

December 9, 2025

Agenda

1. High School Updates

- Activities (Winter Concert, Service)
- [Competency Determination Policy](#) - Approved by School Committee Dec 1
 - i. [Policy Summary for Students and Parents](#)

2. Exploring Career Technical Education Programs

- Salem Visit Summary
 - i. [CTE Page Salem](#)
 - ii. [Ch. 74 List of Programs - DESE](#)

3. School Culture Data Discussion (Using 2 Sources)

- Views of Climate and Learning (DESE Student Survey)
- School Quality Measures (Massachusetts Consortium for Innovative Education Assessment (MCIEA))



NHS SCHOOL COUNCIL

November 4, 2025

School Culture and Climate Data

[Views of Climate And Learning
\(VOCAL\)](#)

[School Quality Measures](#)



School Culture and Climate Data Discussion Prompts

What strengths or bright spots do you see?

Are there any patterns or commonalities you observe across the 2 different data sources?

What areas for growth do you observe?

What is VOCAL?

- VOCAL is an **annual student-survey** in Massachusetts designed to capture students' perceptions of school climate — how they experience their school environment, safety, and engagement.
- It is administered to students in specific grades (in recent years: grades 4, 5, 8 and 10) across the state.
- Participation is voluntary for schools/districts and students.
- VOCAL frames school climate via **three major dimensions**:
 - a. **Engagement** - measuring how much students feel intellectually, emotionally, and behaviorally involved, feel valued and connected.
 - b. **Environment** - looking at how the instructional and broader school environment supports learning and wellbeing.
 - c. **Safety** - examining students' perceptions of safety in the school environment.

What is the School Quality Measures Dashboard (SQM)?

- The SQM Dashboard is a response to concerns that conventional accountability systems—mainly test scores and narrowly defined achievement metrics—provide an incomplete and sometimes biased picture of school quality.
- The idea is to provide a more **comprehensive, fair, and action-oriented** set of indicators, so schools, districts and communities can look at strengths, challenges, and improvement opportunities based on multiple dimensions—not just academic test results.
- The dashboard is **not** meant to rank schools against one another but rather to help each school reflect on its performance and plan improvement.

The SQM framework organizes indicators into five major categories

1. **Teachers & Leadership** – The quality of teaching and leadership, and the support for professional growth.
2. **School Culture** – The environment of the school: safety, caring relationships, academic orientation, attendance, etc.
3. **Resources** – Physical and curriculum resources, class size, facilities, external supports (family-school relationships and community support).
4. **Academic Learning** – Student learning of core academic content, progress/growth, engagement in problem solving, readiness for college/career.
5. **Community & Well-being** – Social-emotional development, engagement in arts/literature, perseverance, preparedness for life beyond school.