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Between Compliance and Support: The Role of the Commonwealth in District Takeovers

Wisdom, and knowledge, as well as virtue, diffused generally among the body of the people, being necessary for the preservation of their rights and liberties; and as these depend on spreading the opportunities and advantages of education in the various parts of the country, and among the different orders of the people, it shall be the duty of legislatures and magistrates, in all future periods of this commonwealth, to cherish the interests of literature and the sciences, and all seminaries of them[.]

Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Chapter V., Section II, 1780

In Fall 2014, Massachusetts Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education Mitchell Chester finished up his weekly call with Jeff Riley, the receiver appointed by Chester as the leader of the Lawrence Public Schools (LPS). As Chester ended the call, he reflected on the progress the district had made over the last two years. In December 2011, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education used its authority to take over the Lawrence Public Schools, which was the first full and complete takeover of a public school district in Massachusetts. Chester had appointed a “receiver” to serve as superintendent in Lawrence, revoked the governing power of the school committee, and helped the district craft a turnaround plan.

Two years later, initial results seemed to show that students were benefitting from the takeover. Overall, graduation rates and student achievement on state tests for English and Math were increasing while dropout rates were on the decline. With the Lawrence turnaround underway, Chester wondered whether he should request the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) to designate other school districts as “Level 5,” which would give him the authority to take over the low-performing systems. He was particularly concerned about several school districts that had failed to improve over the years.

The decision was not straightforward. With the Lawrence takeover still in progress, Chester wondered if the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) could handle another full takeover. Moreover, there were serious political considerations with any takeover,

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especially one that reflected the evolving role of the state government in public schools. In Lawrence, Chester had support from the Mayor and community leaders, who had requested that the school committee be divested of its authority and district operations be taken over by the state after years of corruption and low performance. If there was not sufficient support for a takeover, DESE could get embroiled in an unwanted political battle, consume scarce resources, delay intervention, and even perhaps provide a challenge to the recently broadened powers given to DESE. At the same time, Chester thought about the students in the school districts who were casualties of the chronically low-performing systems. He reflected on the consequences of doing nothing. For Chester, it was not a matter of who took action, but when: “I take no particular pride of ownership. If [improvements] happen at the district-level, great. The question is, how can I support the transformation so that students’ life chances aren’t limited by a substandard education?” That said, Chester had a decision to make. Should the state take over another chronically low-performing school district? If so, which one(s)? There were at least three districts that were potential candidates. What would the turnaround plan look like? And, under what conditions should a district that has been entered into receivership be returned to local control?

Public Education in Massachusetts

Throughout the 20th century, Massachusetts, like many other states, built out a public school system that began with Kindergarten and concluded with a high school diploma in the 12th grade. The state dedicated considerable resources—more than \$13 billion dollars equating to \$13,636 per pupil—to educating the state’s 954,739 students.¹ By 2013, Massachusetts was considered to demonstrate some of the highest student achievement in the nation. On the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP),² a national report conducted by the U.S. Department of Education, Massachusetts’ 4th and 8th graders had been scoring the highest in the United States in reading and math since 2005.³ Massachusetts also topped the charts with one of the highest high school graduation rates in the nation with nearly 85% of students who entered high school in 2009 graduating in four years.⁴ Furthermore, Massachusetts’ students’ performance in the 2013 PISA results proved how competitive Massachusetts’ students were even on an international context.⁵ Yet, despite these impressive results, the Commonwealth had similar struggles to other states in closing the achievement gap between students of different races and income levels. On the 2011 NAEP, for example, there was a 30-percentage-point proficiency gap in reading and math between African-American and Hispanic fourth graders, and their white counterparts. (See **Exhibit 1** for student state performance data).

*Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education*⁶

The 11-member Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) was responsible for ensuring the quality of education in the state. The Massachusetts Secretary of Education, a student representative, and nine other members appointed by the Governor comprised BESE, which established education policies covering early childhood, elementary, secondary, and vocational-technical schools. BESE also oversaw The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), the primary role of which was to implement educational policy in Massachusetts. In addition to these responsibilities, the BESE appointed the Commissioner of Education.

Commissioner Mitchell Chester and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

In January 2008, the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) unanimously selected Mitchell Chester to serve as the Massachusetts public schools Commissioner.

Before Chester took office as Commissioner, he had pursued a diverse career in public education as an elementary school teacher, a middle school assistant principal, a district administrator, and state-level administrator. (See **Exhibit 2** for a brief background). Through his extensive career experience with curriculum and instruction standards, teacher evaluation, student performance and assessments, and accountability, at the school-, district-, and state-levels, Chester had a well-seasoned perspective on DESE's role vis-à-vis individual schools and districts in the state: "The state role represents a continuum from compliance to assistance and support. The appropriate role is to transform existing educational systems to promote a strong education for all students."

Commissioner Chester, as the leader of DESE, oversaw the implementation of educational policy in Massachusetts. DESE distributed state and federal funds, supervised teacher licensure and certification, determined and implemented curriculum and standards, administered assessments such as the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), and oversaw charter schools.

According to Chester, authorizing bodies such as DESE had a comparative advantage in leading school reform: "Authorities can create conditions that lead to transformation using statutes and policies at their disposal. The goal is to be a catalyst, to bring parties together." However, according to Chester, many of DESE's powers of authority also had to be earned: "DESE must invest significant time and energy in getting to know its many formal and informal authorizers. The most direct is BESE, but there are also the legislators, the governor, practitioners, business, and foundations."

Outside of the BESE, there were a host of organizations and advocacy groups that were key players in influencing and improving education in Massachusetts. Among these groups, there were two active teachers unions—the Massachusetts Teachers Association, an affiliate of the National Education Association, and AFT Massachusetts, an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers. Other groups represented key stakeholders such as school committees, parents, superintendents, and community members and partners; such groups included the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC), Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS), Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education (MBAE), Stand for Children Massachusetts, and Massachusetts PTA. The leaders of these and other organizations often worked together on state-level committees, such as the Task Force on Evaluation, to shape education policy and practice in the Commonwealth.

A New Era of Education Reform

The Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993 implemented curriculum standards, mandated high school exit exams, and established a state standardized teacher certification exam and process. The legislation also significantly redefined the role of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), facilitating a move from ensuring compliance to supporting accountability, equity, and leadership.

In January 2010, the state legislature expanded the role of DESE by passing *An Act Relative to the Achievement Gap*. With the passage of this legislation, the state wielded considerably more power to intervene in low-performing districts and schools. The state was granted the ability to create new in-district charter schools, allowed for "innovation schools," and lifted caps on charter schools.⁷ Importantly, the legislation gave DESE and district superintendents unprecedented sweeping powers to categorize struggling schools and to support improvements within schools. Following the expansion of the role, the commissioner of elementary and secondary education had the capacity to designate schools under differentiated performance levels including "underperforming" (Level 4) and "chronically underperforming" (Level 5) using statewide data.⁸ Based on student performance data and improvements in student academic performance over time, up to 4% of the total number of

Massachusetts public schools could be designated as a Level 4 or 5.⁹ Moreover, The 2010 Act obligated the district superintendents of schools designated as Level 4 to work with the Commissioner to develop and enact an appropriate turnaround plan for the school. At Level 5, the state takes receivership of the school. In the fall of 2013, Commissioner Chester designated four schools as Level 5 (chronically underperforming), which was the first time the state took receivership of schools.

Determining a Level 5 District

The act additionally defined the criteria for designating an entire school district as “chronically underperforming,” and made it possible for the state to intervene at a district level. To be designated as “Level 5” or “Chronically Underperforming” within the Massachusetts DOE, a district must be among the state’s lowest performing 20% of school districts as determined by analysis of MCAS measurements¹⁰ over a four-year period, and must also go through a district review conducted by the Center for School and District Accountability.¹¹ The review inspects the district’s capacities across six standards: “Leadership & Governance, Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment, Human Resources & Professional Development, Student Support, and Financial & Asset Management.”¹² (See **Exhibit 3** for District Standards and Indicators). DESE then assesses whether a district is meeting these standards through a comprehensive five-stage review process comprising a thorough document and data review, onsite visits, a report of findings and a recommendations, a development session, and a final published report. (See **Exhibit 4** for “District Review Protocol Document”). Based on these evaluations, the Commissioner could recommend to the Board of Secondary and Elementary Education a designation of Level 5 or “chronically underperforming” to the district.

Based on results of the investigation, the Commissioner can choose a receiver for the school district who would act as both superintendent and school committee. The 2010 Act gave a representative of the state unprecedented authority: “An external receiver designated by the board to operate a district under this subsection shall have full managerial and operational control over such district; provided, however, that the school district shall remain the employer of record for all other purposes.”¹³ The act outlined the structures through which the state could intervene on the district level including turnaround theories of action differentiated by the five levels for district schools. (See **Exhibit 5** for a summary of DOE Theory of Action). Interventions could include a new curriculum, expanded school days, changes to the collective bargaining agreement, teacher dismissal, or a requirement for all teachers and the principal to reapply for their jobs.

Commissioner Mitchell Chester could appoint either a receiver or a non-profit organization to take over the responsibilities of the Level 5 district’s superintendent and elected school committee. To qualify, the receiver or non-profit organization must have demonstrated a track record of improving low-performing schools or districts, or of improving the academic performance of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. In the case that a receiver was appointed, he or she is required to design an improvement plan and report monthly progress to Commissioner Chester. In turn, Chester would report annually to the state education board on the overall progress, effectiveness of receivership, and implementation of the plan. Under this structure, the School Committee plays an advisory role, and the receiver has the legal power to require teachers to reapply. When a Level 5 designation is invoked, the Commissioner and the receiver are required to convoke a local stakeholder group of 13 or fewer individuals to provide recommendations for the district turnaround plan.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)

In 2013, DESE operated with a staff of around 500 people across two divisions—the Division of Learning, Leadership, and Information; and the Division of Accountability, Partnerships, and

Assistance. (See **Exhibit 6** for the DESE organizational chart). DESE operated on a budget of approximately \$4.5 billion, most of which (\$4 billion) was passed through to local districts.

Alan Ingram, the Deputy Education Commissioner who joined Chester's team at DESE in Summer 2012, had experienced firsthand as the former Springfield Superintendent of Schools the evolving role of DESE for districts. During his tenure as a district superintendent, Ingram had felt that the state agency's role was already on the transitional path from compliance and accountability to networked support. He believed the 2010 legislation had brought with it a greater level of support from the state:

In 2010, what was different was actually having people from the state agency be on the ground in Springfield trying to assist us with the planning process, the work of turnaround, following up, monitoring, and even trying to help us identify partners whom we could bring into the fold to help us with some of the things we were struggling with. Honestly, from the district's perspective, many of our challenges stemmed from a capacity issue. We simply didn't have all the people and skills we needed to address the issues we needed to work on.

Ingram noted that DESE helped connect the district to resources such as outside entities for health, mental health, and family support services. In addition, DESE brought in state-level staff to work with the Springfield Schools to build instructional leadership capacity for teachers and administrators and to find outside providers to support and supplement the district's daily work. Ingram described the support he felt from the district: "The state was more than just a listening board – they were bringing ideas to the table. I always felt the state was with me in the turnaround endeavor. There were people from the district on the ground with us every step of the way, and their honest feedback and observations were critical for us." In fact, DESE had established an office dedicated to supporting turnaround schools by helping with turnaround plan design, monitoring, providing funds, and providing targeted assistance.

Ingram however questions whether this level of support can be sustained given limited resources:

These changes were largely funded through the Race to the Top grant – \$250 million – a truly unprecedented opportunity for the resources to be deployed in a way to help districts and schools. Most funding resources are coming to an end. I think the state is going to face some very challenging dilemmas around having added powers through the 2010 legislation without additional state resources.

District Turnaround vs. Improvement

As the Deputy Education Commissioner at DESE, Ingram reflected on how a greater emphasis on turnaround work could potentially require a different set of skills for DESE. He noted:

Turnaround work is very different from school improvement work. What we're trying to do is accelerate improvement in places that have not seen improvement or only marginal improvement, at best, for a long time. Incremental improvement is better than no improvement, but incremental improvement alone in some districts and certain schools is not enough. Having people who have the capacity, the ability, and the skills to raise the level of expectations, to raise the level of performance, to help people use data more effectively – not just poking people in the eye or embarrassing people by showing data – that's crucial. How do you take and analyze data, and develop a plan or a strategy around prioritizing the work to make a real difference? How do you monitor classrooms better? How do you monitor instruction better? What does this all look like on the ground?

Ingram also cited the need for a staunch commitment to the following: “Equity and access for all kids—more than just lip service, but believing in it and believing in supporting the reform agenda that’s been outlined here at the agency.”

Another key component was a greater emphasis on creating change at the district level. Ingram described Commissioner Chester’s ability to bring together DESE’s priorities:

Whether we’re talking about innovation, whether we’re talking about extended learning time, or whether we’re talking about accountability and assistance, curriculum and instruction, teaching and learning, education and evaluation, we help people see how these things fit together. We need to reach out to districts and schools in a different way in terms of building capacity. As an agency, we’ve determined that the lens of entry for us is at the district level.

Lawrence, MA¹⁴

The city of Lawrence in Essex County was one of several former textile centers built around the Merrimack River Valley in the mid-1800s. In the early 20th century, Lawrence was an international leader in cotton and wool textile production and had a reputation as a multi-ethnic “Immigrant City” for the international workforce drawn to the mills. Lawrence was the site of the “Bread and Roses” strike, which occurred among textile workers in the winter of 1912. The strike exposed the horrendous working conditions in the mills. By the time it was over several months later, the strike successfully galvanized the nation and marked a turning point in improving the pay and working conditions of mill laborers.¹⁵ In 2013, Lawrence continued to carry its reputation as an “Immigrant City” with nearly 75% of households being bilingual or speaking a non-English language. While around a third of the economy in Lawrence had been in manufacturing, the city had experienced significant loss of its industrial base over the years since the decline of the wool industry in the 1950s. Since then, both the population and economy of Lawrence had struggled. According to the 2012 U.S. census results, with a population of 77,326 and median household income of \$31,931, Lawrence was the poorest city in Massachusetts.¹⁶ Around one quarter of the population had been living in poverty for the past five years. In addition to a depressed economy, in recent decades Lawrence had developed a reputation for widespread corruption, drugs, violence, and high felony rates.

*Lawrence Public Schools (LPS)*¹⁷

In 2011, the majority of LPS’ 13,000 students came from minority and low-income backgrounds. Over three quarters of students did not have English as a first language and about a fourth of the student population was English Language Learners. LPS’s graduation rate was among the lowest in the state: less than half of students graduated in four years. Additionally, district performance on the ELA and math MCAS state tests was among the lowest in all of Massachusetts’ school districts. The state had declared five LPS schools as underperforming while 75% of LPS schools had declined in performance in 2010-2011. Low teacher attendance rates compounded the low student performance. (See **Exhibit 7** for LPS student demographics; see **Exhibit 8** for LPS 2011 MCAS Results / Academic Summary).

Early History: 1997/ 1998: A Close Call with Receivership^{18, 19, 20}

LPS was no stranger to state interventions. In June 1997, following a state audit, LPS came close to state receivership when the Board of Education flagged LPS for chronic under-performance and administrative misconduct. In addition, Lawrence High School had been stripped of accreditation after

5 years of probation in spite of millions of dollars in state funding. According to then Education Commissioner Robert V. Antonucci, LPS had misspent in total \$9 million in state dollars toward “excessive administrative costs, inadequate administrative controls, substantial spending on non-instructional items, and questionable and unreported staff fringe benefits.” Student performance on state tests had stagnated for over a decade by this point and less than half of 10th graders were taking the state exams. Furthermore, the superintendent and members of the Lawrence School Committee were under investigation for possible criminal misconduct involving the misuse of district funds.

While LPS reached the brink of receivership, the Lawrence mayor at the time (Mary Claire Kelly) pursued a lawsuit against the Massachusetts Board of Education to prevent it. In lieu of receivership, the Massachusetts Superior Court appointed an interim superintendent in joint control with the BOE. Under the interim superintendent’s leadership, the district led a budget overhaul with a greater focus on paying teachers, supporting instruction, and funding special education courses. At the time, the decision caused controversy as many community members felt the decision by the courts was unfair and did not take community input and explanation into account.

In spite of the new interventions, LPS continued to struggle with adequate leadership. In 2003 – just six years after LPS narrowly avoided receivership – the LPS School Committee gave their vote of confidence to schools chief Wilfredo T. Laboy who had failed three times to pass a required state-mandated literacy test, which a new state law now required districts to fire teachers who failed an English fluency test. It was not until 2010 that Laboy would finally step down after being indicted for financial misconduct.

The 2012 Takeover

Chester noted that a key development in the lead up to the receivership was his rejection of the then Lawrence mayor’s request for the state to enter into a partnership with the district to support a turnaround at LPS. Chester cited the evidence that DESE had already spent at least a decade with LPS in partnership without significant positive impact. In addition to continued decline in student achievement at LPS, the leadership at LPS had not improved much since two decades ago. Commissioner Chester noted: “By any academic indicator, Lawrence was poor performing. There was tremendous absenteeism of both adults and students, the superintendent was under indictment, and the school committee was completely dysfunctional.”

Chester described his response to the mayor’s request: “I made clear to the Mayor that I only would be willing to oversee a turnaround effort through receivership, which would provide the authorities and leverage that I believed were necessary for a successful turnaround.” After several conversations with Chester, the Mayor of Lawrence requested a state receivership.

On November 29, 2011, BESE—with the authority granted to it by the Act Relative to the Achievement Gap—voted 10-1 to label LPS as a Level 5 (chronically underperforming) school district and to allow Commissioner Mitchell Chester to appoint a district receiver.²¹ At the time, Chester emphasized the importance of supporting local control within the context of the receivership:

I approach the recommendation of receivership from a bias that supports local control. It is my calculus, however, that short of receivership the likelihood of accelerated educational attainment for the youth of Lawrence is slim... I firmly believe that all Lawrence students are as capable as students anywhere in the Commonwealth of learning and achieving at high levels. Today's vote will enable us to implement an aggressive agenda aimed to transform Lawrence into a district where strong educational outcomes are the rule and no longer the exception.²²

The decision was met with criticism from the Lawrence Teachers Union and some community members. Although the state did make the decision after much community input and testimony at a special board meeting, the Teachers Union noted that DESE voted without holding a public hearing in the city. Groups of community members felt the state takeover to be an unnecessary overreaction, noting that a good number of Lawrence schools were doing quite well. Others were concerned about the takeover's effect on the overall reputation and morale of the city.²³ One Lawrence eighth grade English teacher, Lisa Scott, noted that the takeover would be "devastating" for morale: "Teachers like me, who have poured their hearts and souls into their work, often at the expense of their own families believe in what we do everyday with our students. While we may not be making the extreme growth that the state has set targets for, we are making progress."²⁴ Some members of the Lawrence school committee were against the takeover, and one newly appointed school committee member, Jim Blatchford, pointed to other underperforming school districts in Massachusetts and questioned why Lawrence was the target for a takeover: "We are not the bottom of the barrel and I take offense to that[.] There are many school systems that have more under-performing schools, Level 4 schools, than us, and there's not even a question of them being taking [sic] over, because it wasn't requested?"²⁵ Pavel M. Payano, a Lawrence school board member at the time, expressed a bittersweet attitude toward the takeover: "It's unfortunate this is happening[.] But it's probably for the best."²⁶

Receivership

On January 11th, 2012, Chester appointed Jeff Riley, a Boston Public Schools leader, as receiver of LPS.²⁷ Riley, an alumnus of the Baltimore Teach For America (TFA) corps and the Harvard Graduate School of Education, had more than 20 years of experience in public education and was recognized for successfully turning around the underperforming Edwards Middle School in Charlestown from 2007 to 2009. At Edwards, Riley's turnaround strategy focused on lengthening the school day, increasing student opportunities for arts and athletics in addition to academics, training teachers to use data such as test scores effectively, and helping faculty tailor individual student instruction.

According to Chester, the Lawrence turnaround plan set the stage for several key items: a new collective bargaining agreement, an open architecture approach to the relationship between schools and the central office, contracts with education management organizations to oversee the most underperforming schools, and more instructional time for students and more planning and professional development time for teachers.

Scope of authority As the receiver of LPS, Riley had more authority than a typical superintendent and reported directly to Chester. Riley moved quickly to enact reforms. In summer 2012, Riley labeled 50 teachers as "teachers of concern" and fired 16 from the district. In addition to developing a new teacher compensation plan focused on student achievement, Riley brought into the district new charter school partners, including Community Day Charter School in Lawrence and Unlocking Potential from Boston to manage turnaround of two of the lowest performing district schools, MATCH Boston to support the improvement of math achievement in the high school, and Phoenix Charter Academy in Chelsea to focus on dropouts. To target LPS's lowest performing schools and students, Riley also implemented longer school days, decentralized management, and "acceleration academies." Acceleration Academies offered "focused, data-driven instruction" for high-need students during their spring and winter breaks. The receiver appointed a Teacher Leader cabinet to advise him. Some of the moves were not without controversy. In April 2013, the Lawrence Teachers Union filed two labor complaints citing that Riley's creation of a teacher leader cabinet and implementation of a new compensation system overstepped his legal authority. However, as the receiver, Riley had the authority to make changes to teacher compensation without the union's approval.²⁸

Performance after takeover

Just one year after the state takeover, LPS was beginning to show initial results. (See **Exhibit 9** for LPS 2011 MCAS Results / Academic Summary). Lawrence had doubled the number of Level 1 schools from 2 to 4, which meant four of LPS schools were in the top 30% of the state. Additionally, Lawrence exceeded its first year District Turnaround Plan goal of doubling the number of schools in which students outperform their academic peers. In fact, LPS nearly tripled this number.

Chester emphasized the importance of the new collective bargaining agreement, which DESE was able to lead through Manuel Monteiro, the Special Assistant to the Commissioner. The new collective bargaining agreement, which was reached after a year and a half of negotiations, professionalized teaching and offered four basic benefits according to DESE:

1. 1) Compensation based on performance rather than automatic raises through steps and lanes system
2. 2) A career ladder that rewarded strong teachers through increased compensation for additional responsibility and leadership roles
3. 3) Decentralized work rules to enable teachers and administrators at the school-level to determine work rules
4. 4) More instructional time for students and increased planning and PD time for teachers

The Commissioner also noted how the receivership statute gave the state the authority to implement the agreement unilaterally. The union was not required to ratify the agreement, although it did so after working under the agreement for almost a year.

HR and Labor Relations

Manuel Monteiro described the key role HR and labor relations had played in the Lawrence takeover. Commissioner Chester had invited him to join the DESE team for his extensive experience in negotiating contracts with teachers' collective bargaining agreements and long career in Human Resources. Monteiro helped develop new working conditions and compensation models for Level 5 schools and negotiated a memorandum of agreement between the district, Boston, DESE, and the receiver. During his work with the Lawrence Public Schools, Monteiro believed there were many lessons to take home.

One main realization for Monteiro was the importance of giving the state enough time to review a district's processes in order to make the best recommendations for the district. If the role of the state was to help districts create better systems, processes, and more fruitful autonomies, the state would need a better sense of a district's true problems at a granular level: "I would do a 60-day management analysis of the business conditions – look at their systems, their data, their people, their HR capacity, their business capacity, and their leadership. You'd want to look at the budgets and see how that's handled, how it's managed, but really understanding how the work gets done – how contracts get signed, developed and signed, how purchasing is made and the procurement of supplies – because each district does it differently."

Another important lesson was the key role of teacher engagement: "You want to give the schools autonomy, and generally, those autonomies in the past have come through the authority of the principal. We need to do it in a way that also creates the conditions on the ground for there to be ongoing collaborative dialogue with the practitioners to get their input, their involvement, their

engagement, their own leadership in changing the conditions. The more engaged teachers are, the more involved they will become. The more engaged you have them, the more trust you can build. We hope that at the end of this, the biggest advocate for this work will be the teachers.” Monteiro cited the recent improvements in the TELLMass results for Lawrence. The TELLMass was a voluntary survey for teachers to report the quality of their working conditions. Monteiro noted that teachers in LPS were reporting significantly higher levels of satisfaction and workplace happiness.

Monteiro felt that with the receivership of LPS, the DESE team was learning important lessons for future successful turnaround efforts. One example Monteiro cited was the legal framework about negotiations between the school committee and the union. The law allowed the Commissioner to request the teachers’ union and the school committee to negotiate over a set of terms over a 30-day period; however, the law did not require the parties to reach an agreement, nor did it require the Commissioner to accept the agreement. With the complexities of negotiations and the need to collect adequate information, Monteiro admitted that 30 days was not an adequate timeframe.

Replicating Lawrence?

With 1,800 schools and 350 districts, DESE had a big need to figure out how it would manage its own shifting identity from an organization of monitoring to assistance. Alan Ingram described how a remaining challenge was a general fear of the unknown regarding the changing relationships and roles of DESE, central offices, and school boards as well as discerning and creating buy-in from stakeholders: “How do you gauge the will of the school committee, the superintendent, the labor leaders, and the business leaders of the community? How do you gauge their willingness to accept and admit the shortfalls that exist, and their will to want to do something different going forward? It’s got to be part of the equation.” Ingram also noted the urgency of DESE’s work: “The children can’t wait.”

Ever since the Commonwealth began designating districts by levels 1 through 5 in 2010, seven districts had remained consistently as Level 4 or “underperforming” districts. Among the seven districts, there were three districts that were prime candidates for state takeover. The takeover efforts in Lawrence were off to a good start, but many questions remained before Commissioner Chester and his team considered future state-level intervention. The Commissioner and his team took a close look at these three districts.

Takeover Contenders

District A In 2010, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education conducted a District Review of District A. The state’s Center for District and School Accountability highlighted that some of District A’s main problems included lack of accountability from the superintendent, inconsistent use of data, poor teacher evaluation tools, and ineffective professional development. With the district adjusting to the leadership of a new superintendent, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education labeled District A a Level 4 district in March of 2011 under new *Race to the Top* legislation.

The Level 4 distinction made District A subject to state takeover if significant improvement was not made within the following three years. The new superintendent and the senior leadership team worked to develop and implement an Accelerated Plan per Level 4 district requirements. During SY12, the district believed that it had made significant progress in building capacity to improve instruction, increase student performance, and implement further reforms. However, the percentage of students testing proficient on the MCAS in ELA remained low at 34%, and those proficient in Math actually declined by 1 percentage point when compared to the previous year in SY11.

With MCAS scores relatively unchanged between SY11 and SY12, the superintendent announced the intention to retire at the end of SY13 after three years as Superintendent of the District A Public Schools. The School Committee once again had to seek out a new superintendent. While the School Committee searched for new leadership, the district was still responsible for implementing its Accelerated Plan. District officials focused on building instructional leadership capacity, using common assessments and data, and implementing literacy best practices in all classrooms. However, during SY13, MCAS ELA proficiency fell 1 percentage point from SY12, though MCAS Mathematics proficiency did increase by 4 percentage points.

In March of 2013, the School Committee appointed a new superintendent under a three-year contract to take over the role in July of that year. The new superintendent transitioned from a role as the manager of supplemental support services of another Massachusetts urban school district to lead District A as it continued in Year 3 of its Accelerated Plan. Entering into the final year of the Accelerated Plan, the new superintendent hoped to build upon the development of structures and systems in the past two years to improve the instructional core for all students, particularly the students with disabilities and limited English proficiency. The superintendent hoped to avoid takeover by Commissioner Chester after only the first year on the job.

District B In 2009, the mayor of District B asked the Office of School and District Accountability to review the school system following the retirement of the Superintendent after three years of leadership. In response to the mayor's request, Commissioner Chester provided District B with a full evaluation.

DESE's evaluation of District B revealed that the school district continued to have serious systemic problems. The school system had made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in the aggregate only once from 2003 to 2008 and was in corrective action for both English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics at the time of review. During SY08, the MCAS ELA proficiency rate was 22 percentage points below the state average. The Math proficiency rate was 24 percentage points below the state average. The state also found unclear delineation between the roles of the superintendent and School Committee, weak teacher and staff evaluations, grant mismanagement, and late payments to vendors and some staff. The issues were serious enough that under normal circumstances, Chester would have recommended that District B be labeled an Underperforming District. However, Chester was impressed by the initiative the mayor took in requesting a review and embracing state assistance and intervention and decided to defer recommending a declaration of underperforming status.

Following the report, the mayor of District B and the new superintendent were tasked with implementing the district's improvement plan with direction from the Office of Accountability and an Accountability Monitor from SY10 to SY13. The strategies for action in the plan emphasized program placement integrity, caregiver involvement, curriculum and instruction, and data driven decision-making across the three student subgroups of English Language Learners, Special Education, and the Aggregate.

SY13 was a rollercoaster year for the new superintendent: MCAS ELA proficiency had increased 3 percentage points and Math proficiency had increased by 1 percentage point from SY10 to SY13. Despite the improvement, District B's MCAS proficiency rates still continued to fall far short of the state averages. In addition, the year saw one school closed, two of the district's longtime underperforming schools were removed from their Level 4 designations while another school was put on the state's underperforming Level 4 list, and months of work put into creating a new school option voted down by the School Committee.

Looking at the past decade, Commissioner Chester was pressed whether to accept the small gains District B had made over the last three years or to finally recommend state takeover.

District C When the Center for School and District Accountability of DESE conducted a District Plan for School Intervention (DPSI) Review of District C in SY09, the district was in transition. The superintendent had retired in June SY08. Of the four assistant superintendents, three were new in SY09. The new superintendent was the first person of color and first individual hired from outside the district in 34 years to be District C Superintendent.

In the year prior to the new superintendent's appointment, the District C Public Schools did not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in English language arts (ELA). With a focus on improvement, during the first six months, the new superintendent created a strategic plan to serve as the primary operating document for the District C Public Schools. However, during their DPSI review, DESE found that there was no explicit alignment between the strategic plan, the DPSI, and school-based improvement initiatives. The deficit resulted in a lack of clear expectations to hold individuals accountable for performance, nor was a system in place to measure the impact of initiatives.

By SY10, the District C public schools had increased their ELA proficiency to 44% and Math proficiency to 39%. However, District C's improvements were undercut when the new superintendent resigned abruptly in April 2010 and told the District C School Committee the intent to not seek a contract renewal after the contract expired in June 2011.

The district's Assistant Superintendent for Accountability and Special Programs took up the mantle as the next superintendent. One year into the superintendency, DESE conducted another district review of District C. During this review, DESE designated District C a Level 4 district because one of its elementary schools had been designated as a Level 4 school. Although the SY10 MCAS ELA and Math proficiency rates for the district had improved, they were still among the lowest of all districts in the state. The District C Public Schools also struggled with student attendance, discipline, graduation, and retention with rates among the poorest in the state. As a result, DESE reviewers were highly critical of the district's leadership and governance, professional development, student support, and financial management. The designation sparked controversy in District C as the mayor did not believe DESE's expectations for the district were financially reasonable.

As with the previous superintendent, the most recent superintendent retired from the district one year after a DESE district review and personal conflicts with the School Committee in May of 2012. The District C mayor appointed the former leader of a regional vocational technical high school to serve as acting superintendent. In the midst of changing leadership, in SY12 MCAS ELA proficiency increased 1 percentage point and Math proficiency fell by 2 percentage points from the previous year.

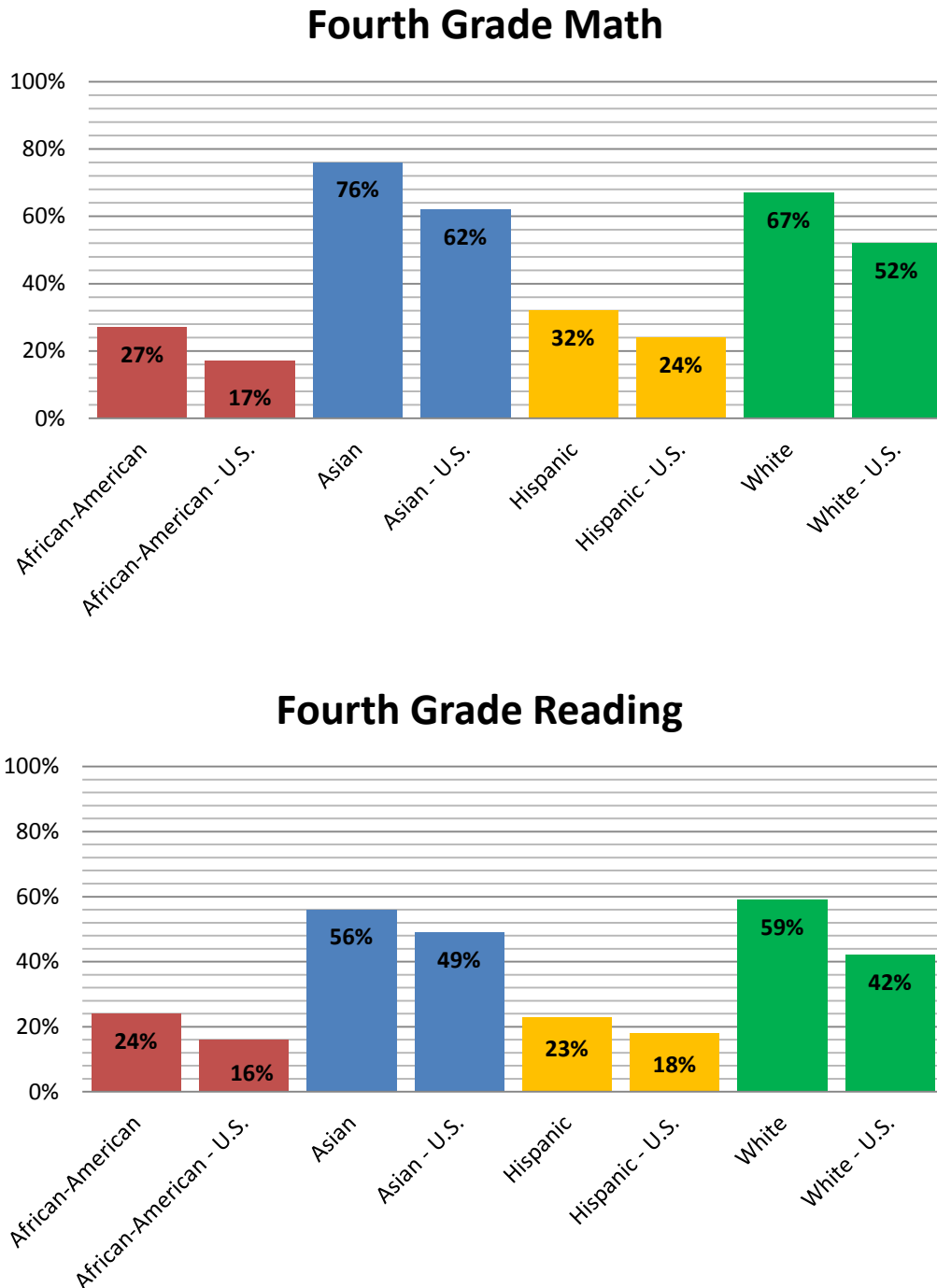
After months of searching, the District C Public Schools appointed a new superintendent from a nearby Massachusetts school district who had a track record of success to be the new superintendent as of July 2013. Challenges for the new superintendent included raising the achievement of a long struggling district with SY13 ELA proficiency of 44% and Math proficiency of 37%. However, DESE was supportive of the new superintendent and believed that the Accelerated Improvement Plan the district had put together for District C in compliance with Level 4 designation would provide a path toward systemic change and improved student outcomes. In the coming months, Commissioner Chester would have to determine whether District C was indeed better on its own or if DESE should step in.

(See **Exhibit 10** for a comparison of data from District A, District B, District C, and Lawrence).

Conclusion

Back at DESE, Commissioner Chester looked out the window as the evening sun was setting over the town center of Malden, Massachusetts. After reviewing the three potential takeover candidates, he considered again the role of the state in serving as a force for change as it pursued its mission for equity and excellence. The takeover efforts were off to a good start in Lawrence, but many questions remained. How long would the receivership last in Lawrence, and when was it appropriate for the state to return control back to the district? How could the state ensure long-term success? Regardless of the future path for Lawrence, was it time to tackle yet another takeover? Meanwhile, he knew that his team was waiting for his direction. As the sun completely set and it became dark outside, Chester returned to preparing his notes for the next day and the new direction he and his team would take.

Exhibit 1 Massachusetts student performance data on 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)



Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, "2011 NAEP Reading and Mathematics: Summary of State Results," November 2011, Massachusetts Department of Education Web site, <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/naep/results/11ReadingMath.pdf>, accessed March 2015.

Exhibit 2 Commissioner Mitchell Chester - Selected background

- Commissioner, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2008 - present
- Senior Associate State Superintendent for Policy and Accountability for the Ohio Public Schools, 2001–2006
- Executive Director of Accountability and Assessment for the Philadelphia Public Schools, 1997–2001
- Ph.D. and M.A., Harvard University; M.A., the University of Connecticut; B.S., the University of Connecticut

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education, "Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Members," March 2015, Massachusetts Department of Education website, <http://www.doe.mass.edu/boe/edboard.html>, accessed May 2015; Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education, "Gov. Patrick Swears in Mitchell Chester as Commissioner of Education," March 2008, Massachusetts Department of Education website, <http://www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.aspx?id=4091>, accessed May 2015; National Assessment Governing Board, "Honorable Mitchell Chester," NAGB website, http://www.nagb.org/who-we-are/members/bios/bio_chester.html, accessed May 2015.

Exhibit 3a District Standards and Indicators



Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

District Standards and Indicators

Leadership and Governance

1. Focused School Committee Governance
2. Effective District and School Leadership
3. District and School Improvement Planning
4. Educationally Sound Budget Development
5. Effective District Systems for School Support and Intervention

Curriculum and Instruction

1. Aligned, Consistently Delivered, and Continuously Improving Curriculum
2. Strong Instructional Leadership and Effective Instruction
3. Sufficient Instructional Time

Assessment

1. Data Collection and Dissemination
2. Data-Based Decision-Making
3. Student Assessment

Human Resources and Professional Development

1. Staff Recruitment, Selection, Assignment
2. Supervision and Evaluation
3. Professional Development

Student Support

1. Academic Support
2. Access and Equity
3. Educational Continuity and Student Participation
4. Services and Partnerships to Support Learning
5. Safety

Financial and Asset Management

1. Comprehensive and Transparent Budget Process
2. Adequate Budget
3. Financial Tracking, Forecasting, Controls, and Audits
4. Cost-Effective Resource Management
5. Capital Planning and Facility Maintenance

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, "2010-2013 District Standards and Indicators," February 15, 2011, Massachusetts Department of Education Web site, <http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/review/district/StandardsIndicators.pdf>, accessed March 2013.

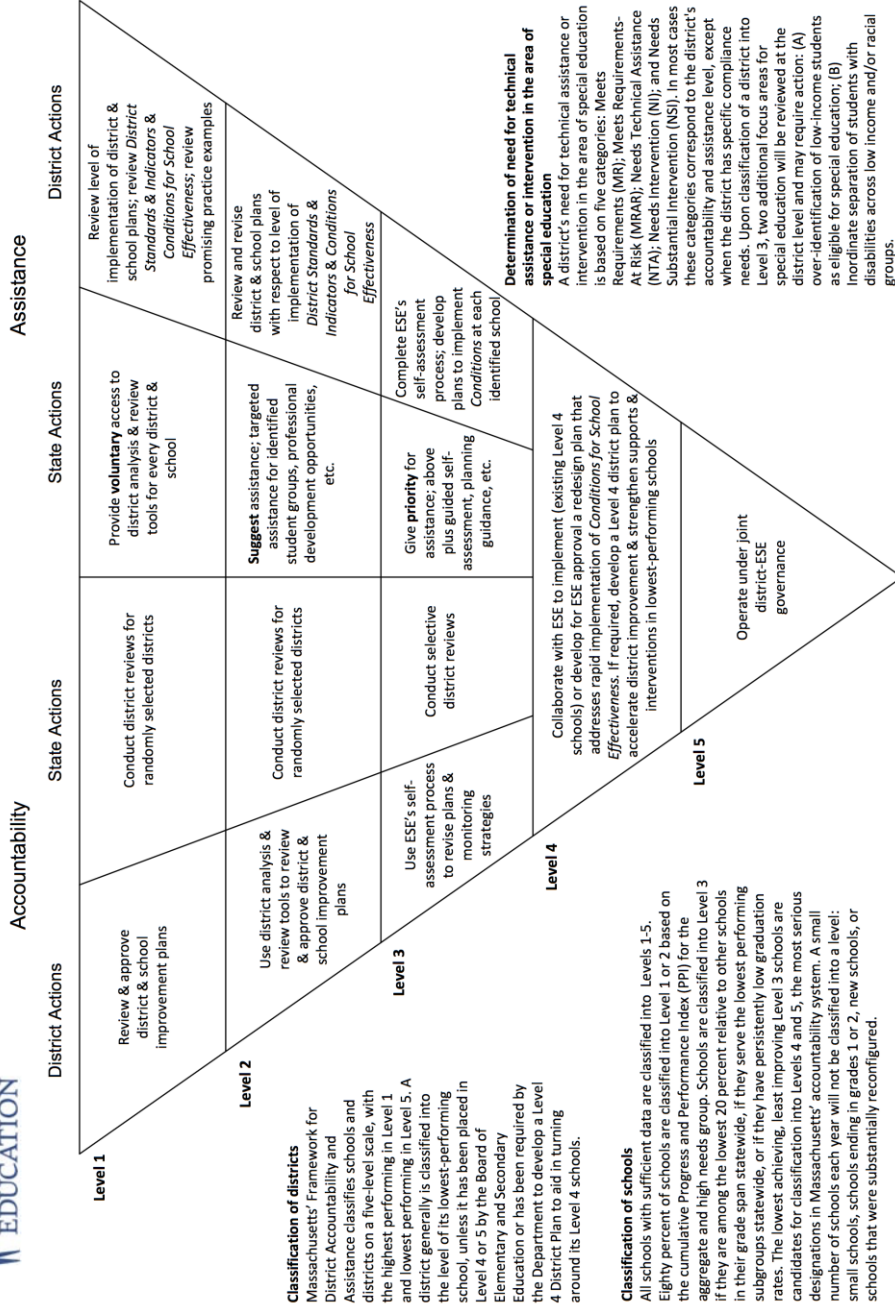
Exhibit 3b Framework for District Accountability and Assistance

For a closer look: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/framework/framework.pdf>



Framework for District Accountability and Assistance

August 2012



Classification of districts

Massachusetts' Framework for District Accountability and Assistance classifies schools and districts on a five-level scale, with the highest performing in Level 1 and lowest performing in Level 5. A district generally is classified into the level or its lowest-performing school, unless it has been placed in Level 4 or 5 by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education or has been required by the Department to develop a Level 4 District Plan to aid in turning around its Level 4 schools.

Classification of schools

All schools with sufficient data are classified into Levels 1-5. Eighty percent of schools are classified into Level 1 or 2 based on the cumulative Progress and Performance Index (PPI) for the aggregate and high needs group. Schools are classified into Level 3 if they are among the lowest 20 percent relative to other schools in their grade span statewide, if they serve the lowest performing subgroups statewide, or if they have persistently low graduation rates. The lowest achieving, least improving Level 3 schools are candidates for classification into Levels 4 and 5, the most serious designations in Massachusetts' accountability system. A small number of schools each year will not be classified into a level: small schools, schools ending in grades 1 or 2, new schools, or schools that were substantially reconfigured.

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, "Framework for District Accountability and Assistance," August 2012, Massachusetts Department of Education Web site, <http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/framework/framework.pdf>, accessed March 2013.

Exhibit 4 District Review Protocol Document

Activities During District and School Visits

Activities	Description
Orientation meeting	The review team will have a chance to introduce themselves and begin the ongoing communication with the district that will characterize the review's joint process.
Document review	The team will review materials that the district provides on-site.
Interviews with district leaders	Superintendent, assistant superintendent(s), curriculum supervisors at the district and department levels, chief financial officer, business manager, HR director, special education director, Title I director
School committee interview	All committee members should be invited. The review team will try to accommodate the schedule for the committee members who attend. Committee members will be interviewed in sub quorum groups.
Interview with municipal leaders	The mayor(s) or town manager(s) of the school district community or communities. Members of the finance committee(s) may also be invited.
Interviews with teacher union leadership	The president should be invited. The president may delegate this responsibility and may choose to include others.
Interviews with school leaders	School leaders include the principals and may also include key assistants (e.g., assistant principals, curriculum director, and/or lead teachers).
Teacher focus group	Groups of teachers, typically representing all grade levels, make up focus groups. All teachers should be invited. The focus group(s) will be scheduled so that invited teachers may attend after school hours.
School council/parent focus group	School Council members and representatives of parent groups are invited.
Classroom visits	Classroom visits will be conducted. Classroom visits are designed to understand instructional practices and are not evaluations of individual teachers. More information is provided in Appendix C.
Teacher team meetings	The team may observe regularly scheduled teacher team meetings. Team members will ask questions only if invited to do so.
Emerging themes meeting	The review team coordinator will share with the district what the team has learned on site and what the team is still sorting out.

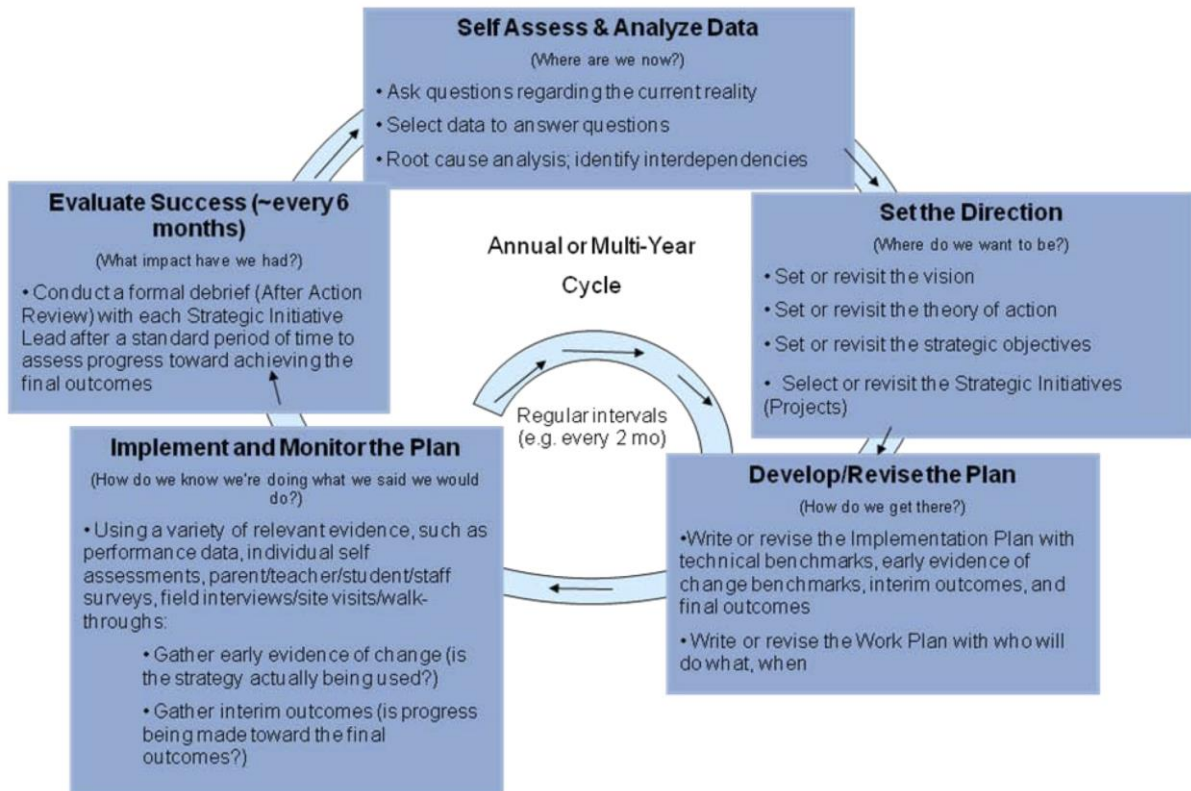
Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, "2010-2013 District Standards and Indicators," September 2014, Massachusetts Department of Education Web site, <http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/review/district/2015dr-protocol.pdf>, accessed March 2015.

Exhibit 5a Massachusetts Department of Education Office of District and School Turnaround Theory of Action

IF ODST supports districts to use a continuous cycle of improvement to turn around their lowest performing schools,

THEN districts will strengthen the district systems of support necessary to continuously improve district and school performance.

A Continuous Cycle of Improvement



Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, "Office of District and School Turnaround: Theory of Action," Massachusetts Department of Education Web site, <http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/review/district/2015dr-protocol.pdf>, accessed March 2015.

Exhibit 5b Massachusetts Department of Education Office Approach to Differentiated Accountability

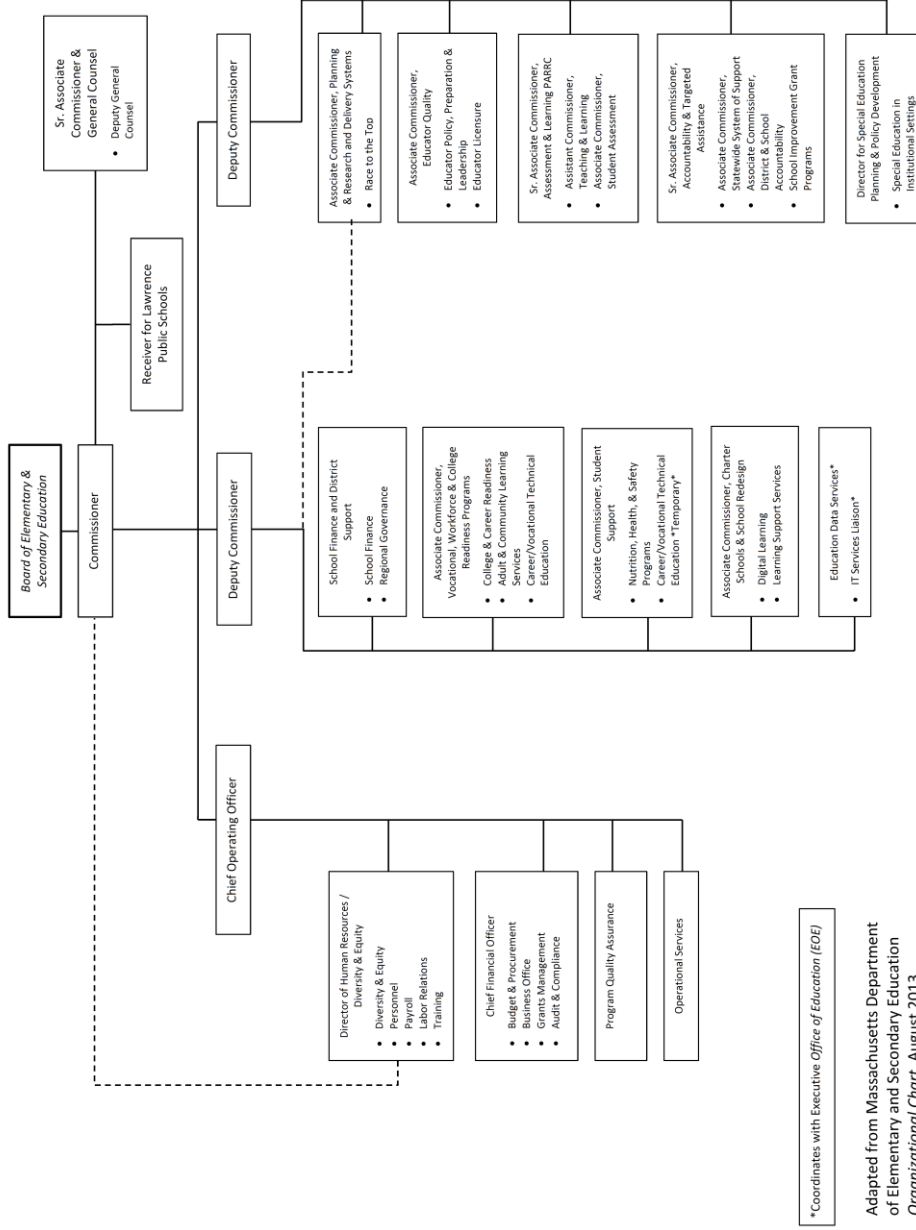
Differentiated Accountability

The amount of flexibility and autonomy each district receives is determined by its classification on the state accountability system.

- **Level 1 districts** are granted considerable autonomy and flexibility and have access to the online tools and resources available to all districts.
- **Level 2 districts** are granted some autonomy but must perform an annual needs assessment based on the state's Conditions for School Effectiveness to implement and/or improve conditions in their schools that are not effectively supporting the needs of all students.
- **Level 3 districts** receive priority assistance from the regional District and School Assistance Center (DSAC) and engage with the DSAC in both the needs assessment process and in the identification of interventions.
- **Level 4 districts** must rapidly implement all 11 Conditions for School Effectiveness in their Level 4 schools, are assigned a liaison from ESE to engage their leadership team in system-level analysis of district support activities, and are closely monitored for efficacy and impact.
- If a school is placed in **Level 5**, the most serious designation on ESE's framework, ESE will engage a receiver to oversee management of the school.

Source: Adapted from Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, "Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, & Support," November 25, 2011, Massachusetts Department of Education Web site, <http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/sss/turnaround/DRAS.pdf>, accessed March 2015.

Exhibit 6 Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Organization Chart



* Coordinates with Executive Office of Education (EOE)

Adapted from Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Organizational Chart, August 2013

Source: From Massachusetts Department of Education documents.

Exhibit 7 Selected Demographics of Lawrence Public Schools

Total Enrollment Oct 2010	Same Students Enrolled Oct to Mar 2011	New Students Enrolled Oct to Mar 2011	Enrolled in Same School Previous Year	Enrolled in LPS Previous Year	Enrolled less than one year in LPS	Enrolled past 6 years in LPS
12,784	11,869 (92%)	811	8,274 (64%)	2,350 (18%)	2,056 (16%)	5,684 (44%)

Selected Population	Race/Ethnicity		Gender		
English Language Learners	24%	African American / Black	2%	Female	47%
Special Education	20%	Asian	2%	Male	53%
First Language Not English	77%	Hispanic / Latino	90%		
Low-Income	87%	White	6%		

Source: Adapted from Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, "Lawrence Public Schools Turnaround Plan," May 30, 2012, Massachusetts Department of Education Web site, <http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/sss/turnaround/level5/districts/LawrencePlan.pdf>, accessed March 2015.

Exhibit 8 LPS 2011 MCAS Results / Academic Summary

2011 MASSACHUSETTS COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM (MCAS)										
Grade	# of Students	ELA/Reading				Mathematics				
		SGP	W/F	NI	A/P	# of Students	SGP	W/F	NI	A/P
03	957	N/A	17%	47%	36%	957	N/A	20%	36%	45%
04	957	51.0	23%	43%	35%	956	43.0	21%	49%	30%
05	942	36.0	22%	42%	37%	949	29.0	39%	32%	30%
06	957	42.0	23%	41%	36%	957	35.0	43%	32%	25%
07	941	51.0	15%	39%	47%	949	43.0	51%	30%	19%
08	990	46.0	20%	30%	50%	992	53.0	54%	26%	21%
10	724	37.0	14%	37%	48%	714	38.0	32%	37%	31%

SGP = Median Student Growth Percentile (Measure of how much student performance changed relative to other students statewide with similar scores in past years, ranging from 1 to 99, where higher numbers represent higher growth and lower numbers represent lower growth. For example: A student with a growth percentile in 5th grade mathematics grew as much or more than 90 percent of her academic peers [students with similar score histories] from the 4th grade math MCAS to the 5th grade math MCAS. Only 10% of her academic peers grew more in math than she did), **W/F** = Warning/Failing, **NI** = Needs Improvement, **A/P** = Proficient or Higher (Advanced)

Source: From the Lawrence Public Schools; Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education, "MCAS Student Growth Percentiles: Interpretive Guide," March 2011.

Exhibit 9 LPS 2014 MCAS Results / Academic Summary

2014 MASSACHUSETTS COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM (MCAS)										
Grade	# of Students	ELA/Reading				Mathematics				
		SGP	W/F	NI	A/P	# of Students	SGP	W/F	NI	A/P
03	1062	N/A	24%	47%	29%	1071	N/A	16%	27%	58%
04	1071	57.0	27%	39%	34%	1072	49.0	19%	39%	42%
05	977	47.0	23%	38%	39%	978	43.0	27%	35%	38%
06	1013	53.0	21%	37%	42%	1014	57.0	29%	32%	40%
07	1012	63.0	18%	30%	52%	1020	66.0	43%	25%	33%
08	1031	54.0	18%	25%	57%	1036	77.0	29%	35%	36%
10	767	37.5	14%	23%	63%	773	47.0	26%	31%	44%

SGP = Median Student Growth Percentile, **W/F** = Warning/Failing, **NI** = Needs Improvement, **A/P** = Proficient or Higher (Advanced)

Source: From the Lawrence Public Schools.

Exhibit 10 Data comparison of Districts A, B, and C, Lawrence, and Massachusetts

	SY12-13					State
	District A	District B	District C	Lawrence*		
City Population	40,000	89,000	95,000	77,300		6,692,824
# of Students	5,573	10,319	12,744	12,784		955,739
# of Schools	11	16	26	28		1,861
African American/Black	3%	7%	12%	2%		9%
Asian	1%	4%	1%	2%		6%
Hispanic/ Latino	79%	21%	33%	90%		17%
Native American	n/a	0%	1%	n/a		0%
White	17%	61%	48%	6%		65%
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	n/a	0%	0%	n/a		0%
Multiracial	1%	6%	6%	0%		3%
Low Income	85%	78%	76%	87%		37%
Students With Disabilities	25%	20%	23%	20%		17%
ELL	29%	9%	6%	24%		8%
Proficient or Higher MCAS 2013						
ELA	34%	47%	44%	41%		69%
Math	30%	37%	36%	28%		61%
Science	18%	31%	25%	13%		53%
Graduation rates (2)	54%	73%	59%	52%		85%
Total expenditure per pupil 2012	\$15,700	\$13,844	\$12,856	\$13,272		\$13,636
Total expenditure	\$105,152,902	\$149,711,201	170,499,099	\$186,742,104		\$13,350,801,439

Other Notes

City A has a population of about 40,000, but has many of the same characteristics as inner city urban areas.

City B has a population of 89,000 and faces many of the challenges of an urban environment including high rates of unemployment and poverty

City C is the sixth-largest city in Massachusetts and deals with many of the challenges of a low-income urban environment.

Source: *SY10-11.

(1) Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. 2011 and 2013 Report Cards -, accessed January 2014.

(2) http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/state_report/gradrates.aspx - 2011 and 2013 Graduation Rate Reports (DISTRICT) for All Students 4-Year Graduation Rate.

Endnotes

¹ Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), “2013 Massachusetts State Report Card,” Massachusetts DESE Web site, <http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/staterc/>, accessed June 2014.

² National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), “NAEP Overview,” NCES Web site, <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/>, accessed February 2014.

³ Massachusetts DESE, “Massachusetts 4th and 8th Graders Lead the Nation in Reading and Mathematics Performance for the Fifth Consecutive Time,” Massachusetts DESE Web site, <http://www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.aspx?id=7846>, accessed June 2014.

⁴ Massachusetts DESE, “Cohort 2013 Four-Year Graduation Rates – State Results,” Massachusetts DESE Web site, <http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/reports/gradrates/2013-4yr.pdf>, accessed June 2014.

⁵ Asma Khalid, “Mass. Students Among Top-Performing In Global Exam,” 90.0 WBUR Web site, December 3, 2013, <http://www.wbur.org/2013/12/03/massachusetts-pisa-test-results>, accessed February 2014.

⁶ This section draws heavily from the following: Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 15, Section 1E, The Commonwealth of Massachusetts General Court Web site, <http://www.mass.gov/courts/case-legal-res/law-lib/laws-by-subj/about/citations.html>, accessed March 2015.

⁷ According to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, a “charter school” is defined as the following: “Charter schools are public schools that are given the freedom to organize their activities around a core mission, curriculum, or teaching method and set their own budgets as well as manage their own staff. In return for this freedom, a charter school must demonstrate positive results within five years or lose its charter.” From Massachusetts DESE, “Massachusetts Charter Schools,” Massachusetts DESE Web site, <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/new/?section=all>, accessed August 2014.

⁸ Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 69, Section 1J, The Commonwealth of Massachusetts General Court Web site, <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter69/Section1j>, accessed August 2014.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ MCAS measurements include “trends in absolute achievement, student growth, graduation and dropout rates, and improvement trends.” From Massachusetts Department of Education, “Level 5 District – Frequently Asked Questions,” Massachusetts Department of Education Web site, <http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/sss/turnaround/level5/districts/faq.html>, accessed March 2015.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 69, Section 1K, The Commonwealth of Massachusetts General Court Web site, <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter69/Section1k>, accessed August 2014.

¹⁴ This section draws heavily from the following: City of Lawrence Massachusetts, “The City of Lawrence,” The City of Lawrence Massachusetts Web site, <http://www.cityoflawrence.com/about-the-city.aspx>, accessed February 2015.

¹⁵ This section draws from the Massachusetts AFL-CIO website, <http://www.massafclcio.org/1912-bread-and-roses-strike>.

¹⁶ US Census Bureau, “Lawrence (city), Massachusetts,” US Census Bureau Web site, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/25/2534550.html>, accessed February 2014.

¹⁷ This section draws heavily on data from the following: The Lawrence Public Schools, “2010-2011 Annual School Report Card,” The Lawrence Public Schools Web site, <https://lawrence.k12.ma.us/files/Report%20Cards/2011%20ASR%20-%20District%20Report.pdf>, accessed August 2014.

¹⁸ This section draws from the following: Massachusetts DESE, “Statement by Commissioner of Education Robert V. Antonucci on the Lawrence Public Schools,” Massachusetts DESE Web site, <https://www.doemass.org/boe/news/rva61697.html>, accessed February 2014.

¹⁹ This section draws from the following: “School board readies for battle with state,” *Associated Press Newswires*, July 2, 1997, <http://global.factiva.com>, accessed March 2015.

²⁰ This section draws from the following: Peter Schworm, "Superintendent fails to make the grade; Lawrence's Laboy on leave after tenure of tumult," *The Boston Globe*, June 26, 2009: B1, <http://global.factiva.com>, accessed March 2015.

²¹ Massachusetts DESE, "Education Commissioner Chester Appoints Jeffrey C. Riley as Receiver for the Lawrence Public Schools," Massachusetts DESE Web site, <http://www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.aspx?id=6628>

²² Massachusetts DESE, "Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Declares Lawrence Public Schools as 'Chronically Underperforming'," Massachusetts DESE Web site, <http://www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.aspx?id=6537>, accessed February 2014.

²³ Monica Brady-Myerov, "Lawrence Public Schools Face Possible State Takeover," 90.9 WBUR Web site, November 29, 2011, <http://www.wbur.org/2011/11/29/lawrence-schools-takeover>, accessed February 2014.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Peter Schworm and John M. Guilfoil, "Lawrence schools taken over by state," *The Boston Globe*, November 29, 2011, <http://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2011/11/29/state-board-votes-take-over-lawrence-public-schools/gjTdLSng9AhXwd4cnAVNrj/story.html>, accessed June 2014.

²⁷ Massachusetts DESE, "Education Commissioner Chester Appoints Jeffrey C. Riley as Receiver for the Lawrence Public Schools," Massachusetts DESE Web site, <http://www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.aspx?id=6628>, accessed June 2014.

²⁸ Peter Schworm, "Lawrence teachers file labor complaint against state receiver," *The Boston Globe*, April 13, 2013, <http://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2013/04/22/lawrence-teachers-file-labor-complaint-against-state-receiver/JtA0G9w7gxJCLswk4b8goJ/story.html>, accessed February 2014.