

Report to the Legislature: Intervention and Targeted Assistance (2014-2015)

Chapter 46 of the Acts of 2015 Line Item 7061-9408 and G.L. c.69, §1J (z)
June 2016



This document was prepared by the
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Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.
Commissioner

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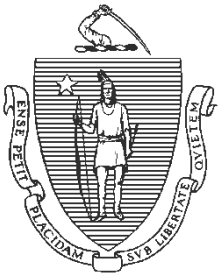
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Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.
Commissioner

March 2016

Dear Members of the General Court:

I am pleased to present a progress report with FY2015 data on the ongoing work of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (“the Department”) to offer targeted assistance to districts and schools across the Commonwealth with the highest need, pursuant to Chapter 46 of the Acts of 2015, line item 7061-9408, and Massachusetts General Law Chapter 69 section 1J, which respectively direct the Department to provide:

“For targeted intervention to schools and districts at risk of or determined to be underperforming under sections 1J and 1K of chapter 69 of the General Laws, schools and districts which have been placed in the accountability status of identified for improvement, corrective action or restructuring pursuant to departmental regulations...”

and to issue a report to the legislature:

“describing and analyzing all intervention and targeted assistance efforts funded by this item...”

This work has been steadily progressing since 2010, when it began under *An Act Relative to the Achievement Gap*,¹ legislation which has provided new flexibilities and authorities to rapidly turn around our state’s lowest performing schools. The Department has continually used resources and this legal framework to supply dedicated accountability and assistance to the state’s highest need schools and districts. This report conveys the highlights on the status of this work during the 2014-2015 school year for schools and districts that are designated according to the state’s accountability system as performing in the lowest 20 percent of schools (Level 3), underperforming (Level 4), and chronically underperforming (Level 5).

To accomplish its key turnaround work, the Department strategically augments, to the extent possible, the state targeted assistance funds with available federal resources to support school improvement, including School Redesign Grants (SRG), *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* Title I Grants, and School Improvement Grants (SIG). Together these funds have been vital

¹ Massachusetts' state system thoroughly reviews and places schools and districts on a five-level scale, ranking the highest performing in Level 1 and lowest performing in [Level 5](#). This approach is detailed in the Department’s [2013 report on intervention and targeted assistance](#), as well as on the Department’s [website](#).

to financing innovative, evidence-based strategies and to continuing and expanding effective practices to build the capacity for school and district turnaround.

During 2014 and 2015, funds were used to provide an array of direct financial and professional development support to districts and schools across the spectrum of Levels 3, 4, and 5 to meet significant challenges in closing achievement gaps, with a particular emphasis on meeting the needs of English language learners and students with disabilities. As expectations rise to meet more rigorous standards, Level 3, 4, and 5 districts and schools depend on support efforts, networking, and targeted activities to expand their knowledge of effective practices to meet the growing and more challenging demands their students face. Targeted Intervention and Assistance funds continue to be allocated to intervene in the state's lowest performing schools and to help prevent decline in student performance in other very low-performing schools. Using these funds, we have seen steady improvements across the Commonwealth in these lowest performing schools continue.

This report summarizes and provides examples of the funds' uses in FY2015 and illustrates the impact of these resources on the students and educators in the served districts. It is presented in the context of annual legislative reporting on the use of these funds by: 1) describing systems the Department uses to support low performing schools, 2) outlining the impact made by that assistance using these and other resources on the state's lowest performing schools, and 3) highlighting the range of uses these funds have supported that have helped improve school and district performance. Following last year's extensive report, this year's report presents an update on the ongoing work at the Department to provide targeted assistance to schools and districts with the highest need.²

Sincerely,

Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

² The Legislative Report on Targeted Assistance Funds FY14 can be found at:
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/reports/category.aspx?section=legislative&yr=2015>.

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Introduction

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education respectfully submits this *Report to the Legislature: Intervention and Targeted Assistance* pursuant to Chapter 46 of the Acts of 2015, line item 7061-9408:

“For targeted intervention to schools and districts at risk of or determined to be underperforming under sections 1J and 1K of chapter 69 of the General Laws, schools and districts which have been placed in the accountability status of identified for improvement, corrective action or restructuring pursuant to departmental regulations, or which have been designated commonwealth priority schools or commonwealth pilot schools pursuant to said regulations; provided, that no funds shall be expended in any school or district that fails to file a comprehensive district plan pursuant to section 1I of said chapter 69; provided further, that the department shall only approve reform plans with proven, replicable results in improving student performance; provided further, that in carrying out this item, the department may contract with school support specialists, turnaround partners and such other external assistance as is needed in the expert opinion of the commissioner to successfully turn around failing school and district performance; provided further, that no funds shall be expended on targeted intervention unless the department shall have approved, as part of the comprehensive district improvement plan, a professional development plan which addresses the needs of the district as determined by the department; provided further, that eligible professional development activities for the purposes of this item shall include, but not be limited to: professional development among teachers of the same grade levels and teachers of the same subject matter across grade levels, professional development focused on improving the teacher’s content knowledge in the field or subject area in which the teacher is practicing, professional development which provides teachers with research based strategies for increasing student success, professional development teaching the principles of data driven instruction, and funding which helps provide common planning time for teachers within a school and within the school district; provided further, that funds may be expended for the purchase of instructional materials pursuant to section 57 of chapter 15 of the General Laws; provided further, that no funds shall be expended on instructional materials except where the purchase of such materials is part of a comprehensive plan to align the school or district curriculum with the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks; provided further, that preference in distributing funds shall be made for proposals which coordinate reform efforts within all schools of a district in order to prevent conflicts between multiple reforms and interventions among the schools; provided further, that the department shall issue a report not later than January 7, 2016 describing and analyzing all intervention and targeted assistance efforts funded by this item; provided further, that the report shall be provided to the secretary of administration and finance, the senate president, the speaker of the house, the chairs of the house and senate ways and means committees, and the house and senate chairs of the joint committee on education; provided further, that no funds shall be expended on recurring school or school district expenditures unless the department and school district have developed a long-term plan to fund such expenditures from the district’s operational budget; provided further, that for the purpose of this item, appropriated funds may be expended for programs or activities during the summer months; provided further, that any funds distributed from this item to a city, town or regional school district shall be

deposited with the treasurer of such city, town or regional school district and held in a separate account and shall be expended by the school committee of such city, town or regional school district without further appropriation, notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary; provided further, the department shall give priority to programs that have the capacity to serve not less than 25 per cent of a district's middle school population and make available documentation of a minimum of \$1 in private sector, local or federal funds for every \$1 in state funds; provided further, that \$250,000 shall be expended for the continuation of the parent engagement program under item 7061-9408 of section 2 of chapter 182 of the acts of 2008; provided further, that \$200,000 shall be expended for an innovative pilot program to address the early literacy proficiency gap and to increase access to early education in the town of Milton; and provided further, that not less than \$60,000 shall be expended for a supplemental science program for the public schools in the town of Randolph..."

and Massachusetts General Law Chapter 69 Section 1J (z):

"The commissioner shall report annually to the joint committee on education, the house and senate committees on ways and means, the speaker of the house of representatives and the senate president on the implementation and fiscal impact of this section and section 1K. The report shall include, but not be limited to, a list of all schools currently designated as underperforming or chronically underperforming, a list of all districts currently designated as chronically underperforming, the plans and timetable for returning the schools and districts to the local school committee and strategies used in each of the schools and districts to maximize the rapid academic achievement of students..."

Overview of Targeted Assistance to High Needs Districts and Schools

Since 2010, under *An Act Relative to the Achievement Gap* ("the Act"), and in accordance with regulations adopted by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education ("the Department") has dedicated targeted assistance funds to intervene and to assist Level 3, 4, and 5 districts and schools to enhance their capacity to use the most current and effective instructional and supportive practices to increase opportunities for all students. While considerable resources and efforts are dedicated to providing sufficient supports to prevent declines in schools' performance and accountability status, as a last resort and in the best interest of students, the Act's legal authorities have allowed the state to intervene in schools and districts and place them in state receivership when all other avenues to implement ambitious and accelerated reforms have been exhausted.

Targeted assistance, supported by resources in line item 7061-9408 to high-need districts and schools, is overseen by the Department primarily through the Center for Accountability, Partnerships and Targeted Assistance's Statewide System of Support. The Department's Statewide System of Support prioritizes assistance to those districts in Levels 3, 4, and 5 within the *Framework for District Accountability and Assistance* (see Appendix I), per its legal obligation to serve those with highest need.

This system is consistent with the federal *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA), which requires establishment of a *Statewide System of Support* to prioritize financial supports

and targeted assistance to help schools that are not meeting performance goals to raise student achievement, and which requires classification of schools based on their performance.

The Department's research has shown that focusing on a small constellation of mutually reinforcing and carefully executed research based practices is the most effective way for schools and districts to improve student performance. Thus, the Department's assistance is designed to support districts' and schools' implementation of the Conditions for School Effectiveness and the District Standards and Indicators as articulated in regulations ([603 CMR 2.03](#)). Efforts of team members in the Statewide System of Support and resources from Targeted Assistance to Schools and Districts (state budget line 7061-9408) are centered on district and school capacity building initiatives, which are summarized in this report.

In addition, assistance is designed to support Level 3, 4, and 5 districts and schools in their implementation and integration of new systems, tools, and resources that form the cornerstone of the Department's reform agenda. Such systems, tools and resources include the 2011 Curriculum Frameworks, Educator Effectiveness system, and Edwin Analytics data.

As noted in previous reports to the Legislature which describe interventions and targeted assistance efforts funded by this line item, the Department continues to use two inter-related but separate structures for providing assistance. The **Office of District and School Turnaround ("ODST")** addresses the particular needs and builds on the existing strengths of the state's largest urban districts, while the **Office for the Regional System of Support ("RSS")** customizes supports to fit the differing needs of smaller and medium sized districts. These two structures utilize the talents of a mix of experienced educators, consultants, and high-quality partners with extensive and diverse experiences in education to provide district and school assistance services explained below. They supply high quality and credible support with the insight, coaching, and resources essential for district and school improvement. **In 2014-2015, these offices offered assistance affecting a combined total of 404,133 students, or 42 percent of the state's total enrollment (955,844) across 19 percent of the Commonwealth's schools.** Approximately 42 percent of these students were economically disadvantaged, 16 percent were English language learners, and 19 percent were students with disabilities. These offices deliver supports using the following approaches:

- The ODST delivery system is designed to build upon the considerable content and leadership infrastructure of the large *Commissioner's Districts*, which include Boston, Brockton, Fall River, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lowell, Lynn, New Bedford, Springfield and Worcester. **ODST served a total of 193,616 students in these districts in 2014-2015 (approximately 20 percent of the state's student enrollment).** Approximately 53 percent of these students were economically disadvantaged, 24 percent were English language learners, and 19 percent were students with disabilities. The Department's assistance to these districts focuses resources and support on refining systems, improving communication and schools' access to services, while strengthening the link between the district central office and school sites. This enhances the operation of existing district systems so that districts will be well positioned to support the needs of their lowest performing schools. Assistance is provided by full time liaisons and program coordinators from the ODST who also coordinate assistance and other resources from

other offices at the Department. Services are based on needs identified through careful examination of data and focused by districts' self-assessments, improvement plans, and direct observations conducted by these skilled liaisons. Additional assistance is provided by external turnaround partners and consultants, vetted by the Department, with documented records of accomplishment at improving outcomes for high-needs and urban students in a variety of areas essential to school and district turnaround and improvement.

In addition, the ODST has expanded its responsibilities to include direct support and resource development for Level 5 schools and districts. Given the Department's increased role and authorities with chronically underperforming schools and districts, the ODST has focused on providing a range of assistance activities to support Level 5 school and district Receivers in developing and implementing Turnaround Plans as well as monitoring the impact of these plans.

- The RSS focuses support on small and medium-sized districts primarily in Levels 3 and 4. Support is delivered through **District and School Assistance Centers** ("DSACs") organized into six regions across the state. The DSACs serve a range of struggling districts that often lack sufficient infrastructure and human resources to deliver the complex array of supports necessary to further their educational improvement efforts. To respond to these needs, DSACs are staffed by a team of experts, including former superintendents (known as Regional Assistance Directors) and principals (known as Support Facilitators), who provide experienced leadership and guidance for targeted assistance efforts to schools and districts. Specialists in mathematics, literacy, data use, and vocational technical education also provide assistance and support. All of these Department representatives, who operate as an integrated regional assistance team, offer districts a focused menu of assistance, customizing that assistance to meet districts' specific needs. In FY2015, the **DSACs offered services to 58 districts serving 210,517 students or 22 percent of the Commonwealth's public school student population.** Approximately 32 percent of these students were economically disadvantaged, 8 percent were English language learners, and 19 percent were students with disabilities.

Both the ODST and the DSAC regional teams work in partnership with districts, providing customized assistance that draws on research based resources and strategies and responds to a variety of districts requests and contexts.³ They analyze data from a variety of sources, collaborate with district and school leaders to identify and focus on high leverage needs, and develop annual plans to implement assistance strategies that will best promote and stimulate rapid and sustained student performance gains.

Summary of Impact and Changes in Accountability Status

Overall, in FY2015, the Department continues to see positive trends in Level 3, 4 and 5 schools and districts using allocated state and federal resources. The following represent the highlights of

³ A list of districts and schools by region and accountability and assistance level can be found at: <http://www.mass.gov/edu/government/departments-and-boards/ese/programs/accountability/reports/school-and-district-reports.html>.

recent implementation of systematic and strategic assistance plans to improve performance and outcomes for students in high needs districts across the state.

Level 5 Schools:

- In October 2013, the Department first designated Level 5 schools that had not made sufficient progress over the terms of their Level 4 designations, assigning receivers or a school superintendent to oversee the implementation of the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education's Turnaround Plans. The four schools designated chronically underperforming (known as Level 5) were: John P. Holland Elementary and Paul A. Dever Elementary in Boston, Morgan Community Elementary in Holyoke, and John Avery Parker Elementary in New Bedford. Under the leadership of the three receivers and one superintendent appointed by the Commissioner, implementation of their school turnaround plans began in July 2014.
- Each Level 5 school provided two to four weeks of summer professional development for staff. All schools developed curriculum guides, defined the use of instructional time, created schedules that protect instructional time, and established additional supports for struggling students. These schools realize the importance of family and community engagement. Therefore, as part of the engagement work, schools frequently communicated and made home visits, hosted family orientation sessions, and created new partnerships with community organizations. Facilities also were updated and reorganized to meet the needs of students and teachers.
- No new Level 5 schools were identified in FY2015, unlike in FY2014. After three years of implementing Turnaround Plans, decisions were made about whether schools from the first and second cohorts of Level 4 schools (those initially identified in 2010 and 2011) would exit or remain in Level 4. For schools in the districts of Boston and Springfield that had not yet made sufficient progress to exit Level 4, district leaders identified the need for new and bold actions to fundamentally revamp these schools' turnaround strategies. These districts chose to establish strong innovative in-district collaborations to dramatically change educational programs for students in schools that remained in Level 4 after three or more years.

Level 5 Districts:

- The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education placed the Lawrence public school district under receivership as a Level 5 district in November 2011 and the Holyoke Public Schools under receivership as of April 2015.⁴

⁴ The Department's announcement that Holyoke Public Schools has been placed under receivership can be viewed at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.aspx?id=17923>.

- In FY2015, the Commissioner renewed Lawrence’s district turnaround plan and the Receiver’s contract for an additional three years. Students in Lawrence continued to make strong gains - evidence that districts serving students from diverse racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds can meet high expectations. Lawrence Public Schools has shown some notable improvements⁵ during its first four years of state receivership. In 2015, the district graduated 750 students – it’s largest graduating class to date. The district also:
 - increased student enrollment by 1,500 students to 14,000;
 - continued to increase the percentage of students achieving at proficient and advanced levels;
 - continued improvements in graduation rates and reduced dropout rates;
 - launched a high school redesign plan, aimed at better preparing all students for success after graduation;
 - opened a new family resource center and online registration platform;
 - formalized a Lawrence Partnership Council with the Lawrence Teachers Union;
 - created 130 new preschool seats with assistance from a federal grant;
 - expanded enrichment programming for students;
 - continued educator leadership initiatives; and
 - achieved particularly strong increases in the Composite Performance Index (CPI), an index that indicates the extent to which students are progressing toward proficiency, in mathematics and science. The improvement trajectory is diminishing the performance gap between this district and the Level 1 and 2 districts in the Commonwealth.

- Holyoke Public Schools was designated Level 5 in April 2015, and during the final months of 2015, was at the beginning of organizing to develop its first Turnaround Plan. In FY2015, the turnaround planning process began with:
 - the appointment of a Receiver, who convened a first set of meetings with school and district leaders; and
 - the assembly and convening of a local stakeholder group to provide recommendations for the Turnaround Plan in compliance with [M.G.L. c. 69, s. 1K\(b\)](#).

Level 4 Schools:

- With the release of accountability results in 2015, over 55 percent (22 in number) of the 40 underperforming (Level 4) schools named in 2010 and 2011 had made good progress, such that they had exited Level 4 status (see Appendix II). These included **four schools from Commissioner’s Districts** that **exited Level 4 status** following the 2014-2015 school year. Recent independent evaluations across several cohorts of Level 4 schools showed **significantly greater student performance gains over state or comparison**

⁵ Please see the findings of Beth Schueler, Harvard Graduate School of Education Associate Professor David Deming and Harvard Kennedy School Associate Professor Joshua Goodman: <http://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/16/01/district-turnaround>.

schools in both English language arts (ELA) and mathematics.⁶

- An independent external evaluation of the impact of the Accelerated Improvement Plan (“AIP”) process on Level 4 schools, completed in FY2015, indicated classroom level improvements in the following three areas:
 - **instructional shifts** related to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks;
 - increased **data-based decision making**; and
 - higher **expectations** for instruction.⁷

Level 4 Districts:

- The CPI in districts in Level 4 between 2012 and 2015 exhibit improvements in English language arts, mathematics, and science, with science showing significant gains. Like the Level 5 districts, we again see increases in CPI in these districts that outpace CPI growth in Level 1 and 2 districts, moving us closer to closing achievement gaps.
- 2015 Monitoring Reports from most Level 4 districts with AIPs continued to note gains and traction in the implementation of strategic initiatives aimed at building the foundation for improved district systems of support for schools. An external evaluation noted that the AIP helped districts use data more effectively, improve structures for collaboration, and increase focus on developing principals’ capacity to serve as instructional leaders, resulting in higher expectations for students.⁸ New Bedford, Randolph, and Salem ended the 2014-2015 school year prepared to rely less on the Department’s Plan Manager supports in the next year.

Level 3 Schools:

- The performance of Level 3 schools that were at or below the 20th percentile in 2012 improved significantly by 2015 (as measured by the CPI) in third grade and eighth grade mathematics, with the greatest gains in the schools in the lowest percentiles (1st-10th). English language arts scores have stayed basically flat during this time for all accountability levels, and have been an increasing area of focus at the Department for intervention.
- Graduation rates have increased in Level 3 schools since 2012, while dropout rates have declined, with trajectories that significantly exceed the state average improvements.

Level 3 Districts:

- Fourteen percent of the districts in Level 3 in 2014 (9 districts) exited that status in 2015, meaning that none of their schools was among the lowest 20 percent in terms of

⁶ American Institutes for Research, *Evaluation of Massachusetts District and School Turnaround Assistance: Impact of School Redesign Grants (SRG)*: <http://www.air.org/resource/evaluation-massachusetts-district-and-school-turnaround-assistance-impact-school-redesign>.

⁷ *Evaluation of Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s Accelerated Improvement Plan (AIP) Process*: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/research-eval.html>.

⁸ Ibid.

performance in the state this year. This was the largest number of districts exiting Level 3 status since 2010, when this accountability structure began.

- The mathematics and science CPIs of students in Level 3 districts between 2012 and 2015 increased at a faster rate than the CPIs of students in Level 1 and 2 districts. CPI change in English language arts remained flat in Level 3 districts, just as it did in Level 1 and 2 districts, and is an area of increased attention and intervention from the Department.

Level 3, 4, and 5 Districts:

- Both mathematics and science CPIs for districts in Levels 3, 4, and 5 indicate a steady increase from 2012-2015, while the CPIs in Level 1 and Level 2 districts did not change over this time.

External evaluations of both ODST and DSAC work in FY2015 supported previous evaluations, indicating the development of successful assistance systems that are highly relevant and useful to school and district improvement efforts and turnaround practices.⁹

Update on Targeted Assistance Fund Use in 2014-2015

The Department applies funds from the Targeted Assistance to Schools and Districts account (state budget line 7061-9408) to support key interventions in the Level 3, 4, and 5 districts and schools. Between July 2014 and June 2015, a total of \$8,437,874 was allocated. This includes \$1,050,154 carried over from the prior fiscal year to allow intensive programs to be implemented in July and August of 2014. Federal resources, primarily from Title I School Improvement funds and Race to the Top (“RTTT”) funds, were used in coordination with the state’s Targeted Assistance funds to supplement and complement key assistance initiatives. While federal funds are used in a manner consistent with state legislation to help enhance some initiatives and expand their reach, state funding from the Targeted Assistance line is the main source of funds for the Department to fulfill its obligations under M.G.L. c. 69, §§ 1J and 1K, and, as noted earlier, to achieve strategic priorities designed to intervene in and strengthen districts and schools in the state’s most challenging educational environments.

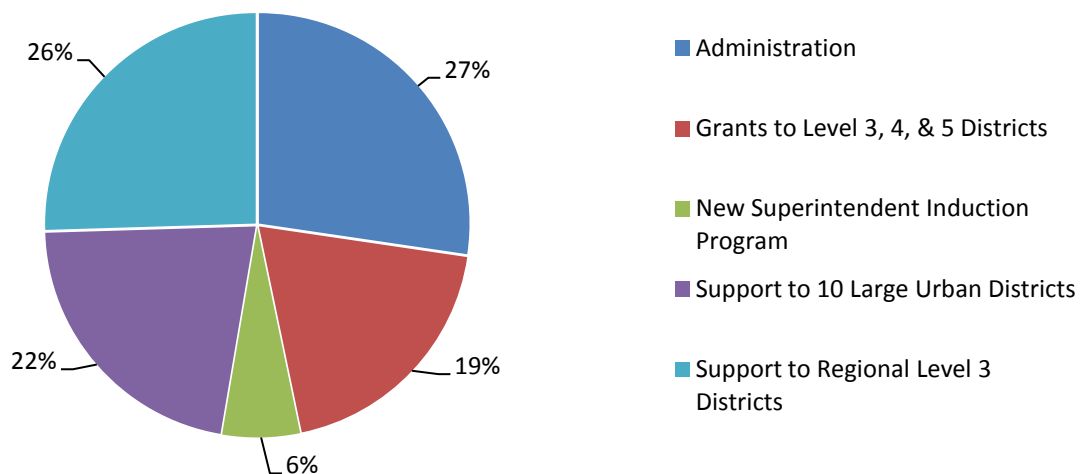
The majority of the state targeted assistance funds are used to enable Level 3, 4, and 5 districts to implement innovative, research based strategies targeted to advance the performance of the state’s highest- need students and close the achievement gap.

Approximately 27 percent of the funds from this account were directed to administration, funding salaries for ESE district support staff in ODST, DSACs and some in the Department’s

⁹ Turnaround Practices Reports: <http://www.mass.gov/edu/government/departments-and-boards/ease/programs/accountability/support-for-level-3-4-and-5-districts-and-schools/school-and-district-turnaround/turnaround-in-massachusetts/turnaround-and-emerging-practices-reports.html>; Final DSAC Evaluation Report: 2014: <http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ease/accountability/dsac/evaluation-report-2014.pdf>; Wraparound Replication Cookbook: <https://sites.google.com/site/masswazcookbook/resources>.

Curriculum and Instruction unit. Approximately 22 percent of the funds (\$1,843,063) were devoted to a variety of initiatives designed to strengthen the Commonwealth’s ten largest, highest need districts and their schools. About twenty-six percent of the funds (\$2,150,049) were used to support a variety of activities supporting 58 districts and their schools through the DSACs. Approximately 19 percent of the funds (\$1,637,417) went directly to districts in the form of grants to enable the districts to address key needs for professional development, school intervention, and improvement purposes. Six percent of the funds (\$501,532) supported multiple cohorts of new district leaders in multi-year, content-based training and coaching (known as the New Superintendents Induction Program). The following chart summarizes the breakdown of the resources.

Targeted Assistance Fund Use in 2014-2015



The intensity and focus of assistance was based on district and school needs, interest, capacity, and accountability status. In FY2015, Targeted Assistance funds (line item 7061-9408) continued to contribute to initiatives designed to achieve rapid improvement through capacity building and embedding of research based, effective turnaround practices in Level 3, 4, and 5 schools and districts in the following areas: 1) Leadership and Governance, 2) Curriculum and Instruction, 3) Assessment, 4) Human Resources and Professional Development, and 5) Student Support. The support provided by Commissioner’s District Liaisons, DSAC teams, and expert external partners through district and school supports involved the following activities.

Leadership and Governance:

- Convening intra and inter-district content and leadership **networks** for instructional leaders and teacher teams to share best practices, jointly learn and problem solve, align curriculum with standards and frameworks, and better access resources from the Department. This strategy was expanded in FY2015 because it uses resources efficiently, and most importantly it builds the capacity of educators to address common challenges and disseminate effective practices;

- Facilitating *Thought Partnerships* for urban superintendents to engage in professional learning and collaborative problem solving, and another for human resource leaders to share problems of practice, strengthen knowledge, and collaborate to solve in-the-moment problems;
- Engaging in outreach, school-to-school matching, and facilitation of visits from **urban leaders to high-percentile Commendation sites** (both urban and non-urban) for the purpose of broadening visions, learning best practices, and focusing on transferable lessons related to instructional rigor and student engagement at school-level sites;
- Addressing need areas identified in District Reviews through district **AIP development** and tracking of implementation and impact, a strategy that an external evaluation conducted by American Institutes for Research (AIR) reported as contributing to identifying gaps in district capacity and promoting strategic planning and implementation of effective practices for rapid improvement;¹⁰
- Implementing the **Turnaround Leadership Academy** to create a pipeline of principals prepared to lead turnaround in challenging schools;
- Partnering with the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents to continue to implement the **New Superintendents Induction Program** that builds instructional leadership capacity across the state;
- Selecting and appointing a receiver and beginning developing a **turnaround plan** with the assembling and convening of local stakeholders, school and district leaders, families, and the broader community in **Holyoke**;¹¹
- Recruiting and matching schools with proven **Operators and Receivers** to lead rapid turnaround implementation in Level 4 and 5 schools, such as in the **Springfield Empowerment Zone Project**;
- Soliciting and vetting **turnaround partners** for Level 4 schools who continue to provide expert assistance on the implementation of key Conditions for School Effectiveness and the Turnaround Practices;
- Funding **plan managers and monitors** in Holyoke, New Bedford, Randolph, Salem, and Southbridge to continue to support the implementation of AIPs and the Level 5 District Turnaround Plan in Lawrence that focus key leadership and instructional improvement initiatives.

Curriculum and Instruction:

- Funding the **Five District Partnership** that continues to provide support for development of common, coordinated, integrated curricula, assessments, materials, and instruction among some of the state's lowest performing districts (Chelsea, Malden, Winthrop, Everett, and Revere), with a plan to disseminate to other districts the promising practices developed;

¹⁰ Evaluation of Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Accelerated Improvement Plan (AIP) Process: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/research-eval.html>

¹¹ On October 1, 2015, a Turnaround Plan for Holyoke Public Schools was published: <http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/accountability/turnaround/level-5-district-holyoke-public-schools-turnaround-plan.pdf>.

- Providing **coaching** for superintendents, principals, and teachers to facilitate and calibrate common understanding of effective instructional practices and the research based cycle of inquiry that leads to improved outcomes.

Assessment:

- Facilitating district and school **self-assessments** based on the Conditions for School Effectiveness and Turnaround Practices and the implementation of new improvement plans that follow;
- Assisting in **data analysis** to update Level 4 school turnaround plans and continue to facilitate access to federal SIG funds significant to turnaround efforts;
- Conducting a **case study** of several DSAC districts by an external evaluator to create shared models of excellence for interventions to improve performance.

Human Resources and Professional Development:

- Facilitating and providing high quality **professional development** at regional, district and school levels on Learning Walkthroughs and data analysis that facilitates the cycle of inquiry, effective instructional and student support practices in academic content areas and for the needs of student subgroups, and integration of career vocational technical education shop classes with academic classes;
- Assisting schools and districts to implement schedules and organize **structures**, such as common planning time for teachers to collaborate on effective instructional practices;
- Offering direct **grants** to targeted districts for high quality professional development designed to support the implementation of research based effective instructional practices, aligning curriculum with the 2011 Curriculum Frameworks, and developing tools and resources that facilitate sharing of highly effective practices from rapidly improving schools;
- Supporting the convening of educator teams for professional development and preparation for the upcoming school year, when schools and districts are most able to take advantage of them, during the **summer months**, when schools are not in session.

Student Support:

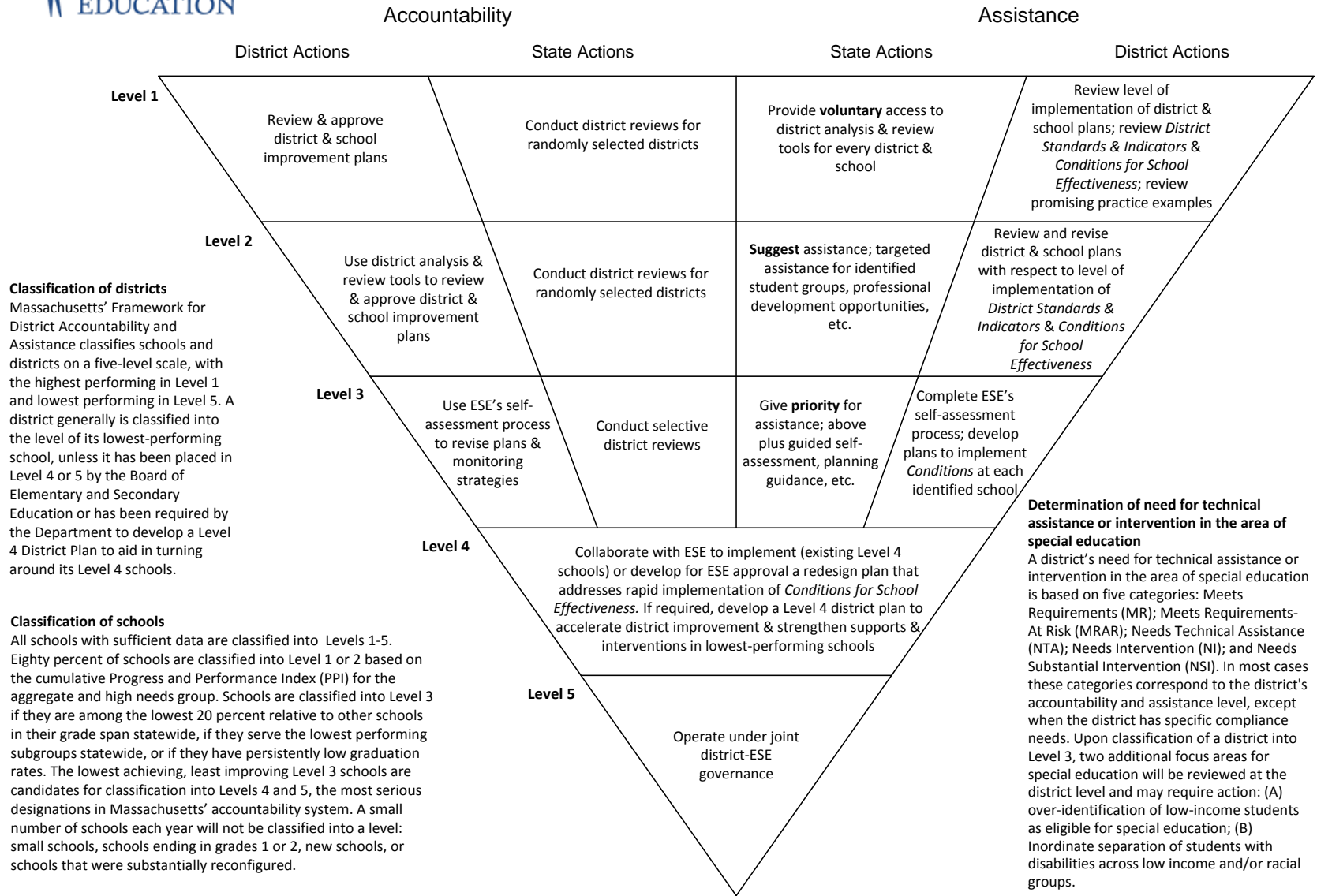
- Facilitating training and **systematic** implementation of **programs designed to remove barriers** to learning for high need students such as: Universal Design for Learning, Tiered Systems of Support, Positive Behavioral Intervention Systems, social emotional supports, and wraparound zones to provide effective **access** to learning for all students;
- Supporting the continued development and implementation of a **parent engagement program** in Randolph, which is a strategy integrated with the district's AIP.

The implementation of the targeted assistance initiatives together with those funded federally have resulted in changes in school and district performance, systems, and conditions. To achieve significant impact, the specific fund uses have been designed in partnership with the districts to

advance practices that have been found through research to build capacity significantly for improvement in schools and districts.



Framework for District Accountability and Assistance



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 of 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.

Determination of need for technical assistance or intervention in the area of special education
 A district's need for technical assistance or intervention in the area of special education is based on five categories: Meets Requirements (MR); Meets Requirements-At Risk (MRAR); Needs Technical Assistance (NTA); Needs Intervention (NI); and Needs Substantial Intervention (NSI). In most cases these categories correspond to the district's accountability and assistance level, except when the district has specific compliance needs. Upon classification of a district into Level 3, two additional focus areas for special education will be reviewed at the district level and may require action: (A) over-identification of low-income students as eligible for special education; (B) Inordinate separation of students with disabilities across low income and/or racial groups.

Appendix II

Level 4 and Level 5 Schools and Districts in Massachusetts (2010-2015)

Level 4 Schools Identified in 2010

Closed

1. Agassiz Elementary, Boston
2. Elihu Greenwood, Boston
3. Henry Lord Middle, Fall River

Exited Level 4 in 2013

1. Blackstone Innovation Elementary, Boston
2. Harbor Middle Pilot School, Boston
3. John F. Kennedy Elementary, Boston
4. Orchard Gardens K-8 Pilot School, Boston
5. William Monroe Trotter Innovation School, Boston
6. John J. Doran Elementary, Fall River
7. Matthew J. Kuss Middle, Fall River
8. Charlotte M. Murkland Elementary, Lowell
9. E.J. Harrington Elementary, Lynn
10. William P. Connery Elementary, Lynn
11. Gerena Elementary, Springfield
12. Homer Street Elementary, Springfield
13. Alfred J. Zanetti PK-8, Springfield
14. Union Hill Elementary, Worcester

Exited Level 4 in 2014

1. Jeremiah E. Burke High School, Boston
2. Brightwood Elementary, Springfield
3. Elias Brookings Elementary, Springfield
4. Chandler Elementary, Worcester

Exited Level 4 in 2015

1. Community Day Arlington Elementary (Formerly Arlington Elementary School), Lawrence
2. White Street Elementary, Springfield

Identified as Level 5 in 2014

1. John P. Holland Elementary, Boston
2. Paul A. Dever Elementary, Boston
3. Morgan Community Elementary, Holyoke
4. John Avery Parker Elementary, New Bedford

Continuing in Level 4

1. Dearborn Middle School, Boston
2. English High School, Boston
3. William J. Dean, Holyoke
4. SPARK Academy (Formerly South Lawrence East Middle School), Lawrence
5. High School of Commerce, Springfield

Continuing in Level 4

6. Chestnut Street North Middle, Springfield
7. Chestnut Street South Middle, Springfield
8. Chestnut Street TAG, Springfield
9. John F. Kennedy Middle, Springfield
10. M. Marcus Kiley Middle, Springfield

Level 4 Schools Identified in 2011

Exited Level 4 in 2015

1. UP Academy Leonard Middle School (Formerly James F. Leonard Middle), Lawrence
2. Burncoat Street Elementary, Worcester

Continuing in Level 4

1. Business Management & Finance High School, Lawrence
2. International High School, Lawrence
3. Hayden-McFadden Elementary, New Bedford
4. Bentley Elementary, Salem

Level 4 Schools Identified in 2012

These schools may be eligible for exit from Level 4 status based on 2016 accountability data.

1. Mattahunt Elementary, Boston
2. Oliver Partnership School (Grades 1-5) (Formerly Henry K. Oliver), Lawrence
3. UP Academy Oliver Middle School (Grades 6-8) (Formerly Henry K. Oliver), Lawrence
4. William N. Deberry, Springfield

Level 4 Schools Identified in 2013

These schools may be eligible for exit from Level 4 status based on 2017 accountability data.

1. Riverbend/Sanders Street Elementary, Athol-Royalston
2. William Ellery Channing, Boston
3. Winthrop Elementary, Boston
4. Watson Elementary, Fall River
5. New Bedford High School, New Bedford
6. High School of Science and Technology, Springfield
7. Milton Bradley Elementary, Springfield

Level 4 Schools Identified in 2014

These schools may be eligible for exit from Level 4 status based on 2018 accountability data.

1. Dorchester Academy High School, Boston
2. Henry Grew Elementary, Boston
3. John J. Duggan Middle, Springfield
4. Forest Park Middle, Springfield
5. Van Sickle Middle, Springfield
6. Elm Park Elementary, Worcester

Level 4 Schools Identified in 2015

This school may be eligible for exit from Level 4 status based on 2019 accountability data.

1. Madison Park Vocational Technical High School, Boston

Appendix III

Level 4 and Level 5 Schools and Districts in Massachusetts (2014-2015)

District Name	School Name
Boston	Dearborn
Boston	Elihu Greenwood Leadership Academy
Boston	Henry Grew
Boston	John P. Holland
Boston	John Winthrop
Boston	Mattahunt
Boston	Paul A. Dever
Boston	William Ellery Channing
Boston	The English High
Boston	Dorchester Academy
Fall River	Samuel Watson
Holyoke	Morgan Full Service Community School
Holyoke	William J. Dean Vocational Technical High
Lawrence	Community Day Arlington
Lawrence	South Lawrence East Middle School
Lawrence	Oliver Partnership School
Lawrence	UP Academy Oliver Middle School
Lawrence	Spark Academy
Lawrence	UP Academy Leonard Middle School
Lawrence	Business Management & Finance High School
Lawrence	International High School
New Bedford	Hayden/McFadden
New Bedford	John Avery Parker
New Bedford	New Bedford High
Salem	Bentley
Springfield	Milton Bradley School
Springfield	William N. DeBerry
Springfield	White Street
Springfield	Chestnut Street North Middle
Springfield	Chestnut Street South Middle
Springfield	Chestnut Street TAG Middle
Springfield	John J. Duggan Middle
Springfield	Forest Park Middle
Springfield	John F. Kennedy Middle
Springfield	M. Marcus Kiley Middle
Springfield	Van Sickle Middle School
Springfield	High School Of Commerce
Springfield	High School/Science-Tech
Worcester	Burncoat Street
Athol-Royalston	Riverbend-Sanders Street School

Appendix IV
Level 3 Districts in Massachusetts (2014-2015)

- Abington
- Bellingham
- Billerica
- Brockton
- Cambridge
- Chelsea
- Chicopee
- Dracut
- Easthampton
- Everett
- Fitchburg
- Framingham
- Gardner
- Gloucester
- Haverhill
- Hudson
- Leicester
- Leominster
- Lowell
- Ludlow
- Lynn
- Malden
- Marlborough
- Mashpee
- Melrose
- Methuen
- Middleborough
- Monson
- Nantucket
- North Adams
- Northampton
- Northbridge
- Orange
- Oxford
- Palmer
- Peabody
- Pittsfield
- Quincy
- Reading
- Saugus
- Somerville
- Taunton
- Waltham
- Ware
- Wareham
- Webster
- Westfield
- West Springfield
- Weymouth
- Winchendon
- Boston Green Academy Horace Mann Charter School (District)
- Boston Day and Evening Academy Charter (District)
- Dorchester Collegiate Academy Charter (District)
- Martin Luther King Jr. Charter School of Excellence (District)
- Phoenix Charter Academy (District)
- Adams-Cheshire
- Dennis-Yarmouth
- Gateway
- Gill-Montague
- Hawlemont
- Narragansett
- Spencer-East Brookfield
- Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical
- UP Academy Charter School of Dorchester (District)
- Massachusetts Virtual Academy at Greenfield (Commonwealth Virtual District)