

# Spencer-East Brookfield Regional School District

## Comprehensive District Review Report

October 2023

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### **Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education**

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Commissioner  
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## Executive Summary

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In accordance with Massachusetts state law, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) contracted with the American Institutes for Research® (AIR®) to conduct a comprehensive review of Spencer-East Brookfield Regional School District (hereafter, Spencer-East Brookfield) in October 2023. Data collection activities associated with the review focused on understanding how district systems, structures, and practices operate in support of district continuous improvement efforts. The review focused on the six standards (and related indicators) that DESE has identified as being important components of district effectiveness.<sup>1</sup>

Three observers, who focused primarily on instruction in the classroom, visited Spencer-East Brookfield during the week of October 9, 2023. The observers conducted 60 observations in a sample of classrooms across grade levels, focused on literacy, English language arts (ELA), and mathematics. The Teachstone Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) protocol, developed by the Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning at the University of Virginia,<sup>2</sup> guided all classroom observations in the district. These observations used the three grade-band levels of the CLASS protocols: K-3, Upper Elementary (4-5), and Secondary (6-12). Overall, for the K-5 grade band, instructional observations suggest somewhat strong evidence of emotional support and classroom organization, mixed evidence of student engagement (Grades 4-5), and weak evidence of instructional support. For the 6-8 grade band, instructional observations provide mixed evidence of emotional support and student engagement, strong evidence of classroom organization, and somewhat weak evidence of instructional support. For the 9-12 grade band, instructional observations provide mixed evidence of emotional support and student engagement, strong evidence of classroom organization, and somewhat weak evidence of instructional support.

## Leadership and Governance

The superintendent of Spencer-East Brookfield, since 2018, is Paul Haughey, Ed.D. He receives support from the director of student services; the director of preschool, early education, and care; the director of academic affairs; the director of food services; the director of facilities and operations; the business officer; and the individual school principals and assistant principals. These officials, particularly the superintendent, work closely with the elected school committee members who represent Spencer and East Brookfield residents through their oversight of the district.

School leadership teams vary by building, but each school principal leads the team. The district leadership team created the district's strategic improvement plan at an annual summer retreat in 2019 and revises it yearly as needed with feedback from key stakeholders. The current plan—*Innovate. Inspire. Achieve 2024!*—has three strategic objectives: (a) the whole child, (b) professional learning, and (c) innovation and responsiveness. The district improvement plan guides the work of the school committee and the district leadership team, and school improvement plans align with the district plan and are tailored to meet school/community needs.

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<sup>1</sup> DESE's District Standards and Indicators are at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/district-review/district-standards-indicators.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> For more information on the Teachstone CLASS protocol, visit <https://teachstone.com/class/>.

Strengths of the district include a student representative to the school committee, a clear division of roles and a strong working relationship between the school committee and superintendent, strong working relationships between district and school leaders, a clear process for developing and revising district improvement planning, the use of data and feedback to review and revise district improvement plans, and a clear and collaborative budget development process. Areas for growth include the relationship between the school committee and instructional staff, formal structures for teacher input into school and district policies, an evaluation plan for objectives and initiatives in the district improvement plan, and the consistent role of school councils to inform district- and school-level planning.

## **Curriculum and Instruction**

The district has a documented process from 2019 for reviewing, selecting, and adopting new curricular resources. The process includes a timeline for regularly reviewing each curricular resource in each content area, which includes prioritizing alignment to state standards and CURATE<sup>3</sup> ratings to guide the selection of resources to best meet student needs.

Spencer-East Brookfield currently uses Journeys for K-5 ELA, which is supplemented by a variety of tools to address identified gaps in the curriculum related to phonics. The district recently adopted StudySync for ELA at the secondary levels (6-12) and i-Ready Classroom Mathematics for K-8. The district uses STEMscopes and OpenSciEd for science, plus a variety of teacher-developed curricula for other secondary content areas.

Strengths of the district include the curricular review process, staff perceptions of relevant and rigorous curricular materials, high scores in the classroom organization domain, multiple career and technical education pathways, and daily student schedules that incorporate postsecondary preparedness and student interest. Areas for growth for the district include the elementary ELA curriculum, vertical alignment, instructional practices to support all learners, and instructional strategies and academic supports for students with disabilities.

## **Assessment**

Spencer-East Brookfield uses a variety of screeners to understand students' reading skills at each school level, including EarlyBird, Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), and Measures of Academic Progress (MAP; Reading). For mathematics, they use information from the newly adopted i-Ready curriculum to screen all students in Grades K-8. In addition, the district is currently partnering with Panorama to gather additional information about student perspectives. At the high school level, teachers use common midterm and final assessments.

Assessment results are accessible to a broad range of educators, including classroom teachers, specialists, and district leaders, to guide decision making. Regular communication of assessment results to families are in a variety of ways, including parent teacher conferences, report cards, and individual meetings. In addition, students and families have access to assignment information via Schoology (middle school) or PowerSchool (high school).

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<sup>3</sup> CURATE: CUrriculum RATings by TEachers. See <https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate>.

Strengths of the district include the use of multiple sources of data and frequent review of student performance data by the district leadership team. Areas for growth include expectations and systems for data use across schools and content areas and sharing assessment results with students.

## **Human Resources and Professional Development**

Spencer-East Brookfield's human resources department is responsible for systems to support employee recruitment and hiring, salary administration, benefits, and policy implementation, whereas the directors of academic affairs and student services are responsible for professional development. The human resources department is currently transitioning from using SchoolSpring for recruitment and hiring to PowerSchool to improve the efficiency of their work. Stakeholders across focus groups acknowledged that the district has had difficulty recruiting, hiring, and retaining diverse staff, which the district listed as a goal in their *Equity and Excellence* plan. The district has partnered with local institutions of higher education to expand and diversify their potential staffing pool. A strategic objective from *Innovate. Inspire. Achieve 2024! Is* to "sustain the high quality of our teachers and administrators by maximizing opportunities for professional development and collaboration, while also increasing diversity."

Strengths of the district include new software to support human resources infrastructure, relationships with local training programs to support recruitment, and training for school leaders on instructional leadership. Areas for growth include efficiency of human resources procedures, concrete strategies for recruiting, hiring, and retaining diverse educators, consistency of instructional walkthroughs and feedback, identifying areas of improvement through the evaluation process, implementing the evaluation process with fidelity, and including teachers in the educator development planning processes.

## **Student Support**

Spencer-East Brookfield has structures and systems in place to support the academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs of all students. These structures include systems to support data-based decision making to inform the matching of students with evidence-based supports and services. Each school has a child study team that uses multiple sources of data to match students with evidence-based supports and services based on their unique academic, behavioral, or social-emotional needs. Each school also has time allocated in schedules to provide interventions and supports to students.

Spencer-East Brookfield proactively builds partnerships with community organizations to meet student needs. At the high school, the district recently included a Bridge for Resilient Youth in Transition program to support students who are transitioning back to school following hospitalization. The district also partners with local organizations (e.g., New Hope; New Beginnings; Girls Inc.; Cares Club) to provide therapeutic services at the elementary and middle schools. District staff described funding additional support staff positions to meet increased student needs.

Strengths of the district include an emphasis on social-emotional supports for all students, adoption of new curricular resources to support social-emotional learning, time allocated in school schedules to provide interventions and supports, an established community relations plan, and

partnerships with community organizations to meet a variety of student needs. Areas for growth include teacher and student relationships at the secondary levels, systems and personnel to support English Learners (ELs), and the systematic collection of information from students and families to inform partnerships and programming.

## **Financial and Asset Management**

As a regional district, Spencer-East Brookfield has a regional agreement that clearly details the amount that each town must contribute to the annual budget. District leaders and school committee members described strong working relationships between district and town leaders, which have benefited from a successful navigation of the school building project. Since 2013, Spencer-East Brookfield has been under financial oversight by the state. The district has repaid its funds borrowed from the state; however, the district has not yet submitted a formal request to the Commissioner to exit state oversight, and therefore continues to work with its fiscal overseer and submit reports to DESE.

The district's budget development and review processes are clear and collaborative. Spencer-East Brookfield values financial transparency; the district posts all finalized budgets to its website and partners with ClearGov to make budget information accessible to the community. District officials worked with the fiscal overseer to develop a six-year resource and needs projection that guides their budget development. The district does not yet have a capital plan developed. A major focus of the district has been securing a high school building project, which district leaders described as a priority for both communities served by SEBRSD.

Strengths of the district include the district's use of ClearGov to transparently publish budget information, financial reporting to school committee, and community support for a building project to replace the high school facility. An area for growth for the district is continued oversight from the state and the development of a comprehensive capital plan.

# Spencer-East Brookfield Regional School District: District Review Overview

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## Purpose

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

## Methodology

A district review team consisting of AIR staff members and subcontractors, with expertise in each district standard, reviews documentation and extant data prior to conducting an on-site visit. On-site data collection includes team members conducting interviews and focus group sessions with a wide range of stakeholders, including school committee members, teachers' association representatives, district and school administrators, teachers, students, and students' families. Virtual interviews and focus groups also are conducted as needed. Information about review activities and the site visit schedule is in Appendix A. Team members also observe classroom instruction and collect data using the CLASS protocol. The Districtwide Instructional Observation Report resulting from these classroom observations is in Appendix B.

Following the site visit, the team members code and analyze the data to develop a set of objective findings. The team lead and multiple quality assurance reviewers, including DESE staff, then review the initial draft of the report. DESE staff provides recommendations for the district, based on the findings of strengths and areas of growth identified, before AIR finalizes and submits the report to DESE. DESE previews and then sends the report to the district for factual review before publishing it on the DESE website. DESE also provides additional resources to support implementation of DESE's District Standards and Indicators, summarized in Appendix C.

## Site Visit

The site visit to Spencer-East Brookfield occurred during the weeks of October 2 and October 9, 2023. The site visit included 16 hours of interviews and focus groups with approximately 61 stakeholders, including school committee members, district administrators, school staff, students, and teachers' association representatives. The review team conducted three teacher focus groups with five elementary school teachers, five middle school teachers, and five high school teachers; two focus groups with nine middle school and eight high school students. The team scheduled a virtual focus group for families, but no one attended even though two individuals registered for the event.



The site team also conducted 60 observations of classroom instruction in four schools. Certified team members conducted instructional observations using the Teachstone CLASS protocol.

## District Profile

Appointed in 2018, the superintendent of Spencer-East Brookfield is Paul Haughey, Ed.D. He receives support from the director of student services; the director of preschool, early education, and care; the director of academic affairs; the director of food services; the director of facilities and operations; the business officer; and the individual school principals and assistant principals. A school committee composed of seven members and elected for three-year terms governs the district.

In the 2022-2023 school year, there were 111 teachers in the district, with 1,377 students enrolled in the district’s four schools. Table 1 provides an overview of student enrollment by school.

**Table 1. Schools, Type, Grades Served, and Enrollment, 2023-2024**

School	Type	Grades served	Enrollment
Wire Village School	Elementary	K-4	451
East Brookfield Elementary	Elementary	PK-6	247
Knox Trail Middle School	Middle	5-8	389
David Prouty High	High	9-12	331
<b>Total</b>			<b>1,418</b>

Note. Enrollment data as of October 1, 2023.

Between 2021 and 2024, overall student enrollment increased by 87 students. Enrollment figures by race/ethnicity and high needs populations (i.e., students with disabilities, students from low-income families, and ELs and former ELs) compared with the state are in Tables D1 and D2 in Appendix D. Appendix D also provides additional information about district enrollment, attendance, and expenditures.

In fiscal year 2022, the total in-district per-pupil expenditure for Spencer-East Brookfield was \$16,866, which is \$1,555 less than the average in-district per-pupil expenditure in districts with similar demographics (\$18,421), and \$15 more than the average in-district per-pupil expenditures in districts of similar wealth (\$16,851).<sup>4</sup> In-district per pupil expenditures for Spencer-East Brookfield were \$2,678 less than the average state spending per pupil (\$19,544). Actual net school spending was greater than what is required by the Chapter 70 state education aid program, as shown in Table D4 in Appendix D.

## School and Student Performance

The following section includes selected highlights regarding student performance in Spencer-East Brookfield. This section is a brief synopsis of data, not a comprehensive analysis of district

<sup>4</sup> Districts with similar demographics and similar wealth are based on [Resource Allocation and District Action Reports \(RADAR\)](#) (retrieved February 2024).

performance data. For additional details and data on district performance, please see Appendix E and [School and District Profiles](#).

### **Achievement**

- Across all student groups, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the ELA, mathematics, and science Next Generation MCAS (Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System) in 2023 was lower than the state averages (in most cases by 5 or more percentage points), except for Multi-race, non-Hispanic/Latino students in ELA in Grades 3-8.
- The percentage of White students meeting or exceeding expectations on the MCAS was below their statewide peers by 21 percentage points to 26 percentage points in ELA and mathematics in Grades 3-8 and 10, and in science in Grades 5 and 8, and 10.

### **Growth**

- In Spencer-East Brookfield, ELA student growth percentiles (SGPs)<sup>5</sup> were lower in 2023 than in 2022 for each student group with reportable data. SGPs were low in Grades 3-8 for Hispanic/Latino students, high needs students, low-income students, and students with disabilities and also were low for all student groups in Grade 10 with reportable data.
- ELA SGPs in sixth grade declined 22.6 points from 68.1 in 2022 to 45.5 in 2023.
- Mathematics SGPs in Grades 3-8 were higher in 2023 than in 2022 for each student group with reportable data and represented typical growth.
- Mathematics SGPs in Grade 10 were typical in 2023 for All students and White students,, and SGPs were low for high needs students and low-income students.

### **Other Indicators**

- Spencer-East Brookfield's four-year graduation rates in 2022 were below the state rate for each student group with reportable data by 18 percentage points to 47.9 percentage points. Graduation rates decreased between 2020 and 2022 for four of the six student groups with reportable data.
- For most student groups with reportable data, the dropout rates in Spencer-East Brookfield in 2022 were double or greater than the state rate.
- The percentage of Spencer-East Brookfield students completing advanced coursework has increased between 2021 and 2023 for most student groups. In 2023, every student group with reportable data completed more advanced coursework than their statewide peers by 8.0 percentage points to 20.6 percentage points, except for English Learners.
- In 2023, David Prouty High School was identified as requiring assistance or intervention via the state's accountability system for two reasons: the school had a low assessment participation rate (less than 95 percent) for low income students on the spring 2023 MCAS assessments, and the overall performance of the White student group was among the lowest performing five percent of White student groups in high schools statewide.

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<sup>5</sup> Average SGP ranges: Very Low Growth = 1.0-29.9, Low Growth = 30.0-39.9, Typical Growth = 40.0-59.9, Exceeded Typical Growth = 60.0 or higher.

## Classroom Observations

Three observers, who focused primarily on instruction in the classroom, visited Spencer-East Brookfield during the week of October 9, 2023. The observers conducted 60 observations in a sample of classrooms across grade levels, focused on literacy, ELA, and mathematics. The CLASS protocol guided all classroom observations in the district. These observations used the three grade-band levels of CLASS protocols: K-3, Upper Elementary (4-5), and Secondary (6-12).

The K-3 protocol includes 10 classroom dimensions related to three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support. The Upper Elementary and Secondary protocols include 11 classroom dimensions related to three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support, in addition to Student Engagement. The three domains observed at all levels broadly are defined as follows:

- **Emotional Support.** Describes the social-emotional functioning of the classroom, including teacher-student relationships and responsiveness to social-emotional needs.
- **Classroom Organization.** Describes the management of students' behavior, time, and attention in the classroom.
- **Instructional Support.** Describes the efforts to support cognitive and language development, including cognitive demand of the assigned tasks, the focus on higher order thinking skills, and the use of process-oriented feedback.

When conducting a classroom visit, the observer rates each dimension (including Student Engagement) on a scale of 1 to 7. A rating of 1 or 2 (low range) indicates that the dimension was never or rarely evident during the visit. A rating of 3, 4, or 5 (middle range) indicates that the dimension was evident but not exhibited consistently or in a way that included all students. A rating of 6 or 7 (high range) indicates that the dimension was reflected in all or most classroom activities and in a way that included all or most students.

In Spencer-East Brookfield, ratings are provided across three grade bands: K-5, 6-8, and 9-12. For each grade band, ratings are provided across the overarching domains, as well as at individual dimensions within those domains. The full report of findings from observations conducted in Spencer-East Brookfield is in Appendix B, and summary results are in Tables 17, 18, and 19 in this appendix.

In summary, findings from the Spencer-East Brookfield observations were as follows:

- **Emotional Support.** Ratings were in the middle range for the K-5, 6-8, and 9-12 grade bands (5.4, 4.9, and 4.7, respectively).
- **Classroom Organization.** Ratings were in the middle range for K-5 grade band (5.8) and the high range for the 6-8 and 9-12 grade bands (6.5 and 6.4, respectively).
- **Instructional Support.** Ratings were in the low range for K-5 grade band (2.7) and the middle range for the 6-8 and 9-12 grade bands (3.4 and 3.1, respectively).
- **Student Engagement.** For Grades 4 and up, where student engagement was measured as an independent domain, ratings were in the middle range for all grade bands: 4.9 for Grades 4-5, 5.4 for Grades 6-8, and 4.6 for Grades 9-12.

Overall, in the K-5 grade band, instructional observations suggest generally strong emotional support, high classroom organization and student engagement (Grades 4-5), and mixed evidence of consistently rigorous instructional support. In the 6-8 grade band, instructional observations provide mixed evidence of consistently strong emotional support, strong classroom organization and student engagement, and mixed evidence of consistently rigorous instructional support. In the 9-12 grade band, instructional observations provide mixed evidence of strong emotional support, strong evidence of classroom organization, and mixed evidence of student engagement or consistently rigorous instructional support.

## Leadership and Governance

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Appointed in 2018, Paul Haughey, Ed. D. is the superintendent of Spencer-East Brookfield. He receives support from the director of student services; the director of preschool, early education, and care; the director of academic affairs; the director of food services; the director of facilities and operations; the business officer; and the individual school principals and assistant principals. These district officials, particularly the superintendent, work closely with the elected school committee members who represent Spencer and East Brookfield residents through their oversight of the district. The school committee has seven members, five from Spencer and two from East Brookfield, each serving a three-year term.

The school committee has a chair, a vice chair, and five additional members as well as one student representative. According to the *Spencer-East Brookfield School Committee Policy Manual*, the broad functions of the committee are as follows: (a) legislative or policymaking, (b) appraisal, (c) provision of financial resources, (d) public relations, and (e) educational planning and evaluation. In support of their work, the school committee meets monthly and is an active member of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees.

School leadership teams vary by building, but each school has a principal who leads the administrative and instructional team. David Prouty High School, Knox Trail Middle, and Wire Village School (elementary) have assistant principals as part of their leadership team, and the high school and middle school also receive support from deans of students. In focus groups, high school staff were familiar with the purpose and structure of their instructional leadership team (ILT), which is comprised of department heads and regularly meets to discuss school wide issues and concerns. Staff from other buildings were less familiar with the purpose and/or structure of their building ILTs, and generally reported mixed feedback about the existence and efficacy of ILTs in their schools.

The district leadership team developed the district's strategic improvement in 2019; revisions and feedback come from key stakeholders. The current plan—*Innovate. Inspire. Achieve 2024!*—has three strategic objectives: (a) the whole child, (b) professional learning, and (c) innovation and responsiveness. Across interviews and focus groups, district leaders described that the district improvement plan guides the work of the school committee and the district leadership team, and that school improvement plans are developed to align with the district plan.

Table 2 summarizes key strengths and areas for growth in leadership and governance.

**Table 2. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Leadership and Governance Standard**

Indicator	Strengths	Areas for growth
<a href="#"><u>School committee governance</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A student representative participates in school committee meetings.</li> <li>■ The school committee and the superintendent have a clear division of roles and a strong working relationship.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Relationship between the school committee and instructional staff</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>District and school leadership</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ District and school leaders have strong working relationships and structures in place that facilitate their work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Formal structures for teacher input into school and district policies</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>District and school improvement planning</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The district established a clear process to develop and revise a three-year district improvement plan that guides decision making.</li> <li>■ Revision of the district improvement plan is driven by the findings of a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis that synthesizes data and feedback from all schools in the district.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Objective measurement and evaluation toward each objective and/or initiative</li> <li>■ Consistency in the role of school councils to inform district- and school-level planning</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>Budget development</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The district’s budget development process is clear, collaborative, and driven by the district improvement plan.</li> </ul>	

## School Committee Governance

The school committee works in partnership with district administrators to uphold Massachusetts laws and regulations, communicates with various stakeholder groups, and fulfills its fiduciary responsibilities to the district and its member towns. As established in the *Regional School District Agreement*, the school committee has five members from Spencer and two members from East Brookfield who are elected to three-year terms. School committee members and the superintendent agree that the school committee uses the district’s improvement plan to guide decision making in support of the district’s stated mission to “provide dynamic learning opportunities that inspire, develop, and support all students.”

The school committee developed a process to annually evaluate the superintendent. The superintendent creates his goals for the year, which he then revises as needed with an evaluation subcommittee to align with district priorities. The subcommittee meets with the superintendent between two and four times per year to review his progress toward these goals. Dr. Haughey noted that feedback on his performance is formative and feeds into the next year, and both the superintendent and the school committee members described the process as constructive and respectful.

The school committee has a collaborative culture that maintains positive working relationships between members, with the superintendent, and with the community. The *School Committee/Superintendent Operating Protocols* clearly detail the expectations for professional

and collegial conduct and define how the committee will dedicate itself to maintaining effective communication. School committee members consistently stated that despite the difficulty of representing two towns with differing opinions, they can disagree respectfully and hear one another out to come to the best decision for their constituents. School committee members noted that this dynamic also extends to the administration and the community:

With our committee in general, we have a lot of different experiences, a lot of different variations of what “right” looks like. But at the end of the day, we all have the same goal in mind. I think transparency is key. And the administration brings that to the forefront to the town, to the committee. And I think the committee brings that to the town as well in all of our meetings. We are free to voice our concerns, our opinions. And at the end of the day, there is a free flow of communication, and we can agree on what is the best possible route at all times.

As further evidence of systems for stakeholder engagement in the district, a student representative participates in school committee meetings, which is a strength of the district. This student, a senior, is in her second year serving as a representative and indicated that the district plans to select an additional representative from the junior class for 2023-2024.

The school committee collaborates with district leaders to establish a clear division of roles and responsibilities, which is a strength of the district. Both the school committee and the superintendent described the school committee’s role as pertaining to governance, policy, and budget, whereas the superintendent is responsible for operations. The superintendent shared that when the community brings operational concerns to the school committee, the members contact him to maintain the division of roles, and he expressed the value of this partnership: “I really appreciate the communication and the collaboration and support they give us and the fact that they know, ‘No, that’s operations. Give it back.’”

Despite the strong collaborative culture established between the school committee and district leaders, instructional staff described distant and strained relationships with the committee, which is an area for growth. Teachers indicated that they rarely choose to attend committee meetings, noting that they did not feel as if their opinions were necessarily valued throughout decision-making processes. Several teachers also described the recent contract negotiation process with the school committee as confrontational.

## District and School Leadership

As shown by the district’s organizational chart, the superintendent receives support from a leadership team comprised of district-level directors, a business officer, and school-level administrators.

In focus groups with district and school leaders, many agreed that district and school leaders have strong working relationships and structures in place that facilitate their work, which is a strength of the district. The leadership team meets as a full group twice per month: once to discuss the district’s status by department, and once to engage in leadership training and professional development. The superintendent also meets separately with the central office directors and with school leaders once per month, and he visits each school in the district weekly. According to district and school leaders, the superintendent communicates openly with members of the district leadership team and is



supportive of their leadership. The superintendent implemented a formal meeting structure that ensures frequent communication with district leaders, and leadership team members indicated that he has an open-door policy that promotes collaborative relationships between the central office and schools. School leaders shared that they feel comfortable reaching out to the superintendent for guidance when needed, but he generally grants them autonomy to manage their buildings. Furthermore, the superintendent acts on feedback from school and district leaders, as evidenced by him changing one of the bimonthly full-group leadership team meetings to a leadership training and professional development session at their request.

Despite the strong communication between district and school leaders, instructional staff across focus groups shared that they feel as if they lack formal structures to share their input into school and district decision making, which is an area for growth. Teachers across grade levels reported that when the district creates opportunities for involvement in leadership, they are tenuous. For example, one school formed an ILT but the team ceased operations within a month. In addition, some teachers reported that the level of communication between the administration and the teacher's association deteriorated in the years following the COVID-19 pandemic. Although school and district leaders have an open-door policy, instructional staff shared that they either do not feel comfortable raising their concerns to building leaders or feel unheard when voicing their opinions.

## District and School Improvement Planning

Spencer-East Brookfield has a clear process to develop and revise a three-year district improvement plan that guides decision making in the district, which is a strength. The improvement plan for 2021-2024—known as *Innovate. Inspire. Achieve 2024!*—has three strategic objectives:

- **The Whole Child:** Focus on every child, in every classroom, every day.
- **Professional Learning:** Invest in our educators.
- **Innovation and Responsiveness:** Provide dynamic, broad-based learning opportunities as part of an innovative and responsive public school system.

Each strategic objective has various initiatives with specific action items that the district plans to implement. As noted in the plan and by focus group respondents, the plan was originally developed in 2019 during a leadership team retreat with the input of administrators, teachers, parents, school committee members, and members of the community. Since 2019, the district has reviewed progress and made revisions annually.

Each year during the leadership retreat, district leaders reflect on progress toward the improvement plan's objectives and identify areas for further improvement. The superintendent shared that this work is driven by the findings of an annual Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis that synthesizes data and feedback from all schools in the district, which is a strength. Feedback from the superintendent and other district leaders suggests that this SWOT analysis and leadership retreat are highly valued and lay the foundation for district and school improvement plans each year.

District and school leaders indicated that district and school improvement planning is a “two-way street.” Principals shared that they reflect on their school's needs based on their improvement



efforts throughout the year before attending the leadership retreat. At the retreat, they identify how those needs compare with the district's needs and can advocate for language in the district improvement plan that supports school-level needs. School leadership teams then use the revised district improvement plan to create an aligned school improvement plan.

District and school leaders across focus groups described the use of data throughout the process of developing, reviewing, and revising the district and school improvement plans. However, the plans themselves do not identify clearly measurable goals. In focus groups and interviews, district- and school-based staff frequently referred to increases in student reading progress across several years. A "performance overview" on page 8 of the district improvement plan summarizes data regarding student performance based on multiple indicators. However, an area for growth for the district is to clearly articulate how progress toward each objective and/or initiative will be measured and evaluated.

The district's strategic plan outlines the importance of school councils in providing feedback to the district improvement and developing school improvement plans. In interviews and focus groups, both district and school leaders referenced school councils and shared about when they brought teacher feedback to district leadership teams; however, many teachers across focus groups shared that school councils met infrequently, if at all. Similarly, teachers across focus groups demonstrated mixed levels of awareness of the district and school improvement plans. One teacher said of the district improvement plan, "We know that there is one, but we don't know what it says," whereas others could not describe how the district improvement plan relates to instructional expectations for teachers. Middle school teachers reported participating in the creation of their school improvement plan, but across other grade bands, teachers reported that the committee responsible for writing their school improvement plan no longer meets. This mix of evidence from school leaders and teachers suggests that the role of school councils to inform district- and school-level planning has inconsistent implementation throughout the district, which is an area for growth for the district.

## Budget Development

One strength of the district is a clear and collaborative budget development process driven by the district and school improvement plans. As the district leaders described, the annual budget process begins near the end of November, when the superintendent, the business manager, the director of student services, the director of facilities, and building administrators meet to discuss what the preliminary budget needs for the next year will be. Stakeholders across these groups noted a focus on the objectives in the district improvement plan when defining these needs. By mid-December, the building administrators provide a draft of their needs for resources and staffing. By the end of January, the team provides the budget to the school committee for their feedback. The school committee holds workshops with building administrators to discuss the budget items in more depth. In one such discussion, a school leader described the need for a dean of students to manage behavioral issues within their building, and the school committee reallocated resources to meet this need.

Multiple district leaders shared vast improvements to the budgeting process (including budget development) in the last several years and noted the role that transparency with the community at large played in those improvements. The business manager and the superintendent specifically

described the district's dedication to clear communication with municipal officials. This contrasted with information gathered across focus groups in which teachers shared mixed opinions about budget transparency and communication. Some teachers expressed high levels of confidence in district decisions, whereas others indicated concerns about budget and resource allocation. In particular, a few staff described their disagreement with decisions made to reduce student support staff.

## DESE Recommendations

- *In collaboration with its instructional staff, the district should better utilize its formal structures to allow for teacher input into both district-wide policy decisions and school-level decisions.*
- *The district should refine its improvement plan to include objective measures to determine progress on each initiative or priority.*
- *The district should review the role of school councils in improvement planning, in alignment with state law, to allow for site-based decision making.*

## Curriculum and Instruction

The district has a documented (2019) process for reviewing, selecting, and adopting new curricular resources. The process includes a timeline for regularly reviewing each curricular resource in each content area, which includes prioritizing alignment to state standards and CURATE ratings to guide the selection of resources to best meet student needs.

Spencer-East Brookfield currently uses Journeys for K-5 ELA, which is supplemented by a variety of tools to address identified gaps in the curriculum related to phonics. The district recently adopted StudySync for ELA at the secondary levels (6-12) and i-Ready Classroom Mathematics for K-8. The district uses STEMscopes and OpenSciEd for science and a variety of teacher-developed curricula for other secondary content areas.

Table 3 summarizes key strengths and areas for growth in curriculum and instruction.

**Table 3. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Curriculum and Instruction Standard**

Indicator	Strengths	Areas for growth
<a href="#">Curriculum selection and use</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A process and timeline is in place for reviewing curricular materials in all subjects, and the process emphasizes stakeholder engagement.</li> <li>Staff feel that recently selected curriculum are both rigorous and relevant for students.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Selecting high quality instructional materials for elementary ELA</li> <li>Continued opportunities for strengthening vertical alignment across content areas</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Classroom instruction</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High scores in the classroom organization domain were observed across all grade bands.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved use of instructional practices to support all learners</li> <li>Increased instructional strategies and academic supports for students with disabilities</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Student access to coursework</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The district offers multiple career and technical education pathways and is seeking to expand this to include Early College offerings.</li> <li>Course schedules incorporate postsecondary college and career readiness and student interests.</li> </ul>	

### Curriculum Selection and Use

For ELA, Spencer-East Brookfield currently uses Journeys for Grades K-5, which is rated by EdReports as “Does not Meet” expectations, and is therefore an area for growth for the district. The district also uses a variety of supplemental programs (e.g., University of Florida Literacy Institute, Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction, Heggerty) for additional support in phonics. These programs are not CURATE or EdReports rated, and the district expressed plans to review and update

their elementary curriculum soon, as described later in this section. At the secondary level, Spencer-East Brookfield recently adopted StudySync (6-12) for ELA, which meets CURATE expectations for Grades 6-8 and EdReport expectations for Grades 6-12. The district uses i-Ready Classroom Mathematics in Grades K-8, which meets CURATE expectations for Grades K-5 and EdReports expectations for grades 6-8. For science, the district uses STEMscopes for Grades K-5 (which is not rated by CURATE or EdReports) and OpenSciEd for Grades 6-8 (which meets EdReports expectations for Grades 6-8). For Grades 9-12, curricula for content areas other than ELA are district developed and therefore not rated by either CURATE or EdReports.

The director of academic affairs leads curriculum selection. For each content area, the process involves convening district- and school-based staff to form a curriculum review process team. Each curricular review cycle includes four phases: self-study, develop/redesign, implement/monitor, and evaluate, as described in more detail in the district's Curriculum Review Process document from 2019. This document lays out a timeline for regularly reviewing each content area, and district staff described recently being involved with curriculum review, implementation, and adoption for both ELA and mathematics, noting that future review cycles were planned. Across focus groups and content areas, district staff described a process that emphasized the use of data-based decision-making to support student learning outcomes. Some staff also described opportunities throughout the process for students to provide direct feedback on curriculum to support decision-making by the curriculum review process team. The clear process, timeline, and stakeholder engagement laid out by the district for curriculum review and selection is a strength of the district.

Instructional staff were generally familiar with the status of curriculum review cycles across content areas and grade levels, and a strength for the district is the degree to which staff felt that recently selected curricula were both rigorous and relevant for students. For example, one educator described a recently selected curriculum as “the most rigorous and relevant curriculum that is out there,” and other teachers expressed an appreciation for how new curricular resources build in supports for students with disabilities and ELs.

Across focus groups, both district- and school-based staff could identify areas for growth for the district concerning vertical alignment. District leaders described efforts embedded into their curricular selection process to address alignment. School-based staff described collaborating with colleagues from different buildings and grade levels to address issues of alignment. However, many staff described an interest in more dedicated collaborative time to discuss vertical alignment. In some cases, staff noted that teacher turnover impacted vertical alignment, and described informal opportunities to collaborate with new staff to review what is covered across grade and school levels. Other staff noted that although vertical alignment was a priority throughout the curriculum selection process, additional time was needed to ensure that curricula are implemented consistently and with integrity. Together, this feedback highlights a need for additional opportunities to address vertical alignment across all content areas.

## Classroom Instruction

Classroom observations revealed a strength in classroom organization throughout the district. As described previously (see Classroom Observations in the overview section), across all grade levels, ratings within the classroom organization domain were generally in the high range. Observations

provide evidence that rules and guidelines for behavior are clear and consistently reinforced by the teacher, and teachers provide a steady flow of activities to help the classroom run smoothly.

In contrast, classroom observations reveal an area for growth for the district related to instructional support, particularly at the elementary (K-5) level. For Grades K-5, the overall Instructional Support domain score fell in the low range, as did average scores for four of the six dimensions (Concept Development, Analysis and Inquiry, Quality of Feedback, and Language Modeling). Although the overall Instructional Support score was in the middle range for Grades 6-8, ratings on three of the five dimensions (Analysis and Inquiry, Quality of Feedback, and Instructional Dialogue) fell within the low range. Secondary students agreed that although some teachers interact with them to support individual learning needs, others merely present content and assignments. Relatedly, high school students felt that beyond honors or Advanced Placement (AP) classes, there is limited differentiation for students in core academic courses. Students expressed appreciation for hands-on work and discussions, which they prefer over instruction that emphasizes textbooks, worksheets, or online learning modules. Together, these results indicate an area for growth around instructional practice to support all learners across all grade levels.

Feedback from district leaders reflected on this area for growth and noted that a strategic initiative throughout the district is to improve instructional leadership to support classroom instruction. Throughout the curricular adoption process, the district partners with several consultants to support school leaders and evaluators to provide high-quality instructional feedback to support curriculum implementation. Central office staff also helped support the development of instructional walkthrough protocols and processes.

In general, a smaller percentage of students in Spencer-East Brookfield meet or exceed MCAS expectations when compared with the state averages. Moreover, the district's student performance data for students with disabilities is notably lower than the state. For example, in 2023 only 7 percent of students with disabilities in Grades 3-8 at Spencer-East Brookfield met MCAS ELA expectations, compared with 12 percent in the state. The district's performance data show similar gaps in learning for elementary mathematics and secondary students (ELA and mathematics). Taken together, these data suggest an area for growth for the district in identifying specific instructional supports for students with disabilities.

## Student Access to Coursework

The district improvement plan provides evidence of Spencer-East Brookfield's commitment to ensuring that all students have access to a range of rigorous coursework. Initiative 1.2 describes the district's efforts to ensure that all students are prepared for college, career, and life and reflects a continuum of supports designed for all learners across each grade level. In addition, Initiatives 3.2 and 3.3 describe relevant work design to integrate instructional technology and experiential learning opportunities to support all learners across each grade level. Central office and school-based staff spoke passionately about the district's efforts to expand career and technical education and Early College offerings at the high school. The district participates in DESE's Quality Support System initiative to improve career and technical education offerings and currently offers four DESE-approved Chapter 74 programs: Criminal Justice, Early Education and Care, Marketing/Business, and Environmental Science and Technology. The superintendent shared that the district currently

has an active application with DESE for Early College approval, which they should hear about in 2024. The fact that the district currently offers multiple career and technical education pathways and is seeking to expand to include Early College offerings is a strength of the district.

The superintendent discussed how expanding these offerings at the high school has impacted the school schedule and the model for delivering instruction. The daily student schedule was expanded from five class periods to seven class periods, which created space for more student-selected elective coursework. He commended the community, which he recognized as active leaders and co-creators in expanding the level of “voice and choice” within a comprehensive high school setting. He also described how work at the secondary school has led to innovations at other school levels as well. For example, a change to the middle school schedule allowed for the incorporation of robotics and science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) programming, which aligns to new high school curricular offerings. In addition to the robotics and STEAM courses that align to high school curricular offerings, middle school students can enroll in a variety of enrichment courses in art, music, Spanish, gym, STEM, and research. The fact that daily student schedules in the middle and high schools allow the incorporation of postsecondary college and career readiness and student interests is another strength of the district.

High school students have a broad range of course options at multiple levels, including a range of career and technical education courses, AP courses, and other electives on topics ranging from marketing to yoga. Honors courses are available for students who are between the general education and AP levels of performance. High school students named elective courses as among their favorites and were disappointed about some elective course topics that lack staff to teach them, including environmental justice, criminal justice, and the research component of an AP capstone course. Career day events have been held at the high school, and students receive information about college fair events in the area.

In general, district staff felt access to advanced coursework was equitable across student groups. For example, school leaders and teachers said that across the district, students with disabilities are able to access grade-level and advanced courses, and all electives and vocational programming are accessible with differentiated supports based on student need. Relatedly, district staff said that they encourage all students to take honors and AP classes, and enrollment decisions are made collaboratively with students instead of through student data. Finally, teachers commented on enrichment opportunities designed to be inclusive of all students, including a middle school robotics program with a strong gender balance and a high school personal finance course designed for students at all levels of mathematical skills. Data reported annually to DESE reveals that 76.1 percent of all Spencer-East Brookfield students complete advanced coursework compared with 65.8 percent of all students in the state. Likewise, 52.2 percent of Spencer-East Brookfield students with disabilities complete advanced coursework compared with 36.0 percent of students with disabilities across the state.

## DESE Recommendations

- *The district should revisit its elementary ELA curricula so that all student materials are high-quality.*

- *Beyond collaborating with colleagues in other buildings and levels, the district should determine better ways to vertically align curricula – potentially increasing its importance in the curriculum review process.*
- *The district should review the Districtwide Instructional Observation Report (Appendix B), in which multiple indicators related to Instructional Support were in the low range across both elementary and secondary levels, to strengthen core instruction for all students.*
- *The district should revisit the instructional supports provided to its students with disabilities to support their performance and growth.*

## Assessment

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Spencer-East Brookfield uses a variety of screeners to understand students' reading skills at each school level, including EarlyBird, DIBELS, and MAP (Reading). For mathematics, they use information from the newly adopted i-Ready curriculum to screen all students in Grades K-8. In addition, the district is currently partnering with Panorama to gather additional information about student perspectives. At the high school level, teachers use common midterm and final assessments.

Assessment results are accessible to a broad range of educators, including classroom teachers, specialists, and district leaders, to guide decision making. The district shares information with families in a variety of ways including parent teacher conferences, report cards, and individual meetings. In addition, students and families have access to assignment level information via Schoology (middle school) or PowerSchool (high school).

Table 4 summarizes key strengths and areas for growth in assessment.

**Table 4. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Assessment Standard**

Indicator	Strengths	Areas for growth
<a href="#">Data and assessment systems</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The district uses multiple sources of data to provide a comprehensive picture of student, school, and district performance.</li></ul>	
<a href="#">Data use</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The district leadership team frequently reviews student performance data to drive planning and decision making.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Consistent expectations and systems for data use across schools and content areas</li></ul>
<a href="#">Sharing results</a>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Sharing assessment results with students</li></ul>

### Data and Assessment Systems

Spencer-East Brookfield data and assessment systems constitute a strength; the district uses multiple sources of data to provide a comprehensive picture of student, school, and district performance. The district uses EarlyBird (K-1), DIBELS (K-4), and MAP (2-10) to universally screen all students in reading. i-Ready Math screeners are used for students in Grades K-8. At the high school, teacher-created midterm and final examinations monitor progress in most content areas, along with other summative measures of performance such as the PSAT and MCAS. In addition, the district is currently in the process of adopting a data collection tool (Panorama), which will provide additional information regarding student perspectives of school. Together, the use of multiple sources of data to provide a comprehensive picture of student, school, and district performance is a strength of the district.



## Data Use

District staff maintain regular data review meetings at multiple levels across the district. In interviews, central office staff and school leaders described meeting monthly with district leadership to review student data and discuss equity gaps. District staff also described how student performance data are used to develop and/or modify instructional schedules to maximize services from specialists, guidance staff, and teachers. It was clear across focus groups that district-level teams regularly review student performance data to inform decision making.

Feedback from school-based educators suggests that data use is somewhat less consistent at the individual school or teacher levels. School-based educators were familiar with the process for administering each assessment, as well as some general uses for the results of each assessment. For example, data discussions often occur during child study team meetings, where results are used to inform individualized education program development for individual students or are presented to teachers by specialists or school leaders. However, teachers expressed a lack of consistent systems for analyzing class or grade-level data during common planning time to inform instructional decision making. Staff described participating in some professional development to understand how to access and interpret collected data, but several described individually learning more about the data through informal conversations with colleagues. School leaders described different structures in place across schools, including a “data team meeting” structure in one school that does not exist in other schools. In general, district staff highlighted an area for growth for the district about providing consistent expectations and systems for data use across schools and content areas.

## Sharing Results

Across focus groups, feedback from staff confirms the sharing of data from student performance assessment with all relevant district staff and educators. Both central office and school-based staff indicated that they knew where and how they could access student performance data.

District staff shared that assessment results are typically shared with parents during parent and teacher conferences. School leaders described that these conferences have been rescheduled to occur earlier in the year, in part to support more proactive conversations about student progress. In addition, one elementary school recently started sending an additional letter home to families of students who score below a certain benchmark on the reading screeners in hopes of engaging families and proactively providing supports as early as possible. Staff described that students and families have access to Schoology (middle school) and PowerSchool (high school) to track individual assignment and coursework completion but noted that the screening assessment results were not available in these platforms. They described sharing screening assessment results via report cards as well as individually scheduled meetings with parents and families to address concerns as needed.

Feedback from focus groups and interviews suggest that although the district regularly communicates about student progress with families, regular opportunities to share information regarding overall performance (e.g., based on assessment results) with students do not occur. Similarly, students expressed mixed opinions of how teachers discuss student performance, which they generally felt varied quite a bit by teacher. Identifying regular opportunities to share assessment results with students is an area for growth for the district.

## DESE Recommendations

- *Beyond providing professional development that focuses on data, the district should establish consistent structures and teams that allow for teachers to actively explore student data.*
- *The district work with secondary school leaders and instructional staff to proactively provide assessment results to students (rather than passively providing access to a platform), so that students can take on a more active role in their learning.*

## Human Resources and Professional Development

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Spencer-East Brookfield’s human resources department is responsible for systems to support recruitment and hiring, salary administration, benefits, and policy implementation, whereas the directors of academic affairs and student services are responsible for professional development. The human resources department is currently transitioning from using SchoolSpring to PowerSchool to improve the efficiency of their work. Stakeholders across focus groups acknowledged that the district has had difficulty recruiting, hiring, and retaining diverse staff, which the district listed as a goal in their *Equity and Excellence* plan. The district has partnered with local institutions of higher education to expand and diversify their potential staffing pool.

A strategic objective from *Innovate. Inspire. Achieve 2024!* is to “sustain the high quality of our teachers and administrators by maximizing opportunities for professional development and collaboration, while also increasing diversity.” In support of this objective, the superintendent identified the district’s professional learning program and mentor program as the two main areas of focus for the new director of academic affairs. Teachers generally reported that these programs were ineffective in the past but are improving. The district also supports educators who want to pursue further education and established a tuition reimbursement fund for this purpose.

Table 5 summarizes key strengths and areas for growth in human resources and professional development.

**Table 5. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Human Resources and Professional Development Standard**

Indicator	Strengths	Areas for growth
<a href="#"><u>Infrastructure</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The district recently adopted new software to support human resources infrastructure.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Efficiency of human resources procedures</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>Recruitment, hiring, and assignment</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The district has developed relationships with local training programs to support recruitment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Concrete strategies for recruiting, hiring, and retaining diverse educators</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>Supervision, evaluation, and educator development</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The district has provided training to building leaders and evaluators to support instructional walkthroughs and observations for providing instructional feedback.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Consistency in both the frequency of instructional walkthroughs and the quality and regularity of feedback</li> <li>■ Need for identifying teacher and administrative staff’s areas of improvement during the formal evaluation process to support ongoing instructional and professional improvement</li> <li>■ Increased implementation fidelity of evaluation process throughout the district</li> <li>■ Inclusion of teachers to support the planning, implementing, and evaluating educator development opportunities</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>Recognition, leadership development, and advancement</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The district promotes its educators’ development by supporting their pursuit of continued education and identifying them for career advancement opportunities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Distributed leadership opportunities for educators</li> </ul>

## Infrastructure

The Spencer-East Brookfield Human Resources department includes the assistant business administrator, a human resources generalist, and the benefits manager. Although the department has established human resources policies and procedures, school leaders and teachers across grade levels expressed their frustration with the efficiency of these procedures, specifically for hiring and human resources. These focus group respondents shared that there is often a significant lag between interviewing a job candidate and human resources finalizing a hiring package for them. This has led qualified candidates to walk away from job openings and has caused other staff to take on additional responsibilities left by these vacancies. Teachers also reported that despite completing the proper paperwork for lane change requests, it can take months for district administrators to review them. In interviews, central office staff were familiar with staff concerns concerning inefficient human resources processes and described steps taken to address this area for growth.

The district is currently implementing new software to support human resources infrastructure, which is a strength. At the time of the review, the district was transitioning from SchoolSpring to PowerSchool's Unified Talent program for job applicant tracking. As one school leader described, this change should remove some lags in communication that have caused problems in the past: "With the new program, it's going to all be streamlined and less paper and more immediate access instead of having to wait for answers." Another school leader elaborated on the potential of this program:

This new software has a flowchart that goes from the moment we request a position be posted, to seeing it posted, to doing the interviews, to the CORI [criminal offender record information] and all that, to alerting the tech office, 'Hey, give them an email. They're on board.' So that whole flow should, in theory, really fix things. It looks like it's going to work well.

To support effective implementation of the new software, district and school leaders receive professional development on PowerSchool during their bimonthly leadership team meetings (see District and School Leadership). District leaders shared that this platform and its modules are customizable, so they can apply their extant human resources hiring handbook to the new software.

## Recruitment, Hiring, and Assignment

Across all focus groups, respondents identified recruiting, hiring, and retaining diverse educators as a major area for growth for the district. District staff agreed that insufficient paraprofessional staffing and support personnel for ELs are two of the biggest areas for concern. At the time of the review, the district had several unfilled positions across these departments. District officials reported that the district struggles both with recruiting and retaining candidates. Several staff noted salary comparisons with nearby communities as a reason that staff frequently leave the district. District staff noted that these challenges have negatively impacted their progress toward goals in their *Equity and Excellence* plan to "recruit, develop, and support a diverse, effective, and culturally competent faculty of educators." According to DESE staffing data for 2022-2023, 97 percent of full-time Spencer-East Brookfield teachers were White, whereas 73 percent of the student population was White.

Teachers and district leaders described the district's efforts to address these challenges. For example, school leaders described how district officials recognized the major staffing concerns and effectively communicated these concerns to the school committee and the towns. District leaders also developed relationships with local training programs to support recruitment, which is a strength. According to the superintendent, the district has partnered with institutions of higher education, specifically Anna Maria College and Worcester State University, since the beginning of his tenure. The superintendent also promotes the district through guest lectures, and these institutions have referred graduates to the district.

## Supervision, Evaluation, and Educator Development

*Innovate. Inspire. Achieve 2024!* highlights educator growth through evaluations, professional learning, and mentoring as one of the district's primary strategic objectives. The district formally established a process for evaluating educators under the current superintendent, but educators reported that supervision and feedback remains inconsistent across buildings. At the start of the superintendent's tenure in 2018, Spencer-East Brookfield did not have a formal educator evaluation

process included in its memorandum of understanding with the teachers' union. During 2018-2019, the superintendent formed a subcommittee with union leaders and the district leadership team to establish an evaluation process, which has been in place since. District leaders generally recognized the improvement the district has made by establishing formal evaluation processes, while noting that more work still is necessary to ensure that the evaluation process is implemented with fidelity and grounded in instructional leadership to develop classroom instructional practices.

Spencer-East Brookfield's evaluation process follows the five-step evaluation cycle detailed in the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework: (a) self-assessment, (b) goal setting and educator plan development, (c) plan implementation and Evidence collection, (d) formative assessment, and (e) summative assessment. The director of academic affairs and the director of student services, in collaboration with building administrators, oversee evaluations for instructional staff and service providers, respectively. All documentation from the process is shared with educators through Vector Solutions (formerly known as Teachpoint).

Despite the formalization of the memorandum of understanding, teachers reported inconsistency in both the frequency of instructional walkthroughs and the quality and regularity of feedback across buildings, which is an area for growth for the district. Teacher focus group respondents reported the frequency of administrators entering their classrooms could range from multiple times per week to just once per year. Across buildings, teachers described that behavioral issues and disciplinary hearings sometimes prevented building administrators from conducting observations. However, educators throughout the district also indicated that they do not receive consistent feedback after a classroom observation, even when they directly request it. Moreover, teachers shared that although evaluations follow a standard rubric, evaluators do not adhere to consistent criteria across buildings.

To address the consistency of providing high-quality instructional feedback, Spencer-East Brookfield hired multiple consultants to support evaluators. This training also included bringing school leaders together for walkthroughs throughout the district to diversify their perspectives. This provision of training to building leaders and evaluators to support instructional walkthroughs and observations for providing instructional feedback is a strength of the district.

In terms of evaluations, district records suggest that teacher evaluations are consistently completed using Vector Solutions. Simple random sampling was used to select the sample of 10 percent of 88 Professional Teacher Status teachers (nine teachers) due for summative evaluations for the 2022-2023 school year. However, only seven of the nine educators randomly selected for review had summative evaluations available in Vector Solutions for review. Teachers who did not have summative evaluations on file had other evaluation documents complete and available for review, such as classroom observations, goal setting, and self-assessment forms. Of the seven summative evaluations available for review, five were complete and included the required components, including a rating for each standard or an overall rating. The majority of the evaluations reviewed (five) included both student learning and professional practice SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely) goals; however, the goals are inconsistently included on the summative evaluation report along with the teacher's reported progress toward goals. Only three of the student learning and professional goals were in the summative evaluation report, whereas the other four could be found on only the goal-setting form. The majority of evaluations reviewed (six)

included multiple sources of evidence, such as observations, student work samples, or other evidence to support progress toward student learning goals, professional learning goals, standards, and indicators. The majority of the summative evaluations (six) included feedback for each standard. All evaluations (100 percent) included feedback naming strengths or practices the teacher should continue, but only one evaluation included feedback indicating areas of improvement.

Administration evaluations also are completed using Vector Solutions. Of the 11 administrative district staff who were due for a summative evaluation for the 2022-2023 school year, seven evaluations were available for review and complete with performance ratings and assessment of progress toward goals. Of the seven summative evaluations reviewed, all (100 percent) included student learning goals, six evaluations included professional practice goals, and none included school improvement SMART goals. Only three evaluations included multiple sources of evidence to assess performance on summative evaluation standards. All summative evaluations (100 percent) included feedback for each standard, complete with evaluator comments with specific, actionable feedback naming each administrator's strengths, but none of the evaluations identified areas of improvement for administrative district staff.

Taken together, the review of teacher and administrator evaluations demonstrates that while the district frequently highlights educators' strengths in the evaluation process, there are critical gaps in the evaluation process and the feedback provided to educators. Both articulating areas for improvement in teacher and administrator evaluations and fully implementing the evaluation process throughout the district are critical to the district's ability to support ongoing instructional and professional development. Therefore, these are two areas for growth in the district.

In addition to supporting the evaluation process throughout the district, the superintendent reported two main areas of focus for the newly hired director of academic affairs were to improve the district's professional learning and mentoring programs. Currently, the director of student services and the director of academic affairs collaborate to develop professional development opportunities to meet the district's needs. In interviews, they described some key priorities for professional development this year related to individualized education program development, social-emotional learning, curriculum implementation, and crisis prevention and intervention. Both directors agreed that they select professional learning courses in collaboration with building leaders based on feedback they receive from educators. Central office staff described a mechanism to collect teacher suggestions for professional development topics via a website but noted that they do not yet have formal structures to collect educator feedback after each event. In focus groups, teachers generally reported that historically they have not found their professional development programs to be helpful. They reported that trainings too often focus on curriculum rather than instructional techniques and do not align with their goals. Many district staff agreed about limited content-specific professional learning opportunities for content areas with small educator cohorts (e.g., ELs, art, physical education). The district described plans to coordinate with nearby districts in the next year to form larger cohorts for these groups to receive subject-specific learning opportunities. In addition, the district plans to contract with Vector, whose professional learning modules tie into Vector Solutions and are assignable according to feedback from instructional observations. Together, this feedback highlights an area for growth for the district including teachers and other building-based staff to support the planning, implementing, and evaluating educator development opportunities.



While the district has a formal mentoring program in place, district- and school-based staff agree that the program could be improved. According to the *Mentoring and Induction Information Sheet*, the intended outcomes for the mentoring program are (a) a collegial support system for all staff members, (b) efficient staff integration, (c) effective staff integration, (d) high-quality professional job performance, and (e) long-term employee job satisfaction. The director of academic affairs reported that building principals assign mentor-mentee pairs and consult with her as needed. Staff volunteer to serve as mentors and receive a stipend for their first year. Districtwide, teachers reported that the previous mentoring program was insufficient. One teacher who previously participated in the program stated, “I am not happy with the mentorship program, and I was not mentored well,” which she attributed to a lack of time scheduled for mentoring. Teachers across buildings concurred that they rely more on mentors from outside the district or informal collaboration with their peers than the designated mentorship program. Teachers expressed a desire for a more formal mentor program, and they acknowledged it is a current goal for the district to “get the program up and running and more effective.” One way the district has tried to improve the program is by providing a two-day formal training for mentors through the French River Education Center. They also established a convening structure that includes check-ins and monthly meetings with the director of academic affairs. Moreover, for the upcoming year, the district built in stipends for Year 2 and Year 3 mentors. Since the hiring of the new director of academic affairs, teachers noted that the program is becoming “more streamlined.” Although the district has begun to implement changes, continuing to improve opportunities for professional development through formal structures for professional learning and mentoring is an area for growth.

## Recognition, Leadership Development, and Advancement

Spencer-East Brookfield promotes educator development by supporting educators’ pursuit of continued education and identifying them for career advancement opportunities, both of which are strengths of the district. The *Spencer-East Brookfield Teachers’ Association Contract* articulates that the district establishes an annual tuition reimbursement fund to finance teachers’ completion of graduate courses. One district staff member described how valuable this opportunity was for his own professional advancement within the district. District leaders and teachers also reported that the district is currently supporting several paraprofessionals in pursuing teaching licensure.

In addition to the district’s facilitation of educational opportunities, teachers throughout the district agreed that Spencer-East Brookfield seeks out internal candidates for administrator roles. As one teacher noted, “One of the strengths of this district is that they very much would like to see admin positions filled by employees in the district already. . . . It’s definitely encouraged for staff.” Focus group respondents identified several instances of teachers promoted to administrative positions, including the current principal of Wire Village School and one dean of students. Other teachers said that district leaders encouraged them to obtain an admin license, and teachers with admin licenses are incorporated into their building’s chain of command.

However, several teachers across the district identified an area for the growth for the district about creating intentional, enduring, and effective opportunities for distributed leadership. Several teachers expressed concern that in some schools, building leadership teams do not involve classroom teachers. Some staff who indicated that a building leadership team was in place still questioned the team’s efficacy: “It’s a way for admin to keep the teachers’ voice involved. . . . I think that’s what the plan was.



But they cherry-pick what works for them, not necessarily what works for us or the students.” Some teachers agreed that a few committees, which represent opportunities for distributed leadership and teacher input into school and district decision making, are rarely well-implemented. Teachers described that many committees or workgroups are introduced, but noted that “there’s no follow-through.”

## DESE Recommendations

- *The district should diagnose and address its process challenges around hiring and human resources, either through its new platforms or through process mapping that identifies bottlenecks.*
- *The district should continue its efforts to diversify its workforce through extensive recruitment, partnerships, and improved hiring processes.*
- *The district should increase the quality, frequency, and consistency of instructional walkthroughs, so that teachers receive frequent feedback and can improve their instruction.*
- *As part of the feedback and evaluation process, the district should intentionally provide administrators and teachers more comments around areas of improvement.*
- *The district should continue to revamp its mentoring program and provide higher-quality professional development opportunities that align with areas for improvement identified in staff evaluations.*
- *The district should refine and make consistent the opportunity for authentic teacher involvement on all school leadership teams.*

## Student Support

Spencer-East Brookfield has structures and systems in place to support the academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs of all students. These supports include systems to support data-based decision making to inform the matching of students with evidence-based supports and services. Each school has a child study team that uses multiple sources of data to match students with evidence-based supports and services based on their unique academic, behavioral, or social needs. In addition, each school has time allocated in schedules to provide interventions and supports to students.

Spencer-East Brookfield proactively builds partnerships with community organizations to meet student needs. At the high school, the district recently included a Bridge for Resilient Youth in Transition program to support students who are transitioning back to school following hospitalization. The district also partners with local organizations (e.g., New Hope; New Beginnings; Girls, Inc.; Cares Club) to provide therapeutic services at the elementary and middle schools. District staff described funding additional support staff positions to meet increased student needs.

Table 6 summarizes key strengths and areas for growth in student support.

**Table 6. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Student Support Standard**

Indicator	Strengths	Areas for growth
<a href="#">Safe and supportive school climate and culture</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The district strategic plan emphasizes the importance of social and emotional support for all students.</li> <li>The district is in the process of adopting new curricular resources to support social-emotional learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved teacher and student relationships at the secondary levels</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Tiered systems of support</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each school has time allocated in schedules to provide interventions and supports to students.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved systems and personnel to support ELs</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Family, student, and community engagement and partnerships</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The district has a community relations plan.</li> <li>The district proactively partners with community organizations in a variety of ways to address student needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Systematic collection of information to inform decision-making about partnerships and programming that students and families feel is most important</li> </ul>

### Safe and Supportive School Climate and Culture

Spencer-East Brookfield fosters a safe and supportive school climate, as highlighted by its strategic plan that places a high priority on social and emotional support for all students. A review of district documents affirms this commitment, including the Equity and Excellence plan that highlights equity as an important consideration for the successful development of social, emotional, and behavioral supports throughout the district. Likewise, feedback from central office and school-based staff reflects high regard for the district’s commitment to safe and supportive learning environments.

Together, the district's emphasis on the importance of social-emotional learning supports for all students is a strength of the district.

Relatedly, the district is currently adopting new curricular resources designed to support social-emotional learning at all grade levels, a recognized strength of the district. The newly adopted resources include weekly 15-minute lessons accompanied by a corresponding video, allowing teachers the flexibility to choose specific modules or follow the curricular sequence. The district is planning to collect additional data through the recently adopted Panorama platform to support instructional design for social-emotional learning. As part of this initiative, plans are in place to provide extensive training for all staff, as well as providing a dedicated social-emotional learning specialist at the middle school for the 2023-2024 school year. The middle school will continue its current practice of conducting once-a-week social-emotional learning lessons during morning classes, supplemented by additional support for students through group sessions with the adjustment counselor. In conjunction with these curriculum enhancements, the district is maximizing the use of existing materials, such as those from Crisis Prevention Institute, to provide comprehensive training and support for staff in de-escalation strategies for responding to student behavior. The district has a focus on improving data collection related to student behaviors to inform instruction and decision-making. The district currently tracks high-intensity behavioral incidents in PowerSchool and is developing plans to leverage a new platform (Panorama) for a more comprehensive understanding of how student behavior is related to other data (e.g., attendance). Staff anticipates benefits such as improved data for early detection of patterns in students' social and emotional functioning.

Data collected in Spencer-East Brookfield reveals positive ratings for behavior management across all grade spans (K-5, 6.2; 6-8, 6.0; and 9-12, 6.1). These ratings suggest that teachers are effectively setting clear behavior expectations and employing successful methods to prevent and redirect misbehavior. Across interviews with district staff, staff discussed various initiatives designed to support student behavior, including the implementation of positive behavioral interventions and supports in one elementary school and a partnership with a regional health system to offer Community Health Link services, including in-class programming on social-emotional learning, counseling, and executive functioning skills for students. However, teachers and students described ongoing challenges related to supporting student behavior. For example, there is only one applied behavior analysis specialist for both elementary schools, and teachers described a desire for increased staffing capacity to support more intense mental health and behavioral concerns at the elementary level. Similarly, despite recent increases in counseling staff at the middle and high school levels, students explained that caseloads still limit access.

On the Views of Climate and Learning student survey, Spencer-East Brookfield students in Grades 4, 5, 8, and 10 rated overall school climate in the "moderately safe" range, with a lower average score across the district (46) than the state average (52). However, disaggregating these data by grade level reveals that Spencer-East Brookfield fourth-grade students describe a favorable climate overall (average score of 61, which is equal to the state average for fourth-grade students), but students in Grades 5, 8, and 10 reported less favorable perspectives on overall school climate compared with their peers in the same grades across the state. Student feedback supported these data, which described some tenuous relationships between students and adults in the secondary school

buildings. Although students generally described feeling a close positive relationship with at least one adult in each building, they described other concerns related to how adults communicate with students and inconsistent expectations across student groups. This trend suggests that an area of growth for the district is to improve teacher and student relationships at the secondary levels.

## Tiered Systems of Support

Spencer-East Brookfield has structures and systems in place to support the academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs of all students. These supports include systems for data-based decision making to inform the matching of students with evidence-based supports and services. Each school has a child study team that uses multiple sources of data to match students with evidence-based supports and services based on their unique academic, behavioral, or social needs. Similarly, each school has time allocated in schedules to provide interventions and supports to students, which is a strength of the district. For example, at the elementary and middle schools, a “What I Need” (WIN) block is built into the schedule to ensure the provision of interventions at a time that supplements, and does not supplant, core instruction. At the high school, student interventions are built into scheduled course periods, like advisory or wellness. Special educators and paraprofessionals support intervention groups. At the middle school, educators and external partners collaborate to offer tiered academic support. Teachers provide academic support during lunch and afterschool tutoring sessions. District staff support school leaders to conduct walkthroughs, revise student performance data, and discuss instructional scheduling considerations to help ensure the implementation of these structures in each school.

In focus groups, educators described using student performance data (see Assessment) to inform instructional interventions and supports delivered through the WIN block. Some teachers described feeling that specific interventions and supports were more fully articulated for ELA than for mathematics, in which interventions and supports are still largely grounded in the newly adopted core mathematics curriculum.

In addition to academic supports, the district has additional supports for social, emotional, and behavioral health. At the high school, the district recently included a Bridge for Resilient Youth in Transition program to support students who are transitioning back to school following hospitalization. The district also partners with local organizations (e.g., New Hope; New Beginnings; Girls, Inc.; Cares Club) to provide therapeutic services at the elementary and middle schools. District staff described that, despite funding additional support staff positions to meet increased student needs, they still face challenges supporting students with more complex needs that require interventions and supports in multiple areas.

Across focus groups, central office and school-based staff frequently noted limited district capacity to support ELs throughout their multitiered systems of support (MTSS) program. Staff frequently described limited capacity to meet the direct EL service needs based on students’ English Language Development (ELD) levels. Additionally, district staff highlighted opportunities to provide classroom teachers with support for appropriately differentiating and supporting ELs within the general education classroom and clearly identify appropriate targeted (Tier 2) interventions for ELs. Staff also shared differing opinions on the district’s ability to appropriately refer and evaluate ELs for special education. Relatedly, district MCAS performance data reveal that a lower percentage of Spencer-East

Brookfield ELs meet MCAS expectations in ELA and mathematics compared with the state, highlighting an area for growth for the district to increase systems and personnel to support ELs.

## Family, Student, and Community Engagement and Partnerships

The *Communications and Community Relations Plan (2021-2026)* outlines the Spencer-East Brookfield mission, vision, goals, annual priorities, and strategies to support family and student engagement. The document further details the forms of communication and frequency of communicating with targeted audiences across the district. This written plan for communications and community relations is a strength of the district. During interviews, school-based staff described GoGuardian as an effective communication tool that supports communication among parents, teachers, and guidance staff. The district also reaches out to families through robocalls and emails to improve school-to-home relationships. District staff also reported that Spencer-East Brookfield would like to hire a community liaison to increase student access to services and hope to leverage Panorama data to inform the community of the district's needs.

Another strength of Spencer-East Brookfield is proactively building partnerships with community organizations to meet student needs. As described previously (see Tiered Systems and Supports), the district has proactively established partnerships with community organizations to meet student needs, particularly in areas with limited district staffing capacity such as behavioral and mental health supports. The district also prioritizes in-person events such as open houses and evening gatherings to bring the larger school community together and share information about available resources and programs.

Across interviews and focus groups, feedback from district staff reiterated an interest in and a commitment to being very responsive to student and family needs throughout the communities served. However, it was not clear from responses or documents if a formal process supported by data existed to gather family and student perspectives concerning needs. This fact highlights an area for growth for the district to more systematically collect information to inform decision making about partnerships and programming that students and families feel is most important.

## DESE Recommendations

- *The district should investigate and identify root causes around the tenuous relationships between secondary students and staff, as well as concerns around adult communication and expectations across student groups.*
- *The district should strategically focus on supporting the needs of its English learners, through increased staffing or shifts in other supports.*
- *The district should develop a formal system for collecting information from families, students, and the community about partnerships and programming.*

## Financial and Asset Management

As a regional district, Spencer-East Brookfield has a regional agreement that clearly details the amount that each town must contribute to the annual budget. District leaders and school committee members described strong working relationships between district and town leaders, which have benefited from a successful navigation of the school building project. The district has consistently met net school spending requirements since 2017.

Since 2013, Spencer-East Brookfield has been under financial oversight by the state. The district has repaid its funds borrowed from the state; however, the district has not yet submitted a formal request to the Commissioner to exit state oversight, and therefore continues to work with its fiscal overseer and submit reports to DESE.

The district's budget development and review processes are clear and collaborative. Spencer-East Brookfield values financial transparency; the district posts all finalized budgets to its website and partners with ClearGov to make budget information accessible to the community. District leaders also meet with municipal officials to discuss and explain the budget in detail to secure the towns' support prior to final approval. District officials worked with the fiscal overseer to develop a six-year resource and needs projection that guides their budget development.

The district does not yet have a capital plan developed. Recently, a new director of facilities was hired, and this individual is beginning the process of inventorying building needs to develop a comprehensive capital improvement plan. In addition to coordinating the development of a capital improvement plan, this individual will be responsible for day-to-day operations and maintenance. A major focus of the district has been securing a high school building project, which district leaders described as a priority for both communities served by SEBRSD.

Table 7 summarizes key strengths and areas for growth in financial and asset management.

**Table 7. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Financial and Asset Management Standard**

Indicator	Strengths	Areas for growth
<a href="#">Budget documentation and reporting</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The district uses ClearGov to transparently publish budget information.</li> </ul>	
<a href="#">Adequate budget</a>		
<a href="#">Financial tracking, forecasting, controls, and audits</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The district provides regular and detailed financial reports to the school committee.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued oversight from the state</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Capital planning and facility maintenance</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The district has successfully reengaged the member towns and the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) to support a new high school facility.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comprehensive capital plan</li> </ul>

## Budget Documentation and Reporting

Spencer-East Brookfield maintains clear, accurate, and easily accessible budget documents. Finalized district budgets from fiscal years 2017 through 2024, the *Three Year Strategic and Financial Plan (2020-2023)*, and a link to the district's ClearGov page are all available to the public on the district's website. The superintendent described regular meetings with town officials to proactively ensure that everyone is familiar with the budget and planned spending for the year. He reiterated how important this information was to maintain a strong working relationship across the regional district. The district provides a detailed, line-item budget to the community. The current budget is clear and thorough, including the allocation of resources by cost center and a breakdown of funding sources by state, district, and assessment revenue. The breakdown of assessment revenue clearly outlines the operating, transportation, debt, and capital costs for each town in accordance with the *Regional School District Agreement*.

District leaders described that in addition to making required budget documentation publicly available on their website, they also partner with a platform called ClearGov, which both sending communities use to ensure fiscal transparency. ClearGov provides budget information for Spencer-East Brookfield dating back to 2009 and divides it into comprehensible domains: overview, funding, expenditures, students, employees, and test scores. The platform summarizes data using various visual representations in addition to providing detailed reports and analyses. The superintendent explained that the district's commitment to using ClearGov reflects the value that their sending communities place on fiscal transparency:

In terms of transparency, there's nothing [the community] doesn't have access to. . . . It's the same data as what's on DESE, but not everybody goes there and not everybody understands. Our municipalities also have subscriptions to ClearGov, so in the interest of showing unity on our finances, we like to utilize this as one tool for the public.

The use of ClearGov for transparently publishing its budget is a strength of the district.

## Adequate Budget

As outlined in the fiscal year 2024 budget, Spencer-East Brookfield has a current operating budget of \$29.5 million combined from their general fund (\$28.5 million) and school choice fund (\$900,000). The general fund appropriation represents a 6.4 percent increase from fiscal year 2023. According to RADAR (Resource Allocation and District Action Reports) data, Spencer-East Brookfield's in-district per-pupil expenditure in 2022 was \$16,886, representing a 1.2 percent increase from the previous year. Since 2017, the district has consistently met net school spending requirements. Multiple central office staff described that both towns are familiar with the required spending limits. To supplement the budget, district leaders work closely to identify additional sources of revenue and funding to support district priorities. For example, the school committee contributed \$900,000 of excess and deficiency funds to the current budget to ensure adequate funding, and the district created a role for a part-time grant writer to assist in securing additional revenue.

The district begins the annual budget development process by reviewing existing staffing and future staffing needs. The business manager reported that he meets with each building principal to discuss school-level needs and then decides how to allocate resources for the upcoming year based on



these discussions. He said of this step in the budget process: “We spend a lot of time on that because clearly that’s our biggest cost and where we get most of the value for the students; it’s in the teachers and the staffing.” The district purposefully uses funds to meet students’ needs, as illustrated by the district creating two full-time equivalent positions for EL teachers and putting resources into social-emotional learning software, curriculum, and staffing for special education.

## Financial Tracking, Forecasting, Controls, and Audits

The district’s business office is responsible for financial tracking and reporting to key stakeholders. The business office established a system to provide regular and detailed financial reports to the school committee, which is a strength. School committee members and the business manager described that the business manager provides monthly line-item expenditure reports to the school committee in addition to quarterly revenue updates. In school committee meetings, he reviews the expenditure reports line by line to ensure clarity about the state of the district’s finances before the committee approves transfers. School committee members expressed their appreciation of the business manager’s process:

He really understands our money and where our money is. . . . He ensures that we know what’s going on and where it’s coming from. . . . When it comes to finances, our job is pretty simple because of that leadership.

The business office completes timely and accurate end-of-year reports following the submission of the final balance sheet and certification of excess and deficiency funds. The school committee noted the transparency of these end-of-year reports because they are “an aggregate of everything we’ve just looked at over the last 11 months.” The district undergoes annual external audits that begin between September and February, following the finalization of the end-of-year report.

During the 2013 fiscal year, Spencer-East Brookfield borrowed funds from the state to resolve a deficit in the district budget. As a requirement of *Chapter 24 of the Acts of 2013*, Spencer-East Brookfield entered fiscal oversight from the state. Though the district finished repaying its debt in 2020, it has not formally requested an exit from oversight from the Commissioner, and therefore, continues to submit reports to the state and work with its fiscal overseer to ensure financial stability.

Though mandated by the state, the fiscal overseer and district enjoy a healthy working relationship. The fiscal overseer supported the district in creating a six-year matrix (fiscal years 2021 to 2027) that projects future local contribution requirements, available resources, and staffing needs. The superintendent and business manager said this projection guides them in their budget development process and helps them “be creative” with other funding sources, such as excess and deficiency and school choice funds. The superintendent commented on this partnership as follows:

We have an overseer who is very talented and has expertise in the municipal finance area. He’s a great resource for us. We work with him to project out not only what our staffing needs are going to be, but what we believe our resources are going to be to pay for those staffing needs. And it’s really kind of helped us develop the budget. We don’t go in blind every year.

The director of student services is responsible for managing special education grants, and accounts payable personnel are responsible for managing all other grants. According to the business manager,



these groups monitor the status of grant money and ensure that all funds are spent or rolled forward, if possible. He reported “constant communication” between accounts payable and the grant writer during this process.

## Capital Planning and Facility Maintenance

Spencer-East Brookfield’s *Innovate. Inspire. Achieve 2024!* plan articulates that a key initiative for the district is to “address capital improvement needs within the regional school district by partnering with our parent/families, communities, the MSBA, and Siemens—so that our facilities are innovative, responsive, and meet the needs of 21st-century teaching and learning.” However, the district does not currently have a comprehensive capital plan, which is a self-identified area for growth. District leaders suggested that this plan is a focus for the newly hired director of facilities and operations. In support of the development of a capital plan, the facilities director is presently inventorying the needs of the district’s buildings in collaboration with the lead custodians.

Although Spencer-East Brookfield lacks a capital improvement plan, the district has successfully reengaged its member towns and the MSBA to support replacing the high school facility—a strength of the district. In 2012, Spencer-East Brookfield was in the MSBA’s pipeline and slated to begin renovations on David Prouty High School; however, perceived financial disarray in the district led the towns to walk away from the project. District leaders and teachers reported that, at the time of Dr. Haughey’s arrival in 2018, the high school had frequent leaks in the roof and did not have a functioning heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning system, both of which were “affecting student and staff morale.” The superintendent made it an immediate priority to reinstitute the building project, which district leaders said required him to advocate with various stakeholders and constituent groups. He also successfully got buy-in from both member towns, and teachers reported that the vote to recommence the building project “felt united.” One district leader noted the importance of this work: “The district was really going downhill, and the high school project was vital to the success of the school district.”

According to *The David Prouty High School Building Project* website, the project has eight modules, with a projected conclusion in October 2027. At the time of the review, the district progressed from Module 6 (detailed design) to Module 7 (construction). The completed building will accommodate 441 students, assuming an 80 percent utilization rate per classroom, and the school design includes a plan for a five-classroom addition if student enrollment exceeds capacity. The estimated total project cost is \$111.6 million, 42 percent of which will be covered by an MSBA grant (\$46.8 million). The two member towns are responsible for contributing the remaining \$64.8 million. The building project website compares this to the \$62.9 million cost to bring the existing school up to code, which “represents the cost to the district of staying the course,” rather than making progress toward their strategic objective of improving their facilities for innovative and responsive 21st-century learning.

## DESE Recommendations

- *The districts should continue to work the individual(s) that are providing fiscal oversight to ensure ongoing fiscal stability.*
- *The district should develop a comprehensive capital plan to ensure the district’s facilities meet students’ future needs.*

## Appendix A. Summary of Site Visit Activities

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The AIR team completed the following activities as part of the district review activities in Spencer-East Brookfield. The team conducted 60 classroom observations during the week of October 9, 2023, and held interviews and focus groups between October 2 and 6, 2023. The site visit team conducted interviews and focus groups with the following representatives from the school and the district:

- Superintendent
- Other district leaders
- School committee members
- Teachers' association members
- Principals
- Teachers
- Support specialists
- Students

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

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

# Appendix B. Districtwide Instructional Observation Report

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***Spencer-East Brookfield  
Regional School District***

**Classroom Visits: Summary of Findings**

**Districtwide Instructional Observation Report**

**October 2023**

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## Introduction

The *Districtwide Instructional Observation Report* presents ratings for the classroom observations that were conducted by certified observers at American Institutes for Research (AIR) as part of the Massachusetts District Reviews.

Three observers visited the Spencer-East Brookfield Regional School District (RSD) during the week of October 11, 2023. Observers conducted 60 observations in a sample of classrooms across four schools. Observations were conducted in grades K-12 and focused primarily on literacy, English language arts, and mathematics instruction.

The classroom observations were guided by the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), developed by the Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) at the University of Virginia. Three levels of CLASS Manuals were used: K-3, Upper Elementary, and Secondary. The K-3 tool was used to observe grades K-3, the Upper Elementary tool was used to observe grades 4-5, and the Secondary tool was used to observe grades 6-12.

The K-3 protocol includes 10 classroom dimensions related to three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support (listed in Table 1).

**Table 1. CLASS K-3 Domains and Dimensions**

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

The Upper Elementary and Secondary protocols include 11 classroom dimensions related to three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support (listed in Table 2), in addition to Student Engagement.

**Table 2. CLASS Upper Elementary and Secondary Domains and Dimensions**

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

When conducting a visit to a classroom, the observer rates each dimension (including Student Engagement) on a scale of 1 to 7. A rating of 1 or 2 indicates that the dimension was never or rarely evident during the visit. For example, a rating of 1 or 2 on Teacher Sensitivity indicates that, at the time of the visit, the teacher was not aware of students who needed extra support or attention, was unresponsive to or dismissive of students, or was ineffective at addressing students' problems; as a

result, students rarely sought support from the teacher or communicated openly with the teacher. A rating of 3, 4, or 5 indicates that the dimension was evident but not exhibited consistently or in a way that included all students. A rating of 6 or 7 indicates that the dimension was reflected in all or most classroom activities and in a way that included all or most students.

Members of the observation team who visited the classrooms all received training on the CLASS protocol and then passed a rigorous certification exam for each CLASS protocol to ensure that they were able to accurately rate the dimensions. All observers must pass an exam annually to maintain their certification.

Research on CLASS protocol shows that students in classrooms that rated high using this observation tool have greater gains in social skills and academic success than students in classrooms with lower ratings (MET Project, 2010; CASTL, n.d.). Furthermore, small improvements on these domains can affect student outcomes: “The ability to demonstrate even small changes in effective interactions has practical implications—differences in just over 1 point on the CLASS 7-point scale translate into improved achievement and social skill development for students” (CASTL, n.d., p. 3).

In this report, each CLASS dimension is defined, and descriptions of the dimensions at the high (6 or 7), middle (3, 4, or 5), and low levels (1 or 2) are presented (*definitions and rating descriptions are derived from the CLASS K–3, Upper Elementary, and Secondary Manuals*). For each dimension we indicate the frequency of classroom observations across the ratings and provide a districtwide average of the observed classrooms. In cases where a dimension is included in more than one CLASS manual level, those results are combined on the dimension-specific pages. In the summary of ratings table following the dimension-specific pages the averages for every dimension are presented by grade band (K-5, 6-8, and 9-12). For each dimension, we indicate the grade levels for which this dimension is included.



## Positive Climate

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### *Emotional Support domain, Grades K–12*

Positive Climate reflects the emotional connection between the teacher and students and among students and the warmth, respect, and enjoyment communicated by verbal and nonverbal interactions (*CLASS K–3 Manual*, p. 23, *CLASS Upper Elementary Manual*, p. 21, *CLASS Secondary Manual*, p. 21). Table 3 (as well as tables for the remaining dimensions) includes the number of classrooms for each rating on each dimension and the district average for that dimension.

**Table 3. Positive Climate: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average**

#### **Positive Climate District Average\*: 5.4**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-5	0	0	0	1	9	7	7	24	5.8
Grades 6-8	0	0	1	3	6	4	2	16	5.2
Grades 9-12	0	0	0	7	8	2	3	20	5.1

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 3, the district average is computed as:  $([3 \times 1] + [4 \times 11] + [5 \times 23] + [6 \times 13] + [7 \times 12]) \div 60 \text{ observations} = 5.4$

**Ratings in the Low Range.** All indicators are absent or only minimally present. Teachers and students do not appear to share a warm, supportive relationship. Interpersonal connections are not evident or only minimally evident. Affect in the classroom is flat, and there are rarely instances of teachers and students smiling, sharing humor, or laughing together. There are no, or very few, positive communications among the teacher and students; the teacher does not communicate encouragement. There is no evidence that students and the teacher respect one another or that the teacher encourages students to respect one another.

**Ratings in the Middle Range.** There are some indications that the teacher and students share a warm and supportive relationship, but some students may be excluded from this relationship, either by the teacher or the students. Some relationships appear constrained—for example, the teacher expresses a perfunctory interest in students, or encouragement seems to be an automatic statement and is not sincere. Sometimes, teachers and students demonstrate respect for one another.

**Ratings in the High Range.** There are many indications that the relationship among students and the teacher is positive and warm. The teacher is typically in close proximity to students, and encouragement is sincere and personal. There are frequent displays of shared laughter, smiles, and enthusiasm. Teachers and students show respect for one another (e.g., listening, using calm voices, using polite language). Positive communication (both verbal and nonverbal) and mutual respect are evident throughout the session.

# Teacher Sensitivity

*Emotional Support domain, Grades K–12*

Teacher Sensitivity encompasses the teacher’s awareness of and responsiveness to students’ academic and emotional needs. High levels of sensitivity facilitate students’ abilities to actively explore and learn because the teacher consistently provides comfort, reassurance, and encouragement (*CLASS K–3 Manual*, p. 32, *CLASS Upper Elementary Manual*, p. 27, *CLASS Secondary Manual*, p. 27).

**Table 4. Teacher Sensitivity: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average**

**Teacher Sensitivity District Average\*: 5.9**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-5	0	0	1	0	5	10	8	24	6.0
Grades 6-8	0	0	0	1	4	4	7	16	6.1
Grades 9-12	0	0	0	3	7	3	7	20	5.7

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 4, the district average is computed as:  $([3 \times 1] + [4 \times 4] + [5 \times 16] + [6 \times 17] + [7 \times 22]) \div 60 \text{ observations} = 5.9$

**Ratings in the Low Range.** In these sessions, the teacher has not been aware of students who need extra support and pays little attention to students’ needs. As a result, students are frustrated, confused, and disengaged. The teacher is unresponsive to and dismissive of students and may ignore students, squash their enthusiasm, and not allow them to share their moods or feelings. The teacher is not effective in addressing students’ needs and does not appropriately acknowledge situations that may be upsetting to students. Students rarely seek support from the teacher and minimize conversations with the teacher, not sharing ideas or responding to questions.

**Ratings in the Middle Range.** The teacher is sometimes aware of student needs or aware of only a limited type of student needs, such as academic needs, not social-emotional needs. Or the teacher may be aware of some students and not of other students. The teacher does not always realize a student is confused and needs extra help or when a student already knows the material being taught. The teacher may be responsive at times to students but at other times may ignore or dismiss students. The teacher may respond only to students who are upbeat and positive and not support students who are upset. Sometimes, the teacher is effective in addressing students’ concerns or problems, but not always.

**Ratings in the High Range.** The teacher’s awareness of students and their needs is consistent and accurate. The teacher may predict how difficult a new task is for a student and acknowledge this difficulty. The teacher is responsive to students’ comments and behaviors, whether positive or negative. The teacher consistently addresses students’ problems and concerns and is effective in doing so. Students are obviously comfortable with the teacher and share ideas, work comfortably together, and ask and respond to questions, even difficult questions.

## Regard for Student Perspectives

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*Emotional Support domain, Grades K–12*

Regard for Student Perspectives captures the degree to which the teacher’s interactions with students and classroom activities place an emphasis on students’ interests, motivations, and points of view and encourage student responsibility and autonomy (*CLASS K–3 Manual*, p. 38, *CLASS Upper Elementary Manual*, p. 35, *CLASS Secondary Manual*, p. 35).

**Table 5. Regard for Student Perspectives: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average**

**Regard for Student Perspectives District Average\*: 3.2**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-5	2	7	7	6	2	0	0	24	3.0
Grades 6-8	1	3	4	4	4	0	0	16	3.4
Grades 9-12	4	4	2	2	6	2	0	20	3.4

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 5, the district average is computed as:  $([1 \times 7] + [2 \times 14] + [3 \times 13] + [4 \times 12] + [5 \times 12] + [6 \times 2]) \div 60 \text{ observations} = 3.2$

**Ratings in the Low Range.** At the low range, the teacher exhibits an inflexible, rigid adherence to his or her plan, without considering student ideas or allowing students to make contributions. The teacher inhibits student enthusiasm by imposing guidelines or making remarks that inhibit student expression. The teacher may rigidly adhere to a lesson plan and not respond to student interests. The teacher does not allow students any autonomy on how they conduct an activity, may control materials tightly, and may offer few opportunities for students to help out with classroom responsibilities. There are few opportunities for students to talk and express themselves.

**Ratings in the Middle Range.** The teacher exhibits control at times and at other times follows the students’ lead and gives them some choices and opportunities to follow their interests. There are some opportunities for students to exercise autonomy, but student choice is limited. The teacher may assign students responsibility in the classroom, but in a limited way. At times, the teacher dominates the discussion, but at other times the teacher allows students to share ideas, although only at a minimal level or for a short period of time.

**Ratings in the High Range.** The teacher is flexible in following student leads, interests, and ideas and looks for ways to meaningfully engage students. Although the teacher has a lesson plan, students’ ideas are incorporated into the lesson plan. The teacher consistently supports student autonomy and provides meaningful leadership opportunities. Students have frequent opportunities to talk, share ideas, and work together. Students have appropriate freedom of movement during activities.

## Negative Climate

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Emotional Support domain, Grades K–3

Classroom Organization domain, Grades 4–12

Negative Climate reflects the overall level of expressed negativity in the classroom. The frequency, quality, and intensity of teacher and student negativity are key to this dimension (*CLASS K–3 Manual*, p. 28, *CLASS Upper Elementary Manual*, p. 55, *CLASS Secondary Manual*, p. 55). For the purposes of this report, we have inversed the observers scores, to be consistent with the range scores across all dimensions. Therefore, a high range score in this dimension indicates an absence of negative climate, and a low range score indicates the presence of negative climate.<sup>1</sup>

**Table 6. Negative Climate: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average**

**Negative Climate District Average\*: 6.8**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-5	0	0	0	0	0	1	23	24	7.0
Grades 6-8	0	0	0	0	1	2	13	16	6.8
Grades 9-12	0	0	1	0	2	1	16	20	6.6

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 6, the district average is computed as:  $([3 \times 1] + [5 \times 3] + [6 \times 4] + [7 \times 52]) \div 60 \text{ observations} = 6.8$

**Ratings in the Low Range.** Negativity is pervasive. The teacher may express constant irritation, annoyance, or anger; unduly criticize students; or consistently use a harsh tone and/or take a harsh stance as he or she interacts with students. Threats or yelling are frequently used to establish control. Language is disrespectful and sarcastic. Severe negativity, such as the following actions, would lead to a high rating on negative climate, even if the action is not extended: students bullying one another, a teacher hitting a student, or students physically fighting with one another.

**Ratings in the Middle Range.** There are some expressions of mild negativity by the teacher or students. The teacher may express irritability, use a harsh tone, and/or express annoyance—usually during difficult moments in the classroom. Threats or yelling may be used to establish control over the classroom, but not constantly; they are used more as a response to situations. At times, the teacher and students may be sarcastic or disrespectful toward one another.

**Ratings in the High Range.** There is no display of negativity: No strong expressions of anger or aggression are exhibited, either by the teacher or students; if there is such a display, it is contained and does not escalate. The teacher does not issue threats or yell to establish control. The teacher and students are respectful and do not express sarcasm.

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<sup>1</sup> When observers rate this dimension it is scored so that a low rating (indicating little or no evidence of a negative climate) is better than a high rating (indicating abundant evidence of a negative climate). To be consistent across all ratings, for the purposes of this report we have inversed this scoring.

## Behavior Management

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Classroom Organization domain, Grades K–12

Behavior Management refers to the teacher’s ability to provide clear behavioral expectations and use effective methods to prevent and redirect misbehavior (*CLASS K–3 Manual*, p. 45, *CLASS Upper Elementary Manual*, p. 41, *CLASS Secondary Manual*, p. 41).

**Table 7. Behavior Management: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average**

**Behavior Management District Average\*: 6.1**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-5	0	0	0	2	3	8	11	24	6.2
Grades 6-8	0	0	2	0	3	2	9	16	6.0
Grades 9-12	0	0	2	0	4	3	11	20	6.1

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 7, the district average is computed as:  $([3 \times 4] + [4 \times 2] + [5 \times 10] + [6 \times 13] + [7 \times 31]) \div 60 \text{ observations} = 6.1$

**Ratings in the Low Range.** At the low range, the classroom is chaotic. There are no rules and expectations, or they are not enforced consistently. The teacher does not monitor the classroom effectively and only reacts to student disruption, which is frequent. There are frequent instances of misbehavior in the classroom, and the teacher’s attempts to redirect misbehavior are ineffective. The teacher does not use cues, such as eye contact, slight touches, gestures, or physical proximity, to respond to and redirect negative behavior.

**Ratings in the Middle Range.** Although rules and expectations may be stated, they are not consistently enforced, or the rules may be unclear. Sometimes, the teacher proactively anticipates and prevents misbehavior, but at other times the teacher ignores behavior problems until it is too late. Misbehavior may escalate because redirection is not always effective. Episodes of misbehavior are periodic.

**Ratings in the High Range.** At the high range, the rules and guidelines for behavior are clear, and they are consistently reinforced by the teacher. The teacher monitors the classroom and prevents problems from developing, using subtle cues to redirect behavior and address situations before they escalate. The teacher focuses on positive behavior and consistently affirms students’ desirable behaviors. The teacher effectively uses cues to redirect behavior. There are no, or very few, instances of student misbehavior or disruptions.

## Productivity

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Classroom Organization domain, Grades K–12

Productivity considers how well the teacher manages instructional time and routines and provides activities for students so that they have the opportunity to be involved in learning activities (*CLASS K–3 Manual*, p. 51, *CLASS Upper Elementary Manual*, p. 49, *CLASS Secondary Manual*, p. 49).

**Table 8. Productivity: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average**

**Productivity District Average\*: 6.5**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-5	0	0	0	0	3	7	14	24	6.5
Grades 6-8	0	0	0	0	1	4	11	16	6.6
Grades 9-12	0	0	0	1	2	3	14	20	6.5

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 8, the district average is computed as:  $([4 \times 1] + [5 \times 6] + [6 \times 14] + [7 \times 39]) \div 60 \text{ observations} = 6.5$

**Ratings in the Low Range.** At the low level, the teacher provides few activities for students. Much time is spent on managerial tasks (such as distributing papers) and/or on behavior management. Frequently during the observation, students have little to do and spend time waiting. The routines of the classroom are not clear and, as a result, students waste time, are not engaged, and are confused. Transitions take a long time and/or are too frequent. The teacher does not have activities organized and ready and seems to be caught up in last-minute preparations.

**Ratings in the Middle Range.** At the middle range, the teacher does provide activities for students but loses learning time to disruptions or management tasks. There are certain times when the teacher provides clear activities to students, but there are other times when students wait and lose focus. Some students (or all students, at some point) do not know what is expected of them. Some of the transitions may take too long, or classrooms may be productive during certain periods but then not productive during transitions. Although the teacher is mostly prepared for the class, last-minute preparations may still infringe on learning time.

**Ratings in the High Range.** The classroom runs very smoothly. The teacher provides a steady flow of activities for students, so students do not have downtime and are not confused about what to do next. The routines of the classroom are efficient, and all students know how to move from one activity to another and where materials are. Students understand the teacher's instructions and directions. Transitions are quick, and there are not too many of them. The teacher is fully prepared for the lesson.

## Instructional Learning Formats

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Classroom Organization domain, Grades K–3

Instructional Support domain, Grades 4–12

Instructional Learning Formats refer to the ways in which the teacher maximizes students' interest, engagement, and abilities to learn from the lesson and activities (*CLASS K–3 Manual*, p. 57; *CLASS Upper Elementary Manual*, p. 63, *CLASS Secondary Manual*, p. 61).

**Table 9. Instructional Learning Formats: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average**

**Instructional Learning Formats District Average\*: 4.4**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-5	1	0	0	3	19	1	0	24	4.8
Grades 6-8	0	2	4	3	5	2	0	16	4.1
Grades 9-12	0	2	5	6	4	2	1	20	4.1

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 9, the district average is computed as:  $([1 \times 1] + [2 \times 4] + [3 \times 9] + [4 \times 12] + [5 \times 28] + [6 \times 5] + [7 \times 1]) \div 60 \text{ observations} = 4.4$

**Ratings in the Low Range.** The teacher exerts little effort in facilitating engagement in the lesson. Learning activities may be limited and seem to be at the rote level, with little teacher involvement. The teacher relies on one learning modality (e.g., listening) and does not use other modalities (e.g., movement, visual displays) to convey information and enhance learning. Or the teacher may be ineffective in using other modalities, not choosing the right props for the students or the classroom conditions. Students are uninterested and uninvolved in the lesson. The teacher does not attempt to guide students toward learning objectives and does not help them focus on the lesson by providing appropriate tools and asking effective questions.

**Ratings in the Middle Range.** At the middle range, the teacher sometimes facilitates engagement in the lesson but at other times does not, or the teacher facilitates engagement for some students and not for other students. The teacher may not allow students enough time to explore or answer questions. Sometimes, the teacher uses a variety of modalities to help students reach a learning objective, but at other times the teacher does not. Student engagement is inconsistent, or some students are engaged and other students are not. At times, students are aware of the learning objective and at other times they are not. The teacher may sometimes use strategies to help students organize information but at other times does not.

**Ratings in the High Range.** The teacher has multiple strategies and tools to facilitate engagement and learning and encourage participation. The teacher may move around, talk and play with students, ask open-ended questions of students, and allow students to explore. A variety of tools and props are used, including movement and visual/auditory resources. Students are consistently interested and engaged in the activities and lessons. The teacher focuses students on the learning objectives, which students understand. The teacher uses advanced organizers to prepare students for an activity, as well as reorientation strategies that help students regain focus.



## Concept Development

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*Instructional Support domain, Grades K–3*

Concept Development refers to the teacher’s use of instructional discussions and activities to promote students’ higher order thinking skills and cognition and the teacher’s focus on understanding rather than on rote instruction (*CLASS K–3 Manual*, p. 64).

**Table 10. Concept Development: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average**

**Concept Development District Average\*: 2.4**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-3**	2	6	3	2	0	0	0	13	2.4

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 10, the district average is computed as:  $([1 \times 2] + [2 \times 6] + [3 \times 3] + [4 \times 2]) \div 13 \text{ observations} = 2.4$

\*\*Concept Development does not appear in the CLASS Upper Elementary Manual, therefore scores for the Elementary School Level represent grades K-3 only.

**Ratings in the Low Range.** At the low range, the teacher does not attempt to develop students’ understanding of ideas and concepts, focusing instead on basic facts and skills. Discussion and activities do not encourage students to analyze and reason. There are few, if any, opportunities for students to create or generate ideas and products. The teacher does not link concepts to one another and does not ask students to make connections with previous content or their actual lives. The activities and the discussion are removed from students’ lives and from their prior knowledge.

**Ratings in the Middle Range.** To some extent, the teacher uses discussions and activities to encourage students to analyze and reason and focuses somewhat on understanding of ideas. The activities and discussions are not fully developed, however, and there is still instructional time that focuses on facts and basic skills. Students may be provided some opportunities for creating and generating ideas, but the opportunities are occasional and not planned out. Although some concepts may be linked and also related to students’ previous learning, such efforts are brief. The teacher makes some effort to relate concepts to students’ lives but does not elaborate enough to make the relationship meaningful to students.

**Ratings in the High Range.** At the high range, the teacher frequently guides students to analyze and reason during discussions and activities. Most of the questions are open ended and encourage students to think about connections and implications. Teachers use problem solving, experimentation, and prediction; comparison and classification; and evaluation and summarizing to promote analysis and reasoning. The teacher provides students with opportunities to be creative and generate ideas. The teacher consistently links concepts to one another and to previous learning and relates concepts to students’ lives.

## Content Understanding

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*Instructional Support domain, Grades 4 – 12*

Content Understanding refers to the depth of lesson content and the approaches used to help students comprehend the framework, key ideas, and procedures in an academic discipline. At a high level, this dimension refers to interactions among the teacher and students that lead to an integrated understanding of facts, skills, concepts, and principles (*CLASS Upper Elementary Manual*, p. 70, *CLASS Secondary Manual*, p. 68).

**Table 11. Content Understanding: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average**

**Content Understanding District Average\*: 3.8**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades 4-5**	1	2	3	5	0	0	0	11	3.1
Grades 6-8	0	1	6	4	2	2	1	16	4.1
Grades 9-12	2	1	3	5	7	2	0	20	4.0

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 11, the district average is computed as:  $([1 \times 3] + [2 \times 4] + [3 \times 12] + [4 \times 14] + [5 \times 9] + [6 \times 4] + [7 \times 1]) \div 47 \text{ observations} = 3.8$

\*\*Content Understanding does not appear in the CLASS K-3 Manual, therefore scores for the Elementary School Level represent grades 4-5 only.

**Ratings in the Low Range.** At the low range, the focus of the class is primarily on presenting discrete pieces of topically related information, absent broad, organizing ideas. The discussion and materials fail to effectively communicate the essential attributes of the concepts and procedures to students. The teacher makes little effort to elicit or acknowledge students' background knowledge or misconceptions or to integrate previously learned material when presenting new information.

**Ratings in the Middle Range.** At the middle range, the focus of the class is sometimes on meaningful discussion and explanation of broad, organizing ideas. At other times, the focus is on discrete pieces of information. Class discussion and materials communicate some of the essential attributes of concepts and procedures, but examples are limited in scope or not consistently provided. The teacher makes some attempt to elicit and/or acknowledge students' background knowledge or misconceptions and/or to integrate information with previously learned materials; however, these moments are limited in depth or inconsistent.

**Ratings in the High Range.** At the high range, the focus of the class is on encouraging deep understanding of content through the provision of meaningful, interactive discussion and explanation of broad, organizing ideas. Class discussion and materials consistently communicate the essential attributes of concepts and procedures to students. New concepts and procedures and broad ideas are consistently linked to students' prior knowledge in ways that advance their understanding and clarify misconceptions.

## Analysis and Inquiry

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Instructional Support domain, Grades 4 – 12

Analysis and Inquiry assesses the degree to which students are engaged in higher level thinking skills through their application of knowledge and skills to novel and/or open-ended problems, tasks, and questions. Opportunities for engaging in metacognition (thinking about thinking) also are included (*CLASS Upper Elementary Manual*, p. 81, *CLASS Secondary Manual*, p. 76).

**Table 12. Analysis and Inquiry: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average**

**Analysis and Inquiry District Average\*: 2.4**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades 4-5**	3	4	3	0	1	0	0	11	2.3
Grades 6-8	5	4	2	0	3	1	1	16	2.9
Grades 9-12	12	3	2	1	1	1	0	20	2.0

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 12, the district average is computed as:  $([1 \times 20] + [2 \times 11] + [3 \times 7] + [4 \times 1] + [5 \times 5] + [6 \times 2] + [7 \times 1]) \div 47 \text{ observations} = 2.4$

\*\*Analysis and Inquiry does not appear in the CLASS K-3 Manual, therefore scores for the Elementary School Level represent grades 4-5 only.

**Ratings in the Low Range.** At the low range, students do not engage in higher order thinking skills. Instruction is presented in a rote manner, and there are no opportunities for students to engage in novel or open-ended tasks. Students are not challenged to apply previous knowledge and skills to a new problem, nor are they encouraged to think about, evaluate, or reflect on their own learning. Students do not have opportunities to plan their own learning experiences.

**Ratings in the Middle Range.** Students occasionally engage in higher order thinking through analysis and inquiry, but the episodes are brief or limited in depth. The teacher provides opportunities for students to apply knowledge and skills within familiar contexts and offers guidance to students but does not provide opportunities for analysis and problem solving within novel contexts and/or without teacher support. Students have occasional opportunities to think about their own thinking through explanations, self-evaluations, reflection, and planning; these opportunities, however, are brief and limited in depth.

**Ratings in the High Range.** At the high range, students consistently engage in extended opportunities to use higher order thinking through analysis and inquiry. The teacher provides opportunities for students to independently solve or reason through novel and open-ended tasks that require students to select, utilize, and apply existing knowledge and skills. Students have multiple opportunities to think about their own thinking through explanations, self-evaluations, reflection, and planning.

## Quality of Feedback

*Instructional Support domain, Grades K–12*

Quality of Feedback refers to the degree to which the teacher provides feedback that expands learning and understanding and encourages continued participation in the learning activity (*CLASS K–3 Manual*, p. 72). In the upper elementary and secondary classrooms, significant feedback also may be provided by peers (*CLASS Upper Elementary Manual*, p. 89, *CLASS Secondary Manual*, p. 93). Regardless of the source, the focus of the feedback motivates learning.

**Table 13. Quality of Feedback: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average**

**Quality of Feedback District Average\*: 2.7**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-5	3	10	3	6	2	0	0	24	2.8
Grades 6-8	3	4	5	1	2	1	0	16	2.9
Grades 9-12	7	5	3	1	3	1	0	20	2.6

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 13, the district average is computed as:  $([1 \times 13] + [2 \times 19] + [3 \times 11] + [4 \times 8] + [5 \times 7] + [6 \times 2]) \div 60 \text{ observations} = 2.7$

**Ratings in the Low Range.** At the low range, the teacher dismisses incorrect responses or misperceptions and rarely scaffolds student learning. The teacher is more interested in students providing the correct answer than understanding. Feedback is perfunctory. The teacher may not provide opportunities to learn whether students understand or are interested. The teacher rarely questions students or asks them to explain their thinking and reasons for their responses. The teacher does not or rarely provides information that might expand student understanding and rarely offers encouragement that increases student effort and persistence.

**Ratings in the Middle Range.** In the middle range, the teacher sometimes scaffolds students, but this is not consistent. On occasion, the teacher facilitates feedback loops so that students may elaborate and expand on their thinking, but these moments are not sustained long enough to accomplish a learning objective. Sometimes, the teacher asks students about or prompts them to explain their thinking and provides information to help students understand, but sometimes the feedback is perfunctory. At times, the teacher encourages student efforts and persistence.

**Ratings in the High Range.** In this range, the teacher frequently scaffolds students who are having difficulty, providing hints or assistance as needed. The teacher engages students in feedback loops to help them understand ideas or reach the right response. The teacher often questions students, encourages them to explain their thinking, and provides additional information that may help students understand. The teacher regularly encourages students' efforts and persistence.

## Language Modeling

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*Instructional Support domain, Grades K–3*

Language Modeling refers to the quality and amount of the teacher’s use of language stimulation and language facilitation techniques (*CLASS K–3 Manual*, p. 79).

**Table 14. Language Modeling: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average**

**Language Modeling District Average\*: 2.5**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-3**	3	3	5	2	0	0	0	13	2.5

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 14, the district average is computed as:  $([1 \times 3] + [2 \times 3] + [3 \times 5] + [4 \times 2]) \div 13 \text{ observations} = 2.5$

\*\*Language Modeling does not appear in the CLASS Upper Elementary Manual, therefore scores for the Elementary School Level represent grades K-3 only.

**Ratings in the Low Range.** In the low range, there are few conversations in the classroom, particularly between the students and the teacher. The teacher responds to students’ initiating talk with only a few words, limits students’ use of language (in responding to questions) and asks questions that mainly elicit closed-ended responses. The teacher does not or rarely extends students’ responses or repeats them for clarification. The teacher does not engage in self-talk or parallel talk—explaining what he or she or the students are doing. The teacher does not use new words or advanced language with students. The language used has little variety.

**Ratings in the Middle Range.** In this range, the teacher talks with students and shows some interest in students, but the conversations are limited and not prolonged. Usually, the teacher directs the conversations, although the conversations may focus on topics of interest to students. More often, there is a basic exchange of information but limited conversation. The teacher asks a mix of closed- and open-ended questions, although the closed-ended questions may require only short responses. Sometimes, the teacher extends students’ responses or repeats what students say. Sometimes, the teacher maps his or her own actions and the students’ actions through language and description. The teacher sometimes uses advanced language with students.

**Ratings in the High Range.** There are frequent conversations in the classroom, particularly between students and the teacher, and these conversations promote language use. Students are encouraged to converse and feel they are valued conversational partners. The teacher asks many open-ended questions that require students to communicate more complex ideas. The teacher often extends or repeats student responses. Frequently, the teacher maps his or her actions and student actions descriptively and uses advanced language with students.

## Instructional Dialogue

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### Instructional Support domain, Grades 4 – 12

Instructional Dialogue captures the purposeful use of content-focused discussion among teachers and students that is cumulative, with the teacher supporting students to chain ideas together in ways that lead to deeper understanding of content. Students take an active role in these dialogues, and both the teacher and students use strategies that facilitate extended dialogue (*CLASS Upper Elementary Manual*, p. 97, *CLASS Secondary Manual*, p. 101).

**Table 15. Instructional Dialogue: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average**

#### Instructional Dialogue District Average\*: 2.9

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades 4-5**	4	0	2	1	3	1	0	11	3.2
Grades 6-8	3	4	4	3	1	1	0	16	2.9
Grades 9-12	5	6	3	3	2	1	0	20	2.7

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 15, the district average is computed as:  $([1 \times 12] + [2 \times 10] + [3 \times 9] + [4 \times 7] + [5 \times 6] + [6 \times 3]) \div 47 \text{ observations} = 2.9$

\*\*Instructional Dialogue does not appear in the CLASS K-3 Manual, therefore scores for the Elementary School Level represent grades 4-5 only.

**Ratings in the Low Range.** At the low range, there are no or few discussions in the class, the discussions are not related to content or skill development, or the discussions contain only simple question-response exchanges between the teacher and students. The class is dominated by teacher talk, and discussion is limited. The teacher and students ask closed-ended questions; rarely acknowledge, report, or extend other students' comments; and/or appear disinterested in other students' comments, resulting in many students not being engaged in instructional dialogues.

**Ratings in the Middle Range.** At this range, there are occasional content-based discussions in class among teachers and students; however, these exchanges are brief or quickly move from one topic to another without follow-up questions or comments from the teacher and other students. The class is mostly dominated by teacher talk, although there are times when students take a more active role, or there are distributed dialogues that involve only a few students in the class. The teacher and students sometimes facilitate and encourage more elaborate dialogue, but such efforts are brief, inconsistent, or ineffective at consistently engaging students in extended dialogues.

**Ratings in the High Range.** At the high range, there are frequent, content-driven discussions in the class between teachers and students or among students. The discussions build depth of knowledge through cumulative, contingent exchanges. The class dialogues are distributed in a way that the teacher and the majority of students take an active role or students are actively engaged in instructional dialogues with each other. The teacher and students frequently use strategies that encourage more elaborate dialogue, such as open-ended questions, repetition or extension, and active listening. Students respond to these techniques by fully participating in extended dialogues.

## Student Engagement

*Student Engagement domain, Grades 4–12*

Student Engagement refers to the extent to which all students in the class are focused and participating in the learning activity that is presented or facilitated by the teacher. The difference between passive engagement and active engagement is reflected in this rating (*CLASS Upper Elementary Manual*, p. 105).

**Table 16. Student Engagement: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average**

**Student Engagement District Average\*: 4.9**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades 4-5**	0	0	0	2	8	1	0	11	4.9
Grades 6-8	0	0	0	3	5	7	1	16	5.4
Grades 9-12	0	1	4	4	6	4	1	20	4.6

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 16, the district average is computed as:  $([2 \times 1] + [3 \times 4] + [4 \times 9] + [5 \times 19] + [6 \times 12] + [7 \times 2]) \div 47 \text{ observations} = 4.9$

\*\*Student Engagement does not appear in the CLASS K-3 Manual, therefore scores for the Elementary School Level represent grades 4-5 only.

**Ratings in the Low Range.** In the low range, the majority of students appear distracted or disengaged.

**Ratings in the Middle Range.** In the middle range, students are passively engaged, listening to or watching the teacher; student engagement is mixed, with the majority of students actively engaged for part of the time and disengaged for the rest of the time; or there is a mix of student engagement, with some students actively engaged and some students disengaged.

**Ratings in the High Range.** In the high range, most students are actively engaged in the classroom discussions and activities.



## Summary of Average Ratings: Grades K–5

**Table 17. Summary Table of Average Ratings for Each Dimension in Grades K–5**

	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average Scores*
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
<b>Emotional Support Domain</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>5.4</b>
Positive Climate	0	0	0	1	9	7	7	24	5.8
Negative Climate**	0	0	0	0	0	1	23	24	7.0
Teacher Sensitivity	0	0	1	0	5	10	8	24	6.0
Regard for Student Perspectives	2	7	7	6	2	0	0	24	3.0
<b>Classroom Organization Domain</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>5.8</b>
Behavior Management	0	0	0	2	3	8	11	24	6.2
Productivity	0	0	0	0	3	7	14	24	6.5
Instructional Learning Formats***	1	0	0	3	19	1	0	24	4.8
<b>Instructional Support Domain</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>2.7</b>
Concept Development (K-3 only)	2	6	3	2	0	0	0	13	2.4
Content Understanding (UE only)	1	2	3	5	0	0	0	11	3.1
Analysis and Inquiry (UE only)	3	4	3	0	1	0	0	11	2.3
Quality of Feedback	3	10	3	6	2	0	0	24	2.8
Language Modeling (K-3 only)	3	3	5	2	0	0	0	13	2.5
Instructional Dialogue (UE only)	4	0	2	1	3	1	0	11	3.2
<b>Student Engagement (UE only)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4.9</b>

\*The district average is an average of the scores. For example, for Positive Climate, the district average is computed as:  $([4 \times 1] + [5 \times 9] + [6 \times 7] + [7 \times 7]) \div 24 \text{ observations} = 5.8$

\*\*Negative Climate is rated on an inverse scale. An original score of 1 is given a value of 7. The scoring in the table reflects the normalized adjustment:  $([6 \times 1] + [7 \times 23]) \div 24 \text{ observations} = 7.0$ . In addition, Negative Climate appears in the Classroom Organization Domain for the Upper Elementary Manual.

\*\*\*Instructional Learning Formats appears in the Instructional Support Domain for the Upper Elementary Manual.

## Summary of Average Ratings: Grades 6–8

**Table 18. Summary Table of Average Ratings for Each Dimension in Grades 6–8**

	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average Scores*
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
<b>Emotional Support Domain</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>4.9</b>
Positive Climate	0	0	1	3	6	4	2	16	5.2
Teacher Sensitivity	0	0	0	1	4	4	7	16	6.1
Regard for Student Perspectives	1	3	4	4	4	0	0	16	3.4
<b>Classroom Organization Domain</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>6.5</b>
Behavior Management	0	0	2	0	3	2	9	16	6.0
Productivity	0	0	0	0	1	4	11	16	6.6
Negative Climate**	0	0	0	0	1	2	13	16	6.8
<b>Instructional Support Domain</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>3.4</b>
Instructional Learning Formats	0	2	4	3	5	2	0	16	4.1
Content Understanding	0	1	6	4	2	2	1	16	4.1
Analysis and Inquiry	5	4	2	0	3	1	1	16	2.9
Quality of Feedback	3	4	5	1	2	1	0	16	2.9
Instructional Dialogue	3	4	4	3	1	1	0	16	2.9
<b>Student Engagement</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>5.4</b>

\*The district average is an average of the scores. For example, for Positive Climate, the district average is computed as:  $([3 \times 1] + [4 \times 3] + [5 \times 6] + [6 \times 4] + [7 \times 2]) \div 16 \text{ observations} = 5.2$

\*\*Negative Climate is rated on an inverse scale. An original score of 1 is given a value of 7. The scoring in the table reflects the normalized adjustment:  $([5 \times 1] + [6 \times 2] + [7 \times 13]) \div 16 \text{ observations} = 6.8$

## Summary of Average Ratings: Grades 9–12

**Table 19. Summary Table of Average Ratings for Each Dimension in Grades 9–12**

	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average Scores*
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
<b>Emotional Support Domain</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>4.7</b>
Positive Climate	0	0	0	7	8	2	3	20	5.1
Teacher Sensitivity	0	0	0	3	7	3	7	20	5.7
Regard for Student Perspectives	4	4	2	2	6	2	0	20	3.4
<b>Classroom Organization Domain</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>6.4</b>
Behavior Management	0	0	2	0	4	3	11	20	6.1
Productivity	0	0	0	1	2	3	14	20	6.5
Negative Climate**	0	0	1	0	2	1	16	20	6.6
<b>Instructional Support Domain</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3.1</b>
Instructional Learning Formats	0	2	5	6	4	2	1	20	4.1
Content Understanding	2	1	3	5	7	2	0	20	4.0
Analysis and Inquiry	12	3	2	1	1	1	0	20	2.0
Quality of Feedback	7	5	3	1	3	1	0	20	2.6
Instructional Dialogue	5	6	3	3	2	1	0	20	2.7
<b>Student Engagement</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>4.6</b>

\*The district average is an average of the scores. For example, for Positive Climate, the district average is computed as:  $([4 \times 7] + [5 \times 8] + [6 \times 2] + [7 \times 3]) \div 20 \text{ observations} = 5.1$

\*\*Negative Climate is rated on an inverse scale. An original score of 1 is given a value of 7. The scoring in the table reflects the normalized adjustment:  $([3 \times 1] + [5 \times 2] + [6 \times 1] + [7 \times 16]) \div 20 \text{ observations} = 6.6$

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## Appendix C. Resources to Support Implementation of DESE’s District Standards and Indicators

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**Table C1. Resources to Support Leadership and Governance**

Resource	Description
<a href="#">Coherence Guidebook</a>	The guidebook illustrates a systems-level path toward deeper learning. School system leaders and teams may use the guidebook, along with its companion self-assessment, to articulate a vision of deeper learning, identify high-leverage instructional priorities, refine tiered supports, and leverage systems and structures—all in service of the articulated vision.
<a href="#">Principal Induction and Mentoring Handbook</a>	A series of modules designed to support novice principals and their mentors in the development of antiracist leadership competencies aligned to the Professional Standards for Administrative Leadership.
<a href="#">Planning for Success In Massachusetts</a>	Planning for Success (PFS) is an inclusive, hands-on planning process designed to build district and school capacity and coherence while also building community understanding and support.

**Table C2. Resources to Support Curriculum and Instruction**

Resource	Description
<a href="#">Coherence Guidebook</a>	The guidebook illustrates a systems-level path toward deeper learning. School system leaders and teams may use the guidebook, along with its companion self-assessment, to articulate a vision of deeper learning, identify high-leverage instructional priorities, refine tiered supports, and leverage systems and structures—all in service of the articulated vision.
<a href="#">Curriculum Frameworks Resources</a>	Some of the most frequently used resources include “What to Look For” classroom observation guides; the Family Guides to help families understand what students are expected to know and do by the end of each grade; and the Standards Navigator tool and app, which can be used to explore the standards, see how they are connected to other standards and related student work samples, reference guides, and definitions.
<a href="#">Curriculum Matters Webpage</a>	A suite of resources to support the use of high-quality curriculum, including IMplement MA, our recommended four-phase process to prepare for, select, launch, and

Resource	Description
	implement new high-quality instructional materials with key tasks and action steps. Also includes CURATE, which convenes panels of Massachusetts teachers to review and rate evidence on the quality and alignment of specific curricular materials and then publish their findings for educators across the Commonwealth to consult.
<a href="#">Digital Literacy and Computer Science (DLCS) Curriculum Guide</a>	The DLCS Curriculum Guide provides curricular overviews for schools to engage students in learning digital literacy and computer science (DLCS) concepts and skills aligned to the standards found in the 2016 Massachusetts DLCS Framework.
<a href="#">Early Warning Indicator System (EWIS)</a>	Tools for districts to identify students who are at risk of not meeting important academic goals to help students get back on track. This comprehensive system spans first grade through high school graduation and beyond.
<a href="#">Foundations for Inclusive Practices</a>	This Guidebook includes tools for districts, schools, and educators that are aligned to the MA Educator Evaluation Framework and promote evidence-based best practices for inclusion.
<a href="#">Guidebook of Culturally Diverse Artists and Artworks</a>	The purpose of this resource is to promote culturally responsive teaching in the arts through the study of culturally diverse artists and their artworks. This guidebook highlights art made by people with racial identities that historically have been and continue to be marginalized.
<a href="#">Mass Literacy Guide</a>	An interactive site with research, information, and resources on evidence-based practices for early literacy that are culturally responsive and sustaining. There is current information on complex text, fluent word reading, language comprehension, students experiencing reading difficulties, equity in literacy, how to support a multitiered system of support for ELA/literacy, and much more.
<a href="#">Massachusetts Blueprint for English Learner Success</a>	Framework for English learner education in MA, with embedded Quick Reference Guides (QRGs) and other resources to support implementation.
Massachusetts Curricular Resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Appleseeds</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Investigating History</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">OpenSciEd</a></li> </ul>	Free, open-source curricular resources aligned to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.

Resource	Description
<a href="#">Planning for Deeper Learning</a>	KCL worked with educators and leaders across the Commonwealth to develop tools, protocols, examples, and professional learning experiences.
<a href="#">Supporting Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices</a>	Culturally and linguistically sustaining practices are essential for all students in the classroom, regardless of their background, culture, or identity.
<a href="#">Synthesized ILT Framework</a>	District and school teams can use this resource to reflect and identify specific actions they could take to establish or improve their instructional leadership teams (ILTs).

**Table C3. Resources to Support Assessment**

Resource	Description
<a href="#">Approved Early Language and Literacy Assessments for Preschool</a>	DESE's Early Learning Team in collaboration with EEC is working with a vendor to approve preschool language and literacy assessments to support classroom instruction.
<a href="#">Assessment Literacy Continuum</a>	Tool to help teachers identify what aspects of assessment literacy they should focus on for their own goal setting.
<a href="#">District Data Team Toolkit</a>	A set of resources to help a district establish, grow, and maintain a culture of inquiry and data use through a district data team.
<a href="#">Early Literacy Universal Screening Assessments</a>	Guidance and support for schools and districts to select and use an early literacy universal screening assessment. Grant funding may be available.
<a href="#">Student Assessment</a>	Statewide assessments help parents, students, educators, and policymakers determine where districts, schools, and students are meeting expectations and where they need additional support.

**Table C4. Resources to Support Human Resources and Professional Development**

Resource	Description
<a href="#">Early Literacy Observation Form</a>	This tool supports the observation and provision of high-quality feedback to teacher candidates on their practice in evidence-based early literacy.
<a href="#">Educator Evaluation Implementation Resources</a>	A suite of resources and practical tools for effective and equitable implementation of educator evaluation, including Focus Indicators, a subset of Indicators from the Classroom Teacher and School Level Administrator Rubrics that represent high-priority practices for the school year.



Resource	Description
Induction and Mentoring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Teacher Induction and Mentoring</a></li> <li><a href="#">Principal Induction and Mentoring</a></li> </ul>	Resources that highlight best practices and reinforce the recently updated guidelines and standards for induction and mentoring.
<a href="#">Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL)</a>	Information on MTEL exams, MTEL alternatives, and licensure requirements for educators.
<a href="#">OPTIC</a>	A professional development tool that supports Massachusetts educators to build a shared understanding of high-quality instruction and improve the feedback that teachers receive.
<a href="#">Professional Learning Partner Guide</a>	A free, online, searchable list of vetted professional development providers who have expertise in specific sets of high-quality instructional materials. Schools and districts can use this guide to easily find PD providers to support the launch or implementation of high-quality instructional materials.
<a href="#">“What to Look For” Observation Guides</a>	Observation tools to help district staff observe instruction.
<a href="#">Talent Guide</a>	An online hub of resources, considerations, and updates for recruiting, hiring, evaluating, and supporting educators and school staff, with a focus on equity.
<a href="#">WIDA Professional Development</a>	WIDA professional development provides great information and strategies to support multilingual learners in Massachusetts public schools, and WIDA PDPs satisfy educator licensure renewal requirements. These DESE Sponsored courses are available at no cost to participants and are perfect for teams of teachers seeking impactful collaboration to support students' access to rigorous course content.

**Table C5. Resources to Support Student Support**

Resource	Description
<a href="#">Bullying Prevention and Intervention</a>	DESE’s Guidance and Technical Assistance for districts/schools related to state requirements around bullying prevention and intervention.
Emergency Management	Guidance and Technical Assistance for districts/schools related to emergency management planning and implementation.

Resource	Description
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (Federal Guidance)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Emergency Management Planning (State Guidance)</a></li> </ul>	
<p>Family Partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">DESE Family Portal</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Strengthening Partnerships: A Framework for Prenatal through Young Adulthood Family Engagement in Massachusetts</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Learning Standards For Families</a></li> </ul>	<p>Resources for authentically engaging families in their child’s education and centering families voices in school and district decision-making.</p>
<p><a href="#">Guidance on Updated Expectations for School and District Leaders Related to Student Discipline</a></p>	<p>Guidance on updated expectations for school and district leaders related to student discipline associated with the 2022 mental health law (G.L. c. 71, §37H¾).</p>
<p>MTSS Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">MTSS Blueprint, Self-Assessment, and Resources</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Massachusetts Tools for Schools</a></li> </ul>	<p>MTSS is a framework for how school districts can build the necessary systems to ensure that every student receives a high-quality educational experience.</p>
<p><a href="#">Resources for Supporting Immigrant and Refugee Students</a></p>	<p>An evolving compilation of resources that can support districts in meeting the needs of immigrant and refugee students.</p>
<p><a href="#">Safe and Supportive Schools Framework and Self-Reflection Tool</a></p>	<p>These resources can help guide school- and district-based teams to create safer and more supportive school climates and cultures. Through a phased process (with preliminary and deeper dive self-reflection options) teams can create plans based on local context and data, and through examination of six areas of school operation.</p>
<p><a href="#">School Breakfast: Breakfast After the Bell Resources</a></p>	<p>The Breakfast After the Bell Toolkit Series is designed to help with the launch and implementation of alternative breakfast models.</p>
<p><a href="#">School Wellness Initiative for Thriving Community Health (SWITCH)</a></p>	<p>SWITCH provides resources that support and advance wellness efforts for Massachusetts students, schools, and communities.</p>
<p>Social Emotional Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">SEL Resources Grades 1-3</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">SEL Guide (K-12)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">SEL/APL Standards (PK/K)</a></li> </ul>	<p>These resources provide evidence-based and developmentally appropriate guidance around supporting social emotional learning in schools.</p>

Resource	Description
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Playful Learning Institute, Preschool through 3rd Grade</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Culturally Responsive Social-Emotional Competency Development</a></li> </ul>	
<a href="#">Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education</a>	Guidance and resources to support districts in meeting the needs of Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE).

**Table C6. Resources to Support Financial and Asset Management**

Resource	Description
<a href="#">DESE Spending Comparisons Website</a>	A clearinghouse of school finance data reports and other resources available to district users and the public.
<a href="#">General Resources for Federal Grant Programs</a>	General federal grants resources.
<a href="#">Massachusetts Farm to School Grant Opportunities</a>	A summary of state, regional and national grant opportunities related to farm to school, school gardens, hydroponics, school food and more.
<a href="#">Office for Food and Nutrition Programs</a>	Resources for school districts, childcare centers, family day care homes, adult day health programs, Summer Eats community organizations, USDA Foods storage and distribution vendors, food banks, and anti-hunger organizations across the Commonwealth.
<a href="#">Planning for Success (PfS)</a>	An inclusive, hands-on planning process designed to build district and school capacity and coherence while also building community understanding and support.
<a href="#">Resource Allocation and District Action Reports (RADAR)</a>	RADAR is a suite of innovative data reports, case studies, and other resources that provide a new approach to resource decisions.
<a href="#">Spending Money Wisely: Getting the Most From School District Budgets (scroll down to Research section)</a>	A discussion of the top 10 opportunities for districts to realign resources and free up funds to support strategic priorities.
<a href="#">Summer Eats   Free Meals for Kids and Teens in MA</a>	Summer Eats is a free-of-charge program that provides free meals to all kids and teens, ages 18 and under, at locations all across Massachusetts during the summer months.
<a href="#">Transforming School Funding: A Guide to Implementing Student-Based Budgeting (SBB) from Education Resource Strategies</a>	This guide describes a process to help districts tie funding to specific student needs.

## Appendix D. Enrollment, Attendance, Expenditures

**Table D1. Spencer-East Brookfield Regional School District: Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity, 2023-2024**

Group	District	Percentage of total	State	Percentage of total
All	1,418	100.0	914,959	100.0
African American	45	3.2	88,104	9.6
Asian	24	1.7	67,847	7.4
Hispanic	287	20.2	229,930	25.1
Native American	5	0.4	2,178	0.2
White	1,004	70.8	484,692	53.0
Native Hawaiian	1	0.1	790	0.1
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	52	3.7	41,418	4.5

Note. As of October 1, 2023.

**Table D2. Spencer-East Brookfield Regional School District: Student Enrollment by High-Need Populations, 2023-2024**

Group	District			State		
	N	Percentage of high needs	Percentage of district	N	Percentage of high needs	Percentage of state
All students with high needs	858	100.0	59.5	515,939	100.0	55.8
Students with disabilities	350	40.8	24.3	187,160	36.3	20.2
Low-income	696	81.1	49.1	385,697	74.8	42.2
English Learner	66	7.7	4.7	119,749	23.2	13.1

Note. As of October 1, 2023. District and state numbers and percentages for students with disabilities and high needs are calculated including students in out-of-district placements. Total district enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 1,441; total state enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 924,947.

**Table D3. Spencer-East Brookfield Regional School District: Chronic Absence<sup>a</sup> Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023**

Group	N (2023)	2021	2022	2023	State (2023)
All students	1,499	31.8	28.1	23.7	22.2
African American/Black	41	40.0	38.6	14.6	25.3
Asian	25	38.9	11.1	16.0	13.9
Hispanic/Latino	304	52.4	39.9	35.2	34.5
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	58	46.3	51.6	43.1	23.3
Native American	3	--	--	--	33.5
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	—	28.3
White	1,068	26.2	23.5	19.9	17.0
High needs	943	39.7	33.6	27.9	30.3
Low income	815	—	36.8	29.6	33.5
ELs	78	66.0	41.7	41.0	33.5
Students w/disabilities	353	35.8	29.7	22.7	30.4

<sup>a</sup> The percentage of students absent 10 percent or more of their total number of student days of membership in a school.

**Table D4. Spencer-East Brookfield Regional School District: Expenditures, Chapter 70 State Aid, and Net School Spending Fiscal Years, 2020-2022**

	Fiscal year 2020		Fiscal year 2021		Fiscal year 2022	
	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual
<b>Expenditures</b>						
From local appropriations for schools						
By school committee	\$25,701,510	\$26,030,586	\$26,511,298	\$26,524,794	\$26,797,444	\$25,747,756
From revolving funds and grants	—	\$2,229,498	—	\$2,911,462	—	\$3,882,458
Total expenditures	—	\$28,260,084	—	\$29,436,256	—	\$29,630,214
<b>Chapter 70 aid to education program</b>						
Chapter 70 state aid <sup>a</sup>	—	\$13,695,254	—	\$13,695,254	—	\$13,740,734
Required local contribution	—	\$8,498,469	—	\$8,878,789	—	\$9,144,752
Required net school spending <sup>b</sup>	—	\$22,193,723	—	\$22,574,043	—	\$22,885,486
Actual net school spending	—	\$23,481,640	—	\$23,072,912	—	\$22,898,530
Over/under required (\$)	—	\$1,287,917	—	\$498,869	—	\$13,044
Over/under required (%)	—	5.8%	—	2.2%	—	0.1%

Note. Data as of July 25, 2023, and sourced from fiscal year 2022 district end-of-year reports and Chapter 70 program information on DESE website.

<sup>a</sup> Chapter 70 state aid funds are deposited in the local general fund and spent as local appropriations. <sup>b</sup> Required net school spending is the total of Chapter 70 aid and required local contribution. Net school spending includes only expenditures from local appropriations, not revolving funds, and grants. It includes expenditures for most administration, instruction, operations, and out-of-district tuitions. It does not include transportation, school lunches, debt, or capital.

**Table D5. Spencer-East Brookfield Regional School District: Expenditures Per In-District Pupil, Fiscal Years 2020-2022**

Expenditure category	2020	2021	2022
Administration	\$1,152	\$1,137	\$791
Instructional leadership (district and school)	\$1,021	\$1,148	\$1,082
Teachers	\$5,469	\$5,716	\$5,712
Other teaching services	\$1,481	\$1,309	\$1,500
Professional development	\$108	\$70	\$144
Instructional materials, equipment, and technology	\$234	\$515	\$462
Guidance, counseling, and testing services	\$471	\$495	\$528
Pupil services	\$1,773	\$1,750	\$2,230
Operations and maintenance	\$1,198	\$1,397	\$1,528
Insurance, retirement, and other fixed costs	\$3,107	\$3,149	\$2,908
Total expenditures per in-district pupil	\$16,013	\$16,688	\$16,886

Note. Any discrepancy between expenditures and total is because of rounding. Data are from <https://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/statistics/per-pupil-exp.xlsx>.

## Appendix E. Student Performance Data

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**Table E1. Next-Generation MCAS ELA Achievement by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2023**

Group	# included (2023)	Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations			Percentage partially meeting expectations			Percentage not meeting expectations		
		2022	2023	State (2023)	2022	2023	State (2023)	2022	2023	State (2023)
All	651	26	25	42	52	49	39	22	26	19
African American/Black	16	13	19	26	53	50	45	33	31	29
Asian	6	—	—	64	—	—	27	—	—	9
Hispanic/Latino	132	20	11	22	52	51	43	28	38	34
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	24	39	54	49	48	29	35	13	17	16
Native American	1	—	—	29	—	—	42	—	—	28
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	45	—	—	37	—	—	18
White	472	28	28	50	52	49	37	20	23	13
High needs	412	18	15	24	53	51	45	29	34	31
Low income	346	20	15	24	53	51	44	27	34	32
ELs and former ELs	55	14	13	20	54	42	42	32	45	38
Students w/disabilities	168	4	7	12	40	36	40	56	57	48

**Table E2. Next-Generation MCAS ELA Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2023**

Group	# included (2023)	Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations			Percentage partially meeting expectations			Percentage not meeting expectations		
		2022	2023	State (2023)	2022	2023	State (2023)	2022	2023	State (2023)
All	76	38	39	58	44	38	30	18	22	11
African American/Black	2	—	—	42	—	—	41	—	—	17
Asian	3	—	—	79	—	—	16	—	—	5
Hispanic/Latino	12	25	17	36	69	25	39	6	58	24
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	3	—	—	63	—	—	29	—	—	9
Native American	1	—	—	42	—	—	41	—	—	18
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	41	—	—	47	—	—	11
White	55	40	45	67	42	44	27	18	11	6
High needs	46	19	30	37	52	37	42	29	33	21
Low income	42	23	31	39	51	38	40	26	31	21
ELs and former ELs	7	—	—	16	—	—	39	—	—	45
Students w/disabilities	14	0	7	22	45	29	47	55	64	31

**Table E3. Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2023**

Group	# included (2023)	Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations			Percentage partially meeting expectations			Percentage not meeting expectations		
		2022	2023	State (2023)	2022	2023	State (2023)	2022	2023	State (2023)
All	652	22	23	41	54	54	41	24	23	18
African American/Black	16	13	19	21	53	56	47	33	25	32
Asian	6	—	—	71	—	—	23	—	—	6
Hispanic/Latino	133	11	14	19	50	47	47	38	39	34
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	24	22	29	46	52	58	38	26	13	16
Native American	1	—	—	28	—	—	46	—	—	26
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	41	—	—	43	—	—	16
White	472	24	26	49	56	55	40	20	20	11
High needs	413	13	15	23	54	52	47	33	33	30
Low income	347	14	17	21	56	53	48	30	31	31
ELs and former ELs	56	8	7	21	46	46	44	46	46	34
Students w/disabilities	168	5	7	13	39	40	41	56	54	46

**Table E4. Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2023**

Group	# included (2023)	Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations			Percentage partially meeting expectations			Percentage not meeting expectations		
		2022	2023	State (2023)	2022	2023	State (2023)	2022	2023	State (2023)
All	79	33	27	50	56	61	42	11	13	9
African American/Black	2	—	—	27	—	—	58	—	—	15
Asian	3	—	—	80	—	—	17	—	—	3
Hispanic/Latino	13	13	0	25	75	69	57	13	31	18
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	3	—	—	54	—	—	39	—	—	8
Native American	2	—	—	32	—	—	59	—	—	10
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	36	—	—	57	—	—	7
White	56	38	34	60	55	61	36	7	5	4
High needs	49	22	16	27	59	63	57	18	20	16
Low income	45	25	18	27	60	62	57	15	20	16
ELs and former ELs	6	—	—	14	—	—	58	—	—	28
Students w/disabilities	13	6	0	16	53	54	59	41	46	25

**Table E5. Next-Generation MCAS Science Achievement by Student Group, Grades 5 and 8, 2022-2023**

Group	# included (2023)	Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations			Percentage partially meeting expectations			Percentage not meeting expectations		
		2022	2023	State (2023)	2022	2023	State (2023)	2022	2023	State (2023)
All	208	39	24	41	42	54	40	19	22	19
African American/Black	5	—	—	21	—	—	47	—	—	32
Asian	3	—	—	65	—	—	27	—	—	8
Hispanic/Latino	40	15	18	20	61	48	45	24	35	35
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	7	50	—	47	40	—	37	10	—	15
Native American	—	—	—	31	—	—	44	—	—	25
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	43	—	—	41	—	—	16
White	153	45	25	50	38	55	38	17	20	11
High needs	134	27	16	23	46	57	46	27	26	31
Low income	107	28	20	22	46	55	46	26	25	32
ELs and former ELs	18	6	6	18	56	61	43	38	33	39
Students w/disabilities	51	4	4	14	33	49	40	63	47	45

**Table E6. Next-Generation MCAS Science Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2023**

Group	# included (2023)	Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations			Percentage partially meeting expectations			Percentage not meeting expectations		
		2022	2023	State (2023)	2022	2023	State (2023)	2022	2023	State (2023)
All	75	38	29	47	41	59	42	22	12	11
African American/Black	2	—	—	26	—	—	55	—	—	20
Asian	2	—	—	75	—	—	21	—	—	4
Hispanic/Latino	9	36	—	24	36	—	52	29	—	24
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	2	—	—	51	—	—	39	—	—	10
Native American	2	—	—	30	—	—	58	—	—	12
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	31	—	—	54	—	—	15
White	58	39	34	55	45	57	39	16	9	6
High needs	45	20	18	26	45	67	54	35	16	21
Low income	41	21	17	26	42	66	53	36	17	21
ELs and former ELs	4	—	—	13	—	—	50	—	—	38
Students w/disabilities	13	6	8	16	31	54	53	63	38	31

**Table E7. Next-Generation MCAS ELA Achievement by Grade, 2022-2023**

Grade	# included (2023)	Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations			Percentage partially meeting expectations			Percentage not meeting expectations		
		2022	2023	State (2023)	2022	2023	State (2023)	2022	2023	State (2023)
3	124	26	28	44	57	54	40	17	18	16
4	103	22	28	40	59	49	43	20	23	17
5	111	21	22	44	60	57	40	19	22	16
6	126	46	26	42	36	40	34	18	34	24
7	90	16	28	40	54	47	40	30	26	19
8	97	29	21	44	45	46	34	26	33	22
3-8	651	26	25	42	52	49	39	22	26	19
10	76	38	39	58	44	38	30	18	22	11

**Table E8. Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Grade, 2022-2023**

Grade	# included (2023)	Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations			Percentage partially meeting expectations			Percentage not meeting expectations		
		2022	2023	State (2023)	2022	2023	State (2023)	2022	2023	State (2023)
3	124	24	27	41	44	49	39	32	23	20
4	103	21	22	45	55	49	37	24	29	18
5	111	14	16	41	55	59	46	31	25	13
6	127	32	28	41	55	50	42	14	22	17
7	90	22	21	38	52	60	40	26	19	22
8	97	20	23	38	61	57	42	19	21	20
3-8	652	22	23	41	54	54	41	24	23	18
10	79	33	27	50	56	61	42	11	13	9

**Table E9. Next-Generation MCAS Science Achievement by Grade, 2022-2023**

Grade	# included (2023)	Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations			Percentage partially meeting expectations			Percentage not meeting expectations		
		2022	2023	State (2023)	2022	2023	State (2023)	2022	2023	State (2023)
5	111	32	22	42	46	54	40	23	24	19
8	97	45	26	41	39	55	40	16	20	19
5 and 8	208	39	24	41	42	54	40	19	22	19
10	75	38	29	47	41	59	42	22	12	11

**Table E10. Next-Generation MCAS ELA Mean Student Growth Percentile by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2023**

Group	# included (2023)	2022	2023	State (2023)
All students	475	47.0	42.2	49.7
African American/Black	10	—	—	48.0
Asian	4	—	—	56.4
Hispanic/Latino	93	44.6	35.9	47.5
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	16	—	—	50.0
Native American	—	—	—	46.7
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	50.5
White	352	47.2	43.6	50.0
High needs	285	46.1	38.0	47.3
Low income	238	45.8	36.9	47.0
ELs and former ELs	39	46.4	45.5	49.7
Students w/disabilities	115	40.3	39.7	43.7

**Table E11. Next-Generation MCAS ELA Mean Student Growth Percentile by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2023**

Group	# included (2023)	2022	2023	State (2023)
All students	67	42.5	35.0	49.5
African American/Black	2	—	—	45.5
Asian	2	—	—	56.2
Hispanic/Latino	8	—	—	45.1
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	2	—	—	51.3
Native American	1	—	—	46.4
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	45.2
White	52	40.2	39.0	50.7
High needs	38	37.4	30.8	44.7
Low income	34	38.5	30.6	44.9
ELs and former ELs	5	—	—	42.1
Students w/disabilities	10	—	—	39.9

**Table E12. Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Mean Student Growth Percentile by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2023**

Group	# included (2023)	2022	2023	State (2023)
All students	476	46.8	47.8	49.8
African American/Black	10	—	—	47.8
Asian	4	—	—	57.7
Hispanic/Latino	94	41.4	45.7	47.5
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	16	—	—	50.3
Native American	—	—	—	47.1
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	51.5
White	352	47.5	49.0	50.1
High needs	286	44.4	44.5	47.8
Low income	239	44.6	44.9	47.3
ELs and former ELs	39	37.8	42.8	49.3
Students w/disabilities	116	37.2	42.0	44.8

**Table E13. Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Mean Student Growth Percentile by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2023**

Group	# included (2023)	2022	2023	State (2023)
All students	68	42.9	41.6	49.6
African American/Black	2	—	—	41.4
Asian	2	—	—	55.9
Hispanic/Latino	9	—	—	41.8
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	2	—	—	51.1
Native American	2	—	—	45.4
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	56.1
White	51	45.9	44.3	52.9
High needs	39	36.5	36.5	43.9
Low income	35	32.7	37.7	43.2
ELs and former ELs	4	—	—	40.2
Students w/disabilities	9	—	—	41.7

**Table E14. Next-Generation MCAS ELA Mean Student Growth Percentile by Grade, 2022-2023**

Grade	# included (2023)	2022	2023	State (2023)
3	—	—	—	—
4	95	51.0	48.9	49.4
5	100	44.0	38.4	49.8
6	113	68.1	45.5	49.9
7	80	34.7	39.7	49.9
8	87	39.3	37.2	49.7
3-8	475	47.0	42.2	49.7
10	67	42.5	35.0	49.5

**Table E15. Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Mean Student Growth Percentile by Grade, 2022-2023**

Grade	# included (2023)	2022	2023	State (2023)
3	—	—	—	—
4	95	51.7	40.2	49.6
5	100	33.7	34.4	50.0
6	115	55.8	62.3	49.9
7	79	49.9	51.4	49.9
8	87	45.9	49.1	49.7
3-8	476	46.8	47.8	49.8
10	68	42.9	41.6	49.6

**Table E16. Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Student Group, 2020-2022**

Group	# included (2022)	2020	2021	2022	State (2022)
All	68	78.9	87.3	72.1	90.1
African American/Black	3	—	—	—	86.2
Asian	1	—	—	—	96.2
Hispanic/Latino	9	85.7	—	33.3	81.2
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	5	—	—	—	88.7
Native American	—	—	—	—	82.2
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	—	81.3
White	50	75.4	86.8	78.0	93.2
High needs	49	64.3	85.4	63.3	83.9
Low income	47	67.6	83.3	61.7	83.2
English Learner	—	—	—	—	73.1
Students w/disabilities	18	40.0	75.0	55.6	78.0



**Table E17. Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Student Group, 2019-2021**

Group	# included (2021)	2019	2020	2021	State (2021)
All	63	91.9	84.5	88.9	91.8
African American/Black	3	—	—	—	88.1
Asian	1	—	—	—	97.0
Hispanic/Latino	5	80.0	85.7	—	84.0
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	—	—	—	—	91.2
Native American	1	—	—	—	84.1
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	—	87.7
White	53	95.1	82.5	88.7	94.4
High needs	41	84.8	73.8	85.4	85.8
Low income	36	85.0	73.0	86.1	85.1
English Learner	3	—	—	—	78.0
Students w/disabilities	20	69.2	60.0	75.0	80.6

**Table E18. Annual Dropout Rates by Student Group, 2020-2022**

Group	# included (2022)	2020	2021	2022	State (2022)
All	340	3.1	2.4	5.3	2.1
African American/Black	13	0.0	0.0	7.7	2.8
Asian	8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6
Hispanic/Latino	56	9.1	2.0	7.1	4.3
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	17	—	0.0	11.8	2.4
Native American	2	—	—	—	4.3
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	—	1.2
White	244	2.4	2.8	4.5	1.3
High needs	188	5.8	3.1	7.4	3.6
Low income	167	—	—	8.4	3.8
English Learner	10	0.0	9.1	0.0	7.8
Students w/disabilities	54	6.1	4.7	11.1	3.4

**Table E19. In-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023**

Group	# included (2023)	2021	2022	2023	State (2023)
All	1,489	0.1	1.4	2.1	1.4
African American/Black	42	—	0.0	--	2.1
Asian	24	—	—	--	0.3
Hispanic/Latino	298	—	2.7	3.0	1.8
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	58	—	—	--	1.6
Native American	3	—	—	--	1.5
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	0	—	—	--	1.4
White	1,064	0.2	1.2	2.1	1.2
High needs	932	0.2	1.7	2.7	2.0
Low income	808	—	1.8	2.7	2.1
English Learner	78	—	—	--	1.3
Students w/disabilities	342	0.3	3.1	2.6	2.5

**Table E20. Out-of-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023**

Group	# included (2023)	2021	2022	20223	State (2023)
All	1,489	0.6	4.8	3.8	2.5
African American/Black	42	—	14.0	--	5.0
Asian	24	—	—	--	0.6
Hispanic/Latino	298	—	6.5	5.0	3.9
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	58	—	—	--	3.0
Native American	3	—	—	--	4.1
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	0	—	—	--	3.1
White	1,064	0.7	4.3	3.7	1.6
High needs	932	0.9	6.6	4.7	3.8
Low income	808	—	7.0	5.0	4.3
English Learner	78	—	—	--	2.7
Students w/disabilities	342	1.5	9.3	5.6	4.7

**Table E21. Advanced Coursework Completion Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023**

Group	# included (2023)	2021	2022	2023	State (2023)
All	163	68.5	73.1	76.1	65.8
African American/Black	6	50.0	57.1	66.7	57.3
Asian	4	—	—	—	84.9
Hispanic/Latino	37	76.9	83.3	70.3	51.2
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	5	—	66.7	—	67.4
Native American	—	—	—	—	50.6
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	—	60.0
White	111	69.0	71.0	78.4	70.4
High needs	94	57.7	63.2	70.2	49.8
Low income	80	—	67.2	71.3	50.7
English Learner	8	—	—	25.0	31.7
Students w/disabilities	23	45.2	27.8	52.2	36.0

**Table E22. Accountability Percentile and Classification, 2023**

School	Progress toward improvement targets (%)	Percentile	Overall classification	Reason for classification
District	35	—	Not requiring assistance or intervention	Moderate progress toward targets
East Brookfield Elementary	73	69	Not requiring assistance or intervention	Substantial progress toward targets
Wire Village School	39	22	Not requiring assistance or intervention	Moderate progress toward targets
Knox Trail Middle School	39	15	Not requiring assistance or intervention	Moderate progress toward targets
David Prouty High	33	12	Requiring assistance or intervention	In need of focused/targeted support; low student group performance: White students; low participation rate: low-income students