



**Dover-Sherborn Regional School Committee
Dover School Committee
Sherborn School Committee**

Tuesday, January 30, 2024

6:30 PM

Dover-Sherborn Middle School Library

[Livestream via Dover-Sherborn Cable Television](#)

AGENDA

1. Call to Order

2. Community Comments

[Zoom Link](#) (Meeting ID: 828 0571 4017; Passcode: 318411)

(Zoom session will close after Community Comments)

3. Superintendent Comments

- Progress on Superintendent's Goals

4. Assistant Superintendent Comments

5. Discussion Items

- Findings from GOALS Program Review
- Update from Policy Subcommittee
- Calendar Task Force Report for 2024-2025 District School Calendar

6. Action Items

7. Consent Items

AR

- Approval of Joint School Committee Minutes – September 12, 2023

8. Informational Items

- Proposed Increase of TEC Reserve Fund
- Update on Food & Nutrition Services
- DESE District Review

9. Items for April 2, 2024 Meeting

10. Adjourn

NOTE: The listings of matters are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair, which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may, in fact, be discussed and other items not listed may also be raised for discussion to the extent permitted by law.

The Public Schools of Dover and Sherborn

157 Farm Street
Dover, MA 02030
Phone: 508-785-0036 Fax: 508-785-2239
www.doversherborn.org



Elizabeth M. McCoy, Superintendent
Denton Conklin, Assistant Superintendent

Dawn Fattore, Business Administrator
Kate McCarthy, Director of Student Services

To: Dover, Sherborn, and Dover-Sherborn Regional School Committees
From: Elizabeth McCoy
Re: Superintendent Goals Update 2023-24
Date: January 30, 2024

As part of the formative evaluation process, I have included updates regarding each of the three district goals and each of my three superintendent goals below (see bold italicized text). I will provide additional details at Tuesday's meeting and am happy to answer questions at that time.

DISTRICT'S IMPROVEMENT GOALS 2023-24

Vision for Teaching and Learning

Establish a shared vision for teaching and learning that engages students as active learners in the development of skills depicted in the Dover-Sherborn Portrait of a Graduate.

- ***This summer, Assistant Superintendent Denny Conklin and I synthesized the lists of best practices from each of the four schools into one PK-12 list. At the August District Leadership and PK-12 Instructional Leadership Retreats, administrators and teacher leaders vetted the identified 9 Best Practices to ensure alignment with the district's guiding frameworks, including the Portrait of a Graduate, Challenge Success, Multi-Tiered System of Support, Universal Design for Learning, CASEL Standards, etc.***
- ***Building leaders developed student learning and professional practice goals focused on supporting educators to increase implementation of the 9 Best Practices across classrooms. Educators adopted common goals around increasing strategies in two Best Practice areas of their choosing. Evaluators use classroom observations as an opportunity to provide constructive feedback relative to teachers' integration of new strategies while educators self-reflect and provide evidence of growth through the evaluation process.***
- ***Throughout the year, PK-12 Instructional Leaders are working with grade level/subject specific teams to identify "look-fors" for each of the 9 Best Practices. Identified indicators will be used for classroom observations via the evaluation process and the Instructional Rounds protocol.***
- ***Each month, building-based faculties are focusing on a different Best Practice. Principals share professional articles prior to the meeting to frame the discussion and educators are invited to share classroom strategies with their peers.***
- ***The full day of Professional Development in November provided educators an opportunity to engage in workshops to further support implementation of their selected Best Practices. Teachers chose from a variety of session topics, including "The Epic Guide to Student Engagement: Developing***

The Dover Sherborn Schools share in the mission to inspire, challenge and support all students as they discover and pursue their full potential.

Student-Centered Activities,” “AI For Engagement & Creativity in an Elementary Classroom,” and “A Toolkit for Rethinking Assessment.”

- *Every month I co-conduct classroom walkthroughs with each of the building principals using Bloom's Taxonomy and the Ladder of Engagement as measures of critical thinking and student engagement (defined in the 9 Best Practices as voice, agency, collaboration, individualization and growth). During our debrief, principals and I share our findings and discuss how to provide educators with targeted, constructive feedback to improve classroom practice.*
- *Educators are continuing with the curriculum audit to affirm that what they teach engages students in rigorous and relevant material. The audit was launched during the 2022-23 school year and has teachers review materials for evidence of 11 components: high expectations, higher order thinking, critical thinking, student engagement, student voice, student expression/choice, and representation.*

Student Sense of Belonging

Nurture a positive school culture and strong sense of belonging as a means to improve academic and social-emotional outcomes for all students.

- *The elementary schools are continuing to pilot the Fly Five curriculum as a means of incorporating CASEL skills into Morning Meeting and various activities throughout the school day.*
- *Each of the four schools continues to expand opportunities for students to develop leadership skills and build community. The Chickering Citizens program allows fifth graders to work with younger students through a variety of roles such as reading buddies, classroom helpers, recess equipment managers and assembly leaders. Fifth graders at Pine Hill do similar through the Leadership and Legacy strand of the Pine Hill Promise, and students at both the Middle and High Schools have been trained as Peer Leaders to serve as upstanders, workshop facilitators and/or peer mediators.*
- *The Director of Guidance and all four assistant principals are currently enrolled in the Restorative Practice training through Suffolk University and continue to work with their home teams on developing school-wide community norms and responses to events that resolve conflict, repair harm and hold students accountable.*
- *Dover-Sherborn is one of four “committed” districts participating in the launch of METCO 2.0. Through training and coaching sessions, a cohort of five Dover-Sherborn leaders are developing a plan to bring the district into greater alignment with the recently released METCO Blueprint.*

Transparent Communication

Refine communication strategies relative to district goals and practices as a means to increase transparency and build trust with families and the community.

- *The new district website launched this summer and continues to be tweaked based on user feedback. For example, the Student Services portion has been broken into multiple pages for ease of access to information relative to Student Services, Special Education, School Counseling and Health Services. Content updates have been completed relative to the METCO, Multilingual Language and Athletic programs as well.*
- *Leaders continue to collaborate on the format and content of district and school newsletters so as to include similar components such as a message from the leader, highlights relative to teaching and learning, reminders of upcoming events, etc.*
- *The Communication Hub is located on the district website’s landing page, providing all parents, caregivers and community members access to newsletters from all four schools.*
- *Office Hours with the Superintendent were hosted on four occasions this fall/winter as an opportunity for parents, caregivers and community members to drop in with questions or to discuss topics of interest.*

The Public Schools of Dover and Sherborn do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex/gender, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, or homelessness.

Sessions were held via Zoom in the mornings and evenings on different days of the week to provide access to a wide range of stakeholders with varying schedules.

- *I have provided updates on the Strategic Plan and District Goals through meetings with all four school parent groups (Chickering CSA, Pine Hill PTO, Middle School POSITIVE and High School PTO) as well as both the Dover and Sherborn Councils on Aging.*
- *Assistant Superintendent Conklin and I hosted a State of the District presentation open to all educators, parents, caregivers and community members. The objective was to provide an overview of current district data and demographics, highlight examples of school programming and student outcomes, and outline initiatives and next steps in support of a shared vision for 21st century learning. While the session was held in person, a recording of it will be made available to all stakeholders via email, newsletters and the district website.*
- *In reconnecting with our roots as a district, workshops have been scheduled throughout the year focused on Challenge Success (Well-Balanced Student, Well-Balanced Child, Belonging) and the Portrait of a Graduate (Industry Panel, College Panel). While the event were/will be held in-person, recordings were/will be made available to all stakeholders via email, newsletters and the district website.*
- *The district leadership team has engaged in professional development with a communication specialist. Workshops have focused on strengthening and reinforcing core messages about the schools; and leveraging the website, social media, e-news and other tools to reach a variety of audiences regularly.*
- *The district has partnered with Parentsquare as a means of streamlining and centralizing home-school communication through a single app. The Instructional Technology Department has configured the program and training for educators and parents/guardians is scheduled for the spring and summer.*

SUPERINTENDENT GOALS 2023-24

Goal 1: Vision for Teaching and Learning (Student Learning)

In order to increase student engagement and foster deep learning, I will support educators in further utilizing student-centered, inquiry-based, skills-focused instruction.

- *Please see the evidence listed under District Goal 1 above.*

Key Actions

1. Develop a list of district-wide “best practices” and identify key indicators as evidence of application across grade levels and disciplines.
2. Support leaders in creating goals centered around expanding educators’ capacity to utilize multiple “best practices.”
3. Conduct classroom observations focused on key indicators; engage in post-observation conversations with evaluators to share strategies for coaching educators and providing targeted feedback.
4. Share sample observations and problems of practice between leaders as a means of calibrating findings and strengthening individual and collective efficacy.

Benchmarks

1. A list of district-wide “best practices” and individual grade level/department indicators.
2. Leaders’ student learning and professional practice goals.
3. A schedule of classroom observations and debriefing sessions with building leaders.
4. Leadership Team meeting agendas and sample calibration activities.

The Public Schools of Dover and Sherborn do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex/gender, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, or homelessness.

Goal 2: District Measures of Success (Student Learning)

Identify a comprehensive set of data points to monitor student, school and district growth relative to established goals and benchmarks.

- *The district has partnered with Open Architects to develop three dashboards, one focused on MCAS data to measure growth and inform instruction (inward facing), another using diagnostic and benchmark statistics to assign interventions via a multi-tiered systems of support (inward facing), and a third tracking progress on district and school improvement goals (public). Based on our own strategic goals and samples from other districts, we are currently in the process of identifying which factors will best measure movement on various initiatives.*
- *Each school-based data team continues to refine its protocols for gathering and analyzing information relative to individual student achievement and progress toward identified goals and benchmarks.*
- *I attended a workshop at the MASS/MASC Joint Conference in December entitled, “Staying on Message: Keeping Your Strategic Plan on the Forefront.” Ideas and examples gathered will help inform the development of our district-wide dashboard.*

Key Actions

1. Identify a set of data points to measure growth in priority areas as identified in the District Strategy.
2. Establish a process for the ongoing collection and analysis of data from multiple sources by various teams.
3. Develop a platform to share findings with the community relative to progress in priority areas.

Benchmarks

1. List of data points and measures of district progress and growth.
2. An outlined process for the ongoing collections and analysis of data.
3. A public platform to share data and findings relative to established goals.

Goal 3: Transparent Communication (Professional Practice)

Streamline platforms and practices to ensure timely, effective systems of communication between home and school.

- *Please see the evidence listed under District Goal 3 above.*

Key Actions

1. Refine the new district website based on user feedback and analytics.
2. Streamline access to program information available in principal reports, school newsletters and social media posts.
3. Develop guidelines relative to norms of communication between families and educators, building leaders, district administrators and school committee members.

Benchmarks

1. Updates to the new district website over time.
2. Increased access to various sources of information for parents and community members.
3. A communication guidebook.
4. Feedback from stakeholders around access to key information.

The Public Schools of Dover and Sherborn

157 Farm Street
Dover, MA 02030
Phone: 508-785-0036 Fax: 508-785-2239
www.doversherborn.org



Elizabeth M. McCoy, Superintendent
Denton Conklin, Assistant Superintendent

Dawn Fattore, Business Administrator
Kate McCarthy, Director of Student Services

TO: Dover-Sherborn Joint School Committee

FROM: Kate McCarthy, Director of Student Services

DATE: January 25th, 2024

RE: Special Education High Needs Program Review

Attached please find:

- Executive Summary of the High Needs/G.O.A.L.S. Program Evaluation completed by Anne Donovan, Director of School Consultation Services at ACCEPT Collaborative

Explanation:

ACCEPT Collaborative completed a Program Review of Special Education Programming for High Needs students across the district. This review was completed as a recommendation from the Special Education District Review by Dorsey Yearley and Deb Levine in the 2022-2023 school year.

Enclosed you will find the executive summary of the program review. A presentation will be provided to discuss the next steps in the district as a result of the recommendations.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Program Evaluation was conducted for the Dover-Sherborn Public Schools in order to examine special education services provided within the Elementary G.O.A.L.S. Program for students in Grades K-5. The scope of the evaluation also included an analysis of special education programming at the middle school level to inform long-term planning considerations for developing a continuum of services for students in the G.O.A.L.S. Program. The purpose of the evaluation was to determine overall program effectiveness in supporting positive outcomes for students with Autism and related developmental disabilities serviced within this program and to identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement for the District to consider.

Several guiding questions were developed based on conversations with the District's administrative team to help frame the scope of this evaluation. These guiding questions included:

- 1) What is the current model of the G.O.A.L.S. Program and what types of specially designed instruction are embedded within the program?
- 2) Is the organization of staff resources efficient and effective in providing students with appropriate levels of support to access the curriculum within the least restrictive environment?
- 3) What type of program structure would best serve students with disabilities who require highly specialized programming?
- 4) What are the recent data trends in the G.O.A.L.S. Program enrollment and how can this information be utilized to inform long-term planning regarding the development of a cohesive program continuum across schools?

Several assessment methods were utilized throughout the program evaluation process. The *Essential Best Practices in Inclusive Schools* quality indicators tool by the National Center on Inclusive Education was used as the primary assessment measure. This assessment tool is a compilation of evidence-based practices essential for delivering high-quality educational services to students with significant disabilities, including those with Autism, intellectual disabilities, and multiple disabilities who require substantial support. The *Autism Program Quality Indicators* was also utilized as a supplementary measure. Comprehensive reviews of student IEPs and evaluations, state data collected by the DESE, documents provided by the District, direct observations of special education services provided within the general education setting as well as within alternative settings, and verbal feedback provided by staff were also key sources of data that were integrated into the program evaluation process.

The evaluation identifies notable strengths in inclusive models of special education, UDL implementation, professional expertise, and family partnerships. Several opportunities for improvement are also outlined, emphasizing the need for a clear program model, alignment of specialized programs, reduced reliance on paraprofessionals, enhanced inclusion practices, improved curricula, and streamlined delivery of related services. A summary of these strengths and opportunities for improvement are captured below:

Strengths:

1. Inclusive Models of Special Education:

- Substantial emphasis placed on servicing students in inclusive settings within the district
- High rates of inclusive placements for students with disabilities compared to state averages
- Inclusive model of the G.O.A.L.S. Program was highlighted as a core strength
- Social and emotional benefits of inclusive education acknowledged by educators

2. Universal Design for Learning (UDL):

- Implementation of UDL principles observed at the elementary level
- General education teachers provided multiple means of representation and engagement
- Overall high levels of student engagement noted

3. Professional Expertise and Staffing Ratios:

- Educators possess strong skill sets and extensive knowledge in their disciplines
- Positive reception of new educators hired this year, including both G.O.A.L.S. teachers
- Robust staff ratios

4. Family Partnerships:

- Establishment of supportive family partnerships highlighted as a consistent strength
- Positive parent engagement practices reflected in indicators

Opportunities for Improvement:

1. Program Model and Team Vision:

- Lack of clear programmatic model and shared vision
- Significant cross-over of student profiles and specially designed instruction noted between G.O.A.L.S. and Learning Lab models
- Need for reconceptualization of program based on student needs versus ASD diagnosis
- Development of entrance and exit criteria recommended

2. Vertical Alignment of Specialized Programs:

- Lack of a true programmatic model for students with significant disabilities at the secondary level
- Concerns about the three-student “cohort” being perceived as isolated
- Considerations for restructuring cohort model and integrating within the Learning Center

3. Use of Paraprofessionals:

- Overreliance on paraprofessionals noted
- Concerns about use of paraprofessionals and practices negatively impacting student independence
- Suggestions for evidence-based alternatives, including flexible support and co-teaching

4. Meaningful Inclusion and Peer Interactions:

- Need to redefine “meaningful inclusion”, particularly for students with moderate to severe disabilities
- Significantly limited peer interactions observed during inclusion times
- Opportunities for neurodiversity education, strategic peer groupings, and peer-mediated strategies

5. Curriculum and Instruction:

- Concerns raised about the impact of adopted core curricula on special education
- Need for evidence-based supplemental and alternative curricula for students with more substantial academic needs

6. Related Services:

- Disjointed service delivery model relative to instruction in social-emotional skills
- Lack of structured SEL curriculum and coordination among service providers
- Need for increased collaboration to embed social, emotional, and regulation skills cohesively into the program

Recommendations:

Several detailed recommendations were formulated based on the findings from this Program Evaluation to assist the district in establishing a well-defined program model and ensuring the ongoing delivery of high-quality special education services. Recommendations are organized into four main categories: *Program Model, Staff Roles and Responsibilities, Curriculum and Instruction, and Additional Considerations*. These recommendations highlight the importance of creating a shared vision for the program with clarity in the overarching model and eligibility criteria, developing clarity in the roles of all program staff, providing explicit instruction for all students in social-emotional and behavioral regulation skills, and ensuring greater alignment of evidence-based curricula and instructional supports. Additional recommendations for staff professional development, assistive technology, and long-term planning considerations were also identified.

DOVER SHERBORN METCO REPRESENTATIVE TO THE DOVER SHERBORN REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

The Dover School Committee, The Sherborn School Committee, and The Dover-Sherborn Regional School Committee, hereafter referred to as “The School Committees”, proposes to add in addition to its regular members and its Student Advisory Committee member, one non-voting representative or two co-representatives (hereafter referred to as the METCO representative) who shall represent families participating in the Dover-Sherborn METCO program. The METCO representative or co-representatives will be authorized to sit at all open sessions of the School Committees and to discuss matters of concern in a fashion similar to School Committee members. In addition, the METCO representative or co-representatives may be assigned other responsibilities including committee assignments as determined by the chair of the representative School Committee.

METCO representatives or co-representatives shall be chosen annually by the Boston Dover-Sherborn METCO Parent Organization (BWMPO) and appointed by the School Committees for a one-year term. The selection process shall be determined by the BWMPO in keeping with its bylaws. The METCO representative or co-representative will be eligible for re-nomination and reappointment to subsequent terms. If a vacancy occurs, the officers of the BWMPO may nominate a person for appointment to complete the unexpired term.

A top-down photograph of a desk workspace. In the center is a wooden clipboard with a calendar for January. A black binder clip is at the top of the calendar. To the left of the calendar are a pair of black-rimmed glasses and a wooden pencil. To the right is a white coffee cup with a latte art design. In front of the calendar is a black rectangular sign with the year '2024' in white. Several white paper clips are scattered on the desk surface.

A Memo From the Calendar Task Force

TO DOVER-SHERBORN STUDENTS, FAMILIES & STAFF MEMBERS
January 11, 2024

This document is intended to provide an overview of the objectives, process undergone and findings of the Calendar Task Force in anticipation of a second community survey that will be distributed the week of January 15th.

CALENDAR TASK FORCE OVERVIEW

Some Dover-Sherborn students, parents/caregivers and educators have expressed interest in updating the school calendar to be more inclusive of the various holidays and traditions observed by and celebrated within our community.

As a result, the Dover, Sherborn, and Dover-Sherborn Regional School Committees convened a task force to conduct research and bring forth proposals for possible implementation during the 2024-25 school year. The goals of the Calendar Task Force include:

- Maintaining academic excellence and the continuity of learning for all students.
- Providing opportunities for students to learn about various holidays/observances throughout the school year.
- Honoring the diverse religious and cultural practices of community members.
- Adhering to state and federal regulations relative to mandated holidays and instructional time.

Over multiple meetings, the Calendar Task Force has engaged in the analysis of data and information relative to:

- Student, family and staff demographics and priorities relative to the school calendar.
- Student and staff attendance rates on holidays on which school is in session.
- Celebrations and rituals for each of the community-identified holidays/observances and the types of accommodations students, families and staff may need as a result (no homework, an early release day, a full day off from school, etc.).
- School calendars of comparable districts and those we compete with via sports and extracurricular activities.
- The impact of additional no-school days on the length of the school year and the schedules/child-care needs of families.

STATE/FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

- Elementary students are required to have a minimum of 900 hours of instruction per year.
- Secondary students are required to have a minimum of 990 hours of instruction per year.
- School calendars must include a minimum of 180 school days.
- The school year cannot extend beyond June 30.
- Federally mandated holidays that require a day off from school include: *New Year's Day, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday, Presidents' Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day/Indigenous Peoples' Day, Veterans' Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day.*

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

- In total there were 845 respondents, including 204 students, 499 parents/caregivers and 142 staff members.
- Students prioritized honoring diversity, representation and inclusivity in the school calendar; families prioritized the continuity of learning with the fewest interruptions possible; staff prioritized securing the earliest possible last day of school with the other two factors close behind.
- Students indicated stress and tension as a result of having to choose between their faith/family/culture and school when school is in session on a holiday they observe; more than half choose to attend school anyway.

INITIAL FINDINGS

Based on the analysis of survey data, regardless of how the district structures its calendar, the Dover-Sherborn community feels it is important to:

- Educate students about various holidays as they occur throughout the year.
- Ensure students and faculty adhere to [school committee policies](#) relative to attendance and coursework on/around various holidays.
- Consider the impact of scheduled athletic events and extracurricular activities on/around various holidays.

Based on the review of calendars from comparable districts, there are significant variations in holidays/observances that are recognized with days off from school. For example:

An "X" indicates NO SCHOOL on that day

	Rosh Hashanah	Yom Kippur	Diwali	Day Before Christmas	Lunar New Year	Good Friday	Eid Al-Fitr
Dover-Sherborn CURRENT CALENDAR	X	X	-	X	-	X	-
Acton-Boxborough	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Concord-Carlisle	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Holliston	X	X	X	-	-	X	-
Hopkinton	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Lexington	X	X	-	X	-	X	-
Lincoln-Sudbury	X	X	-	X	-	X	-
Natick	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Needham	X	X	-	X	-	X	-
Medfield	X	X	-	X	-	X	-
Wayland	X	X	-	X	X	X	-
Wellesley	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Weston	X	X	-	X	-	X	-

PROPOSALS

1. **No Holidays** - Remove all non-federally mandated holidays from the calendar and provide students/staff with accommodations for holidays/observances as needed per district policy. *(Note: This provides equity as no non-mandated holidays are recognized with a day off from school. Concord-Carlisle made this change a few years ago.)*
2. **Status Quo** - Maintain the current calendar which recognizes all federally mandated holidays plus Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, the Day Before Christmas and Good Friday. Provide students/staff with accommodations for additional holidays/observances as needed per district policy.
3. **Add Diwali, Lunar New Year and Eid Al-Fidr** - Maintain the current calendar which recognizes all federally mandated holidays plus Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, the Day Before Christmas and Good Friday AND add Diwali, Lunar New Year and Eid Al-Fitr as a days off from school. Provide students/staff with accommodations for additional holidays/observances as needed per district policy. *(Note: Beyond the holidays included in our current calendar, Lunar New Year, Diwali and Eid Al-Fitr are the next most frequently requested by the community to be recognized with days off from school. Some comparable districts have incorporated all three, including Acton-Boxborough, Hopkinton, Natick and Wellesley.)*

In projecting the impact of additional no-school days over the next 10 years, given that holidays sometimes fall on weekends or school vacations, in all but one of the 10 years (2031-2032), the addition of Diwali, Lunar New Year and Eid Al-Fidr only extend the school year by **one or two days**.

Within this 10 year period, with the addition of three no-school days, the last day of school would range from **June 18-23** (assuming no snow days), while recognizing that Juneteenth (6/19) is a federal holiday and therefore a day off from school.

Should the committees decide to remove all non-mandated holidays and create a secular calendar, over the next ten years the last day of school would range from **June 10-June 16** (assuming no snow days).

A separate question remains around whether to continue to recognize **Good Friday** with a full day off from school since it is not federally mandated and does not require rituals/observances during school hours.

It should also be noted that the school committees have the authority to decide when any vacation begins/ends. Therefore, while a secular calendar would not recognize **Christmas Eve** as a day off from school, the school committees may opt to begin the holiday break on December 23rd or 24th regardless. The initial calendar survey indicated strong community support for starting December vacation on/before the 24th, not necessarily for religious reasons, but rather to extend the break; this information will be relayed to the committees when making their decision.

NEXT STEPS

Feedback will be collected from students, families and staff via Calendar Feedback Form #2; an email with a link to the survey will be sent on Monday, January 15th. The purpose of this survey is advisory in nature - it is not a vote.

The Calendar Task Force will take any/all data collected under advisement when deciding which proposal(s) to send forth to the three school committees at their joint meeting on January 30.

CALENDAR TASK FORCE MEMBERS

Marina Baklanova (parent); Renee Grady (educator); Beth Hecker (educator); Kelly Hodge (educator); Fiona Hu (parent); Zahra Ishikawa (parent); Keith Kaplan (educator); Beth McCoy (administrator); Andrea Moran (educator); Judi Miller (Regional School Committee); Deb Reinemann (administrator); Goli Sepehr (Dover School Committee); Tracy Sockolasky (administrator); Parag Tandon (parent); Christine Walsh (Sherborn School Committee); 6 High School Students



Elizabeth McCoy

Elizabeth is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters

	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030	2030-2031	2031-2032	2032-2033
REQUIRED HOLIDAYS									
Labor Day	9/2 (Mon)	1 9/1 (Mon)	1 9/7 (Mon)	1 9/6 (Mon)	1 9/4 (Mon)	1 9/3 (Mon)	1 9/2 (Mon)	1 9/1 (Mon)	1 9/6 (Mon)
Indig Peoples Day	10/14 (Mon)	1 10/13 (Mon)	1 10/12 (Mon)	1 10/11 (Mon)	1 10/9 (Mon)	1 10/8 (Mon)	1 10/14 (Mon)	1 10/13 (Mon)	1 10/11 (Mon)
Veteran's Day	11/11 (Mon)	1 11/11 (Tues)	1 11/11 (Wed)	1 11/11 (Thurs)	1 11/11 (Sat)	1 11/11 (Sun)	1 11/11 (Mon)	1 11/11 (Tues)	1 11/11 (Wed)
Thanksgiving	11/28, 11/29	2 11/27, 11/28	2 11/26, 11/27	2 11/25, 11/26	2 11/23, 11/24	2 11/22, 11/23	2 11/28, 11/29	2 11/27, 11/28	2 11/25, 11/26
Christmas (12/25)	Wed	1 Thurs	1 Fri	1 Sat (Fri counts)	1 Mon (vac)	0 Tues (vac)	0 Wed	1 Thurs	1 Sat (Fri counts)
MLK Jr. Day	1/20 (Mon)	1 1/18 (Mon)	1 1/18 (Mon)	1 1/17 (Mon)	1 1/15 (Mon)	1 1/21 (Mon)	1 1/20 (Mon)	1 1/19 (Mon)	1 1/17 (Mon)
President's Day	2/17 (Mon) vac	0 2/16 (Mon) vac	0 2/15 (Mon) vac	0 2/21 (Mon) vac	0 2/19 (Mon) vac	0 2/18 (Mon) vac	0 2/17 (Mon) vac	0 2/16 (Mon) vac	0 2/14 (Mon) vac
Good Friday	4/18	1 4/3	1 3/26	1 4/14	1 3/30	1 4/19 (vac)	0 4/11	1 3/26	1 4/15
Memorial Day	5/26	1 5/25	1 5/31	1 5/29	1 5/28	1 5/27	1 5/26	1 5/31	1 5/30
Juneleenth (6/19)	6/19 (Thurs)	1 6/19 (Fri)	1 6/19 (Sat)	1 6/19 (Mon)	1 6/19 (Tues)	1 6/19 (Wed)	1 6/19 (Thurs)	1 6/19 (Sat)	1 6/19 (Sun)
Total	10	10	10	10	10	9	8	10	10



Dover-Sherborn

Calendar Task Force Report

Joint Meeting of the School Committees

January 30, 2024



Convening a Task Force

- **Community Comments at September 20, 2022 and January 17, 2023 Meetings**

“There were motions to approve the 2023-24 District Calendar as submitted and to direct the Superintendent to form a Task Force comprised of school committee members, educators, students, and community members to review the school calendar for greater inclusivity of religious and cultural holidays.” (Minutes, January 17, 2023 joint meeting)

- **Recommendations in the 2022 Equity Audit:**

“We heard widespread appreciation for recent efforts to acknowledge, teach about, and celebrate a wider range of cultural and religious holidays, and to accommodate student absences for important celebrations. Elementary students appreciated finding books about Diwali, Eid, and other holidays in classroom and school libraries.”

“Another goal could be a plan to move beyond the “food, festivals, fun” approach to incorporating learning about diverse cultures and religions. Parents and students largely appreciate the work done so far to celebrate a broader range of holidays and highlight family traditions, but there’s room to integrate diverse cultures into academic instruction more regularly and authentically.”



Task Force Members

- *6 High School Students*
- *Marina Baklanova - Parent*
- *Renee Grady - Chickering Educator*
- *Beth Hecker - High School Educator*
- *Kelly Hodge - Pine Hill Educator*
- *Fiona Hu - Parent*
- *Zahra Ishikawa - Parent*
- *Keith Kaplan - High School Educator*
- *Beth McCoy - Superintendent*
- *Andrea Moran - Middle School Educator*
- *Judi Miller - Regional School Committee*
- *Deb Reinemann - Chickering Principal*
- *Goli Sepehr - Dover School Committee*
- *Tracy Sockalosky - Middle School Asst. Principal*
- *Parag Tandon - Parent*
- *Christine Walsh - Sherborn School Committee*



Goals

- **Maintaining academic excellence and the continuity of learning for all students.**
- **Providing opportunities for students to learn about various holidays/observances throughout the school year.**
- **Honoring the diverse religious and cultural practices of community members.**
- **Adhering to state and federal regulations relative to mandated holidays and instructional time.**



Timeline

May	Outline process
June	Finalize community survey
September	Launch survey & conduct research
October	Review survey results & research
November	Develop proposals & gather feedback
January	Finalize proposal
	Present proposal to school committees



Areas of Research

- **Student, family and staff demographics and priorities relative to the school calendar.**
- **Student and staff attendance rates on holidays on which school is in session.**
- **Celebrations and rituals for each of the community-identified holidays/observances and the types of accommodations students, families and staff may need as a result (no homework, an early release day, a full day off from school, etc.).**
- **School calendars of comparable districts and those we compete with via sports and extracurricular activities.**
- **The impact of additional no-school days on the length of the school year and the schedules/child-care needs of families and staff.**



Current Practice

- **School begins Wednesday before Labor Day**
- **181 School Days**
- **Federal Holidays (required)**
 - *New Year's Day, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday, Washington's Birthday, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day/Indigenous Peoples' Day, Veterans' Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day*
- **Additional Holidays**
 - *Yom Kippur, Rosh Hashanah, Day before Christmas, Good Friday*
- **School Vacations**
 - *December, February, April*
- **Early Release Days**
 - *Day before Thanksgiving plus 10 elementary, 8 middle, 6 high*



Parameters & Considerations

- **STATE LAW**

- 180 School days
- Elementary schools - 900 hours of time on learning
- Secondary schools - 990 hours of time on learning
- Seniors must attend a minimum of 168 days
- School year cannot extend beyond June 30

- **CONSIDERATIONS**

- Consistency of learning/exams
- Activities & athletic schedules (MIAA, competing schools)
- Educator professional development
- Employee contracts
- Childcare/family schedules (DS families & families of staff)



Survey #1 Questions

- Do you need an exemption or time off from school for any religious or cultural observance (other than the mandated holidays already provided for)?
- In order for DS to have more accurate information about the religious diversity within our community, please check ALL that apply to you/your family.
- Below is a list of some religious or cultural observances. For any of the observances that APPLY TO YOU, please indicate the related impact on your availability for a school day.
- Please tell us about any other religious or cultural observances that are not listed and may have an impact on a school day. Add any information that helps the committee understand more about the observance or holiday.
- DS Schools must meet the state-required minimum numbers of days. As we are gaining perspectives from the community, do you have any suggestions on how we may accommodate both additional observed holidays and meet the required in-school number of days?
- With 181 days to work with, we have competing priorities in terms of allocating in-school and out-of-school days. Please indicate which factors are important to you.
 - Honoring diversity, representation, and inclusivity in our observed holidays
 - Maximizing continuity of learning with the fewest interruptions (days off) possible
 - Securing the earliest possible last day of school
- To address your top priority above, please select your preference from the following options:
 - Maintain current calendar; Reduce non-mandated holidays; Eliminate non-mandated holidays; Add additional holidays
- If you have any additional suggestions or thoughts regarding the questions above, please share your thoughts here.



Survey #1 Questions

STUDENT ONLY QUESTIONS

- When school is NOT in session due to a cultural/religious observance, please select the option that best describes your experience with work that is assigned and due on the following day. Select all that apply.
- In the past, if school HAS been in session during a religious or cultural holiday you observe, did you attend school anyway?
- Do you (or would you) feel comfortable asking teachers for flexibility with assignments, homework and exams so that you can observe a cultural or religious holiday?
- Have extra-curricular activities or athletics ever affected your ability to celebrate a religious or cultural observance? If so, how?



Results: Community Survey #1

- In total there were 845 respondents, including 204 students, 499 parents/caregivers and 142 staff members.
- Students prioritized honoring diversity, representation and inclusivity in the school calendar; families prioritized the continuity of learning with the fewest interruptions possible; staff prioritized securing the earliest possible last day of school (for purpose of equity) with the other two factors close behind.
- Students indicated stress and tension as a result of having to choose between their faith/family/culture and school when school is in session on a holiday they observe; more than half choose to attend school anyway.



District Demographic - Religion

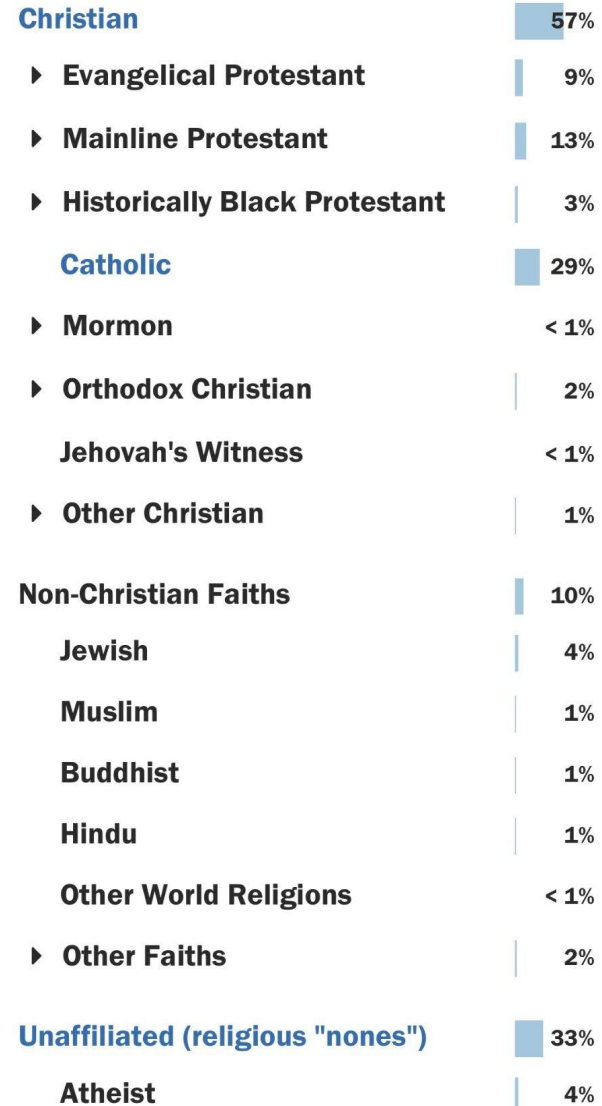
Of 499 family responses...

Catholic	24.8%
Protestant	17.4%
Jewish	11.6%
Agnostic	11.6%
None	9%
Atheist	7%
Other	4%
Prefer Not Say	3.9%
Muslim	2.8%
Hindu	2.5%
Orthodox Christian	2.4%
Buddhist	1.2%
Christian Scientist	0.3%
Jain	0.3%
Mormon	0.3%
Jehovah's Witness	0%
Sikh	0%

Catholic	Total 42.4%
Protestant	
Prefer Not Say	Total 31.5%
Agnostic	
Atheist	
None	
Other	Total 16%
Jewish	Total 11.6%
Muslim	Total 2.8%
Hindu	Total 2.5%
Orthodox Christian	Total 2.4%
Buddhist	Total 1.2%

Boston Area Religions

The Pew Center





District Demographic - Race

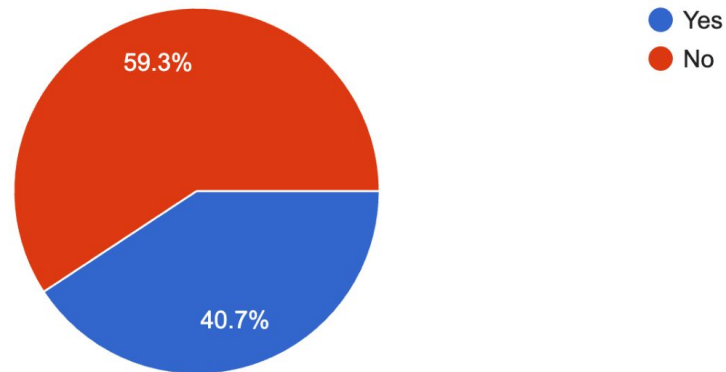
***Numbers represent % of total population**

	Chickering	Pine Hill	Middle School	High School
African Am/Black	2	4	2	2
Asian	12	9	11	13
Hispanic	4	4	5	5
Multi-Racial	7	5	7	7
White	73	75	72	70

Students - Need Accommodations?

Do you need an exemption or time off from school for any religious or cultural observance (other than the mandated holidays already provided for)?

189 responses



Most Requested Days Off

	STUDENTS N = 204	FAMILIES N = 499	STAFF N = 142
IDENTIFY WITH RELIGION	Christmas Eve (69) Yom Kippur (48) Good Friday (47) Rosh Hashanah (24) Ash Wednesday (21) Diwali (18) Holy Thursday (18) Maha Shivaratri (11)	Christmas Eve (135) Yom Kippur (46) Rosh Hashanah (39) Good Friday (33) Eid Al-Fitr (13) Eid Al-Adha (12)	Christmas Eve (70) Good Friday (28)
DO NOT IDENTIFY WITH RELIGION	Christmas Eve (47) Lunar New Year (33)* Orth. Christmas (28) Good Friday (21) Orth. Good Fri. (12) Diwali (11) Holy Thursday (11)	Christmas Eve (77) Good Friday (30) Lunar New Year (23)*	Christmas Eve (17)

*Lunar New Year is associated with a culture, not a religion.

NOTE: Tally included if more than 10 individuals in that group indicated needing a full day off. Holidays with less than 10 requests by one or more stakeholder groups include Ash Wednesday, Ashura, Dussehra, Eid Al-Adha, Maha Shivaratri, Nowruz, Orthodox Christmas, Orthodox Good Friday, Yalda.



Student Attendance

Diwali

Chickering: +22% dismissals (+2)

Pine Hill: +11% tardies (+2)

DSMS : +19% tardies (+3)

DSHS : +6% absences (+1)

Lunar New Year

DSMS : + 4% absences (+1), +100% tardies (+16), +38% dismissals (+8)

Eid al-Fitr

(no substantial shifts in attendance)

*(#) indicates number of students



Comparable District Calendars

An "X" indicates NO SCHOOL on that day

	Rosh Hashanah	Yom Kippur	Diwali	Day Before Christmas	Lunar New Year	Good Friday	Eid Al-Fitr
Dover-Sherborn CURRENT CALENDAR	X	X	-	X	-	X	-
Acton-Boxborough	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Concord-Carlisle	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Holliston	X	X	X	-	-	X	-
Hopkinton	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Lexington	X	X	-	X	-	X	-
Lincoln-Sudbury	X	X	-	X	-	X	-
Natick	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Needham	X	X	-	X	-	X	-
Medfield	X	X	-	X	-	X	-
Wayland	X	X	-	X	X	X	-
Wellesley	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Weston	X	X	-	X	-	X	-

District Calendars with Only Mandated Holidays



Abington

Bedford

Burlington (+Good Friday)

Concord-Carlisle

Easton

Hadley

Littleton

Millis

Nashoba Regional

North Adams

Norton

Provincetown

Shrewsbury

Stoneham

Stoughton

Sutton

Watertown (+.5 Good Friday)



Local Private School Calendars

DAYS OFF FROM SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- Charles River Yom Kippur (& early release on Good Friday)
- Dana Hall Yom Kippur & Good Friday
- Dedham Country Day Yom Kippur
- Milton Academy Yom Kippur
- Nobles & Greenough Yom Kippur
- Rivers Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur & Good Friday
- Roxbury Latin (none)



School End Dates

- **Maintaining the non-mandated holidays included in the current calendar (Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Day Before Christmas, Good Friday)**
- **Attend school 181 days**

	24-25	25-26	26-27	27-28	28-29	29-30	30-31	31-32	32-33
No Snow End	W 6/18	Th 6/18	M 6/21	W 6/14	Th 6/14	Th 6/13	W 6/18	W 6/16	W 6/15
5 Snow Day End	Th 6/26	F 6/26	M 6/28	Th 6/22	F 6/22	F 6/21	Th 6/26	Th 6/24	Th 6/23
# Add'l Days*	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	3	2

***The addition of Diwali, Lunar New Year and Eid Al-Fitr would add this number of days beyond the dates listed above. June 19th is a federally mandated holiday and school cannot be held.**



Agreements

- **Educate students about various holidays as they occur throughout the year.**
- **Ensure students and faculty adhere to school committee policies relative to attendance and coursework on/around various holidays.**
- **Consider the impact of scheduled athletic events and extracurricular activities on/around various holidays.**
- **Strong community support for starting December vacation on/before the 24th, not necessarily for religious reasons, but rather to extend the break.**



School Committee Policy IMDC

“Teachers should use good judgment and be especially sensitive to the feelings of students who might not wish to participate for religious reasons. Requests for excusal in school activities associated with these holidays should be granted.

When students are absent from school for the purpose of religious observance during religious holidays, it is expected that:

- 1. teachers should not, in good faith, conduct special or unique activities which will cause those students to miss out on an important curriculum event;**
- 2. teachers should not, in good faith, administer quizzes/tests on that day;**
- 3. teachers will keep homework expectations reasonable and the due date will be extended as needed to allow for religious observances;**
- 4. teachers will provide opportunity and time to make up any work missed on that day as defined in the student handbook;**
- 5. teachers will give extra help and additional support to those who require such attention;**
- 6. teachers will not, in good faith, require projects or long term assignments due on the day of or the day after a religious holiday.”**



Results: Community Survey #2

	Students			Families			Staff	
Only Mandated Holidays	18	29%		159	36%		52	29%
Status Quo	88	34%		182	42%		83	46%
Add Three (Lunar New Yaer, Diwali, Eid Al-Fitr)	156	60%		95	22%		46	25%
<i>Total responses</i>	<i>262</i>			<i>436</i>			<i>181</i>	
Good Friday - School Day	14	5%		233	53%		55	30%
Good Friday - Early Release	69	26%		73	17%		68	38%
Good Friday - Day Off	179	68%		130	30%		58	32%
<i>Total responses</i>	<i>262</i>			<i>436</i>			<i>181</i>	



Perspective: Federally Mandated Holidays Only

"NO MORE BREAKS. ONLY SCHOOL. LONG SUMMERS." STUDENT

"The most equitable solution is to create a secular / federal holiday calendar. My suggestion is that the high school should create a no-assessment calendar that recognizes the need for students to be able to take a day off without worry that they will fall behind with regards to making up assessments. They may need to make up assignments, but they will be given the time to do so. Adding in these days in addition to the ones we already recognize will open a door to all religions needing the same recognition. There is no way to be equal given the number of religions and number of holidays that could be recognized, and the interruptions in the educational process are not helpful for learning or keeping students engaged." STAFF

"Public schools are a secular institution and should not be endorsing any religion through the formal recognition of its holidays. Additionally, in recognition of our commitment to equity and diversity, adding the additional proposed holidays does not recognize major holidays for all religions and, therefore, only serves to perpetuate the discrimination in our system. The only way for us to treat the religious diversity in our communities with equity would be to not formally recognize any religious holidays." STAFF

"Our building doesn't have air-conditioning, so ending school before the end of June would be ideal if we have to use snow days. It's just too hot in the building to teach young children, without air-conditioning." STAFF

"In order to maintain continuity with our students we should not include additional days off that will further fragment our school calendar and make it difficult for staff, students, and families to be on a consistent routine. As exhausting as March can be; 4-5 uninterrupted weeks of learning is actually very beneficial for our school community and helps our students focus, and it would be helpful if the calendar included more uninterrupted weeks of learning. Additional days off will further fragment our calendar and make a consistent educational routine even more difficult for some of our most challenged students/families. Thank you for all your efforts to find an equitable solution to a complex issue." STAFF

"I believe that the most equitable calendar is one that does not prioritize one group over another; a 'secular' calendar would still allow for students and staff to take days off as needed." STAFF



Perspective: Federally Mandated Holidays Only

"While I appreciate the inclusion of a few holidays, I am apprehensive about the potential discrimination against forgotten minority groups, including East Asian-Americans and Iranian-Americans. My own experiences since immigrating to the United States in 2002 have led me to believe that there are numerous minority voices that are not adequately represented in these discussions... It is essential to recognize that while some communities may be smaller in size within the district, they are not voiceless." PARENT

"We shouldn't over complicate Holidays for school. Parents need to work, and when school is out for holidays not universally recognized, it puts unnecessary pressure on those families. You also don't need a full day to celebrate holidays. You can maintain traditions in the evenings, just like people have been doing for a long time. We need to prioritize education, stability and predictably. " PARENT

"We are Jewish, but I prefer to have no non-mandated holidays, begin summer as soon as possible, and allow people to celebrate their holidays without penalty such as counting missing school that day as an excused absence." PARENT

"This should not be a popular vote. This Country is secular, and all religious holidays should be eliminated. The school administration will never please all groups and adding holidays will only result in more controversy and demands. You are all on a slippery slope if you keep or add new religious holidays." PARENT

"Our calendar year extending to late June (or potentially early July with 5 snow days) limits career opportunities such as camps, summer jobs, internships, etc. " PARENT

"Given the increasing diversity in our community, I personally believe it would work best to remove all non-federal holidays. This would allow us to treat all religious and cultural holidays equally and give everyone a fair opportunity to request accommodations as needed. This would also allow our students to keep up with the required instructional hours while finishing the school year with a reasonable end time. Proposal #2 prioritizes Jewish and Christian holidays over the other non-federal holidays and contradicts with our mission to achieve equality. Proposal #3 on the other hand, is subject to further changes as the population in our community continues to grow and diversify. Proposal #3 also significantly delays the last day of school and takes away well-deserved summer break time from our students." PARENT

Considerations: Federally Mandated Holidays Only



- Consistency of learning throughout the year
 - Access to learning prior to spring MCAS and AP exams
 - Shorter year reduces concern with lack of air conditioning at Pine Hill
 - Families would not need additional child care
 - Students/families have greater options for summer travel, programs, etc
-
- Last day of school would range from June 10-June 16 (assuming no snow days)
-
- DS staff with children in other districts may have conflicting schedules



Perspective: Status Quo

"I don't celebrate any of these holidays, I just want days off school." STUDENT

"This is a terrible time in history to dishonor the Jewish people by taking away school observation of their holidays. 'Creating a secular calendar' does only that, it does not actually remove any Christian Holidays from the calendar." STAFF

"Consider/continue making accommodations for personal and religious observances but do not extend the school year. As it is, we have many students leaving early for athletic events, summer jobs, camps, etc. Even without snow days, students are looking for ways to take final exams early and leave before the last day of school. Adding more days will only make this worse." STAFF

"Generally lean towards a 'floating holiday' type approach where only the federal holidays are given holidays, but the programming (e.g. tests and homework) is very light on days like Good Friday, Yom Kippur, Diwali so that people can take those days off as desired without being treated as an absence and without missing anything material. That would allow school to end as early as possible while giving individuals the freedom to recognize their own holidays." PARENT

"It is helpful for my family if the holidays are aligned with other districts. I am a teacher in Holliston public schools and it can be difficult to find childcare when our holidays and start/end dates don't match. Thanks for taking on this issue!" PARENT

"I really appreciate the thoughtfulness and forward thinking that is going into this process. I hope the voices of the majority don't drown out those of the minority, otherwise there will never be forward progress." PARENT



Considerations: Status Quo

- Does not increase equity or inclusivity of additional religions/cultures
- Doesn't pick and choose between which religions/cultures' holidays to add
- Holds plurality vote with family/staff
- More desirable to people who just like days off than only having mandated holidays



Perspective: Add Three Holidays

"The projections seem to make it that adding the three holidays have very little impact on the length of the school year, and some educationally strong schools have already included these holidays. Since such holidays uphold diversity and most likely don't majorly affect education it seems like a good idea to incorporate them." STUDENT

"I'm not well versed in the religious background of these holidays, but I am in favor of giving students a day to observe the holidays they celebrate." STUDENT

"I think we should get chinese new year off. " STUDENT

"I would like to have Eid-al-Fitr off since it is a very important holiday to me and many others. It is also very hard to make up a day's worth of work during a holiday so it would be very helpful to get the day off. " STUDENT

"Holidays should incorporate all cultures. Days off are also beneficial to student's health and education since it provides a break AND gives students time to catch up on work or continue extracurriculars." STUDENT

"At the end of the day, we can't do it all but I believe having these holidays off from school will significantly help create windows and mirrors for our students. Especially students who may not currently feel 'seen'" STAFF



Perspective: Add Three Holidays

"The beauty of living in a community in America is discovering and respecting a wide array of different spiritual and cultural celebrations. The question to either remove all non-federal holidays or to include more to reflect the religions of our community is a rather simple one in my mind. Do it. There is something powerful about inclusion and I think it's something the Dover Sherborn community could use more. To remove all 'excess' holidays would be to say 'there is too much diversity that we can not include all of it'. That is not the Dover Sherborn I've come to know and love. So we have a slightly shorter summer than we could if we abolished all holidays. It is a small price to pay.

As a practicing Catholic I would be devastated if my religious life ever had to come into conflict with my professional life. The thought of having to potentially take a personal day to practice my faith on Good Friday is frustrating. If the thought of having it removed is so frustrating to me, imagine how frustrating it is for students and faculty who have to either come into school, or take the day off, in order to celebrate holidays we have refused to recognize for decades.

If we want to honestly say that people of all different walks of life are welcome in this community we need to show that by actually welcoming them into our community. We don't need to strip away tenants and values that we have held forever, but we can alter them. In order to accept we must integrate new families into our own.

We have never had Lunar New Year, Eid Al-Fitr, or Diwali off as a school system. If we choose to adhere to only federal holidays, the three aforementioned holidays will never be legitimized by our community. I know very little about the practices of these holidays, and I would love to learn about them through the excitement of students who can't wait for the day off to practice them. I'd rather be a part of a community that incorporates actions and words to make our towns better for all of its inhabitants. I'd be repulsed by a community that sings boldly of their acceptance, while their actions are that of gross hypocrisy." STAFF



Considerations: Add Three Holidays

- **Additional religions/cultures are recognized with days off**
- **Students appreciate opportunities for rest and work completion**
- **Last day of school would range from June 18-23 (assuming no snow days)**
- **Some religions/cultures are still not recognized**
- **Families who require child care need to find coverage**
- **With a longer year, lack of air conditioning at Pine Hill is a concern**
- **Potential delay with the dates of senior activities and graduation**



Additional Thoughts

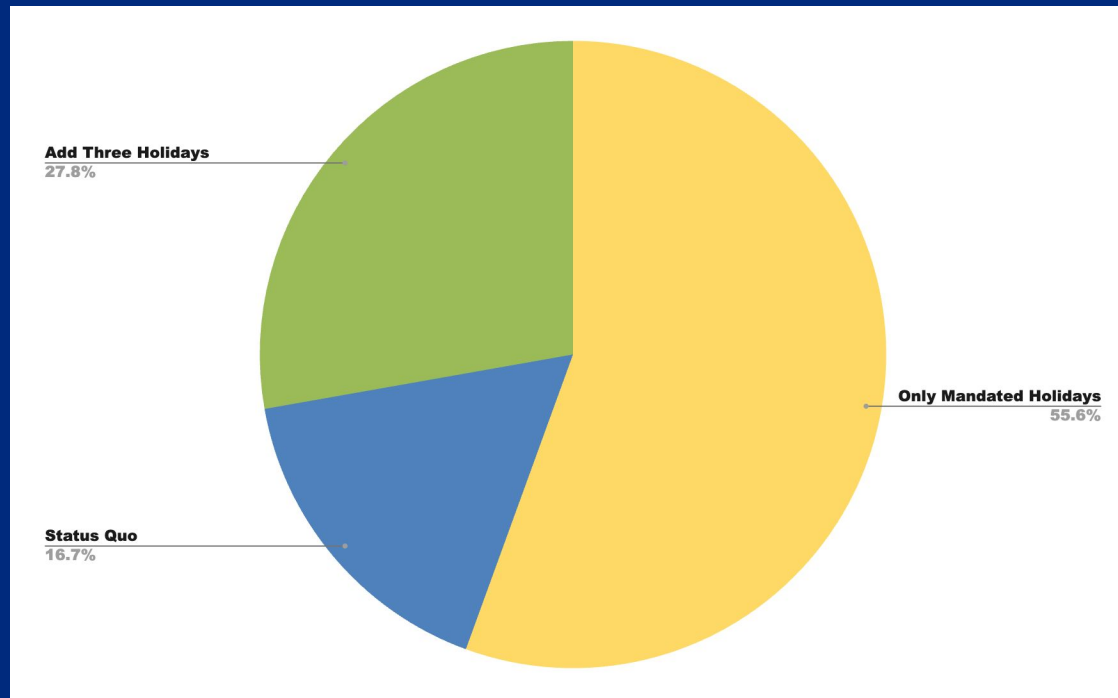
"I think you should also add in orthodox holidays. As a student where my Easter is a few weeks after American Easter having to go to school on Good Friday/ Easter week is hard because of having to do my work while also celebrating the holiday." STUDENT

"We should remove Good Friday and Rosh Hashanah to make room for more non Judeo-Christian holidays. I think we should prioritize days off for fasting holidays." STAFF

"I think we should have school off on the day after Halloween because we will most definitely not be focused if we stayed up really late and that would be bad for our health if we get not enough sleep. We also could become sick if we don't have enough sleep." STUDENT



Calendar Task Force Support



Make Good Friday an early release day if the 3 proposed holidays are added to the calendar



Next Steps

DRAFT

Dover-Sherborn Regional School Committee
Dover School Committee
Sherborn School Committee
Union #50 Superintendency Committee
Meeting Minutes September 12, 2023

Present:

Dover School Committee

Jeff Cassidy

Goli Sepehr

Jessie Hole

Martha Castle

Sherborn School Committee

Dennis Quandt

Christine Walsh

Amanda Brown

Becca Hammond

Kristen Aberle

Dover-Sherborn Regional School
Committee

Judi Miller

Maggie Charron

Kate Potter

Angie Johnson

Mark Healey

1. **Call to order** – The meeting was called to order at 6:34 PM in the DSMS Library.
2. **Community Comments** - none
3. **School Committee Norms** - Maggie Charron reviewed the document which can be found [here](#). It was originally adopted in January 2022.
4. **Superintendent's Update** - Superintendent McCoy asked for a moment of silence in memory of Sadie Mauro and JB Harvey and thanked all of those who responded to support friends and classmates of Sadie and JB. She then spoke about the August DS Leadership Retreat; the school opening; District Priorities; and highlights from the work done over the summer. Assistant Superintendent Denny Conklin spoke about summer curriculum work and the launch of the new school website.
The Administration also reported that they are working to accommodate all those that need enrollment. While staffing is more stable than in recent years it is still the limiting factor for enrollment. Currently Dover Extended Day has 99 students and 10 students on the waitlist (all new families) and Sherborn Extended Day has 90 students (80 students last year) with 19 waitlisted for 5 day slots and 16 waitlisted for 3 or 4 day slots. Additional staff is being sought to cover a few more off the 5 day waitlist.
5. **District Strategy Presentation** - Superintendent McCoy reviewed the Dover-Sherborn Public Schools District Strategy 2023-2028 with five areas of focus: 1) Excellence & Innovation in Learning; 2) Challenge & Support of All Students; 3) Professional Learning & Growth; 4) Family & Community Engagement; and 5) Safe & Sustainable Spaces. The full plan including initiatives for each area of focus can be found [here](#).

There were motions to approve the District Strategy as presented.

RSC: motion by Maggie Charron, second by Mark Healey

Vote in favor: Judi Miller, Angie Johnson, Kate Potter, Maggie Charron, and Mark Healey

SSC: motion by Kristen Aberle, second by Amanda Brown

DRAFT

Vote in favor: Dennis Quandt, Christine Walsh, Amanda Brown, Kristen Aberle, and Becca Hammond

DSC: motion by Goli Sepehr, second by Martha Castle

Vote in favor: Goli Sepehr, Jeff Cassidy, Martha Castle, and Jessie Hole

- 6. District Superintendent Goals** - Superintendent McCoy discussed her goals for the coming school year which reflect the goals of the School Improvement Plans and School Committees.

There were motions to approve the Superintendent Goals as presented.

RSC: motion by Kate Potter, second by Angie Johnson

Vote in favor: Judi Miller, Angie Johnson, Kate Potter, Maggie Charron, and Mark Healey

SSC: motion by Kristen Aberle, second by Amanda Brown

Vote in favor: Dennis Quandt, Christine Walsh, Amanda Brown, Kristen Aberle, and Becca Hammond

DSC: motion by Goli Sepehr, second by Jessie Hole

Vote in favor: Goli Sepehr, Jeff Cassidy, Martha Castle, and Jessie Hole

7. Consent Agenda

- Substitute Rates - new rates effective August 30, 2023
- June 13, 2023 minutes

There were motions to approve the Consent Agenda.

RSC: motion by Angie Johnson, second by Kate Potter

Vote in favor: Judi Miller, Angie Johnson, Kate Potter, Maggie Charron, and Mark Healey

SSC: motion by Kristen Aberle, second by Amanda Brown

Vote in favor: Dennis Quandt, Christine Walsh, Amanda Brown, Kristen Aberle, and Becca Hammond

DSC: motion by Martha Castle, second by Jessie Hole

Vote in favor: Goli Sepehr, Jeff Cassidy, Martha Castle, and Jessie Hole

8. Adjourn at 7:54 pm

Respectfully submitted, Amy Davis

Emily J. Parks
Executive Director

Dan Shovak
Dir. of Finance & Operations



Dr. Zachary Abrams
Dir. of Student Services

Dr. Jean Kenney
Dir. of Professional Learning &
Leadership

141 Mansion Drive, Suite 200
East Walpole, Massachusetts 02032
Phone: 781-352-5700 Fax: 508-660-1124

December 15, 2023

To: TEC Board of Directors and Member School Committees

From: Emily Parks, Executive Director

Re: Modification of TEC Capital Reserve Fund

Objective:

TEC is requesting to modify the TEC Capital Reserve Fund plan of use and to increase the limit on the fund balance through the approval of the TEC Member School Districts.

According to 603 CMR 50.00 Collaboratives can modify a Capital Reserve Fund. The request for modification must be approved by the Board of Directors and notice must be provided to all member districts. If the member district does not vote to disapprove the revised capital plan within a 45-day period, that member shall be deemed to have approved the revised capital plan. Two-thirds (2/3) approval of the member districts is required to revise the capital plan.

Revised Purpose of Fund:

TEC is proposing to modify the TEC Capital Reserve Fund to include its plan of use for:

- The accumulation of funds for the possibility of a future purchase of an educational facility.
- Renovations and upgrades to an educational facility.
- Provide funding for TEC facility leases and common area maintenance during periods when enrollments are below expectations.
- The purchase of capital equipment and capital technology to support the operations of TEC programs.

Requested Limit Increase:

TEC is requesting an increase on the limit on the TEC Capital Reserve Fund Balance from \$750,000 to \$3,500,000.

Additional Information:

All deposits into the TEC Capital Reserve Fund shall be proposed and approved through the budget process.

The Public Schools of Dover and Sherborn

157 Farm Street
Dover, MA 02030
Phone: 508-785-0036 Fax: 508-785-2239
www.doversherborn.org



Elizabeth M. McCoy, Superintendent
Denton Conklin, Assistant Superintendent

Dawn Fattore, Business Administrator
Kate McCarthy, Director of Student Services

TO: Dover, Sherborn and Dover-Sherborn Regional School Committee Members

FROM: Dawn Fattore, Business Administrator
Janelle Madden, Director of Food Services

RE: Updates on Food and Nutrition Services

DATE: January 26, 2024

Universal Free Lunch

Free lunch for all students was put in place in FY21 as schools were returning from the COVID pandemic remote learning period (spring of 2020). It continued to be funded at the national level through FY22. The State enacted the Massachusetts Universal Free Meals Program in FY23 and has continued to fund the program in the subsequent annual State Budgets (it is in the FY25 Budget just released).

With the continuation of the State program, they are fully implementing all aspects of the program in FY25 which states each student in the district is entitled to (1) free breakfast and (1) free lunch. Food Services is currently working on plans for the breakfast roll-out next fall in all three Districts.

Surplus reserves

With the higher participation rate for school lunches across all districts, food service programs are seeing growth in their reserves. Dover-Sherborn has seen a 20% increase in participation rates since the Universal Free Lunch was put into place. DESE does set caps for allowed reserves in Food Service Revolving accounts (3-months of operating expenses) and is encouraging programs to use the excess funds to reinvest in their kitchen equipment and other areas of their operations. Over the next year, we will be presenting each School Committee with needed equipment replacements and other uses of funds to spend down the accumulated reserves. Given the age of our equipment, this is a timely issue to address and will greatly enhance current operations.

Free and Reduced Lunch

This federally supported program continues to exist even with the State's program in place for all. The identification program has become much more automated eliminating the need in most cases for individual applications. Food Service programs are encouraged to upload their student census data into the Department of Health and Human Services system on a routine basis to identify eligible families. This identification assists families with other support options and allows the State to receive federal meal reimbursements, helping to offset the State's direct program costs.

The Dover Sherborn Schools share in the mission to inspire, challenge and support all students as they discover and pursue their full potential.

In addition, access to this information is now provided to school guidance departments to assist with identifying support for families such as school-related fees, testing fees, etc. The availability of the Free and Reduced Lunch program is communicated to all families at the start of each school year and the link is always available on our website for access as needed.

DESE Administrative Review

All three Districts just completed a DESE Administrative Review. These reviews take place every three to five years and cover multiple aspects of Food and Nutrition Services. We had the closing meeting with the DESE reviewer on Thursday to discuss the review and related corrective action findings. A few of the overall comments included, “we do a great job” and “our employees were amazing”. There were a few corrective action items with the primary findings including both the Districts’ Wellness Policy and Civil Rights Policies around child nutrition. The Wellness Policy and related Implementation Guide require a review and approval every three years by the School Committees, and we are behind in this cycle. The Wellness Committee did meet this fall and is in the process of this review. It will be presented to the School Committees for approval before the end of the school year. The Civil Rights related findings include more prominent postings of these policies on our Food and Nutrition Services website page and, where appropriate, in our cafeterias. The draft report will be forth coming in the next several weeks and we will prepare our corrective action plans to be submitted to DESE. We will include each District’s report in your School Committee packets once finalized for your review. I want to thank Janelle Madden, Food Services Director, and the staff for their work and diligence as we underwent this review. It is work on top of an already demanding schedule of serving meals daily to over 60-70% of our students.

The Public Schools of Dover and Sherborn

157 Farm Street
Dover, MA 02030
Phone: 508-785-0036 Fax: 508-785-2239
www.doversherborn.org



Elizabeth M. McCoy, Superintendent
Denton Conklin, Assistant Superintendent

Dawn Fattore, Business Administrator
Kate McCarthy, Director of Student Services

January 8, 2024

Notification of DESE District Review

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has selected Dover-Sherborn Public Schools to participate in a district review during the 2023–24 school year. The purpose of the district review is to provide formative and actionable feedback on district practices, enabling district leaders to reflect on progress and strengthen staff and student performance. To meet this goal, DESE has contracted with a third party, the American Institutes for Research® (AIR®), to assess the district on its current practices as they relate to Governance and Administrative Systems, Human Resources and Professional Development, and Financial Asset Management.

The district's participation in this review will result in a culminating report that provides information about the strengths and challenges of current practices. Making these determinations requires on-site data collection, including interviews and focus groups and classroom observations in addition to the collection and review of documents.

District reviews are conducted according to Chapter 15, Section 55A of the Massachusetts General Laws and are mandatory. Please contact Assistant Superintendent, Denny Conklin if you have any additional questions: conklind@doversherborn.org

The Dover Sherborn Schools share in the mission to inspire, challenge and support all students as they discover and pursue their full potential.



Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

District Standards and Indicators

Introduction

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (DESE's) *District Standards and Indicators* are the agency's definition of effective school district policy and practice. The 6 standards and their 21 related indicators were developed based on research and on input from school-, district-, and state-level stakeholders about policies, systems and practices, which, if implemented well, are likely to lead to improved student performance, opportunities, and outcomes.¹ In particular, the document describes the focus on equity that all school districts must embrace to ensure they are effectively serving all students.

Definitions of terms used frequently in this document

All students: Given that some student groups have been historically underserved, and also that any student can be particularly "vulnerable" at any moment in time, it is important to consider practices and outcomes beyond the aggregate to ensure that all students are challenged and supported to learn and grow. The phrase "all" in this document refers to equity for and attention to students from all backgrounds and identities and experiences. These include but are not limited to all races and ethnicities, all genders and gender identities, all sexual orientations, all disabilities, all nationalities, all types of citizenship or immigration status, all religions, all family structures, all family housing situations, all medical/health needs, and all traumatic experiences.

Culturally responsive: Cultural responsiveness is an approach to viewing culture and identity as assets, including students' race, ethnicity, or linguistic assets, among other characteristics. Culturally responsive policies and practices acknowledge and actively draw upon diverse backgrounds, identities, strengths, and challenges of administrators, students, staff, and community as a way to deepen connections between the school and its community.

Disaggregated student data: Aggregate student data that is broken down into smaller parts in order to learn about the performance, opportunities, and outcomes of specific student populations; for example, schools, grade levels, and student groups. All data analysis described in this document should be conducted in accordance with all applicable laws pertaining to the confidentiality of student data.

Equity: Educational equity means that all students have access to the educational resources, opportunities, and rigor they need at the right moment in their education across race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, sexual orientation, family background and/or family income to meet high expectations for cognitive, behavioral, and social-emotional growth and development.²

¹ While some indicators refer to state laws or regulations, the purpose of this document is to describe effective district policies, systems, and practices.

² Adapted from Leading for Equity: Opportunities for State Education Chiefs, <https://ccsso.org/equity> and National Equity project, <http://nationalequityproject.org/about/equity>

Safe and supportive environment: A safe and supportive whole-school learning environment is positive, healthy, and inclusive and effectively integrates services and aligns initiatives that promote students' behavioral health. These services and initiatives include social and emotional learning, bullying prevention, trauma sensitivity, dropout prevention, truancy reduction, children's mental health, foster care and homeless youth education, inclusion of students with disabilities, and positive behavioral approaches that reduce suspensions and expulsions.

Student group: Any group of students who share similar characteristics, such as racial or ethnic identification, gender identification, socioeconomic status, physical or learning disabilities, or language skills.³ This includes, but is not limited to, the groups of students for which DESE issues annual performance determinations.

³ Adapted from EdGlossary.org, <https://www.edglossary.org/student-subgroup/>

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

District Standards and Indicators

Leadership and Governance

1. School Committee Governance
2. District and School Leadership
3. District and School Improvement Planning
4. Budget Development

Curriculum and Instruction

1. Curriculum Selection and Use
2. Classroom Instruction
3. Student Access to Coursework

Assessment

1. Data and Assessment Systems
2. Data Use
3. Sharing Results

Human Resources and Professional Development

1. Infrastructure
2. Recruitment, Hiring, and Assignment
3. Supervision, Evaluation, and Educator Development
4. Recognition, Leadership Development, and Advancement

Student Support

1. Safe and Supportive School Climate and Culture
2. Tiered Systems of Support
3. Family, Student, and Community Engagement and Partnerships

Financial and Asset Management

1. Budget Documentation and Reporting
2. Adequate Budget
3. Financial Tracking, Forecasting, Controls, and Audits
4. Capital Planning and Facility Maintenance

Leadership and Governance

School committee members and district and school leaders work collaboratively and strategically to improve all students' performance, opportunities, and outcomes. They establish, implement, and evaluate policies, procedures, systems, and budgets with a primary focus on achieving districtwide improvement goals, in part through equitable and effective use of resources.

- 1. School Committee Governance:** The school committee upholds its responsibilities under Massachusetts laws and regulations, including the Massachusetts Education Reform Act; focuses on improving outcomes for all students; and acts as the primary advocate in the community for meeting students' needs. The committee:
 - Focuses on improvement
 - Purposefully uses the district's vision and improvement plan to guide its policies, deliberations, and decisions
 - Regularly reviews disaggregated student data
 - Maintains a particular focus on closing achievement, access, and opportunity gaps for students of color, economically disadvantaged students, English learners, and students with disabilities
 - Evaluates the superintendent's performance annually as required by law
 - Establishes a culture of collaboration
 - Ensures that members develop and sustain a collaborative working relationship with each other and with the superintendent
 - Actively creates opportunities to engage stakeholders in working together to improve student outcomes
 - Promotes positive working relationships between district and municipal leaders
 - Provides opportunities for students to share meaningful input into policies and decision-making as appropriate
 - Fulfills its legal and fiduciary responsibilities as defined in Massachusetts state law
 - Takes responsibility for securing adequate funding for the district
 - Operates with transparency and maintains a clear and appropriate division of roles between municipal officials, the committee, and the superintendent
 - Ensures prudent financial management and spending in accordance with the budget it has approved
 - Equitably distributes available resources to improve student outcomes
 - As the employer of record on all collective bargaining agreements, takes an active and constructive role in developing timely and effective strategies for collective bargaining and managing negotiations
- 2. District and School Leadership:** The superintendent promotes a culture of collaboration, trust, accountability, and joint responsibility for student learning among administrators, teachers, and other staff members. The superintendent engages with the school committee and the community to support district improvement.
 - Leadership and engagement
 - The superintendent advises and makes recommendations to the school committee for sound educational policies, prudent budgeting, and effective collective bargaining
 - The superintendent, in collaboration with the school committee, actively builds a strong sense of support for public schools within the community

- The district provides clear and appropriate lines of internal and external communication and demonstrates responsiveness to feedback from stakeholders
 - The superintendent establishes and leads an effective leadership team and ensures that leadership roles are appropriate for the district's needs
 - The district ensures that each school has an effective leadership team that assures staff understanding and commitment to the school's mission and strategies; supports teacher leadership and a collaborative learning culture; focuses staff time and resources on improving student learning; and ensures an inclusive, respectful environment for all staff
 - Focus on improvement. District and school leaders:
 - Demonstrate instructional leadership by focusing on improving teacher practice and student learning outcomes
 - Take concrete and ambitious steps to close achievement, access, and opportunity gaps for students of color, economically disadvantaged students, English learners, and students with disabilities
 - Use historical, longitudinal, and current disaggregated student data to plan and regularly monitor the impact of key improvement strategies, instructional practices, and the use of resources on student outcomes
 - Ensure that programs are evidence-based to the extent possible; maintain focus on high-quality implementation
 - Identify persistently low-performing or struggling schools and programs for intervention and improvement planning, with responsibility shared between district and school leaders for making measurable and sustained improvement
 - Leadership development and support
 - The superintendent ensures that all administrators are evaluated annually
 - School leaders make strategic use of staffing, scheduling, and budgeting autonomies to support their school improvement plan and improve student outcomes
 - District and school leaders identify and support potential leaders and provide educators with meaningful leadership development opportunities
 - Systems and structures promote stability and help to sustain district initiatives during leadership turnover
- 3. District and School Improvement Planning:** Using a clear, thoughtful, and inclusive process, the district develops a three- to five-year district improvement plan, strategic plan, or district strategy and an annual district action plan, and each school develops an annual school improvement plan aligned with the district's plan. The plans drive the development, implementation, and modification of educational programs and practices.
- Stakeholder engagement and reflection
 - District leaders, school leaders, teachers, students, families, and community are engaged in developing and implementing the district's plan/strategy and annual action plan
 - District and school leaders provide frequent, timely, and thorough information to the school committee, staff, students, families, and community on progress toward the achievement of plan goals, and seek significant and meaningful feedback to guide the plans' ongoing refinement
 - The district ensures that each school engages a representative School Council to develop a school improvement plan and has a clear process for reviewing school improvement plans

- The district implements and refines an ongoing, participatory process for reflection on progress toward plan goals, analyzing what was implemented, whether it worked, and why; modifications are made as needed to ensure progress toward goals
 - Plan elements. Improvement plans:
 - Have clear goals and ambitious strategies for improving performance, opportunities, and outcomes for all students
 - Are based on analysis of historical, longitudinal, and current disaggregated student data
 - Reflect careful consideration of the ways in which the district can impact student outcomes
 - Include realistic assessments and equitable allocation of available staffing, financial, material, and operational resources
- 4. Budget Development:** The district's budget recommendations to the school committee are educationally sound and address the goals and strategies of the district's improvement plans, benchmarking data available from DESE and elsewhere, and analysis of disaggregated student data.
- Budget development and monitoring
 - District and school leaders, including the district's business manager, work together to develop a budget through a participatory and transparent process
 - As part of budget development, administrators review the cost-effectiveness of programs, initiatives, and activities, referencing student data
 - The district plans for the effective use of grant funds, revolving accounts, and other funds, in alignment with its improvement goals
 - District administrators regularly track spending and other financial transactions throughout the year, including special revenue funds, revolving accounts and related fees, and make changes and adjustments as needed
 - Principals have some discretion to make spending decisions during the school year, and have access to the information they need to make them
 - Resource allocation
 - Resources including funds, staff, materials, and time are allocated to ensure improved performance, opportunities, and outcomes for all students, with an emphasis on equity and effectiveness to close achievement, access, and opportunity gaps for students of color, economically disadvantaged students, English learners, and students with disabilities
 - Resources are allocated based on students' needs at each school and program
 - The district seeks ways to expand capacity and resources through shared services agreements and other collaborations with external partners
 - Using student outcomes and other information, the district monitors the staffing, financial, material, and operational needs of schools, and addresses them in a timely, effective, and equitable way

Curriculum and Instruction

The district ensures effective implementation of high-quality, standards-aligned curricular materials⁴ that have undergone rigorous, research-based review such as that of the CURATE project;⁵ instruction that challenges and supports all students to meet Massachusetts standards; and a variety of academic offerings preparing all students for college, career, and civic participation.

- 1. Curriculum Selection and Use:** The district ensures that all teachers have access to standards-aligned curricular materials that meet the definitions of high-quality as set forth by ratings systems such as CURATE, and the support needed to implement those materials consistently and skillfully.
 - Decision-making processes. Curriculum reviews:
 - Are regular, rigorous, transparent, consistent, and inclusive
 - Consider specific district needs (e.g., areas of low performance, cultural relevance for students)
 - Align to relevant definitions of high-quality instructional materials, such as CURATE
 - Documented curriculum. Curricular materials:
 - Are readily available and feasible to implement for all teachers
 - Align to the content and rigor of the appropriate Massachusetts curriculum frameworks and to definitions of high-quality instructional materials, such as those set forth by CURATE
 - Align vertically, with coherent student learning progressions
 - Are complementary across content areas
 - Support teachers to challenge and support all students
 - Taught curriculum. Curriculum implementation:
 - Is consistent and coherent within and across classrooms and schools
 - Includes skillfully adapting and supplementing materials based on individual student needs and strengths, as appropriate
 - Is supported effectively by inclusive professional learning structures for all educator roles
- 2. Classroom Instruction:** The district ensures that all teachers provide effective instruction that challenges and supports all students.
 - Learning experiences for students. Instruction:
 - Allows students to engage with grade-appropriate text every day, with meaningful real-world problems every day, and in scientific conversations using data every week
 - Supports students to acquire and use complex knowledge and subject-specific skills and vocabulary
 - Enables students to develop social and emotional competencies (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making) as they progress academically
 - Is designed inclusively to account for differences in students' learning needs, competencies, interests, and levels of readiness
 - Centers on challenging, engaging tasks with measurable outcomes for all students

⁴ Resources teachers use to facilitate sequences of learning experiences (e.g., lesson and unit plans, texts); also called adopted or written curriculum.

⁵ <https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate/default.html>

- Adjustments to practice. Instructional decisions are informed by:
 - Differences in students' learning needs, skill levels, interests, and levels of readiness
 - A variety of assessments to measure student progress toward intended outcomes
 - Research-based differentiated interventions and enhancements for students
 - High-quality feedback from students, peers, coaches, and evaluators
- Learning environment. Classroom climate and structures:
 - Provide opportunities for all students to learn collaboratively in purposeful, flexible, diverse groups
 - Support all students to take academic risks (e.g., by attempting challenging tasks, eliciting feedback on their work)
 - Support all students to take ownership of their learning (e.g., by persevering effectively and asking for help when necessary)

3. Student Access to Coursework: The district ensures that all students have access to a range of rigorous coursework.

- Variety of academic offerings. Courses of study:
 - Support all students to become college and career ready and prepared for civic engagement, by developing the knowledge and skills that are necessary to successfully complete entry-level, credit-bearing college courses; participate in certificate or workplace training programs; enter economically viable career pathways; and engage as active and responsible participants in our democracy
 - Provide opportunities for all students to pursue rigorous learning experiences aligned to their ambitions and interests, such as accelerated learning pathways, Advanced Placement courses, and instruction in computer science, foreign languages, health, and the arts
- Equity of access. Students from historically marginalized groups, including students of color, those receiving special education services, and economically disadvantaged students:
 - Have equitable access to advanced coursework, such as accelerated learning pathways and Advanced Placement courses
 - Have equitable access to instruction in areas not subject to statewide testing, such as computer science, foreign languages, health, history, and the arts

Assessment

The district establishes and supports a culture that values the use of data in improving teaching, learning, and decision-making. District and school leaders ensure that systems are in place for the efficient and purposeful collection, use, and sharing of data from a variety of assessments to guide decision making at the district, school, and classroom levels and to improve all students' performance, opportunities, and outcomes.

- 1. Data and Assessment Systems:** The district has a clear purpose and system for reviewing state-level data and efficiently collecting district and school level assessment and outcome data.
 - Data selection. The district ensures that:
 - Data collected provides a comprehensive picture of student, school, and district performance based on multiple sources of data
 - Each data source (e.g., assessments, classroom grades) complements information from other measures
 - Assessment Alignment. The district ensures that:
 - Data systems support the consistent administration of a variety of informal and formal assessment methods, including screeners, diagnostic tools, and common interim assessments
 - Assessments are aligned across grade levels and subject areas to the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks, with particular attention to the practices or anchor standards for ELA and Literacy.
- 2. Data Use:** The district fosters a culture of data use to drive continuous improvement at all levels and ensures that educators, including district and school leaders, use collected data to guide instructional practice.
 - District data use. District and school leaders:
 - Set and track improvement goals using assessment of student performance including the performance of the district's most struggling students
 - Use data on the performance of student groups to provide actionable information to close achievement, access, and opportunity gaps for students of color, economically disadvantaged students, English learners, and students with disabilities
 - Use data to compare district performance with peer districts and/or state averages and identify strengths and weaknesses
 - Support for data use. District leaders:
 - Promote and sustain a culture of shared responsibility and accountability for assessing performance and taking actions that lead to improved outcomes for all students
 - Ensure that important data is readily available to end users
 - Oversee systems and structures that support the regular use of data to inform decision making at the classroom level
 - Demonstrate a commitment to professional development designed to improve the use of data and assessments to inform the practice of all educators
 - Provide opportunities for educators and others, including their evaluators, to work together to establish anticipated student learning gains prior to administering common and classroom assessments and compare student results on those assessments to anticipated gains

- 3. Sharing Results:** The district shares assessment results with students, teachers, and students' families in ways that are clear, timely, and easily understood and utilized.
- Communication with district staff. District leaders:
 - Share data and analysis connected to district goals with educators in ways that are clear, understandable, and actionable
 - Ensure that individual educators have easy access to all relevant data that can support classroom level decision making
 - Communication with families. The district:
 - Regularly communicates with families evidence of the school and district's performance, and the effectiveness of current strategies
 - Provides timely and effective information to families about their students' progress toward attaining grade-level standards and whether they are on track to being college and career ready
 - Ensures that information shared with families helps them understand how to support their students to perform at a high level
 - Communication with students. The district ensures that:
 - Evidence of a student's performance is shared with students in meaningful and appropriate ways
 - Data shared with students promotes engagement and personal effort

Human Resources and Professional Development

The district strategically designs, implements, and oversees human resource and inclusive professional development efforts in a way that supports an aligned human capital management system and results in the employment, development and retention of effective educators who are successful in advancing all students' performance, opportunities, and outcomes.

- 1. Infrastructure:** The district employs effective human resources policies, procedures, and practices.
 - The district maintains and reports accurate employment-related records
 - The district routinely analyzes and provides reports to principals for use in their planning and decision-making

- 2. Recruitment, Hiring, and Assignment:** The district proactively cultivates a pipeline of educators such that there is a qualified pool of applicants for all vacancies. It has hiring timelines, policies, and processes which are rigorous and efficient such that schools are able to employ effective educators. The district has developed systems and processes to identify and address equitable access to excellent educators.
 - Recruitment systems:
 - Target projected supply and demand issues across schools
 - Seek to diversify the workforce
 - Employ a variety of short-term and longer-term strategies
 - Proactively generate a pool of educators to fill vacancies as needed
 - Hiring systems:
 - Empower and support hiring managers to make hiring decisions based on district priorities and to meet the learning needs of individual schools' student populations
 - Establish a consistent process for selection
 - Encompass both internal hiring (e.g., promotions, transfers, shared staff) and external hiring
 - Verify appropriate licensure, endorsements, background checks, and waivers
 - Are continually evaluated and refined through systematic data collection on program design, implementation, and outcomes, including student learning outcomes and educator retention rates
 - Assignment. The district ensures that:
 - Teacher assignment is based on students' learning needs
 - Master schedules result in the equitable distribution of educator skill across grades and content areas, as well as student skill levels, ensuring appropriate supports for all students and programs
 - Teachers teaching outside of their licensure area do so for no more than 20 percent of their time⁶

⁶ The out-of-field allowance was increased to 50 percent for the 2020-21 school year, and this flexibility was extended for the 2021-22 school year. The 50 percent allowance excludes educators in roles requiring any of the following licenses: Teacher of Moderate Disabilities, Teacher of Severe Disabilities, Teacher of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ASL/TC), Teacher of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (Oral/Aural), Teacher of Visually Impaired, Teacher of Speech, Language and Hearing Disorders, school nurse, or English as a Second Language.

3. Supervision, Evaluation, and Educator Development: The district ensures that supervision and evaluation inform a comprehensive approach to the identification, development, and retention of effective educators. It ensures that educators at all stages of their careers receive appropriately targeted and differentiated professional development that improves their knowledge, skills, and ability to meet the learning needs of all students. The district provides high-quality induction and mentoring support to all new hires such that it is able to develop, support, and retain effective educators.

- Supervision and evaluation systems:
 - Prioritize opportunities for educators to receive high-quality feedback (specific, timely, and actionable) that improves their practice
 - Ensure evaluators receive training, support, and development in effective, bias-free supervision and evaluation that impacts educator effectiveness
 - Provide all educators with performance ratings related to the Standards of Effective Teaching or the Standards for Effective Administrative Leadership Practice based on:
 1. evidence of practice,
 2. impact on student learning,
 3. student or staff feedback, and
 4. goal attainment
 - Result in setting a high bar for professional teaching status, the recognition of excellence, and the dismissal of educators who do not meet evaluation criteria within specified timeframes for improvement
- Professional development systems are:
 - Aligned with MA Standards for Professional Development and the district's vision/mission
 - Described in a professional development plan for all professional staff that is consistent with DESE's guidelines
 - Intentionally varied, including but not limited to teacher-led PD and job-embedded, content-based, and individually pursued learning, with structures for collaboration that enable teachers to improve implementation of standards-aligned curricula and instructional practice
 - Informed by student and educator data and aligned to district, school, and/or educator goals, such that connections between theory and practice are explicit and programming directly impacts educator effectiveness and student learning
 - Aligned to the instructional materials used in the district
- Induction and mentoring systems:
 - Include an orientation, a support team, and an intentionally matched, trained mentor
 - Ensure all beginning teachers and administrators receive mentoring support beyond the induction year (minimum of 50 hours), in alignment with DESE guidelines
 - Provide sufficient release time to engage in regular classroom observations and other mentoring activities
 - Ensure that mentors are well-qualified, extensively trained, carefully selected educators who have demonstrated effectiveness with students and colleagues
 - Are continually evaluated and refined through systematic data collection on program design, implementation, and outcomes, including student learning outcomes and educator retention rates

4. **Recognition, Leadership Development, and Advancement:** The district provides differentiated roles and opportunities for growth, including distributed leadership opportunities and an articulated career ladder, such that it can effectively build leadership skills and retain effective professional staff and maximize their impact.

Student Support

The district ensures that schools equitably support all students' safety, well-being, and sense of belonging; systematically identify and address students' needs; and engage families and community partners to improve all students' performance, opportunities, and outcomes. The district assesses the programs and practices used across schools to ensure that students experience educational continuity and are well supported through school transitions.

- 1. Safe and Supportive School Climate and Culture:** The district prioritizes the physical, intellectual, and emotional safety of all students and adults, and creates an environment that helps students develop social, emotional, and academic knowledge, skills, and competencies. It supports schools to foster safe, positive, healthy, inclusive, engaging, and welcoming learning environments that cultivate supportive, authentic relationships and a strong sense of belonging and connection, and that value the diverse assets and voices of all students, staff, families, and partners.
 - Safe and supportive environment. The district:
 - Has comprehensive plans to support the safety and well-being of students and staff that are developed with input from representative stakeholders and aligned with and integrated into district and school improvement plans
 - Ensures that all school and classroom environments are supportive, culturally responsive, welcoming, respectful, trauma-sensitive, gender- and sexuality-inclusive, reflective of the community and students' cultures and identities, and well-maintained
 - Access, equity, engagement, and student voice. The district:
 - Demonstrates a commitment to access and equity for all students, and to developing staff capacity to examine and dismantle implicit biases and systemic inequalities and to create environments in which all students can deeply learn, grow, and thrive
 - Ensures that schools promote meaningful student engagement and leadership; provides opportunities for all students to participate in and/or influence education decisions and experiences, with a particular focus on engaging students who have been historically underserved
 - Positive behavioral approaches. The district:
 - Builds adult capacity to identify, understand, and respond to the underlying causes of student behavior
 - Engages students and families in developing positive behavioral systems
 - Implements clear schoolwide positive behavioral systems and expectations, in which specific rules, behaviors, and expectations are taught, modeled, and reinforced, while using an ongoing data-monitoring system to evaluate progress and inform practices
 - Ensures that behavior management/discipline policies, practices, and procedures are inclusive, developmentally appropriate, unbiased, equitable, supportive, and aligned to the needs of all students
- 2. Tiered Systems of Support:** The district has a proactive approach and system designed to meet the needs of all students by ensuring that schools use data-driven decision making, progress monitoring, and evidence-based supports and strategies with increasing intensity to sustain students' academic, behavioral, and social-emotional growth. The district:

- Provides tiered, evidence-based, culturally responsive supports for students (e.g., instruction, enrichment and extracurricular opportunities, interventions, etc.)
 - All students receive tier 1 instruction and supports. Tier 2 and 3 supports are focused on specific goals and needs, are of greater intensity, and are part of a continuum of services. All students, including but not limited to students with 504 plans or IEPs and English learners, can receive support across all three tiers
 - The district provides supports to general education teachers to address the needs of students with diverse learning styles through a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan or other guidance document
 - Universally designed practices (UDL) are utilized across all tiers and for all students
 - Schedules and resource allocation are designed to ensure that tier 2 and 3 supports supplement but do not replace core instruction
- Uses a systematic planning process that includes representative stakeholders with authority to make collaborative decisions
- Uses scientifically-validated assessments for screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring
- Ensures that school leadership teams:
 - Systematically evaluate the effectiveness of tiered systems of support, including evaluating the effectiveness of Tier 1 instruction, to inform planning
 - Have a process to determine whether interventions are structured and assigned equitably
 - Use a process for reviewing individual, group, and aggregate data (e.g., formative assessments, attendance, chronic absenteeism, discipline, etc.) to assess the impact of interventions, understand trends in results, make changes as needed, and identify broader school improvement needs
 - Have protocols for engaging students, families, and partners in the tiered support process, including gathering input from students to make decisions about the supports they receive
- Provides high-quality, on-going support and professional development to support the use of tiered models, and to build expertise in academic, behavioral, and social emotional learning

3. Family, Student, and Community Engagement and Partnerships: The district ensures that each school develops strong collaborative relationships with families, students, community partners, and other stakeholders in order to support students' academic progress and behavioral, social, emotional, and physical development and well-being.

- Family and student engagement. The district:
 - Establishes systems and practices that reflect the importance of building relationships with families and that position them as equal partners in their students' education
 - Partners with families and students in a way that is strengths-based, culturally responsive, and collaborative, and that demonstrates an appreciation of different languages, norms, family structures, and values
 - Ensures that students and families have a voice in planning and decision-making, including gathering and using their feedback to improve school practices, communication, and climate
 - Establishes opportunities for student and family leadership (beyond required committees and councils), and ensures that participants in those leadership roles are representative of the community served

- Ensures that schools support two-way communication and access for all students' families, including providing interpretation and translation services to families, as appropriate
- Allocates resources to support family and community partnering activities and analyzes data to ensure effectiveness
- Leverages community partners to support families' needs, as appropriate
- Community engagement. The district:
 - Has a clear process to find, establish, and manage partnerships and other community resources to engage during in-school and out-of-school time
 - Conducts a comprehensive mapping of partners and resources, and assesses family and student needs, with a goal of equitable support and responsiveness for communities, schools, and families
 - Works with schools to evaluate partnership effectiveness and make appropriate changes
 - Communicates key priorities widely, including to municipal officials, to ensure a shared understanding of goals and strategies; provides guidance to schools on effective practices for managing partnerships

Financial and Asset Management

District leaders manage the equitable allocation and effective use of funding and other resources to improve all students' performance, opportunities, and outcomes, support the district's improvement plan, and secure community support.

1. Budget Documentation and Reporting

- Budget documents:
 - Are clear, accurate, and user-friendly
 - Are explicitly connected to district and school improvement planning
 - Demonstrate how student performance data, particularly data related to performance, access, and opportunity outcomes and gaps, have been used to set budget priorities
 - Include information about allocation of resources (money, people, and time) and about all sources of funds, including local revolving funds and grants
 - Provide historical spending data for comparisons and sufficient detail for stakeholders to understand the current year's resource allocations
- Municipal agreement:
 - Costs paid and managed directly by the municipality are described in a current written agreement and clearly documented in the budget and financial accounting

2. Adequate Budget

- Provision and use of resources
 - The community provides sufficient general appropriation funds each year to meet or exceed required net school spending and cover other costs such as transportation
 - The district uses all available funding effectively to support student performance, opportunities, and outcomes
 - The district annually reviews staffing and scheduling to plan for the effective use of people and time

3. Financial Tracking, Forecasting, Controls, and Audits

- The business office:
 - Provides regular, accurate reports to the superintendent and school committee on spending from all funding sources, and forecasts spending through the end of the year, with adequate school-level information provided to every principal
 - Ensures that business office personnel are trained and supervised, and systems are in place for procurement in accord with state laws and regulations, timely payment of invoices, and accurate payrolls
 - District spends down grant funds (including promptly using entitlement rollovers) so no grant funds revert to the state
 - Meets end of year reporting requirements in a timely and accurate way
 - Uses modern and comprehensive accounting technology for monitoring and control of resources
 - Competitively procures independent financial auditing services at least every five years, implements audit recommendations, and complies with other regulations as applicable

4. Capital Planning and Facility Maintenance

- Preventative maintenance
 - The district has a formal preventative maintenance program to prolong the effective life of the district's capital assets
 - The district ensures that educational and program facilities are accessible, clean, safe, secure, well-lit, well-maintained, and conducive to student learning, including adequate access to technology
- Long-term capital plan
 - The district has a long-term capital plan that describes future capital development and improvement needs, including adequate-sized facilities based on enrollment projections
 - The plan is reviewed and revised as needed with input from all appropriate stakeholders

Frequently Asked Questions: District Reviews

What is a district review?

The district review is an evidence-based process that assesses district systems, enabling district leaders to reflect on progress and strengthen performance. The focus of the district reviews is to provide formative and actionable feedback. These reviews are conducted according to Chapter 15, Section 55A of the Massachusetts General Laws.

The district review is designed to examine the systems, policies, and practices that drive the day-to-day work of the district, as well as those factors that may help or hinder staff performance and, ultimately, student performance and outcomes. Analysis of these systems, policies, and practices includes a focus on the ways in which the district works to improve and promote equity for all students.

Why was our district selected for this district review?

Along with a handful of other districts, your district was selected from a pool of districts that (a) have not had a district review in the last five years, and (b) do not have a concurrent Tiered Focused Monitoring (TFM) or New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) review scheduled for the 2023-24 school year.

Who is conducting the review, and what are their credentials?

The review process is overseen by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), but the review itself will be conducted by the American Institutes for Research (AIR). For more information, see the AIR website [here](#).

What are the reviewers looking for?

The review focuses on DESE's *District Standards and Indicators*. A detailed description of these standards can be found [here](#).

What is the difference between a comprehensive review and a targeted review?

The comprehensive review focuses on all six DESE *District Standards and Indicators*. By comparison, a targeted review focuses on only three standards: either as a Student-Centered Systems review (Curriculum & Instruction, Assessment, Student Support) or as a Governance and Administrative Systems review (Leadership & Governance, Human Resources & Professional Development, Financial and Asset Management). If your district was selected for a targeted review, DESE will collaborate with your district to select one of these review types.

Can we opt-out of this review? Can we delay it to a future year?

No, districts may not opt-out or delay the review to a future year.

What does the district review process entail?

The process consists of four components: district self-assessment, document review, interviews, and classroom observations.

- *District Self-Assessment:* Your district will complete and submit a document that evaluates its strengths and areas for growth across the six DESE standards. *This task is required for districts with targeted reviews, but optional for districts with comprehensive reviews.*
- *Document Review:* AIR will request documents ranging from strategic plans to financial audit documentation to sample teacher and administrator evaluations.
- *Interviews:* the review includes conversations with school committee members, district and school leaders, union leadership, teachers, families, and students. AIR will work with to coordinate logistics and arrange for these discussions, and ideally, avoid the need for coverages or substitutes.
- *Classroom Observations:* AIR will work with your district to select a random sample of classrooms to observe. These reviews are to understand general themes in your district's instructional practices, and will not be attributed to any individual teacher. Lessons should continue as they would normally.

When will the visit take place?

AIR and DESE will work with your district to select dates for an onsite visit between October 2023 and May 2024 that represent typical school days and are convenient for your community.

When will the report be completed?

The district will receive a *Districtwide Instructional Observation Report* that outlines findings from classroom observations approximately one month after the onsite visit. Approximately three months after the onsite, the district will receive a draft of the full report to review for factual errors. After any edits have been resolved, the final report will be posted to the DESE website. (Note that these estimates are based on previous years and may vary from district to district.)

What is the result of the review?

The entire review culminates in a published report that shares findings, relative to the *District Standards and Indicators* and recommendations for consideration. Superintendents often find their report helpful in identifying areas for growth and guiding the district's strategic direction. You can view a library of past reports from other districts [here](#).

Massachusetts District Reviews

Targeted District Reviews

Introduction

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

To that end, the Office of District Reviews and Monitoring (ODRM) at the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and its partner, the American Institutes for Research[®] (AIR[®]), provides a district review that assesses district systems, enabling district leaders to reflect on progress and strengthen performance. The focus of the district reviews is to provide formative and actionable feedback. These reviews are conducted according to Chapter 15, Section 55A of the Massachusetts General Laws.

The district review is designed to examine the systems, policies, and practices that drive the day-to-day work of the district, as well as those factors that may help or hinder staff performance and, ultimately, student performance and outcomes. Analysis of these systems, policies, and practices includes a focus on the ways in which the district works to improve and promote equity for all students.

The district review is intended to add value to the improvement cycle by providing an experienced team of education researchers who provide an objective analysis of the district's systems and key findings on strengths and areas for improvement through an equity lens. The value of the district review is measured by the reflection that preparing and participating in the review promotes, the usefulness of the findings and recommendations to district leaders and stakeholders, the effectiveness of the resulting action steps and goals that the process generates, and, ultimately, improved results.

The targeted district review is an evidence-based process focusing on the Massachusetts District Standards and Indicators (DSI): Governance and Administrative Systems (Leadership and Governance, Human Resources and Professional Development, and Financial and Asset Management standards) or the Student-Centered Systems (Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment, and Student Support standards).

DESE's District Standards and Indicators

The District Standards and Indicators¹, which are the basis of the district reviews, clarify the components necessary to building strong systems that support student outcomes. The six District Standards and 21 Indicators were developed based on research and on input from Massachusetts school-, district-, and state-level stakeholders about policies, systems, and practices that, if implemented well, are likely to lead to improved student performance, opportunities, and outcomes. In particular, the District Standards and

¹ See Appendix A for an abbreviated list of District Standards and Indicators.

Indicators describe the focus on equity that all school districts must embrace to ensure they are effectively serving all students.

DESE has partnered with AIR to conduct comprehensive district reviews for DESE selected districts. The comprehensive district review processes include data collection procedures, quantitative and qualitative analyses, and reporting. The goals for the comprehensive district review are to:

- Develop an evidence-based report which provides a snapshot of participating districts' systems and practices relative to the Massachusetts District Standards and Indicators.
- Provide participating districts with key findings on strengths and areas for improvement through an equity lens, grounded in the Massachusetts District Standards and Indicators.
- Provide information to DESE to support the identification of relevant DESE resources specific to district needs

The Targeted District Review Process

The superintendent or their designee serves as the district liaison and coordinates the review process on behalf of the district. The AIR district lead will serve as the primary point of contact for the district liaison throughout the district review process. The process includes the collection of a variety of types of data from a range of stakeholders and district documents. The multiple data sources allow analysts and writers to triangulate findings and provide a valid and reliable assessment of the district's status on the District Standards and Indicators.

The targeted district review is primarily composed of four activities that include: 1) a district self-assessment, 2) document reviews, 3) instructional observations, and 4) stakeholder interviews and focus groups. Figure 1 provides an overview of the data collection activities and whether they are gathered on-site or through off-site data collection methods.

Figure 1. Overview of Data Collection Activities

Data Collection Activity	Description	Timing	On-Site	Off-Site
1. District self-assessment	District staff will complete a self-assessment prior to the on-site visits. Based on the results, DESE and AIR will work with districts to determine whether the review will focus on the Governance and Administrative Systems standards or the	Due to DESE by August 31		X

	Student-Centered Systems standards.			
2. Document review	<p>The district liaison or a designee will submit documents that provide information about systems and practices that are relevant to the standards of focus. See Appendix B for a list of documents and Appendix C for directions to upload documents.</p> <p>Educator evaluation documents will be reviewed for districts participating in a Governance and Administrative Systems review. See Appendix D.</p> <p>Note: During the on-site stakeholder interviews and focus group sessions, the site visit team may request additional documents, as well as follow-up interviews, to address questions that emerge in evidence review, classroom observations, interviews, and focus groups.</p>	Due to AIR at least two weeks prior to the on-site interview and focus groups		X
3. Instructional observations	<p>Certified observers will conduct classroom observations using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) observation tool. Observations will be conducted at each grade level. These can be scheduled at the same time as the on-site stakeholder interviews and focus groups or a few days prior or later. For more information on CLASS, see Appendix E.</p>	2-5 days ²	X	
4. Stakeholder interviews and focus groups	<p>A team of three to four site visitors, led by the AIR district lead, will conduct interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders. A list of key stakeholders and a schedule will be collaboratively developed by the site lead and the district liaison. During this portion of the data collection, private space must be reserved. See Appendix F for a list of key stakeholders.</p> <p>It is possible to hold some interviews and focus groups virtually to accommodate schedules. The AIR district lead and the district liaison will coordinate any virtual interviews and focus groups.</p>	2–4 days	X	

² The estimate is based on a district with five or fewer schools. Instructional observation data collection may take additional days for larger districts. The AIR site lead will coordinate with the district liaison to determine the best strategy for collecting these data.

Figure 2 provides a sample schedule for the Targeted District Review data collection.

Figure 2. Sample Targeted District Review Data Collection Schedule

Schedule	Activity
Prior to the district review	<p>Orientation meeting. The AIR district lead and the district liaison meet virtually to discuss the process and the timeline for data collection.</p> <p>Document collection begins. The district liaison begins gathering and uploading district documents.</p> <p>District Self-Assessment submitted</p>
Week 1	District liaison/AIR district lead coordination. The district liaison gathers/uploads remaining documents and works with AIR district lead to coordinate on-site data collection and access to documents.
Week 2	<p>Data collection tasks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Documents submitted ▪ Access to educator evaluation database provided ▪ Key Stakeholder Interviews and Focus Groups Schedule is finalized/confirmed ▪ Instructional observation dates are confirmed, schedules are shared with the AIR district lead, and school building leaders are notified of the schedule ▪ Superintendent interview completed (virtual) ▪ School maps and schedules submitted (for observations)
Week 3	AIR district lead prepares the site visit team and reviews submitted materials.
Week 4	<p>On-site data collection. AIR site visit team conducts key stakeholder interviews and focus groups (2–3 days). (Some interviews and focus groups may be conducted virtually.)</p> <p>AIR observers conduct instructional observations (2-4 days, depending on district size).</p>

Analysis and Reporting

Team members will review, analyze, and triangulate data from documents, classroom observations, interviews, and focus groups. AIR considers all the evidence collected, makes connections, and looks for patterns and trends. Final reports include a description of the district context and background, demographic and student achievement data, findings focused on the district's most significant strengths and challenges related to the District Standards and Indicators, and recommendations from DESE that the district can use for ongoing systematic improvement. Final reports also include instructional observation ratings at the grade and district level; ratings will be reported in aggregate and will not identify individual teachers.

Final reports are posted to <https://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/district-review/>. In addition, in fall 2024, reports will be linked from each district's accountability report on DESE's [School and District Profiles](#) website.

Timeline

Targeted district reviews will take place between September and May.

In the fall, following an orientation session for all districts receiving a district review, each identified district liaison will be surveyed to prioritize the possible dates for the district's review process. AIR will then confirm the date of the review, taking the district's Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) testing schedule and other scheduling constraints into consideration.

The draft district review report will be submitted to ODRM for initial review and later to the district for factual correction prior to finalization. ODRM's goal is to provide a draft report 3 to 5 months after the on-site visit. The time required to produce reports varies based on several factors.

Contacts

Robert Havdala

Office of District Reviews and Monitoring
Massachusetts Department
of Elementary and Secondary Education
Robert.J.Havdala@mass.gov

Betheny Lyke, EdD

American Institutes for Research
blyke@air.org

Appendix A.

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education District Standards and Indicators

Below are the six standards and their 21 related indicators. For a more detailed explanation of each indicator, please visit the [DESE website](#).

Governance and Administrative Systems

Leadership and Governance

1. School Committee Governance
2. District and School Leadership
3. District and School Improvement Planning
4. Budget Development

Human Resources and Professional Development

1. Infrastructure
2. Recruitment, Hiring, and Assignment
3. Supervision, Evaluation, and Educator Development
4. Recognition, Leadership Development, and Advancement

Financial and Asset Management

1. Budget Documentation and Reporting
2. Adequate Budget
3. Financial Tracking, Forecasting, Controls, and Audits
4. Capital Planning and Facility Maintenance

Student-Centered Systems

Curriculum and Instruction

1. Curriculum Selection and Use
2. Classroom Instruction
3. Student Access to Coursework

Assessment

1. Data and Assessment Systems
2. Data Use
3. Sharing Results

Student Support

1. Safe and Supportive School Climate and Culture
2. Tiered Systems of Support
3. Family, Student, and Community Engagement and Partnerships

Appendix B. Documents

The district liaison provides as many of the documents on this list as possible. Except for the Completed Curriculum List and Ratings Table and the Completed Assessment Inventory for Student-Facing Systems Targeted Reviews, districts are not required to create documents that do not already exist. Other pertinent information about the district that might inform the site visit team is welcome. Please be prepared during the site visit to provide additional documents that the site visit team might request. Individual student information should be redacted from all documents prior to submission.

Student Centered Systems Targeted Review

Preparation Documents

- District organizational chart
- List of all administrators
- Completed Curriculum List and Ratings Table
- Completed Assessment Inventory

For each school in the district:

- Map of school
- Daily schedule
- Master schedule

Core Documents

General

- School committee minutes from past year (or web address where these are located)
- Strategic Plan, District Improvement Plan, and School Improvement Plans, as well as any district- or school-level plans related to ensuring educational equity for all students
- Sample agendas from relevant team meetings and schedules for the year (e.g., leadership team meetings, CPT meetings)

Curriculum and Instruction

- Curriculum pacing guides, scope and sequences, and sample curriculum documents or curriculum units of study for English language arts, mathematics, science and technology/engineering, and history and social science for all grade levels. (The district may also choose to provide access to curriculum posted online.)
- Description of the curriculum review process (e.g., identification, piloting, adoption) and calendar/schedule, if applicable
- High school program of studies
- Most recent New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) report, if applicable

Assessment

- Documents that describe or illustrate structures, policies, or practices related to data analysis and use (e.g., description of the district data team; protocols used for data analysis at the district, school, or classroom levels)
- Copies of data analyses or reports used in schools, such as analyses of student performance on mid-term and final examinations and benchmark and formative assessments

Student Support

- Description of Tiers 1, 2, and 3 academic, behavioral, and social-emotional supports for all students
- District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) or document that provides general education teachers with guidance to address the needs of students with diverse learning styles and needs
- Documents that describe or illustrate district- and school-based student support teams or similar teams that meet regularly to discuss student academic, social-emotional, and behavioral needs
- Guidance for schools about how to engage with families; information about opportunities for family leadership (e.g., Special Education Advisory Council, School Advisory Council)
- Examples of ways in which the district shares student performance data with students and families
- Internal and external evaluations of mandated programs (such as English learners, special education, and Title I) and of other programs and services (such as needs assessments, community partnerships, and curriculum reviews)
- Documents that describe or illustrate the district's My Career and Academic Plan (MyCAP) process (including scope and sequence), or that describe/illustrate a similar student-driven process which provides students with ongoing opportunities to plan for their academic, personal, or social and career success
- Documents that describe or illustrate the way in which the district assesses school climate and conditions for learning within the school (e.g., extent to which the school environment is safe, supportive, culturally responsive, engaging, and equitable), as well as any relevant data (examples include the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Self-Assessment, the Safe and Supportive Schools Self-Reflection Tool, the School Health Assessment and Performance Evaluation System (SHAPE), or an action plan addressing school climate)

Governance and Administrative Systems Targeted Review

Preparation Documents

- District organizational chart
- List of all administrators
- Completed Curriculum List and Ratings Table
- Completed Assessment Inventory

For each school in the district:

- Map of school
- Daily schedule
- Master schedule

Core Documents

Leadership and Governance

- School committee minutes from past year (or web address where these are located)
- Strategic Plan, District Improvement Plan, and School Improvement Plans, as well as any district- or school-level plans related to ensuring educational equity for all students
- Sample agendas from relevant team meetings and schedules for the year (e.g., leadership team meetings, CPT meetings)

Financial and Asset Management

- Most recent budget proposal with any narrative/presentation used, and approved budget for past three years
- Capital plan
- Examples of data and financial reports provided to the school committee
- Financial audits (including, if applicable, annual single audit findings; End of Year Compliance Supplement; and any other recent financial management audits or review)

Human Resources and Professional Development

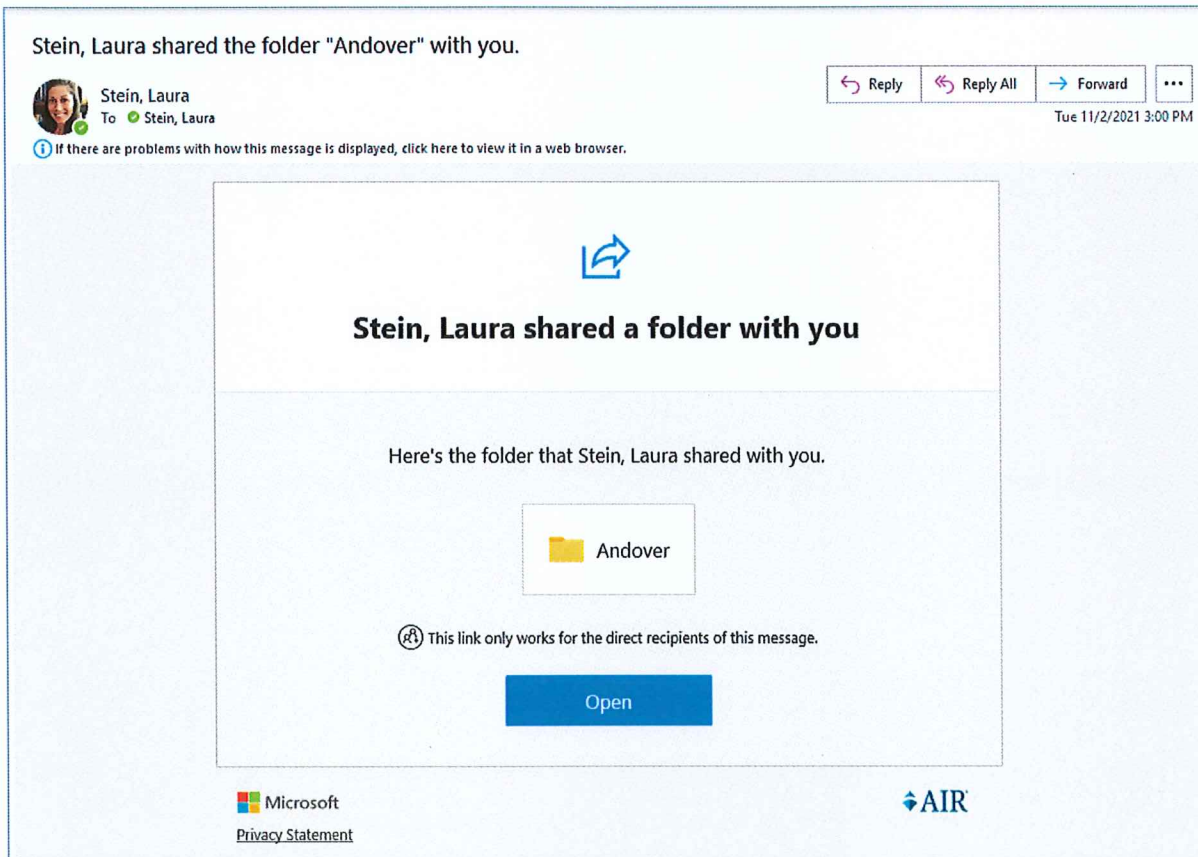
- List of all instructional staff and administrators who were scheduled to be evaluated during the 2021-2022 school year (to facilitate random selection of educator evaluation files)
- Forms, documents, observation tools, and templates used in educator evaluation system for all educators, such as rubrics, educator plans, and observation and evidence gathering forms. Please also provide access to electronic documents related to educator evaluation in order for site-visit team members to review a sample of documentation. (If such access cannot be made available in advance, please plan to provide access during the on-site visit.)
- Teacher common planning time schedules
- Documents that describe/illustrate educator recognition, leadership development, and advancement program(s) and opportunities

- Description of induction and mentoring program and/or associated handbook/materials
- Professional Development (PD) Plan and description of current PD program, along with documents or data illustrating evaluation of PD, including curriculum-specific professional development plans for all grades
- Descriptions or examples of how the district is developing staff capacity to examine and dismantle implicit biases and systemic inequalities
- Documents that describe or illustrate the district's efforts to recruit and retain a diverse workforce and build the cultural competency of its staff
- Human Resources office procedures manual and any other associated materials, particularly those articulating recruitment, hiring or placement procedures

Appendix C. SharePoint Directions

Uploading Files to SharePoint

1. Provide your AIR district lead with email addresses for one or more district representatives who will be responsible for providing documents for the district review and thus need access to SharePoint. Note: Only authorized individuals will have access to the SharePoint.
2. You will receive an email sharing a folder with you. (This email may go to your Spam or Junk folder, so please check those folders if you are expecting the invitation.) Click on the folder icon or the Open button to open a folder.



3. Note: You may need to create a Microsoft account to access the site. You may have difficulty accessing the site if you use a Microsoft account that already is linked to another organization. If you have any difficulty connecting to the folder, please contact your AIR district lead.
4. You should then receive a prompt for two-factor authentication. Click Next.
5. Select your preferred method of contact (text, call, or mobile app) for two-factor authentication.

Jones, Kathleen shared the folder: x Additional security verification x +

account.activedirectory.windowsazure.com/proofup.aspx?culture=en-US

Microsoft

Additional security verification

Secure your account by adding phone verification to your password. [View video to know how to secure your account](#)

Step 1: How should we contact you?

Authentication phone
Authentication phone
Office phone
Mobile app

415-65

Method

☐ Send me a code by text message

☒ Call me

Next

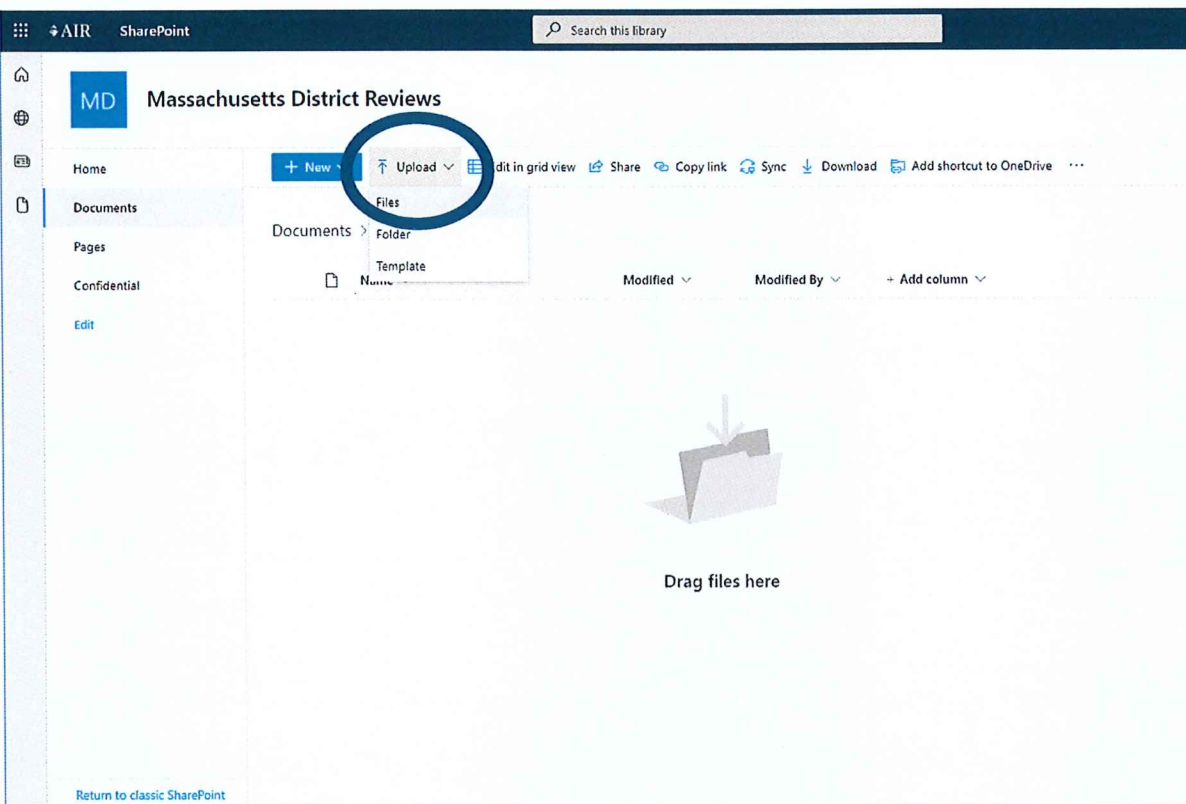
Your phone numbers will only be used for account security. Standard telephone and SMS charges will apply.

©2020 Microsoft Legal | Privacy

Click Next and enter in the code as prompted.

6. Click Done, and you will be taken directly to the folder for your district (only authorized users from your district and the AIR site-visit team will have access to this folder).

7. On the SharePoint site, click upload and select the file or files you want to upload. Folder permissions ensure that personnel from each district can only view their own district's documents. Please be sure that all documents are titled in such a way that the content of the document is clear.



If the documents are already stored in a folder or directory structure, you may upload the complete structure.

Having Difficulty?

If you are signed into a SharePoint, OneDrive, or Microsoft account with an email address that differs from the email address that received the AIR SharePoint Online invitation, please sign out of the account before clicking on the SharePoint Online folder link in the email from AIR.

If you have any questions about the document collection process or using the SharePoint, please contact Betheny Lyke (BLyke@air.org).

Appendix D.

Educator Evaluation File Review

For Governance and Administrative Targeted Reviews Only

Because a district's systems for continually building educator effectiveness are critical to improving student achievement, the review includes a careful analysis of educator evaluations, following the guidelines below.³

1. Based on the number of teachers working in the district, the site-visit team identifies a group of teachers and asks to see the following documents for each of them:
 - Teacher self-assessment
 - Educator Plan, including professional practice and student learning goals
 - Announced or unannounced observation reports
 - Formative assessment or evaluations
 - Summative evaluations (also called teacher evaluations) for teachers who were evaluated during the previous school year
8. In addition, the site-visit team will ask to see the following documents for each currently serving administrator, including the superintendent:
 - Self-assessment
 - Educator Plan, including professional practice and student learning goals
 - Observation or school visit reports or documentation
 - Formative assessment or evaluations
 - Summative evaluations (also called administrator evaluations) for administrators who were evaluated during the previous school year

If records are stored electronically, the district should provide electronic access for the assigned members of the site-visit team. If paper documents are stored, hard copies should be provided or scanned and submitted electronically.

The site-visit team recognizes that in many districts, only about half the teachers and half the administrators are being evaluated each year in accordance with the educator evaluator requirements.

³ The review of evaluations as part of the district review process is mandatory for each district receiving a Governance and Administrative Targeted Review and is allowable under state regulations ([603 CMR 35.10 \(2\)](#)). Both DESE and AIR staff understand the sensitive nature of this information and are committed to ensuring its confidentiality in the development of the district review report.

Appendix E.

Instructional Observations and CLASS Information

Sit review team members who observe the classrooms all receive training on the CLASS protocol in a two-day session and pass a rigorous certification exam to ensure that they are able to accurately rate the dimensions.

Table E1. CLASS K–3 Domains and Dimensions

Emotional Support	Classroom Organization	Instructional Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive Climate Negative Climate Teacher Sensitivity Regard for Student Perspectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behavior Management Productivity Instructional Learning Formats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concept Development Quality of Feedback Language Modeling

Table E2. CLASS Upper Elementary Domains and Dimensions

Emotional Support	Classroom Organization	Instructional Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive Climate Teacher Sensitivity Regard for Student Perspectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behavior Management Productivity Negative Climate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructional Learning Formats Content Understanding Analysis and Inquiry Quality of Feedback Instructional Dialogue
Student Engagement		

Table E3. CLASS Secondary Domains and Dimensions

Emotional Support	Classroom Organization	Instructional Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive Climate Teacher Sensitivity Regard for Student Perspectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behavior Management Productivity Negative Climate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructional Learning Formats Content Understanding Analysis and Inquiry Quality of Feedback Instructional Dialogue
Student Engagement		

When conducting a visit to a classroom, the observer rates each dimension on a scale of 1 to 7. The ratings of all classrooms visited in a school will be aggregated for each domain and dimension in the Monitoring Site Visit report. Names of teachers whose classrooms are observed are not recorded and will not be reported.

Appendix F.

Key Stakeholders for Interviews and Focus Groups

Guided by the District Standards and Indicators, interview (I) and focus group (FG) questions will be customized for specific stakeholders. Interviews and focus groups will take approximately 45-60 minutes. Stakeholders participating in one of these may include the following:

- Superintendent (I)
- District leaders who lead work in each district standard (I)
- School leaders (FG)
 - One focus group
 - All principals in the district
- School level instructional staff (FG)
 - Multiple focus groups
 - General education teachers
 - Special education specialists
 - English learner specialists
- School committee members (FG)
- Teachers association leadership (FG)
- Family members (FG)
- Students (FG)
 - Multiple groups
 - Middle and high school students

Stakeholder(s)	Type	Optimal Number of Participants
Superintendent	Interview	
District leaders	Interviews	As required
School leaders	Focus group(s)	All school leaders in district ⁴
Instructional staff	Focus groups	6–8 per group
School committee members	Focus group	3+
Teachers' association leadership	Focus group	1–5 leaders
Family members	Focus groups	1-2 focus group with 3–5 families each
Students (middle and high school) ⁵	Focus groups	2 focus groups, 6–8 students each

⁴ This may be broken into two focus groups if there are more than six schools in the district.

⁵ Permission forms for each student must be signed by a family member and submitted to AIR staff before student groups occur. AIR district lead will provide these blank forms to the district liaison.