



# **Comprehensive District Review Protocol**

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Center for District and School Accountability  
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## Introduction to the Comprehensive District Review

Research on effective school and district leadership has highlighted the importance of a concerted districtwide focus on aligning all the district's systems in service of improving student achievement. This focus is demonstrated by clear standards for performance and goals for improvement, coupled with an ongoing cyclical process for measuring progress.

To that end, the Office of District Reviews and Monitoring (ODRM) at the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) provides a district review that assesses district systems, enabling district leaders to reflect on progress and strengthen performance. District reviews are conducted according to Chapter 15, Section 55A of the Massachusetts General Laws.

### *The District Standards and Indicators*

The District Standards and Indicators<sup>1</sup> that form the basis of the district review offer clarity on the areas in which district capacity and excellence should be built and focused in a systemic way. The 6 District Standards and 24 Indicators below were developed collaboratively based on input from school and district stakeholders about which systems and system components have the most direct impact on student achievement.

#### **I. Leadership and Governance**

1. Focused School Committee Governance
2. Effective District and School Leadership
3. District and School Improvement Planning
4. Educationally Sound Budget Development
5. Effective District Systems for School Support and Intervention

#### **II. Curriculum and Instruction**

1. Aligned, Consistently Delivered, and Continuously Improving Curriculum
2. Strong Instructional Leadership and Effective Instruction
3. Tiered Instruction and Sufficient Instructional Time

#### **III. Assessment**

1. Data Collection and Dissemination
2. Data-Driven Decision-Making
3. Student Assessment

#### **IV. Human Resources and Professional Development**

1. Staff recruitment, Selection, Assignment
2. Educator Growth and Evaluation
3. Professional Learning

#### **V. Student Support**

1. Academic and Non-Academic Support
2. Access and Equity
3. Educational Continuity and Student Participation

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<sup>1</sup> For a full list of the District Standards and Indicators, see Appendix D. District Indicators are continuously updated and clarified to reflect ESE priorities.

4. Family, Community, and Partner Engagement
5. Safety

#### VI. **Financial and Asset Management**

1. Thorough and Inclusive Budget Development
2. Complete and Usable Budget Document
3. Constructive Civic Relationships
4. Fiscal Health and Financial Management
5. Capital Planning and Facility Maintenance

#### *The Framework for District Accountability and Assistance*

The *Framework for District Accountability and Assistance* defines and brings coherence to ESE's approach to engaging with districts to improve student performance. District accountability and ESE's assistance must be closely linked in order to produce sustainable improvement. The *Framework* defines the roles and expectations of the district and ESE based on the performance of the district's schools. Every district in the Commonwealth falls into one of five levels, with districts requiring the least state support placed in Level 1, while districts requiring the most support are in Level 5. At each of the five levels, the *Framework* distinguishes ESE's role and districts' responsibilities with respect to accountability, assistance, and intervention. Districts whose student performance and growth place them in Level 3 and 4 are given high priority for ESE assistance.

#### *The Conditions for School Effectiveness (CSEs)*

ESE's theory of action is that if state interventions are concentrated on ensuring that the necessary district systems are in place and are focused on establishing and sustaining the Conditions for School Effectiveness (<http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/accountability/school-effect-conditions.pdf>) in each school, substantial gains in student performance will result. Accordingly, the District Standards and Indicators incorporate the CSEs. In fact, the first CSE points to the need for the strong district systems of support and practices specified in the District Standards and Indicators.

#### *The Comprehensive District Review as Support for a Standards-Based District Inquiry Cycle*

Using the District Standards and Indicators as the touchstone, ODRM has developed a district review that is designed to identify the systems, policies, and practices that drive the day-to-day work of the school district, as well as those factors that may help or hinder staff performance and, ultimately, student performance.

Having a district review adds value to the improvement cycle by providing an experienced team of district leaders who provide an objective analysis and suggestions for improvement. The value of the district review is measured: first, by the reflection that preparing and participating in the review promotes; second, by the usefulness of the findings and recommendations to district leaders and stakeholders; third, by the effectiveness of the resulting action steps and goals that the process generates; and, ultimately, by improved results.

#### *A Standards-based, Evidence-based Process*

The comprehensive district review is an evidence-based process using the 6 District Standards and 24 Indicators to organize the collection and analysis of data in order to generate findings about key district systems and practices and recommendations for improvement. In alignment with the *Framework for District Accountability and Assistance* described above, districts whose performance level places them in Levels 3 and 4 typically participate in a comprehensive district review. The comprehensive district review is a capacity-building process designed to promote district reflection on its own performance and potential next steps.

### *ESE Preparation for the Comprehensive Review*

ODRM assembles a review team that includes independent consultants. The size of the team depends on district size and needs, with teams typically ranging from five to six members. ODRM provides protocols, materials, and oversight of the review process.

Before the site visit, the district submits documents requested by ODRM. Review team members review these documents and other relevant information about the district provided by ESE. This helps them prepare thoughtful, tailored questions. The team meets for two days at ESE before the site visit to review documents, sort evidence, and develop district-specific questions for various stakeholders in the district.

ODRM and the review team coordinator work collaboratively with the district to establish a schedule for the site visit that meets the needs of the district and its schools, to the extent possible.

### *District Preparation for the Comprehensive District Review*

Districts are asked to complete the District Self-Assessment to promote reflection on the district's practices, as well as to prepare for the visit. The district provides copies of the documents that it has and uses. For the purposes of a review, the district is not required to create any documents. Requests for documents other than those listed in this protocol are limited to those referred to in interviews and focus groups when they are critical to a finding.

Before the review, districts are asked to appoint a district liaison; the liaison should be someone with experience in and knowledge of the district. The liaison and the review team coordinator work together to prepare a site visit schedule (see sample site visit schedule below). The district liaison should not share the schedule with other district personnel until the review team coordinator informs the liaison that the schedule is final: schedules undergo numerous changes in the course of preparing for a review. The district liaison also arranges appropriately composed focus groups. The liaison should work with principals to schedule times for principal interviews and teacher team meetings. ODRM provides sample templates and letters developed to help districts communicate with various constituencies about the review.

ODRM offers a conference call for superintendents, designated review liaisons, and other district staff to explain and answer questions about the review process.

### *The Site Visit*

The site visit begins with an orientation meeting with key district leaders. This meeting gives review team members a chance to introduce themselves and begin the ongoing communication with the district that characterizes the review process. It also provides district leaders an opportunity to bring questions and concerns about district systems and practices to the attention of the review team.

During the on-site, the review team uses multiple sources of evidence to understand district policies, systems, processes, practices, and outcomes. The reviewers seek to identify those systems and practices that may be impeding rapid improvement, as well as those that might need to be further developed. The team holds interviews and focus groups with such stakeholders as school committee members, teachers' association representatives, administrators, teachers, parents, and students. Review team members also observe classroom instruction. Arrangements can be made to interview the district's turnaround partners and monitors, including ESE staff and contracted vendors, as necessary.

The district may present the team with additional information at any point during the site visit. As the site visit progresses, the review team may request additional documents, as well as follow-up interviews to address questions that emerge after focus groups and classroom observations. This is the team's opportunity to make sure that the evidence it gathers is complete.

## *Methodology*

The team gathers evidence from multiple sources including documents, interviews, focus groups, student performance data, and classroom visits. Evidence in findings is triangulated; that is, it comes from at least two and preferably from at least three of the following sources: data, interviews, documents, and classroom observations. This ensures that the team's findings are well substantiated. In interviews with district personnel, the team checks for understanding by summarizing, restating, and asking follow-up questions.

While team members focus on assigned standards, the team looks at all of the evidence collected, makes connections, and looks for patterns and trends. The team considers the entire body of evidence in order to determine the impact of the district's systems on student achievement.

## *Four Stages of the Comprehensive District Review*

The comprehensive district review consists of the four stages outlined below.

### **1. Document and Data Review**

The team reviews information about the district's context, student achievement, goals and processes, and resources.

- Team members are each assigned to one or more of the six District Standards
- The District Standards and Indicators serve as a framework for collecting and sorting information
- Team members independently review documents and data to learn about district practices
- Team members independently develop specific questions related to their assigned standard
- The team comes together to collectively review data analyses
- The team collectively prioritizes and tailors questions for each interview
- The team collectively reviews and the review team coordinator adjusts the on-site schedule as needed

### **2. On-site Visit**

During the four day on-site review, the review team observes instruction, collects documents, and interviews district stakeholders about district practices. On-site activities include:

- Orientation meeting: purpose of the review and a brief overview of the review process
- School committee interviews
- District, school, and program leaders interviews
- Teachers' association leadership interview
- Teacher focus groups
- Parent focus group
- High school student focus group
- Classroom observations
- Review of educator evaluation documentation
- Team collects additional documents as needed
- Closing meeting with the superintendent to wrap up the review and explain next steps

### **3. Analysis of Evidence and Draft Report Development**

The review team uses the evidence gathered from the review to generate a draft report of findings and recommendations, a summary of data about observed instruction, and a description of the district context and background. Review team members follow a strict protocol for evidence triangulation in

developing findings to ensure that findings are well substantiated.<sup>2</sup> The process of report production consists of:

- Evidence sorting
- Identification of priority findings and possible recommendations
- Consensus that findings are sufficiently supported by evidence
- Development of district background and context
- Collective correction of and feedback on draft findings, recommendations, and the district context and background
- Compilation of findings, recommendations, and data about observed instruction as well as the district context and background by the review team coordinator; draft report created
- ODRM and ESE staff edit the draft to ensure that findings are supported by sufficient evidence, that recommendations are aligned with current ESE guidance, and that the report is aligned with ESE's writing guidelines
- The draft report is sent to the superintendent to check factual accuracy
- ODRM staff respond to the district's corrections and finalize the report

#### **4. Publication of the Final Report**

- Final reports include a description of the district context and background, demographic and student achievement data, data about observed instruction, findings focused on the school system's most significant strengths and challenges, and recommendations that the district can use for ongoing systematic improvement and that ESE can use to consider giving the district priority for technical assistance and other resources.
- ODRM's goal is to provide a completed report three to four months after the on-site visit. Reports are posted to <http://www.mass.gov/edu/government/departments-and-boards/ease/programs/accountability/reports/district-review-reports/>.

#### *Supporting the District after the Comprehensive Review*

After receiving the report, district leaders should have a clearer sense of which practices are contributing to improvement and which might need to be further developed. In the case of Level 3 and Level 4 districts, the report may be the basis for future technical assistance and/or ESE intervention.

At the district's request, ESE representatives may present the findings and recommendations to the district's school committee.

In addition, districts have the option of participating in an ESE-led meeting after the report is final. The purpose of the meeting is to assist district stakeholders in identifying areas for improvement that are most important and most likely to have an impact on student achievement and outcomes. The meeting typically includes district leaders in addition to ESE representatives. Representatives from the district's DSAC and other appropriate ESE support personnel are invited to attend the session to help facilitate a connection to ongoing support.

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<sup>2</sup> Triangulated evidence comes from at least two and preferably from at least three of the following sources: data, interviews, documents, and classroom observations.

## Activities during District and School Visits

Activities	Description
<b>Orientation meeting</b>	The review team members introduce themselves and begin the ongoing communication with the district that continues throughout the review.
<b>Interview with the superintendent</b>	This interview provides the superintendent an opportunity to provide top-level insight into key district initiatives.
<b>Interviews with district leaders</b>	The review team meets with key district leaders to discuss all aspects of district programs and processes. Representation at these interviews should include key district leaders, such as the superintendent, assistant superintendent(s), curriculum supervisors at the district and department levels, chief financial officer, business manager, HR director, special education director, Title I director, and others, as appropriate.
<b>Document review</b>	The team reviews materials that the district provides on-site.
<b>District partners who directly support district efforts</b>	The review team may meet with any other internal or external partners who have worked with the district to support development and/or implementation of district- and school-level initiatives.
<b>School committee interview</b>	All committee members should be invited. The review team tries to accommodate the schedule for the committee members who attend. Committee members are interviewed in sub-quorum groups.
<b>Interview with municipal leaders</b>	The mayor(s) or town manager(s) of the school district community or communities may be interviewed. Members of the finance committee(s) may also be invited.
<b>Interviews with teachers' association leadership</b>	The president should be invited. The president may delegate this responsibility and/or may choose to include others.
<b>Interviews with school leaders</b>	School leaders include principals and may also include other leaders (e.g., assistant principals, curriculum director, and/or lead teachers).
<b>Teacher and specialist focus groups</b>	<p>Focus groups are differentiated by level (elementary and secondary), when appropriate. All teachers should be invited. The focus group(s) are scheduled so that invited teachers may attend after school hours.</p> <p>Interviews with specialists may also be conducted. School leaders are asked to identify personnel who play a significant role in school functioning and improvement, such as the</p>

Activities	Description
	school's special education director, ELL coordinator, curriculum coordinators, coaches, and other relevant staff.
<b>School Council/ parent focus group</b>	School Council members and representatives of parent groups should be invited.
<b>Classroom visits</b>	Classroom visits are conducted. Classroom visits are designed to understand trends in instructional practices and are not evaluations of individual teachers. See Appendix B.
<b>Student focus group(s)</b>	A selection of six to eight high school students representing a variety of grade levels and varying instructional needs may participate in a focus group. Students are selected by the school's leadership and/or staff.
<b>District Debrief Meeting</b>	The review team coordinator will meet with the superintendent to wrap up the on-site review and explain next steps.

## Comprehensive District Review Documentation and Preparation Requirements

Documents and Data to be provided by ESE to the review team before the site visit
1. District Profile data (to be used by the review team if there is a discrepancy with DART or Edwin data)
2. District Analysis and Review Tool (DART) data
3. Edwin data
4. PARCC data
5. Latest Coordinated Program Review (CPR) Report (even if not published within the last two years) and the follow-up Mid-cycle Report if one has been published since the latest CPR Report
6. Special Education Planning and Policy reports, if applicable
7. Most recent Extended Learning Time grant site visits, if applicable
8. Most recent NEASC report, if applicable
9. Collective bargaining agreement for teachers, including the teacher evaluation tool
10. Report on staffing
11. Long-term enrollment trends
12. End-of-Year Report
13. Current Turnaround Plans for any Level 4 schools
14. Most recent Level 4 Monitoring Site Visit Reports for Level 4 schools, if applicable

To be arranged by the district before the site visit
1. The district appoints a district liaison to schedule interviews and meetings. The district liaison should be a staff member with experience in and knowledge of the district.
2. Administrators, faculty, and staff made aware of the visit, its purpose, and the review schedule
3. Private meeting space arranged for review team for days in the district office
4. Access to copier, printer, and Internet
5. Private meeting space(s) for interviews (different from team room)
6. District prepared to provide a) access to educator evaluations requested by the team based on a random selection process; b) access to K–12 ELA, mathematics, and science curriculum documents; c) school committee policy manual; and d) other documents requested by the team.
7. School master schedules, directions to schools, building maps, and parking arrangements

## District Document Checklist

Electronic documents are preferred if available. If documents are on the district website, please provide URL. If not, please upload documents to ODRM’s drop box (ODRM Reviews folder).

1. Completed Self-Assessment
2. Organization chart
3. Strategic Plan, District Improvement Plan, and School Improvement Plans
4. School committee minutes for past year and if possible the web address where school committee meeting videos are posted
5. Most recent budget proposal with any narrative/presentation used, and approved budget.
6. Business office procedures manual
7. Curriculum guides and sample curriculum documents or curriculum units of study for ELA, mathematics, and sciences at elementary, middle, and high school levels. The district may also choose to provide URL links to curriculum posted online.
8. Description of tiered instruction, academic and non-academic support programs for all students, and DCAP, if applicable
9. High school program of studies
10. High school course enrollment/course passing data
11. Copies of data analyses/reports used in schools such as analyses of student performance on mid-term and final examinations and benchmark and formative assessments
12. Forms, documents, and templates used in educator evaluation system for all educators, such as rubrics, educator plans, and observation and evidence gathering forms. Please also include URL to online documents related to educator evaluation in order for review team members to review a sample of online documentation. If online access cannot be made available in advance, please provide access during the onsite visit.
13. Five high-quality examples of District-Determined Measures used in the district
14. Classroom observation tools not used for educator evaluation system
15. Descriptions of support programs for all students

16. Description of tiered instruction, academic and non-academic support programs, and DCAP, if applicable
17. Descriptions of career development and awareness programs
18. Sample school or district safety plan
19. Internal and external evaluations of mandated programs such as ELL, special education, and Title I and other programs and services such as the mentor program, before- and after-school and summer-school programs; curriculum reviews and needs assessments
20. Student, faculty and family handbooks
21. Professional Development Plan and current PD program or schedule of courses
22. Teacher common planning time schedules
23. Sample agendas from team meetings and schedule for the year (for example, leadership team meetings, CPT meetings, etc.)
24. Numbered alphabetical Teacher list and administrator list categorized by Educator Evaluation Plan (1.3, One-Year self-Directed, Two-Year Self-Directed, Improvement, and Developing Educator)
25. Most recent NEASC report, if applicable
25. Job descriptions for central office and school administrators and instructional staff

Additional notes:

1. Please provide as many of the documents on the District Document Checklist as possible.
2. You are not required to create documents on this list that do not already exist. The team might ask for additional documents during the site visit.

Please be prepared during the site visit to provide a) access to educator evaluations requested by the team based on a random selection process; b) access to K–12 ELA, mathematics, and science curriculum documents; c) school committee policy manual; and d) other documents requested by the team.

3. Other pertinent information about the district that might inform the review team is welcome.

## 2016-2017 Sample ODRM Draft Site Visit Schedule for Comprehensive District Review

(Blue indicates places where district should fill in information. Be sure that interviewees selected for each interview block can answer questions about each level: elementary, middle, and high school. The district liaison and the review team coordinator will work together to create a site visit schedule.)

Notes: Team members may use laptops to take notes during interviews, focus groups, etc. With the exception of meetings with leadership teams, supervising staff should not be scheduled in focus groups with those they supervise.

### Day 1—Monday, Month & Date

Location 1:	Team workroom	Location 2:	Meeting room at central office (for 6–8 people)	Location 3:	Another meeting room at central office
Time	Activity	Time	Activity	Time	Activity
7:30-8:30	<b>Review Team Meeting</b>				
8:30-9:15	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Orientation with District Leaders and Principals</b>  <b>Note meeting location.</b>                      Entire team meets with whomever the district wishes in whatever location fits the group. Most districts include superintendent, business manager, and principals. Many districts add special education director, curriculum coordinators, guidance director, and others.</p>				
9:30-11:00	<b>Review of Documents</b> (Documents not available before site visit or randomly selected personnel files)	9:30-11:00  Leadership Student Support	<b>Superintendent Interview</b> <b>Note meeting location.</b>	9:30-11:00  C&I Assessment	<b>Curriculum and Instruction Interview</b> <b>Note meeting location.</b> List interviewees' names, titles. Generally the person(s) responsible for curriculum oversight: curriculum coordinator or assistant superintendent for curriculum, plus a variety of staff working at each level of the school district.
11:00-11:30	<b>Review Team Meeting</b>				
11:30-12:15	<b>Lunch meeting</b>				

Location 1:	Team workroom	Location 2:	Meeting room at central office (for 6–8 people)	Location 3:	Another meeting room at central office
Time	Activity	Time	Activity	Time	Activity
12:15-1:45	<b>Review of Documents</b> (Documents not available before site visit or randomly selected personnel files)	12:15-1:45  Assessment C&I	<b>Assessment Interview</b> <b>Note meeting location.</b> List interviewees’ names, titles. Person or persons responsible for administration of district assessments, and/or curriculum leaders who can answer questions on program assessments, such as assessments for special education, English language arts (ELA), mathematics, Reading First, etc.	12:15-1:45  Leadership Student Support	<b>Human Resources and Professional Development Interview</b> <b>(focusing on Human Resources)</b> <b>Note meeting location.</b> List interviewees’ names, titles.
1:45-2:15	<b>Review Team Meeting</b>				
2:15-3:30  Leadership Assessment	<b>Financial and Asset Management Interview w/ district administrative staff</b> <b>Note meeting location.</b> List interviewees’ names, titles. Generally, the business manager and key business department staff.	2:15-3:30  Student Support C&I	<b>Student Support Interview</b> <b>Note meeting location.</b> List interviewees’ names, titles. Generally, the special education director and/or assistant, special education team leaders from every level as available.	2:15-3:30	
3:30-4:30 Leadership Assessment	<b>Teachers’ Association Interview</b> <b>Note meeting location.</b> List names and elected roles of those who will attend. Only members of the teachers’ association should be present.				
4:30-5:30  Leadership Assessment C&I Student Support	<b>Review of Documents</b> (Randomly selected personnel files)				

**Day 2—Tuesday, Month & Date**

<b>Location 1:</b>	<b>Team workroom/ selected classrooms</b>	<b>Location 2:</b>	<b>Meeting room at central office (for 6–8 people)</b>	<b>Location 3:</b>	<b>Another meeting room at central office</b>
<i>Time</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Activity</i>
8:00-8:30	<b>Review Team Meeting</b>				
8:30-10:00	<b>Classroom visits</b>	8:30-10:00  Leadership Student Support	<b>Human Resources and Professional Development Interview (w/Financial and Asset Management)</b> <b>Note meeting location.</b>  <b>Leadership and Governance</b> <b>Note meeting location.</b> List interviewees’ names, titles. Staff responsible for planning and evaluating the PD program. Sometimes principals, PD committee members, coaches, team leaders, and others.	8:30-10:00  C&I Assessment	<b>Student Focus Group</b> <b>Note meeting location.</b> A selection of high school students representing a variety of grade levels and varying instructional needs may participate in the focus group. Students are selected by the school’s leadership and/or staff.
10:00-11:30 C&I Student Support	<b>Classroom visits</b>	10:15-11:30	<b>Leadership and Governance w/ Principals Interview</b> <b>Note meeting location.</b> List interviewees’ names and schools they represent. Group should have representation from all levels.	10:15-11:30  Leadership Assessment	<b>Financial and Asset Management Interview (staff)</b> <b>Note meeting location.</b> List interviewees’ names, titles. Business manager, bookkeeper, sometimes superintendent, and others.
11:30-12:00	<b>Lunch Meeting</b>				
12:00-1:00	<b>Review Team Meeting</b>				
1:00-2:30	<b>Classroom visits (HS)</b>	1:00-2:30  Student Support C&I	<b>Student Support Interview</b> <b>Note meeting location.</b> List interviewees’ names, titles. This could be a wide range of staff from program directors, principals to Title I and literacy specialists or department heads. Assistant	1:00-2:30  Leadership Assessment	<b>Financial and Asset Management Interview w/ Town Officials</b> <b>Note meeting location.</b> Only municipal personnel should attend. Time may be changed as needed. Specify location of this meeting and names and titles of

Location 1:	Team workroom/ selected classrooms	Location 2:	Meeting room at central office (for 6–8 people)	Location 3:	Another meeting room at central office
<i>Time</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Activity</i>
			principals or other staff dealing with student discipline and/or attendance should be invited.		those to be interviewed.
2:30-3:30 (flex time to meet district needs)	<b>Teacher Focus Group</b> <b>Note meeting location.</b> <b>Note which level</b> (there should be a teacher focus group for each level during the onsite). The invitation needs to be posted and announced in each school. The time can be adjusted for teacher convenience; specify convenient location. Personnel who participate in evaluating teachers should not attend.	2:30-3:30 (flex time to meet district needs) C&I Student Support	<b>Teacher Focus Group</b> <b>Note meeting location.</b> <b>Note which level</b> (there should be a teacher focus group for each level during the onsite). The invitation needs to be posted and announced in each school. The time can be adjusted for teacher convenience; specify convenient location. Personnel who participate in evaluating teachers should not attend.	2:30-4:00 (flex time to meet district needs) Leadership Assessment	<b>Teacher Focus Group</b> <b>Note meeting location.</b> <b>Note which level</b> (there should be a teacher focus group for each level during the onsite). The invitation needs to be posted and announced in each school. The time can be adjusted for teacher convenience; specify convenient location. Personnel who participate in evaluating teachers should not attend.
3:30-4:30 (flex time to meet district needs) Student Support C&I	<b>Parent Focus Group</b> <b>Note meeting location.</b> Volunteers on the School Councils and other interested parents may attend.	4:00 – 5:00  Leadership Assessment	<b>Teachers’ Association</b> <b>Note meeting location.</b> List names and elected roles of those who will attend. Only members of the teachers’ association should be present.		<b>Curriculum and Instruction Meeting</b> <b>Note meeting location.</b> List interviewees’ names, titles.

**Day 3—Wednesday, Month & Date**

Location 1:	Team workroom/ selected classrooms/ location for focus group	Location 2:	Meeting room at central office (for 6–8 people)/ selected classrooms	Location 3:	Another meeting room at central office/ location for focus group
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<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>
8:00-8:30 Review Team	<b>Review Team Meeting</b> <b>Review of Documents</b>				
8:30-10:00	<b>Classroom visits</b>	8:30-10:00	<b>Classroom Visits</b>	8:30-10:00	<b>Classroom visits</b>
10:00-10:30					
10:30-12:00	<b>Classroom visits</b>	10:30-12:00  Leadership Assessment	<b>Classroom visits</b>	10:30-12:00  Student Support C&I	<b>Student Support Interview</b> List interviewees' names, titles. Staff responsible for evaluating programs: Title I director, curriculum coordinator, ELA coordinator, and others. Staff responsible for assuring access to programs: special education, guidance, and others.
12:00-1:00	<b>Lunch Meeting</b>				
12:30-2:00  Leadership Student Support	<b>Human Resources and Professional Development Interview</b> List interviewees' names, titles. Staff responsible for planning & evaluating the PD program. Sometimes principals, PD committee members, coaches, team leaders, and others.	12:30-2:00	<b>Curriculum and Instruction Interview w/Principals</b> List interviewees' names, titles.	12:30-2:00  Assessment C&I	<b>Assessment Interview</b> List interviewees' names, titles. This could be a wide range of staff from program directors, principals to Title I and literacy specialists or department heads.
2:00-2:30	<b>Review Team Meeting</b>				
2:30 – 3:30	<b>Review Team Meeting</b>	2:30 – 3:30 Leadership	<b>Leadership and Governance Interview w/Financial and Asset Management</b> <b>Note meeting location.</b>		
4:30 -5:30 (flex time to	<b>School Committee Interview</b> (Members will be interviewed in	4:30 -5:30 (flex time to	<b>School Committee Interview</b> (Members will be interviewed in	4:30 -5:30 (flex time to	<b>School Committee Interview</b> (Members will be interviewed in

<b>Location 1:</b>	<b>Team workroom/ selected classrooms/ location for focus group</b>	<b>Location 2:</b>	<b>Meeting room at central office (for 6–8 people)/ selected classrooms</b>	<b>Location 3:</b>	<b>Another meeting room at central office/ location for focus group</b>
<b><i>Time</i></b>	<b><i>Activity</i></b>	<b><i>Time</i></b>	<b><i>Activity</i></b>	<b><i>Time</i></b>	<b><i>Activity</i></b>
meet district needs)	sub-quorum groups.) <b>Note meeting location.</b>	meet district needs)	sub-quorum groups.) <b>Note meeting location.</b> Time/place will be adjusted as necessary.	meet district needs)	sub-quorum groups.) <b>Note meeting location.</b> Time/place will be adjusted as necessary.

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**Day 4—Thursday, Month & Date**

<b>Location 1:</b>	<b>Team workroom/ selected classrooms/ location for focus group</b>	<b>Location 2:</b>	<b>Selected classrooms</b>	<b>Location 3:</b>	<b>Meeting room at central office/ selected classrooms</b>
<i><b>Time</b></i>	<i><b>Activity</b></i>	<i><b>Time</b></i>	<i><b>Activity</b></i>	<i><b>Time</b></i>	<i><b>Activity</b></i>
8:00-11:00	Classroom visits	8:00-11:00	Classroom visits	8:00-11:00	Classroom visits
	Classroom visits		Classroom visits		Classroom visits or Follow-up Interviews
11:00-2:00	<b>Review Team Meeting</b>				
	Working Lunch				
2:00-2:45	<b>Final Review of Documents</b>				
2:45-3:30	<b>Team Debrief Meeting</b>				
3:30-4:00	<b>Review Team Wrap-up with Superintendent</b>				

## Appendix A: Expectations for Review Participants

The review places a value on engaging the district in understanding its own systems and practices. The process is evidence based and designed to promote learning and improvement. Clear communication among the district, its schools, and the review team is essential to the process. All review team members have extensive experience in the area they are reviewing, are governed by a Code of Conduct (see below), are objective, and minimize disruption to teaching and learning.

### *Code of Conduct for Reviewers*

Review team members are expected to observe the highest ethical standards in their work with ODRM. Failure to adhere to this code of conduct may result in termination of employment.

#### **1. Carry out work with integrity.**

- a. Treat all those you meet with courtesy and sensitivity. Try to minimize stress.
- b. Allay anxiety through mutual respect and valuing opinions. Show an interest in what is said.
- c. Focus attention and questions on topics that will reveal how well students are learning.
- d. Protect sensitive and confidential information, e.g., personnel files or educator evaluation documents.
- e. Discuss the district and the review only in the private team meeting room; be discrete in all public areas, including hallways and restrooms in the district and in hotels, restaurants, etc.
- f. Act as a “curious researcher” and stay in that role throughout the review. Be careful not to offer opinions about district practices even if you are asked to give an opinion. Do not offer your business card.

#### **2. Act in the best interests of students and staff.**

- a. Emphasize that students come first and are at the center of the review.
- b. As much as possible, minimize disruption to teaching and learning.
- c. Do not comment on the work of a teacher or anyone else involved with the school.
- d. Classroom visits are used only to understand instruction at the school. Classroom visits are not evaluations of individual teachers.
- e. All teacher interviews are anonymous. Only the superintendent is identified by name in oral or written reports; other leaders are identified by position only, where appropriate.
- f. Try to understand what leaders and teachers are doing and why.

#### **3. Base findings on evidence.**

- a. Findings must be robust, fully supported by evidence, and defensible. Evidence should be triangulated; that is, it should come from at least two and preferably at least three of the following sources: data, interviews, documents, and classroom observations.
- b. Findings must be reliable in that others would make the same finding from the same evidence.
- c. Interviews with staff and discussion with review team members help create a validated and reliable evidence base from which findings are made.

### *Expectations for Review Team Members*

- Adhere to the protocol and follow direction from the review team coordinator.
- Make any requests to the district only through the review team coordinator.
- Before the site visit, review district and school documents and participate in document review and question preparation; visit the website for the district and relevant parts of the ESE website.
- Arrive punctually for all team meetings and appointments in the district. Adhere to all deadlines.
- Participate fully and collegially on teams.

- Organize notes and additional evidence to share with other team members by the end of each site visit day; make sure the coordinator has all notes and other evidence by end of the site visit. Interview notes should be typed (if possible) and the pages numbered; they should indicate standard, the participants, and the date of the interview.
- Complete assigned section of report according to report template guidance, making sure that it is backed by triangulated evidence and that detailed evidence footnotes are included.
- Participate in refining the draft of the report, ensuring that it contains sufficient evidence, is accurate, and reflects the consensus of the team.

#### *Expectations for the Review Team Coordinator*

- Ensure adherence to the protocol. Exhibit the highest professional standards and be responsible for ensuring that the team does so. If there is a breach or perceived breach of the protocol, inform ODRM immediately.
- As the review begins, make sure that all review team members are scheduled for the interviews they need.
- Maintain and distribute daily team meeting notes.
- Conduct a daily review of the schedule with the team and ensure that all interviews, focus groups, and classroom visits are attended and go smoothly.
- Maintain clear channels of communication with the district and schools at all times.
- Take responsibility for facilitating all team meetings on-site.
- Schedule school and classroom visits on-site.
- Keep district and school leaders informed of the team's progress throughout the visit.
- Take appropriate actions to follow up on any questions by the team.
- Facilitate the team's District Debrief Meeting at the end of the visit.
- Oversee the writing of the entire report.
- Make sure that each team member's evidence is footnoted (with interview dates, list of participants, and page numbers) in the findings and that electronic versions of findings and interview notes are uploaded to the team drop box.
- Provide ODRM with complete copies of the district documents reviewed by the team, the interview notes, and the observational evidence.

#### *Expectations for the District*

- Before the site visit, provide the documents requested and appoint a district liaison to schedule interviews and meetings. The district liaison should be a staff member with experience in and knowledge of the district.
- Explain the purpose and process of the review to all staff.
- Complete and submit the District Self-Assessment.
- Provide confidential team meeting space with access to a printer, copier, and the Internet during each day of the on-site.
- Provide a space for each interview (not the team room).
- Welcome the review team and recognize that its efforts are on behalf of students.
- Express views and concerns about district systems and practices during the orientation meeting with the team. Work with the review team to ensure that the visit runs smoothly.
- Engage faculty and other stakeholders to reflect on district systems and practices and their impact on education.

- Encourage and enable teachers to participate in focus groups.
- Provide the review team coordinator with any additional documents requested, including personnel files.
- Maintain clear communication with the review team coordinator throughout the review, conveying any concerns or other feedback from staff.
- After the site visit, invite all participants in the review to complete a brief online survey (to be supplied) to give ESE feedback on the review process.
- Consider participation with ESE staff in an optional meeting after the report is final.
- Consider presenting (or having ESE staff present) the final report to the school committee.

## **Appendix B: Guidelines for Classroom Visits**

### *General Guidance*

Classroom visits are one source of information for the review team on instruction in the district. The team visits a representative range of grade levels, focusing on core academic areas, especially ELA, mathematics, and science. It is expected that classrooms are visited for no less than 20 minutes to enable the team to gain an understanding of the lesson and the classroom climate.

Classroom visits should reflect a typical experience for students and teachers. Teachers do not need to address the classroom visitor or explain the lesson. The classroom visitor may walk around the classroom to review student work or classroom postings, if appropriate.

Classroom visits are used only to understand instruction at the school. Classroom visits are NOT evaluations of individual teachers. Review team members do not provide feedback to individual teachers.

### *Guidelines for Review Team Members during Classroom Visits*

- Record factual data on the classroom observation form.
- Label the form with descriptive characteristics, not identifiers such as teacher names.
- Avoid distractions to the class.
- If possible, review samples of student work in folders, portfolios, or displays. Include specific examples when completing the form.
- Make sure that each class visit lasts for about the same amount of time.

### *Guidelines for Discussion during Team Meetings*

- All team meetings should take place in the team meeting room.
- All team members share evidence related to each characteristic.
- They state factual evidence and do not make judgmental or subjective statements.
- The team shares and tallies the evidence for all classes/characteristics.
- The team shares highlights (big ideas, trends, areas of strong practice, and areas of need) from the aggregated evidence they collected.
- The team discusses overarching trends, strengths, and challenges observed.
- The team reaches consensus on the trends across classroom visits.

## Appendix C: Review of Educator Evaluations

Since a district's systems for continually building educator effectiveness are critical to improving student achievement, the review includes a careful analysis of educator evaluations, following the guidelines below.

1. Based on the number of teachers working in the district, the review team identifies between 20 and 30 teachers and asks to see the following documents for each of them:
  - Teacher self-assessment
  - Plan development (also called goal setting, teacher rubric analysis, etc.)
  - Announced and unannounced observation reports
  - Formative assessment/evaluations
  - Summative evaluations (also called teacher evaluations) if teachers were evaluated during the previous school year
2. In addition, the review team asks to see the following documents for each currently serving administrator, including the superintendent:
  - Self-assessment
  - Plan development (also called goal setting)
  - Observation reports
  - Formative assessment/evaluations
  - Summative evaluations (also called administrator evaluations)

If records are stored electronically, the district should provide electronic access for the assigned members of the review team. If paper documents are stored, hard copies should be provided. In the case of formative assessments/evaluations or classroom observation reports that are stored locally on laptop or tablet devices, the district should provide time for review team members to review the necessary documents in their current electronic state.

The review team recognizes that in most districts, only about half the teachers are being evaluated each year. Depending on the date of the review, some documents on the lists above may not have been generated for teachers being evaluated this year. The district should inform review team members when a requested teacher is currently being evaluated and provide the documents that are available at the time of the review. When summative evaluations are available for the previous year, the district should include them, even if formative assessments/evaluations are provided for the current year.

## **Appendix D: District Standards and Indicators**

### **Leadership and Governance**

1. Focused School Committee Governance
2. Effective District and School Leadership
3. District and School Improvement Planning
4. Educationally Sound Budget Development
5. Effective District Systems for School Support and Intervention

### **Curriculum and Instruction**

1. Aligned, Consistently Delivered, and Continuously Improving Curriculum
2. Strong Instructional Leadership and Effective Instruction
3. Tiered Instruction and Sufficient Instructional Time

### **Assessment**

1. Data Collection and Dissemination
2. Data-Driven Decision-Making
3. Student Assessment

### **Human Resources and Professional Development**

1. Staff Recruitment, Selection, Assignment
2. Educator Growth and Evaluation
3. Professional Learning

### **Student Support**

1. Academic and Non-Academic Support
2. Access and Equity
3. Educational Continuity and Student Participation
4. Family, Community, and Partner Engagement
5. Safety

### **Financial and Asset Management**

1. Comprehensive and Transparent Budget Process
2. Adequate Resources
3. Effective Resource Management and Allocation
4. Financial Tracking, Forecasting, Controls, and Audits
5. Capital Planning and Facility Maintenance

**Leadership and Governance:** School committee and district and school leaders establish, implement, and continuously evaluate the effectiveness of policies and procedures that are standards-based, driven by student achievement data, and designed to promote continuous improvement of instructional practice and high achievement for all students. Leadership decisions and actions related to the attainment of district and school goals are routinely communicated to the community and promote the public confidence, community support, and financial commitment needed to achieve high performance by students and staff.

1. **Focused School Committee Governance:** School committee members are informed and knowledgeable about their responsibilities under the Education Reform Act. In their policy-making and decision-making processes, they are guided by improvement plan goals and informed by student achievement data and other educationally relevant data. The performance of the superintendent is annually evaluated based on the attainment of the goals in the district improvement plan, MCAS results, and other student achievement data. Together with the superintendent, the school committee creates a culture of collaboration and develops contracts and agreements, which encourage all stakeholders to work together to support higher levels of student achievement.
2. **Effective District and School Leadership:** The superintendent promotes a culture of transparency, accountability, public confidence, collaboration, and joint responsibility for student learning in the district and broader community. The superintendent effectively delegates educational and operational leadership to principals, program leaders, and administrators, and annually evaluates their performance in their roles based on the goals in the district and school improvement plans, MCAS results, and other relevant data.

*The district and each school take action to attract, develop, and retain an effective school leadership team that obtains staff commitment to improving student learning and implements a well-designed strategy for accomplishing a clearly-defined mission and set of goals, in part by leveraging resources. Each school leadership team: a) ensures staff understanding of, and commitment to, the school's mission and strategies; b) supports teacher leadership and a collaborative learning culture; c) uses supervision and evaluation practices that assist teacher development; and d) focuses staff time and resources on instructional improvement and student learning through effective management of operations and use of data for improvement planning and management (CSE #2).*

3. **District and School Improvement Planning:** The district and school leaders have a well-understood vision or mission, goals, and priorities for action that are outlined in a District Improvement Plan. The plan's performance goals for students and its analysis of student achievement data drive the development, implementation, and modification of educational programs. Each school uses an approved School Improvement Plan (SIP) that is aligned with the district's plan and based on an analysis of student achievement data. District and school plans are developed and refined through an iterative process that includes input from staff, families, and partners on district goals, initiatives, policies, and programs. District and school leaders periodically report to the school committee, staff, families, and community on the extent of the attainment of the goals in the plans, particularly regarding student achievement.
4. **Educationally-sound Budget Development:** The superintendent annually recommends to the school committee educationally-sound budgets based primarily on its improvement planning and analysis of data. The budget is developed and resources are allocated based on the ongoing analysis of aggregated and disaggregated student assessment data to assure the budget's effectiveness in supporting improved achievement for all student populations. District leaders promote equity by distinguishing among the needs of individual schools' populations and allocating adequate resources to the schools and students with greater needs. Each school's administrators are actively involved in the development of its budget.

5. **Effective District Systems for School Support and Intervention:** *The district has systems and processes for anticipating and addressing school staffing, instructional, and operational needs in timely, efficient, and effective ways. Using these, it monitors the performance of students and conditions in each school. The district also identifies any persistently low-achieving and/or struggling schools; makes any needed changes in staffing, schedule and/or governance; and supports an ambitious, yet realistic, plan for school improvement, including goals, timelines, and benchmarks, with explicit consequences for not meeting benchmarks. The district provides its lowest achieving and struggling schools with additional monitoring and effective support for improvement. (CSE #1)*

**II. Curriculum and Instruction:** The curricula and instructional practices in the district are developed and implemented to attain high levels of achievement for all students. They are aligned with components of the state curriculum frameworks and revised to promote higher levels of student achievement.

1. **Aligned, consistently delivered, and continuously improving curriculum:** The district and each of its schools have curriculum leadership that ensures consistent use, alignment, and effective delivery of the district's curricula. Teachers and other staff make effective use of curriculum guides for all content areas that include objectives, resources, instructional strategies, timelines, and assessments. The district has an established, documented process for the regular and timely review and revision of curricula based on valid research, the analysis of MCAS results and other assessments, and input from professional staff. *The district ensures that each school's taught curricula a) are aligned to state curriculum frameworks and to the MCAS performance level descriptions, and b) are also aligned vertically (between grades) and horizontally (across classrooms at the same grade level and across sections of the same course). (CSE #3).*
2. **Strong instructional leadership and effective instruction:** The district and each of its schools have leadership and support for effective instruction. District and school leaders address instructional needs and strengths that are identified through active monitoring of instruction and ongoing use of formative and summative student assessment data. *The district ensures that instructional practices are based on evidence from a body of high-quality research and on high expectations for all students and include use of appropriate research-based reading and mathematics programs. It also ensures that instruction focuses on clear objectives, uses appropriate educational materials, and includes: a) a range of strategies, technologies, and supplemental materials aligned with students' developmental levels and learning needs; b) instructional practices and activities that build a respectful climate and enable students to assume increasing responsibility for their own learning; and c) use of class time that maximizes student learning. Each school staff has a common understanding of high-quality evidence-based instruction and a system for monitoring instructional practice. (CSE #4)*
3. **Sufficient instructional time:** The district allocates sufficient instructional time for all students in core content areas. The allocation of time is based on analyses of student achievement data and focused on improving proficiency.

**III Assessment:** District and school leadership use student assessment results, local benchmarks, and other pertinent data to improve student achievement and inform all aspects of its decision-making including: policy development and implementation, instructional programs, assessment practices, procedures, and supervision.

1. **Data collection and dissemination:** District assessment policies and practices are characterized by the continuous collection and timely dissemination of data. District and school staff members have access to

user-friendly, district-wide and school-based reports on student achievement and other relevant data. All appropriate staff and community members are made aware of internal reports and external review findings.

2. **Data-based decision making:** The district is highly effective at analyzing and using data to drive decision making. District and school leadership annually review student assessment results, external and internal reviews, and other pertinent data to prioritize goals, maximize effectiveness in allocating human and financial resources, and to initiate, modify, or discontinue programs and services. District and school leaders monitor student achievement data throughout the year in order to ascertain progress toward goals identified in the district and school plans, and to make needed adjustments to programs, policies, services, or supervision practices. All professional staff members are supported and expected to use aggregated and disaggregated student achievement data regularly to improve performance.
3. **Student Assessment:** *The district ensures that each school uses a balanced system of formative and benchmark assessments to guide instruction and determine individual remedial and enrichment requirements. Benchmark assessments are given 4-to-8 times per year. (CSE #5)*

IV. **Human Resources and Professional Development:** The district identifies, attracts, and recruits effective personnel, and structures its environment to support, develop, improve, promote, and retain qualified and effective professional staff who are successful in advancing achievement for all students.

1. **Staff Recruitment, selection, and assignment:** The district has policies and practices to secure candidates who are committed and qualified to meet student needs, contribute to a professional learning community, and – in the case of teachers – provide high quality instruction in their content area. The district attracts quality candidates by appropriately compensating staff and by developing varied incentives and other strategies for recruiting and ensuring a diverse pool of high-quality candidates in hard-to-staff positions. Hiring and placement timelines, policies, and practices allow districts to recruit high-quality candidates in a competitive timeframe. Hiring processes include input from appropriate district stakeholders. During the hiring process, the district assesses candidates’ proficiency in domains of the common core of professional knowledge and skills. All members of the professional staff have appropriate Massachusetts licensure. In the event of unfilled professional positions, individuals are hired on waivers and provided mentoring and support to attain the standard of substantial annual progress toward appropriate licensure. The district places a high priority on retaining and maximizing the impact of effective professional staff by providing new roles and opportunities for growth and a career ladder. The district provides administrators with guidance and support to make effective decisions regarding the selection and assignment of staff. ***The district ensures that each principal has the authority, guidance, and assistance needed to make staffing decisions based on the school’s improvement plan and student needs. (CSE#6)***
2. **Educator growth and evaluation:** The district promotes a culture of growth-oriented supervision through a combination of formal evaluations and ongoing, informal instructional feedback. The district’s evaluation procedure for administrators’ performance meets the requirements of state law and regulation and is informative, instructive, and used to promote individual growth and overall effectiveness. Compensation and continued employment for administrators are linked to evidence of effectiveness, as assessed by improvement in student performance and other relevant school data. Through effective supervision practices, administrators identify the strengths and needs of assigned staff in order to plan effective implementation of district and school initiatives, assess the application of skills and practices learned from professional development, provide struggling staff with opportunities for additional professional development and support and provide frequent, high-quality feedback focused on professional growth. The

district ensures that school leaders regularly use evidence-based supervision processes to monitor and support teachers to meet instructional and program expectations based on high standards of performance aligned to the common core of professional knowledge and skills. The district's evaluation procedure for teachers' performance is aligned to the supervision process, incorporates multiple sources of data including student achievement results, effectively implemented by trained administrators, and fulfills the requirements of state law and regulation. The district has identified variegated strategies for supporting and developing struggling teachers and has dismissed or demoted educators who do not meet evaluation criteria over time. The district ensures that school administrators receive the guidance and support to effectively use the formal evaluation process to hold staff accountable to high professional expectations for performance.

3. **Professional learning:** District and school organization, culture, and structures create a climate conducive to adult learning through effective communication, ongoing professional improvement, and joint responsibility for student learning. The district maintains a strong commitment to creating and sustaining a professional development program that supports educators at all stages in their careers. Professional development programs and services are based on district priorities, information about staff needs, student achievement data, and assessments of instructional practices and programs at each school. Programs progress developmentally and differentiate for educators' different areas of responsibility and levels of expertise and experience. The district supports teacher leadership and growth by creating opportunities for exemplary teachers to have responsibility for instructional leadership and mentoring. ***Professional development includes: a) both job-embedded and individually pursued learning, including content-based learning, that enhances a teacher's knowledge and skills; and b) structures for collaboration that enable teachers to have regular, frequent department and/or grade-level common planning and meeting time that is used to improve implementation of the curriculum and instructional practice. (CSE #7)***

**Student Support:** The district provides quality programs for all students that are comprehensive, accessible and rigorous. Student academic support services and district discipline and behavior practices address the needs of all students. The district is effective in maintaining high rates of attendance for students and staff and retains the participation of students through graduation.

1. **Academic support:** The district has policies, procedures, and practices that promote student high achievement, support course completion, reduce grade retention, and encourage on-time graduation. ***The district has an effective system for identifying all students who are not performing at grade level. Each school schedule is designed to provide adequate learning time for all students in core subjects. For students not yet on track to proficiency in English language arts or mathematics, the district ensures that each school provides additional time and support for individualized instruction through tiered instruction, a data-driven approach to prevention, early detection, and support for students who experience learning or behavioral challenges, including but not limited to students with disabilities and English language learners. (CSE #8)***
2. **Access and equity:** District and school staff members work to close proficiency gaps by using aggregated and disaggregated data on student participation and achievement to adjust policies and practices and to provide additional programs or supports. Inclusive classrooms and programs that use an integrated services model minimize separation of special populations from the mainstream of school activity. The district and its schools work to promote equity through such means as increasing the proportion of underrepresented subgroups in advanced and accelerated programs. Beginning at the middle school level, leaders actively

create pathways to ensure that all students are prepared for post-secondary education and career opportunities upon graduation.

3. **Educational continuity and student participation:** District and school policies and practices promote student attendance, which is continuously monitored, reported, and acted upon. They also promote and track staff attendance and participation; appropriate provisions are made to ensure continuity for students. District and school policies and practices also help all students make effective transitions from one school, grade level, or program. Entering and mobile students are promptly placed in educationally-appropriate settings using information from skill and other assessments when prior school records are not accessible. Transient and homeless students have timely and equitable access to quality programs supported by district oversight, policies, and practices to address their needs. Fair and equitable policies, procedures, and practices are implemented to reduce suspensions, exclusions, and other discipline referrals. Policies and practices are implemented to reduce or minimize dropping out, and the district has practices to recover dropouts and return them to an educationally appropriate placement.
4. **Partnerships and services to support learning:** *The district ensures that each school creates a safe school environment and makes effective use of a system for addressing the social, emotional, and health needs of its students that reflects the behavioral health and public schools framework.<sup>3</sup> Students' needs are met in part through: a) the provision of coordinated student support services and universal breakfast (if eligible); b) the implementation of a systems approach to establishing a productive social culture that minimizes problem behavior for all students; and c) the use of consistent schoolwide attendance and discipline practices and effective classroom management techniques that enable students to assume increasing responsibility for their own behavior and learning. (CSE #9) The district ensures that each school develops strong working relationships with families and appropriate community partners and providers in order to support students' academic progress and social and emotional well-being (CSE #10);* such community partners and providers as human service agencies, corporate and civic sponsors, and higher education give students and families access to health, social, recreational, and supplemental educational services.
5. **Safety:** The district supports schools to maintain safe environments for students. The district has a comprehensive safety plan that is reviewed annually with local police and fire departments and is used to create aligned school plans. The district provides ongoing training for appropriate staff in dealing with crises and emergencies, as well as opportunities for all staff and students to practice safety procedures.

**Financial and Asset Management:** The district budget document is clear, comprehensive, and aligned to district goals including student achievement and educator effectiveness goals. The budget is created through an open, participatory process. The district pursues and secures resources to improve education. The district effectively manages its financial and capital assets and does the appropriate long-term planning.

1. **Thorough and Inclusive Budget Development:** The superintendent and school committee work together to leverage resources to achieve the best student performance outcomes. Budget development is driven by district and school plans; student outcomes data is used in both. Student needs drive resource allocation to schools. Leaders review revenue and spending trends and make projections to plan beyond the upcoming year. Stakeholders are involved in budget development. Budget development includes all funding sources; general funds, grants and other funds. District leaders manage operations expenditures efficiently through

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<sup>3</sup> *The behavioral health and public schools framework was developed by the Task Force on Behavioral Health and Public Schools pursuant to c. 321, s. 19, of the Massachusetts Acts of 2008.*

optimizing transportation, participating in shared services or cooperative purchasing, among other strategies. Partnerships with colleges or non-profits, virtual learning, etc. are used to extend education resources if possible.

2. **Complete and Usable Budget Document:** The budget document and related formal presentation documents have clear and useful summaries as well as financial detail. The budget summary includes narrative about key priorities and how they are supported financially. The budget document includes all funds (grant amounts and expenditures may be estimated). The budget document includes trends information for several years, at least at a summary level. School committee holds a public hearing, and superintendent provides information to the public.
3. **Constructive Civic Relationships:** The district meets or exceeds net school spending. If the district does not meet net school spending, district and municipal leaders work together to plan to meet that requirement. District leaders understand municipal leaders' approach to defining the level of the district's appropriation. District and municipal leaders agree on a method for assigning education-related municipal costs to net school spending. District and municipal leaders have positive working relationships.
4. **Fiscal Health and Financial Management:** The superintendent receives regular reports and information from the business official about current expenditures and projections for annual expenditures, for all sources of funds. The school committee receives regular reports and information from the superintendent about current expenditures and projections for annual expenditures. The district regularly fully spends its available funds, without exceeding them. There is minimal carryover or return of funds to the municipality or to grantors at the end of the year. The district fully uses technology that meets its staffing and financial management needs, and integrates with the municipal system, if applicable. Management of staff and financial resources are integrated.
5. **Capital Planning and Facilities Maintenance:** Buildings are generally in good condition. The district maintains its buildings well. Buildings are neither overcrowded nor under-used. Technology infrastructure is updated. The district has a current capital improvements plan that includes a fiscal component. The municipality has supported capital projects in the past.