

2026–2028 District Improvement Plan

Cycle One of the South Hadley Strategy for Student Success



South Hadley High School



Michael E. Smith Middle School



Mosier Elementary School



Henry J. Skala School

The commitments that guide the work

OUR MISSION

South Hadley Public Schools is committed to ensuring that every student has meaningful opportunities to learn, grow, and achieve full potential. The district seeks academic excellence through strong instruction, mastery of essential skills, critical thinking, creativity, independent inquiry, and responsible decision-making. The district also promotes equity, inclusion, and a sense of belonging for all and is committed to respectful dialogue, upstander behavior, and learning environments that support students' academic, social, emotional, and civic development.

CORE VALUES

Academic Excellence and Growth

Meaningful opportunities to learn, grow, master essential skills, and achieve full potential.

Challenging and Supportive Learning

High expectations with the support students need to succeed.

Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

Every student feels respected, included, and valued.

Critical Thinking and Responsible Decision-Making

Creativity, inquiry, sound judgment, and problem solving.

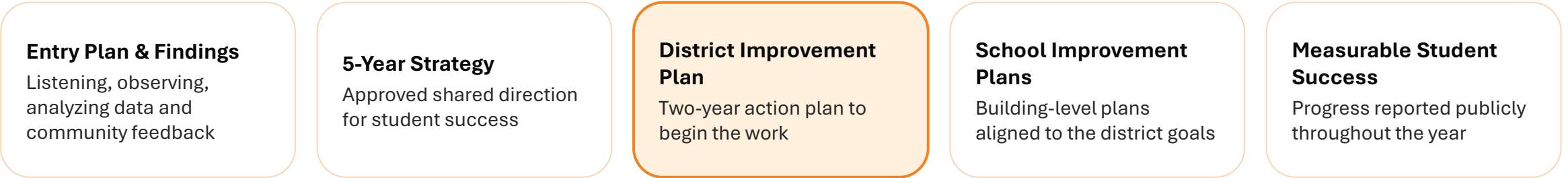
Lifelong Learning and Responsible Citizenship

Preparing students to contribute in a diverse and global society.



From listening to strategy to action

THE PROCESS



The Strategy establishes where we are going. The District Improvement Plan explains how we begin getting there.



How the findings connect to the Strategy and DIP goals



Cross-cutting entry finding themes

Entry Finding Theme 3: Communication, Transparency, & Trust and Theme 6: Resource Allocation, Staffing Capacity, Organizational Support Structures, & Program Sustainability are incorporated into all four goals.



The four goals that organize the work

1

Instructional Coherence, Curriculum, and Rigor

Consistent grade-level learning, aligned curriculum, clear expectations, and rigorous inclusive instruction.

2

MTSS, Student Supports, and Readiness

A coherent system of academic, behavioral, social-emotional, executive-functioning, and transition supports.

3

Climate, Safety, Belonging, and Student Voice

Predictable, inclusive, and responsive schools where students feel safe, known, respected, and heard.

4

Special Education Coherence, Compliance, and Inclusive Access

Consistent IEP implementation, timely services, progress monitoring, communication, and inclusive access.



A phased plan protects focus and capacity

2026-2027

Build and baseline

Develop shared frameworks
Establish baseline data
Address compliance priorities
Pilot selected practices

2027-2028

Implement and refine

Use priority systems across schools
Monitor implementation and outcomes
Adjust based on evidence

2028-2030

Expand and sustain

Expand work that needs more time or capacity
Sustain effective systems
Begin the next improvement-plan cycle

The 2026-2028 plan establishes the foundation. Work that requires additional capacity moves into the next cycle rather than disappearing from the strategy.



How we will identify measures of success

ESTABLISH A BASELINE

Use 2026-2027 data to understand the district's starting point.

TRACK IMPLEMENTATION

Review whether the planned systems, practices, and communication expectations are in place and used consistently.

REVIEW OUTCOMES

Use student learning, intervention, climate, family feedback, and special education service data to determine whether conditions are improving.

COMPARE AND REPORT

Measure progress against the June 2027 and June 2028 checkpoints, report results publicly, and adjust the work when evidence shows a need.

Success will include both completed system work and evidence that student and family experiences are improving.

Goal 1: Instructional Coherence, Curriculum, and Rigor

Every student should experience consistent grade-level learning, aligned curriculum, clear expectations for rigor, and high-quality instruction across, schools, subjects, and transition points.



What students and families should expect

By 2028

- Clearer and more consistent learning expectations across schools and grade levels.
- Instruction that is appropriately challenging and accessible to students with diverse needs.
- Better alignment at transition points, especially elementary-to-middle and middle-to-high school.
- Clearer information for families about learning, progress, assessments, and supports.

Why this matters

Strong relationships are a major strength in South Hadley. Goal 1 adds stronger system coherence so that student success does not depend on classroom, grade, or program variability.



Objective 1.1: shared instructional expectations

1

Define rigor

Develop a shared district definition so that rigor is not interpreted differently from classroom to classroom.

2

Clarify inclusive Tier 1 instruction

Identify expectations for differentiation, inclusion, engagement, checks for understanding, and access for students with disabilities and English learners.

3

Use grade-span look-fors

Create common classroom look-fors that administrators can use for calibration, walkthroughs, and feedback.

4

Build professional learning cycles

Introduce the framework in 2026–27 and continue staff learning in 2027–28.

5

Monitor implementation

Establish baseline walkthrough data in every school and review growth by June 2028.



Objective 1.2: curriculum, assessments, and alignment

Curriculum review cycle	Create a simple protocol and five-year calendar.	ELA	Continue Grade 5 and Grades 6–8 curriculum implementation and identify PK–12 alignment gaps.
Mathematics	Continue Grade 5 work and pilot Grades 6–8 curriculum for full implementation in 2027–28.	Science	Review Grades 6–8 needs and identify curriculum for implementation.
Social Studies	Pilot modules in Grades 6–7 and Grades 3–4 across the cycle.	Common assessments	Use at least one common assessment per unit/module/chapter in applicable grades/courses.



Objective 1.3: family-facing academic communication

Families asked for clearer academic signals: what students are learning, how progress is communicated, and where information can be found.

- Major learning topics and resources posted through existing school tools.
- Assessment calendars and clearer platform guidance.
- Reasonable minimum expectations for grade/progress communication by grade span.
- A 10-school-day family communication standard after a documented pattern of academic concern.
- Family feedback used to refine communication.

Goal 2: MTSS, Student Supports, and Readiness

Students should have access to a coherent PK–12 system of academic, behavioral, social-emotional, executive-functioning, and transition supports. This work is designed so student needs are identified early, interventions begin in a timely way, progress is monitored consistently, and information follows students as they move between supports, grades, and schools.



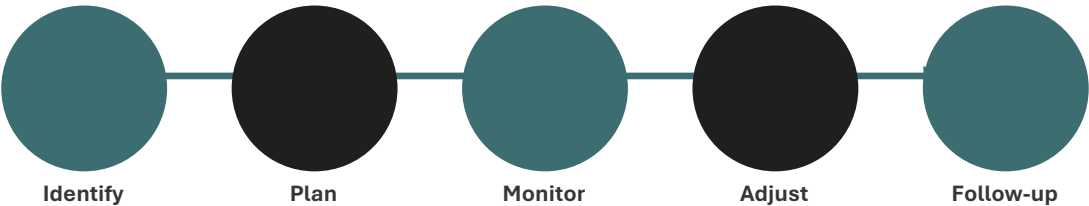
What students and families should expect

GOAL 2

MTSS, Student Supports, and Readiness

By 2028

- Student needs are identified earlier and addressed through a common process.
- Interventions begin in a timely manner and are monitored regularly.
- Families receive communication at important intervention points.
- Students are monitored after exiting intervention so they do not fall through the cracks.
- Transition supports are clearer for elementary-to-middle, Grade 8-to-9, and postsecondary transitions.





Objectives 2.1–2.3 across the district

1

PK–12 MTSS framework

Define Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 across academic, behavioral, attendance, SEL, and executive-functioning supports.

3

Common referral and plan process

Create consistent intervention-plan components and entry, continuation, intensification, and exit criteria.

5

Data routines and dashboards

Use Fall/Winter/Spring review windows, monthly data review, and multiple data sources for decisions.

2

School MTSS teams

Establish team membership, roles, responsibilities, and every-other-week review routines.

4

MTSS and special education guidance

Clarify that MTSS cannot delay or deny evaluation when disability is suspected.

6

Executive-functioning and transition supports

Inventory current practices, evaluate the middle school WIN pilot, and implement transition protocols.

Goal 3: Climate, Safety, Belonging, and Student Voice

Students should feel safe, known, respected, and able to fully engage in rigorous learning, with clear follow-through when concerns arise.



GOAL 3

What students and families should expect

GOAL 3

Climate, Safety, Belonging, and Student Voice

By 2028

- Clearer and more consistent expectations across schools.
- More predictable response to behavior, safety, bullying, and general concerns.
- Accessible ways to raise concerns and understand next steps.
- More visible student voice opportunities and action taken in response to student feedback.
- Stronger sense of belonging, safety, and follow-through.



Belonging improves when students see that adults listen, respond, and follow through consistently.



Objectives 3.1–3.3 across the district

1

Behavior and response framework

Distinguish classroom-managed and administrator-managed concerns and define common response principles.

3

General concern protocol

Create closest-level-first guidance, escalation steps, an online form, routing, ownership, and tracking categories.

5

Climate data routines

Review behavior/safety and aggregate concern data at school and district levels.

2

Bullying and reporting pathways

Clarify procedures, forms, timelines, student/family education, and closure communication.

4

Response timelines

Acknowledge formal concerns within two school days and provide a substantive response/status update within five school days after acknowledgment.

6

Student voice

Survey twice annually, create listening opportunities, establish Superintendent Student Advisory, and use You Said–We Heard–We Did responses.

Goal 4: Special Education Coherence, Compliance, and Inclusive Access

Students with disabilities should receive timely services, consistent IEP implementation, meaningful progress monitoring, and full access to instruction and belonging.



GOAL 4

What students and families should expect

GOAL 4

Special Education Coherence, Compliance, and Inclusive Access

By 2028

- More consistent IEP implementation and service delivery across schools.
- Clearer and more proactive family communication about services and progress.
- Timely response when services are missed, delayed, changed, or require follow-up.
- Stronger progress monitoring and clearer concern response.
- Greater access to inclusive instruction, belonging, and shared responsibility.



Districtwide responsibility

Inclusive access is not only a Student Services responsibility. It requires coordinated general education, special education, administrative, and family partnership.



Objective 4.1: special education audit to action

- 1

Audit framework
Finalize review areas, evidence sources, stakeholder groups, methodology, timeline, and deliverables.
- 2

Stakeholder evidence
Analyze caregiver, staff, ESY family/staff survey data, and additional stakeholder/student feedback.
- 3

Record and compliance review
Review approximately 10% of district IEPs and 100% of identified missed/compensatory-service cases from the prior three years.

- 4

Recommendations to action
Identify staffing, scheduling, program, resource, communication, compliance, and inclusion implications.
- 5

Public reporting
Present audit findings and initial recommendations in December 2026, then provide two School Committee progress updates each year.



Objective 4.2: service delivery, timelines, and follow-up

The plan moves the district toward common definitions, consistent documentation, and routine review.

- Track required, scheduled, delivered, missed, make-up, and compensatory services.
- Use a monthly special education compliance/service-delivery dashboard.
- Clarify principal/AP support responsibilities and schedule review for IEP service-delivery capacity.
- Clarify IEP implementation responsibilities and access procedures for responsible staff.
- Provide role-specific special education procedure training, including new-hire training.
- Monitor legal timelines and service-delivery fidelity, then use audit findings to refine systems.

Monthly review

Overdue items, repeated concerns, and compliance risks are assigned an owner and tracked to resolution.

Schedule capacity

Service-delivery conflicts are identified before school starts and receive a documented mitigation plan.



Objective 4.3: family communication and progress monitoring

1

Monthly proactive communication

Establish minimum case-manager/liaison communication expectations for families.

2

Family-friendly progress reporting

Strengthen data-based IEP progress reports, language access, and clarity about services and progress.

3

Concern response timelines

Use two-day acknowledgment and five-day substantive response/status standards for formal special education concerns.

4

Internal communication

Set a two-school-day standard for significant IEP/service changes.

5

Post-exit monitoring

Transfer students who exit special education into MTSS follow-up when appropriate.



Objective 4.4: inclusive practice and shared ownership

The plan treats inclusion as a system that must be defined, supported, monitored, and resourced.

1

Define expectations

Districtwide inclusion/shared-ownership and least restrictive environment guidance.

2

Inventory current practice

Baseline access, placement, progress, co-teaching, and inclusive service-delivery data.

3

Strengthen co-teaching

Continue secondary co-teaching support, including purposeful parallel teaching and walkthrough indicators.

4

Train paraprofessionals/ETAs

Role-specific training and support that promotes student access and independence.

5

Select school focus areas

Each school identifies 1–2 inclusion focus areas and completes action tied to those areas.



What this means across the district

This plan requires coordinated work at every level of the district.

School Committee

Approve plan, review progress, ask questions, and maintain public accountability.

Superintendent & district leaders

Coordinate systems, implementation timelines, data review, and public reporting.

Principals/APs

Translate district goals and objectives into school plans and lead school-level implementation.

Educators & support staff

Implement practices, participate in professional learning, use common tools, and give feedback.

Student Services

Lead special education and MTSS systems, service tracking, compliance, and family communication.

Students & families

Provide feedback, participate in advisory/listening structures, and help us improve implementation.



Cycle One: first-year milestones

Sept. 2026	DIP approval and launch; principals finalize aligned School Improvement Plans.
Fall 2026	Rigor definition, instructional look-fors, special education audit framework, current practice reviews.
Dec. 2026	Tier 1 expectations finalized; special education audit findings and initial recommendations presented.
Winter/Spring 2027	MTSS framework, concern/behavior protocols, curriculum-review protocol, school pilots, baseline data.
June 2027	Year 1 public progress review: systems built, pilots completed, baselines established, next adjustments.
Aug./Sept. 2027	Role-appropriate staff training and Year 2 implementation launch.



What success should look like by 2028

More consistent learning

Students experience clearer expectations, aligned curriculum, rigorous inclusive instruction, and common evidence of learning.

More timely support

Students receive interventions through a common process, with progress monitoring, family communication, and follow-up.

More visible follow-through

Students and families understand how concerns are addressed, and schools respond to feedback and data.

More coherent special education

Students with disabilities receive consistent services, progress monitoring, communication, and access to inclusive learning.

By 2028, the most important question will be whether our systems are not only built, but used consistently enough to improve student experience and outcomes.