Massachusetts
Consolidated State Plan
Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
Draft for Public Comment – February 2017

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Letter from Commissioner Chester

With the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Congress maintained the Elementary and Secondary Education Act’s original focus on advancing equity and excellence for all students, but particularly for disadvantaged and high need students. ESSA’s priority areas—academic standards that represent readiness for the expectations of post-secondary education and employers; accountability, support, and intervention for school improvement; ensuring effective educators; supporting all students; and academic assessments that form the backbone of accountability for results—align closely to the Commonwealth’s existing strategies.

Massachusetts has much to be proud of in K–12 public education. Our schools are recognized as best in class among the states, and our students perform at academic levels commensurate with the highest performing education systems in the world. Yet despite our overall success, substantial gaps in student outcomes persist in our state, and too often those gaps are correlated with students’ racial/ethnic identification, family economic background, disability status, and English language proficiency.

ESSA provides the opportunity for Massachusetts to refine, enhance, and accelerate our efforts to deliver a world-class education to all of our students, including students for whom we historically have not been successful. As such, we are considering changes to our existing system. Our draft ESSA state plan includes ideas that have emerged from the numerous discussions, meetings, and submissions involving thousands of educators, parents, citizens, business, and public officials from across the Commonwealth.

We hope that you will provide us with feedback on the ideas in the draft plan. Among the areas that we particularly are interested in your input are:

**Accountability Inputs**

Some of the changes under consideration relate to our school and district accountability system and are designed to ensure an appropriate balance between expanding the elements that contribute to accountability metric on the one hand, and ease of interpreting the metric on the other. One way of thinking about this is in terms of signal versus noise. While the incorporation of numerous elements in an accountability measure provides a wide range of inputs, the resulting measure may provide a weak signal regarding the efficacy of the academic program.

Another way of thinking about the elements that contribute to the accountability metric is to think of outcomes (e.g., student academic attainment) versus inputs (e.g., access to curricular offerings), with our ultimate goal being students who are well prepared for success after high school. Yet another consideration is the question of whether potential input measures essentially become prescriptions and/or mandates. If the answer is yes, then the question is whether the evidence for the nexus of measure to student attainment warrants its inclusion in the accountability system.
An additional consideration for accountability design is whether an element is a robust reflection of the outcome or input that we are measuring. An element that is easily manipulated may promote practices that improve the element’s score, but not practices that are productive for students.

A final note regarding accountability inputs is based on the production of school and district profiles (report cards) that will provide a detailed profile of student enrollment; student attainment; opportunities and program offerings; faculty; and expenditures. We anticipate that the school and district profiles will include elements that extend beyond those that are included in the accountability system design. We welcome your suggestions on what should be reported without necessarily being included in the accountability system.

**Accountability Metrics**

We are considering several changes that are designed to provide more accurate reflections of school and district productivity. We welcome your feedback on these. For example, moving to average scale score is designed to capture more fine-grained achievement and progress increments than is provided by the Composite Performance Index, as well as to capture student performance beyond proficiency. The use of mean (average) Student Growth Percentiles is designed to provide a more accurate measure of changes in year-to-year growth than is the use of median SGPs.

ESSA requires that we set improvement targets for each school and district, as well as for subgroups of students. Further, the improvement targets must expect stronger progress for districts, schools, and student groups that are behind. This methodology requires continuous improvement for all while expecting gaps in achievement to narrow. We encourage you to look at our initial thoughts on setting targets and provide us with feedback.

Among the features we have included in this draft is an enhanced focus on school and district success in accelerating the progress of students furthest behind (“high needs” students). A second feature concerns the designation of schools and districts into levels, or tiers. We are proposing that both normative (how a school’s performance compares to others) and criterion (the school’s performance relative to its aggregate and high needs students targets) measures would determine the placement. Further, we are considering disentangling districts’ designations from the designation of their lowest performing school.

**Commitment to Transforming our Lowest Performing Schools and Districts**

The Commonwealth will use ESSA to refine and expand our efforts to turn around our lowest performing schools and districts. Building on our progress in Lawrence, Holyoke, and Southbridge, we will use our receivership authority in districts where achievement is low and we see little evidence of progress over time. Borrowing from our promising effort in Springfield, we will expand the use of innovation partnership zones that create a fresh start for a cluster of low performing schools with freedom from district and collective bargaining requirements that are an impediment to turnaround. State legislation has been introduced that will allow the creation of innovation partnership zones either at the volition of a school committee or through Commissioner-initiated designation.
We will continue to expand the use of joint district/state governance as a strategy for turnaround, which we have achieved with the Springfield Empowerment Zone and elements of which are in play in Boston, New Bedford, and Salem. Across our turnaround efforts, we are guided by conditions that our research demonstrates are essential for successful continuous improvement, including school autonomy coupled with accountability for progress; communication, collaboration, and commitment among staff for the turnaround; instructional focus that includes classroom feedback; student supports; and a safe, orderly, and respectful climate among students and faculty.

**Human Capital/Workforce Development**

The Department has revamped teacher and administrator preparation approval standards to incorporate a more robust focus on pre-service performance of candidates, job placement, and graduates’ impact on student learning. We are expanding teacher residency programs and streamlining licensure requirements to reduce unnecessary barriers to entry for qualified candidates while increasing opportunities for performance-based licensure.

State legislation has been filed to link preparation with induction during the first years on the job as well as to create career advancement incentives for effective teachers to take on assignments in low performing schools. The legislation incorporates elements of the teacher career ladder that is successfully being implemented in Lawrence as well as elements of systems in other nations that reward teachers with career advancement opportunities if they assist where they are needed most (e.g., turning around a low performing school).

We will be more deliberate in our approach to expanding the recruitment and pipeline of school leaders and preparing school leaders for taking on turnaround assignments. We are pursuing cohort-based training by proven providers with a track record of success in strengthening the skills of principals as instructional leaders who have demonstrated successful impact on student achievement.

**Connections Across Sectors**

Under the leadership of Education Secretary Peyser, the Departments of Early Education and Care, Elementary and Secondary Education, and Higher Education, along with the UMass system, are collaborating on initiatives to ensure strong and diverse pathways from early education through higher education. In addition, through a joint effort of three Secretariats—Education, Labor and Workforce Development, and Housing and Economic Development—a Workforce Skills Cabinet is active in expanding and linking K-12, higher education, and career/technical education opportunities to workforce and economic development needs.

Initiatives resulting from cross-sector collaboration include the expansion of access to career and technical training; increased internship opportunities, particularly in STEM fields; a joint K-12 and higher education early college initiative; and an early literacy initiative. We expect to build on our success in cross-sector collaboration to further our ESSA goal of preparing students for success after high school.

**Innovation in Pursuit of Student Success**
Innovation is a hallmark of the Commonwealth in all sectors, and no less so in K-12 education. Examples include new governance and school turnaround strategies as well as district receivership initiatives (outlined above). We have an active public-private partnership (Massachusetts Personalized Learning EdTech) to employ technology and digital resources in the support of more individualized learning environments. We have also certified two online virtual schools.

School choice in the form of charter and regional vocational technical schools represent a high functioning and innovative element of the K-12 system. In many cases, these choice schools are overenrolled and as a result are turning away students. Each is informing the broader public delivery system in multiple ways.

Charter schools’ use of extended time led the way for state support of extended time in traditional schools as well as serving as a dynamic component of successful school turnaround. We and our partners at the local district level have enlisted successful charter school operators to be responsible for the turnaround of underperforming schools.

Regional vocational technical schools are expanding their reach beyond requiring full-time enrollment in order to provide access to students who do not currently have access. This includes hybrid programs where students spend part of their day in their traditional high school and the remainder in a vocational technical school.

The Commonwealth also encourages “innovation schools” wherein faculty can propose innovative programs and freedom from district, collective bargaining, and state constraints that would impede the program. More than 40 Innovation Schools are in operation statewide.

Public Comment Period
The public comment period on this plan, which we expect to submit to the U.S. Department of Education in early April, is open through March 9, 2017. Our draft plan is informed by over two decades of successful experience with standards-based reform, but we know we can’t simply rest on our laurels. We have attempted to be ambitious in our aspirations while balancing the various, and sometimes competing, goals that we have set for ourselves, but we may not have always made the right choices. I encourage you to submit suggestions, large and small, on how to improve our plan. I look forward to your suggestions and the work ahead to accomplish our ambitious goals. Please submit any comments you may have about the plan via this feedback survey or email essa@doe.mass.edu.

Sincerely,

Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education
Massachusetts ESSA Plan: Executive Summary

Revised draft for discussion – February 2017

Introduction

With the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Congress maintained the Elementary and Secondary Education Act’s original focus on advancing equity and excellence for all students, particularly disadvantaged and high need students. ESSA’s priority areas—academic standards that represent readiness for the expectations of post-secondary education and employers; accountability, support, and improvement for schools; ensuring effective educators; supporting all students; and academic assessments that form the backbone of accountability for results—align closely to the Commonwealth’s existing strategies.

Massachusetts has much to be proud of in K–12 public education. Our schools are recognized as best in class among the states, and our students perform at academic levels commensurate with the highest performing education systems in the world. Yet despite our overall success, substantial gaps in student outcomes persist in our state, and too often those gaps are correlated with students’ racial/ethnic identification, family economic background, disability status, and English language proficiency.

The goal of the Massachusetts public education system is to prepare all students for success after high school. This means that all students will be prepared to successfully complete credit-bearing college courses or certificate or workplace training programs, enter economically viable career pathways, and engage as active and responsible citizens in our democracy. Our work is to broaden students’ opportunities and close gaps so that all students, regardless of background, are ready for the world that awaits them after high school.

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education employs five strategies to advance towards this goal:

1) Strengthen standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessments
2) Promote educator development
3) Support social-emotional learning, health, and safety
4) Turn around the lowest performing districts and schools
5) Use technology and data to support student learning

Our particular focus is using these strategies to **strengthen the quality and breadth of the instructional program students experience**, as that is our major lever for ensuring success after high school for all students. This focus includes special attention to two areas where state performance has been stagnant—**early grades literacy and middle grades mathematics**—to ensure our students are well prepared with strong literacy and mathematics skills. It also includes special attention to our high schools, ensuring that all students have **multiple high-quality pathways to educational and career opportunities after secondary school**. Lastly, we continually focus on providing **additional supports for students who have historically struggled to attain our proficiency standard**—including English language learners, students receiving special education services, and students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds—to ensure that we reach all students.

Massachusetts intends to use its ESSA implementation to refine, deepen, and accelerate our work on our five strategies and to promote coherence across our strategies through our focus on instructional quality. We will strengthen the design of our system of accountability to better identify those districts and schools
making the most and least progress towards improving student outcomes, and we will improve our assistance for those farthest behind. And we will help districts reconsider how they use their people, time, and fiscal resources in support of these objectives.

We have great confidence in the ability of the Commonwealth’s excellent educators and education system to successfully tackle the gaps in performance that exist, and will continue to highlight and share the incredible work being done in schools and districts. Our state’s success in turning around schools and districts convinces us that low achievement in high poverty communities and neighborhoods is not predestined. We look forward to using the opportunity that Congress has provided through ESSA to build on what is working in Massachusetts, to curtail what is not working, and to accelerate our progress, particularly in our lowest performing schools and districts.

Our successes so far and the challenges that remain

By any measure, Massachusetts public school students are among the strongest performing in the nation and the world. Our students have scored at the top of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (“the nation’s report card”) tests in grades 4 and 8 English language arts and mathematics for over a decade—a result unparalleled in any other state. In the most recent international PISA test of 15 year olds, none of the 72 participating countries or territories performed higher than Massachusetts in reading, only one performed higher in science, and only 11 performed higher in mathematics. Our four-year high school graduation rates have improved steadily each year to 87.3 percent for the graduation cohort of 2015, and fewer than 5,400 students dropped out in the 2014–15 school year, down from nearly 10,000 in 2007–08.

While we have made strong strides in providing an excellent education in Massachusetts, we have still not attained our goal to prepare all students for success after high school. A few facts highlight the broader story:

- Although most economically viable career pathways today require at least some postsecondary education, about one-quarter of Massachusetts public high school graduates do not enroll in a college or university in the fall immediately after their high school graduation.
- Among Massachusetts public high school graduates who go on to enroll in Massachusetts public colleges, more than one-third take at least one remedial, non-credit-bearing course in their first semester in college.
- Student performance overall is strong compared to other states and nations, but some subjects and grade spans have not shown improvement. For example, proficiency in grade 3 reading has lingered at approximately 60 percent of students for more than a decade, as has proficiency in grade 6 mathematics.
- Students who are absent from school are not experiencing the curriculum and instruction that will help them become prepared for success. Yet 12 percent of students were chronically absent last year, meaning that they missed 10 percent or more of their days of enrollment in a public school.
- Exposure to a broad curriculum is an important part of a student’s overall educational development. Yet at the high school level, only 72 percent of students completed MassCore, the state’s recommended curriculum for college readiness. About 6 percent of elementary and middle school students took no arts course in 2015–16; at the high school level, more than 50 percent took no arts.
• In 2016, 79 percent of grade 9 students completed and passed all their courses; 21 percent did not. In Massachusetts, students who do not pass all their grade 9 courses are 14 times more likely to not complete high school in four years.

• Exposure to college-level coursework while in high school has been demonstrated to increase the likelihood of success in college. Yet only 36 percent of Massachusetts public high school juniors and seniors took at least one Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate (college-level) course in 2016.

• Critically, the students who are not experiencing these opportunities are disproportionately our historically underserved, or high needs, student groups: students who are English language learners, receiving special education services, economically disadvantaged, and/or members of racial and ethnic minority groups. Performance for high needs students on the above indicators is substantially worse. For example, proficiency rates for high needs students in both grade 3 reading and grade 6 math are approximately 20 percentage points lower than proficiency rates for all students, cohort graduation rates for disadvantaged students in Massachusetts are 10 to 20 percentage points lower than our state averages, and these students are two to three times more likely to drop out of school.

Advancing and accelerating our state strategies will help us close these gaps and move closer to our goal of success after high school for all Massachusetts public school students.

**Our state strategies and connections to ESSA**

1) **Strengthen standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessments**
2) **Promote educator development**

Our expectations for student learning, the instructional program that students experience, and student success depend on the effectiveness of our educators. Thus, our first two strategies are fundamentally intertwined, and we benefit from their synergy when we tackle them together. Our aim is that all students attain ambitious academic content standards as outlined in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks by participating in an instructional program that well prepares them for the transition after high school, provides support for them as individuals, and ensures access to great teachers and administrators. To accomplish this, we have identified three immediate priorities:

- **Priority 1**: Increase the effectiveness of first-year teachers to have an impact on students on day one and accelerate teacher impact in years two and three.

We will advance this work under ESSA by:

• **Strengthening educator preparation programs** to ensure the effectiveness of first-year teachers. We will continue to refine our educator preparation program review process to focus on outcomes rather than inputs, including implementing performance-based assessments for teacher and principal candidates. We will also encourage educator preparation programs and school districts to create structured partnerships that benefit the preparation program, the school district, and the first-year teacher.

• **Supporting implementation of an educator evaluation and development framework that provides educators with meaningful feedback**. The state will continue to work with districts to support strong implementation of the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework by providing guidance and resources, such as a calibration instrument that promotes shared understanding of expectations for strong instruction and conversations about effective feedback.
• **Directing greater attention to students’ learning experiences and their access to effective educators.** We will provide reports to districts that identify and compare rates at which student subgroups are taught by inexperienced, out-of-field, and ineffective teachers. Accompanying these tools will be support to districts in use of this tool through technical assistance, comprehensive video tutorials, and other resources.

• **Expanding the principal pipeline and promoting principal development.** The state will also provide support for all principals’ understanding of the curriculum frameworks and will promote strong implementation, high instructional expectations, and effective feedback for educators. We will also work to build our cadre of principals prepared to serve in turnaround schools, so that we can accelerate the improvement of those schools through effective school leadership strategies.

**Priority 2:** Increase the quality of instruction such that instruction across all of our schools and districts is aligned to the high expectations of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.

We will advance this work under ESSA by:

• **Improving program and instructional quality in early learning.** In an effort to strengthen developmental and learning outcomes for our state’s youngest students, the state will continue to address program and instructional quality for public school programs in preschool through third grade. We will continue to work collaboratively with our state colleagues at the Department of Early Education and Care, as we know successful connections across state agencies are critical to achieving excellence within the K-12 system. This initiative aligns with the focus for our collaborative work with the Department of Public Health on our State Systemic Improvement Plan for students with disabilities: improved outcomes for preschool children with disabilities. Together, we will continue to build partnerships and alignment between state agencies, public schools, and community-based preschool and after-school and out-of-school time programs.

• **Focusing statewide efforts on early grades literacy and middle grades mathematics: areas where student performance is relatively weak or stagnant.** The early literacy focus of our state plan will ensure that students reach upper elementary grades with strong literacy skills. The middle grades mathematics focus will ensure that greater numbers of students reach high school ready to succeed in higher level mathematics. The state will prioritize these areas for supports and assistance for districts so that we can shift our trajectory upward.

• **Increasing student access to an ambitious, engaging, well rounded curriculum.** We will support educators to understand the curriculum frameworks and employ high expectations for instruction. We will encourage districts to increase student access to high quality curriculum and enrichment opportunities that include the core subject areas, civics, the arts, foreign languages, computer science, career development education, and alternate pathways to preparation for success after high school. We will provide guidance, technical assistance, and professional learning networks to support implementation of these initiatives, for both pre-service and in-service educators. This support will include targeted support for educators working with students with disabilities and English learners.

**Priority 3:** Increase student access to the supports they need to be successful in achieving the standards in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.

We will advance this work under ESSA by:

• **Implementing more effective programs to serve the students farthest behind.** ESSA provides us with many opportunities to improve results for student groups that have historically struggled to meet proficiency standards: students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, English language learners, and students receiving special education services, in particular. Through grant
funding, prioritized access to resources, and program initiatives at the state and local levels, we will accelerate their improvement.

- **Implementing the new MCAS test and supporting districts to develop common assessments.** The state will upgrade the MCAS to better measure the critical thinking skills students need for success in the 21st century. The new test, informally called Next Generation MCAS, will build upon the best aspects of the MCAS assessments that have served the Commonwealth well for the past two decades. The tests will be administered entirely online for grades 3 to 8 by 2019. We will also work with districts to develop assessments that are common across schools, grades, and subjects so that they can more effectively compare progress and provide consistent feedback to teachers on their students’ performance.

### 3) Support social-emotional learning, health, and safety

Academic and social-emotional skills and competencies are mutually reinforcing. Thus, preparing all students for success must include attending to their social emotional and health development. We will accomplish this by promoting systems and strategies that foster safe, positive, healthy, culturally competent and inclusive learning environments that address students’ varied needs in order to improve educational outcomes for all students.

We will advance this work under ESSA by:

- **Promoting social and emotional learning (SEL)** with the goal of creating conditions that will support statewide implementation of SEL in preschool through high school. Through participation in the Collaborating States Initiative facilitated by the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL), we will update and expand guidelines for implementing SEL curricula and explore ways to incorporate SEL into the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.

- **Ensuring a positive school climate** and providing safe, healthy and supportive learning environments for all students. We will provide training, technical assistance, access to resources and guidance to schools and districts as they consider using Title IV, Part A funds in this realm, and will continue to support initiatives and resources such as: Safe and Supportive Schools Framework and Self-Assessment Tool, Rethinking Discipline, Bullying Prevention and Intervention, Substance Use and Abuse Prevention. In addition, we will explore using a school climate indicator in our measures of school performance.

- **Promoting family engagement** as a key lever that contributes to positive outcomes for students. We will continue to find opportunities to provide training, technical assistance, resources, and guidance to schools and partners on effective family engagement strategies that promote the development of strong working relationships with families and appropriate community organizations to support students’ success.

### 4) Turn around the lowest performing districts and schools

The state’s lowest performing schools require evidence-based interventions and strong educators to support rapid improvement in their ability to prepare their students for success. Over the past seven years, Massachusetts has used strong authorities codified in state law to implement an aggressive system of identification, support, and intervention in the state’s lowest performing schools and districts. Under ESSA, we will continue to work with districts as they strive to improve underperforming schools. Where districts are unable to implement effective improvement initiatives, we will utilize our authority under state statute to intervene.
Proposed changes to our school and district accountability system, described below, will help us prioritize which schools most need state assistance to improve student outcomes. The accountability system will identify the lowest performing 5 percent of schools, schools with the lowest performing subgroups, and high schools with four-year graduation rates below 67 percent so that those schools can be put first for assistance.

We will support the lowest performing schools by:

- Establishing a school-wide community of practice through leadership, shared responsibility, and professional collaboration;
- Employing intentional practices for improving instruction;
- Providing student-specific supports and instruction to all students; and
- Providing appropriate social, emotional, and behavioral supports in order to create a safe, orderly, and respectful learning environment for students and teachers.

Research on Massachusetts schools demonstrates that formerly low performing schools in our state that have changed their trajectories implement these four practices with fidelity. They are the cornerstones of our turnaround strategy and guide all our interactions with our lowest performing schools and districts.

We will advance this work under ESSA by:

- Providing low performing schools direct expert assistance, funding and research-based resources, and preferred access to professional development. These might include coaching, professional development focused on instructional leadership and curriculum development, planning and program implementation support, and data analysis assistance.
- Intervening in chronically underperforming districts and schools. In instances when all other avenues to implement ambitious and accelerated reforms have been exhausted in turnaround schools and districts, and when it is in the best interest of students, the state will place districts and schools under state receivership in accordance with state law. At present, three school districts and four schools are under receivership.
- Supporting districts in establishing alternative governance structures for low performing schools that struggle to make rapid improvements in student achievement. Alternative governance structures, such as Innovation Partnership Zones, keep schools within a district’s control but allow for additional authorizations that may be necessary for persistently low performing schools. To date, two Massachusetts districts, Boston and Springfield, have negotiated alternative governance structures, and pending state legislation may expand opportunities for districts to establish Innovation Partnership Zones for two or more low performing schools.

5) Use technology and data to support teaching and learning

ESE seeks to improve the state’s data infrastructure and promote a culture of effective data and technology use in districts and schools. We will accomplish this by investing in efforts to increase access to technology, streamlining reporting requirements, and providing resources and tools to advance effective data use and personalized learning.

We will advance this work under ESSA by:

- Shining a light on equity and access concerns through data reporting. ESSA requires additional reporting on school-level expenditures and access to effective educators that will provide districts with valuable information and comparisons about how they allocate resources to their lowest performing students and schools.
• **Building technological capacity and infrastructure.** ESSA funds will supplement existing state efforts to bridge the digital divide that exists among schools across the Commonwealth and expand access to high-quality digital learning opportunities, particularly for students in rural, remote, and underserved areas. We will also continue to implement the Schools Interoperability Framework to streamline and automate data reporting for districts.

• **Supporting high-quality professional development for educators to personalize learning and improve academic achievement through technology.** Through a public-private partnership, we will catalyze personalized learning in the Commonwealth to better prepare students for their future. Among other activities, the partnership will help schools pilot projects that allow students to progress through the curriculum based on demonstrated competency on the expectations set forth in the curriculum frameworks.

• **Updating and improving our Edwin Analytics tools.** Edwin Analytics is the system by which the state provides data reports to districts and schools. We will update the Edwin Analytics reports to report on data from the state’s Next Generation MCAS test and will continue to add to the bank of reports available to help districts better understand their student data. We will also add and update reports for educator preparation programs to strengthen their support for aspiring teachers and administrators.

**Other work supporting our focus on success after high school**

The agency undertakes a number of other initiatives designed to support student access to multiple high-quality pathways to educational and career opportunities after high school. These programs improve the quality of students’ high school experiences, including increasing graduation rates, exposing students to career and technical skills, and promoting postsecondary access.

We will advance this work under ESSA by:

• **Supporting use of our Early Warning Indicator System.** The state produces reports that predict the likelihood of students successfully attaining their next academic milestone throughout their K–12 and postsecondary careers. ESSA will allow us to continue to help districts identify students that are likely to be off track and provide resources to implement effective interventions.

• **Providing graduation supports for student subgroups.** ESE is developing specific tools and supports to help schools and districts increase graduation rates for students with disabilities and English learners, whose graduation rates have historically lagged behind state averages.

• **Expanding postsecondary access.** ESE continues to promote the development of early college models and partners with organizations across the state to increase the number of graduates that enroll in postsecondary education or training. We will continue to collaborate with our state partners at the Department of Higher Education to ensure that expectations, experiences, and connections between agencies are well-aligned.

• **Expanding access to career development education and high-quality career pathways.** The agency provides funding and technical assistance to schools, districts, and workforce investment boards to increase the number of students who participate in meaningful work-based learning while in high school. Of particular note, Massachusetts recently won a $2 million grant to accelerate the development of high-quality career pathways and help ensure that high needs students are prepared for success after graduation.
School and district accountability

The state’s accountability system is our primary way of measuring each school’s and district’s progress on attaining the state goal of success after high school for all students. ESSA provides us with an opportunity to refine our accountability system to better align it with the agency’s goals and strategies. This will allow us to broaden the dimensions of performance we consider, as well as to improve our system for assisting those schools and districts farthest behind in attaining the state’s goals.

Our state’s existing accountability system rests primarily on student achievement and growth and graduation data, with an emphasis on closing gaps for historically low performing subgroups. These data are fundamental to the educational enterprise. If students are not proficient on grade-level material and are not graduating, then schools and districts are not doing their jobs. And if not all students are performing well, the accountability system should highlight those gaps.

In our proposed new accountability system, these data remain core measures of school and district results, and opportunity gaps for high needs students remain of paramount consideration. In addition, we propose to expand the measures included in the system to create a more comprehensive picture of student opportunity and outcomes, and increase the value placed on improvement. By doing so, we intend to promote a more well-rounded view of school performance and to encourage schools and districts to focus on increasing equitable access to educational opportunities. These measures also more strongly connect to our agency strategies.

In keeping with the focus on excellence and equity, our proposed new system will prioritize strong outcomes for all students and closing gaps for high needs students. High needs students are defined as students who are current or former English language learners, receive special education services, and/or are economically disadvantaged.

Proposed measures to be included in the system for elementary and middle schools are as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core measures</th>
<th>Status for ALL students</th>
<th>Gap closing for HIGH NEEDS students</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ELA and math scaled score</td>
<td>1. ELA, math, and science gap reduction</td>
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<td>2. Science performance index</td>
<td>2. ELA and math student growth percentile</td>
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<td>3. ELA and math student growth percentile</td>
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<td>4. ACCESS progress (English language learners)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Additional measures</th>
<th>Status for ALL students</th>
<th>Gap closing for HIGH NEEDS students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Chronic student absenteeism</td>
<td>1. Improvement in chronic absenteeism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Access to the arts</td>
<td>2. Improvement in access to the arts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. School climate</td>
<td>3. Improvement in school climate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Proposed indicators for high schools are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status for ALL students</th>
<th>Gap closing for HIGH NEEDS students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core measures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. ELA and math scaled score</td>
<td>1. ELA, math, and science gap reduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Science performance index</td>
<td>2. ELA and math student growth percentile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. ELA and math student growth percentile</td>
<td>3. ACCESS growth (English language learners)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. ACCESS progress (English language learners)</td>
<td>4. Graduation and dropout rate gap reduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Graduation and dropout rates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional measures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Chronic student absenteeism</td>
<td>1. Improvement in chronic absenteeism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Grade 9 course passing</td>
<td>2. Improvement in grade 9 course passing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Access to advanced coursework</td>
<td>3. Improvement in access to advanced coursework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Access to the arts</td>
<td>4. Improvement in access to the arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Breadth of curriculum</td>
<td>5. Improvement in breadth of curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. School climate</td>
<td>6. Improvement in school climate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These measures would be aggregated into an overall school performance percentile. Per the federal law, the core measures outlined above would be given much greater weight in the calculation than the additional measures.

The school percentile would be used as the first step for classifying schools into performance levels. Each level would have an associated percentile range. But, the system for designating performance levels would not be entirely relative. Every year the state would also set out performance targets based on the measures in the percentile for each of the school performance levels. If a school met or exceeded those targets, it could attain that level even if its percentile would have otherwise placed it lower. In this way the expectations for performance are clear and known ahead of time for all schools, and performance level designations do not depend solely on the performance of other schools.

A district’s level would be determined by the overall performance of its students, rather than the level of its lowest performing school as it is currently. Additional measures of school and district performance beyond those in the formal accountability system would be included on a public report card to provide further insight and comparative data to the public.

Per the requirements of the federal law, the lowest performing 5 percent of schools and high schools with four-year graduation rates below 67 percent will be identified for comprehensive support and improvement. Schools above the bottom 5 percent overall but that have very low performing subgroups will be identified for targeted support and improvement. These schools, along with schools nearing those categories, will implement a turnaround plan to improve student performance and will be eligible for a wide variety of supports and services aligned to our evidence-based practices for school turnaround, as described above.
An important caveat to this section of our plan is that we do not currently have state data on several of the indicators we have proposed. Most notably, we are just beginning a new statewide assessment program in the 2016–17 school year so do not yet have data on student performance under the new assessment system. Until we have data and can conduct simulations for combining multiple indicators to generate the summary measures of school and district performance, we present this section as a conceptual framework for the accountability system we plan to launch at the end of the 2017–18 school year. The academic and other indicators that we generate at the close of the 2016–17 school year will serve as a baseline for the new system.

**Strategic resource use**

In an era of increasing demands for public services as the state’s population ages, it is unlikely that new financial resources will be coming to the education sector in future years. Districts must find ways to get more out of the people, time, and fiscal resources they already have to help improve outcomes for students, including by reducing inequities in the allocation of resources to different types of students. To this end, the state has created a new Office of Resource Allocation Strategy and Planning to develop new tools and supports for districts to rethink how they use their resources.

We will advance this work under ESSA by:

- **Developing a consolidated district application for federal education grants consistent with state and local priorities.** Currently districts apply separately for each of the funding sources provided for under ESSA. By creating a consolidated application connected to our state strategies, we will encourage districts to use their federal resources more strategically towards improving outcomes for all students.

- **Enhancing reports on school-level expenditures.** Massachusetts already collects school-level per-pupil data and reports on them in a limited way, but we will use ESSA as an opportunity to advance our work in this area. We have already begun pilot-testing Resource Allocation and District Action Reports that use these data to provide comparisons and insights on how districts use their resources. These reports will be available statewide during the 2017–18 school year.

- **Requiring resource use reviews in the lowest performing schools.** The turnaround plan for schools identified for comprehensive or targeted support and intervention will include an analysis of inequities in access to resources for students in those schools, to inform the strategies included in the plan.

**Ongoing review and refinement**

In developing this state plan, we benefited greatly from the voluminous feedback we received from our stakeholders. We collected feedback over the course of nearly 12 months, during which we connected with nearly 200 stakeholder groups, along with hundreds of educators, parents, and students. We also conducted five public forums in fall 2016 with more than 250 participants; participated in close to 100 community meetings and presentations; and received more than 1,500 responses to our stakeholder feedback surveys. We made numerous revisions to our plans as a result of this engagement. We are confident that we have developed a plan that is both responsive to our stakeholders’ interests and ambitious in its goals for our state’s students.

However, a plan is only as good as its implementation. Our Office of Planning and Research (OPR) will take the lead on ESSA implementation for the agency. Over the past six-plus years, OPR has employed a sophisticated approach to monitoring and improving the quality of our implementation and refining our improvement strategies over time. This approach identifies key initiatives that support each agency strategy.
and develops specific plans, benchmarks, and outcomes for each. We dedicate three ESE staff to monitoring the implementation of these plans and assisting program offices with analytical and strategic capacity to extend their work. We will continue to use this method of review and continuous improvement to advance our work and hold ourselves accountable for our ongoing efforts to improve student outcomes, particularly for historically disadvantaged subgroups.

We will promote continuous improvement in districts by taking advantage of new resources we have already developed for district strategic planning, the consolidated federal grant application described above, and an enhanced focus on performance and outcomes in our program review and monitoring activities. Our Planning for Success model for district strategic planning involves three steps: creating a plan, aligning systems to the plan, and implementing the plan (including evaluating and monitoring progress). We will encourage districts to use this planning model as the structure underlying the plan we will require as part of their annual federal grant application, which will begin to help districts to establish local evaluation practices where they do not already exist. Over time we will add in more supports to help districts evaluate their progress, particularly in conducting formal evaluations where needed as part of the language throughout ESSA that requires evidence-based interventions. This work will be driven by our new Office of Resource Allocation Strategy and Planning within OPR, which has responsibility for promoting strategic resource use and grant coordination in districts. Modifications to program review and monitoring activities are being led by our Office of Public School Monitoring.

As we refine our implementation of our plan, stakeholder voice and analysis of the strong work underway in Massachusetts districts and schools will continue to play a prominent role. We hold regular meetings with many of our stakeholder groups, including superintendents, principals, teachers, union leadership, school committee members, state board members, state legislators, parents, students, and so forth. We have established intentional processes that allow us to study the effectiveness of our initiatives, and we will continue to learn from local implementation efforts and make adjustments to our plans as necessary. We will continue these conversations and analyses, and also offer additional opportunities for stakeholders to provide input, particularly at key junctures when we are considering significant changes to an element of the plan.
Introduction from U.S. Department of Education

Section 8302 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), permits the Secretary to establish procedures and criteria under which, after consultation with the Governor, a State educational agency (SEA) may submit a consolidated State plan designed to simplify the application requirements and reduce burden for SEAs. The Secretary must establish, for each covered program under section 8302 of the ESEA, and additional programs designated by the Secretary, the descriptions, information, assurances, and other material required to be included in a consolidated State plan.

The U.S. Department of Education (Department) encourages each State to think comprehensively about implementation of programs across the ESEA and to leverage funding to ensure a focus on equity and excellence for all students as it develops its consolidated State plan. Further, the Department aims to support collaboration and efficiency across multiple programs to help ensure that all children have significant opportunity to receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality education and that each SEA works to close achievement gaps.

The Department identified five overarching components and corresponding elements that integrate the included programs and that must be addressed by each SEA electing to submit a consolidated State plan. These components encourage each SEA to plan and implement included programs in a comprehensive way to support local educational agencies (LEAs), schools, and all subgroups of students. Consistent with the Secretary’s authority in 34 C.F.R. § 299.13(d) to establish the date, time and manner for submission of the consolidated State plan, the Department has established this template for submitting the consolidated State plan. Within each component, each SEA is required to provide descriptions related to implementation of the programs the SEA includes in the consolidated State plan. The consolidated State plan template includes a section for each of the components, as well as a section for the long-term goals required under the statewide accountability system in section 1111(c)(4)(a) of the ESEA and 34 C.F.R. § 299.17(a).

The sections are as follows:

1. Long-Term Goals
2. Consultation and Performance Management
3. Academic Assessments
4. Accountability, Support, and Improvement for Schools
5. Supporting Excellent Educators
6. Supporting All Students

When developing its consolidated State plan, the Department encourages each SEA to reflect on its overall vision and how the different sections of the consolidated State plan work together to create one comprehensive approach to improving outcomes for all students. The Department encourages each SEA to consider: (1) what is the SEA’s vision with regard to its education system; (2) how does this plan help drive toward that vision; and (3) how will the SEA evaluate its effectiveness on an ongoing basis?

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1 Unless otherwise indicated, citations to the ESEA refer to the ESEA, as amended by the ESSA.
2 In developing its consolidated State plan, each SEA must meet the requirements section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) and describe the steps it will take to ensure equitable access to and participation in the included programs for students, teachers and other program beneficiaries with special needs.
Instructions for Completing the Consolidated State Plan

Each SEA must address all required elements of the consolidated State plan. Although the information an SEA provides for each requirement will reflect that particular requirement, an SEA is encouraged to consider whether particular descriptions or strategies meet multiple requirements or goals. In developing its consolidated State plan, an SEA should consider all requirements to ensure that it develops a comprehensive and coherent consolidated State plan.

Submission Procedures

Each SEA must submit to the Department its consolidated State plan by one of the following two deadlines of the SEA’s choice:

- **April 3, 2017;** or
- **September 18, 2017.**

The Department will not review plans on a rolling basis; consequently, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 299.13(d)(2)(ii), a consolidated State plan or an individual program State plan that addresses all of the required components received:

- On or prior to April 3, 2017 is considered to be submitted by the SEA and received by the Secretary on April 3, 2017.
- Between April 4 and September 18, 2017 is considered to be submitted by the SEA and received by the Secretary on September 18, 2017.

Each SEA must submit either a consolidated State plan or individual program State plans for all included programs that meet all of the statutory and regulatory requirements in a single submission by one of the above deadlines.

The Department will provide additional information regarding the manner of submission (e.g., paper or electronic) at a later date consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 299.13(d)(2)(i).

Publication of State Plan

After the Secretary approves a consolidated State plan or an individual program State plan, an SEA must publish its approved plan(s) on the SEA’s Web site in a format and language, to the extent practicable, that the public can access and understand in compliance with the requirements under 34 C.F.R. § 200.21(b)(1)-(3).

For Further Information: If you have any questions, please contact your Program Officer at OSS.[State]@ed.gov (e.g., OSS.Alabama@ed.gov).
### Cover Page

#### Contact Information and Signatures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>SEA Contact (Name and Position)</strong></th>
<th><strong>Telephone</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mailing Address:</strong> Massachusetts Department of Elementary &amp; Secondary Education 75 Pleasant Street Malden, MA 02148</td>
<td><strong>Email Address:</strong> <a href="mailto:essa@doe.mass.edu">essa@doe.mass.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Authorized SEA Representative (Printed Name)</strong> Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D. Commissioner of Elementary &amp; Secondary Education</td>
<td><strong>Telephone:</strong> 781-338-3100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Signature of Authorized SEA Representative</strong></th>
<th><strong>Date:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Signature of Governor (If Applicable)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Date:</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The SEA, through its authorized representative, agrees to the enclosed assurances.
Programs Included in the Consolidated State Plan

Instructions: Indicate below by checking the appropriate box(es) which programs the SEA included in its consolidated State plan. If an SEA elected not to include one or more of the programs below in its consolidated State plan, but is eligible and still wishes to receive funds under that program or programs, it must submit individual program plans that meet all statutory requirements with its consolidated State plan in a single submission, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 299.13(d)(iii).

☐ Check this box if the SEA has included all of the following programs in its consolidated State plan.

or

If all programs are not included, check each program listed below for which the SEA is submitting an individual program State plan:

☐ Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by State and Local Educational Agencies

☐ Title I, Part C: Education of Migratory Children

☐ Title I, Part D: Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk

☐ Title II, Part A: Supporting Effective Instruction

☐ Title III, Part A: Language Instruction for English Learners and Immigrant Students

☐ Title IV, Part A: Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants

☐ Title IV, Part B: 21st Century Community Learning Centers

☐ Title V, Part B, Subpart 2: Rural and Low-Income School Program

☐ Title VII, Subpart B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (McKinney-Vento Act): Education for Homeless Children and Youths Program

Educator Equity Extension

☐ Check this box if the SEA is requesting an extension for calculating and reporting student-level educator equity data under 34 C.F.R. § 299.13(d)(3). An SEA that receives this extension must calculate and report in this consolidated State plan the differences in rates based on school-level data for each of the groups listed in section 5.3.B and describe how the SEA will eliminate any differences in rates based on the school-level data consistent with section 5.3.E. An SEA that requests this extension must also provide a detailed plan and timeline in Appendix C addressing the steps it will take to calculate and report, as expeditiously as possible but no later than three years from the date it submits its initial consolidated State plan, the data required under 34 C.F.R. § 299.18(c)(3)(i) at the student level.
Long-term Goals

Instructions: Each SEA must provide baseline data (i.e., starting point data), measurements of interim progress, and long-term goals for academic achievement, graduation rates, and English language proficiency. For each goal, the SEA must describe how it established its long-term goals, including its State-determined timeline for attaining such goals, consistent with the requirements in section 1111(c)(2) of the ESEA and 34 C.F.R. § 200.13. Each SEA must provide goals and measurements of interim progress for the all students group and separately for each subgroup of students, consistent with the State’s minimum number of students.

In the tables below, identify the baseline (data and year) and long-term goal (data and year). If the tables do not accommodate this information, an SEA may create a new table or text box(es) within this template. Each SEA must include measurements of interim progress for academic achievement, graduation rates, and English language proficiency in Appendix A.

A. Academic Achievement.
   i. Description. Describe how the SEA established its ambitious long-term goals and measurements of interim progress for improved academic achievement, including how the SEA established its State-determined timeline for attaining such goals.

   Massachusetts will be administering a new statewide assessment in grades 3-8 in the 2016-17 school year. The new assessment, the Next-Generation MCAS, will build upon the successes of both the original MCAS and Massachusetts’ two-year trial of the PARCC assessments. The Next-Generation MCAS will be scored on a scale that differs from both the original MCAS and PARCC. Because baseline data from the new assessments will not be available until the summer of 2017, it is not possible for Massachusetts to determine long-term goals for the state at this time. Once baseline data are available, Massachusetts plans to set ambitious long-term goals in accordance with the state plan requirements.

   ii. Provide the baseline and long-term goals in the table below.

Sample Grade-level Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subgroups</th>
<th>Reading/ Language Arts: Baseline Data and Year</th>
<th>Reading/ Language Arts: Long-term Goal</th>
<th>Mathematics: Baseline Data and Year</th>
<th>Mathematics: Long-term Goal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically disadvantaged students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children with disabilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English learners</td>
<td>&lt;Add a row, as necessary, for each additional subgroup consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.16(a)(2)&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Graduation Rate.
i. **Description.** Describe how the SEA established its ambitious long-term goals and measurements of interim progress for improved four-year adjusted cohort graduation rates, including how the SEA established its State-determined timeline for attaining such goals.

Massachusetts began calculating a cohort graduation rate in 2006. At that time, 79.9 percent of the 2006 cohort graduated in four years. Since that initial calculation, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the state’s school districts have implemented a number of programmatic initiatives to increase the four-year cohort rate to 87.3 percent for the 2015 cohort. The most significant reason behind this increase has been a reduction in the number of dropouts in grades 9-12. Since 2007, the number of dropouts has decreased by almost 50 percent to 5,346 dropouts in 2015. This represents a dropout rate of 1.9 percent of all students in grades 9-12, the lowest rate on record in the state. Massachusetts expects this trend to continue as the state continues to support high schools developing multiple pathways for students to prepare for the college and beyond.

As part of its ESSA state plan, Massachusetts has set ambitious goals based on the strong graduation rate improvement of recent years. Since 2010, the average high school in Massachusetts has improved its four-year graduation rate by 5.0 percentage points and the state cut its “graduation gap” for the all students subgroup (the distance from a 100 percent four-year graduation rate) by 29 percent. The long-term goals associated with this plan seek to achieve the same level of improvement for all students and all subgroups over the next five years.

ii. Provide the baseline and long-term goals for the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subgroup</th>
<th>Baseline (Data and Year)</th>
<th>Long-term Goal (Data and Year)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All students</td>
<td>87.3 (2015)</td>
<td>91.0 (2020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically disadvantaged students</td>
<td>78.2 (2015)</td>
<td>84.5 (2020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children with disabilities</td>
<td>69.9 (2015)</td>
<td>78.6 (2020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English learners</td>
<td>64.0 (2015)</td>
<td>74.4 (2020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Needs</td>
<td>78.5 (2015)</td>
<td>84.7 (2020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American/Black</td>
<td>77.5 (2015)</td>
<td>84.0 (2020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>92.4 (2015)</td>
<td>94.6 (2020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>72.2 (2015)</td>
<td>80.2 (2020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-race, Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>85.9 (2015)</td>
<td>90.0 (2020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Haw./Pacific Islander</td>
<td>83.8 (2015)</td>
<td>88.5 (2020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>91.6 (2015)</td>
<td>94.0 (2020)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

iii. If applicable, provide the baseline and long-term goals for each extended-year cohort graduation rate(s) and describe how the SEA established its ambitious long-term goals and measurements for such an extended-year rate or rates that are more rigorous as compared to
the long-term goals and measurements of interim progress than the four-year adjusted cohort rate, including how the SEA established its State-determined timeline for attaining such goals.

In addition to the four-year graduation rate, Massachusetts will use a modified version of the five-year graduation rate in its district and school accountability system. A traditional calculation of the five-year graduation rate includes only students who have received a diploma within five years of entering the assigned cohort. Massachusetts proposes to use a rate that is equal to the sum of the percentage of students that have graduated within five years plus the percentage of students that are still enrolled in school after years.

The district and school accountability system should incentivize welcoming students back into the school environment regardless of whether they are on track to graduate in four or five years. Many high schools now have alternative programming designed for off-track students and an accountability system should reward these types of programs rather than negatively impacting schools with a traditional five-year graduation rate calculation.

Massachusetts will set ambitious and achievable state goals based upon past performance for the state on this metric. Since 2010, Massachusetts has reduced its “five-year graduation rate plus” gap by 33.3 percent. The goals listed below would strive to continue that level of improvement over the next five years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subgroup</th>
<th>Baseline (Data and Year)</th>
<th>Long-term Goal (Data and Year)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All students</td>
<td>90.6 (2015)</td>
<td>93.7 (2020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically disadvantaged students</td>
<td>82.9 (2015)</td>
<td>88.5 (2020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children with disabilities</td>
<td>82.1 (2015)</td>
<td>88.0 (2020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English learners</td>
<td>73.6 (2015)</td>
<td>82.3 (2020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Needs</td>
<td>84.3 (2015)</td>
<td>89.5 (2020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American/Black</td>
<td>84.5 (2015)</td>
<td>89.6 (2020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>95.2 (2015)</td>
<td>96.8 (2020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>77.2 (2015)</td>
<td>84.7 (2020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaska Native</td>
<td>84.6 (2015)</td>
<td>89.7 (2020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-race, Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>88.9 (2015)</td>
<td>92.6 (2020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Haw./Pacific Islander</td>
<td>83.9 (2015)</td>
<td>89.2 (2020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>94.0 (2015)</td>
<td>96.0 (2020)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. **English Language Proficiency.**

i. **Description.** Describe the State’s uniform procedure, applied consistently to all English learners in the State, to establish research-based student-level targets on which the goals and measurements of interim progress are based. The description must include:

1. How the State considers a student’s English language proficiency level at the time of identification and, if applicable, any other student characteristics that the State takes into account (i.e., time in language instruction programs, grade level, age, Native language proficiency level, or limited or interrupted formal education, if any).
All students enrolling in Massachusetts schools are given a Home Language Survey. If a language other than English appears on the survey, it is reviewed by appropriate staff at the district, and if necessary, a WIDA screening assessment of English language proficiency is administered to determine whether the student is an English learner. Staff reviewing the information presented on the Home Language Survey, or by the parent, determine the extent to which another language is present in the home, in the environment the child finds himself, or whether s/he comes from an English speaking environment where another language is also spoken regularly. Student transcripts or school records are also reviewed to determine grade level and content level placement. If it is determined that the student has a language other than English that may impact their level of English proficiency, students are screened for English proficiency with the W-APT or MODEL screening tools. Students who score proficient on the screener are not identified as English learners, rather are considered fluent English speakers with other language background, and possibly bilingual.

If a newly enrolled student transferred from another district within Massachusetts or from another WIDA state, it is possible that he or she participated in the annual language proficiency assessment (ACCESS for ELLs). If so, and if the district is able to obtain ACCESS results of the test that was administered within the last calendar year, instead of retesting the student, district staff can use ACCESS for ELLs results in the student’s records to determine his or her English language proficiency. Students from non-WIDA states and students new to Massachusetts are screened with W-APT or MODEL at the district.

English language proficiency scores, grade level, and time in an English language development program are taken into consideration when placing students in language instruction programs at the district and making determinations about level and type of service. Some ELs may have experienced interrupted or limited formal education prior to enrolling in the district. State law requires that all English learners (ELs) receive instruction that is specifically designed to meet their academic and language development needs. When a new student enrolls in a school district, it is the district’s obligation to determine whether the student is an EL and to place that student in an appropriate instructional program. Similarly, districts should ensure that students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE) are properly identified so that placement and other important academic decisions can be properly informed. For more information about procedures for identifying SLIFE students and programming considerations, please see the Massachusetts Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE) Definition and Guidance document at [http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/SLIFE-Guidance.pdf](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/SLIFE-Guidance.pdf).

1. The applicable timelines over which English learners sharing particular characteristics would be expected to attain ELP within a State-determined maximum number of years and a rationale for that State-determined maximum.

   We plan to differentiate among English learners (ELs) according to their English proficiency level, at what grade they enrolled in the system, and the prior schooling. The majority of Massachusetts ELs
have grown up in the Commonwealth and have attended school here since kindergarten. Other students enter the Massachusetts system after Kindergarten with varying levels of English proficiency. In some cases, immigrant students enroll in the system at the secondary level and arrive with little or no English proficiency, often with limited continuous schooling before arriving in the United States.

We anticipate that for students who grow up in the United States and enroll in Massachusetts schools by kindergarten, English proficiency should be attained by the end of grade two. For students who enter school in upper grades, their time to proficiency will be a function of their entering proficiency level, with full proficiency achieved within three years. For secondary grade immigrant students with little English proficiency and/or interrupted schooling, we anticipate that a specialized program to accelerate English acquisition and education will be required and may include a community college and/or vocational technical education component.

How the student-level targets expect all English learners to make annual progress toward attaining English language proficiency within the applicable timelines.

Districts will continue to be held accountable for all enrolled EL students reaching proficiency within the established timeline, based on reaching their growth-to-proficiency targets.

i. Describe how the SEA established ambitious State-designed long-term goals and measurements of interim progress for increases in the percentage of all English learners in the State making annual progress toward attaining English language proficiency based on 1.C.i. and provide the State-designed long-term goals and measurements of interim progress for English language proficiency.

The WIDA ACCESS for ELLs test is in the midst of a transition from paper and pencil to online testing. This transition requires us to carefully study the adjusted standard setting results and scales to ensure that the changes support valid determinations of progress toward proficiency, and to determine the best approach to measuring progress. We will provide additional information at a later date.
Section 2: Consultation and Performance Management

2.1 Consultation.

Instructions: Each SEA must engage in timely and meaningful consultation with stakeholders in developing its consolidated State plan, consistent with 34 C.F.R. §§ 299.13 (b) and 299.15 (a). The stakeholders must include the following individuals and entities and reflect the geographic diversity of the State:

- The Governor or appropriate officials from the Governor’s office;
- Members of the State legislature;
- Members of the State board of education, if applicable;
- LEAs, including LEAs in rural areas;
- Representatives of Indian tribes located in the State;
- Teachers, principals, other school leaders, paraprofessionals, specialized instructional support personnel, and organizations representing such individuals;
- Charter school leaders, if applicable;
- Parents and families;
- Community-based organizations;
- Civil rights organizations, including those representing students with disabilities, English learners, and other historically underserved students;
- Institutions of higher education (IHEs);
- Employers;
- Representatives of private school students;
- Early childhood educators and leaders; and
- The public.

Each SEA must meet the requirements in 34 C.F.R. § 200.21(b)(1)-(3) to provide information that is:
1. Be in an understandable and uniform format;
2. Be, to the extent practicable, written in a language that parents can understand or, if it is not practicable to provide written translations to a parent with limited English proficiency, be orally translated for such parent; and
3. Be, upon request by a parent who is an individual with a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. 12102, provided in an alternative format accessible to that parent.

A. Public Notice. Provide evidence that the SEA met the public notice requirements, under 34 C.F.R. § 299.13(b), relating to the SEA’s processes and procedures for developing and adopting its consolidated State plan.
To be completed prior to plan submission.

B. Outreach and Input. For the components of the consolidated State plan including Challenging Academic Assessments; Accountability, Support, and Improvement for Schools; Supporting Excellent Educators; and Supporting All Students, describe how the SEA:
   i. Conducted outreach to and solicited input from the individuals and entities listed above, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 299.13(b), during the design and development of the SEA’s plans to implement the programs that the SEA has indicated it will include in its consolidated State plan; and following the completion of its initial consolidated State plan by making the plan available for public comment for a period of not less than 30 days prior to submitting the consolidated State plan to the Department for review and approval.

In preparing its ESSA plan, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary
Education (ESE) conducted an extensive outreach effort over the course of nearly a full year. From the beginning of the effort, it was our goal to hear from a broad range of stakeholders about Massachusetts’ state plan. ESSA provided us an opportunity to reconsider the strategies we use to improve student outcomes, the data we use to measure school and district progress, and the types of supports and assistance we make available. As such, we organized our work into four phases: Listening Phase 1 (April to June 2016): Where we asked broad questions of our stakeholder community about their thoughts on the purpose and design of the state’s accountability and assistance system, among other topics related to ESSA. Modeling (June to September 2016): Where we developed specific proposals based on the feedback we heard during the first listening phase. Listening Phase 2 (September 2016 to January 2017): Where we shared our draft proposals with stakeholders to further refine and improve them. Revising (January to March 2017): Where we incorporated a wide variety of feedback into a proposed state plan, put the plan out for public comment, and finalized the plan based on the feedback we received during public comment period.

Throughout the nearly 12 month process, we sought to gather feedback through a variety of mechanisms with the goal of maximizing stakeholder participation. We developed a master list and engaged nearly 200 stakeholder groups (advocacy organizations, civil rights organizations, affinity organizations, American Indian tribes, policy organizations, researchers, professional associations, special education organizations, community-based organizations, representatives from higher education, English Learner organizations, teachers unions, charter schools, governmental agencies, the business community, the Governor’s education secretariat, state legislators, our Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, and many more) along with hundreds of educators, parents, and students from our 409 school districts and nearly 2,000 schools.

We conducted several online surveys, which we and our contacts distributed widely, which allowed anyone in the public to submit their thoughts: as of January 2017, right before the state plan went out for public comment, we had well over 1,500 combined responses to our ESSA surveys. The Department held five public forums around the Commonwealth in the fall of 2016, where we gathered a variety of feedback using a process known as brain-swarming, where every piece of feedback is discussed and/or captured in some way. Over 250 people participated in these forums, and we were pleased by the wide variety of attendees (approximately 20% parents, 20% teachers, 20% administrators, 20% advocacy groups, 20% concerned citizens). The state also held a series of focus groups for representatives of stakeholder associations who wanted to provide more detailed feedback in a discussion format. Furthermore, the state participated in close to 100 different community meetings and presentations with associations and organizations who wanted to discuss the implications of ESSA with us.

We gathered formal input from others in the state’s education policy governance structure, such as the governor’s office, the legislature, the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, and many of the Board’s Advisory Councils, including the Accountability and Assistance Advisory Council, Gifted and Talented Advisory Council, Family and Community Engagement Advisory Council, State Student Advisory Council, and Arts Education Advisory Council.
Appendix listing stakeholder organizations/contacts to be added.

ii. Took into account the input obtained through consultation and public comment. The response must include both how the SEA addressed the concerns and issues raised through consultation and public comment and any changes the SEA made as a result of consultation and public comment for all components of the consolidated State plan.

The Department has relied heavily on the feedback we received from our many stakeholders through the consultation we conducted starting in spring 2016. The overall design of the consultation period allowed us to maximize the feedback from our field. We looped back with our stakeholders on multiple occasions during the development of this plan, making them an integral part of the entire process. The voices of stakeholders are widely reflected on the pages of this plan.

Concretely, the inclusion of measures related to “students’ access to a well-rounded education” and “school culture and climate” in our accountability system is a direct result of the feedback we heard from the field. Our analyses of the feedback, along with our many conversations with a multitude of stakeholders, confirmed that these measures deeply resonated with a wide variety of stakeholders. As a result, the Department determined that we would include these measures in the accountability system, given how much support the measures had garnered throughout the feedback process.

Additional items to be described following comment period.

C. Governor’s consultation. Describe how the SEA consulted in a timely and meaningful manner with the Governor consistent with section 8540 of the ESEA, including whether officials from the SEA and the Governor’s office met during the development of this plan and prior to the submission of this plan.

The Secretary of Education for the Commonwealth, appointed by Governor Baker, is an ex-officio member of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. Our agency reported to the Board on a frequent basis about the ESSA state plan development process. By virtue of his position on the Board, the Governor’s appointee was involved throughout the process, from the inception of the state planning, through the public comment period, and to the ultimate finalization of the plan.

Date SEA provided the plan to the Governor: To be completed prior to plan submission.

Check one:
☐ The Governor signed this consolidated State plan.
☐ The Governor did not sign this consolidated State plan.

2.2 System of Performance Management.

Instructions: In the text boxes below, each SEA must describe consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 299.15 (b) its system of performance management of SEA and LEA plans across all programs included in this consolidated State plan. The description of an SEA’s system of performance management must include information on the SEA’s review and approval of LEA plans, monitoring, continuous improvement, and technical assistance across the components of the consolidated State plan.
A. **Review and Approval of LEA Plans.** Describe the SEA’s process for supporting the development, review, and approval of LEA plans in accordance with statutory and regulatory requirements. The description should include a discussion of how the SEA will determine if LEA activities align with: 1) the specific needs of the LEA, and 2) the SEA’s consolidated State plan.

*To be completed prior to plan submission.*

B. **Monitoring.** Describe the SEA’s plan to monitor SEA and LEA implementation of the included programs to ensure compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements. This description must include how the SEA will collect and use data and information which may include input from stakeholders and data collected and reported on State and LEA report cards (under section 1111(h) of the ESEA and applicable regulations), to assess the quality of SEA and LEA implementation of strategies and progress toward meeting the desired program outcomes.

*To be completed prior to plan submission*

C. **Continuous Improvement.** Describe the SEA’s plan to continuously improve SEA and LEA plans and implementation. This description must include how the SEA will collect and use data and information which may include input from stakeholders and data collected and reported on State and LEA report cards (under section 1111(h) of the ESEA and applicable regulations), to assess the quality of SEA and LEA implementation of strategies and progress toward meeting the desired program outcomes.

A plan is only as good as its implementation. ESE’s Office of Planning and Research (OPR) will take the lead on ESSA implementation for the agency. Over the past six-plus years, OPR has employed a sophisticated approach to monitoring and improving the quality of our implementation and refining our improvement strategies over time. This approach identifies key initiatives that support each agency strategy and develops specific plans, benchmarks, and outcomes for each. We dedicate three ESE staff to monitoring the implementation of these plans and assisting program offices with analytical and strategic capacity to extend their work. This firmly established performance management and continuous improvement team (the delivery unit) works to make sure that all projects that are of strategic priority, such as those under ESSA, are on track.

The performance management team aims to answer four questions: What is our agency trying to do? How are we planning to do it? At any given moment, how will we know whether we are on track? If not, what are we going to do about it? The delivery unit helps our ESE teams do exactly what is outlined in ESSA: plan the work in a thoughtful way, monitor progress towards our agency-wide priorities by collecting a wide range of data from our districts (both quantitative and qualitative). Ultimately, we intend for this rigorous process to ensure that we’re meeting the goals of the program and improving outcomes for all students. With the help of the delivery unit, agency staff members determine reform strategies, set targets and trajectories for program outcomes, identify relevant stakeholders, write strategic plans, and are held accountable to deliver results. Once plans are in place, the delivery unit tracks progress, identifies challenges, solves problems early and rigorously, and keeps the Commissioner and other agency leadership informed of both progress and challenges. Routines are now firmly embedded in the work of the agency and will continue to play an important role.

Our ESSA state plan will become the basis for regular progress reports to the Commissioner and
other senior staff. ESE also has a well developed budget management system to oversee and control program unit spending. While the current system has allowed the agency to successfully manage and track its various ESEA activities, we continue to improve and consolidate the system to make it more efficient and effective for our schools and districts. We will continue to use these methods of review and continuous improvement to advance our work.

Our state’s strong data collection practices and analysis tools (including Edwin Analytics, District Action and Research Tools (DART), our Early Warning Indicator System (EWIS), and Resource Allocation and District Action Reports (RADAR)) will help us promote continuous improvement in districts. Additionally, we will continue to take advantage of new resources we have developed for district strategic planning, along with district consolidated federal grant applications. At the LEA level, our Planning for Success model for district strategic planning involves three steps: creating a plan, aligning systems to the plan, and implementing the plan (including evaluating and monitoring progress). We will encourage districts to use this planning model as the structure underlying the plan we will require as part of the annual federal grant application, which will begin to help districts to establish local evaluation practices where they do not already exist. Over time we plan to add in more supports to help districts evaluate their progress, particularly in conducting formal evaluations where needed and in alignment with ESSA requirements for evidence-based interventions. This work will be driven by our new Office of Resource Allocation Strategy and Planning within OPR, which has responsibility for promoting strategic resource use and grant coordination in districts.

As we refine our implementation of our plan, stakeholder voice will continue to play a prominent role. We already hold regular meetings with many of our stakeholder groups, including superintendents, principals, teachers, union leadership, school committee members, state board members, state legislators, parents, students, and others. We will continue these conversations and also offer additional opportunities for stakeholders to provide input, particularly at key junctures when we are considering significant changes to an element of the plan.

D. **Differentiated Technical Assistance.** Describe the SEA’s plan to provide differentiated technical assistance to LEAs and schools to support effective implementation of SEA, LEA, and other subgrantee strategies.

ESE’s framework for district accountability and assistance undergirds our statewide system of support for districts and schools. Our system provides an array of supports, services, and opportunities for schools and districts to engage in professional learning communities focused on establishing high expectations for all students, a common language to discuss school improvement efforts, and a knowledge base from which all educators can benefit. ESE provides multiple resources and tools that are widely accessible for use by a wide array of educators and the public.

**Commissioner’s Districts:** The state’s 10 largest, highest poverty school districts, collectively known as the “Commissioner’s Districts”, are supported through full time liaisons, program specialists and partners with expertise in collaborating with large urban districts’ considerable content and leadership infrastructure. The majority of comprehensive and targeted support and intervention schools are represented in these ten districts, and therefore the districts require an intense level of support from the Department. Support services are based on needs identified through careful examination of data and focused by research, districts’ self-assessments, improvement plans, and direct observations conducted by these skilled liaisons. Additional assistance is provided by Department content experts in English language arts, mathematics, science and English language
development. Further external turnaround partners and consultants, who are vetted by the Department, with documented records of accomplishment at improving outcomes for high-needs and urban students provide additional targeted supports based on need. The Commissioner’s Districts include: Boston, Brockton, Fall River, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lowell, Lynn, New Bedford, Springfield and Worcester.

**District and School Assistance Centers.** ESE has established a network of regional assistance for those small- to medium-sized districts most in need through our six District and School Assistance Centers (DSACs). In collaboration with partner organizations, DSACs use a regional approach to support self-assessment and planning, provide regional opportunities to learn about and share effective practices; and train, model, and facilitate the use of resources and tools. Districts have a strong incentive to participate in DSAC activities because they add value and needed capacity, provide customized professional development and other supports; and serve as a venue for networking opportunities. Further, the relationship between a DSAC and a district is collaborative, not evaluative, fostering trust and an atmosphere of support. Each DSAC is led by a Regional Assistance Director (RAD), a recently retired superintendent selected based on his or her prior record of accomplishment. Most RADs have led one or more districts in the region and bring a deep understanding of the local, civic, cultural, economic, and educational context and the ability to meaningfully engage local stakeholder groups in the work. The RAD works directly with the region’s superintendents, providing opportunities for honest conversations about strengths and needs. Each RAD is supported by a team that includes a former principal, a data specialist, a mathematics specialist, and a literacy specialist, with the availability of additional support from ESE specialists as needed. Each DSAC serves as a forum for regional networks of school and district teams on various topics, especially the education of English language learners and students with disabilities, and for developing strong instructional leaders. In short, the support we provide to districts is modeled on the support that a good teacher would give to their students: differentiated, personalized, and designed to bring out the best in every single one of them.

Other tools and resources available to all districts include: The District Analysis and Review Tools (DARTs) report on more than 40 quantitative indicators to allow all stakeholders to gauge the overall health of school or district. Users can track pertinent data elements over time and make sound, meaningful comparisons to the Commonwealth or to comparable districts. The DARTs provide a snapshot of school and district trends and allows users to examine trends over the most recent five years of available data; view school- and district-level data on easily accessible graphical displays; reflect and self-evaluate; locate comparable schools and districts elsewhere in the state based on student characteristics; and make comparisons to enable a district to collaborate with a similar district that has shown promising trends.

Online models and self-assessment tools for district and school improvement that are aligned with ESE’s 11 Conditions for School Effectiveness and six District Standards and Indicators; The Early Warning Indicator Index system, a data-driven system to identify high school students who are at risk of not graduating on time. ESE provides targeted grants to enhance district and regional capacity to plan, implement, and sustain practices to improve student performance that are aligned with the 11 Conditions for School Effectiveness. One of ESE’s goals as an agency is to guide school and district leaders to think more strategically about how best to maximize the various grants they receive, either through entitlement or competitive opportunities; ensure that grant resources are used in ways that directly contribute to attainment of agency goals; and create new practices within the agency itself to improve ESE’s practices around grant development, assessment, and award
determination.

The Commonwealth’s professional development programs are scaled up through the DSACs, through train-the-trainer models, and through online webinars and courses. ESE’s foundational professional development course menu, offered through the DSACs and other sources, is designed to build educator effectiveness in five critical content areas: 1) instructional leadership, 2) sheltering content for English language learners, 3) inclusive instructional practices for students with disabilities, 4) mathematics, and 5) literacy. A Behavioral Health and Public Schools Self-Assessment Tool that allows districts and schools to evaluate their practices and strategies for supporting positive behavior and health of students. [http://bhps321.org/](http://bhps321.org/).

ESE also employs a staff of knowledgeable, skilled program specialists who work to support district implementation of federal programs, including Title I, Title II, Title III, and Title IV.
Section 3: Academic Assessments

Instructions: As applicable, provide the information regarding a State’s academic assessments in the text boxes below.

A. Advanced Mathematics Coursework. Does the State: 1) administer end-of-course mathematics assessments to high school students in order to meet the requirements under section 1111(b)(2)(B)(v)(I)(bb) of the ESEA; and 2) use the exception for students in eighth grade to take such assessments under section 1111(b)(2)(C) of the ESEA?

☐ Yes. If yes, describe the SEA’s strategies to provide all students in the State the opportunity to be prepared for and to take advanced mathematics coursework in middle school consistent with section 1111(b)(2)(C) and 34 C.F.R. § 200.5(b)(4).

☒ No.

Massachusetts does not administer end-of-course mathematics assessments to high school students, nor is an exception provided to assess students in grade 8 using end-of-course mathematics assessments.

B. Languages other than English. Describe how the SEA is complying with the requirements in section 1111(b)(2)(F) of the ESEA and 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(f) in languages other than English.

i. Provide the SEA’s definition for “languages other than English that are present to a significant extent in the participating student population,” consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(f)(4), and identify the specific languages that meet that definition.

Massachusetts defines the first language of ten percent or more of students eligible to take assessments in the State as “languages other than English that are present to a significant extent.” This includes only Spanish-speaking students in Massachusetts.

ii. Identify any existing assessments in languages other than English, and specify for which grades and content areas those assessments are available.

Spanish/English grade 10 Mathematics MCAS tests and retests are made available to EL students who are literate in Spanish and have been in a U.S. school less than three years.

iii. Indicate the languages other than English identified in B.i. above for which yearly student academic assessments are not available and are needed.

Other than grade 10 Mathematics MCAS tests and retests available in Spanish/English editions, MCAS tests are available only in English. State law (Chapter 71A, Section 7) has prohibited the assessment of EL students in a language other than English: “…a standardized, nationally-normed written test of academic subject matter given in English shall be administered at least once each year to all public schoolchildren...who are English learners.”

iv. Describe how the SEA will make every effort to develop assessments, at a minimum, in languages other than English that are present to a significant extent in the participating student population by providing:
1. The State’s plan and timeline for developing such assessments, including a description of how it met the requirements of 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(f)(4);

The state will continue to administer the grade 10 Spanish/English Mathematics test and retest. The state has conducted an internal review of the feasibility of developing Spanish-language assessments, and will pursue the development of test translations of the High School Biology and Introductory Physics tests once the next-generation high school tests are developed in 2019.

2. A description of the process the State used to gather meaningful input on the need for assessments in languages other than English, collect and respond to public comment, and consult with educators; parents and families of English learners; students, as appropriate; and other stakeholders; and

The state has consulted with its constituents and stakeholders periodically since 2002 on the topic of developing statewide other-language assessments. Since adoption of the Every Student Succeeds Act and its focus on development of assessments in languages that are “present to a significant extent,” the state will again conduct a statewide dialog on this topic and solicit input from its stakeholders.

3. As applicable, an explanation of the reasons the State has not been able to complete the development of such assessments despite making every effort.

As a result of a binding Massachusetts ballot initiative in 2002 and resulting legislation (Chapter 71A, Section 7), Massachusetts has been prohibited from developing or administering assessments in languages other than English. The Spanish/English grade 10 Mathematics MCAS tests and retests were grandfathered, as advocated by Massachusetts stakeholders, because passage of the grade 10 mathematics test or retest is a statewide requirement to earn a Competency Determination and a high school diploma.
Section 4: Accountability, Support, and Improvement for Schools

Instructions: Each SEA must describe its accountability, support, and improvement system consistent with 34 C.F.R. §§ 200.12-200.24 and section 1111(c) and (d) of the ESEA. Each SEA may include documentation (e.g., technical reports or supporting evidence) that demonstrates compliance with applicable statutory and regulatory requirements.

4.1 Accountability System.

A. Indicators. Describe the measure(s) included in each of the Academic Achievement, Academic Progress, Graduation Rate, Achieving English Language Proficiency, and School Quality or Student Success indicators and how those measures meet the requirements described in 34 C.F.R. § 200.14(a)-(b) and section 1111(c)(4)(B) of the ESEA.

- The description for each indicator should include how it is valid, reliable, and comparable across all LEAs in the State, as described in 34 C.F.R. § 200.14(c).
- To meet the requirements described in 34 C.F.R. § 200.14(d), for the measures included within the indicators of Academic Progress and School Quality or Student Success measures, the description must also address how each measure within the indicators is supported by research that high performance or improvement on such measure is likely to increase student learning (e.g., grade point average, credit accumulation, performance in advanced coursework).
- For measures within indicators of School Quality or Student Success that are unique to high school, the description must address how research shows that high performance or improvement on the indicator is likely to increase graduation rates, postsecondary enrollment, persistence, completion, or career readiness.
- To meet the requirement in 34 C.F.R. § 200.14(e), the descriptions for the Academic Progress and School Quality or Student Success indicators must include a demonstration of how each measure aids in the meaningful differentiation of schools under 34 C.F.R. § 200.18 by demonstrating varied results across schools in the State.

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<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
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<tr>
<td>i. Academic Achievement</td>
<td>• Grades 3-8 English language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics: average scale score.</td>
<td>The average scale score will replace the use of a proficiency index in the district and school accountability system. The average scale score better represents the range of scores at the district and school level.</td>
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<td>• Grades 5 and 8 Science: average scale score equated to Next-Generation ELA and Math MCAS scale.</td>
<td>Massachusetts will begin its assessment transition with grades 3-8 ELA and Mathematics in the 2016-17 school year. In an effort to report comparable data to districts, schools and the public, the science assessment scores will be equated to the Next-Generation ELA and Mathematics scale scores until such time that the grade 10 assessments have transitioned.</td>
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|                               | • Grade 10 ELA, Math and Science: average scale score equated to Next-Generation ELA and Math MCAS scale.                             | Massachusetts will begin its assessment transition with grades 3-8 ELA and Mathematics in the 2016-17 school year. In an effort to report comparable data to districts, schools and the public, the grade 10
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<tr>
<td>ii. Academic Progress</td>
<td>• Mean student growth percentile (SGP)</td>
<td>Massachusetts will continue its use of the student growth percentile (SGP) as a measure of student growth. Beginning in 2016-17, we will follow the advice of our Technical Advisory Committee and use the mean SGP as opposed to the median to better reflect the full range of growth percentiles.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ii. Academic Progress</td>
<td>• Measure of growth to standard (to be incorporated in the future)</td>
<td>As Massachusetts transitions its assessment program over the coming years, we will pursue the possibility of using a growth to standard measure for public reporting and as a metric in the district and school accountability system.</td>
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<tr>
<td>iii. Graduation Rate</td>
<td>• Four-year cohort graduation rate</td>
<td>Massachusetts will continue to use the four-year graduation rate in its district and school accountability system. This rate has been calculated since 2006 and will continue to be a main driver of accountability at the high school level.</td>
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<tr>
<td>iii. Graduation Rate</td>
<td>• Five-year cohort graduation rate plus percentage of students still enrolled in high school</td>
<td>In addition to the four-year graduation rate, Massachusetts will also use a modified version of the five-year graduation rate in its district and school accountability system. A traditional calculation of the five-year graduation rate includes only students that have received a diploma within five years of entering the assigned cohort. Massachusetts proposes to use a rate that is equal to the sum of the percentage of students that have graduated within five years plus the percentage of students that are still enrolled in school after years. The district and school accountability system should incentivize welcoming students back into the school environment regardless of whether they are on track to graduate in four or five years. Many high schools now have alternative programming designed for off-track students and an accountability system should reward these types of programs rather than negatively impacting schools with a traditional five-year graduation rate</td>
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assessment scores will be equated to the Next-Generation ELA and Mathematics scale scores until such time that the grade 10 assessments have transitioned.
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<tr>
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<td>• Annual dropout rate</td>
<td>The graduation rate of a high school is certainly a key indicator of success. However, in a district and school accountability system that makes annual determinations, it is often difficult to make large gains in a graduation rate calculation in a one year because much of the rate has been determined in grades 9-11. The number of high school dropouts on an annual basis is a significant component of the graduation rate calculation. The inclusion of the annual dropout rate in a high school accountability determination allows for a more actionable indicator for high schools to focus on an annual basis.</td>
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<tr>
<td>iv. Achieving English Language Proficiency</td>
<td>• Progress made by students towards attaining English language proficiency as measured by growth on the ACCESS for English language learners.</td>
<td>Massachusetts will use the percentage of students achieving proficiency in English along with those making progress towards attaining English language proficiency as its measure for English language learners (ELL). ELLs enter schooling at very different points in their English language development and these differences are evident across districts. As a result, it is most appropriate to measure the progress of ELLs towards English language proficiency rather than the attainment of English proficiency. Massachusetts will use a measure of student growth on the state’s English language proficiency assessment, ACCESS for ELLs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>v. School Quality or Student Success</td>
<td>• Chronic absenteeism (all grades)</td>
<td>Massachusetts proposes to use a measure of chronic absenteeism as a measure of School Quality or Student Success because the district and school accountability system should incentivize a minimal loss of classroom instruction time. Chronic absenteeism would be defined as the percentage of students missing at least 10% of their days in membership in a school (18 days or more in a typical 180 day school calendar). This measure would be applied to all grades and would be done with minimal exceptions granted for lost instruction time. While some absences are understandable and perhaps might be excused, ultimately the student has lost instruction time regardless of the reason. There has been significant research on the</td>
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<td>• Student access to the arts (all grades)</td>
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<td>Massachusetts proposes to include student access to the arts as a measure of School Quality or Student Success. It is important for students at all grade levels to have access to a well-rounded curriculum and research has shown the positive impact on student learning when students have access to arts education. Examples of that research can be found here and here.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• School climate index (all grades over time)</td>
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<td>Massachusetts proposes to include a school climate index as a measure of School Quality or Student Success. At this time, Massachusetts does not have the data to incorporate a measure of school climate into the district and school accountability system. Beginning in 2016-17, Massachusetts will pilot a school climate survey to begin capturing baseline data to possibly be used in future accountability metrics.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Success in grade 9 courses (high school)</td>
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<td>Massachusetts proposes to include success in grade 9 courses as a measure of School Quality or Student Success at the high school level. The impact of grade 9 performance is a leading indicator to student success in high school and beyond. According to the most recent data available in Massachusetts (2015), students that failed any courses in 9th grade were four times more likely to drop out of school than those students that did not. Although data validation measures will need to be put into place to guard against improper grade inflation, the importance of the measure is too critical to ignore.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Student access to a well-rounded curriculum (high school)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Massachusetts proposes to include student access to a well-rounded curriculum as a measure of School Quality or Student Success at the high school level. This measure would be defined as the percentage students that enroll in each of the four core course areas (English, math, science and social science), at least one foreign language and at least one arts course in a school year. A high school accountability system should incentivize practices to improve student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicator</td>
<td>Measure(s)</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Student access to advanced coursework (high school)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Massachusetts proposes to include student access to advanced coursework as a measure of School Quality or Student Success at the high school level. This indicator would measure the percentage of students that enroll in advanced coursework (defined as AP, IB, honors etc.) in a school year. The accountability system would incentivize student access to these types of courses. The most recent data available in Massachusetts (2015) indicate there are varying levels of participation in advanced coursework across the state and within school districts there are equity gaps in participation across subgroups. In addition, Massachusetts PSAT, SAT and course grade data indicate that additional students are prepared for advanced coursework and are not enrolling. Some of the national research in this area can be found here.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**B. Subgroups.**

i. List the subgroups of students from each major and racial ethnic group in the State, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.16(a)(2), and, as applicable, describe any additional subgroups of students used in the accountability system.

Massachusetts will continue to use the same racial/ethnic subgroups it has used for many years in its district and school accountability system: African-American, Asian, Hispanic, Multi-race/non-Hispanic, Native American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander and White. In addition, Massachusetts will also include four subgroups of selected populations in its accountability system: economically disadvantaged, former or current English language learners (see below for details about the inclusion of former English language learners), students with disabilities and high needs students (an unduplicated count of students that appear in any one of the three selected population subgroups).
ii. If applicable, describe the statewide uniform procedure for including former children with disabilities in the children with disabilities subgroup for purposes of calculating any indicator that uses data based on State assessment results under section 1111(b)(2)(B)(v)(I) of the ESEA and as described in 34 C.F.R. § 200.16(b), including the number of years the State includes the results of former children with disabilities.

Massachusetts is currently evaluating the inclusion of former students with disabilities within the students with disabilities subgroup by speaking with internal/external stakeholders and looking at the impact on the achievement levels of the subgroup. The state would like retain the flexibility of including former students with disabilities in the students with disabilities subgroup for up to two years, but is not ready to commit to doing so at this point.

iii. If applicable, describe the statewide uniform procedure for including former English learners in the English learner subgroup for purposes of calculating any indicator that uses data based on State assessment results under section 1111(b)(2)(B)(v)(I) of the ESEA and as described in 34 C.F.R. § 200.16(c)(1), including the number of years the State includes the results of former English learners.

ELL students must participate in all state assessments scheduled for their grades regardless of the language program and services they are receiving or the amount of time they have been in the United States. The one exception applies to first-year ELL students. Schools have the option to administer ELA tests to first-year ELL students, provided they have also participated in ACCESS for ELLs testing. First-year ELL students must participate in MCAS Mathematics and STE tests although results will be reported only for diagnostic purposes, and will not be included in school and district summary results, or in state and federal accountability reporting. Massachusetts currently includes the results of former English language learners in its accountability results for two school years after a student transitions out of ELL status and is evaluating the possibility of increasing that timeframe to four years based on flexibility afforded under ESSA.

iv. If applicable, choose one of the following options for recently arrived English learners in the State:

☐ Exception under 34 C.F.R. § 200.16(c)(3)(i) or
☐ Exception under 34 C.F.R. § 200.16(c)(3)(ii) or
☐ Exception under section 1111(b)(3) of the ESEA and 34 C.F.R. § 200.16(c)(4)(i)(B). If selected, provide a description of the uniform procedure in the box below.

To be determined.

C. Minimum Number of Students.

i. Provide the minimum number of students for purposes of accountability that the State determines are necessary to be included in each of the subgroups of students consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.17(a).

Massachusetts intends to continue its practice from recent years and implement a minimum number of students of 20 for the purposes of subgroup accountability determinations. A minimum of 20 students allows for maximum accountability while still making valid and
reliable accountability determinations at the subgroup level.

ii. If the State’s minimum number of students for purposes of reporting is lower than the minimum number of students for purposes of accountability, provide that number consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.17(a)(2)(iv).

Massachusetts reports enrollment, dropout and graduation rate data for any group with at least six students and reports assessment results for any group with at least ten students.

iii. Describe how the State's minimum number of students meets the requirements in 34 C.F.R. § 200.17(a)(1)-(2);

The minimum number of students being used by Massachusetts for the purposes of making accountability determinations (20) meets all of the requirements set forth in the final regulations. It provides an appropriate level of statistical reliability and validity while also allowing for the maximum number of districts, schools and subgroups to be represented in the accountability system.

iv. Describe how other components of the statewide accountability system, such as the State’s uniform procedure for averaging data under 34 C.F.R. § 200.20(a), interact with the minimum number of students to affect the statistical reliability and soundness of accountability data and to ensure the maximum inclusion of all students and each subgroup of students under 34 C.F.R. § 200.16(a)(2);

Requiring a minimum of 20 students and multiple years to make an accountability determination has an impact on the number of school and subgroup classifications that are able to be made. However, this loss is outweighed by the need to make valid and reliable determinations based on at least 20 students and be as comprehensive as possible by looking at multiple years of data.

v. Describe the strategies the State uses to protect the privacy of individual students for each purpose for which disaggregated data is required, including reporting under section 1111(h) of the ESEA and the statewide accountability system under section 1111(c) of the ESEA;

Massachusetts has a long history of reporting vast amounts of data to the general public while at the same time protecting the identity and privacy of its students. Massachusetts does not report any enrollment data for a group with less than six students, does not report assessment results for any group with less than ten students and does not include any group with less than 20 students in its accountability system.

vi. Provide information regarding the number and percentage of all students and students in each subgroup described in 4.B.i above for whose results schools would not be held accountable under the State’s system for annual meaningful differentiation of schools required by 34 C.F.R. § 200.18;

The accountability system we propose to develop would include 99.8% of all students from assessed grades in the aggregate. In addition, the use of the High Needs subgroup (any student in the economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities or formerly/current English language learner subgroups) would allow over 150 additional schools to be held
accountable as opposed to inclusion based on the three discreet subgroups comprising the High Needs subgroup. The individual race/ethnic and selected population subgroups percentages of students included in the accountability system assuming an N size of 20 are included below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Number of Student Enrolled in Assessed Grades</th>
<th>% of Students in Accountability System in Individual Subgroups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Students</td>
<td>498,832</td>
<td>99.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>42,942</td>
<td>74.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>32,519</td>
<td>67.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>92,258</td>
<td>86.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-race/Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>15,876</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>469</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian</td>
<td>1,082</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>313,641</td>
<td>99.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically Disadvantaged</td>
<td>156,522</td>
<td>94.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Learner</td>
<td>59,534</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Needs</td>
<td>227,900</td>
<td>99.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with Disabilities</td>
<td>88,874</td>
<td>89.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

vii. If an SEA proposes a minimum number of students that exceeds 30, provide a justification that explains how a minimum number of students provided in 4.C above promotes sound, reliable accountability determinations, including data on the number and percentage of schools in the State that would not be held accountable in the system of annual meaningful differentiation under 34 C.F.R. § 200.18 for the results of students in each subgroup in 4.B.i above using the minimum number proposed by the State compared to the data on the number and percentage of schools in the State that would not be held accountable for the results of students in each subgroup if the minimum number of students is 30.

D. Annual Meaningful Differentiation. Describe the State’s system for annual meaningful differentiation of all public schools in the State, including public charter schools, consistent with the requirements of section 1111(c)(4)(C) of the ESEA and 34 C.F.R. §§ 200.12 and 200.18.

See below.

Describe the following information with respect to the State’s system of annual meaningful differentiation:

i. The distinct and discrete levels of school performance, and how they are calculated, under 34 C.F.R. § 200.18(a)(2) on each indicator in the statewide accountability system;

The state’s accountability system is our primary way of measuring each school’s and district’s progress on attaining the state goal of success after high school for all students. ESSA provides us with an opportunity to refine our accountability system to better align it with the agency’s goals and strategies. This will allow us to broaden the dimensions of performance we consider, as well as to improve our system for assisting those schools and districts farthest behind in attaining the state’s goals.
Our state’s existing accountability system rests primarily on student achievement and growth and graduation data, with an emphasis on closing gaps for historically low performing subgroups. These data are fundamental to the educational enterprise. If students are not proficient on grade-level material and are not graduating, then schools and districts are not doing their jobs. And if not all students are performing well, the accountability system should highlight those gaps.

In our proposed new accountability system, these data remain core measures of school and district results, and opportunity gaps for high needs students remain of paramount consideration. In addition, we are expanding the measures included in the system to create a more comprehensive picture of student opportunity and outcomes, and we are increasing the value placed on improvement. By doing so, we intend to promote a more well-rounded view of school performance and to encourage schools and districts to focus on increasing equitable access to educational opportunities. These measures also more strongly connect to our agency strategies.

In keeping with the focus on excellence and equity, our proposed new system will prioritize strong outcomes for all students and closing gaps for high needs students. High needs students are defined as students who are current or former English language learners, receive special education services, and/or are economically disadvantaged. Proposed measures to be included in the system are as follows.

Proposed measures to be included in the system for elementary and middle schools are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core measures</th>
<th>Status for ALL students</th>
<th>Gap closing for HIGH NEEDS students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. ELA and math scaled score</td>
<td>1. ELA, math, and science gap reduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Science performance index</td>
<td>2. ELA and math student growth percentile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. ELA and math student growth percentile</td>
<td>3. ACCESS growth (English language learners)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. ACCESS progress (English language learners)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional measures</th>
<th>Status for ALL students</th>
<th>Gap closing for HIGH NEEDS students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Chronic student absenteeism</td>
<td></td>
<td>1. Improvement in chronic absenteeism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Access to the arts</td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Improvement in access to the arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. School climate</td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Improvement in school climate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Proposed indicators for high schools are as follows:
Status for ALL students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ELA and math scaled score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Science performance index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. ELA and math student growth percentile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. ACCESS progress (English language learners)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Graduation and dropout rates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gap closing for HIGH NEEDS students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ELA, math, and science gap reduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ELA and math student growth percentile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. ACCESS growth (English language learners)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Graduation and dropout rate gap reduction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status for ALL students</th>
<th>Gap closing for HIGH NEEDS students</th>
<th>Average Percentile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core measures</td>
<td>Percentile A</td>
<td>Percentile C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional measures</td>
<td>Percentile B</td>
<td>Percentile D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The final school percentile would be used as the first step for classifying schools into performance levels. Each level would have an associated percentile range. But, the system for designating performance levels would not be entirely relative. Every year the state would also set out performance targets based on the measures in the system for each of the
school performance levels. If a school met or exceeded those targets, it could attain that level even if its percentile would have otherwise placed it lower. In this way the expectations for performance are clear and known ahead of time for all schools, and performance level designations do not depend solely on the performance of other schools.

A district’s level would be determined by the overall performance of its students, rather than the level of its lowest performing school as it is currently. Additional measures of school and district performance beyond those in the formal accountability system would be included on a public report card to provide further insight and comparative data to the public.

ii. The weighting of each indicator, including how certain indicators receive substantial weight individually and much greater weight in the aggregate, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.18(b) and (c)(1)-(2).

Massachusetts has not established specific weightings for the percentile methodology illustrated above because of we do not have results from the new assessment to create models and simulations. However, the core measures (Percentile E) will be given much greater weight than the additional measures (percentile F) for purposes of determining an overall school percentile.

iii. The summative determinations, including how they are calculated, that are provided to schools under 34 C.F.R. § 200.18(a)(4).

The final summative determinations will be made using a hybrid approach employing a normative and criterion-referenced methodology. As mentioned above, schools will first be placed in a performance level based on their school percentile range. The exact percentile ranges associated with different levels have not been determined but an example is included below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level Name</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tier 1</td>
<td>School Percentile 90-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 2</td>
<td>School Percentile 50-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 3</td>
<td>School Percentile 25-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 4</td>
<td>School Percentile 11-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 5</td>
<td>School Percentile 6-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 6</td>
<td>School Percentile 1-5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The placement into a level establishes a baseline level for schools and that level can change in either direction based on number of criterion-referenced factors. At the beginning of each school year, all schools will be provided with targets based on their starting point on each of the indicators included in the system. Schools that are deemed to have met the targets set (exact methodology for attaining “met” status has not been determined to date) will be eligible to move up the level scale by one level and those schools attaining an “exceeding” status will be eligible up two levels on the scale.
Conversely, schools are also eligible to be moved down on the level scale for several reasons: (1) those schools that do not meet the participation requirements would be eligible to be moved down a level on the performance scale; (2) schools that are identified for targeted support are ineligible for the top level of the scale regardless of the school percentile; and (3) schools in the bottom two levels (lowest 10% of schools statewide) would be ineligible for an improved classification thus allowing the Department to clearly determine appropriate resource allocation and other support.

iv. How the system for meaningful differentiation and the methodology for identifying schools under 34 C.F.R. § 200.19 will ensure that schools with low performance on substantially weighted indicators are more likely to be identified for comprehensive support and improvement or targeted support and improvement, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.18(c)(3) and (d)(1)(ii).

Massachusetts has not established specific weightings for the percentile methodology illustrated above because we do not yet have results from our new assessment system. However, the core measures (Percentile E) will be given much greater weight than the additional measures (percentile F) for purposes of determining an overall school percentile.

E. Participation Rate. Describe how the State is factoring the requirement for 95 percent student participation in assessments into its system of annual meaningful differentiation of schools consistent with the requirements of 34 C.F.R. § 200.15.

A school’s summative performance level will be lowered if that school assesses less than 95% of students in the aggregate or for any subgroup that meets a minimum N size of 20.

F. Data Procedures. Describe the State’s uniform procedure for averaging data, including combining data across school years, combining data across grades, or both, in a school as defined in 34 C.F.R. § 200.20(a), if applicable.

As in past years, Massachusetts will leverage multiple years of data to place schools in a level on its classification system. Due to the change in assessment, Massachusetts will only use two years of data (2016-17 and 2017-18) for its first classification under the new accountability system in 2018. In year one, each of the two years will account for 50% of the weight towards a summative classification. Following year one, another year of data will be added to the calculation in each of the next two years until four years of data can used. This approach is consistent with the current system in Massachusetts and allows for the most comprehensive classification of a school. At that time, the most recent year of data will account for 40% of the calculation, followed by 30% for the next most recent year (year 2), 20% for year 3 and 10% for the year four in the calculation.

G. Including All Public Schools in a State’s Accountability System. If the States uses a different methodology for annual meaningful differentiation than the one described in D above for any of the following specific types of schools, describe how they are included, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.18(d)(1)(iii):

i. Schools in which no grade level is assessed under the State's academic assessment system (e.g., P-2 schools), although the State is not required to administer a standardized assessment to meet this requirement;
Massachusetts does not currently assign a summative classification to schools that do not administer the statewide assessment to any students in the school, but plans to develop a protocol to be able to do so.

ii. Schools with variant grade configurations (e.g., P-12 schools);

Massachusetts plans on treating schools with any tested grades in the same manner. The construct of the Next-Generation MCAS will allow us to compare achievement across grades either through the scaled score (grades 3-8) or through equating the scale of the grade 10 assessment to that of the Next-Generation MCAS.

iii. Small schools in which the total number of students who can be included in any indicator under 34 C.F.R. § 200.14 is less than the minimum number of students established by the State under 34 C.F.R. § 200.17(a), consistent with a State’s uniform procedures for averaging data under 34 C.F.R. § 200.20(a), if applicable;

Massachusetts does not currently assign a summative classification to schools that do not have the requisite number of assessed students in the school, but plans to develop a protocol to be able to do so.

iv. Schools that are designed to serve special populations (e.g., students receiving alternative programming in alternative educational settings; students living in local institutions for neglected or delinquent children, including juvenile justice facilities; students enrolled in State public schools for the deaf or blind; and recently arrived English learners enrolled in public schools for newcomer students); and

Massachusetts does not currently differentiate between schools whose mission is to serve alternative populations, but plans to explore a protocol to do so for the first time following the 2017-18 school year.

v. Newly opened schools that do not have multiple years of data, consistent with a State’s uniform procedure for averaging data under 34 C.F.R. § 200.20(a), if applicable, for at least one indicator (e.g., a newly opened high school that has not yet graduated its first cohort for students).

Massachusetts plans to include all schools into the accountability as soon as we are able to make a valid and reliable summative determination. In most cases, this will be after two years so we can measure both status and improvement.

4.2 Identification of Schools.

A. Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools. Describe:

i. The methodologies, including the timeline, by which the State identifies schools for comprehensive support and improvement under section 1111(c)(4)(D)(i) of the ESEA and 34 C.F.R. § 200.19(a) and (d), including: 1) lowest-performing schools; 2) schools with low high school graduation rates; and 3) schools with chronically low-performing subgroups.
Massachusetts plans to identify schools for Comprehensive Support for the first time in the fall of 2018 using assessment results from 2016-17 and 2017-18 and graduation rates for the 2017 cohort. There will be three types of schools in need of Comprehensive Support:

1. The lowest 5% of schools will be identified according to the school percentile methodology described above. Any school with a final school percentile from 1-5 will be identified as in need of Comprehensive Support.
2. Comprehensive high schools with a 2017 four-year graduation rate lower than 67% will also be identified in the fall of 2018 as in need of Comprehensive Support.
3. Any school identified as having the same chronically low-performing subgroup for three consecutive years will be identified as in need of Comprehensive Support. These schools will be first identified following the 2018-19 school year.

ii. The uniform statewide exit criteria for schools identified for comprehensive support and improvement established by the State, including the number of years over which schools are expected to meet such criteria, under section 1111(d)(3)(A)(i) of the ESEA and consistent with the requirements in 34 C.F.R. § 200.21(f)(1).

Massachusetts will identify the exit criteria for schools in need of comprehensive support prior to the first identification in fall 2018.

B. Targeted Support and Improvement Schools. Describe:

i. The State’s methodology for identifying any school with a “consistently underperforming” subgroup of students, including the definition and time period used by the State to determine consistent underperformance, under 34 C.F.R. § 200.19(b)(1) and (c).

Massachusetts will identify the methodology for schools with consistently underperforming subgroups prior to the fall of 2018.

ii. The State’s methodology, including the timeline, for identifying schools with low-performing subgroups of students under 34 C.F.R. § 200.19(b)(2) and (d) that must receive additional targeted support in accordance with section 1111(d)(2)(C) of the ESEA.

Massachusetts plans to identify schools as in need of targeted support for the first time in the fall of 2018 using assessment results from 2016-17 and 2017-18. These schools will be identified if the school has a subgroup that is in the lowest performing 10% of all eligible subgroups and the school has not already been identified for comprehensive support.

iii. The uniform exit criteria, established by the SEA, for schools participating under Title I, Part A with low-performing subgroups of students, including the number of years over which schools are expected to meet such criteria, consistent with the requirements in 34 C.F.R. § 200.22(f).

Massachusetts will identify the exit criteria for schools in need of targeted support prior to the first identification in fall 2018.

4.3 State Support and Improvement for Low-performing Schools.
Overview
Massachusetts has a well-established and robust process for identifying and intervening in the lowest performing schools and districts across the state. This Consolidated State Plan under ESSA will allow the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) to integrate its state system with federal accountability and assistance requirements, and enhance supports and services to comprehensive and targeted support and improvement schools.

Since 2012, ESE has commissioned research to assess what practices and conditions are most effective at promoting turnaround. In 2014, the Turnaround Practices in Action Report\textsuperscript{3} illustrated the findings of that research. The report highlighted four key turnaround practices observed in schools that have shown significant and rapid gains in student achievement:

- Establish a school-wide community of practice through leadership, shared responsibility, and professional collaboration;
- Employ intentional practices for improving instruction;
- Provide student-specific supports and instruction to all students; and
- Provide appropriate social, emotional, and behavioral supports in order to create a safe, orderly, and respectful learning environment for students and teachers.

The four turnaround practices now form the framework for all ESE support and assistance efforts for comprehensive and targeted support school, including but not limited to:
- the state-required Turnaround Plan requirements (Appendix TBD),
- direct technical assistance,
- competitive funding (Appendix TBD)
- annual monitoring (Appendix TBD)
- professional development
- turnaround partner development

Since 2014, ESE has continued this research and dissemination of best practices in turnaround schools. In 2016, in addition to an impact study, ESE released an implementation study\textsuperscript{4} and a field guide\textsuperscript{5} for districts and schools, which provide specific examples of turnaround practices in action at the school and district level. Based on this research, Massachusetts will continue to align its competitive grant process to these evidence-based strategies, as well as monitoring of comprehensive and targeted support and improvement schools to the turnaround practices. Massachusetts will also continue to evaluate the use of school improvement resources and disseminate evidence of best practices through our Office of Effective Practices in Turnaround and the Office of Planning and Research.

A. School Improvement Resources. Describe how the SEA will meet its responsibilities, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.24(d) under section 1003 of the ESEA, including the process to award school improvement funds to LEAs and monitoring and evaluating the use of funds by LEAs.

Comprehensive support and improvement schools will be eligible to apply for school improvement funds through a competitive process.

A 2016 quasi-experimental study conducted by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) showed statistically significant gains in student achievement for Massachusetts turnaround schools receiving and implementing federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) funding between 2011 and 2015. This research gives Massachusetts strong evidence to continue to support its lowest-performing schools as was done under its former SIG program. If adequate school improvement funding is not available to sufficiently support all schools eligible for funding, Massachusetts will establish prioritization criteria for school improvement grant funds that best meets the needs of comprehensive and targeted support and improvement schools in our state.

Under ESSA, Massachusetts will structure the competitive school improvement grant process around critical elements of its former SIG competitive process;
• a rigorous set of expectations aligned to the four evidence-based turnaround practices, required of applicant schools;
• applications and interviews scored on a rubric with a high bar that ensures funding is only allocated to schools that demonstrate strong capacity to implement a strategic and actionable approach based on a robust data analysis and with community involvement to implement the turnaround plan;
• alignment to state statute and regulations for low performing schools; and
• supplemented with district assistance and support by our statewide system of support aligned to the turnaround practices.

See appendices (to be added prior to plan submission) for additional details on grant requirements, planning template and guidance, scoring rubric, reapplication template, sample budget workbook, and monitoring rubric to be used in the competitive school improvement grant process.

If adequate funding is available, Massachusetts will open eligibility for school improvement funds to targeted support and intervention schools, and/or allocate school improvement grant funds according to a formula that best meets the needs of comprehensive and targeted support and improvement schools in our state. All school improvement grant awards, whether competitive or formulaic, will be made in alignment with the turnaround practices and take into account district capacity to effectively, sustainably, and proactively implement the practices. For low performing schools and districts that embrace the practices and conditions essential for success, ESE will provide priority consideration in the allocation of other discretionary grants (such as Expanded Learning Time) and will work with EEC to expand access to early education.

---

B. Technical Assistance Regarding Evidence-Based Interventions. Describe the technical assistance the SEA will provide to each LEA in the State serving a significant number or percentage of schools identified for comprehensive or targeted support and improvement, including how it will provide technical assistance to LEAs to ensure the effective implementation of evidence-based interventions, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.23(b), and, if applicable, the list of State-approved, evidence-based interventions for use in schools implementing comprehensive or targeted support and improvement plans consistent with § 200.23(c)(2)-(3).

The Department prioritizes resources and intervention to districts with comprehensive and targeted support and improvement schools by providing:

- direct expert assistance and accountability from Department staff and its approved turnaround partners, including but not limited to coaching, professional development, planning and program implementation support, data analysis assistance,
- funding and research based resources,
- and preferred access to professional development.

The majority of these efforts are designed to enhance school and district capacity to effectively, sustainably, and proactively use proven instructional and supportive practices to boost and sustain rapid gains in student achievement. The foundation for the state assistance and intervention is the turnaround practices research conducted in Massachusetts’ schools and districts that have made rapid student achievement gains. Department-funded research has further indicated that the most effective ways to improve student performance is through the faithful implementation of the turnaround practices in a coherent system for improvement.

Comprehensive and targeted support and improvement schools and their districts are supported by resources from throughout the Department. However, the direct targeted assistance for turnaround in districts with comprehensive and targeted support and improvement schools is overseen through the Statewide System of Support in the District Support Center. Targeted Assistance is provided in a multi-pronged method that provides a customized approach based on district size, capacity, and accountability status The basic design for assisting these districts and their schools involves addressing the distinct strengths and needs of the largest urban districts from smaller ones along the following functional assistance distinctions.

Commissioner’s Districts: The state’s ten largest, highest poverty school districts, collectively known as the “Commissioner’s Districts”, are supported through full time liaisons, program specialists and partners with expertise in collaborating with large urban districts’ considerable content and leadership infrastructure. The majority of comprehensive and targeted support and intervention schools are represented in these ten districts, and therefore the districts require an intense level of support from the Department. Support services are based on needs identified through careful examination of data and focused by research, districts’ self-assessments, improvement plans, and direct observations conducted by these skilled liaisons. Additional assistance is provided by Department content experts in English language arts, mathematics, science and English language development. Further external turnaround partners and consultants, who are vetted by the Department, with documented records of accomplishment at improving outcomes for high-needs and urban students provide additional targeted supports based on need. The Commissioner’s Districts include: Boston, Brockton, Fall River, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lowell, Lynn, New Bedford, Springfield and Worcester. The majority of Massachusetts comprehensive and targeted support and improvement schools are in the Commissioner’s Districts.
District and School Assistance Centers - Support to the small and medium-sized districts with comprehensive and targeted support and improvement schools is delivered through District and School Assistance Centers (“DSACs”) organized into six regions across the state. The DSACs serve a range of struggling districts and their schools that may lack sufficient infrastructure and human resources to deliver the complex array of supports necessary to further their educational improvement efforts. DSACs are staffed by a team of experts, including former superintendents and principals, who provide experienced leadership and guidance, along with specialists in mathematics, literacy, data use, and career vocational technical education. These Department representatives, who operate as an integrated regional assistance team, offer districts a focused array of research based assistance, customizing that assistance to meet districts’ and schools’ specific needs aligned to the turnaround practices.

Evidence-Based Criteria: Massachusetts has strong research to support meeting the evidence-based criteria under ESSA. As previously detailed in this section, years of high-quality research studies have shown that Massachusetts schools that implement four key turnaround practices are more likely to see rapid improvements in student achievement results. A quasi-experimental study in 2016 showed statistically significant gains in student achievement for Massachusetts turnaround schools receiving and implementing federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) funding. These findings give Massachusetts great confidence in its approach for supporting and monitoring comprehensive and targeted intervention schools in full alignment with the turnaround practices. An annual monitoring process for comprehensive support and intervention schools provides substantial evidence of implementation of the research-based turnaround practices, from which liaisons or DSAC staff provide direct targeted assistance to districts and schools. The Department fully intends to continue commissioning further turnaround research, deepen and enhance our statewide system of support for low performing schools based on research, and disseminate evidence of best practice to comprehensive and targeted support schools.

In addition, ESE also supports district implementation of evidence-based practices by vetting vendors interested in supporting comprehensive and/or targeted support and intervention schools through its Priority Partner Initiative. This initiative is aimed at qualifying organizations from a pre-approved list of vendors to support district and school turnaround. To be approved to work with Massachusetts comprehensive and targeted support and improvement schools, vendors must provide evidence of a demonstrated track record of effectiveness in accelerating school improvement. The Priority Partner Initiative is fully integrated into the state procurement process that requires frequent renewal periods to ensure vendors continue to meet the standards we require for vendors engaging in turnaround work with schools and districts.

C. More Rigorous Interventions. Describe the more rigorous interventions required for schools identified for comprehensive support and improvement that fail to meet the State’s exit criteria within a State-determined number of years consistent with section 1111(d)(3)(A)(i) of the ESEA and 34 C.F.R. § 200.21(f)(3)(iii).

Massachusetts has developed several approaches to intervening in persistently low-performing schools and districts; full state take-over through receivership, vetted educational management organizations to fully manage a school on behalf of districts or the Department, and support to districts in establishing alternative governance structures for specific schools or clusters of schools (such as Innovation Partnership Zones). In each instance of a persistently low-performing school or district, we use the approach that best meets their context and unique needs. Each district and school engaged in receivership or alternative governance structures receives prioritized assistance, support and monitoring from the Commissioner and other staff from the Department, all aligned to the research-based turnaround practices.

In instances when all other avenues to implement ambitious and accelerated reforms have been exhausted in Level 4 schools and districts and when it is in the best interest of students, the state has intervened, using legal authorities, and has placed persistently low-performing districts and schools under state receivership into Level 5 or “chronically underperforming” status. At present, three school districts and four schools are under state receivership. The Department has exercised a few different models of receivership by appointing the superintendent as receiver of a school or district and by placing a highly-qualified educational management organization as receiver. Many of these approaches are seeing results in higher student achievement, especially in Lawrence Public Schools. Since the district was placed in receivership in 2013, student proficiency rates in English language arts, mathematics and science have rose significantly, the achievement gap between English language learners and students in the aggregate has been reduced, and dramatic improvements have been realized in graduation and drop-out rates. After three years, the four individual schools under receivership in Boston, New Bedford and Holyoke have also seen improvements in student achievement.

The Department engages in active pursuit of educational management organizations that have a demonstrated track record in successfully managing and operating low-performing schools and can demonstrate success in achieving improved outcomes for students. School Turnaround Operators are responsible for implementing well-developed models that encompass school governance and management, instructional design, staff planning, community engagement strategies, and student supports. These pre-qualified School Turnaround Operators may be selected by districts or ESE to manage or serve as receiver for persistently low-performing schools.

The Department also supports districts in establishing alternative governance structures for one or a set of schools that continue to struggle in making rapid improvements in student achievement. Alternative governance structures and Innovation Partnership Zones keep the schools within the district’s control, but allow for additional autonomies, flexibilities, and compensation systems necessary for persistently low-performing schools. To date, two districts, Boston and Springfield, have negotiated alternative governance structures. To execute an alternative governance structure, districts may choose to select an educational management organization from our vetted School Turnaround Operators. Alternatively, districts may establish an Innovation Partnership Zone consisting of at least two public schools for the purpose of improving school performance and student achievement through increased autonomy and flexibility governed by a board of directors. Pending legislation for Innovation Partnership Zones may be a key resource for districts to exercise this option. Massachusetts intends to leverage this legislation and ESSA to support districts in establishing these types of alternative governance structures in districts with multiple comprehensive and targeted support and improvement schools, as well as in districts with
comprehensive support and improvement schools that fail to meet the State’s exit criteria.

D. **Periodic Resource Review.** Describe how the SEA will periodically review, identify, and, to the extent practicable, address any identified inequities in resources to ensure sufficient support for school improvement in each LEA in the State serving a significant number or percentage of schools identified for comprehensive or targeted support and improvement consistent with the requirements in section 1111(d)(3)(A)(ii) of the ESEA and 34 C.F.R. § 200.23(a).

*To be completed prior to plan submission.*
Section 5: Supporting Excellent Educators

5.1 Educator Development, Retention, and Advancement.

Instructions: Consistent with sections 2101 and 2102 of the ESEA, if an SEA intends to use funds under one or more of the included programs for any of the following purposes, provide a description with the necessary information.

A. Certification and Licensure Systems. Does the SEA intend to use Title II, Part A funds or funds from other included programs for certifying and licensing teachers and principals or other school leaders?

☑ Yes. If yes, provide a description of the systems for certification and licensure below.

☐ No.

Massachusetts has been licensing educators since 1951. Our licensure system requires that educators – including teachers, support personnel, and administrators – hold a Massachusetts license for their specific role. Teachers demonstrate subject matter knowledge and skills, usually via the Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL). Educators must also continue to complete professional development on an ongoing basis to maintain licensure. Additional information on Massachusetts Licensure may be found on our Educator Licensure website.

In support of setting a high bar for licensure, and therefore ensuring that novice teachers in their first year of teaching are ready to make an impact with students on their first day in the classroom, Massachusetts will effectively implement the Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure. The Department manages the contract with a vendor and develops and revises tests to align with the subject matter knowledge requirements for educators. The Department has continuously sought to evolve our licensure system. As a result, the agency will continue to refine the regulation that governs the requirements for educator licensure to promote effective teachers. Massachusetts will develop and solicit feedback on licensure policies and seek approval of revised licensure regulations from the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. These regulations directly impact novice and veteran teachers, as well as educator preparation programs.

We intend to use Title IIA administrative funds to support staff deployment within the agency to work on licensure policy, including design and implementation. Our theory of action is that if we effectively support the administration of the teacher tests and build out licensure policies that set a high bar for educators, then educators will be better positioned to affect students on day one.

B. Educator Preparation Program Strategies. Does the SEA intend to use Title II, Part A funds or funds from other included programs to support the State’s strategies to improve educator preparation programs consistent with section 2101(d)(2)(M) of the ESEA, particularly for educators of low-income and minority students?

☑ Yes. If yes, provide a description of the strategies to improve educator preparation programs below.

☐ No.

Educator Preparation provides the foothold for beginning educators to maximize their impact on student learning from the very moment they enter the classroom as novice teachers.
Over the past several years, Massachusetts has significantly shifted the expectations for educator preparation program design, review and accountability, resulting in a review process based on data, and driven by evidence, more meaningful field-based experiences, and improved assessments for educator candidates.

The four strategies the Department has used and will continue to use include:

- Require the use of performance assessments for prospective teachers and administrators
- Implement an educator preparation program review process focused on evidence of outcomes
- Use data to promote continuous improvement and transparency, including stakeholder survey data
- Foster strong partnerships between educator preparation programs and districts

First, the Department requires performance assessments for teacher and school leader candidates. The Performance Assessment for Leaders (PAL) is required for Principal licensure and a new statewide Candidate Assessment of Performance (CAP is a program completion requirement for prospective teachers. The assessments hold educator preparation program providers accountable for educator performance and also emphasize the importance of preparing educators to work with students with diverse needs, backgrounds and family income levels. The CAP assesses a teacher candidate’s readiness in relation to state’s Professional Standards for Teachers (PSTs). CAP parallels the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation system in order to better prepare teacher candidates and ensure that they are ready to be effective on day one. It measures teacher candidates’ practice across a range of key indicators as outlined in the Guidelines for the Professional Standards for Teachers, and supports prospective teachers in improving their practice based on assessment results.

Second, the Department will continue to prioritize implementing the Educator Preparation Program Approval Process, outlined in the Guidelines for Program Approval, and that emphasizes program outcomes. The review process includes an intensive off-site collection and analysis of data as well as on-site reviews.

Third, the Department will continue to release online Educator Preparation Profiles, which include public reports linking data from educator preparation to educator evaluation, employment in Massachusetts public schools, and other outcomes of program completers. Educator Preparation Profiles hold program providers accountable for teacher performance and emphasize the importance of preparing educators to work with students with diverse needs. The profiles help prospective educators to compare programs. School and district leaders can also learn about the outcomes of the programs generating applicants for local positions, so that leaders can recruit well-prepared teachers.

Additionally, the Department is implementing a suite of surveys to provide additional data to the educator preparation programs. The Department administers and analyzes four surveys that contribute to an overall picture of educator preparation programs’ and new teachers’ effectiveness:
Candidates Survey, Supervising Practitioners Survey, Hiring Employer Survey (one year out), and Program Completer Survey (one year out).

The fourth strategy includes providing resources and support in building close formal partnerships between educator preparation programs and school districts that mutually benefit the preparation program, the school district, and the first-year teacher.

The Department plans to use Title IIA funds, non-federal funds and other sources to continue the above work.

C. Educator Growth and Development Systems. Does the SEA intend to use Title II, Part A funds or funds from other included programs to support the State’s systems of professional growth and improvement for educators that addresses: 1) induction; 2) development, consistent with the definition of professional development in section 8002(42) of the ESEA; 3) compensation; and 4) advancement for teachers, principals, and other school leaders. This may also include how the SEA will work with LEAs in the State to develop or implement systems of professional growth and improvement, consistent with section 2102(b)(2)(B) of the ESEA; or State or local educator evaluation and support systems consistent with section 2101(c)(4)(B)(ii) of the ESEA?

☑ Yes. If yes, provide a description of the educator growth and development systems below.

☐ No. Massachusetts intends to support the continued development and implementation of systems of professional growth and improvement for educators, including:

- Induction
- Professional growth and development system

**Induction:** To support the state’s system of professional growth and improvement, in 2015 the Department revised the longstanding induction and mentoring guidelines. The existing regulations link beginning educator support programs, called “induction programs,” to licensure by making participation in such a program one of the requirements for teachers and administrators to attain Professional License (603 CMR 7.04 (2)[c][b]). The regulations outline basic program standards or components that are required of district induction programs (603 CMR 7.12, 603 CMR 7.13).

The revised [MA Induction and Mentoring Guidelines](#) have been developed to:

- assist districts in the creation and administration of their induction programs; and
- align with educator effectiveness reform initiatives.

Districts are encouraged to develop programs that meet the spirit of the standards included in the regulations while taking into account their own district needs and characteristics. The intention of this guidance is not to prescribe a specific course of action or program design, but to provide a resource to districts as they develop and refine their programs.

Since the revisions of the guidelines, the Department annually collects data from districts on their induction programs, and produces a statewide report on induction in order to describe district programs, share best practices, and understand areas of challenge. Furthermore, the report shows a snapshot of the common characteristics of statewide mentoring and induction programs, and
provides information, resources and solutions that can aid districts as they continue the work of improving their mentoring and induction programs.

Specifically, the goals of the statewide annual report are to:

- Encourage district reflection on current induction and mentoring practices so districts may identify strengths and areas for further development; and
- Provide ESE with data so the agency can identify promising induction and mentoring practices to share across districts and understand areas where the agency can provide additional supports and resources to districts.

The completed 2016 Annual Induction and Mentoring Report was published in October 2016.

**Educator Evaluation System:** The Department supports districts in implementing their educator evaluation systems, which are aligned to the statewide Educator Evaluation Framework. The Educator Evaluation Framework is designed to provide educators with meaningful feedback on their practice and impact on students. The Framework applies to principals and other administrators, central office staff, superintendents, and teachers. In 2011, the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approved new state regulations on educator evaluation (603 CMR 35.00) in order to:

- promote growth and development among leaders and teachers;
- place student learning at the center, using multiple measures of student learning, growth, and achievement;
- recognize excellence in teaching and leading;
- set a high bar for professional teaching status; and
- shorten timelines for educator improvement.

The Department continues to work with districts to support educator evaluation implementation (see here for examples of educator evaluation resources the Department builds and implements); to collect and analyze data from districts on educator evaluation implementation; and to solicit and use feedback to improve the design of the Framework and supporting resources. For example, the Department will continue to promote the use of the Calibration Tool, a resource available to assist districts in supporting evaluators and educators to come to a shared understanding of expectations for instructional practices, and to build common understandings of the feedback provided to educators.

5.2 Support for Educators.

*Instructions:* Consistent with sections 2101 and 2102 of the ESEA, if the SEA intends to use funds under one or more of the included programs for any of the following purposes, provide a description with the necessary information.

**A. Resources to Support State-level Strategies.** Describe how the SEA will use Title II, Part A funds and funds from other included programs, consistent with allowable uses of funds provided under those programs, to support State-level strategies designed to:

i. Increase student achievement consistent with the challenging State academic standards;
ii. Improve the quality and effectiveness of teachers, principals, and other school leaders;
iii. Increase the number of teachers, principals, and other school leaders who are effective in improving student academic achievement in schools; and
iv. Provide low-income and minority students greater access to effective teachers, principals, and other school leaders consistent with the educator equity provisions in 34 C.F.R. § 299.18(c).

The Department will support implementation of revised English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics standards as described in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. This strategy will include resources such as “Quick Reference Guides” detailing more specific aspects of the Frameworks, links to videos of teaching of the standards, available sample assessment items, and in-person professional learning experiences through professional learning networks across the state and in-person convening of educators.

Early Literacy
The Department anticipates releasing revised English Language Arts and literacy (ELA/literacy) and mathematics learning standards in spring 2017. The implementation of the ELA/Literacy Curriculum Framework provides an opportunity for the Department to redouble our support for districts in designing effective literacy programs for students in grades Pre-K through 2 in close coordination with our partners at the state Department of Early Education and Care. To best meet the needs of districts and schools to promote early literacy success, the Department is conducting a needs assessment of the field through targeted interviews with practitioners and working with experts and stakeholders to identify research-informed approaches to early literacy instruction. Once we confirm the match made between field need and instructional support approaches, ESE will develop a program of supports, including competitive grant opportunities, teacher leadership opportunities, regional professional learning networks for teachers and administrators, statewide convenings of educators for professional learning, and web-based tools and resources. Our efforts begin with the goal of all early literacy educators in Massachusetts developing a deep understanding of the revised ELA/literacy standards to support students to attain them. This foundational knowledge of the expectations for what students should know and be able to do on the part of teachers, coupled with supports from school and district administrators will result in engaging, developmentally appropriate learning experiences that prepare all students for later academic success.

Middle Grades Math
As with the Department’s attention to early literacy and its relationship to rollout of a revised ELA/Literacy Curriculum Framework, our efforts to improve instruction in middle grades mathematics will be grounded in a set of comprehensive supports to districts designed to help educators access and unpack the revised learning standards in the Mathematics Curriculum Framework to ensure students meet these standards. We have preliminarily identified as a focus deepening educators’ understanding of mathematical rigor, as discussed in the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework as a balanced approach between procedural, conceptual, and applied learning/tasks and supporting educators to represent this balance in lesson and unit design. Specific to mathematics instruction in the middle grades, we intend to facilitate professional learning opportunities (e.g., regional networks, statewide professional development offerings) on how to
support students to reason abstractly and quantitatively and make use of structure (two of the eight Standards for Mathematical Purpose included in the Mathematics Curriculum Framework), skills that we believe will help students develop the balance between procedure, concept, and application they will need to meaningfully engage in advanced mathematics coursework in high school and beyond. Further, we anticipate supporting educators to understand the vertical progression of the standards from the early grades through the middle grades so educators understand the progression of mathematical concepts in the standards and how to prepare students for what they will need to know and be able to do in the next grade.

The Department has been consistently focused on the equity implications and possibilities for Title IIA. Nationally, the bulk of Title IIA funding – up to 75 percent – is spent on professional development and class-size reduction, with little data as to how impactful these activities are in improving educator effectiveness. We see this trend in Massachusetts, documented in an analysis of Title IIA applications facilitated by SRI International. The state FY17 Title IIA application required districts to indicate what student and/or educator outcome data they intended to use to measure the effectiveness of grant expenditures. The Department conducts Title IIA monitoring and places a focus on equity. For example, in addition to existing indicators addressing equitable distribution of in-field and effective teachers, Massachusetts added indicators to ensure that districts are implementing quality induction and mentoring and educator evaluation systems, and to identify exemplary districts or those needing technical assistance. In the technical assistance sessions, Department staff reinforces the connection between Title IIA and equity, such as how Title IIA funds can support the access of students with disabilities to effective educators under ESSA. Massachusetts’s Title IIA application and review process will further promote equity and development of more effective educators beginning in FY18. For example, the Title IIA application approval will be tied to a district’s submission of an approvable equity plan.

Furthermore, Massachusetts intends to leverage the ESSA provision allowing SEAs to allocate up to three percent of Title IIA funds toward a state initiative for principals and teacher leaders. ESE will fund principal and teacher ambassador fellowships, designed to strengthen the principal pipeline and build principals’ effectiveness in supporting implementation of curriculum standards and supporting administrators’ efficacy in the educator evaluation standards of effective administrative leadership.

Finally, Title IIA resources will support the continued development of the Student Learning Experience Report (SLE), a student-level report available to districts to analyze and understand patterns of individual students’ assignment to teachers with various characteristics and proxies of effectiveness (e.g., experience, certification, ratings on educator evaluation). The SLE report will be a critical mechanism for districts to analyze student access to effective educators and will assist districts in being strategic about student assignment.

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B. Skills to Address Specific Learning Needs. Describe how the SEA will improve the skills of teachers, principals, or other school leaders in identifying students with specific learning needs and providing instruction based on the needs of such students, consistent with section 2101(d)(2)(J) of the ESEA.

Many units across the Department have developed resources and guidance to improve the skills of educators in addressing specific learning needs of students, including: Social and Emotional Learning, Special Education, and English Language Learners. The Department will continue to work with districts to support the use of these resources:

- **Educator Guidebook for Inclusive Practice**: This Guidebook was created in conjunction with educators and includes tools for districts, schools, and educators that are aligned to the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework, and that promote evidence-based best practices for inclusion following the principles of Universal Design for Learning, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, and Social and Emotional Learning.

- **Foundations for Inclusive Practice Online Courses**: These courses are one option for Massachusetts educators to meet the license renewal requirement related to training in strategies for effective schooling of students with disabilities and instruction of students with diverse learning styles. The courses are available at no cost to educators.

- **Inclusive Practice and the Teacher Candidate**: In collaboration with higher education faculty, the Department offers a three-hour sample lesson sharing evidence-based best practices for inclusion, designed to meet the needs of teacher candidates in all licensure areas.

- **Social-emotional learning, health and safety** is one of the **Department’s five core strategies**. Massachusetts is participating in the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL’s) two-year Collaborating States Initiative (CSI). The CSI is an inter-state partnership on the development of policies, guidelines, learning standards or goals to support statewide implementation of social and emotional learning (SEL).

While the needs and approaches of supporting social and emotional outcomes vary from district to district, the Department intends to partner with our stakeholders to establish a common language and shared vision of positive social and emotional competencies for all students. Partnership with CASEL and other participating states will allow the Department to achieve those goals by:

- Engaging with our stakeholders, especially our teachers, administrators, and specialized instructional support personnel (SISP);
- Integrating SEL principles with existing policies, resources, and initiatives; and
- Building useful, well-aligned resources.

In addition, the Department strongly recommends sustained professional development and collaborative learning around issues of cultural competency and SEL. Developing students’ social emotional competencies can provide an opportunity to develop a sense of positive self-worth in connection to a student’s race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, and sexual orientation.
ESE has released a set of guidance to administrators and school leaders on how to facilitate SEL as a school-wide initiative. They include:

- **PreK-K Standards**
  These standards were developed as a collaborative initiative with the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) and the University of Massachusetts/Boston with funding from the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant. The standards bring attention to critical areas of development and learning that positively impact student outcomes and can be used to guide efforts to strengthen curriculum, instruction, assessment, professional development, and family engagement.

- **Guidelines on Implementing SEL**
  This document contains guidelines for schools and districts on how to effectively implement social and emotional learning curricula for students in grades K-12. The information provided relates to leadership, professional development, resource coordination, instructional approaches, policies and protocols, and collaboration with families.

- **Educator Guidebook for Inclusive Practice**
  Created by Massachusetts educators, this Guidebook includes tools for districts, schools, and educators that are aligned to the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework and promote evidence-based best practices for inclusion following the principles of Universal Design for Learning, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, and SEL.

- **Recommendations for SEL Guiding Principles in Math/ELA Curriculum Frameworks currently posted for public comment**
  The Department consulted with PK–12 educators, curriculum specialists, and others to identify possible improvements to the Massachusetts ELA/literacy and mathematics standards, based on lessons learned during implementation since 2011. A review panel analyzed this stakeholder input and recommended needed changes. SEL was included in the recommended ELA standards as **Guiding Principle 9** and in the recommended Math standards as **Guiding Principle 7**.

### 5.3 Educator Equity.

#### A. Definitions

Provide the SEA’s different definitions, using distinct criteria, for the following key terms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Term</th>
<th>Statewide Definition (or Statewide Guidelines)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ineffective teacher*</td>
<td>An educator who has been rated as Needs Improvement or Unsatisfactory on the Summative Performance Rating of the Educator Evaluation Framework. The corollary is also true: Educators who have been rated as Exemplary or Proficient, and who also</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Term</td>
<td>Statewide Definition (or Statewide Guidelines)</td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>succeed on other measures, are considered Excellent.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out-of-field teacher*+</td>
<td>a core academic teacher(^8) who is not Highly Qualified for the subject/ he or she teaches for more than 20 percent of his or her schedule(^9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inexperienced teacher*+</td>
<td>Teachers in their first year of practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-income student</td>
<td><strong>Economically Disadvantaged Students</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Prior to the 2014-2015 school year, termed “low income students”: enrolled students who are eligible for free or reduced price lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• In 2015-2016 school year and beyond: “economically disadvantaged students” are enrolled students participating in one or more of the following state-administered programs: the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); the Transitional Assistance for Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC); the Department of Children and Families’ (DCF) foster care program; and eligible Mass Health programs (Medicaid).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority student</td>
<td>Students who are American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, or two or more races. The term “students of color” is used interchangeably.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Definitions of these terms must provide useful information about educator equity.  
+Definitions of these terms must be consistent with the definitions that a State uses under 34 C.F.R. § 200.37.

**B. Rates and Differences in Rates.** In Appendix B, calculate and provide the statewide rates at which low-income and minority students enrolled in schools receiving funds under Title I, Part A are taught by ineffective, out-of-field, and inexperienced teachers compared to non-low-income and non-minority students enrolled in schools not receiving funds under Title I, Part A using the definitions provided in section 5.3.A. The SEA must calculate the statewide rates using student-level data.

Massachusetts’ educator equity initiative applies to all schools in the state. As such, we have provided data in Appendix B for the entire state over the past five years.

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\(^9\) MA regulations allow for a person holding a license to be employed for a maximum of 20 percent of his/her time in a role and/or at a grade level for which she/he does not hold a license.
C. **Public Reporting.** Provide the Web address or URL of, or a direct link to, where the SEA will publish and annually update, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 299.18(c)(4):

i. The rates and differences in rates calculated in 5.3.B;

ii. The percentage of teachers categorized in each LEA at each effectiveness level established as part of the definition of “ineffective teacher,” consistent with applicable State privacy policies;

iii. The percentage of teachers categorized as out-of-field teachers consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.37; and

iv. The percentage of teachers categorized as inexperienced teachers consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.37.

www.profiles.doe.mass.edu

D. **Likely Causes of Most Significant Differences.** If there is one or more difference in rates in 5.3.B, describe the likely causes (e.g., teacher shortages, working conditions, school leadership, compensation, or other causes), which may vary across districts or schools, of the most significant statewide differences in rates in 5.3.B. The description must include whether those differences in rates reflect gaps between districts, within districts, and within schools.

Previous analysis of the Massachusetts teacher workforce, published in December 2013, provides data on how much differences in rates of access to educators reflect gaps between districts, within districts, and within schools. The analyses indicated that inequities in access to experienced teachers, based on levels of student achievement, are most strongly attributable to differences across districts in the state. The gap in lower-achieving students’ access to experienced teachers is only slightly more attributable to differences across schools in a district than to differences within schools. The experiences of subsets of districts, where the Department has analyzed district data, suggest a similar pattern. Most of these districts include several elementary schools and a single high school, with a large portion of local equity gaps attributable to differences across elementary schools in the district – thus, the differences in rates reflect gaps within districts. Why do these inequities exist? We have identified root causes for the four areas of equity gaps: the experience gap, the preparation gap, and the effectiveness gap.

**Root Cause Analysis**

**Experience Gap:** 1) Hiring Practices – When and how schools and districts hire is critical, especially for high-need urban schools, as great teacher candidates don’t wait around long.\(^{10}\) In Massachusetts, 60 percent of preparation program completers are employed in a public school (and 47 percent employed as teachers) within one year of program completion – on average, to a school only 21 miles away from the Educator Preparation Program.\(^{11}\) 2) Scheduling decisions-- In Massachusetts, first year teachers are more likely to be assigned students with lower scores on the previous year’s statewide standardized test, when compared with students assigned to more-experienced teachers. Statewide, first-year teachers in grades four and five are assigned to students

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who are an average of 3.2 months behind in math and 5.5 months behind in ELA, compared to the test scores of students assigned to teachers with more than three years of experience. This difference in test scores increases in grades six to eight, to an eight-month difference in math scores and 9.2-month difference in ELA scores.12

Research has also found that schools disproportionately assign students with challenging behavior to new teachers.13 This data supports the assumption that one of the root causes of the experience gap – indeed, a root cause of inequitable access— is that first year teachers are routinely assigned to teach students who are at greater risk. 3) Retention Strategies/Turnover Patterns – High poverty and high minority schools in Massachusetts experience higher educator turnover rates (see tables in section (F) below). When high-need schools experience high turnover rates, even more teachers are hired under ineffective hiring practices, yielding a greater gap in access to experienced teachers.

**Root Cause Analysis: Preparation Gap**

1) Inadequate Preparation – When Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) adequately prepare students for the realities of 21st century classrooms, educators are less likely to leave a school or district. This is why ESE is focused on supporting preparation programs to prepare program completers to make impact on the first day they are in the classroom (see above – reference section re: Educator Preparation). 2) Inadequate Pipeline – Educator Preparation Programs must look strategically at the issue of supply and demand. We heard repeatedly from school and district stakeholders about persistently hard-to-fill teaching positions, such as special education, ESL, and STEM.

In 2013-2014, almost 70 percent of licensure waivers granted to districts were to teach students with moderate/severe disabilities. For this reason, the Department has included criteria for Educator Preparation Programs to meet local district supply needs as part of the program review and approval process. In 2013-2014, ESE issued 778 waivers to 145 districts. These waivers allowed the districts to hire unlicensed candidates for teaching and administrative positions. Thus, more than one-third of all districts employed educators who were not licensed for their specific role. The educator pipeline also continues to yield teachers who are not demographically representative of Massachusetts students. Statewide, only seven percent of teachers are people of color, compared to 35 percent of students. For schools to be able to hire a diverse staff, Educator Preparation programs must attract a more representative pool of teacher candidates. Here again, for this reason, the Department has included recruiting a diverse cohort of educators as one of the criteria for program review.

**Root Cause Analysis: Effectiveness Gap**

12 MA ESE, 2013.
Stakeholders and national research both noted the relationship between leader effectiveness gaps and teacher effectiveness gaps. There are several practices that contribute to the effectiveness gap: 1) Hiring Practices – Poor hiring practices lead to gaps in teacher effectiveness. School leaders note that by the time high-need urban districts are hiring, the most effective teacher candidates have been hired elsewhere. 2) Scheduling Decisions – Stakeholders explained that in scheduling decisions, educators’ interests are often given higher preference than student considerations. Scheduling decisions can support teacher retention (e.g., creating an environment which is stimulating and supportive for an educator). When determining staff and student schedules, the first priority must be providing equitable access for students to impactful educators. 3) Inadequate Training for Diverse Student Needs – Teachers who are not adequately trained to meet the needs of ELLs, SWDs, students with social-emotional issues, and students who are academically behind, are less effective at teaching and managing behavior. This leads to an adverse school climate, and often to higher teacher turnover. This also puts added stress on specialists such as ESL and special education teachers, and on school leaders who are attempting to support unprepared teachers. 4) Climate and Culture – Effective organizations, including schools, should make building a productive culture part of a planned strategic effort. This helps to retain and attract effective teachers, and to create an environment more conducive to teaching and learning. Stakeholders consistently stressed the importance of schools’ and districts’ climate and culture. Behavior management, student needs, and leadership quality can all influence school climate.

E. Identification of Strategies. If there is one or more difference in rates in 5.3.B, provide the SEA’s strategies, including timelines and Federal or non-Federal funding sources, that are:

i. Designed to address the likely causes of the most significant differences identified in 5.3.D and

ii. Prioritized to address the most significant differences in the rates provided in 5.3.B, including by prioritizing strategies to support any schools identified for comprehensive or targeted support and improvement under 34 C.F.R. § 200.19 that are contributing to those differences in rates.

See timelines and strategies below from Massachusetts’ approved Equity Plan.

14 Fisher, D., Frey, N. and Pumpian, I., How to Create a Culture of Achievement in Your School And Classroom. ASCD, 2012.