

REPORT OF TWO YEAR FOLLOW UP REVIEW

Office of Educational Quality and Accountability

Liberty Elementary School

Springfield Public Schools

Executive Summary

Liberty Elementary School has made only limited progress in improving student achievement, even though it has made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in the aggregate in two out of the last three years. Under the principal appointed in the summer of 2003, the school has made significant strides in developing clear and focused planning and in providing a very positive climate for students. Nevertheless, the evidence is still not strong enough that systems in place are working effectively to make continuous improvement in instructional quality and in student standards for performance.

Priority Findings

- I. Liberty Elementary School is not showing the consistent forward progress that will be necessary to meet AYP, although performance is somewhat stronger in math than in English Language Arts compared to the Springfield district results.
 - Results in Cycle III were on the low side of the Composite Performance Index (CPI) target in ELA and regressed in 2005 testing.
 - With a 56.8 CPI in ELA at the end of Cycle II, Liberty should have been averaging progress of 3.6 points per year; CPI in 2005 was 61.4, an average of 1.5 points per year over the three years.
 - With a 38.7 CPI in math at the end of Cycle II, Liberty should have been averaging progress of 5.1 points per year; CPI in 2005 was 49.7, an average of 3.7 points per year over the three years.
 - Changes in programmatic materials to achieve curriculum goals have been frequent in the last few years, creating some transitional stress, but
 - These changes have been supported with professional development.
 - The transitions will be completed this year with training in *Investigations* and in the *John Collins Writing Process. Growing with Math* is in its first year of implementation.
 - The system of CPDT “coaches” (collaborative professional development teachers) is not working according to the job description, but
 - The coaches at primary grades are working in an accepting atmosphere that gives potential to the job description.
 - There is district coordination to help make upper elementary operation more effective.

- The principal and most faculty members are committed to the coaching model.
- Academic expectations need to be more rigorous, even though Liberty has become a place that teachers and students desire to work, and
 - The meeting structures are in place for looking at student work.
 - The pupil progression plan of the district has been redesigned with more rigorous expectations and is in its second full year of implementation.
 - The faculty shares a general commitment to student learning.
 - The district has supportive structures in place.

II. The school effectively builds and implements a thorough and detailed School Improvement Plan (SIP) that is completely integrated with the Performance Improvement Mapping (PIM) process.

- The school actively participated in 2003 training to develop skills for the PIM process.
- The Springfield School Improvement Plan integrates fully with the PIM process.
- Liberty is continuing to participate in Springfield training and takes advantage of the school support specialist.
- Faculty desire a stronger voice in the recent changes in the School Improvement Plan, and
 - A teacher leader is being included in 2005-06 training.
 - The principal is committed to involving more faculty and has funds to support that for the 2006-07 plan.
- Twice monthly grade-level “team time” and weekly after school “extended day” time provide professional exchange on the School Improvement Plan and student learning which is considered valuable by most faculty.
- While the school understands the planning process, including identification of root causes and the linkage from learning objectives to specific strategies in the classroom, a consistent understanding of rigorously high targets for instructional performance and for student learning are not yet in place.
 - See sub-bullets of Priority Finding I above and IV below relative to coaching and rigor that state the positive potential.

III. In general, other factors impacting the school have been supportive and positive, most significantly the appointment of a new principal in 2003 and district resource allocations to support the school; factors that have impeded progress are, in most cases moving towards resolution.

- Strains relative to the lack of contract for several years are being addressed by the courts, and
 - A work-to-rule condition put in place by the union has been withdrawn.
- The transition to a student assignment plan that created a 44 percent change in student population, with attendant data handling problems, is a one-year issue, and the stronger neighborhood pattern allows better parent interaction and support.
- Teachers, parents, and students agree that the learning environment at Liberty has become calm and positive and that the commitment to children is part of a clear vision.

- Liberty's status as a Magnet school starting in 2004-05 has brought human and material resources, most importantly support for *Investigations* and *John Collins Writing Process* and upgrading of technology resources.
- Student service teams have been expanded from one to three teams with Magnet grant money to provide intensive case management and the development of action plans for students in need.
- The pupil progression plan, setting benchmarks for promotion, has been more rigorously redesigned for the elementary grades and is moving into full implementation for the second year.
- Technology elements of the Magnet school designation, including a television studio, are not fully implemented and may cause distraction from academic objectives; training and space uses for further implementation must be weighed against the achievement priorities of the school, but
 - There is an effective instructional technology resource person in the building who works effectively with teachers across the grade levels.
 - A number of teachers are well versed in the use of technology and are using it on a limited basis at this time.
 - The technology component is an attractive element for school choice and for the self-image of the school.

IV. The core weakness is in the slow development of skillful and effective peer coaching and administrative supervision toward excellence in instructional methodologies and standards of student performance. The obstacles appear manageable:

- Grade-level "team time" is becoming more sophisticated, with agendas and a second year of full use underway.
- The two Magnet resource staff are in their second year and one new math CPDT and a new CPDT in ELA are in their first year, with potential to work through initial issues.
- Data issues attendant to the change in student assignment plan are a one-year issue.
- Central office leadership is available to assist with the effective roles of CPTDs.
- Central office mentoring and support for administrative supervision is available.
- Pupil progression plan benchmarks have been more rigorously defined.
- The principal has strong credibility with teachers and parents.
- The faculty is supportive of the goals and objectives of the School Improvement Plan.

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 **Liberty Elementary School** developed such a plan, and the Commissioner and Board of Education accepted the plan in **October 2003**. The district was 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 **Liberty Elementary School**. The Follow Up Review was conducted on **November 28 and 29, 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 responses to the above key questions that defined the scope of the review are 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 two 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 **Liberty 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.

Liberty Elementary School Profile

Liberty is one of thirty-two elementary schools in Springfield. It is one of twenty that covers grades K-5; ten others include pre-K, and one each for K-4 and K-8. With 280 students in 2004-2005, Liberty is one of the smaller schools, which break out into the following categories:

**Table 1. Springfield District Elementary School Sizes
SY 2005**

NO. OF STUDENTS	NO. OF SCHOOLS
250 + less	2
251 – 350	11
351 – 450	9
451 – 550	4
551 – 650	5
651 + over	1

The demographics for Liberty in some measures are very similar to the Springfield District as a whole, as shown in the table below for the 2005 school year. Liberty and the City of Springfield have three times the state percentages of Black, Hispanic, and low-income children. Liberty is very much lower than the city and the state for students whose first language is not English (FLNE) and for limited English proficient (LEP) students. Also, Liberty has one-third smaller a percentage of special needs students than the city as a whole and three percentage points lower than the state as a whole. Twenty of the 32 schools have special needs rates between 11-15 percent, and like most of those schools Liberty sends its low incidence, more disabled students to district programs in other schools. Ten elementary schools have 16 percent or more students in special needs and two elementary schools have ten percent or fewer.

**Table 2. Liberty School in Comparison to the District and State
By Subgroup Population
SY 2005**

Subgroup	Liberty	Springfield	State
Black	22	28	9
Hispanic	58	50	12
White	18	19	74
Other	2	3	5.3
Low Income	88	76	28
FLNE	3	19	14
LEP	0	14	5
Spec Educ	13	20	16

Figures are in percentages; Liberty data for K-5 population; Springfield and state for PreK-12.

Demographic trends at Liberty do not match the city trends except in the area of racial subgroups. Both Liberty and the city have increasing minority groups, with the Hispanic population the predominately increasing group. The trends for Liberty and for the city appear to move in opposite directions for low-income students if tracking only the October 1 data reported to the state. Liberty's low-income population has dropped from 90 percent in 2003 to 79 percent in 2005 using that official data, and during the same years, the city's low-income population has moved from 71 percent up to 76 percent. But the city figures show that as of November 24, 2005, Liberty has bounced up from 79 percent to 86 percent and climbed gradually to 89 percent by the end of the year. Currently, in 2005-06, the total is 87 percent. So Liberty remains in the top rank of elementary schools in Springfield by low-income measures.

In terms of limited English proficient students, Liberty has stayed constant with virtually no students classified as LEP and only two or three percent as FLNE. In the meantime, the city has increased from eight percent to 14 percent in LEP and from 13 percent to 19 percent in FLNE. Liberty is one of nine out of 32 elementary schools with rates under five percent.

Liberty, then, faces very challenging demographics compared to the state and has a slightly less demanding student population than other elementary schools in the city, relative to special needs and LEP percentages.

Overall, the attendance rate at Liberty in 2005 was 92 percent and by grade it was: K at 90.8; 1 at 91.0; 2 at 91.0; 3 at 93.5; 4 at 92.9; 5 at 92.9. In general, attendance rates at Liberty are plus or minus one percentage point from the 92 percent rate set for AYP, with the rates at grades K-2 on the low side and the rates at grades 3-5 on the high side. Compared to the district levels at these grades, Liberty is within about half a percentage point except at Grade 1, where it lags behind the district by one percentage point, and at Grade 2, where it lags behind by two percentage points. In the current year the attendance is holding at close to 93 percent. In 2004-05 Hispanic students fell 0.7 of a percentage point below the average; African American students fell about 0.6 of a percentage point above the average; and White students about 0.8 of a percentage point above the overall 92 percent average. (The school had two Hispanic students, one in Grade 1 and one in Grade 5, who were absent a total of 110 days despite aggressive actions by the school.) Judging by the percentage of students chronically absent (more than 18 days per school year) Liberty in 2004-05 had over one-third of its students in Grade 1 and Grade 2 in this category. This is about 50 percent higher than the city as a whole. At grades 4 and 5 the fraction was about a quarter of the students, higher than the city by 3.7 percentage points. Only at Grade 3 in 2005 was Liberty below the city, at 20 percent of students.

In terms of retention rates, Liberty was at a 6.3 percent rate in 2004, more than double the rates in 2002 and 2003. The school was one of eight at the elementary level with a rate above six percent. While Springfield has had a pupil progression plan for four years, which established promotion criteria, it was being heavily revised in the 2003-04 school year and was not uniformly implemented until the 2004-05 school year. The grade level where significant change occurred in retention at Liberty was in Grade 1 in 2004; nine students were retained in 2004 compared to two in 2003 and five in 2002. The Grade 1 rate was more than double the rate for the city as a whole in 2004, whereas the year before it was half of the city rate.

Suspension statistics for Liberty display a significant decline from 2003-04 to 2004 and 2005, from fifteen students (5.4 percent) to three students in each of the two succeeding years (1.2 percent each year). These are all out-of-school suspensions at Liberty, since the school had no in-school suspension program. (In 2004-05 the school had a "focus room", which met IDEA requirements by providing an educational program fitting each student's work.) Liberty is well below the suspension rates for the city in all categories except at Grade 4 in 2003 when ten students were suspended. But in 2004-05 Liberty was one of eight elementary schools with rates below two percent. This comparison does not include the city rates for in-school suspensions, which would illustrate an even more dramatic difference.

Staffing

The 2005-06 Year Two Follow Up Panel Review Staffing Report shows the following categories of teachers:

**Table 3. Liberty School Staff
2005-2006**

TEACHER CATEGORY	NO.	COMMENTS
Regular Ed Classroom	12	Two per grade, K-5
Support Staff	8	Five SPED, including evaluation team leader 2 days/wk; two Title I; one class-size reduction teacher
Instructional Specialists	4	Two CPDTs, two Magnet resource
Other	4 (3 FTE)	Includes a part-time librarian and world language and full-time science and physical education/health
Guidance	1	
Administrator	1	

If the principal, guidance counselor, and the evaluation team leader are not considered teachers, there are twenty-six full time equivalent (FTE) teachers at Liberty in 2005-06, an increase of two from the prior year, a science teacher and an additional CPDT specialist in math. In the 2004-05 school year, Liberty had twenty-four teachers creating an 11.7:1 student/teacher ratio compared to an 11.6:1 ratio at the district level and a 13.3:1 at the state level (district and state include grades K-12). With the additional two teachers in 2005-06 and a student population of 269, the Liberty student/teacher ratio falls to 10.4:1.

For support, one Title I teacher works with grades 1 and 2; the class-size reduction teacher assists Grade 3; and the second Title I teacher assists grades 4 and 5. One special needs teacher runs a substantially separate program; one serves grades K-2; and two serve grades 3-5. The four specialists are listed as school-wide, but the instructional tech specialist under the Magnet grant is most widely spread. The class-size Reduction Teacher is focusing heavily on Grade 3 and also does reading recovery; and the two math specialists, one a CPDT and one a Magnet grant person, divide between the primary and upper elementary grades. The health/physical education and science teachers as well as the guidance counselor are full-time; the education team leader (ETL), the foreign language teacher, and the library/media specialist are at Liberty two days per week.

Relative to certification, the school's status is strong with the exception of special education. One Grade 5 teacher has an out-of-state license and certification is pending. The health/physical education teacher is serving on a waiver but has a Master's degree in Education. Of the five special education teachers, two are working on waivers and one has certification pending. Of the two on waivers one has a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and the other has a Bachelor's degree in Psychology. The teacher with a pending certificate has a Bachelor's in Elementary Education.

Eighteen teachers have been hired by the new principal, but only one without prior experience. The average teaching experience of the new hires at Liberty is eighteen years. Seven are new this year; seven were hired the year before; and four were hired the first year the principal moved to the building. Of the twelve regular education classroom teachers, five were selected by the new principal: both in Grade 5 in the current year, both in Grade 3 a year ago, and one of the two Grade 2 teachers a year ago.

MCAS Results

The Adequate Yearly Progress history for Liberty is that from 1999 to 2002 the school did not make AYP in the aggregate for either English Language Arts or math. In 2003, the school met AYP in both subjects, for the aggregate and subgroups; in 2004, AYP was met in the aggregate in ELA and math, but not for subgroups in ELA where there were sufficient numbers to count. In 2005 the school failed to make AYP in ELA for the aggregate or for subgroups (low-income and Hispanic) and it failed to make AYP for the aggregate in math.

At the end of Cycle III, the Liberty performance rating in ELA was “low” and in math “very low.” The improvement ratings in both ELA and math were “on target.”

In 2005, the Mid-Cycle IV AYP report showed the aggregate ELA CPI at 61.4 compared to Springfield at 69.1 and the state at 83.7. Liberty data for math was considerably lower than ELA with an aggregate CPI of 49.4 but higher than Springfield at 48.3; and compared to the state at 72.4.

The CPI trend at Liberty was a -0.6 in ELA from Cycle III to Mid-Cycle IV and a +1.7, a small portion of the needed target change, in math. At the same time, Springfield was making a very small positive CPI change of +0.5 in ELA and +1.1 in math; and the state was flat for the aggregate in ELA and +2.0 aggregate CPI change in math.

Proficiency levels are summarized in the tables below:

**Table 4. Liberty School in Comparison to the District and State
Grade 3 MCAS Test Reading Results
2001-2005**

	Liberty			District			State		
	Prof	NI	W/F	Prof	NI	W/F	Prof	NI	W/F
2005	29	52	19	41	46	13	62	31	7
2004	26	51	23	40	45	16	63	30	7
2003	20	61	20	42	41	17	62	30	7
2002	23	63	14	44	42	14	67	27	6
2001	11	77	13	39	46	15	62	31	7

**Table 5. Liberty School in Comparison to the District and State
Grade 4 MCAS Test ELA Results
2001-2005**

	Liberty				District				State			
	Adv	Prof	NI	W/F	Adv	Prof	NI	W/F	Adv	Prof	NI	W/F
2005	0	12	59	29	3	25	50	22	10	40	40	11
2004	0	19	48	33	5	31	43	21	11	45	35	9
2003	2	33	44	21	3	29	46	22	10	45	34	10
2002	0	7	58	36	3	29	47	21	8	46	37	10
2001	2	15	50	33	2	26	48	24	7	44	38	11

**Table 6. Liberty School in Comparison to the District and State
Grade 4 MCAS Test Math Results
2001-2005**

	Liberty				District				State			
	Adv	Prof	NI	W/F	Adv	Prof	NI	W/F	Adv	Prof	NI	W/F
2005	2	8	49	41	5	16	50	29	14	27	44	15
2004	0	7	52	40	6	19	47	27	14	28	44	14
2003	0	9	53	37	4	17	45	34	12	28	43	16
2002	0	5	29	66	4	15	43	38	12	27	42	19
2001	0	2	46	52	3	12	47	38	10	24	46	19

In Grade 3 reading the percentage in 'Proficient' has risen from 20 to 29 percent, while Springfield has stayed flat at 41 percent +/- 1, and the state flat at 62 percent. In 'Warning/Failing' (W/F), Liberty has remained reasonably flat at 21 percent +/- 2, while Springfield has improved from 17 percent to 13 percent, and the state has stayed flat at 7 percent.

In Grade 4 ELA, Liberty had a strong class in 2003 that was slightly above the district but below the state for the percent in 'Advanced/Proficient' (A/P). That same class matched the district but was at about double the state level in the W/F category. In the last two years, both of which have lagged well behind the 2003 cohort, the percent in A/P has declined from 19 to 12 percent but the percent in W/F has also declined by 4 percent. Springfield district results in A/P percentages improved from 2003 to 2004 but declined to 28 percent in 2005, still more than double the percentage at Liberty. The district W/F remained flat at about 22 percent. State A/P was 20 percentage points above Springfield and also declined in 2005; the W/F has stayed flat at approximately ten percent.

In Grade 4 math, Liberty has seen a very small growth from 2003 to 2005, from nine percent 'Proficient' to two percent 'Advanced' and 8 percent 'Proficient.' The W/F category has increased from 37 percent in 2003 to 40 percent in 2004 and 41 percent in 2005. Springfield over the three years has remained relatively flat in A/P at 21 percent with a slight improvement in 2004 only. The W/F has declined from 34 percent in 2003 to 29 percent in 2005. State rates have stayed between 40 and 41 percent in A/P over the three years and at 15 percent +/- 1 in the W/F category.

Further analysis is provided in the response to Key Question 1.

PANEL RESPONSES TO THE KEY QUESTIONS

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

No; student achievement at Liberty Elementary School has improved too slowly, although there are some positive signs over the last three years.

Liberty did not meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in 2005 either in the aggregate or for either of two subgroups (low-income, Hispanic) in the English Language Arts area. In Cycle III results, combining 2003 and 2004, Liberty did meet AYP in the aggregate in English Language Arts and math and also for the low-income subgroup in English Language Arts. Hispanic students did not meet AYP in ELA in Cycle III. The strongest MCAS test results for Liberty were in 2003, with AYP met in English Language Arts and math both for the aggregate and for subgroups. Prior to 2003, Liberty had not met AYP for four years in either subject area.

The general trends in the distribution of students across proficiency levels for Liberty in comparison to the district of Springfield and the state in the three subject areas is shown in the table earlier in the MCAS test results section. The distribution at Liberty has been less strong than the Springfield School District in Grade 3 reading, Grade 4 ELA, and Grade 4 math. Margins in 2003 through 2005 in the 'Proficient' category and the 'Warning' category have been six to 22 percentage points in Grade 3 reading (averaging 9.6 points), 7 to 26 percentage points in Grade 4 ELA (averaging 9.6 points), and 11 to 18 percentage points in Grade 4 math (averaging 10.5 points). Two exceptions are in 2003 in Grade 4 ELA: Liberty had 35 percent of students in A/P, whereas the district had 32 percent; and Liberty had 21 percent of the students in W/F, whereas the district had 22 percent.

As described in the school profile, there are significantly higher percentages of low-income, ELL, and minority students enrolled in the district compared to the state averages. The demographics for Liberty in the percentage of minority and of low income students are very similar to the Springfield District as a whole for the 2005 school year, but in measures of FLNE, LEP, and SPED students, Liberty faced lower learning challenges. Because Liberty is a small school with 45-50 students at each grade level in most years, MCAS test results sometimes show strong variability from year-to-year. For instance, the cohort of students in Grade 3 in 2002 moving to Grade 4 in 2003 and Grade 5 in 2004 shows higher results than the cohorts on either side.

In looking at all 32 elementary schools in Springfield, Liberty outperforms about a third of the schools. Some of the schools that are substantially ahead of Liberty have higher percentages of special needs students and higher percentages of FLNE and LEP students to educate. Liberty's performance falls below the city as a whole, and the city is considerably below the state.

Relative to the performance of subgroups in other schools in the district, among the four that are quite comparable to Liberty, in 2005 all had low income groups in English Language Arts, and

only one achieved AYP for that group; two had low income subgroups in math and neither achieved AYP. Liberty met AYP for subgroups in 2003 in both ELA and math but since then has not done so where there is a group of sufficient size to be reported. At the six possible points at which AYP was reported for these two Liberty subgroups, there are two in which the group was not of sufficient size, there are two in which Liberty achieved AYP, and two in which Liberty did not. For the four similar schools, the numbers are much the same, achieving AYP half the time and failing the other half of the time. Although Springfield and Massachusetts results are for a larger number of grades and a larger number of subgroups, neither Springfield nor the state as a whole has achieved AYP for subgroups in either subject in the last three years.

The area of greatest improvement overall at Liberty is in Grade 3 reading where from 2003 to 2005 there has been a one-point reduction in the percentage of students in the 'Warning' category, a steady nine-point decline in 'Needs Improvement,' and steady growth from 20 percent to 29 percent in 'Proficient.' At the same time in Grade 3 reading, Springfield has seen a four-point reduction in the 'Warning' category but no significant increase in the percentage in 'Proficient.' State trends have been flat both in the reduction of those in 'Warning' and the increase of those in 'Proficient.'

In proficiency levels, Grade 4 ELA has a less positive trend, than is the case for the district and the state. There has been a four-percentage point decline from 2004 to 2005 in the percentage in 'Warning' at Liberty, but the percentage in 'Proficient' has also declined seven points in the same year. Springfield and Massachusetts as a whole dropped by small amounts in 'Warning' and declined by seven points and six points respectively in 'Proficient' and 'Advanced.'

For Grade 4 math, the relatively strong Liberty cohort in 2003 also impacts the trends and comparisons. In 2005, the percentage in 'Warning' has stayed relatively constant, moving slightly higher (four points) from 2003 to 2005. The percentage in 'Proficient' and 'Advanced' has shown slight improvement (three points) in the math area, but still the total is half the level of the city as a whole and one quarter of the level of the state as a whole.

Low-income students at Liberty have made more progress over the last two years of testing than Hispanic students, although both subgroups in ELA took steps backwards in CPI in 2005 (-1.3 and -2.2, respectively). Low-income students made a significant jump in CPI in math in Cycle III (+10.8) but remained static in 2005. Although not a large enough group to qualify for AYP rating, African American students (numbering 29) in Cycle III made a significant jump in CPI in ELA (+11.6), but the size of the group was not large enough in the 2005 testing to show any results. Hispanic students (numbering 19) increased 9.6 CPI points in Cycle III in math but remained static (+0.3) in 2005.

The two-year report by the principal states a number of positive subgroup changes across the various performance index categories including some very positive percentages. But the numbers of students in these groups, other than the Hispanic subcategory, are often of single-digit size. The Springfield School Department supplied a worksheet and an analysis by these PI categories.

There is some demographic change for the school that would suggest a small positive impact on improvement trends in MCAS test results. Low income, race, and ELL factors have remained

relatively constant and challenging. An additional trend that is difficult to document quantitatively was expressed by the principal and by teachers and parents talking about the desirability of being at Liberty and the impact of a new assignment plan in Springfield called the Boundary Plan. Three years ago Liberty was not seen as a desirable school in the choice program. Parents who were exercising their choice options tended to move their children to other schools. Now, the reports are that Liberty is perceived as a strong school and, where choice is still an option, it has attracted children whose parents are looking for a desirable educational environment.

The other source of data about factors that may have impacted performance is the number of program changes that occurred in the 2004-05 school year that had some impact on the consistency of instruction. *Harcourt Brace* ELA replaced *Success for All* at grades 2-5; the school was declared a Magnet school and began its transition efforts towards a theme of Mathematical Discovery and Communication with *Investigations* introduced at the start of the year to supplement the Addison Wesley math materials. These changes are described more fully in later responses, but the plates of teachers in grades 2-5 were very full.

The performance goals that have been set in School Improvement Plans, using the PIM process, have been driven by AYP calculations. They are clearly ambitious enough for this school and its students. The growth targets do not seem to have been impacted by other factors. The question of whether they are “achievable and reasonable” for Liberty is answered in part by the five or six schools with similar demographic challenges that are meeting AYP in Springfield and that are achieving higher percentages of students in ‘Proficient’ categories. Liberty Elementary School, among those with similar or even more demanding demographic factors, remains somewhat behind the middle of the pack.

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

Yes. The school effectively builds and implements a thorough and detailed School Improvement Plan that is completely integrated with the PIM process. However, while the 2003-04 plan correlates with meeting AYP for the aggregate in the 2004 testing, this success was not sustained in the 2005 testing.

Success for All (SFA) was chosen as the English Language Arts program for grades K-5 in 2002-03. Its implementation was blunted, especially at the upper elementary grades, because of inadequate consultant help from *SFA*, resistance from some teachers, and inadequate leadership from the prior principal. Upper elementary teachers believed that their voices had not been heard in the selection of the program. The new principal, working with his mentor and an assistant superintendent, determined that there was not effective instruction through *SFA* to meet the needs of upper elementary grade students, especially in writing. When the faculty again was consulted on their views about appropriate curriculum in ELA, the majority voice was for a shift to *Harcourt Brace*, the ELA program used in the Springfield district. However, the primary grade teachers expressed a strong desire to maintain the *SFA* program. Responding to the teachers and to the weaknesses outlined in the SIP, the principal shifted to *Harcourt Brace* mid-year of the 2004-05 year for grades 2-5 with classroom-level professional development during

that shift. However, he also supported his primary teachers and gained permission from the central office to continue with *SFA* at the kindergarten and Grade 1 levels.

The sustained use of *SFA* at grades K and 1 follows the SIP and responds to students' needs for a strong phonics program. The existing data is that students at the end of Grade 1 have made strong progress through the use of the program; 83 percent were at proficiency levels in 2004 and 96 percent in 2005. The shift to *Harcourt Brace* was a responsive one by the principal, agreed to by the central office. A decline in the 2005 ELA CPI, a decline in Grade 4 ELA percentages in 'Proficient', and a slight increase in the Grade 4 math 'Warning' percentages are the places that there were quantitative steps back as a result of a possible implementation dip, but the restraining effect on possible increases is plausible and must await the 2006 tests for confirmation.

The original 2003-04 plan has been modified in 2004-05 and 2005-06 in response to both MCAS test data and the Springfield "Step Up" assessments, quarterly tests based on MCAS test questions. The School Improvement Plan (SIP) document is clear and specific and for each improvement objective provides a brief statement of strategies, activities, who is responsible, resources needed, specific timelines, specific students targeted, methods of collecting information, expected evidence of quality implementation, and a statement of frequency and timeline for review. The on-line survey supports the ownership and clarity of the SIP for teachers with 64 percent giving the highest rating and 32 percent the next highest. On the survey teachers gave clear and sometimes detailed answers showing a reliance on the PIM in terms of the priorities of instruction.

The 2003-04 plan was developed through a process that sought to involve teachers in Department of Education training on the PIM process and Springfield School Improvement Plan planning (SIP planning). In the summer of 2003, the new principal, using district guidance and support, was able to pay approximately half of the teachers for their time devoted to the development of the PIM/SIP. The previous principal, as noted in the Panel Report from winter 2003, had minimum participation. A new sense of faculty representation and engagement, noted in the Fact-Finding report in fall 2003, was a result of the shift. In the revisions of the plan for 2004-05 several teachers were involved, but in 2005-06, the process has become dominated by the leadership team at Liberty: made up of the principal, the two CPDTs, and two Magnet school grant-funded specialists, who meet weekly. The concern is that broader teacher representation could provide additional strategies for reaching learning objectives, but the leadership team meets during the school day when teachers are not easily available. The union representatives have raised that concern with the principal, and he has taken a step to include a teacher leader in the current district SIP training.

In support of the SIP learning objectives, the Springfield School System has instituted a program for embedded professional development by replacing more generic resource teachers with the collaborative professional development teachers. These are teachers selected for skills in reading or math who are supported at the district level by coordinators and who are placed in individual schools. Their job description calls for 80 percent of time spent in assisting the improvement of instruction through modeling, through development of lesson plans, and through interaction with teachers; the other 20 percent of the time is designated for work directly with students outside of other teachers' classrooms to provide release time and to provide smaller groupings. The job

description also calls for leadership in analyzing data and using it to set plans and to develop instruction. A CPDT role in ELA has been in place for two years, although the person in the job is new for 2005-06, and an additional CPDT has been provided in math this year, as well as additional resource specialists in math and technology provided last year by the Magnet school grant. There are some issues with the effectiveness of the work of these specialists that will be discussed later.

The leadership team has time structures with which to implement the SIP/PIM with classroom teachers. At least two of the four district professional development days at the start of the school year are used to review the plan and discuss the incorporation of strategies in the classroom. Twice-monthly 40-minute “team time” brings the leadership team and the teachers working at a grade level together to look at progress based on a variety of test data and to discuss changes in strategies and resources needed. Also, “extended day time” at Liberty every Tuesday after school for 75 minutes is used in part for the monitoring and discussion of the SIP/PIM.

The school has systems operating for focusing on data and strategies to respond to it. The principal meets with the ELA and math CPDTs weekly. As of 2004-05, established team time for 40 minutes every other week for each grade level provides time for the principal, the CPDTs, and resource specialists to meet, with a primary focus on assisting in the implementation of SIP objectives. The contract also provides “extended day time” for 75 minutes, and each Tuesday Liberty has structured agendas with an emphasis on SIP implementation and the use of data to look at instruction.

The district also supports SIP development and implementation through the assignment of a school support specialist who visits the school several times a month to talk to the principal about the plan and the school’s progress towards its objectives, and to provide advice and assistance. When a new plan is being developed, the school support specialist becomes more involved in the design. Furthermore, there is a district review of the School Improvement Plan that uses a rubric similar to the Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE) monitoring rubric. The district has a data specialist who also contributes to the analysis of the Springfield MCAS-like test, administered quarterly in 2004-05 and three times in the current year.

Another form of district support for planning is the strong mentoring for the principal, especially in his first year. He and the assistant superintendent for the zone of the city did frequent learning walks in the first two years with the principal, including occasionally the superintendent. The written feedback from such walks is rather broad and directed through the principal to the faculty as a whole, and the primary purpose of the district walks is one of school accountability more than individual instructional improvement.

Massachusetts Department of Education review team reports and monitoring reports have been taken seriously. DOE monitoring of the PIM process was consistent up to the last report in February, 2005. A May visit was made, but a report was not forthcoming because of turnover in the Department of Education staffing. The DOE monitoring commentary spoke more about the PIM processing than the results for students.

The degree to which the leadership and faculty understand the dynamics of improvement remains limited and is one reason why the strong planning with clear and well-analyzed strategies are not yet consistently providing continuous improvement in achievement. All classroom teachers understood the value of daily and weekly formative assessments and explained how data is used by individuals or in discussion with colleagues. The school leadership and faculty recognize the performance gap. But there is not a strong and consistent understanding of the quality of highly effective instructional practices necessary to bring students to proficient standards.

Significant change has taken place in the past two years; teachers are being hired who are strongly committed to student achievement and to improved programs and presentation. The assistant superintendent, the principal, and the Fact-Finding Report noted the start of that change. The principal has continued to fill openings with faculty who have experience and the desire to be at Liberty under his vision. The desire and the work ethic are in place, but instructional leadership that engages teachers on a daily basis to push their instruction to higher standards of performance is limited.

In observations of the twelve classrooms in the school, the majority of lessons were satisfactory. None were remarkable for exemplary instruction nor were any poor. Strengths of classrooms were in high-quality student behavior through classroom management, which was noted as a serious deficiency in the Panel Review, teacher enthusiasm, effective class size, and visually lively and well-organized spaces. The district's Math Instructional Guide and other curriculum documents describe a model for planning a varied instructional process, including direct teacher instruction, guided practice, small group work, and informal assessments of learning; this was observed in several lessons within the 30 minutes scheduled. A fully redesigned "pupil progression plan" setting challenging benchmarks for student promotion holds the promise of providing additional standards for effective teaching. But rigorous expectations, though seen in a few instances, were not common; nor were effective differentiation of instruction, broad incorporation of higher order thinking skills, or connection of classroom activities to major concepts or skills.

The learning walks by the central office and principal are fulfilling district accountability and are assisting the principal; they are not designed to have impact directly on individual teachers with generalized feedback to the whole staff in writing from the principal. The principal is actively visiting classes, as judged by the log that he must submit to the central office and by teacher comments. His formal evaluation reports are detailed, but many of the comments are focused on the less sophisticated elements of instructional capacity. While teachers appreciate positive tone, they are not receiving the detailed feedback necessary to improve instruction targeted on closing the performance gap. There is no assistant principal highly skilled in instruction, and the central office's school support resources are not sufficient to engage twelve classroom teachers and fifteen additional certified employees in moving beyond satisfactory daily performance to highly skilled instruction.

The primary district plan for direct assistance in instructional leadership is the work of CPDTs and magnet school resource specialists; but their current effectiveness in changing teacher instructional behavior is limited by a number of factors. The tensions that exist in

union/management relationships because of the collective bargaining problems have limited the work of CPDTs. They have been barred from doing learning walks with the principal because they are in the same contract unit as teachers, and they may not look at plan books, monitor implementation of strategies, or behave in ways that are supervisory. They do not appear to have the right to enter a teacher's classroom without an invitation. More than half the teachers talked to by the Review Team find the CPDT and specialist classroom to be helpful when they ask for it, but others primarily value their direct work with small student groups. Also limiting their effectiveness in improving instruction are time demands imposed by other responsibilities such as data analysis. While the job description delineates 80 percent of time spent improving instruction through modeling, coaching on lesson plans, or discussing data-driven changes, far less is available to them; teaching breakout groups of students, their own training time, and preparing for and attending meetings intrudes. Daily time schedules for classes place similar subjects at the same time of day and limits CPDT ability to be present in their subject specialization. Additionally, some interpersonal tensions have not been resolved. These factors are not insurmountable, but even in the best of conditions these coaches do not have administrative authority. While reasonable time structures are in place for collaborative sessions outside of the classroom, their full potential is not being reached.

The SIP is well designed, it is understood by faculty, and connections are made to classroom activities; the time structures are in place to monitor and advise; the reintegration of classroom teachers' voices into the planning process is underway; and the planning efforts are reasonably supported at the district level; however, the intense supervision and feedback to teachers to move beyond satisfactory instructional process is not consistently and effectively active in the school.

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 on the school's ability to implement their plan?

Yes; significant changes in conditions, policies, and practices in the school and the district, most of them deliberate rather than unforeseen, have an impact which is primarily positive.

Most significant and positive in the changes at Liberty is the appointment of the new principal, Mr. Anthony Hill, in the summer of 2003 by action of Superintendent Burke. His leadership has brought commitment to the PIM and SIP processes, and he has changed the school's climate through his skills, energy, and modeling and through his selection of new staff. He both speaks and acts with a belief in the achievement of all students and a belief that teachers and the school can make a difference. The mission and the motto of the school use the phrase "transforming the lives of ALL children." The Liberty Learning Pledge is recited each morning by the students after the Pledge of Allegiance, and begins: "I will put forth my best effort daily in school..." The unified vision noted by the Fact-Finding Report remains strong. Also, teachers, parents, and students agree that the discipline, criticized in the Panel Review report, is well controlled now, and the number of suspensions has been significantly reduced. The principal has applied his guidance skills to problems, has oriented new faculty to his expectations and procedures, and has advised all faculty about de-escalation approaches. Similarly, the attendance issues are considered by teachers to be improving with individual and classroom recognitions and with follow-up with homes, including home visits and allying with DSS to get the message out to

parents. The district made available ConnectEd as a communication device for the school; it has been used actively by the principal to alert parents to attendance problems. The faculty survey gives the principal a 4.80 out of five points in guiding and supporting effective improvement in learning. The principal has also won strong support from parents.

A factor that impedes progress in the school is the condition of union/management relationships, especially in the collective bargaining process. Teachers have been without a contract since 2001 and without any salary adjustments, while health insurance contributions have increased up to 25 percent. Across the school system the union declared work-to-rule conditions and has been highly vigilant about any efforts to increase expectations for teacher time or effort. Liberty teachers decided to end the work-to-rule condition in mid-November in part because of their concern for the missed opportunities to tutor students. Two weeks later the strategy was stopped city-wide. Teachers have been leaving the system in large numbers, but Liberty has been less hurt by the salary pressures than many schools, with only two departures since last year to other districts.

Attendance has been impeded by the use of half days of school in the Springfield system. The regular calendar uses partial days before Thanksgiving and Christmas vacations. Furthermore, the unforeseen problems with weather in the winter of 2004-05 also created several delayed opening days. Attendance at Liberty fell to 25-50 percent of the normal rate on these scheduled and unscheduled partial days.

Liberty has benefited from district efforts to provide additional resource allocations. The most dramatic changes come with designation as a Magnet school in the fourth cycle of this grant that took effect as of the 2004-05 school year. The Magnet grant was developed in alignment with the School Improvement Plan with an emphasis on improving and supporting instruction in mathematics. The grant provides \$400,000 a year for three years which has added two staff members, one as a resource in math instruction and the other as a resource in technology. It has supported intensive professional development for those teachers involved in *Investigations* in the summer of 2004. Starting in November, grades 2 to 5 teachers will receive training with the implementation of this program to focus on the SIP learning objective of improving math problem-solving capabilities. The grant will pay for the training in the *John Collins* writing process as part of improving communication. E-rate funding has paid for modernizing the electrical service for the school (which is expected to come online in the next month), and the district has purchased six desktop computers. This technology improvement has been added to by Magnet funds to procure two mobile laptop labs of sixteen computers apiece. While the designation of a Magnet school has certainly provided very positive benefits to the school, there is also the feeling among some teachers that it has added demands (“made the plate more full”); this reaction is likely to become more significant as *Investigations* is required of all teachers rather than volunteers. The value of some elements of the proposal, such as the creation of a television studio, is questioned in terms of the demands for limited space and the interference with other priorities for learning in the school.

The school has also benefited from district decisions to provide an additional teacher through the Class Size Reduction grant, to add a CPDT in math in the 2004-05 school year, to provide \$10,000 in additional funds for textbooks, and to provide a variety of supplemental programs.

These include the benefits of the 21st Century program that is run in conjunction with the parks department and provides faculty to work with 60 students in math and ELA, as well as offering recreation and character-building activities. A Mass Mutual grant provides support for a reading incentive program. While teachers still are spending money out of their own pockets for posters, other decorative materials, and extras in their classrooms, the report of the principal and teachers is that basic instructional resources are in strong supply at Liberty, a positive change from the report of the Fact-Finding team.

The district initiated several years ago a student service team process with training which brings into the school additional expertise, so that especially challenging students can receive a kind of case management that analyzes needs and sets up interventions. The Magnet grant funding has allowed the expansion from one team to three teams (grades K/1, 2/3, and 4/5). Team discussions focus on school-based interventions for students with both academic and social/emotional issues, after informal discussion in team time and before formal referral for full special needs processes.

The district has a reading scope and sequence in place, a stated alignment of Massachusetts standards with district expectations, and a mathematics instructional guide, which provide clear direction for the curricula; although, there has been a major shifting of the materials to support these efforts at Liberty. Most teachers value these changes in programmatic materials and methodologies, but the number and the pace have created transitional stresses. Changes in ELA were discussed earlier. An additional change is the impact on the writing program, which is supplementing *First Steps* with training in the *John Collins* writing process as of the next few months. While the *Addison-Wesley* math materials have stayed constant, the Magnet school program has introduced *Investigations* from TERC as an additional component. Perhaps the most dramatic of the math changes have been cycling at the kindergarten level where four programs in five years have culminated in the use of *Growing with Mathematics*. The incorporation of computer technology under the Magnet grant has been reasonably non-intrusive to date, voluntary, and supported by an instructional technology specialist, but that activity will be accelerating.

The Boundary Plan for assignment of students has had a mixed impact at Liberty. The new system provides 70 percent of the school population on a neighborhood basis and 30 percent on a school choice plan heavily influenced by the Magnet School concept. At the start of this school year there was a 44 percent turnover of the students at Liberty as a result of the Boundary Plan and the Magnet School attraction. This meant the departure of students who were growing with the new climate and an influx of students whose strengths and weaknesses needed to be assessed and planned for. However, teachers are pleased with the easier access to parents. Liberty's changes, the more positive reputation (see page 12), the new Boundary Plan, and the new Magnet School status spell a long-term change to stronger parent contact, support, and commitment.

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

No. Many conditions for learning at Liberty have improved, and yet important shortcomings remain in moving the faculty to the level of instructional practice necessary for significant

achievement gain. There is a clear desire for improvement in performance, but there is not a true understanding of the standards of excellence involved. The principal has used his skill as a leader to develop a positive climate and a culture of commitment, a necessary condition for student success. Yet it currently does not provide the necessary quality of instruction to ensure proficiency for students who have many obstacles to their progress. The principal's unique educational background has been essential in creating a school in which children and staff are eager to work, but the systems in place to bring continuous improvement of instructional quality and academic expectations are not operating at full effectiveness.

Leadership at Liberty Elementary School is effective in most ways. The review team found that many of the positive initiatives documented in the Fact-Finding report in the fall of 2003 have moved forward productively (positive leadership, open communication, staff morale and participation, strong PIM process, use of data, strong relations with the central office, unifying vision statement, revitalization of guidance, availability of resources). Most of the negative conditions have been turned around (resolution of the *Success for All* problems, discipline and classroom management, benchmarking of student improvement). The school now has a strong reputation for its commitment to children and for the responsiveness and collaborative style of the principal.

However, the point at which this positive momentum loses traction is in the daily supervision of teachers to hone their instructional skills and to work together for consensus on truly rigorous expectations for all students. The general directions are set, but the ongoing professional dialogue about instructional expertise is active for only a small majority of the faculty and the detailed monitoring and specific feedback on the more sophisticated elements of instruction are not widely available.

The faculty is supportive of the goals and objectives of the school improvement plan. Professional development time before the school year is also used for planning classroom activities in conjunction with SIP objectives. "Team time" for forty minutes every other week includes two teachers at a grade level, the principal, several specialists, and CPDTs in discussions of progress toward the objectives, discussions of specific students and instructional efforts to assist them, and opportunities for teachers to seek assistance. This is seen as a valuable opportunity by about two-thirds of the classroom teachers. Faculty interviews and agendas and minutes of meetings support the value of this time, although tensions around the role of CPDTs are distracting for the one third.

This is a school that displays a desire to improve the achievement of its students. A few teachers expressed a desire to be more directly involved in creating the School Improvement Plan and its strategies as well as devising classroom activities to make it succeed. This fall, through union channels, the principal has been formally requested to include teachers actively in the development of the next plan. New sources of funding are available to the principal to support teacher involvement outside of the school day. The narrowing of teacher input in 2005-06 has been recognized and is being corrected for 2006-07.

The evidence of a positive climate and collegial interaction is manifest in daily observations, in descriptions of work together, and in survey results. Instructional specialists and support teachers

in most cases have strong working relations with others in the building, but obstacles to the full utilization of the CPDTs exist that limit their roles.

District leadership is providing adequate guidance and support. The district provided strong mentoring for the new principal, especially active in his first year, and with continued positive efforts since then. That included the direct attention of a very capable mentor and the support of an assistant superintendent. Frequent meetings and learning walks contributed to important decisions on blocking time, on program changes, and on implementing a strong School Improvement Plan. Monthly formal learning walks continue with district personnel and the principal, although they are seen as slowing from the frequency of prior years. Visits by the school support specialist assist in SIP implementation. The Magnet school director meets with the Liberty specialist staff along with other Magnet grant specialists in the district, and district coordinators for the CPDTs meet regularly with them. However, this district support for the specialists has not resolved issues of role clarification or increased the focus on modeling instructional practice; nor has it yet created more rigorous expectations and more refined instructional behaviors.

CONCLUSION

Liberty Elementary School has made only limited progress in improving student achievement, even though it has made AYP in the aggregate in two out of the last three years. It has made significant strides under the principal appointed in the summer of 2003 in developing clear and focused planning and in providing a very positive climate for students. Other positive factors include added resources as a Magnet school and an effective student support team structure to provide case management. Nevertheless, the evidence is still not strong enough that the systems in place are working effectively to make continuous improvement in instructional quality and in student standards for performance.

Overall, student achievement at Liberty Elementary School has improved slowly, although there are some positive signs over the last three years. Liberty did not meet Adequate Yearly Progress in 2005 either in the aggregate or for subgroups in the English Language Arts area. In Cycle III results, combining 2003 and 2004, Liberty did meet AYP in the aggregate in English Language Arts and math and also for the low-income subgroup in English Language Arts. Hispanic students did not meet AYP in ELA in Cycle III. The strongest MCAS test results for Liberty were in 2003, with AYP met in English Language Arts and math both for the aggregate and for subgroups. Prior to 2003, Liberty had not met AYP for four years in either subject area.

The school effectively builds and implements a thorough and detailed School Improvement Plan that is completely integrated with the PIM process. However, while the 2003-04 plan correlated with meeting AYP for the aggregate in the 2004 testing, this success was not sustained in the 2005 testing. The original 2003-04 plan has been modified for 2004-05 and 2005-06 in response to both MCAS test data and the Springfield "Step Up" assessments, quarterly tests based on MCAS test questions. The SIP document is clear and specific and for each improvement objective provides a brief statement of strategies, activities, who is responsible, resources needed, a specific timeline, specific students targeted, methods of collecting information, expected evidence of quality implementation, and a statement of frequency and timeline for

review. The plan is well designed, understood by faculty, and connections are made to classroom activities. The time structures are in place to monitor and to advise; the reintegration of classroom teacher voices into the planning process is underway; and the planning efforts are reasonably supported at the district level. However, the intense supervision and feedback to teachers to move beyond satisfactory instructional process is not consistently and effectively active in the school.

In general, other factors impacting the school have been supportive and positive, most significantly the appointment of a new principal in 2003 and district resource allocations to support the school. Factors that have impeded progress are moving toward resolution, including the long-standing tensions in collective bargaining. The Boundary Plan has created a one-year transition issue for Liberty, but the overall impact will be closer parent contacts. Discipline is no longer an issue, and attendance is improving. The rapid introduction of new programs in the 2004-05 and 2005-06 school years was supported by faculty. Student service teams provide teacher and specialist attention to difficult student cases. The Magnet school grant has, since the 2004-05 school year, brought added human and material resources and a new sense of esteem to the school; although the new technology emphasis will add to other pressing learning priorities.

The core weakness is in the slow development of skillful and effective peer coaching and administrative supervision toward excellence in instructional methodologies and standards of student performance. The obstacles are manageable. There is a clear potential for this weakness to be corrected, but there is not a plan in place to do so. The school has a positive climate and a culture of commitment, a necessary condition for student success. It currently does not provide, however, the necessary quality of instruction to ensure proficiency for students who have many obstacles to their progress. The components to foster continuous improvement in these areas are in place: time structures, concern for data, predominantly collegial relations, and a coaching structure. Full effectiveness awaits analyzing and solving implementation problems in the coaching and supervision processes and engaging the whole professional community in achieving more rigorous instructional standards.

APPENDIX A

Team Members

Peter Davies, Chairman, Senior Consultant and President, Class Measures

Eva Mitchell, Coordinator, Office of Educational Quality and Accountability

Lisa Bryant, Associate Examiner, Office of Educational Quality and Accountability

Peter Clark, Senior Consultant, Class Measures

APPENDIX B

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

The times specified on the following schedule may be adjusted slightly to align with the daily schedule and practices of the school being reviewed.

The team will meet for a full day before the on site portion of the review to study all data and documents provided to the team. The team chairperson may choose to conduct the interviews noted below on this day, rather than during the Day 1 on site visit.

Day 1 on-site schedule

All activities take place in the school

<i>8:00—9:00</i>	Team members meet with the principal.
<i>9:00—10:00.</i>	Team members meet with the district superintendent (and Assistant Superintendent, if appropriate).
<i>10:00—11:00.</i>	Team members meet with the school’s curriculum and instruction leadership team and members of the school site council.
<i>11:00—1:00.</i>	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.
<i>1:00—3:00.</i>	Team members meet with teachers in focus groups.

	REVIEWER A and REVIEWER B	REVIEWER C and REVIEWER D
1:00-1:30	TEACHER FOCUS GROUP #1	TEACHER FOCUS GROUP #2
1:30-2:00	TEACHER FOCUS GROUP #3	TEACHER FOCUS GROUP #4
2:00-2:30	TEACHER FOCUS GROUP #5	TEACHER FOCUS GROUP #6

2:30-3:00 Team members meet with parents and students in focus groups.

	REVIEWER A	REVIEWER B	REVIEWER C	REVIEWER D
2:30 - 3:00	Community & PD FOCUS GROUP #1	PARENT FOCUS GROUP #2	STUDENT FOCUS GROUP #1	STUDENT FOCUS GROUP #2

3:00—5:00 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

7:30—8:00 *a.m.* Team members meet with the principal for follow-up questions

8:00—8:30 *a.m.* Team members visit classrooms and interview teachers.*

	REVIEWER A	REVIEWER B	REVIEWER C	REVIEWER D
9:15 - 9:40	Observe teacher 1 Grade 1	Observe teacher 2 Grade 1	Observe teacher 3 Grade 2	Observe teacher 4 Grade 2
9:40 - 10:00	Interview teacher 1	Interview teacher 2	Interview teacher 3	Interview teacher 4
10:00- 10:30	Observe teacher 5 Grade 4	Observe teacher 6 Grade 4	Observe teacher 7 Grade 5	Observe teacher 8 Grade 5
10:30 - 11:00	Interview teacher 5	Interview teacher 6	Interview teacher 7	Interview teacher 8
11:00- 11:30	Observe teacher 9 Grade 3	Observe teacher 10 Grade 3	Observe teacher 11 Grade K	Observe teacher 12 Grade K
11:30 - 12:00	Interview teacher 9	Interview teacher 10	Interview teacher 11	Interview teacher 12

11:00—1:00. 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.

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.

	REVIEWER A	REVIEWER B	REVIEWER C	REVIEWER D
<i>1:00 - 2:00</i>	Follow-up meetings with school staff	Follow-up meetings with school staff	Follow-up meetings with school staff	Follow-up meetings with school staff

2:00—2:30 p.m. Closing meeting with the principal to discuss next steps (all team members are present)

2:30—5:00 p.m. Reviewers deliberate and form conclusions.

*Instructions for classroom observations, teacher interviews, and focus groups

Please inform all school faculty and students that Review Panel members will be visiting a cross-section of classrooms during the site visit. The selection of classrooms will be determined mutually by the Review Coordinator and the Principal using the staff directory information provided by the school. All faculty members are asked to be prepared to accommodate a visitor on the morning of the site visit. Panel members will make every effort to minimize the disruption of planned classroom activities.

1. Observations Each reviewer will observe three class lessons (for a total of 12 classes observed overall) in order to obtain a representative sample of the school's individual classrooms. The purpose of the classroom observation is to judge the quality of the learning environment, which is a critical aspect of the school's overall conditions, and a determinant in whether or not the school will be able to successfully implement its improvement plan. The learning environment includes:
 - The physical setting—space, lighting, size, classroom temperature, etc.,
 - The classroom organization—desk arrangement, resources available to students, orderliness, etc.,
 - The level of the teacher's preparation for instruction; the students' readiness for learning
 - The level of the teacher's expectation for student learning and performance
 - The interaction between teacher and students—the students' level of engagement or withdrawal.
 - The level and quality of instructional practice in the school (Panelists are not evaluating individual teachers).

2. Individual Teacher Interviews The purpose of the teacher interview that follows the observation is to:
 - Clarify the evaluator's impressions of the classroom dynamic and learning environment
 - Determine what the teacher considers to be the chief learning needs of students across the school and within his or her classroom
 - Determine the teacher's understanding of the school's plan to address those needs and to improve student performance
 - Determine the teacher's role in the overall mission and improvement plan of the school

3. Teacher Focus Groups The purpose of the teacher focus groups is to:
 - Determine what each teacher considers to be the chief learning needs of students across the school and within his or her classroom
 - Determine each teacher's understanding of the school's plan to address those needs and to improve student performance
 - Determine each teacher's role in the overall mission and improvement plan of the school