the timely adoption of appropriate researched-based reading and mathematics programs at the elementary level to ensure that literacy and math instruction is high quality.

**Benefits:** Implementing this recommendation will help to ensure a guaranteed and viable curriculum that specifies the knowledge and skills that students will learn in each subject by grade and course and that supports teachers’ instructional planning. Students’ learning experiences in the district will be more consistent and will be more cohesive across grades and subjects. Ultimately, a comprehensive, coordinated approach to curriculum development can lead to improved student achievement.

**Recommended resources:**

• Curriculum Mapping: Raising the Rigor of Teaching and Learning (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/CandI/model/maps/CurriculumMaps.pdf>) is a presentation that provides definitions of curriculum mapping, examples of model maps, and descriptions of curriculum mapping processes.

• Sample curriculum maps (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/model/maps/default.html>) were designed to assist schools and districts with making sense of students' learning experiences over me, ensuring a viable and guaranteed curriculum, establishing learning targets, and aligning curriculum to ensure a consistent implementation of the MA Frameworks.

• Creating Curriculum Units at the Local Level (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/model/mcu_guide.pdf>) is a guidance document that can serve as a resource for professional study groups, as a reference for anyone wanting to engage in curriculum development, or simply as a way to gain a better understanding of the process used to develop Massachusetts’ Model Curriculum Units.

• The Model Curriculum Unit and Lesson Plan Template (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/model/MCUtemplate.pdf>) includes Understanding by Design elements. It could be useful for districts’ and schools’ curriculum development and revision

Human Resources and Professional Development

Contextual Background

Avon was last reviewed in 2006 by ESE’s Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA). In that report reviewers noted that the district’s educator evaluation system was generally functioning effectively. Although some concerns were identified, including the school committee’s missed opportunity to evaluate the superintendent in any year during the period under review and inconsistencies in the quality of teachers’ summative evaluations, overall the district’s supervisory and evaluative practices were rated as “Satisfactory.” Specifically, the report stated: “The superintendent did evaluate administrators annually during the period under review and evaluations included recommendations for improvement. Administrator evaluations followed the Principles of Effective Administrative Leadership.” The report also indicated that the district’s evaluative procedures were aligned with the requirements of the Education Reform Act. Further, reviewers wrote: “Principals evaluated teachers during the period under review and evaluations, both formative and summative, included recommendations . . . [that] were informative and instructive, and used to promote individual growth and overall effectiveness.”

The 2006 EQA Report described the district’s professional development program in a similar, largely positive manner. The report stated: “The district had a professional development plan during the period under review. The district had an institutionalized process of professional development that included regular surveys of staff to determine professional development needs.” The district’s professional development program was directed by a committee that met during the school year and planned activities designed to “provide teachers with improved skills to effectively deliver programmatic offerings and improve student achievement and classroom instruction.”

It is the team’s judgment that with respect to the district’s supervision and evaluation practices and professional development program, the district is performing less well than it did in 2006. The district has not achieved consistency in the implementation of its educator evaluation system and has not taken action on the more recent components of the Educator Evaluation Framework. Although the district provides appropriate resources and structures to support adult learning, its professional development (PD) program does not have a designated leadership group or formal steering committee, a PD plan with SMART goals,[[10]](#footnote-10) and strategic objectives aligned with district priorities and staff interests/needs.

**Strength Finding**

**1. The district provides appropriate resources and structures to support adult learning.**

 **A.** The district has built considerable time into its annual calendar for professional development (PD) programs and activities. This includes eight early-release days throughout the school year, and four full in-service days.

 **B.** Teachers have opportunities to attend out-of-district PD.

 1. The district augments PD opportunities and resources for teachers through its active involvement with the North River Collaborative (NRC). [[11]](#footnote-11)

a. District leaders identified several programs and workshops available through NRC to staff, as well as ongoing support services, including training on ELL tutoring, social-emotional learning, and special education.

**C.** Teachers and administrators spoke positively about the district’s mentoring program. The two-year, teacher-directed program provides new staff with a comprehensive range of ongoing and structured support services and activities designed to facilitate the orientation of and enhance the retention of new teachers. A document review indicated that the program’s goals include promoting reflective practice and collegiality, increasing awareness of diversity in the schools, and establishing norms for continual professional learning.

**Impact:** Providing a range of opportunities and supports for educators to work together on their practice can help them improve instruction and promotes a culture of continuous professional growth and shared responsibility for improved student achievement.

**Challenges and Areas for Growth**

**2. The district has not achieved sufficient quality in the implementation of its educator evaluation system.**

**A**. Although the district has endeavored to meet the requirements and support the full implementation of the state’s Educator Evaluation Framework, overall its implementation has been uneven in quality.

* + 1. The team reviewed in the district’s TeachPoint system the formative assessments/evaluations and summative evaluations records of 35 teachers randomly selected from the district’s two schools.
		2. Reviewers found that formative assessments/evaluations and summative evaluations were generally not instructive,[[12]](#footnote-12) included few specific suggestions, and seldom provided teachers with feedback for improved classroom instruction that was concrete, measurable, or actionable. Nor did they generally contain clear, evidence based recommendations with the ability to significantly improve instruction or contribute meaningfully to professional growth.
		3. Interviewees indicated that there were significant differences in supervisory practices and procedures between and within the district’s two schools. Elementary teachers reported that the quality and value of the feedback that was provided after announced/unannounced observations by administrators varied considerably.
		4. Middle- and high-school teachers indicated that the absence of administrator visibility and support in classrooms has long been a serious concern. When middle- and high-school teachers were asked how many times they would be likely to see an administrator in their classroom in a typical week, some teachers replied, “None.”
		5. Avon Education Association leaders asserted that teacher evaluation is a serious concern within the district. They expressed the belief that the process is often unfair and inconsistent. Further, they reported that classroom observations were frequently not done, evaluations were “extremely brief,” recommendations for improvement were missing “actionable feedback,” and noted that the evaluation committee, a forum to address and resolve relevant issues, was defunct.
			1. In the district’s self-assessment submitted before the onsite, the district rated educator growth and development as “Somewhat well” described by the indicator: “Evaluations are conducted by trained administrators who calibrate their work for fairness and consistency.” (Possible responses were Not at all well, Somewhat well, Well, and Very well.)

**Impact**: The state’s Educator Evaluation Framework was designed to provide teachers and administrators with the type of evidence-based, growth-oriented feedback and continuous support needed to significantly enhance pedagogical practice and expand professional competencies. Without consistent supervisory practices, evaluative procedures, and documentation, the district cannot derive the full benefit of its educator evaluation system: increased educational opportunities, learning experiences, and academic outcomes for all students.

**3. The district has not taken action on a more recent component of the state Educator Evaluation Framework which requires districts to use student and staff feedback in the evaluations of teachers and administrators.**

1. As of the 2015–2016 school year, state regulations called for all districts to collect and include student feedback as a source of evidence in determining an educator’s summary performance rating.[[13]](#footnote-13) Similarly, the district should collect and use staff feedback to inform principals’ evaluations. Feedback may also be used to inform an educator’s self-assessment, goal setting, and as evidence to demonstrate changes in practice over time. The district is currently out of compliance with this state requirement.

District and school administrators acknowledged that the district has not taken formal action to implement this component of the state Educator Evaluation Framework and indicated that the district was not planning such an initiative.

**Impact**: By missing the opportunity to implement the components of the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework that require the collection and use of multiple measures of student learning to be used in the evaluation of teachers and administrators, the district is challenged to provide all educators with a comprehensive, accurate, and evidence based description of their overall effectiveness and to help them identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement in their practice.

**4. The district’s professional development program is missing: collaborative leadership; comprehensive, data-driven, and clearly articulated plans and goals; and sustained alignment with district priorities.**

1. Interviews and a document review indicated that the district’s professional development (PD) program is not aligned with the key components of the Massachusetts Standards for Professional Development. The guiding principles of these standards ensure that PD: (a) is intentional ; (b) is a structured, comprehensive, and coordinated process; (c) requires strong and collaborative leadership; and (d) is evaluated for effectiveness.
2. Although the District Improvement Plan (DIP) states that “A committee will be created to collect and analyze data to develop a comprehensive PD calendar starting in 2015–2016,” district and school leaders reported that formal action has not been taken to do so. They acknowledged that at the time of the onsite in April 2017 the district did not have a designated leadership group or formal steering committee in place to plan, coordinate, or direct the district’s PD program.
3. Despite a strategic objective in the DIP to “develop a schedule in each building to maximize common planning time in spring 2015,” district leaders reported that efforts have been made to do so, but the objective had not been met.[[14]](#footnote-14)
4. District leaders acknowledged that the district has not developed a comprehensive annual PD plan or created a coordinated and unified PD system. Further, the district has not developed PD SMART goals[[15]](#footnote-15) or strategic objectives to inform, guide, and coordinate district and school initiatives, priorities, and resources.
5. Interviewees confirmed that the district has not provided a mechanism or structure to enable the formal collaboration or active participation of faculty in the planning, oversight, and delivery of district PD sessions. The assistant superintendent serves as the de facto PD director; she communicates with school administrators at the administrator summer retreat and with the administrative council during the year to plan PD activities.
6. Faculty input is further limited by the absence of any process or system for collecting and analyzing data to identify or analyze teacher professional needs/interests, to formally evaluate the effectiveness of the PD program, and to communicate this information to faculty.
7. Teachers expressed concern about the limited number of in-service days devoted to collaborative programs and activities specifically designed to expand their professional competencies or to improve instructional practices and student learning outcomes.

**Impact**: The overall effectiveness of the district’s PD program is diminished by the absence of a well-defined and collaborative leadership structure, of a comprehensive and clearly articulated PD plan with SMART goals, and of strategic objectives directly aligned with specific district priorities and identified faculty interests/needs. By missing the opportunity to create and sustain a unified, data-driven PD program, designed to support educators at all stages of their careers, the district limits its ability to enhance professional practice, to build local capacity, to improve classroom instruction, and to advance district priorities. Ultimately, the district’s ability to provide enhanced educational opportunities and academic achievement for all students is compromised.

**Recommendations**

**1. The district should take deliberate steps to fully and effectively implement all components of the state’s educator evaluation framework. Attention should focus on improving the quality of supervisory practices, as well as the development of appropriate systems for the collection and use of student and staff feedback to properly inform the evaluation process.**

**A.** All teachers and administrators should consistently receive written formative assessments/evaluations and summative evaluations that provide meaningful, actionable feedback and can contribute directly to their continuous professional growth.

Evaluators should be provided with formal and ongoing training, coaching, and other appropriate support structures to improve their overall evaluative competencies. Attention should be given to calibration activities to enhance quality, accuracy, and consistency among all evaluators in their analyses, ratings, and written descriptions of classroom practices and overall professional effectiveness.

Appropriate quality control procedures should be established whereby all formative assessments/evaluations and summative evaluations are reviewed to ensure they are properly aligned with ESE’s Characteristics of Standards Based Teaching and Learning and provide substantive feedback and recommendations that are specific, actionable, and capable of improving practice and promoting professional growth.

The superintendent should provide regular and specific evaluative feedback to principals, both oral and written, relative to their responsibility to provide their teachers with effective and timely supervision and evaluation.

* 1. The district is urged to implement the component of the state Educator Evaluation Framework that requires the use of multiple sources of evidence to inform the summary evaluations of both teachers and administrators.

Policies and procedures to collect and appropriately incorporate student and staff feedback as evidence components of teacher and administrator evaluations should be collaboratively developed. The district could consider empowering the former Evaluation Joint Committee to advance this important initiative.

**Benefits**: The use of student and staff feedback as part of the district’s evaluation system will significantly improve the district’s ability to provide educators with an evidence-based description of their overall effectiveness and enable them to more objectively identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement. By improving the quality of supervisory practices, the district will enhance educators’ pedagogical practice and expand professional competencies and skills. These improvements to the educator evaluation system can lead to enriched learning opportunities and increased academic achievement for all students.

**Recommended resources:**

* Educator Evaluation Implementation Surveys for Teachers (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/implementation/TeachersSurvey.pdf>) and Administrators (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/implementation/AdministratorsSurvey.pdf>) are designed to provide schools and districts with information about the status of their educator evaluation implementation. Information from these surveys can be used to target district resources and supports where most needed to strengthen implementation.
* ESE’s *Calibration Video Library* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/calibration/>) is a collection of professionally created videos of classroom instruction produced by the School Improvement Network. These videos depict a range of practice (this is NOT a collection of exemplars) to support within-district calibration activities that promote a shared understanding of instructional quality and rigor.
* ESE’s *Online Calibration Training Tool* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/calibration/tool/>) uses videos of classroom instruction from ESE’s Calibration Video Library to simulate brief, unannounced observations. Groups of educators, such as a district leadership team, watch a video together and then individually assess the educator’s practice related to specific elements from the Model Classroom Teacher Rubric and provide the educator with written feedback. Through real-time data displays, the group members can then see how their conclusions compare to each other, as well educators throughout the state.
* ESE’s *"What to Look For" Observation Guides* ***(Updated August 2017)*** (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/observation/>) describe what observers should expect to see in a classroom at a particular grade level in a specific subject area. This includes the knowledge and skills students should be learning and using (as reflected in state learning standards) and best practices related to classroom curriculum, instruction, and assessment for each subject area. The guides are not designed to replace any evaluation system or tools districts currently use, but are a resource to help classroom observers efficiently identify what teachers and students should be experiencing in specific subjects and grade levels.
* ESE’s Summative Performance Rating web page ([www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/sprating/](http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/sprating/)) provides guidance on writing high quality summative performance ratings.

**2. The district should develop an improved PD model characterized by strong and collaborative leadership and alignment with district priorities.**

**A.** The new professional development (PD) model should focus on systematically promoting the professional growth and practice of staff, advancing well defined district and school priorities, and improving student achievement. It should be fully aligned with the principles articulated in the Massachusetts Standards for Professional Development, with attention focused on the following elements.

The district’s PD program should be directed by a designated joint committee composed of administrators and teacher representatives from both schools, thereby creating a well-defined, collaborative leadership structure. Its role would be to systematically develop and implement comprehensive and coordinated PD plans, programs, activities, and support services for the district.

The new PD model should provide effective and appropriately strong leadership with the capacity to revise and improve the structure and organization of current programming, ensure continuity and follow up to PD activities, and promote a culture of consistently high expectations for all components of district programs.

The annual goals and objectives of the district’s PD plan should be specific and aligned with the priorities described in the District Improvement Plan.

The Plan should be written and monitored according to the SMART goal format.

School Improvement Plans should reflect the goals in the PD plan.

Improved and standardized policies and practices for the collection and analysis of data relevant to PD goals, effectiveness, and audience should be established. These should include student data from multiple sources to inform decisions about PD programming and educator data to identify the needs and interests of faculty, as well as an assessment of the effectiveness of current PD activities to ensure that objectives are being met.

**Benefits**: The creation of a strong, collaborative, well defined PD leadership structure will help ensure that all resources, including personnel, embedded time, and related support structures and services are deployed in a more coordinated, systematic, and equitable manner. The involvement and formal collaboration of teachers in the PD process can also contribute to the creation of an authentic professional community and promote a model of shared leadership within the district.

**Recommended resources:**

* *The Massachusetts Standards for Professional Development* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/pd/standards.pdf>) describe, identify, and characterize what high quality learning experiences should look like for educators.
* ESE’s *Professional Development Self- Assessment Guidebook* (<http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/accountability/dsac/professional-development-self-assessment-guide.pdf>) provides tools for analyzing professional development offerings’ alignment with the Massachusetts High-Quality Professional Development Standards, the Educator Evaluation Framework, and the Standards and Indicators of Effective Practice.
* *Identifying Meaningful Professional Development* (<https://youtu.be/zhuFioO8GbQ>) is a video in which educators from three Massachusetts districts discuss the importance of targeted, meaningful professional development and the ways districts can use the evaluation process to identify the most effective PD supports for all educators.

Financial and Asset Management

Contextual Background

Avon is a small district consisting of a Pre-K– 6 elementary school and a 7–12 middle high school. The two schools have had renovations and additions in the last 12 years. School choice plays a major part in Avon’s enrollment. In 2016, 188 choice-in students were enrolled in the district, generating $980,670. Only 2 students “choiced out,” at a cost of $10, 067. Approximately 15 high-school-age students leave each year to attend vocational or private high schools. In 2016–2017, 53 Avon residents were enrolled at Blue Hills Regional Technical High School and 2 at Norfolk County Agricultural High School. Some interviewees said that the district does not “sell” the high school well enough. Some interviewees expressed the view that the students who stay do so because it is a small, safe, family environment and students have more opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities and sports because there is less competition than in larger districts.

The town’s support of the schools has historically exceeded required net school spending. The amount over the requirement has increased during the past six years.

Because of the district’s small size the town has often considered regionalizing with neighboring towns. A standing regionalization committee is in place to consider all opportunities to regionalize.

**Strength Findings**

* + - 1. **The district’s schools are in good condition and are well maintained. The district has a long-term capital plan and capital budget.**
	1. Avon has a K–6 elementary school and a 7–12 middle high school.
		+ 1. Avon Middle High School was built in 1955, added to in 1973, and fully renovated in 2005 with another addition. It has separate cafeteria, auditorium, and gymnasium facilities along with science labs, a technology/engineering shop, a library media center, a computer lab, a music room, and an art room. The renovated building is 100,000 square feet.
			2. Butler Elementary was built in 1963. A modular addition was completed in 2004. The school has a “cafetorium” with an attached play area, a separate play area, an outdoor playground, 23 classrooms, a computer lab/media center, and a music room. The building area is 45,000 square feet.
	2. Review team members found Avon’s school buildings to be in very good physical condition. They are clean and well maintained.
		+ 1. The 2010 Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) Needs Survey Report rated both schools “1” (the highest rating) for building condition and general environment.
			2. The 2013 New England Association of Schools and Colleges report on Avon Middle High School commends the district for its “commitment to maintaining a clean and safe building.” The report also commends the school for having an up-to-date capital improvement plan and up-to-date building safety certificates.
	3. The district maintains a thorough, up-to-date list of all “extraordinary maintenance” and capital projects. ESE defines extraordinary maintenance as major maintenance projects that do not exceed $150,000 per school per year. The projects include many energy efficiency upgrades such as lighting replacements and heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) upgrades.
		+ 1. The list for Avon Middle High School has been maintained since the 2005 renovation.
			2. The list for Butler Elementary has been maintained since the 2004 modular addition.
	4. In fiscal years 2014, 2015, and 2016 Avon’s expenditures on operations and maintenance exceeded the state average by 10 percent or more, which serves as evidence of Avon’s commitment to maintain its schools.[[16]](#footnote-16)
	5. Avon has a five-year capital improvement plan for both capital and extraordinary maintenance projects.

Projects come from various sources including the school principals and custodians, the building inspector, and the fire department. The district’s health and safety committee also makes recommendations for projects.

The town includes the projects from the district’s capital plan in its capital plan and regularly funds district capital projects. Municipal officials told the review team that in fiscal 2018 the town plans to spend $1.5 million on a new parking lot and grounds upgrades at Butler Elementary.

**Impact**: By properly updating and maintaining school buildings and planning improvements, the district ensures that the classroom environment is conducive to learning and that learning spaces are well-suited to learning strategies such as small groups, stations, and hands-on learning.

**2. The district has a strong working relationship with the town. The town’s support of the schools has historically exceeded required net school spending. District leaders understand municipal leaders’ approach to defining the level of the district’s appropriation. District and municipal leaders agree on a method for assigning education-related municipal expenditures in support of the schools.**

 **A.** The town’s support of the schools has historically exceeded the net school spending requirement.

1. Actual net school spending has increased and exceeded the requirement every year since fiscal year 2007. Avon has exceeded the requirement by over 30 percent since fiscal year 2010 and in fiscal year 2017 is budgeted to exceed the requirement by 68 percent.

* 1. Interviews and a document review indicated that district and municipal leaders agree on a method for assigning education-related municipal expenditures in support of the schools.
		1. The district and town have a written agreement with documented expenditure requirements. The town documents the expenditures each year.
		2. Town officials indicated their agreement with the methodology used to determine the allocation.
		3. The superintendent and town accountant sign the End of Year Report each year signifying their agreement to the assignment of municipal expenditures in support of the schools.

 **C.** District leaders told the review team that they understand municipal leaders’ approach to defining the level of the district’s appropriation.

 **D.** District and municipal leaders have positive working relationships.

**Impact:** Becausethe district and the town have a written, up-to-date agreement on municipal expenses in support of the schools, the town can allocate costs accurately and accurately calculate and report required net school spending.

**Challenges and Areas for Growth**

**3. Publicly shared budget documents do not include trend data, all funds, or clear links to district priorities.**

* 1. The district’s budget overview document provided to the review team is a nine-page spreadsheet organized around ESE’s chart of accounts.
1. The budget overview document does not contain trend information for several years at the summary or detail level.
	1. The budget overview contains the town appropriation and choice revenue budget for the upcoming fiscal year and the current fiscal year.
	2. The budget overview does not contain historic budget or expenditure history for any years before the current fiscal year. Interviewees told the team that this detail is available, but does not appear in the budget overview document.
	3. The budget overview payroll line items do not contain information on staffing levels or changes in staffing levels.
	4. Individual line items in the budget overview document are identified by program, such as ELL, special needs, or school. Relevant line items are identified as Avon Middle High School or Butler Elementary.
	5. The budget overview document is not organized by program and does not include sub-totals by program, thus program costs are not readily available.
2. The budget overview document does not contain any significant narrative about key priorities and how they are supported financially.
	1. The budget overview document does not contain a narrative explaining the various budget increases.
3. The budget overview document includes town appropriations and choice revenue expenditures. It does not include other funds such as circuit breaker, federal and state grants, and food service revenues and expenditures.
4. The budget overview document does not contain clear links to the goals in the District Improvement Plan (DIP) and School Improvement Plans (SIPs).
	1. DIP and SIP goals that need budgetary support are not monetized. Reviewers were told that these items are addressed in a school’s budget request.
	2. The review team was told that the funds necessary to meet school and district goals were part of administrative team discussions on the budget. These discussions determine the level of the line item account levels.
	3. While it appears that budget discussions consider the funds needed for DIP and SIP goals, there is no clear link in the budget overview document.
	4. The superintendent reported that additional budget documents in three binders contain comprehensive budget information, including: trend information; expenditure history before the current fiscal year; staff levels/changes; links to the DIP and SIPs; narrative about district priorities and how they are supported financially; and funds such as circuit breaker, federal and state grants, and food service revenues and expenditures. The superintendent also reported that comprehensive budget information is presented early in the school year to the budget subcommittee of the school committee, the committee as a whole, the selectmen, and the finance committee. A series of PowerPoint slides support the superintendent’s comprehensive presentation in the public hearing.
		* 1. A document review indicated that Power Point slides about the district’s fiscal year 2018 budget were included on the district’s website.

 2. The team did not find evidence that the binders containing comprehensive budget information were accessible to the public.

**Impact:** Without including historical data, summary narratives, all funds, and a clear link to strategic goals in publicly shared budget documents, the district cannot ensure a transparent budget process and effective use of funds to support students’ needs.

**Recommendation**

**1. The district should develop a more complete, transparent, and usable budget overview document.**

* 1. Budget presentation materials that are shared with the public, such as the current PowerPoint, should contain information about key priorities and how they are supported financially.
		1. The overview document(s) should show the ways in which the budget supports DIP and SIP priorities.
		2. Budgetary changes linked to the DIP and the SIPs should be monetized and explained.
	2. All funds, such as federal and state grants and revolving funds, should be shown in the budget overview document(s).
	3. The budget summary or overview should be revised to better reflect key information about the district’s budget.
1. The overview document(s) should be organized by school or by programs. Summary totals should be available for each program.
2. The district could consider showing the requests of principals and department heads for additional transparency.
3. The document(s) should include trend information.
4. Staff changes should be monetized and explained.

**Benefits:** A more complete and transparent budget presentation will help ensure that district stakeholders can understand how district funds are used to support the needs of the district’s students. By clarifying the ways in which the budget is aligned with the DIP and the SIPs, the district will communicate how it is supporting and sustaining key priorities. By including all funding sources in the budget summary, the district will provide a more complete picture of the resources available to support its work. Greater detail, such as summary totals for programs, will help communicate the ways in which the district allocates and manages funds.

**Recommended resources:**

* *Transforming School Funding: A Guide to Implementing Student-Based Budgeting* (<https://www.erstrategies.org/library/implementing_student-based_budgeting>), from Education Resource Strategies, describes a process to help districts tie funding to specific student needs.
* The Rennie Center’s *Smart* *School Budgeting* (<http://www.renniecenter.org/research/reports/smart-school-budgeting-resources-districts>) is a summary of existing resources on school finance, budgeting, and real­location.
* *Best Practices in School District Budgeting* (<http://www.gfoa.org/best-practices-school-district-budgeting>) outlines steps to developing a budget that best aligns resources with student achievement goals. Each step includes a link to a specific resource document with relevant principles and policies to consider.

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

Review Team Members

The review was conducted from April 25–26, 2017, by the following team of independent ESE consultants.

1. Dr. Coral Grout, Leadership and Governance
2. Suzanne Kelly, Instruction
3. Frank Sambuceti, Ed.D, Human Resources and Professional Development
4. David King, Financial and Asset Management
5. James Hearns, *review team coordinator*

 District Review Activities

The following activities were conducted during the review:

The team conducted interviews with the following financial personnel: the coordinator of school business, the coordinator of administrative services, the town administrator, and the town treasurer and collector.

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

The review team conducted interviews with the following representatives of the teachers’ association: the president and the vice-president.

The team conducted interviews/focus groups with the following central office administrators: the superintendent, the assistant superintendent, and the coordinator of school business.

The team visited the following schools: Ralph D. Butler Elementary (Pre-K–6) and Avon Middle High School (grades 7–12).

During school visits, the team conducted interviews with 2 principals and focus groups with 6 elementary-school teachers, and 17 middle- and high-school teachers.

The team observed 25 classes throughout the district: 8 at the high-school level, 5 at the middle- school level, and 12 at the elementary school. The team observed 10 ELA classes, 10 mathematics classes, and 5 classes in other subject areas.

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

* + Student and school performance data, including achievement and growth, enrollment, graduation, dropout, retention, suspension, and attendance rates.
	+ Data on the district’s staffing and finances.
	+ Published educational reports on the district by ESE, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), and the former Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA).
	+ District documents such as district and school improvement plans, school committee policies, curriculum documents, summaries of student assessments, job descriptions, collective bargaining agreements, evaluation tools for staff, handbooks, school schedules, and the district’s end-of-year financial reports.
	+ All completed program and administrator evaluations, and a random selection of completed teacher evaluations.

Site Visit Schedule

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Tuesday**04/25/2017 | **Wednesday**04/26/2017 |
| Interviews with district staff and principals; review of personnel files; teacher focus groups; parent focus group; school committee interview; and visits to Butler Elementary and Avon Middle High School for classroom observations. | Interviews with town or city personnel; interviews with students; interview with teachers’ association representatives; and visits to Butler Elementary and Avon Middle High School for classroom observations. |

Appendix B: Enrollment, Performance, Expenditures

**Table B1a: Avon Public Schools**

**2016–2017 Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Student Group** | **District** | **Percent****of Total** | **State** | **Percent of****Total** |
| African-American | 211 | 29.6% | 84,996 | 8.9% |
| Asian | 33 | 4.6% | 63,690 | 6.7% |
| Hispanic | 42 | 5.9% | 184,782 | 19.4% |
| Native American | 7 | 1.0% | 2,125 | 0.2% |
| White | 387 | 54.2% | 584,665 | 61.3% |
| Native Hawaiian | -- | -- | 855 | 0.1% |
| Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic  | 34 | 4.8% | 32,635 | 3.4% |
| **All Students** | 714 | 100.0% | 953,748 | 100.0% |
| Note: As of October 1, 2016 |

**Table B1b Avon Public Schools**

**2016–2017 Student Enrollment by High Needs Populations**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Student Groups** | **District** | **State** |
| **N** | **Percent of High Needs** | **Percent of District** | **N** | **Percent of High Needs** | **Percent of State** |
| Students w/ disabilities | 114 | 45.2% | 15.9% | 167,530 | 38.4% | 17.4% |
| Econ. Disad. | 164 | 65.1% | 23.0% | 288,465 | 66.1% | 30.2% |
| ELLs and Former ELLs | 15 | 6.0% | 2.1% | 90,204 | 20.7% | 9.5% |
| All high needs students | 252 | 100.0% | 35.0% | 436,416 | 100.0% | 45.2% |
| Notes: As of October 1, 2016. District and state numbers and percentages for students with disabilities and high needs students are calculated including students in out-of-district placements. Total district enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 719; total state enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 964,514. |

**Table B2a: Avon Public Schools**

**English Language Arts Performance, 2013–2016**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grade and Measure** | **Number Included (2016)** | **MCAS Year** |  | **PARCC** | **Gains and Declines** |
| **2-Year Trend** |
| **2013** | **2014** |  | **2015** | **2016** |
| 3 | CPI | 50 | 88.6 | 86.4 | CPI | 76.7 | 95.1 | 18.4 |
| P+ | 50 | 65% | 67% | Lv 4&5 | 43% | 84% | 41% |
| 4 | CPI | 57 | 84.4 | 81.6 | CPI | 75.0 | 76.3 | 1.3 |
| P+ | 57 | 59% | 52% | Lv 4&5 | 50% | 56% | 6% |
| SGP | 56 | 44.0 | 44.0 | SGP | 26.0 | 41.5 | 15.5 |
| 5 | CPI | 56 | 87.7 | 90.9 | CPI | 82.0 | 94.2 | 12.2 |
| P+ | 56 | 71% | 78% | Lv 4&5 | 48% | 70% | 22% |
| SGP | 54 | 71.5 | 60.5 | SGP | 41.5 | 72.5 | 31.0 |
| 6 | CPI | 63 | 89.3 | 90.9 | CPI | 90.8 | 89.7 | -1.1 |
| P+ | 63 | 73% | 75% | Lv 4&5 | 77% | 67% | -10% |
| SGP | 62 | 65.0 | 59.0 | SGP | 67.5 | 64.5 | -3.0 |
| 7 | CPI | 65 | 92.7 | 84.6 | CPI | 80.9 | 90.0 | 9.1 |
| P+ | 65 | 80% | 62% | Lv 4&5 | 47% | 68% | 21% |
| SGP | 62 | 35.0 | 27.0 | SGP | 20.0 | 34.5 | 14.5 |
| 8 | CPI | 60 | 91.8 | 95.4 | CPI | 85.4 | 92.5 | 7.1 |
| P+ | 60 | 82% | 89% | Lv 4&5 | 48% | 65% | 17% |
| SGP | 59 | 49.0 | 52.0 | SGP | 26.0 | 64.0 | 38.0 |

|  |
| --- |
| **Table B2b: Avon Public Schools****English Language Arts Performance, 2013–2016[[17]](#footnote-17)** |
| **Grade and Measure** | **Number Included (2016)** | **MCAS/Accountability Year** |  | **Gains and Declines** |
|  | **4-Year Trend** | **2-Year Trend** |
| **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **State (2016)** |
| 10 | CPI | 46 | 96.1 | 97.5 | 99.0 | 96.2 | 96.7 | 0.1 | -2.8 |
| P+ | 46 | 89% | 88% | 96% | 91% | 91% | 2% | -5% |
| SGP | 36 | 80.0 | 71.0 | 93.0 | 71.0 | 50.0 | -9.0 | -22.0 |
| All | CPI | 399 | 90.0 | 89.5 | 84.0 | 90.1 | 87.2 | 0.1 | 6.1 |
| P+ | -- | 74% | 73% | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| SGP | 329 | 56.0 | 53.0 | 42.0 | 56.0 | 50.0 | 0.0 | 14.0 |

**Table B2c: Avon Public Schools**

**Mathematics Performance, 2013–2016**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grade and Measure** | **Number Included (2016)** | **MCAS Year** |  | **PARCC** | **Gains and Declines** |
| **2-Year Trend** |
| **2013** | **2014** |  | **2015** | **2016** |
| 3 | CPI | 50 | 91.8 | 91.2 | CPI | 81.1 | 90.7 | 9.6 |
| P+ | 50 | 82% | 82% | Lv 4&5 | 44% | 72% | 28% |
| 4 | CPI | 60 | 85.5 | 80.8 | CPI | 76.3 | 64.2 | -12.1 |
| P+ | 60 | 56% | 52% | Lv 4&5 | 43% | 35% | -8% |
| SGP | 58 | 35.0 | 41.0 | SGP | 25.0 | 18.0 | -7.0 |
| 5 | CPI | 56 | 88.5 | 91.8 | CPI | 80.6 | 86.6 | 6.0 |
| P+ | 56 | 76% | 81% | Lv 4&5 | 48% | 52% | 4% |
| SGP | 53 | 76.5 | 78.0 | SGP | 54.0 | 46.0 | -8.0 |
| 6 | CPI | 63 | 88.9 | 90.1 | CPI | 85.8 | 81.3 | -4.5 |
| P+ | 63 | 78% | 78% | Lv 4&5 | 62% | 57% | -5% |
| SGP | 61 | 72.5 | 75.5 | SGP | 57.0 | 54.0 | -3.0 |
| 7 | CPI | 64 | 82.7 | 75.8 | CPI | 74.2 | 79.3 | 5.1 |
| P+ | 64 | 62% | 57% | Lv 4&5 | 51% | 55% | 4% |
| SGP | 61 | 30.0 | 51.0 | SGP | 21.0 | 48.0 | 27.0 |
| 8 | CPI | 60 | 76.5 | 72.7 | CPI | 61.4 | 80.0 | 18.6 |
| P+ | 60 | 52% | 48% | Lv 4&5 | 18% | 55% | 37% |
| SGP | 59 | 36.0 | 18.5 | SGP | 25.0 | 39.0 | 14.0 |

|  |
| --- |
| **Table B2d: Avon Public Schools****Mathematics Performance, 2013–2016[[18]](#footnote-18)** |
| **Grade and Measure** | **Number Included (2016)** | **MCAS/Accountability Year** |  | **Gains and Declines** |
|  | **4-Year Trend** | **2-Year Trend** |
| **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **State (2016)** |
| 10 | CPI | 45 | 86.5 | 89.2 | 90.1 | 87.8 | 89.7 | 1.3 | -2.3 |
| P+ | 45 | 67% | 71% | 77% | 73% | 78% | 6% | -4% |
| SGP | 35 | 45.5 | 37.0 | 48.0 | 56.0 | 50.0 | 10.5 | 8.0 |
| All | CPI | 400 | 85.5 | 84.2 | 78.9 | 80.8 | 81.5 | -4.7 | 1.9 |
| P+ | -- | 67% | 67% | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| SGP | 327 | 49.0 | 52.5 | 36.5 | 43.0 | 50.0 | -6.0 | 6.5 |

**Table B2e: Avon Public Schools**

**Science and Technology/Engineering Performance, 2013–2016**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grade and Measure** | **Number Included (2016)** | **Spring MCAS Year** | **Gains and Declines** |
| **4-Year Trend** | **2-Year Trend** |
| **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **State (2016)** |
| 5 | CPI | 56 | 79.8 | 83.6 | 79.3 | 71.9 | 76.4 | -7.9 | -7.4 |
| P+ | 56 | 51% | 62% | 50% | 34% | 47% | -17% | -16% |
| 8 | CPI | 61 | 67.9 | 66.2 | 66.7 | 70.5 | 71.3 | 2.6 | 3.8 |
| P+ | 61 | 30% | 26% | 30% | 43% | 41% | 13% | 13% |
| 10 | CPI | 40 | 83.0 | 90.8 | 87.2 | 86.3 | 88.9 | 3.3 | -0.9 |
| P+ | 40 | 64% | 72% | 67% | 65% | 73% | 1% | -2% |
| All | CPI | 157 | 76 | 78.8 | 76.9 | 75 | 78.7 | -1 | -1.9 |
| P+ | 157 | 46% | 51% | 47% | 45% | 54% | -1% | -2% |
| Notes: P+ = percent *Proficient* or *Advanced*. Students participate in Science and Technology/ Engineering (STE) MCAS tests in grades 5, 8, and 10 only. Median SGPs are not calculated for STE. |

**Table B3a: Avon Public Schools**

**English Language Arts (All Grades)**

**Performance for Selected Subgroups Compared to State, 2013–2016[[19]](#footnote-19)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group and Measure** | **Number Included (2016)** | **Accountability** | **2-Year Trend** | **4-Year Trend** |
| **MCAS** |  | **PARCC** |
| **2013** | **2014** |  | **2015** | **2016** |
| High Needs | District | CPI | 154 | 80.6 | 83.2 | CPI | 74.1 | 81.0 | 6.9 | 0.4 |
| P+ | -- | 54% | 57% | Lv 4&5 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| SGP | 124 | 60.0 | 55.0 | SGP | 42.0 | 49.0 | 7.0 | -11.0 |
| State | CPI | 222,707 | 76.8 | 77.1 | CPI | 76.3 | 77.1 | 0.8 | 0.3 |
| P+ | -- | 48% | 50% | Lv 4&5 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| SGP | 165,487 | 47.0 | 47.0 | SGP | 47.0 | 47.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Econ.Disad. | District | CPI | 116 | -- | -- | CPI | 78.6 | 85.1 | 6.5 | -- |
| P+ | -- | -- | -- | Lv 4&5 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| SGP | 92 | -- | -- | SGP | 42.0 | 49.0 | 7.0 | -- |
| State | CPI | 152,877 | -- | -- | CPI | 77.6 | 78.2 | 0.6 | -- |
| P+ | -- | -- | -- | Lv 4&5 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| SGP | 114,361 | -- | -- | SGP | 46.0 | 46.0 | 0.0 | -- |
| SWD | District | CPI | 60 | 66.9 | 68.5 | CPI | 52.3 | 62.5 | 10.2 | -4.4 |
| P+ | -- | 25% | 26% | Lv 4&5 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| SGP | 48 | 59.0 | 52.0 | SGP | 28.0 | 50.0 | 22.0 | -9.0 |
| State | CPI | 91,177 | 66.8 | 66.6 | CPI | 67.4 | 68.2 | 0.8 | 1.4 |
| P+ | -- | 30% | 31% | Lv 4&5 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| SGP | 66,633 | 43.0 | 43.0 | SGP | 43.0 | 43.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| ELL or Former ELLs | District | CPI | 19 | -- | -- | CPI | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| P+ | -- | -- | -- | Lv 4&5 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| SGP | 14 | -- | -- | SGP | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| State | CPI | 52,960 | 67.4 | 67.8 | CPI | 68.9 | 70.7 | 1.8 | 3.3 |
| P+ | -- | 35% | 36% | Lv 4&5 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| SGP | 35,109 | 53.0 | 54.0 | SGP | 53.0 | 54.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| **All students** | District | CPI | 399 | 90.0 | 89.5 | CPI | 84.0 | 90.1 | 6.1 | 0.1 |
| P+ | -- | 74% | 73% | Lv 4&5 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| SGP | 329 | 56.0 | 53.0 | SGP | 42.0 | 56.0 | 14.0 | 0.0 |
| State | CPI | 491,267 | 86.8 | 86.7 | CPI | 86.8 | 87.2 | 0.4 | 0.4 |
| P+ | -- | 69% | 69% | Lv 4&5 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| SGP | 388,999 | 51.0 | 50.0 | SGP | 50.0 | 50.0 | 0.0 | -1.0 |

**Table B3b: Avon Public Schools**

**Mathematics (All Grades)**

**Performance for Selected Subgroups Compared to State, 2013–2016[[20]](#footnote-20)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group and Measure** | **Number Included (2016)** | **Accountability** | **2-Year Trend** | **4-Year Trend** |
| **MCAS** |  | **PARCC** |
| **2013** | **2014** |  | **2015** | **2016** |
| High Needs | District | CPI | 154 | 72.5 | 73.8 | CPI | 67.2 | 68.7 | 1.5 | -3.8 |
| P+ | -- | 44% | 45% | Lv 4&5 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| SGP | 121 | 49.0 | 48.0 | SGP | 41.0 | 42.0 | 1.0 | -7.0 |
| State | CPI | 222,349 | 68.6 | 68.4 | CPI | 67.9 | 68.8 | 0.9 | 0.2 |
| P+ | -- | 40% | 40% | Lv 4&5 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| SGP | 165,191 | 46.0 | 47.0 | SGP | 46.0 | 46.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Econ.Disad. | District | CPI | 118 | -- | -- | CPI | 73.3 | 72.5 | -0.8 | -- |
| P+ | -- | -- | -- | Lv 4&5 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| SGP | 91 | -- | -- | SGP | 41.0 | 42.0 | 1.0 | -- |
| State | CPI | 152,560 | -- | -- | CPI | 69.2 | 70.0 | 0.8 | -- |
| P+ | -- | -- | -- | Lv 4&5 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| SGP | 114,091 | -- | -- | SGP | 46.0 | 45.0 | -1.0 | -- |
| SWD | District | CPI | 58 | 54.4 | 58.9 | CPI | 42.3 | 47.8 | 5.5 | -6.6 |
| P+ | -- | 16% | 21% | Lv 4&5 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| SGP | 45 | 56.0 | 43.0 | SGP | 31.5 | 40.0 | 8.5 | -16.0 |
| State | CPI | 91,049 | 57.4 | 57.1 | CPI | 57.3 | 58.1 | 0.8 | 0.7 |
| P+ | -- | 22% | 22% | Lv 4&5 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| SGP | 66,511 | 42.0 | 43.0 | SGP | 43.0 | 44.0 | 1.0 | 2.0 |
| ELL or Former ELLs | District | CPI | 19 | -- | -- | CPI | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| P+ | -- | -- | -- | Lv 4&5 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| SGP | 13 | -- | -- | SGP | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| State | CPI | 53,048 | 63.9 | 63.8 | CPI | 64.5 | 65.8 | 1.3 | 1.9 |
| P+ | -- | 35% | 36% | Lv 4&5 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| SGP | 35,290 | 53.0 | 52.0 | SGP | 51.0 | 50.0 | -1.0 | -3.0 |
| **All students** | District | CPI | 400 | 85.5 | 84.2 | CPI | 78.9 | 80.8 | 1.9 | -4.7 |
| P+ | -- | 67% | 67% | Lv 4&5 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| SGP | 327 | 49.0 | 52.5 | SGP | 36.5 | 43.0 | 6.5 | -6.0 |
| State | CPI | 490,612 | 80.8 | 80.3 | CPI | 80.7 | 81.5 | 0.8 | 0.7 |
| P+ | -- | 61% | 60% | Lv 4&5 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| SGP | 388,423 | 51.0 | 50.0 | SGP | 50.0 | 50.0 | 0.0 | -1.0 |

**Table B3c: Avon Public Schools**

**Science and Technology/Engineering (All Grades)**

**Performance for Selected Subgroups Compared to State, 2013–2016**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group and Measure** | **Number Included (2016)** | **Spring MCAS Year** | **Gains and Declines** |
| **4-Year Trend** | **2-Year Trend** |
| **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** |
| High Needs | District | CPI | 56 | 63.2 | 70.6 | 66.7 | 65.2 | 2.0 | -1.5 |
| P+ | 56 | 29% | 35% | 35% | 30% | 1% | -5% |
| State | CPI | 89,857 | 66.4 | 67.3 | 66.3 | 65.4 | -1.0 | -0.9 |
| P+ | 89,857 | 31% | 33% | 32% | 31% | 0 | -1 |
| Econ. Disad. | District | CPI | 44 | -- | -- | 71.7 | 71.6 | -- | -0.1 |
| P+ | 44 | -- | -- | 38% | 39% | -- | 1% |
| State | CPI | 61,476 | -- | -- | 67.1 | 65.8 | -- | -1.3 |
| P+ | 61,476 | -- | -- | 33.0% | 29% | -- | -4 |
| Students w/ disabilities | District | CPI | 21 | 49.3 | 52.5 | 47.2 | 40.5 | -8.8 | -6.7 |
| P+ | 21 | 8% | 5% | 22% | 5% | -3% | -17% |
| State | CPI | 38,109 | 59.8 | 60.1 | 60.2 | 59.7 | -0.1 | -0.5 |
| P+ | 38,109 | 20% | 22% | 22% | 21% | 1 | -1 |
| English language learners or Former ELLs | District | CPI | 2 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| P+ | 2 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| State | CPI | 18,594 | 54 | 54 | 53.9 | 54.1 | 0.1 | 0.2 |
| P+ | 18,594 | 19% | 18% | 18% | 19% | 0 | 1 |
| All students | District | CPI | 157 | 76.0 | 78.8 | 76.9 | 75.0 | -1.0 | -1.9 |
| P+ | 157 | 46% | 51% | 47% | 45% | -1% | -2% |
| State | CPI | 208,262 | 79.0 | 79.6 | 79.4 | 78.7 | -0.3 | -0.7 |
| P+ | 208,262 | 53% | 55% | 54% | 54% | 1 | 0 |
| Notes: Median SGPs are not calculated for Science and Technology/ Engineering (STE). State figures are provided for comparison purposes only and do not represent the standard that a particular group is expected to meet. |

**Table B4: Avon Public Schools**

**Annual Grade 9-12 Drop-Out Rates, 2013–2016**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **School Year Ending** | **Change 2013–2016** | **Change 2015–2016** | **State (2016)** |
| **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **Percentage Points** | **Percent Change** | **Percentage Points** | **Percent Change** |
| High Needs | 3.1% | 3.0% | 2.9% | 4.0% | 0.9 | 29.0% | 1.1 | 37.9% | 3.7% |
| Econ. Disad.[[21]](#footnote-21) | 4.0% | 3.9% | 2.2% | 5.7% | 1.7 | 42.5% | 3.5 | 159% | 4.1% |
| Students w/ disabilities | 2.6% | 4.5% | 3.8% | 2.9% | 0.3 | 11.5% | -0.9 | -23.7% | 3.1% |
| ELL | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 6.6% |
| All students | 2.4% | 1.9% | 3.0% | 3.1% | 0.7 | 29.2% | 0.1 | 3.3% | 1.9% |
| Notes: The annual drop-out rate is calculated by dividing the number of students who drop out over a one-year period by the October 1 grade 9–12 enrollment, multiplied by 100. Drop outs are those students who dropped out of school between July 1 and June 30 of a given year and who did not return to school, graduate, or receive a high school equivalency by the following October 1. Drop-out rates have been rounded; percent change is based on unrounded numbers. |

**Table B5: Avon Public Schools**

**Attendance Rates, 2013–2016**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **School Year Ending** | **Change 2013–2016** | **Change 2015–2016** | **State (2016)** |
| **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **Percentage Points** | **Percent Change** | **Percentage Points** | **Percent Change** |
| All students | 95.4 | 95.6 | 95.5 | 95.5 | 0.1 | 0.1% | 0.0 | 0% | 94.9% |
| Notes: The attendance rate is calculated by dividing the total number of days students attended school by the total number of days students were enrolled in a particular school year. A student’s attendance rate is counted toward any district the student attended. In addition, district attendance rates included students who were out placed in public collaborative or private alternative schools/programs at public expense. Attendance rates have been rounded; percent change is based on unrounded numbers. |

**Table B6: Avon Public Schools**

**Expenditures, Chapter 70 State Aid, and Net School Spending Fiscal Years 2014–2016**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | **FY14** | **FY15** | **FY16** |
|   | **Estimated** | **Actual** | **Estimated** | **Actual** | **Estimated** | **Actual** |
| Expenditures |
| From local appropriations for schools: |  |
| By school committee | $5,695,053 | $6,496,720 | $6,786,758 | $6,786,758 | $7,055,328 | $7,055,328 |
| By municipality | $2,794,090 | $2,775,308 | $3,231,252 | $2,991,627 | $3,227,569 | $3,117,479 |
| Total from local appropriations | $8,489,143 | $9,272,028 | $10,018,010 | $9,778,385 | $10,282,897-- | $10,172,807 |
| From revolving funds and grants | -- | $1,672,164 | -- | $1,777,928 | -- | $1,724,180 |
| Total expenditures | -- | $10,944,192 | -- | $11,556,313 | -- | $11,896,987 |
| Chapter 70 aid to education program |
| Chapter 70 state aid\* | -- | $902,873 | -- | $946,829 | -- | $1,011,381 |
| Required local contribution | -- | $4,882,181 | -- | $4,680,844 | -- | $4,485,828 |
| Required net school spending\*\* | -- | $5,785,054 | -- | $5,627,673 | -- | $5,497,209 |
| Actual net school spending | -- | $8,217,078 | -- | $8,642,220 | -- | $8,900,955 |
| Over/under required ($) | -- | $2,432,024 | -- | $3,014,547 | -- | $3,403,746 |
| Over/under required (%) | -- | 42.0% | -- | 53.6% | -- | 61.9% |
| \*Chapter 70 state aid funds are deposited in the local general fund and spent as local appropriations.\*\*Required net school spending is the total of Chapter 70 aid and required local contribution. Net school spending includes only expenditures from local appropriations, not revolving funds and grants. It includes expenditures for most administration, instruction, operations, and out-of-district tuitions. It does not include transportation, school lunches, debt, or capital.Sources: FY14, FY15, and FY16 District End-of-Year Reports, Chapter 70 Program information on ESE websiteData retrieved 12/13/16 and 8/18/17 |

**Table B7: Avon Public Schools**

**Expenditures Per In-District Pupil**

**Fiscal Years 2013–2015**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Expenditure Category** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** |
| Administration | $598 | $665 | $606 |
| Instructional leadership (district and school) | $990 | $1,092 | $1,062 |
| Teachers | $5,195 | $5,390 | $5,965 |
| Other teaching services | $387 | $406 | $397 |
| Professional development | $137 | $111 | $82 |
| Instructional materials, equipment and technology | $372 | $721 | $597 |
| Guidance, counseling and testing services | $286 | $308 | $359 |
| Pupil services | $1,113 | $937 | $955 |
| Operations and maintenance | $1,184 | $1,209 | $1,463 |
| Insurance, retirement and other fixed costs | $2,232 | $2,430 | $2,562 |
| Total expenditures per in-district pupil | $12,492 | $13,270 | $14,047 |
| Sources: [Per-pupil expenditure reports on ESE website](http://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/statistics/)Note: Any discrepancy between expenditures and total is because of rounding. |

Appendix C: Instructional Inventory

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Focus Area #1: Learning Objectives & Instruction** |  | Insufficient | Minimal | Moderate | Strong | Avg Number of points |
|  | (0) | (1) | (2) | (3) | (0 to 3) |
| 1. The teacher demonstrates knowledge of subject matter and content. | **ES** | 0% | 8% | 58% | 33% | 2.3 |
| **MS** | 0% | 0% | 80% | 20% | 2.2 |
| **HS** | 0% | 13% | 25% | 63% | 2.5 |
| **Total #** | 0 | 2 | 13 | 10 | 2.3 |
| **Total %** | 0% | 8% | 52% | 40% |  |
| 2. The teacher provides and refers to clear learning objective(s) in the lesson. | **ES** | 0% | 17% | 67% | 17% | 2.0 |
| **MS** | 20% | 20% | 60% | 0% | 1.4 |
| **HS** | 0% | 25% | 50% | 25% | 2.0 |
| **Total #** | 1 | 5 | 15 | 4 | 1.9 |
| **Total %** | 4% | 20% | 60% | 16% |  |
| 3. The teacher implements a lesson that reflects high expectations aligned to the learning objective (s). | **ES** | 0% | 17% | 67% | 17% | 2.0 |
| **MS** | 0% | 40% | 60% | 0% | 1.6 |
| **HS** | 0% | 50% | 38% | 13% | 1.6 |
| **Total #** | 0 | 8 | 14 | 3 | 1.8 |
| **Total %** | 0% | 32% | 56% | 12% |  |
| 4. The teacher uses appropriate instructional strategies well matched to the learning objective(s). | **ES** | 0% | 8% | 83% | 8% | 2.0 |
| **MS** | 0% | 20% | 60% | 20% | 2.0 |
| **HS** | 0% | 13% | 88% | 0% | 1.9 |
| **Total #** | 0 | 3 | 20 | 2 | 2.0 |
| **Total %** | 0% | 12% | 80% | 8% |  |
| **Total Score For Focus Area #1** | **ES** |  |  |  |  | 8.3 |
| **MS** |  |  |  |  | 7.2 |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Focus Area #2: Student Engagement & Critical Thinking** |  | Insufficient | Minimal | Moderate | Strong | Avg Number of points |
|  | (0) | (1) | (2) | (3) | (0 to 3) |
| 5. Students are motivated and engaged in the lesson. | **ES** | 0% | 25% | 50% | 25% | 2.0 |
| **MS** | 0% | 20% | 80% | 0% | 1.8 |
| **HS** | 0% | 25% | 50% | 25% | 2.0 |
| **Total #** | 0 | 6 | 14 | 5 | 2.0 |
| **Total %** | 0% | 24% | 56% | 20% |  |
| 6. The teacher facilitates tasks that encourage students to develop and engage in critical thinking. | **ES** | 8% | 25% | 67% | 0% | 1.6 |
| **MS** | 20% | 20% | 60% | 0% | 1.4 |
| **HS** | 38% | 25% | 25% | 13% | 1.1 |
| **Total #** | 5 | 6 | 13 | 1 | 1.4 |
| **Total %** | 20% | 24% | 52% | 4% |  |
| 7. Students assume responsibility for their own learning whether individually, in pairs, or in groups. | **ES** | 0% | 0% | 83% | 17% | 2.2 |
| **MS** | 0% | 20% | 80% | 0% | 1.8 |
| **HS** | 0% | 38% | 50% | 13% | 1.8 |
| **Total #** | 0 | 4 | 18 | 3 | 2.0 |
| **Total %** | 0% | 16% | 72% | 12% |  |
| **Total Score For Focus Area #2** | **ES** |  |  |  |  | 5.8 |
| **MS** |  |  |  |  | 5.0 |
| **HS** |  |  |  |  | 4.9 |
| **Total** |  |  |  |  | 5.3 |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Focus Area #3: Differentiated Instruction & Classroom Culture** |  | Insufficient | Minimal | Moderate | Strong | Avg Number of points |
|  | (0) | (1) | (2) | (3) | (0 to 3) |
| 8. The teacher appropriately differentiates instruction so the lesson content is accessible for all learners. | **ES** | 0% | 17% | 58% | 25% | 2.1 |
| **MS** | 0% | 80% | 20% | 0% | 1.2 |
| **HS** | 13% | 88% | 0% | 0% | 0.9 |
| **Total #** | 1 | 13 | 8 | 3 | 1.5 |
| **Total %** | 4% | 52% | 32% | 12% |  |
| 9. The teacher uses appropriate resources aligned to students' diverse learning needs. (e.g., technology, manipulatives, support personnel). | **ES** | 0% | 17% | 75% | 8% | 1.9 |
| **MS** | 0% | 40% | 40% | 20% | 1.8 |
| **HS** | 0% | 50% | 50% | 0% | 1.5 |
| **Total #** | 0 | 8 | 15 | 2 | 1.8 |
| **Total %** | 0% | 32% | 60% | 8% |  |
| 10. The classroom climate is characterized by respectful behavior, routines, tone, and discourse. | **ES** | 0% | 25% | 42% | 33% | 2.1 |
| **MS** | 0% | 20% | 40% | 40% | 2.2 |
| **HS** | 0% | 25% | 38% | 38% | 2.1 |
| **Total #** | 0 | 6 | 10 | 9 | 2.1 |
| **Total %** | 0% | 24% | 40% | 36% |  |
| 11. The teacher conducts appropriate formative assessments to check for understanding and provide feedback to students. | **ES** | 0% | 17% | 58% | 25% | 2.1 |
| **MS** | 0% | 20% | 60% | 20% | 2.0 |
| **HS** | 0% | 38% | 38% | 25% | 1.9 |
| **Total #** | 0 | 6 | 13 | 6 | 2.0 |
| **Total %** | 0% | 24% | 52% | 24% |  |
| **Total Score For Focus Area #3** | **ES** |  |  |  |  | 8.2 |
| **MS** |  |  |  |  | 7.2 |
| **HS** |  |  |  |  | 6.4 |
| **Total** |  |  |  |  | 7.4 |

1. According to ESE data, 714 students were enrolled in the district in the 2016–2017 school year. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. According to ESE data, between 2012 and 2017 overall student enrollment decreased by 5.5 percent, from 756 in 2012 to 714 in 2017. Between 2012 and 2017, student enrollment at Butler decreased from 405 to 395 (a loss of 10 students) and enrollment at Avon Middle High School decreased from 351 to 319 (a loss of 32 students). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The economically disadvantaged subgroup does not have a CPI target and rating because 2015 is the first year that a CPI was calculated for the economically disadvantaged group; this CPI will serve as a baseline for future years’ CPI targets. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The four-year cohort graduation rate target is 80 percent for each group and refers to the 2015 graduation rate. Low-income students did not receive a 2016 accountability rating because of the change to the economically disadvantaged measure. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The five-year cohort graduation rate target is 85 percent for each group and refers to the 2014 graduation rate. Low-income students did not receive a 2016 accountability rating because of the change to the economically disadvantaged measure. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Drop-out rates for students from low income families used for 2013 and 2014 drop-out rates for students from economically disadvantaged families. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. 10th grade results are MCAS and refer to the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. 10th grade results are MCAS and refer to the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. SMART goals are: Specific and Strategic; Measureable; Action-oriented; Rigorous, Realistic, and Results- Focused; and Timed and Tracked. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. SMART goals are: Specific and Strategic; Measureable; Action-oriented; Rigorous, Realistic, and Results-focused; and Timed and Tracked. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. The member districts of North River Collaborative (Abington, Avon, Bridgewater-Raynham, East Bridgewater, Hanover, Rockland, West-Bridgewater, and Whitman Hanson) work together “to provide high-quality, cost-effective educational programs and services.” [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. An informative evaluation is factual and cites instructional details such as methodology, pedagogy, Standards and Indicators of Effective Teaching Practice or instruction of subject-based knowledge that is aligned with the state curriculum frameworks. It does not commit to improvement strategies. An instructive evaluation includes comments intended to improve instruction. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. On Tuesday, February 28, 2017, after collecting public comment since November 2016, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education voted 9-1 to amend the educator evaluation regulations. The most significant change in the regulations is the elimination of a separate student impact rating. Under the [amended regulations](http://www.doe.mass.edu/boe/docs/FY2017/2017-02/item6.html), evaluators do not have to make a separate judgment about an educator’s impact on student learning. Instead, student learning is embedded as an indicator within one of the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework’s four standards. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. The superintendent reported that a revised school schedule with structured time for high-school staff would be implemented for the 2017–2018 school year. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. SMART goals are: Specific and Strategic; Measureable; Action-oriented; Rigorous, Realistic, and Results- focused; and Timed and Tracked. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. <http://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/statistics/ppx12-16.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. In the All category 2015 and 2016 CPI and SGP are based on MCAS and PARCC test scores. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. In the All category 2015 and 2016 CPI and SGP are based on MCAS and PARCC test scores. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. 2015 and 2016 CPI and SGP are based on MCAS and PARCC test scores. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. 2015 and 2016 CPI and SGP are based on MCAS and PARCC test scores. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Drop-out rates for students from low income families used for drop-out rates for students from economically disadvantaged families for 2013 and 2014 [↑](#footnote-ref-21)