

# REPORT OF TWO YEAR FOLLOW UP REVIEW

## Office of Educational Quality and Accountability

### Lucy Stone Elementary School Boston Public Schools

#### Executive Summary

The Lucy Stone Elementary School has made progress since the designation of under-performance in 2003. For the past two years, a School Improvement Plan (SIP), constructed in accordance with the Performance Improvement Map (PIM) process, has been implemented systematically. The plan involved the principal, faculty, and staff in root cause analyses and student assessment analyses in order to redefine curricula and instruction at the school. The updated curriculum was aligned with state standards and incorporated student benchmarks in reading, ELA, and math. Reading First, Reading/Writing Workshop, and an augmented TERC *Investigations* math program are the primary instructional resources used to improve student performance. Professional development training and a support system involving academic coaches have enabled teachers to differentiate instruction, work on higher-order thinking skills, expedite special education student inclusion opportunities, and make use of laptop computers and Palm Pilots to facilitate classroom work.

The PIM process, the improving social climate, the redesigned curricula and instruction, and the utilization of student assessments as an important part of the decision-making and resource allocation process were the engines of change at the Lucy Stone Elementary School. These engines facilitated improved student performance through the 2003-2004 school year. Unfortunately, student performance declined during 2005. Reasons for the decline have been identified, and they are being addressed by principal, faculty, and staff.

The priority programs and practices adopted by the school are well grounded and the school staff is learning how to make effective use of them. The climate of the school supports changes in progress.

#### Priority Findings

- I. The Lucy Stone Elementary School MCAS test performance, which improved between 2002 and 2004, did not meet targets in ELA and math in 2005.
  - Whereas Grade 3 reading scores have improved steadily, Grade 4 ELA and math scores have fluctuated during the past two rating cycles. A

combined 2003-2004 Cycle III MCAS test performance rating of 'Low' in ELA and 'Very Low' in math was reported. The ELA improvement rating was 'On Target' whereas the math improvement rating was 'Above Target.' The school made AYP in both ELA and math in 2004 and made AYP in math in 2003. The 2005 Mid-Cycle IV AYP Report indicated that the school met AYP targets in ELA but not in math. Whereas student academic performance has improved in reading, both ELA and math remained below desired levels.

**II.** The Performance Improvement Map (PIM) process, initiated in 2003, taught the principal, faculty, and staff at the school how to utilize root cause analyses and student assessment data to up-grade curriculum and instruction and to improve student performance.

- The implementation of a data-driven School Improvement Plan (SIP) turned around students' academic performance. The school has a viable system in place to track implementation of the SIP and to oversee regular assessments of progress. Key elements of the system are school-wide goals and instructional approaches, curricula aligned with state standards, continuous monitoring and assessment, and focused professional development.
- The SIP also focused upon improving the climate of the school. Teachers were included on the school's Instructional Leadership Team (ILT); they began to meet weekly as a faculty team; and they adopted programs designed to promote positive social behavior and to build community.

**III.** Significant factors have been identified that impeded sustained student achievement at the school.

- The loss of a well-established Grade 4 teacher for five months of the 2003-2004 school year contributed to behavioral problems, which gained momentum throughout the year and adversely influenced instruction offered.
- The TERC *Investigations* math program used at the school and throughout the Boston Public Schools (BPS) did not fulfill expectations of a majority of the teachers. Teachers interviewed raised questions about the delivery of lessons, the timing of content introduced, the depth of lessons presented, and the periodic gaps in math content encountered.
- Faculty and staff identified a lack of active and constructive instructional leadership by their superiors as an on-going issue. They believed that the principal did not spend sufficient time observing classroom instruction and that the classroom visits from district office personnel did not adequately or effectively supplement instructional leadership. Teachers looked to the school's academic coaches for instructional leadership.

**IV.** The Boston Public Schools and the Lucy Stone Initiative (LSI) provided financial support needed to sustain student academic improvement at the school.

- The BPS provided staff support – a School Support Specialist, academic coaches, and an additional math coach; funds to support before- and after-school tutoring services, instructional resources, and professional development; motivation to change curriculum and instruction practices substantially; and, a monitoring inventory summarized monthly.
- The LSI directed over two million dollars into the school as part of a five-year School Improvement Plan. Funds have been spent on a change coach, tutors, technology resources, a library renovation, and specialized personnel. An LSI annual report, published during the 2003-2004 school year, listed 15 partner agencies.

**V.** Support services for teachers and students now available at the school contributed to the differentiation of instruction and to the varied enrichment and remedial opportunities for students.

- Collaborative Coaching and Learning (CCL), an in-service professional development resource, was embraced by the Lucy Stone teachers. ELA and math coaches, a School Support Specialist and other specialist staff became part of the school's system of teacher support. Teachers valued the instructional leadership provided by the coaches and members of their own group.
- A large number of tutors were provided by the City Year Program, the Jewish Community Relations Council, and the Unitarian Universalist Society of Wellesley Hills. These tutors coordinated work with the academic program teachers, avoided pulling tutees out of core academic classes, and shared student progress with a program coordinator. Tutors worked during the school day as well as during the before- and after-school programs.

## **Two Year Follow Up Review Process**

### **Introduction**

The Two Year Follow Up Review is the fourth and final stage in the process used to assess school performance under the Massachusetts School and District Accountability System. The first stage identifies schools in the lowest MCAS test performance categories that are in need of improvement. Stage two, the Panel Review, involves the visitation of a review team to assist the Commissioner of Education in determining whether a school that has been identified as in need of improvement is underperforming and in need of state guidance to improve student performance. Schools declared to be

underperforming are required to undergo the next stage of the process, the Fact Finding Review, to assist both the school and the Commissioner in determining the reasons for low student performance and in developing a factual basis from which to develop a plan to improve student performance. The Lucy Stone Elementary School developed such a plan, and the Commissioner and Board of Education accepted the plan in December of 2003. The district is required to direct the implementation of this plan, and within two years, the school must have demonstrated significant improvement.

The Underperforming Follow Up Review reports on progress at the end of this two year period of implementation. The Commissioner and Board of Education will use the Follow Up Review report to issue a judgment on the question of chronic underperformance at the Lucy Stone Elementary School. The Follow Up Review was conducted on December 13 and 14, 2005.

The panel's charge was to analyze data and written information on the school's performance and improvement efforts, visit the school, and meet with school and district officials in order to advise the Commissioner on the answers to the following four key questions:

1. Has the school shown improvement in student performance?
2. Is the school effective in using an improvement plan that results in the continuous improvement of student performance?
3. Are there other factors (changes in conditions or circumstances, i.e., policies, practices) in the school or district, which have contributed to or impeded the school's ability to implement their plan?
4. Are the conditions in place to sustain the gains achieved and support continued improvement in student performance?

The panel's response to the above key questions that defined the scope of the review is included in this report. These findings and conclusions are the product of the panel's analysis, discussion, and observation, based on the evidence available to it. A list of panel members who participated in the review is provided in Appendix A. A detailed schedule of the panel's activities is provided in Appendix B.

The panel's findings and conclusions on the four key questions will be forwarded to the Commissioner of Education for consideration, together with the school's status reports and student performance data, in determining whether Lucy Stone Elementary School is deemed to be chronically under-performing. The panel was not asked to formulate a sound plan for school improvement where such a plan does not presently exist or to recommend a course of action to create the conditions for successful implementation of sound improvement strategies where such conditions at present do not appear to exist.

## **Lucy Stone Elementary School Profile**

### **Enrollment**

The Lucy Stone School is one of 67 PreK-5 elementary schools in the Boston Public School system. Enrollment at the school has declined from 204 students in 2002 to 149 students in 2005. In 2005, 86 percent of the students were black, 13 percent Hispanic, and one percent White. The percentage of students whose first language is not English (FLNE) was nine percent in 2002 and in 2005. The limited English proficiency (LEP) population was one percent in 2002 and five percent in 2005; it was slightly higher than five percent during 2003 and 2004. Lucy Stone is a school-wide Title I school with 89 percent of the students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch, which is about triple the state average.

Attendance at Lucy Stone School varied from 90.0 percent in 2002 to 95.0 percent in 2004; it is 93.4 percent currently. Attendance at the school exceeded the BPS attendance rate consistently during these years. During 2005, the attendance rate was below the state rate of 94.2 percent. The student retention rate was 9.9 percent in 2002; it has declined each year since that time. The retention rate is now below the BPS rate, but above the state rate. No in-school suspensions were reported during the period under review; however, out-of-school suspensions increased from 1.5 percent in 2002 to 6.0 percent in 2005. The out-of-school suspension rate remained below the BPS and state rates. City and state rates are for grades PreK-12, whereas Lucy Stone is PreK-5; LS is in the top 25 percent of Boston elementary schools on suspension rate.

Thirty of the 149 students enrolled during 2004-2005 were receiving special education services. Eleven participated in a full inclusion program, whereas 19 were in substantially separated classrooms. The over-all percentage of the enrollment in special education was consistent with the BPS; however, students in separated classrooms were 19 percentage points higher at Lucy Stone because the school houses two BPS substantially separate programs.

### **Staffing**

The Lucy Stone Elementary School staff consisted of a principal, a part-time secretary, a nurse, a .5 librarian supported by LSI, 11.6 teaching positions (n=13 persons), a part-time physical education teacher, and 2.5 paraprofessional positions (n=3 persons) in 2004-2005. In 2002, the staff included 2.4 more full-time teachers, seven more part-time instructors, a librarian, a school psychologist, and a long-term substitute teacher. Enrollment declined by 55 students between 2002 and 2005, which contributed to changes in the school staff.

All of the staff earned bachelor degrees and 13 of the 15 earned Master's degrees. All but two are certified at the elementary school level; certification is pending for the other two. Three hold additional certification in Special Needs and one is also certified in Reading.

The teaching and administrative staff are experienced, ranging from one to 29 years in the classroom; in addition, three persons served as administrators for one, four, and 13 years. Six of the staff members have had a total teaching experience of more than 23 years, whereas three of the staff members taught for five or fewer years. Eight of the staff members taught specifically at Lucy Stone between ten and 16 years, whereas five taught there for three or fewer years.

### MCAS Test Overview

Students at the Lucy Stone Elementary School were tested in the MCAS in Grade 3 reading, in Grade 4 English Language Arts (ELA), and in Grade 4 math during the period under review. The 2005 Mid-Cycle IV MCAS test participation rates were 100 percent for all groups in both ELA and math.

The school's Cycle III combined MCAS test results for 2003 and 2004 resulted in a performance rating of 'Low' in ELA and 'Very Low' in math. The ELA improvement rating was 'On Target,' whereas the math improvement rating was 'Above Target.' The school made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in both ELA and math in 2004 and made AYP in 2003 in math as well. The 2005 Mid-Cycle IV AYP Report shows that performance targets were not met in ELA and math, whereas test improvement and AYP targets were met in ELA but not in math.

Tables 1 through 5 present regular education and special education student MCAS test performance in reading, ELA, and math between 2002 and 2005. Lucy Stone Elementary School results are compared with Boston Public School and state results in each table.

### Student Performance in Reading

Regular education student performance on the Grade 3 MCAS reading test improved considerably between 2002 and 2005. In 2002, 29 percent of the students scored in the 'Proficient' category, 70 percent in 2004, whereas 53 percent scored in this category in 2005. Both state (74 percent) and district (41 percent) students performed much better than Lucy Stone students (29 percent) in the 'Proficient' category in 2002. During 2004 and 2005, Lucy Stone students outperformed the district each year and compared favorably with the state in 2004. Except for the 2003 year, LS results in the 'Warning' category have compared favorably with the state and have been far stronger than the city results.

**Table 1. Lucy Stone School in Comparison to the District and State:  
Regular Education Students  
Grade 3 Reading Results  
2002-2005**

Year	2002			2003			2004			2005		
	School	District	State	School	District	State	School	District	State	School	District	State
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Proficient	29	41	74	40	40	71	70	46	72	53	39	71
Needs Improvement	68	49	23	45	49	26	30	46	25	47	50	26
Warning	3	10	2	15	11	3	0	8	3	0	11	3

**Data Source: Department of Education MCAS Data**

*Note: Performance level percentages are not publicly available if student group is less than 10*

Grade 3 MCAS reading test results for special education students were not reported, because the class sample size was too small.

### Student Performance in ELA

Regular education students' performance on the Grade 4 MCAS ELA test seesawed between 2002 and 2005. This occurred in both the 'Proficient' and 'Warning' categories. Student performance declined from 26 percent (2002) to 11 percent (2005) in the 'Proficient' category and increased from 11 percent (2002) to 22 percent (2005) in the 'Warning' category. Lucy Stone student performance was consistently below district and state student performance between 2002 and 2005, with the exception of the 'Warning' category comparison with the city in 2004.

**Table 2. Lucy Stone School in Comparison to the District and State:  
Regular Education Students  
Grade 4 ELA Results  
2002-2005**

Year	2002			2003			2004			2005		
	School	District	State	School	District	State	School	District	State	School	District	State
Advanced	0	2	9	0	3	13	5	6	14	0	5	12
Proficient	26	27	52	8	30	51	32	34	51	11	29	46
Needs Improvement	63	52	34	63	49	31	55	48	31	67	52	37
Warning	11	18	5	29	17	5	9	12	4	22	15	5

*Data Source: Department of Education MCAS Data*

*Note: Performance level percentages are not publicly available if student group is less than 10*

MCAS ELA test data were available only in 2003 and 2005 for Lucy Stone special education students. Their performance was well below district and state student performance in 2003. In 2005, Lucy Stone students performed better than district students but not as well as state students.

**Table 3. Lucy Stone School in Comparison to the District and State:  
Special Education Students  
Grade 4 ELA Results  
2002-2005**

Year	2002			2003			2004			2005		
	School	District	State	School	District	State	School	District	State	School	District	State
Advanced	-	0	1	0	0	2	-	0	2	0	0	1
Proficient	-	4	18	0	6	22	-	8	22	7	4	17
Needs Improvement	-	30	50	21	30	47	-	38	48	50	38	50
Warning	-	66	31	79	64	29	-	54	28	43	58	35

*Data Source: Department of Education MCAS Data*

*Note: Performance level percentages are not publicly available if student group is less than 10*

### Student Performance in Math

Regular education students' performance on the Grade 4 MCAS math test, between 2002 and 2004, improved from 11 percent to 23 percent in the 'Proficient' category and declined from 57 percent to 9 percent in the 'Warning' category. These gains were not sustained in 2005, as the 'Proficient' category declined to 11 percent and the 'Warning' category increased to 42 percent. Lucy Stone student performance was below district and state student performance in 2002, 2003, and 2005; during 2004, Lucy Stone outperformed the district and closed the percentage gap with the state.

**Table 4. Lucy Stone School in Comparison to the District and State  
Regular Education Students  
Grade 4 Math Results  
2002-2005**

Year	2002			2003			2004			2005		
	School	District	State	School	District	State	School	District	State	School	District	State
Advanced	3	4	14	5	5	15	0	8	17	0	7	17
Proficient	11	14	31	5	15	32	23	20	33	11	20	31
Needs Improvement	29	44	42	56	50	43	68	51	42	47	51	44
Warning	57	38	13	33	31	10	9	22	8	42	22	8

*Data Source: Department of Education MCAS Data*

*Note: Performance level percentages are not publicly available if student group is less than 10*

MCAS math test data were available only in 2003 and 2005 for Lucy Stone special education students. Their performance was above district but below state performance in 2003. Lucy Stone student performance regressed and was below district and state student performance in 2005.

**Table 5. Lucy Stone School in Comparison to the District and State:  
Special Education Students  
Grade 4 Math Results  
2002-2005**

Year	2002			2003			2004			2005		
	School	District	State	School	District	State	School	District	State	School	District	State
Advanced	-	0	3	0	0	3	-	1	3	0	1	3
Proficient	-	3	13	0	3	14	-	6	14	0	5	12
Needs Improvement	-	23	42	50	33	45	-	38	48	29	35	47
Warning	-	73	42	50	64	38	-	55	35	71	59	38

*Data Source: Department of Education MCAS Data*

*Note: Performance level percentages are not publicly available if student group is less than 10*

## PANEL RESPONSES TO THE KEY QUESTIONS

### KEY QUESTION 1: Has the school shown improvement in student performance?

Yes. The Lucy Stone Elementary School's MCAS test performance has improved since 2003; however, the improvement has been inconsistent. Whereas Grade 3 reading scores

have improved, Grade 4 ELA and math scores have fluctuated during the past two rating cycles. Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) occurred in ELA for 2004 and 2005 and in math for 2003 and 2004.

The Lucy Stone Elementary School received an MCAS test performance rating of 'Very Low' in ELA and 'Critically Low' in math in 2002 (Cycle II). Due to the school's small student population, an improvement rating could not be determined. The school failed to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Cycle I (1999-2000) in both ELA and math. The February 2003, Panel Review Report concluded that the school did not have a sound plan in place for improving students' MCAS test performance.

The school's Cycle III combined MCAS test results for 2003 and 2004 had improved slightly. An MCAS test performance rating of 'Low' in ELA and 'Very Low' in math was reported. The ELA improvement rating was 'On Target,' whereas the math improvement rating was 'Above Target.' The school made AYP in both ELA and math in 2004. The 2005 Mid-Cycle IV AYP Report test performance targets were not met in ELA and math, whereas test improvement and AYP targets were met in ELA but not in math.

When MCAS test results in Grade 3 reading and in Grade 4 ELA and math were compared for 2002 (Cycle II) and 2005 (Mid-Cycle IV), a pattern of student progress could be discerned in Grade 3 reading and in Grade 4 math, but not in Grade 4 ELA. Between 2002 and 2005, Grade 3 MCAS reading test results for regular education students increased from 29 percent to 53 percent in the 'Proficient' category and declined from 3 percent to 0 percent in the 'Warning' category; Grade 4 MCAS ELA test results for regular education students declined from 26 percent to 11 percent in the 'Proficient' category, and increased from 11 percent to 22 percent in the 'Warning' category; and, Grade 4 MCAS math test results for regular education students remained stable at 11 percent in the 'Proficient' category, but improved from 57 to 42 percent in the 'Warning' category.

Grade 3 MCAS reading test results for special education students were not reported, because the class sample size was too small. Grade 4 MCAS ELA test results for special education students increased from 0 percent in 2003 to seven percent in 2005 in the 'Proficient' category, and declined from 79 percent in 2003 to 43 percent in 2005 in the 'Warning' category. Grade 4 MCAS math test results for special education students remained at 0 percent in 2003 and 2005 in the 'Proficient' category and decreased from 50 percent in 2003 to 71 percent in 2005 in the 'Warning' category.

Thus, between 2002 and 2005, as judged by proficiency levels, Grade 3 MCAS reading test results improved, Grade 4 MCAS ELA test results declined for regular education students but improved for special education students, and Grade 4 MCAS math test results improved for regular education students but declined for special education students.

The Lucy Stone School, district, and state MCAS test result comparisons between 2002-2005 revealed: LS students outperformed the district and compared favorably with the

state during 2004 and 2005 in reading; LS students performed below the district (except in 2004) and state between 2002 and 2005 in ELA; and, LS student performance was below the district and state in 2002, 2003, and 2005, but above the district and below the state in 2004 in math. Special education student results were not reported for the MCAS reading test because the class sample size was too small; their MCAS ELA test results were below the district and state in 2003, but above the district and below the state in 2005; and, their MCAS math test results were above the district and below the state in 2003, and below both the district and state in 2005.

Analyses of the MCAS test 2005 Mid-Cycle IV AYP Report for six demographically similar elementary schools in the district put the Lucy Stone Elementary School performance in context. Lucy Stone outperformed five of the six schools in ELA and three of the six in math.

Even though the CPI increased by 5.7 points between 2003 and 2005, the MCAS test 2005 Mid-Cycle IV AYP Report revealed a decline in Grade 4 ELA and math scores. Interviews with principal, faculty, and staff provided information pertaining to the declining Grade 4 scores, which will be discussed later in the report. These interviews raised questions about the TERC *Investigations* math program being used at the school, which will also be discussed later in the report.

Finally, a team representing the school and district enrolled in a Performance Improvement Map (PIM) process during the summer of 2003. Members of the team shared outcomes of the PIM training with their colleagues, after which the newly acquired skills were used to initiate a comprehensive analysis of the School's ELA and math programs. MCAS test results informed school improvement goal setting for student performance and time schedules for meeting the goals.

**KEY QUESTION 2: Is the school effective in using an improvement plan that results in the continuous improvement of student performance?**

Yes, in that the school has conceptualized and implemented effectively an improvement plan during the period under review which contributed to an improved CPI between 2003 and 2005; however, student performance declined on the MCAS test 2005 Mid-cycle IV AYP Report. Reasons for the decline have been identified by members of the UPFUR Team and they are discussed here and in Key Question 3. The SIP being used is comprised of strategies and tactics which are viable and which merit continued implementation.

The February, 2003 Panel Review Report concluded that the school plan being used by Lucy Stone faculty and staff was unlikely to lead to improved student achievement for three reasons. Firstly, the plan was not linked to a clear articulation of root causes for the students' low performance. Secondly, teachers did not comprehend the school plan well enough to translate it into daily lessons effectively over time. And, thirdly, the plan did not specify a systematic process for evaluating the implementation process.

To address the deficiencies identified by the Panel Review Team, a team comprised of the Lucy Stone School principal, faculty, and staff learned how to apply the Performance Improvement Map (PIM) process. The application involved: an in-depth analysis of the school's MCAS test data, including an item analysis on the 2002 MCAS test data for all students; an analysis of all the required Boston Public Schools formative assessment results for the school's students (the DRA, SRI, Observation Survey, Record of Oral Language, and Writing Prompt related to ELA; and the BPS's Math Assessment); a root cause analysis of the low performance of special needs students; and, an analysis of the school's past curriculum and instruction practices. The PIM Team's analyses identified eight consistent school patterns, which needed to be changed.

The Lucy Stone School's principal, faculty, and staff believed that a starting point for addressing the eight school patterns in order to improve student performance began with the implementation of five strategies. The first was a professional development approach called Collaborative Coaching and Learning (CCL). Secondly, the school's Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) was reshaped to include all full-time teachers and the principal to develop a working understanding of differentiated instruction and inclusion. Thirdly, all teachers and the principal began to meet weekly in a staff meeting to facilitate communication. Fourthly, all supportive services were realigned to reduce and eventually eliminate student pullouts; large blocks of time were earmarked within the school schedule so that students could work on skills and practices introduced. And finally, higher-order thinking skills were focused upon during teachers' professional development time. Work on these five strategies began during the 2003-2004 school year within the context of the SIP.

Persons interviewed held the CCL in the highest regard, recognized "differentiation" as a continuing but improving work in progress; recognized "inclusion" as a push-in rather than a pull-out process presently; recognized teacher leadership emerging at the school as an outcome of ILT and the weekly faculty meetings; recognized numerous classroom applications of higher-order thinking skills; and recognized the opportunities provided by the expanded time blocks to facilitate remedial instruction, practice, and independent work. Since 2004, faculty members have accepted increasing responsibility for the implementation of these and other school initiatives aimed at improving students' academic performance. This acceptance is a departure from the way school business was conducted prior to 2003.

The SIP followed during the period under review set forth clear improvement goals with specific objectives that were grounded in the school's analysis of reasons for poor student performance. These goals and objectives were focused upon ELA and math in particular, as well as upon all content areas school-wide. The PIM process sub-divides work into a number of discrete parts which can be monitored continuously and which generate varied student assessment data. These data were used by principal, faculty, and staff to revise and update the SIP Action Plan twice, in August 2004 and again in August 2005.

The SIP/PIM is a lengthy document, it provides detailed Action Plans, and it is clearly written. The plan has guided faculty and staff implementation work since 2003.

Considerable paperwork is generated by faculty and staff during the implementation work, which can be overwhelming at times according to teachers interviewed. Steps were taken in 2005 to simplify the paper-generation process.

To obtain evidence about the SIP's implementation at the classroom level, the UPFUR Team observed lessons in eight classrooms and then interviewed the eight teachers immediately afterward. Students in attendance ranged from ten to 20 students, with 18 being the median number present. All of the academic classrooms at the school were observed by team members. Teachers observed were rated on five variables using a three-point scale (one being low and three being high). Five teachers received a 3.0 rating, two a 2.5 rating, and one a 1.5 rating. These are impressive results.

The principal told team members what they would see during the lessons, and that was what they observed in nearly all of the lessons. Elements of the Reading/Writing Workshop and TERC math were observed; the use of clearly stated objectives, differentiated instruction, varied instructional resources, behavioral management, higher-order inquiry, verbalization of thought processes during problem solving, and recognition and praise were observed; and both tutors and paraprofessionals were observed.

More than half of the teachers shared concerns about the TERC math curriculum. For example, the pacing guides required teachers to move through lessons too rapidly, content gaps were identified, basic skills instruction was flawed, and the method of lesson introductions was often confusing. Most of the teachers appreciated the help provided by colleagues and the coaches, the district support, and the LSI support. Most said they were not benefiting from sufficient instructional leadership from the principal or appropriate instructional leadership from the district office.

A team consisting of eight persons from the Lucy Stone School and the district participated in the initial PIM training during the summer, 2003. These persons shared their training experience with other members of the faculty and staff and succeeded in broadening the base of persons committed to the school improvement process. According to teachers and administrators interviewed, the Instructional Leadership Team assumed responsibility for the utilization of the PIM process to write a School Improvement Plan that could be embraced by members of the school community. The principal, a School Support Specialist (SES), and a change consultant played important roles during the construction of the SIP. The completed SIP/PIM was presented to the faculty and staff in the fall of 2003 and approved by the Board of Education in December, 2003.

One of the first steps under the plan was to involve all professional staff at the school in the ILT. The augmented ILT was led by the principal and the consultant. This committee of the whole formed sub-committees to facilitate business, of which one was the PIM Monitoring Team, consisting of the principal, the SES, a consultant, and 11 teachers. Faculty and staff membership rotated monthly on this team to involve all persons who would be influenced by the PIM. The principal's continuing management of

this sub-committee may have inadvertently suppressed teachers emerging as PIM process leaders.

The Lucy Stone School has been the beneficiary of extensive support from two sources. The first is from the Boston Public Schools. BPS provided staff support – a School Support Specialist, academic coaches, and an additional math coach; funds to support before- and after-school tutoring services, instructional resources, and professional development. In particular the district office has provided motivation to change curriculum and instruction practices substantially and a monitoring inventory, which is summarized monthly.

The second support source, called the Lucy Stone Initiative, has been providing substantial resources as part of a five-year School Improvement Plan. Over two million dollars has been directed into school improvements during the past four years. An LSI annual report, dated 2003-2004, listed 15 partners contributing resources. Funds are spent on before- and after-school tutorial programs, other tutoring during the regular school day, a change coach and a Learning Coordinator, laptop computers for teachers, a library renovation project, and other related expenses. This five-year undertaking ends in June 2006. A second five-year plan is being conceptualized currently.

In addition, Title I funds are utilized annually, and a City Year tutoring program involving about eight individuals is under way. City Year is financed by LSI and Reading First funds, but funding for the future is not secure.

The PIM process has helped teaching staff better understand the connections between changes in curriculum, instruction, assessment, and improvements in student performance. New programs, new ways to teach, and new ways to make use of student assessments have changed the school climate and empowered the teachers. Teacher leadership is beginning to emerge to supplement the leadership of the principal and deputy superintendent.

Evidence of understanding of the causes of improvement or lack of improvement include: revisions made to the SIP in 2004 and 2005 to better focus the plan; curriculum/instruction adjustments described during faculty/staff interviews; results of two faculty surveys completed in 2004 and 2005; and the caliber of teaching observed by the UPFUR Team. Most significantly, the ILT decided to raise expectations for student promotion under BPS guidelines from grades of Level 2 to Level 3, a move that was later adopted by the BPS district-wide. This move toward higher expectations was an affirmation by the school that their SIP was working.

**KEY QUESTION 3: Are there other factors (changes in conditions or circumstances, i.e., policies, practices) in the school or district which have contributed to or impeded the school's ability to implement their plan?**

Yes, significant factors impeded as well as contributed toward implementation of the SIP. The former either have been or are being addressed by the principal and faculty/staff. They are discussed along with the contributing factors.

Three unforeseen changes impacted upon the school's ability to implement the SIP. Firstly, one Grade 4 teacher was absent for the first 2 ½ months of the 2004-2005 school year, returned with reduced effectiveness until March, and subsequently resigned her position. In her initial absence, a succession of three substitute teachers, despite the help of supplemental support staff, could not create an effective educational environment. Behavioral problems gained momentum throughout the school year and adversely influenced the instruction offered overall. The poor 2005 MCAS test results have been attributed to this dysfunction of the school's single Grade 4 class during 2004-2005. Eventually, the principal moved the troubled class downstairs, adjacent to her office so that she could provide more active supervision herself. Notwithstanding, seven out of the nine suspensions during the school year were from this class, and the administrative response was either insufficient or too late to influence MCAS test results. While the reaction of the principal and district office were hampered by the uncertainty of the teacher's return date and by BPS contract constraints, the major impacts on learning were not met with proportional problem-solving strategies by the administration.

Secondly, the math program used at Lucy Stone and throughout BPS, TERC *Investigations*, was problematic for a majority of the teachers interviewed. They raised a series of questions about the strength of the program, which are described later in this report. They also described steps taken to overcome TERC program shortcomings, such as using extra math instruction time to repeat instructional deficiencies, to plug program holes, and to reinforce basic skills concepts. The teachers expressed concerns about the compatibility of TERC and the Grade 4 MCAS math test (for example, multiplication facts needed to perform well on the test are not introduced until just before the test is administered). A recognized benefit of the program was the emphasis on math reasoning and the nature of inquiry techniques that prepare well for MCAS tests. However, teachers interviewed believed the TERC *Investigations* program was more of a liability than an asset in conjunction with the MCAS math test.

Thirdly, instructional leadership from the principal and BPS divisional office was inadequate. Until the 2005-2006 school year, the principal did not spend sufficient time observing classroom instruction. Even at the time of the review, the principal was spending only a small fraction of the 60 percent of her time engaged in this observation work as mandated by the divisional office. BPS staff who visited the school to observe instruction did so to support the principal's internal accountability procedures; however, they did not succeed in increasing her classroom monitoring time during the period under review.

Several changes at Lucy Stone deserve comment. Enrollment at the school declined by 55 students between 2003 and 2005, and resulted in teacher and support staff losses. During this period of time, one to two high-performing students per year transferred from Lucy Stone to other schools offering BPS "advanced work class" academic options; these

students were replaced by less capable students consistently, according to faculty and staff interviewed. They called this a “Catch 22” pattern, in which effective instruction contributed to the student transfers just before the important Grade 4 MCAS tests. Nevertheless, a positive visible change in school policy was the raised grade promotion guideline for students from Level 2 to Level 3, a move that the district followed soon afterward.

The principal encouraged the faculty to adopt, and received funds to establish, a Reading First grant at Lucy Stone. The program has been incorporated within the curriculum at the school and is receiving high marks from teachers interviewed. They believe Reading First will sustain student improvement in both reading and ELA. A second change in resource allocation at the school impacted the Family Coordinator, a position originally funded full-time by FAMILY, Inc, which lost its funding at the end of 2004-05. The BPS has provided half-time support in the current year with significant losses in development of family contact and activity. Thirdly, a BPS-endorsed math intervention program, called *Knowing Math Skills*, was adopted for implementation during 2005-2006 as part of the after-school program. A Learning Coordinator and three teachers were trained to offer the program.

Three aspects of Lucy Stone School operations were influenced by existing collective bargaining agreements. The contract limited replacement options available to the administration in dealing with the problem of the Grade 4 teacher in 2004-2005. It contributed to the long-delayed response to the problem. The use of CCL after-school time cannot over-ride collectively bargained time limits for professional development; hence, such CCL time will have to be voluntary on the part of participants in the coming year as other professional development utilizes some of the time. And finally, the role of academic coaches with teachers has proceeded productively without being challenged by the Boston Teachers Union; coaches are members of the teachers’ unit of the Union and cannot carry supervisor responsibility, but this has not been an issue in effective coaching.

Finally, the large numbers of tutors provided by the City Year Program, the Jewish Community Relations Council, and the Unitarian Universalist Society of Wellesley Hills, have been scheduled more effectively by school staff so that students will not lose time in core academic program instruction.

**KEY QUESTION 4: Are the conditions in place to sustain the gains achieved and support continued improvement in student performance?**

Yes. Many of the conditions are in place to support continued improvement in student performance. The leadership pool at the school is expanding, the faculty supports goals and objectives articulated in the SIP, the climate of the school continues to improve, and the school is receiving adequate guidance and support from the district.

The February 2003, Fact-Finding Panel devoted four paragraphs of commentary to the caliber of leadership and management at the Lucy Stone Elementary School. They

concluded that "...school leadership successfully develops community partnerships and school management (but) is less successful in providing instructional leadership and nurturing a positive professional climate." Since that time, change has been a constant at the school. The school climate has improved, the academic program has been transformed, special education services have expanded, assessment data have become an integral part of all planning initiatives, and the resource base expanded significantly. The principal has been at the forefront of all these changes.

Between 2003 and the present time, the principal introduced a decision-making model entitled Developing Consensus. The model encourages coaches and teachers to share responsibility for instructional leadership, and has expanded the talent pool at the school capable of providing leadership. This means more people are able to plan and direct the implementation of instructional improvement initiatives. However, the principal's active execution of instructional leadership remains inadequate.

The UPFUR Team also noted examples of dissatisfaction with the instructional leadership at the school currently. Teachers were asked by team members to rank order five sources of instructional help; the principal was ranked last among these sources by the teachers. Two different reports called for the principal to spend more time in the classroom. The principal moved the Grade 4 classroom from the second floor to the first floor next to her office in 2004-2005 so she could more easily frequent the classroom. She also added time of support teachers to the room, but her administrative response to the problem was too little and too late to influence the learning environment significantly in time for MCAS test results. Upon the teacher's official leave in March, the principal and district office found an effective substitute and did add a second teacher to the classroom for the remainder of the year.

Principal, faculty, and staff have utilized the PIM process: to identify root causes for all students' low academic performance; to identify the training needed by teachers to carry out proposed curriculum and instruction changes; to establish processes for the utilization of students' formative and summative assessments; to modify special needs student programs and services; and, to improve the climate of the school. Resources have been provided by the district to facilitate implementation of these PIM-based plans. In addition, steps have been taken by school and district administrators to observe, to evaluate, and to suggest modifications throughout the implementation process.

Faculty and staff support the goals and objectives articulated in the SIP. A prime indicator of their support is the amount of time committed by them to the revision of the SIP Action Plan in August 2004, and again in August 2005. Another indicator is the emergence of faculty leadership during planning work. Finally, teachers engage with pride in the work required to achieve their goals and objectives.

According to the November, 2003, Fact-Finding Report, "...there was a level of negativity and divisiveness that affected teachers' morale and work. Teachers reported that they were teaching in isolation and there was widespread unwillingness to communicate about curriculum or content weakness, all of which contributed to low staff

morale.” The PIM identified as an action step a need on the part of the principal with and staff to address the quality of school climate.

A facilitator was hired by the district to initiate work on the school climate quality issue, which resulted in increased faculty participation in the school’s decision-making bodies. Currently, all teachers participate in the monthly ILT meetings, serve on one or more ILT subcommittees formed to address school priorities, and meet weekly as a staff.

Other actions to improve school climate were the following: development of 11 “Norms” by the Leadership Team to facilitate group discussions; Project ASPIRE and Open Circle, now merged, to promote positive social behaviors and to build community; “Bounce,” a procedure adopted to “cool down” disruptive student behavior; and, an open-door policy aimed at facilitating communication among faculty and staff.

Effects of these actions were described by faculty and staff during interviews and focus groups. A common theme shared throughout these interviews was the impact of the PIM process upon all aspects of school life. It retooled teachers, built confidence, and improved working relationships. Two faculty surveys, one administered in 2004 and the other administered in 2005, confirmed the information offered by faculty and staff during interviews.

Following a January 15, 2004, professional development meeting, 11 members completed a staff survey instrument pertaining to the characteristic behavior of group members. A scale of one (low) to five (high) was utilized. The most frequent response was a “three,” followed by a “four” and a “two.” There were more very positive responses (nine) than very negative responses (one). Results suggested members of the faculty were improving their individual and group behavior.

An Instructional Staff Survey was completed by 14 of the 16 professional staff at the school in November, 2005. The survey focused upon faculty perceptions of the school’s programs and services. Five school programs and services were agreed upon as strengths, most recognized a need for professional development in conjunction with diverse learners, and most noted the worth of weekly peer group meetings. Results of the survey were consistent with comments made by teachers during interviews.

Examples of priority improvements in teaching and learning were provided by faculty and staff. To facilitate the organization and utilization of student assessment results, teachers were provided with laptop computers. To make better use of Title I funds, a teaching position was terminated so that the resulting savings could be better utilized to meet school needs. To support literacy programs, the school library was moved and extensively refurbished and a half-time librarian was maintained under LSI funds after the district reduced its budget support. To support math programs, enrichment program opportunities were incorporated within the curriculum in place of a journalism class. These four examples represent steps being taken at the school to facilitate instruction.

District leaders' monitoring of Lucy Stone programs and student achievement helped illuminate problems at the school and lent urgency to finding solutions. District leaders participated in the search for solutions with the principal and faculty, including taking part in the initial PIM training. Once the PIM was adopted, district leaders created an instrument, used in Triad C, to monitor the implementation process monthly. They visited the school regularly, critiqued instruction observed, and offered suggestions to improve student achievement.

The district provided varied resources to the school during the past two years. District funds were used to employ a School Support Specialist, ELA and math coaches, and a Math Enrichment Program Coordinator. District funds also paid for professional development, ELA and math instructional resources, and before- and after-school tutoring services.

District officials made demands upon the school, which were not always implemented enthusiastically. The principal was instructed to spend 60 percent of her time each day monitoring teaching and learning. Teachers were instructed to initiate weekly quizzes in order to prepare for the BPS math assessments, to add 30 minutes of math instruction time for additional practice and review, and to incorporate ten-minute math lessons to fill gaps within their TERC program. And, write-ups of classroom observations by district officials, which were often quite critical of practices observed, were then shared with the principal.

Both the principal and the faculty recognize the importance of the district's resources and generous support, appreciate the periodic nudges that serve to energize the faculty and staff, and tolerate the demands placed upon them from time to time. They wish the district would be more positive and constructive.

## **CONCLUSION**

The priority initiatives in the Lucy Stone Elementary School's School Improvement Plan, as presented to the State Board of Education in 2003, are being implemented systematically.

During the past two years, a stable, committed administration and staff have brought consistency, viable programs, and a positive climate to the school. Sustained improvement is threatened, however, by limited active instructional leadership and supervision.

A curriculum rich in MCAS test content and which set forth high student performance expectations has been implemented. The school made Adequate Yearly Progress in ELA during 2004 and 2005 and in math during 2003 and 2004. The school's Cycle III combined MCAS test results for 2003 and 2004 resulted in a performance rating of 'Low' in ELA and 'Very Low' in math. The ELA improvement rate was 'On Target,' whereas the math improvement rating was 'Above Target.' The 2005 Mid-Cycle IV AYP Report

indicated the school met AYP targets in ELA but not in math. Whereas student academic performance has improved in reading, both ELA and math remained below desired levels.

The school has a viable system in place to track implementation of the SIP initiatives and to oversee on-going student assessments. Key elements of the system in place are school-wide goals and instructional approaches, curricula aligned with state standards, continuous monitoring and assessment, and focused professional development. All of this work is now taking place in an improved school climate.

**APPENDIX A**  
**Team Members**

Mr. Peter Clark, Chair, Classmeasures

Mr. W. C. Wolf, Jr., Scribing Examiner, Classmeasures

Ms. Lisa Bryant, Examiner, Office of Educational Quality and Accountability

Ms. Helen Apostolides, Examiner, Office of Educational Quality and Accountability

**APPENDIX B**  
**TWO YEAR FOLLOW-UP REVIEW SCHEDULE**  
**Detailed Schedule for School Site Visit**

**LUCY STONE SCHOOL**

**Day 1 on site schedule**

**All activities take place in the school**

- 7:30 -8:30* Team members meet with the principal.
- 8:30 – 9:20* Team members meet with the school’s curriculum and instruction leadership team and members of the school site council.
- 9:30 – 10:30* Team members meet with the district superintendent (and Assistant Superintendent, if appropriate).
- 10:30 – 12:30* Team members meet to discuss findings so far and to plan the remainder of the day (working lunch). Members use time as needed to analyze findings and to gather more information; members should conduct an informal walk-through with a focus on school culture and climate for learning.
- 12:45 – 2:15* Team members meet with teachers in focus groups.

	<b>REVIEWER A and REVIEWER B</b>	<b>REVIEWER C AND REVIEWER D</b>
<i>12:45 – 1:30</i>	TEACHER FOCUS GROUP #1	STUDENT FOCUS GROUP #1
	<b>REVIEWER B</b>	<b>REVIEWER C AND REVIEWER D</b>
<i>1:30 – 2:15</i>	STUDENT FOCUS GROUP #2	TEACHER FOCUS GROUP #2

- 2:30 – 3:15* Team members meet with parents and students in focus groups.

	<b>REVIEWER A</b>	<b>REVIEWER B AND C</b>	<b>REVIEWER D</b>
<i>2:30 – 3:15</i>	PARENT FOCUS GROUP	SUPPORT STAFF FOCUS GROUP	COMMUNITY MEMBERS FOCUS GROUP

3:15 – 5:30 Team members synthesize information, further define findings, prepare questions, and develop a team strategy for second day of the on-site visit.

### **Day 2 on-site schedule**

#### **All activities take place in the school**

8:30 – 9:00 a.m. Team members meet with the principal for follow-up questions.

9:30 – 11:45 a.m. Team members visit classrooms and interview teachers.  
*45-minute observation and 30-minute interviews*

	<b>REVIEWER A</b>	<b>REVIEWER B</b>	<b>REVIEWER C</b>	<b>REVIEWER D</b>
9:30-10:15	Observe teacher 1	Observe teacher 2	Observe teacher 3	Observe teacher 4
10:15 – 10:30	Interview teacher 1	Interview teacher 2	Interview teacher 3	Interview teacher 4
10:30 – 11:15	Observe teacher 5	Observe Teacher 6	Observe teacher 7	Observe teacher 8
11:15 – 11:45	Interview teacher 5	Interview teacher 6	Interview teacher 7	Interview teacher 8

11:45 – 1:00 Team members meet to discuss findings so far and to and plan the remainder of the day (working lunch). Members use time as needed to analyze findings and to gather more information.

1:00 – 2:00 Team structured time. Members will identify any gaps in the evidence collected and may request additional information from the principal in the form of documents, meetings with classroom teachers, curriculum facilitators, content-area specialists, Grade-level instructors, or other specific individuals or groups who can respond to questions relevant to the panel review protocol.

	<b>REVIEWER A</b>	<b>REVIEWER B</b>	<b>REVIEWER C</b>	<b>REVIEWER D</b>
1:00-2:00	School Support Specialist	District SPED Director	Document Review	Document Review