

Purpose

The district self-assessment tool helps districts review their practices according to the state's District Standards and Indicators, which define strong district practice in six areas:

- Leadership and governance
- Curriculum and instruction
- Assessment and effective use of data
- Human resources and educator development
- Student support
- Financial and asset management

These 6 standards and their 24 related indicators were developed based on input from school and district stakeholders about which aspects of district systems most directly affect student achievement.

All districts participating in district accountability reviews complete the self-assessment as part of their preparation for the review process. For those selected for targeted district reviews, the self-assessment will also inform the decision of whether the review will focus on governance and administrative systems (the leadership and governance, human resources and educator development, and financial and asset management standards) or student-centered systems (the curriculum and instruction, assessment and effective use of data, and student support standards).

Using the tool

The self-assessment defines what strong district practice looks like for each indicator within the standard. Districts should convene a representative group to review this information and collaboratively agree on how well each definition describes the district's current practices. Districts should consider including a mix of central office staff, school leadership, teachers, and school committee members in the group.

Districts should also complete the supplemental tables, which specify how the supporting documents submitted provide evidence for the chosen rating and provide additional details for the review team about the district's curriculum and assessment practices. Please limit the number of supporting documents to 3 or fewer per standard, if possible.

Standard 1: 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.

	How well does this indicator describe your district's current practices? Put an X in the box that represents your rating			
	Not at all well	Somewhat well	Well	Very well
Indicator 1: Focused School Committee Governance				
a. Is knowledgeable about the district, owning student performance outcomes.				
b. Performs district oversight through policy-setting, budget approval, and hiring of the superintendent.				
c. Delegates educational and operational administration of the district to the superintendent.				
d. Annually evaluates the superintendent based on mutually agreed-upon district goals and the implementation of district improvement plan, using a process consistent with state law and regulations about educator evaluation.				
e. Sets and updates policy in response to changing district needs.				
f. Works well with the superintendent on policy and budget matters.				
g. Works well with local officials and other key stakeholders, including union leadership and the public, and advocates for the district's plans to meet student needs.				
h. Takes leadership in contract negotiations to align contracts with district needs and budget.				

	Not at all well	Somewhat well	Well	Very well
Indicator 2: Effective District and School Leadership				
a. The superintendent shares a district vision and key strategic goals with educators, parents, and students.				
b. The district administrative team has clear roles and responsibilities, works well together, and is neither too big nor too small.				
c. The district administrative team has consistent expectations for principals.				
d. Principals are strong instructional leaders and ensure that school operations run smoothly.				
e. District and school leaders provide opportunities for teacher leadership and engage teachers in planning and in review of school instructional practices.				
f. District and school leaders are evaluated annually using a process consistent with state law and regulations about educator evaluation.				

	Not at all well	Somewhat well	Well	Very well
Indicator 3: District and School Improvement Planning				
a. The district improvement plan articulates a vision and strategic objectives developed from data analysis.				
b. The plan specifies rigorous, detailed student performance goals for the year.				
c. The plan is regarded as a work in progress, subject to change as needed.				
d. The plan specifies the assessment/measurement tools that will be used to gauge progress and when and how data will be reviewed during the year.				
e. The plan is concise, clearly written, and available in summary form for widespread communication with stakeholders. School improvement plans are aligned with the district improvement plan; they are ambitious yet attainable and include goals, timelines, and benchmarks.				
f. Principals, instructional leaders, and teachers use interim and annual student data to monitor progress, make adjustments to instruction as needed, and track the effectiveness of district and school initiatives.				
g. The district's educator evaluation system is aligned to district and school goals, includes team and individual student learning and professional practice goals for all educators, and connects to a professional development program that provides educators with meaningful opportunities for professional growth.				
h. District and school progress toward goals is reported to teachers, parents, and the school committee.				

	Not at all well	Somewhat well	Well	Very well
Indicator 4: Educationally Sound Budget Development				
a. The superintendent and school committee work together to leverage resources (money, staff and time) to achieve the best student performance outcomes.				
b. 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.				
c. District leaders understand municipal leaders' approach to defining the level of the district's appropriation.				
d. District and municipal leaders agree on a method for assigning education-related municipal costs to net school spending.				
e. District and municipal leaders have positive working relationships.				

	Not at all well	Somewhat well	Well	Very well
Indicator 5: Effective District Systems for School Support and Intervention				
a. Central office instructional leadership staff has a system for reviewing the needs of schools and providing targeted assistance to support implementation of school improvement plans.				
b. Central office administrative staff and systems provide quick responses to staffing and operational needs of the schools.				
c. District leadership identifies strategies for monitoring, support, and intervention at the lowest achieving and struggling schools.				
d. Administrative data, such as recruitment and hiring numbers and student and staff attendance rates, are readily available to district leaders and principals.				
e. Principals are held accountable for student outcomes and progress throughout the year.				

Leadership and Governance: Evidence

Use the following table (adding rows as necessary) to list the district documents you are submitting to support your ratings for the Leadership and Governance standard and indicators. Also provide a brief rationale for their selection with enough information to justify the rating chosen above. **Please limit the number of documents to 3 or fewer, if possible.** Lengthy narrative is NOT expected. An example is provided for your reference.

Title of Document	Rationale for Submission as Evidence
<p>[EXAMPLE DOCUMENT] School committee minutes</p>	<p>[EXAMPLE RATIONALE] The minutes show evidence of many elements of indicators 1 and 4, as well as 3e, 3g, and 3h.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 11/15/14 minutes show an example of budget and priority development on the basis of data; subsequent meetings show evidence of regular tracking of the district improvement plan, a culture of regular analysis of performance data • The 6/30/15 minutes include the superintendent’s evaluation • The 4/15/15 minutes include a description of the district’s educator evaluation system

Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction

The district provides a rigorous instructional program aligned with the state’s curriculum frameworks with curricula and instructional practices that lead to high levels of achievement for all students.

	How well does this indicator describe your district’s current practices? Put an X in the box that represents your rating.			
	Not at all well	Somewhat well	Well	Very well
Indicator 1: Aligned, Consistently Delivered, and Continuously Developing Curriculum				
a. Curriculum leaders ensure that curriculum is aligned to state frameworks.				
b. The district has a curriculum review and revision process that is comprehensive and addresses identified needs. This process includes teacher input, program evaluation, and regular review of assessment results.				
c. Curriculum guides for content areas include objectives, resources, instructional strategies, pacing guides, and an assessment cycle.				
d. Curriculum guides are vertically aligned, with particular attention to transition points (e.g., from elementary to middle and middle to high school).				
e. Principals and district instructional leaders convey the expectation the teachers will teach the written curriculum to teachers and other support staff such as instructional coaches.				
f. Curriculum leaders ensure that content is delivered consistently across grades and across schools.				
g. Instructional leaders monitor how curriculum is being delivered in classrooms and provide feedback to teachers as needed.				

Indicator 2: Strong Instructional Leadership and Effective Instruction	How well does this indicator describe your district's current practices? Put an X in the box that represents your rating.			
	Not at all well	Somewhat well	Well	Very well
Instructional leadership:				
a. All instructional leaders agree on what effective instruction looks like.				
b. District and school leaders maintain high expectations for students and staff.				
c. Principals and instructional leaders provide consistent support and supervision to teachers on their instructional practices through informal and formal observations and feedback.				
d. Principals and instructional leaders use student assessment data to adjust instruction for students at all levels, from struggling to high achieving, and can support teachers on this.				
Effective instruction:				
a. Classroom teachers' daily lesson plans include clear objectives, appropriate instructional materials, and a range of instructional strategies.				
b. Teachers can differentiate instruction for students' individual learning needs.				
c. Teachers use regular classroom assessments, formal and informal, to monitor student progress.				
d. Teachers know how to adjust instruction based on assessment data to help all students learn.				

Indicator 3: Sufficient Instructional Time	How well does this indicator describe your district's current practices? Put an X in the box that represents your rating.			
	Not at all well	Somewhat well	Well	Very well
a. The district meets the state minimum requirements of 180 school days and 900 hours (elementary) / 990 hours (high school) / 425 hours (kindergarten) of structured learning time for students.				
b. Sufficient instructional time is scheduled to enable all students to reach proficiency in core content areas, with additional instructional time for struggling students.				
c. Principals maximize learning time through efficient scheduling and minimization of daily interruptions.				

Curriculum and Instruction: Curriculum Alignment

Please indicate the district’s progress in aligning its curriculum with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks by entering “Not begun,” “In progress,” or “Completed [Month/Year]” in the table for each grade and subject area.

Status of Alignment of Curriculum to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks				
Grade	ELA	Mathematics	Science	Comments (optional)
<i>Example</i>	<i>Completed Oct. 2014</i>	<i>In progress</i>	<i>Not begun</i>	
K				
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				

Curriculum and Instruction: Evidence

Use the following table (adding rows as necessary) to list the district documents you are submitting to support your ratings for the Curriculum and Instruction standard and indicators. Also provide a brief rationale for their selection with enough information to justify the rating chosen above. **Please limit the number of documents to 3 or fewer, if possible.** Lengthy narrative is NOT expected. See the example in the Leadership and Governance section.

Title of Document	Rationale for Submission as Evidence

Standard 3: Assessment

District and school leaders have a system of assessments and data-sharing that provides teachers timely data about what students have and have not learned, and provides data that drives all aspects of decision-making about curriculum, instructional practices, professional development, and policy and budget.

Indicator 1: Data Collection and Dissemination	How well does this indicator describe your district's current practices? Put an X in the box that represents your rating.			
	Not at all well	Somewhat well	Well	Very well
a. District technology systems allow prompt collection and distribution of student data, including but not limited to assessment data.				
b. Assessment results are made available to principals and teachers quickly enough for progress measurement to inform instruction in the following academic units.				
c. Data reporting is user-friendly.				
d. Principals and teachers are trained on using the reports to analyze student progress and needs.				
e. Data reports ranging from detail to summary levels are made available to administrators and to local stakeholders as appropriate.				

Indicator 2: Data-Based Decision Making	How well does this indicator describe your district's current practices? Put an X in the box that represents your rating.			
	Not at all well	Somewhat well	Well	Very well
a. The district sets goals and priorities based on reviews of student assessment results and internal and external evaluations and analyses.				
b. The district regularly monitors student achievement data to measure progress towards goals and make adjustments in district strategies.				
c. Administrators use student data to measure educators' impact on student learning.				
d. The district allocates human and financial resources based on multiple sources of data.				
e. The district offers ongoing, effective staff training and support to use student achievement data to improve performance.				

Indicator 3: Student Assessment	How well does this indicator describe your district's current practices? Put an X in the box that represents your rating.			
	Not at all well	Somewhat well	Well	Very well
a. Teachers have a range of methods to assess student growth, both formal and informal.				
b. District- or school-wide benchmark assessments are given several times during the year.				
c. Benchmark data is analyzed by teacher teams.				
d. The district balances gathering sufficient information to guide instruction with preserving sufficient time for instruction.				

Assessment: Evidence

Use the following table (adding rows as necessary) to list the district documents you are submitting to support your ratings for the Assessment standard and indicators. Also provide a brief rationale for their selection with enough information to justify the rating chosen above. Lengthy narrative is NOT expected. **Please limit the number of documents to 3 or fewer, if possible.** An example is provided for your reference. See the example in the Leadership and Governance section.

Title of Document	Rationale for Submission as Evidence

Standard 4: Human Resource Management and Professional Development

The district retains effective professional staff and provides a career path within teaching for those who want to take some leadership; it recruits and hires teachers with good qualifications and potential; leaders maintain high expectations of all teachers, and systematically support professional development with a range of strategies.

Indicator 1: Staff Recruitment, Selection, and Assignment	How well does this indicator describe your district's current practices? Put an X in the box that represents your rating.			
	Not at all well	Somewhat well	Well	Very well
a. The district has a human resources leader with clearly defined duties and expectations.				
b. The district's hiring procedures result in timely and effective recruitment, selection, and assignment of qualified educators.				
c. Appropriate staff and stakeholder input is part of hiring procedures.				
d. Hiring decisions are based on school and district improvement plans and current student needs.				
e. The hiring process for educators is based on the Standards for Effective Administrative Leadership and Teaching Practice in the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework.				
f. Staff members who are hired and/or retained have current licensure in the areas in which they teach or in the administrative roles they hold. The district makes limited use of certification waivers.				
g. The district extends new roles and opportunities to effective professional staff as identified through the evaluation process; for example, teacher recognition, career paths within teaching, and appropriate compensation and incentives.				
h. Staff retention rates are high for teachers with strong evaluations.				

Indicator 2: Educator Growth and Development	How well does this indicator describe your district's current practices? Put an X in the box that represents your rating.			
	Not at all well	Somewhat well	Well	Very well
a. Supervision and evaluation for all educators is aligned to the Standards for Effective Administrative Leadership and Teaching Practice articulated in the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework.				
b. Evaluations are conducted by trained administrators who calibrate their work for fairness and consistency.				
c. Formal and informal supervision of educators includes regular, timely, and actionable feedback that is instructive, identifies next steps for professional development, and enables administrators to meet their expectations and goals.				
d. Educators are active participants in the evaluation process.				
e. The evaluation process uses multiple types of evidence.				
f. The district provides regular support to enable educators to meet their expectations and goals.				
g. The district demotes or dismisses educators who do not meet evaluation criteria after intensive supports are provided.				

Indicator 3: Professional Learning	How well does this indicator describe your district's current practices? Put an X in the box that represents your rating.			
	Not at all well	Somewhat well	Well	Very well
a. District leaders and principals establish a district professional development plan based on the district improvement plan and educator evaluation data (e.g., educator self-assessments, evaluator assessment of instructional practices, and student achievement data).				
b. Professional development is predominantly focused, job-embedded learning (e.g., coaching, peer observation, department/grade level collaboration).				
c. Professional development programs are available to support educators at all levels of expertise and stages in their careers.				
d. Teachers receive training and support on effective classroom management.				
e. New staff receives formal orientation, mentoring, coaching, and other support consistent with ESE's 2015 Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring Programs.				
f. Administrators and teachers have time and support for participating in professional learning communities, with the expectation of ongoing professional improvement.				
g. Experienced teachers have opportunities for instructional leadership and for mentoring peers.				

Human Resources and Professional Development: Evidence

Use the following table (adding rows as necessary) to list the district documents you are submitting to support your ratings for the Human Resources and Professional Development standard and indicators. Also provide a brief rationale for their selection with enough information to justify the rating chosen above. **Please limit the number of documents to 3 or fewer, if possible.** Lengthy narrative is NOT expected. An example is provided for your reference. See the example in the Leadership and Governance section.

Title of Document	Rationale for Submission as Evidence

Standard 5: Student Support

The district provides programs for all students that are comprehensive, accessible and rigorous. Student academic support services and district discipline practices and behavior expectations address the needs of all students. The district maintains high rates of attendance for students and staff and a high graduation rate.

Indicator 1: Academic Support	How well does this indicator describe your district's current practices? Put an X in the box that represents your rating.			
	Not at all well	Somewhat well	Well	Very well
a. District policies and practices support course completion, low rates of grade retention, and on-time graduation.				
b. Leaders and teachers have a clear process for identifying students below grade level or otherwise at risk.				
c. Tiered systems of support provide additional instructional time and appropriate interventions for all students when they are needed.				
d. Students performing below grade level receive additional support (more instructional time, tiered interventions, smaller classes, etc.).				
e. Students with disabilities, English language learners, and other students with learning or behavioral challenges have access to teachers with the necessary certifications and experience to meet their needs.				

Indicator 2: Access and Equity	How well does this indicator describe your district's current practices? Put an X in the box that represents your rating.			
	Not at all well	Somewhat well	Well	Very well
a. The district improvement plan and the efforts of district and school leaders are focused on closing proficiency gaps.				
b. District policies and procedures, such as student and staff assignment policies, ensure that students have equitable access to excellent educators.				
c. Educators work actively to increase the proportion of underrepresented subgroups enrolled in advanced and accelerated programs.				
d. All high school students have access to post-secondary and career pathways.				

Indicator 3: Educational Continuity and Student Participation	How well does this indicator describe your district's current practices? Put an X in the box that represents your rating.			
	Not at all well	Somewhat well	Well	Very well
a. Student attendance reporting ensures accurate daily information that enables timely responses.				
b. Staff attendance reporting ensures accurate daily information that enables timely responses and seeks to minimize absences.				
c. Provisions are made to ensure continuity for students when teachers are absent.				
d. Students transitioning from one school, grade level, or program to another receive systematic support.				
e. New students are promptly assessed and placed.				
f. High mobility students from within or outside the district and transient and homeless students have prompt and equitable access to programs that meet their particular needs.				
g. The district has fair and equitable policies and practices that reduce suspensions, expulsions, and other disciplinary actions.				
h. Specific resources are targeted to reducing the dropout rate.				
i. Strong efforts are made to recover dropouts and return them to school with supports to help them stay in school.				

Indicator 4: Services and Partnerships to Support Learning	How well does this indicator describe your district's current practices? Put an X in the box that represents your rating.			
	Not at all well	Somewhat well	Well	Very well
a. Families receive regular communication about students' academic, social, and emotional development.				
b. Family engagement efforts focus on supporting student learning and respect linguistic and cultural differences.				
c. School leaders coordinate support services, universal breakfast (if eligible), positive behavior interventions, inclusive classrooms, and attendance and discipline practices.				
d. External partnerships help provide students and families with access to behavioral health, social, recreational, and supplemental educational services.				
e. Students take responsibility for appropriate behavior and learning.				

Indicator 5: Safety	How well does this indicator describe your district's current practices? Put an X in the box that represents your rating.			
	Not at all well	Somewhat well	Well	Very well
a. The district ensures that its schools and partner sites that host students maintain a safe environment.				
b. The district has a comprehensive district safety plan, and each school has a safety plan consistent with the district plan.				
c. Leaders conduct annual safety plan reviews with local police and fire department personnel.				
d. Staff receives ongoing training and has opportunities to practice dealing with crises and emergencies.				

Student Support: Evidence

Use the following table (adding rows as necessary) to list the district documents you are submitting to support your ratings for the Student Support standard and indicators. Also provide a brief rationale for their selection with enough information to justify the rating chosen above. **Please limit the number of documents to 3 or fewer, if possible.** Lengthy narrative is NOT expected. An example is provided for your reference. See the example in the Leadership and Governance section.

Title of Document	Rationale for Submission as Evidence

Standard 6: Financial and Asset Management

District leaders leverage district resources (including money, staff, and time) to maximize outcomes for the students they serve. The superintendent informs the school committee and the public about district financial matters. The district maintains its facilities well and has a long-term capital plan.

Indicator 1: Thorough and Inclusive Budget Development	How well does this indicator describe your district's current practices? Put an X in the box that represents your rating.			
	Not at all well	Somewhat well	Well	Very well
a. The superintendent and school committee work together to leverage resources to achieve the best student performance outcomes.				
b. Budget development is driven by district and school plans; student outcomes data is used in both.				
c. Student needs drive resource allocation to schools.				
d. Leaders review revenue and spending trends and make projections to plan beyond the upcoming year.				
e. Stakeholders are involved in budget development.				
f. Budget development includes all funding sources: general funds, grants, and other funds.				
g. District leaders manage operations expenditures efficiently by optimizing transportation and participating in shared services or cooperative purchasing, among other strategies.				
h. Partnerships with colleges, non-profits, virtual learning, etc. are used to extend education resources if possible.				

Indicator 2: Complete and Usable Budget Document	How well does this indicator describe your district's current practices? Put an X in the box that represents your rating.			
	Not at all well	Somewhat well	Well	Very well
a. The budget document and related formal presentation documents have clear and useful summaries as well as financial detail.				
b. The budget summary includes narrative about key priorities and how they are supported financially.				
c. The budget document includes all funds. (Grant amounts and expenditures may be estimated.)				
d. The budget document includes trends information for several years, at least at a summary level.				
e. School committee holds public hearing, and superintendent provides information to the public.				

Indicator 3: Constructive Civic Relationships	How well does this indicator describe your district's current practices? Put an X in the box that represents your rating.			
	Not at all well	Somewhat well	Well	Very well
a. 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.				
b. District leaders understand municipal leaders' approach to determining the district's appropriation.				
c. District and municipal leaders agree on a method for assigning education-related municipal costs to net school spending.				
d. District and municipal leaders have positive working relationships.				

Indicator 4: Fiscal Health and Financial Management	How well does this indicator describe your district's current practices? Put an X in the box that represents your rating.			
	Not at all well	Somewhat well	Well	Very well
a. The superintendent receives regular reports and information from the business official about current expenditures and projections for annual expenditures, for all sources of funds.				
b. The school committee receives regular reports and information from the superintendent about current expenditures and projections for annual expenditures.				
c. The district regularly fully spends its available funds, without exceeding them. Minimal funds are carried over or returned to the municipality or to grantors at the end of the year.				
d. The district fully uses technology that meets its staffing and financial management needs and integrates with the municipal system, if applicable.				
e. Management of staff and financial resources are integrated.				

Indicator 5: Capital Planning and Facility Maintenance	How well does this indicator describe your district's current practices? Put an X in the box that represents your rating.			
	Not at all well	Somewhat well	Well	Very well
a. Buildings are generally in good condition and the district maintains its buildings well.				
b. Buildings are neither overcrowded nor underused.				
c. Technology infrastructure is updated.				
d. The district has a current capital improvements plan that includes a fiscal component. The municipality has supported capital projects in the past.				

Financial and Asset Management: Evidence

Use the following table (adding rows as necessary) to list the district documents you are submitting to support your ratings for the Financial and Asset Management standard and indicators. Also provide a brief rationale for their selection with enough information to justify the rating chosen above. **Please limit the number of documents to 3 or fewer, if possible.** Lengthy narrative is NOT expected. An example is provided for your reference. See the example in the Leadership and Governance section.

Title of Document	Rationale for Submission as Evidence