

Cohasset  
Public  
Schools  
Strategic  
Plan

2016-

2021

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## Preface

Cohasset Public Schools are among the best in the state of Massachusetts. We achieve a standard of excellence because of the efforts of the people involved – a first-rate faculty, dedicated staff, committed students, supportive parents, and community members who value public education. We maintain that standard by focusing our collective efforts in the same direction, aligning our resources with our vision, and holding each other mutually accountable. While we celebrate our successes, we also recognize the imperfections in our schools both in the systems that have been created and the practices that exist within those systems. The goal of our strategic planning is to correct those imperfections so that all students are able to excel.

## Steering Committee

- Barbara Cataldo, Superintendent of Schools
- Mary McGoldrick, Vice Chair, School Committee
- Louise Demas, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
- Dave DeGennaro, Business Manager
- Mary Buchanan, Director of Student Services
- Carolyn Connolly, Principal, Middle-High School
- Jennifer DeChiara, Principal, Deer Hill School
- Bob LeCount, Principal, Joseph Osgood School
- Kerri Sandler, Assistant Principal Grades 6-8
- Brian Scott, Assistant Principal Grades 9-12

## Process

Our strategic plan will consider the current state of Cohasset Public Schools. We will begin by reviewing our vision statement, our most recent strategic plan, and our current school improvement plans. Our educational leadership team will then develop overarching strategic goals using input from our critical stakeholders while considering trends

### Strategic Planning Process Overview



in global, national, and local education. From those goals the necessary resources required will be identified, and action plans will be developed that outline more specific actions, timelines, and accountable parties.

## **Timeline**

Our general timeline is as follows:

### **September 2015**

- Assemble a Strategic Planning Steering Committee
- Agree to a strategic planning process and to a detailed timeline

### **October 2015 - December 2015**

- Assess the present state of CPS through internal and external scans
- Gather input from critical stakeholders (parents, students, faculty and staff, community members)

### **January 2016 - April 2016**

- Determine the overarching goals
- Draft action steps required to meet the proposed goals
- Identify resources required to accomplish the goals

### **May 2016**

- Present the draft plan at public hearing

### **June 2016**

- Finalize and publish the plan

## **Cohasset Public Schools Vision Statement**

The Cohasset Public Schools is a district committed to excellence. We hold high expectations for all students and staff, and provide the support and resources that enable all to meet or exceed those expectations. We collaboratively support an academically challenging, safe, respectful, and student-centered learning environment in preparing them to be responsible citizens of a global and digital twenty-first century environment.

## Executive Summary

<b>Vision Statement</b>
The Cohasset Public Schools is a district committed to excellence. We hold high expectations for all students and staff and provide the support and resources that enable all to meet or exceed those expectations. We collaboratively support an academically challenging, safe, respectful, and student-centered learning environment in preparing them to be responsible citizens of a global and digital twenty-first century environment.
<b>Theory of Action</b>
If we hire, train, and retain the best teachers, incorporate best practices into the classrooms, attend to the emotional well-being and safety of our students and create effective vehicles for members of the community to work together, we will create environments under which students can excel.

	<b>Human Capital</b>	<b>Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment</b>	<b>Social and Emotional Learning</b>	<b>Safety and Security</b>	<b>Communication and Collaboration</b>
<b>Strategic Goals</b>	Recruit, retain, and develop exceptional teachers	Ensure that all students are able to achieve appropriate growth in learning	Promote the social and emotional well-being of students	Strengthen the safety and security of schools	Create vehicles that strengthen relationships among critical educational stakeholders
<b>Key Initiatives</b>	<p>Commit to hire and retain exceptional teachers</p> <p>Develop opportunities for professional collaboration and teacher leadership</p>	<p>Encourage 21<sup>st</sup> century skills that promote creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, innovation and problem solving</p> <p>Expand the use of differentiated instructional practices and delivering coordinated and specific tiered supports, and</p> <p>Define assessment practices that provide meaningful data to guides instructional changes and measure student growth</p>	<p>Identify areas of student need</p> <p>Build programs to provide social-emotional support to all students</p> <p>Develop tiered intervention strategies</p> <p>Build student resiliency to prepare students for college and careers beyond Cohasset High School</p>	<p>Strengthen the security of the physical plant and bus safety</p> <p>Improve school security procedures</p> <p>Foster an environment of social-emotional safety</p> <p>Increase awareness and readiness among students and staff</p> <p>Commit to ongoing assessment, funding, planning and training for school safety initiatives</p>	<p>Engage/collaborate critical stakeholders</p> <p>Create effective communication vehicles</p> <p>Collaborate where shared responsibilities overlap such as finance, facilities planning and facilities maintenance</p> <p>Develop community partnerships that enhance opportunities for student learning</p>
<b>Critical Supporting Platforms</b>	A <b>Digital Learning Plan</b> that supports Understanding by Design (UbD) and provides the infrastructure, resources, and training for both teachers and students				
	A <b>Professional Development Plan</b> that is focused around Understanding by Design principles and teacher-created tools and strategies				
	Clearly commit to aligning educational goals with sound financial practices and budget requests supported by the School Committee; in concert with the town, maintain and improve the physical plant (inside and out) for the safety and benefit of all				

## Internal Scans

Internal scans are designed to provide a snapshot of the Cohasset Public Schools, looking at town and school demographics and key educational performance data, and to solicit the opinions of various stakeholders regarding the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges of Cohasset Public Schools. The Steering Committee collected this information in three ways: a review of internal documents, and online survey, and face to face meetings.

The numbers of participants are as follows:

<b>Stakeholder Group</b>	<b>Online Survey</b>	<b>Face-to-Face Meetings</b>
Faculty	33	8
Staff	8	0
Parent	138	16
Student	2	25
Community Member	3	0
Town Official	3	1

<b>School Representation</b>	<b>Online Survey</b>
Survey respondents with children enrolled in Joseph Osgood	53
Survey respondents with children enrolled in Deer Hill	55
Survey respondents with children enrolled in Cohasset Middle School	65
Survey respondents with children enrolled in Cohasset High School	41
Survey respondents with children enrolled in an out of district placement	1
Survey respondents with school age children currently enrolled in private schools	9
Survey respondents with no children currently enrolled	39

## Demographics

### The Community

Cohasset is a residential community with a population of approximately 8500 situated on the coast 20 miles south of Boston. Most of the residents are engaged in professional and business occupations in the city of Boston. The socioeconomic status of the town is considered high.

DESE (2013-2014)	District	State
<b>Total Count</b>	1,632	955,739
<b>Race/Ethnicity (%)</b>		
African American or Black	3.6	8.7
Asian	1.7	6.1
Hispanic or Latino	0.8	17.0
Multi-race, Non-Hispanic	0.4	2.9
Native American	0.2	0.2
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.0	0.1
White	93.3	64.9
<b>Gender (%)</b>		
Male	51.7	51.2
Female	48.3	48.8
<b>Selected Populations (%)</b>		
English Language Learner	0.1	7.9
Low-Income	3.7	38.3
Students w/Disabilities	12.8	17.0
First Language Not English	0.1	17.8



### Student Enrollment Trends

Student enrollment has climbed steadily over the past ten years, largely due to new families moving into the district.

## Pre-K to 12 Enrollment Trends



**10 Year Trends**  
Total Increase: 227 Students

**Secondary**  
Total Increase: 157 Students  
Middle School: 92 Students  
High School: 65 Students

**HS Max: 430 Students - FY 17**  
**MS Max: 421 Students - FY 17**

**Elementary**  
Total Increase: 70 Students  
Osgood: 14 Students  
Deer Hill: 56 Students

Does not include out-of-district special educational students or vocational students. FY 16 based on February enrollment

### Educational Trends

General Source <i>DESE</i>	Per Pupil Expenditure	Graduation Rate	Dropout Rate	% Students to Higher Education	Student to Teacher Ratio
2015		96.6%	0.0%		13.9 to 1
2014	\$13,913	96.1%	0.3%	87.4%	16.4 to 1
2013	\$13,478	94.6%	0.3%	87.2%	14.3 to 1
2012	\$13,524	98.9%	0.0%	90.6%	13.6 to 1

SAT Performance Source <i>DESE</i>	Reading	Writing	Math	Total
2015	557	539	541	1637
2014	568	548	571	1687
2013	547	544	567	1658
2012	555	549	563	1667

MCAS Source <i>DESE</i>	ELA Percentage Proficient or Above	Math Percentage Proficient or Above	STEM Percentage Proficient or Above
2015	87	75	73
2014	87	79	74
2013	87	81	69
2012	87	83	75

GRADE 10 - ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS						GRADE 08 - ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
ADVANCED	64	70	77	75	74	ADVANCED	39	42	37	25	44
PROFICIENT	33	27	23	24	25	PROFICIENT	54	55	61	72	48
NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	2	2	0	1	1	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	4	3	2	2	5
FAILING	1	1	0	0	0	WARNING	3	0	0	2	4

GRADE 10 - MATHEMATICS						GRADE 08 - MATHEMATICS					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
ADVANCED	84	87	78	88	79	ADVANCED	35	39	23	16	36
PROFICIENT	14	11	15	11	20	PROFICIENT	40	39	54	44	37
NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	1	1	6	0	1	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	19	19	21	35	19
FAILING	1	1	1	1	0	WARNING	7	3	3	5	7

GRADE 10 - SCIENCE AND TECH/ENG						GRADE 08 - SCIENCE AND TECH/ENG					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
ADVANCED	25	49	37	44	36	ADVANCED	5	11	2	3	10
PROFICIENT	59	37	44	46	56	PROFICIENT	45	54	61	45	57
NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	16	12	19	9	8	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	43	31	37	47	26
FAILING	0	1	0	1	0	WARNING	8	5	1	5	7

GRADE 07 - ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS						GRADE 06 - ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
ADVANCED	37	15	17	21	8	ADVANCED	17	34	29	31	27
PROFICIENT	50	80	72	71	80	PROFICIENT	70	55	61	58	65
NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	13	5	10	6	9	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	13	9	7	10	6
WARNING	0	0	1	2	3	WARNING	0	2	3	1	2

GRADE 07 - MATHEMATICS						GRADE 06 - MATHEMATICS					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
ADVANCED	40	41	28	25	21	ADVANCED	30	40	39	35	26
PROFICIENT	42	40	47	53	43	PROFICIENT	46	42	45	43	45
NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	15	17	17	15	24	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	22	15	11	18	23
WARNING	2	2	8	7	13	WARNING	2	4	5	4	6

GRADE 05 - ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS						GRADE 04 - ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
ADVANCED	29	23	26	29	30	ADVANCED	13	23	21	23	15
PROFICIENT	57	58	58	56	55	PROFICIENT	53	54	57	55	64
NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	12	15	14	14	14	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	30	20	21	21	17
WARNING	2	5	2	1	1	WARNING	5	3	1	1	4

GRADE 05 - MATHEMATICS						GRADE 04 - MATHEMATICS					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
ADVANCED	44	51	44	49	45	ADVANCED	28	29	32	28	32
PROFICIENT	43	32	37	36	37	PROFICIENT	40	44	45	43	37
NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	11	12	17	12	15	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	28	26	23	28	28
WARNING	3	5	3	3	3	WARNING	3	1	1	1	3

AP Performance Source <i>DESE</i>		% Score 1-2	% Score 3-5		% Score 1-2	% Score 3-5	
<b>English Language/Composition</b>	FY 15	16.1%	83.9%	<b>European History</b>	FY 15	25%	75%
	FY 14	7.0%	91.3%		FY 14	9.4%	90.6%
	FY 13	15.8%	84.2%		FY 13	17.4%	82.6%
	FY 12	0.0%	100.0%		FY 12	3.3%	96.7%
<b>English Literature/Composition</b>	FY 15	27.3%	72.7%	<b>US History</b>	FY 15	0.0%	100.0%
	FY 14	23.3%	76.7%		FY 14	0.0%	100.0%
	FY 13	6.8%	93.2%		FY 13	0.0%	100.0%
	FY 12	28.3%	71.7%		FY 12	7.4%	92.6%
<b>Physics 1</b>	FY 15	35.3%	64.7%	<b>Calculus AB</b>	FY 15	11.1%	88.9%
					FY 14	16.7%	83.3%
<b>Macro Economics</b>	FY 15	3.7%	94.3%		FY 13	0.0%	100.0%
	FY 14	0.0%	100.0%		FY 12	6.7%	93.3%
	FY 13	3.2%	96.8%				
<b>Chemistry</b>	FY 14	15.0%	85%	<b>Statistics</b>	FY 15	9.1%	90.9%
	FY 13				FY 14	12.9%	87.1%
	FY 12	13.0%	87%		FY 13	3.3%	96.7%
					FY 12	26.3%	73.7%
				<b>Biology</b>	FY 15	0.0%	100.0%
					FY 14		
					FY 13	0.0%	0.0%
					FY 12	0.0%	0.0%

### Social-Emotional Trends

The social-emotional support of students has been a growing concern recently and is reflected in each of the school improvement plans. At the secondary level, data from the Communities That Care Survey (similar to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey) administered in 2015 concludes, in general, that students reported drug and alcohol use higher than the national average with a marked shift from grades 9 to 10, highly increased anxiety over the past several years, and troubling feelings of low self-worth. These findings mirror an increase in student anxiety which are not only self-reported in the CTC survey but also reflected in increases in emotional disability diagnoses, crisis center referrals, and general education students in the adjustment counselor caseload.

District administration and staff wish to address these potential issues as early as possible in the elementary programs using age appropriate methods. It is that goal which has led the elementary schools to embark on PBIS and other schoolwide positive environment programs. Both Deer Hill and Osgood schools have begun implementation of PBIS as of August, 2015. Both schools have been implementing the pro-social skills curriculum “Second Steps” (Osgood School) and “Steps to Respect” (Deer Hill School) created by the Committee for Children for ten years. The Adjustment Counselor at the Deer Hill School routinely convenes a “Kindness Squad” consisting of students from all grades to pro-actively create and follow through with acts of kindness that impact all members of the school community as well as local charities. The Middle-High School is currently engaged in developing a Behavioral Health Model that identifies universal social-emotional instruction and supports but also adds strategic supports and resources for students who continue to struggle with the general education social-emotional curriculum.

### Elementary Data

In the spring of 2015, both the Osgood School Council and the Deer Hill School Council surveyed their parents and guardians for input that would inform the 2015-2016 School Improvement Plan. Among the survey questions were items specifically related to the school environment. The results were as follows:

One hundred and twenty-one (94.53%) respondents indicated that there are many opportunities for family and community at the Osgood. Somewhat unexpectedly, 5 (3.91%) respondents indicate that they strongly disagree with that statement. To the statement of, ‘I feel my concerns as a parent/guardian are taken into consideration by the school when decisions affect my child or me,’ 113 (89.69%) agree or strongly agree. Nine (7.14%) respondents indicated that they are not sure. With respect to the statement of ‘Class size is appropriate to instruction,’ 104 (81.26%) respondents agreed or strongly agreed. Nineteen (14.84%) respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed.

With respect to safety, over 95% of respondents indicated that they agree or strongly agree that the building and classrooms are safe. Relative weaknesses in this area are the playground and busses with 16 (12.7%) responding they disagree or strongly disagree that the playground is safe and 14 (11.48%) responding that they disagree or strongly disagree that the busses are safe. To the statement, ‘Drop off and dismissal procedures are safe and efficient,’ 98 (77.17%) respondents stated that they agree or strongly agree.” (Joseph Osgood School Council Executive Summary, spring 2015).

In the area of Learning Environment and School Culture, a majority of parents and guardians claimed positively that they ‘feel welcomed in my child’s school’ (88%) and believe ‘there are many opportunities for family and community involvement at the Deer Hill.’ (84%) One area that continues to see a fair amount of disagreement is in the area of class size: 51% of respondents agree with the statement ‘Class size is appropriate for instruction’ but 45.91 % disagree. However, there was widespread support for the statement that ‘a positive school climate that reinforces appropriate student behavior is promoted by school programs’ [97%]. Most respondents reported being ‘satisfied’ with the consistency by which discipline problems are handled within the school,’ with 33% saying they were ‘not sure,’ happily indicating they had no experience with disciplinary matters in the parent commentary. Most parents reported positively that ‘my concerns as a parent are taken into consideration when decisions affect my child or me’ but 11% of respondents to this question answered, ‘not sure, commenting that they’d had no experience to inform them in this area. In the area of Safety, Security, and School Services, most parents agreed that a safe environment is provided in the building (92%), classrooms (95%), with the cafeteria, playground, and bus garnering less support. (76%, 68%, and 65% respectively.) The area of some disagreement continues to be with the bus, with 12% reporting disagreement. 89% of respondents agreed that ‘the school rules and regulations outlined in the student handbook are reasonable’ with 10% responding ‘Not sure.’ 75% of parents agree that ‘School transportation services are safe and efficient’ with 14% ‘not sure.’ 80% of parents agreed that ‘Drop off and dismissal procedures are safe and efficient’ but 6% of parents disagreed with that statement, citing limited space as the cause of inefficiency. 88% of parents believe that ‘the building facilities are adequate to support the instructional program, with the 9% disagreement coming from concerns over classroom crowding and climate control. (Deer Hill School Council Survey Executive Summary, spring 2015)

### **Secondary Data**

In January of 2014, students and parents were surveyed about their experiences at the high school as part of a scheduling review study. An overwhelming majority of students and faculty reported that they were engaged in and challenged by the academic learning environment and the school community, and that they were known by the adults in the building. Parents comment that their children like coming to school and talk about what they are doing at school when they come home. Alumnae consistently report that they are better prepared for college than their classmates and that they were able to take advantage of unique learning opportunities that weren't

available to their college peers. Cohasset consistently scores among the best in Massachusetts in English and math MCAS, and the list of college acceptances is impressive. Despite these successes, not all experiences have been positive. Students report higher stress levels in the first three years than seniors, alumnae, or parents report.

There are marked differences in the perception of student stress. Seniors (80%), alumnae (90%) and parents (82%) report that student stress levels are appropriate overall. Similarly, only one teacher reported that the block had a negative impact on student stress levels. In contrast, only 64% of freshmen, 56% of sophomores, and 52% of juniors report that their stress levels are appropriate overall. Many students (55%) and parents (45%) express feeling pressure to be in accelerated or AP courses.



**Financial Trends**

	FY13 ACTUAL	FY14 ACTUAL	FY15	FY16
	<u>EXPENSES</u>	<u>EXPENSES</u>	<u>APPROPRIATED</u>	<u>SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVED BUDGET</u>
<b>TOWN APPROPRIATED OPERATIONAL BUDGET</b>	<b>\$15,866,062</b>	<b>\$16,237,032</b>	<b>\$16,957,496</b>	<b>\$17,505,000</b> *
% OF TOTAL SPENDING	88.7%	89.2%	88.8%	89.8%
% CHANGE	2.8%	2.3%	4.4%	3.23%

<b>FEES, GIFTS, BOOSTERS, GRANTS, TUITIONS,</b>	<b>\$2,016,286</b>	<b>\$1,958,644</b>	<b>\$2,129,272</b>	<b>\$1,935,664</b>
% OF TOTAL SPENDING	11.3%	10.8%	11.2%	9.9%

<b>Town Capital Budget Committee contribution to school bus lease, per M.O.A.</b>				<b>\$60,000</b>
				0.30%
<b>COST TO RUN DISTRICT</b>	<b>\$17,882,348</b>	<b>\$18,195,676</b>	<b>\$19,086,768</b>	<b>\$19,500,664</b>

*\*Includes transportation, unemployment, contractual salary increases; other school related town budgeted expenditures, such as building maintenance, health insurance costs are not included here.*

## Stakeholder Input Analysis

### Strengths

1. Competent teachers are the number one resource across all constituencies interviewed. This coincides with state and national efforts to recruit, retain, develop, support and reward teachers.
2. Strong parental and community support for education is listed among parents, faculty and students.
3. Cohasset is also proud of the academic rigor and high expectations of its students.
4. Other key strengths noted were the relative size of the student body, the positive culture, strong administrators, and the available sports and activities relative to our size.

### Weaknesses

1. The number one weakness cited among all constituencies was technology. This also coincides with state and national efforts to improve the use of data to inform decisions, to support digital learning and literacy among students, and to differentiate instruction all of which involve technology. Technology concerns include the website, which may reflect communication.
2. All constituencies cite issues with poor communication. Faculty include this sometimes as a challenge more than a weakness.
3. Parents qualify their support of effective teachers by stressing that poor teaching practices need to be eliminated, and that good teaching practices need to be promoted and good teachers need to be hired.
4. Other areas of concern include safety and security and issues related to the size of the district (in programming, large class sizes).

### Challenges

1. Finances was the number one challenge cited, and as a sub-category issues of leadership related to finance (the teachers' contract, the ability to hire better teachers, more programmatic resources).
2. Facilities were also cited as a major challenge (the age and deterioration of the buildings, heat, and space in general against a growing population).

### Opportunities

1. Parents and faculty report opportunities in the areas of technology,
2. Forging or leveraging community partnerships, and
3. Exploring creative financing options within the broader community.

## Parent

Parents were supportive of good teachers and good teaching practices, overwhelmingly identifying this as the number one strength in the schools. At the same time, parents were critical that ineffective teaching practices needed to be corrected or eliminated and that better hiring be done when teachers retire or leave. Technology was cited as the biggest weakness but also the biggest opportunity, and finances were seen as the biggest obstacle to both.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Teachers</li> <li>2. Community involvement and support</li> <li>3. Academic rigor, curriculum, and instruction</li> <li>4. Parental communication and involvement</li> <li>5. Small size</li> <li>6. Positive atmosphere</li> <li>7. Co-curricular activities</li> <li>8. Athletics</li> <li>9. Administrators</li> <li>10. Staff</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Technology</li> <li>2. Eliminating poor teaching and promoting good teaching practices/hiring</li> <li>3. Communication</li> <li>4. Safety and Security</li> <li>5. Program of studies issues, including course offerings</li> <li>6. Growth</li> <li>7. Facilities</li> <li>8. Other: more focus on general education interventions and the student “in the middle”, equitable sports vs. arts funding, issues with administration and leadership.</li> </ol>
Challenges	Opportunities
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Finances</li> <li>2. Leadership/recruiting, paying teachers</li> <li>3. Facilities</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Technology</li> <li>5. Community Partnerships</li> <li>6. Finances</li> <li>7. Promoting good teaching</li> <li>8. School security/bullying</li> <li>9. Increased programming and other experiential learning</li> </ol>

## Faculty

Faculty agreed with parents that the three biggest strengths of the district were the teachers, strong parental and community support, and a rigorous curriculum. They also agreed with parents that technology was both the greatest weakness and the biggest area of opportunity, and cited leadership issues as the biggest challenge.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dedicated and competent teachers/staff</li> <li>2. Strong parental/community support</li> <li>3. High expectations and a rigorous curriculum</li> <li>4. Strong administrators</li> <li>5. Others: resources available, culture of respect, sports and activities available, and facilities.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Technology</li> <li>2. Leadership, communication, and support for innovation</li> <li>3. Continuity of programming and student assessment</li> <li>4. Others: Family and METCO involvement, professional development, hiring of staff, special education and tiered intervention, class sizes, facilities, healthy snacks, emotional supports, and school safety.</li> </ol>
Challenges	Opportunities
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Leadership, communication and transparency</li> <li>2. Finances</li> <li>3. Technology</li> <li>4. Hiring</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Technology</li> <li>2. After school enrichment and community service</li> <li>3. Value faculty and staff; promote trust and transparency</li> <li>4. Others: student-centered learning, recycling, response to interventions, middle school, hiring, curriculum development.</li> </ol>

## Students

Approximately 25 students were interviewed from grades 8-12. Students generally enjoy the school experience across the middle and high school. Both like the schedules on the whole, with some programming suggestions such as adding academic electives that are not AP courses (HS) and making more consistent the terms that specialists meet (MS). Middle School students were less concerned that every specialist is offered every year. Students thought that they were well-prepared academically, specifically in writing. High school students argue that while the block schedule is great and particularly with the new rotation, semester courses can sometimes have a choppy feel to them (i.e. remembering Algebra 2 when in Calculus). Students think teaching is good but that some practices need improving (MS students described that they wanted a “strict but nice” approach) as does the consistency of teaching across multiple sections of the same course. Most clearly in the interviews was a sense that the student support blocks were very useful, that there is a large degree of stress among the student body, and having peer supports might be an opportunity to alleviate some of the strain from balancing school and home obligations.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The MS and HS schedules</li> <li>2. Tiered Support Time</li> <li>3. Writing Preparation</li> <li>4. Size</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Technology</li> <li>2. School/Life Balance and Student Stress Levels</li> <li>3. Consistency of Teaching Across Course Sections</li> <li>4. School Security</li> <li>5. Finances</li> </ol>
Challenges	Opportunities
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Finances</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. More Academic Electives</li> <li>2. Community Partnerships</li> <li>3. Work Study Programs/Independent Study Opportunities</li> <li>4. Peer Supports</li> <li>5. Timely Electronic Access to Grades</li> <li>6. More Spirit Days/Group Field Trips</li> </ol>

## Staff

Staff identified three weaknesses: communication, leadership, and security.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<i>None reported</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Communication</li> <li>2. Leadership skills</li> <li>3. Security</li> </ol>
Challenges	Opportunities
<i>None reported</i>	<i>None reported</i>

## Town Officials

Three town officials were asked to participate in the survey. All responded. All answers are included below.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. High quality teachers (3)</li> <li>2. Administrators (2)</li> <li>3. Respectful student body</li> <li>4. Strong sense of community among students</li> <li>5. Strong college preparation</li> <li>6. Extracurricular activities; artistic and creative opportunities</li> <li>7. Reproducible quality of the school year to year</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Arts or other non-athletic extracurricular (2)</li> <li>2. Too much emphasis on producing winning sports teams</li> <li>3. Support for special education students</li> <li>4. Block scheduling at the high school</li> <li>5. A staff commitment to the town and students and willingness to help outside of contracted hours</li> <li>6. Teaching students about living in a a diverse society</li> <li>7. Attracting the very best teachers</li> </ol>
Challenges	Opportunities
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Town budgets are very tight over the foreseeable future</li> <li>2. More parents need to run for School Committee and participate in school related organizations</li> <li>3. School Committee and parents need to support a meals tax this spring in order to support the schools and other town functions – otherwise face cutbacks, etc.</li> <li>4. High teacher:student ratio needs to be fixed</li> <li>5. Increased enrollment</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Adaptive technology and digital learning (2)</li> <li>2. Increased learning about Cohasset itself and civic life (2)</li> <li>3. More learning and courses taking advantage of living near the sea</li> <li>4. International exchange for 6 months</li> <li>5. Practical learning about living in a modern society</li> </ol>

## Community Member

Community Member responses were too few to be significantly representative.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Teachers</li><li>2. Administrators</li><li>3. Student performance</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Differentiated learning</li><li>2. Technology</li><li>3. Communication</li><li>4. Curriculum</li><li>5. Facilities</li></ol>
Challenges	Opportunities
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Finances</li><li>2. Respectful discourse</li><li>3. Community apathy</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Creativity</li><li>2. Investment in faculty and staff</li><li>3. Communication</li><li>4. Facilities</li></ol>

## External Scans

External scans contextualize the work of the committee by considering factors that influence the educational climate outside of the Cohasset Public Schools. The major strategic plans from the state, national, and global levels are considered against emerging trends in education found in sources such as:

- The Marshall Memo,
- ASCD
- The College Board
- The Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents,
- The Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators,
- The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association,
- The Cohasset five-year fiscal forecast, and
- The Cohasset Master Plan

Local and national political changes are also considered.

Level	Primary Focus Areas of Elementary and Secondary Education	Source
Massachusetts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>Strengthen standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment.</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Implement curriculum frameworks</li> <li>- Improve instructional practices</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. <u>Develop educators</u> through educator preparation, professional development, and evaluation                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recruit and hire teachers</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. <u>Turn around low performing schools.</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support turnaround strategies</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. <u>Use data</u> and technology to support teaching and learning.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Integrate data systems</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	MA DESE Strategic Plan 2015



Level	Primary Focus Areas of Elementary and Secondary Education	Source
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Produce relevant data from reporting tools</li> <li>- Support the expansion of <u>digital learning</u> and literacy</li> </ul> <p>5. Support students' <u>social and emotional health</u>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide programming to support non-academic needs</li> <li>- Promote tiered systems of support</li> </ul>	
<b>United States</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>Strengthen standards and assessment</u> by supporting implementation of internationally benchmarked college and career ready standards with aligned, valid and reliable assessments.</li> <li>2. <u>Develop educators</u> by improving the recruitment, retention, development, support, evaluation, recognition and equitable distribution of effective teachers and leaders.</li> <li>3. <u>Improve school climate and community</u> by increasing the success, safety, and health of students and deepen family and community engagement.</li> <li>4. <u>Improve low performing schools</u> by decreasing achievement gaps and developing models of next generation schools.</li> <li>5. <u>Focus on STEM</u> courses by increasing the percentage of STEM teachers and the number of public high school graduates who have taken at least one STEM course.</li> <li>6. <u>Increase access to early learning programs</u>, especially for children with high needs and improve the capacity to implement <u>early learning assessment systems</u>.</li> <li>7. <u>Facilitate the development of data systems</u> to enable data-</li> </ol>	U.S. Department of Education Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2014-2018

Level	Primary Focus Areas of Elementary and Secondary Education	Source
	driven, transparent decision-making by increasing access to timely, reliable, and high-value data.	
<b>Global</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Foster <u>quality and inclusive</u> education for all. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promote literacy</li> <li>- Focus on career readiness</li> <li>- Improve teaching quality</li> <li>- Improve the learning process and outcomes</li> <li>- Expanding learning opportunities</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Empower learners to be <u>responsible global citizens</u>. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reinforcing citizenship education</li> <li>- Promoting health</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Shape the future education agenda by <u>rethinking education, monitoring development and building effective partnerships</u>.</li> </ol>	<p>UNESCO Education Strategy 2014-2021</p> <p>Global Education First Initiative</p>

## Strategic Goals

1. Recruit, retain, and develop exceptional teachers by:
  - Committing to hire the best teachers, and
  - Developing opportunities for professional collaboration and teacher leadership
  
2. Ensure that all students are able to achieve appropriate growth in learning by:
  - Encouraging 21<sup>st</sup> century skills that promote creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, innovation and problem solving
  - Expanding the use of differentiated instructional practices and delivering coordinated and specific tiered supports, and
  - Defining assessment practices that provide meaningful data that guides instructional changes and measure student growth
  
3. Promote the social and emotional well-being of students by:
  - Identifying areas of student need,
  - Building programs to provide social-emotional support to all students,
  - Developing tiered intervention strategies, and
  - Building student resiliency for college and careers beyond Cohasset High School
  
4. Strengthen the safety and security of schools by:
  - Strengthening the security of the physical plant and bus safety,
  - Improving school security procedures,
  - Fostering an environment of social-emotional safety,
  - Increasing awareness and readiness among students and staff, and
  - Committing to ongoing funding, planning and training for school safety and security
  
5. Create vehicles that strengthen relationships among critical educational stakeholders by:
  - Identifying critical stakeholders,
  - Creating effective communication vehicles and
  - Collaborating where shared responsibilities overlap such as finance, facilities planning, and facilities maintenance

## Strategic Action Plan

1. Recruit, retain, and develop exceptional teachers by:
  - Committing to hire the best teachers, and
  - Developing opportunities for professional collaboration and teacher leadership

	Action Step	Responsible Parties	Implementation Date (FY)					Measure of Success
			17	18	19	20	21	
1.1	Post anticipated vacancies by the first week of April.	Superintendent	√	√				Record of postings
1.2	Create strategic questions for use in the hiring process.	Principals	√	√				Record of questions in hiring packets
1.3	Expand reference checking.	Principals/ Assistant Principals	√					Reference checks recorded in hiring packets
1.4	Clear budget funding will be identified for hiring across the district.	Superintendent/ Business Manager	√	√				Budget documents
1.5	Hiring priorities collectively discussed among the leadership team when possible.	Superintendent/Lead ership Team	√	√				Leadership agendas
1.6	Expand our mentoring capacity to nonteaching members of the staff and outline a more robust mentoring process.	Assistant Superintendent	√	√				Mentoring list; mentoring manual
1.7	Encourage teacher input into professional development and the sharing of best practices by: narrowing the focus of professional development; creating time for teachers to work in grade level and/or departmental groups to develop tools or strategies that can be implemented in the classrooms.	Assistant Superintendent /Principals/Faculty	√	√				PD faculty survey/calendar
1.8	Establish professional development calendar that is published by September.	Assistant Superintendent/ Principals	√	√				PD calendar
1.9	Ensure that existing curricular initiatives are supported through cyclical training.	Assistant Superintendent	√	√	√	√	√	PD calendar

2. Ensure that all students are able to achieve appropriate growth in learning by:
- Encouraging 21<sup>st</sup> century skills that promote creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, innovation and problem solving
  - Expanding the use of differentiated instructional practices and delivering coordinated and specific tiered supports, and
  - Defining assessment practices that provide meaningful data that guides instructional changes and measure student growth

	Action Step	Responsible Parties	Implementation Date (FY)					Measure of Success
			17	18	19	20	21	
2.1	Evaluate the current curriculum against the 21 <sup>st</sup> century skills outlined above, in light of the higher levels of Bloom’s taxonomy, and with an eye towards having students demonstrate mastery.	Assistant Superintendent/ Principals/ Assistant Principals/ Grade level Collaborative Groups/ Department Chairs		√	√	√	√	Curriculum revisions in Atlas Rubicon or similar curriculum maps. Evidenced in educator evaluations/ observations
2.2	Continue to incorporate Universal Design for Learning principles and practices into annual professional development.	Assistant Superintendent/ Faculty	√	√	√	√	√	Professional Development Calendar Evaluation and follow up implementation
2.3	Incorporate professional development that allows teachers to define and model differentiated instructional practices and tiered general education supports.	Assistant Superintendent/ Principals/ Assistant Principals	√	√	√	√	√	Professional Development documentation the form of lesson plans/Atlas Mapping evidence/classroom observations

2.4	Expand independent learning opportunities for students.	Principals/ Assistant Principals/ Educators	√	√	√	√	√	Program of Studies  Student Work
2.5	Develop a computer programming curriculum with dedicated teachers, space, and technological supports.	Superintendent/ MHS Principal/ Department Chair			√	√	√	
2.6	Explore the possibility of co-teaching models in grades K-8.					√	√	
2.7	Articulate and publish the types and purpose of assessments, what data can be culled from such assessments, and how that data can be used to change curricular or instructional practices.	Assistant Superintendent/ Principals/ Assistant Principals Grade level Collaborative Groups/ Department Chairs	√	√	√	√	√	Assessment Calendar and supplementary materials
2.8	Develop in-class assessments that allow for a variety of ways that students can demonstrate mastery.	Principals/ Assistant Principals/ Faculty	√	√	√	√	√	Teacher evaluations/Atlas Mapping/Common Assessment and use of assessments collaboratively

3. Promote the social and emotional well-being of students by:
- Identifying areas of student need,
  - Building programs to provide social-emotional support to all students,
  - Developing tiered intervention strategies, and
  - Building student resiliency for college and careers beyond Cohasset High School

	Action Step	Responsible Parties	Implementation Date (FY)					Measure of Success
			17	18	19	20	21	
3.1	Adopt a framework for defining Social Emotional Learning so that we have common K-12 language. (CASEL was suggested as a sound model).	Leadership Team	√		√	√		SEL Framework
3.2	Educate and vet the framework with the faculty in order to develop a coherent understanding of what SEL is, why it is important, and how it looks in a classroom.	Principals/ Assistant Principals			√	√	√	Faculty meeting agendas/minutes
3.3	Develop or adopt self-assessment tools in order to identify district needs, including the CTC or YRBS at the secondary level.	Leadership Team				√	√	Self-assessment tools
3.4	Implement SEL Assessments.	Principals/ Assistant Principals		√		√	√	Implementation results
3.5	Develop strategies to embed tiered SEL into curricula and adjust strategies based on assessment results.	Principals/ Assistant Principals/ Faculty	√	√	√	√	√	Tiered intervention documentation Evaluator observation
3.6	Incorporate professional development that allows teachers to define and model differentiated instructional practices and tiered general education supports.	Assistant Superintendent/ Principals/ Assistant Principals	√	√	√	√	√	Professional Development documentation in the form of lesson plans/Atlas Mapping evidence/classroom observations

4. Strengthen the safety and security of schools by:
- Strengthening the security of the physical plant and bus safety,
  - Improving school security procedures,
  - Fostering an environment of social-emotional safety,
  - Increasing awareness and readiness among students and staff, and
  - Committing to ongoing assessment, funding, planning and training for school safety initiatives

*\*\* Action items to be determined following the review of the District Safety Assessment provided by the Cohasset Police Department*

5. Create vehicles that strengthen relationships among critical educational stakeholders by:
- Identifying critical stakeholders,
  - Creating effective communication vehicles and
  - Collaborating where shared responsibilities overlap such as finance, facilities planning, and facilities maintenance

	Action Step	Responsible Parties	Implementation Date (FY)					Measure of Success
			17	18	19	20	21	
5.1	Engage in collaborative discourse to maximize financial efficiencies (i.e. technology).	Superintendent / Town Manager	√					Organization chart, budget
5.2	Identify and deploy vehicles that leverage technology in order to enhance home and school communication. Vehicles should consider both existing platforms (website, iPass, and Blackboard Connect) and social media platforms not currently utilized.	Superintendent/ Assistant Superintendent/ Principals/ Assistant Principals/ Faculty	√	√	√			Technological enhancements and the creation of social media outlets.
5.3	Explore a coordinated student internship program for high school students that leverages community partnerships as appropriate.	Superintendent/ Assistant Superintendent/ Principals/ Assistant Principals/ Faculty Coordinator	√	√	√	√	√	Program of Studies; sustainable funding/resources



## **References**

**Strategic Planning Survey Results 2015**

**Communities That Care Survey Results 2015**

**School Committee Benchmarking Statistics 2015**

**Cohasset Fiscal Five-Year Forecast 2015**

**Cohasset Master Plan 2015**

**Deer Hill School Council Survey 2015**

**Osgood School Council Survey 2015**

**Block Schedule Study 2014**

**Osgood, Deer Hill, and Middle-High School Improvement Plans**

**Cohasset Public Schools District Safety Assessment**