

Level 5 Schools 2015–16 Quarter 2 Report: Paul A. Dever Elementary School

School Information		Student Enrollment and Demographics	
Location	Boston, Massachusetts	Total SY 2015–16 Enrollment	498
Current Status	Level 5	Percentage SWDs	14%
Receiver Name	Blueprint Schools Network	Percentage ELLs	48%
Year Designated Level 5	2013	Percentage Black	28%
Year Designated Level 4	2010	Percentage Latino/Hispanic	60%
Grade Span	PK–5	Percentage Asian	7%
Number of Full-Time Staff in SY 2015–16	76	Percentage White	4%
		Percentage Multirace	2%
Priority Areas			
<p>Priority Area 1: Rapidly accelerate all students’ language development in English and provide families with the opportunity for content-rich Spanish language development for their students.</p> <p>Priority Area 2: Improve instructional quality and maximize time for core instruction.</p> <p>Priority Area 3: Use data to drive instruction.</p> <p>Priority Area 4: Establish a culture of high expectations and college and career readiness.</p> <p>Priority Area 5: Hire and cultivate high-performing and high-potential staff.</p>			

Content provided by Blueprint Schools Network

Executive Summary

In Quarter 2, the Paul A. Dever Elementary School (Dever) continues to strengthen and build on systems for improving instruction, using data, and developing a culture of high expectations. Students are developing English-language and Spanish-language skills through a variety of engaging, interactive strategies. With a focus on planning and executing rigorous lessons, Dever is supporting teachers through collaborative teaming structures and coaching. Dever also continues to strengthen and reinforce its Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS), using a common language of merits and reminders to reinforce the five core values (Self-Control, Citizenship, Grit, Respect, and Positive Attitude) and providing frequent opportunities to recognize students who are demonstrating positive behavior.

Updates on Priority Areas

Priority Area 1: Rapidly accelerate all students’ language development in English and provide families with the opportunity for content-rich Spanish-language development for their students.

- **Highlight:** Dever continues to implement the Imagine Learning curriculum schoolwide in order to provide individualized English-language instruction for all students. Imagine Learning is an online program that builds students’ language and literacy skills through differentiated, interactive activities. All students are expected to participate in the

program for 30 minutes each day. Student usage and progress with the program will be monitored monthly during data meetings.

- **Highlight:** During August Professional Development, the ESL Lead Teacher conducted a refresher training session on the Sheltered English Instruction (SEI) strategies from the Rethinking Equity and Teaching for English Language Learners (RETELL) course. Since then, she has led walkthroughs every three weeks to monitor implementation of SEI strategies across the school. Feedback from these walkthroughs has been shared with staff and is used to inform coaching and common planning time priorities.
- **Highlight:** Dever offers daily Spanish-language instruction for all students. As a supplement to the core Spanish-language class, students receive Spanish instruction during weekly grade-level Community Meetings. During each meeting, the Spanish teacher facilitates a mini-lesson connected to the learning target in the students' Spanish class. These Community Meetings also are used to reinforce Dever's core values by providing an opportunity for Spanish-language "shout-outs" to students and staff.
- **Challenge:** Dever's second Spanish teaching position continues to be filled by the school's bilingual Cluster Substitute. She continues to receive support from Dever administration and the Spanish-language program consultant. However, Blueprint is continuing to recruit and interview for a licensed, experienced Spanish teacher.

Priority Area 2: Improve instructional quality and maximize time for core instruction.

- **Highlight:** One of Dever's instructional focuses is lesson planning. Instructional staff participated in professional development on October 9, 2015, on structuring lesson plans to deliver rigorous, engaging, and intentional instruction. During weekly Common Planning Time, grade-level teams convene to collaboratively discuss upcoming plans with support from the Academic Coaches and Assistant Principal of Academics. Teachers receive weekly feedback on lesson plans, with an explicit focus on the "Teach To," or the component of the lesson whereby teachers provide direct instruction and modeling. Teachers participated in three additional professional development sessions on deconstructing the standards in order to identify the skills and knowledge embedded in each standard and determine daily learning targets that will lead to mastery of the standard. This work will be used to ensure that lesson plans are effectively scaffolded to support students in reaching the level of rigor of the standard. In addition to building teachers' understanding of the standards, these efforts are expected to raise the rigor of instruction.
- **Highlight:** The Primary (K–2) and Intermediate (3–5) Academic Coaches continue to provide ongoing coaching support to teachers. The coaches facilitate a biweekly observation and feedback cycle, provide weekly lesson plan feedback, facilitate Common Planning Time, and conduct professional development. On Blueprint's November site visit, teachers in the focus group reported that they highly value the support the coaches provide and feel that their efforts are improving their practice. Site visit feedback was shared with the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) on December 9 and with grade-level teams on December 10.
- **Highlight:** Dever is implementing a common whiteboard configuration in all classrooms. This structure is intended to provide visual clarity to students and staff on the goals and

structure of the daily learning. The common whiteboard configuration includes the learning target and a timed lesson agenda.

- **Challenge:** Dever continues to focus its efforts to ensure that students are prepared for success at the end of the year. Grade-level teams meet every other week to analyze student work, and teachers continue to expose students to appropriate performance tasks and scoring rubrics.

Priority Area 3: Use data to drive instruction.

- **Highlight:** Dever administers a robust system of assessments to measure student progress and inform instruction. Teachers administer Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) to measure and monitor early literacy skills and are using the data to plan for needs-based groups and fluency instruction. The percentages of students meeting benchmarks for DIBELS are currently: 74 percent in Kindergarten, 57 percent in Grade 1, 56 percent in Grade 2, 63 percent in Grade 3, 68 percent in Grade 4, and 47 percent in Grade 5. Teachers in Grades 2–5 use Achievement Network (ANet) to plan for whole-group reteaching, needs-based groups, or Math Fellows interventions. In addition to measuring student growth, Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) data are being used to target students for interventions. Based on the results from fifth grade, Math Fellows are being redeployed from third grade to fifth grade to provide pull-out interventions beginning in January. The intermediate academic coach and Assistant Principal of School Culture also are dedicating significant time to working with the fifth-grade team, modeling lessons and providing instructional and behavioral support.
- **Highlight:** Dever’s redesigned master schedule and school calendar incorporate more time for team data meetings this school year. Each grade-level team meets biweekly for 50 minutes to discuss academic and behavioral data, on a rotating basis. These meetings are facilitated by the Assistant Principal of Academics and include homeroom teachers and resource teachers, as applicable. Dever also conducted its first ANet data meeting, during which time teachers analyzed ANet data and created action plans to target non-mastered skills. A portion of the January 4 and February 16 professional development days will be used for these data and planning sessions. Action plans are monitored during Common Planning Time and through the coaching observation and feedback cycle.
- **Highlight:** Dever continues to implement Kickboard, an online platform that enables teachers and administrators to track data on positive and negative behaviors on a daily and weekly basis. Students earn “merits” for positive behaviors and “reminders” for negative behaviors aligned with the Dever core values. Merits and reminders are calculated into Dolphin Pride Points. Weekly reports are sent home to be signed and returned. Administrators and teachers are able to monitor data on a weekly basis by logging into the system. Kickboard data also are included on Blueprint’s monthly data reports for administrators.
- **Challenge:** Currently, 100 percent of teachers are not yet displaying goals and data trackers in their classrooms. This expectation has been included in teachers’ professional practice goals and will be monitored through the educator evaluation system.

Priority Area 4: Establish a culture of high expectations and college and career readiness.

- **Highlight:** All students are encouraged to reach goals for Dolphin Pride Points. Students are recognized for their Dolphin Pride Points, or their steady improvement, at weekly Community Meetings. Dever will host four family events throughout the year to celebrate students who reach their Dolphin Pride Point goals. The first PBIS event, Fall Fest, was held on October 30 and included Halloween- and fall-themed activities such as crafting, trick-or-treating, games, and dancing. The Parent Council also had an informational table. The families of more than 110 students attended, an improvement from the attendance at last year's Fall Festival. These PBIS events and activities are improving family engagement and strengthening the Dever community. In addition, the Therapeutic Learning Community (TLC) program is a substantially separate setting designed to support the needs of students identified with emotional disabilities. Teachers in the TLC program send home daily reports indicating points earned for each period of the day.
- **Highlight:** Dever has prioritized the need to build relationships with families and connect them to the support services that they need. The administrative team is conducting a targeted effort to engage the families of struggling students and coordinate the delivery of support services. Dever has hired a City Connects School Site Coordinator, whose responsibility is to assess the strengths and needs of each student and connect them, and their families, with a tailored set of supports from within and outside of the school. In the TLC program, families are frequently invited to the school to collaboratively and proactively problem-solve. The TLC Coordinator has established a partnership with the Boston Emergency Services Team (BEST) that includes ongoing communication and monitoring of high-level cases. In addition, Dever has convened a collaborative group of the school's therapeutic providers, including the TLC clinician and organizations such as Home for Little Wanderers, Wediko, and MassStart. This group will meet monthly to coordinate services and effectively leverage all available resources in support of students' social-emotional well-being.
- **Highlight:** The Assistant Principal (AP) of School Culture was hired and started full-time on November 11, 2015. The AP of School Culture's responsibilities include establishing and maintaining a positive, safe, and college-going school culture; supervising the administration of school policies regarding student conduct and discipline; and serving as a point person for dealing with crisis-intervention and behavioral issues. The incoming AP has more than 20 years of experience as an educator in Boston Public Schools, including experience managing a crisis intervention and counseling program and as an operational leader within her prior school.
- **Challenge:** The vacancy of the AP of School Culture position through the first quarter of the school year proved to be a critical challenge. The responsibilities of this position were assumed by the other administrators and the coaches. The additional capacity gained by the new AP's hiring will enable the school to strengthen its systems in support of a positive, safe, and college-going school culture.

Priority Area 5: Hire and cultivate high-performing and high-potential staff.

- **Highlight:** Dever is implementing systems and structures for monitoring and supporting teachers. Dever's two Academic Coaches conduct biweekly observations and feedback cycles for all teachers, with a focus on supporting teachers with the highest level of need. In these high-need classrooms, coaches model lessons and provide intensive instructional

and behavioral support. All teachers participate in weekly Common Planning Time meetings that follow a protocol laid out in the school's Professional Learning Community manual developed by the AP of Academics.

- **Highlight:** TLC teachers are receiving support from both their grade-level team and the TLC team. TLC teachers participate in common planning with their grade-level team each week in order to ensure academic alignment across the grade-level. In addition, TLC teachers meet with the TLC Coordinator to review program-specific topics such as case management, classroom structures, and behavior management. The TLC teachers meet one-on-one with the TLC Coordinator and as a lower grade (K–3) or upper grade (4–5) team. These collaborative meeting structures provide TLC teachers with support from their colleagues in both general education and TLC classrooms and help the school build a culture of collegiality and high expectations.
- **Highlight:** Dever opened the application for Advanced and Master Educator roles for 2016–17 in December. As defined by the Level 5 Career Ladder professional compensation system, educators who demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement, thoughtfully reflect on their own practice, and actively work to help their students and colleagues grow have the opportunity to apply for this distinction. Advanced and Master Educators will serve as schoolwide models of excellence and take on additional leadership roles in service of the school community. Completed applications will be reviewed beginning January 18, 2016.
- **Challenge:** The Dever and Blueprint teams are engaging in ongoing conversations as we continue to work toward alignment of priorities and goals, with consideration of Dever's Level 5 Turnaround Plan, ESE's Turnaround Practices and Indicators, and the Blueprint framework. With significant work to be done on an accelerated timeline, the challenge is ensuring that the team continues to work efficiently and strategically toward Dever's goals. To meet this challenge, Blueprint has reviewed ESE's Turnaround Practices and Indicators, and is using the Practices and Indicators to measure progress under the Turnaround Plan priority areas .