



Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.
Commissioner

March 7, 2014

Dear Parker Elementary School Community:

We are excited to share with you the turnaround plan for the John Avery Parker Elementary School.

Accompanying this letter is a preliminary plan for turning around Parker so that all of its children receive a world-class education. We have high expectations for what Parker's students can achieve if provided with the right tools. As a result, we have high expectations for the professionals who will work at the school, and for the effectiveness and impact of the programs and strategies we will implement.

Superintendent Durkin will serve as the Commissioner's point person in charge of the day-to-day management of the school, and will work directly with him to implement the Parker turnaround plan. More detail about the priorities and strategies for our work follows in the plan, but key themes include:

- 1) A strong focus on great teaching, so all students will achieve to their highest potential;
- 2) A program of study that provides students with a well-rounded curriculum;
- 3) Supports for students, so they have what they need to learn; and
- 4) Effective use of resources, including time, funds, staff, operational support, and other resources.

We know this work will be challenging, but it is our conviction that we must – and can – do better for Parker's students. It will take bold thinking, a commitment to continuous rapid improvement in teaching and learning, and multiple years of effort, focusing on what's best for students as the core of our work.

The Parker community deserves a school where – in every classroom, every day – we are helping students to perform at high levels, reach their full potential, and be prepared to succeed in the world that awaits them, in high school and beyond. We encourage you to read through this plan, contact Superintendent Durkin with any questions, and think about the role you can play as we move forward over the coming years.

We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Signed by Commissioner Chester

Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.
Commissioner
Department of Elementary & Secondary Education

Signed by Superintendent Durkin

Pia Durkin, Ph.D.
Superintendent
New Bedford Public Schools
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Section 1. Executive Summary

Introduction from Commissioner Chester:

On October 30, 2013, I determined that the John Avery Parker Elementary School is chronically underperforming – a level 5 school in the Commonwealth’s accountability system. This designation provides a significant opportunity to transform the school from one of the lowest performing in the state to an extraordinary school with sustained high performance. Using the tools provided by the Achievement Gap Act, we will transform the Parker so that all students receive a high quality education.

The turnaround work at the Parker will be realized only through substantial reform that will require considerable time and effort. I know this work is challenging, and I do not assume that the Parker’s status as a level 5 school is due to a lack of effort or concern by the adults working there. I also know, however, that the students at the Parker need and deserve a much stronger education than they have received at the school over the past several years. I have every conviction we can do better.

On January 29, 2014, I named New Bedford School District Superintendent Pia Durkin as my selection to implement the turnaround plan at Parker. Superintendent Durkin participated with me in the creation of the turnaround plan that follows. I look forward to working with Superintendent Durkin and with the Parker community to implement the turnaround plan.

Turnaround Plan summary

For years, the John Avery Parker Elementary School has struggled to make consistent academic progress. Its students have demonstrated limited mastery of core skills, even during the school’s tenure as a Level 4 school. Despite designation as a Level 4 school in 2010 (and the resulting autonomies, authorities, and investments provided the district and school), student achievement at John Avery Parker Elementary School has lagged for the past three years, leading to the school’s designation as a Level 5 school in fall 2013. Superintendent Durkin, as the Commissioner’s selection to implement the turnaround plan for the Parker, will restart the school in summer 2014.

Based on student performance data, classroom observations, and evidence collected by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and by school and district leaders, six central challenges have kept the school from improving student performance:

- **Low rigor of classroom instruction:** In the 2012-2013 school year, fewer than 50% of students passed the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) in any subject. Particularly in reading and English/Language Arts (ELA), data suggests that students are not provided with rigorous instruction every day in every classroom.
- **Lack of structure for tracking progress and making mid-course corrections:** After it was designated Level 4 in 2010, the school had difficulty making the comprehensive, rapid changes needed to create substantial improvement, delaying much-needed improvements in the school’s systems for providing rigorous instruction and supports.
- **School schedule does not maximize instructional time:** Due to structural issues in the school schedule, students are often pulled for related arts courses during core instructional time, preventing teachers from providing high-quality instruction during a continuous core instructional period.
- **Lack of use of data to drive instruction:** According to Monitoring Site Visits from previous school years, teachers did not formally use a data cycle to identify “root causes” for why students struggle. Student performance did not grow between past years’ middle-of-year (MOY) and end-of-year (EOY) assessments, suggesting that teachers did not know how to analyze data thoroughly, or did not know how to change their practice in response to the data.

- **Disruption of core instructional time:** Teachers lack the expertise to address behavioral issues in the classroom. Students with disabilities are often pulled from core classes to receive specialized services. This leads to disruptions of classroom instruction and a school environment that does not focus primarily on teaching and learning.
- **Limited number of focused approaches to engage families as partners in their children's learning:** While many families attend social activities at the school, Parker has offered few events focused on academics. Parent-teacher conferences are optional, and teachers have not been expected to maintain two-way communication with their students' families. The school has struggled to build relationships with community resources to assist families, many families do not speak English and the school has not established effective ways to engage them.

As a district, New Bedford Public Schools has started to address these issues in the 2013-2014 school year under the leadership of Superintendent Pia Durkin, who was named the Commissioner's designee for operating Parker Elementary School. As a Level 5 school, Parker Elementary will use the authorities afforded to it to deepen the focus on instruction and on the use of data to ensure that all students receive challenging instruction in every classroom every day. This will be accomplished by exercising certain authorities available to Level 5 schools, including:

- Extending the school day and school year for students and staff
- Providing extensive professional development to teachers
- Retaining and hiring highly-effective staff to ensure the school's teachers are dedicated to a continuous cycle of improvement to raise student performance
- Implementing a new career ladder that rewards teachers for improving student achievement
- Revising the collective bargaining agreement with the New Bedford Educators' Association and other applicable unions for members working at Parker

To address these challenges, Parker Elementary will focus on four priorities:

- **Increase the rigor of Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III instruction (Priority Area 1):** The school will focus heavily on professional development and coaching for teachers to ensure that they use evidence-based best practices to consistently provide instruction to students that promotes higher-order thinking and pushes students to improve toward grade level standards . This will be accomplished through:
 - Establishing curricula in reading, math, and science that are Common Core-aligned.
 - Providing professional development on implementing effective and rigorous instructional practices and strategies in Tiers I, II, and III; and holding teachers accountable for using the evidence-based practices they learn through professional development in their classroom, including strategies for differentiating instruction for all students based on their individual needs.
 - Hiring a turnaround manager to oversee the school's rapid improvement by closely tracking the turnaround plan, ensuring the plan's components are implemented with fidelity; and closely monitoring teacher quality and student learning with the principal, Superintendent, and Chief Academic Officer.
 - Expanding the school's pre-kindergarten program to address literacy development at an early age.
 - Developing and refining services for English Language Learners.
- **Create school structures and systems that support instruction and maximize time on task (Priority Area 2):** The school will establish systems and structures to ensure that students receive instruction from teachers who can support and challenge them to improve toward grade level standards , such as:

- Retaining, hiring, and developing teachers who are committed to rapidly improving student performance through a cycle of continuous improvement and who have a track record of success in improving student achievement.
- Revising the school schedule to maximize time in core instruction by extending the school day and year; and restructuring the schedule for arts, interventions, and support services.
- Creating incentives to reward teachers for improving student achievement through a new career ladder.
- **Increase the use of data to drive instruction (Priority Area 3):** The school leadership team and teacher collaboration teams (TCTs) will use data to inform instruction. To ensure that data analysis informs classroom instruction, the school will focus on:
 - Establishing a system for collecting, organizing, and summarizing student data.
 - Ensuring that common formative assessments are administered and analyzed on a regular schedule.
 - Sharing data with students and helping them set goals for their learning.
 - Building the capacity of TCTs to analyze student-level data and use it to inform their instruction during core and intervention instructional periods.
 - Monitoring TCTs' decisions for impact in the classroom.
- **Establish a school culture focused on achievement and engage families as partners in their children's learning (Priority Area 4):** School leaders and teachers will be responsible for promoting a school culture that focuses on learning, and for engaging families in the school's efforts to improve student performance through:
 - Creating a safe and respectful school climate that prioritizes student learning.
 - Providing tiered supports to ensure students come to school ready to learn by addressing behavioral issues, including on-task behavior during class, and the reinforcement of content at home.
 - Developing a coherent strategy for teacher and family communication.
 - Building families' capacity to support their student's academic progress using parent-centered programs like a Family Resource Center and a Saturday Academy.

The effective use of resources to maximize student achievement is the principle on which all of the school's strategies will be based. All resources allocated to Parker – including time, funds, human capital, operational supports, and other resources – will be fully aligned in support of student learning.

Theory of Action

IF John Avery Parker Elementary School focuses on and persists in expecting, developing, supervising, and evaluating educators' capacity to deliver rigorous and engaging instruction that is:

- aligned to state standards,
- monitored so student progress in attaining those standards reaches a level of proficiency,
- adjusted and differentiated so that all students will be supported and stretched to make progress,
- and demonstrated every day in every classroom

THEN student achievement will significantly increase in each classroom and in the school overall.

Parker Elementary School Core Values

- Our core business is teaching and learning
- Our students always come first
- Everyone shares in accountability for student results
- Teamwork, trust, and mutual respect are expected
- Parents and community members are our partners in ensuring that all students improve their academic performance

Section 2: Priority Areas for Improvement

Priority Area for Improvement 1: Maximize and accelerate student achievement by increasing the rigor of classroom instruction in every classroom for every student every day

Rationale

Achievement will only increase if students are consistently provided with rigorous instruction. To ensure that student achievement improves rapidly, Parker Elementary must establish a curriculum aligned to Common Core standards; must develop and support teachers through professional development to provide Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III instruction, supports, and interventions; and must empower school leaders to provide growth-producing feedback with a focus on rigor.

Related Emerging and Sustaining Practices for School Turnaround

- Improving instruction and interventions through teacher- and student-specific data

Challenges Addressed by Priority Area 1

- Low rigor of classroom instruction:** Parker did not meet any of its Composite Performance Index (CPI) targets in the 2012-2013 school year. The percentage of students who were Proficient or Advanced on the 2013 MCAS was at or below 50% in every subject in grades 3-5. The number is even lower for special education students, who make up 25% of the school's population. In 2013 in grade 3, no students with disabilities passed the reading MCAS; only 14% passed in math. This low student performance suggests that instruction does not promote higher-order thinking for students, nor is it differentiated to meet students' needs.
- Students struggle with reading:** While performance in all subjects is below the state average, MCAS results in reading and ELA are especially weak, particularly in third and fourth grade. Parker has seen some growth in math performance, but reading and ELA scores have remained almost flat (see Figure 1). On the 2013 MCAS in third and fourth grade, no students were Advanced in reading. In 2013, only 30% of second graders started the year proficient on the Grade 1 Reading for Literature Standards, as measured by the beginning-of-year Galileo assessment; and 15% of second graders met the standard regarding phonics and word recognition (see Table 1). This low performance is due in part to the fact that the school has been using outdated curricula that are not aligned to Common Core standards. The school launched a new reading program, Reading Street, in grades 3-5 at the beginning of the current school year and began to pilot the program in grades K-2 in February 2014. However, in K-2 classes not piloting the new program, the curricula are over 10 years old, and few curriculum maps or model units exist as resources for teachers. As a result, turnaround work will focus heavily on literacy.

Figure 1. MCAS Reading/ELA Performance
(% of Students Proficient or Higher, 2009 – 2013)

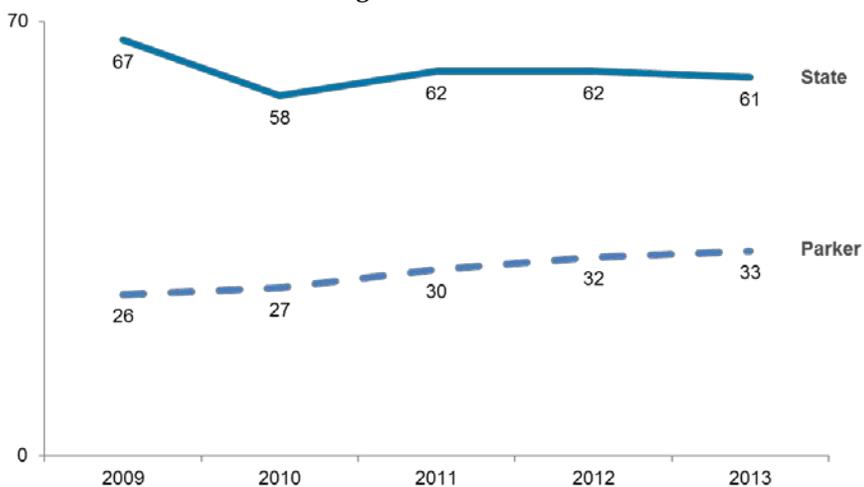


Table 1. Second Grade ELA Beginning-of-Year (BOY) Galileo Assessment Performance (SY2013-2014)

% of Students Meeting Standard

MA-RL.2. Reading Standards for Literature Concept Mastery	15%
MA-RI.2. Reading Standards for Informational Text Concept Mastery	5%
MA-RF.2. Reading Standards for Foundational Skills	15%

- Lack of dedicated school structure for tracking turnaround plan progress and making mid-course corrections:** After it was designated Level 4 in 2010, Parker School had difficulty making the comprehensive, rapid changes needed to create substantial improvement. It took almost a year for Parker’s original Level 4 school turnaround plan to meet approval from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, delaying much-needed improvements in the school’s systems of instruction and supports. No one person was responsible for tracking the plan’s progress on a regular basis or for changing plan strategies that weren’t yielding results. As a result, student achievement at the school has lagged for the past three years, leading to the school’s designation as a Level 5 school.

Strategies to Achieve Priority Area 1

Key Strategy	Owner	Timeline
<p>1.1 Align the reading, writing, and math curriculum with Common Core standards to ensure students receive rigorous core instruction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Reading</u>: Continue to implement the new Reading Street curriculum that was piloted in SY 2013-2014 in grades 3-5, and rollout the program in all classes in grades K-2. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Expand the Lively Letters curriculum from pre-K to kindergarten to teach students and help them master phonemic awareness to ensure early reading fluency. ○ Continue the work of the current reading specialist to assist with implementation of Reading Street. • <u>Writing</u>: Continue to use the Empowering Writers program, currently used in grades K-5. • <u>Math</u>: Finalize and implement the K-5 math curriculum based on district evaluation of potential math programs. • <u>Science</u>: Continue to use the existing curriculum with an emphasis on literacy development. • Implement model curriculum units for reading; based on pilot, roll out district-wide as appropriate. • Regularly assess the fidelity of implementation of each program through classroom observations, conversations with teachers, and focused learning walks to identify areas where teachers need additional support in using the curricula. • Based on identified areas for support, provide additional professional development to help teachers understand and deliver the content of their core curricula. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Share best practices and professional development material with other elementary schools in the district. <p><i>This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendation B-6, B-7, and B-10.</i></p>	<p>Chief Academic Officer</p>	<p>July 2014, with monthly assessments of impact in the classroom</p>
<p>1.2 Use Level 5 authorities to increase the amount of focused and accountable professional development for teachers on delivering effective, engaging, and rigorous reading and math instruction in Tiers I, II, and III during and beyond the core block.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Level 5 authorities include, for example, expanding the school year and school day, establishing a plan for professional development, and providing increased opportunities for teacher planning time and collaboration focused on improving student instruction. • <u>Tier I</u>: Provide training for core teachers in grades K-5 over the summer and during the school year on evidence-based best practices for providing Tier I instruction in ELA and math. Tier I instruction occurs during the core block and includes instruction and interventions that target all students. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide four weeks of training for all core teachers in grades K-5 over the summer through a pilot summer institute in which teachers receive professional development on Tier I instruction for half the day and teach struggling students in summer school for the other half. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify struggling students for the program based on middle-of-year (MOY) and end-of-year (EOY) student achievement data, including Galileo and MCAS data, and performance on common 	<p>Turnaround manager, principal</p>	<p>June 2014, ongoing monthly</p>

formative assessments (see Priority Area 3).

- Work with an external consultant to identify an instructional focus area and identify evidence-based best practices to share during professional development, with a goal of ensuring that teachers develop skills for teaching higher-order thinking skills and know how to build a culture of high expectations for learning in their classrooms.
- Dedicate monthly faculty meetings to professional development on Tier I instruction with a focus on ELA and math; and provide professional development for related service providers.
- Redefine the role of the Teaching and Learning Specialist to be a literacy coach who provides job-embedded professional development and works with teachers individually and in small groups on delivery of differentiated, high-powered instruction rich in literacy through side-by-side coaching of teachers and observations of students needing intensive literacy instruction.
 - 70% of literacy coach's time will focus on working with teachers, and 30% of his/her time will be spent directly with students.
- **Tier II:** Coach teachers on further differentiating instruction based on specific needs of subgroups of students as identified by the collection and review of student data (see Priority Area 3). Tier II instruction provides interventions and time on instruction for struggling students, in addition to Tier I.
 - During professional development on monthly early release days and during common planning time, train teachers to implement center-based instruction in which students are flexibly grouped and re-grouped based on their strengths and skills.
 - "Centers" provide the opportunity to review, reinforce, and accelerate student learning based on students' strengths and weaknesses in priority Common Core standards.
 - Train teachers to differentiate Reading Street and math curriculum based on student need.
- **Tier III:** Coach teachers and related service providers to support students who demonstrate significant learning gaps and work with struggling students directly. Tier III instruction is the most intense level of intervention, provided to students who receive Tier I and II instruction but who continue to struggle.
 - As part of the new role, literacy coach trains teachers on providing targeted instruction to students who are significantly behind grade-level and provides additional support to struggling students directly.
 - Provide additional time on task for students who are struggling during the school's remediation/intervention period (see Priority Areas 2 and 3).
- Present targeted professional development to teachers with a focus on providing appropriate accommodations and modifications for students with disabilities in both general education and substantially separate classrooms to ensure access to quality instruction in the least restrictive environment possible in all three tiers of instruction.
- Identify two teacher-leaders to model implementation of reading, writing, math, and science curricula in "best-practice" classrooms during core instruction and to coach peers.
 - Principal and Superintendent select teacher-leaders through an application process.
 - Establish a schedule that allows teacher-leaders to teach their own classes and coach peers through role-modeling and during TCT

<p>conversations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Financial incentives for the position may be awarded, consistent with the provisions of the performance-based compensation plan (see Appendix A). ● Establish the expectation that teachers will immediately use the practices gained in professional development in their daily instruction and monitor teachers for follow-through. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ After each professional development session, teachers implement what they learned in their classrooms. ○ Literacy coach and teacher-leaders provide embedded support and activities, coach teachers, and develop follow-up activities to ensure teachers are able to put their new knowledge and skills into practice. ○ Teachers continue to use weekly common planning time to share successful practices and learn from each other. ○ Principal conducts classroom observations and learning walks to ensure new instructional practices are being used and implemented with fidelity, and to provide feedback to teachers on their instruction. ○ Teachers, literacy coach, and principal assess the impact of the professional development on student learning by analyzing data. ● Use the educator evaluation tool for the principal to provide growth-producing feedback to teachers that is aligned between teacher skill and evidence of student outcomes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Principal conducts at least 10 mini-observations a week and spends at least 600 minutes a week on instructional leadership. ● Share professional development material and best practices with other elementary schools in the district. <p><i>This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendation B-3, B-9, and E-3.</i></p>		
<p>1.3 Hire a turnaround manager to ensure that the turnaround plan's strategies lead to improvements in student learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Turnaround manager will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Manage implementation of the school's turnaround plan and organize and coordinate resources to ensure plan is implemented. ○ Coordinate professional development with principal, Chief Academic Officer, and Superintendent and assess impact of professional development on classroom instruction. ○ Help school develop data management systems and ongoing assessments. ○ Share lessons learned and best practices from other district and school leaders with principal. ○ Report to Superintendent directly to ensure that progress is being made and recommend mid-course corrections if progress is not on track. ● Position will be in place for the duration of the Parker turnaround plan. <p><i>This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendation E-4.</i></p>	Superintendent	June 2014 - ongoing
<p>1.4 Study, develop, and expand the current pre-K program to better serve all students in a more cohesive program with a focus on literacy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Examine and propose new program parameters to increase the current 	Principal	September 2015 - ongoing

<p>population of students served in the pre-K program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Currently, program serves mostly students with disabilities from throughout the district and a limited number of general education students from the Parker neighborhood. ○ Analyze data to examine why more families of Parker students do not take advantage of the pre-K program and how the program can be enhanced to attract additional students and meet their needs. ○ Based on data analysis, develop and execute a strategy for attracting more students to the program. ○ Change current district policy to prioritize enrollment in the pre-K program for students who would attend Parker in grades K-5. ○ Study the feasibility of expanding the program to add classrooms and instructional time (e.g. possibly full days, full week). ● Establish a curriculum for the program with a focus on early literacy and oral language development to address the literacy development deficits in many incoming kindergartners, and narrow the learning gaps of students by grade 3. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue using the Lively Letters curriculum to teach phonemic awareness to students. <p><i>This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendation B-4.</i></p>		
<p>1.5 In conjunction with efforts underway in the district, study and evaluate the need for supports for English Language Learners (ELLs) and develop services as necessary.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In alignment with wider district efforts, re-evaluate current processes for screening students for fluency in English. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In SY 2013-2014, send home-language surveys to all Parker students in their native language to identify and evaluate students who may qualify as ELL or Formerly Limited English Proficient (FLEP) and who need language support. ● Depending on survey results, develop and implement relevant ELL and/or SEI curriculum, classrooms, and services as needed. ● Depending on survey results, develop a Parker ELL Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) as needed. ● If necessary, present targeted professional development to teachers with a focus on providing appropriate accommodations and differentiating instruction to meet the needs of ELLs and FLEP students in all three tiers of instruction. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Professional development for teachers will focus on strategies to help non-native English speakers access the curriculum, differentiate instruction to meet student needs, and provide appropriate assessments. ○ Interventions for ELL students will target language development. 	Superintendent	March 2014 - ongoing

This priority area is aligned with Initiative 3.2 in the 2013-2014 New Bedford Accelerated Improvement Plan.

Final Outcomes

By June 2015, Parker Elementary School will meet or exceed all of its Measurable Annual Goals related to student achievement, including:

- Narrowing proficiency gaps in ELA, math, and science
- Demonstrating growth in student performance in ELA and math

Early Evidence of Change

- Within 2 weeks of every professional development session, 100% of core K-5 teachers will be observed using an evidence-based practice taught in professional development during a classroom observation, or will present other evidence of having used such practice(s) to their principal.
- By June 2015, 100% of students will be provided with rigorous Tier I instruction, as measured by a review of observation data and growth-producing feedback provided by the school principal, turnaround manager, Chief Academic Officer, and/or Superintendent.
- By February 2015, 100% of students will be regularly grouped and re-grouped based on their identified need to receive the appropriate supports, interventions, and enrichment opportunities as part of tiered instruction.

Implementation Milestones

Strategy 1.1

- By September 2014, ELA curriculum maps in grades K-5 will be finalized and shared with teachers.
- By January 2015, model curriculum units in reading in grades K-5 will be developed and shared with teachers.

Strategy 1.2

- In July and August 2014, 100% of core K-5 teachers will participate in a summer institute to receive additional professional development on providing rigorous instruction and to teach struggling students over the summer.
- By August 2014, a plan for providing professional development on Tier I instruction and supports during the 2014-2015 school year will be finalized.
- Starting in September 2014 and ongoing throughout the year, 100% of core K-5 teachers will receive professional development on Tier I instruction at least once a month.
- By October 2014, two teacher-leaders at Parker Elementary will be identified.
- By October 2014 and ongoing throughout the year, the impact of 100% of professional development sessions on classroom instruction and student learning will be monitored through conversations, learning walks, observations, and data collection.

Strategy 1.3

- By June 2014, a turnaround manager will be hired for the school.
- Starting in August 2014 and ongoing throughout the year, the turnaround manager will report on the school's progress to the Superintendent at least every week.

Strategy 1.4

- By September 2015, the percentage of neighborhood students enrolled in Parker's pre-K program will increase from 4% to 6%.
- By September 2016, the percentage of neighborhood students enrolled in Parker's pre-K program will increase from 6% to 10%.

Strategy 1.5

- By September 2014, ELL and FLEP students at Parker will be identified based on results of home language surveys completed in SY2013-2014.

Priority Area for Improvement 2: Establish school structures and systems to ensure that all students have teachers who are proficient in delivering rigorous instruction and maximize instructional time

Rationale

Without the proper resources and support, teachers cannot successfully provide rigorous instruction to all students. Parker Elementary must be staffed with teachers who are committed to delivering rigorous instruction and continually improving their own practice to ensure that all students succeed. Systems and structures must be established to provide adequate time in core instruction with these highly-qualified staff. All resources allocated to Parker—including time, funds, human capital, operational supports, and other resources—will be used to maximum effectiveness and will be fully aligned to support student learning.

Related Emerging and Sustaining Practices for School Turnaround

- Building a community of effective practice through leadership, shared responsibility, and professional collaboration

Challenges Addressed by Priority Area 2

- **Low rigor of classroom instruction:** As discussed in Priority Area 1, Parker did not meet any of its CPI targets in the 2012-2013 school year, suggesting that teachers did not consistently provide rigorous instruction to their students across all content areas. The 2012-2013 Monitoring Site Visit also reported that classroom instruction did not promote higher-order thinking. Retaining and hiring staff that have track records of success in raising student achievement will help ensure that all students receive rigorous instruction.
- **School schedule that does not maximize instructional time:** As a Level 4 school, Parker Elementary failed to maximize additional learning time to extend instruction for its students. Parker Elementary did add 30 minutes to the school day, providing students with an additional 3.5 hours of instruction per week, and is one of only two elementary schools in the district with a dismissal time after 1 PM on Fridays. Despite these earlier improvements to the schedule, a fragmented instructional day offsets the potential gains of the extended school day. Slow transitions from breakfast and lunch result in the loss of learning time. Students with disabilities are often pulled from core classes to receive specialized services. Due to the constricting schedules of related arts and music teachers, core instructional time is interrupted for art, music, and physical education and students are pulled out of instructional time to participate in chorus and band. This leaves teachers with only a fraction of their homeroom classes for a portion of core instruction. While these additional subjects are important aspects of a well-rounded education, the current schedule results in a loss of core academic instructional time.

Strategies to Achieve Priority Area 2

Key Strategy	Owner	Timeline
<p>2.1 Exercise Level 5 autonomies to recruit, hire, and develop all teachers who are committed to a cycle of continuous improvement and who take responsibility for improving student results.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 5 autonomies include limiting, suspending, or changing provisions of contracts or collective bargaining agreements as they relate to the school (see Appendix A). • Articulate expectations for staff at a Level 5 school that requires bold and robust change, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teachers and other professional staff will devote whatever time is required to achieve and maintain high-quality education. ○ In addition to their traditional responsibilities, all staff members will be expected to be involved in a variety of educational and administrative activities necessary to fulfill the mission of the school. ○ The Superintendent, working with the principal, will have the sole authority to set professional expectations and put policies and procedures in place for the school that will lead to the rapid academic achievement of Parker’s students. • Superintendent and the school principal have the sole discretion to select the staff for any and all positions at the school. In order to exercise this autonomy, following consultation with the union, all existing Parker employees who are interested in continuing to work at Parker will be asked to reapply to secure positions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Specifically, the Superintendent and principal may select staff for Parker’s positions represented by the New Bedford Educator Association (NBEA) without regard to seniority within the NBEA or past practices between the New Bedford School Committee and the NBEA. ○ Principal, in collaboration with the Superintendent, may formulate job descriptions, duties, and responsibilities for any and all positions in the school. • Beginning in the 2014-15 school year, Superintendent and principal identify teachers to retain through a thorough assessment based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teachers’ expressed interest in remaining at the school for at least three years ○ Student growth data ○ Classroom observations ○ Educator evaluation ratings, including educators’ portfolios of evidence, using the educator evaluation system used within New Bedford Public Schools ○ Principal’s assessment of teachers’ skill to provide rigorous instruction, continually improve their practice, and commit to working in an environment where staff feel an urgency for raising student performance ○ Evidence of commitment to working as part of a high-performing team ○ Teacher willingness to participate in a four-week summer institute, extensive professional development, an extended school day and school year, occasional weekends for Saturday Academy, and other requirements of a Level 5 school ○ Additional evidence as determined by the principal and Superintendent. An example of this includes, but is not limited to teachers providing 	<p>Superintendent, principal</p>	<p>March 2014 – ongoing</p>

<p>sample lessons.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on number of teachers retained for the 2014-2015 school year, identify staffing needs. • Recruit and hire teachers annually to fill needed positions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Publicize for and recruit high-quality proficient and exemplary teachers within New Bedford Public Schools. ○ Partner with outside organizations to recruit effective teachers with track records of success. • Principal may make adjustments to staff positions annually and may unilaterally move staff to other positions if they are appropriately licensed for those positions. • For the 2015-2016 school year and beyond, use ratings on the New Bedford Public Schools educator evaluation tool as a basis to identify teachers who will be retained and who will separate from the school, with a focus on retaining teachers who are proficient and exemplary. • Use a dispute resolution process that allows for rapid and effective resolution of employee concerns (see Appendix A). • Support all teachers through professional development as described in Priority Area 1. 		
<p>2.2 Focus time, resources, and efforts within the school schedule on improving the quality of core instruction and maximizing the effectiveness of instructional time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend the school year for teachers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Up to 185 instructional days with students in attendance for 7.5 hours; per full day of school ○ Up to 20 days for professional development, planning time, Saturday Academies (not to exceed two per teacher per work year), and Summer Academies: • Add 40 minutes to the current school day for teachers to increase the standard school day from 7 hours and 20 minutes to 8 hours. • Extend the school day for students to 7.5 hours. • Create a school schedule with student “movement” near the end of the day, including interventions, enrichment, and related arts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dedicate the morning portion of every day to core instruction in an uninterrupted block. ○ Stagger work times for related arts specialists (e.g., art, music, and PE teachers) so that students are not pulled from core instruction to attend their related arts courses. ○ Schedule related arts near the end of the day so that students receive well-rounded educational experiences without interrupting core education. • Establish an intervention or acceleration period during the school day so that all students receive intervention and/or enrichment based on need, as identified by data. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop an array of re-teaching strategies for teachers to use to address the “root cause” for why students struggle. ○ Identify and implement opportunities for acceleration and enrichment for high-performing students, including project-based learning and an 	Principal	September 2014

<p>application of learning strategies within increasingly complex contexts (e.g., science, social studies, and throughout community-based venues, including the New Bedford Whaling Museum, New Bedford Historical Society, etc.).</p> <p><i>This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendation B-1.</i></p>		
<p>2.3 Create incentives based on student results to reward teachers for rapid improvements in student performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective starting in the 2014-2015 school year, a new performance-based compensation system will be developed and used to compensate teachers based on individual effectiveness, professional growth, and student academic growth. • Communicate the new compensation system to all stakeholders to ensure they understand the objective and benefits of the system. • Roll out the system in spring 2014 to allow for a smooth transition between the current and new compensation systems. 	Superintendent	March 2014 - ongoing

Final Outcomes

By June 2015, 100% of core K-5 teachers will see student growth at or above the student growth percentile of 50 in all of their classrooms.

Priority Area 2 directly supports the Final Outcomes for Priority Area 1.

Early Evidence of Change

- By September 2014, 100% of teachers will transition to new positions on a career ladder in the newly-devised compensation system.
- By January 2015, 100% of struggling students as identified by data will receive additional instructional time during the school day during an established intervention block.
- By June 2015, 90% of teachers who respond to a school survey will report on the survey that they feel a sense of urgency to improve student outcomes.

Implementation Milestones

Strategy 2.1

- By April 2014, the Superintendent and principal will assess 100% of core K-5 teachers to determine who will remain at the school based on observational information, student growth data, and teacher's educator evaluation ratings, etc.
- By June 2014, 80% of new teachers who receive offers to work at Parker Elementary will have accepted positions.

Strategy 2.2

- By July 2014, the new school schedule will be finalized, communicated to all school staff, and implemented.
- By August 2014, 100% of related arts and PE teachers will have staggered work schedules, which may be revised as necessary throughout the year.
- By September 2014 and ongoing throughout the year, students will receive additional instruction as established by the new school schedule.

Strategy 2.3

- By March 2014, a new career ladder that is aligned with performance measures will be developed for teachers.
- By April 2014, a communications strategy for rolling out the career ladder will be finalized and 100% of retained teachers will be informed of their placement on the new career ladder.

Priority Area for Improvement 3: Provide students with appropriate supports and acceleration opportunities to maximize their learning by using data to differentiate instruction and identifying opportunities for intervention and enrichment

Rationale

Using data to inform teachers' practice is an essential tool for providing rigorous instruction, yet it is not consistently used across all classrooms at Parker Elementary. Teachers are beginning to embrace and implement the data cycle, but only a continued focus on data will ensure that teachers build upon this practice. Teachers need a robust understanding of how to differentiate their instruction based on analysis of their students' data.

Related Emerging and Sustaining Practices for School Turnaround

- Providing data-driven tiered instruction for all students

Challenge Addressed by Priority Area 3

- **Lack of a comprehensive data system:** As noted by the Local Stakeholder Group in fall 2013, the school lacks a system for organizing school-wide data and tracking “at risk” students. Without easy-to-understand data, school leaders and teachers cannot accurately identify the “root cause” for why students struggle, nor can they provide the appropriate differentiation to help address these students’ needs.
- **Lack of use of data-driven instruction:** The use of data to drive instruction is a new instructional practice in the district, starting in the 2013-2014 school year. As noted in the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 Monitoring Site Visits, teachers have not yet made the connection between their data analysis and their instructional practice. Teachers spent the first half of the 2013-2014 school year learning about the process of the data cycle, but teachers do not yet understand how to embed formative assessments into their daily instruction, how to consistently check for understanding, and how to adjust their instruction to ensure all students learn. Time has already been built into the school schedule so that teacher collaboration teams (TCTs) can meet two times per week, but this time has not been used effectively. Teachers require more coaching and support on how to transfer their data analysis into re-teach plans for differentiating instruction based on student need.

Strategies to Achieve Priority Area 3

Key Strategy	Owner	Timeline
<p>3.1 Create a coherent system for organizing student data, communicating data to students and teachers, and acting on data.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Collect the data:</u> Create a coherent system for collecting and organizing common formative assessment (CFA) data. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify an external partner to assist in this work. • <u>Communicate the data:</u> Create a student data “dashboard” system to provide the principal and teachers with timely views of all students’ academic profiles and non-academic profiles for students who are at-risk (see Priority Area 4). • <u>Share data with students:</u> Help students understand their own performance data, set goals, and identify strategies for improvement. • <u>Create tools to use the data:</u> Improve existing tools and create new tools to help teachers and the principal analyze data (e.g., spreadsheets for reviewing CFA data school-wide, TCT toolkit, etc.). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Create a TCT calendar to clearly define the schedule for completing data cycles during the school year, including specific guidelines on when teachers should re-teach and re-assess their students. • Using existing data, conduct a “root cause” analysis to identify why students struggle to meet grade-level goals and expectations. • This analysis will inform the schedule and topics for professional development needs addressed in Priority Area 1. <p><i>This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendation A-2.</i></p>	Turnaround manager	August 2014 - ongoing
<p>3.2 Ensure the regular administration of formative assessments in ELA and math.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a calendar for administering assessments regularly in ELA and math throughout the year using Reading Street, Galileo assessments, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conduct additional diagnostic testing, including screening for English Language proficiency, for students who are identified as struggling and are consistently below grade-level. • With the support of the principal and the turnaround manager, create banks of rigorous assessment questions aligned with the Common Core for teachers to use in their common formative assessments. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Share questions with other elementary schools district-wide. • Embed formative assessments in daily instruction. • School instructional leadership team, which includes teachers and school administrators, monitors implementation of assessments at the classroom level by collecting formative assessments from a sample of classrooms and through conversations and analysis with teachers. • School instructional leadership team analyzes results of common formative assessments to identify school-wide trends in student learning and design strategies to address gaps. <p><i>This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendation A-4.</i></p>	Principal, school instructional leadership team	September 2014 - monthly
<p>3.3 Build the capacity of leadership staff and teachers to effectively use the data inquiry cycle to make data-driven decisions about instruction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the results of formative assessments, TCTs identify priority areas for each subject and grade-level. 	Principal	September 2014 - ongoing

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of the extended day and staggered schedules, use TCT meetings and planning time to provide teachers with dedicated time to review student data. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ As part of the TCT calendar, create agendas to ensure that TCTs make effective use of their time working on focused instructional goals and practices. • Establish a voluntary professional learning community for teachers to deepen their understanding of data-driven instruction. • Develop and implement a professional development plan to ensure teachers know how to consistently check for student understanding, use embedded formative assessments to monitor student progress, and make meaning of data that impacts their classroom instruction. • Ensure that teachers provide supplemental supports/interventions to struggling students based on data, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Additional time on task during the intervention/remediation period ○ Instruction during the intervention/remediation period that uses evidence-based programs with track records of success (e.g., SuccessMaker) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discontinue intervention/remediation programs that have been deemed ineffective based on student results. ○ Summer institute for four weeks for students identified as struggling in reading and math, based on MOY and EOY student achievement data, including Galileo and MCAS performance, and performance on common formative assessments • Offer a Saturday Academy for struggling students in targeted grades to provide additional instruction for struggling students while simultaneously building the knowledge, skills, and capacity of parents and families to develop students at home (see Priority Area 4). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hire an external consultant to assist in developing the curricula and program for the Academy. ○ Identify students to attend the program based on performance data. ○ Ensure that the program contains learning opportunities that address the specific learning targets of students who attend. • Identify instructional best practices to address the areas in which students struggle. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Literacy coach provides job-embedded coaching and professional development to teachers on data analysis, coordinated by turnaround manager and principal. • Coordinate provision of specialized instructional supports outside of the K-5 classroom in alignment with students' IEPs to minimize student absence during core instruction. • Ensure that principal provides growth-producing feedback to teachers on their use of data to inform instruction. <p><i>This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendation B-1.</i></p>		
<p>3.4 Monitor that TCT decisions result in differentiated instruction and additional learning time for all students, leading to improvement in student outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School instructional leadership team meets weekly to review student data, track progress towards meeting the school's goals, and make instructional adjustments as necessary. 	Principal, literacy coach	September 2014 - ongoing

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TCTs make instructional adjustments after each formative assessment based on the results of the data. • TCTs reassess and regroup students based on most recent formative assessment data every 6-8 weeks. • Principal, school instructional leadership team, and literacy coach monitor data-driven decisions for impact by reviewing TCTs' action plans and reflection protocols, through conversations and analysis with teachers, and by classroom observations. 		
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This priority area is aligned with Initiatives 2.1 and 2.2 in the 2013-2014 New Bedford Accelerated Improvement Plan.

Final Outcomes

By January 2015, the school leadership team will make data-driven decisions that result in teachers providing differentiated instruction and additional learning time for struggling students in 100% of meetings, as evidenced by minutes from leadership team meetings.

By June 2015, 100% of TCTs will make decisions that result in teachers providing appropriate supports/interventions, differentiated instruction, and additional learning time for all students, as evidenced by TCT minutes, re-teach plans, classroom observations and improved student outcomes.

Priority Area 3 directly supports the Final Outcomes for Priority Area 1.

Early Evidence of Change

- By January 2015, 100% of classrooms focus core instruction on the priority areas identified by analysis of assessment data.
- By January 2015, 100% of Tier II and Tier III supplemental instructional supports/interventions will address areas where data has identified that students need support.
- By March 2015, all students will receive core instruction (Tier I), no more than 15% of students will require additional supports/instruction (Tier II), and no more than 5% of students will require more targeted and intensive supports/interventions (Tier III).*

* These numbers are targets; students will be provided the supports necessary to ensure individual learning.

Implementation Milestones

Strategy 3.1

- By September 2014, the turnaround manager and school principal will establish a system for analyzing data. By October 2014 and ongoing throughout the year, TCTs will initially identify 100% of struggling students and the “root cause” for why they struggle. **Strategy 3.2**
- By September 2014, a calendar for conducting common formative assessments will be established and distributed to 100% of core teachers expected to administer these formative assessments.
- Every 6-8 weeks, 100% of core K-5 teachers will conduct formative assessments to identify students’ academic needs and learning gaps.

Strategy 3.3

- By October 2014 and ongoing throughout the year, 100% of struggling students identified by data will receive the appropriate supplemental supports/interventions during the intervention/enrichment block provided near the end of the school day.
- Every 6-8 weeks, 100% of core K-5 teachers will analyze the most recent common formative assessment data to identify students’ academic needs, identify appropriate interventions, and develop and implement re-teach plans.
- By October 2014, at least two priority areas for each subject and grade level will be identified based on beginning-of-the-year (BOY) formative assessment data.
- Every 6-8 weeks, priority areas for each subject and grade level will be re-assessed and new priority standards will be identified if necessary, based on formative assessment data.

Strategy 3.4

- By January 2015, 80% of teachers will show evidence of using differentiated instruction informed by data in their classrooms, as evidenced by student groupings, re-teach plans, classroom observations, conversations and analysis with teachers, and improvement in student outcomes

Priority Area for Improvement 4: Ensure that all students succeed academically by establishing a climate that focuses on learning and engaging families as partners in student learning

Rationale

Parker School is responsible for ensuring that all students are productive learners during the school day and must establish a positive culture that focuses on student learning. Families are valued members of the school community whose collaboration is needed to support and accelerate student learning beyond the school day and at home. The school must increase family engagement in children's learning experiences by offering family-friendly activities and relationship-building focused on academics. These targeted activities and supports will lead to increased on-task behavior in the classroom for students, cooperative problem solving work with families on attendance and behavior issues, and reinforcement of academic content at home.

Related Emerging and Sustaining Practices for School Turnaround

- A safe, orderly, and respectful environment for students and teachers

Challenges Addressed by Priority Area 4

- **Instructional time lost to behavioral issues:** The school does not have a fully developed tiered system of behavioral supports. As a result, student behavioral issues often detract from the focus on instruction in the classroom. In 2012-2013, the school's out-of-school suspension rate was 1.8%, more than double the suspension rate in 2011.
- **Limited number of focused approaches to engage families in academic activities:** Family engagement focused on student learning has been - limited at Parker: While many family members attend social events at the school, few events focused on academic issues have been offered; and attendance at those events has been low. For example, according to the 2012-2013 Monitoring Site Visit, families were engaged in social activities, such as family movie nights, cook-outs, and game nights, but not academic activities. On the 2012 Massachusetts TELLS survey, about 33% of teachers responded that parents and/or guardians were influential decision-makers at the school, and only 13% of teachers felt that families help students achieve their educational goals. Similarly, very few family members attended a meeting at the school in fall 2013 regarding Parker's status as a school at risk of being designated Level 5.
- **Poor connections with community resources to support students and families:** The school does not have existing formal structures to coordinate support for families. They struggled to build relationships with community resources to assist families who may have extensive needs. Going forward, providing supports for families facing extenuating circumstances will -help improve students' academic achievement.
- **Challenges engaging families who do not speak English:** Local Stakeholder Group members indicated that the school may be struggling with family engagement because of the number of families for whom English is not a first language. Data shows that the percentage of First Language Not English (FLNE) families has increased from 14% to 20% since 2011. The lack of bicultural and bilingual staff makes it difficult for families and school personnel to communicate and engage with each other in support of student learning and success.

Strategies to Achieve Priority Area 4

Key Strategy	Owner	Timeline
<p>4.1 Establish a safe and respectful climate within the school so that all students can learn (Tier I Social/Emotional and Behavioral Supports).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate key priorities in the turnaround plan and school-wide focus areas to students in a clear, kid/family-friendly way that ensures understanding of high expectations, academic goals, and how good attendance and positive behavior can help everyone in the school reach those goals. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Build on the district’s “Where Are You Headed?” campaign to help students begin to think about college, career, and other future aspirations. • Establish school-wide behavioral expectations for staff. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ During August professional development and ongoing throughout the year, establish the common understanding that teachers’ primary business in the classroom is ensuring that all students are fully engaged in their learning • Establish school-wide behavioral expectations for students to support a safe learning environment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This will be a Tier I, school-wide approach that will result in all Parker staff using common and consistent language and systems to help all students demonstrate on-task behavior during all academic classes. ○ Establish a system for collecting and organizing data on student behavior. ○ Engage staff, families, and students in determining whether to implement a student dress code. • Coach teachers to build a repertoire of strategies for ensuring that students remain engaged and on task in the classroom (e.g. classroom management, positive reinforcement, providing opportunities to respond). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide professional development prior to the beginning of the school year so teachers construct the elements of fostering a laser-like focus on learning in their classrooms. • Message monthly “core values” for students to motivate them to engage in their education and to set high expectations for all members of the school community. • Hold Student of the Month assemblies to recognize students for exemplary academic growth, performance, and effective effort, and provide rewards centered on learning and enrichment. • Monitor programs and behavioral expectations for impact, celebrate successes, and make mid-course corrections as necessary (see Priority Area 3 for academic alignment). <p><i>This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendation B-5.</i></p>	<p>Behavior intervention specialist</p>	<p>September 2014 – ongoing monthly</p>
<p>4.2 Provide tiered supports to students demonstrating behaviors that prevent them and others from fully engaging in the classroom (Tier II and Tier III supports).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire a behavior intervention specialist to plan, coordinate and implement this work. • <u>Tier II:</u> Teachers, family members, and students work with behavior 	<p>Principal, behavior intervention specialist</p>	<p>September 2014 – Ongoing</p>

<p>intervention specialist to develop behavior plans or identify supplemental supports/interventions for identified students who have difficulty staying on task and/or are disruptive in the classroom.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Students identified as needing Tier II supports based on behavioral issues inside and outside the academic setting. ○ Teachers, family members, and behavior interventionist review both academic and behavioral data to determine the root cause of misbehavior (see Strategy 4.3). ○ Teachers, family members, and behavior interventionist work with students to develop behavior plans to raise students' academic achievement and address behavioral issues at school and at home. ○ Teachers, family members, and behavior interventionist monitor behavior plans for impact and adjust as necessary. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tier III: Teachers, students, and families collaborate with Family Resource Center staff and behavioral intervention specialist to identify community resources to assist families in need of services and support. . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Students identified as needing more intensive and targeted supports/interventions ○ Teachers, family members, Family Resource Center staff, and behavior interventionist review both academic and behavioral data to determine the root cause of off-task behavior with a plan to increase focused learning time and student outcomes. ○ Teachers, family members, Family Resource Center staff, and behavior interventionist monitor behavior plans for impact on learning and adjust as necessary. <p><i>This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendation B-5.</i></p>		
<p>4.3 Establish meaningful communication and relationship-building between teachers and families to reinforce and support academic goals and student success.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide professional development to teachers on cultural competencies before the beginning of the school year to engage with all family members, including those who are not native English speakers. ● Clarify and monitor expectations for teacher communication with families. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Core K-5 teachers reach out to families one to three times over the summer during the summer institute. ○ Core K-5 teachers reach out to the families of all their students at least once a month during the school year to discuss students' academic progress. ○ Core K-5 teachers hold at least one parent-teacher conference with all their students' families during the school year. ○ Encourage teachers to conduct home-visits to families who are receptive to engaging with teachers in their homes. ○ All educators record written and oral communication with families in a log. ● Reinvigorate the school-site council by leveraging it as an opportunity for families to provide input, feedback, and support to turnaround efforts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure supports are available so that families who do not speak English can fully participate. <p><i>This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendation C-1, D-1, D-3, and D-4.</i></p>	Principal, Family Resource Center manager	Summer 2014 - ongoing

<p>4.4 Build parent capacity to support academic goals and school success.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate key priorities in the turnaround plan and school-wide focus areas to families in a clear, family-friendly way. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Educate families on grade-level expectations for rigor for their students in reading and math, and what they can do at home to support those goals. ○ Provide translation into all languages spoken at home in all family communications. • Establish a Family Resource Center to coordinate family and community engagement activities that are linked directly to student learning. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hire a coordinator for the Resource Center to help families access resources through community agencies to provide extensive services and supports, including language and workforce supports. ○ Investigate successful Parent Academy models to offer parent support and programming. • Through the Family Resource Center: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Analyze school-level data from past events to identify successful strategies for engaging families. ○ Offer school-wide evening events that combine literacy and math development with engaging activities for children and families to learn together. ○ Hold school-wide evening events and workshops to help all families, with a focus on non-native English speakers, navigate the school system, understand how to interpret grades and MCAS results, and make the link between their child’s elementary school experience and their goal to be prepared for college and careers. • Partner with community-based agencies or organizations to provide wraparound services (e.g., home visits, adult workforce development, wraparound referrals, family literacy development, mentoring, etc.) that enhance student learning and ensure families are partners in their child’s progress toward higher achievement. • Offer a Saturday Academy program in the 2014-2015 school year in targeted grades, to provide additional instruction for struggling students while simultaneously building the knowledge, skills, and capacity of parents and families to develop students at home (see Priority Area 3). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Offer high-quality learning opportunities for parents and families, facilitated by community partners and teachers, for three hours twice a month in October, November, January, February, March, April, and May. <p><i>This strategy is informed by Local Stakeholder Group recommendation C-1, D-1, D-3, and D-4.</i></p>	<p>Family Resource Center manager</p>	<p>September 2014 - ongoing</p>
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This priority area is aligned with Initiatives 4.1 and 4.2 in the 2013-2014 New Bedford Accelerated Improvement Plan.

Final Outcomes

By June 2015, student attendance will be at or above 95.7%, and out-of-school suspensions will be at or below 1.4% without a related increase in in-school suspensions.

By June 2015, at least 70% of families responding to a survey will demonstrate an understanding of Parker Elementary School's vision for turnaround and will take regular action to support their student's academic achievement.

Priority Area 4 directly supports the Final Outcomes for Priority Area 1.

Early Evidence of Change

- Starting in September 2014 and ongoing throughout the year, 100% of core K-5 teachers will communicate at least once per month with at least one family member of all their students.
- By January 2015, 40% of families will have attended at least one event offered at the Family Resource Center, as measured by attendance logs at events.
- By June 2015, 80% of students who respond to a school survey will report feeling both challenged and supported by adults at the school.
- By June 2015, 80% of core K-5 teachers will be rated as proficient or exemplary on indicator III-C. Communication in their summative or formative evaluations.

Implementation Milestones

Strategy 4.1

- By January 2015, 80% of students will follow school-wide behavioral expectations as measured by student detention rates and in-school suspension rates.

Strategy 4.2

- By September 2014, all students' social/emotional skills will be assessed to identify whether they require additional Tier I, II or III behavioral supports/interventions.
- By October 2014 and ongoing throughout the year, all students will be reassessed every 6-8 weeks to determine what behavioral supports are needed, if any.
- By June 2015, 50% of students with behavioral plans will have achieved the goals outlined in their plans, as measured by the behavior intervention specialist, teachers, and families.

Strategy 4.3

- By August 2014, a Family Resource Center manager will be hired for the school.
- By September 2014, a family engagement plan will be developed, as informed by data analysis of previous successful community events at Parker.
- Starting in October 2014 and ongoing throughout the year, the Family Resource Center will host monthly events for families and community members.
- By January 2015, 50% of core K-5 teachers will have participated in at least one Saturday Academy or evening program.

Statutory requirements	Related Priority Area(s)
Achievement gaps for limited English-proficient, special education and low-income students	All Priority Areas
Alternative English language learning programs for limited English proficient students	Priority Area 1
Social service and health needs of students at the school and their families, to help students arrive and remain at school ready to learn; may include mental health and substance abuse screening	Priority Area 4
Improved or expanded child welfare services and, as appropriate, law enforcement services in the school community, in order to promote a safe and secure learning environment	Priority Area 4
Improved workforce development services provided to students at the school and their families, to provide students and families with meaningful employment skills and opportunities	Priority Area 4
A financial plan for the school, including any additional funds to be provided by the district, commonwealth, federal government or other sources	Appendix C
Formation of a Parent Advisory Committee focused on English Language Learners (if applicable)	Priority Area 1
Strong leadership in schools, including a new or current principal with a track record of success	Priority Areas 1, 2, &3
Redesigned school day, week, or year to include additional time for student learning and teacher collaboration	Priority Area 2

Turnaround Plan Authorization

The turnaround plan is authorized for a period of three years. The Superintendent may develop additional components of the plan, which must be approved by the Commissioner.

Guidance on Changes in Policy and Strategies to Consider under State Law

The Superintendent will use the proposed changes in policies and strategies available to Level 5 schools to implement the school's Turnaround Plan as marked below.

Curriculum and Instruction

- ✓ **Expand, alter, or replace curriculum:** The Commissioner may expand, alter or replace the curriculum and program offerings of the school, including the implementation of research based early literacy programs, early interventions for struggling readers and the teaching of advanced placement courses or other rigorous nationally or internationally recognized courses, if the school does not already have such programs or courses
- ✓ **Expand use of time:** The Commissioner may expand the school day or school year or both of the school
- ✓ **Add Kindergarten or pre-Kindergarten:** The Commissioner may, for an elementary school, add prekindergarten and full day kindergarten classes, if the school does not already have such classes

Financial and Asset Management

- ✓ **Reallocate school budget:** The Commissioner may reallocate the uses of the existing budget of the school
- ✓ **Reallocate district budget:** The Commissioner may provide additional funds to the school from the budget of the district, if the school does not already receive funding from the district at least equal to the average per pupil funding received for students of the same classification and grade level in the district

Human Resources

- ✓ **Attract and retain leaders and teachers:** The Commissioner may provide funds, subject to appropriation, to increase the salary of an administrator, or teacher in the school, to attract or retain highly qualified administrators, or

teachers or to reward administrators, or teachers who work in chronically underperforming schools that achieve the annual goals set forth in the turnaround plan

- ✓ **Make staffing changes:** The Commissioner may, following consultation with applicable local unions, require the principal and all administrators, teachers and staff to reapply for their positions in the school
- ✓ **Implement a new system of evaluation and/or performance compensation:** The Commissioner may establish steps to assure a continuum of high expertise teachers by aligning the following processes with a common core of professional knowledge and skill: hiring, induction, teacher evaluation, professional development, teacher advancement, school culture and organizational structure
- ✓ **Leadership development:** The Commissioner may establish a plan for professional development for administrators at the school, with an emphasis on strategies that develop leadership skills and use the principles of distributive leadership

Professional Development and Collaboration

- ✓ **Embedded professional development:** The Commissioner may include a provision of job embedded professional development for teachers at the school, with an emphasis on strategies that involve teacher input and feedback
- ✓ **Expanded teacher planning time:** The Commissioner may provide for increased opportunities for teacher planning time and collaboration focused on improving student instruction

Leadership and Governance

- ✓ **Change contract or collective bargaining agreements:** The Commissioner may limit, suspend or change 1 or more provisions of any contract or collective bargaining agreement, as the contract or agreement applies to the school; provided that the Commissioner shall not reduce the compensation of an administrator, teacher or staff member unless the hours of the person are proportionately reduced; and provided that the Commissioner may require the school committee and any applicable unions to bargain in good faith for 30 days before exercising authority pursuant to this clause
- ✓ **Change district policies:** The Commissioner may limit, suspend or change 1 or more school district policies or practices, as such policies or practices relate to the school

Additional Strategies

- ✓ **Study best practices:** The Commissioner may develop a strategy to search for and study best practices in areas of demonstrated deficiency in the school
- ✓ **Address mobility and transiency:** The Commissioner may establish strategies to address mobility and transiency among the student population of the school

Additional strategies: The Commissioner may include additional components based on the reasons why the school was designated as chronically underperforming and the recommendations of the local stakeholder group

Appendix A: Working Conditions and Compensation for Level 5 School

Following are the terms for working conditions and compensation specific to the John Avery Parker Elementary School, a Level 5 school in the district. The Commissioner and Superintendent Durkin reserve the right to make additional changes to the collective bargaining agreement as needed. Nothing contained in the turnaround plan or the collective bargaining agreement shall be construed to limit the rights of the Commissioner as they are provided for under G.L. c.69, §J.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR EMPLOYEES AT THE JOHN AVERY PARKER SCHOOL

Pursuant to G.L. c. 69, §1J, the Commissioner must create a turnaround plan intended to maximize the rapid improvement of the academic achievement of students in the John Avery Parker Elementary Schools, hereinafter referred to as “the school”. The Commissioner will take all appropriate steps necessary to support the goals of the turnaround plan. Among other things, the Commissioner may:

- (1) expand, alter or replace the curriculum and program offerings of the school, including the implementation of research-based early literacy programs, early interventions for struggling readers and the teaching of advanced placement courses or other rigorous nationally or internationally recognized courses, if the school does not already have such programs or courses;
- (2) reallocate the uses of the existing budget of the school;
- (3) provide additional funds to the school from the budget of the district, if the school does not already receive funding from the district at least equal to the average per pupil funding received for students of the same classification and grade level in the district;
- (4) provide funds, subject to appropriation, to increase the salary of an administrator, or teachers in the school, in order to attract or retain highly-qualified administrators or teachers or to reward administrators or teachers who work in chronically underperforming schools that achieve the annual goals set forth in the turnaround plan;
- (5) expand the school day or school year or both of the school;
- (6) for an elementary school, add pre-kindergarten and full-day kindergarten classes, if the school does not already have such classes;
- (7) limit, suspend, or change 1 or more provisions of any contract or collective bargaining agreement, as the contract or agreement applies to the school; provided, however, that the commissioner shall not reduce the compensation of an administrator, teacher or staff member unless the hours of the person are proportionately reduced; and provided further, that the commissioner may require the school committee and any applicable unions to bargain in good faith for 30 days before exercising authority pursuant to this clause;
- (8) following consultation with applicable local unions, require the principal and all administrators, teachers and staff to reapply for their positions in the school, with full discretion vested in the superintendent regarding his consideration of and decisions on rehiring based on the reapplications;
- (9) limit, suspend or change 1 or more school district policies or practices, as such policies or practices relate to the school;
- (10) include a provision of job-embedded professional development for teachers at the school, with an emphasis on strategies that involve teacher input and feedback;
- (11) provide for increased opportunities for teacher planning time and collaboration focused on improving student instruction;
- (12) establish a plan for professional development for administrators at the school, with an emphasis on strategies that develop leadership skills and use the principles of distributive leadership; and
- (13) establish steps to assure a continuum of high expertise teachers by aligning the following processes with the common core of professional knowledge and skill: hiring, induction, teacher evaluation, professional development, teacher advancement, school culture and organizational structure.

The terms outlined below are necessary for the successful implementation of the turnaround plan and reflect mandatory changes to the school’s policies, agreements, work rules, and any practices or policies. These terms will take effect July 1, 2014. The Commissioner reserves the right to make additional changes to collective bargaining agreements as needed. Nothing contained in the turnaround plan or the collective bargaining agreements shall be construed to limit the rights of the Commissioner as they are provided for under G.L. c.69, §1J.

Central to the School Turnaround Plan is the requirement that the John Avery Parker Elementary School make effective use of its resources to maximize student achievement. In particular, the John Avery Parker Elementary School Turnaround Plan requires Superintendent Durkin develop and utilize the new performance-based compensation system, which will contains a career path and which compensates employees based on individual effectiveness, professional growth, and student academic growth. The compensation plan must be affordable and sustainable and may serve as a model for the district to consider in setting future compensation policies.

Part I, below, sets out working conditions for all staff at the school.

Part II, below, sets out the performance-based compensation system.

These terms shall supersede any contrary provision of the district's collective bargaining agreements or any pre-existing practice or policy. The terms reflect mandatory changes to the district's policies, agreements, work rules and any practices or policies, and are implemented pursuant to G.L. c. 69, § 1J.

I. WORKING CONDITIONS

To implement the John Avery Parker Elementary School Turnaround Plan, the Commissioner has selected Superintendent Pia Durkin as the Commissioner's designee (hereinafter referred to as Superintendent Durkin) to implement the turnaround plan for the school. Superintendent Durkin shall have full managerial and operational authority for the school. Superintendent Durkin shall develop and the Commissioner shall approve, an annual operational plan which outlines working conditions for staff working at the school.

Superintendent Durkin retains final authority over school-based decision-making and her determination shall be final.

Conditions Necessary for Superintendent Durkin to Succeed

Superintendent Durkin will exercise key autonomies derived from those articulated in the Commissioner's school turnaround plan. Below are the conditions and autonomies that are necessary for the successful transformation of the John Avery Parker School as a low-performing school:

Student Discipline

Superintendent Durkin shall have the discretion to establish the code of conduct for students and establish procedures and standards for the discipline of students in the school.

Staffing

Collective Bargaining Agreements:

- All staff members at the school will continue to be represented by their respective collective bargaining units. However, certain terms of the collective bargaining agreements in effect across the district will not apply at the school managed by Superintendent Durkin. Also, prior Level 4 agreements and/or decisions of the John Avery Parker Elementary School Joint Resolution Committee (JRC) will not apply beyond June 30, 2014. John Avery Parker Elementary School employees will also accrue seniority while employed at the school. Superintendent Durkin will adopt the new compensation strategy to be effective July 1, 2014 for teachers. (See Part II).
- Grievance Procedure: Notwithstanding any provision in a collective bargaining agreement, the Grievance Process for employees at the John Avery Parker Elementary School shall be as follows:

A grievance is defined as an allegation of a violation of an applicable provision of the parties' collective bargaining agreement. The following are excluded from the definition of grievance and from this grievance procedure:

Suspension of professional employees

Discharge of professional employees

Non-renewal of professional employees.

- A. The grievant may be represented by his/her union representative at any level of the dispute resolution process.
- B. Grievance Process:
1. Level 1 Grievance: The employee may submit a grievance to the Principal in writing within ten (10) work days of the occurrence of the event giving rise to the grievance. The grievance must include a description of the alleged violation, identify the specific violation of the parties' agreement alleged to have been violated, and state the desired resolution.
 2. Level 1 Response: Within ten (10) work days of the receipt of the grievance, the Principal/designee will schedule a meeting with the grievant to discuss the grievance. Within five (5) work days of the meeting, the Principal/designee will issue a decision to the NBEA.
 3. Level 2 Grievance: If the grievant is not satisfied with the Principal's/designee's response at Level 1, the grievant may submit the grievance to the Commissioner's designee, Dr. Pia Durkin, in writing within five (5) work days of receiving the Level 1 response. The grievant's submission to the Commissioner's designee shall include the Level 1 Grievance and the Level 1 Grievance Response and an explanation with the reasons why the grievant does not find the Level 1 Response satisfactory.
 4. Level 2 Response: Within fifteen (15) work days of the receipt of the grievance, the Commissioner's designee will schedule a meeting with the grievant to discuss the grievance. Within five (5) work days after the meeting, the Commissioner's designee will issue a decision to the NBEA for professional employees or to the applicable union, if the employee is not represented by the NBEA.
 5. Level 3 Grievance: If the grievant is not satisfied with decision of the Commissioner's designee, she/he may submit the grievance in writing to the Commissioner of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts within five (5) work days of receipt of the Level 2 Response. The employee's submission to the Commissioner must include the following information:
 - Name of Grievant;
 - For employees represented by the NBEA, New Bedford Educators Association, 160 William St. New Bedford Ma, 02740. For employees represented by another union, the name and address of the applicable union.
 - School District where Grievant is employed;
 - Level 1 grievance;
 - Level 1 decision;
 - Level 2 grievance;
 - Level 2 decision; and
 - An explanation with the reasons why the Level 2 decision was not satisfactory to the Grievant.
 6. Level 3 Decision: The Commissioner's designee's Level 2 response will be entitled to substantial deference during the Commissioner's review of the Level 3 grievance. The Commissioner's decision shall be final. The Level 3 decision shall be sent to the NBEA if the grievant is represented by the NBEA. If the employee is represented by another union, the Commissioner's decision will be sent to the applicable union.

7. General Provisions:

- A. The time periods are considered maximum periods. Failure of the grievant to advance his/her grievance to the next level within the time period shall be deemed to be acceptance of the grievance answer/decision at the prior Level.
- B. The Commissioner's designee has the authority to suspend or amend the time periods for any one or more grievances in writing by agreement with the union.

Personnel:

- Superintendent Durkin has the sole discretion to select the staff for any and all positions at the school, including administrators, teachers, maintenance staff, nurses, security guards, etc. There is to be no requirement for Superintendent Durkin to employ any specific individuals in the school.
- Superintendent Durkin may select staff for union-represented positions without regard to posting requirements, transfer provisions, recall provisions, and seniority provisions in an applicable collective bargaining agreement and without regard to any applicable and past practices between the school committee and union.
- Superintendent Durkin may formulate job descriptions, duties and responsibilities for any and all positions in the school.
- Staff in the existing school (and the district) shall not have attachment rights to any position and Superintendent Durkin may unilaterally move any employee at the school to another position provided that for positions requiring a license or certification that the employee is properly licensed and certified.
- Superintendent Durkin may choose to terminate or non-renew any union or non-union employee pursuant to federal and state laws and municipal ordinances.
- In dismissing an employee as a result of misconduct, Superintendent Durkin shall not be bound by any provision in an applicable collective bargaining agreement, practices or procedures between the school district and any collective bargaining unit. Superintendent Durkin shall issue discipline, up to and including termination, to employees in accordance with applicable federal and state laws and municipal ordinances.
- The school and its employees are exempt from the layoff and recall provisions of any applicable collective bargaining agreement and any associated practices.
- Notwithstanding any provision in an applicable collective bargaining agreement or practice to the contrary, administrators may without limitation have discussions with educators regarding professional practice, student needs, data analysis, curriculum, and other topics regarding or related to improving instruction and educational outcomes for students.

Professional Obligations

Teachers and other professional staff shall devote whatever time is required to achieve and maintain high quality education at the John Avery Parker Elementary School. For example, unless formally excused, teachers and other professional staff shall participate in all regular school functions during or outside of the normal school day, including faculty meetings, parent conferences, department meetings, curriculum meetings, promotional exercises, and other similar activities.

Notwithstanding any provision of an applicable collective bargaining agreement or practice to the contrary, and subject only to the requirements of any applicable state or federal law, all employees assigned to work at the John Avery Parker Elementary School shall request and receive advance approval from the Principal/designee whenever possible for each personal day requested. Employees will inform the Principal/designee as soon as practicable of the employee's need to use a sick day(s) prior to taking the day.

Expectations for Staff Members

- The term of employment for teachers will be July 1 through June 30, and will include the following:
 - Up to and including 20 days for professional development, planning time, Saturday Academies (not to exceed two per teacher per work year), and Summer Academies;

- Up to and including 185 instructional days with students in attendance for seven and one half (7.5) hours per full day of school;
 - Superintendent Durkin and Chief Academic Officer will develop the schedule for students and for employees and shall determine the content for professional development and planning days.
 - Wednesday prior to Thanksgiving: On the Wednesday prior to Thanksgiving, professional employees shall remain in their assignments fifteen (15) minutes beyond the actual dismissal time of students.
 - Final Day of Classes in the Work Year: The final day of classes will be a full work day for professional employees but a half-day for students with dismissal time for students being the same as the day before Thanksgiving.
- The John Avery Parker Elementary School will use the state's model educator evaluation system, as determined by Superintendent Durkin.
 - Except as noted below, the standard workday for professional employees represented by the NBEA at the school will be 8 hours. Professional employees shall arrive at least fifteen (15) minutes prior to the start of the student day and may be required to supervise students as students arrive. Professional employees may be assigned duties, including duties before and/or after school, to support the smooth operation of the John Avery Parker Elementary School. The Commissioner's designee shall establish the hours for the work day.

Additional working conditions for specific staff are as follows:

Grade-level Teachers at the Parker School shall receive up to 175 minutes of preparation time per 5-day week and up to 90 minutes of common planning time per five-day week, excluding Summer Academy weeks. Specialists will not be entitled to common planning time but may be assigned to participate in some common planning time from time to time at the discretion of the Principal. Common planning time activities shall be determined by administration and may include but are not limited to common planning time, tutoring students, student help sessions, supervision of students, working with colleagues, grade-level meetings, cross-grade level meetings, subject area meetings, training, coaching, professional development, data analysis or other activities, duties or tasks as determined by the administration.

- The schedule will be created in such a way that teachers will have a duty-free lunch lasting approximately 30 minutes each full work day.
- Superintendent Durkin, Chief Academic Officer, and/or Principal will select teachers to take part in a summer academy program for students. Teachers will participate in a half-day of professional development or other activity as determined by the administration and spend a half-day working with students. The summer program is anticipated to be up to and including 16 days over a 4-week period with each day being 6.5 hours.
- *Teacher leaders:* At least 2 teacher-leaders will be identified: one in grades K-2 and one in grades 3-5. Applicants for the position may apply and applications will be reviewed by Superintendent Durkin, the Chief Academic Officer, and/or Principal. Superintendent Durkin shall determine the job duties, responsibilities, and qualifications for such teacher leader positions which are expected to include: (1) coaching of peers on providing rigorous instruction and (2) opening up the teacher leader's classroom to peers so teachers can view model lessons and use that observational learning to adjust their own practice accordingly in their own classrooms. Superintendent Durkin shall establish the salary or stipend for such teacher leader positions and shall appoint qualified individuals to such positions whom she may remove in her sole discretion.
- Student support services personnel such as guidance counselors, social workers, nurses, behaviorists, SAC, therapist, OT, PT may be assigned staggered start and end times to their work days provided the employee's starting time is within one hour of the regular start time and the time is continuous.
- *After School Meetings and Activities:*
 - In addition to meetings pursuant to Section E.1 of Article 12 of the NBEA Unit A collective bargaining agreement, professional employees in the school will be required to attend up to and including three (3) meetings per month. Meetings will begin within a reasonable amount of time following the end of the student day (generally and approximately ten (10) minutes after the end of the student dismissal) and will last no longer than seventy-five (75) minutes. Content of the meetings will be determined by

Superintendent Durkin, Chief Academic Officer, Principal, and/or Teacher Leader with approval of Principal and may include but are not limited to professional development activities, common planning, grade-level meetings or activities, cross grade-level meetings. New personnel in their first full year of employment in the John Avery Parker Elementary school may be required to attend additional meetings.

- Employees at the John Avery Parker Elementary School may be required to attend four (4) evening parent-teacher conferences and one (1) open house each school year, and up to and including four (4) evenings each year for the school. Events may include but are not limited to plays, shows, and recreation events for students. Evening meetings and events shall not last more than two (2) hours and shall end no later than 9:00 p.m. During all evening meetings and events there will be an administrator, administrator's designee, or central office staff member present for the duration of the evening meetings.

During a typical Monday – Friday week, all staff members are expected to perform additional duties that support the smooth operation of the school before the school day, during the school day, and after the school day. Additional responsibilities may include but are not limited to: coverage of homeroom periods; substitute coverage of classes and duties of others who are absent from school; coverage of school and afterschool activities (e.g., lunch periods, recess, etc.).

Superintendent Durkin, Chief Academic Officer, and/or Principal may assign NBEA members to be available to support, assist, and communicate with students and parents in the Family Resource Center.

- Superintendent Durkin, Chief Academic Officer, and/or Principal may select any NBEA members to participate in the Saturday Academy. NBEA members will be expected to participate in no more than two Saturday Academy sessions during the school year.
- NBEA members are expected to be involved in a variety of educational and administrative activities that are necessary to fulfill the mission of the school. These activities may include, but are not limited to the following:
 - Conducting home visits Professional employees will be offered training prior to commencing home visits. When necessary, home visits may be conducted at another mutually agreed upon location. Home visits by professional employees shall occur outside of the school day and with notice to the principal. Professional employees may schedule their home visits with another educator if they choose. If an educator is assigned to participate in a home visit(s) the educator shall be paired with another educator if the educator so requests.);
 - Conducting regular contact with families of students with chronic behavior issues, poor attendance and/or other factors that are impacting student learning gains will be made to discuss academic and social progress of these students on a weekly basis;
 - Participating in four family conference evenings during the school year;
 - Preparing of individual Progress Reports and Report Cards;
 - Leading student extracurricular activities;
 - Maintaining a subject-area bulletin board;
 - Working regularly with school administrators to improve one's instructional practices;
 - Checking homework on a daily basis;
 - Attending student-related meetings; and
 - Serving as an advisor to a small cohort of students
- Notice of Retirement: A teacher shall provide notice pursuant to Article 7 of the NBEA contract that includes an irrevocable resignation and must be made to the Superintendent of Schools on or before February 1st with payment being made on or before the 1st of September of the same calendar year.

II. PROFESSIONAL COMPENSATION SYSTEM

Effective July 1, 2014, Superintendent Durkin will implement the following new performance-based compensation system which contains a career path and which compensates professional employees based on individual effectiveness, professional growth, and student academic growth. This new system replaces the salary schedule in the NBEA Unit A collective bargaining agreement.

Basic Principles of the plan:

Provides competitive compensation for teachers

Rewards teachers for excellent performance and effectiveness

Provides a career path for teachers to grow professionally without leaving the classroom

Provides opportunities to reward teachers for their contributions to student growth

It is envisioned that student outcomes will improve by creating a professional compensation system that will attract new high-potential teachers and retain our best performers and leaders.

The new professional compensation system will be implemented for professional employees in the John Avery Parker Elementary School that includes a teacher career ladder containing five tiers—Novice, Developing, Career, Advanced, and Master—that will compensate teachers commensurate with their development and impact on students. This new system replaces the salary schedule in effect during the 2013-2014 school year. It is envisioned that student outcomes will improve by creating a professional compensation system that will attract new high-potential teachers and retain our best performers and leaders.

The Commissioner's designee for the John Avery Parker Elementary School may include student performance measures in the evaluation of teacher performance and determination of teacher compensation.

CAREER LADDER

Definitions:

Novice teachers are typically first-year teachers entering teaching directly from college.

Developing teachers are early career educators, typically with one to two years of experience. There are two levels within the Developing tier.

Career teachers have been recognized as excellent educators. Career teachers serve as role models to less-experienced educators, and proactively drive their own professional growth.

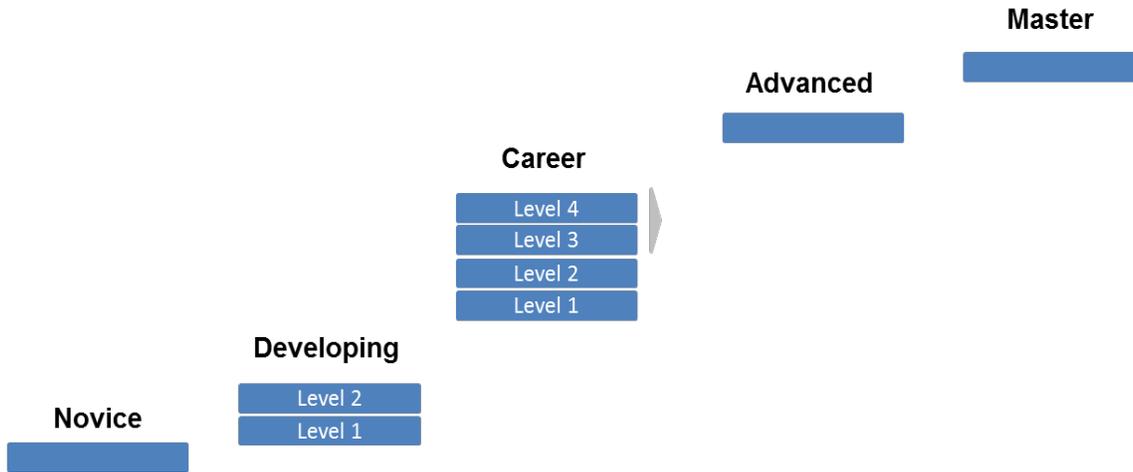
Advanced teachers are outstanding educators who serve as school-wide models of excellence.

Advanced teachers have at least five years of experience and possess deep expertise in their craft.

Master teachers are exceptional educators who serve as school-wide and district-wide models of excellence. Master teachers have at least five years of experience, possess deep expertise in their craft, and are capable of elevating the practice of already-gifted educators. Master teachers will assume additional roles and responsibilities to support the school's and district's improvement.

Transition to the Career Ladder

Effective July 1, 2014, each New Bedford Public Schools teacher assigned to the John Avery Parker Elementary School will be placed on one of the Levels based on such teacher’s performance as determined by the Commissioner’s designee. Teachers newly hired and assigned to the John Avery Parker Elementary School will be placed on one of the Levels as determined by the Commissioner’s designee:



Career Ladder 2014-15 Salary

Novice	\$49,000
Developing Level I	\$52,000
Developing Level II	\$55,000
Career Level I	\$62,000
Career Level II	\$65,500
Career Level III	\$69,000
Career Level IV	\$74,000
Career Level IV	* \$74,000+

* Also includes Career Legacy teacher, defined as a teacher whose base salary for the 2013-2014 school year exceeds \$74,000.

The ELT stipend (\$7,000) and longevity payments from the 2013-2014 work year are rolled into the salaries listed above. Commencing with the 2014-2015 work year, the ELT stipend and longevity payments are extinguished.

A New Bedford teacher whose 2013-2014 annual base salary exceeds \$74,000 will be identified as a Career Legacy teacher. A Career Legacy teacher’s new annual base salary will be the sum of the following components: 1) 2013-2014 annual “step and lane” salary including the \$7,000 ELT stipend if applicable, 2) 2013-2014 longevity payment, and 3) an additional \$750.

The annual base salary for an “Advanced” teacher will be \$81,500. A teacher designated as an Advanced teacher, whose total compensation exceeds \$81,500, will receive an additional \$750.

The annual base salary for a “Master” teacher will be \$89,000. Teachers selected for this position will receive a stipend differential based on their annual base salary in order to reach \$89,000. These stipend compensation amounts shall be included in base pay, or otherwise considered as part of the teacher’s annualized salary, for retirement purposes.

The salary schedule will be reviewed and may be adjusted periodically by the Commissioner’s designee to reflect market conditions.

Advancement on the Career Ladder

A Novice teacher shall advance to Developing I and a Developing I teacher shall advance to Developing II annually provided that the teacher does not receive an end-of-year overall evaluation rating of “unsatisfactory” and provided that such teacher’s employment is renewed.

A Developing II teacher shall advance to Career I and all Career level teachers shall advance a level annually provided that an end-of-year overall evaluation rating of “proficient” or “exemplary” is received, with “proficient” or better ratings on all four standards. It is expected that educator evaluation ratings and student performance data will be major components of the teacher’s evaluation. A teacher with an end-of-year overall rating of “proficient” who has achieved less than “proficient” ratings in the third and fourth standards may still advance to the next level with the recommendation of the building principal and the approval of the Commissioner’s designee.

A teacher may advance on the salary scale more rapidly than described at the discretion of the Commissioner’s designee

.Novice, Developing, Career, and Advanced teachers who continue in employment at the John Avery Parker Elementary School shall not have their salary reduced based on their performance evaluation.

Consistent with the School Turnaround Plan, based on past experience and performance, a newly-hired teacher may be placed above the Novice level at the discretion of the Commissioner’s designee

The categories of Advanced and Master teachers will be established effective July 1, 2014. The roles, expectations, and selection criteria for Advanced and Master teachers will be determined by the Commissioner’s designee.

A teacher who has attained the status of Career III or a higher level and received “proficient” or “exemplary” overall end-of-year ratings the previous two years can apply to become an Advanced teacher through a cumulative career portfolio, including demonstrated success in attaining specific student growth benchmarks as determined by the Commissioner’s designee.

A teacher who has attained the status of Career III or a higher level and received “exemplary” overall end-of-year ratings the previous two years can apply to become a Master teacher through a cumulative career portfolio with demonstrated success in attaining specific student growth benchmarks as determined by the Commissioner’s designee. The portfolio may include 1) student growth data over time; 2) endorsements from peers, parents, students, and administrators; 3) and evidence of effective instruction.

In addition to teacher advancement as outlined above, the Commissioner’s designee may provide additional compensation to a bargaining unit member if she determines that such payment is necessary to better serve the needs of the students. Such compensation may include payment to teachers who possess additional certifications not required by their current positions, and/or for performing additional duties, etc.

III. Summary Regarding Bargaining Activity

On January 29, 2014, Commissioner Chester sent letters to the New Bedford School Committee and several unions representing employees who work at the Parker School notifying them that the turnaround plan for the Parker School would require changes to the collective bargaining agreements, and requiring them to bargain with respect to these changes.

An ESE representative met in Executive Session with the Superintendent and the School Committee to review the contents of the working conditions changes and the parameters for the compensation plan.

DESE provided the required changes to working conditions at the Parker School to the Superintendent. The district scheduled sessions with the teachers union. The New Bedford Superintendent and key staff members assisted the school department's labor attorney during the negotiations. There were several preparatory meetings and discussions with the Superintendent, the labor attorney, a DESE representative, and school department personnel.

New Bedford Teachers Association

Meetings were held with representatives of the NBEA and the Massachusetts Teachers Association on February 24, 27, and 28 pursuant to the Commissioner's directive. The NBEA represents both the teachers and the administrators in the district. The bargaining sessions were attended by the Superintendent as well as an ESE representative. The Superintendent provided the NBEA with a Working Conditions Summary Document for the Parker School that outlined various changes to terms and conditions of employment and set forth a model compensation plan which would serve as a basis for compensation changes in the school. The Superintendent and the labor attorney explained the intended changes at the school and answered questions posed by the NBEA and the MTA. The NBEA made counterproposals to the changes. Some agreements were reached on language changes which have been incorporated into the plan. Ultimately, no agreement was reached on the totality of the required changes, including teacher compensation.

Other Unions

The district's Human Resources Director has met or has scheduled meetings with the other employee unions. They have decided to continue to discuss the changes, but do not anticipate any issues since the majority of the changes apply only to teachers in the Parker School.



Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

75 Pleasant Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148-4906

Telephone: (781) 338-3000

TTY: N.E.T. Relay 1-800-439-2370

Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.
Commissioner

January 29, 2014

The Honorable Jon Mitchell
Chair, ex officio New Bedford School Committee
New Bedford City Hall
New Bedford, MA 02740

Lisa Poulos
c/o Casmir Pulaski School
1097 Braley Road
New Bedford, MA 02745

Re: John A. Parker School

Dear Mayor Mitchell and Ms. Poulos:

As you know, after careful consideration, and pursuant to the authority granted to me in the Achievement Gap Act, G.L. c. 69, § 1J, I announced on October 30, 2013 my determination that the John A. Parker School is chronically underperforming – a Level 5 school under the state accountability system. Having received the recommendations from the Local Stakeholder Group for the Parker school, I am now in the process creating a turnaround plan for the school.

The Achievement Gap Act states that in creating the turnaround plan, I may “limit, suspend or change 1 or more provisions of any contract or collective bargaining agreement, as the contract or agreement applies to the school. . . .” Chapter 69, § 1J(o)(7) The statute also provides that I may require the school committee and any applicable unions to bargain in good faith for 30 days before exercising this authority.

The turnaround plan for the Parker school will require changes in the collective bargaining agreement. The turnaround plan will include a longer school day, a longer school year, a performance based compensation system, and new working conditions. As a result, by this letter, I am requiring that the New Bedford School Committee and the New Bedford Educators Association bargain in good faith for 30 days in connection with these matters.

I will be providing you with additional details regarding the necessary changes in the collective bargaining agreement in the next few days.

Sincerely,

Signed by Commissioner Chester

Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.
Commissioner

C: Pia Durkin, Superintendent



Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

75 Pleasant Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148-4906

Telephone: (781) 338-3000

TTY: N.E.T. Relay 1-800-439-2370

Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.
Commissioner

January 29, 2014

The Honorable Jon Mitchell
Chair, ex officio New Bedford School Committee
New Bedford City Hall
New Bedford, MA 02740

Louis St. John
President, New Bedford Educators Association
160 William Street
New Bedford, MA 02740

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The turnaround plan for the Parker school will require changes in the collective bargaining agreement. The turnaround plan will include a longer school day, a longer school year, a performance based compensation system, and new working conditions. As a result, by this letter, I am requiring that the New Bedford School Committee and the New Bedford Educators Association bargain in good faith for 30 days in connection with these matters.

I will be providing you with additional details regarding the necessary changes in the collective bargaining agreement in the next few days.

Sincerely,

Signed by Commissioner Chester

Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.
Commissioner

C: Pia Durkin, Superintendent



Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

75 Pleasant Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148-4906

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Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.
Commissioner

January 29, 2014

The Honorable Jon Mitchell
Chair, ex officio New Bedford School Committee
New Bedford City Hall
New Bedford, MA 02740

Douglas Brites
c/o New Bedford High School
230 Hathaway Blvd
New Bedford, MA 02740

Re: John A. Parker School

Dear Mayor Mitchell and Mr. Brites:

As you know, after careful consideration, and pursuant to the authority granted to me in the Achievement Gap Act, G.L. c. 69, § 1J, I announced on October 30, 2013 my determination that the John A. Parker School is chronically underperforming – a Level 5 school under the state accountability system. Having received the recommendations from the Local Stakeholder Group for the Parker school, I am now in the process creating a turnaround plan for the school.

The Achievement Gap Act states that in creating the turnaround plan, I may “limit, suspend or change 1 or more provisions of any contract or collective bargaining agreement, as the contract or agreement applies to the school. . . .” Chapter 69, § 1J(o)(7) The statute also provides that I may require the school committee and any applicable unions to bargain in good faith for 30 days before exercising this authority.

The turnaround plan for the Parker school will require changes in the collective bargaining agreement. The turnaround plan will include a longer school day, a longer school year, a performance based compensation system, and new working conditions. As a result, by this letter, I am requiring that the New Bedford School Committee and the New Bedford Educators Association bargain in good faith for 30 days in connection with these matters.

I will be providing you with additional details regarding the necessary changes in the collective bargaining agreement in the next few days.

Sincerely,

Signed by Commissioner Chester

Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.
Commissioner

C: Pia Durkin, Superintendent

Appendix B. Measurable Annual Goals

The Measurable Annual Goals for Parker Elementary School's preliminary turnaround plan are located at:

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/sss/turnaround/level5/schools/>

Appendix C. Financial Plan for the School

John Avery Parker Elementary School Financial Plan

The Commissioner and the Superintendent are fully committed to the most effective use of the Parker Elementary School's resources in order to achieve the rapid, dramatic improvement of the school. The effective use of resources to maximize student achievement is the principle on which all of the school's strategies will be based. All resources allocated to Parker Elementary School, including time, funds, human capital, operational supports and other resources – will be aligned in support of student learning.

Given that salaries and employee benefits are the largest and most significant portion of a school's budget, the Commissioner and the Superintendent will ensure that those investments are allocated in a manner most likely to promote increased student learning. In addition, the Commissioner and the Superintendent will ensure the provision of sufficient time for student instruction and staff development, and that the use of that time maximizes student achievement. At the same time, they will curtail expenditures that fail to demonstrate a positive relationship to student learning.

Projected Funding Available for Parker Elementary School in Fiscal Year 2014-2015

Pursuant to the Achievement Gap Act, a district is required to provide funding to a Level 5 school that is at least equal to the average per pupil funds received by other schools in the district for students of the same classification and grade level.¹ The Act also authorizes the Commissioner to reallocate the use of those funds within a Level 5 school. If the Commissioner determines that a district has not provided the required level of funding to a Level 5 school, the Commissioner is authorized by the statute to provide additional funds to the school from the budget of the district. The Commissioner reserves the right to exercise this authority, following further review of the total funding provided by the district to Parker Elementary School. If the Commissioner decides to provide additional funds to Parker Elementary School from the district budget, the Commissioner will notify the school committee and the superintendent in writing of the amount and the rationale for the additional funds.

¹ G.L. c. 69, § 1J(o).

The information provided below includes projected funds to be available for operating the Parker Elementary School in School Year 2014-15, including district, state, and federal funding sources.

Funding Source	FY15 Estimated Amount*	Inclusions and Exclusions
School-based local appropriation	\$2,008,097	This includes staff and general school-based expenses for grades Pre-K to 5. It does not include transportation, food services, payroll services, benefits and/or similar district services which will be provided to the Level 5 school on the same basis as other schools. Includes approximately \$100,000 for gas, oil, and electricity for the school.
District supports to school from local appropriation	TBD	This will include support for district-based positions and services such as special education, school nurse, and attendance specialist, assigned to schools including the Level 5 school based on student and program needs. This amount will be determined when the budget is final and student enrollment is known.
Federal grants	TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title I: Funds to improve education for children with low academic achievement - School allocation, including additional allocation for low-performing schools To be determined: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title I – Additional allocation for other centrally-budgeted supports to schools • Title IIA: Funds to improve educator quality • Title III: Funds to improve education for English language learners • Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): Funds to improve education for children with disabilities • Other federal grants
State grants	TBD	To be determined: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kindergarten Expansion • Additional support for operation of Level 5 school • Other state grants

*As of March 7, 2014, before final FY15 budget has been approved by the school committee and before FY15 grant amounts are known.

Within the broad budgetary framework identified above, and consistent with the statutory requirement of equity in per pupil funding, the Commissioner will use his discretion to determine whether and to what extent the per pupil funding formula will include provision of “in-kind” services. For example, it is anticipated that the district will provide certain services to the Parker Elementary School (including but not limited to: transportation, employee benefits, facilities, payroll, safety, food service, and other central office services) as “in-kind” support. It is also anticipated that the Superintendent will provide certain services to the Parker Elementary School that the district provides to other non Level 5 schools. The funding formula may recognize the provision of services from the district. Where the Superintendent is providing services that the district provides to other non Level 5 schools, the district will provide commensurate funding to the Parker Elementary School. The district, Superintendent and DESE will enter into a Memorandum of Agreement regarding the provision of these services and will work together to ensure that the appropriate resources are available for the school’s daily operations.

Compensation and Student Achievement

Good teaching matters and is a key to addressing proficiency gaps. Some teachers routinely secure a year-and-a-half of gain in achievement while others with similar students consistently produce only one-half a year gain. As a result, two students who begin the year with the same general level of achievement may know vastly different amounts one year later – simply because one had a weak teacher and the other a strong teacher. Further, no other attribute of schools comes close to having the magnitude of influence on student achievement that teacher effectiveness provides.² Research on school leadership underscores the importance of effective leaders in attracting, retaining, and supporting effective teachers and creating organizational structures and environments where powerful teaching and learning is the norm.

The impact of teachers is cumulative. Having effective teachers for successive years accelerates student growth while having ineffective teachers for successive years dampens the rate of student learning. Research in the Dallas school district and the State of Tennessee suggests that having a strong teacher for three years in a row can effectively eliminate the racial/ethnic and income achievement gap.³

No other expenditure comes close to that which is devoted to personnel: often as much as 85 percent of the budget is dedicated to educator salaries and benefits.⁴ In a typical school district, compensation has little nexus to performance. Drawing from the example above, given identical length of service and continuing education credits, the teacher who consistently is highly effective would be paid the same as the teacher who routinely underperforms. Further, it is likely that both teachers have identical responsibilities and opportunities for leadership, despite the vast difference in accomplishment.

The development of a performance-based compensation system is an essential strategy for maximizing the rapid academic achievement of students at Parker Elementary School.

Effective in School Year 2014-15, a new performance-based compensation system will be employed to compensate employees based on responsibilities and leadership roles, individual effectiveness, professional growth, and student academic growth. The Superintendent will restructure compensation to ensure that the district’s investment in the school promotes, supports, and values effective performance. The new compensation system will help to improve student learning by attracting new high potential teachers and allowing the school to retain its most effective leaders and teachers.

The evidence demonstrating that the primary compensation factors – longevity and credit accumulation – have little relationship to educator performance continues to accumulate. For example:

- Generally, teachers with master’s degrees have little or no additional positive effect on student achievement compared to teachers who do not have an advanced degree.⁵ The exception to this statement is in a few specific

² Hanushek, E. (2010), “The Economic Value of Higher Teacher Quality.” National Bureau of Economic Research.

³ Carey, K. “The Real Value of Teachers: Using Information about Teacher Effectiveness to Close the Achievement Gap,” Thinking K-16, Vol. 8, Issue 1, Winter 2004.

⁴ <http://cepa.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/stateRole.pdf>

⁵ Raegen Miller and Marguerite Roza, 2012. “The sheepskin effect and student achievement: De-emphasizing the role of master’s degrees in teacher compensation.” Washington, DC: Center for American Progress. Available: http://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/issues/2012/07/pdf/miller_masters.pdf

content areas--math and science--where researchers found student achievement to be slightly higher for high school students whose math and science teachers held advanced degrees.⁶

- Approximately 90 percent of the master's degrees held by teachers are degrees attained from education programs that tend to be unrelated to or unconcerned with instructional impact.⁷
- “Although teachers with master's degrees generally earn additional salary or stipends--the so-called ‘master's bump’ – they are no more effective, on average, than their counterparts without master's degrees.”⁸
- The traditional structure is built on the assumption that teachers get better with experience. While it is true that novice teachers, particularly in their first year, experience a steep learning curve, teacher performance tends to plateau after 6 to 10 years.⁹

In order to direct school fiscal resources to most directly promote rapid improvement of student achievement, the performance-based compensation plan at Parker Elementary School will include the following basic principles: 1) provide competitive compensation for teachers; 2) reward teachers for excellent performance and effectiveness; 3) provide a career path for teachers to grow professionally without leaving the classroom; and 4) reward teachers for their contribution to student growth. Restructuring compensation in this way ensures that the Parker Elementary School's investment in educators promotes and values effective performance.

⁶ Dan Goldhaber and Dominic Brewer, 1998. “When should we reward degrees for teachers?” *The Phi Delta Kappan* 80(2): 134-138.

⁷ National Center for Education Statistics, “2003-2004 Schools and Staffing Survey” as cited by Miller and Roza, 2012.

⁸ Miller and Roza, 2012, p.1.

⁹ Eric A Hanushek, John F. Kain and Stephen G. Rivkin, “Teachers, Schools and Academic Achievement.” Working Paper 6691 (National Bureau of Economic Research, 1998).

Appendix D. Local Stakeholder Group Recommendations

Parker Elementary School Local Stakeholder Group Recommendations to the Commissioner Submitted January 6, 2014

John Avery Parker Elementary School was designated by Commissioner Chester as chronically underperforming (“Level 5”) on October 30, 2013. Massachusetts law indicates that within 30 days of a school being designated as chronically underperforming, the Commissioner shall convene a local stakeholder group to solicit the group’s recommendations for the Commissioner’s Level 5 School Turnaround Plan.

The Parker Elementary School Local Stakeholder Group was convened on Thursday, November 21, 2013. The statute allowed 45 days for the local stakeholder group to complete its work. The Local Stakeholder Group met four times during this period, on the following dates and times:

- Meeting #1: Thursday, November 21st, 5:00-7:00 pm
- Meeting #2: Tuesday, December 3rd, 5:00-7:00 pm
- Meeting #3: Wednesday, December 11th, 5:00-7:00 pm
- Meeting #4: Wednesday, December 18th, 5:00-7:00 pm

All of the meetings were held at the school. All of the meetings were open to the public. All meetings were facilitated by an ESE staff member or a consultant hired for this purpose. All meetings were also observed by at least one ESE staff member.

The membership of the Parker Elementary School Local Stakeholder Group is listed below. The committee’s membership meets the requirements of the statute as outlined in M.G.L. Chapter 69, Section 1J, subsection m.

Position, per statute	Designee
The superintendent or designee	Pia Durkin
School committee chair or designee	Jack Livramento
Local teachers’ union president or designee	Marcia Guy
Administrator from the school, who may be the principal, chosen by the superintendent	Deb Letendre
Teacher from the school, chosen by the faculty of the school	Michael Irving
Parent from the school, chosen by the local parent organization. (Note: If school or district doesn’t have a parent organization, the Commissioner shall select a volunteer parent of a student at the school.)	Kerri De Pina
Representatives of applicable state and local social service, health and child welfare agencies, chosen by the Commissioner	Jenny DiBlasi, Vice President of Community, Child and Family Services; SMILES (South Coast Mentoring Initiative for Learning, Education and Service)
Representatives of applicable state and local social service, health and child welfare agencies, chosen by the Commissioner	Darlene Spencer, Executive Director, New Bedford Community Connection Coalition
As appropriate, representatives of state and local workforce development agencies, chosen by the Commissioner	Helena Hughes, Executive Director, New Bedford Immigrants Assistance Center
For elementary schools, a representative of an early education and care provider, chosen by the Commissioner of the Department of Early Education and Care	Martha Kay
Community member, chosen by the chief executive of the city or town	Chris Cotter
Total number of members allowed by statute: Not more than 13 individuals	Total number of members on the Local Stakeholder Group: 11

The Parker Elementary School Local Stakeholder Group worked diligently to execute its charge to provide recommendations to the Commissioner as he creates his turnaround plan for the school; these recommendations are designed to maximize the rapid academic achievement of students.

The Local Stakeholder Group offers the following recommendations for the Commissioner’s consideration.

A. Recommendations: Data and Use of Data

Except where noted, LSG members unanimously wanted to forward the recommendations in this section.

- 1) Build in more teacher teaming and planning time (four times per week), in order to provide more time to review student data (e.g., extend the day longer, have a half-day early release day per month). Hold weekly data team meetings.
- 2) Identify a strong student data “dashboard” system that can provide a better, more streamlined view of a student’s profile, and generate bi-weekly reports with targeted data.
- 3) Use “Student Success Plan” or portfolio tool to track student goals, progress, academic and non-academic needs, trends and support strategies. Some LSG members felt the ideal tool should be something that could also be used with families and students.
- 4) Identify better, more targeted diagnostic tools:
 - a) Academic: for groups of students not making progress (not sure if current tools such as Galileo can do this)
 - b) Non-academic: better methods for assessing and understanding students and possible barriers to learning (learning readiness, non-academic barriers)

B. Recommendations: Supporting All Students to Learn at the Highest Levels

Except where noted, LSG members unanimously wanted to forward the recommendations in this section.

- 1) Continue to use an extended school model. Most LSG members recommend extending Parker’s day by an additional 60 minutes beyond the current schedule, for a total of 90 minutes. (Parker is one of two schools in the district that already extends the day by 30 minutes). LSG members felt that further extending the day would provide several key benefits:
 - Additional academic learning through a richer variety of methods including integration with arts, music, etc.
 - Time for tutoring and other remediation and acceleration support
 - Additional time for teachers to use data and plan more targeted instructional support
 - Additional time to understand and address student needs (student success plans)
- 2) Review afterschool programs and how programming can better support both student learning and Parker improvement priorities (currently delivered by three providers: New Bedford Parks, Recreation & Beaches Department; YWCA; and New Bedford Art Museum).
- 3) Create summer learning experiences/summer academies that help:
 - a) Incoming preschool and kindergarten students (3-5 year olds) prepare to come to Parker
 - b) Current students access high quality summer learning opportunities
- 4) Expand Parker’s preschool program: Parker currently runs a small program focused on students with special needs. LSG members feel that more could be done to support learning and build relationships with families and younger siblings earlier - and that, in particular - could help address the literacy development lags seen with many incoming Parker students.
- 5) Develop a stronger student support strategy:
 - a) Possibly reactivate Parker’s “Family & Children Learning Together” (FACT) team: this multidisciplinary team of community agency and school staff representatives, facilitated by Parker’s student adjustment counselor, could serve as a mechanism for aligning school and community support with student and family needs (intervention and wraparound support). LSG members recommended reviewing the purpose and role of the team, as well as the role of parents on the team.
 - b) Develop school-wide use of a consistent, coherent set of practices to support positive behavior and mitigate non-academic barriers, e.g., trauma-sensitive practices, positive behavior systems/PBIS.
- 6) Continue implementation of the Reading Street program in Grades 3-5 (new reading program rolled out by the district in summer/fall 2013). While still early in the process, LSG members feel implementation of the new program is going well and that staff and parents are seeing positive signs, e.g., more engaging instruction, wider

variety of assignments that better engage students. Several LSG members also recommended continuing the Empowering Writers program, which they view as a strong complement to Reading Street.

- 7) Identify a strong early grades literacy acceleration strategy:
 - a) Start implementation of Reading Street at lower grades.
 - b) Look at WIDA (ELL/language development) as an approach that could benefit all students as a literacy accelerator.¹⁰
 - c) Consider starting a literacy volunteers training program similar to an initiative currently being launched at another district school (parents are trained to read aloud to classrooms, provide reading help).
- 8) Add an Assistant Principal position that would focus more on behavior and behavioral interventions. This role could also include management of family and community engagement initiatives. Several LSG members underscored the demands of turnaround on leadership, the need to balance the load on the principal, and the importance of the instructional leadership role teachers need the principal to play.
- 9) Special Education
 - a) Consider an integrated co-teaching model, with one SPED teacher at each grade level serving as co-teacher.
 - b) Review process of identifying and referring students to substantially separate classrooms; strengthen referral process.
- 10) Math
 - a) The district's math lead is currently evaluating math programs (district math curriculum decision). The LSG recommends that Parker use the program selected by the district and be in the first wave of schools to begin implementation (following the same strategy used with the district's Reading Street implementation process).
- 11) Science
 - a) Identify and implement a consistent science curriculum, with materials that are fully aligned with grade level learning standards (current materials are not well aligned).
 - b) Designate a room as a science center or lab.
 - c) Provide more professional development to help teachers maximize science kits.
- 12) Upgrade Parker's technology infrastructure (smart boards; hardware and internet access). Hardware in classrooms and in the school's computer lab is out-of-date and internet access is unreliable.

C. Use Talents and Assets of Partners to Improve Students' Learning

LSG members unanimously wanted to forward the recommendations in this section.

- 1) Identify a person who can coordinate partner involvement.

Currently the principal and other staff (student adjustment counselor) work to maintain relationships, field requests, and develop new partnership and support opportunities. LSG members feel this work merits a more structured staffing model given the role partners and assets could play in supporting Parker turnaround priorities, particularly related to family engagement, support for non-academic barriers, and summer, extended day and afterschool learning activities. LSG members outlined several possible staffing options:

- Having a dedicated school staff position
- Folding responsibility for family and community engagement into a new assistant principal position
- Partnering with a community agency who could provide onsite partnership development support
- Activating the "Community Resource Specialist" position recommended by the Child & Youth Readiness Cabinet

¹⁰One member noted that this approach would require professional development to ensure that all staff is appropriately trained.

- 2) Partner with a community-based multiservice agency or organization that could operate from the school and provide multiple forms of support (wraparound services and referrals, afterschool programming, parent engagement support, e.g., home visits, adult workforce development).
- 3) Partner with organization(s) that can provide literacy support, e.g., mentoring, readers, training for parents as volunteers, home literacy development support, interpretation and translation support.
- 4) Partner with an organization that can help build strong connections with parents/families who do not speak English, and those from the New Bedford immigrant community. LSG members feel an important factor that may be contributing to low parent engagement is the number of families for whom English is not a first language (school data shows that the percentage of FLNE families has increased from 14% to 20% since 2011). LSG members recommend that Parker staff learn more from these families in order to target parent engagement and student support efforts.

LSG members also provided the following information about **current and potential** partnerships and community resources that could be leveraged to support turnaround:

Current Parker partners

- UMass Dartmouth: three work study students onsite certain days/hours to coordinate volunteers
- Child and Family Services: school-based counseling, Caring Network starting in January (groups and afterschool support)
- Gifts to Give: new initiative focused on parent read-aloud, training for in-school classroom reading support
- New Bedford Community Connections Coalition Family Resource and Development Center: family support worker at the school 2 hours/week (2nd year of this) who currently supports 10-12 families (wraparound referrals, some parent activities); offered parent survey
- Police Resource Support: resource officer based at Keith Middle School also provides some support at Parker
- St. Mary's Church (Dartmouth): food and gift support around the holidays
- PTO
- FACT committee: meet every other month, district-wide model, support for at-risk students, wraparound support (see B.5)

Other possible community assets not currently partnering with Parker

- AMIGOS Project: language support, support connecting parents to the school
- Sea Lab: summer program
- Buzzard's Bay Coalition: environmental program
- Lloyd Center for the Environment
- Whaling Museum
- Ocean Exploratorium
- Free Fun Fridays (Highland Street Foundation)
- Parker had a robotics program but teacher who ran it is no longer at the school

D. Maximize Engagement & Support of Family and Community Members

Except where noted, LSG members unanimously wanted to forward the recommendations in this section.

LSG members recommend a multifaceted strategy to engage parents including:

- 1) Continue the current shift in making Parker feel more welcoming to parents. LSG members attribute the current shift to several factors including:
 - Hiring choices (hiring staff who want to be at Parker; the addition of bilingual and bicultural staff – including interns and mentors from area colleges -- might be more welcoming to parents)
 - Principal and staff practices related to visibility, communication, and access -- aided by the work both veteran and new-to-Parker teachers are doing as part of the new Massachusetts educator evaluation system,

particularly on two MEES components: making the school more welcoming and two-way parent/teacher communication

- 2) Start home visits: LSG members unanimously recommend that Parker initiate a home visit program modeled after the “Parent Teacher Home Visit Project” (<http://www.pthvp.org/>), a national model which is currently being implemented at Carney Elementary in New Bedford, and also in Springfield.

Program features recommended by LSG members:

- The program should be voluntary for both teachers and families (families would not be targeted based on perceived need, etc.)
 - Visits can take place where families are most comfortable (may not always be in the home).
 - Teachers should receive stipends for their involvement.
 - Some LSG members also felt it might be beneficial to have an initial focus for the program; for example, PK/K students and their families who would benefit from establishing a strong parent-school relationship in their first years at the school that would carry forward through Grade 5.
- 3) Parent learning opportunities: LSG members recommend offering parent workshops (or a parent academy) with initial instructional support and “parents as partners” focal points but that could expand later to include other parent education and capacity building opportunities, including parent leadership development, adult learning/workforce development opportunities. LSG members highlighted examples of similar approaches in Springfield and Boston.
 - 4) Create a parent center at the school: LSG members recommend creating a physical space at the school that would serve as a welcome center and hub for coordinating family and community engagement activities (e.g., home visits, parent workshops/parent academy, etc.). Members also recommended having a bilingual/bicultural staff person to coordinate activities (see also recommendations B.8 and C.1. related to staff support for family and community engagement)
A majority of LSG members felt that creating the parent center should be the first of the parent engagement recommendations implemented – it represents a physical sign of the school’s priority on parent engagement and a natural starting point for organizing a robust parent engagement effort.
 - 5) Involve community partners who can help facilitate connections with parents and provide parent support (see also recommendations C.1-4, D.3-4 on areas where LSG members feel partners could be leveraged to support turnaround).

E. Other Recommendations

- 1) Playground: LSG members strongly and unanimously recommended that a playground be built for the school. Currently the school has a paved lot and sand area (no play structures, equipment, etc.)
- 2) Leadership Continuity: A majority of LSG members recommended keeping the current principal. They highlighted the current progress and the importance of leadership continuity as Parker moves forward and begins to implement the Level 5 turnaround plan. LSG members feel that Parker’s students and families have experienced a large amount of staff turnover and change. Several group members also highlighted the investment in staff training, in particular with the new Reading Street program, and the positive shift in teacher-parent relationships.
- 3) Professional Development: LSG members recommend a strong program of professional development so that staff has the appropriate training and coaching support to implement turnaround plan strategies. As part of this support, LSG members recommend adding a math instructional specialist/coach at the school. Currently Parker has a .40 FTE Reading Specialist focused on Grades 3-5 Reading Street implementation.
- 4) One LSG member suggested the need for a Turnaround Manager to assist the principal.

Purpose, Intended Outcomes, and Discussion Topics for Parker LSG Meetings

Upon designation as a Level 5 school, state law requires that the Commissioner develop a Turnaround Plan for accelerated improvement and outlines a timeline and process accordingly. The first step in this process is for the Commissioner to convene a local stakeholder group. The guidance below is designed to help Local Stakeholder Group members understand that process.

Purpose of the Level 5 School LSG

- To engage in an evidence-based conversation regarding the core issues and challenges facing John Avery Parker Elementary School and identify what the school community believes are the key challenges creating barriers to its students' academic progress.
- To make recommendations to the Commissioner about the key components of his turnaround plan for Parker, "in order to maximize the rapid academic achievement of students."

The Commissioner has chosen to increase the intensity to a Level 5 intervention for Parker because he believes that despite the efforts taken during the first three years of turnaround, a different mix of interventions and practices are required to put the conditions in place for an educational experience that prepares all of Parker's students to succeed. He looks forward to the LSG's ideas for how to create substantial change at the school – change that will secure rapid improvement in the academic achievement of students.

Intended Outcomes

Through the LSG's discussion and exploration of the data, to generate a set of rigorous, evidence-based recommendations that will provide the Commissioner with input directly from the Parker community and advise him as he creates his Level 5 Turnaround Plan.

The Local Stakeholder Group will consider

- The key **issues and challenges** facing the school, and the district's support of the school;
- The impact and sufficiency of the **strategies and supports** employed by the school to date – what has worked, what has not worked;
- The **school's and district's capacity**—including its systems, polices, and use of resources—to fully implement proposed strategies; and
- The **interventions and practices** that are most likely to promote rapid improvement of student achievement.

Within 45 days of its initial meeting, the stakeholder group shall make its recommendations to the Commissioner. Meetings of the local stakeholder group shall be open to the public and the recommendations submitted to the Commissioner shall be publicly available upon submission.

Meeting focus areas and discussion questions are described below.

Meeting #1: What does the evidence tell us about the key issues and challenges facing Parker?

Data will be presented regarding the school and its performance.

Questions for discussion:

- What do the data tell us about where the school is now? What do we know about changes to the data over the past three years?
- What do the data tell us about the school's core assets and strengths?
- What do the data tell us about the school's core challenge areas?
- How is Parker using data now to inform instruction? How does the school select the most relevant data to use? What are Parker's greatest strengths in using data? Greatest challenges?
- What data tools, skills would the school need to push the school to the next level?
- What does the LSG recommend to the Commissioner about how the school can better use data tools, skills, and resources to improve instruction?

Meeting #2: How can Parker support all students to learn at the highest levels?

Information will be presented regarding the school's existing structures and supports that facilitate all students' learning.

Questions for discussion:

- What do LSG members believe to be the most significant academic challenges at the school?
- What strategies has the school already tried to overcome these academic challenges? What worked? What didn't work?
- What strategies can the school try to improve literacy in the early grades (grade 3 and below)?
- What specific supports has the school tried to facilitate English Language Learners' (ELLs') learning? Are they working? How do you know?
- What specific supports has the school tried to facilitate the learning of students with special needs? Are they working? How do you know?
- Is the school currently challenging all students to work to their highest potential? If not, what specific actions can be taken to increase the level of rigor in Parker's instruction?
- What does the LSG recommend to the Commissioner about how the school can support all students to learn at the highest levels?

Meeting #3: How can Parker maximize the assets and talents of partners to improve students' learning?

Information will be presented regarding existing partnerships with the school.

Questions for discussion:

- What partners currently work at the school? In what academic and non-academic areas do they provide support?
- What areas do you believe need partner support?
- What structures are in place to align partner efforts with school goals?
- What structures are in place to coordinate efforts between partners?
- If you had to pick just three of the school's current partner initiatives to continue, which would you select? Why? Is there evidence to show how these partners are being effective in the school?
- Does the school have an unaddressed (or under-addressed) challenge area that you believe could benefit by a partner's support? Which one, and why?
- What does the LSG recommend to the Commissioner about how the school can maximize the assets and talents of partners to improve students' learning?

Meeting #4: How can Parker maximize the engagement and support of family and community members for students' learning?

Information will be presented regarding existing family (family members of students at the school) and community (other community members or organizations unrelated to students at the school) engagement efforts at the school.

Questions for discussion:

- While engagement varies by individual, how would you rate the overall level of family member engagement at the school (low/medium/high)? What evidence supports this rating?
- While engagement varies by individual, how would you rate the overall level of community engagement at the school (low/medium/high)? What evidence supports this rating?
- What structures are in place to encourage family member and community engagement at the school? (e.g. regular, frequent schedule of calls to students' families; annual community open house, etc.) Are they working? How do you know?

Note: Please identify school-wide efforts, not unique efforts by individual teachers or staff members.

- How do school leaders and/or the school's partners bolster the school's structures to encourage family member and community engagement? What has worked? What else could school leadership and/or partners do to facilitate engagement?

- How can family and community members' talents be incorporated into the strategy to improve the school's academic performance?
- What does the LSG recommend to the Commissioner about how the school can maximize family and community members' support to maximize students' learning?

Note: A portion of this meeting will be used to finalize the recommendations made across all meetings.