

# Report of DESE Comprehensive Review

- Consultants for Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) perform about 10 reviews annually
- 75% of districts selected are low performing
- Team of 6 visited for 4 days in January
- The Intention:
  - Bring outside, expert perspective to district's work
  - Contribute to district's improvement efforts
  - Identify relevant DESE resources or interventions
- To read similar reports of other districts go to [doe.mass.edu](http://doe.mass.edu). Use search term: *District Comprehensive Reviews*

# Report Recommendations

- 1. Develop and implement an actionable and comprehensive district improvement plan (DIP) and aligned school improvement plans (SIP).*
  - This is being done. You will see the full DIP following this presentation and the SIPs have been drafted and will be shared in next two meetings.
  - In past years we used the district strategy to inform SIPs and the superintendent's goals acted similarly to a DIP. Our team embraces this recommendation.

# Report Recommendations

*2a. The district should assign responsibility for districtwide curricular and instructional leadership;*

- This year we have created the position of Elementary Director of Teaching and Learning as a two day a week position in response to this well understood need. The rest of the administrative team needs to share this work out of financial necessity. It is not an ideal situation.

# Report Recommendations

*2b. ensure that all curriculum materials are fully documented and aligned with state standards;*

- Secondary level curricula are aligned to state standards and available for public viewing on our website.
- Elementary level curricula are only partially written and will be written in a more comprehensive and fully aligned manner this year.
- With about 24 hours of flexible professional development (PD) time available and no content area coaches or curriculum development positions, each year we are forced to make difficult decisions about what work to prioritize.

# Report Recommendations

*2c. and take steps to strengthen teachers' understanding and implementation of high-quality instruction.*

- This year we are placing a major focus on the development of a set of shared Fundamental Instructional Practices (FIPs). This focus will extend from training, to educator collaboration, to teacher feedback through the evaluation system. Our team embraces this recommendation.

# Report Recommendations

*3. The district should complete its assessments and curriculum units in a systematic way that is faithful to the Understanding by Design Framework (UbD).*

- UbD is the best practices approach to developing curricula in a manner aligned with district learning principles of constructivism (build on prior knowledge) and transference (demonstrate understanding by applying knowledge and skills in new and meaningful contexts).
- We have been using this model for curricula development and refinement. We intend to provide additional training from external provider in this area next spring or summer. (Preaching to the choir)

# Report Recommendations

*4. The district should promote the growth of educators by fully implementing all components of the educator evaluation system, including a concerted effort to collect student data and feedback to inform the evaluation process.*

- For the past two years we have collected student feedback and used it to inform school level plans but we have not used it to evaluate individual teachers. We are not sure this is a good idea.

# Report Recommendations

## 4. continued

- We feel the team missed a few things in this area: the frequency of classroom observations and individual oral feedback; the frequency of supt. visits to classrooms and the oral and written feedback provided.
- We will provide additional training to the admin team in providing written feedback focused on detailed recommendations for improved practice.

# Report Recommendations

*5. The district should create a professional development committee and procedures to ensure adequate time and resources are allocated to providing a high-quality professional development program that has clear goals and objectives and is aligned with the district and school improvement goals.*

- We feel the PD provided last year was well aligned to school improvement goals and that it was well received (see next slide).
- We prefer having those already in teacher leadership roles help drive the PD planning process in an integrated way rather than having a stand alone committee.

# Professional Development Feedback

Criteria	Strongly Agree (4)	Somewhat Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
The topic/tasks were relevant to my work	100	5	3	0
The presenter/facilitator was effective	102	5	0	0
The event was well organized and planned	92	15	0	0

# Report Recommendations

*6. The district and school leaders should ensure that adequate resources are provided in all schools and at all levels to provide differentiated supports to help all students succeed.*

- This is an area of need. We have educators who provide additional support to struggling readers but we lack these non-special education positions in other subject areas. Therefore, we have to do our best to differentiate instruction in the general education setting, and by supporting individual students in creative ways such as after school help, during support periods carved out of the day, and potentially with volunteer tutors.

# Report Recommendations

*7. The district should review its spending to determine how it can more effectively support district priorities and get the value that it wants from its investment choices.*

- We feel we are quite vigilant in this area. A comparison with districts of similar student enrollment, socio-economic circumstances, and learning needs shows that in FY17 we spent \$1,000 per pupil more than the group's average.
- Employee benefits costs exceed the group avg. by \$650 p.p.
- Instructional Materials and Technology costs exceed the group avg. by \$257 p.p.

# Fiscally Comparable Districts

## **Gill Montague**

Total Number Of Students: 976

Average Household Income: \$51,403

## **Southern Berkshire**

Total Number Of Students: 681

Average Household Income: \$55,164

## **Lee**

Total Number Of Students: 692

Average Household Income: \$59,019

## **Gateway**

Total Number Of Students: 831

Average Household Income: \$65,370

## **Mohawk Trail**

Total Number Of Students: 925

Average Household Income: \$55,642

# Fiscally Comparable Districts

## *Comparable Districts, cont.*

### Ware

Total Number Of Students: 1,213

Average Household Income: \$49,630

### Berkshire Hills

Total Number Of Students: 1,245

Average Household Income: \$54,863

### Winchendon

Total Number Of Students: 1,286

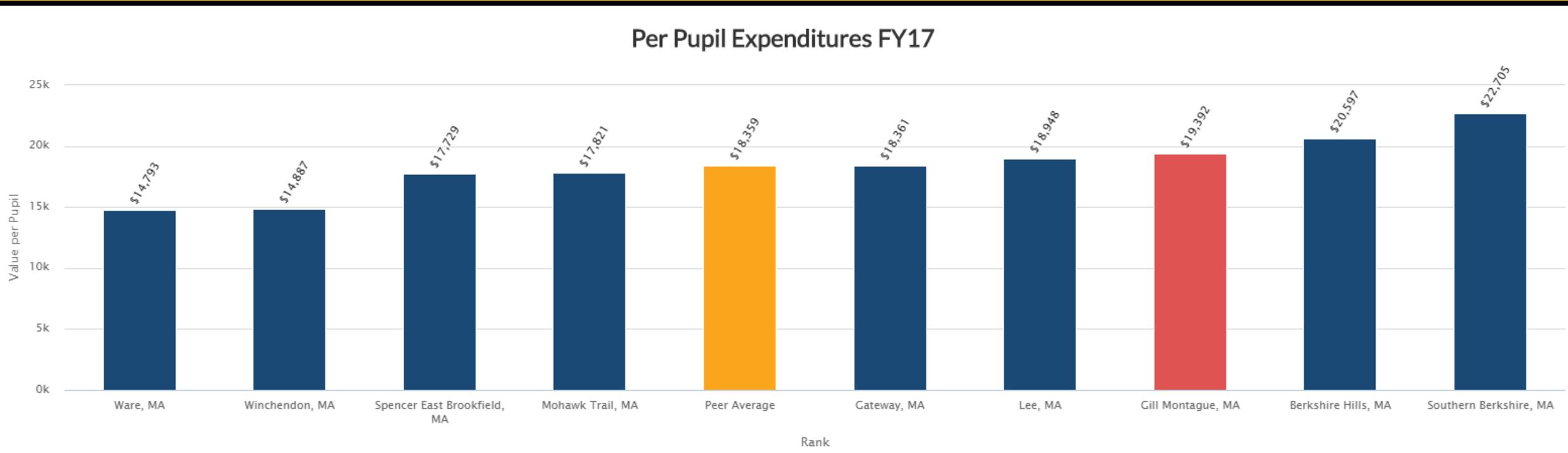
Average Household Income: \$59,332

### Spencer East Brookfield

Total Number Of Students: 1,366

Average Household Income: \$62,727

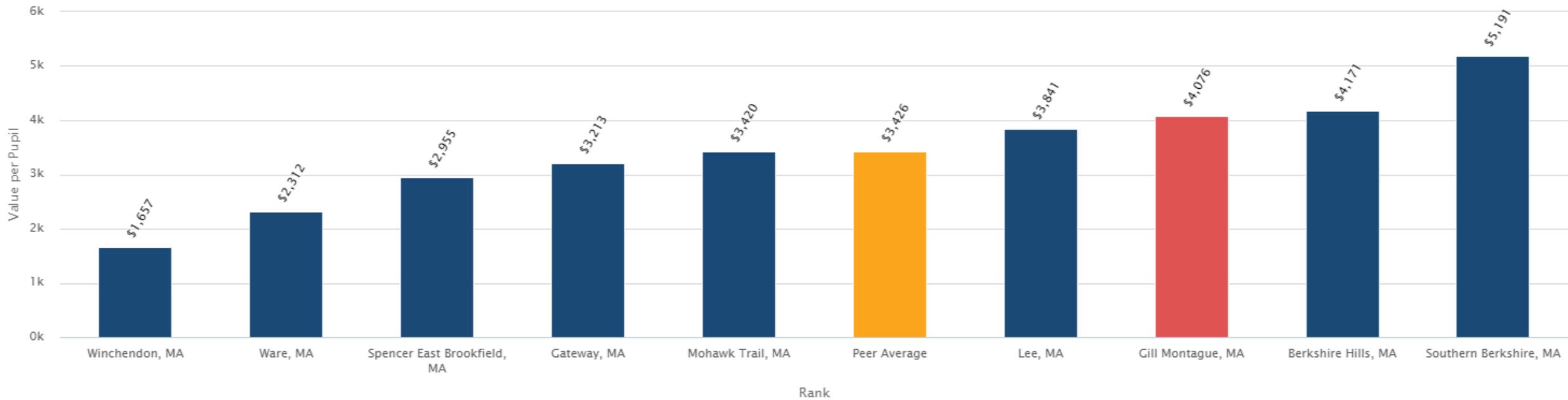
# Cleargov.com



8 Most Similar to GMRSD: 8 Districts of similar demographics; 4 with fewer students and 4 with more

# Cleargov.com

## Employee Benefits



8 Most Similar to GMRSD: 8 Districts of similar demographics; 4 with fewer students and 4 with more

# Cleargov.com

## Instructional Materials, Equipment, and Technology



8 Most Similar to GMRSD: 8 Districts of similar demographics; 4 with fewer students and 4 with more

# Report Recommendations

*8. The district should investigate the underutilization of buildings along with addressing the age and physical condition of the buildings.*

- Our space situation is more nuanced than this label. We lack sufficient classroom and support services spaces at all three elementary schools. While we have ample space at the secondary building, we do not have so much space available that we could move entire additional grades there.
- To meet our short-term needs for additional elementary space we should conduct a serious study of the possible better use of the district central offices building as a potential space for students.

# Report Recommendations

*9. The district should develop public budget documents that provide a transparent, complete, and usable budget that is clearly aligned with the district's goals.*

- We feel our budget process and documents are quite transparent and additionally do a good job projecting future revenues and expenses with clearly identified underlying assumptions.

- We do have a goal this year to create accompanying narrative documents for the budget, showing how spending plans reflect strategic priorities.

# District Improvement Plan 18-19

*An extension of our multi-year strategy, which prioritizes...*

*Rigor*

*Relevance*

*Relationships*

*Rigor and Relevance*

*Educator Learning*

*Community Engagement*

# District Improvement Plan 18-19

1. Educator Collaborative Learning
2. Curriculum Development
3. Fundamental Teaching Practices
4. Systems of Student Support (RTI)
5. Affective Learning
6. Community Engagement
7. Fiscal and Facilities Management
8. School Safety and Security

# DIP Goal 1

- 1. *Educator Collaboration:*** *Provide training to admin and teacher leaders in how to collaborate effectively to plan lessons, review student work, and develop instructional strategies.*

# DIP Goal 1

- *Measureable Outcomes:*
  - *Elementary grade level teams and secondary department meetings will be observed using protocols for meeting facilitation, lesson planning, analyzing student work, and providing peer classroom observation feedback.*
  - *Written protocols will exist on how to do these tasks.*
  - *Spring teacher feedback will show satisfaction with effectiveness of these protocols in working together to improve instruction.*

## DIP Goal 2

**2. Curriculum:** Develop curricula that reflect fidelity to current state standards and emphasize student understanding through the application of learning in meaningful contexts.

Measureable Outcomes:

- Curriculum maps, including summative assessments, will exist for grades pre-k to grade 5 in ELA, math, and science. These will be posted on Atlas using the district templates.
- Secondary Level: School/Subject area SIP goals in this area will be met.

## DIP Goal 3

**3. District Teaching Practices:** Provide administrator and teacher training, collaboration, and feedback on Fundamental Teaching Practices (FTP)

- a. Present, explain, justify the District Fundamental Teaching Practices (FTP)
- b. All grade levels - review expectations for FTP - Lesson planning and execution.
- c. All grade levels - Training for FIP #6 - Student small group work to develop HOTs.
- d. School-Level: Provide school specific training, collaboration, and feedback on school targeted FIPs to be effectively and routinely deployed.

# DIP Goal 3

## Measurable Outcomes:

- Training will occur at district level in August, and later in school faculty meetings, on the what, why, and how of FTPs.
- The ed. eval. classroom observation feedback form and evaluator write-ups will reflect emphasis on FTPs. 85% of randomly sample write ups for each evaluator will make reference to a specific FTP.
- 85% of supt./principal joint observations will show alignment of lesson objective with suitable tasks.
- 85% of teachers will achieve their professional practice goals regarding effective group work strategies.
- Each school will achieve its school improvement plan goals that target FIPs.

# DIP Goal 4

**4. Learner Interventions:** Develop elementary and secondary Response to Intervention (RTI) systems, detailing assessments, interventions, and decision making processes for moving students among tiers 1, 2, and 3 in ELA, math, and in social and emotional learning (SEL).

Measureable Outcomes:

- A comprehensive RTI plan, using the district template, for elementary ELA, math, and SEL.
- A comprehensive RTI plan, using the district template, for middle school ELA, math and SEL.
- A comprehensive RTI plan, using the district template, for high school ELA, math, and SEL.

# DIP Goal 5

- 5. Affective Learning:** Support school specific SEL and multicultural education initiatives.
- a. Continued training of administrative team.
  - b. Provide district staff/faculty with introductory diversity training.
  - c. Support, catalogue, and publicize school/teacher equity initiatives.

# DIP Goal 5

## Measureable Outcomes:

- Administrators will have participated in Cultural Proficiency and Culturally Responsive Teaching Training.
- Each school and the district will have written a multi year plan for improving student equity/multicultural/social justice learning.
- Each school will meet its school improvement plan goals to advance student social and emotional learning.

# DIP Goal 6

## **6. Community Engagement:**

- a. Develop effective and consistent systems for home-school communication
- b. Increase efforts to market/promote the district/schools
- c. Work with area districts and stakeholders to explore opportunities for new initiatives, shared programs or services, or restructuring.
- d. Investigate development of a Hillcrest Elementary before school program.

# DIP Goal 6

## Measureable Outcomes:

- New district web-site will be launched and it will receive positive feedback from 75% of stakeholders in spring survey.
- Each school will have a written plan in place detailing consistent and effective approaches to home-school communications.
- Each school will have a promotional video featuring testimonials from students as part of its internet presence.

# DIP Goal 8

## More Measureable Outcomes:

- The Efficiency and Regionalization Project will generate a set of recommendations which will be thoroughly reviewed by the public.
- The Powertown in the 21st Century Project will generate a series of recommendations for high school redesign which will be thoroughly reviewed by stakeholders and which will inform plans for the future of the school.

# DIP Goal 7

## **7. Fiscal and Facilities Management Planning:**

- a. Develop budget documents with narrative components identifying resource allocations to improvement initiatives and providing more context of district's fiscal situation.
- b. Develop more detailed mid and long term capital improvements and space needs plans.
- c. Develop new information and communications technology 3 year plan.

# DIP Goal 8

## **8. School Safety and Security:**

- a. Integrate school resource officer into district systems and culture
- b. Update school safety and security measures
- c. Develop more robust school reunification plans