



Massachusetts Department of
**ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY
EDUCATION**

**Report to the Legislature:
School Leadership Academies Training Initiative**

Line-item 7061-9411
April 2009

**Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary
Education**

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April 2009

Dear Members of the General Court:

I am pleased to submit this *Report to the Legislature: School Leadership Academies Training Initiative* pursuant to Chapter 182 of the Acts of 2008, line-item 7061-9411 that reads in part:

“For the creation of leadership academies for principals and superintendents ..., that ... shall focus on expanding and increasing the capacity of the principal or superintendent to be an instructional and educational leader within the district or school; provided further, that said training shall include, but not be limited to: training in effective personnel evaluation, curriculum development, with a focus on aligning the district and school curriculum with the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks established pursuant to chapter 69 of the General Laws, school based management skills with a focus on distributed leadership, data analysis skills that enhance the capacity of the principal or superintendent to use student achievement data to drive instructional change and techniques for developing collaborative relationships with parents and community organizations....”

Since FY07, the legislature appropriated \$2 million to support the development and implementation of the School Leadership Academies Training Initiative for identifying, training, and supporting principals and superintendents in order to increase their abilities to provide effective instructional and educational leadership for improving student achievement. Leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to student achievement. Leading our schools into the 21st century must be exceptional, highly qualified, culturally proficient, extremely capable and committed individuals, who will shape the professional environment, provide enlightened and collaborative leadership, develop and retain quality teachers, organize resources to improve teaching and learning, and respond to the ever-changing needs of students and parents.

The shared need for developing school leaders in a cohesive and systematic way among Massachusetts' 391 districts, diverse in size, geographic location, and type, requires devising inventive ways to maximize existing capacity while developing new structures and systems to support school improvement initiatives. Since FY07, funding from the legislature enabled the Department to join with the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS), the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC), the Massachusetts Elementary School Principals Association (MESPA), the Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators Association (MSSAA), Future Management Systems (FMS), a consultant firm experienced in leadership and

organizational development, and DWJ Solutions, a school reform partner, to launch new leadership development initiatives as the Massachusetts Education Leadership Alliance. These initiatives are detailed in the report.

Massachusetts has made a tremendous investment over the past few years to put in place the foundations for a comprehensive system to ensure the numbers of highly qualified leaders, who continue to grow and develop over the course of their careers, to meet new challenges. Experience and a growing body of research tell us that without effective leadership for the quality teaching that we know bears results for student achievement, all of our investments in school improvement efforts are not likely to succeed in turning around struggling low performing schools. Dire financial times will require ever more strategic collaboration and efficiencies. In order to stay on track to meet long-range goals for expanding the scope of educational leadership to focus more strategic and coherent effort on improving student achievement, the Leadership Alliance must be sustained and the leadership development services it provides must be expanded, continually assessed and refined.

In these uncertain times, when school districts are struggling more than ever to maintain current levels of teaching staff, programs and services, continued funding for leadership is essential to enable the Department and their Alliance partners to provide critical support in a cost-effective and strategic manner to high need urban, small/rural and under-performing districts. By coordinating and focusing our efforts on essentials, and eliminating duplication of effort wherever possible to maximize resources, we will keep moving closer to a more cohesive leadership development system for Massachusetts.

The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education's FY10 expansion budget recommendations request continued funding of \$1 million in FY10 to enable the Leadership Alliance to continue to provide support to local school districts across the state through its Leadership Academy initiatives and to expand the promising initiatives and regional pilot programs described in this report. With the elimination of this appropriation in the recent House budget there will be significant impact on NISL training for 350 school and district participants for 24 urban districts; training a new cohort of 12 district-based NISL trainers for Boston, Chelsea, Lawrence, Springfield, and Worcester Public Schools; formative evaluation of the comprehensive Regional Leadership Development program and Leadership Services support programs in the Leadership Alliance's five pilot districts to determine feasibility of extending regionally coordinated leadership development services to additional high-need districts; coaching services for NISL-trained district and school leaders and district leadership teams for 24 urban districts; and among other activities, the expansion of the transition program for superintendents and school committee members to meet the project demands of 50 districts.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact Associate Commissioner David Haselkorn at 781-338-3562.

Sincerely,

Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Introduction

It is with great pride that I submit this *Report to the Legislature: School Leadership Academies Training Initiative* pursuant to Chapter 182 of the Acts of 2008, line-item 7061-9411 that reads in part:

“For the creation of leadership academies for principals and superintendents ..., that ... shall focus on expanding and increasing the capacity of the principal or superintendent to be an instructional and educational leader within the district or school; provided further, that said training shall include, but not be limited to: training in effective personnel evaluation, curriculum development, with a focus on aligning the district and school curriculum with the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks established pursuant to chapter 69 of the General Laws, school based management skills with a focus on distributed leadership, data analysis skills that enhance the capacity of the principal or superintendent to use student achievement data to drive instructional change and techniques for developing collaborative relationships with parents and community organizations....”

Since FY07, the legislature appropriated \$2 million to support the development and implementation of the School Leadership Academies Training Initiative for identifying, training and supporting principals and superintendents in order to increase their abilities to provide effective instructional and educational leadership for improving student achievement. Leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to student achievement. Leading our schools into the 21st century must be exceptional, highly qualified, culturally proficient, extremely capable and committed individuals, who will shape the professional environment, provide enlightened and collaborative leadership, develop and retain quality teachers, organize resources to improve teaching and learning, and respond to the ever-changing needs of students and parents.

Three years ago the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education began to address the need to prepare and support leaders to meet these challenges. Toward this end, and with support from the Wallace Foundation and the Massachusetts Legislature, the Department has been working with the Massachusetts Education Leadership Alliance to:

- Define what “strong instructional leadership” looks like in a standards-based educational system by specifying the skills and knowledge required;
- Develop state performance standards to guide school leaders and provide a tool for holding leaders accountable;
- Provide training and support for promoting the knowledge and skills required for current educational leaders to be successful;
- Create the pre-service components to enable current and future leaders to meet the rigorous demands of educational leadership in the 21st century;
- Establish new licensure requirements that link directly to professional administrator responsibilities (standards) and to leader training programs;
- Expand on current recruitment policies and build systems of support to attract and retain proven instructional leaders in the lowest performing schools, where they are needed most;

- Develop and implement a comprehensive leadership development continuum in Massachusetts; and
- Develop a sustainability plan with districts to extend the benefits gained from the Regional Leadership Development Pilot.

Many of the pieces needed for a comprehensive statewide system of leadership development and support are now in place. The hard work going forward will be to refine, expand, and sustain these efforts at a high level of quality as they are brought to scale statewide. This will require a strategic and ambitious vision for comprehensive leadership development in the Commonwealth over the next ten years that results in the various pieces being brought together to form a coherent system for recruiting, retaining, supporting, and continually developing educational leaders along a continuum of skills, knowledge, and behaviors from pre-service to mastery. In partnership with the Springfield and Boston Public School Districts and the Leadership Alliance, the Department has articulated a vision for a cohesive leadership career continuum that includes clear action plans to achieve short, intermediate, and long-term goals.

Accomplishing these goals will require the formation of strategic partnerships and coalitions between and among constituencies that are invested in the provision of high quality public education, like the Massachusetts Education Leadership Alliance.

The Massachusetts Education Leadership Alliance

Massachusetts continues to face a critical shortage of experienced and well-prepared school leaders – a shortage facing many states across the nation. Recent studies through the Massachusetts Elementary School Principals Association (MESPA) indicate that over the next five years, 48 percent of Massachusetts’ principals will retire. As of January 2009, 40 percent of the principals currently serving in Massachusetts are new to the job for no more than three years. In addition, the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents reports that over 200 superintendents left their positions between 2004 and 2008, and annual turnover of superintendents is anticipated to continue at an average rate of 50 per year. If Massachusetts is competing with other states for the diminishing resource of school and district leaders, “growing our own” may be the most effective tool.

The shared need for developing school leaders in a cohesive and systematic way among Massachusetts’ 391 districts, diverse in size, geographic location, and type, requires devising inventive ways to maximize existing capacity while developing new structures and systems to support school improvement initiatives. Since FY07, funding from the legislature enabled the Department to join with the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS), the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC), the Massachusetts Elementary School Principals Association (MESPA), the Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators Association (MSSAA), Future Management Systems (FMS), a consultant firm experienced in leadership and organizational development, and DWJ Solutions, a school reform partner, to launch new leadership development initiatives as the Massachusetts Education Leadership Alliance.

Leadership Alliance members continue to identify unmet professional development needs of current school and district administrators, along with school committee members, and to develop and refine program offerings to address those needs. All of the Leadership Alliance's leadership development initiatives infuse cultural proficiency into their training.

The Leadership Alliance also continues to review ways to improve working conditions for leaders and build stronger networking support and collaboration among principals, superintendents, and school committee members. The Alliance itself is modeling this collaboration.

The research-based programs and services organized by the Leadership Alliance to date, and funded in whole or in part through line-item 7061-9411, are described below.

National Institute for School Leadership Executive Development Program

In FY08, approximately half of line-item 7061-9411 funds were directed to support The National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) instructional leadership training program. As the centerpiece of the Commonwealth's ambitious statewide effort to provide instructional leadership training and support to all school principals in the state over the next several years, the NISL program continues to engage growing numbers of participants from among our current district and school leaders. The research-based principles of learning, teaching, and curriculum upon which the NISL training is built also serve as a reference point for the array of other professional development offerings the Leadership Alliance delivers or supports.

The two-year NISL Executive Development for School Leadership curriculum focuses on:

- Training in standards-based instructional systems aligned by the Department and NISL staff with the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks;
- Training in data analysis skills related to student achievement data;
- Capacity to take learning theory into practice, by providing skills and knowledge to enable principals to be instructional leaders in literacy and math in their own schools; and
- Training principals in distributed leadership strategies that will assist in developing the professional capacity of school staff.

Supplemental curricula for serving students with special needs, serving second language learners, and leading improvements in science instruction, begun in FY07, are now included in an enhanced NISL training program that more fully address the needs of Massachusetts public school leaders. Such updates and enhancements will continue as needed to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of the program.

With the cooperation and support of Leadership Alliance members, the Department continues to deploy the NISL Executive Leadership Training Program for School Leaders in three ways: 1) training highly qualified, experienced district and school leaders to deliver the NISL curriculum; 2) organizing the delivery of the NISL training program to prepare school leaders to meet the challenges of increased accountability; and 3)

providing technical assistance to districts and to other states to tailor and implement the NISL program in their particular context.

Building a Shared Vision of Effective Education Leadership

The relatively accelerated growth of the NISL training program, enabled over the past three years by both the Wallace Foundation and the legislature, is resulting in a shared, research-based vision of what leaders need to know and be able to do in order to provide the optimum conditions for student success in all of our schools in this century. Participation in the training has helped broaden our concept of education leadership at every level and provided a common language for educators within schools, across districts, and throughout the state to talk more clearly about where and how best to focus their efforts on the core work of educating kids. The training has also armed leaders at the school and the district level with new skills and practical strategies for getting that work done and enlisting resources and support essential to successful implementation of effective instructional management systems.

As of January 2009, the leadership line-item has helped fund 26 training cohorts from 28 school districts, including all but two of our urban centers, with new cohorts beginning each year, and growing interest from more and more districts. To date, a total of 793 school and district leaders have participated in the program; 387 of those have completed the two-year training. Based on 2008 enrollments, this means a potential positive impact in the classroom for some 270,955 Massachusetts public school students.

The remarkable progress we have made so far is the result of a strategic planning and rollout process, consistent leadership for the project, and continuous support from the Commonwealth.

- ***In FY05*** a cohort of 55 selected principals and district administrators from the highest need districts participated in the NISL “train the trainers” program and became certified to deliver the Massachusetts NISL curriculum to their local district and school leaders.
- ***In FY07*** the leadership line item allowed us to launch the first eight cohorts (240 participants) being trained by the 55 certified trainers.
- ***In FY07*** the Department selected another cohort of 40 highly qualified educators to become NISL trainers who completed their training in January 2009. They join the 55 trainers to bring our state’s pool of certified trainers to 100.
- ***In FY08***, participation in the Commonwealth’s NISL training program more than doubled, from 240 participants from 14 districts that began training in FY07, to 700 superintendents, principals, district administrators and school leadership team members from 25 high need districts now participating this year, receiving their training as part of nine new regionally-based training cohorts.

- *In FY08* the leadership line-item funded new training cohorts in three of the largest urban districts (Boston, Worcester, and Lawrence).

In early 2009, this newly minted cohort of in-state trainers will be the first to complete an apprenticeship, spending approximately six months with trainers in active cohorts as a final support and quality control measure before they are assigned to lead a training. To continue to ensure consistency of quality and fidelity of curriculum, executive coaches from the national NISL staff are providing support to the in-state NISL training teams currently delivering the NISL curriculum to Massachusetts district and school leaders. In addition to adding an apprenticeship as a standard part of the NISL training, the Department has invested in the development of a Massachusetts NISL training facilitator's guide that includes specific strategies and tools for teaching the NISL curriculum and checking for learning, and emphasizes approaches that have proven successful in training the first eight Massachusetts school leader cohorts. The Facilitator's Guide is now being used by all of the trainers, who have been encouraged to contribute especially effective activities, assignments, and strategies as part of a regular revision process.

Additional benefits of the NISL Program

There is a growing body of compelling research showing the centrality of a new kind of instructional leadership for improving student achievement. The NISL training offers busy school and district leaders a valuable opportunity for "on the job" training in 21st century leadership for learning. If we are to recruit and retain the numbers of highly qualified leaders we will need to achieve our goals for all our students, our commitment to training and supporting the continued growth of our educational leaders needs to include other incentives and possibilities for improving the difficult working conditions and the increasing demands on them.

The National Institute for School Leadership has collaborated with a number of private and public universities in Massachusetts to encourage institutions of higher education to offer graduate credit to participants who successfully complete the NISL training program toward the award of principal licensure and/or graduate degrees.

- In June 2007, Lesley University admitted the first group of eight NISL participant principals to its doctoral program. Participants will receive 24 graduate credits at Lesley for successful completion of NISL training, and will qualify for reduced tuition for other doctoral program costs.
- In 2008, Fitchburg State College agreed to grant graduate credits toward a master's degree or administrator certification (CAGS) for completion of the NISL curriculum, as well as reduced tuition. Five participants are currently enrolled.
- Nova Southeastern, a private university in Florida, has also made arrangements with NISL to grant 24 graduate credits and reduced tuition in their leadership doctoral program. Thirty-five participants are currently enrolled.

- Discussions are currently underway with several Massachusetts state universities about the possibilities for similar arrangements.

These agreements not only attest to the caliber of the curriculum, they provide added incentive for district and school leaders to make the substantial commitment of time and effort required for full participation in the Commonwealth's 18-month NISL executive leadership training program.

From the state's perspective these opportunities facilitate a growing cadre of leaders whose practice is based on developing theories, and national research on successful school improvement initiatives. So far, fifty school and district leaders are taking advantage of this opportunity to extend their academic growth and hone their professional skills to the highest levels. The cross-pollination of content and expectations between the NISL program and higher education will also maintain a crucial link between theory and training on the one hand, and changing practice to meet current needs of leaders in the field on the other.

As a result of the progress here in Massachusetts with a statewide leadership training effort with the NISL curriculum, and the principles of "leading for learning" at its core, leaders from ten other states have visited to observe our strategic system of program delivery during the past year, and some are working with NISL to begin statewide training programs of their own.

At present, NISL training is being offered in 11 other states. Training is being offered at the state level in Pennsylvania, Mississippi and Minnesota; at the district level (moving towards statewide) in Colorado, Arizona and New Hampshire; and at the district level in Texas, New York, Maryland, and Illinois.

Leadership Academy

Pilot for Regional Leadership Development

In March 2007, the Leadership Alliance created a Leadership Academy to explore the costs and benefits of combining resources in five diverse districts with limited infrastructure to secure the leadership development programs that would enable these districts to meet the needs of current and aspiring leaders. Beginning with Leominster, Fitchburg, Ashburnham-Westminster, Athol-Royalston, and Winchendon as pilot districts, the goal of the project was, and continues to be, meeting the growing needs of the selected region by delivering a strong systemic approach to leadership development that is aligned with the larger statewide system. In addition, this pilot program has provided an opportunity for these five districts to collaborate, and share training and resources beyond the Leadership Academy offerings.

In addition to providing NISL instructional leadership trainings to principals, superintendents, and central office staff in four of the five regional pilot districts (Ashburnham-Westminster chose not to participate at this time), the Leadership Alliance is offering the following services to school and district leaders in the five pilot districts and other districts prioritized for state assistance.

Leadership Services

Leadership Coaching Support for NISL Participants

In February 2007, the Leadership Alliance trained 26 coaches in order to provide individual and leadership team coaching to all superintendents and principals in the five pilot districts as well as ongoing coaching services for NISL districts upon completion of their NISL training. To date, thirty five superintendents and principals from the five pilot districts have received coaching services from the Leadership Alliance coaches. By FY09, all coaches received NISL training, supplementary training in data analysis and other professional development. In addition, coaches attended five mandatory Coach Connect Days to foster their development as a *learning community* and to discuss coaching challenges and brainstorm solutions to these challenges.

For the past two years, the coaches go to other districts to provide individualized action planning, goal setting, and objective, supportive and, corrective feedback to principals. In addition, they serve as knowledgeable resources for school and district leaders. Beginning in FY09, the superintendents, principals, and coaches in each of the five pilot districts hold regular team meetings to set SMART goals, integrate district and school goals, and work more effectively to increase student achievement across their districts.

The Leadership Alliance provides leadership coaching services to improve and expand the leadership skills and knowledge of leaders by helping them reflect critically on their own practice, by integrating and aligning school and district goals, and by changing their leadership behaviors so that all students within their charge will achieve at high levels of proficiency. Survey data reveals an overwhelming majority of the participating superintendents and principals view this coaching experience as valuable professional development.

Leadership Team Development

A key finding from the research on effective leadership is the understanding that new demands made upon leaders cannot be met by one individual, however dynamic and knowledgeable. Sitting leaders are overwhelmed by both increasing responsibilities and increased accountability. Their frustration is contributing to a de-stabilizing turnover rate of 40-50 per year, which inevitably undercuts continuity and momentum on improvement initiatives. In response to this need, the Leadership Alliance began in October 2007 to provide a leadership coach in each of the five pilot districts to work with their leadership team. The goal is to support and guide each district as they form, develop, and put in place the policies and processes needed to sustain an interdependent, high performing leadership team able to focus and align all resources within their school systems, and from the community, in order to improve student achievement.

This year's work on focusing and improving leadership coaching includes:

- Assessing and confirming plans for each district's leadership team development, discussing goal setting processes, and facilitating appropriate action planning;
- Administering standardized assessment instruments to each district's leadership team and conducting a group session to provide each team with feedback and guidance on how to best use this information to further positive team results;

- Integrating research on effective professional learning communities and concepts of culturally proficient leadership practices into this year's team development; and
- Creating and implementing a plan to make the leadership team development program sustainable.

While it is too early to assess the impact of this year's program, as a result of last year's effort, the superintendents and central leadership made a specific commitment to a team approach to using key data to plan, implement and monitor changes designed to increase learning. Another important positive impact was an increase in both the willingness and the skills to take on tough issues within the district and effectively deal with arising conflicts in a collaborative and supportive way. The teams also reported recognizing the need to continuously hone their problem-solving and decision-making skills, and that such efforts must be anchored in standards and data.

Aspiring Leaders

The Leadership Alliance has created a series of voluntary workshops designed to address the needs of individuals new to education administration in order to prepare novice and aspiring administrators for the challenges facing 21st century school leaders. In FY09, 27 out of the 36 participants are currently working assistant principals or school administrators and the remainder are aspiring leaders. In addition, a mentoring component was added to the Aspiring Leaders Program so that each of the 36 participants has an opportunity to meet with an experienced administrator to help facilitate their ongoing growth and learning and guide them with career placement.

Career Pathways Seminars

The goal of the Career Pathways Seminars is to give potential and new administrators an opportunity to explore the challenges and rewards facing those in administrative positions, examine the knowledge and skills necessary for educational administrators, and develop a personal career action plan. To that end, the Career Pathways project has developed a statewide career seminars program that is offered in different locations across the Commonwealth for newly licensed administrators and aspiring leaders.

The Leadership Alliance began in November 2008 to offer a series of five workshops that will be scheduled through June 2009. Through an interactive format, aspiring principals, assistant principals, and district leaders will examine the standards and expectations for specific administrative positions, hear first-hand about individual experience, and get recommendations from administrators working in the field. Participants will also complete individual skill self-assessments.

The target audience includes newly licensed administrators, current principals and assistant principals who aspire to move to another administrative role, and teachers who are considering a career in administration. Twenty-seven participants attended the first workshop, *Becoming a Secondary Principal*. Approximately half of the attendees are employed as assistant principals or in some administrative capacity. Presently over 40 individuals are registered for the second workshop, *Moving from Teaching to Leading: The Job of the Assistant Principal*, and over 30 participants have registered for the third workshop, *Becoming School or District Instructional Leaders*.

The Career Pathways Seminars provide new opportunities for those considering a career in educational administration or those changing administrative positions. Participants reflect on the requirements of the job, and identify personal goals and areas for improvement. Individuals will have a chance to follow-up with a mentor who will help them refine their career action plan after their participation in the workshop. Attendees will be encouraged to strategize about how they may prepare for and secure employment in administration.

Adaptive Leadership Training

Adaptive Leadership is a concept and practice developed by Ron Heifitz at the Harvard Business School in recognition of the fact that leadership in a complex environment requires a deeper examination of the many variables that impact decision-making. The most obvious solutions, or solely “technical” responses, may not provide the best long-term results. In 2005, a statewide adaptive leadership training initiative began. Since that time, over 70 superintendents have been trained in the theory of *Adaptive Leadership* and practiced using a structured, collegial consultancy model designed to improve their decision-making skills.

In FY09, the Education Alliance will be offering *Adaptive Leadership Training* to all first and second year superintendents (approximately 60 individuals) as part of their professional development. To date, over 250 MASS members have attended orientation presentations introducing the principles of adaptive leadership. Over 150 of those members report they have worked with colleagues on complex issues using Adaptive Leadership techniques. In several regions of the state (Cape Cod, Worcester County, Connecticut Valley) superintendents have extended the training and use Adaptive Leadership protocols with their principals.

Given the significant turnover of superintendents, and an increasing number of new superintendents, Adaptive Leadership techniques can be a critical common training experience that also provides a structured, collegial model for sound decision-making. According to the evaluations of the program’s impact conducted by the Center for Public Policy at the University of Massachusetts during its three years in operation, participating superintendents report that the training led to improved decision making and increased job satisfaction.

Transitions

The Leadership Alliance designed the Transitions Program to systematically provide support to new superintendents and school committee members in order to smooth operations during increasingly frequent transitions in leadership at all levels.

In FY08, the Leadership Alliance developed and implemented transitional workshops and trainings for the Waltham Public Schools and roles/responsibility training for the Auburn Public Schools. They are providing direct and group mentoring and customized transitions training to two other districts (Arlington and Winchendon) undergoing changes in district leadership, as well as one district (Chelsea) ending a 20-year partnership with Boston University.

Each of these districts utilized a self-assessment tool created by the Alliance to help district leaders determine their district's needs in relation to transition issues. The resulting information proved helpful in the process of matching school districts' needs to superintendent candidate profiles.

School Committee Chairs Leadership Training

The Leadership Alliance is currently developing resources and training materials to cultivate and mentor successful school board chairs and to train aspiring chairs for success. In addition, the Alliance will produce a series of regional leadership training sessions focused on: meeting management, team building, parliamentary procedure, cultural proficiency, and managing difficult people. In FY09, the Alliance expects to train and provide ongoing mentorship and resources to 50 to 60 school committee members.

Leadership and Licensure Program for Superintendents (LLPS)

In a more direct response to the dwindling pool of qualified candidates and the high, steady rate of 50 turnovers annually at the superintendent level specifically, the Alliance is in the process of designing the LLPS to recruit and develop a cohort of successful school and district leaders to be the next generation of school superintendents.

Candidates with a proven track record of successful building and/or district leadership who have demonstrated instructional leadership qualities will be recruited directly by current superintendents of schools.

The LLPS Program, with the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents and the Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators' Association as lead partners, in collaboration with *Teachers21*, Massachusetts Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, and Boston College, is a three-year doctoral program designed specifically to develop the next generation of superintendents. The program emphasizes instructional leadership, supervision, cultural competence, accountability and assessment, business and finance, personal and legal issues, and provides candidates with a mentor. The three-year cohort program culminates in a project-based dissertation. Completers will also be assisted in acquiring the superintendent's license. The first cohort of 24 candidates will begin the program in June 2009.

Other Leadership Alliance Initiatives

Women's Educational Leadership Network (WELN)

The Women's Educational Leadership Network is a joint partnership between the Department and the MASS, and is funded in part by the Wallace Foundation. The Network's mission is to create, promote, and support a culturally diverse professional network where all women can recognize their leadership potential, have opportunities to act on that potential, and mentor a future generation of women leaders.

The WELN has planned, funded and hosted five day long conferences held in March and December 2006, April and October 2007, and November 2008. Current and aspiring women leaders representing 85 districts and four education collaboratives from across the Commonwealth attended these WELN events. Approximately 100 school and district leaders per session have come together to examine leadership challenges and experiences unique to women in leadership roles.

Conference attendees have included superintendents, assistant superintendents, curriculum coordinators, budget and human resource directors, SPED directors and pupil services directors, principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders. In addition to encouraging the development of women as educational leaders at all levels, the WELN conferences have led to expanded networks and increased communication among administrators within and between districts throughout the Commonwealth.

In FY09, the WELN expanded to include two regional networks, consisting of between six and ten superintendents and assistant superintendents who meet several times during the year to work together on case studies relevant to their work, and hold facilitated discussions of timely research. There is currently a waiting list of 27 women interested in either joining an existing regional network or developing a WELN regional network of their own.

Cultural Proficiency

The emergence of an increasingly global economic and cultural context requires those of us charged with educating all of our children to address the need to promote cultural proficiency in our students, educators, and leaders. Governor Patrick's 2008 educational plan entitled "Ready for 21st Century Success: The New Promise of Public Education" highlights the importance of cultural proficiency in the preparation of students for the realities of 21st century economic and social life.

Cultural proficiency is the ability of the individual to assess their values and assumptions about difference as it relates to culture. Being blind to the impact that the various cultures teachers and students bring with them to the learning culture of schooling and on student performance remains a barrier to helping all of our students attain academic proficiency and prepare for productive citizenship.

In FY08, the Alliance made a commitment to promoting the need for culturally proficient educational policies and practices by embedding them in their work. To launch that mission on one front, a cultural proficiency committee of Alliance members has taken responsibility for educating its various constituencies through a series of presentations on the role of cultural proficient practice in building school cultures of excellence that provide optimum learning conditions for teachers and students. Among these were presentations to the Governor's taskforce for *The Skills for the Twenty First Century*. The Alliance has also:

- Created a cultural proficiency resource list and tools that have been disseminated to all Alliance partners and distributed to their constituent groups;
- Created and distributed basic training materials that can be used by Alliance members to introduce cultural proficiency within their organizations; and
- Created a survey on cultural proficiency to be used as a data-gathering tool for districts and organizations engaging in cultural proficiency work.

This initiative is yet to be fully realized as a statewide plan for ensuring this essential element factors in all of our decision-making and improvement initiatives directed at the classroom. The design and implementation of the Fitchburg Public Schools Cultural Proficiency Pilot Project is a major step forward in figuring out how to bring leaders,

educators and students to cultural proficiency. The goal of this project is to support the superintendent and district leadership in their development as culturally proficient leaders in order to strengthen their ability to meet the needs of their increasingly diverse student populations.

In addition to developing partner relationships with social and cultural organizations in the community, the Fitchburg Public Schools have enlisted the cultural proficiency committee to develop a series of workshops to be delivered in all sectors and levels of the district to help deepen their understanding of why and how the use of cultural proficient strategies can enhance student learning. We will be watching closely to learn all we can from this bold experiment. To begin, we will collect data throughout the project that enable us to evaluate the success of this systemic professional development model and use this learning to improve and adapt for rollout across other school districts.

Evaluating Program Effectiveness

As we continue to develop and integrate the elements of our leadership development system, both formative and summative evaluations of the effectiveness of programs and initiatives are vital to our commitment for continuous improvement. In addition to soliciting participant responses to all leadership offerings, formal evaluations are conducted for each Education Leadership Alliance initiative to inform data-based enhancements, planning and decision-making.

Given the scope of the NISL training initiative, we have enlisted the services of *Meristam Group (LLC)* to conduct a multi-phased evaluation. The first phase of the evaluation assessed the process of rollout and the first year of training. It includes participants' perceptions of their NISL training experiences. The executive summary of that evaluation report is attached as Appendix A. Phase two of the evaluation will determine the impact on student achievement, and the final report for that phase will be published on the Department's website in summer 2009.

An informal preliminary evaluation of the Regional Leadership Development Pilot was also completed this year (Appendix B). The Department is planning a formal evaluation of the pilot's impact on systematizing collaboration among district leaders in spring 2009. At the end of two years of individual coaching, a board of advisors from the professional associations will provide input to help shape the evaluation. Goals will include assessing whether the training:

- Has ongoing relevance to the field;
- Is improving the quality of instructional leadership in the Commonwealth;
- Is building and strengthening collaboration among principals, superintendents and school committees; and
- Is contributing to improved student achievement.

At the end of each WELN and Career Pathways workshop, participants complete a MASS evaluation on the impact and value of the workshop as it relates to their leadership role. As part of its ongoing evaluation of the Aspiring Leaders program, the Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators Association (MSSAA) collects participant evaluations from each activity and professional development program. In

addition, to help shape future decisions regarding its development efforts, the Cultural Proficiency Steering Committee continues to gather data from students and teachers about their school experience and the impact of cultural barriers on student achievement.

Going forward, the Leadership Alliance will look at the larger picture and how these evaluations can be coordinated and synthesized to help determine the effectiveness of each element, as well as determine which element would add value in other districts throughout the Commonwealth.

Recommendations for FY10 Funding

Continue to Build Capacity and Ensure Sustainability

The work of the Massachusetts Education Leadership Alliance continues to deepen and mature. The unique collaboration between the Department and statewide professional organizations continues to be productive and instructive, as it works to assess and meet the training and support needs of different constituent groups. The Leadership Alliance remains strongly committed to actively participating in training and preparing leaders to face the challenges of the 21st century.

A great deal of progress has been made as a direct result of these collaborative efforts. However, planning and work need to continue in order to address the ongoing conditions and needs of the profession.

- *Isolation:* Administrators are not fully prepared to single-handedly take on the mantle of leadership.
- *Little or no support:* Both novice and veteran leaders arrive on the job without either the systemic assistance or support they need to succeed. This results in significant turnover, and diminishes the likelihood of positively impacting student achievement.
- *Lack of systemic training:* Many of today's leaders are ill-prepared to manage and integrate instructional leadership and organizational management.
- *Inadequate political skills:* District leaders often do not have the skills to develop productive partnerships with their municipalities, leading to ongoing struggles over budgets and appropriations.

Continued funding for the Massachusetts Education Leadership Alliance's unified leadership development initiatives will enable the expansion and refinement of these needed supports and services. The successful implementation of each of these pieces will also contribute to establishing an effective and cohesive statewide system for recruiting and retaining outstanding leaders, well-prepared and supported to lead for learning at each level of administration.

The progress of the past three years must be sustained and expanded if we are to meet the state's urgent need for new leaders who stay and grow in their roles. Programs organized

by the Leadership Alliance will continue to be staffed by experts from the Department, educator associations, consulting partners, and universities by doing the following:

- Recruit potential leaders, assess leadership capability, provide high quality, coordinated and relevant professional development, and support mentoring and coaching to sustain effective leadership practices;
- Expand *Transitions Program* to increase the number of districts needing this service;
- Investigate statewide evaluation program that coincides with proposed standards;
- Extend NISL experience by developing professional learning communities to deepen knowledge and support;
- Provide follow-up NISL training in order to meet the ongoing and changing needs of districts;
- Continue to extend NISL trainings throughout the state;
- Develop leadership career continuum to include professional development opportunities for each career pathway on the continuum; and
- Build strong partnerships with leadership preparatory programs and districts to support newly hired principals and superintendents.

The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education's FY10 expansion budget recommendations request continued funding of \$1 million in FY10 to enable the Leadership Alliance to continue to provide critical support to local school districts across the state through its Leadership Academy initiatives and to expand the promising initiatives and regional pilot programs described in this report. FY10 funding would be used to support the following programs and services:

- NISL training for 350 school and district participants for 24 urban districts¹;
- Training a new cohort of 12 district-based NISL trainers for Boston, Chelsea, Lawrence, Springfield, and Worcester Public Schools;
- Formative evaluation of the comprehensive Regional Leadership Development program and Leadership Services support programs in the Leadership Alliance's five pilot districts to determine feasibility of extending regionally coordinated leadership development services to additional high-need districts;
- Coaching services for NISL-trained district and school leaders and district leadership teams for 24 urban districts;
- Expansion of the transition program for superintendents and school committee members to meet the project demands of 50 districts;
- Development of public policy to institutionalize a cohesive leadership development system for the state;
- Expansion of career pathways seminars to provide more opportunities for recruiting future leaders;
- Statewide development of cultural proficiency model for districts and community partners as one means of addressing student achievement gap.

In FY10, the Massachusetts Education Leadership Alliance expects to lead a working group of constituents in the development of clear state policy on the development of

¹ NISL urban districts are Boston, Brockton, Chelsea, Chicopee, Fall River, Fitchburg, Framingham, Haverhill, Holyoke, Lawrence Leominster, Lowell, Lynn, Malden, New Bedford, Pittsfield, Revere, Somerville, Springfield, and Worcester.

leaders at every level of education. The success of this next phase of Education Reform and the future of public education in Massachusetts will rely, in part, on institutionalizing a cohesive leadership development system for recruiting, training, supporting, and sustaining the large number of educational leaders that will continue to be the driving force for quality public education.

FY10 Massachusetts Education Leadership Alliance Proposed Budget

Leadership Development and Training Initiatives	Cost
Career Pathways	\$55,000
Coaches & Coaching Services for NISL Districts	\$200,000
NISL Training for Principals and Leadership Teams	\$400,000
Team Coaches & Training support for Pilot Districts	\$100,000
Transitions Program for Superintendents/School Committees	\$100,000
Cultural Proficiency - Training and Integration	\$100,000
Facilities and Materials	\$25,000
Program Evaluation	\$20,000
TOTAL	\$1,000,000

Conclusion

Funding from the legislature and the vital support of our district and Leadership Alliance partners have enabled the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) to continue developing and implementing an ambitious system to address the statewide crisis in leadership.

We will need to continue to expand, deepen and coordinate these components to meet a dual challenge: recruit, train, develop, and sustain the large number of new school leaders who need to be prepared to support all students to the highest level of achievement, and continue to develop and support the current leaders to meet the potentially overwhelming responsibilities for educational leaders in the 21st century standards-based environment. Establishing and systematizing a leadership development continuum provides incentives and support for ongoing professional growth for leaders, and clear standards for what leaders need to know and be able to do at each transition point from aspiring through mastery licenses. The continuum will offer a long-term approach to bringing more people into the field and keeping them as they continue to grow and become increasingly more effective in their roles.

Continue to deepen and expand this leadership training and support system, centered in the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) Executive Development Program, beyond its currently successful 25 high-need urban districts and five pilot districts is necessary. We need to update and augment the curriculum where appropriate to keep up with research on effective programs and practices both in Massachusetts and nationally.

Preliminary program outcomes indicate that the NISL program’s immediate goal of building effective leadership for standards-based education is showing signs of success.

The shared knowledge base and common language are enabling cross-district learning and collaboration among school and district leadership teams. Results also show that following NISL training, school leaders are spending more time in classrooms supporting teachers and improved classroom instruction. Understanding how to use student performance and other data to support instructional decisions has been increased. Principals are reporting that NISL training has had a positive effect on the design, operation, and effectiveness of their school leadership teams, and they are actively seeking ways to share NISL strategies both within their school and district setting.

The involvement of Massachusetts professional organizations of principals, superintendents, and school committees represented in the Leadership Alliance has been critical in identifying and defining the unique needs of different constituent groups. School and district leaders are already reporting the positive impact. Furthermore, efforts to attract and retain high quality leaders and build the skill level of all leaders are gaining momentum and moving toward coherence.

Massachusetts has made a tremendous investment over the past few years to put in place the foundations for a comprehensive system to ensure the numbers of highly qualified leaders, who continue to grow and develop over the course of their careers, to meet new challenges. Experience and a growing body of research tell us that without effective leadership for the quality teaching that we know bears results for student achievement, all of our investments in school improvement efforts are not likely to succeed in turning around struggling low performing schools. Dire financial times will require ever more strategic collaboration and efficiencies. But in order to stay on track to meet long-range goals for expanding the scope of educational leadership to focus more strategic and coherent effort on improving student achievement, the Leadership Alliance must be sustained and the leadership development services it provides must be expanded, continually assessed and refined.

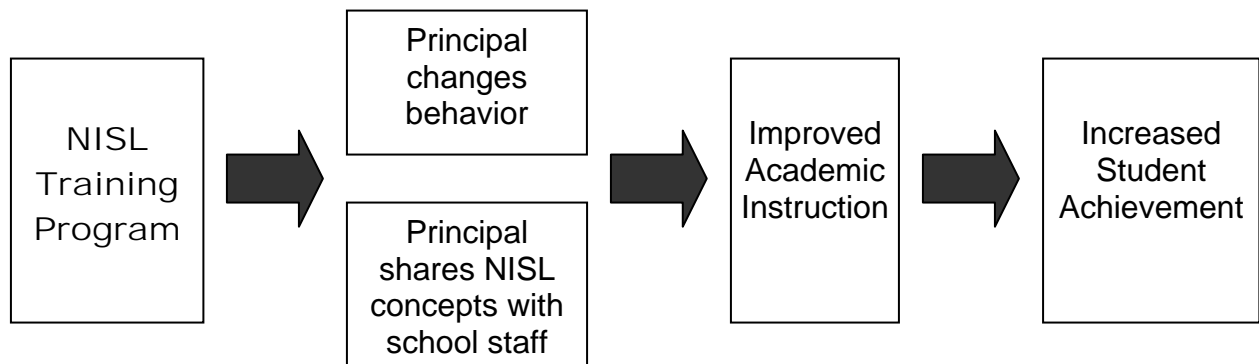
In these uncertain times, when school districts are struggling more than ever to maintain current levels of teaching staff, programs and services, continued funding for leadership is essential to enable the Department and their Alliance partners to provide critical support in a cost-effective and strategic manner to high need urban, small/rural and under-performing districts. By coordinating and focusing our efforts on essentials, eliminating duplication of effort wherever possible to maximize resources, we will keep moving closer to a more cohesive leadership development system for Massachusetts.

Appendix A – Evaluation Report on Massachusetts Implementation of the NISL Program; Meristam Group

Executive Summary

In July 2005, Massachusetts began the first state-level implementation of the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) Program. This effort was organized and led by the Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE), in cooperation with the Urban Superintendents Network. The National NISL office was contracted both to provide the curriculum and to assist with its implementation in Massachusetts.

Ultimately, the NISL Program seeks to substantially improve student academic achievement by promoting high-quality, standards-based academic instruction in the schools. However, neither students nor teachers are direct participants in the training activities conducted by the NISL Program. Instead, the program is focused on school principals, while also involving other school and school district administrators. This reflects a belief, grounded upon both school improvement research and experience, that successful student achievement and high-quality academic instruction depend upon the presence of effective, standards-based instructional leadership. As a result, the NISL Program seeks to ensure that effective, standards-based instructional leadership becomes the core of the school principal's role.



To achieve this leadership development outcome, the program seeks to shift fundamental values, beliefs, and assumptions of principals and other administrators around what it takes to be an effective school leader. This involves building a deeper understanding of what constitutes primary evidence for student learning, changing how principals allocate their time during the day, and developing a principal's ability to strengthen the decision-making and critical thinking capacities of their faculty.

Implementation of the NISL Program is not considered to be the sole responsibility of NISL. Rather, this responsibility is accepted by its local clients/partners with substantial, ongoing guidance and support from the National NISL office. In Massachusetts, DOE and the participating local school districts have taken this role.

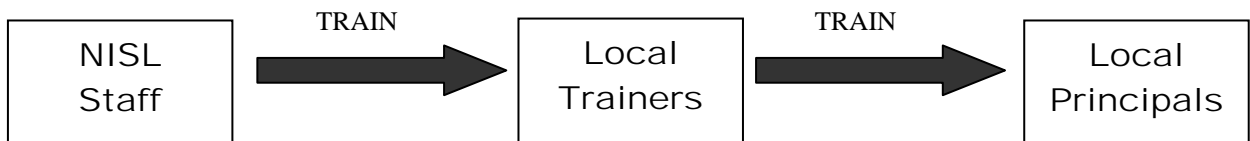
Curriculum. At the heart of the NISL Program is an extensive, written curriculum designed to guide principals in becoming effective, standards-based instructional leaders.

The curriculum is delivered in 28 full-day sessions and is organized into four courses: **World-Class Schooling: Vision & Goals** (course #1); **Focusing on Thinking & Learning** (course #2); **Developing Capacity & Commitment** (course #3); and **Driving for Results** (course #4).

The original design of the curriculum included thirteen units (each focused on a specific topic): a one-day simulation, which came at the end of the second course after unit 8; a two-day coaching institute, which occurred between the second and third courses; and a two-day simulation, which came at the end of the final course, after unit 13. The design of the curriculum was modified by the National NISL office for fall 2007 in response to requests from DOE and recommendations in the *Preliminary Evaluation Report*. The current design of the curriculum added a new two-session unit focusing on science instruction and merged two of the one-session units with the second day of the previous unit.

In addition to the activities conducted during each full-day training session, the NISL Program also includes two categories of activities that participants complete outside the actual training session. For each of the sessions (except for the three simulation sessions), participants are asked to complete “pre-work” prior to the session. Participants also are assigned “homework” to complete in their school or district after the unit ends. Many of the homework activities seek to link and integrate the current unit with previous units.

Implementation. The NISL Program employs a “train-the-trainer” approach to implement its curriculum. With NISL, this approach includes two types of training. The first type of training focuses on preparing local administrators and consultants to become local trainers and use the NISL curriculum to train other school administrators. The second type of training focuses on informing, guiding, and supporting local principals and other administrators to apply and use the NISL concepts and methods to improve instruction and increase student achievement. The National NISL staff focus their time primarily on the first type of training. The local trainers focus their time primarily on the second type of training. In theory, this approach allows the NISL Program to quickly expand – by training a much larger number of participants than could be directly served by National NISL staff.



Currently, implementation of the NISL Program in Massachusetts has encompassed three training cycles. The first training cycle began during the summer of 2005 and continued through the summer of 2006. The second training cycle began during the summer of 2006 and will conclude during the summer of 2008. The third training cycle began in the summer of 2007 and will conclude during the fall of 2009.

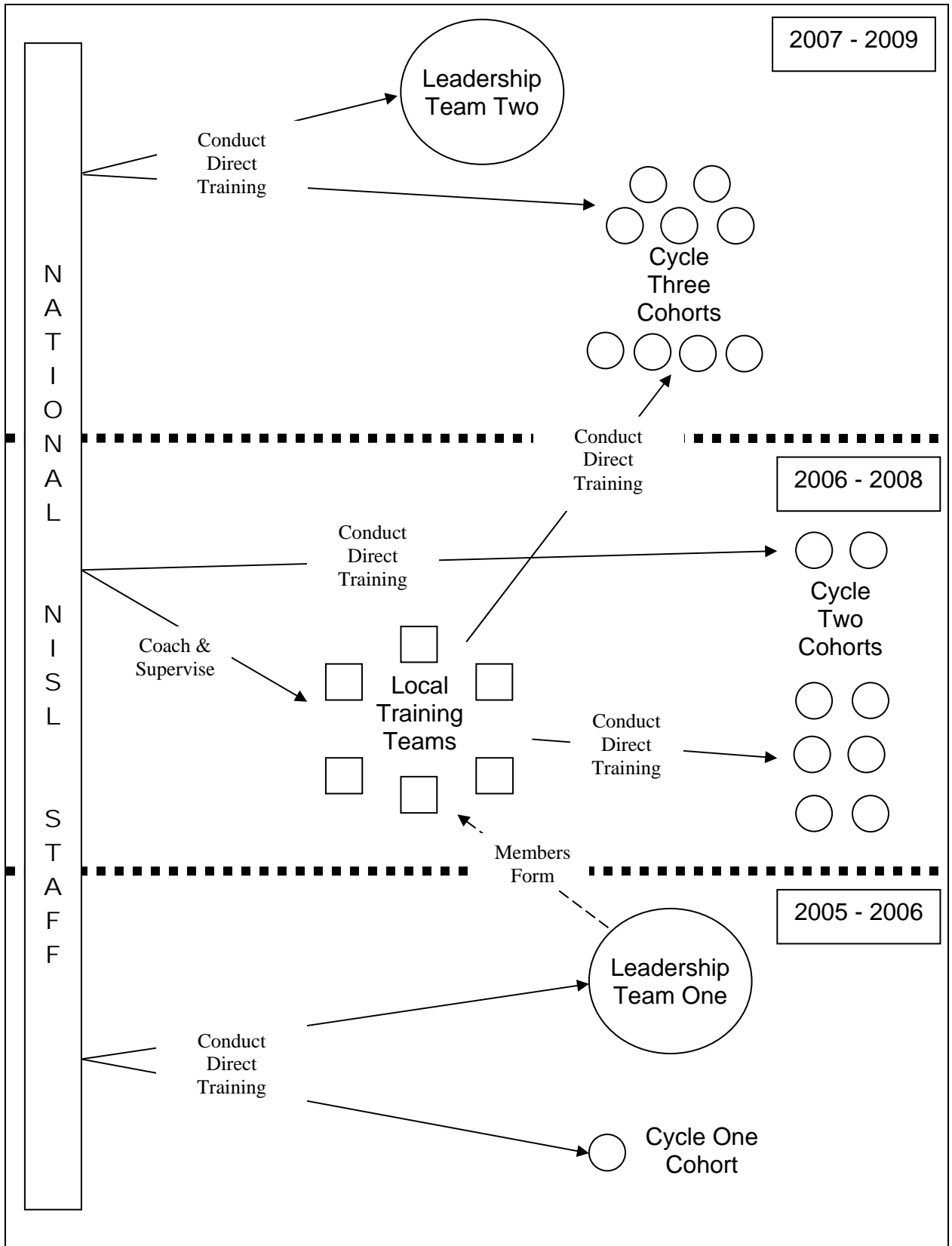
Participants. Two groups of administrators, consultants, and university faculty (“Leadership Teams”) have participated or are participating in the first type of NISL training discussed above – receiving training to become NISL Local Trainers. In addition,

19 groups of Massachusetts administrators (“Participant Cohorts”) have participated or are participating in the second type of NISL training – receiving training in the application of NISL concepts and tools in their schools and districts. There was one NISL cohort in the first training cycle. Ten were in the second training cycle. Eight were in the third training cycle. An additional cohort will begin soon, and at least four additional cohorts are currently in the planning or discussion stage. If established, these will all be added to the third training cycle.

Thus far, all of these cohorts have been funded either directly or indirectly by DOE. Almost all have been directly funded under the state’s NISL initiative. In a few cases, a school district has chosen to use funds received from the state under a broader leadership development grant to support the establishment of a cohort.

The Cycle 1 cohort was directly trained by the same National NISL staff involved in conducting the training for Leadership Team One. The members of Leadership Team One who successfully completed their training were organized into local training teams and conducted the NISL training for eight of the Cycle 2 cohorts. Two of the Cycle 2 cohorts were trained directly by Dr. Marge Sable (Lead NISL Trainer for Massachusetts). In addition, National NISL staff were involved in presenting specific NISL units (generally units 6 and 7) for most of the Cycle 2 cohorts. Among the Cycle 3 cohorts, four are being trained by local training teams drawn from members of Leadership Team One. The other five are being directly trained by National NISL staff. The new cohorts currently being considered for Cycle 3 will also be trained by the National NISL staff. Since 2005, over 700 individuals have participated in the NISL Program in Massachusetts. The vast majority (more than 660) were administrators at the school or district level. The size of the Program has grown steadily with each cycle. During the first cycle, there were 80 participants. During the second cycle, there were about 290 participants. During the third cycle, there were about 340 participants.

NISL Participant Cohorts (2005–2009)	
<p><u>First Training Cycle</u> Holyoke Cohort (26 participants)</p>	
<p><u>Second Training Cycle</u> Brockton Cohort I (24 participants) Fall River Cohort I (36 participants) Fitchburg-Leominster-Somerville Cohort (34 participants) Lowell Cohort (32 participants) Malden-Revere-Chelsea Cohort (32 participants) MESPA Cohort (29 participants) New Bedford Cohort I (30 participants) Pittsfield Cohort (31 participants)</p>	<p><u>Third Training Cycle</u> Boston Cohort I (42 participants) Boston Cohort II (33 participants) Brockton Cohort II (17 participants) Fall River Cohort II (37 participants) Lawrence Cohort I (41 participants) Lawrence Cohort II (35 participants) New Bedford Cohort II (29 participants) Worcester Cohort (33 participants)</p>



Impact of NISL Program

The evaluation identified preliminary outcomes of the NISL Program by administering an online written survey in September 2007 to all participants. At that point, two of the cohorts in the second training cycle (MESPA and New Bedford) had just completed the training under the NISL Program. The others were still participating in the training. Responses were received from 154 of 240 participants (64% response rate), including 85 of 125 principals (68% response rate).

Time Use by Principals. All school administrators in the first training cycle and three-quarter of them in the second training cycle reported appropriate time use changes. These reports were generally confirmed by the district administrators. Changes reported were generally in line with the types of changes advocated by the NISL Program. Most administrators reported spending more time on classroom visits and observations. A much smaller proportion described how they actually spent that additional time in the classroom (i.e. observing or discussing teaching, instructional practice, curriculum use, and student work). Overall, a greater proportion of participants in the Holyoke cohort (compared to those in the second training cycle) increased their time in the classroom and used that time to discuss and observe student work.

Level of Knowledge. Participant responses to several narrative items in the online written survey were assessed by the evaluation team to assess the level of knowledge demonstrated in seven topics related to instructional leadership and explicitly addressed by the NISL Program. About one-third demonstrated adequate knowledge in six of the seven areas.

These results were not a surprise. At the time the outcome survey was administered, only two of the eight cohorts in the second training cycle had completed the NISL training. The iterative nature of the NISL curriculum means that topics are introduced in one unit and then discussed further in later units – allowing participant knowledge to build during the course of the program. Moreover, both Leadership Team members and participants have emphasized the rich, but complex nature of the NISL Program and the wide variety of topics covered during the training sessions. Mastering this material during the course of the training program was challenging.

Higher attendance may contribute to greater demonstrated knowledge by NISL participants. Although the knowledge differences between participants with high and low rates of attendance were relatively small, these differences were consistently observed across all topics examined by the evaluation.

Development of Principals as Instructional Leaders. On the online written survey, participants were asked to describe any actions taken in their school to strengthen instructional leadership or improve instruction based on their experiences in the NISL Program. Their responses were analyzed using the same seven categories as in the knowledge assessment.

The vast majority of NISL participants (86%) reported that they were motivated by their NISL training experiences to begin to implement NISL concepts in their school. A

majority (53%) began to work on multiple concepts. Not surprisingly, participant action paralleled participant knowledge. Thus, participant action was most prevalent with regards to three areas: leadership teams, effective instructional practices, and student data use. These were the same three areas where the largest proportion of participants demonstrated adequate levels of knowledge.

Development of Building-Based Leadership Teams. The NISL Program encouraged principals to establish or strengthen the operation of a building-based leadership team to support effective instructional leadership in the school. All of the school administrators in the first training cycle and 79% of the school administrators in the second training cycle have an operational leadership team in their school. In fact, 15% of the school administrators in both training cycles reported that they created a leadership team in their school for the first time as a result of their NISL experience. The vast majority of school administrators (84%) reported that participation in the NISL Program had a positive impact on their school leadership team.

Sharing NISL Concepts in the Schools. The logic model of the NISL Program assumes that principals and other school administrators will actively share the concepts, strategies, and tools learned during the NISL training with their colleagues in the school. Effective implementation of the NISL Program in a school relies upon such a pro-active dissemination effort. Virtually all of the school administrators (99%) reported at least occasional efforts to share what they learned with others, while 78% reported regular dissemination efforts in their schools. A majority of the school administrators (51%) reported using multiple strategies on a regular basis for dissemination of the NISL Program. More than one-quarter of them (27%) reported using at least four strategies on a regular basis for that purpose.

Operation and Culture of Schools. Based on its logic model, the NISL Program should have a short-term impact on several aspects of a school's operation, including staff interactions, their use of data, instruction in language arts and math, and student engagement, as well as overall staff morale and school culture. In the online written survey, NISL participants in both the first and second training cycles were asked to rate the impact of the NISL Program on these areas of their schools.

A substantial majority of NISL participants (at least 64%) reported at least a moderate impact in every area. However, only a relatively small proportion (generally less than one-quarter) of participants reported a substantial impact. Participants who were more active in implementing the NISL Program in their school also reported a greater impact from the NISL Program on the operation and culture of their school.

Impact on Students. Given the logic model of the NISL Program, it is unlikely that measurable changes in student academic outcomes will be observed in the participating schools and districts during NISL training or immediately after NISL training concludes. This is true even if changes in leadership or teaching practices occur.

In fact, the evaluation revealed that there was no consistent pattern of changes in MCAS results in May 2007 compared to baseline results from 2005 for the cohort in the first training cycle and from 2006 for the cohorts in the second training cycle. At this point, it

does not appear that NISL training had an immediate and incremental impact on student academic achievement as measured by the MCAS.

Revised Program Recommendations	
Training Teams Preparation & Support	Preparation and support activities should emphasize: (1) communicating key issues in each session to participants, (2) balancing and integrating interactive training methods with lectures, video presentations, and group discussions, and (3) effectively incorporating both local issues and the personal knowledge and experiences of the trainer into the design of each training session.
Composition of Training Teams	Team members should possess a complementary set of skills, experiences, and perspectives to more effectively respond to the various challenges associated with the NISL Program. Teams should be supported to develop and institutionalize procedures and practices that allow it to effectively plan, deliver, and debrief the training activities.
Training for District Administrators	NISL Program should incorporate a set of differentiated activities that can enable district leadership and administrators to support principals in becoming instructional leaders. To develop these activities, NISL and DOE should consult with district leadership and administrators to ensure that these activities are grounded in and informed by these authentic experiences.
NISL Coaches	Roles should be defined around: (1) providing ongoing support to the local training teams to build their capacity as effective trainers and facilitators, and (2) ensuring quality and appropriate fidelity in the participant training. DOE and NISL should work with the NISL Coaches and Leadership Team members to identify specific tasks, strategies, and requirements. A written guide defining this role should be created.
Attendance	DOE, NISL, and the participating school districts should work together to ensure that NISL participants understand that they are expected to attend all NISL training sessions. DOE should also develop a more formalized system for collecting and archiving attendance data and for supporting the process of making up missed sessions. The system should use online, web-based tools to automate the process to a greater degree, shift greater responsibility to the participants, and substantially reduce the burden of this function for DOE.
Logistics	DOE and NISL should develop a Logistics Manual for distribution to school systems and other agencies responsible for conducting the NISL training sessions. DOE also should develop agreements with, and create incentives for, participating school districts that require them to take more responsibility for effectively managing the logistics of the training sessions.
Program	Participating school districts should work with the state to develop

Follow-up & Sustainability	follow-up plans and identify the resources to implement these plans. Plans could include options focused on the individual, as well as those focused on maintaining group work. The NISL training program should be seen by all as part of an on-going permanent commitment on the part of administrators, districts, and the state to strengthen and maintain high-quality instructional leadership in the schools.
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Appendix B - Informal Preliminary Evaluation of the Regional Leadership Development Pilot

An informal survey was distributed to the five districts in the pilot program. Surveys were distributed to superintendents, principals, and coaches at the end of the first year of coaching services. Below are representative comments from the five pilot district superintendents on their perceptions of the impact of individual coaching for their leadership teams. There was an overwhelmingly positive report from all parties about the services offered and received.

Question 1: To what degree do you think individual members of your leadership team benefited from their leadership coaching experience?

“Principals at the elementary level greatly benefited from the coaching and invested their time and energy. The entire team benefited from the work that (the Coach) did with us and have built on her work as we move forward. The Asst. Supt. has integrated many of (the Coach’s) “streamlining” and organizational strategies to increase the overall efficiency of how the team works. The more senior principals with 25-40 years experience have used their coaches in different ways – most often task oriented rather from a broader approach.”

“I think that the coaching was an excellent experience for all of my principals. The coaches were very knowledgeable.”

“I have heard nothing but positive comments from all of my principals regarding this coaching initiative. Each coach was well suited to the individual needs of the principals. The HS principal received help in preparing a HS restructuring, The Alt Ed HS principal received lots of practical advice as well as assistance in creating a more structured and rigorous program. The Academy principal received great practical advice for an inner city principal as well as a good sounding board. In all everyone was very satisfied and looking forward to next year.”

“My team and I all commented on how beneficial the coaching was to advancing our individual plans.”

Question 2: What are some of the benefits faculty may have experienced as a result of the leadership coaching their principal received?

“Elementary principals benefited by targeted work on evaluations, teacher relations, faculty meeting formats, and succession planning.”

“The coaches helped to walk the principals through some difficult situations or situations that they were not familiar with. Therefore, I think the principals approached these situations with more confidence and a broader perspective. That was a benefit to the faculty.”

“A better and more thoughtful approach to the specific topics addressed with the coach.”

Question 3: To what extent have you noticed a change in the leadership skills/behavior of the principal(s) as a result of the leadership coaching program?

“There has been an increase in willingness to look beyond themselves for answers, increase in consulting colleagues for feedback, and less immediate blaming of others for institutional issues.”

“In our weekly principal meetings, principals often mentioned what they were working on with their coaches. I believe that the coaches helped them to see a different perspective.”

“I have noticed some very clear changes. I have seen some very practical growth in building management and curriculum. I think that some of the coaches really gave the principals a sense of confidence in the decisions they were making.”

“The coaching was part of a larger overall plan in our district that resulted in a change in the culture of our district and significant improvement in every phase of school and district improvement plans.”

Question 4: What are some of the ways that you benefited from your leadership coaching experience?

“I greatly value (Coach’s) opinion and experience. (She) and I covered many topics and a few difficult situations that she helped me process.”

“(the Coach was) great for me this year. I was faced with some very serious public health and personnel issues. (She) was able to listen and advise. She was able to share some of her own strategies and help me problem solve. She also made an effort to check in and be available should I need a sounding board. It was a very important support to have (her) working with me. This has been a very challenging year in”

“The leadership team is more focused on student learning and achievement for all students.”

“... with the opportunity to discuss various points and review options my approach was more thoughtful and focused.”

Question 5: To what degree has your leadership coaching experience helped you provide positive and/or corrective feedback to your leadership team?

“We have increased our collaborative efforts and begun moving toward a Professional Learning Community approach.”

“(The Coach) and I discussed a very difficult situation with a member of my central office team. The discussion with (Coach) helped me think it through and gave me the courage to address the situation.”

“I have not shared any of my own coaching experience with my leadership team.”

“On a scale (degree) 1-10, I would say a 9.5.”

“To a large degree. Again, an opportunity to think allowed and have someone provide feedback to you regarding your thoughts and plans is significant.”

Question 6: To what degree have the leadership coaches helped individual members of your leadership team achieve district and building-based goals?

“We have refocused on the District Improvement Plan and individual School Improvement Plans. Action items have targeted decision making in articulation with the DIP and the SIP.”

“Principals and coaches set goals at the beginning of the year as to what they would work on. It was very helpful.”

“Very much so. At least in four cases I am very aware of a direct influence in helping my principals achieve their goals.”

“Regarding the specific district goal as it relates to student achievement, a 9.5.”

“As noted in question #3 there was an overall impact and, in addition, there were individuals who visibly benefited from the opportunity to think allowed and have someone provide feedback.”

Question 7: To what degree has leadership coaching helped you achieve your goals?

“The District Leadership Summit was launched with coaching input and meetings attended by (Coach). The feedback sessions after the first session were attended by the admin staff and individual coaches.”

“Again (Coach) and I covered many topics. We discussed my goals and approaches to them.”

“My coaching was more focused on problem solving and a supportive colleague as opposed to helping me in my goals.”

“9.5.”

“Repeat of #4 (As noted above, with the opportunity to discuss various points and review options my approach was more thoughtful and focused.)”

Question 8: How might the Leadership coaching program be improved?

“More than 1 year commitment at a time – extend the program to include coaches for Asst. Supt.”

“I would like to have more interaction with the coaches so that I could better help them understand where I am trying to take the district.”

“I can’t think of anything that would make it better. That coaches, time spent and quality were exceptional.”

“The model should include assistant principal coaches or have the one principal coach work with both the principal and assistant principal.”

“More opportunity to meet with coaches and extend the opportunity to all administrative staff.”

Question 9: What is the most important thing you learned as a result of your coaching experience?

“Despite 35 years of experience, there is feedback outside the institution that can refresh old ideas and help generate new solutions.”

“The importance of a neutral confidant.”

“To trust my instinct and have confidence in my decision making ability. To find a way to leave the job behind and enjoy myself more.”

“The importance of a professional learning community.”

“I have used a coaching approach in my supervision of teachers and administrators for over twenty years. This coaching experience validated the importance of coaching for me and made me realize how much I needed to sustain contact with a coach.”

Question 10: In what ways would you be willing to support leadership?

“Continue to support Principals and staff and encourage active participation.”

“I would be happy to coach a new Superintendent.”

“In any way I can. I would like very much to be a coach myself.”

“Encourage other superintendent(s) to use this model.”

“Using it with my staff, seeking a coach for myself, advocating the need for more funds to expand the use of coaching.”

Appendix C: Chapter 182 of the Acts of 2008

Line-item 7061-9411

The Governor has reduced the following item by \$1,500,000

7061-9411 For the creation of leadership academies for principals and superintendents pursuant to section 58 of chapter 15 of the General Laws; provided, that said training shall focus on expanding and increasing the capacity of the principal or superintendent to be an instructional and educational leader within the district or school; provided further, that said training shall include, but not be limited to: training in effective personnel evaluation, curriculum development, with a focus on aligning the district and school curriculum with the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks established pursuant to chapter 69 of the General Laws, school based management skills, with a focus on distributed leadership, data analysis skills that enhance the capacity of the principal or superintendent to use student achievement data to drive instructional change, and techniques for developing collaborative relationships with parents and community organizations; provided further, that the department shall issue a report, not later than February 16, 2009 , on the implementation of this initiative, which shall include, but not be limited to, the number of principals and superintendents who have been trained in such academies, the number who have expressed interest in such academies, the level of need for leadership training, the most commonly requested types of training, and a preliminary analysis of the effectiveness of the academies in improving the quality of instructional leadership in the commonwealth; provided further, that said report shall be provided to the secretary of administration and finance, the senate president, the speaker of the house, the chairs of the house and senate ways and means committees and the house and senate chairs of the joint committee on education; and provided further, that for the purpose of this item, appropriated funds may be expended through August 31, 2009 , to allow for principal and superintendent training which occurs in the summer months \$2,500,000
\$1,000,000