THE POWER GAP

IN MASSACHUSETTS K-12 EDUCATION

EXAMINING GENDER AND RACIAL DISPARITIES AMONG LEADERSHIP

Women's Power Gap
Eos Foundation

Rennie Center
Education Research & Policy

THE POWER GAP IN K-12 MASSACHUSETTS EDUCATION

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About The Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy

The mission of the Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy is to improve public education through well-informed decision making based on deep knowledge and evidence of effective policy making and practice. As Massachusetts' preeminent voice in public education reform, we create open spaces for educators and policymakers to consider evidence, discuss cutting-edge issues, and develop new approaches to advance student learning and achievement. Through our staunch commitment to independent, non-partisan research and constructive conversations, we work to promote an education system that provides every child with the opportunity to be successful in school and in life.

About The Women's Power Gap

The Women's Power Gap (WPG) Initiative was created by the Eos Foundation in 2018 to dramatically increase the number of women from diverse backgrounds among CEO and C-suite leaders nationally. We conduct and commission actionable research on prominent sectors of the economy and measure the extent of the power and wage gaps at the company or institutional level to highlight those making fast progress and those falling behind. Each report is accompanied by a public dialogue and community conversation highlighting the issue and offering practices and policies to increase representation and inclusion. Past reports include the Women's Power Gap among Top Earners at America's Elite Universities, the Women's Power Gap in Massachusetts Higher Education: Study and Rankings, and the Women's Power Gap in Corporate Massachusetts.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for providing us with the majority of data analyzed in this report. Thank you to the individual districts who responded to our data requests, specifically those who took the time to share and discuss racial and gender data on their district's past superintendents. We are grateful to Sinead Chalmers and Christy Mach Dube for their immense work, dedication, and insights that have deeply informed this final report. Thank you to the Eos Foundation team, Andrea Silbert and Marta Rosa, for their thought partnership and deep passion for this work. Most importantly, thank you to the women who told us their stories with honesty, compassion, and resilience. It is because of you that our students see glimpses of a future in which they can become leaders and be validated and respected as such.

INTRODUCTION

Massachusetts is viewed as a leader in K-12 education, yet when it comes to closing the racial and gender power gaps in education leadership, the Commonwealth fails to lead. Rarely does a child of color see someone who looks like them at the highest levels of leadership. **Only 5% of Massachusetts superintendents are people of color. And, while 76% of Massachusetts educators are women, they comprise only 39% of superintendents.**

The education field has paid much attention to the need to diversify the teacher workforce, but far fewer efforts have focused on the benefits of diverse leadership. Research shows that the race of K-12 leaders has a direct impact on student and family experiences with the school system. For example, in districts with diverse leadership, discipline disparities between students of color and white students significantly diminish.[1] In addition, students of color are more likely to be identified for advanced coursework opportunities in schools with a leader of color.[2] Women superintendents, specifically women of color, interviewed for this study highlighted further that when students see their identities represented in positions of power, it can heavily impact their future aspirations.

The time to diversify Massachusetts education leadership is now. The summer of 2020 marked an awakening for justice and equity long overdue in the United States. The K-12 education field, including its leadership, has a long way to go to achieve gender and racial equity. It will take time, persistence, and deliberate action for K-12 leaders to reflect the students they serve. In this liminal moment, we have the opportunity to push towards a more equitable future.

This report lays out the stark, white- and male-dominant landscape of K-12 education leadership in Massachusetts. It begins with a statewide scan of gender data within leadership, discussing the barriers that women face in obtaining the superintendent role. Women achieve 59% of all certifications to become a superintendent, yet comprise only 39% of superintendents. This shows there is not a pipeline issue for women, but rather a glass ceiling to obtaining a superintendency.

The report then explores leadership disproportionality by race, focusing specifically on the ways in which intersectionality affects access to the superintendency for women of color. Findings show that people of color are severely underrepresented not only in the superintendent position, but in every position in Massachusetts K-12 education. People of color comprise 12% of principals and 14% of assistant superintendents, yet only 5% of superintendents. They too face a glass ceiling in reaching the superintendent's office, with conscious or unconscious racial bias in leadership selection processes contributing to this systemic problem. Additionally, only 9% of teachers are people of color, indicating a pipeline issue in addition to the glass ceiling. Finally, the report concludes with recommendations on how to achieve greater gender and racial representation in districts across the Commonwealth.

What's a Power Gap?

In Massachusetts there exists both a gender power gap and a racial power gap within educational leadership. The power gap refers to an inequitable representation of women and people of color within the superintendency and along the path to it.

Research reveals a glass ceiling for women in K-12 education, where women are highly represented as educators but not at the highest level of leadership. Racial gaps exist within every position in K-12 education, with a significant power gap between white people and people of color in the superintendency.

FAST FACTS: STATEWIDE

Women Are Underrepresented in MA K-12 Leadership

Women of color hold 6% of superintendent licenses in MA, and only 3% of superintendencies.

BIPOC Underrepresented among Superintendents

43% BIPOC students in MA

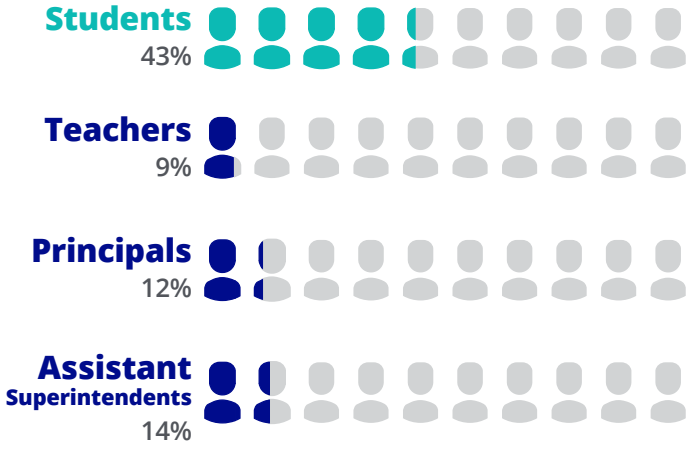
but only

5% BIPOC superintendents

In 2020, there were only **8** women of color and **6** men of color superintendents:

- 3 Black, 3 Latina, and 2 Asian women
- 3 Black, 2 Latino, and 1 Asian male

BIPOC Underrepresented among Teachers, Principals, and Assistant Superintendents



Of Women in the K-12 Workforce

91% White Women

Though white women make up 70.5% of working age women in MA*

9% Women of Color

Though women of color make up 29.5% of working age women in MA*

What is BIPOC?

An acronym that stands for **Black, Indigenous, and People of Color**

* Source: US Census 2020

FAST FACTS: 180 DISTRICTS*

31 Districts (17%) Have Never Had a Permanent Woman Superintendent

- Abington
- Bellingham
- Billerica
- Brookline
- Chelmsford
- Clinton
- East Longmeadow
- Fitchburg
- Framingham
- Gloucester
- Hampden-Wilbraham
- Ipswich
- Marshfield
- Medfield
- Mendon-Upton
- Newton
- Norwell
- Pentucket
- Plymouth
- Quincy
- Reading
- Rockland
- Saugus
- Shrewsbury
- Somerset
- Springfield
- Tyngsborough
- Wachusett
- Wayland
- Westford
- Woburn

143 Districts (80%) Have Never Had a Permanent Superintendent of Color

- Abington
- Acton-Boxborough
- Agawam
- Amesbury
- Arlington
- Ashburnham-Westminster
- Ashland
- Attleboro
- Auburn
- Ayer Shirley
- Barnstable
- Bedford
- Belchertown
- Bellingham
- Belmont
- Beverly
- Billerica
- Blackstone-Millville
- Bourne
- Braintree
- Bridgewater-Raynham
- Burlington
- Canton
- Carver
- Central Berkshire
- Chelmsford
- Clinton
- Cohasset
- Concord
- Danvers
- Dartmouth
- Dedham
- Dennis-Yarmouth
- Dighton-Rehoboth
- Dudley-Charlton
- Duxbury
- East Bridgewater
- East Longmeadow
- Easthampton
- Easton
- Fairhaven
- Fall River
- Falmouth
- Fitchburg
- Foxborough
- Franklin
- Gloucester
- Grafton
- Greenfield
- Groton-Dunstable
- Hamilton-Wenham
- Hampden-Wilbraham
- Hanover
- Haverhill
- Hingham
- Holliston
- Hopkinton
- Ipswich
- King Philip
- Leicester
- Leominster
- Lexington
- Littleton
- Longmeadow
- Ludlow
- Lunenburg
- Lynnfield
- Marblehead
- Marshfield
- Masconomet
- Mashpee
- Medfield
- Medway
- Melrose
- Mendon-Upton
- Methuen
- Middleborough
- Milford
- Millbury
- Monomoy
- Nantucket
- Nashoba
- Natick
- Needham
- Newburyport
- Newton
- North Andover
- North Attleborough
- North Middlesex
- North Reading
- Northampton
- Northborough - Southborough
- Northbridge
- Norton
- Norwell
- Norwood
- Oxford
- Peabody
- Pentucket
- Pittsfield
- Plymouth
- Quabbin
- Quincy
- Reading
- Revere
- Rockland
- Sandwich
- Saugus
- Scituate
- Seekonk
- Shrewsbury
- Silver Lake
- Somerset
- Somerville
- Southwick-Tolland-Granville
- Stoneham
- Stoughton
- Sudbury
- Swampscott
- Swansea
- Tantasqua
- Taunton
- Tewksbury
- Triton
- Tyngsborough
- Uxbridge
- Wachusett
- Wakefield
- Walpole
- Waltham
- Wareham
- Watertown
- Webster
- West Springfield
- Westborough
- Westford
- Weston
- Westwood
- Whitman-Hanson
- Wilmington
- Winchester
- Winthrop
- Woburn

* Based on a sample of districts with more than 1,500 students; see Methodology section on p. 6 for more

GLASS CEILING VS. GLASS ELEVATOR

"Glass ceiling" is a term coined by feminists about 40 years ago to explain the invisible (e.g., social and systemic) barriers that exist for women and minorities to reach the highest levels of leadership. The term originally referred only to women and has since morphed to include people of color and people who identify as LGBTQ+ and other historically marginalized groups. Like other sectors, a glass ceiling for women and people of color is observed in education leadership.

In this report, we use the term "glass elevator" to describe a phenomenon in which white men take a more direct path to leadership, at a faster pace than women and people of color.[3] This includes a trend in which men skip steps in the leadership hierarchy (e.g., moving from a principalship directly to a superintendency), something that occurs far less often for women.

METHODOLOGY SNAPSHOT

To better understand the power gap in Massachusetts K-12 education, we examined pathways to the superintendency. Through a detailed scan of 180 districts (those with enrollments of 1,500 or more), we studied the path people take to reach the superintendency. We analyzed each current superintendent's two previous positions. We also analyzed 10 years of gender and race data for superintendents in the 180 districts from 2011-21, and gender data for all teachers, principals, districts administrators, and school committee members from 2020-21. Statewide, we analyzed 10 years of aggregate gender and race data for all teachers, principals, assistant superintendents, and superintendents, and 10 years of principal and superintendent credentialing data, disaggregated by race and gender. We contacted districts to request that they self-report whether they have had a superintendent of color or a female superintendent in the past 50 years. Lastly, we conducted a series of interviews with K-12 leaders who identify as women and/or people of color to gather their perceptions related to leadership opportunities in Massachusetts.

Data used in this report is from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), much of which is publicly available on DESE Profiles Statewide Reports. All gender and race data is self-reported by schools and districts to DESE each year. Other data presented in the report was manually pulled from interviews, direct outreach to districts, and a review of research literature.

DESE's statewide reports are generally released annually in March and reflect data gathered the previous October. The anchor date for all data presented in this report is October 2020, reflecting the 2020-21 school year. Given that district staffing data is constantly evolving, this report also highlights superintendent hires made in 2021.

A comprehensive ranking of districts by gender representation is included in Appendix A, and a more detailed methodology is listed in Appendix B. *It is important to note that gender analyses conducted for this study includes only male and female gender categorizations, given limitations in accessing data on genderqueer/nonbinary and transgender individuals in publicly reported data systems. Future research should explore pathways to the superintendency for nonbinary and transgender K-12 leaders.*

IDENTIFYING THE POWER GAP IN K-12 EDUCATION

In Massachusetts and across the nation, education leadership becomes increasingly male in every position leading up to the superintendency. Additionally, the field is overwhelmingly white. This section discusses the Massachusetts power gaps by the numbers for both gender and race.

The Women's Power Gap by the Numbers

Though the education workforce is mostly women, its leadership is not. Male teachers are far more likely than female teachers to advance to positions of power. Women who do move from teaching positions into leadership roles are overrepresented in elementary principal and assistant superintendent positions. They comprise 60% of assistant superintendents, the position second in line to the superintendency, yet their representation drops significantly in the superintendency. In middle and high school principalships, and in the superintendency, men are overrepresented. These trends illustrate a pipeline to leadership for men that bypasses senior-level administrative positions in the district office, while simultaneously creating a glass ceiling for many women supporting the day-to-day work of running school systems. The next section of this report further analyzes the pathways women and men take into school and district leadership.

In Massachusetts, women represent

76% of teachers

59% of supt. licenses

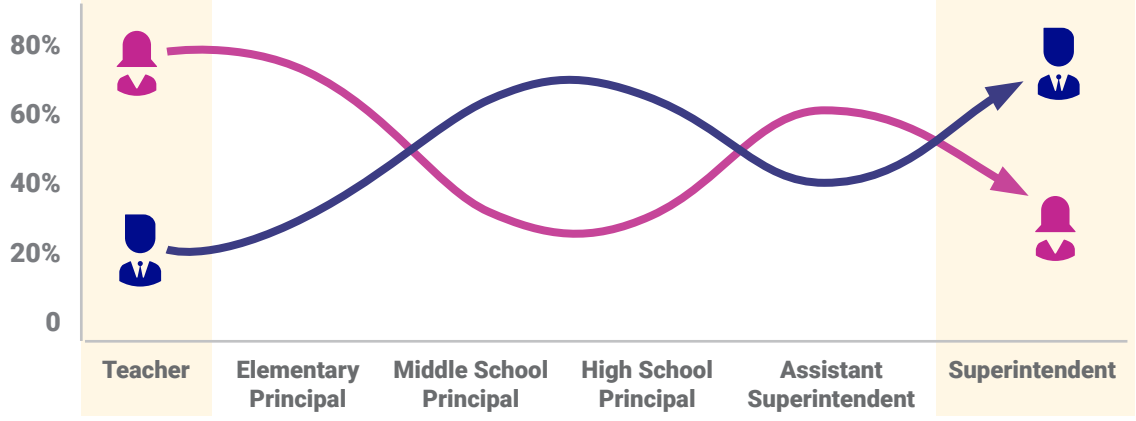
but are only

39% of superintendents

FIGURE 1

GENDER DATA TOTALS BY LEADERSHIP POSITION

	Teacher	Elementary Principal	Middle School Principal	High School Principal	Assistant Superintendent	Superintendent
% Women	76%	68%	39%	37%	60%	39%
% Men	24%	32%	61%	63%	40%	61%



The Racial Power Gap by the Numbers

43% of Massachusetts students are students of color, but only 5% of superintendents are BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color).*

As shown in the chart below, racial parity does not exist within any K-12 leadership position across the state. Research shows that representation matters for students' experiences in school, academic outcomes, and future aspirations, yet people of color represent less than 15% of staff in every K-12 position.

BIPOC REPRESENTATION ACROSS K-12 EDUCATION IN MASSACHUSETTS

FIGURE 2

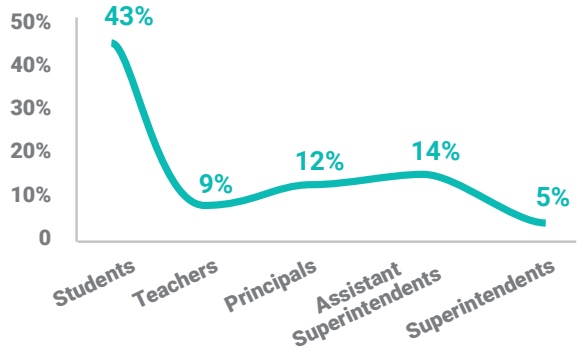


TABLE 1

	Teachers	Elementary Principals	Middle School Principals	High School Principals	Assistant Superintendents	Superintendents
Female	7% 4,998 FTE	8% 91 FTE	3% 8 FTE	8% 33 FTE	9% 18 FTE	3% 8 FTE
Male	2% 1860 FTE	4% 42 FTE	7% 20 FTE	7% 29 FTE	5% 10 FTE	2% 6 FTE

FTE: Full Time Equivalent

The highest representation of BIPOC is among high school principals and assistant superintendents, both of which commonly lead to the superintendency. Yet representation within the superintendency does not reflect the percentages within these positions, indicating the presence of a glass ceiling. Additionally, only 9% of Massachusetts teachers are people of color, which indicates a pipeline issue for diverse district leadership. Additional research is needed to determine why people of color have stronger representation in school leadership and assistant superintendent roles than in teaching positions. Research is also needed to determine why people of color are being selected for principalships at a higher rate than superintendencies.

Educators of color we spoke with reported that mentors and personal networks were a primary way through which they obtained leadership opportunities. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that few people of color are progressing from principalships to the superintendency within the same district. Of the 8 women of color superintendents in the state in 2020, 5 were hired from out of district prior to their current superintendency, 1 was hired from out of state, and 2 were hired from within their same district.

Though people of color remain significantly underrepresented in K-12 leadership, there are signs of progress in 2021, albeit limited. Most districts in Massachusetts have never had a superintendent of color, yet in the summer of 2021, six new superintendents of color were hired in the state. Among these new hires, three districts hired their first-ever person of color to hold the superintendent role: Andover, Brookline, and Wayland. Meanwhile, South Hadley, Malden and Cambridge all hired another superintendent of color, though Cambridge's new superintendent is currently interim.

Representation Matters

The findings above have a tremendous impact on student experience in school.[3] Boys often lack male teachers to serve as role models, especially in the elementary grades. Girls are less likely to see themselves represented in their school or district leadership once they reach middle school. For students of color, it is rare to see themselves represented at all, whether in teachers, principals, or district leaders.

* Race subgroups include those used by DESE in DESE profiles (African American, Asian, Hispanic, White, Native American, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Multi-Race/Non-Hispanic)

Progress in 2021 Superintendent hires in 2021 are not reflected in the statewide totals in this report. BIPOC hires raised the percentage of BIPOC superintendents in the state from 5% to 7%. There are now 12 women of color superintendent (5 Black, 4 Latina and 3 Asian women) and 8 men of color superintendents (6 Black and 2 Latino men) in Massachusetts.

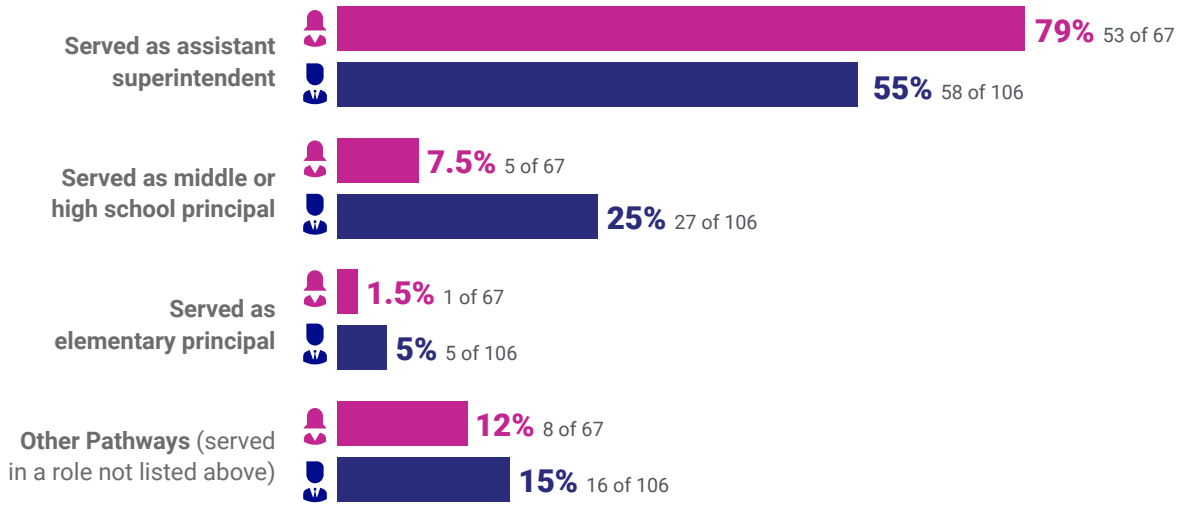
EXAMINING THE GENDER POWER GAP

How Does the Pathway to the Superintendency Differ by Gender?

Most individuals enter the education profession as a teacher. At this phase of the pipeline, the workforce is overwhelmingly female. While men represent 24% of Massachusetts teachers, they are far more likely than their female colleagues to move into positions of leadership. This section explores pathways to the superintendency by gender. Except where otherwise noted, all data in this section refers to our sample of 180 districts with student enrollment of 1,500 or more.

FIGURE 3

ROLE SUPERINTENDENT SERVED IN DIRECTLY BEFORE BECOMING SUPERINTENDENT*



Finding 1: Men progress to the superintendency more quickly than women.

Men spend fewer years than women in the classroom before progressing to administrative positions. According to national data, female leaders spend an average of 7 to 10 years as a teacher, while male leaders spend 5 to 6 years.[4] In addition, men are less likely than women to perform the assistant superintendent role, or repeat assistant superintendent roles, before becoming superintendent. Among women, 18% repeated an assistant superintendent position prior to becoming a superintendent, compared to 12% of men. Differences in the assistant superintendent position are explored in greater depth in Finding 2.

Finding 2: Women perform more roles than men before becoming superintendent.

For both men and women, the pathway to the superintendency most often advances through a principalship. However, similarities end here. Serving as a principal, particularly at the middle and high school level, was a launching point to the superintendency for 25% of current male superintendents. Only 8% of female superintendents took this same route, indicating strong evidence of a glass elevator for men who hold a high school or middle school principalship. Women serve as elementary principals much more often than men, yet 5 men went straight from elementary principal to a superintendency while only 1 woman made this same leap. Most elementary principals who progressed to the superintendency performed an additional role between principal and superintendent, indicating that this

* Results are based on previous positions held before each person ever became a superintendent. Data comes from 173 current superintendents in our 180-district sample. Four superintendents were excluded because they held two superintendencies prior to their current one, and we do not have data on the remaining three superintendents.

role does not currently offer a direct pathway to the superintendency. This evidence suggests that gender bias plays a role in preventing elementary principals, a position dominated by women, from reaching the superintendency. Elevating the elementary principal role as a valid pre-position to the superintendency is an issue that the field must address to advance gender equity in K-12 leadership.

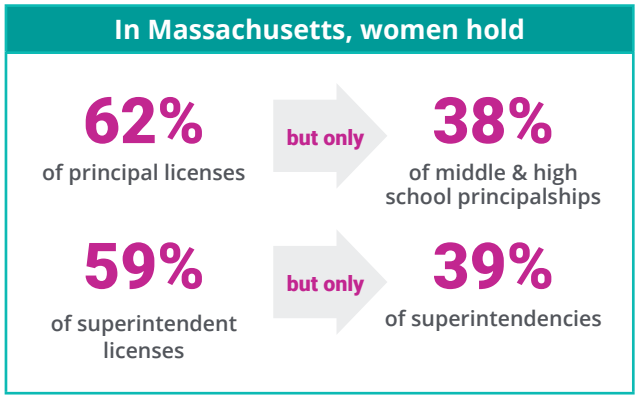
As a female assistant superintendent observed, "males are jumping from principals to superintendent and I would never have thought to do that. A lot of males move through the system so fast without fully understanding the teaching and learning part." In contrast, women most often take additional steps to reach the superintendency and tend to seek out positions in the central office to better prepare for running a district. As a result, women tend to transition from a principalship to an assistant superintendent position before becoming superintendent.

> *While 79% of women in our 180-district dataset were assistant superintendents before taking on the superintendent position, only 55% of men performed this same role.*

Deeper analysis reveals that women tend to move up the leadership ladder one rung at a time. For instance, it is common for a female teacher to become an instructional coach or assistant principal, advance to the role of principal, and become an assistant superintendent before moving into the superintendent role. While 79% of women in our 180-district dataset were assistant superintendents before taking on the superintendent position, only 55% of men performed this same role. Additionally, women sometimes repeat positions at the principal and assistant superintendent levels, adding even more steps in their leadership journey. This indicates the presence of a persistent glass ceiling at the steps before the superintendency, where women get stuck and men bypass.

Finding 3: Though women outqualify men for superintendent roles, many hit a glass ceiling in the assistant superintendent position.

The assistant superintendent role serves as the most common feeder position directly prior to the superintendency for both men and women. However, not all assistant superintendencies are equal. Data reveals that many women struggle to break through a glass ceiling once they gain this position, indicating this position functions differently in a career trajectory for men than women. For women, the assistant superintendency is often a stopping point, while for men it frequently serves as a stepping stone to the superintendency. Statewide, women represent 60% of assistant superintendents, but only 39% of superintendents.



This discrepancy cannot be explained by educational attainment or qualifications for leadership positions. Women outqualify men in terms of education, credentialing, and experience, but they are less likely to become superintendents. Results of a ten-year scan of statewide superintendent and principal credentialing data shows that women consistently outpace men in earning leadership licenses. Over the past ten years, women on average have held 59% of superintendent credentials and 62% of principal credentials in Massachusetts.

Similar trends appear when looking at educational attainment. Within our 180-district dataset, 65% of women had an EdD or PhD compared with 57% of men. The disproportionate number of women earning leadership credentials has not translated to the number of women in superintendent roles, indicating the presence of other barriers to accessing the highest levels of leadership.

WHAT OBSTACLES DO WOMEN FACE IN OBTAINING THE SUPERINTENDENT POSITION?

Bias in Superintendent Selection

Gender bias around leadership qualities often bars women from reaching the superintendency. While men are favored for their personal qualities, women we interviewed expressed having to work twice as hard and be twice as qualified to be considered for leadership positions. Current superintendents expressed that gender stereotypes play a role in who gets picked for the superintendency. A former male superintendent explained this phenomenon by noting, "personal identities play a role in how [superintendent candidates] are perceived instead of the knowledge and skills they actually hold." The 2015 School Superintendent Association Mid-Decade Survey reinforced this finding, reporting that female superintendents were "hired for their curriculum and instructional leadership prowess while male superintendents were favored for their personal characteristics."[5]

Female superintendents were "hired for their curriculum and instructional leadership prowess while male superintendents were favored for their personal characteristics."

One female superintendent noted that male teachers are more likely to be recognized for their leadership qualities. "It just didn't happen for me," she said. "It was a boys club. Male PE teachers became assistant principals and principals. Not women." In the aggregate, based on credentials, degrees, and teaching experience, women are more qualified than men to hold principal and superintendent positions, yet less likely to attain those roles. This reinforces the finding that men are often selected for leadership opportunities based upon personal characteristics rather than professional qualifications.

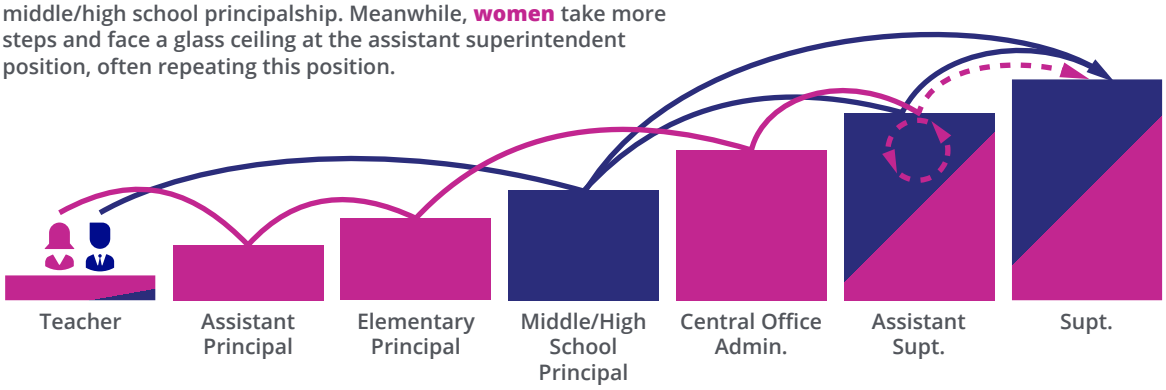
Consequences of External Bias

Research suggests that women often wait until they possess all required qualifications before applying for positions, while men are more likely to apply for positions before they are fully qualified. When surveyed, less than 10% of women report that they don't apply for jobs because they don't think they could do the job well. Over 60% report that they don't apply without meeting all qualifications because they don't think they will be hired. [6] Though further research is needed to examine this trend, studies indicate that

FIGURE 4

THE PATHWAY TO THE SUPERINTENDENCY DIFFERS BY GENDER

Men take multiple paths in addition to the women's path to the superintendency, often accelerated and often jumping there via middle/high school principalship. Meanwhile, **women** take more steps and face a glass ceiling at the assistant superintendent position, often repeating this position.



> **"It just didn't happen for me," she said. "It was a boys club. Male PE teachers became assistant principals and principals. Not women."**

women are more likely than men to follow specific guidelines about who should apply for positions and are less likely to believe they will be hired without meeting 100% of job qualifications. This internalized gender bias is one reason why women spend longer amounts of time in leadership roles before acquiring a superintendency.

This trend emerges early in the leadership pipeline. Female teachers spend more time than their male counterparts in classroom teaching roles before advancing to leadership positions. This longer teaching tenure results in women entering the superintendency later in life than their male counterparts. Research has not clearly articulated why men advance more quickly, but this would be a rich subject of study in the future.

Inequitable Pathways for Elementary vs. Middle/High School Principals

Pathway analysis shows that the male-dominated high school principal role provides a more direct route to the superintendency than the female-dominated elementary principal role. Elementary principals report spending significant time on instructional leadership, family engagement, and efforts to create a welcoming school environment. Each of these components is essential to the superintendent's role. This points to a need for stronger pathways for elementary principals interested in district leadership.

Lack of Support for Caregiving Mothers

Women face enormous societal and cultural expectations to serve as their household's primary caregiver. The decision to bear and raise children often means a pause in their career journeys. Many woman leaders spoke about society's lack of infrastructure to support them as working mothers, altering their professional paths and even creating the need to repeat key positions, slowing their advancement into leadership.

EXAMINING THE RACIAL POWER GAP

Women of color represent only 3% of superintendents, and men of color 2%. These figures depict a systemic problem with Massachusetts K-12 leadership. People of color, and in particular women of color, aspiring to gain leadership positions face the barriers described earlier (e.g., discrimination, biased hiring practices, lack of professional resources and support) alongside significant additional hurdles. In fact, when people of color advance to the superintendent position, many don't stay. A 2021 Boston Globe article stated that superintendents of color are often either pushed out or choose to move to other positions for more job security and support within the role.

The superintendent pathway analysis for people of color in this report is limited due to a small sample size, which is the result of severe underrepresentation of people of color in Massachusetts K-12 leadership. At the time of our analysis, 2020-21, statewide there were only 14 superintendents of color. Underrepresentation also influenced our ability to study the impact of the combined forces of racism and sexism in the pathway to the superintendency for women of color. Therefore, findings in this section are primarily qualitative, resulting from interviews with women superintendents of color in Massachusetts.

HOW DOES INTERSECTIONALITY AFFECT THE OPPORTUNITY TO OBTAIN A SUPERINTENDENCY AMONG WOMEN OF COLOR?

As demonstrated in this report, obtaining a superintendency as a woman comes with many challenges. Women of color face each of these barriers, but they also face the impact of systemic racism during the hiring process and during leadership service. The section below describes key barriers raised by women of color currently serving as superintendents, as well as those who are aspiring to the superintendency.

In 2021, women of color hold only 6% of superintendent credentials in the state, indicating they are not making it into the pipeline for leadership.

Finding 1: Too few women of color are making it into the K-12 leadership pipeline.

In 2021, women of color hold only 6% of superintendent credentials in the state, indicating they are not making it into the pipeline for leadership. Even within positions that have high female representation (teachers, elementary school principals and assistant superintendents), women of color are severely underrepresented. One woman superintendent mentioned, "As a Black woman you have to work twice

TABLE 2

K-12 EDUCATION WORKFORCE BY RACE AND GENDER

Race	# of Women Supt Licenses		# of Women in K-12 workforce	
White	1011	89%	53,456	91%
Black/African American	58	5%	1,732	3%
Latina	43	3.7%	2,041	3.4%
Asian	15	1.3%	1,012	1.7%
Native/Indigenous	3	0.2%	58	0.1%
Mixed Race	3	0.2%	289	0.5%
Pacific Islander	1	0.08%	27	0.05%

as hard as the average white person. You are not going to make it by doing what everyone else is doing. I have gotten here through extreme hard work, above and beyond what is considered normal."

In addition, many districts struggle to retain teachers of color. Through our interviews, women of color reported that experiences of discrimination, both towards them and towards students of color, have pushed them out of schools. This reduces the pipeline of women of color to serve in leadership positions.

> **"People of color would rather have a safe job as a union teacher in a district than take on a [superintendent] job that if you make one mistake in public you will be fired."**

Finding 2: Educators of color report that racism and discrimination may prevent them from seeking leadership positions

Educators of color, through interviews and outside sources, report that racism, discrimination, and microaggressions in the workplace make being a leader incredibly difficult and may prevent people of color from seeking superintendent positions. The superintendent role is under direct supervision of the community by way of an elected school committee.* Leaders report that political scrutiny makes the job more difficult and grueling. One woman of color superintendent stated, "people of color would rather have a safe job as a union teacher in a district than take on a [superintendent] job that if you make one mistake in public you will be fired." Fewer people of color may aspire to the superintendency due to a variety of systemic and cultural biases directed at them from the community and school committee.

GENDER & RACIAL BIASES IMPACT SUPERINTENDENT SELECTION

In education, as in our society as a whole, notions of leadership tend to be deeply ingrained with white-dominant, patriarchal norms, which often supersede the credentials, experience, and/or competence an individual brings to their job. K-12 leaders interviewed for this study report that these norms serve as barriers for women and people of color seeking to obtain district leadership positions. Asked why she waited for many years to apply for a superintendent position, one female superintendent said, "a part of me thinks it is because I didn't look like what a superintendent 'looks like.'" As noted by this superintendent, internalized biases can impact individuals' aspirations. Biases held by those in power also impact who is chosen for leadership opportunities.

School committees, composed of community members either appointed or elected, hold the power over the superintendent hiring process. In fact, this is the key statutory responsibility of their role. In this process

> **"A part of me thinks it is because I didn't look like what a superintendent 'looks like.'**

they are responsible for defining the search process, creating a job description, securing a pool of candidates, hosting interviews, and voting on the final candidate. Additionally, they regularly evaluate and decide whether to extend sitting superintendents' contracts. Often, districts have underdeveloped processes for evaluating leadership performance either during a review of a current superintendent or during a superintendent search. Every step of this process is influenced by their perceptions of the skills and competencies superintendents should possess, which are inherently connected to ingrained conceptions of leadership.

Women superintendents may experience a glass ceiling in the hiring process, as the school committee looks for leadership qualities traditionally associated with men.

* Boston Public Schools is the only district in MA that has a mayor-appointed school committee. All other school committees are elected by the community.

Biased assumptions of leadership qualifications and capabilities can lessen women's chances of being selected for the superintendency.

> **"I have never in my life felt like my job was secure."**

Racial biases, both within the community and within the school committee, can also create barriers for aspiring superintendents of color. Current superintendents of color spoke to the daunting nature of public perception for leaders of color, particularly those working in predominantly white communities.

Racism and biases embedded in the fabric of a community can cause macro- and micro-aggressions targeted at superintendents of color, making the job far more difficult than that of a white superintendent. For example, one superintendent described an event where she visited one of the district's schools and a parent emailed the principal to ask why she was there because she "makes the students nervous." One assistant superintendent of color described experiencing these aggressions by saying, "I have never in my life felt like my job was secure." She noted feeling like she was placed under a microscope by the surrounding community. Leaders of color describe these experiences as barriers to diversifying education leadership and retaining leaders of color.

MA SCHOOL COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

- In our 180-district sample, 94 (52%) currently have a female school committee chair and 114 (63%) currently have 50% or more female representation on their school committee. While women have a strong presence on Massachusetts school committees, observational evidence suggests that the majority of these members are white women.
- While looking at the racial composition of school committees was beyond the scope of this research, several interview participants noted that BIPOC are grossly underrepresented on school committees across the state. This points to an important topic for future research and action.

RECOMMENDATIONS

After speaking with numerous female superintendents, specifically women of color, as well as white and male allies, we came to a set of recommendations as starting points for advancing gender and racial equity within K-12 leadership in Massachusetts. The recommendations below are designed specifically for school committees, superintendents, principals, and others in leadership positions.

What Can School Committees, Mayors, and Other Municipal Leaders Do?

- **Invest in diversity, equity, and inclusion training for school committee members.** This should include specific guidance focused on equitable hiring practices.
- **Advocate for school and district equity audits.** Ensure that bias in hiring and promotions is a component of equity audits. Include an analysis of past superintendent pools to examine trends related to the gender and race of superintendent applicants versus those who received the job offer.
- **Develop more equitable, transparent, and rigorous systems for assessing leadership performance.** These processes should value the skills and leadership qualities women and BIPOC bring into leadership positions.
- **Prioritize retention of female and BIPOC superintendents.** Publicly state retention goals at the time a superintendent is hired.

FROM THE FIELD: *"The school committee at the time of choosing the person for the position needs to publicly define their goal on retaining them" – WOC Superintendent*

- **Consider candidates who took non-traditional pathways to the superintendency.** Districts can diversify their candidate pools by considering a wider range of individuals for superintendent positions. This includes those who have demonstrated leadership in community-based organizations as well as those who have participated in alternative preparation programs such as Future Chiefs through Chiefs for Change.
- **Provide pathways to the superintendency for elementary principals.** The elementary principal role offers many transferable skills for running a district. Community leaders should invest in pathways to leadership for elementary principals, such as a leadership development program for aspiring superintendents.
- **Encourage BIPOC individuals to run for school committee.** Create initiatives to support increased BIPOC representation on school boards.
- **Tie superintendent performance evaluation and pay to setting and meeting diversity goals.** Making staff and leadership diversity an integral part of the superintendent's role will ensure that efforts to create a diverse and inclusive workforce are prioritized at the district level.

What Can Superintendents and K-12 Principals Do?

- **Develop mentorship structures for your district's staff.** Leaders across Massachusetts attribute much of their upward mobility to mentors. These people believed in them as leaders and connected them to other networks and opportunities. District administrators can create a leadership pipeline within their district by building formal mentorship structures.

FROM THE FIELD: *"Look out for other potential leaders and cultivate [their leadership]. This starts super early, all through K-12 and undergrad." – WOC Superintendent*

RECOMMENDATIONS (CONTINUED)

- **Nurture the next generation of education leaders.** Student experiences in school today have a profound impact on their future aspirations. Welcoming, culturally affirming school environments ensure that students feel seen and cared for during their education. In turn, this makes it more likely that they will aspire to future careers in K-12 education.

FROM THE FIELD: *"We often think of students last, but students are our greatest resource. The pipeline starts with them, cultivating their leadership and love for education." – WOC Superintendent*

- **Build a stronger recruitment pipeline for aspiring BIPOC superintendents to gain the necessary credentialing and access to superintendent searches.**
- **Set measurable goals to diversify your district's workforce.** Share goals publicly with the community. Establish regular touchpoints to check in on goal progress.

FROM THE FIELD: *"If you want teachers of color you need to have people of color recruiting them." – WOC Superintendent*

- **Prioritize retention of educators and administrators of color**. Hiring educators and school leaders of color is insufficient. Districts must put practices in place to create a positive, affirming environment that supports educator retention.

What Can the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Do?

- **Collect comprehensive data on gender and race for school committee members.**
- **Publish an annual report focused on the state of gender and racial diversity amongst K-12 educational leadership.**

CONCLUSION

The power gaps in Massachusetts education leadership are significant. This report has found the presence of a persistent glass ceiling for women and people of color to reach the superintendency. These gaps are not solely a pipeline issue. Deeply embedded cultural, systemic, and institutional barriers and biases continue to favor white, male leadership in Massachusetts' K-12 schools. As evidenced by the barriers described in this report, supporting more women of color to gain superintendent credentials is insufficient to fix the problem. Women of color are still far less likely than their white and male counterparts to be hired for the job because of systemic racism and leadership bias. Additionally, increasing the number of women high school principals, which this report has found to be the most direct route to the superintendency, is also insufficient. Men are still more likely than women to acquire a superintendent position, by way of a glass elevator. Meaningful change and progress towards equity requires current leaders to attack the cultural, systemic, and institutional structures and biases that have led to the white- and male-dominant landscape that currently exists in educational leadership. To better serve all the Commonwealth's children, Massachusetts education leaders must take deliberate action.

APPENDIX A

Comprehensive District Ranking on Gender Parity

(180 districts with 1500+ students)

For the rankings below, we consider gender parity to be present when at least 60% of women and 40% of men hold an equivalent role. The 60% benchmark reflects the average percent of women who hold superintendent and principal credentials in Massachusetts. The ranking assigns a higher point allocation to the superintendency, since it is the highest administrative position in K-12 education. Interim superintendents are not factored into the "Ever Had a Female Superintendent" category, so this only reflects permanent positions. All data reflects the 2020-2021 school year.

POINT ALLOCATION/WEIGHTING

VARIABLE(S)	POINT ALLOCATION	CALCULATIONS BASED ON 60% PARITY	NOTES
SUPERINTENDENTS - UP TO 55 POINTS			
Ever Had a Female Superintendent?	25	If yes, recieve 25 points. If no, receive 0 points.	n/a
Past Female Superintendent 2011-2021 (10 years)	30	Points allocated based on # of years with past female superintendent. Each year of female superintendent from 2011 to 2021 = 3 points	n/a
FEEDER POSITIONS TO DISTRICT LEADERSHIP - UP TO 40 POINTS			
Currrent Asst. Supterintendent(s)	10	If 60% or higher female, receive 10 points. Less than 60% calculate %*.166.	If district does not have the position, place this category out of 0
Current Elementary School Principals	10	If 60% female or higher, receive 10 points. Less than 60% calculate %*.166.	If district does not have the position, place this category out of 0
Current Middle School (standalone) Principal(s)	10	If 60% female or higher, receive 10 points. Less than 60% calculate %*.166.	If district does not have the position, place this category out of 0
Current High School Principals	10	If 60% female or higher, receive 10 points. Less than 60% calculate %*.166.	If district does not have the position, place this category out of 0
COMMUNITY-ELECTED POSITIONS - UP TO 20 POINTS			
Current School Committee Chair	5	If female, receive 5 points	n/a
% Women on School Committee	15	If 50% women on board, receive 15 points. Less than 50%, calculate %*.3	Points allocated based on 50% parity
Total	**115**		**Total points received are divided by total points possible, leading to a score out of 100, and districts are ranked accordingly.**

LEADERSHIP RANKING BY GENDER OF 180 DISTRICTS WITH 1500+ STUDENTS

** Indicates did not hear back from district to confirm whether the district has ever had a female superintendent*

RANK	DISTRICT	EVER HAD FEMALE SUPT?	FEMALE SUPT POINTS	FEMALE SUPT (10 YRS)	% FEMALE ASSIST SUPT	% FEMALE HS PRINC	% FEMALE MS PRINC	% FEMALE ELEM PRINC	% FEMALE BOARD CHAIR	% FEMALE SCHOOL BOARD	FINAL POINTS
1	Greenfield	Yes	25	30	0	10	10	10	5	15	100
2	Lincoln-Sudbury	Yes	25	24	10	10	0	10	5	15	94.3
3	Worcester	Yes	25	30	10	9.5	8.3	10	0	15	93.7
4	Wareham	Yes	25	24	10	8.3	10	10	5	15	93.3
5	Foxborough	Yes	25	30	10	10	10	10	0	12	93
6	Easthampton	Yes	25	30	0	0	10	10	5	15	90.5
7	Chelsea	Yes	25	30	8.3	0	10	10	5	15	89.8
8	Franklin	Yes	25	30	8.3	0	10	9.5	5	15	89.4
9	Barnstable	Yes	25	27	10	10	0	10	5	15	88.7
9	Milton	Yes	25	27	10	10	0	10	5	15	88.7
11	Wilmington	Yes	25	18	8.3	10	10	10	5	15	88.1
12	Watertown	Yes	25	30	10	0	10	10	0	15	87
13	Falmouth	Yes	25	24	10	10	0	10	5	15	86.1
14	Webster	Yes	25	24	0	0	10	10	5	15	84.8
15	King Philip	Yes	25	21	10	10	10	0	5	7.5	84.3
16	Boston	Yes	25	18	10	7.6	10	10	5	11.3	84.2
17	Sudbury	Yes	25	21	10	10	0	10	5	15	83.5
18	Concord	Yes	25	30	10	0	0	10	5	15	82.6
19	Lynn	Yes	25	21	10	10	10	10	0	7.5	81.3
20	Taunton	Yes	25	21	8.3	0	10	10	5	13.3	80.6
21	Andover	Yes	25	12	10	10	5.5	10	5	15	80.5
22	Beverly	Yes	25	12	10	10	10	10	0	15	80
22	Melrose	Yes	25	27	10	0	0	10	5	15	80
22	Swampscott	Yes	25	27	10	0	0	10	5	15	80
25	Lexington	Yes	25	18	10	0	8.3	10	5	15	79.4
26	Lunenburg	Yes	25	30	0	0	0	8.3	5	15	79.3
27	Dartmouth	Yes	25	27	8.3	0	0	10	5	15	78.5
28	East Bridgewater	Yes	25	24	10	0	0	8.3	0	15	78.4
29	Northborough	Yes	25	15	10	0	10	10	5	15	78.3
29	Northbridge	Yes	25	30	10	0	0	10	0	15	78.3

RANK	DISTRICT	EVER HAD FEMALE SUPT?	FEMALE SUPT POINTS	FEMALE SUPT (10 YRS)	% FEMALE ASSIST SUPT	% FEMALE HS PRINC	% FEMALE MS PRINC	% FEMALE ELEM PRINC	% FEMALE BOARD CHAIR	% FEMALE SCHOOL BOARD	FINAL POINTS
31	Revere	Yes	25	18	5.5	10	10	8.3	0	12.9	78
32	Salem	Yes	25	15	10	10	0	9.5	5	15	77.8
33	Groton-Dunstable	Yes	25	21	10	0	10	5.5	5	12.9	77.7
33	North Middlesex	Yes	25	21	10	0	8.3	10	0	15	77.7
35	Hingham	Yes	25	24	0	10	0	10	5	15	77.4
35	Hopkinton	Yes	25	24	10	0	0	10	5	15	77.4
35	Stoughton	Yes	25	24	0	10	0	10	5	15	77.4
38	Leicester	Yes	25	24	0	10	0	10	0	12	77.1
39	Central Berkshire	Yes	25	18	8.3	0	10	10	5	12	76.8
40	Bourne	Yes	25	3	10	10	10	10	5	15	76.5
41	Methuen	Yes	25	30	0	0	0	10	0	15	76.2
42	Weston	Yes	25	24	8.3	0	0	10	5	15	75.9
43	Auburn	Yes	25	27	10	0	0	10	0	15	75.7
43	Westwood	Yes	25	12	10	10	0	10	5	15	75.7
45	Somerville	Yes	25	18	0	8.3	10	10	0	15	75
46	Belchertown	Yes	25	21	0	10	0	10	5	15	74.8
46	Mansfield	Yes	25	21	0	10	0	10	5	15	74.8
48	North Attleborough	Yes	25	18	10	0	10	10	0	12.9	74.7
49	Danvers	Yes	25	30	8.3	0	0	10	0	12	74.2
49	Medway	Yes	25	12	10	0	10	8.3	5	15	74.2
51	Longmeadow	Yes	25	15	10	0	10	10	0	15	73.9
52	Carver	Yes	25	15	0	0	0	10	5	15	73.7
53	Arlington	Yes	25	30	0	0	8.3	8.3	0	12.9	73.4
54	Amesbury	Yes	25	12	0	10	0	10	5	15	73.3
54	Tantasqua	Yes	25	27	10	0	0	0	0	15	73.3
54	Ayer-Shirley	Yes	25	21	0	0	10	8.3	5	15	73.3
57	Randolph	Yes	25	9	10	0	10	10	5	15	73
58	Newburyport	Yes	25	15	10	0	10	10	5	8.6	72.7
59	Lowell	Yes	25	12	10	10	4.7	8.7	0	12.9	72.5
60	Westborough	Yes	25	30	0	0	0	8.3	5	15	72.4
61	Canton	Yes	25	18	0	0	10	10	5	15	72.2
61	Mashpee	Yes	25	21	10	0	0	10	5	12	72.2

RANK	DISTRICT	EVER HAD FEMALE SUPT?	FEMALE SUPT POINTS	FEMALE SUPT (10 YRS)	% FEMALE ASSIST SUPT	% FEMALE HS PRINC	% FEMALE MS PRINC	% FEMALE ELEM PRINC	% FEMALE BOARD CHAIR	% FEMALE SCHOOL BOARD	FINAL POINTS
63	Wakefield	Yes	25	12	10	10	0	6.6	5	12.9	70.9
64	Marblehead	Yes	25	18	10	0	0	8.3	5	15	70.7
65	Lawrence	Yes	25	12	10	5.5	10	10	0	8.6	70.5
66	Cohasset	Yes	25	24	10	0	0	10	0	12	70.4
67	Bridgewater-Raynham	Yes	25	12	0	10	5.5	8.3	5	15	70.3
68	Natick	Yes	25	9	0	8.3	8.3	10	5	15	70.1
69	Pembroke	Yes	25	18	10	0	10	5.5	0	12	70
70	Winchester	Yes	25	18	10	0	0	10	5	12	69.6
71	Silver Lake	Yes	25	18	0	10	0	0	5	15	69.5
72	Westfield	Yes	25	15	0	0	10	10	0	12.9	69.4
73	South Hadley	Yes	25	6	10	10	0	8.3	5	15	69
74	Quabbin	Yes	25	30	0	0	0	10	0	6.9	68.5
75	Brockton	Yes	25	18	0	6.6	8.3	10	0	10	67.8
76	Bedford	Yes	25	9	10	10	0	8.3	0	15	67.2
76	North Andover	Yes	25	9	10	0	10	8.3	0	15	67.2
78	Waltham	Yes	25	12	10	0	0	9.5	5	15	66.5
79	Gardner	Yes	25	18	10	8.3	0	0	0	15	66.3
80	Freetown-Lakeville	Yes	25	6	10	10	0	10	0	15	66.1
80	Seekonk	Yes	25	21	0	0	10	0	5	15	66.1
82	New Bedford	Yes	25	18	10	8.3	0	10	0	4.3	65.7
83	Medford	Yes	25	12	8.3	0	0	10	5	15	65.5
83	Sharon	Yes	25	12	10	0	0	8.3	5	15	65.5
85	Belmont	Yes	25	0	10	0	10	10	5	15	65.2
85	Grafton	Yes	25	0	10	0	10	10	5	15	65.2
87	Fall River	Yes	25	15	0	5.5	8.3	10	0	4.3	64.9
88	Dedham	Yes	25	9	0	0	10	10	5	15	64.3
89	Duxbury	Yes	25	0	10	0	10	8.3	5	15	63.7
90	Scituate	Yes	25	3	10	10	0	10	0	15	63.5
91	Dennis-Yarmouth	Yes	25	30	0	0	0	0	5	12.9	63.4
91	Needham	Yes	25	0	10	0	10	10	5	12.9	63.4
93	Oxford	Yes	25	12	10	0	10	0	0	15	62.6
94	Agawam	Yes	25	3	10	0	8.3	10	0	15	62

RANK	DISTRICT	EVER HAD FEMALE SUPT?	FEMALE SUPT POINTS	FEMALE SUPT (10 YRS)	% FEMALE ASSIST SUPT	% FEMALE HS PRINC	% FEMALE MS PRINC	% FEMALE ELEM PRINC	% FEMALE BOARD CHAIR	% FEMALE SCHOOL BOARD	FINAL POINTS
95	Sandwich	Yes	25	15	10	0	0	8.3	0	12.9	61.9
95	Easton	Yes	25	12	10	0	0	4.2	5	15	61.9
97	Blackstone-Millville	Yes	25	6	0	0	10	10	5	15	61.7
97	Monomoy Regional	Yes	25	6	0	10	0	10	5	15	61.7
99	Winthrop	Yes	25	12	10	0	0	10	0	12.9	60.7
100	Ashland	Yes	25	9	0	10	0	5.5	5	15	60.5
101	Whitman-Hanson	Yes	25	21	0	0	0	10	0	13.3	60.3
101	Attleboro	Yes	25	6	10	8.3	0	10	0	10	60.3
101	Hanover	Yes	25	6	10	0	0	8.3	5	15	60.3
104	Cambridge	Yes	25	0	10	0	4.2	10	5	15	60.1
105	Ashburnham-Westminster	Yes	25	3	0	0	10	10	0	15	60
105	Nantucket	Yes	25	3	0	10	0	10	0	15	60
107	Lynnfield	Yes	25	21	0	0	0	10	0	12	59.1
108	Athol-Royalston	Yes	25	12	0	0	0	10	0	15	59
109	Hudson	Yes	25	9	10	0	0	10	5	8.6	58.8
110	Northampton	Yes	25	3	0	8.3	0	10	0	15	58.4
111	Nashoba	Yes	25	15	0	0	8.3	0	5	13.6	58.2
112	Ludlow	Yes	25	0	0	10	10	10	0	6	58.1
113	Burlington	Yes	25	0	0	8.3	10	8.3	0	15	57.9
113	Southwick-Tolland-Granville	Yes	25	15	0	0	0	10	0	5	57.9
115	Holliston	Yes	25	3	0	10	0	8.3	5	15	57.7
115	Wellesley	Yes	25	3	8.3	0	0	10	5	15	57.7
117	Dracut	Yes	25	0	0	0	10	10	0	15	57.1
118	Weymouth	Yes	25	15	0	0	0	5.5	5	15	57
119	Millbury	Yes	25	9	0	0	0	0	5	15	56.8
119	Southbridge	Yes	25	6	10	10	0	10	0	4.3	56.8
121	Triton	Yes	25	0	10	0	0	10	5	15	56.5
122	Haverhill	Yes	25	9	0	0	5.5	10	0	15	56.1
122	North Reading	Yes	25	12	0	0	10	5.5	0	12	56.1
124	Marlborough	Yes	25	6	8.3	0	0	10	0	15	55.9
125	Uxbridge	Yes	25	0	10	0	0	10	0	12.9	55.1

RANK	DISTRICT	EVER HAD FEMALE SUPT?	FEMALE SUPT POINTS	FEMALE SUPT (10 YRS)	% FEMALE ASSIST SUPT	% FEMALE HS PRINC	% FEMALE MS PRINC	% FEMALE ELEM PRINC	% FEMALE BOARD CHAIR	% FEMALE SCHOOL BOARD	FINAL POINTS
126	Norwood	Yes	25	0	0	0	10	8.3	5	15	55
127	Norton	Yes	25	3	10	0	0	10	0	15	54.8
128	Leominster	Yes	25	9	0	0	0	10	5	13.3	54.2
129	Everett	Yes	25	6	8.3	0	0	3.7	0	13.3	53.6
130	Dudley-Charlton	Yes	25	6	0	0	0	10	5	15	53
130	Hamilton-Wenham	Yes	25	6	0	0	0	10	5	15	53
132	Framingham	No*	0	0	10	10	10	10	5	15	52.2
133	Acton-Boxborough	Yes	25	0	10	0	0	4.7	5	15	52
134	Chicopee	Yes	25	3	5.5	5.5	0	10	0	10	51.4
135	Stoneham	Yes	25	0	8.3	0	0	10	0	15	50.7
136	Fairhaven	Yes	25	0	10	0	0	10	0	12.9	50.3
137	Middleborough	Yes	25	9	0	0	0	8.3	0	10	49.8
138	Tewksbury	Yes	25	0	10	0	0	10	0	12	49.6
139	Dighton-Rehoboth	Yes	25	6	0	0	0	10	0	15	48.7
140	Holyoke	Yes	25	0	10	0	0	10	0	10.9	48.6
141	Milford	Yes	25	0	8.3	0	0	8.3	5	8.6	48
142	Pittsfield	Yes	25	0	0	0	0	10	5	15	47.8
142	Reading	No	0	0	10	10	10	10	0	15	47.8
144	Mendon-Upton	No*	0	0	10	8.3	10	10	5	11.3	47.4
144	Masconomet	Yes	25	0	0	0	0	0	5	15	47.4
146	Braintree	Yes	25	6	0	0	0	10	0	12.9	46.8
147	Springfield	No	0	0	10	8.3	10	10	0	15	46.3
148	Walpole	Yes	25	6	0	0	0	6.6	0	15	45.8
149	Malden	Yes	25	0	10	0	0	5.5	0	6.7	45
150	Littleton	Yes	25	0	0	0	0	10	0	12	44.8
151	Swansea	Yes	25	6	10	0	0	4.2	0	6	44.5
152	West Springfield	Yes	25	0	0	0	0	10	0	15	43.5
152	Marshfield	No	0	0	10	0	10	10	5	15	43.5
152	Wayland	No	0	0	0	10	10	10	5	15	43.5
155	Peabody	Yes	25	6	0	0	0	10	0	8.6	43.1
156	Bellingham	No	0	0	10	10	0	10	0	12	40
157	Plymouth	No	0	0	8.3	8.3	0	7.4	5	15	38.2

RANK	DISTRICT	EVER HAD FEMALE SUPT?	FEMALE SUPT POINTS	FEMALE SUPT (10 YRS)	% FEMALE ASSIST SUPT	% FEMALE HS PRINC	% FEMALE MS PRINC	% FEMALE ELEM PRINC	% FEMALE BOARD CHAIR	% FEMALE SCHOOL BOARD	FINAL POINTS
158	Brookline	No	0	0	10	0	0	10	5	15	38.1
159	Newton	No	0	0	4.2	0	8.3	10	5	15	36.9
160	Clinton	No	0	0	10	0	10	10	0	12	36.5
160	Rockland	No	0	0	10	0	10	10	0	12	36.5
162	Shrewsbury	No	0	0	10	0	10	9.5	0	12	36.1
163	Woburn	No	0	0	5.5	10	0	7.1	5	12.9	35.2
164	East Longmeadow	No	0	0	10	0	0	10	5	15	34.8
165	Somerset	No	0	0	0	10	10	10	0	6	34.3
166	Norwell	No	0	0	10	0	0	8.3	5	15	33.3
167	Quincy	No	0	0	10	0	6.6	9.1	0	11.3	32.1
168	Ipswich	No	0	0	0	0	10	10	0	12.9	31.3
169	Fitchburg	No	0	0	0	8.3	8.3	4.2	0	15	31.1
170	Abington	No	0	0	10	0	0	5.5	5	15	30.9
171	Gloucester	No	0	0	0	0	10	10	0	15	30.4
171	Westford	No	0	0	10	0	0	10	0	15	30.4
173	Medfield	No	0	0	0	0	0	10	5	15	28.6
174	Chelmsford	No	0	0	10	0	0	6.6	0	12	24.9
175	Hampden-Wilbraham	No	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	12.9	21.8
176	Wachusett	No*	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	15	21.7
177	Pentucket	No*	0	0	0	0	0	4.2	5	15	21
178	Tyngsborough	No	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	12.9	19.9
179	Billerica	No	0	0	10	0	0	10	0	2	19.1
180	Saugus	No	0	0	0	0	10	10	0	0	17.4

APPENDIX B

Methodology

Data included in this report was gathered from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Much of it is publicly available on DESE Profiles Statewide Reports. All gender and race data is self-reported by schools and districts to DESE each year. DESE's statewide reports are generally released annually in March and reflect data gathered the previous October. The anchor date for data presented in this report is October 2020.

Other data presented in the report was manually pulled from 23 interviews conducted 2019 and 2020 with current and former superintendents, assistant superintendents, principals, and school committee members. Direct outreach to districts was conducted to find out the history of district's superintendents, including their race and gender. A review of research literature was conducted for national statistics on gender and racial parity to supplement the findings on Massachusetts.

Statewide Data

Statewide data was pulled to inform both the gender and race analysis of Massachusetts' education workforce. We gathered data from the past 10 years, 2011-2021, on staff gender and race for all education positions: teacher; elementary, middle, and high school principal; assistant superintendent; and superintendent. Additionally, we pulled 10 years of statewide principal and superintendent credentialing data, disaggregated by race and gender.

180-District Sample Data

Our 180-district dataset was selected for having student enrollments of 1,500 or more. This cut-off number automatically removed most charter and vocational-technical schools — since charter and vocational-technical schools have significantly different leadership structures, this report solely focused on districts. Therefore, we removed the 4 charters (Brooke Charter School, Foxborough Regional Charter, Mystic Valley Regional Charter, Sabis International Charter), 2 regional vocational-technical schools (Greater Lowell Regional Vocational Technical, Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical), and 1 virtual school (TEC Connections Academy Commonwealth Virtual School) that originally landed in the sample because they have 1,500+ students.

We used this dataset, through manual outreach to individual districts, to gather data on which of these 180 districts had never had a female superintendent or superintendent of color. Additionally, we identified all 180 current superintendents' previous two positions to better understand the pathways people take to the superintendency. This included where they held these positions (district and state) and for how long they held each position.

Gender Ranking Data for 180 Districts

Data used in the ranking of 180 districts was pulled from DESE profiles for superintendent, assistant superintendent, and principal data. Manual outreach to districts was conducted for historical data on superintendents in the district and website reviews were conducted for school committee make-ups. Data for the past 10 years was used in the point allocation for the superintendent position, while all other positions were allocated points solely for the 2020-21 school year. Race was not included in the district ranking.

Endnotes

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