



Report to the Legislature: Targeted Assistance and Intervention (2024-2025)

Chapter 28 of the Acts of 2024 Line Item 7061-9408 and G.L. c.69 § 1J(z) and 1K
March 2026

This document was prepared by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Pedro Martinez, Commissioner

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March 3, 2026

Dear Members of the General Court:

I am pleased to present the progress report for school year 2024-2025 (FY2025), describing the ongoing work of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) to offer targeted assistance to districts and schools across the Commonwealth with the highest need to maximize the rapid academic achievement of their students.

This report *Targeted Assistance and Intervention (2024-2025)* is responsive to reporting requirements outlined in Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 69 Section 1J and the General Appropriations Act, Chapter 28 of the Acts of 2024, Line Item 7061-9408, which directs the Department to provide:

“For targeted assistance and support to schools and districts at risk of or determined to be underperforming or chronically underperforming under sections 1J and 1K of chapter 69 of the General Laws, including schools and districts that have been identified as in need of “focused support/targeted support” or “broad/comprehensive support” within the state’s framework for accountability and assistance under departmental regulations and guidelines; . . . not later than January 16, 2025, the department shall submit a report describing and analyzing all targeted assistance efforts funded by this item; provided further, that the report shall be submitted to the secretary of administration and finance, the senate president, the speaker of the house, the house and senate committees on ways and means and the joint committee on education;”

Since the passage of An Act Relative to the Achievement Gap in 2010, the Department has evolved efforts over time to best serve students in the state’s highest-need schools and districts--that is, those districts and schools determined by the state’s accountability system to be performing in the lowest 10 percent of schools, schools with persistent low-performing student groups, high schools with low graduation rates, and schools designated as underperforming and chronically underperforming. Assistance efforts span a wide array of activities and levers, from direct technical assistance to funding, to guidance, and professional development. The Department strategically augments, to the extent possible, the state Targeted Assistance funds (Line Item 7061-9408) with available federal resources to support school improvement.

During FY2025, resources were used to provide a range of direct financial aid and professional development support to districts and schools. These targeted resources are designed to address significant challenges in closing achievement gaps, with a particular emphasis on meeting the needs of English learners, students with disabilities, students of color, and students living in poverty.



This investment in the students served by our lowest-performing schools and districts has led to improvements across the Commonwealth in closing achievement gaps. While we are not yet satisfied with the overall performance of these schools, research has shown progress made by schools engaged in substantial turnaround efforts supported by Department assistance efforts. Under our Accountability System, we will continue to track the progress of schools requiring assistance and intervention each year. This report outlines the Department's strategy for resource use in the service of students through targeted assistance and intervention efforts. Our staff works tirelessly to ensure that schools and districts receive carefully aligned and timely supports and resources through this strategy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Pedro Martinez", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Pedro Martinez, Commissioner

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Introduction

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education respectfully submits this Report to the Legislature: Targeted Assistance and Intervention (2024-2025) pursuant to the General Appropriations Act, [Chapter 28](#) of the Acts of 2024, Line Item 7061-9408, which directs the Department to provide:

“For targeted assistance and support to schools and districts at risk of or determined to be underperforming or chronically underperforming under sections 1J and 1K of chapter 69 of the General Laws, including schools and districts that have been identified as in need of “focused support/targeted support” or “broad/comprehensive support” within the state’s framework for accountability and assistance under departmental regulations and guidelines; . . . not later than January 16, 2026, the department shall submit a report describing and analyzing all targeted assistance efforts funded by this item; provided further, that the report shall be submitted to the secretary of administration and finance, the senate president, the speaker of the house, the house and senate committees on ways and means and the joint committee on education;”

And [Massachusetts General Laws 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 . . .”

The following are updates on the Accountability System, targeted assistance to schools and districts provided through grants and services, and the commissioner’s strategic initiatives. In each area, the Department seeks to directly support the strongest performance in our districts and schools, relying on evidence-based practices to directly impact those students who are least well served.

Accountability System Overview

In 2018, the Department began reporting accountability results under its new framework for district and school accountability and assistance, which was approved by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (“the Board”) in June 2018.

The purpose of the Massachusetts Accountability System is to provide clear, actionable information to families, community members, and the public about district and school performance. Additionally, the Accountability System helps the Department direct resources and assistance. The framework for the Accountability System allows the Department to identify schools that require assistance or intervention, as well as schools that are demonstrating success. It maintains a single statewide accountability system that aligns with the Commonwealth’s priorities while meeting federal education requirements. Highlights of the System include:

- The inclusion of accountability indicators that provide information about school performance and student opportunities beyond test scores;
- A focus on raising the performance of each district’s or school’s lowest performing students, in addition to the performance of the district or school as a whole; and
- The use of accountability categories that define the progress that districts and schools are making and the type of support or assistance they may receive from the Department.

Accountability determinations consist of a *normative component* and a *criterion-referenced component*, which are used to classify schools. The *normative component*, or accountability percentile, measures the performance of all students in a school compared to other schools in the state. This measure is reported as a percentile, from One (1) to 99, which is calculated using all available accountability indicators for a school. The *criterion-referenced component* measures a school’s progress toward the Department’s established improvement targets for each of the accountability indicators. This measure is reported as a percentage, representing the degree to which targets have been met.

Using the normative and criterion-referenced components, overall school results are reported in two categories: schools *requiring assistance or intervention*, and schools *not requiring assistance or intervention*. The Department focuses its assistance efforts on schools identified as *requiring assistance or intervention*, in addition to all schools in districts that have been identified as *chronically underperforming*.

Targeted Assistance Delivery System Overview

The Department utilizes Targeted Assistance funds (state budget Line Item 7061-9408) to support schools requiring assistance or intervention in the state's [Accountability Framework](#). Historically, the Department's Statewide System of Support (SSoS) and Office of Strategic Transformation (OST) prioritize resources and intervention to districts and schools designated as focused/targeted and broad/comprehensive support, including underperforming and chronically underperforming schools and districts, and provide direct expert assistance and accountability from Department staff and its approved partners, funding and research-based resources, and preferred access to professional development. These efforts are designed to enhance school and district capacity to effectively and proactively use proven instructional and supportive practices to boost and sustain rapid gains in student achievement. This work has been ongoing since 2010 under [An Act Relative to the Achievement Gap](#) (the Act) in accordance with regulations adopted by the Board.³

In FY2025, the Center for School and District Partnership (which houses SSoS, the Office of Strategic Transformation (charged with supporting schools and districts identified as chronically underperforming), and the Center for Strategic Initiatives (charged with leading several equity-focused agency initiatives) partnered together to leverage Targeted Assistance funds to support 228 schools in 45 districts. The combined enrollment in these schools was 134,040 students, which is 14.6 percent of the state's total student enrollment (915,932). Approximately 75.6 percent of the 134,040 students were from low-income families, 30.9 percent were English learners, and 22.3 percent were students with disabilities. An overview of the funds allocated and programs supported is described as follows.

Center for School and District Partnership

The Center for School and District Partnership (CSDP) provided the following support to districts and schools requiring assistance and intervention through staffing, grants, and direct services using \$8,000,378 of Line Item 7061-9408 Targeted Assistance funding in 2024-2025.

CSDP staff engage with districts that have schools identified as requiring assistance and intervention (targeted/focused support schools and broad/comprehensive support schools) on our state accountability system. Massachusetts CSDP staff provide assistance to districts and schools that are differentiated by need, and provide structured opportunities for teachers, administrators, and district leaders to engage in activities that include coaching, facilitated work teams, professional communities of practice, and resource networking.

Since 2022, CSDP has taken a Center-wide approach to prioritize targeted assistance to schools identified by the MA Accountability System as "requiring assistance or

intervention” based on district context (excluding charter schools, receivership schools, and districts that are supported by other Department offices). Districts with multiple schools identified as requiring assistance receive intensive support from the Statewide System of Support regional assistance teams. Districts with only a single school identified as requiring assistance receive support from other CSDP offices, such as Kaleidoscope Collective for Learning (Kaleidoscope) or the Office of Effective Partnerships and Impact (OEPI). A combination of full-time and contract staff, who are in part supported by Targeted Assistance funds, worked with districts and schools in FY25 on sustainable improvement planning and implementation efforts. Details on support activities funded through this line item are provided in each office’s section below.

CSDP closely coordinates with the [Office of Strategic Transformation \(OST\)](#), which is responsible for the implementation of state receivership and alternative governance models, to ensure resources and supports to all targeted schools and districts are aligned, and to share promising practices.

The Kaleidoscope Collective for Learning:

In FY2025, the Kaleidoscope Collective for Learning (Kaleidoscope) continued to advance key initiatives and partnerships with schools and districts to support school and district leaders with developing systems for scaling effective instruction and pedagogical practices to increase students’ access to Deeper Learning—grade-level work that is real-world, relevant, and interactive. In FY2025, Kaleidoscope utilized 7061-9408 funds to secure one full-time Instructional Leadership Coach through School Works to ensure adequate direct school support. Kaleidoscope partnered with Intercultural Productions to produce a video library illustrating Deeper Learning in practice across a variety of classrooms in Massachusetts schools and partnered with TNTP to provide direct coaching to districts participating in CSDP’s Learning Acceleration Network (LAN) program. Additional direct partnerships were provided to 12 districts through the Deeper Learning Implementation Network, which included grant funding.

Statewide System of Support:

In FY25, 7061-9408 funds were used to partner with School Works to provide staffing for SSoS assistance teams in West/Central and Coastal regions, who were deployed to 21 districts, impacting 167 schools identified by the Accountability System as requiring assistance or intervention.

SSoS teams work closely with District Instructional Leadership Teams (DILTs) to identify instructional priorities anchored in culturally responsive grade-appropriate instruction and a sense of belonging. SSoS teams then target support in service of those priorities, with a focus on supporting school Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs), and the adoption and implementation of high-quality instructional materials (HQIM). SSoS teams also support DILTs with monitoring progress toward outcomes related to the instructional priority and identifying and addressing the district systems that contribute to inequities in schools. The work of SSoS is grounded in the Department’s Educational Vision for supporting Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices.

Targeted assistance funding was also used by SSoS to offer networking opportunities for urban leaders through a variety of mechanisms, such as the Urban Superintendents' Network, to build capacity through the sharing of best practices and thought partnering with others in similar roles to solve complex challenges, intended to improve student outcomes for every student.

Office of Effective Partnerships and Impact:

The Office of Effective Partnerships and Impact (OEPI) provides centralized support across CSDP, such as staff training and professional development, resources for schools and districts on school improvement, on-call expertise, project work plans, contracts, grant processing, and progress monitoring. The centralized team also oversees research to identify best practices in school improvement and ensures these practices impact policy and are embedded into practice. Finally, this team facilitates the implementation of the statutory requirements related to underperforming schools, the allocation of federal school improvement grant resources to support turnaround schools, and the monitoring of progress in schools implementing sustainable improvement plans. OEPI staff are access points for districts and schools to high-quality external partners, multi-year academies, and grants, and also provide direct technical assistance to select districts with schools requiring assistance or intervention.

CSDP contracts with various vendors add to the Department's capacity to provide support services to schools. In a continuing partnership with the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, FY25 Targeted Assistance funding supported a New Superintendents Induction Program to build instructional leadership capacity across the state. OEPI also contracted with a vendor to support a Culturally Responsive Teaching Academy to best support the needs of diverse learners and partnered with an external vendor to provide staffing services to ensure capacity to provide the office's programs and services.

Grants:

A significant portion of FY25 Targeted Assistance funding was issued to districts and schools requiring assistance or intervention in the form of Targeted Assistance Grants (TAG). TAG funding focused on the implementation of district and school-level sustainable improvement plans, in alignment with federal and state requirements and Massachusetts' best practices. Funding allocations were tiered based on the number of schools requiring assistance or intervention within a district. Districts and schools were encouraged to spend TAG resources on strategies to support students, staff, and families. Recipients of TAG funding are expected to engage in assistance activities with Department staff from the Center for School and District Partnership (CSDP) and the Statewide System of Support (SSoS), and in Department-sponsored progress monitoring efforts.

Site Visit Services:

FY25 Targeted Assistance funds were used to contract with an outside vendor to conduct one or two-day site visits at schools requiring assistance or intervention. The

vendor used a rubric co-created with CSDP to collect data and generate findings relative to schools' implementation of several indicators aligned to the Coherence Guidebook. The final site visit reports were used by schools to reflect on their sustainable improvement plan implementation in order to make necessary mid-course corrections. The data within the site visit reports were also used by the CSDP team to assess patterns and trends in improvement efforts across the state and identify and disseminate best practices.

Office of Language Acquisition:

The Office of Language Acquisition (OLA) supports schools and districts to implement effective programs for multilingual learning, including English learner education (ELE). OLA also monitors districts' compliance with state and federal law to ensure that ELE programs are implemented effectively and that students' civil rights are met. In FY25, OLA used 7061-9408 funds for staffing support from SchoolWorks to ensure the office had the capacity to coordinate its programs and services. The office also partnered with external vendors to develop a needs assessment tool package, identify high-quality instructional materials for English learners, develop supplemental resources for dual language and transitional bilingual education guidance, and support the adoption and implementation of high-quality ESL curriculum. OLA also worked with an external vendor to sponsor a proficiency academy in implementing the World Languages Framework.

Office of Ed Tech:

The Office of Educational Technology (EdTech) supports schools and districts with their strategic integration of technology. The office provides guidance, coaching, networking, and professional learning opportunities targeted to district technology directors, and creates and curates technology-related resources that are made publicly available.

The initial Office of EdTech K-12 Artificial Intelligence (AI) Task Force, comprised of school and district staff, helped guide the development of recommendations for how the state can support schools and districts in navigating the emergence and continued evolution of generative AI. Initial funding supported contracting with a vendor possessing AI and school system expertise, who created learning opportunities for task force members, compiled findings from a national and international landscape analysis on AI usage in schools, facilitated stakeholder engagement opportunities, and developed a report that included the final recommendations for DESE.

The Office of EdTech then contracted with ISTE+ASCD, an international organization focused on the effective use of technology to improve learning, to launch the "District Leadership in the Age of AI" learning cohort. This cohort experience provided a collaborative learning opportunity for 17 LEA teams that worked to develop strategies to support AI integration in their context. 48 LEA teams applied, signaling the level of demand for this type of support.

The Office of EdTech, in response to the Task Force and its recommendation to “develop a set of materials for varied stakeholder groups that outlines foundational understandings of AI,” contracted with additional vendors to develop specific resources and companion materials, which were launched in August 2025.

Resources include:

- MA Guidance for Artificial Intelligence in K–12 Education
- MA Guidance for AI in K–12: Quick Reference Guides
- AI Literacy for Educators online module
- AI Literacy for Educators: Certificate of Completion Version
- AI Literacy for Educators: Facilitation and Discussion Guides with Slides (45-min and 2.5-hour options)

Additionally, the Office of EdTech contracted with a local technology and AI integration leader to add internal capacity and expertise for resource development, and to design workshops and webinars to translate resources into actionable steps for all schools and districts across the Commonwealth. With the added capacity, the office has offered differentiated, no-cost training opportunities for educators and administrators, the latest “MA Guidance for Artificial Intelligence in K–12 Education” webinar for school and district leaders’ registration nearing 500 participants.

Office of Strategic Transformation

The Office of Strategic Transformation (OST) provided supports to districts and schools in state receivership and under alternative governance structures through grants, direct assistance, research, and high-quality partners using \$4,033,970 of Line Item 7061-9408 Targeted Assistance funds in 2024-2025.

Chronically Underperforming Schools

Chronically underperforming schools, as defined by state law [M.G.L. c. 69, §1J](#), at the expiration of their underperforming school plans, failed to show enough improvement as required by the goals, benchmarks, and/or timetables of the turnaround plan and were designated as chronically underperforming. There were no new schools designated as chronically underperforming in FY2025.

During the 2024-2025 school year, three schools held state designations as chronically underperforming: UP Academy Holland and Paul A. Dever School in Boston, and John Avery Parker School in New Bedford. The turnaround plans for these schools, originally designated as chronically underperforming in October 2013, were renewed in July 2023 for a three-year period. Morgan Full Service Community School in Holyoke, which also entered receivership in October 2013, was removed from chronically underperforming status in September 2022 on the basis of its district’s concurrent designation as chronically underperforming. In October 2024, then-Acting Commissioner Russell Johnston announced his decision to remove New Bedford’s John Avery Parker School

from chronically underperforming status, and the school formally exited receivership on January 1, 2025.

During the 2024-2025 school year, UP Academy Holland, Paul A. Dever School, and John Avery Parker School (until January 1, 2025) were managed by nonprofit operators. These schools pursued strategic improvements in several key areas of instruction, including:

- Aligning schoolwide practices to a shared, research-based instructional vision and framework;
- Enacting high-quality standards-aligned curriculum materials;
- Providing feedback to teachers in high-leverage areas of instruction;
- Utilizing multiple sources of assessment data to drive instructional improvements at the school, classroom, and student levels.

In addition to funding the receiver services at the three schools designated as chronically underperforming, Targeted Assistance funds under Line Item 7061-9408 were used to provide targeted school grants to support individual school initiatives in the following areas:

- Curricular resources and curriculum-aligned professional development to enhance both core instruction and tiered academic supports in English language arts and mathematics;
- Assessment data tools and expanded learning time to support data-driven literacy interventions for struggling readers; and
- Curricular resources and professional development to embed social-emotional learning supports in classroom instruction for all students.

Chronically Underperforming Districts:

Three districts have been designated as chronically underperforming, in accordance with [M.G.L. c. 69, §1K](#).⁵ The Board placed the Lawrence Public Schools district under receivership in November 2011, the Holyoke Public Schools under receivership in April 2015, and the Southbridge Public Schools under receivership in January 2016. A list of these districts, in accordance with [M.G.L. c. 69, §1K](#), can be found in Appendix III. Targeted strategic intervention and assistance from the Department began in 2011 when the first district was designated. An update about these districts' uses of FY2025 Targeted Assistance Funds under Line Item 7061-9408 is provided below.

In October 2024, then-Acting Commissioner Johnston announced his provisional decision to remove Holyoke Public Schools from chronically underperforming status at the end of the 2024-25 school year, pending the successful completion of a capacity-building plan by the Holyoke School Committee. The district formally exited receivership on July 1, 2025.

Southbridge Public Schools:

In FY2025, the use of Targeted Assistance funds under Line Item 7061-9408 for Southbridge enabled the district to sustain its investment in high-quality instructional materials in core academic areas. The district also utilized targeted assistance funds to strengthen advanced coursework offerings and post-secondary planning supports at the high school level. A portion of the district's targeted assistance funds was used to defray the costs of contracting with an external receiver to lead the district.

Springfield Empowerment Zone Partnership:

In FY2025, another targeted assistance and intervention effort provided to strengthen the capacity of underperforming schools was the facilitation of and strategic support for the Springfield Empowerment Zone Partnership. The Springfield Empowerment Zone Partnership (SEZP) is a voluntary partnership between the SEZP Board, Springfield Public Schools, and the Department, working in close collaboration with the Springfield Education Association and aimed at rapidly improving outcomes for Springfield's middle and high school students. Created in 2014, SEZP has supported leaders and educators to make bold changes in school programming by strategically exercising new autonomies. In FY2025, the use of Targeted Assistance funds under Line Item 7061-9408 for SEZP supported a Zone-wide collaboration to empower families as partners in school-based decision making, training in adolescent literacy, and a multi-year initiative to build school leadership capacity.

Overall, schools and districts in chronically underperforming status used Targeted Assistance funding through direct grants to districts and contracts with high-quality vendors in a variety of different ways to accelerate student outcomes and improve student learning experiences. They include, but are not limited to:

- Effective implementation of high-quality curriculum resources and interventions;
- Professional learning around academic content, social-emotional learning, trauma-informed practice, and culturally responsive teaching;
- Mentoring and coaching of teachers and leaders;
- Development of integrated postsecondary planning and support services in high school;
- School-level progress monitoring to inform timely and data-driven adjustments to strategic plan implementation.

Boston Public Schools:

In 2021, the Department and Boston Public Schools (BPS) agreed to a set of actions outlined in a Memorandum of Understanding. In 2022, BPS developed a Systemic Improvement Plan (SIP), which was agreed to by the Department in 2022. The SIP establishes goals for BPS across the following domains: student safety, special education, transportation, facilities, supporting English learners, transformation schools, and data and accountability. The Department has provided technical assistance to support the district in meeting the improvement goals and monitoring progress towards targets.

BPS Systemic Improvement Plan Grant: As outlined in the SIP, the Department agreed to provide \$10 million in grant funding over three years to support items related to the SIP. In FY2025, the Department provided \$3,270,706 in funding to BPS through grant FC 0465 and FC 0593. This assistance supported activities, including administrators to support the implementation of the SIP, staffing for a Problem Resolution department, and contractual support for the expansion of bilingual programming, data strategy, and implementation support of plans for multitiered systems of support and inclusive education.

Commissioner's Strategic Initiatives

The Center for Strategic Initiatives (CSI) provided the following assistance to districts and schools requiring assistance and intervention, using \$3,484,626.28 of Line Item 7061-9408 Targeted Assistance funding in 2024-2025.

AP/IB Exam Subsidy and Support for AP Exams:

In FY2025, the Department provided Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) exam fee subsidies for public school students from low-income households.

The State Advanced Placement STEM & ELA Program, executed through the vendor Mass Insight Education and Research (Mi), partnered with high schools to drive a school culture of high expectations and increase participation and performance in AP courses for historically underserved student populations.

The Department used the Targeted Intervention funds to support subsidies for all 637 International Baccalaureate (IB) exams taken by students from low-income households attending 5 Massachusetts public high schools. All AP students from low-income households were subsidized through other funds identified by the Department. Therefore, ***all*** public-school students from low-income households were eligible for the exam subsidy for all advanced placement tests, and 33,231 AP exams were subsidized in the state in FY2025.

Acceleration Academies:

An Acceleration Academy is a week-long academic program designed to accelerate student learning through engaging, standards-aligned lessons that meet the specific academic needs of students participating in the program. Students who attend an Acceleration Academy receive the equivalent of an extra month of learning (20-25 hours) in a single subject area.

During the 2024-2025 school year (FY2025), the Department partnered with 18 school districts (Brockton Public Schools, Fall River Public Schools, Fitchburg Public Schools, Pittsfield Public Schools, Athol-Royalston Public Schools, Boston Public Schools,

Chelsea Public Schools, Greenfield Public Schools, Holyoke Public Schools, Lawrence Public Schools, Lowell Public Schools, Lynn Public Schools, New Bedford Public Schools, Taunton Public Schools, Webster Public Schools, Worcester Public Schools, Springfield Public Schools) and the Springfield Empowerment Zone to implement Acceleration Academy programs during the February and April school vacation weeks. These districts received targeted grant funding to implement their Acceleration Academy programs, and CSI provided logistical support and professional development for teachers. The grant was funded using Line Item 7061-9408 Targeted Assistance funds.

Advanced Learning Pilot

In FY2025, CSI used Targeted Assistance funds to support five districts participating in the Advanced Learning Pilot program. The Advanced Learning Pilot program is a five-year partnership with participating districts to develop and implement a continuum of culturally responsive advanced learning services, utilizing a multi-tiered system of supports as a framework, alongside talent development principles. Funds supporting districts may be used to support time for teachers outside the classroom (professional development, one-on-one coaching, additional planning time) or for materials to be used as resources to implement best practices. Funds were also used to procure space and two meals for full-day, in-person professional development to teachers and administrators.

FY2025 funds were also used to contract with a vendor. Northwestern University's Center for Talent Development will provide supplemental resources that align with the implementation of the "Continuum of Services" guidance document to support advanced learners in the Commonwealth's PK-12 public schools.

Influence 100:

In FY2025, Targeted Assistance funds were used to provide continued financial support to the Influence 100 Program in its sixth year. Currently, about eight and a half (8.4) percent of Massachusetts school superintendents are people of color, while 45 percent of the students served by public school districts are people of color. In FY20, the Department launched Influence 100 to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of superintendents in Massachusetts, create more culturally responsive districts and leaders across the Commonwealth, and promote better outcomes for students. Participating districts select rising leaders to participate in a two (2) year fellowship to prepare for superintendent roles through monthly training and ongoing support, with a particular focus on equity. Districts and school committees with participating fellows also agree to participate in professional development and technical assistance with the Department to enhance their strategic planning for equity. In its sixth year (FY2025), Influence 100 was comprised of 32 total fellows spread across two cohorts: 16 fellows from Cohort 5 and 16 fellows from Cohort 6. The fellows were a mix of school leaders and central office staff. To date (end of FY25), 104 fellows have graduated from the program; seven fellows have become superintendents, and 50% of fellows from cohorts 1-5 moved up in administrative roles. Additionally, one of the program's graduates, Andrea Zayas, was appointed by President Biden to the White House's Advisory

Commission on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Hispanics.

In FY2024, State funds were used to continue a multi-year third-party evaluation of the initiative with the UMASS Donahue Institute (UMDI). The evaluation was completed in June of 2025.

Teacher Diversification Pilot Program Grant and Professional Learning Community:

In FY25, state funds were allocated to school districts committed to implementing innovative strategies aimed at increasing the number of effective and diverse teachers. The Teacher Diversification Grant provided competitive one-year grants to support various educator recruitment and retention programs, including high school education pathways, financial incentives, financial assistance, and school culture support.

DESE received 77 grant applications and, following a rubric-based review process, awarded a total of \$1,794,932 to 41 applicants. The total funding requested across all applications was \$6,540,256.

Additionally, in FY25, the Department contracted with William James Colleges to facilitate the Teacher Diversification Professional Learning Community (PLC). The PLC is designed to empower districts to cultivate the capacity for identifying and addressing bias, and to implement best practices in the recruitment, selection, and retention of diverse educators. The PLC provides adaptive support to districts as they utilize Teacher Diversification Grant funds to implement their diversification strategies. There were more than 75 districts comprised of grant funded and non-grant funded districts, that regularly attended the sessions.

In FY25, DESE contracted UMASS Amherst Donahue Institute to provide actionable information to 1) facilitate a better understanding of the influence of grant funds on the recruitment, hiring, and retention of a diverse educator workforce; 2) support continuous improvement in understanding, providing support, and mitigating the challenges prospective educators of color and institutions face related to increasing the diversity of the educator workforce; and 3) explore ways in which future research could examine the extent to which the grant activities influence student outcomes. UMDI worked with DESE to request, gather, and organize current year (FY25) participant data from grantees about each teacher/participant (except high school students) who directly engaged in or benefited from grant-funded activities and/or resources. This data was used to better understand the relative scope of services each grantee provided with the support of grant funds during the most recent academic year.

Employee Resource Groups and Culturally Responsive Leadership Training:

In FY2025, DESE continued its work on increasing employee retention, inclusion, and belonging through its employee resource group (ERG) work. The DESE ERGs are: Allies at DESE, Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) ERG, the Black Employee Resource Group (BERG), DESE Caregivers, DESE Pride, Hispanic and Latino

Organization of Leaders in Action (HOLA) ERG, and the DESE Supportive Platform for Interfaith Resources, Impact, Togetherness, Education and Development (SPIRITED).

Several ERGs hosted all agency outreach and educational events during the year, followed by post-surveys to measure employee learning experiences and obtain additional valuable feedback to inform future events.

Partners in Equity Leadership Conference:

In FY25, DESE contracted with The Leadership Academy to develop and host a Partners in Equity Leadership Conference in the spring of 2025. The event was created to serve individuals who have participated in equity programs at DESE in the past. Often, these equity leaders face significant barriers to moving their institutions forward. The conference helped participants further build their equity implementation skills in the face of challenges. Additionally, many of the equity leaders are leaders of color and may face challenges different from those of their white peers, so the conference provided leaders of color with strategies to tackle these issues as well. In total, two hundred equity leaders from across the Commonwealth participated in the spring 2025 event.

Aspiring Principals Fellowship:

In FY25, DESE completed its first cohort of the Aspiring Principal Fellowship to enhance the recruitment and development of diverse school leaders. Boston College's Lynch Leadership was selected as the vendor to spearhead professional development efforts focused on cultural responsiveness, equity, and anti-racist principles. This fellowship aims to empower aspiring leaders by equipping them with the skills and knowledge necessary to foster inclusive educational environments.

The fellowship sets forth several goals, including providing valuable, job-embedded professional development for both candidate fellows and their mentors. This initiative aligns with the Professional Standards for Administrative Leadership and addresses the unique challenges faced by Massachusetts public schools. Upon completion, participating candidates will become acquainted with equitable leadership practices and qualify to apply for provisional licenses for Assistant Principal and Principal positions, contributing to a more diverse education workforce. The first cohort of 38 Fellows has seen 18 participants move on to new leadership roles.

Emphasizing collaboration and community engagement, the program aims to develop a robust pipeline of well-prepared educational leaders. This fellowship is designed to support 40 aspiring and 40 current principals with coaching and mentorship.

Equity in Action:

In FY25, state funds were utilized to support the Equity in Action project, a collaborative initiative with the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents. Learning Lab International was contracted to facilitate the Equity in Action sessions. This project is designed to empower school and district leadership teams to develop culturally responsive strategies and overcome barriers to equity-focused goals. By conducting intensive analyses of school community climates and the capacity of equity teams,

Equity in Action provides coaching on addressing both internal and external obstacles to achieve meaningful equity outcomes.

Equity in Action notably enhances the skills of educators and leaders, focusing on creating a well-prepared workforce equipped to address gaps for marginalized students. Strategies implemented in the program align with adult learning best practices and change management research, encouraging leaders to evaluate their teamwork structures and ensure inclusivity in decision-making. With an emphasis on family and community engagement, the project requires participants to collaborate with historically excluded stakeholders, fostering a culture that values diverse identities. Progress has been monitored through regular feedback surveys, observational data, and goal achievement metrics, ensuring the effectiveness of this critical initiative as it works to significantly advance equity in education.

InSPIRED Fellowship:

In FY25, state funds were utilized to contract a part-time coordinator to support the development and implementation of the InSPIRED Fellowship. The goal of the InSPIRED Fellowship is to foster inclusive and equitable educational environments by increasing the representation of diverse educators in Massachusetts schools. The Fellowship focuses on four key goals: increasing the diversity of the teaching workforce, enhancing retention rates for diverse educators, building supportive community networks, and elevating the voices of fellows to ensure their experiences are reflected in educational practices.

Through the eight-month fellowship, participants engaged in events designed to inspire the next generation of educators, with opportunities to speak at panels and share their insights at various educational events.

Progress

In 2024-2025, the Department offered assistance through this funding source to 228 schools in 45 districts. The combined enrollment in these schools was 134,040 students, which is 14.6 percent of the state's total student enrollment (915,932). Approximately 75.6 percent of the 134,040 students were from low-income families, 30.9 percent were English learners, and 22.3 percent were students with disabilities.

Of the 228 schools receiving assistance from CSDP, 21 schools increased their accountability percentile such that they are no longer among the lowest performing 10 percent of schools statewide based on 2024 accountability results.

Of all schools within the Strategic Transformation Region with an accountability percentile (including Lawrence, Holyoke, Southbridge, Springfield Empowerment Zone, and chronically underperforming schools), 18 of 47 schools (38 percent) are above the tenth percentile based on 2024 data. This is an increase for 17 of 48 schools (35 percent) in 2023-2024.

As noted above, several research ventures are underway to assess the impact of various strategic initiatives. The Department looks forward to sharing those results as they become available.

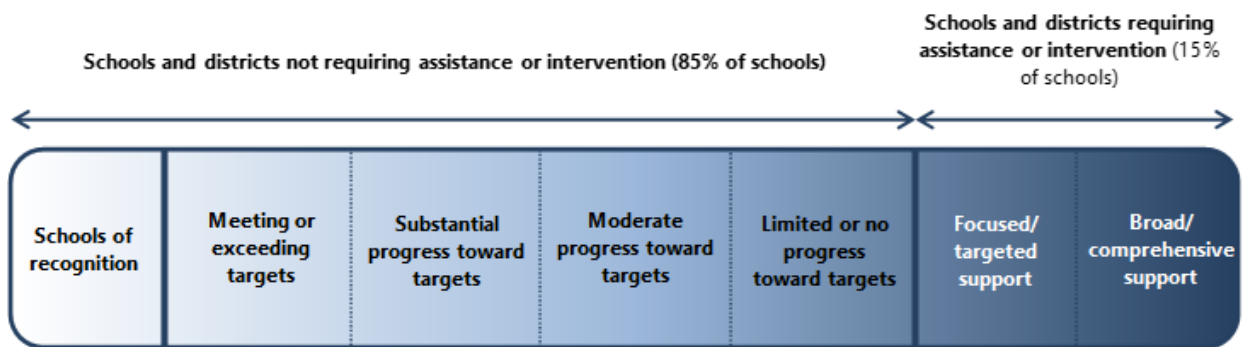
Closing Summary

The total expenditures from July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025, from Line Item 7061-9408 were \$15,967,482.

The vast majority of the State Targeted Assistance funds were used to enable districts and schools to implement innovative, research-based strategies targeted to advance the performance of the state's highest-need students in alignment with the Department's Education Vision. The intensity and focus of assistance were based on district and school needs, interest, capacity, and accountability status. The support provided by the Office of Strategic Transformation, CSDP teams, and expert external partners, as well as the direct grants and targeted high-leverage programs, were strategies that assisted districts and schools in accelerating learning for students.

Appendix I

Massachusetts Accountability System



Appendix II

List of 2024-2025 Underperforming Schools

<u>District Name</u>	<u>School Name</u>
Boston	Dearborn
Boston	Brighton High
Boston	Excel High School
Boston	Madison Park High
Fall River	Mary Fonseca Elementary School
Lawrence	Oliver Partnership School ¹
Lawrence	Oliver Middle School
New Bedford	New Bedford High
Springfield	Forest Park Middle
Springfield	John F Kennedy Middle
Springfield	M Marcus Kiley Academy
Springfield	M Marcus Kiley Prep
Springfield	Legacy Academy
	Impact Prep at Chestnut
Springfield	Van Sickle Academy ²
	Van Sickle Prep
Springfield	High School of Commerce ³
Springfield	Springfield High School of Science and Technology
Athol-Royalston	Athol Community Elementary School

¹ Exited in the 2024-25 school year.

² Exited in the 2024-25 school year.

³ Exited in the 2024-2025 school year. Q

Appendix III

List of 2024-2025 Chronically Underperforming School Districts

Holyoke Public Schools⁴
Lawrence Public Schools
Southbridge Public Schools

List of 2024-2025 Chronically Underperforming Schools

<u>District Name</u>	<u>School Name</u>
Boston	Paul A. Dever Elementary
Boston	UP Academy Holland
New Bedford	John Avery Parker Elementary ⁵

⁴ Exited in the 2024-25 school year.

⁵ Exited in the 2024-25 school year.