

## **School Panel Review Report James J. Chittick Elementary School Boston Public Schools**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of the School Panel Review Process is to assist the Commissioner of Education in determining whether State intervention is needed to guide improvement efforts in schools where students' MCAS performance is not at a level that reaches the school's Adequate Yearly Progress targets in English language arts or mathematics or both. The James Chittick Elementary School met these criteria and was one of sixteen schools selected for panel review in winter, 2004. The panel review was conducted on February 23-24, 2004.

The review 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 two key questions:

1. Does the school have a sound plan for improving student performance?
2. Are the conditions in place for the successful implementation of the school's improvement plan(s)?

The panel's responses to the two key questions that defined the scope of its 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 school performance data, in determining whether the Chittick School is deemed 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. Diagnostic and/or prescriptive intervention, where needed to assist an under-performing school, occurs at the next stage of the school review process.

### **James Chittick Elementary School Profile**

#### **Enrollment**

The Chittick School is one of 83 elementary schools in Boston. The school serves 288 students this academic year in a kindergarten through grade 5 configuration. Enrollment at the Chittick School has been steadily declining since 2001, when 340 students were enrolled. On average 90 percent of students enrolled have been Black, five percent Hispanic, and the remaining divided between students of Asian, White, and Native American heritage.

Since 2001, nearly 80 percent of students enrolled at the Chittick School were low-income. Non-native English speaker enrollment during the last four years varied between eight and 19 percent. Fewer than five percent of students have had limited proficiency in English. This year 22 percent of students enrolled receive special education services.

In 2003, the school recorded an attendance rate of 95.3 percent. Retentions averaged 5.4 percent, consistent with previous years. The out-of-school suspension rate was 8.2 percent, which is similar to the 2002 rate.

### **Staffing**

This school year, the school reported having a staff of 29 that includes one administrator, one long-term substitute, three teacher aides, one curriculum facilitator, and 23 teachers. The school did not report data on staff length of employment at the school. Only one teacher is reported as lacking certification.

### **MCAS Overview**

Students at the Chittick School are assessed in English language arts (ELA) in grades 3 and 4, and in mathematics in grade 4. In 2003, the school made Adequate Yearly Progress in ELA in the aggregate and for all qualifying subgroups.<sup>1</sup> In the last five years, the school has made AYP three times. The school failed to make AYP in mathematics in the aggregate and for all subgroups. In the last five years, the school has not made AYP in mathematics.

## **Student Performance in English Language Arts**

### **GRADE 3**

#### **Regular Education**

In the last three years, the performance of grade 3 students in ELA has shown consistent improvement. In 2001 when the test was first administered, 24 percent of students were proficient. Fifty nine percent performed at the Needs Improvement level, and 17 percent at Warning. The following year, the proportion of proficient students rose to 26 percent; 60 percent were in need of improvement; and the proportion of those performing at Warning decreased to 13 percent. In 2003, 29 percent of those assessed were proficient, 63 percent performed at the Needs Improvement level, and eight percent at Warning.

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<sup>1</sup> In accordance with the federal No Child Left Behind Act passed in 2001, student performance is disaggregated by the following subgroups: Limited English Proficient, Special Education, Free/Reduced Lunch, African-American/Black, Asian or Pacific Islander, Hispanic, Native American, and White. A minimum of 20 students per subgroup is required to issue a statistically sound rating or determination of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). In 2003 the qualifying subgroups in ELA at the Chittick School were: Special Education, Free/Reduced priced lunch, and African American/Black. In mathematics, they were: Free/Reduced Lunch, and African American/ Black.

### Special Education

In 2001, fewer than 10 special education students were tested in ELA at the grade 3 level. In 2002, 46 percent performed at the Needs Improvement level, and 54 percent at Warning. Last year, six percent were proficient, 69 percent were in need of improvement, and 25 percent performed at Warning.

### Limited English Proficient

Fewer than 10 Limited English Proficient (LEP) students were assessed in ELA at the Chittick School in the last five years.

## GRADE 4

### Regular Education

In the last four years the performance of regular education grade 4 students has varied widely, yet no trends of improvement are evident. In 2000, two percent of students performed in the Proficient category, 58 percent in Needs Improvement, and 41 percent in Warning. In 2001, the proportion of proficient and advanced students rose to 32 percent. Fifty percent of students were in need of improvement, and 17 percent at scored at Warning. The following year, the proportion of proficient students decreased to 18; half of those assessed performed at the Needs Improvement level, and 33 percent at Warning. In 2003, 19 percent of students were proficient and 67 percent were in need of improvement. The percentage of students scoring at Warning was reduced to 14 percent.

### Special Education

In 2000, fewer than 10 special education students were assessed in grade 4 ELA. In 2001, seven percent of students were proficient; 20 percent performed at the Needs Improvement level, and 73 percent at Warning. In 2002, fewer than 10 special education students were tested in ELA at the grade 4 level. Last year, 56 percent were in need of improvement, and 44 percent performed at Warning.

### Limited English Proficient

Fewer than 10 Limited English Proficient (LEP) students were assessed in ELA at the Chittick School in the last five years at the grade 4 level.

## **Student Performance in Mathematics**

### Regular Education

Student performance in mathematics has shown no improvement in the last four years. In 2000, six percent of students performed in the Proficient category, 34 percent in Needs Improvement,

and 60 percent in Warning. In 2001, 54 percent of students were in need of improvement, and 46 percent at scored at Warning. The following year, eight percent of students were proficient; 28 percent performed at the Needs Improvement level, and the percentage of those scoring at Warning rose to 64 percent. In 2003, eight percent of students were proficient, 31 percent were in need of improvement, and 61 percent scored at the Warning level.

### Special Education

In 2000, fewer than 10 special education students were assessed in grade 4 mathematics. In 2001, 20 percent performed at the Needs Improvement level, and 80 percent at Warning. In 2002, fewer than 10 special education students were tested in ELA at the grade 4 level. Last year, 25 percent were in need of improvement, and the remaining three-quarters performed at Warning.

### Limited English Proficient

Fewer than 10 Limited English Proficient (LEP) students were assessed in mathematics at the Chittick School in the last five years at the grade 4 level.

## PANEL RESPONSES TO THE KEY QUESTIONS

### **KEY QUESTION 1: DOES THE SCHOOL HAVE A SOUND PLAN FOR IMPROVING STUDENT PERFORMANCE?**

Yes. While using the district's Whole School Improvement Plan (WSIP) process and document protocols for its planning efforts, the school conducted a thorough analysis of student performance information from recent years. School planners identified the root causes of significant performance shortcomings and developed goals, objectives and strategies to improve student performance in those areas. Established timelines are both realistic and understood by all using the plan. Continuing assessment practices are a regular part of monitoring plan progress and areas of difficulty. All at the school are gaining increasing skills in the use of such information to make better and more focused and informed decisions about programs and students.

The process used at the school in its improvement planning efforts, although led by the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) and the principal, was exceptionally comprehensive and inclusive of the entire faculty and staff. Seeking feedback and suggestions at each step of the process, they developed a comprehensive plan that has very strong support from the teachers and the school council. Parents on the council indicated how well informed they felt about the plan's purposes and progress during the current school year.

The plan developed by the ILT represents a clear statement of the school's decisions about students' needs and the specific steps it intends to take to address those needs. The plan's

implementation, conducted with an impressive sense of teamwork and mutual support, is on target during the current year

**A. Has the school analyzed appropriate data and program information to accurately identify the gaps in student performance and determined why those gaps exist?**

Yes. The school engaged in a comprehensive effort to analyze appropriate data to inform efforts aimed at improving student achievement. Planning for the current WSIP began in the spring of 2003 with a detailed analysis of several data sources. The school's ILT and principal received the district's MCAS analysis for the school. Using that material as a foundation, but also examining prior years' results to examine longer-term information and trends, the ILT, the math leadership team (MLT), and the math and literacy coaches continued that work with the principal. They analyzed each question in terms of skills and instructional concepts. In addition to examining whole school student data, they also reviewed the performance of identified sub-groups, noting discrepancies in the performance of special education students in particular.

With assistance from a faculty member, a "teacher-friendly" spreadsheet was created that provided student performance information about each question. Performance gaps, connection to learning standards and strands, and performance trends were identified. That information was provided to the entire faculty for feedback prior to the development of the WSIP. Teacher observation information and formative assessment results were included in the feedback considered by plan developers.

With the continuing and active involvement of the entire faculty, areas of performance weaknesses and their root causes were identified. These areas are clearly identified and established as priorities in the WSIP. The plan also identifies the continuing analysis of data from such sources as the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI), the Diagnostic Reading Assessment (DRA), the district's mid-year math assessments, and reading and writing prompts.

Describing the school's initial analysis of data last spring as "fair to middling", the deputy superintendent expressed her observation of increased and more skillful analysis of data to inform curricular decisions and determine instructional approaches by all within the school. In fact, the principal and faculty in both individual and group interviews echoed that characterization, describing their increased familiarity and skill with the use of student performance data. As evidenced by teacher and principal statements, review of the common planning time (CPT) notebooks for every grade, each classroom's assessment notebooks and several other planning and reporting documents examined by the panel review team, there is a steady and meaningful dialogue among all of the faculty about pupil performance, based on a regular flow of data and recognition of it as a useful and important tool.

**B. Does the plan set out specific improvement objectives that are grounded in the school's analysis of the reasons for poor student performance?**

Yes. Using the information gained from the detailed data analysis just mentioned and following the district's planning protocol and format, the ILT established important improvement goals. The specific objectives within the plan are most clearly identified in the WSIP sections entitled "Measurement of Strategies Effectiveness". Differing somewhat from what was described to the panel review team about the past use of the district's SMART goals, many of the current plan's objectives are more clearly and specifically focused on MCAS improvement goals, connected directly to the state's curriculum frameworks.

The objectives established in the plan present multiple opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration, perceived by the faculty as a plan strength. Although not readily discerned from the written WISP documentation, decisions were made to significantly increase that amount of time allocated for math instruction in all grades. The approach used with special education students also was modified to seek to have as many students as possible receive instruction in regular classrooms with an inclusionary approach. That purpose, in specific response to the data analysis results for those students, was established to attempt to have all students, to the maximum extent possible, have access to the full range of the school's curriculum.

Members of the student support team report their efforts to connect all of their activities to the plan's objectives and strategies. As reported by staff during interviews with panelists, all members of the faculty regularly refer to the plan's objectives during common planning and team meetings. These conversations expand teachers' understanding of their role in the improvement initiatives.

**C. In order to accomplish each improvement objective, does the plan specify strategies which appear likely to lead to improved student results?**

Yes. The WSIP contains a lengthy list of specific strategies aimed at successful objective attainment. Thirteen strategies are listed for two math objectives while 29 strategies are listed for three literacy objectives. The strategies identified are clearly connected to root causes identified from the school's analysis of data.

The strategies address identified performance weaknesses, student needs and professional development needs for the faculty. There is a strong research base in both the literacy and math programs and in the strategies included in the plan. An example of the connection from initial data analysis to current lesson planning was demonstrated in observations of math lessons, review of lesson plans and examination of the math curriculum. Data analysis done by the ILT and teachers indicated student weaknesses in developing and communicating about problem-solving strategies. The district's mathematics curriculum, "Investigations" is produced by TERC (formerly the Technical Education Research Center). That program calls for the use of a number of instructional approaches including Ten-Minute Math, significant blocks of new instruction and AYP (Annual Yearly Progress) or review/reinforcement periods during each day. Strategies included in the WSIP indicate that teachers should use the dialogue boxes and teacher notes discussed in the curriculum materials and student math notebooks used to record the development of student problem-solving strategies and mathematical thinking. Math lessons

observed and lesson planning materials reviewed indicated consistent implementation of the strategies and instructional approaches in the WSIP. Similar examples of literacy strategies, such as the use of writer's workshops, aimed at student weaknesses identified in the school's data analysis, are also evident in daily lessons. Teachers and instructional coaches reported continuing school-based professional development activities, identified as important strategies in the school's plan. They provided panel review members information sheets describing math workshops and demonstration lesson schedules developed by the coaches in response to teacher needs.

Panel review members noted differences in the levels of implementation and development between math and literacy strategies in the plan, in part due to differences in training opportunities, an important element to understand in judging the likelihood of success for each of the strategies. When the district's literacy curriculum was to be implemented in the school some years ago, all teachers at the school received professional development connected to that program. That professional development was presented at the school and the program was implemented throughout the school. The 29 literacy strategies connected to the literacy objectives in the plan appear quite developed, reflective of that training and experience with full curriculum implementation for some time.

This school was in the last "cohort" identified by the district for implementation of the math curriculum. Full implementation of that curriculum is in its first year at the school, especially in the school's upper grades. The extensive professional development directly connected to that program was not presented at the school. For such reasons as staff transfers, the late hiring of a teacher, current contract difficulties resulting in "work to fairness" practices that prevent teachers from taking professional development training outside of their assigned schools and others, some teachers have received limited or no professional development training in the implementation of the math curriculum. Those circumstances seem to some members of the panel review team to be reflected in some of the 13 strategies for math performance improvement. School leaders and planners reported they are well aware of these circumstances and are making every effort available to them to deal with them.

**D. Are the school's written improvement planning document (s) clear and specific enough to guide their implementation of planned improvement initiatives?**

Yes. The WSIP document is quite clear, purposeful and specific. Faculty members indicate their full understanding of the plan and its expectations of them in their responses to the staff survey and in multiple interviews. Every teacher interviewed had her/his copy of the plan available and was able to speak in a thoroughly informed manner about the plan's meanings, goals, strategies, connection to that teacher's work and the opportunities for teamwork and collaboration presented, and in significant ways, required by the plan.

Their careful use of such tools provided for them and reviewed by the panel review team as the math pacing guide, math and literacy journals, listing of units of study, planning and assessment portfolios, curriculum calendars, workshop schedules, shared strategy notes about technology

use and classroom techniques as well as common planning time meetings, agendas and binders keep their focus on the successful implementation of the plan.

These documents and the continuing assessment activities being conducted are helping to clarify the benchmarks that have been established as well as those currently being developed on the basis of new information learned. The principal noted in the Leadership Report that some of the strategies in the plan are “not easily or quickly measured”. As a result, the school is seeking additional feedback from district math and literacy leaders for more sophisticated or technical assistance in benchmarking the school’s strategies. As they describe it during interviews, similar to all other elements of the plan and the process, all teachers are well informed of these continuing discussions and efforts to improve the existing plan. Some faculty members report that the school does not yet have full implementation of the district’s “MyBPS” website, a resource they indicate is not available for the school’s parents.

The plan’s timelines are clear within the plan and are fully understood by those implementing the plan.

#### **E. Was the School Improvement Plan developed through a process that will support its successful implementation?**

Yes. The process used for the development of this school’s WSIP was exceptionally inclusive and comprehensive, important factors for the plan’s likely success. While the planning process began last spring with the principal and the school’s ILT, as reported by all interviewed, all of the early planning steps and information was shared with teachers and with the school council. That all-inclusive approach continued throughout the development of the plan and, in fact, continues in the execution of the plan during the school year.

Parents and teachers describe the structure established for the students by this plan as “excellent”. Every indicator examined by the members of the panel review indicated that every teacher at the school as well as those with responsibilities to lead or assist them is fully engaged in implementing and supporting the plan.

The plan, in ways that could be used as textbook examples of how to focus the attention and energies of a group toward a common goal, is embedded in every class lesson and all activities as well as the structure of the school as observed by the panel review team. There is a palpable sense of symmetry, cohesiveness and teamwork present in the school’s work and culture as presented and described by the faculty and staff. Grade level teachers review and discuss their plan progress on a weekly basis in CPT meetings. Instructional coaches work closely with the faculty to plan and present the professional development activities and demonstration lessons that occur regularly. Specialists provided the panel review team several examples of their communication messages to teachers suggesting ways of integrating the areas of their responsibility into the daily school program. The theatre arts, technology and physical education teachers described the several ways they incorporate student oral communication goals and other goals from the WSIP into their programs during interviews with panel review members. Volunteers regularly videotape classes. Those tapes were used at a “pot-luck dinner”, held to

help parents understand their children's school experience. Tapes are also sent home for parent review for the same purpose. All of these activities combine to make the plan a powerful and purposeful document.

The common planning time notebooks, assessment notebooks and other process monitoring and management documents as well as interviews with the principal, instructional coaches and faculty indicated the clear efforts to evaluate the plan on an on-going basis and to make any necessary modifications in instructional approaches or any other element of the plan.

## **KEY QUESTION 2: ARE THE CONDITIONS IN PLACE FOR THE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE IMPROVEMENT PLAN(S)?**

Yes. The school has very solid leadership and sound plan management practices and techniques for the delivery and monitoring of the WSIP. In her fifth year at the school, the principal is regarded by the faculty and staff as a highly effective and supportive leader. They admire and support her high expectations for the school's students. She has the full support of the deputy superintendent with responsibilities for this school as well as parents on the school council.

The school's faculty has been fully informed about and involved in the development of the school's plan. The plan was introduced and used as a daily focus of lesson planning, curriculum and discussion of student achievement, an approach that has been essential in creating the atmosphere of shared responsibility so evident at the school. Interviews and survey responses revealed that the faculty overwhelmingly supports it. The school council approved the plan and is kept informed about plan progress. They express their clear support for the plan and the process used to develop and execute it.

Support and guidance components from the district are clear, focused and well planned. The school followed the process established by the district for WSIP development and implementation. Documentation protocols helped the school focus on essential elements of planning for improvement. The district has provided instructional materials, guidance about the use of those materials and financial and human resources to assist in plan delivery. The district also provided the data analysis mentioned earlier in this report that was, in many ways, the starting point for the development of the current plan.

### **A. Does the school have effective leadership and sound management?**

Yes. The school leadership in operation at the school is exemplary. The panelists' observations were corroborated by strong interview comments from all stakeholders. Together, the principal, faculty and staff have created a very positive and focused environment and climate within the school. As observed in multiple settings, teachers are fully informed about and involved in working toward the goals of the WSIP, fostering a genuine team approach to the school's work. In virtually every group and individual interview, teachers spoke knowledgeably and purposefully about plan goals and strategies, a hallmark of effective communication.

The school council participated in the development and approved the WSIP. Parents on the school council described the number of ways the school communicates with to keep all parents informed about programs and activities at the school. They listed newsletters and memos, auto messages, emails, videotapes; special school events aimed at helping them understand the purposes and methods used in their children's school experience and the principal's presence and support at many meetings as effective communication measures. During school council meetings, they reported that she makes constant reference to the WSIP and the progress the school is making in its implementation. They regularly review school and class performance data prepared for them by the principal and described themselves as "very plugged into the review/revise cycle initiated by the ILT." The members of the panel review team who met with the council described them as very supportive of the school and its leadership.

The faculty also expressed similar support with 84 percent of those responding positively to the staff survey question about the effectiveness of the principal's leadership. That perspective was repeated in several individual and group interviews with the teachers. They appreciated her consistent support of their efforts and her insistence on high academic standards.

While the principal is the identified leader of the school, she has managed to create an impressive sense of shared responsibility and leadership among the entire faculty. Without exception, every single teacher is focused on the strategies and assessment means identified in the school's plan. Seemingly without external directives to do so, they constantly communicate with and support each other in all of the plan's elements. A wide array of management tools ranging from materials provided by the district to other protocols and regular means of reporting developed by the instructional coaches and the faculty are used to monitor plan implementation and focus. Every teacher is involved in their purposeful use.

During multiple interviews, both teachers and parents describe the principal as "very supportive" of them. They recounted her successful efforts at obtaining grants to allow the school to continue improvement efforts in areas that would not have been possible without such support. They also described her creativity in maintaining school focus on improvement during the current, difficult district contractual discussions. They universally praised her for "keeping decisions centered on children."

## **B. Is there evidence that the school's faculty supports the planned improvement efforts?**

Yes. There is an abundance of evidence of strong support from the faculty for the goals and strategies in the school's plan. Ninety-six percent of the faculty agreed with the survey statement that "our school has a well-defined plan for reaching student performance goals." That same survey as well as teacher interviews indicated that a significant majority of the faculty meets with other teachers on a weekly or more frequent basis to coordinate lesson plans and instruction and to discuss the efficacy of plan's strategies.

During teacher interviews, many teachers expressed confidence in the improvement strategies identified in the WSIP and currently being implemented. That confidence is based, in part, on the regular assessment of student progress and the increasingly skilled use of performance data

as a key component in making instructional decisions. Members of the panel review team examined several assessment portfolios/notebooks required of all teachers to confirm that impression.

The weekly grade level meetings provide a regular means of communicating about the plan, instructional questions, or issues of implementation that arise. Review of the notebooks kept for all such meetings show the use of a common protocol for the meetings and the required response to this question as a major focus of the meetings: "What will we focus on in our classroom instruction as a result of this session?" Most of the notes in response to that question demonstrated a clear focus on the strategies and goals required by the school's plan. As observed by the panel, individual teacher's copies of the WSIP are well marked and used. Teachers described and shared with observers their planning for daily lessons, using the school plan as both a general and specific guide.

As described in several interviews, the participation and involvement of the entire faculty in the development of the plan's improvement strategies described earlier in this report resulted in general agreement with the strategies identified in the plan. Some question the wisdom of including approximately 40 strategies as possibly excessive or resulting in some strategies being ignored. While most teachers expressed confidence in the strategies aimed at improving math performance results, that confidence was tempered by the school's actual experience with the district's math curriculum. This school is among the last of the district's "cohorts" in implementing that curriculum. In fact, this is the first year of full use of the curriculum in all grades within the school. Further, considerable professional development for teachers using the math curriculum has been determined by the district as necessary for its successful implementation. Some teachers have had only portions of that professional development. Others have had none. The math coach provides welcomed professional development at the school and has been very responsive to teachers' requests for assistance. The totality of these circumstances appear to result in some teachers feeling less confident about either the strategies aimed at improving math performance or in their own abilities to utilize the math strategies to their greatest effect. During 10 classroom observations, the members of the panel review team formed the impression of full compliance with the plan's requirements and strategies in all areas, including math.

### **C. Is the school receiving adequate guidance and support from the district leadership?**

Yes. The deputy superintendent and math and ELA instructional coaches who serve the school on a part-time basis are very well informed about both the school's needs and the current status of its WSIP implementation. In interviews with each of them, they described the opportunity they had had to review early drafts of the school's plan and to make suggestions about its improvement. They also are informed about the school's increasing use of performance assessment data to monitor and modify improvement efforts. Recently, the school has also received feedback from district math and literacy leaders, information the school considers very valuable in their improvement efforts. The district's head of the mathematics department was at the school during the panel review, adding her observations of the implementation of that curriculum within the school. Seeking and welcoming feedback of this nature is described by

the deputy superintendent as a regular means of doing business at this school. "They always look forward to and welcome feedback about their efforts."

The district established an extensive menu of professional development offerings both before and during the current school year. The deputy superintendent reported that much of the centralized, professional development training had been cancelled due to limited or no attendance, a by-product of the current contract difficulties mentioned earlier. Professional development activities continue to be carried out at the building, primarily using the Collaborative Coaching and Learning (CCL) model, led by the two instructional coaches. In her Leadership Report, the principal described that process in which teachers "focus for 12 hours of after-school study and eight weeks of ninety-minute lab site work in classrooms on an area of need based on the improvement plan established." Teachers describe those sessions as very helpful and the coaches as exceptionally responsive to their needs, even inviting evening and weekend contact by telephone and email at their homes.

In addition to professional development training, the district provides standards based curriculum guides, a pacing guide in math, resource materials and informational packages on such things as The Core Components of Literacy Instruction. It maintains an informational website, MyBPS, which contains a great deal of information about the district's curriculum. Exemplary samples of student work that pertain to specific learning goals are included on the site to assist teacher planning.

Funding was set aside for the current school year to hire a full-time math specialist for the school to assist in the full implementation of that curriculum. The district has not yet been able to hire a certified math specialist for the school, although efforts to do so continue. Meanwhile, the principal has used the funds earmarked for that position to hire a long-term substitute teacher to assist teachers with the math program. Although not a certified teacher, that individual is reported as an engineer with good math skills. He was observed assisting with math instruction, primarily working with small groups of students during times when teams of students had been given assignments.

## CONCLUSION

The process used to develop the current WSIP, begun in the spring of 2003, was thorough and comprehensive. It was exceptionally inclusive of the entire faculty and school council, factors in the overwhelming support expressed for the plan. The plan is clear, purposeful and specific. As the plan is being implemented, members of the faculty and staff are becoming increasingly skilled at gathering and using assessment data on a regular basis to determine the plan's progress and to make necessary plan modifications. Implementation of the mathematics program is occurring later and in a less fully cohesive manner than the literacy program, which was implemented some years ago. The school's efforts to remedy program shortcomings are important, requiring full support from the district.

The plan's effect on every aspect of the school's operations is remarkable to observe and the clear sense of purpose and teamwork present in the building speaks volumes about the success of

the planning process and the hopes for its outcome. The shared sense of responsibility and leadership mentioned earlier in the report is an important and strong component of the school's culture. The plan is embedded in every class lesson and all school activities, a topic of focused discussion at virtually every meeting at the school.

To her credit and that of the faculty, the principal has skillfully managed to maintain a proper focus on what's important in a climate of very good morale and to "keep children's faces in front of us when we are making decisions about the school." That expression struck panel review team members as a powerful statement for the Chittick Elementary School's approach to its important work.

**APPENDIX A  
Team Members**

**Geri Lyn Ajemian, Panel Coordinator**, Office of Accountability and Targeted Assistance, MA  
Department of Education, Malden, MA.

**George Blaisdell, Panel Chairperson**, former Superintendent, North Andover Public Schools,  
consultant for SchoolWorks, Beverly, MA.

**Diane Juknavorian**, Grade 4 Teacher, Haverhill Public Schools, Haverhill, MA.

**Catherine Latham**, School Support Specialist, Lynn Public Schools, Lynn, MA.

**Kathleen Podesky**, Principal, Minot Forest School, Wareham Public Schools, Wareham, MA.

## APPENDIX B UNDER-PERFORMING PANEL REVIEW SCHEDULE Detailed Schedule for Review Panel School Site Visit

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

### Day 1

- 10:30—12:00 Panel chairperson and panel coordinator meet to discuss and clarify roles, prepare for the first team meeting, and review general logistics/schedule for the review. [location: hotel]
- 12:00—2:00 p.m. **Team meeting # 1:** team meets for the first time to discuss each panelist’s individual analysis; team forms preliminary judgements on key questions. [location: hotel]
- 2:00—3:00 p.m. Panelists meet with the district Superintendent (and Assistant Superintendent, if appropriate). [location: hotel]
- 3:30—4:30 p.m. Panelists meet with Principal (and one other school-based individual, if appropriate). [location: the school]
- 6:00—8:00 p.m. **Team meeting # 2:** panelists synthesize interview information, further define findings, prepare questions, and develop a team strategy for Day 2 of the review. [location: hotel]

### Day 2

#### All activities take place in the school

- 7:30—8:00 a.m. Panelists meet with the Principal
- 8:00—8:30 a.m. Panelists meet with the School Council
- 8:30—9:00 a.m. Panelists meet with Focus Groups. The Panel Review Coordinator and the Principal will identify participants for each Focus Group. The groups will be organized, as appropriate, to include groups of individuals who can respond to questions designed for parents, students, classroom teachers, curriculum facilitators, content-area specialists, grade-level instructors, or other specific inquiry groups.

Panelist A	Panelist B	Panelist C	Panelist D	Panelist E
Focus Group	Focus Group	Focus Group	Focus Group	Focus Group

9:00—11:00 a.m. Classroom observations and teacher interviews\*

	Panelist A	Panelist B	Panelist C	Panelist D	Panelist E
9-10 a.m.	Observe teacher 1 and teacher 2	Observe teacher 3 and teacher 4	Observe teacher 5 and teacher 6	Observe teacher 7 and teacher 8	Observe teacher 9 and teacher 10
10-11 a.m.	Interview teacher 1 and teacher 2 individually	Interview teacher 3 and teacher 4 individually	Interview teacher 5 and teacher 6 individually	Interview teacher 7 and teacher 8 individually	Interview teacher 9 and teacher 10 individually

11 a.m.—12:30 p.m. **Team meeting # 3:** panelists meet to discuss findings so far and to plan the remainder of the day (working lunch)

12:30—1:00 p.m. Panelists use time as needed to analyze findings and to gather more information; panelists are encouraged to roam the entire school and visit classrooms not yet seen.

1:00—2:00 p.m. Panelists meet with teachers in groups\*; consultant co-chair is free to work on report

	Panelist A	Panelist B	Panelist C	Panelist D	Panelist E
1:00-1:30	Teacher	Focus Group 1	Teacher	Focus Group 3	Prepare report
1:30-2:00	Teacher	Focus Group 2	Teacher	Focus Group 4	

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

2:30—5:00 p.m. **Team meeting # 4:** panelists deliberate and form conclusions