Targeted District Review Report

Dudley-Charlton Regional School District

Review conducted February 12–14, 2018

Office of District Reviews and Monitoring

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

**Organization of this Report**

[Executive Summary 1](#_Toc524438078)

[Dudley-Charlton RSD Targeted District Review Overview 4](#_Toc524438079)

[Leadership and Governance 16](#_Toc524438080)

[Instruction 21](#_Toc524438081)

[Human Resources and Professional Development 27](#_Toc524438082)

[Financial and Asset Management 33](#_Toc524438083)

[Appendix A: Review Team, Activities, Schedule, Site Visit 38](#_Toc524438084)

[Appendix B: Enrollment, Attendance, Expenditures 40](#_Toc524438085)

[Appendix C: Instructional Inventory 44](#_Toc524438086)

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148-4906

Phone 781-338-3000 TTY: N.E.T. Replay 800-439-2370

[www.doe.mass.edu](http://www.doe.mass.edu)



This document was prepared by the   
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Jeffrey C. Riley

Commissioner

**Published October 2018**

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

© 2018 Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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

This document printed on recycled paper

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148-4906

Phone 781-338-3000 TTY: N.E.T. Relay 800-439-2370

[www.doe.mass.edu](http://www.doe.mass.edu)



Executive Summary

The Dudley-Charlton Regional School District, located in central Massachusetts on the Rhode Island border, serves approximately 4,000 students in 4 elementary schools, 2 middle schools, and 1 high school.[[1]](#footnote-1) The number of central office leaders has been mostly stable in recent years.[[2]](#footnote-2) The seven-member school committee, three members from Dudley and four from Charlton, has experienced some recent turnover, with three members being elected since 2017. The number of members from each town is based on student enrollment.

The superintendent, the school committee, the teachers’ association, and town officials have created a culture of collaboration, transparency, and trust. This culture of collaboration has contributed to high levels of morale among teachers and administrators and has enabled the district to work with school committee members and town leaders to ameliorate budget shortfalls.

For example, while the towns of Dudley and Charlton have a positive relationship with the district, the towns’ approved regional assessments to fund the district’s budget have only minimally exceeded the required net school spending (NSS) level, by 2.2 percent in fiscal year 2017, compared with the statewide average of 24 percent. The major reason for this limited funding beyond the required NSS level was restrictions in the towns’ Proposition 2½ levy limits, which means that increases for schools and other town services were not possible without an override. Facing a budget shortfall in the 2018–2019 school year, the superintendent and both school committees embarked on a campaign to put a $1.5 million- override on the ballot in the spring 2017. On April 3, 2018, voters in Dudley and Charlton approved a Proposition 2½ override totaling more than $3 million for the regional school district (see the Financial and Asset Management section).

**Instruction**

The team observed 59 classes throughout the district: 19 at the high school, 23 at the 2 middle schools (grades 5–8) and 17 at the 4 elementary schools (2 grades Pre-K–1, 2 grades 2–4). The team observed 27 ELA classes, 17 mathematics classes, 14 science classes, and 1 class in another subject area (health). 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.

Districtwide in observed classrooms, team members noted high levels of teachers’ knowledge, a positive classroom climate, and overall positive behaviors by the students that made classrooms conducive to teaching and learning.However, the quality of instruction varied, instruction was not appropriately differentiated to account for differences in the learning needs of all students, and teachers did not consistently engage students in challenging tasks that required higher-order thinking skills.

**Strengths**

* The superintendent, the school committee, the teachers’ association, and town officials have created a culture of collaboration, transparency, and trust. There is a high level of morale among administrative and teaching staff.
* In most observed classes, team members noted a high incidence of teachers’ knowledge of the subject matter, of classroom routines and positive supports in place to ensure that students behave appropriately, and of a positive classroom climate that is conducive to teaching and learning.The district has developed a culture of professional growth for teachers through timely observations and evaluations that include recommendations to improve pedagogy.

The district has developed a professional development program, which is aligned with district and school priorities and supports teachers throughout their careers.

* The towns of Dudley and Charlton and the district have a positive working relationship, which has contributed to a collaborative budget process and a budget that meets required net school spending.
* The district has developed a capital improvement plan for the future status of its aging buildings. The buildings are generally in good condition.

**Challenges and Areas for Growth**

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. The planning documents focus largely on structural improvement such as technology, staffing, and committee work and not on student achievement and instructional practice.

In observed lessons, the quality of instruction varied across levels, especially in students engaging in higher-order thinking, students communicating their ideas and thinking with each other, student engagement in challenging tasks regardless of learning needs, and teachers’ use of a variety of instructional strategies.

The district has not developed an evaluation process for administrators that enhances professional growth and includes recommendations for improvement.

The budget document does not contains trend data or a summary or narrative highlighting the district’s goals.

**Recommendations**

The district should use a participatory process to revise its planning documents and make them more data- and goal-driven.

The district should improve instruction by building teachers’ capacity to engage students in higher- order thinking, to allow students to communicate their ideas and thinking with each other, to engage all students in challenging tasks regardless of learning needs, and to use a variety of instructional strategies.

The district should ensure that all administrators develop SMART goals as part of the educator evaluation system and that they receive frequent growth-oriented feedback.

The district should construct public budget documents that are transparent and complete. The budget should be clearly aligned with the district and school improvement plan goals.

Dudley-Charlton RSD Targeted District Review Overview

Purpose

Conducted under Chapter 15, Section 55A of the Massachusetts General Laws, targeted district reviews support local school districts in establishing or strengthening a cycle of continuous improvement. In general, districts performing at the 20th percentile or above receive a targeted review, while lower-performing districts receive a comprehensive review.[[3]](#footnote-3) Reviews consider carefully the effectiveness of systemwide functions, with reference to three district standards used by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE). Targeted reviews address one of the following sets of three standards: **Governance and Administrative Systems** (Leadership and Governance, Human Resources and Professional Development, and Financial and Asset Management standards) or **Student-Centered Systems** (Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment, and Student Support standards) —and may include the team’s observations/thoughts about systems and practices in the set of standards not being addressed. All targeted reviews include finding(s) about instruction based on classroom observations. A targeted review identifies systems and practices that may be impeding improvement as well as those most likely to be contributing to positive results. The targeted district review is designed to promote district reflection on its own performance and potential next steps. In addition to being a tool that districts can use to inform their own improvement efforts, review reports may be used by ESE to identify technical assistance and other resources to provide to the district. This targeted review by the Office of District Reviews and Monitoring focused on the following standards: 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, students, and students’ families. Subsequent to the onsite review, the team meets for two days to develop findings and recommendations before submitting a draft report to ESE.

Site Visit

The site visit to the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District was conducted from February 12–14, 2018. The site visit included approximately 22 hours of interviews and focus groups with approximately 75 stakeholders, including school committee members, district administrators, school staff, students, students’ families, and teachers’ association representatives. The review team conducted 3 focus groups with 11 elementary-school teachers, 14 middle-school teachers, and 4 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, attendance, and expenditures. The team observed classroom instructional practice in 59 classrooms in 7 schools. The team collected data using ESE’s Instructional Inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards-based teaching. This data is contained in Appendix C.

**District Profile**

Both Dudley and Charlton have a town manager form of government and the chair of the school committee is elected. The seven members of the school committee meet approximately bi-monthly during the school year. Three members represent Charlton and three represent Dudley with the seventh member representing the town with the greater population, currently Charlton.

The superintendent has been in the position since July 28, 2014. The district leadership team includes the superintendent; the director of curriculum and student assessment; the science, technology, engineering, art, and math (STEAM) director; the information technology director; and the director of operations and finance. Central office positions have been mostly stable in number over the past five years. The district has seven principals leading seven schools. There are four assistant principals. In 2017–2018, there were 258 teachers in the district.

In the 2017–2018 school year, 3,925 students were enrolled in the district’s 7 schools:

**Table 1: Dudley-Charlton Regional School District,**

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

| **School** | **School Type** | **Grades Served** | **Enrollment** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [Dudley Elementary](http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/profiles/student.aspx?orgcode=06580005&orgtypecode=6) | ES | 2–4 | 391 |
| Charlton Elementary | ES | Pre-K–1 | 345 |
| [Heritage School](http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/profiles/student.aspx?orgcode=06580030&orgtypecode=6) | ES | 2–4 | 480 |
| [Mason Road School](http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/profiles/student.aspx?orgcode=06580010&orgtypecode=6) | ES | Pre-K–1 | 276 |
| Dudley Middle School | MS | 5–8 | 574 |
| Charlton Middle School | MS | 5–8 | 691 |
| Shepherd Hill Regional High School | HS | 9–12 | 1,168 |
| **Totals** | **7 schools** | **Pre-K–12** | **3,925** |
| \*As of October 1, 2017 | | | |

Between 2014 and 2018 overall student enrollment decreased by 2.9 percent. Enrollment figures by race/ethnicity and high needs populations (i.e., students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, and English language learners (ELLs) and former ELLs) as compared with the state are provided in Tables B1a and B1b in Appendix B.

Total in-district per-pupil expenditures were lower than the median in-district per-pupil expenditures for 32 K–12 districts of similar size (3,000–3,999 students) in fiscal year 2016:  $11,157 as compared with $13,919 (see [District Analysis and Review Tool Detail: Staffing and Finance](http://www.doe.mass.edu/dart/)). Actual net school spending has been above what is required by the Chapter 70 state education aid program, as shown in Table B3 in Appendix B.

Student Performance

**Note:** The Next-Generation MCAS assessment is administered to grades 3–8 in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics; it was administered for the first time in 2017. (For more information, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/parents/results-faq.html>.) The MCAS assessment is administered to grades 5 and 8 in science and to grade 10 in ELA, math, and science. Data from the two assessments are presented separately because the tests are different and cannot be compared.

**The average scaled score on the Next- Generation MCAS assessment for all students was above the state rate by 2.2 points in ELA and by 2.0 points in math.**

| **Table 2: Dudley-Charlton Regional School District**  **Next-Generation MCAS ELA and Math Average Scaled Score (SS) Grades 3–8, 2017** | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **N** | **ELA SS** | **State SS** | **N** | **Math SS** | **State SS** |
| High Needs | 599 | 489.6 | 488.5 | 599 | 489.6 | 488.1 |
| Econ. Dis. | 414 | 493.6 | 489.2 | 414 | 492.9 | 488.1 |
| SWD | 271 | 478.6 | 480.0 | 271 | 478.5 | 479.8 |
| ELLs | 57 | 488.2 | 484.9 | 57 | 491.6 | 486.8 |
| All | 1,919 | 501.3 | 499.1 | 1,919 | 500.8 | 498.8 |
| Next Generation MCAS Achievement Levels: 440–470 Not Meeting Expectations; 470–500 Partially Meeting Expectations; 500–530 Meeting Expectations; 530–560 Exceeding Expectations | | | | | | |

**The percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS assessment in grades 3–8 was above the state rate by 6 percentage points in ELA (55 percent vs. 49 percent) and above the state rate by 4 percentage points in math (52 percent vs. 48 percent).**

* In ELA, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations was above the state rate for high needs students, economically disadvantaged students, and English language learners by 4 to 9 percentage points, and below the state rate by 4 percentage points for students with disabilities.
* In math, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectation was above the state rate for high needs students, economically disadvantaged students, and English language learners by 2 to 8 percentage points, and below the state rate by 4 percentage points for students with disabilities.

| **Table 3: Dudley-Charlton Regional School District**  **Next-Generation MCAS ELA and Math Percent Meeting or Exceeding (M/E) Expectations Grades 3–8, 2017** | | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **N** | **ELA M/E** | **State M/E** | **Above/Below State** | **N** | **Math M/E** | **State M/E** | **Above/Below State** |
| High Needs | 599 | 31% | 27% | 4 | 599 | 29% | 27% | 2 |
| Econ. Dis. | 414 | 38% | 29% | 9 | 414 | 35% | 27% | 8 |
| SWD | 271 | 9% | 13% | -4 | 271 | 10% | 14% | -4 |
| ELLs | 57 | 32% | 23% | 9 | 57 | 30% | 26% | 4 |
| All | 1,919 | 55% | 49% | 6 | 1,919 | 52% | 48% | 4 |

**The percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on the MCAS assessment in 10th grade was 4 and 1 percentage points above the state rate in ELA and math, respectively.**

* In ELA, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced was above the state rate by 3 and 8 percentage points for high needs students and economically disadvantaged students, respectively, and below the state rate by 8 percentage points for students with disabilities.
* In math, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced was below the state rate by 1 and 18 percentage points for high needs students and students with disabilities, respectively, and above the state rate by 4 percentage points for economically disadvantaged students.

| **Table 4: Dudley-Charlton Regional School District**  **MCAS ELA and Math Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grade 10, 2017** | | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **N** | **ELA** | **State** | **Above/Below State** | **N** | **Math** | **State** | **Above/Below State** |
| High Needs | 61 | 82% | 79% | 3 | 60 | 57% | 58% | -1 |
| Econ. Dis. | 46 | 89% | 81% | 8 | 45 | 64% | 60% | 4 |
| SWD | 25 | 60% | 68% | -8 | 25 | 24% | 42% | -18 |
| ELLs | 3 | -- | 59% | -- | 3 | -- | 39% | -- |
| All | 263 | 95% | 91% | 4 | 262 | 80% | 79% | 1 |

**Between 2014 and 2017, science proficiency for all students improved by 1 percentage point and improved by 3 and 7 percentage points for high needs students and English language learners, respectively, and declined by 6 percentage points for students with disabilities.**

| **Table 5: Dudley-Charlton Regional School District**  **MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grades 5, 8, and 10, 2014–2017** | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **N (2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2017)** |
| High Needs | 251 | 34% | 45% | 29% | 37% | 3 | 31% |
| Econ. Dis. | 184 | -- | 58% | 39% | 47% | -- | 32% |
| SWD | 106 | 17% | 20% | 11% | 11% | -6 | 21% |
| ELLs | 22 | 29% | 18% | 11% | 36% | 7 | 20% |
| All | 914 | 58% | 63% | 56% | 59% | 1 | 53% |

**In ELA, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS assessment was 6 percentage points above the state rate in grades 3–8 as a whole and 5 to 9 percentage points above the state rate in the 3rd through 7th grades, and equal to the state rate in the 8th grade.**

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

| **Table 6: Dudley-Charlton Regional School District**  **Next-Generation MCAS ELA and Math Percent Meeting or Exceeding (M/E) Expectations in Grades 3–8, 2017** | | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grade** | **N** | **ELA M/E** | **State ELA** | **Difference** | **N** | **Math M/E** | **State Math** | **Difference** |
| 3 | 303 | 53% | 47% | 6 | 303 | 49% | 49% | 0 |
| 4 | 279 | 54% | 48% | 6 | 279 | 62% | 49% | 13 |
| 5 | 289 | 58% | 49% | 9 | 289 | 51% | 46% | 5 |
| 6 | 325 | 56% | 51% | 5 | 325 | 56% | 50% | 6 |
| 7 | 347 | 58% | 50% | 8 | 347 | 52% | 47% | 5 |
| 8 | 376 | 49% | 49% | 0 | 376 | 45% | 48% | -3 |
| 3–8 | 1,919 | 55% | 49% | 6 | 1,919 | 52% | 48% | 4 |

**Between 2014 and 2017, in science, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on the MCAS assessment improved by 1 percentage point in the district as a whole and by 6 percentage points in the 8th grade, and declined by 1 and 5 percentage points in the 10th and 5th grades, respectively.**

| **Table 7: Dudley-Charlton Regional School District**  **MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grades 5, 8, and 10, 2014–2017** | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grade** | **N (2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **State** |
| 5 | 288 | 60% | 61% | 56% | 55% | -5 | 46% |
| 8 | 376 | 40% | 47% | 35% | 46% | 6 | 40% |
| 10 | 250 | 83% | 87% | 83% | 82% | -1 | 74% |
| All | 914 | 58% | 63% | 56% | 59% | 1 | 53% |

**Between 2014 and 2017, in ELA, the median student growth percentile (SGP) improved by 11 points in the 5th grade and by 4.5 to 9 points in the 4th, 6th, 7th, and 10th grades, and declined by 7 points in the 8th grade.**

| **Table 8: Dudley-Charlton Regional School District**  **ELA Median Student Growth Percentile, 2014-2017** | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grade** | **N (2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2017)** |
| 3 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 4 | 265 | 54.5 | 56.5 | 53.5 | 59.0 | 4.5 | 50.0 |
| 5 | 265 | 46.0 | 42.0 | 30.0 | 57.0 | 11.0 | 50.0 |
| 6 | 309 | 47.0 | 47.0 | 36.0 | 52.0 | 5.0 | 50.0 |
| 7 | 332 | 51.0 | 53.0 | 59.0 | 60.0 | 9.0 | 50.0 |
| 8 | 357 | 47.0 | 51.0 | 56.0 | 40.0 | -7.0 | 50.0 |
| 10 | 226 | 33.5 | 42.0 | 35.0 | 39.0 | 5.5 | 50.0 |
| Changes in SGP of 10 points or more are considered meaningful. | | | | | | | |

**Between 2014 and 2017, in math, the median SGP improved by 18.0 points in the 4th grade and by 14.5 points in the 7th grade.**

| **Table 9: Dudley-Charlton Regional School District**  **Math Median Student Growth Percentile, 2014–2017** | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grade** | **N (2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2017)** |
| 3 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 4 | 268 | 46.0 | 60.0 | 50.0 | 64.0 | 18.0 | 50.0 |
| 5 | 265 | 43.0 | 49.0 | 44.0 | 41.0 | -2.0 | 50.0 |
| 6 | 311 | 42.0 | 35.0 | 36.0 | 42.0 | 0.0 | 50.0 |
| 7 | 330 | 47.5 | 37.0 | 47.0 | 62.0 | 14.5 | 50.0 |
| 8 | 356 | 39.0 | 45.0 | 28.0 | 43.0 | 4.0 | 50.0 |
| 10 | 228 | 47.0 | 41.0 | 42.5 | 47.0 | 0.0 | 50.0 |
| Changes in SGP of 10 points or more are considered meaningful. | | | | | | | |

**In ELA, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS assessment ranged from 51 to 56 percent in the 3rd grade, and from 52 to 58 percent in the 4th grade in the district’s elementary schools. The percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations ranged from 58 to 62 percent in the 5th grade, from 55 to 60 percent in the 6th grade, from 52 to 67 percent in the 7th grade, and from 32 to 64 percent in the 8th grades in the district’s middle schools.**

| **Table 10: Dudley-Charlton Regional School District**  **Next-Generation MCAS ELA Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations by Grade and School, 2017** | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **School** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **3–8** |
| Mason Road | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Charlton | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Dudley | 51% | 58% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 55% |
| Heritage | 56% | 52% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 54% |
| Dudley Middle | -- | -- | 58% | 55% | 67% | 32% | 53% |
| Charlton Middle | -- | -- | 62% | 60% | 52% | 64% | 59% |
| District | 53% | 54% | 58% | 56% | 58% | 49% | 55% |
| State | 47% | 48% | 49% | 51% | 50% | 49% | 49% |

**In math, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS assessment ranged from 39 to 57 percent in the 3rd grade, and was 63 percent in the 4th grade in the district’s elementary schools. The percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations in math ranged from 44 to 58 percent in the 5th grade, from 57 to 58 percent in the 6th grade, from 53 to 54 percent in the 7th grade, and from 40 to 51 percent in the 8th grades in the district’s middle schools.**

| **Table 11: Dudley-Charlton Regional School District**  **Next-Generation MCAS Math Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations by Grade and School, 2017** | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **School** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **3–8** |
| Mason Road | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Charlton | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Dudley | 39% | 63% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 50% |
| Heritage | 57% | 63% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 60% |
| Dudley Middle | -- | -- | 58% | 57% | 54% | 40% | 52% |
| Charlton Middle | -- | -- | 44% | 58% | 53% | 51% | 52% |
| District | 49% | 62% | 51% | 56% | 52% | 45% | 52% |
| State | 49% | 49% | 46% | 50% | 47% | 48% | 48% |

**On the MCAS assessment in the 10th grade, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced at Shepherd High Regional High was above the state rate by 5 and 2 percentage points in ELA and math, respectively**.

| **Table 12: Dudley-Charlton Regional School District**  **MCAS ELA and Math Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grade 10, 2017** | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **School** | **ELA** | **Math** |
| Shepherd Hill Regional High | 96% | 81% |
| State | 91% | 79% |

**In science, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on the MCAS assessment was 49 and 62 percent in the 5th grade and 34 and 56 percent in the 8th grade at Dudley Middle and Charlton middle schools. Science proficiency in the 10th grade at Shepherd Hill Regional High was 83 percent.**

| **Table 13: Dudley-Charlton Regional School District**  **MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced by School and Grade, 2017** | | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **School** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **10** | **Total** |
| Dudley | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Mason Road | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Charlton | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Heritage | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Dudley Middle | -- | -- | 49% | -- | -- | 34% | -- | 41% |
| Charlton Middle | -- | -- | 62% | -- | -- | 56% | -- | 59% |
| Shepherd Hill Regional High | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 83% | 83% |
| District | -- | -- | 55% | -- | -- | 46% | 82% | 59% |
| State | -- | -- | 46% | -- | -- | 40% | 74% | 53% |

**In ELA, the percentage of all students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS assessment ranged from 53 to 59 percent in the district’s schools.**

* The percentage of high needs students meeting or exceeding expectations ranged from 27 to 43 percent.
* The percentage of economically disadvantaged students meeting or exceeding expectations ranged from 34 to 51 percent.
* The percentage of students with disabilities meeting or exceeding expectations ranged from 8 to 18 percent.
* The percentage of English language learners meeting or exceeding expectations ranged from 26 to 42 percent.

**In math, the percentage of all students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS assessment ranged from 50 to 60 percent in the district’s schools.**

* The percentage of high needs students meeting or exceeding expectations ranged from 27 to 35 percent.
* The percentage of economically disadvantaged students meeting or exceeding expectations ranged from 32 to 39 percent.
* The percentage of students with disabilities meeting or exceeding expectations ranged from 4 to 19 percent.
* The percentage of English language learners meeting or exceeding expectations ranged from 16 to 42 percent.

| **Table 14: Dudley-Charlton Regional School District**  **Next-Generation MCAS ELA and Math Percent Meeting and Exceeding Expectations by School, 2017** | | | | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **ELA** | | | | | **Math** | | | | |
| **School** | **All** | **High Needs** | **Econ. Dis.** | **SWD** | **ELLs** | **All** | **High Needs** | **Econ. Dis.** | **SWD** | **ELLs** |
| Mason Road | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Charlton | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Dudley | 55% | 43% | 51% | 18% | 42% | 50% | 33% | 39% | 12% | 33% |
| Heritage | 54% | 27% | 34% | 8% | 26% | 60% | 35% | 37% | 19% | 42% |
| Dudley Middle | 53% | 36% | 43% | 8% | 37% | 52% | 30% | 38% | 4% | 16% |
| Charlton Middle | 59% | 27% | 35% | 8% | -- | 52% | 27% | 32% | 13% | -- |
| District | 55% | 31% | 38% | 9% | 32% | 52% | 29% | 35% | 10% | 30% |

**Between 2014 and 2017, ELA proficiency at Shepherd Hill Regional High improved by 2 and 6 percentage points for all students and students with disabilities, respectively, and did not improve for high needs students.**

**Between 2014 and 2017, math proficiency at Shepherd Hill Regional High declined by 3 and 6 percentage points for all students and high needs students, respectively, and improved by 16 percentage points for students with disabilities.**

| **Table 15: Dudley-Charlton Regional School District**  **MCAS ELA and Math Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grade 10, 2014-2017** | | | | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **ELA** | | | | | **Math** | | | | |
| **School** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** |
| Shepherd Hill Regional High | 94% | 95% | 96% | 96% | 2 | 84% | 87% | 81% | 81% | -3 |
| High Needs | 84% | 79% | 85% | 84% | 0 | 66% | 67% | 59% | 60% | -6 |
| Econ. Dis. | -- | 83% | 89% | 93% | -- | -- | 76% | 64% | 67% | -- |
| ELLs | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| SWD | 58% | 61% | 69% | 64% | 6 | 11% | 41% | 38% | 27% | 16 |

**Between 2014 and 2017, in science, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on the MCAS assessment improved by 3 percentage points at Charlton Middle and declined by 3 and 2 percentage points at Dudley Middle and Shepherd Hill Regional High, respectively.**

* Between 2014 and 2017, science proficiency for high needs students improved by 6 and 2 percentage points at Charlton Middle and Shepherd Hill Regional High, respectively, and declined by 1 percentage point at Dudley Middle.
* In 2017, science proficiency for economically disadvantaged students was 37 and 38 percent at Dudley and Charlton middle schools, respectively, and was 83 percent at Shepherd Hill Regional High.
* Between 2014 and 2017, science proficiency for students with disabilities declined by 7 and 4 percentage points at Dudley and Charlton middle schools, respectively, and declined by 20 percentage points at Shepherd Hill Regional High.

| **Table 16: Dudley-Charlton Regional School District**  **MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Science by School and Subgroup, 2014–2017** | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **School** | **N (2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** |
| Dudley | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Mason Road | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Charlton | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Heritage | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Dudley Middle | 298 | 44% | 50% | 39% | 41% | -3% |
| High Needs | 97 | 31% | 39% | 22% | 30% | -1% |
| Econ. Dis. | 71 | -- | 52% | 29% | 37% | -- |
| SWD | 39 | 12% | 15% | 9% | 5% | -7% |
| ELLs | 14 | -- | 14% | 15% | 36% | -- |
| Charlton Middle | 352 | 56% | 57% | 53% | 59% | 3% |
| High Needs | 89 | 27% | 39% | 24% | 33% | 6% |
| Econ. Dis. | 66 | -- | 51% | 31% | 38% | -- |
| SWD | 37 | 18% | 17% | 13% | 14% | -4% |
| ELLs | 5 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Shepherd Hill Regional High | 248 | 85% | 87% | 83% | 83% | -2% |
| High Needs | 53 | 64% | 67% | 59% | 66% | 2% |
| Econ. Dis. | 41 | -- | 79% | 73% | 83% | -- |
| SWD | 21 | 44% | 39% | 24% | 24% | -20% |
| ELLs | 2 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |

**Between 2014 and 2017, the district’s four-year cohort graduation rate for all students declined 1.2 percentage points, from 95.3 percent in 2014 to 94.1 percent in 2017, above the 2017 state rate of 88.3 percent. The 2017 four-year cohort graduation rates for each subgroup with reportable data were above the state rates.**

| **Table 17: Dudley-Charlton Regional School District**  **Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates, 2014–2017** | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **N**  **(2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2017)** |
| High needs | 107 | 88.2% | 81.6% | 77.5% | 88.8% | 0.6 | 80.0% |
| Economically Disadvantaged\* | 87 | 87.9% | 81.8% | 81.0% | 87.4% | -0.5 | 79.0% |
| ELLs | 5 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 63.4% |
| SWD | 32 | 85.2% | 73.0% | 61.1% | 78.1% | -7.1 | 72.8% |
| African American | 4 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 80.0% |
| Asian | 8 | -- | -- | -- | 100% | -- | 94.1% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 19 | 83.3% | 72.2% | 80.0% | 84.2% | 0.9 | 74.4% |
| Multi-Race, non-Hisp./Lat. | 2 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 85.2% |
| White | 269 | 95.7% | 93.9% | 91.6% | 95.2% | -0.5 | 92.6% |
| All s | 303 | 95.3% | 91.9% | 91.1% | 94.1% | -1.2 | 88.3% |
| \* Four-year cohort graduation rate for students from low income families used for 2014, and 2015 rates. | | | | | | | |

**Between 2013 and 2016, the district’s five-year cohort graduation rate decreased by 1.9 percentage points for all students from 95.1 percent in 2013 to 93.2 percent in 2016, above the 2016 state rate of 89.8 percent.**

| **Table 18: Dudley-Charlton Regional School District**  **Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates, 2013–2016** | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **N**  **(2016)** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2016)** |
| High needs | 102 | 83.6% | 89.5% | 83.7% | 82.4% | -1.2 | 82.9% |
| Economically Disadvantaged\* | 84 | 83.3% | 89.7% | 83.1% | 84.5% | 1.2 | 82.1% |
| ELLs | 2 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 70.9% |
| SWD | 36 | 77.8% | 85.2% | 75.7% | 69.4% | -8.4 | 76.5% |
| African American | 3 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 83.4% |
| Asian | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 94.8% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 15 | -- | 83.3% | 77.8% | 93.3% | -- | 76.8% |
| Multi-Race, non-Hisp./Lat. | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 87.4% |
| White | 261 | 95.6% | 96.4% | 94.3% | 93.1% | -2.5 | 93.5% |
| All | 280 | 95.1% | 96.0% | 92.7% | 93.2% | -1.9 | 89.8% |
| \* Five-year cohort graduation rate for students from low-income families used for 2013 and 2014 rates. | | | | | | | |

**In 2017, the in-school suspension rate for all students was 4.8 percent, more than twice the state rate of 1.7 percent. In-school suspension rates in the district were more than twice the state rates for each subgroup with reportable data.**

| **Table 19: Dudley-Charlton Regional School District**  **In-School Suspension Rates by Subgroup, 2014–2017** | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2017)** |
| High Needs | 7.6% | 8.2% | 8.5% | 7.9% | 0.3 | 2.6% |
| Economically Disadvantaged\* | 8.6% | 8.6% | 7.9% | 9.0% | 0.4 | 2.9% |
| ELLs | -- | -- | 9.9% | -- | -- | 1.7% |
| SWD | 7.6% | 9.8% | 10.9% | 9.0% | 1.4 | 3.1% |
| African American | 14.3% | -- | 10.0% | -- | -- | 3.3% |
| Asian | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 0.5% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 7.4% | 11.1% | 12.3% | 10.4% | 3.0 | 2.5% |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic or Latino | 10.7% | 8.3% | 6.3% | -- | -- | 2.1% |
| White | 4.6% | 3.9% | 4.7% | 4.3% | -0.3 | 1.3% |
| All | 5.0% | 4.5% | 5.4% | 4.8% | -0.2 | 1.7% |

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

**Between 2014 and 2017, out-of-school suspension rates increased for all students and for each subgroup with reportable trend data by 0.3 to 2.4 percentage points, below the 2017 state rates for all students and each subgroup, except white students.**

| **Table 20: Dudley-Charlton Regional School District**  **Out-of-School Suspension Rates by Subgroup, 2014–2017** | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2017)** |
| High Needs | 3.1% | 2.5% | 2.8% | 4.1% | 1.0 | 4.5% |
| Economically Disadvantaged\* | 3.5% | 2.6% | 3.1% | 5.2% | 1.7 | 5.3% |
| ELLs | -- | -- | 1.4% | -- | -- | 3.8% |
| SWD | 2.8% | 2.9% | 2.7% | 4.8% | 2.0 | 5.5% |
| African American | 7.1% | -- | 3.3% | -- | -- | 6.3% |
| Asian | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 0.7% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 2.5% | 2.7% | 3.3% | 4.9% | 2.4 | 5.2% |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic or Latino | 6.7% | 1.2% | 2.5% | -- | -- | 3.1% |
| White | 1.7% | 1.5% | 1.3% | 2.0% | 0.3 | 1.6% |
| All | 1.9% | 1.5% | 1.5% | 2.2% | 0.3 | 2.8% |

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

**Between 2014 and 2017, the district’s dropout rate for all students increased from 0.6 percent in 2014 to 1.0 percent in 2017, below the state rate of 1.8 percent.**

| **Table 21: Dudley-Charlton Regional School District**  **Dropout Rates by Subgroup, 2014–2017** | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2017)** |
| High Needs | 0.9% | 3.8% | 2.5% | 2.9% | 2.0 | 3.5% |
| Economically Disadvantaged\* | 0.8% | 3.6% | 2.4% | 2.5% | 1.7 | 3.6% |
| ELLs | 0.0% | -- | -- | 12.5% | 12.5 | 6.5% |
| SWD | 1.1% | 5.0% | 1.8% | 5.0% | 3.9 | 3.3% |
| African American | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 5.0% | 5.0 | 2.9% |
| Asian | -- | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | -- | 0.6% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 0.0% | 3.3% | 3.2% | 0.0% | 0.0 | 4.2% |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic or Latino | 0.0% | 9.1% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0 | 1.7% |
| White | 0.7% | 0.8% | 0.8% | 1.1% | 0.4 | 1.1% |
| All | 0.6% | 1.0% | 0.9% | 1.0% | 0.4 | 1.8% |
| \*Dropout rates for students from low income families used for 2014 rates. | | | | | | |

Leadership and Governance

At the time of the onsite review in February 2018, the superintendent was in his fourth year in the position having previously served as a middle school principal in the district. He has hired four of the current seven principals. Morale in the district is high as evidenced by low turnover of teachers and by numerous comments to the team during the onsite review.

The superintendent is attempting to focus teaching in the district on preparing students for the skills they need in the twenty-first century. This has resulted in a strong focus on technology and interpersonal skills. This emphasis is evident in the district’s planning documents.

In recent years, the superintendent has focused on bringing the district’s technology up to date. At the time of the onsite review in February 2018, the district had only had wireless access in its schools for two years and was still experiencing bandwidth issues.

***Strength Finding***

**1. The superintendent, the school committee, the teachers’ association, and town officials have created a culture of collaboration, transparency, and trust. There is a high level of morale among administrative and teaching staff.**

* 1. The superintendent’s relationship with the school committee has been positive and productive.
     1. In his 2016–2017 evaluation, members of the school committee described the superintendent as effective and applauded his interaction with students, his communication with the staff, and his work with the school committee.
     2. School committee members stated that the superintendent was a skilled listener who thought outside the box. They stated that he had handled difficult situations with professionalism, compassion, supportiveness, reasonableness, and calmness.
  2. The superintendent has developed and nurtured positive relations with town officials and state legislators.
     1. The superintendent has organized several leadership breakfasts with town officials and local legislators.
     2. In March 2017, a meeting was held to judge support for an operational override. Twenty-nine local and state officials and district leaders attended and supported the concept of the override. A follow-up meeting was held in May 2017 to formulate plans for an override in the 2017–2018 school year.
        1. At the time of the onsite review in February 2018, the town of Charlton approved an override vote for April 3, 2018. The town of Dudley was expected to follow. (See the Financial and Asset Management standard below.)
     3. A school committee member stated that relations with the town boards, local and state representatives, and fire and police departments were constructive.

**C.** Principals told the team that they felt supported by the superintendent and had autonomy within the planning structure of the district.

1. For example, each principal received a budget for professional development to send teachers to workshops and conferences that reflect the specific needs of the school.

2. Principals said that the hiring of teachers was done at the school level with a committee of teachers aiding the principal in the hiring decision. They stated that the superintendent was collaborative and supportive.

**D.** Teachers expressed the view that the district was a fine place to work and they felt consulted and involved.

1. Teachers’ association representatives stated that they had a positive relationship with the superintendent, that they could call him anytime and that there had not been any grievances.

2. Teachers stated that the superintendent sent out weekly communications to teachers. They said that they were aware of his vision for classroom teaching (kids first), and their voices were heard in the planning process.

**Impact**: Leaders who communicate effectively and work at building relationships with all the stakeholders in the district are essential for a district to move forward. A strong level of trust between the superintendent and the community can lead to increased and sustained support for the district.

***Challenges and Areas for Growth***

**2. 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. The planning documents focus largely on structural improvement such as technology, staffing, and committee work and not on student achievement and instructional practice.**

**A.** Interviews and a document review indicated thatthe district’s 2014–2017 strategic plan began in 2014, was revised in 2016, and expired in 2017. At the time of the onsite review in February 2018, the district continued to operate under this plan and was developing the 2017–2020 strategic plan. The superintendent told the team that he planned to take the new plan to the school committee in May 2018, noting that the new strategic plan would go into effect in July 2018.

**B.** The district’s 2014–2017 strategic plan does not have SMART goals[[4]](#footnote-4) based on specific desired student outcomes.

1. The vision in the district’s 2014–2017 strategic plan focuses on providing a safe and supportive learning environment and the development of lifelong learning and personal confidence to enable students to meet the challenges of a changing world.

a. Elementary teachers stated that the vision of the district was “kids first.” Middle-school teachers stated that the district’s vision was “kids first.” High-school teachers stated that the vision was “pride and unity” for the high school and “kids first” for the rest of the district. The 2014–2017 strategic plan does not use this terminology.

2. The district’s 2014–2017 strategic plan has three headings: communications, community engagement and partnerships; climate, culture and civility; and curriculum, instruction and assessment. Under each are goals and “tasks/activities.”

a. In the 2014–2017 strategic plan, of the 17 tasks/activities in the curriculum, instruction and assessment section, only 3 address curricula and only 1 addresses teachers’ practice. Only one of the tasks/activities lists teachers as the personnel responsible (developing vertical alignment committees). Tasks/activities are not related to measurable student achievement outcomes.

**C.** Of the 14 “action steps” in the draft strategic plan under the heading “academic competencies,” only one concerns a student outcome (seniors producing portfolios or capstone projects).

**D.** Although the strategic plan is reviewed periodically, it is missing an annual action plan, which would enable the district to prioritize initiatives within a given school year.

1. The district’s de-facto annual action plan is based on the “theme” determined by the superintendent, by professional development (PD) priorities decided by the PD committee, and by the power standards for evaluation determined by the administrative team. These district priorities are not part of the 2014–2017 strategic plan.

**E.** Both teachers and the superintendent spoke about an emphasis on teacher practice, using phrases such as “dynamic teaching, “student engagement,” and “data driven instruction.” These terms and other indicators of exemplary teacher practice are absent from both the 2014–2017 strategic plan and the draft strategic plan.

**F.** The School Improvement Plans (SIPs) use the 2014–2017 district goals as their goals and then list school specific activities under those goals. However, the SIPs are missing some of the basic elements of effective school improvement such as backward design from specific student outcomes.

1.The SIPs list the task/activity, the evidence of completion, and the personnel responsible. Few SIP goals, activities, and student outcomes are written as SMART goals. Most SIPs are missing resources and a timeline. For example, one SIP listed staff participation in the district’s ELA/literacy program and curriculum creation as a task/activity. The outcome was that students would have a more consistent ELA experience across grade levels. Neither the task nor the outcome was specific, measurable, or time limited.

2.The SIPs do not have goals addressing specific student outcomes.

3.The SIPs do not contain instructional practice objectives that can be linked to the educator evaluation process.

**Impact**: Without a strategic plan with data-based SMART goals and SIPS with SMART goals aligned with those in the strategic plan, stakeholders do not know the direction in which the district is heading, the plans to achieve goals, or the extent to which progress is being made.

***Recommendation***

**The district should use a participatory process to revise its planning documents and make them more data- and goal-driven.**

* 1. The district should engage in an inclusive, reflective process to clarify its vision and communicate it to ensure that students, teachers and families understand the district’s overriding philosophy.

1. The vision should be incorporated into the district plan, and plan goals should be designed to achieve the district’s vision.

* 1. The district should adopt a backwards planning process based on desired student outcomes and other outcomes identified by the district, including those specific to academic achievement.
  2. The district should develop an annual action plan that prioritizes district initiatives aligned with the strategic plan.

1. This document should include many of the yearly initiatives already in place such as yearly themes and PD priorities and align these with the strategic plan.

2. The draft strategic plan contains some initiatives written with benchmarks and timelines. This should be expanded to those initiatives that are less specific and not time limited.

* 1. SIPs should be aligned with the district plan.
     1. SIPs should include annual school initiatives, personnel responsible, and the resources needed to achieve them.

2. Outcomes should be written in SMART goal format.

3. The plan should include any professional development and budgetary implications, if applicable.

**Benefits:** By implementing this recommendation, the district can use a representative and effective district and school improvement planning process that results in clarity about the district’s vision, specific goals, and its plans to achieve them. A greater focus on student achievement outcomes and instructional practice goals will increase the likelihood that the plan will drive continuous and meaningful improvement in teaching and learning.

**Recommended resources:**

* 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.
* *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.
* *Massachusetts Transfer Goals* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/model/MATransferGoals.pdf>) are long range goals that students should work toward over the course of their Pre-K–12 academic experience. They were written to provide an explicit connection between the standards-based Model Curriculum Units and Massachusetts’ definition of College and Career Readiness. They are not recommended for use as a checklist, evaluation tool, or as an assessment tool, but they could be a helpful resource for the district as it articulates a vision and engages in long-term planning.

Instruction

***Contextual Background***

Primary responsibility for curriculum and instruction lies with the director of curriculum and student assessment, whose role is to provide Pre-K–12 leadership in the areas of curriculum, instruction, learning, assessment, strategic planning, staff development, and grant management in coordination with district administrators. Additional support for curriculum and instruction is provided by the director of science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics (STEAM), who has been in the role for two years, and the seven principals, who serve as the instructional leaders of their schools. Six department heads at the high school, who receive a stipend and teach four out of five classes,[[5]](#footnote-5) support the principals and teachers with strategies to improve curriculum and instruction. Department heads at the high school also collaborate with the two assistant principals on evaluations and meet monthly with the teachers. At the middle school, team leaders receive a stipend, but do not evaluate teachers. An ELL and a Title I coordinator receive stipends, but do not have release time to meet with teachers. The district has K–5 facilitators in mathematics and literacy and ELL liaisons for each school. Reading teachers also model instruction in classes. Approximately 50 instructional assistants are assigned to classrooms or work one to one with students. The district does not have coaches to support teachers in the classroom.

The district adopted “power standards,” or areas of focus for teacher evaluations, when it adopted its educator evaluation system. Administrators and teachers receive a list of these power standards at the start of the school year. In the 2017–2018 school year, the seven power standards include well-structured lessons, adjustment to practice, and student engagement.

***Strengths***

**1. In most observed classes, team members noted a high incidence of teachers’ knowledge of the subject matter, of classroom routines and positive supports in place to ensure that students behave appropriately, and of a positive classroom climate that is conducive to teaching and learning.**

* 1. Team members observed sufficient and compelling evidence that teachers demonstrated knowledge of subject matter and content (characteristic #1) in 49 of 59 classes or in 83 percent of observed lessons (in 83 percent of elementary lessons, in 82 percent of middle-school lessons, and in 85 percent of high-school lessons.)
     1. In a marine biology class for students in grades 11–12, the teacher provided feedback as students dissected small sharks and questioned students about the muscle structure and size of the liver as they worked in pairs.
     2. In a grade 1 ELA literacy block, a teacher met with a small group of students for guided reading and provided targeted support and questioned students as they read aloud to ensure comprehension of a short story.
  2. Team members observed sufficient and compelling evidence of classroom routines and positive supports in place to ensure that students behave appropriately (characteristic #11) in 52 of 59 classes or in 84 percent of observed lessons (in 82 percent of elementary lessons, in 96 percent of middle-school lessons, and in 84 percent of high-school lessons.)
     1. In an elementary class, kindergarten students returned to the classroom from a health class and immediately took their places on the rug for mathematics review.
     2. In a middle-school ELA class, students met individually with the teacher who reviewed and signed their agenda books, while the remainder of the class worked on an individual assignment.
     3. In a high-school ELA class, the teacher positively and successfully redirected students when they were not focused on the assignment.

1. The team observed sufficient and compelling evidence that classroom climate is conducive to teaching and learning (characteristic #12) in 52 of 59 classes or in 88 percent of observed lessons (in 100 percent of elementary lessons, in 87 percent of middle-school lessons, and in 79 percent of high-school lessons.
   * 1. In a high-school ELA class, students seemed comfortable laughing and enjoying a lesson on Shakespeare.
     2. In a grade 5 ELA class, students worked in groups on citing textual evidence and the teacher positively reinforced students as they worked.
     3. In a grade three literacy block, students rotated among centers, and transitions were smooth without disruption.
     4. In a kindergarten ELA literacy block, the observer noted, “Students know where to go and what to do.”

**Impact**: Teachers’ knowledge of the subject and content matter ensures that students learn complex concepts and skills. When structures are in place and the environment is conducive to teaching and learning, students can feel safe to take risks and become responsible for their own learning.

***Challenges and Areas for Growth***

1. **In observed lessons, the quality of instruction varied across levels, especially in students engaging in higher-order thinking, students communicating their ideas and thinking with each other, student engagement in challenging tasks regardless of learning needs, and teachers’ use of a variety of instructional strategies.**
2. Observers noted sufficient and compelling evidence of students engaging in higher-order thinking (characteristic #6) in 29 of 59 observed lessons (in 41 percent of elementary lessons, in 61 percent of middle-school lessons, and in 42 percent of high- school lessons.)

1. The team observed some strong examples of students engaging in higher-order thinking, including high-school students analyzing text in an ELA class and middle-school students working together in a science lab to measure the amount of energy stored in food.

2. In contrast, in a high-school science class, students took notes while the teacher lectured.

3. In a middle-school ELA class, students viewed a video during the entire 20-minute observation time. The teacher did not stop the video during the observation to ask questions and enable students to engage in higher-order thinking to process what they were viewing.

1. Team members observed sufficient and compelling evidence of students communicating their ideas and thinking with each other (characteristic #7) in only 21 of 59 observed lessons (in 41 percent of elementary lessons, in 43 percent of middle-school lessons, and in just 21 percent of high-school lessons.)

1. The team observed some examples of students communicating their ideas and thinking with each other, including a lively discussion about Macbeth in a high-school ELA class, students interacting during a science lab at the high school, and an elementary teacher questioning students in a guided reading group, “What you think you know about the book from the cover?”

2. In several high-school lessons where students were not given opportunities to interact, the teacher lectured or responded to students’ questions throughout the observation. In some cases, when there was time to communicate ideas and thinking, students were assigned individual work.

3. In two mathematics classes (high school and grade 4), the teacher solved problems on the interactive white board while students watched.

1. Team members observed sufficient and compelling evidence of the teacher ensuring that students are engaging in challenging tasks regardless of learning needs (characteristic #9) in only 25 of 59 observed lessons (in 47 percent of elementary lessons, in 57 percent of middle-school lessons, and in just 21 percent of high-school lessons.) At all levels, while observers saw appropriate use of instructional aides to assist students in accessing the curriculum, observers found mostly whole-group lessons with little evidence of differentiation to ensure that all students could access the curriculum.

1. In a high-school English class, for example, the teacher lectured, and then students read aloud, and then answered questions as a group. While the tasks changed, the whole-group lesson was not differentiated and did not support and challenge all students.

2. At the elementary level, students were often grouped for the literacy block, though in most cases, they all performed the same tasks, indicating an absence of differentiation.

**D.**  Team members observed sufficient and compelling evidence that the teacher used a variety of instructional strategies (characteristic #10) in 23 of 59 observed lessons (in 47 percent of elementary lessons, in 43 percent of middle-school lessons, and in only 26 percent of high-school lessons.)

1. In most observed middle-school and high-school classes, the teacher lectured. In some classes, the teacher used an interactive white board to solve problems or to make a PowerPoint presentation.

2. At the elementary level, students were assigned various tasks in learning centers during the literacy block, but in several whole-group lessons the teacher instructed and asked questions of the full group.

**Impact**: When effective, engaging, research-based instructional practices are not fully in place K-12, the district cannot ensure that students are sufficiently prepared to achieve at high levels.

***Recommendation***

**1.** **The district should improve instruction by building teachers’ capacity to engage students in higher-order thinking, to allow students to communicate their ideas and thinking with each other, to engage all students in challenging tasks regardless of learning needs, and to use a variety of instructional strategies.**

**A.** As part of the supervision and evaluation process, school leaders and evaluators should provide feedback to teachers on how to improve their skills in providing challenging, engaging instruction that meets all students’ needs.

1. All teachers should be encouraged to vary their instructional methods and rely less on the lecture format.

2. The district should continue to provide administrators with opportunities to calibrate evaluations through walk-throughs and videos, ensuring that there is a common understanding of concepts including student engagement, higher-order thinking, and varied instructional strategies that address students’ strengths and needs.

3. The district should continue conducting learning walks with a focus on identifying examples of these concepts.

4. The district could encourage teachers to observe peers who are exemplary in these areas.

**B.** The district should consider planning professional development addressing the areas described above.

1. Professional development could include sharing best practices, collaborative instructional planning, and reflecting on the effectiveness of new instructional strategies.

2. Topics could include using questioning techniques to elicit higher order thinking, as well as how to structure opportunities for students to engage in deep and meaningful discussions about subject matter with each other.

3. The district should consider longer time frames for professional development themes and goals (see Human Resources and Professional Development section of this report) to ensure deep and sustained learning and promote meaningful change to instructional practice.

**C.** The district should pay particular attention to helping teachers learn how to promote student engagement in challenging tasks regardless of learning needs.

1. This should include a focus on formative assessment strategies that can help teachers to identify students’ strengths and needs.

2. Teachers who use centers or group activities should maximize the potential of this approach by differentiating student tasks based on their identified skill level.

**Benefits** By implementing this recommendation the district will ensure that all teachers are engaging students at a high level of learning. Students will gain deeper understanding of course content and be able to support their ideas and thinking.Students with disabilities, English language learners, and students with varied learning styles will be able to access the curriculum successfully.

**Recommended resources:**

* 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 *Learning Walkthrough Implementation Guide* (<http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/accountability/dart/walkthrough/implementation-guide.docx>) 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.
  + 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.

Human Resources and Professional Development

Contextual Background

The district’s practices for hiring teachers and administrators are collaborative and implemented consistently across the district. Teams of teachers and administrators districtwide use hiring protocols and interview procedures.

While the district has adopted the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework, implementation is inconsistent. Teachers’ evaluations generally provided actionable feedback that promoted professional growth; however, only the evaluations of several principals included feedback intended to improve instruction. Most teachers’ evaluation files included self-assessment and goal setting documents with student learning goals written as SMART goals. However, most administrators’ goals did not include measurable benchmarks. The district has implemented student and staff feedback and the use of common assessment data, required components of an educator evaluation system.

The district has a process for developing, implementing, and funding professional development (PD). PD is funded by the regional budget and federal Title IIA funds. The teachers’ collective bargaining agreement provides a yearly amount for PD, as well as amounts allocated per teacher for workshops and for tuition reimbursement for graduate courses.

A six-member PD committee, which the teachers’ collective bargaining agreement describes, determines districtwide PD. The committee, led by the director of curriculum and student assessment, determines the types of PD offerings for the district’s full-day and half-day PD programs. Each school year, the district has a retreat where district and school administrators, led by the superintendent, determine the theme for the year’s PD programming. The committee also administers surveys to teachers before and after PD, to get feedback about their professional needs and an evaluation of the PD.

In school year 2016–2017, the district’s PD themes were social and emotional behavior and character education; in school year 2017–2018, the theme was technological literacy with digital tools. In 2018–2019, the theme will be project-based learning. The district has obtained grants in anticipation of this focus. Teachers in focus groups seemed aware of the annual PD themes.

*Strength Findings*

**The district has developed a culture of professional growth for teachers through timely observations and evaluations that include recommendations to improve pedagogy.**

1. Teachers’ evaluations reviewed by the team included actionable feedback that included recommendations on how to improve teaching practices.
2. Team members reviewed the evaluation files of 24 teachers randomly selected from the district’s 7 schools. All files included completed self-assessments, team or individual goal setting documents that included SMART goals, formative assessments/evaluations, summative evaluations, and evaluators’ observation walkthrough summaries.
   1. The evaluation files reviewed included teachers on developing or self-directed one or two-year evaluation plans. Formative assessments/evaluations and summative evaluations were conducted in accordance with the timelines required by the educator’s plan.
   2. Teachers told the team that at first the educator evaluation system was overwhelming but that it was going well now. Teachers stated that they received timely feedback from evaluators, which they could reflect on and respond to as part of the evaluation process.
   3. When team members asked evaluators whether they have spent time calibrating the consistency of evaluations across the district, evaluators told the team that they have discussed calibration at the weekly administrative team meetings and have received training in observational techniques. Evaluators stated that twice a month teams of administrators visited schools, observed classes, met with the principals, and calibrated findings. Administrators conduct learning walks at each school twice a year.
   4. All evaluation documentation is stored in TeachPoint, the district’s educator evaluation management system.

2. The teachers’ evaluation documents reviewed by the team were informative and instructive[[6]](#footnote-6) and included professional practice and student achievement SMART goals as well as instructional practices and engagement strategies the teacher used to improve student achievement. For example, one evaluator noted the best practices that the teacher used to engage the students in high quality-instruction.

* + 1. Of 24 teachers’ files reviewed, 20 included recommendations from the evaluator that could improve educator skills or improve the learning experience for students. For example, one evaluator suggested practices to help students learn the content and to connect it to their world today.

1. As of the 2015–2016 school year, state educator evaluation regulations (603 CMR 35.07) call for all districts to collect and use student feedback as evidence in the teacher evaluation process and staff feedback in the administrator evaluation process. The educator evaluation regulations also call for districts to develop multiple measures of student learning, growth, and achievement and inform judgments about educator impact.
2. District and school leaders told the team that the district has implemented the student and staff feedback requirements of the state’s Educator Evaluation Framework. The district has developed a document entitled “Overview of Student/Staff Feedback Survey Evaluation Guidelines,” which outlines student and staff survey guidelines and timelines.
3. Students and teachers confirmed that the district conducted surveys to measure the effectiveness of teachers and administrators. In addition, the district provided the team with survey feedback forms used by students and staff to measure teacher and administrator effectiveness.
4. School leaders told the team that assessment data was reviewed to determine whether teachers were meeting the student learning goals included in the teachers’ goal setting documents.

**Impact**: Providing educators with suggestions and recommendations that improve practice and enhance professional growth promotes a culture of continuous improvement and support and likely leads to improved student achievement.

**2.** **The district has developed a professional development program, which is aligned with district and school priorities and supports teachers throughout their careers.**

1. Interviews and a document review indicated that the district’s professional development (PD) program incorporated many of the core components of the Massachusetts Standards for Professional Development.[[7]](#footnote-7) Among these principles is that PD should be a systematic and purposeful process directed by effective and collaborative leadership.
2. The district’s PD committee oversees its PD program.

1. The PD committee is composed of the director of curriculum and student assessment, the science, technology, engineering, arts, and math (STEAM) director, the interim director of special education, and three members of the teachers’ association.

2. The committee meets several times throughout the year.

3. Teachers told the review team that teachers’ association representation on the PD committee made them feel that they were consulted about the PD program.

**C.** The collective bargaining agreement between the district and the Dudley-Charlton Teachers’ Association includes agreements about PD funding.

1. The agreement specifies that the district allocate $65,000 for PD in school year 2017–2018. To ensure that each teacher has an equal opportunity to attend workshops, conferences, etc., the district allocates a minimum of $150 per teacher per agreement year. The district reimburses teachers for graduate courses, the amount depending on the academic level.

**D.** The district schedules three full PD days (in October, January, and August) and two half-days in school year 2017–2018. Beginning in the 2018–2019 school year, the district plans to add two half days for districtwide PD. There are many other PD opportunities in the district, including a menu of summer offerings, enough for a group of high-school teachers to say that there are “constant PD opportunities for everyone.”

1. The district provides opportunities for faculty to serve as instructors and uses the “train-the-trainer” model whenever possible.

2. The district encourages teachers to observe each other’s instruction through the mentor program and for less experienced teachers to witness colleagues’ techniques in an informal peer-observation process. In addition, the district gives some teachers release time to observe teaching in neighboring districts.

* + 1. The district’s STEAM director runs a monthly workshop called “Define STEM” with the teachers for grades 4–8. This online program comes with PD, as well as lesson plans.
    2. School principals are allocated dedicated PD funds and choose the content of the PD for their school-based educator improvement sessions, which are held during faculty meetings or the dedicated half-day release time.
    3. The district has monthly PLCs with different forms at different schools, such as data study, vertical alignment, and collaborative lesson planning.
    4. During “Tech Tuesdays,” knowledgeable staff members teach their colleagues about iPads, interactive white boards, etc. This program matches the district’s current technology theme.

**Impact:** Using teacher leaders as instructors and trainers can support communication and collaboration and help the district focus on priorities to improve teaching and learning. The use of monthly PLCs can also contribute to continuous improvement. Teachers’ participation in choosing and evaluating PD gives them a feeling of empowerment. By creating opportunities for teachers to take on instructional leadership, the district is supporting the growth of its faculty.

***Challenges and Areas for Growth***

**The district has not developed an evaluation process for administrators that enhances professional growth and includes recommendations for improvement.**

1. The team reviewed evaluation documentation of 14 school and district administrators including the most recent evaluation of the superintendent conducted by the school committee.
2. Of the 14 administrator evaluations, only 5 included SMART goals. None of the five was a principal’s evaluation because principals were required to adopt the district goals, which were not SMART goals. For the most part, these goals did not have benchmarks or measurable outcomes.
3. Evidence of instructive comments and growth-oriented feedback in the administrators’ evaluations was limited to the evaluations of four principals for whom the superintendent wrote lengthy evaluations that included growth-oriented feedback.
4. School leaders stated that they submitted goals to the superintendent and met with him on an ongoing basis throughout the year. They noted that at the end of the year they received a summative evaluation that included instructive feedback.
5. The superintendent’s goals were not SMART goals and reflected a general direction for the district rather than actionable goals with measurable outcomes. For example, one goal was “I will continue to pursue the district strategic plan priorities.” Another goal was “District administrators will provide support to the district schools to develop consistent methods of communication with students, parent and the community.” The superintendent’s goals were submitted with a plan, but it did not include a timeline or specific outcomes.

1. All school committee members completed evaluations of the superintendent, and all made comments, some of which were recommendations for improvement.

**Impact**: Without providing all district and school leaders with suggestions and recommendations to improve practice and enhance professional growth, the district is missing critical opportunities to promote a culture of continuous improvement and to improve student achievement.

***Recommendation***

**The district should ensure that all administrators develop SMART goals as part of the educator evaluation system and that they receive frequent growth-oriented feedback.**

1. Evaluators of school and district administrators should evaluate and observe administrators consistent with the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework guidelines.

1. Evaluators should conduct thorough formative assessments/evaluations and summative evaluations and observations that include effective recommendations for improvement that will lead to professional growth.

2***.*** The superintendent should establish procedures that ensures all administrators receive timely formative and summative evaluations and observations.

Evaluators of school and district administrators should provide verbal and written actionable feedback to administrators that includes information on progress toward meeting student achievement and/or school improvement goals.

Evaluators of school and district administrators should ensure that administrators have developed SMART goals aligned with district/strategic or school improvement plans.

a. This includes the school committee ensuring that the superintendent develops SMART goals.

The district should continue to use staff feedback as a component of the administrator evaluation process.

**Benefits**: By ensuring high-quality goals and feedback for all administrators, the district will help ensure that school and district leaders have opportunities to reflect on their professional practice. If all administrators establish SMART goals that are aligned with school and district goals, their work will help to guide the schools and district on a clear path toward improved student achievement.

**Recommended resources:**

* *On Track with Evaluator Capacity* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/pln/OnTrack-EvaluatorCapacity.pdf>) is an interactive document that provides specific strategies, lessons learned, and links to district-created resources. It was produced by eight districts that were part of a Professional Learning Network for Supporting Evaluator Capacity.
* *Quick Reference Guide: Opportunities to Streamline the Evaluation Process* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/QRG-Streamline.pdf>) is designed to help districts reflect on and continuously improve their evaluation systems:
  + What’s working? What are the bright spots?
  + How can we streamline the process to stay focused on professional growth and development?
  + What do we need to adjust to ensure our system is valuable to educators and students?

Financial and Asset Management

Contextual Background

Dudley and Charlton have a positive relationship with the district, but the towns’ approved regional assessments to fund the district’s budget have only minimally exceeded the required net school spending (NSS) level, by 2.2 percent in fiscal year 2017, compared with an average of 24 percent statewide.

The towns have struggled to fulfill additional funding requests from the district because they have been at their Proposition 2½ levy limits, which means that increases for schools and other town services were not possible without an override. In response, a $3 million tax override was proposed for the fiscal year 2019 budget. At the time of the onsite review in February 2018, both boards of selectmen had approved putting the override on their ballots, which was scheduled to take place on April 3, 2018.[[8]](#footnote-8)

Strength Findings

**1. The towns of Dudley and Charlton and the district have a positive working relationship, which has contributed to a collaborative budget process and a budget that meets required net school spending.**

**A.** The relationship between district leaders and town officials is professional and collaborative.

* + 1. District leaders spoke highly of their relationships with town administrators.
       1. The superintendent stated that the towns were “well run.” Other interviewees stated that the district had a positive working relationship with municipal officials.
       2. The towns and the district hold regular joint meetings that include state legislators, selectmen, and school committee members.
       3. Interviewees stated that the towns were supportive of the schools and provided whatever resources they could.
    2. The towns and district work together to achieve a budget that is satisfactory to the schools, meets required net school spending (NSS), and is affordable for the towns.

**B.** The district’s actual NSS has exceeded the minimum requirement for at least the last 10 years. That excess percentage has fluctuated in the last 10 years from 1.2 percent to 4.2 percent. The average Massachusetts School district exceeds the minimum by around 24 percent.

1. The district’s actual NSS has increased from $33,804.552 in fiscal year 2007 to $40,584,636 in fiscal year 2017.

2. The district’s actual NSS exceeded the NSS requirement by 2.2 percent in fiscal year 2017.

**Impact**: Because the town and district officials communicate and work collaboratively, they likely can allocate resources more effectively, and address areas of concern quickly.

1. **The district has developed a capital improvement plan for the future status of its aging buildings. The buildings are generally in good condition.**
2. The capital improvement plan combined with the budget document sets out a complete picture of the capital budget.

The capital improvement plan details past current and future bond payments and state aid on those payments.

1. The detail notes that the 1999–2000 renovation and construction projects will have their last principal and interest payments in 2019.

The individual building assessments estimate the costs and priority of each building’s capital improvement need.

The district budget demonstrates how the capital plan fits into the overall budget picture.

1. The capital improvement plan tracks the current and future needs of each building and reports on recently funded improvements.

Shepherd Hill Regional High School is 45 years old and has never had a major renovation.

1. A 2016 School Survey Report by the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) rates Shepherd Hill as being in good condition “with a few building systems that may need some attention (level 2).”
2. In 2016, the district contracted for a professional analysis of the high school’s capital needs. The study presents a 20-year plan for replacing various systems. Immediate needs include a roof, pneumatic controls, paving, and athletic fields.
3. The MSBA rejected various statements of interest for renovating the high school. The superintendent told the team that the building was in too good condition to receive MSBA funding.
4. The district is hoping the MSBA will fund a new roof for the high school.

Charlton Elementary was built in 1958 and renovated in 1988. Heritage Elementary was built in 1989.

The MSBA School Survey Report rates Charlton Elementary as level 2 indicating that it needs minor repairs or renovation.

The Report rates Heritage Elementary as level 1, good with few needs.

The capital improvement plan includes the capital needs of the Charlton and Heritage elementary schools. Items needed include carpets at Charlton Elementary and heat pumps and an energy management system at Heritage.

The other four schools, Dudley and Charlton middle schools, Dudley Elementary, and Mason Road were built or renovated in 2000.

The MSBA School Survey Report rates all four schools level 1, good with few needs.

The capital improvement plan lists the capital needs of all four buildings. Necessary items include paving repairs, carpets, air conditioning, and a roof replacement.

**Impact**: Effective capital planning helps to ensure that school buildings are in generally good condition and provide adequate learning environments for all students and staff.

**Challenges and Areas for Growth**

**3. The budget document does not contains trend data or a summary or narrative highlighting the district’s goals.**

* 1. The budget document consists of a binder with multiple exhibits.

1. The budget document does not include trend data or a summary or narrative highlighting the district’s goals.
2. The budget document shows the budget for the next fiscal year; however, it does not include an actual expenditure history.
3. The budget document does not have full-time equivalent (FTE) data in the personnel sections. The document does not have an FTE history. The school “spotlights “contain staffing data, but not FTE data.
4. A PowerPoint presentation on the district’s website describes the budget process.
   1. The budget document does not contain clear links to district and school goals.

Budget development is not connected to the district’s strategic plan.

SIPs are not connected to the budget document and the goals are not monetized.

Finance officers told the review team that the funding needed for school and district goals was discussed in administrative team meetings about the budget.

**Impact**: Without including historical data, summary narratives, and clear links to strategic goals in the budget document, the district does not present important financial information to the public and cannot ensure the effective use of funds to support the needs of students.

**Recommendation**

**The district should construct public budget documents that are transparent and complete. The budget should be clearly aligned to the district and school improvement plan goals.**

1. The detailed public budget should be expanded, adding historical data for previous years. It should include trend information for several years.
2. The district office should use its detailed internal records to provide information that will enhance the documents’ transparency.
3. The district might consider displaying individual department/program budgets---or displaying those funds by school---to communicate how funds are allocated and used.
4. The public budget should include actual line item expenditures for the previous school year. Previous year’s expenditures or current year-to-date expenditures could also be included.
5. At a minimum, the payroll line items should show staffing levels, in full-time equivalents, for the previous, current, and projected year.
6. The district could consider showing the requests of principals and department heads for additional transparency.
7. Funding for the SIPs and the district strategic plan should be transparently linked to the budget.

SIPs and the district’s strategic goals should be monetized. The budget narratives and supporting materials should connect the SIP and district budget needs to the actual budget.

**Benefits:** A transparent and complete budget presentation will help to ensure that the district’s funds are being properly used to support the needs of the district’s students, and will help the public to better understand the district’s financial picture.

**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 February 12–14, 2018, by the following team of independent ESE consultants.

1. John Retchless, Leadership and Governance
2. Maureen Murray-Adamson, Instruction
3. James Hearns, Human Resources, *review team coordinator*
4. Alison Fraser, Professional Development
5. David King, Financial and Asset Management

District Review Activities

The following activities were conducted during the review.

The team conducted interviews with the following financial personnel: director of operations and finance, the benefits coordinator, treasurer, payroll coordinator, accounts payable coordinator, and administrative assistant to the director of operations and finance.

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

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

The team conducted interviews/focus groups with the following central office administrators: superintendent, director of curriculum and student assessment, director of operations and finance, interim director of special education, and the STEAM director.

The team visited the following schools: Shepherd Hill High School (grades 9–12), Charlton Middle School (grades 6–8), Dudley Middle School (grades 6-–8), and Heritage School (grades 2–4), Dudley Elementary School (grades 2–4), Mason Road School (pre-K–1), and Charlton Elementary School (pre-K–1).

During school visits, the team conducted interviews with 7 principals and focus groups with students’ families and 11 elementary-school teachers, 14 middle-school teachers, and 4 high-school teachers.

The team observed 59 classes in the district: 19 at the high school, 23 at the 2 middle schools, and 17 at the 4 elementary schools.

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

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

Site Visit Schedule

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Monday**  02/12/2018 | **Tuesday**  02/13/2018 | **Wednesday**  02/14/2018 |
| Orientation with district leaders and principals; interviews with district staff and principals; document reviews; interview with the teachers’ association and teachers, and visits to Mason Road School for classroom observations. | Interviews with district staff and principals; review of personnel files; teacher focus groups; school committee interview; town officials interview; parent focus group; and visits to Shepherd Hill High School, Charlton Middle School, Dudley Middle School, and the Heritage School for classroom observations. | Interviews with students; interviews with school leaders; visits to Dudley Middle School, Charlton Middle, the district’s elementary schools, and Shepherd Hill High School for classroom observations. |

Appendix B: Enrollment, Attendance, Expenditures

**Table B1a: Dudley-Charlton RSD**

**2017–2018 Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity**

| **Group** | **District** | **Percent**  **of Total** | **State** | **Percent of**  **Total** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| African-American | 66 | 1.7% | 86,305 | 9.0% |
| Asian | 51 | 1.3% | 65,667 | 6.9% |
| Hispanic | 314 | 8.0% | 191,201 | 20.0% |
| Native American | 9 | 0.2% | 2,103 | 0.2% |
| White | 3,378 | 86.1% | 573,335 | 60.1% |
| Native Hawaiian | 3 | 0.1% | 818 | 0.1% |
| Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic | 104 | 2.6% | 34,605 | 3.6% |
| All | 3,925 | 100.0% | 954,034 | 100.0% |
| Note: As of October 1, 2017 | | | | |

**Table B1b: Dudley-Charlton RSD**

**2017–2018 Student Enrollment by High Needs Populations**

| **Group** | **District** | | | **State** | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **N** | **Percent of High Needs** | **Percent of District** | **N** | **Percent of High Needs** | **Percent of State** |
| Students w/ disabilities | 553 | 45.3% | 14.0% | 171,061 | 38.0% | 17.7% |
| Econ. Dis. | 819 | 67.1% | 20.9% | 305,203 | 67.9% | 32.0% |
| ELLs and Former ELLs | 86 | 7.0% | 2.2% | 97,334 | 21.6% | 10.2% |
| All high needs students | 1,220 | 100.0% | 30.8% | 449,584 | 100.0% | 46.6% |
| Notes: As of October 1, 2017. District and state numbers and percentages for students with disabilities and high needs students are calculated including students in out-of-district placements. Total district enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 3,955; total state enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 964,806. | | | | | | |

**Table B2: Dudley-Charlton RSD**

**Attendance Rates, 2014–2017**

| **Group** | **N (2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2017)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| High Needs | 1,229 | 95.0 | 94.6 | 95.1 | 94.4 | -0.6 | 93.1 |
| Econ. Dis. | 828 | -- | 93.9 | 94.7 | 93.9 | -- | 92.6 |
| ELLs | 74 | 96.7 | 96.3 | 95.2 | 96.0 | -0.7 | 93.5 |
| SWD | 589 | 95.2 | 94.0 | 95.1 | 94.6 | -0.6 | 93.0 |
| African American | 62 | 97.4 | 97.0 | 97.7 | 97.4 | 0.0 | 94.0 |
| Asian | 56 | 97.3 | 97.3 | 97.1 | 96.6 | -0.7 | 96.3 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 326 | 95.4 | 94.9 | 95.2 | 94.2 | -1.2 | 92.8 |
| Multi-Race | 94 | 95.5 | 95.7 | 96.4 | 96.0 | 0.5 | 94.5 |
| White | 3,554 | 96.2 | 95.8 | 96.2 | 95.8 | -0.4 | 95.1 |
| All | 4,104 | 96.1 | 95.8 | 96.2 | 95.7 | -0.4 | 94.6 |
| Notes: The attendance rate is calculated by dividing the total number of days students attended school by the total number of days students were enrolled in a particular school year. A student’s attendance rate is counted toward any district the student attended. In addition, district attendance rates included students who were out placed in public collaborative or private alternative schools/programs at public expense. Attendance rates have been rounded; percent change is based on unrounded numbers. | | | | | | | |

**Table B3: Dudley-Charlton Regional School District**

**Expenditures, Chapter 70 State Aid, and Net School Spending Fiscal Years 2015–2017**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **FY15** | | | **FY16** | | | **FY17** | | | |
|  | **Estimated** | | **Actual** | **Estimated** | **Actual** | | **Estimated** | | **Actual** | |
| Expenditures | | | | | | | | | | |
| By school committee | $47,225,411 | $46,189,287 | | $47,409,796 | | $46,764,372 | | $48,873,113 | | $47,823,519 |
| From revolving funds and grants | -- | $4,739,592 | | -- | | $5,066,359 | | -- | | $4,335,381 |
| Total expenditures | -- | $50,928,878 | | -- | | $51,830,732 | | -- | | $52,158,900 |
| Chapter 70 aid to education program | | | | | | | | | | |
| Chapter 70 state aid\* | -- | $23,842,023 | | -- | | $23,938,773 | | -- | | $24,151,183 |
| Required local contribution | -- | $14,006,333 | | -- | | $14,629,068 | | -- | | $15,535,167 |
| Required net school spending\*\* | -- | $37,848,356 | | -- | | $38,567,841 | | -- | | $39,686,350 |
| Actual net school spending | -- | $39,014,729 | | -- | | $39,502,370 | | -- | | $40,584,634 |
| Over/under required ($) | -- | $1,166,373 | | -- | | $934,529 | | -- | | $898,284 |
| Over/under required (%) | -- | 3.1% | | -- | | 2.4% | | -- | | 2.3% |
| \*Chapter 70 state aid funds are deposited in the local general fund and spent as local appropriations.  \*\*Required net school spending is the total of Chapter 70 aid and required local contribution. Net school spending includes only expenditures from local appropriations, not revolving funds and grants. It includes expenditures for most administration, instruction, operations, and out-of-district tuitions. It does not include transportation, school lunches, debt, or capital.  Sources: FY15, FY16, and FY17 District End-of-Year Reports, Chapter 70 Program information on ESE website  Data retrieved 12/13/17 and 7/5/18 | | | | | | | | | | |

**Expenditures Per In-District Pupil**

**Fiscal Years 2014–2016**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Expenditure Category** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** |
| Administration | $211 | $235 | $223 |
| Instructional leadership (district and school) | $644 | $625 | $642 |
| Teachers | $4,427 | $4,571 | $4,649 |
| Other teaching services | $877 | $925 | $945 |
| Professional development | $118 | $64 | $50 |
| Instructional materials, equipment and technology | $384 | $256 | $270 |
| Guidance, counseling and testing services | $296 | $304 | $313 |
| Pupil services | $1,197 | $1,241 | $1,262 |
| Operations and maintenance | $864 | $840 | $815 |
| Insurance, retirement and other fixed costs | $1,694 | $1,817 | $1,989 |
| Total expenditures per in-district pupil | $10,711 | $10,879 | $11,157 |
| Sources: [Per-pupil expenditure reports on ESE website](http://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/statistics/ppx.html)  Note: Any discrepancy between expenditures and total is because of rounding. | | | |

Appendix C: Instructional Inventory

| **Focus Area #1: Learning Objectives & Expectations** |  | Insufficient Evidence | Limited Evidence | Sufficient Evidence | Compelling Evidence | Average  Number of points |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (1 to 4) |
| 1. The teacher demonstrates knowledge of the subject matter. | **ES** | 0% | 18% | 71% | 12% | 2.9 |
| **MS** | 4% | 13% | 78% | 4% | 2.8 |
| **HS** | 0% | 16% | 74% | 11% | 2.9 |
| **Total #** | 1 | 9 | 44 | 5 | 2.9 |
| **Total %** | 2% | 15% | 75% | 8% |  |
| 2. The teacher ensures that students understand what they should be learning in the lesson and why. | **ES** | 0% | 24% | 76% | 0% | 2.8 |
| **MS** | 0% | 17% | 78% | 4% | 2.9 |
| **HS** | 5% | 37% | 53% | 5% | 2.6 |
| **Total #** | 1 | 15 | 41 | 2 | 2.7 |
| **Total %** | 2% | 25% | 69% | 3% |  |
| 3. The teacher uses appropriate classroom activities well matched to the learning objective(s). | **ES** | 0% | 24% | 71% | 6% | 2.8 |
| **MS** | 0% | 17% | 78% | 4% | 2.9 |
| **HS** | 0% | 53% | 42% | 5% | 2.5 |
| **Total #** | 0 | 18 | 38 | 3 | 2.7 |
| **Total %** | 0% | 31% | 64% | 5% |  |
| 4. The teacher conducts frequent checks for student understanding, provides feedback, and adjusts instruction. | **ES** | 12% | 12% | 71% | 6% | 2.7 |
| **MS** | 9% | 22% | 61% | 9% | 2.7 |
| **HS** | 0% | 58% | 32% | 11% | 2.5 |
| **Total #** | 4 | 18 | 32 | 5 | 2.6 |
| **Total %** | 7% | 31% | 54% | 8% |  |
| **Total Score For Focus Area #1** | **ES** |  |  |  |  | **11.2** |
| **MS** |  |  |  |  | **11.3** |
| **HS** |  |  |  |  | **10.6** |
| **Total** |  |  |  |  | **11.0** |

| **Focus Area #2: Student Engagement & Higher-Order Thinking** |  | Insufficient Evidence | Limited Evidence | Sufficient Evidence | Compelling Evidence | Average Number of points |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (1 to 4) |
| 5. Students assume responsibility to learn and are engaged in the lesson. | **ES** | 0% | 47% | 53% | 0% | 2.5 |
| **MS** | 0% | 22% | 70% | 9% | 2.9 |
| **HS** | 0% | 42% | 53% | 5% | 2.6 |
| **Total #** | 0 | 21 | 35 | 3 | 2.7 |
| **Total %** | 0% | 36% | 59% | 5% |  |
| 6. Students engage in higher-order thinking. | **ES** | 0% | 59% | 29% | 12% | 2.5 |
| **MS** | 9% | 30% | 57% | 4% | 2.6 |
| **HS** | 11% | 47% | 42% | 0% | 2.3 |
| **Total #** | 4 | 26 | 26 | 3 | 2.5 |
| **Total %** | 7% | 44% | 44% | 5% |  |
| 7. Students communicate their ideas and thinking with each other. | **ES** | 6% | 53% | 41% | 0% | 2.4 |
| **MS** | 17% | 39% | 30% | 13% | 2.4 |
| **HS** | 5% | 74% | 21% | 0% | 2.2 |
| **Total #** | 6 | 32 | 18 | 3 | 2.3 |
| **Total %** | 10% | 54% | 31% | 5% |  |
| 8. Students engage with meaningful, real-world tasks. | **ES** | 6% | 59% | 35% | 0% | 2.3 |
| **MS** | 4% | 35% | 48% | 13% | 2.7 |
| **HS** | 21% | 53% | 21% | 5% | 2.1 |
| **Total #** | 6 | 28 | 21 | 4 | 2.4 |
| **Total %** | 10% | 47% | 36% | 7% |  |
| **Total Score For Focus Area #2** | **ES** |  |  |  |  | **9.7** |
| **MS** |  |  |  |  | **10.5** |
| **HS** |  |  |  |  | **9.2** |
| **Total** |  |  |  |  | **9.9** |

| **Focus Area #3: Inclusive Practice & Classroom Culture** |  | Insufficient Evidence | Limited Evidence | Sufficient Evidence | Compelling Evidence | Average Number of points |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (1 to 4) |
| 9. The teacher ensures that students are engaging in challenging tasks regardless of learning needs. | **ES** | 6% | 47% | 41% | 6% | 2.5 |
| **MS** | 17% | 26% | 57% | 0% | 2.4 |
| **HS** | 16% | 63% | 16% | 5% | 2.1 |
| **Total #** | 8 | 26 | 23 | 2 | 2.3 |
| **Total %** | 14% | 44% | 39% | 3% |  |
| 10. The teacher uses a variety of instructional strategies. | **ES** | 0% | 53% | 47% | 0% | 2.5 |
| **MS** | 9% | 48% | 43% | 0% | 2.3 |
| **HS** | 5% | 68% | 21% | 5% | 2.3 |
| **Total #** | 3 | 33 | 22 | 1 | 2.4 |
| **Total %** | 5% | 56% | 37% | 2% |  |
| 11. Classroom routines and positive supports are in place to ensure that students behave appropriately. | **ES** | 0% | 18% | 53% | 29% | 3.1 |
| **MS** | 0% | 4% | 87% | 9% | 3.0 |
| **HS** | 0% | 16% | 79% | 5% | 2.9 |
| **Total #** | 0 | 7 | 44 | 8 | 3.0 |
| **Total %** | 0% | 12% | 75% | 14% |  |
| 12. The classroom climate is conducive to teaching and learning. | **ES** | 0% | 0% | 88% | 12% | 3.1 |
| **MS** | 0% | 13% | 78% | 9% | 3.0 |
| **HS** | 0% | 21% | 79% | 0% | 2.8 |
| **Total #** | 0 | 7 | 48 | 4 | 2.9 |
| **Total %** | 0% | 12% | 81% | 7% |  |
| **Total Score For Focus Area #3** | **ES** |  |  |  |  | **11.2** |
| **MS** |  |  |  |  | **10.7** |
| **HS** |  |  |  |  | **10.1** |
| **Total** |  |  |  |  | **10.6** |

1. In 2017–2018, 3,925 students were enrolled in the district. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. After the onsite review in February 2018, an interim superintendent replaced the superintendent who resigned. In addition, the curriculum director assumed the position of special education director, and a high-school English teacher and ELL coordinator was appointed curriculum director. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Other factors are also taken into consideration when determining the type of review a district will receive. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. SMART goals are Specific and Strategic; Measurable; Action Oriented; Rigorous, Realistic, and Results Focused; and Time and Tracked. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Other high-school teachers teach five classes. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. 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-6)
7. [www.doe.mass.edu/professionaldevelopment/standards](http://www.doe.mass.edu/professionaldevelopment/standards) [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. On April 3, 2018, voters in Charlton and Dudley approved a Proposition 2½ override totaling more than $3 million for the regional school district. In Charlton, voters supported a $1,543,655 increase to the tax rate. In Dudley, voters supported an increase of $1,544,333. See ["Charlton, Dudley Voters Support Proposition 2 1/2 Override for Schools," *Citizen Chronicle* (April 3, 2018).](http://www.thecitizenchronicle.com/southbridge-community/override040318/) [↑](#footnote-ref-8)