

# District Review Report

Brockton Public Schools

Comprehensive review conducted

March 2–5, 2020

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Office of District Reviews and Monitoring

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and  
Secondary Education

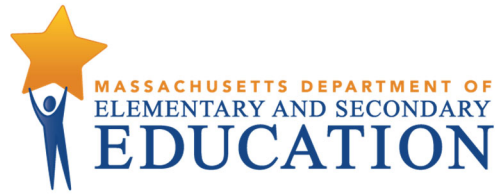
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### Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148-4906  
Phone 781-338-3000 TTY: N.E.T. Replay 800-439-2370  
[www.doe.mass.edu](http://www.doe.mass.edu)

Brockton Public Schools Comprehensive District Review



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

Jeffrey C. Riley  
Commissioner  
**Published October 2020**

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## Executive Summary

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### *Leadership and Governance*

Since its previous height nearly a decade ago as a recognized leader in closing the achievement gap, Brockton has experienced a continual decline in academic outcomes according to the most recent state data, with 10 of its 21 schools now ranked in the lowest 10 percent of Massachusetts schools. The district eliminated 212 positions from 2014 to 2019 due to budget cuts. These positions included key curricular and instructional leadership roles that were either eliminated entirely or their responsibilities redistributed elsewhere. The district's decision to reduce leadership, primarily at the secondary level, in order to protect teaching positions has resulted in unstable systems and practices to create and drive improvement initiatives.

The decision to reduce the leadership force was not informed by district goals or an analysis of data. It was based on the idea that teachers can be effective without sufficient leadership and ignored the value of having high-level leaders to support and monitor high-quality teaching. This approach also avoided the reality that even with fiscal restrictions, it is possible to provide clarity about strategies and expectations for high-quality teaching practices, along with structures to support teachers and monitor the quality of instruction. Evidence gathered during the review indicated that the district did not fully appreciate the cascading impact of reduced leadership and supervision on the quality of curriculum, instruction, and student support services. Consequently, student achievement continues to deteriorate, even with added support and intervention from DESE's Statewide System of Support.

Despite the above, stakeholders from the school committee to leaders and teachers voiced dedication to Brockton's students and expressed respect and support for the promise of a newly configured executive team. In December 2019, the district appointed a new superintendent---a native Brocktonian and career Brockton educator who most recently served as interim superintendent, and before that, as the deputy superintendent

As in many Massachusetts school districts, Brockton's enrollment has decreased in recent years: by 6.8 percent, from 17,186 in school year 2014-2015 to 16,024 in school year 2019-2020. At the time of the review in March 2020, the district's 21 schools served a slightly lower percentage of students with disabilities than the state (16.6 percent, compared with 18.4 percent statewide), more than twice the percentage of English learners (26.2 percent, compared with 10.8 percent statewide), and almost twice the percentage of students whose first language is not English (44.3 percent, compared with 23.0 percent statewide). In school year 2019-2020, Brockton's students were 60.0 percent African-American/Black, 17.0 percent Hispanic/Latino, 16.1 percent White, 4.4 percent Multi-race, non-Hispanic, and 2.0 percent Asian.

In school year 2018-2019 the district had only moderate success in boosting student achievement, based on the state's accountability metric, i.e., the percentage of improvement toward targets. Overall, the district has met 45 percent of its improvement targets and 14 of Brockton's schools need targeted support. Of these, 10 are rated in the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile or lower of similar schools in the state: Arnone

Community, Brookfield, Downey, Gilmore , Manthala George, Jr., East, North, Joseph Plouffe Academy, South, and West.<sup>1</sup> Six schools are rated between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> percentiles: Angelo Elementary School, Baker Elementary School, Raymond Elementary School, Ashfield Middle School, Davis,<sup>2</sup> and Brockton High School, which is rated in the 13<sup>th</sup> percentile of all Massachusetts high schools.

The 10 lowest performing schools (5 elementary and 5 middle schools) have worked with team members from DESE's Statewide System of Support (SSoS) since just after the last review that DESE conducted in the district (report issued in 2014). While the assistance has focused on strengthening the executive team's capacity to support school leaders with improvement initiatives, two team members have partnered with district and school leaders along with instructional leadership teams to co-plan and co-facilitate the development or implementation of each school's Sustainable Improvement Plan. The SSoS team also serves as a resource to support equity and diversity initiatives such as grant applications, hiring priorities, and professional development. In addition, the partnership has identified challenges about the philosophy and logistics of integrating English learners (ELs) into general education classrooms and the extent of inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education program.

The district encourages collaboration and creates representative committees such as teams to adopt new curriculum resources and task forces. The District Design Team addresses systemwide issues such as math instruction, attendance, and suspensions with the intent of informing decision-making. However, the review team found little urgency or awareness in the district about the continual decline in student achievement in recent years and a tendency to blame external factors on the infrequent occasions when student achievement data was reviewed.

Evidence shows that the school committee and other district leaders as well as school leaders have not engaged in effective planning to promote continuous improvement practices and support an increase in student achievement. In addition, the school committee does not use disaggregated data on student outcomes to inform its work. As a result, critical decisions at the governance level are often made based on opinion and anecdotal information rather than evidence. While district leaders believe that their decisions have made the best use of limited funds, stakeholders at all system levels describe a system that is not serving students well.

### *Curriculum and Instruction*

At the elementary level, the chief academic officer in collaboration with the K-5 ELA/social studies and STEM coordinators have put some structures in place to support improvement initiatives. K-5 ELA curricula, instruction, and assessment systems show purpose and clarity of strategy with the recent adoption of a new literacy program, although there is inconsistent implementation across schools. K-5 teachers continue to build capacity to use data and evidence to drive teaching decisions.

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<sup>1</sup> Arnone Community, Brookfield, Downey, Gilmore, and Manthala George, Jr. are elementary schools. East, North, Joseph Plouffe Academy, South, and West are middle schools.

<sup>2</sup> Davis is a K-8 school.

At the middle-school level, associate principals are assigned multiple educational leadership responsibilities without uniform structural and leadership support. In place of content area coordinators, each associate principal is now responsible for an academic subject across all middle schools, with two sharing duties for mathematics. This limits their available time to support teacher teams at their own schools. The middle schools also participate in the curriculum adoption process and are in the midst of piloting program resources in multiple subjects, partly in response to a curriculum audit that the district initiated.<sup>3</sup>

At the high-school level, the loss of key curricular and instructional leadership in the position of associate principal, combined with limited focused oversight from the district and school levels, have left each department as the key driver of its improvement efforts---many of which are not achieved in a timely way and with systematic purpose. Some improvements are in very nascent stages, such as the development of common assessments. Unlike the K-5 level, the high school has no provisions for teams of teachers to engage in collaborative inquiry to better understand and address the inconsistent quality of teaching, particularly with regard to its large population of ELs and students with disabilities. Also, in addition to responsibility for the high school, which serves 4,077 students, the high-school principal also serves as executive director of grades 6-8 with added obligations to monitor all middle-school academic programs and high-school programs and to supervise and evaluate all middle-school principals as well as grades 9-12 deans and department heads. This dual responsibility (for grades 6-8 and 9-12) raises capacity concerns and is yet another consequence of the elimination of leadership roles.

### *Assessment*

The district has established a useful districtwide database, WISL Plus, which makes academic and demographic data accessible to selected staff including principals, elementary coaches, and program leaders. However, the district has not established a districtwide culture of shared responsibility for using common assessments aligned with state standards and performance data to guide teaching and learning. In addition, district and school leaders do not use performance data to set measurable improvement milestones which are monitored regularly to revise and refine programs and instructional practices.

### *Human Resources and Professional Development*

The district has not taken full advantage of evidence-based best practices to elevate the level of instruction, exemplified by its lax approach to conducting performance evaluations. Based on the team's review of recent performance evaluation documents, school principals did not receive consistent and documented performance evaluations over the two years before the onsite review and as a result have not been held accountable for improvements in their schools. Furthermore, principals' evaluations of

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<sup>3</sup> In school year 2018-2019, Brockton received a grant from DESE to contract with an outside organization to conduct a curriculum audit to help inform curricular improvement.

teachers overall showed limited high-quality feedback<sup>4</sup> that could bring about the changes needed to improve teaching and learning. A strength worthy of note related to human resources is the district's attempt to recruit and retain a diverse and highly qualified new pool of teachers. However, contractual obligations for "last-in/first out" have stymied the addition of many new staff members.

### *Student Support*

Improving teaching practices is central to increasing the quality and variety of support provided to the most vulnerable student populations. The review showed that more effective academic support systems were still needed, especially for ELs and students with disabilities, and particularly related to their inclusion in general education settings. On the positive side aligned with student support, the district has developed a collaborative relationship with many families.

Overall, leaders and teachers in interviews were well-versed and articulate in discussing the meaning of "equity" and "diversity" and how schools can mitigate against the subtle and not-so-subtle forms of inequity, racism, bias, and unequal educational opportunities. This understanding has been heightened by a school year 2019-2020 professional development (PD) module in all schools. A districtwide committee organized the PD to focus on enhancing staff members' self-awareness and ability to implement lessons and activities that reflect the diverse cultural, linguistic, and ethnic identities of Brockton's students and families. One outcome is an ongoing audit of curriculum materials for bias and stereotypes to ensure that instructional materials better reflect the multi-cultural nature of the community. However, transferring lessons learned about awareness of equity and diversity into modifications to improve instruction---for example, emphasizing content-based vocabulary and using multiple instructional approaches---are difficult to implement. These modifications were limited in observed lessons.

Instructional improvement in the district is elusive. While there is some clarity about what constitutes effective teaching at the elementary level, there is inconsistent implementation of these practices in kindergarten through grade 5. At the secondary level, there is limited clarity about the characteristics of high-quality instruction. Observed instruction districtwide during the onsite review showed inconsistencies and low ratings within and across school levels in terms of implementing an instructional model that reflects evidence-based best practices.

### *Financial and Asset Management*

The district has a well-developed maintenance and capital planning process and cooperation between the district and the city, also with a new mayor as leader, is harmonious. The district's budget documents are clear to internal stakeholders but do not give community stakeholders a clear picture of how resources are allocated to support the district's priorities. The review team found that while some

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<sup>4</sup> High-quality feedback is specific, timely, and actionable.

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schools were well-maintained, others had maintenance and cleanliness issues. At the time of the onsite, the district was in the planning stage to renovate and update the high-school building.

The district is anticipating an additional \$21,093,362 in Chapter 70 state aid following the passage of the Student Opportunity Act (2019). At the time of the onsite review, the district had begun to prioritize how to allocate the funds. However, the school committee had approved restoring 93 teaching positions before the full development of an updated strategic plan or district improvement plan. While this added infusion of funds can go a long way toward remediating some of the serious effects of reduced personnel, programs, and services the district has experienced in recent years, the district and its students would benefit from more thoughtful analysis and decision-making.

### *Observed Instruction*

The review team observed 220 classes throughout the district: 70 at the comprehensive high school and 3 alternative high-school programs, 61 at 5 middle schools and in grades 6-8 at the Davis K-8 school, and 89 at 10 elementary schools and in kindergarten through grade 5 at the Davis K-8 school. The team observed 70 ELA classes, 61 mathematics classes, 41 science/STEM classes, and 48 classes in other subject areas, including 15 in history and social studies. Among the classes observed were 19 special education, inclusion or co-taught classes, 27 ESL classes, and 10 dual-language classes taught in Spanish, Portuguese or French at the Manthala George, Jr. Global Studies School for kindergarten through grade 5. The observations were approximately 20 minutes in length. All review team members collected data using DESE's Instructional Inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards-based teaching. This data is presented in Appendix C.

The review team found that instruction overall showed few strengths. For 8 of the 12 characteristics of effective instruction in DESE's Instructional Inventory, fewer than half of observed classes showed sufficient evidence of strong practices. Review team members observed only some classes in which students experienced challenging and rigorous learning experiences that probed ideas and content in depth. In a large majority of classes, teachers relied heavily on one instructional format---most frequently, teacher-centered, front-of-the-room instruction, or a worksheet with low-level cognitive demand. In these classes, students had little agency, diminished voice, and few opportunities to engage meaningfully with each other over content. These approaches did not maximize the use of a variety of instructional approaches or formats to engage students more deeply in higher-order thinking or address students' learning needs.

### *Conclusion*

Overall, the review team found a district that has not put in place stable educational leadership, systems, and processes. As a result, the district has struggled to allocate limited resources while trying to ensure that fewer leaders and a diminished teaching force provide high-quality learning opportunities for students. To ensure the integrity of educational programs that serve all students, including English learners and students with disabilities, the district needs to develop a more coherent and ambitious districtwide improvement strategy and focus on strengthening "the instructional core:" teachers'

knowledge and skills, students' engagement in their own learning, and academically challenging content.

## **Strengths**

- The district culture shows a commitment to serving Brockton students. District stakeholders engage in a number of collaborative processes and often complete work through taskforces or committees.
- The district has implemented a structured process to adopt academic programs and curriculum resources at the elementary and middle schools when funds are allocated for new programs.
- There are consistent structures and systems in place at the elementary schools for improving curriculum and instruction. Most K-5 teachers and leaders share a common understanding of the district's expectations for high-quality, standards-based instruction.
- The district has taken initial steps to increase the staff's understanding of issues related to equity and diversity. Educators are in the early stages of making curricular resources more culturally relevant and representative of the diversity in the school community and ensuring that school environments are more welcoming to all student groups.
- The district-developed student information database WISL Plus provides district and selected school staff access to student data from multiple sources.
- Elementary teachers who regularly use district-provided data analysis protocols, the WISL Plus student information database, and common curriculum assessments to identify students' strengths and challenges are building their capacity to improve instruction.
- The district has made a commitment to recruit, support, and retain a diverse cadre of highly qualified teachers and administrators.
- The district engages families in a collaborative way and demonstrates an appreciation of the different languages spoken in the community.
- The district has constructed some new schools to replace older buildings, has renovated others, and has a long-term plan designed to make certain that school facilities are conducive to learning and suited to educational purposes.

## **Challenges and Areas for Growth**

- The school committee does not appear to use the district's strategic plan to guide its decision-making, to focus on improving student outcomes through a continuous review of disaggregated



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student data, or to develop and update policies that are driven by the district's strategic plan or the needs of Brockton students and staff.

- The district does not set measurable goals in most planning documents based on an analysis of historical, longitudinal, and current disaggregated student data. District staffing decisions made during challenging budget cycles are driven primarily by public perception and staff requests rather than by district goals or a review of data.
- The district has not established a culture of collective responsibility for district and school improvement. There is little urgency or awareness about the continual decline in student achievement in recent years, few focused discussions on how instruction can be improved, and a tendency to blame external factors on the infrequent occasions when student achievement data is reviewed.
- The district eliminated several district and school leadership positions that support teaching and learning in grades 6-12 and reallocated responsibilities to the remaining positions.
- The high school is missing a systematic review and revision of curricula that can help focus improvement efforts for teaching and learning and ensure well-developed, standards-based guiding documents and up-to-date curricular resources.
- At the secondary level, leaders and teachers do not have a shared understanding of the district's expectations for high-quality teaching. The amount of regularly scheduled time for teachers to collaborate and support for teacher collaboration varies.
- In observed classes, the quality of instruction was inconsistent for the characteristics of effective instruction associated with the Instructional Inventory's Focus Area #1: Learning Objectives & Expectations, particularly in the areas of students understanding what they were learning and why, and teachers checking for understanding, providing feedback, and adjusting instruction. Instruction was slightly more effective at the elementary level than at the secondary level for the characteristics of effective instruction in Focus Area #1.
- In observed classes, there was a generally low incidence of characteristics of effective instruction associated with Focus Area #2: Student Engagement & Higher-Order Thinking, particularly in the areas of higher-order thinking, students communicating their ideas and thinking with each other, and students having opportunities to engage with meaningful, real-world tasks.
- In observed classrooms, there was a generally high incidence of several characteristics of effective instruction associated with the Instructional Inventory's Focus Area #3: Inclusive Practice & Classroom Culture, notably in ensuring appropriate student behavior and providing a classroom climate conducive to learning. Yet, there was a consistently low incidence of teachers ensuring that students engage in thought-provoking tasks regardless of learning needs and teachers using multiple instructional approaches.

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- The district has not ensured that all students have equitable access to pursue a range of rigorous coursework and learning experiences.
- The district has not established a culture of shared responsibility for the consistent and timely assessment of student performance. In addition, the district has not ensured that leaders and staff use student performance data effectively to improve all students' performance, opportunities, and outcomes.
- The district's WISL Plus database does not provide timely and actionable data about what individual students know and are able to do. As a result, teachers determine students' strengths and learning needs solely using their own assessments, which may not be aligned with grade-level learning standards.
- The district does not regularly share evidence of the district's performance or of the effectiveness of its current improvement strategies with the community in ways that can be easily understood. The district does not provide timely information about individual students' performance and progress or present the information in a format that families can use to support their students to succeed at high levels.
- The district's educator evaluation system does not prioritize opportunities for educators to receive high-quality feedback that helps them improve their practice.
- The district has not developed a coordinated professional development plan that is informed by student and educator data and aligned with district and school priorities.
- All district students do not have access to the least restrictive environment. Co-teaching models are not adequately supported.
- Positive behavioral approaches have not been implemented across the district. Students are not provided equitable discipline-related supports and interventions.
- The district's public budget documents are not clear and user-friendly. In addition, the link between district and school goals and budget development is unclear.

## Recommendations

- The school committee should focus its attention on its role to evaluate the superintendent, to review and approve budgets, and to establish educational goals and policies. The committee should prioritize its efforts to use the district's soon-to-be-revised strategic plan and the regular review of disaggregated student data to guide its policies, deliberations, and decisions.
- The district should ensure that its planning documents have clear goals that are based on an analysis of historical, longitudinal, and current disaggregated student data.

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- The district should establish expectations and protocols to strengthen the use of data to promote reflection and drive improvement.
- The district should develop and implement an ongoing process for reviewing and revising curriculum.
- The district should ensure that all teachers provide effective instruction that challenges and supports all students.
- The district should ensure that all students are prepared for and have equitable access to a range of rigorous learning experiences as well as courses aligned with and their ambitions, interests, and talents.
- The district should take steps to improve teachers' access to and skills in using high-quality common assessments aligned with the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks.
- The district should take immediate steps to ensure that all families have clear, personalized, and timely information about their children's academic progress. In addition, the district should consider providing the community with convenient access to information about school and district performance status and planned improvement efforts.
- The district should fully implement all components of the educator evaluation system, with a particular emphasis on ensuring that all educators receive high-quality feedback.
- The district should develop a coordinated and comprehensive multi-year professional development plan that is informed by data and includes well-defined, measurable goals that are aligned with district, school, and educator goals.
- The district should expand its inclusion model with appropriate supports in order to provide all students with a high-quality education in the least restrictive environment and to the maximum extent appropriate.
- The district should consider the full implementation of a multi-tiered system of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) throughout all school levels to increase the inclusion of students with behavioral and social-emotional challenges and to improve school climate for all students. Tier 1 practices should be implemented effectively before the introduction of Tier 2 and 3 supports.
- The district should develop a clear, comprehensive, budget document that clearly details how the budget is aligned with district and school goals.

## Brockton Public Schools District Review Overview

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### **Purpose**

Conducted under Chapter 15, Section 55A of the Massachusetts General Laws, comprehensive district reviews support local school districts in establishing or strengthening a cycle of continuous improvement. Reviews consider carefully the effectiveness of systemwide functions, with reference to the six district standards used by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE): Leadership and Governance, Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment, Human Resources and Professional Development, Student Support, and Financial and Asset Management.<sup>5</sup> Reviews identify systems and practices that may be impeding improvement as well as those most likely to be contributing to positive results. In addition, the comprehensive district review is designed to promote district reflection on its own performance and potential next steps. In addition to providing information to each district reviewed, DESE uses review reports to identify resources and/or technical assistance to provide to the district.

### **Methodology**

Reviews collect evidence for each of the six district standards above. A district review team consisting of independent consultants with expertise in each of the district standards reviews documentation, data, and reports for two days before conducting a four-day district visit that includes visits to individual schools. The team conducts interviews and focus group sessions with such stakeholders as school committee members, teachers' association representatives, administrators, teachers, students, and students' families. Team members also observe classroom instruction. Subsequent to the onsite review, the team meets for two days to develop findings and recommendations before submitting a draft report to DESE. DESE edits and fact-checks the draft report and sends it to the district for factual review before publishing it on the DESE website.

### **Site Visit**

The site visit to the Brockton Public Schools was conducted from March 2–5, 2020. The site visit included 36.5 hours of interviews and focus groups with approximately 170 stakeholders, including school committee members, district administrators, school staff, students, students' families, and teachers' association representatives. The review team conducted 3 teacher focus groups with 15 elementary-school teachers, 12 middle-school teachers, and 9 high-school teachers.

A list of review team members, information about review activities, and the site visit schedule are in Appendix A, and Appendix B provides information about enrollment, attendance, and expenditures. The team observed classroom instruction in 220 classrooms in 21 schools. The team collected data using

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<sup>5</sup> The District Standards and Indicators are posted at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/district-review/district-standards-indicators.pdf>.

DESE’s Instructional Inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards-based teaching. This data is contained in Appendix C.

## District Profile

Brockton has a mayor-council form of government and the mayor chairs the school committee. The school committee has eight members: seven members elected by ward and the mayor. The committee meets twice each month.

The superintendent has been in the position since December 2019 after having served as interim superintendent since July 2019 and before that as deputy superintendent. The district leadership team includes the chief academic officer; the chief of student support services; the chief financial officer; the executive director of human resources; the executive director of assessment, accountability, technology, and student data research; the executive director of operations (who is also the principal of the Edison Academy); and the executive director of 6-12, who is also the principal of the Brockton High School. Central office positions have been unstable in number, decreasing over the five years before the onsite review. The district has 23 principals leading 21 schools and 3 alternative high-school programs.<sup>6</sup> There are numerous other school administrators, including associate principals, assistant principals, four high-school deans, four high-school assistant deans, high-school department heads, and K-12 department heads. In the 2018–2019 school year, there were 967.9 teachers in the district.

In the 2019-2020 school year, 16,024 students were enrolled in the district’s 21 schools and 3 alternative high-school programs:

**Table 1: Brockton Public Schools  
Schools, Type, Grades Served, and Enrollment\*, 2019-2020**

School	Type	Grades Served	Enrollment
Barrett Russell Early Childhood Center	EES	Pre-K	237
Dr. W. Arnone Community School	ES	Pre-K-5	767
Brookfield Elementary School	ES	K-5	523
Downey Elementary School	ES	K-5	588
Gilmore Elementary School	ES	K-5	435
Hancock Elementary School	ES	K-5	516
John F. Kennedy Elementary School	ES	K-5	593

<sup>6</sup> Brockton Champion High School and Frederick Douglass Academy have the same principal. There is another principal for Edison Academy (who is also the district’s executive director of operations). All three are alternative high-school programs.

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School	Type	Grades Served	Enrollment
Louis F. Angelo Elementary School	ES	K-5	881
Manthala F. George Elementary School	ES	K-5	961
Mary E. Baker Elementary School	ES	K-5	668
Oscar F. Raymond Elementary School	ES	K-5	818
Edgar B. Davis School	ESMS	K-8	1,041
Huntington Therapeutic Day School	ESMSHS	2-12	64
Ashfield Middle	MS	6-8	568
East Middle School	MS	6-8	694
Joseph F. Plouffe Academy	MS	6-8	761
South Middle School	MS	6-8	602
West Middle School	MS	6-8	695
North Middle School <sup>7</sup>	MS	8	168
Brockton Champion High School**	HS	9-12	103
Brockton High School	HS	9-12, SP	4,077
Edison Academy**	HS	9-12	249
Frederick Douglass Academy**	HS	9-12	15
<b>Totals</b>	<b>23 schools</b>	<b>Pre-K-12, SP</b>	<b>16,024</b>
*As of October 1, 2019			
** Alternative high-school programs			

Between 2015 and 2020 overall student enrollment decreased by 6.8 percent. Enrollment figures by race/ethnicity and high needs populations (i.e., students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, and English learners (ELs) and former ELs) as compared with the state are provided in Tables B1a and B1b in Appendix B.

The total in-district per-pupil expenditure was similar to the median in-district per-pupil expenditure for K-12 districts of similar size in fiscal year 2018: \$14,297 as compared with \$14,444. Actual net school

<sup>7</sup> At the time of the review in March 2020, North Middle School was in the last year of being phased out and was scheduled to close in June 2020. The school enrolled a grade 8 cohort only.

spending was been equal to what is required by the Chapter 70 state education aid program, as shown in Table B3 in Appendix B.

## Student Performance

**Table 2: Brockton Public Schools  
Accountability Percentile, Criterion Reference Target (CRT) Percentage, Reason for Classification**

School	Accountability Percentile	Cumulative CRT Percentage	Overall Classification	Reason for Classification
Arnone Elementary School	5	40%	Requiring assistance or intervention	In need of focused/target support: Among the lowest performing 10% of schools and for low subgroup performance for students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, and high needs students
Baker School	12	63%	Requiring assistance or intervention	In need of focused/targeted support Low subgroup performance for students with disabilities
Manthala Elementary School	3	50%	Requiring assistance or intervention	In need of focused/target support: Among the lowest performing 10% of schools and for low subgroup performance for White students, economically disadvantaged students, and high needs students
Russell Early Childhood Center	--	--	Insufficient data	Insufficient data
Brookfield Elementary School	9	69%	Requiring assistance or intervention	In need of focused/target support: Among the lowest performing 10% of schools
Kennedy Elementary School	27	55%	Not requiring assistance or intervention	Substantial progress toward goals
Edgar B Davis	17	72%	Not requiring assistance or intervention	Substantial progress toward goals
Hancock Elementary School	21	65%	Not requiring assistance or intervention	Substantial progress toward goals
Gilmore Elementary School	10	66%	Requiring assistance or intervention	In need of focused/target support: Among the lowest performing 10% of schools
Angelo Elementary School	16	50%	Not requiring assistance or intervention	Substantial progress toward goals
Raymond Elementary School	15	67%	Not requiring assistance or intervention	Substantial progress toward goals

**Table 2 Continued: Brockton Public Schools**  
**Accountability Percentile, Criterion Reference Target (CRT) Percentage, Reason for Classification**

School	School	School	School	School
Frederick Douglass Academy	--	--	Requiring assistance or intervention	In need of focused/targeted support: Low participation rate for all students and high needs students
Downey Elementary School	9	59%	Requiring assistance or intervention	In need of focused/target support: Among the lowest performing 10% of schools and for low subgroup performance for White students
Huntington Therapeutic	--	--	Insufficient data	Insufficient data
East Middle School	4	40	Requiring assistance or intervention	In need of focused/target support: Among the lowest performing 10% of schools and for low subgroup performance for White students
North Middle School	6	52%	Requiring assistance or intervention	In need of focused/target support: Among the lowest performing 10% of schools
South Middle School	4	39%	Requiring assistance or intervention	In need of focused/target support: Among the lowest performing 10% of schools and for low subgroup performance for White students
West Middle School	8	55%	Requiring assistance or intervention	In need of focused/target support: Among the lowest performing 10% of schools
Ashfield Middle School	16	58%	Not requiring assistance or intervention	Substantial progress toward goals
Plouffe Academy	9	41%	Requiring assistance or intervention	In need of focused/target support: Among the lowest performing 10% of schools and for low subgroup performance for high needs students
Brockton High School	13	20%	Not requiring assistance or intervention	Limited or no progress toward targets
Brockton Champion High School	--	--	Requiring assistance or intervention	In need of focused/targeted support: Low participation rate for all students
Edison Academy	--	--	Requiring assistance or intervention	In need of focused/targeted support: Low participation rate for all students, economically disadvantaged students, and high needs students



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District	--	45%	Not requiring assistance or intervention	Moderate progress toward goals
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**Table 3: Brockton Public Schools  
Next-Generation MCAS ELA Scaled Scores Grades 3--8, 2017—2019**

Group	N (2019)	2017	2018	2019	Change	State (2019)	Above/Below
All	7,708	486.9	486.7	487.0	0.1	501.2	-14.2
African American/Black	4,427	484.4	483.8	484.6	0.2	491.2	-6.6
Asian	169	497.4	502.0	500.7	3.3	512.8	-12.1
Hispanic or Latino	1,323	484.7	484.7	484.8	0.1	490.6	-5.8
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	360	488.4	490.9	490.4	2.0	503.6	-13.2
White	1,382	493.4	494.5	494.8	1.4	504.9	-10.1
High Needs	5,782	482.7	482.6	483.1	0.4	490.7	-7.6
Econ. Disadvantaged	4,884	483.5	483.5	483.7	0.2	490.6	-6.9
Students w/ Disabilities	1,354	470.1	469.4	469.1	-1.0	481.1	-12.0
EL and former EL	2,363	476.9	477.6	478.1	1.2	489.3	-11.2

Next Generation MCAS Achievement Levels: 440-470 Not Meeting Expectations; 470-500 Partially Meeting Expectations; 500-530 Meeting Expectations; 530-560 Exceeding Expectations

**Table 4: Brockton Public Schools  
Next-Generation MCAS Math Scaled Scores Grades 3--8, 2017—2019**

Group	N (2019)	2017	2018	2019	Change	State (2019)	Above/Below
All	7,707	485.4	483.8	484.4	-1.0	499.2	-14.8
African American/Black	4,425	482.8	481.3	482.2	-0.6	487.8	-5.6
Asian	169	501.0	502.4	503.6	2.6	516.4	-12.8
Hispanic or Latino	1,324	482.8	481.4	482.1	-0.7	488.2	-6.1
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	363	485.5	485.0	485.4	-0.1	500.8	-15.4
White	1,379	492.5	490.7	491.4	-1.1	502.7	-11.3
High Needs	5,781	481.2	479.9	480.6	-0.6	488.8	-8.2
Econ. Disadvantaged	4,885	481.8	480.5	480.9	-0.9	488.1	-7.2
Students w/ Disabilities	1,355	469.0	467.2	466.5	-2.5	479.5	-13.0
EL and former EL	2,361	477.8	477.1	477.9	0.1	489.3	-11.4

Next Generation MCAS Achievement Levels: 440-470 Not Meeting Expectations; 470-500 Partially Meeting Expectations; 500-530 Meeting Expectations; 530-560 Exceeding Expectations

**Table 5: Brockton Public Schools  
Next-Generation MCAS ELA Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations Grades 3--8, 2017--2019**

Group	N (2019)	2017	2018	2019	Change	State (2019)	Above/Below
All	7,708	25%	26%	27%	2	52%	-25
African American/Black	4,427	21%	21%	22%	1	33%	-11
Asian	169	45%	52%	53%	8	72%	-19
Hispanic or Latino	1,323	21%	23%	24%	3	33%	-9
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	360	28%	32%	33%	5	56%	-23
White	1,382	37%	39%	40%	3	59%	-19
High Needs	5,782	18%	19%	21%	3	32%	-11
Econ. Disadvantaged	4,884	20%	21%	22%	2	33%	-11
Students w/ Disabilities	1,354	4%	4%	4%	0	16%	-12
EL and former EL	2,363	10%	14%	15%	5	32%	-17

**Table 6: Brockton Public Schools  
Next-Generation MCAS Math Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations Grades 3--8, 2017--2019**

Group	N (2019)	2017	2018	2019	Change	State (2019)	Above/Below
All	7,707	23%	20%	22%	-1	49%	-27
African American/Black	4,425	18%	16%	19%	1	28%	-9
Asian	169	53%	52%	57%	4	76%	-19
Hispanic or Latino	1,324	19%	17%	19%	0	29%	-10
Multi-Race	363	23%	19%	23%	0	51%	-28
White	1,379	35%	30%	34%	-1	56%	-22
High Needs	5,781	16%	14%	16%	0	29%	-13
Econ. Disadvantaged	4,885	17%	15%	17%	0	29%	-12
Students w/ Disabilities	1,355	3%	3%	3%	0	15%	-12
EL and former EL	2,361	12%	12%	13%	1	32%	-19

**Table 7: Brockton Public Schools  
Next Generation MCAS ELA and Math Scaled Scores in Grade 10, 2019**

Group	ELA				Math			
	N (2019)	2019	State	Above/Below	N (2019)	2019	State	Above/Below
All	991	492.7	506.2	-13.5	984	487.5	505.1	-17.6
African American/Black	583	488.5	493.8	-5.3	582	484.1	492.3	-8.2
Asian	20	503.0	516.8	-13.8	20	502.4	522.5	-20.1
Hispanic or Latino	140	491.3	492.0	-0.7	139	484.3	491.0	-6.7
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	43	494.9	509.0	-14.1	43	489.5	506.7	-17.2
White	197	504.5	510.7	-6.2	192	498.3	509.0	-10.7
High Needs	697	486.1	492.6	-6.5	688	481.5	491.6	-10.1
Econ. Disadvantaged	566	487.2	493.4	-6.2	559	482.7	492.1	-9.4
Students w/ Disabilities	164	477.8	486.2	-8.4	158	469.8	483.8	-14.0
EL and former EL	320	475.8	480.6	-4.8	318	475.7	485.4	-9.7

**Table 8: Brockton Public Schools  
Next Generation MCAS ELA and Math Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Grade 10, 2019**

Group	ELA				Math			
	N (2019)	2019	State	Above/Below	N (2019)	2019	State	Above/Below
All	991	34%	61%	-27	984	26%	59%	-33
African American/Black	583	29%	38%	-9	582	20%	35%	-15
Asian	20	50%	78%	-28	20	60%	82%	-22
Hispanic or Latino	140	31%	37%	-6	139	19%	33%	-14
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	43	33%	65%	-32	43	26%	60%	-34
White	197	52%	69%	-17	192	44%	67%	-23
High Needs	697	22%	36%	-14	688	15%	33%	-18
Econ. Disadvantaged	566	24%	38%	-14	559	17%	35%	-18
Students w/ Disabilities	164	9%	22%	-13	158	3%	18%	-15
EL and former EL	320	8%	18%	-10	318	8%	24%	-16

**Table 9: Brockton Public Schools  
Next Generation MCAS Science Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Grades 5 and 8,  
and MCAS Science Proficient or Advanced in Grade 10, 2019**

Group	Next-Generation MCAS 5 and 8				MCAS Grade 10			
	N (2019)	2019	State	Above/Below	N (2019)	2019	State	Above/Below
All	2,579	23%	48%	-25	852	48%	74%	-26
African American/Black	1,470	17%	24%	-6	494	42%	54%	-12
Asian	63	44%	67%	-22	20	75%	88%	-13
Hispanic or Latino	459	22%	26%	-3	121	46%	53%	-7
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	128	25%	51%	-26	37	38%	76%	-38
White	445	40%	56%	-17	174	67%	81%	-14
High Needs	1,909	17%	27%	-10	591	36%	53%	-17
Econ. Disadvantaged	1,602	18%	27%	-9	480	38%	54%	-16
Students w/ Disabilities	432	6%	17%	-11	131	12%	38%	-26
EL and former EL	799	11%	23%	-11	270	26%	39%	-13

**Table 10: Brockton Public Schools  
Next-Generation MCAS ELA Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Grades 3-8, 2017–2019**

Grade	N (2019)	2017	2018	2019	Change	State (2019)	Above/Below
3	1,273	23%	22%	24%	1	56%	-32
4	1,301	23%	30%	24%	1	52%	-28
5	1,326	26%	27%	28%	2	52%	-24
6	1,320	25%	26%	28%	3	53%	-25
7	1,231	30%	22%	28%	-2	48%	-20
8	1,257	25%	29%	30%	5	52%	-22
3--8	7,708	25%	26%	27%	2	52%	-25
10	991	--	--	34%	--	61%	-27

**Table 11: Brockton Public Schools  
Next-Generation MCAS Math Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Grades 3--8, 2017--2019**

Grade	N (2019)	2017	2018	2019	Change	State (2019)	Above/Below
3	1,272	26%	19%	23%	-3	49%	-26
4	1,302	23%	25%	21%	-2	50%	-29
5	1,329	23%	16%	29%	6	48%	-19
6	1,316	22%	18%	21%	-1	52%	-31
7	1,233	22%	19%	19%	-3	48%	-29
8	1,255	21%	22%	21%	0	46%	-25
3--8	7,707	23%	20%	22%	-1	49%	-27
10	984	--	--	26%	--	59%	-33

**Table 12: Brockton Public Schools  
MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grades 5, 8, and 10, 2015--2018**

Grade	N (2019)	2016	2017	2018	2019	4-yr Change	State (2019)
5	--	17%	21%	23%	--	--	--
8	--	17%	17%	14%	--	--	--
10	852	57%	56%	53%	48%	-9	74%

**Table 13: Brockton Public Schools  
English Language Arts and Math Mean Student Growth Percentile, 2018-2019**

Grade	ELA				Math			
	N (2019)	2018	2019	State (2019)	N (2019)	2018	2019	State (2019)
3	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
4	1,165	46.4	45.3	49.7	1,164	47.0	48.3	49.8
5	1,220	43.9	46.7	50.0	1,222	45.1	52.7	50.0
6	1,168	46.2	50.3	50.0	1,163	41.9	43.6	50.0
7	1,092	50.0	54.8	49.9	1,092	43.8	44.1	50.1
8	1,095	46.3	52.6	49.9	1,095	44.3	49.9	49.9
3--8	5,740	46.5	49.8	49.9	5,736	44.5	47.8	49.9
10	699	47.1	45.9	49.4	693	52.5	41.2	49.7

**Table 14: Brockton Public Schools  
Next-Generation MCAS ELA Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations by School and Grade, 2019**

School	3	4	5	6	7	8	3--8	10
Arnone Elementary School	17%	16%	26%	--	--	--	20%	--
Baker School	25%	34%	33%	--	--	--	30%	--
Manthala Elementary School	24%	17%	19%	--	--	--	20%	--
Russell School	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Brookfield Elementary School	35%	21%	23%	--	--	--	27%	--
Kennedy Elementary School	27%	21%	34%	--	--	--	27%	--
Edgar B Davis	36%	30%	25%	30%	27%	33%	30%	--
Hancock Elementary School	39%	24%	39%	--	--	--	34%	--
Gilmore Elementary School	15%	11%	28%	--	--	--	18%	--
Angelo Elementary School	11%	43%	41%	--	--	--	35%	--

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Raymond Elementary School	27%	13%	20%	--	--	--	20%	--
Frederick Douglass Academy	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Downey Elementary School	18%	20%	15%	--	--	--	18%	--
Huntington Therapeutic	--	--	--	--	--	--	0%	--
East Middle School	--	--	--	22%	10%	16%	17%	--
North Middle School	--	--	--	--	23%	34%	28%	--
South Middle School	--	--	--	28%	24%	14%	22%	--
West Middle School	--	--	--	29%	34%	40%	34%	--
Ashfield Middle School	--	--	--	30%	32%	37%	33%	--
Plouffe Academy	--	--	--	35%	43%	41%	39%	--
Brockton High School	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	37%
Brockton Champion High School	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	20%
Edison Academy	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
District	24%	24%	28%	28%	28%	30%	27%	34%
State	56%	52%	52%	53%	48%	52%	52%	61%

**Table 15: Brockton Public Schools  
Next-Generation MCAS Math Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations by School and Grade, 2019**

School	3	4	5	6	7	8	3-8	10
Arnone Elementary School	26%	11%	19%	--	--	--	19%	--
Baker School	23%	40%	18%	--	--	--	27%	--
Manthala Elementary School	19%	15%	12%	--	--	--	15%	--
Russell School	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Brookfield Elementary School	30%	5%	33%	--	--	--	24%	--
Kennedy Elementary School	27%	16%	50%	--	--	--	30%	--
Edgar B Davis	26%	30%	30%	39%	22%	24%	29%	--
Hancock Elementary School	32%	11%	37%	--	--	--	27%	--
Gilmore Elementary School	41%	14%	31%	--	--	--	29%	--
Angelo Elementary School	14%	46%	46%	--	--	--	39%	--
Raymond Elementary School	13%	9%	23%	--	--	--	15%	--
Frederick Douglass Academy	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Downey Elementary School	20%	13%	22%	--	--	--	18%	--
Huntington Therapeutic	--	--	--	--	--	--	0%	--
East Middle School	--	--	--	8%	7%	17%	10%	--
North Middle School	--	--	--	--	15%	9%	12%	--
South Middle School	--	--	--	22%	13%	8%	14%	--
West Middle School	--	--	--	16%	14%	23%	17%	--
Ashfield Middle School	--	--	--	19%	27%	26%	23%	--
Plouffe Academy	--	--	--	34%	38%	40%	37%	--
Brockton High School	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	28%
Brockton Champion High School	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	6%
Edison Academy	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
District	23%	21%	29%	21%	19%	21%	22%	26%
State	49%	50%	48%	52%	48%	46%	49%	59%

**Table 16: Brockton Public Schools  
Science Next-Generation MCAS Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations and  
MCAS Percent Proficient or Advanced by Grade and School, 2019**

School	Next-Generation MCAS			MCAS
	5	8	5 & 8	
Arnone Elementary School	20%	--	20%	--
Baker School	21%	--	21%	--
Manthala Elementary School	14%	--	14%	--
Russell School	--	--	--	--
Brookfield Elementary School	19%	--	19%	--
Kennedy Elementary School	35%	--	35%	--
Edgar B Davis	21%	22%	21%	--
Hancock Elementary School	36%	--	36%	--
Gilmore Elementary School	24%	--	24%	--
Angelo Elementary School	44%	--	44%	--
Raymond Elementary School	19%	--	19%	--
Frederick Douglass Academy	--	--	--	--
Downey Elementary School	19%	--	19%	--
Huntington Therapeutic	--	--	--	--
East Middle School	--	11%	11%	--
North Middle School	--	11%	11%	--
South Middle School	--	16%	16%	--
West Middle School	--	24%	24%	--
Ashfield Middle School	--	18%	18%	--
Plouffe Academy	--	40%	40%	--
Brockton High School	--	--	--	50%
Brockton Champion High School	--	--	--	13%
Edison Academy	--	--	--	--
District	25%	20%	23%	48%
State	49%	46%	48%	74%

**Table 17: Brockton Public Schools  
3—8 Next-Generation MCAS ELA Percent Meeting and Exceeding Expectations by School, 2019**

School	All	High Needs	Econ. Dis.	SWD	EL and Former EL	African American	Asian	Hispanic	Multi-race	White
Arnone Elementary School	20%	15%	16%	3%	15%	19%	--	19%	27%	21%
Baker School	30%	21%	21%	0%	17%	23%	--	31%	38%	45%
Manthala Elementary School	20%	15%	16%	6%	10%	21%	--	17%	29%	32%
Russell School	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Brookfield Elementary School	27%	20%	22%	9%	8%	18%	--	28%	50%	43%
Kennedy Elementary School	27%	22%	25%	3%	20%	20%	67%	32%	22%	34%
Edgar B Davis	30%	26%	27%	2%	19%	27%	--	36%	44%	33%
Hancock Elementary School	34%	30%	34%	4%	24%	26%	55%	52%	42%	37%
Gilmore Elementary School	18%	16%	17%	6%	12%	19%	--	23%	8%	--
Angelo Elementary School	35%	24%	26%	2%	18%	30%	49%	26%	15%	51%
Raymond Elementary School	20%	18%	18%	6%	13%	20%	--	15%	38%	20%
Frederick Douglass Academy	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Downey Elementary School	18%	14%	16%	2%	20%	19%	--	16%	12%	20%
Huntington Therapeutic	0%	0%	0%	0%	--	--	--	--	--	--
East Middle School	17%	14%	13%	9%	10%	13%	--	19%	26%	26%
North Middle School	28%	27%	29%	4%	18%	26%	--	28%	29%	27%
South Middle School	22%	16%	17%	6%	10%	16%	--	22%	24%	47%
West Middle School	34%	30%	32%	8%	27%	28%	68%	30%	57%	47%
Ashfield Middle School	33%	24%	26%	5%	10%	22%	44%	26%	53%	50%
Plouffe Academy	39%	24%	25%	3%	17%	37%	74%	26%	38%	56%
Brockton High School	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Brockton Champion High	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Edison Academy	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
District	27%	21%	22%	4%	15%	22%	53%	24%	33%	40%
State	52%	32%	33%	16%	32%	33%	72%	33%	56%	59%

**Table 18: Brockton Public Schools  
3—8 Next-Generation MCAS Math Percent Meeting and Exceeding Expectations by School, 2019**

School	All	High Needs	Econ. Dis.	SWD	EL and Former EL	African American	Asian	Hispanic	Multi-race	White
Arnone Elementary School	19%	15%	17%	4%	13%	20%	--	16%	27%	15%
Baker School	27%	19%	20%	6%	13%	28%	--	23%	19%	29%
Manthala Elementary School	15%	13%	13%	5%	9%	15%	--	13%	12%	27%
Russell School	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Brookfield Elementary School	24%	17%	17%	7%	11%	16%	--	38%	33%	33%
Kennedy Elementary School	30%	23%	23%	5%	26%	23%	83%	35%	33%	34%
Edgar B Davis	29%	26%	26%	2%	21%	26%	--	31%	35%	34%
Hancock Elementary School	27%	23%	23%	8%	22%	19%	45%	33%	21%	35%
Gilmore Elementary School	29%	26%	27%	0%	20%	26%	--	47%	50%	--
Angelo Elementary School	39%	25%	26%	3%	20%	32%	59%	31%	10%	56%
Raymond Elementary School	15%	13%	12%	2%	9%	14%	--	12%	29%	18%
Frederick Douglass Academy	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Downey Elementary School	18%	16%	17%	4%	14%	20%	--	16%	12%	20%
Huntington Therapeutic	0%	0%	0%	0%	--	--	--	--	--	--
East Middle School	10%	7%	7%	4%	6%	8%	--	7%	16%	19%
North Middle School	12%	11%	11%	2%	14%	11%	--	8%	6%	18%
South Middle School	14%	10%	10%	4%	9%	11%	--	12%	8%	27%
West Middle School	17%	14%	14%	2%	16%	14%	64%	13%	14%	23%
Ashfield Middle School	23%	17%	18%	1%	10%	15%	56%	20%	27%	35%
Plouffe Academy	37%	22%	22%	2%	15%	31%	74%	22%	44%	63%
Brockton High School	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Brockton Champion High	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Edison Academy	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
District	22%	16%	17%	3%	13%	19%	57%	19%	23%	34%
State	49%	29%	29%	15%	32%	28%	76%	29%	51%	56%

**Table 19: Brockton Public Schools  
Next Generation MCAS ELA Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Grade 10, 2019**

School	All	High Needs	Econ. Dis.	SWD	EL and Former EL	African American	Asian	Hispanic	Multi-race	White
Brockton High School	37%	24%	27%	9%	8%	31%	50%	35%	38%	55%
Brockton Champion High	20%	16%	7%	8%	--	--	--	--	--	--
Edison Academy	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Huntington Therapeutic	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
District	34%	22%	24%	9%	8%	29%	50%	31%	33%	52%
State	61%	36%	38%	22%	18%	38%	78%	37%	65%	69%



**Table 20: Brockton Public Schools  
Next Generation MCAS Math Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Grade 10, 2019**

School	All	High Needs	Econ. Dis.	SWD	EL and Former EL	African American	Asian	Hispanic	Multi-race	White
Brockton High School	28%	17%	19%	3%	8%	22%	60%	22%	30%	47%
Brockton Champion High	6%	0%	0%	0%	--	--	--	--	--	--
Edison Academy	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Huntington Therapeutic	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
District	26%	15%	17%	3%	8%	20%	60%	19%	26%	44%
State	59%	33%	35%	18%	24%	35%	82%	33%	60%	67%

**Table 21: Brockton Public Schools  
Next-Generation MCAS Science Percent Meeting and Exceeding Expectations by School, 2019**

School	All	High Needs	Econ. Dis.	SWD	EL and Former EL	African American	Asian	Hispanic	Multi-race	White
Arnove Elementary School	20%	16%	16%	10%	22%	20%	--	24%	--	--
Baker School	21%	14%	15%	7%	16%	17%	--	18%	--	38%
Manthala Elementary School	14%	10%	10%	4%	8%	11%	--	12%	--	31%
Russell School	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Brookfield Elementary School	19%	11%	13%	0%	2%	11%	--	18%	--	32%
Kennedy Elementary School	35%	26%	30%	--	15%	24%	--	54%	--	47%
Edgar B Davis	21%	21%	21%	0%	13%	14%	--	36%	44%	25%
Hancock Elementary School	36%	24%	30%	--	10%	22%	--	50%	--	52%
Gilmore Elementary School	24%	20%	24%	--	16%	20%	--	--	--	--
Angelo Elementary School	44%	34%	36%	3%	28%	36%	63%	29%	--	65%
Raymond Elementary School	19%	17%	17%	8%	15%	16%	--	25%	--	29%
Frederick Douglass Academy	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Downey Elementary School	19%	20%	22%	6%	18%	17%	--	18%	--	32%
Huntington Therapeutic	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
East Middle School	11%	8%	8%	7%	6%	9%	--	0%	--	19%
North Middle School	11%	10%	12%	4%	7%	9%	--	24%	--	--
South Middle School	16%	12%	12%	5%	4%	10%	--	18%	27%	44%
West Middle School	24%	19%	19%	10%	17%	21%	--	11%	20%	46%
Ashfield Middle School	18%	10%	12%	5%	5%	13%	--	16%	--	29%
Plouffe Academy	40%	26%	27%	11%	11%	36%	--	31%	--	56%
Brockton High School	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Brockton Champion High	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Edison Academy	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
District	23%	17%	18%	6%	11%	17%	44%	22%	25%	40%
State	48%	27%	27%	17%	23%	24%	67%	26%	51%	56%

**Table 22: Brockton Public Schools  
MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Science by School and Student Group, 2016-2019**

School	N (2019)	2016	2017	2018	2019	4-yr Change
<b>Brockton High School</b>	793	60%	58%	56%	50%	-10%
African American/Black	465	55%	52%	50%	44%	-11%
Asian	20	83%	61%	72%	75%	-8%
Hispanic	104	63%	57%	56%	49%	-14%
Multi-race, non-Hispanic/Latino	35	61%	54%	70%	40%	-21%
White	163	72%	72%	75%	69%	-3%
High Needs	535	50%	48%	45%	37%	-13%
Economically Disadvantaged	432	54%	51%	50%	40%	-14%
Students w/ Disabilities	102	26%	23%	18%	12%	-14%
English Learners	254	28%	31%	31%	27%	-1%
<b>Brockton Champion High School</b>	15	25%	40%	23%	13%	-12%
African American/Black	6	--	--	--	--	--
Asian	--	--	--	--	--	--
Hispanic	5	--	--	--	--	--
Multi-race, non-Hispanic/Latino	--	--	--	--	--	--
White	4	--	--	--	--	--
High Needs	14	27%	--	18%	7%	-20%
Economically Disadvantaged	11	--	--	18%	9%	--
Students w/ Disabilities	12	--	--	--	8%	--
English Learners	1	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Edison Academy</b>	3	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Huntington Therapeutic</b>	6	--	--	--	--	--

**Table 23: Brockton Public Schools  
Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates, 2016-2019**

Group	N (2019)	2016	2017	2018	2019	4-yr Change	State (2019)
All	1,402	79.1	77.7	74.1	72.8	-6.3	88.0
African American/Black	891	78.1	77.1	75.1	70.8	-7.3	79.9
Asian	25	92.9	88.0	88.6	96.0	3.1	95.2
Hispanic or Latino	163	64.0	70.7	60.6	68.7	4.7	74.4
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	50	86.2	96.6	77.5	82.0	-4.2	87.6
White	265	88.3	81.8	77.9	78.1	-10.2	92.7
High Needs	1,115	76.9	75.8	68.8	67.4	-9.5	78.8
Economically Disadvantaged*	861	78.5	77.0	71.4	72.7	-5.8	78.5
Students w/ Disabilities	219	53.1	51.7	54.5	47.5	-5.6	73.9
English Learners	469	60.8	62.0	56.9	57.6	-3.2	64.6

**Table 24: Brockton Public Schools  
Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates, 2015-2018**

Group	N (2018)	2015	2016	2017	2018	4-yr Change	State (2018)
All	1,353	81.6	83.3	81.6	77.6	-4.0	89.7
African American/Black	878	80.6	83.0	81.5	78.6	-2.0	84.5
Asian	35	92.6	96.4	88.0	88.6	-4.0	95.5
Hispanic or Latino	180	73.8	68.3	73.6	65.6	-8.2	77.6
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	40	80.8	86.2	96.6	85.0	4.2	88.7
White	213	87.2	91.2	85.4	80.3	-6.9	93.4
High Needs	1,030	80.6	81.5	79.8	73.2	-7.4	81.4
Economically Disadvantaged*	851	81.9	83.1	80.8	75.6	-6.3	81.0
Students w/ Disabilities	189	60.8	59.9	57.4	59.8	-1.0	76.4
English Learners	436	67.1	68.3	69.1	62.4	-4.7	69.7

**Table 25: Brockton Public Schools  
In-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2016-2019**

Group	2016	2017	2018	2019	4-yr Change	State (2019)
All	4.0	4.7	6.9	6.4	2.4	1.9
African American/Black	4.8	5.5	8.2	7.6	2.8	3.4
Asian	0.7	1.0	2.3	1.5	0.8	0.5
Hispanic or Latino	4.2	5.0	6.2	5.2	1.0	2.3
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	4.3	4.2	6.9	5.7	1.4	2.3
White	1.9	2.6	4.0	3.9	2.0	1.6
High Needs	4.5	5.0	7.5	6.9	2.4	2.7
Economically Disadvantaged*	4.6	5.1	7.7	7.1	2.5	2.9
Students w/ Disabilities	5.0	5.6	7.2	7.2	2.2	3.3
English Learners	4.5	4.0	6.3	6.3	1.8	1.7

**Table 26: Brockton Public Schools  
Out-of-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2016-2019**

Group	2016	2017	2018	2019	4-yr Change	State (2019)
All	6.1	6.5	7.1	7.1	1.0	3.0
African American/Black	7.3	7.5	8.4	8.3	1.0	6.2
Asian	1.0	1.6	2.0	1.8	0.8	0.8
Hispanic or Latino	5.8	6.4	6.0	6.6	0.8	5.0
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	6.1	6.1	6.8	7.0	0.9	3.5
White	4.0	4.2	4.9	3.7	-0.3	2.0
High Needs	7.0	7.6	8.2	7.9	0.9	4.7
Economically Disadvantaged*	7.2	7.8	8.5	8.0	0.8	5.4
Students w/ Disabilities	11.3	11.6	10.6	10.3	-1.0	5.7
English Learners	6.5	7.1	7.1	6.9	0.4	3.6

**Table 27: Brockton Public Schools  
Dropout Rates by Student Group, 2016-2019**

Group	2016	2017	2018	2019	4-yr Change	State (2019)
All	3.4	3.8	4.4	3.9	0.5	1.8
African American/Black	2.9	3.3	4.3	4.2	1.3	2.6
Asian	1.9	1.8	2.8	0.0	-1.9	0.5
Hispanic or Latino	7.1	7.0	6.6	4.9	-2.2	4.3
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	0.7	1.3	4.2	1.1	0.4	1.8
White	2.9	3.5	3.5	3.1	0.2	1.0
High Needs	4.6	4.8	5.6	4.9	0.3	3.5
Economically Disadvantaged	5.1	4.4	4.5	4.4	-0.7	3.8
Students w/ Disabilities	5.1	4.2	7.0	5.3	0.2	3.1
English Learners	4.7	7.0	9.8	8.0	3.3	7.1

**Table 28: Brockton Public Schools  
Advanced Coursework Completion by Student Group, 2018-2019**

Group	N (2019)	2018	2019	Change	Target
All	2,267	41.5	41.4	-0.1	45.8
African American/Black	1,450	37.7	36.8	-0.9	44.9
Asian	53	70.7	60.4	-10.3	75.1
Hispanic or Latino	279	38.3	36.9	-1.4	46.3
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	83	49.4	44.6	-4.8	53.7
White	391	52.3	58.8	6.5	56.5
High Needs	1,572	31.7	32.3	0.6	39.0
Economically Disadvantaged	1,297	33.8	33.7	-0.1	41.2
Students w/ Disabilities	283	13.0	14.8	1.8	20.0
EL and former EL	767	19.8	21.5	1.7	25.3

**Table 29: Brockton Public Schools  
Progress toward Attaining English Language Proficiency, 2018-2019**

Group	Non-High School					High School				
	N (2019)	2018	2019	Change	Target	N (2019)	2018	2019	Change	Target
All	2,392	46.9	50.5	3.6	48.5	803	25.3	27.1	1.8	32.3
EL and former EL	2,392	46.9	50.5	3.6	48.5	803	25.3	27.1	1.8	32.3

**Table 30: Brockton Public Schools  
Chronic Absence\* Rates by Student Group, 2018-2019**

Group	Non-High School					High School				
	N (2019)	2018	2019	Change	Target	N (2019)	2018	2019	Change	Target
All	10,974	19.0	16.6	-2.4	18.0	4,787	28.0	29.0	1.0	26.4
African American/Black	6,424	13.9	11.5	-2.4	11.4	2,996	24.8	26.5	1.7	21.1
Asian	210	10.6	11.9	1.3	8.5	99	19.3	18.2	-1.1	16.5
Hispanic or Latino	1,874	28.3	26.3	-2.0	25.4	661	37.1	38.1	1.0	32.7
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	510	28.5	25.7	-2.8	27.5	184	34.5	36.4	1.9	32.9
White	1,891					816	32.9	30.4	-2.5	31.1
High Needs	8,443	21.6	18.9	-2.7	19.8	3,486	31.0	33.0	2.0	28.1
Economically Disadvantaged	6,228	25.4	21.7	-3.7	23.0	2,410	35.0	35.4	0.4	30.5
Students w/ Disabilities	1,821	28.3	25.8	-2.5	25.9	690	38.9	39.7	0.8	35.4
EL and former EL	3,609	12.2	10.3	-1.9	9.7	1,697	23.6	27.0	3.4	19.5

\* Chronic absence is defined as the percentage of students absent 10 percent or more of their total number of student days of membership in a school.

## Leadership and Governance

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### ***Contextual Background***

#### *District and School Improvement Planning*

Brockton was last reviewed by DESE in 2013.<sup>8</sup> Challenges identified in the report related to leadership and governance included a missed opportunity to invest part of the district's \$2,800,000 in Race to the Top Funds to adopt the state's new Educator Evaluation Framework; inconsistent and untimely completion of performance evaluations which were missing instructive information for professional growth; and a budget development process which did not have a clear link to district goals. The report recommended that the school committee, superintendent, and other stakeholders "collaboratively develop a clear vision and mission for the district and... communicate these to a wide range of stakeholders." The report further stated, "The vision and mission should be used to develop District and School improvement plans, which should drive the work of the district."

Since the district review in 2013, the district has experienced a continual decline in achievement. There is little evidence that the district acted upon the recommendations of the 2014 district review report. The district also faces several other structural, cultural, and practical characteristics that are described in this report. What exists currently in Brockton is a system of talented, dedicated, and passionate educators and stakeholders who do not have robust systems, models, and tools to address the growing and changing needs of students. While it is helpful that Brockton leaders and educators engage in a collaborative professional culture, they seem reluctant to hold hard conversations about their role in school improvement and to challenge one another to try new and different approaches to meet the changing needs of students.

#### *District and School Leadership*

As with many urban districts, in recent years Brockton has experienced some senior leadership changes and has endured some substantial financial challenges because of budget cuts. During school year 2019-2020, a new mayor was elected in November 2019 to replace a previous mayor who passed away suddenly. In addition, the interim superintendent who had served since July 2019 became superintendent in December 2019.

Other significant structural changes have taken place since 2013-2014, largely during school year 2017-2018 when the following critical administrative positions were cut: the deputy superintendent of teaching and learning, the executive director of elementary schools, the executive director of middle schools, the English language arts/social studies and math/science curriculum coordinators at the middle-school level, and the associate principal at the high school in charge of curriculum.

At the school level, in 2017-2018 the district eliminated the associate principal at the high school in charge of curriculum, 169 certified teachers, and 128 para-professionals, all because of budget

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<sup>8</sup> The Brockton District Review Report was published in 2014.

reductions. Loss of these positions has resulted in larger class sizes, decreased course offerings, increased teacher duties, elimination of technology teachers at the elementary level, reduction of technology teachers at the secondary level, and reduction of support staff.

The administrative cuts in school year 2017-2018 resulted in a district decision for two district leaders to take on duties previously covered by five staff members. The K-12 curriculum is overseen by a chief academic officer, an administrator who is also responsible for 11 Pre-K-5 schools and 8 district offices. The remaining schools, all secondary schools, are overseen by a district administrator who is also the principal of a high school serving 4,077 students. In addition, the middle schools lost curriculum coordinators and the high school lost the associate principal in charge of curriculum. These reductions all resulted in losses of appropriate support and accountability personnel and structures for schools, creating a negative impact on teaching and learning.

In school year 2019-2020, the executive team included the superintendent; the chief financial officer; the chief academic officer (a newly created role); the chief of student support services; the executive director of human resources; the executive director of operations; the executive director of assessment, accountability, technology, and student data research; and the executive director of grades 6-12.

Brockton leaders said that the reductions in central office staff were made to limit the negative impact of budget cuts on teachers and classrooms. Brockton school committee members and district leaders said that they received significant pushback from district staff and the larger Brockton community about the elimination of teaching positions. While district leaders acknowledged that their decisions about personnel allocation have created what some characterized as impossible workloads for Brockton leaders and teachers, they said that they were looking forward to restoring a number of school and classroom-level positions when they received additional financial support through the Massachusetts Student Opportunity Act. (See the Financial and Asset Management section below.)

#### *School Committee Governance*

School committee members described their role as managing and setting the budget, establishing policy, and hiring and supervising the superintendent. They characterized their relationship with the superintendent as very positive and said that he kept them well informed. The mayor, who chairs the school committee, and the vice chair of the school committee meet with the superintendent every two weeks and the superintendent emails the entire committee a packet of updates every Friday. In addition, the mayor meets weekly with the superintendent.

## ***Strength Finding***

### **1. The district culture shows a commitment to serving Brockton students. District stakeholders engage in a number of collaborative processes and often complete work through taskforces or committees.**

**A.** District leaders, including the superintendent, school committee members, school leaders, and teachers voiced their commitment to students and have demonstrated their commitment through long-term service in the district.

1. One school committee member stated that the committee members all had a “shared vision for a better school system.” Another committee member stated that district stakeholders were “working toward common purpose of a better Brockton for everybody.”

2. Principals made a number of statements illustrating the commitment of district and school leaders and teachers to the district and its students.

a. One principal stated about the superintendent, “His enthusiasm is infectious. He was a Brockton kid himself. He has a strong affinity for our kids.”

b. Another principal told the review team, “Ultimately Brockton wants to create citizens with the world in their hands who will have the means and opportunities to be successful citizens and productive members of society.”

c. One principal stated, “We shore each other up with late night calls. I feel an honor working in Brockton; we’ve all grown up together.”

d. One principal who came from another district said, “People work together and there is passion there; people want to do the right thing and are not worrying about their jobs.”

3. Many staff members at all levels have served the district for over five years.

a. Of 17 principals interviewed for this review, 16 have served in the district in some capacity for over 16 years and 14 have served as principal for over 3 years.

b. Almost all teachers interviewed served in the district in some capacity for over a dozen years.

c. Four of five high-school department heads interviewed had been in the district eleven years or more and two had served in that role for two years or less.

**B.** School committee members, other district leaders, and teachers told the review team that districtwide decisions tended to be made by committees representing stakeholders from different levels and typically included teachers. Interviewees made positive statements about their committee and sub-committee work and appeared to appreciate collaborative processes.



1. The school committee has various sub-committees for work such as grievances, accounts review, and the superintendent’s contract.
2. School planning is supported by a 30-member systemwide District Design Team. The design team has subcommittees to address specific issues such as attendance, suspensions, and math instruction.<sup>9</sup>

**Impact:** Many district and school leaders and teachers have long-term roots in Brockton and its schools and are committed to serving the district’s students. The resulting “shared vision for a better school system,” trust, and connectivity has facilitated people coming together to address the multiple, growing needs of the district and its students.

### ***Challenges and Areas for Growth***

**2. The school committee does not appear to use the district’s strategic plan to guide its decision-making, to focus on improving student outcomes through a continuous review of disaggregated student data, or to develop and update policies that are driven by the district’s strategic plan or the needs of Brockton students and staff.**

**A.** The school committee does not appear to use the district’s strategic plan to guide its deliberations or decisions.

1. A review of school committee agendas, minutes, and videos posted on the district’s website for meetings between July 2019 and March 2020 indicated discussions and decisions made without reference to the district’s vision or strategic plan.
  - a. In a discussion about student performance during the October 15, 2019, school committee meeting, the superintendent referenced the need for more focus. Questions and answers about student performance did not refer to the strategic plan as a source of focus.
  - b. On March 3, 2020, the school committee approved the addition of 93 positions for the schools for the fiscal year 2020-2021 budget through a recommendation by the finance subcommittee. Questions were not asked about the purpose of the positions and only budget summaries were provided. References were not made during the approval process to the district’s strategic plan.
    - i. One school committee member stated that the 93 positions were approved, “based on feedback from administrators and the superintendent about school needs.”

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<sup>9</sup> The District Design Team was created by superintendent Thomas and modeled after Brockton High School’s Redesign Team.

2. When asked how the school committee used the district's strategic plan to make decisions, one committee member said that the committees and subcommittees "learn what schools need most, hear feedback [from the superintendent and administrators], and make decisions." The member did not refer to the strategic plan or any process to use the plan in decision-making.
- B.** A review of school committee agendas, meeting minutes, and meeting videos from the period between July 16, 2019, and March 3, 2020 indicated an absence of focus on improving student outcomes through a continuous review of disaggregated student data.
1. Other than a presentation on enrollment numbers for grades 1-5 during the September 18, 2019, school committee meeting, the only review of student data at a school committee meeting took place on October 15, 2019.
    - a. The October 2019 enrollment report was provided during the October 15 meeting.
    - b. MCAS assessment results were presented at the October 15 meeting. Only aggregate data was presented; data was not broken down by student groups, grade levels, or schools.
- C.** The school committee does not employ clear and timely processes for developing and updating policies that are driven by the district's strategic plan or the needs of Brockton students and staff.
1. The policy manual is divided into a number of sub-areas, many of which have not been recently. Many student policies were updated in 2019. Student welfare and student safety policies, however, have not been updated since 2002.
    - a. Except for use of the Internet and social media, instruction policies have not been updated since 2002 or 2004. For example, policies do not address the use of cell phones.
    - b. Except for use of the Internet and criminal offender record information, staff policies have been not updated since 2002.
  2. Many Brockton school committee policies are not specifically tailored to the unique needs of the district.
    - a. School committee members told the review team that the policies were all taken from the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) written policies.
    - b. Most policies address only what is required by law, and do not provide sufficient guidance for staff members or students.
    - c. The student welfare and safety policy, last updated in 2002, does not address current student safety concerns such as active shooter situations.

- d. The First Aid policy under student safety does not provide detailed guidance on what to do when a student has a medical emergency.
  3. School committee policies and staff policies do not include protocols for missing students. It was not clear to the review team what policy or procedures guided the actions of district and school leaders when a student went missing on the first day of school in September 2019.<sup>10</sup> School committee minutes and principal meeting agendas addressed the issue.
  4. Staff policies, which are posted on the district’s website, do not provide guidance about what to do in the event of a medical emergency. The policies are compliance-based and are based on legal requirements. For example, the policies establish a drug-free workplace; describe employees’ appropriate use of Internet, Intranet, voicemail, and email; detail the district’s sexual harassment policy, and prohibit tobacco use on school property by staff members.
  5. Policy development and review are completed through two different subcommittees within the school committee: one for policy and one for updating the policy book. It was not clear to the review team how the two subcommittees worked together.
- D.** The school committee appears to base its decision-making primarily on anecdotal evidence and requests rather than on district goals and an analysis of disaggregated student data. Some school committee members visit schools without the invitation of the superintendent.
1. When discussing budget reductions, a school committee member told the review team that she visited the schools in her ward frequently and asked them what they needed.
  2. A school committee member said that the committee supported efforts to close gaps by “engaging with teachers and students to learn what they need to close achievement gaps.” The member continued by saying, “We don’t tell them how; we are there to help the principals. We ask, ‘What can I help you with?’”
  3. When asked about challenges, another school committee member told the review team, “Being everywhere [in the schools]; being present; choosing where I should be.”
  4. Several school committee members told the review team that they listened to voters and that they regularly attended PTA<sup>11</sup> and or PAC<sup>12</sup> meetings.

**Impact:** By basing decision-making primarily on requests and anecdotal evidence, rather than using a well-formulated district plan coupled with frequent examination of student data to advance district and school improvement efforts, the school committee is challenged to serve as knowledgeable, objective,

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<sup>10</sup> District leaders reported that they now had a missing student protocol which detailed the steps that an administrator or designated staff person would take within 10 minutes of a student being reported missing before school, during school hours, and after school hours.

<sup>11</sup> PTA stands for Parent Teacher Association.

<sup>12</sup> PAC stands for Parent Advisory Council.

high-impact stewards of the district's policies, budget, and leadership, and as effective advocates in the community for meeting students' needs.

**3. The district does not set measurable goals in most planning documents based on an analysis of historical, longitudinal, and current disaggregated student data. District staffing decisions made during challenging budget cycles are driven primarily by public perception and staff requests rather than by district goals or a review of data.**

- A.** The district's strategic plan does not contain appropriate elements to drive the development, implementation, and modification of educational programs and practices.
1. The goal statement for instructional excellence is, "A demonstrated commitment to instructional excellence through educator collaboration and engagement in a Cycle of Professional Practice that ensures high quality, rigorous instructional practices and defined by improved student achievement." Strategic initiatives under that goal do not contain action steps, measurable benchmarks, or goals.
    - a. The first strategic action goal, "Implement an equitable and vertically articulated curriculum that reflects the diversity of the district and is tied to essential student learning and is aligned to the MA frameworks," does not explain how an equitable curriculum will be selected or implemented; how it will be vertically articulated, or how it will be reviewed for cultural relevance, for example.
    - b. The plan does not include benchmarks to outline the essential activities related to the curriculum strategic action goal, or a timeline depicting when essential activities will take place.
    - c. The strategic action goal is assigned to general groups such as "strategic steering committees comprised of teachers and other educators," rather than to specific individuals. In addition, the plan does not have guidance on how members will be selected, how they will work together, or how they will ensure that their work is aligned across their schools and the district.
  2. The superintendent acknowledged that the district's strategic plan was too general and did not focus teachers on effective instruction. He reported that he was developing an entry plan which would evolve into a clearer and more focused strategic plan.
- B.** The quality of school plans varies.<sup>13</sup>
1. The Ashfield Middle School's improvement plan does have school-based action steps tied to the district's goal to "Implement an equitable and vertically articulated curriculum." However, the action steps are the same for literacy, math, and science and do not directly

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<sup>13</sup> The review team did not receive a school improvement plan for Brockton High School so was unable to assess its quality.

- guide instruction. The steps include planning time to review data and common global plans, use of common assessments, posting homework, and scoring common writing samples.
2. Most school improvement plans use MCAS assessment data for attainment goals but do not include interim measures of student achievement.
    - a. Ashfield’s literacy goal is to meet or surpass its target goal on the MCAS assessment.
    - b. Brookfield Elementary School’s literacy goal is to increase its scaled score by 2 points in 2 years.
  3. The district has 10 schools (5 elementary and 5 middle schools) that have been identified as among the lowest performing 10 percent of schools statewide among schools that serve similar grades. In addition, the Baker School has been identified for a low performing student group which requires a plan. These schools all received additional funding through DESE’s Targeted Assistance Grant which also provides support from the Coastal Regional Assistance team in DESE’s Statewide System of Support (SSoS). The regional support team members have worked with district liaisons to help each school develop or implement a Sustainable Improvement Plan.
    - a. The 10 Sustainable Improvement Plans contain clearly articulated practices, summaries of current strategies, intended modifications or new strategies, and key benchmarks with clear targets.
      - i. For example, a benchmark from the Arnone Middle School plan states: “By June 2019, the number of students meeting grade level benchmarks as measured by STAR assessments in ELA and math will increase from 20% to 35%. This is a 15% improvement from the June 2018 results. By June of 2020, the number of students meeting grade level benchmarks as measured by STAR assessments in math and ELA will increase from 35% to 50%.”
    - b. The superintendent told the review team that he believed that the Sustainable Improvement Plans might provide an effective model for future School Improvement Plans.
- C. Plans do not appear to be consistently shared with stakeholders, discussed, and reviewed.
1. In its self-assessment submitted in advance of the onsite review, the district rated plan elements as “Somewhat Well” described by the indicator “Improvement plans have clear, measurable goals and ambitious strategies for improving performance, opportunities, and outcomes for all students. They are informed by data, including disaggregated student data.” Possible ratings are “Very Well,” “Well,” “Somewhat Well,” and “Not at All Well.” The self-assessment notes, “We have not, as a district, systematically reviewed the strategic plan recently and documented our progress or lack thereof. We have worked hard on the issues,

but we have not formally assessed ourselves or made course corrections because of these analyses.”

- a. While the self-assessment states that the superintendent would work with the District Design Team to update the district’s vision and mission and improvement plan so that it included clear benchmarks to measure progress toward achieving goals, it also states that the plan would only be reviewed twice a year.
2. The superintendent stated that plan development was led by an executive team member who worked with each school’s educational leadership team to review data results and identify activities to address student achievement. When asked how plans were reviewed, he stated that they were supposed to be reviewed by the executive team, and that the process should be in place. It was not clear to the review team whether the executive team was reviewing school improvement plans.
  3. When asked what the executive team would learn from principals about their school plans, the superintendent stated that the response would be different for every principal and that principals might not provide a lot of detail.
  4. When asked how plan progress was monitored, one principal told the review team that there was no need to review it [plan progress] because they previously received feedback on the plan. Another stated that a staff member on one of their four committees for sustainable improvement practices monitored the plan. Another stated that the school met monthly using a rubric provided by the state to monitor plan progress.
  5. When principals were asked how they shared their plans with other stakeholders, they had various responses, including through a family engagement night and through PTA. One principal stated that the process for sharing plans was currently being developed.
  6. Several teachers stated that schools with Sustainable Improvement Plans did get updates on plan progress and revised the plans as needed.
- D.** Interviews and a review of documents and videos of school committee meetings indicated that decisions about district staffing made during challenging budget cycles were driven primarily by public perception and staff requests rather than by the district’s strategic plan or through the review of data. This included a number of cuts of critical administrative positions (made largely in school year 2017-2018): the deputy superintendent of teaching and learning, two executive directors, the English language arts/social studies and math/science curriculum coordinators at the middle-school level, and the associate principal at the high school.
1. A district leader stated that there was a public perception that the district had too many administrators.
  2. Another administrator stated that administrators were not valued in the district and that the culture created pressures to protect teachers.

3. The superintendent described the district budget development process beginning with having principals identify their schools' needs, reviewing the current district budget, making sure that and the needs of English learners and students with disabilities were included in their budgets, and convening a number of various stakeholder meetings. The process is inclusive and focused on needs but does not appear to use data beyond finance data.
  4. The 93 positions approved at the March 3, 2020, school committee meeting were approved for funding without reference to the district's strategic plan.
- E. Interviewees stated that these reductions in staff resulted in losses of necessary personnel and structures to support teaching and learning.
1. In response to a question about the supports that teachers receive, one teacher said that her department was able to adjust the curriculum in the past in a way that "had everyone all on the same page." She stated that the loss of positions contributed to less cohesion in curricula.
  2. Another teacher told the team that the absence of an associate principal in charge of curriculum at her school resulted in "a gaping hole."
  3. The superintendent told the review team that he believed that more district leadership was needed to help with curriculum and instruction, particularly for sustainable improvement schools. He stated that the district did not have the necessary organizational structures to support teaching and learning, accountability, and intervention.

**Impact:** Without planning documents with measurable goals based on an analysis of historical, longitudinal, and current disaggregated student performance, opportunity, and outcome data, the district cannot ensure that its priorities are based on evidence and that its improvement plans drive the development, implementation, and modification of educational programs and practices. Decision-making mainly based on public perception, anecdotes, and opinions, rather than on the district's strategic goals and a regular analysis of disaggregated student data, has impaired oversight of all aspects of teaching and learning districtwide. The biggest impact has been at the secondary level, with reductions in leadership which have left the staff in the district appearing to be largely on their own to decide how to meet the needs of their students on a day-to-day basis.

**4. The district has not established a culture of collective responsibility for district and school improvement. There is little urgency or awareness about the continual decline in student achievement in recent years, few focused discussions on how instruction can be improved, and a tendency to blame external factors on the infrequent occasions when student achievement data is reviewed.**

- A. A review of documents and videos of school committee meetings and interviews with district leaders indicated a district that was proud of serving its students, but seemed unaware of the

extent to which students, teachers, principals, and district leaders were under-performing, despite the availability of multiple sources of data.

1. District leaders reported that an associate principal created an activity for the District Design Team to review the findings from the 2014 Brockton District Review Report. The superintendent stated that he was surprised that the school committee and district leaders “did not know about the past results.”
    - a. The District Design Team reviewed the 2014 Brockton District Review report on January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020.
    - b. The January 21, 2020, school committee meeting included a plan for the district to study and discuss DESE’s 2014 District Review Report.
  2. In their annual review of MCAS assessment results (from the 2018-2019 school year) during the October 15, 2019, school committee meeting, district leaders and committee members voiced differing views on what the presentation meant for student performance and what the results could be attributed to.
    - a. One district leader attributed performance issues to students and teachers not being used to taking tests online.
    - b. Another district leader told the committee that while large class sizes might have been a factor in scores dropping, performance was most likely explained by a need to improve teaching and professional development.
    - c. A committee member expressed the view that it was not clear whether high-school performance was really an issue because the data only presented averages. The same committee member said the MCAS assessment results did not make sense given that the district’s graduation rates “are off the charts.” However, according to DESE data, Brockton’s 2019 four-year graduation rate was 72.8 percent for all students compared with a 2019 state average of 88.0 percent. For almost all measured student groups the district’s four-year graduation rate was meaningfully lower.
    - d. Several committee members attributed low performance to budget challenges, while several district leaders pointed out that comparable districts were doing better than Brockton in MCAS assessment subjects (e.g., ELA, math and science).
  3. The October 15, 2019, school committee meeting represents the only conversation in a regular school committee meeting between July 2019 and March 2020 about student performance and what it meant for teaching and learning.
- B.** District systems and practices do not prioritize improvement in teaching and learning.



1. Although the superintendent said that his priorities include developing a strategic plan for the district, it was unclear to the team if and how the plan would focus on improving instructional quality and student outcomes.
2. When asked how the district and school leaders improve teacher practice and student outcomes, the superintendent stated it was “mostly through professional development and evaluation.”
  - a. However, some professional development initiatives in the district are not informed by student performance data or observed trends in instruction.<sup>14</sup>
  - b. The district’s educator evaluation system does not include data illustrating educators’ impact on student learning or student and staff feedback, despite state regulations that call for the use of such data. Some principals have not been evaluated for several years.<sup>15</sup>
3. The district culture appears to be one in which leaders worry that reviewing data and discussing what it might mean will be seen as offensive or provocative.
  - a. When asked about incentives or consequences for student results, a district leader stated, “This is not a place where people are shamed because they are not doing well.”

**Impact:** The culture in Brockton is one of congeniality in which staff members care about students but have not created a culture of engagement and reflection that includes reviewing data objectively and considering their personal and collective responsibility for students’ success. By focusing on external factors such as budget challenges rather than analyzing data and focusing on improving teaching and learning, district leaders have lowered expectations for themselves and students and have not recognized their power to improve all students’ performance, opportunities, and outcomes.

## ***Recommendations***

1. **The school committee should focus its attention on its role to evaluate the superintendent, to review and approve budgets, and to establish educational goals and policies. The committee should prioritize its efforts to use the district’s soon-to-be-revised strategic plan and the regular review of disaggregated student data to guide its policies, deliberations, and decisions.**
  - A. The school committee should develop and update policies and practices that are driven by the district’s strategic plan and the needs of district students and staff.

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<sup>14</sup> See the Human Resources and Professional Development section of this report.

<sup>15</sup> See the Human Resources and Professional Development section of this report.

1. The committee’s decisions, including budget decisions, should be informed and guided by the goals and benchmarks in the district’s strategic plan.

B. The school committee should regularly review disaggregated student data and use it to gauge progress toward district goals and drive continuous improvement.

**Benefits:** In executing its role to evaluate the superintendent, to review and approve budgets, and to establish educational goals and policies, the school committee can help the district gain much needed alignment, which will aid in helping the system focus its resources more efficiently and effectively.

**Recommended resources:**

- *Advisory on School Governance* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/advisory/cm1115gov.html>) explains state law as it applies to particular functions of school governance, and provides recommendations on the important role that each partner in this endeavor plays in advancing collaboration and school improvement.
- *Eight Characteristics of Effective School Boards* (<https://www.nsba.org/-/media/NSBA/File/cpe-eight-characteristics-of-effective-school-boards-report-december-2019.pdf?la=en&hash=1E19C481DAAEE25406008581AE75EB2ABA785930>), provided by the National School Board Association and the Center for Public Education, highlights results from a study of indicators of school board effectiveness and explains how those indicators vary across high- and low-achieving school districts.
- The *District Governance Project* (<http://www.masc.org/field-services/district-governance-project>), provided by the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, is designed to focus on continuous improvement and to build understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the school committee and the superintendent.

**2. The district should ensure that its planning documents have clear goals that are based on an analysis of historical, longitudinal, and current disaggregated student data.**

A. Under the leadership of the superintendent, the district should convene a representative group of stakeholders to develop measurable goals (including progress benchmarks and final outcomes) for its planning documents.

1. As it develops measurable goals for its strategic plan, the district should review the Sustainable Improvement Plans and work with Statewide System of Support staff currently working with the district’s 10 Sustainable Improvement Schools.
2. The goals should be based on an analysis of historical, longitudinal, and current disaggregated data related to student performance, opportunities, and outcomes.
3. The goals should be SMART (Specific and Strategic; Measurable; Action Oriented; Rigorous, Realistic, and Results Focused; and Timed and Tracked).

4. The district should develop a process for using the most recent student data to continually monitor and update district and school improvement plans.
- B.** Principals, in collaboration with school councils, should ensure that each School Improvement Plan includes specific measures to determine the ongoing progress of school-based initiatives.
1. Similar to the strategic plan, these measures should be SMART.
  2. District leaders should frequently review data illustrating the extent of individual schools' progress toward goals and should use this analysis to inform specific assistance and supports for schools.
- C.** District and school leaders should provide frequent, timely, and thorough information to the school committee, staff, students, families, and community on progress toward the achievement of district and school goals.

**Benefits:** By developing, communicating, and using measurable goals based on an analysis of historical, longitudinal, and current disaggregated student data and other data sources, the district will ensure that it is focused on the most important areas for improvement. By making a commitment to the yearly amount of change that it plans to achieve, the district will be able to plan and regularly monitor the impact of key improvement strategies, instructional practices, and the use of resources on student performance, opportunities, and outcomes.

**Recommended resources:**

- DESE's *Planning for Success* tools (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/success/>) support the improvement planning process by spotlighting practices, characteristics, and behaviors that support effective planning and implementation and meet existing state requirements for improvement planning.
- *District Accelerated Improvement Planning - Guiding Principles for Effective Benchmarks* (<http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/accountability/turnaround/level-4-guiding-principles-effective-benchmarks.pdf>) provides information about different types of benchmarks to guide and measure district improvement efforts.

**3. The district should establish consistent expectations and protocols to strengthen the use of data to promote reflection and drive improvement.**

- A.** In alignment with the work to develop/refine district and school plans, the district should establish opportunities for district and school leaders to review a range of data on student outcomes and achievement.
1. District leaders should model and cultivate a shared understanding of collaborative discussions about data as an essential tool for improvement.

## Brockton Public Schools Comprehensive District Review

2. The district should establish common protocols for data analysis to ensure that expectations for processes and outcomes are clear and consistent.
  3. The resulting data analyses should be used to develop and refine clear action steps at the district, school, and classroom levels.
- B.** The district should use data to critically review how decisions about the allocation of human capital resources have affected the ability of the district's executive team to support the needs of the district and its schools.
1. The district should analyze staff survey data to identify gaps in supports to schools along with longitudinal data to identify where teaching and learning may need additional supports.
  2. The superintendent, school committee members, and executive team members should review and discuss previous and current executive team position responsibilities and data to understand the effectiveness of the current executive team configuration.
  3. The district should consider gathering information about the structures, systems, and practices of districts similar to Brockton as examples of ways to create consistent central office structures that support the teaching and learning needs of every school.

**Benefits:** By ensuring that the district's executive team is appropriately staffed to support the district's strategic plan and schools improvement plans, the district can help the district to move forward with important initiatives and programs to improve students' performance, opportunities, and outcomes.

### **Recommended resources:**

- The *Conditions for School Effectiveness Self-Assessment* (<http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/accountability/school-effect-self-assessment.pdf>) is a tool for conducting a scan of current practice, identifying areas of strength, and highlighting areas requiring greater focus.

## Curriculum and Instruction

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### ***Contextual Background***

At the time of the onsite review in March 2020, the district relied on a lean profile of curricular and instructional leaders, mainly because of district decisions to reduce and consolidate key curricular and instructional leadership roles, especially at the secondary level, in response to financial constraints starting in school year 2014-2015.<sup>16</sup> Given these reductions, the district redistributed leadership responsibilities for secondary educational programs to other school leaders, some in newly created positions. In other cases, leaders were assigned responsibilities for more than one previous position.

The chief academic officer (CAO), who oversees all pre-kindergarten through grade 12 academic programs, is a newly defined role for the executive director of K-5. A review of the 2019-2020 organizational chart indicated that leaders who reported directly to the CAO included the director of bilingual education, elementary principals, the coordinators of elementary literacy and social studies and elementary math and science, and the middle-school associate principals. Although the CAO is technically responsible for pre-kindergarten through grade 12 academics, the CAO's work in practice does not extend beyond grade 8; the CAO's work at the high-school level is mainly limited to professional development for high-school staff.

### *Curriculum Selection and Use*

In school year 2018-2019, the district received a grant from DESE to contract with an organization to conduct a curriculum audit to help inform curricular improvement.<sup>17</sup> Key recommendations in the July 2019 report included the need to "adopt a stronger curriculum across K-12" and "re-design each grade to replace low-quality texts with higher-quality texts at the elementary schools." At the secondary schools, the report recommended that the district "ensure proper coverage and quality in key domains such as U.S. History, World History and Global Literature." The district appears to have focused on the text replacement recommendation. In addition, at the time of the onsite review, middle-school teachers were engaged in piloting new ELA and math curriculum resources.

Although the district does not conduct regular and comprehensive K-12 curriculum reviews and revisions by content area, it does take a thoughtful approach to improve curriculum, particularly for kindergarten through grade 8, when researching, purchasing, and developing new program materials. However, given the scarcity of financial resources, large-scale program adoptions often take place over several years. For example, it took the district three years to purchase and phase in a new K-5 ELA program districtwide.

Core program resources are aligned with the current state frameworks. Those in use at the elementary level include *Reach for Reading* (National Geographic; Cengage), *Foundations* (Wilson Language),

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<sup>16</sup> See the Leadership and Governance section above.

<sup>17</sup> See the Strength finding below.

*EnVisions Math* (Pearson), *Discovery Science* (Discovery Education), and *Mystery Science* (Mystery.org). *Reach for Reading* also includes readings that embed science and social studies topics.

The middle schools do not have a common ELA program or uniformly shared units. Teachers use a variety of thematic units for ELA lessons. At the time of the onsite review, several middle schools were about to pilot two new ELA programs: *StudySynch ELA* (McGraw Hill) and *Amplify ELA* (Amplify Education, Inc.). Students study math using *EnVisions Math* (Pearson) which the district plans to replace in the 2020-2021 school year. Consequently, three middle schools are piloting *Carnegie Math Solutions* (Carnegie Learning) and another middle school is piloting *Mathia*, the accompanying Carnegie software. In grades 6-8, students study science and social studies using *Amplify Science* (Amplify Education) and *Newsela* (Newsela.org),<sup>18</sup> respectively. Both *Amplify Science* and *Newsela* have online components.

At the high school, students have the option of taking core courses and/or electives. Students read a selection of novels and readings from the Western canon as well as more contemporary literature that reflects diverse cultural identities such as *The House on Mango Street* (Sandra Cisneros), *Native Son* (Richard Wright), and *Fences* (August Wilson). Students use *Center for Mathematics Education's (CME) Mathematics* for math 1-3/algebra and geometry, and *Larsen's Pre-calculus and Calculus* (Larsen Texts). High-school students use a variety of science and social studies textbooks, many of which are of older vintage, including *Earth Science* (Prentice Hall, 2002), *Biology* (Holt, 2004), *Biotechnology* (Paradigm, 2007), *Chemistry* (Holt, 2004), and *Physics* (Holt, 2002). Various science electives and advanced placement courses also rely on 10-to-20-year-old and older texts. In addition to *Newsela* and *U.S. History* (Pearson, 2016), social studies texts include *America: Pathways to the Present* (Prentice Hall, 2003), *World History: Patterns of Interaction* (McDougal Littell, 2003), and *American History A Survey*, 13<sup>th</sup> edition (McGraw Hill, 2009).

Brockton High School provides a variety of Career, Vocational and Technical Education (CVTE) programs for students seeking practical and technical educational experiences. Programs include: Business Technology; Media Communications; Information Technology; Automation; Computer Science and Programming; Engineering Technologies; Office Technologies; Exploring Health Assisting Professions; Hospitality and Restaurant Food Production; and Automotive, Construction, and Graphic Design technologies.

### *Classroom Instruction*

In the elementary and middle schools, instructional leadership teams meet regularly. All elementary schools and almost all middle schools have regularly scheduled professional learning communities (PLCs) with the expectation that teachers collaborate in data-driven discussions to improve teaching and learning. At the elementary schools, a literacy and a STEM coach support PLCs. At the middle schools, the associate principals provide coaching and collaborate with principals to improve instruction. These processes are not implemented evenly across schools.

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<sup>18</sup> At the time of the onsite review, the district was piloting *Newsela* in grade 8.

At the high school, a leadership council composed of school and house leaders also meets regularly. However, departments do not have regularly scheduled, focused time for teachers' collaborative inquiry other than monthly department meetings. In addition, without a curriculum leader specifically charged with leading, supervising, and monitoring implementation of educational improvement activities, the high school has few robust systems.

### *Student Access to Coursework*

The district is aware of issues of equity and diversity. A 2019-2020 districtwide professional development initiative has prompted the vetting of curriculum materials to ensure that they represent the diversity of the school community and are void of bias and stereotypes. Still, there have not been sufficient instructional adaptations to ensure that instruction is culturally responsive and that these student groups are well prepared and well-represented in the talented and gifted program for grades 4-8 and in the higher-level courses at the high school.<sup>19</sup>

One ray of hope expressed during the review was the new Massachusetts Student Opportunity Act passed into law in November 2019. The district anticipated---and was in the early stages of planning for---new state funding that would enable a rethinking of resource allocation and a rebuilding of essential personnel and curricular and instructional systems that had been lost to the cutbacks of recent years. However, although the school committee recently committed to restoring 93 teaching positions in school year 2020-2021, it has postponed addressing the reduced leadership roles until fiscal year 2021-2022. Most leaders and teachers stated that there was still much to accomplish to ensure that the district was functioning at the level required to meet the diverse needs of its students.

## ***Strength Findings***

- 1. The district has implemented a structured process to adopt academic programs and curriculum resources<sup>20</sup> at the elementary and middle schools when funds are allocated for new programs.**
  - A.** The district has a process to adopt new academic programs and curriculum resources and uses it mainly for kindergarten through grade 5 and grades 6-8.
    1. District and school leaders and teachers cited criteria for new program adoption such as: to improve student achievement and test results, to better accommodate students' learning needs, to address changes in state standards, to provide more equitable curriculum resources for its diverse population, and when possible to replace outdated materials.
    2. District and school leaders also noted that new program adoption took place when the district could allocate the required funds, sometimes over several years. For example, adopting the current K-5 ELA program, *Reach for Reading* and *Reach for Reading ELD for*

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<sup>19</sup> See the Challenge finding about access to rigorous coursework below.

<sup>20</sup> Academic programs and curriculum resources are the materials used in teaching the curriculum.

*non-English speaking students* (National Geographic: Cengage), began in school year 2014-2015; it required three years to purchase and introduce the program to all elementary schools.

- B.** The district also engaged an outside organization to conduct an audit of the K-12 curriculum to help guide its curriculum development for the 2019-2020 school year.
1. The curriculum audit report (July 2019) identified strengths in how ELA/English programs addressed students' self-knowledge and understanding of culturally relevant experiences, particularly those of African-American students. In kindergarten through grade 5, the report also complimented the coverage of literary genres and inclusion of science topics in *Reach for Reading*.
  2. In addition, the report cited the high-school English program's strengths in reinforcing and integrating literary content and relevant historical contexts such as supplementing *Of Mice and Men* (John Steinbeck) with studying the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl.
  3. The curriculum audit report challenged the low cognitive demand of elementary content area texts (other than ELA) as well as novels in middle-school English.
  4. Key recommendations stated the need to "adopt a stronger curriculum across K-12" or to "re-design each grade so as to remove low-quality texts and replace them with higher-quality texts at the elementary schools." At the secondary schools, the report recommended that the district "ensure proper coverage and quality in key domains such as U.S. History, World History and Global Literature." The district appears to have focused on the recommendations for text replacement.
- C.** Interviews and a document review indicated that the adoption process is inclusive, rigorous, and transparent.
1. The Office of Teaching and Learning convenes a curriculum committee composed of district leaders, K-5 instructional leadership coaches (ILCs) or middle-school associate principals,<sup>21</sup> and teachers.
  2. The curriculum committee surveys teachers to define priorities and conducts research to find high-quality, evidence-based programs for teachers to assess.

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<sup>21</sup> Instructional leadership coaches are positions at the elementary schools only. Associate principals have coaching responsibilities at the middle-school level. The only coach at the high school is a language acquisition coach.



- a. Research is largely completed using online sources such as Ed Reports, DESE’s CURATE (Curriculum Ratings by Teachers), and Johns Hopkins University’s Evidence for ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act).<sup>22</sup>
  - b. Some priorities for K-8 program adoption include diverse contemporary texts that are classic, of high interest, and reflect students’ cultures; digital and print capacity for teachers to work online; strong support to teach writing skills; and strong professional development (PD).
3. Teacher teams evaluate how well the selected programs meet district priorities and usually narrow the choice of programs to two for piloting.
- a. Several team members conduct fact-finding visits in districts using the selected pilot materials and review those districts’ performance data.
- D.** Once the curriculum committee selects pilot programs, volunteer teachers participate in PD to learn the program’s teaching strategies. They then teach one module from each program, collect achievement data, and discuss the program’s merits and its “fit” with district priorities.
1. At the time of the site visit, as an example of the vetting process, middle-school teacher volunteers participated in PD to pilot one module from each of two ELA programs in May 2020, *StudySynch ELA* (McGraw-Hill Education) and *Amplify ELA* (Amplify Education, Inc). In the fall 2020, volunteer teachers would fully pilot both programs, collect achievement data, and then discuss the merits of each program to select one for purchase in late 2020. After PD in spring 2021, the district planned to implement the new program in school year 2021-2022.
  2. Middle-school teachers were also in the early stages of investigating *Carnegie Math Solutions* (Carnegie Learning, Inc.) and its software. In addition, a team was exploring a new social studies programs with a pilot of *Newsela* (Newsela, Inc.) in grade 8.
- E.** PD continues after the district has launched a new program.
1. For example, principals said that when introducing the *Reach for Reading* program, the district contracted with the publisher to conduct extensive PD for teachers, coaches, and principals to prepare for implementation and monitoring of instruction.
  2. In addition, a district leader stated that there was ongoing PD for the reading program. In school year 2018-2019, the publisher provided 44 days of PD in the district. At the time of the onsite in March 2020, the publisher had provided 33 days for school year 2019-2020.

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<sup>22</sup> Ed Reports: [www.edreports.org](http://www.edreports.org); DESE’s CURATE (Curriculum Ratings by Teachers): <http://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate/>; and Evidence for ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act): <https://www.evidencefoessa.org/> from Johns Hopkins University’s Center for Research and Reform in Education.

3. In the district's self-assessment submitted in advance of the onsite, district leaders stated that the district carefully monitored new program adoptions by collecting achievement data, conducting learning walks, and surveying teachers at critical junctures during the year to determine successes as well as ascertain the need for additional support and professional development.

**Impact:** By developing an inclusive, thoughtful, transparent, and rigorous screening process to adopt new programs or new curricular materials, the district identifies rigorous academic programs aligned with current Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. By providing ongoing PD to leaders and teachers about implementing new programs, the district likely better ensures that students have access to high-quality, evidence-based curricular materials that can meet the needs of Brockton's diverse student population.

**2. There are consistent structures and systems in place at the elementary schools for improving curriculum and instruction. Most K-5 teachers and leaders shared a common understanding of the district's expectations for high-quality, standards-based instruction.**

- A. The district has pre-kindergarten through grade 5 curricular and instructional leaders in the core content areas.
  1. The district has a pre-kindergarten through grade 5 coordinator for literacy/social studies and one for science/math or STEM.<sup>23</sup> These experienced educators, who oversee all procedures, committees, and materials' development related to curriculum and instruction for the core content areas, report to the chief academic officer.
- B. At each elementary school, two instructional leadership coaches (ILCs)---one each for ELA/social studies and STEM---work with coordinators, the principal, and teachers to strengthen curriculum and instruction in their content areas. They also teach two forty-minute classes each day.
  1. Coaches meet regularly with their principal and with each other to ensure that all aspects of the curriculum are implemented and supported in the school. They also meet monthly with coordinators to analyze and discuss data and discuss instructional and curricular improvement needs to prepare for grade-level meetings.
  2. Both coaches plan and attend grade-level professional learning community (PLC) meetings once every six days, along with principals. ILCs also help determine district and school professional development (PD) objectives and provide PD. In addition, they help develop curriculum and teaching materials.
  3. Coaches also facilitate teachers' discussions to look at student work to better understand performance levels, present model lessons, and provide follow-up with teachers after PD.

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<sup>23</sup> Because of restructuring related to financial constraints in recent years, at the time of the onsite review the district had two coordinators responsible for two content areas instead of one for each of the four core content areas: ELA, math, science, social studies.

4. Principals reported that the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) coaches, who have been trained by publishers to use technology features in new curricular programs such as *Amplify ELA*, *Amplify Science and Carnegie Math Solutions*, supported teachers to fully implement the curriculum.
  5. Some coaches have also participated in the district's diversity taskforce and in the 2019-2020 school year helped teachers vet textbooks and curriculum for bias and stereotypes.
    - a. After the recent diversity taskforce training, the coaches also ordered book fair materials that presented more diverse cultures and included children who were differently abled.
- C.** Regional support team members from DESE's Statewide System of Support (SSoS) provide support to 10 district schools that rank within the bottom 10 percent of elementary or middle schools statewide and qualify for targeted support. SSoS practices are being considered as models by others in the district.
1. Three members of DESE's SSoS regional support team have been working with 10 Brockton schools (5 elementary and 5 middle schools) over time (one since the time of the last district review in 2013) to build teacher capacity and establish stronger planning and instructional practices. One member of the SSoS regional support team works with the leadership team and two support five schools each.
  2. The SSoS team has focused on collaborative improvement planning with district leaders, the principal, coaches, specialists, and teachers to develop or implement a Sustainable Improvement Plan at each of the 10 schools. The plans focus on strategic objectives and initiatives aligned with sustainable improvement practices.
    - a. The superintendent noted that sustainable improvement planning would be adopted in all district schools in school year 2020-2021.
  3. Members of the SSoS regional support team reported some successes: expanding district capacity for improvement, participation of liaisons from each school receiving SSoS support in the district's High Expectations Teaching (HET) PD,<sup>24</sup> a focus on sustainable improvement practices and intervention strategies, and the beginnings of cultural shifts to improve student performance.
- D.** Elementary leaders and teachers provided a coherent and consistent understanding of the district's expectations for effective, high-quality core instruction.
1. K-5 leaders identified effective teaching as standards-based, equitable instruction using clear learning and language objectives. They mentioned rigor and higher-order thinking, the qualities promoted in the district's new High Expectations Teaching (HET) PD initiative. They

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<sup>24</sup> HET promotes rigor and higher-order thinking.

- also stated the importance of student perseverance and engagement and teachers' instructional support for diverse learners.
2. Elementary teachers articulated the importance of standards-based instruction; higher-order thinking; building relationships with students and families; small-group, collaborative learning; differentiation; and data-driven instruction. They stated that teachers should show sensitivity to students experiencing trauma and teach the whole child. They also noted a need for inclusivity by incorporating options for English learners and students with disabilities in whole-class activities.
- E. A review of exemplar K-5 ELA curriculum documents submitted for the review indicated a collection of well-developed guiding documents and materials to support curriculum implementation and instruction. Interviewees noted that not all core subjects had a full suite of similar materials.
1. Funded by a 2017 DESE grant, a summer 2017 steering committee developed guiding documents to support all teachers in implementing the new *Reach for Reading* ELA program.
  2. These guiding documents include Year-at-a-Glance documents listing state standards to cover, unit guides that identify ELA skills as well as science and social studies content embedded within units, mini-lessons by unit with guiding questions related to standards, and graphic organizers.
  3. K-5 materials shared with the review team to teach writing included a K-12 Overview of Writing Requirements, standards-based writing requirements for each *Reach for Reading* unit, writing rubrics, writing prompts, and a tool for teachers to analyze and summarize students' writing to prepare for grade-level team discussions.
  4. The district submitted documents from the Museum of Science's PD, *Engineering is Elementary*, to introduce STEM<sup>25</sup> in kindergarten through grade 5. The district also submitted a project for grade 2 students to integrate math and science knowledge, skills, and understandings by designing a prosthetic for dogs using everyday materials.

**Impact:** By providing key leadership and coaching roles at the elementary level and collaboratively producing effective teaching materials, the district likely helps ensure that teachers and leaders can collaborate to deliver more effective instruction. With clarity about high-quality teaching practices and support from coaches and leaders, teachers likely implement effective practices.

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<sup>25</sup> STEM stands for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

**3. The district has taken initial steps to increase the staff’s understanding of issues related to equity and diversity. Educators are in the early stages of making curricular resources more culturally relevant and representative of the diversity in the school community and ensuring that school environments are more welcoming to all student groups.**

- A.** In the 2019-2020 school year, the district offered a professional development (PD) module to boost staff understanding of and sensitivity to equity and diversity.
1. The diversity steering committee, led by the chief of student support services and composed of leaders and teachers, prepared train-the-trainer sessions for a PD module that was presented to staff at all schools during December 2019 and January 2020.
    - a. The district shared PD materials with the review team that staff used to reflect upon and help increase the district’s capacity to respond to the diverse needs of its students.
    - b. Examples include a culture wheel that examines aspects of individual identity, a graphic organizer that promotes self-reflection about one’s own cultural group affiliations, and a tool to explore bias in textbooks and educational materials.
  2. Teachers and leaders noted that the training was “very eye-opening” and lessons learned would be applied to current practices, especially to new curriculum development.
  3. In multiple interviews, most educators seemed to be aware of issues of equity and diversity and said that the district needed more support and PD to address equity and diversity.
- B.** District and school leaders and teachers reported that the PD provided several practical and beneficial tools, especially the Equity and Diversity checklists for teachers and for administrators. Each checklist engaged staff in a self-assessment of how well they recognized, respected, and embedded diversity in their work.
1. Teachers have begun to apply the Equity and Diversity Checklist for Teachers to make curricula more culturally responsive and relevant and to better recognize and affirm students’ diverse backgrounds, identities, strengths, and challenges in their practice.
    - a. The teachers’ checklist offers guidance for increasing self-awareness and including culturally proficient practices in classroom environments, teaching materials, and lesson plans.
    - b. Interviewees highlighted the importance of cultural relevance, for example, when selecting the new K-5 *Reach for Reading* program (National Geographic, Cengage), which took place several years before the training.
    - c. They also spoke about how cultural relevance influenced the purchase of new novels to provide more opportunities for Brockton’s diverse student body to see themselves in the texts they used in all content areas, not just in ELA/English.

2. The Equity and Diversity Checklist for Administrators emphasized cultural responsiveness and proficiency in communication and leadership functions.
  - a. The checklist identified the importance of regular, two-way, culturally proficient communication with families about student learning and performance.
  - b. The administrators' checklist also provided a self-assessment and priority setting opportunity to ensure stronger cultural proficiency in setting policies and practices and creating school environments that enable staff and students to interact more effectively in a culturally diverse environment.
  - c. Principals noted that schools were just beginning to implement these new practices. They added that they needed more time and that some, especially veteran teachers, needed even more awareness to be successful.
- C. The superintendent told the team that he planned to participate in an online PD course offered by Cornell University on diversity, noting that all members of the executive team and principals would be required to take the course as a summer assignment.

**Impact:** Brockton's leaders' and teachers' recognition of the practices and strategies needed to embrace students' diversity in cultural background, identities, languages, learning needs, strengths, and challenges likely helps create a more responsive and proficient educational program.

### ***Challenges and Areas for Growth***

4. **The district eliminated several district and school leadership positions that support teaching and learning in grades 6-12 and reallocated responsibilities to the remaining positions.**
  - A. Interviews and a document review indicated that in school year 2017-2018, the district reduced several district and school leadership positions that support teaching and learning in grades 6-12 and reallocated responsibilities to the remaining positions.
    1. The district eliminated the positions of deputy superintendent of learning and teaching, executive director for learning and teaching Pre-K-5, executive director in charge of curriculum for 6-8 and the alternative schools, coordinator for ELA/social studies for grades 6-8, coordinator for math/science for grades 6-8, and the associate principal in charge of curriculum at Brockton High School.
    2. The decision to decrease leadership personnel was made in response to public pressure to avoid reductions of the teacher force.
  - B. Interviews and a document review indicated that with the loss of grades 6-8 curricular and instructional leaders, the district reallocated improvement responsibilities to principals and associate principals.

1. Associate principals were given responsibility to coach teacher teams on curriculum, instruction, and assessment during professional learning time (PLT), coach struggling teachers, and plan and provide professional development (PD) to grade-level teams at their schools.
  2. Associate principals were also assigned leadership responsibility for one core content area and its curriculum; two principals were assigned to math. They are also involved in planning and implementing most PD for all middle schools in that content area, in addition to other assigned school-based duties.
  3. Because of curricular and PD commitments across all middle schools, associate principals cannot always fulfill coaching obligations which sometimes results in interruptions in the coaching cycle.
- C. In 2017-2018, the district also eliminated the high-school's associate principal for teaching and learning. This role had a driving influence and focus on curricular and instructional leadership and a role in planning, overseeing, and providing PD at the high school.
1. To recover these responsibilities and fill the vacancy left by the absence of curricular and instructional leadership at the high school, the district reassigned the high-school associate principal's responsibilities to the role of executive director of 6-12 who is also the high-school principal.
    - a. In addition to leading and managing a school of 4,077 students, the high-school principal now has oversight of the high-school academic programs and responsibility for supervision and evaluation of all deans, assistant deans, academic department heads for grades 9-12; the coordinator of foreign languages for 6-12; the director of athletics; the director of music K-12; the director of art K-12; the director of physical education K-12; and all six middle-school principals.
    - b. When high-school teachers were asked about supports they wish they had, teachers said that they wished "they had an associate principal in charge of curriculum."
    - c. One high-school teacher told the review team that in the past, her department adjusted curriculum in a way that "had everyone all on the same page." She said revising curriculum now "results in less cohesion," because of "certain roles being filtered out."
    - d. Another high-school teacher told the team that the absence of an associate principal in charge of curriculum resulted in "a gaping hole."
  2. A district leader said that important supports were not in place at the middle and high schools. Without an associate principal at the high school, for example, no one has broad "oversight of the curriculum and instruction and continuity." The district leader added, "The structures do not exist and that is a big source of the difficulty."

3. Consequently, the high school relies on individual teacher initiatives, informal partnerships among faculty, and department meetings to address improvements to teaching, learning, and the curriculum.
4. To compensate for the loss of educational leadership at the high school, the district removed the department chairs' teaching assignment for one class and made them responsible for all curricular and instructional leadership in their content areas in addition to other department chair duties, which included teacher evaluation.

**Impact:** The diffusion of oversight for curricular and instructional leadership at the middle and high schools limits consistency and accountability for accomplishing the work. Without mid-level leaders in the secondary schools, students do not have the benefit of a cohesive, well-aligned curriculum and the active learning opportunities and experiences that prepare them well for college, work, career, and civic life.

**5. The high school is missing a systematic review and revision of curricula that can help focus improvement efforts for teaching and learning and ensure well-developed, standards-based guiding documents and up-to-date curricular resources.**

- A. District and school leaders and teachers stated that the high school did not have systematic, cyclical curriculum review.
  1. Interviewees said that teachers did discuss teaching resources, however. For example, when state standards changed, teachers edited their program's scope and sequence and course sequence documents and revisited their course articulation plans.
  2. If new resources were required, teachers reviewed, researched, and recommended new materials. However, the review team did not find evidence that a whole content area was reviewed for improvement regularly.
- B. A review of sample texts and other instructional resources at the high school indicated that a substantial number of textbooks were 10-20 years old and some were older. A majority of course documents reviewed were either incomplete or of insufficient depth to challenge and support all students.
  1. The English department provided a list of novels and readings that often reflected the cultural and ethnic diversity of the student population. Teachers could choose their course reading materials, set the pace for instruction, and decide how to assess student progress and achievement, and there were no common assessments in English to measure how well students mastered grade-level state standards across English courses. In addition, the English department's shared folder (a depository for instructional materials all can use) had not been updated and was described as "not very helpful."
  2. District and school leaders and teachers stated that math pacing documents were not sufficiently detailed. The department was working on developing common assessments, and



- interviewees described previous common assessments as not useful. At the time of the onsite, while there was a drive to post common assessments, it was “not up to date.”
3. Interviewees stated that only about 10 percent of science courses had common assessments. Also, interviewees said that science curriculum maps did not exist, although there were course resources on the shared folder.
    - a. A review of AP science texts submitted to the review team were out of date. The AP Chemistry text was dated 2009 and the AP Physics texts was from 2004. The curricula and exams for AP Chemistry and AP Physics were redesigned in 2014, according to the College Board and other sources.
    - b. In the general science program, the texts included: Earth Science, 2002; Biology, 2004; Biotechnology, 2007; Chemistry, 2004; and Physics, 2002. Most science electives did not list texts (although online/open sources may be in use) while other courses such as human physiology used a 1997 text and Oceanography, one from 1990.
  4. Although the Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Framework was updated in 2018, American and World History texts dated from 2003.
  5. In observed classrooms, team members noted a preponderance of worksheets and handouts in use in high-school classes.
- C. Sample high-school documents that guide teachers to implement curriculum and choose teaching strategies were submitted to the review team. A review of these documents indicated that they were inadequately focused and detailed to ensure the use of best-practice standards-based instruction that could support and challenge all students.
1. One document, entitled *XXX Department Curriculum Guide 2019-2020*, was a verbatim list of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for that subject; the only guideline suggested clustering the standards by grades 9-10 and grades 11-12, as in the Frameworks.
  2. Most of the high-school course outlines, guidelines, and expectations for students from all core content areas provided two or three short paragraphs describing course content and up to three pages of detailed rules and regulations for student behavior, expected attitudes, and policies for grading and homework. One course guideline dated 2019-2020, referred students to the “Course Curriculum, 2015-16.”
  3. A curriculum guide for an International Baccalaureate course included unit topics, lesson topics, key topics, and assessment types. Spaces for resources were almost always blank and the guide did not include timelines or learning expectations to guide learning and teaching.

**Impact:** Unless teaching materials are consistently updated to reflect new content and take advantage of new and more effective pedagogy and innovations in instructional technology, students cannot have

access to high-quality, rigorous curricula that challenge and support all students and prepare them for the next steps in their education, work, and civic engagement.

**6. At the secondary level, leaders and teachers do not have a shared understanding of the district's expectations for high-quality teaching. The amount of regularly scheduled time for teachers to collaborate and support for teacher collaboration varies.**

- A. Secondary school leaders and teachers expressed varying definitions of the district's expectations for high-quality core instruction.
  - 1. A teacher-leader for a creative elective subject described expectations specific to the discipline, stating, "to challenge students to create original work based on who and where they are and to be able to speak about it."
  - 2. Some interviewees cited qualities such as student-centered instruction with student collaboration and opportunities for higher-order thinking.
  - 3. Interviewees also spoke about the importance of relevance, leveraging technology, and teaching 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and social justice.
  - 4. One interviewee said that students should explain their thought processes and make their thinking visible.
  - 5. Some teachers described the need to use openers and closers, foster respectful relationships with students, ensure literacy charts in every room, and use differentiation with multiple intelligences to engage students.
- B. When asked how leaders shared their expectations for high-quality teaching with faculty, an interviewee noted that it was difficult for teachers to talk about shared expectations for effective teaching in a half-hour faculty meeting once a month.
- C. The amount of professional learning time and support for teacher collaboration varies.
  - 1. When asked about professional learning time (PLT) for teachers, middle-school interviewees noted that not all middle schools had PLT twice a week. In addition, during PLT, teachers mainly collaborated in content-area teams with associate principals who provided content-based coaching, when they were available. Teachers did not meet in interdisciplinary teams to discuss students' progress and student challenges, a common middle-school improvement practice.
  - 2. Because of their responsibility to provide professional development across all middle schools, middle-school associate principals cannot always fulfill their obligations as coaches during PLT with teacher teams at their schools. A school leader noted that this sometimes resulted in "interrupted coaching sequences."

3. Teachers agreed that they needed time to work on what they knew they needed. The amount of PLT and support available for teacher collaboration varied from elementary to middle to high-school levels.
  - a. When asked about PLT for high-school teachers to co-plan, collaborate to review student work, analyze data or discuss improvement strategies, interviewees stated that the high school did not have shared or structured PLT for teachers.
  - b. Leaders said that the absence of structured planning time at the high school was a budget issue related to classroom coverage. They noted that every ninth day, teachers had an extra prep period originally designated for some form of PLT but arranging coverage of the prep period was challenging.
- D. When high-school teachers were asked about support from colleagues and to whom they turned for help, they expressed a variety of views, such as: “I go to my dean more than I go to my principal,” and “I go to my department head then to the dean; it depends on what the need is.”
  1. The high school does not have instructional coaches, except for 2 instructional resource specialists (IRSs) who are charged with supporting 235 teachers. Principals agreed that the role of the IRSs was impossible because of the ratio of IRSs to teachers.
  2. A school leader questioned whether it was possible for two IRSs to learn enough in all content areas to be able to support everyone. The school leader told the team that the district was exploring a shift from the IRS role to a coaching role.
- E. High-school students recounted their experiences related to how challenging and engaging they found their classwork.
  1. Several students said that it “depends on the teacher;” that certain subjects were “a breeze,” while others were “a challenge.”
    - a. One student stated that one teacher did not know the content but was honest about it. The student added, “Sometimes that bothers me, but I get it, she’s been here only two years.”
    - b. Another described “a math teacher who didn’t know how to teach. She just put it [the content] on the board and wouldn’t say anything.”
    - c. Others noted that some honors classes were harder than some advanced placement classes.
  2. When asked whether they had opportunities to learn in groups, students again stated that it depended on the teacher. For example, they said “Math is a group activity one year and not the next---you learn better in groups.”

**Impact:** The loss of dedicated academic leadership and the limitations on fundamental systems and practices inhibit efforts to improve, implement, and monitor curriculum and instruction. This affects the quality of instruction, holds back student achievement, and can affect students' experience of school. Without sufficient leadership and coherent and consistently applied systems, the district cannot ensure that it can meet all students' needs and that they will be well-prepared for study, work, and civic engagement after high school.

**7. In observed classes, the quality of instruction was inconsistent for the characteristics of effective instruction associated with the Instructional Inventory's Focus Area #1: Learning Objectives & Expectations, particularly in the areas of students understanding what they were learning and why, and teachers checking for understanding, providing feedback, and adjusting instruction. Instruction was slightly more effective at the elementary level than at the secondary level for the characteristics of effective instruction in Focus Area #1.**

- A.** The review team found sufficient and compelling evidence that teachers clearly and fluently explained lesson content (characteristic #1) in 58 percent of observed elementary classes, in 53 percent of observed middle-school classes, and in 53 percent of observed high-school classes.
1. K-5 effective practices included clear explanations of ELA content or multiple ways of explaining math so that students understood concepts before beginning class activities. Some teachers related content to other subjects using real-life examples.
    - a. In contrast, less effective practices included not correcting a student's misconception.
  2. At the middle schools, some teachers provided examples or reviewed a handout that explained lesson content to the class.
    - a. Examples that did not promote high-quality learning were showing a video accompanied by a worksheet without an introduction other than naming the topic and having students log on to a computer to complete drills without context, discussion, or explanation.
  3. At the high school, in an effective lesson, a teacher told stories about William Shakespeare and previewed helpful strategies to read his works. In science, a teacher elaborated on a YouTube video and added details to help students understand lesson context. In a history class, a teacher led a discussion about appropriate inquiry questions to investigate Civil War battles before students explored one in depth.
    - a. A less effective practice was beginning a lesson activity without introduction of content, context, importance or relevance.
- B.** The team saw sufficient and compelling evidence that learning objectives were present or reflected in the lesson so that students understood what they were learning and why

(characteristic #2) in less than half of observed classrooms: in 44 percent of elementary classes, in 43 percent of middle-school classes, and in 39 percent of high-school classes.

1. In the best K-5 lessons, teachers explained objectives and directions for each small group and modeled starter activities; teachers asked students to re-explain objectives.
    - a. Less effective lessons started without the teacher posting or clarifying lesson objectives before asking students to do activities. For example, in a math lesson where students were learning to build equivalent fractions, the teacher did not provide an explanation why this was a useful procedure to know and be able to do.
  2. In effective middle-school lessons, teachers folded the purpose of the lesson into class discussions; clearly stated and/or posted lesson objectives on the board and checked with students to ensure clear understanding; and reviewed lesson objectives and steps before completing tasks.
    - a. In less effective lessons, teachers focused only on classroom management in their interactions with students; only reviewed directions rather than what students would learn; did not provide explanations; and started the lesson with a worksheet with low expectations and objectives for the grade level.
  3. Well-taught high-school lessons showed teachers clearly stating the purpose and the context of the lesson, often in multiple ways; students able to explain lesson objective(s); and teachers asking students to define lesson vocabulary while explaining the lesson objective(s).
    - a. When teachers did not provide objectives, students likely did not understand the purpose of what they were supposed to learn and why.
- C.** Observers noted sufficient and compelling evidence that teachers used appropriate classroom activities well matched to learning objectives (characteristic #3) in 50 percent of observed elementary classrooms, in 39 percent of middle-school classrooms, and in 45 percent of high-school classrooms.
1. Effective practices in K-5 lessons included carefully sequenced ELA strategies for gradual release to students; teachers using student work to demonstrate achievement; and in a STEM class, providing scaffolded step-by-step procedures for building a windmill.
    - a. Less effective practices included students filling in worksheets without discussion or analysis and the limited use of Sheltered English Immersion strategies in general and in ESL classes.
  2. In effective middle-school lessons, teachers provided warm-ups or openers related to lesson objectives; lesson content and cognitive demand were aligned; and teachers demonstrated how to solve math problems before students worked with a partner to do so.

- a. Lessons were less effective when teachers asked for a show of hands to see whether students agreed or disagreed but did not probe by asking “Why?” or “Why not?” Some lessons were slow to start; in others, activities did not maximize students’ understanding based on the lesson objective.
3. In a high-school science class, students took notes as they watched a video which the teacher stopped periodically to provide explanations and ask questions. In an earth science class, students completed a chart with category samples which the whole group discussed and reviewed for accuracy. In addition, in an art history class, students shared their opinions about pictures of art.
    - a. Less effective observed practices included worksheets without introduction, discussion, or review; teachers who did all the talking during lessons; and questioning techniques that accepted “Yes” or “No” answers and did not require discussion or explanation of answers.
- D.** In observed classes, there was sufficient and compelling evidence that teachers frequently and skillfully checked for student understanding, made adjustments to practice, and provided most students with relevant feedback (characteristic #4) in 49 percent of elementary classes, in 45 percent of middle-school classes, and in 44 percent of high-school classes.
1. Teachers skillfully and periodically or consistently checked that students understood what they were learning in less than half of observed classes at all school levels. Observers noted effective practices when teachers circulated to small groups, checked and discussed student work, and provided feedback. Teachers also checked for understanding by drilling down and asking thoughtful questions or using exit tickets. In the strongest lessons, after checking work, teachers debriefed on common errors or exemplar student work and re-taught key ideas or concepts.
  2. In the least effective lessons, teachers did not use any strategies that would indicate how well students understood what they were learning and provided little feedback to students, even when circulating from student to student.

**Impact:** Without clear learning objectives and aligned teaching strategies, students cannot optimize their learning to achieve lesson goals. When teachers do not consistently check for understanding, provide useful feedback, and adjust their instruction to meet learning needs, students cannot make acceptable progress in meeting high expectations for learning.

**8. In observed classes, there was a generally low incidence of characteristics of effective instruction associated with Focus Area #2: Student Engagement & Higher-Order Thinking, particularly in the areas of higher-order thinking, students communicating their ideas and thinking with each other, and students having opportunities to engage with meaningful, real-world tasks.**

**A.** There was sufficient and compelling evidence that students engaged with lesson content or objectives and actively participated in lesson tasks by volunteering responses and asking questions (characteristic #5) in 66 percent of observed elementary classrooms, in 47 percent of middle-school classrooms, and in 39 percent of high-school classrooms.

1. Throughout the district, students engaged and participated in activities when they were primarily held responsible for doing the thinking in the classroom. This was evident in K-5 classes when students worked in pairs or small groups on structured and creative assignments that made them think and express their thinking.
  - a. Most students did not pay attention or engage in learning when the teacher did all the talking and all the work, such as a math lesson where the only demand on students was to raise a hand or give a short answer such as “6” or “b.”
2. At the middle-school level, students showed strong engagement when collaborating on well-thought-out activities, such as a writing assignment guided by a graphic organizer or a timed activity with a partner to solve an interest rate problem.
  - a. In lessons with repetitive verbal or worksheet drills, some students “tuned out,” seemed tired or bored, and put their heads on desks.
  - b. Students were not absorbed in learning in whole-class, teacher-directed lessons where the teacher’s voice dominated and they did not have a meaningful role to think, probe, speak, or participate in a relevant activity.
3. At the high-school level, students were highly engaged when given responsibility to think and probe deeper into objectives and activities. For example, students in a poetry class could choose several poems and develop a concept analysis. In other examples, students were responsible for research and analysis, and teachers took an interest in what students were accomplishing during independent or group work by asking questions or probing for explanations.
  - a. When teachers stood at the front of the room and lectured or solved equations at the board without student input and discussion, students were not engaged in learning, displayed blank looks, and put their heads down on desks and looked asleep.

**B.** In observed classes, review team members noted sufficient and compelling evidence that students engaged in higher-order thinking (characteristic #6) in 32 percent of elementary classes, in 26 percent of middle-school classes, and in 33 percent of high-school classes.

1. K-5 lessons engaged students in higher-order thinking (analysis, synthesis, problem solving, evaluation or application of knowledge) when ELA students identified and explained cause and effect; expressed their verbal abilities and imaginations when discussing tall tales; or in a “turn-and-talk” with a neighbor about why/how to build a windmill. In a science class, students tested materials for their ability to soak up oil and then recorded and analyzed the data.
    - a. In contrast, deep thinking was not always required in math when students drilled on procedures. While some science lessons required hands-on inquiry, others expected students to read an article or story about science and answer questions on paper without including any active learning.
  2. At the middle school, in lessons that involved higher-order thinking, students worked on science projects that required them to develop a hypothesis, describe an experiment, collect data, provide evidence, complete a proof, and draw/write a conclusion. In another example, students studying the American Revolution had a lively discussion about what it meant “to rebel” and compared it to being a teenager.
    - a. Higher-order thinking was noticeably missing in most observed middle-school math classes. In these classes, students did worksheet drills. There were missed opportunities to discuss or explain mathematical thinking or to find and share alternative solutions to problems.
  3. High-school students engaged in higher-order thinking, for example, when poetry students explained their understandings of poetic language, specifically the meaning of “guilt.” U.S. History students developed original inquiry questions to research Civil War battles. Algebra II students explained how to solve equations. STEM students calculated and explained the influence of weight and mass on the velocity of a rocket, as if they were engineers.
    - a. Yet, two out of three lessons were not designed for higher-order thinking. In one such class, teachers asked low-level questions such as “What is the title of the chapter?” In another, a teacher projected a worksheet as he lectured, asked questions, and filled in the blanks with one or two words which the students copied.
- C.** In observed classrooms, there was sufficient and compelling evidence that most or almost all students consistently and authentically communicated ideas with each other in ways that demonstrated deep connection to lesson content (characteristic #7) in 33 percent of elementary classrooms, in 27 percent of middle-school classrooms, and in 24 percent of high-school classrooms.
1. In one out of three observed classrooms, K-5 students communicated ideas and thinking with each other to some extent or consistently and authentically.



- a. For example, in an ELA class, students exchanged writing plans and supported their choices in a paired discussion; in another, students did peer editing and used turn-and-talk to find extra details. In a math lesson on fractions, students discussed which fractions showed the same distance and why.
  - b. In other classes, students engaged in conversations rather than exchanging ideas on lesson topics without intervention by teachers or communication was always between teachers and students without opportunities for students to probe with others.
2. At the middle schools, students communicated ideas and thinking with each other, in only one out of four observed classrooms.
    - a. For example, students in an ELA class shared ideas about leadership qualities and how textual evidence supported their views. In another ELA class, students shared with partners why they chose a specific main idea before sharing with the teacher and compared their answers to predictions at the beginning of class. In one math class, students explained their thinking about how to simplify.
    - b. However, in many middle-school classrooms the teacher's voice dominated and students essentially did not have a voice. They sat quietly, listened, followed directions, and did not speak. In a number of ESL classes, students almost always spoke in their native language to each other and had limited opportunities to speak in English.
  3. In observed high-school classrooms, students engaged with each other in sustained ways or to some extent about content when they worked together on worksheets, discussed problem solving as in an Algebra I class where students discussed and justified their proof of slope with each other. Students in an American government class discussed and shared differing opinions.
    - a. More often than not, however, high-school students did not engage each other about content, because teachers controlled the flow of ideas. Some lessons were purposefully designed for independent work and did not include student-to-student interaction. In others, teachers led question and answer sessions, many requiring short answers without follow-up or discussion between or among students.
- D.** There was sufficient and compelling evidence that students had opportunities to engage with meaningful, real-world tasks (characteristic #8) in 36 percent of observed elementary classrooms, in 37 percent of middle-school classrooms, and in 36 percent of high-school classrooms.
1. Across all school levels, ELA, science, and social studies classes provided multiple examples of tasks or topics related to the real world. K-5 examples included an ELA book choice that reflected Middle Eastern culture in a story about refugees waiting to come to America and a science lesson on chemical change that used roasting marshmallows as an example.

2. Positive examples at the secondary level included a middle-school discussion of graffiti as art and graffiti as a crime and a social studies class about the presidential campaign. High-school examples included a co-taught English class reading about life sentences for teenagers and another English class debating media bias. Science students studied proteins and their effect on our bodies; in a physics class, the teacher explained sound systems and music to connect students to the topic. A history class did a SWOT<sup>26</sup> analysis of the Civil War and discussed the Massachusetts 54<sup>th</sup> regiment and the role of Brockton in making shoes to supply the Union Army.
3. In a large majority of observed classrooms, there were missed opportunities to address the real world. For example, in a class reading about non-violent protests, students did not extend their discussion beyond the text to their lives or to the world around them. Another was a U.S. history lesson addressing The Great Compromise and the Electoral College without reference to the current debate about keeping/eliminating the Electoral College. Many math lessons treated math only as theory and procedures and did not provide students opportunities to see the wonder and presence of math in the world.

**Impact:** Students cannot develop the “Habits of Mind” posted on so many classroom walls in Brockton without opportunities to assume responsibility for learning, engage in and communicate their thinking and ideas with each other, and immerse themselves in meaningful tasks related to the real world around us---present, past, and future. Students cannot develop higher-order thinking skills without being asked to absorb themselves in the processes that make us think deeply about content and the world: analyzing, synthesizing, problem-solving, evaluating, and applying knowledge, skills, and understanding to create new knowledge.

**9. In observed classrooms, there was a generally high incidence of several characteristics of effective instruction associated with the Instructional Inventory’s Focus Area #3: Inclusive Practice & Classroom Culture, notably in ensuring appropriate student behavior and providing a classroom climate conducive to learning. Yet, there was a consistently low incidence of teachers ensuring that students engage in thought-provoking tasks regardless of learning needs and teachers using multiple instructional approaches.**

- A. In observed classrooms, review team members noted sufficient and compelling evidence that lessons were designed to challenge and support most or all students, regardless of learning needs (characteristic #9) in 41 percent of elementary classrooms, in 28 percent of middle-school classrooms, and in 27 percent of high-school classrooms. Likewise, teachers used a variety of instructional strategies or approaches (characteristic #10) in 43 percent of elementary classrooms, in 29 percent of middle-school classrooms, and in 25 percent of high-school classrooms.

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<sup>26</sup> SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats.

1. Elementary lessons supported and challenged students with varied learning needs in ELA classrooms with different centers where teachers also lead guided reading groups with leveled books. When Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) strategies were in use, as in a class where the teacher worked with one student on pronunciation, they were effective; however, observers noted that SEI strategies were not often evident. A majority of K-5 observed classes focused on one approach or strategy with little adjustment or few formats to address needs other than in designated ESL or special education classrooms.
  2. Middle-school lessons that provided a variety of activities designed to address students' specific learning needs included English lessons for ESL students that supported students' linguistic needs and special education classes or inclusion classrooms that focused on students' specific challenges or strengths. However, in most middle-school classes, teachers did not provide multiple ways of introducing lessons or offer differentiated tasks well-matched to an individual's or groups' learning needs. In multiple math and science classes, students worked on the same task at the same pace, usually filling in the blanks on a worksheet.
  3. In a high-school English class, the teacher met with each student and asked different questions to each about their writing. Some lessons provided elements of choice, as in an art class where students could choose to move to the next stage of the lesson when they were ready. Other examples were self-contained classrooms where ESL students or students with disabilities met with teachers who designed activities to meet their needs. Most high-school lessons, however, consisted of whole-class, teacher-directed activities where students sat quietly or did one task while teachers remained in the front of the room.
- B.** Observers noted sufficient and compelling evidence that consistent and effective classroom routines and positive supports were in place to redirect misbehavior and ensure appropriate student conduct (characteristic #11) in 81 percent of elementary classes, in 75 percent of middle-school classes, and in 62 percent of high-school classes.
1. In most observed K-5 classrooms, teachers and students made consistent and effective use of routines and rituals to respond to or prevent disruptions to learning. Teachers demonstrated skillful and purposeful classroom management techniques such as smooth transition routines. More often than not, elementary students showed appropriate behavior and were focused on lessons.
  2. Most observed middle-school classrooms provided evidence of positive redirection and re-focusing students when needed. Examples included a teacher setting behavioral expectations in science classes by stating, "...because that's polite and acceptable behavior" and in another, "we discussed expected behavior to get this done. Focus." In a social studies class the teacher said, "Excuse me, gentlemen," when students were chatting out of turn. In one class, the teacher used a chime to call students back to attention. In many middle-school lessons, however, teachers did not manage behavior well. Examples included teachers

- continually “shushing” students because of the din of noise, and in one observation, a teacher across the hall yelling at students about math skills while pounding a fist on the desk.
3. In a majority of observed high-school classes, teachers and students demonstrated routines and responses to limit disruptions to learning. In these classes, teachers encouraged students to focus on learning and used calm and quiet voices when necessary. Teachers used positive tones and called students “stars” to re-focus attention. Students responded to teachers’ demeanor by using soft respectful voices and active listening.
  4. However, in some high-school classes, teachers seemed indifferent and did not pay attention to or did not address students’ negative behavior and the subsequent disruptions to learning. Examples included teachers who ignored disorderly students and students who played video games or texted and distracted classmates without question or refocus by the teacher. Observers noted more than isolated incidences of students sleeping or having heads down on desks in class and students listening to music on earbuds or headphones.
  5. Sometimes teachers did not use sufficient classroom management skills, as in a classroom where the teacher said, “if you don’t want to work, go to the office,” or in a classroom where the teacher ended the lesson too soon and students walked out of class early while the teacher assigned classwork as homework.
- C. Observers noted sufficient and compelling evidence that classroom climate was conducive to learning with teachers and students showing positive and even warm relationships with students, often characterized by respectful language and active listening (characteristic #12), in 70 percent of elementary classrooms, in 61 percent of middle-school classrooms, and in 49 percent of high-school classrooms.
1. In a majority of K-5 classrooms, observers noted respectful relationships between teachers and students. Most teachers used positive and calm tones characterized by active listening and created an environment that encouraged learning and teaching. Teachers asked students to use “whisper talk” when seated on the rug and were patient with wait-time when asking questions. Students applauded spontaneously when another student shared a story he wrote; teachers referred to students as “my friends” and students exhibited excitement for learning with an enthusiastic teacher. Only a few inconsistencies prevented students from making the most of their time in class, such as a very laid back classroom environment or a teacher’s tone that was unwelcoming and unpleasant which seemed to stifle students’ responses.
  2. Teachers’ positive and encouraging comments supported students in their lessons in a majority of observed middle-school classes. Teachers and students exhibited respectful interactions and teachers used measured tones that encourage learning.
    - a. In more than a third of classes, however, there were negative influences on classroom learning. Loud noises came from classrooms on the other side of folding walls.

Sometimes teachers did not provide positive redirection when students misbehaved to create an environment conducive to active, collaborative learning. Some teachers shouted, "Listen!" or "I'll wait...." In one class the teacher blew a whistle and asked, "OK, who is wasting my time?"

3. A majority of high-school lessons took place in classrooms with friendly environments that could promote student learning. Some teachers displayed pleasant and supportive attitudes toward students and encouraged them when asking probing questions. Other teachers showed a sense of humor, telling students to "get out your moans and groans..." when beginning a unit on Shakespeare. In a social studies class, the teacher announced Amnesty Week when students could submit past due assignments and receive full credit, thus promoting learning rather than "zeroes."
  - a. Still, there were issues in some high-school classrooms, such as loud noises from classrooms on the other side of partitioned walls, overcrowded ESL classrooms that facilitated misbehavior, and teachers who did not have adequate classroom management skills to control students who laughed and made fun of other students. In some observed classes, teachers allowed students to drink soda or coffee, chat, text, and listen to music through ear buds while the class carried on.

**Impact:** Without ensuring that students engage in challenging tasks regardless of learning needs, the district does not provide students the support and rigor that they need to learn effectively and achieve at high levels.

**10. The district has not ensured that all students have equitable access to pursue a range of rigorous coursework and learning experiences.**

- A. At the time of the review in March 2020, access to the district's Talented and Gifted Program (TAG)<sup>27</sup> for grades 4-8 was capped at those students whom the district admitted at the end of grade 3.<sup>28</sup>
  1. The district screens students for admission to TAG by testing all grade 3 students using the Cognitive Aptitude Test (COGAT) from the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) and STAR assessments for reading and math. In addition, TAG teachers create and score a written assessment for students who qualify through standardized test scores.
  2. District and school leaders stated that many students qualified for TAG, but they had to decide whether to participate in TAG or in one of the district's dual-language programs (*Juntos Spanish Program, Unidos Portuguese Immersion Program, and the Amitié French Immersion Program*).

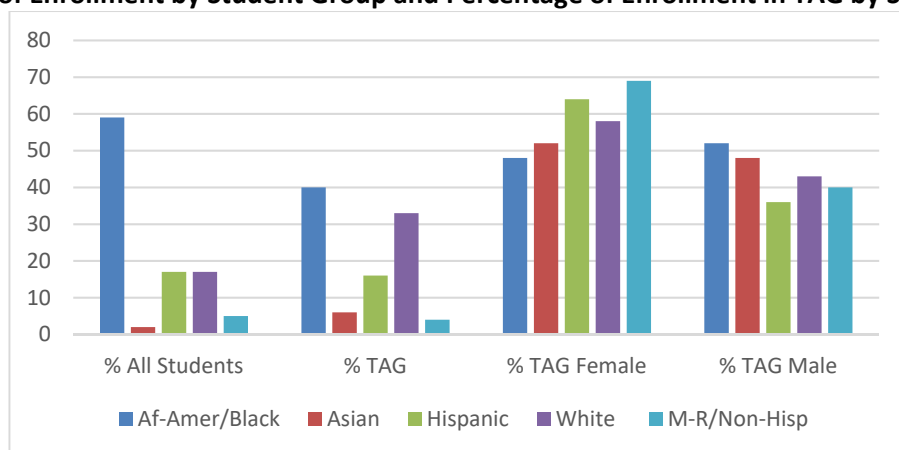
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<sup>27</sup> TAG enrolled 478 students in grades 4-8 in 2019-2020.

<sup>28</sup> TAG is located at one elementary school for grades 4 and 5 and one middle school for grades 6-8.

3. District and school leaders also stated that, in addition, there was limited movement of students into TAG after grade 3 because TAG class sizes were already large at 30.
  4. District and school leaders stated that the district’s assessment team<sup>29</sup> was in the process of finding ways to expand students’ access to TAG beyond grade 3 by having entry and exit points throughout a child’s academic program, but strategies to accomplish this had not been developed.
- B.** In school year 2019-2020, the enrollment in TAG by student group did not always closely resemble each student group’s proportion of the general student population. See Table 31 below.

**Table 31: Brockton Public Schools, 2019-2020  
Percentage of Enrollment by Student Group and Percentage of Enrollment in TAG by Student Group**



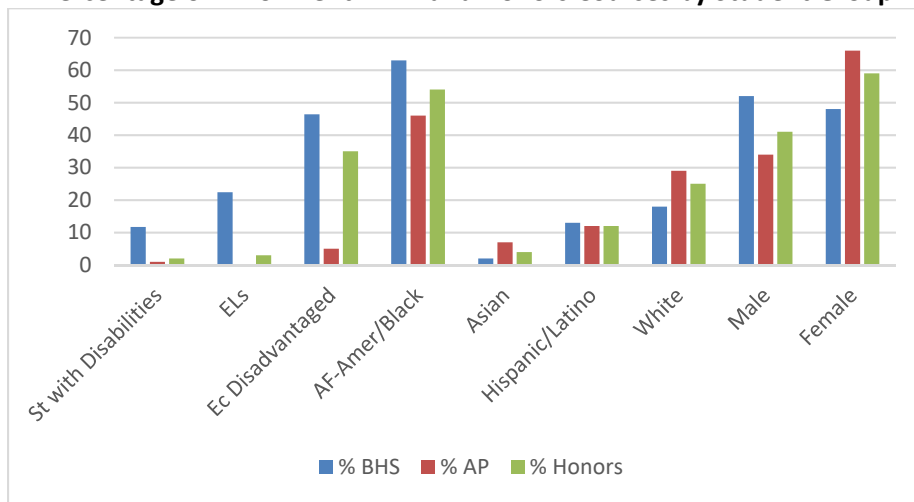
Source: Brockton Public Schools, Office of Assessment, Accountability, Technology and Student Data Research

1. African-American/Black students, who represented 59 percent of all students, made up 40 percent of all TAG students.
2. Asian students represented a higher percentage of TAG students (6 percent) than their share of the total enrollment (2 percent).
3. White students, who made up 17 percent of all students, filled 33 percent of TAG slots.
4. Hispanic students made up 17 percent of all students and 16 percent of TAG students.
5. Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic students, also showed comparable percentages: they represented 5 percent of all students and 4 percent of TAG students.

<sup>29</sup> The executive director leads twice-monthly meetings of the districtwide assessment team, composed of teachers and administrators from all three levels, in reviewing state-level and benchmark assessment data to identify trends and patterns across the district.

6. Females were more likely to be admitted to TAG than males. While females were 48 percent of all students, they represented 55 percent of all TAG students. In contrast, males represented 52 percent of all students and only 45 percent of TAG students. It is only in the African-American/Black student group that male TAG students outnumbered female TAG students. In all other student groups, female students outnumbered male students.
  7. However, for African-American/Black students, there was a slightly higher percentage of males enrolled in the TAG program than females. Of this student group, 52 percent were male compared with 48 percent female.
- C.** District data also indicated that in the 2019-2020 school year very few students with disabilities and English learners (ELs) participated in the TAG program.
1. In the 2019-2020 school year, there were four students with disabilities in TAG: two were African-American/Black, one was Hispanic, and one was White.
  2. In the 2019-2020 school year, there was one EL, who was White, in the TAG program.
- D.** At the high-school level, the percentages of student groups enrolled in AP and honors courses also did not closely resemble their representation in the general high-school population in the 2018-2019 school year. See Table 32 below.

**Table 32: Brockton Public Schools, 2018-2019  
Percentage of Enrollment at Brockton High School by Student Group and  
Percentage of Enrollment in AP and Honors Courses by Student Group**



Source: DESE Data Warehouse and Brockton Public Schools, Office of Assessment, Accountability, Technology and Student Data Research

1. Economically disadvantaged students represented 46.4 percent of high-school enrollment; yet they made up only 5 percent of AP students and 35 percent of honors students.

2. African-American/Black students, the school's largest student group at 63 percent of all students, represented 46 percent of AP students and 54 percent of honors students.
  3. Asian students, the school's smallest student group at only 2 percent of the high school's total enrollment, were 7 percent of AP students and 4 percent of honors students.
  4. Students with disabilities accounted for 12 percent of high-school students, yet they were only 1 percent of AP students and 2 percent of honors students.
  5. English learners (ELs) make up 22.4 percent of all high-school students, yet they represented 0 percent of AP students and only 3 percent of honors students.
  6. Although males made up slightly more than half of all students (52 percent), they accounted for only one third (34 percent) of AP students and 41 percent of honors students.
  7. Female students were the only student group whose enrollment percentages in AP and honors courses outpaced their percentage enrollment of all Brockton students. Females made up 48 percent of all students, yet they were 66 percent of AP students and 59 percent of honors students. Two out of every three AP students were girls, and more than half of honors students were girls.
- F.** High-school students' access to advanced coursework and rigorous programs varied by department.
1. District and school leaders stated that the high school did not have a uniform standard for all students to gain access to AP and honors courses and that the current process to enroll in higher-level courses was not a fully open one.
    - a. One department head stated that it was important to ensure that students would be successful before admitting them to higher-level courses. Another said that there was an AP section for grade 10 students, and many had applied. A third noted that students needed to apply to enroll in higher-level courses, that there were strict guidelines for admission, including not being able to leave the course until the first report card.
    - b. Interviewees told the review team that the high school was working with MASS Insight (MI) to review enrollment, noting that MI had advised establishing study sessions for students to help them qualify for higher-level courses.
    - c. When asked about the higher proportion of female students than male students (66 percent compared with 34 percent) in AP courses, secondary school leaders noted that the district's assessment team had identified that disparity and had created the 100 Males to College Program.
  2. The district's diversity in education steering committee, which was in its first year at the time of the review, looks at enrollment data in each high-school program.



- a. District and school leaders stated that at the high school the teacher of a computer science course actively recruited students to get a more diverse enrollment.
  - b. In addition, district and school leaders stated awareness that students with disabilities and ELs were under-represented in AP classes and the International Baccalaureate (IB) program.
3. The review team was told that the district paid all testing fees for the PSAT, ACT, SAT and AP exams to enable all students to take them.
- G.** Algebra is not required for all grade 8 students. It is a grade 9 course and is offered to a number of grade 8 middle-school students; placement is determined by several pieces of data including teacher recommendations and MCAS and STAR assessments.

**Impact:** Preparing students well to enroll in higher-level courses at the high-school level largely begins with strong academic preparation in kindergarten through grade 8. Without a focused effort to implement more effective instructional strategies and academic programs that reach all student groups districtwide and develop their cognitive skills and content knowledge, the district is unable to close the opportunity and achievement gaps. Without strengthening academic programs and supports for all student groups throughout their education, particularly those who are traditionally underserved, many students do not have the knowledge, skills, and understandings not only to succeed in challenging academic work, but also to find success in further education, careers, and civic involvement.

## ***Recommendations***

### **1. The district should develop and implement an ongoing process for reviewing and revising curriculum.**

- A.** District leaders should develop a formal process for the regular review and revision of curriculum.
1. As part of the planning process, the district should consider specifying the roles that central office staff, principals, and school-based staff will perform. The district may also want to include community members or representatives from higher education with content expertise.
  2. The review process should be transparent; progress updates should be provided to the executive team and a final report should be given to the school committee.
- C.** Various sequenced activities that can be conducted over time can include:<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> These activities are examples and are not clustered by “year” of the review cycle.

1. The district should evaluate current K-12 curricular resources and select new curricular materials, as necessary.
  - a. The district should ensure that the curriculum committee guides the evaluation and selection process throughout the district. This committee should have a solid understanding of standards-aligned instructional practices and of what high-quality materials look like on paper as well as in practice.
  - b. The curriculum committee should analyze student achievement data and current curriculum resources and guiding documents (i.e., scope and sequence, curriculum maps, units of study, and assessments). This work will inform the criteria that the committee uses to evaluate and select new materials. The curriculum committee should continue to use online sources such as DESE's CURATE (Curriculum Ratings by Teachers) and EdReports to find high-quality, evidence-based curricular materials.
2. The district should select new curricular materials using three main steps: narrowing, investigating, and selecting. The curriculum committee first should narrow the list of potential curricular materials based on district non-negotiables such as budget, grade span, standard alignment, and/or technology requirements. Once the committee has developed a list of two to five programs that meet these criteria, it should investigate the materials using district priorities, such as supports for English learners. This investigation can include a field test or pilot, book study, and communication with the publishers. The committee should compile this data to make a final selection.
3. Once curricular materials have been selected, the district should launch the new curricular materials in the district by developing a plan for preliminary training and distribution of curricular materials and establishing expectations for grading, assessments, pacing, and collaborative planning.
4. The district should provide teachers with appropriate guidance and feedback as they implement new/revised curricular materials and monitor the implementation. The district should consider revisions and adjustments to curricular materials based on a thorough review of student achievement data and feedback from teachers and leaders.
5. The district should evaluate curricular materials and conduct research. The cycle begins anew.

**Benefits:** Implementing this recommendation will help ensure that teachers and students have access to provide high- quality, comprehensive, and clearly articulated curriculum that prepares all students for success in high school and beyond.

**Recommended resources:**

- DESE's Instructional Materials and Professional Development page (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/>) provides resources for improving and collaborating on

curriculum, including quick reference guides and maps designed to facilitate cross-district communication about curriculum.

- Quick Reference Guide: Aligning Curriculum to Massachusetts Standards (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/>) is designed to support teachers, coaches, administrators, and curriculum developers in the work of considering the ways in which curricular materials may diverge from the Massachusetts standards.
- DESE's Curriculum Review and Institutional Self-Evaluation Training Toolkit (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/psm/tfm/civilrights-toolkit.docx>) provides useful guides and suggestions for district to prepare leadership staff for discussions about race and equity, makes suggestions for curriculum review implementation strategies to address implicit and explicit bias in curriculum and instruction, and offers suggested strategies for institutional self-evaluation.
- DESE's *Writing Standards in Action* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/wsa/>) provide examples of high-quality student writing with annotations that highlight how each piece demonstrates competence in learning standards at each grade level.

**2. The district should ensure that all teachers provide effective instruction that challenges and supports all students.**

- A. The district should convene a representative group to identify key instructional practices.
  - 1. The recommended product of these meetings is a set of expectations that challenges and engages students and reflects the district's emphasis on rigor and relevance.
  - 2. The district should prioritize these instructional strategies as its "non-negotiables."
- B. Once the set of instructional expectations has been defined, district leaders should develop a plan for communicating these expectations with staff.
  - 1. The district is encouraged to provide regular opportunities for educators to discuss ideas and strategies from the set of instructional expectations. These opportunities might include a portion of every professional learning team meeting in the district as well as grade-level, department meetings, common planning time, faculty meetings, and professional development days.
  - 2. The district should develop structures to support peer observation to both model instructional feedback and encourage peer feedback.
    - a. Opportunities should be provided by level for exemplary teachers to share best practices.
- C. The district should provide teachers with appropriate guidance and feedback as they implement the district's instructional expectations.

1. Professional development should focus on strategies that develop students' higher-order thinking in independent and group activities that require students to think analytically, creatively and deeply about content, about the world around them, and about themselves, their lives, and the lives of others.
  2. Professional development should focus on elements of the instructional expectations as applied to the specific curricula that teachers and students work with every day.
  3. Principals and other instructional leaders should continue to provide teachers with high-quality feedback<sup>31</sup> that helps them to improve instruction.
- D.** The district should ensure that all teachers have regular and adequate collaborative professional learning time with colleagues by establishing Professional Learning Communities or interdisciplinary teacher groups districtwide and providing regular time for these communities to collaborate with a focus on improving instruction.
1. The district should expectations for processes and protocols staff should use and the outcomes for which they are responsible.
  2. It is the review team's understanding that under prior leadership at the high school all teachers had professional learning time with colleagues.<sup>3</sup> Given the high school schedule and size, teachers should be expected to work collaboratively and creatively within and/or across departments to address important and needed improvements to teaching, learning and the curriculum as well as other key school issues.

**Benefits:** Implementing this recommendation will mean clear and articulated expectations for instruction across the district. A district that provides high-quality instruction for all students and ongoing professional development for teachers and administrators creates and sustains a culture of continuous improvement, resulting in professional growth and increased student achievement.

**Recommended resources:**

- *Where Teachers Thrive: Organizing Schools for Success*: Susan Moore Johnson, (Harvard Education Press: 2019). This book details the power of key school systems--- collaboration, evaluation, leadership, improving instruction, and others--- that can make for a thriving organizational culture and a more successful school experience for all stakeholders. Particularly helpful for leaders and teachers is the book's *Users' Guide* (<https://www.hepg.org/HEPG/media/Documents/AdditionalMaterials/Users-Guide-Where-Teachers-Thrive.pdf?ext=.pdf> ).
- *In Search of Deeper Learning: The Quest to Remake the American High School*: Jal Mehta and Sarah Fine, (Harvard University Press, 2019). This book describes lessons to learn from innovative schools to transform and usher teaching and learning deep into the 21st century. It examines depths of

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<sup>31</sup> High-quality feedback is specific, timely, and actionable.

learning and provides models for teachers and leaders to move beyond the constraints of effective teaching to create deeper and more impactful learning for all students.

- *Time for Deeper Learning: Lessons from Five High Schools* (<http://www.timeandlearning.org/publications/time-deeper-learning>), from Mass2020, examines how schools that prioritize deeper learning are using whatever time they have available—whether through an expanded day or during a traditional school schedule—to reach their educational goals.
  - *Time for Teachers: Leveraging Time to Strengthen Instruction & Empower Teachers* (<http://www.timeandlearning.org/sites/default/files/resources/timeforteachers.pdf>) describes the systems and practices implemented at 17 schools to provide students with more time for learning and teachers with more time to collaborate, reflect, and plan.
  - *Time Well Spent* (<http://www.timeandlearning.org/publications/timewellspent>) offers an in-depth examination of 30 expanded-time schools serving high-poverty populations with impressive track records of student success, and demonstrates how these schools leverage their additional time in order to implement other critical reforms. - See more at: <http://www.timeandlearning.org/publications/timewellspent#sthash.beAL3i6.dpuf>
- 3. The district should ensure that all students are prepared for and have equitable access to a range of rigorous learning experiences as well as courses aligned with and their ambitions, interests, and talents.**
- A.** Key to preparing students for success in high school and especially to success in rigorous coursework is high-quality preparation in kindergarten through grade 8.
    1. Toward this goal, the district should ensure that the rigor and comprehensive knowledge, skills, and understanding reflected in the most current Massachusetts curriculum frameworks are fully and effectively implemented at all grade levels using best teaching practices.
  - B.** The district should conduct a self-evaluation or equity audit to better understand the nature of and root causes of the district’s opportunity and achievement gaps for specific groups of students.
    1. The district should conduct a trend analysis of student data for academic achievement, enrollment in honors and AP courses, special education, English learner proficiency, discipline, attendance, reports of social emotional issues, dropout and graduation rates, and selection of elective courses.
      - a. Student performance data should be disaggregated to better understand each group’s performance and achievement.
      - b. The data analysis should lead to a root cause analysis and deeper conversations about how well the district supports its students’ academic and social-emotional growth and where it should rethink and develop new strategies of engagement.

3. Algebra I should be made a requirement in grade 8, with only few exceptions.

**Benefits:** By implementing a self-evaluation or an equity audit, the district will likely identify ways to make access to rigorous coursework more equitable and create a more equitable school community. These activities can also help the district better understand its challenges and identify best practices and the resources needed to meet all students' learning and developmental needs.

**Recommended resources:**

- "A Leak in the STEM Pipeline: Taking Algebra I Early," November 2018, U. S. Department of Education white paper (<https://www2.ed.gov/datastory/stem/algebra/index.html>) discusses U.S. trends and the benefits of early access to algebra as key to success in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) subjects in high school and beyond.
- Jobs for the Future's *Common Instructional Framework* (<https://www.jff.org/resources/common-instructional-framework/>), a core component in Early College Designs for schools, contains six powerful teaching and learning strategies to build college readiness.
- *Increasing Access to Advanced Coursework* (<https://assets.aspeninstitute.org/content/uploads/2018/04/ESSA-IncreasingAccessToAdvancedCoursework.pdf>) describes how school districts can use the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to expand access to advanced coursework and increase students' achievement in these courses.
- DESE's *My Career and Academic Plan (MyCAP)* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/ccte/ccr/mycap/>) is a student-centered, multi-year planning tool designed to provide students with ongoing opportunities to plan for their academic, personal/social and career success.
- DESE's *High Quality College and Career Pathways Initiative* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/ccte/ccr/hqccp/>) serves as an overarching strategy for significantly expanding student access to high-quality career pathways.
- The Middle College National Consortium (<http://mcnc.us/>) provides resources to support increasing the number of high-school students who have access to early colleges, middle colleges, and dual enrollment.

## Assessment

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### Contextual Background

The district is in the early stages of establishing efficient systems to collect and retrieve data across a range of sources to produce a broad profile of students' strengths and challenges that educators can use to identify students most at risk. The district is beginning to provide tools and training to build educators' skills in analyzing data to make instructional decisions that can lead to improved outcomes.

Three times per year, all district schools K-8 administer the STAR assessment in ELA and mathematics along with district-made common assessments in ELA 6-8 and in math K-8. The district administers 3 Amplify assessments per unit in science in grades 6-8. K-12 the district administers Foundations in ELA 5 to 12 times per year (depending on the grade). Commercially made assessments that are part of the Reach for Reading resource are administered K-5 in ELA. The EdCite online assessment platform is used in ELA for grades 6-8 and in mathematics K-8 to create assessments. The high school administers final examinations in each mathematics course. The district administers formative and summative Biotech Pathway examinations and document-based question assessments 4 times per year in social science in grades 9-11. At the time of the onsite, the high school was beginning to return to its former practice of administering common assessments by department and was piloting the EdCite platform.

#### *Data Collection System*

The executive director of assessment, accountability, and technology oversees district systems for collecting student information, including academic, behavioral, and demographic data. The district provides training for selected staff to retrieve data relevant to their grade level, subject areas, or program responsibilities. The executive director leads twice-monthly meetings of the districtwide assessment team, composed of teachers and administrators from all three levels, in reviewing state-level and benchmark assessment data to identify trends and patterns across the district. The executive director of assessment, accountability, and technology prepares reports comparing the performance of Brockton students on MCAS assessments with the performance of students in similar districts and shares that information with the district's executive team and curriculum and program directors to ensure that these critical stakeholders are aware of the performance and progress of Brockton students. Upon request, the executive director generates reports from the WISL Plus student information database<sup>32</sup> across multiple factors affecting student success, including attendance, discipline referrals, grades, and MCAS and STAR assessment results. School leaders, program directors, instructional coaches, and behavior support staff are trained in retrieving data from WISL Plus. The district is in the early stages of developing a data presentation tool that provides more informative representations of student information from the district's student information database.

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<sup>32</sup> See the Strength finding below in this section.

### *Data Use*

In addition to collecting and sharing information from state and district assessments about students' performance and progress with the district's executive team and curriculum and program directors, the district provides selected school staff with a data use protocol and training on how to use the protocol. The selected school staff are responsible for helping teachers analyze classroom assessments and make informed instructional decisions that address student needs. Use of the protocols to improve instruction at the classroom level varies across the district, with more consistent use of these protocols among elementary teachers than among teachers at the middle-school and high-school levels.

### *Sharing Results*

While the district regularly provides reports about school and district performance on MCAS assessments to school leaders and district leaders, it does not share that information regularly in informative and useable ways with families and the community. The district is in the early stages of responding to the results of a family survey requesting more timely information about their children's progress and performance and guidance families can use to improve their children's outcomes.

## ***Strength Findings***

- 1. The district-developed student information database WISL Plus provides district and selected school staff access to student data from multiple sources.**
  - A.** WISL Plus stores information about students across the district, including schools attended, discipline referrals, classroom grades, attendance, class assignments, and STAR and MCAS assessments' results.
    1. The WISL Plus tool collects multiple sources of information about each student originally captured in different datasets. District leaders created WISL Plus in response to staff requests for one system to capture the breadth of information available about each student.
      - a. WISL Plus is an Excel file which allows ease of entry and retrieval of student information from multiple sources.
  - B.** The district uses scaled scores and student growth percentiles from MCAS and STAR assessments stored in the district's WISL Plus database to prepare reports comparing Brockton with similar districts and to compare student performance across the schools in the district.
  - C.** Upon request, the executive director of assessment, accountability, and technology generates reports from the WISL Plus student information database across multiple factors affecting student success.



- D. The WISL Plus tool is designed to promote shared responsibility for looking across multiple pieces of student information to develop strategies targeted to specific student needs.
  - 1. The WISL Plus tool identifies students by risk level for academics and behavior, based on a review of the indicators stored in the system.
  - 2. School leaders, program directors, instructional coaches, and behavior support staff are trained in retrieving data from WISL Plus.
  - 3. Instructional leadership coaches in the elementary schools and associate principals in the middle schools are responsible for bringing data retrieved from WISL Plus to teachers for review during common planning time.
  - 4. Members of the student support teams including the school adjustment counselors in each school use student information retrieved from WISL Plus to develop behavioral intervention plans.
    - a. For example, high-school staff looked at detailed data on attendance as well as the time and location of misbehavior to gain insights into possible causes for misbehavior, leading to the design of an intervention strategy targeted to specific students at specific times of day.

**Impact:** By having a student information database that brings together data from multiple sources, district and school leaders and instructional coaches have access to a range of information about students' strengths and needs.

**2. Elementary teachers who regularly use district-provided data analysis protocols, the WISL Plus student information database, and common curriculum assessments to identify students' strengths and challenges are building their capacity to improve instruction.**

- A. With guidance from school-level coaches, some elementary teachers use district-provided data analysis protocols to develop plans to address gaps in student learning.
  - 1. Most K-5 classroom teachers have regular grade-level team meetings, and in most elementary schools follow professional learning community practices and data analysis protocols to discuss how their instructional practices influence student performance.
    - a. The district trains elementary coaches for literacy and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) in the use of the data analysis protocol.
    - b. Teachers described the use of data analysis protocols as critical in keeping their focus on where to target instruction to address gaps in student learning.
  - 2. In their grade-level teams, elementary teachers review MCAS and STAR assessment results in WISL Plus reports provided by instructional coaches to develop reteaching plans to support low performing students as directed in the district protocols.

- B. In addition to reviewing MCAS and STAR assessment results from WISL-Plus, elementary teachers reported that they regularly used common classroom assessments to identify students' mastery of specific learning standards.
  - 1. The district develops common assessments for some grade levels and content areas using released items from MCAS and other assessment sources that are aligned with the curriculum learning standards.
  - 2. Elementary teachers cited classroom assessments, such as the common assessments, as well as quizzes, exit tickets, and review of student work, as the measures of student performance they relied on to make instructional modifications.
- C. The district informally monitors the use of data analysis practices at the school and classroom levels.
  - 1. Coaches share examples of their practice and the work of the teachers whom they serve during monthly meetings with district curriculum leaders.

**Impact:** As teachers become more experienced in using data analysis protocols to link student assessment results with their classroom practice, they likely improve their skill in accurately selecting instructional strategies targeted to students' learning needs. By engaging students in learning experiences addressing concepts or skills they have not mastered, teachers likely help students make progress toward meeting grade-level expectations.

### ***Challenges and Areas for Growth***

- 3. **The district has not established a culture of shared responsibility for the consistent and timely assessment of student performance. In addition, the district has not ensured that leaders and staff use student performance data effectively to improve all students' performance, opportunities, and outcomes.**
  - A. While common assessments linked to the Massachusetts curriculum standards have been developed for some grade levels and content areas, they are not available for all grades and subjects.
    - 1. Instructional coaches reported that many elementary teachers analyzed common assessment results for ELA and mathematics during grade-level planning time.
    - 2. However, the district's common assessments for middle-school ELA are not required for every school. The newly developed middle-school math assessments are optional and are not administered or scored consistently.

- a. Teachers and coaches reported that while some middle-school math teachers administered the assessments, they did not complete the scoring, so the data was not usable.
3. While one high-school teacher has piloted a common course assessment recently, Brockton High School does not have a plan to develop uniform course assessments in 2019-2020.
  - a. School leaders reported that common course assessments were in place in the past, but teachers deemed them not adequate so they were eliminated.
  - b. At the time of the onsite, the high school was beginning to return to its former practice of administering common assessments by department and was piloting the EdCite platform.
- B. The district does not ensure that teachers use data analysis protocols effectively to review student performance data in order to improve instruction and student outcomes.
  1. While district curriculum leaders meet with elementary coaches responsible for facilitating teachers' use of data, there are no mechanisms in place to track whether use of the protocols leads to changes in instruction or changes in student learning.
    - a. District leaders rely on anecdotal reports from elementary coaches to learn how teachers are using the protocols to change their practice. Although coaches reported that they visited classrooms regularly, the district did not require them to document instructional changes.
  2. The district assigns middle-school associate principals to facilitate common planning time (CPT) sessions devoted to teachers' review of data and the development of plans to modify instruction. However, teachers and coaches reported that middle-school CPT has not been regularly available.
    - a. Teachers and coaches said that at the time of the onsite review middle schools had only recently revised their schedules to include occasional CPT for grade-level teams to meet.
  3. Responsibility for monitoring data use at the high school is the responsibility of the principal and of department heads. CPT for grade-level or content-level teams has not been scheduled at the high school. While department meetings are scheduled monthly, the district's data analysis protocol is not regularly used during these meetings.
  4. District leaders acknowledged that they have not put procedures in place to evaluate the impact of using the data analysis protocols on student outcomes.

**Impact:** Without setting expectations for the development and consistent administration of common standards-aligned assessments, the district cannot ensure that teachers have timely and accurate measures of what students know and are able to do on which they can make informed instructional

decisions. When the district does not ensure that teachers use data effectively to design appropriate instructional strategies, the district does not fulfill its responsibility to ensure that classroom instruction will lead to improved student achievement.

**4. The district's WISL Plus database does not provide timely and actionable data about what individual students know and are able to do. As a result, teachers determine students' strengths and learning needs solely using their own formative assessments, which may not be aligned with grade-level learning standards.**

A. Although district and school leaders use the scaled score and growth percentiles from MCAS and STAR assessments stored in the district's WISL Plus data system to assess overall school and district performance, teachers find those measures of limited use to inform their instructional practices.

1. The district uses MCAS assessment scaled scores and growth percentiles from WISL Plus to prepare reports comparing Brockton with similar districts and to compare student performance across the schools in the district.
2. WISL Plus does not document an item analysis<sup>33</sup> for the MCAS assessments for Brockton students to show common learning gaps.
3. Teachers reported that the most timely and useful measures of student learning were those most closely related to classroom instruction.
  - a. Teachers said that they used classroom measures such as quizzes, exit tickets, and student work to guide their decisions about what to reteach in part because MCAS and STAR assessment results did not tell them which concept or skill students needed to master.
    - i. Some teachers stated that STAR assessment results were difficult to interpret because the "computer-adaptive" test adjusted the difficulty level of test items based on students' responses, so the test did not tell teachers specifics about what students knew that they did not know before the last test.
    - ii. Teachers acknowledged that Brockton students generally performed well below proficiency on state assessments and MCAS assessment results were not a surprise. They pointed out that MCAS assessment results concerned the previous year and analyzing that data did not provide timely information that they could use to guide their choice of teaching strategies.
    - iii. Teachers of English learners and students with disabilities stated that STAR and MCAS assessments provided inaccurate and confusing information about their students because of language and other learning issues. They said that they relied

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<sup>33</sup> An item analysis shows the test item and associated curriculum learning standard aligned with each item.

on classroom assessments, student work, and measures aligned with their curriculum to inform their instructional decisions.

4. Some elementary teachers who responded to a district survey at the end of the 2018-2019 school year noted that assessments that were clearly linked to specific curriculum learning standards, such as the math common assessments, were most useful in deciding what to teach.
5. Other elementary teachers responding to the survey believed that some district assessments, including the common assessments, were too challenging for their students and reported that some items were not aligned with what was being taught in their classrooms.

**Impact:** Without student performance data that is timely and actionable and clearly linked to learning standards, teachers are challenged to make instructional decisions targeted to the specific concepts and skills that students are expected to master.

**5. The district does not regularly share evidence of the district’s performance or of the effectiveness of its current improvement strategies with the community in ways that can be easily understood. The district does not provide timely information about individual students’ performance and progress or present the information in a format that families can use to support their students to succeed at high levels.**

**A.** While the district posts links to the state report cards for the district and its schools on its website, the district does not provide guidance for understanding the DESE charts beyond what is provided by the state.

1. The state report card shows comparisons with the state without providing information about similar districts to enable parents to understand how Brockton students perform compared with their peers.

- a. The executive director of assessment, accountability, and technology shared an MCAS assessment report with the district’s executive team and the district office of teaching and learning (OTL) showing a comparison with eight districts either geographically or demographically similar to Brockton. The director executive of assessment, accountability, and technology said that report was not shared with others beyond the original audience.

**B.** The district’s website does not include the accountability status of the district’s schools, many of which are designated in the bottom 10 percent of schools statewide.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> An accountability percentile between 1 and 99 is reported for most schools. This number is an indication of the school's overall performance relative to other schools that serve similar grades and is calculated using multiple years of data for all accountability indicators.

- C. The district’s website does not provide access to current Sustainable Improvement Plans, school improvement plans or a district improvement plan.
- D. Parents raised concerns about gaps in communication between the district and families about students’ academic performance, and about the inadequacies of online information tools and variations in the online tools used.
  - 1. While some parents said that the online portal was informative, others noted that some teachers did not consistently update the information.
    - a. Interviews with district and school leaders and families indicated that the online portal, Infinite Campus, was only used by middle-school and high-school teachers. The district assessment team estimated that 10 to 20 percent of parents have registered for accounts on the online portal. Assessment team members reported that parents could access the portal using their children’s login credentials so they could not provide accurate data on the percentage of families using the portal.
    - b. Parents reported that only some elementary teachers used the phone app, Class Dojo, to communicate with their students’ families, confirming what teachers noted. Although the district encourages use of apps such as Class Dojo, Teams, Infinite Campus parent portal, and Schoology, it cannot require it.
    - c. Some elementary teachers said that they prepared classroom newsletters, but these were not required and were not posted on the district’s website. It was unclear whether classroom newsletters provide families with guidance related to their children’s academic program.
  - 2. The district assessment team reported in the results of a recent survey that parents raised concerns about the timeliness and usefulness of the assessment information provided to families about their children.
    - a. In response to parent feedback, the district initiated a process to redesign report cards. However, the district assessment team noted that the district expected that the redesigned report card would not be available for two years because of the time needed to pilot and revise proposed drafts.

**Impact:** Families who do not have adequate information about their children’s performance and progress are challenged to provide supports to help their children perform at a high level. Without an accurate understanding of students’ performance and progress compared with their peers in other districts, and a clear understanding of the district’s improvement goals and initiatives, families and members of the community cannot partner with the district to advocate for and support improved outcomes.

## ***Recommendations***

### **1. The district should take steps to improve teachers' access to and skills in using high-quality common assessments aligned with the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks.**

- A.** In the elementary schools, the district should continue building teachers' skill in using common assessments, quizzes, exit tickets, and review of student work to inform their instructional decisions.
  - 1. The district should continue to provide training to the instructional coaches and STEM coaches in each elementary school to enhance their ability to facilitate teachers' use of data to improve classroom instruction.
- B.** In the middle schools, teachers should continue to develop common assessments in core content areas and ensure that the assessments are administered consistently.
  - 1. The district should engage teachers in developing common assessments aligned with the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks similar to the process undertaken at the elementary level.
- C.** In the high schools, the district should oversee the development of high-quality common assessments, including common mid-term and final exams, that reflect appropriate levels of challenge and rigor.
  - 1. The district should also ensure consistent administration of the common assessments and regular analysis of the assessment results by core subject teachers to improve instruction.
  - 2. One option is to invite teachers of Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses to include assessments from their programs with MCAS released items in the common assessment library.
- D.** The district should provide sufficient time districtwide for teachers to meet with their colleagues to analyze common assessment results and develop strategies to strengthen teaching and learning.
  - 1. District leaders and principals should develop procedures to monitor the effectiveness of the strategies teachers select to address learning gaps identified through the analysis of the common assessment results. One consideration is to provide opportunities for teachers to share their most effective practices with colleagues across the district.
- E.** The district should ensure that teachers of students with disabilities and English learners participate in data analysis common planning time with their general education colleagues in the analysis of and use of common assessment data to inform instruction for all students.

**Benefits:** Timely and targeted assessments linked to standards, coupled with regular monitoring of classroom instruction aligned with the curriculum standards, likely will lead to improved outcomes for

all students. By focusing on data from assessments directly linked to the learning standards which form the foundation of grade level and content area curriculum and instruction, the district likely will ensure that teachers make instructional decisions targeted to the specific concepts and skills students are expected to master.

**Recommended resources:**

- DESE's *Assessment Literacy Self-Assessment and Gap Analysis Tool* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/assessment/continuum.pdf>) is intended to support districts in understanding where their educators fit overall on a continuum of assessment literacy. After determining where the district as a whole generally falls on the continuum, districts can determine potential next steps.
  - Educational Testing Service White Paper, *Measuring the Power of Learning*, 2018. (<https://www.ets.org/s/k12/pdf/ets-k-12-understanding-measurement-white-paper.pdf>) is a reader-friendly document that can help educators better understand different types of assessments, their various and specific uses in teaching and learning, and how they can enable a district to implement best practices in assessment.
- 2. The district should take immediate steps to ensure that all families have clear, personalized, and timely information about their children's academic progress. In addition, the district should consider providing the community with convenient access to information about school and district performance status and planned improvement efforts.**
- A.** The district should ensure that well-supported and consistent practices for sharing information with families related to student learning take place at each school.
    - 1. The district should collect input from parents/guardians about which methods for communicating students' progress work well, and about what families want and need to know about students' learning progress.
      - a. Depending on what information this yields, the district should consider whether its current strategies and tools need to be revisited.
    - 2. Families should be provided with guidance about the online tools the district selects.
  - B.** The district should consider providing easy access on its website to information about district and school performance as well as to Sustainable Improvement Plans and district and school improvement plans.
    - 1. The district' website should be updated to include reports describing how Brockton students perform on the MCAS assessment compared with students in similar districts.
    - 2. The district's website and each school's website should post the district improvement plan, when developed, and the individual school improvement plans to inform families and the



community about the improvement initiatives undertaken by individual schools and by the district.

**Benefits:** By providing clear and timely information that can help parents understand their children's progress and enable them to take action to support their children's success, the district can ensure that families are true partners in the education of their children. By presenting district and school performance in transparent ways, the district can engage the community in the support of its improvement efforts.

**Recommended resources:**

- *The Communicating Student Learning Progress project* ([https://research.acer.edu.au/ar\\_misc/34](https://research.acer.edu.au/ar_misc/34)) investigated questions relating to the effectiveness of current methods of communicating student progress, the extent to which they are valued by stakeholders, whether they are considered to provide quality information about student learning, and whether there are alternative designs for these activities that might be more effective.
- *Parents' Guides to Student Success* (<https://www.pta.org/home/family-resources/Parents-Guides-to-Student-Success>) are grade-specific guides from the National PTA (available in English and Spanish) with specific descriptions for parents of what children should be learning once Common Core standards are fully implemented, along with suggestions for helping students at home and communicating with teachers.

## Human Resources and Professional Development

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### ***Contextual Background***

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

The district's human resources (HR) office consists of a director, three associate directors, and an administrative support staff. The office has the overall responsibility for posting and recruitment of all teacher, administrator, and support positions. Recruitment efforts for diverse and highly qualified teachers include a partnership with Bridgewater State University to create a pipeline of qualified teachers and administrators, a presence at educational job fairs, and online postings.

The district's HR office maintains an employee checklist for each new hire and veteran employee to ensure that all employees have participated in all federal, state, and local mandated trainings.

The HR office also maintains responsibility for ensuring that all professional staff are appropriately licensed for their teaching or administrative position. Over the five years before the onsite review, the district made a concerted effort to ensure proper licensure of all professional staff. At the time of the onsite, 99.2 percent of Brockton's teachers were licensed.

#### *Supervision, Evaluation, and Professional Development*

The district has adopted the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework. However, according to DESE data, in 2017-2018 (the most recent available data), only 88.7 percent of district teachers and only 35.2 percent of district administrators were evaluated.

The district's office for teaching and learning maintains the responsibility for professional development (PD) for teachers, administrators, and paraprofessionals. PD opportunities in the district include early release days,<sup>35</sup> professional learning communities, coaching, career partnerships with local universities, and initiatives with external providers. PD opportunities take place at the district, interdisciplinary, department, and school levels.

### ***Strength Finding***

**1. The district has made a commitment to recruit, support, and retain a diverse cadre of highly qualified teachers and administrators.**

**A.** The district has made a commitment to attract highly qualified and diverse teacher candidates.

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<sup>35</sup> The district calendar provides elementary-school staff with 17 half days for PD. Middle-school and high-school staff are provided eight half days for PD.

1. The district's latest strategic plan (2018-2019) includes a strong focus on increasing teacher diversity to reflect the composition of the student body. As one interviewee stated, "we are casting a wide enough web" to let people know they should apply even if they do not have all the qualifications yet.
    - a. A diversity task force meets monthly to strategize and disseminate information on teaching opportunities through local civic and religious organizations.
    - b. Interviews with district and school leaders and a document review indicated that the district has initiated diversification strategies, including participation with DESE's Diversity Network, and InSPIRED Fellows<sup>36</sup> program, participation in college recruitment fairs, and membership in the Massachusetts Partnership for Diversity in Education.
  2. The district has initiated the development of a pipeline of newly qualified and diverse teachers for its workforce.
    - a. In partnership with Massasoit Community College and Bridgewater State University, the district has a program for paraprofessionals to attain their degree and teacher license.
    - b. At the time of the onsite review, district leaders reported that earlier in the 2019-2020 school year over 40 teachers had attended a meeting relating to a partnership for courses with Bridgewater State University that would help teachers advance their teaching licenses to the next level.
  3. When district leaders were asked what attribute made Brockton attractive to new teachers, their responses included, "the diverse population," "professional development that is provided by the district," "opportunities for leadership," and "a partnership with Bridgewater State University."
- B.** The district has multiple structures to provide support for its new and veteran teachers.
1. To support teachers new to the profession and new to the district, Brockton has a mentoring program where trained mentors are paired with new teachers. District and school leaders and teachers stated that mentors helped new teachers by modeling lessons, helping with curriculum, observing the mentees, and connecting with content coaches, associate principals, or department heads responsible for supporting teachers with the implementation of curriculum and sound instructional practices.
  2. Elementary instructional coaches, middle-school associate principals, and high school department heads are responsible for supporting teachers in all content areas.

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<sup>36</sup> InSPIRED Fellows: In-Service Professionals Increasing Racial and Ethnic Diversity

3. The district has in-house translators in the five major languages spoken in the community<sup>37</sup> with further offsite support for other languages.
  4. The district provides professional development (PD) based on teacher surveys, as well as to support curriculum initiatives, equity, professional learning communities, and high expectations for teaching.
- C. The district annually provides an administrative career ladder for its teachers.
1. Annually, by application and selection, a cadre of 6 to 10 teachers has the opportunity to participate in an administrative internship program with the goal of administrative licensure within the district. This program provides teachers two months of first-hand collaboration and shadowing with a school administrator.
- D. The district maintains a strong human resources (HR) infrastructure in relation to job postings, employee status, licensure, evaluations, and volunteers within the schools.
1. The HR office is responsible for posting and advertising all jobs, participating in recruitment fairs, and processing intake for new employees.
  2. According to DESE data, in 2018-2019 the district had a teacher licensure rate of 99.2 percent. A document review indicated that the HR office attributed this rate to an ongoing initiative to monitor teacher licensure with proactive reminders to teachers about maintaining proper licensure.
  3. The HR office processes all CORI<sup>38</sup> forms for staff and volunteers across the district.
  4. The HR office maintains the district's Baseline Edge database of teacher and non-principal administrative evaluations. The HR department office sends a memo to evaluators when evaluations are overdue.
  5. The HR office prepares background information for contract negotiations and handles grievances and harassment issues for each of the bargaining units.

**Impact:** With the district's ongoing efforts to recruit, support, and retain a diverse and highly qualified teacher core, the district is poised to see an increase in the number of effective teachers who are successful in advancing all students' performance, opportunities, and outcomes.

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<sup>37</sup> The district provides in-house translators for the following languages spoken in the community: Portuguese, Spanish, French, Cape Verdean Creole, and Haitian Creole.

<sup>38</sup> CORI stands for Criminal Offender Record Information.

## ***Challenges and Areas for Growth***

### **2. The district's educator evaluation system does not prioritize opportunities for educators to receive high-quality feedback<sup>39</sup> that helps them improve their practice.**

- A.** The team reviewed the evaluative documentation in the district's Baseline Edge program of 82 randomly selected teachers for the 2019-2020 and 2018-2019 school years. The evaluative documentation for 2019-2020 included 79 formative assessments/evaluations and summative evaluations and for 2018-2019, 66 assessments/evaluations and summative evaluations, for a total of 145 teacher evaluations. The team did not find evaluative documentation in Baseline Edge for four randomly selected teachers.
1. In 44 of the 145 teacher evaluations, teachers did not express their student learning goals as SMART goals.<sup>40</sup> District and school leaders told the team that the last training on developing SMART goals was done five years before the onsite review.
  2. Only 37 of the 66 teacher formative assessments/evaluations and summative evaluations for 2018-2019 provided feedback that would promote teacher growth. District and school leaders and teachers stated that the quality of feedback to teachers depended on the evaluator.
  3. Teachers in one focus group said that the educator evaluation process was "very clumsy," "not helpful," and "not supportive."
  4. One group of principals stated that there was a need to rethink the push for compliance in completing evaluations and instead make the process meaningful.
- B.** The team reviewed the evaluative documentation of 15 randomly selected administrators, including assistant principals, associate principals, and deans. Most evaluative documents were missing.
1. Only three administrators had evaluative documents for the 2019-2020 school year, and only two for the 2018-2019 school year.
- C.** The team attempted to look at the evaluative documentation for all 20 principals and found that they were largely missing.
1. The district provided only three evaluations of principals for the 2018-2019 school year.
  2. The superintendent stated that the main way to ensure that schools had effective leaders was through evaluation. However, he admitted that the district had not always done an

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<sup>39</sup> High-quality feedback is specific, timely, and actionable.

<sup>40</sup> SMART goals are Specific and Strategic; Measurable; Action-Oriented; Rigorous, Realistic, and Results-Focused; and Timed and Tracked.

effective job with principal evaluations, particularly at the secondary level, and that the district did not have a formal process for principals' evaluations.

3. District and school leaders told the review team that evaluations were "a work in progress," that there was not time to complete principal evaluations, and that evaluations were not happening.
  4. Principals stated that they did not use Baseline Edge, the district's educator evaluation management system for their evaluations . It was not clear where the principals' evaluations were stored. However, because of the collective bargaining agreement, assistant principals did use Baseline Edge.
  5. The superintendent noted that some principals have not been evaluated for several years.
- D. At the time of the onsite review in March 2020, the new superintendent was in the process of setting his goals for the district with the school committee, as well as setting goals with central office administrators.
- E. As of the 2015–2016 school year, state educator evaluation regulations (603 CMR 35.07) call for districts to collect and use student feedback as evidence in the teacher evaluation process and staff feedback as evidence in the administrator evaluation process. This feedback may also be used to inform an educator's self-assessment, goal setting, or as evidence to demonstrate growth over time.
1. The team did not find evidence that the district used student or staff feedback in the education evaluation process.
- F. It was unclear to the review team whether the district used educators' impact on student learning in the education evaluation process.

**Impact:** Without high-quality (specific, timely, and actionable) feedback designed to contribute to the professional growth of teachers and administrators, the district is missing opportunities to prepare teachers and administrators to serve a diverse population of students and improve their learning experiences and outcomes.

**3. The district has not developed a coordinated professional development plan that is informed by student and educator data and aligned with district and school priorities.**

- A. While the district's most recent strategic plan (2018-2019) calls for the district to implement a system of high-quality teacher development that connects the district and school improvement plans and leads to improved teaching and student outcomes, it does not provide any action steps or benchmarks related to professional development (PD) that link the schools' priorities with district priorities.

1. In the district's self-assessment submitted in advance of the onsite review, district leaders stated that after analyzing data from multiple sources, schools develop a plan for their own PD based on their needs.
    - a. However, a review of the fourteen school improvement plans (2018-2020) submitted by the district showed that six schools did not list PD activity for the 2018-2019 school year, and only eight schools listed PD topics for the 2018-2019 school year. None of the school improvement plans listed PD initiatives for the 2019-2020 school year.
    - b. During the onsite review, the chief academic officer provided the team with a list of 2019-2020 PD activities in the district.
  2. District and school leaders and teachers said that many PD initiatives were based primarily on teacher surveys and not informed by student performance data or observed trends in instruction.
    - a. Coordinators and middle-school associate principals stated that PD in the district was primarily based on teacher surveys, noting that the district was preparing to connect PD to new curriculum initiatives in 2020-2021.
    - b. Elementary and middle school teachers said that they were not fully represented in the PD planning process and that PD did not always relate to teachers' needs.
  3. At the time of the onsite review, a reinstated executive council for PD had recently initiated the process of developing a districtwide cohesive PD initiative.
- B.** The district has not established training related to the implementation of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in all its schools.
1. In the district's self-assessment submitted in advance of the onsite review, district leaders stated that an outside consultant has provided training on implementing effective PLCs in nine of its elementary schools and three of its middle schools.

**Impact:** Without a thoughtful districtwide strategy and annual plan for PD informed by a variety of district, school, teacher, and student data as well as the district's strategic priorities and those articulated in school improvement plans, the district misses an opportunity to collaboratively plan, design, and deliver coherent PD that is aligned with educators' needs and interests.

## ***Recommendations***

**1. The district should fully implement all components of the educator evaluation system, with a particular emphasis on ensuring that all educators receive high-quality feedback.**

- A.** The district should implement systems to ensure that personnel at all levels develop student learning and professional practice goals in SMART goal format (Specific; Measurable; Action-Oriented; Rigorous, Realistic, and Results-Focused; and Timed and Tracked) consistent with the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework.
  - 1. The district should provide refresher training for all licensed educators in the district on the development of SMART goals.
- B.** The district should ensure that all teachers, principals and administrators are evaluated in accordance with the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework.
  - 1. The superintendent, in conjunction with the human resources office and the office for teaching and learning, should hold all evaluators accountable for ensuring that assigned personnel receive timely and high-quality evaluations.
- C.** The district should implement systems to ensure high-quality verbal and written feedback and provide additional professional development (PD) for evaluators.
  - 1. The district should support and monitor the skills and practices of evaluators to ensure that the feedback they provide is specific, instructive, actionable, and relevant to professional growth and student outcomes.
  - 2. Evaluators should participate in calibration training and activities to ensure consistency, quality, and accuracy in the evaluation process and documentation.
- D.** Performance ratings for all educators should be based in part on student and staff feedback and educators' impact on student learning.
- E.** The district should identify opportunities to streamline the evaluation process to ensure that it is valuable to educators and supports their growth and development.

**Benefits:** A fully implemented educator evaluation system that prioritizes high-quality feedback likely promotes professional growth, improves skills and knowledge, and ultimately increases student performance and outcomes. Providing PD for evaluators can improve the consistency and quality of instructive feedback.

**Recommended resources:**

- *A Protocol for developing S.M.A.R.T Goal Statements* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/>) is designed to support educators in developing S.M.A.R.T. goal statements using the appropriate evaluation rubric and an ESE-developed protocol. *The Evidence Collection Toolkit*



(<http://www.doe.mass.edu/eeval/resources/>) is designed to help districts establish clear and consistent expectations for evidence collection and promote a meaningful process for the collection, analysis, and sharing of high-quality artifacts. The toolkit includes: brief guidance, examples of district strategies, a worksheet for district decision-making, and a handout of Evidence Collection Tips for Educators.

- *On Track with Evaluator Capacity* (<https://www.doe.mass.edu/eeval/resources/pln/OnTrack-EvaluatorCapacity.docx>) is an interactive document that provides specific strategies, lessons learned, and links to district-created resources. It was produced by eight districts that were part of a Professional Learning Network for Supporting Evaluator Capacity.
- *Quick Reference Guide: Opportunities to Streamline the Evaluation Process* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/eeval/resources/QRG-Streamline.pdf>) is designed to help districts reflect on and continuously improve their evaluation systems:
  - What's working? What are the bright spots?
  - How can we streamline the process to stay focused on professional growth and development?
  - What do we need to adjust to ensure our system is valuable to educators and students?
- *Quick Reference Guide: Student and Staff Feedback* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/eeval/resources/QRG-Feedback.pdf>) provides information about how to select feedback instruments and use feedback as part of the educator evaluation system, along with links to relevant resources.
- The Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/eeval/>): This website includes descriptions of the components of the Framework, implementation resources, and frequently asked questions. The site includes links to instructive videos and forms on most components of the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework.

**2. The district should develop a coordinated and comprehensive multi-year professional development plan that is informed by data and includes well-defined, measurable goals that are aligned with district, school, and educator goals.**

- A.** The district's professional development (PD) plan should describe a set of learning experiences that is varied, systematic, informed by student and educator data, with specific, measurable goals aligned with district, school, and educator goals.
1. The district should develop a coordinated PD plan and design, implement, and evaluate the effectiveness of district PD programs and supports.
  2. The district should provide formal opportunities for teachers to participate in the design, implementation, and assessment of PD.

3. PD programming should be sufficiently differentiated to accommodate the individual learning needs and the experience and expertise of teachers, including grade-level, content, and career stage.
  4. All PD programs and activities at both the district and school levels should be regularly evaluated by staff. The PD team should use the results of those evaluations, as well as a careful analysis of student performance and other data, to make needed and timely improvements to future PD programming.
- B.** The district should formalize its process for analyzing student assessment data and other relevant information to inform districtwide and school-specific professional development goals and initiatives.
1. The district should include educator evaluation data to determine areas of need for professional development.
- C.** District leaders should elicit input and feedback from the recently reinstated executive council for PD.

**Benefits:** The development of a carefully planned, data-informed, differentiated PD program will help to strengthen educators' skills, ultimately benefitting student performance and outcomes. Involving staff directly in the design, implementation, and assessment of PD programming will increase their sense of ownership and enhance their support for and active participation in district and school improvement efforts, as well as their own professional growth.

**Recommended resources:**

- *The Massachusetts Standards for Professional Development* ([www.doe.mass.edu/pd/standards.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/pd/standards.html)) describe, identify, and characterize what high quality learning experiences should look like for educators
- Professional development case studies (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/pd/CaseStudies/>) highlight districts implementing meaningful professional development programs that support educators throughout the entire career continuum. Watch examples of PD programs that are job-embedded, teacher-led, data-driven, and aligned to educator and district needs.
- The *PLC Expansion Project* website (<http://plcexpansionproject.weebly.com/>) is designed to support schools and districts in their efforts to establish and sustain cultures that promote Professional Learning Communities.
- DESE's *Professional Development Self-Assessment Guidebook* (<http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/accountability/dsac/professional-development-self-assessment-guide.pdf>) provides tools for analyzing professional development offerings' alignment with the Massachusetts High-Quality Professional Development Standards, the Educator Evaluation Framework, and the Standards and Indicators of Effective Practice.

## Brockton Public Schools Comprehensive District Review

- *Identifying Meaningful Professional Development* (<https://youtu.be/zhuFioO8GbQ>) is a video in which educators from three Massachusetts districts discuss the importance of targeted, meaningful professional development and the ways districts can use the evaluation process to identify the most effective PD supports for all educators.

## Student Support

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### ***Contextual Background***

The district serves a large, diverse, urban population. Many students come to school each day with unique programmatic and support needs. According to DESE data, in school year 2019-2020, 73.4 percent of students were part of the high-needs student group, compared with 48.7 percent statewide, because they were in one or more of the following student groups: economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and English learners (ELs) or former ELs. Economically disadvantaged students made up 57.5 percent of students, compared with 32.8 percent statewide. Students with disabilities represented 16.6 percent of district students, compared with 18.4 percent across the state, and ELs made up 26.2 percent of district students, compared with 10.8 percent statewide.

According to the district's website, the chief officer of student support services leads the office of student support. The office is responsible for the district's departments of special education and health services as well as guidance and attendance. Key personnel associated with the office of student support include the high-school principal/executive director of middle schools, the Edison Academy principal/executive director of operations, the director of facilities, the supervisor of nurses, the director of special education, the assistant director of special education, the coordinator of outside placements, six special education department heads, the coordinator of school adjustment counseling and psychology Pre-K-12, and the chief attendance supervisor.

The office of student support also oversees the district's 4 alternative schools: the Huntington Alternative School (grades 2-12), Frederick Douglass Academy (grades 9-12), Edison Academy (grades 9-12), and Champion High School (grades 9-12), and the Pathways program; each provides a range of tailored educational opportunities to meet students' needs. For example, Edison Academy and Champion High School offer students at risk of dropping out of school alternative opportunities to complete high school. A review of the high school's student handbook indicated that students also had the opportunity to buy back both demerits for behavioral infractions and a limited number of absences to help reach their goal of graduating from high school.

In school year 2018-2019, the district's annual dropout rate was almost 3.9 percent, more than twice the state rate of 1.8 percent. The four-year graduation rate declined from 79 percent in 2016 to 73 percent in 2019, below the 2019 state rate of 88 percent.

### ***Safe and Supportive School Climate and Culture***

School-based staff specifically responsible for providing behavioral and social-emotional support include adjustment counselors and guidance counselors. District staff said that they have struggled in recent years to maintain the needed support staff to address the growing needs of Brockton students, given funding, allocated time, and limited staff. The district does not have a consistent, effective set of positive behavioral approaches at all levels. Students are not provided equitable discipline-related

supports and interventions. The district uses its WISL Plus data<sup>41</sup> and other information to track students' progress and identify needed supports and interventions. Instructional support teams at the elementary and middle schools and student support teams at the high school meet regularly to assess students' needs and monitor progress for students receiving multi-tiered supports. The special education department becomes involved in student programming when appropriate.

The district created a discipline taskforce in 2016. According to the self-assessment that the district completed in advance of the onsite review, the taskforce "developed an intervention model that was therapeutic rather than punitive for students in grades 5-10." District leaders reported that the district was implementing this intervention model and collecting data.

The guidance department has implemented a comprehensive college and career advising curriculum that is presented in classrooms at all grade levels; the curriculum is based on the Massachusetts Model 2.0 document released in 2017 by the Massachusetts School Counselors Association (MASCA). Although guidance counselors provide group lessons for career development and planning and early college planning as well as individual lessons and group and individual counseling supports, the district's Mass Core completion rate (the state-recommended program of study) is 28 percent, compared with the statewide rate of 81 percent.

## ***Strength Finding***

### **1. The district engages families in a collaborative way and demonstrates an appreciation of the different languages spoken in the community.**

**A.** The district has developed a Parents' Academy directed by a parent engagement specialist; the Academy provides families with translation services, translators, resource information, and educational workshops. The district provides in-house translators for the following major languages spoken in the community: Portuguese, Spanish, French, Cape Verdean Creole, and Haitian Creole.

1. The Parents' Academy sponsors monthly workshops facilitated by professionals, sends notifications to families in multiple languages, and provides multiple translators at the workshops.

a. Workshops explore topics such as academic support, effective discipline, parenting, health, nutrition, and safety issues.

b. The Academy also sponsors family fitness night, crafts nights, and game nights.

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<sup>41</sup> WISL Plus stores data about attendance, discipline referrals, grades, and MCAS and STAR assessments. See the Assessment Strength Finding above.

2. The district has surveyed parents about school climate; surveys have been sent to families in multiple languages.
  3. The Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) provides child-care during monthly meetings to encourage attendance by parents of students with disabilities.
    - a. The district encouraged and partnered successfully with SEPAC to apply for a grant to construct a playground at the Downey School.
- B.** The district has established community partnerships and resources to support family and student needs.
1. The Brockton Community and Family Oversight Committee, which focuses on parent engagement and children’s health and wellness, has vetted 30 organizations to provide a variety of programs housed at the North Middle School<sup>42</sup>--- including but not limited to--- homework help, performing arts, sports and health and safety education.
  2. The Champions program partners with the district to support students excluded as a result of a long-term suspension or expulsion as they assimilate back into the community. In addition, Champions provides a mentoring program for students in kindergarten through grade 12. The district provides transportation for mentees to and from the program.
  3. SABURA,<sup>43</sup> an after-school program and camp, is designed to engage and educate Cape Verdean students. In 2019-2020, the program served 200 students. Transportation is provided to students in grades 3 and 4 through grant funding.
  4. Community Schools provides aquatics, ESL, wrestling, and drivers’ education classes from Monday to Thursday. It is supported by SABURA and the Brockton Association for Retarded Citizens (ARC).
  5. Commitment to be Healthy Accountable Responsible and Motivated Students (CHARMS) is a mentoring program for girls in grades 6-8. The after-school program, which is in session for 37 to 40 weeks during the school year and during the summer, targets girls with high suspension rates.

**Impact:** By establishing strong collaborative relationships with families and community partners, the district increases family engagement in the schools while providing important after-school, summer and evening programs for students and families. These opportunities involve families in their students’ education while supporting students’ academic progress and behavioral, social, and emotional development and well-being.

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<sup>42</sup> At the time of the onsite in March 2020, the North Middle School was slated to close.

<sup>43</sup> SABURA is the Cape Verdean Kriolu (Creole) word for “fun.”

## ***Challenges and Areas for Growth***

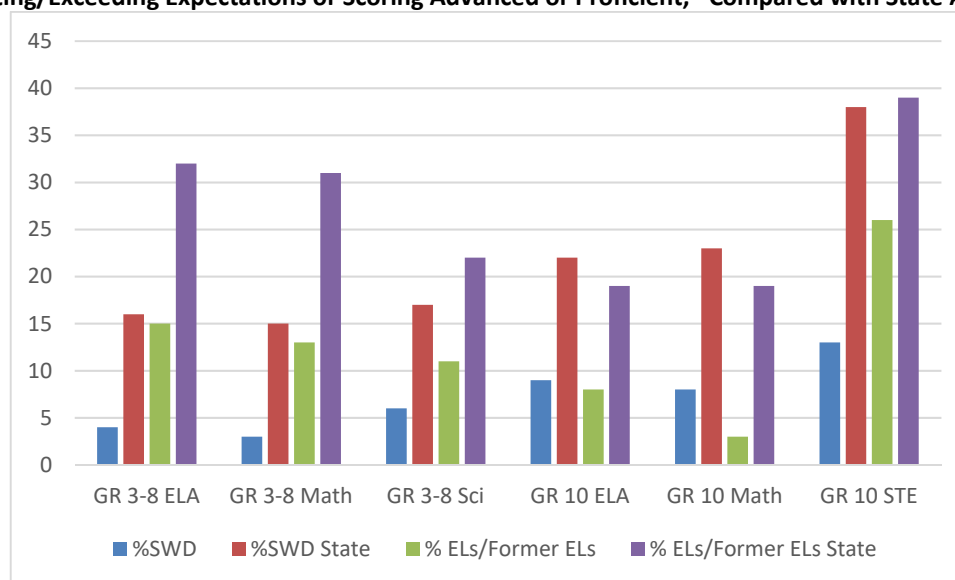
### **2. All district students do not have access to the least restrictive environment. Co-teaching models are not adequately supported.**

- A.** The district has not ensured the appropriate assignment of students with disabilities to educational supports in the least restrictive environment.
  - 1. According to DESE data, in school year 2019-2020, 8 percent of district students aged 6-21 with disabilities were educated in partial inclusion in general education classrooms as compared with the state rate of 14 percent. In addition, 27 percent of students with disabilities are educated in substantially separate placements. This represents more than twice the state rate of 13 percent. In school year 2019-2020, 60 percent of Brockton's students with disabilities were educated in full inclusion in general education classrooms, compared with the state rate of 66 percent.
  - 2. Teachers told review team members that students with disabilities tended to be in full inclusion or in substantially separate programs. They said that the district was considering piloting a partial inclusion program.
  
- B.** The district has not provided the supports necessary to ensure a high-quality co-teaching model.
  - 1. Principals identified the need for the district to better develop integrated learning and a co-teaching model to support ELs' learning needs.
  - 2. Elementary-school teachers reported that the district has not implemented a full co-teaching model.
  - 3. Elementary teachers said that moderate special needs teachers were not included in grade-level or department team meetings.
  - 4. Middle-school teachers said that the substantially separate teachers were not included in department or grade-level meetings.
  - 5. A review of the district's 2018-2019 strategic plan indicated that the district planned to provide professional development (PD) for general education and special education co-teachers to learn more effective methods for co-planning and co-teaching to meet the needs of students with disabilities.
  - 6. The superintendent expressed his desire for additional PD for general education teachers to meet the needs of students with disabilities and ELs in their classrooms.
  - 7. School leaders identified slow growth for students with disabilities in MCAS math assessments as generating the need for improvement in Tier 1 [core] instruction.

- C. MCAS and Next Generation MCAS assessment results for 2019 indicated substantially low attainment for both students with disabilities and ELs compared with peers statewide for grades 3-8 combined and for grade 10, as shown in Table 31, below.
1. For example, 4 percent of Brockton's grade 3-8 students with disabilities met or exceeded expectations on the 2019 Next Generation MCAS assessment in ELA, compared with 16 percent statewide; 3 percent met or exceeded expectations in math compared with 15 percent statewide; and 6 percent in science, compared with 17 percent statewide.
  2. For example, 9 percent of Brockton's grade 10 students with disabilities met or exceeded expectations on the 2019 Next Generation MCAS assessment in ELA, compared with 22 percent statewide; 3 percent met or exceeded expectations in math compared with 19 percent statewide; and 13 percent scored Advanced or Proficient on the MCAS assessment in science, compared with 38 percent statewide.
  3. For example, 15 percent of Brockton's grade 3-8 ELs and former ELs met or exceeded expectations on the 2019 Next Generation MCAS assessment in ELA, compared with 32 percent statewide; 13 percent met or exceeded expectations in math, compared with 31 percent statewide; and 11 percent in science, compared with 22 percent statewide.
  4. For example, 8 percent of Brockton's grade 10 ELs and former ELs met or exceeded expectations on the 2019 Next Generation MCAS assessment in ELA, compared with 19 percent statewide; 8 percent met or exceeded expectations in math, compared with 23 percent statewide; and 26 percent scored Advanced or Proficient on the MCAS science and technology and engineering assessment, compared with 39 percent statewide.



**Table 31: Brockton Public Schools  
2019 Next Generation MCAS Assessment Results for ELA, Math, and Science and MCAS Assessment Results for Science and Technology and Engineering  
Percentage of Students with Disabilities and English Learners (ELs)/Former ELs Meeting/Exceeding Expectations or Scoring Advanced or Proficient,\* Compared with State Average**



\* Results for Next Generation MCAS Assessments for grades 3-8 ELA, math, and science and grade 10 ELA and math report the percentages of students who met or exceeded expectations on the assessment. Results for MCAS assessments for grade 10 science and technology and engineering results report the percentages of students who scored Advanced or Proficient on the assessment.

Source: DESE's School and District Profiles

- D. In addition, according to DESE data for 2018-2019, the dropout rates for students with disabilities and ELs were higher than state rates. Brockton's dropout rate for students with disabilities was 5.3 percent compared with 3.1 percent statewide; the dropout rate for ELs was 8.0 percent, compared with 7.1 percent statewide.
- E. Many students believe that students with learning or physical difficulties are teased or picked on by other students in Brockton's schools.
  - 1. In the spring 2019, 4,837 students participated in DESE's 2019 Views of Climate and Learning (VOCAL) survey, which measures three dimensions of school climate: engagement, safety, and environment.
    - a. Of 938 students who took the grade 10 survey, 32 percent said that the following statement was "Always True" or "Mostly True," compared with 21 percent statewide: "Students with learning or physical difficulties are teased or picked on at my school." (Possible responses were "Always True," "Mostly True," "Mostly Untrue," and "Never True." )

**Impact:** When all students do not have access to the least restrictive environment with equal access to the general education classroom included with their general education peers, and when co-teaching

models are not adequately supported, the district is not likely to close opportunity and achievement gaps for all students.

**3. Positive behavioral approaches have not been implemented across the district. Students are not provided equitable discipline-related supports and interventions.**

**A.** The district does not have a consistent, effective set of positive behavioral approaches at all levels.

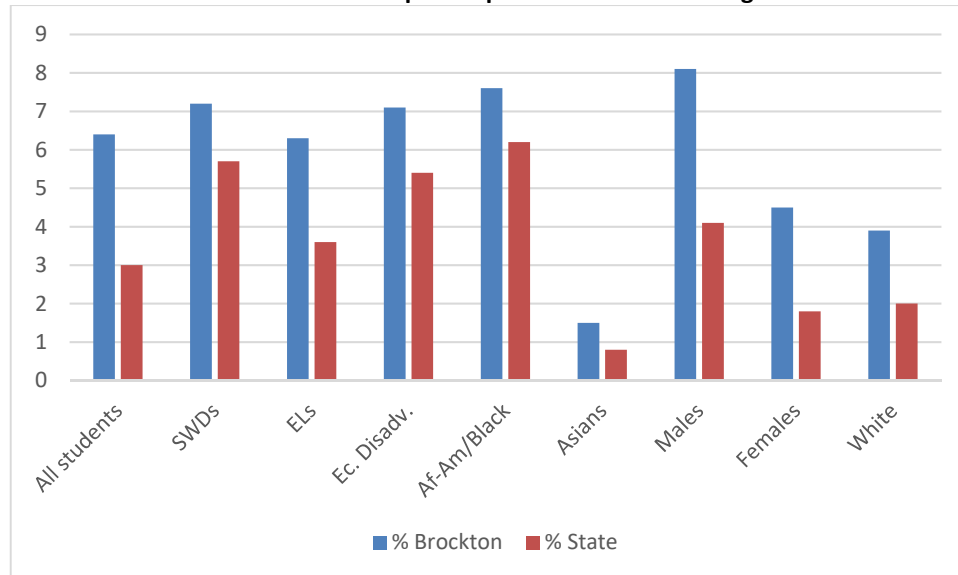
1. All elementary schools have implemented the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework.
2. At the time of the onsite review, middle-school students who struggled with recurring behavioral issues were removed from their school and assigned to the Intervention Program at North Middle School (IPN) for 10 days to develop better social-emotional skills.
3. Interviews and a document review indicated that the middle schools had a plan to implement a positive behavioral intervention system and were in the initial phases of implementing such a system.
  - a. Interviewees noted the scheduling of social emotional learning (SEL) lessons as well as adequate staffing to implement these lessons were challenging in the middle schools.
  - b. Middle-school teachers shared their frustration concerning students who---if not successful in one middle school---could be moved to a different middle school as a solution.
  - c. Middle-school teachers told review team members that disciplinary supports and Tier 2 interventions were missing in the middle schools.
4. When asked about incentives to behave well, one high-school student told the team that teachers did not offer specific incentives for students to behave well; another high-school student said, "Teachers treat you with more respect."

**B.** District leaders expressed their concern that middle-school suspension rates were high.

1. The 2019 out-of-school suspension rates for students in Brockton middle schools were 9.7 percent, 7.7 percent, 13.4 percent, 4.7 percent, 11.2 percent, and 10.2 percent. The district's 2019 overall out-of-school suspension rate was 7.1 percent, compared with the state's rate of 3.0 percent for all students.
2. Teachers expressed the need for additional therapeutic support in the middle schools.
3. The district has hired Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventionists to observe and provide support to individual students and to offer recommendations about individual students and general practice to teachers.

- C. Administrators told the review team that they were also concerned about the suspension rates of English learners, students with disabilities, males, and males of color.
- D. DESE data for school year 2018-2019 indicated that for all student groups, Brockton’s out-of-school suspension rates exceeded state average rates, sometimes by twice, as shown in Table 32 below.
  1. In the 2018-2019 school year: 7.2 percent of students with disabilities in Brockton were suspended out of school, compared with 5.7 percent statewide; 6.3 percent of ELs, compared with 3.6 percent statewide; 7.1 percent of economically disadvantaged students, compared with 5.4 percent statewide; 7.6 percent of African American students, compared with 6.2 percent statewide; and 1.5 percent of Asian students, compared with 0.8 percent statewide.
  2. In the 2018-2019 school year: 7.1 percent of all Brockton students experienced out-of-school suspension, compared with 3.0 percent statewide; 9.7 percent of male students, compared with 4.1 percent statewide; 4.2 percent of female students, compared with 1.8 percent statewide; and 3.7 percent of white students, compared with 2.0 percent statewide.

**Table 32: Brockton Public Schools: 2018-2019 Rates for Out-of-School Suspension for Brockton Student Groups Compared with State Average Rates**



Source: DESE’s School and District Profiles

- D. Many students do not feel safe and supported at school.
  1. In the spring 2019, 4,837 students participated in DESE’s 2019 Views of Climate and Learning (VOCAL) survey, which measures three dimensions of school climate: engagement, safety, and environment.

- a. Of 938 students who took the grade 10 survey, 47 percent said that the following statement was “Always True” or “Mostly True,” compared with 55 percent statewide: “My teachers will first try to help (guide) students who break class rules, instead of punishing them.” (Possible responses were “Always True,” “Mostly True,” “Mostly Untrue,” and “Never True.” )
- b. Of 938 students who took the grade 10 survey, 35 percent said that the following statement was “Always True” or “Mostly True,” compared with 53 percent statewide: “Teachers give students a chance to explain their behavior when they do something wrong.”

**Impact:** Without a cohesive set of approaches to supporting students’ well-being across the district, the district cannot ensure that students receive the support that they need to be successful academically, behaviorally, socially, and emotionally. Students who are removed from school—either to an alternative placement or through suspension—miss valuable instructional time and likely do not experience a sense of belonging and connection.

## ***Recommendations***

- 1. The district should expand its inclusion model with appropriate supports in order to provide all students with a high-quality education in the least restrictive environment and to the maximum extent appropriate.**
  - A.** The district should develop a representative committee that will focus on the expansion of an inclusion model that will emphasize equitable access for all students to the general education program and curriculum.
    1. The committee should create timelines, goals, and resources for full implementation of an inclusion model with emphasis on increasing opportunities for students requiring partial inclusion programming.
    2. Emphasis should be placed on instructional and behavioral strategies that can improve academic and social-emotional outcomes for all students in general education settings.
  - B.** The district should expand the development of the existing co-teaching model for delivering instruction to ensure maximized learning outcomes for all students.
    1. The district should provide meaningful and ongoing professional development for all teachers on high quality co-teaching models—especially how to create and implement more effective instructional strategies to meet the varying needs of diverse student groups in the classroom.

2. Common planning time should be provided for co-teachers to discuss classroom strategies and lesson planning.
3. Teachers of students with disabilities and of English learners should be included in grade level and/or department meetings.

**Benefit:** By implementing a high-quality inclusion model, the district will provide greater access to content, increase academic performance, and provide more opportunities for all students to engage with their peers.

**Recommended resources:**

- The *Educator Effectiveness Guidebook for Inclusive Practice* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/eval/guidebook/>) includes tools for districts, schools, and educators that are aligned to the MA Educator Evaluation Framework and promote evidence-based best practices for inclusion following the principles of Universal Design for Learning, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, and Social and Emotional Learning.
  - The *Massachusetts Tiered System of Support (MTSS)* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfss/mtss/>) is a blueprint for school improvement that focuses on systems, structures and supports across the district, school, and classroom to meet the academic and non-academic needs of all students. The MTSS website includes links to a self-assessment and a variety of helpful resources.
- 2. The district should consider the full implementation of a multi-tiered system of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) throughout all school levels to increase the inclusion of students with behavioral and social-emotional challenges and to improve school climate for all students. Tier 1 practices should be implemented effectively before the introduction of Tier 2 and 3 supports.**
- A.** The district should establish a committee that will develop the PBIS initiative and will be responsible for training, coaching and evaluating the program.
1. The district should provide high-quality, evidence-based, ongoing professional development for all teaching staff in the structures, processes, resources and collaboration needed for districtwide implementation of PBIS.
    - a. The committee should receive sufficient training in data collection and analysis procedures specific to PBIS.
    - b. The committee should meet on a regular and on-going basis.
    - c. While developing the program the committee should consider the input from all stakeholders, including but not limited to, teachers, families and students.

2. The district should continue its program of PD for equity and inclusion, with particular attention paid to strategies to better understand the needs of and to include students with disabilities and English learners in general education classrooms.
3. Behavioral interventionists should have access to support students at all school levels, as needed.
  - a. The district should explore and implement appropriate therapeutic supports for students in need.

**Benefits:** By implementing evidence-based practices across a multi-tiered support system focusing on school and classroom environments, the district can better ensure that all students have access to culturally relevant social supports in the general education classrooms. This can also help limit the need for separating students with behavioral challenges from school.

**Recommended resources:**

- *Supporting and Responding to Behavior: Evidence-Based Classroom Strategies for Teachers* (<https://www.osepideasthatwork.org/evidencebasedclassroomstrategies/>) summarizes evidence-based, positive, proactive, and responsive classroom behavior intervention and support strategies that can help teachers capitalize on instructional time and decrease disruptions.
- *Guiding Principles: A Resource Guide for Improving School Climate and Discipline* (<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/guiding-principles.pdf>) highlights ways in which states and school districts can promote academic excellence by creating safe and productive learning environments for all students.

## Financial and Asset Management

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### ***Contextual Background***

#### *Adequate Budget*

For fiscal year 2019-2020 the district had a municipal budget appropriation of \$166,566,445 to support a Pre-K-12 district of 16,024 students. The budget is developed during the school year beginning with an analysis of staffing needs by principals and directors. In consultation with those administrators the superintendent and central office develop a budget to submit to the school committee. From that point, the budget progresses to a public hearing and eventually to the school committee for approval. Finally, the school committee budget is sent to the mayor, who also chairs the school committee. The mayor proposes the total city budget and sends it to the city council for final approval. The mayor and city council have final say on the budget total. The school committee can allocate that total as they see fit.

Recently the city's financial support of schools has been close to the minimum established by Chapter 70. The city failed to meet required net school spending (NSS) in fiscal years 2009-2010, 2012-2013, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016. In subsequent years the city has exceeded required NSS, on average, by less than 1 percent. The percentage amount over the required minimum contribution in fiscal year 2018-2019 was 1.0 percent, compared with a state average of nearly 27 percent. The city was \$75,744 (.05 percent) below its tax levy limit and had a \$61 million override capacity in 2020. Debt service was less than 5 percent of the city budget.

Under the 2019 Massachusetts Student Opportunity Act, Brockton is targeted to receive an additional \$21,093,362 in Chapter 70 aid, for a total of \$207,593,871. The city's minimum contribution will increase by \$2,077,342 to \$48,112,285.<sup>44</sup> Thus, the district will have to increase net school spending by \$23,170,704 to \$255,706,156. At the time of the onsite review in March 2020, the district had begun to prioritize expenditures to reach this level.

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<sup>44</sup> The fiscal year 2021 required local contribution and aid numbers are preliminary and very likely will change as a result of the state fiscal downturn. These numbers are based on the governor's House 2 budget proposal and subject to change.

**Table 33: Brockton Public Schools  
Chapter 70 Program for Fiscal Year 2020, Compared with Fiscal Year 2021**

	<b>FY 2019-2020</b>	<b>FY 2020-2021</b>	<b>Dollar Increase</b>
<b>Minimum Contribution</b>	\$46,034,943	\$48,112,285	\$2,077,342
<b>Chapter 70 Aid</b>	\$186,500,509	\$207,593,871	\$21,093,362
<b>Total Net School Spending</b>	\$232,535,452	\$255,706,156	\$23,170,704

Sources: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/chapter70/fy2021/prelim.html> and <http://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/chapter70/fy2020/chapter-20.html>

Although the district and the city do not have a written agreement detailing municipal expenditures that are provided to the district, they do have an accounting procedure that otherwise appears appropriate. The district and the city use an interconnected MUNIS accounting system.

*Capital Planning and Facility Maintenance*

The district has 21 schools serving students in pre-kindergarten through grade 12. The review team and teachers noted that some schools were well maintained but there were maintenance and cleanliness issues in many schools.

**Strength Finding**

**1. The district has constructed some new schools to replace older buildings, has renovated others, and has a long-term plan designed to make certain that school facilities are conducive to learning and suited to educational purposes.**

- A.** Since 1998 the district has constructed new buildings and closed or renovated older buildings.
  - 1. From 1998 to 2009 Brockton built five new schools, while closing six nineteenth century buildings. In addition, three schools had major renovation projects.
  - 2. From 2010 to the 2019-2020 school year Brockton completed over \$12 million in MSBA funded accelerated repairs on 4 buildings and over \$30 million in green school repairs on another 8 buildings.
  - 3. Between 1998 and 2020 all district buildings, except three, are either new or have had major repairs or renovations. At the time of the onsite review, the Huntington School was been closed as a K-5 elementary (although it is still used for an alternative program), and Frederick Douglass Academy and Champion High School, located at the Keith Center in Brockton, were scheduled to move to a newly renovated space in 2022. The district plans to do a feasibility study in 2020-2021 to prepare for major renovations to the high school.
- B.** The district and the city have a long-term capital plan and budget for building maintenance and repair.



## Brockton Public Schools Comprehensive District Review

1. In 2014 the Brockton Public Schools strategic plan called for a short-term and a long-term plan to address building maintenance and refurbishing. In 2017 Brockton's mayor and the district superintendent separately issued reports calling for a study of municipal buildings and schools. These reports led to the hiring of an architectural firm to conduct a facilities study.
2. In December 2018 the architectural firm presented a Municipal and School Facilities Study and Master Plan. The school assessment included studies of Brockton's demographics, enrollment projections, and a survey of existing school facilities.
  - a. The school facilities survey evaluated the district's 24 school buildings, providing an overview of the general condition of each building using common statistics, findings of needs, and a facility priority chart assessing 37 building features, ranking them from 4 (good) to 1 (poor).
3. Beginning in the summer of 2019 the district and the city created a six-year capital plan and budget based on the Municipal and School Facilities Study and Master Plan.
  - a. The capital plan includes upgrades to all buildings, including accessibility, HVAC,<sup>45</sup> roofs, and technology.
  - b. The plan also specifically calls for the renovation of Brockton High School and North Middle School and relocating Frederick Douglass Academy and Champion High School from the Keith Center to North Middle School, which is no longer needed as a middle school.
  - c. City officials have also planned to financially support the capital budget as best they can.
    - i. Brockton High School's renovation, if approved by MSBA, should be substantially funded at approximately 80 percent.
    - ii. Several bond issues are to be paid off, in the near future, freeing up the ability to bond new projects.
    - iii. The city is well below its debt limit and has the ability to bond new projects.

**Impact:** Brockton's history of building new schools and renovating old schools, along with its long-term capital plan, likely ensure that educational and program facilities are conducive to student learning.

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<sup>45</sup> HVAC stands for heating, ventilation, and air conditioning.

## ***Challenges and Areas for Growth***

### **2. The district's public budget documents are not clear and user friendly. In addition, the link between district and school goals and budget development is unclear.**

#### **A. The public budget documents are not clear and user friendly.**

1. The fiscal year 2019-2020 public budget is a 30-page document that contains a one-page spreadsheet overview along with several supporting pieces, including educational materials by school, athletic costs, and utility costs. The review team also reviewed other budget data that was presented during school committee budget presentations in school year 2018-2019.
  - a. The district's self-assessment submitted in advance of the onsite review rated the budget document as "Somewhat Well" described by the indicator "The district's budget documents are clear, accurate, and user-friendly. They are explicitly connected to district and school improvement planning and demonstrate how student performance data---particularly data related to performance, access, and opportunity outcomes and gaps---has been used to set budget priorities." Possible ratings are "Very Well," "Well," "Somewhat Well," and "Not at All Well."
  - b. A city official stated that the budget document for the district and the city needed to be improved, noting "The average citizen may not understand it [the budget]. We can do better and will improve."
2. The public budget detail document shows only the planned budget for the upcoming year and the previous year's budget data. There is no actual expenditure history. The budget does not show the actual increase or decrease from the previous years.
  - a. Personnel budgets are only expressed in general summaries such as \$49,678,292 for elementary personnel. There is no breakdown by school, department, or type of personnel.
3. The budget does not have FTE data in the personnel sections or FTE history for previous years. This means that stakeholders cannot see changes in staffing levels from year to year.
  - a. Because the budget does not include FTE data, there is no way to compare the amount spent on staffing with budget dollars, particularly by school or department, from year to year.

#### **B. The review team did not find evidence that the budget was explicitly connected to district and school improvement planning. The budget does not provide a narrative section that clearly demonstrates how resource allocations are required to meet specific improvement goals from the district's strategic plan.**

1. While district and school improvement plans have goals that require funding, the budget is not explicitly connected to those documents. An in-depth study of the district's strategic plan, School Improvement Plans, Sustainable Improvement Plans, and budget may show such a connection, but to the general public this connection would not be evident.

**Impact:** A budget without and explicit connection to district and school goals, and without student performance data and clear information about funding and staffing, does not give stakeholders a clear picture of how resources are allocated to support the district's priorities.

### ***Recommendation***

1. **The district should develop a clear, comprehensive, budget document that clearly details how the budget is aligned with district and school goals.**
  - A. The district should develop a budget document that contains all essential information about the financial operations of the district.
    1. All funding sources should be included with detailed spending plans. Estimated grant amounts, circuit breaker, school choice, and expenses from other revolving accounts would be included in this section.
  - B. The public budget document should include information about how the budget supports district and school goals, as well as descriptions and subtotals for schools and program staffing and costs.
    1. The document should detail how student performance data, particularly data related to performance, access, and opportunity outcomes and gaps have been used to set budget priorities.
    2. The district should consider including in the budget document narratives explaining underlying assumptions and major changes.
  - C. At least two years of actual, clearly labeled expenses, the current year's budget numbers, and the proposed budget amounts should be included. This financial data will allow stakeholders to make comparisons among years and recognize trends in actual and proposed spending.

**Benefits:** By implementing this recommendation, the district will have a transparent and complete budget document that clearly presents the district's efforts to improve student outcomes through effective planning and implementation of goals and priorities. In addition, the budget document, and the process used to create it, will inform budget development and likely create trust and confidence among stakeholders in the district's sound stewardship of public funds.

**Recommended resources:**

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

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

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### Review Team Members

The review was conducted from March 2–5, 2020, by the following team of independent DESE consultants.

1. Heather Zavadsky, Ph. D., Leadership and Governance
2. Linda L. Greyser, Ed. D., Curriculum and Instruction and *review team coordinator*
3. Karen Laba, Ph. D., Assessment
4. Charles M. Burnett, Ed. D., Human Resources and Professional Development
5. Valerie Murphy, M. S. W., Student Support
6. David King, M. S., M. Ed., Financial and Asset management
7. Jacob Foster, Ph. D., lesson observations
8. Carla Hulce, M. Ed., lesson observations
9. Linda Denault, Ed. D., lesson observations

### District Review Activities

The following activities were conducted during the review:

The team conducted interviews with the following financial personnel: chief financial officer, associate director of financial services, chief financial officer for the city of Brockton, treasurer/collector for the city of Brockton, city council president, and mayor.

The team conducted interviews with the following members of the school committee: mayor/chair, vice-chair, and five members.

The review team conducted interviews with the following representatives of the teachers' association: president and vice-president of the Brockton Education Association.

The team conducted interviews/focus groups with the following central office administrators: superintendent; chief academic officer; chief officer for student support services; executive director of assessment, accountability, technology, and student data research; executive director of human resources; executive director of middle schools/principal of Brockton High School, executive director of operations/principal Edison Academy; director of bilingual education; director of special education; director of instructional technology; director of facilities; director of parent information and school registration center; director of community schools and after-school programs; three associate directors

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of human resources; coordinator of ELA and social sciences, Pre-K-5; coordinator of math and science Pre-K-5; coordinator of school adjustment counseling and psychology; and coordinator of Title I and McKinney Vento; and specialist for parent engagement.

The team visited the following schools: Dr. W. Arnone Community School (Pre-K-5), Brookfield Elementary School (K-5), Downey Elementary School (K-5), Gilmore Elementary School (K-5), Hancock Elementary School (K-5), John F. Kennedy Elementary School (K-5), Louis F. Angelo Elementary School (K-5), Manthala F. George Elementary School (K-5), Mary E. Baker Elementary School (K-5), Oscar F. Raymond Elementary School (K-5), Edgar B. Davis School (K-8), Huntington Therapeutic Day School (grades 2-12), Ashfield Middle School (grades 6-8), East Middle School (grades 6-8), Joseph F. Plouffe Academy (grades 6-8), South Middle School (grades 6-8), West Middle School (grades 6-8), Brockton Champion High School (grades 9-12), Brockton High School (grades 9-12, SP), Edison Academy (grades 9-12), and Frederick Douglass Academy (grades 9-12).

During school visits, the team conducted interviews/focus groups with students, students' families, and 17 principals, and focus groups with 15 elementary-school teachers, 12 middle-school teachers, and 9 high-school teachers.

The team observed 220 classes in the district: 70 at the high school, the 3 alternative high school programs, and grades 9-12 at the therapeutic day school; 61 at 5 middle schools, grades 6-8 at the K-8 school, and the Huntington Therapeutic Day School; and 89 at the 10 elementary schools, kindergarten through grade 5 at the K-8 school, and the Huntington Therapeutic Day School.

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

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

### Site Visit Schedule

<p><b>Monday</b> 03/02/2020</p>	<p><b>Tuesday</b> 03/03/2020</p>	<p><b>Wednesday</b> 03/04/2020</p>	<p><b>Thursday</b> 03/05/2020</p>
<p>Orientation with district leaders and principals; interviews with district staff, principals, associate principals, one assistant principal, one assistant dean, coaches, department heads, special education team chair, school adjustment counselor; Brockton Education Association president and vice-president; document reviews; interview with teachers' association; and visits to Brockton High School, Frederick Douglass Academy, and Joseph F. Plouffe Academy, for classroom observations; review team meeting.</p>	<p>Interviews with district staff and principals, high school dean, associate principals, science, technology and engineering/mathematics (STEM) coaches, teachers, school adjustment counselors; review of personnel files; teachers' focus groups; students' and students' and focus groups; mayor and other city officials; and visits to Brockton High School, Ashfield Middle School, East Middle School, South Middle School, Brookfield Elementary School, Downey Elementary School, Arnone Community School, and Edison Academy for classroom observations; review team meeting.</p>	<p>Interviews with school leaders; interviews with school committee members; visits to Davis Elementary School, Manthala F. George Elementary School, Angelo Elementary School, Hancock Elementary School, and West Middle School for classroom observations, review team meeting.</p>	<p>Interviews with school leaders; follow-up interviews; district review team meeting; visits to Brockton High School, Huntington Therapeutic Day School, Brockton Champion High School, Oscar Raymond Elementary School, Gilmore Elementary School, John F. Kennedy Elementary School, Manthala George Elementary School, and Mary E. Baker Elementary School, for classroom observations; review team meeting; district wrap-up meeting with the superintendent.</p>

## Appendix B: Enrollment, Attendance, Expenditures

**Table B1a: Brockton Public Schools  
2019–2020 Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity**

Group	District	Percent of Total	State	Percent of Total
African-American	9,611	60.0%	87,053	9.2%
Asian	318	2.0%	67,527	7.1%
Hispanic	2,723	17.0%	205,136	21.6%
Native American	58	0.4%	2,081	0.2%
White	2,573	16.1%	549,006	57.9%
Native Hawaiian	32	0.2%	781	0.1%
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic/Latino	709	4.4%	37,244	3.9%
All	16,024	100.0%	948,828	100.0%

Note: As of October 1, 2019

**Table B1b: Brockton Public Schools  
2019–2020 Student Enrollment by High Needs Populations**

Group	District			State		
	N	Percent of High Needs	Percent of District	N	Percent of High Needs	Percent of State
Students w/ Disabilities	2,672	22.6%	16.6%	176,741	37.9%	18.4%
Econ. Disadvantaged	9,212	78.0%	57.5%	310,873	66.6%	32.8%
EL and Former EL	4,194	35.5%	26.2%	102,861	22.0%	10.8%
All high needs students	11,815	100.0%	73.4%	466,930	100.0%	48.7%

Notes: As of October 1, 2019. District and state numbers and percentages for students with disabilities and high needs students are calculated including students in out-of-district placements. Total district enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 16,104; total state enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 959,394.



**Table B2a: Brockton Public Schools  
Attendance Rates, 2016–2019**

Group	N (2019)	2016	2017	2018	2019	4-yr Change	State (2019)
African American/Black	10,378	95.0	94.3	93.8	94.2	-0.8	94.1
Asian	328	95.7	94.8	94.3	95.3	-0.4	96.2
Hispanic or Latino	2,795	92.3	91.8	91.4	91.6	-0.7	92.7
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	765	93.4	92.5	91.5	92.0	-1.4	94.4
White	2,989	93.4	92.6	91.9	92.4	-1.0	95.1
High Needs	13,248	93.7	92.8	92.5	92.9	-0.8	93.3
Econ. Disadvantaged	11,157	93.2	92.5	92.0	92.6	-0.6	92.7
Students w/ Disabilities	2,876	92.4	91.3	91.1	91.2	-1.2	93.0
English Learners	4,617	95.3	94.6	94.0	94.3	-1.0	93.2
All	17,357	94.2	93.5	93.0	93.4	-0.8	94.6

Notes: The attendance rate is calculated by dividing the total number of days students attended school by the total number of days students were enrolled in a particular school year. A student’s attendance rate is counted toward any district the student attended. In addition, district attendance rates included students who were out placed in public collaborative or private alternative schools/programs at public expense. Attendance rates have been rounded; percent change is based on unrounded numbers.

**Table B2b: Brockton Public Schools  
Chronic Absence Rates\* by Student Group, 2016–2019**

Group	N (2019)	2016	2017	2018	2019	4-yr Change	State (2019)
African American/Black	10,378	13.5	16.9	18.3	17.4	3.9	16.2
Asian	328	10.6	17.8	14.2	14.3	3.7	7.5
Hispanic or Latino	2,795	26.7	28.6	31.8	30.3	3.6	21.7
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	765	21.1	23.9	30.9	28.6	7.5	13.7
White	2,989	21.1	24.2	27.0	24.9	3.8	9.7
High Needs	13,248	20.1	24.2	25.5	24.0	3.9	19.4
Econ. Disadvantaged	11,157	22.5	26.1	27.9	25.9	3.4	22.5
Students w/ Disabilities	2,876	25.8	31.1	32.2	30.9	5.1	20.3
English Learners	4,617	11.6	14.8	17.1	16.5	4.9	20.3
All	17,357	17.4	20.6	22.5	21.2	3.8	12.9

\* Chronic absence is defined as the percentage of students absent 10 percent or more of their total number of student days of membership in a school.

**Table B3: Brockton Public Schools  
Expenditures, Chapter 70 State Aid, and Net School Spending Fiscal Years 2017–2019**

	FY17		FY18		FY19	
	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual
<b>Expenditures</b>						
From local appropriations for schools:						
By school committee	\$169,915,358	\$175,538,453	\$174,955,763	\$171,208,938	\$169,915,358	\$176,381,454
By municipality	\$65,661,102	\$65,193,745	\$64,674,868	\$65,193,321	\$65,661,102	\$69,210,669
Total from local appropriations	\$235,576,460	\$240,732,198	\$239,630,631	\$236,402,258	\$235,576,460	\$245,592,123
From revolving funds and grants	--	\$31,537,809	--	\$29,018,105	--	\$32,502,874
Total expenditures	--	\$272,270,007	--	\$265,420,364	--	\$278,094,996
<b>Chapter 70 aid to education program</b>						
Chapter 70 state aid*	--	\$171,012,998	--	\$171,549,638	--	\$178,296,402
Required local contribution	--	\$40,895,634	--	\$42,271,112	--	\$43,627,822
Required net school spending**	--	\$211,908,632	--	\$213,820,750	--	\$221,924,224
Actual net school spending	--	\$216,333,768	--	\$215,953,486	--	\$223,671,247
Over/under required (\$)	--	\$4,425,136	--	\$2,132,736	--	\$1,747,023
Over/under required (%)	--	2.1%	--	1.0%	--	0.8%

\*Chapter 70 state aid funds are deposited in the local general fund and spent as local appropriations.

\*\*Required net school spending is the total of Chapter 70 aid and required local contribution. Net school spending includes only expenditures from local appropriations, not revolving funds and grants. It includes expenditures for most administration, instruction, operations, and out-of-district tuitions. It does not include transportation, school lunches, debt, or capital.

Sources: FY16, FY17, and FY18 District End-of-Year Reports, Chapter 70 Program information on DESE website

Data retrieved 1/13/20

**Table B4: Brockton Public Schools  
Expenditures Per In-District Pupil  
Fiscal Years 2017–2019**

<b>Expenditure Category</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
Administration	\$546	\$515	\$554
Instructional leadership (district and school)	\$1,096	\$911	\$971
Teachers	\$5,730	\$5,877	\$6,181
Other teaching services	\$908	\$851	\$932
Professional development	\$53	\$37	\$33
Instructional materials, equipment and technology	\$276	\$424	\$290
Guidance, counseling and testing services	\$486	\$485	\$540
Pupil services	\$1,520	\$1,656	\$1,786
Operations and maintenance	\$991	\$789	\$1,017
Insurance, retirement and other fixed costs	\$2,703	\$2,752	\$2,811
<b>Total expenditures per in-district pupil</b>	<b>\$14,308</b>	<b>\$14,297</b>	<b>\$15,114</b>

Sources: Per-pupil expenditure reports on DESE website

Note: Any discrepancy between expenditures and total is because of rounding.

## Appendix C: Instructional Inventory

Focus Area #1: Learning Objectives & Expectations		Insufficient	Limited	Sufficient	Compelling	Average Number of Points
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	( 1 to 4)
1. The teacher demonstrates knowledge of the subject matter.	ES	10%	31%	47%	11%	2.6
	MS	5%	43%	46%	7%	2.5
	HS	6%	41%	46%	7%	2.5
	<b>Total #</b>	16	83	102	19	2.6
	<b>Total %</b>	7%	38%	46%	9%	
2. The teacher ensures that students understand what they should be learning in the lesson and why.	ES	19%	37%	27%	17%	2.4
	MS	15%	43%	30%	13%	2.4
	HS	14%	46%	36%	3%	2.3
	<b>Total #</b>	36	91	67	25	2.4
	<b>Total %</b>	16%	42%	31%	11%	
3. The teacher uses appropriate classroom activities well matched to the learning objective(s).	ES	16%	34%	28%	22%	2.6
	MS	15%	46%	34%	5%	2.3
	HS	17%	37%	31%	14%	2.4
	<b>Total #</b>	35	84	68	32	2.4
	<b>Total %</b>	16%	38%	31%	15%	
4. The teacher conducts frequent checks for student understanding, provides feedback, and adjusts instruction.	ES	12%	38%	29%	20%	2.6
	MS	21%	34%	38%	7%	2.3
	HS	10%	46%	34%	10%	2.4
	<b>Total #</b>	31	87	73	29	2.5
	<b>Total %</b>	14%	40%	33%	13%	
Total Score For Focus Area #1	ES					<b>10.1</b>
	MS					<b>9.5</b>
	HS					<b>9.7</b>
	<b>Total</b>					<b>9.8</b>

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<b>Focus Area #2: Student Engagement &amp; Higher-Order Thinking</b>		Insufficient	Limited	Sufficient	Compelling	Average number of Points
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(1 to 4)
5. Students assume responsibility to learn and are engaged in the lesson.	<b>ES</b>	8%	26%	45%	21%	2.8
	<b>MS</b>	15%	38%	39%	8%	2.4
	<b>HS</b>	19%	43%	26%	13%	2.3
	<b>Total #</b>	29	76	82	33	2.5
	<b>Total %</b>	13%	35%	37%	15%	
6. Students engage in higher-order thinking.	<b>ES</b>	28%	39%	28%	4%	2.1
	<b>MS</b>	31%	43%	23%	3%	2.0
	<b>HS</b>	33%	34%	24%	9%	2.1
	<b>Total #</b>	67	85	56	12	2.1
	<b>Total %</b>	30%	39%	25%	5%	
7. Students communicate their ideas and thinking with each other.	<b>ES</b>	28%	35%	29%	8%	2.2
	<b>MS</b>	41%	33%	25%	2%	1.9
	<b>HS</b>	41%	35%	23%	1%	1.9
	<b>Total #</b>	78	75	57	9	2.0
	<b>Total %</b>	36%	34%	26%	4%	
8. Students engage with meaningful, real-world tasks.	<b>ES</b>	34%	30%	31%	5%	2.0
	<b>MS</b>	30%	34%	30%	7%	2.1
	<b>HS</b>	36%	29%	17%	19%	2.2
	<b>Total #</b>	72	308	60	21	2.1
	<b>Total %</b>	16%	67%	13%	5%	
Total Score For Focus Area #2	<b>ES</b>					<b>9.1</b>
	<b>MS</b>					<b>8.4</b>
	<b>HS</b>					<b>8.5</b>
	<b>Total</b>					<b>8.7</b>

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Focus Area #3: Inclusive Practice & Classroom Culture		Insufficient	Limited	Sufficient	Compelling	Average Number of Points
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(1 to 4)
9. The teacher ensures that students are engaging in challenging tasks regardless of learning needs.	ES	15%	44%	37%	4%	2.3
	MS	41%	31%	28%	0%	1.9
	HS	37%	36%	23%	4%	1.9
	<b>Total #</b>	64	83	66	7	2.1
	<b>Total %</b>	29%	38%	30%	3%	
10. The teacher uses a variety of instructional strategies.	ES	18%	38%	31%	12%	2.4
	MS	34%	36%	26%	3%	2.0
	HS	36%	39%	21%	4%	1.9
	<b>Total #</b>	62	83	59	16	2.1
	<b>Total %</b>	28%	38%	27%	7%	
11. Classroom routines and positive supports are in place to ensure that students behave appropriately.	ES	6%	13%	42%	39%	3.1
	MS	11%	13%	52%	23%	2.9
	HS	14%	23%	31%	31%	2.8
	<b>Total #</b>	22	36	91	71	3.0
	<b>Total %</b>	10%	16%	41%	32%	
12. The classroom climate is conducive to teaching and learning.	ES	4%	26%	43%	27%	2.9
	MS	11%	28%	43%	18%	2.7
	HS	16%	35%	49%	0%	2.3
	<b>Total #</b>	19	58	89	35	2.7
	<b>Total %</b>	9%	29%	44%	17%	
Total Score For Focus Area #3	ES					<b>10.8</b>
	MS					<b>9.4</b>
	HS					<b>9.0</b>
	<b>Total</b>					<b>9.9</b>