

School Panel Review Report Emily G. Wetherbee Lawrence 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 Wetherbee School met these criteria and was one of sixteen schools selected for panel review in winter, 2004. The panel review was conducted on Feb. 9-10, 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 Wetherbee Elementary 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.

Emily Wetherbee Elementary School Profile

Enrollment

The Wetherbee School is one of 13 elementary schools and two middle schools in Lawrence. The school serves students in grades 1 through 8. Preliminary tabulations show enrollment at Wetherbee School increasing from nearly 500 in 2003 to 743 for 2004. In fact enrollment at this school has steadily increased from 235 in 2001 to over 700 this year. The percentages of Asian and White students have decreased consistently over the last four years (2001-2004); the former from 16 to seven percent and the latter from 31 to 16 percent. The percentage of Black students

decreased from four percent in 2001 to two percent in 2002. Hispanics are the only subgroup to experience a steady increase over the last four years, from 49 percent in 2001 to 75 percent in 2004.

The percentage of non-native English speakers at the Wetherbee School increased steadily from 52 percent in 2001 to 73 percent this year. The proportion of Limited English Proficient students during this period fluctuated between 10 and 16 percent. Between 74 and 87 percent of students were low-income. In 2001, the school reported 11 percent of students receiving Special Education, slightly fewer than this year's 12 percent.

In 2003, the Wetherbee School's attendance rate was 93.9, with students absent on average 8.4 days. At 4.1 percent, the in-school suspension rate was a few decimal points lower than the state's 4.5 percent. The same is true for the out-of-school suspension rate, which was 6.7 percent for 2003. The state level for out-of-school suspension for that same period was 6.1 percent. The school retained 1.2 students in grade.

Staffing

This year, the Wetherbee School reported having a staff of 62 that includes three administrators, two guidance counselors, one librarian, four long-term substitutes, five specialists, one psychologist, two curriculum facilitators, and 46 teachers. With the exception of one, all teachers at this school are certified. Over 90 percent of the staff has been at the school for fewer than five years.

MCAS Overview

Students at the Wetherbee School are assessed in English language arts in grades 3, 4, and 7 and in grades 6 and 8 in mathematics. In 2003, the school failed to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in the aggregate and for all subgroups except for White.¹ In the last five years, the school has made AYP twice in ELA. In mathematics, the school also failed to make AYP in the aggregate and for all subgroups except for Whites in 2003. The school has never made AYP for mathematics in any year.

Student Performance in English Language Arts

GRADE 3

Regular Education

At the grade 3 level, the performance of regular education students shows no sustained improvement trends. In 2001, when the test was first administered, 26 percent of students scored

¹ 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). The qualifying subgroups at the Wetherbee School in 2003 were Free/Reduced-price lunch, Hispanic, and White.

at the Proficient level. Fifty eight percent performed at the Needs Improvement level, and 15 percent at Warning. The following year, the percentage of Proficient students increased to 34 percent; 60 percent were in Needs Improvement, and six percent performed at Warning. In 2003, the proportion of Proficient students fell to 28 percent while 50 percent of the scores were at the Needs Improvement level. The percentage of those scoring at the Warning level rose to 23 percent.

Special Education

In 2001, 45 percent of Special Education students in grade 3 performed at the Needs Improvement level with the remaining 55 percent at Warning. In the last two years fewer than 10 grade 3 students have been tested in ELA.

Limited English Proficient

Fewer than 10 students have been tested at this grade level in the last three years.

GRADE 4

Regular Education

The performance of regular education students at the grade 4 level in ELA improved significantly in 2001 as compared to the previous year. However, ELA scores have continued in a downward spiral since that time. Fewer students have scored at the Proficient level and the percentages of those performing at the Warning level have continued to rise. In 2000, 70 percent of students performed at the Needs Improvement level and 30 percent at Warning. In 2001, 33 percent of those assessed were found Proficient; 53 percent were in Needs Improvement; and 14 percent at Warning. The following year, the percentage of those in the Proficient category declined by eight percentage points. The proportion of those students who scored at the Needs Improvement level was 58 percent; 18 percent were at Warning. In 2003, the Proficient percentage fell again to 21 percent. Fifty six percent were in Needs Improvement and 23 percent scored at the Warning level.

Special Education

In 2001, fewer than 10 Special Education students were assessed in grade 4. In 2002, a quarter of all assessed students were Proficient; 42 percent performed at the Needs Improvement level, and 33 percent at Warning. In 2002, all tested students performed at the Warning level. Fewer than 10 students have been tested since.

Limited English Proficient

Fewer than 10 LEP students have been assessed in grade ELA in the last four years.

GRADE 7 ELA

Regular Education

Prior to 2002, there were no students enrolled in grade 7 at the Wetherbee School. In 2002, 35 percent of regular education students at the grade 7 level were Proficient and Advanced; 54 percent performed at the Needs Improvement level, and the remaining 10 percent at Warning. Last year, 46 percent of students were found Proficient; 49 percent were in Needs Improvement, and five percent at Warning.

Special Education

In 2002, 18 percent of special education students performed at the Needs Improvement level, and 82 percent at Warning. Last year, all special education students scored at the Warning level.

Limited English Proficient

Fewer than 10 LEP students have been assessed in grade ELA in the last four years.

Student Performance in Mathematics

GRADE 6

Regular Education

In 2002, 20 percent of Regular Education students at the grade 6 level were proficient and advanced in mathematics. That year, 28 percent scored at the Needs Improvement level, and 52 percent at Warning. In 2003, 11 percent of students were proficient and advanced; 29 percent were in need of improvement; and 60 percent performed at the Warning level.

Special Education

In 2002, nine percent of special education students in grade 6 performed at the Needs Improvement level in mathematics and 91 percent at Warning. In 2003, fewer than 10 students were assessed at this grade level.

Limited English Proficient

Fewer than 10 LEP students have been assessed at this grade level.

GRADE 8

Regular Education

In 2003, 11 percent of regular education students were Proficient; 22 percent were in Needs Improvement while 67 percent performed at Warning.

Special Education

All Special Education students tested in 2003 scored at the Warning level

Limited English Proficient

Fewer than 10 LEP students have been assessed at this grade level.

PANEL RESPONSES TO THE KEY QUESTIONS

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

Yes. In a relatively short period of time and under difficult circumstances, the administration and teachers at the Wetherbee School, with the assistance of district personnel, have produced a sound school improvement planning document focused on five priority areas. A two year reconstruction of the original Wetherbee School was completed and the school reopened in the fall of 2003. At that time, Wetherbee faculty, staff and students, temporarily working at four different school locations, were reunited. A middle school, grades 6-8, was added at that time. The school has spent the past five months becoming acclimated to the new building and each other, assimilating a middle school and implementing the plans for improvement.

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. District staff, school leaders and PIM team members analyzed available data and program information to identify student academic weaknesses and identified possible reasons for those weaknesses.

The Wetherbee School Performance Improvement Mapping (PIM) team examined Cycle II MCAS performance data for grades 3, 4, 6, and 7 for 2001 and 2002. Gates-McGinitie and Terra Nova test scores were not readily available and too scattered to be of use, according to the principal, due to the student body being at several sites. The MCAS scores for those years show very low performance in both ELA and math for the tested grades, with some improvement in ELA but none in math in the second year. The 2003 mid-cycle AYP report shows the school meeting all attendance targets but only one of the disaggregated groups showing improvement in the content areas. Significant numbers of students remain in the needs improvement and warning categories and are targeted in the Wetherbee Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP). In their root cause analysis of the 4th Grade MCAS math and ELA data, the school's PIM team

identified weaknesses in the students' ability to respond to open response and multi-step questions. It was found that students are not exposed to a variety of question types nor do they review answers to insure that all parts of the question are answered. The students' very low reading abilities, as reflected in MCAS scores, are also seen as contributing factors to these problems.

Interviews with the administration indicate that the school has created its own data analysis team and that the entire leadership team will participate in the next round of district- sponsored PIM training, thus expanding the school's cadre of data analysts. Data that will be available to them will be the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) assessment for the SFA reading program administered on an eight week cycle, assessments embedded in the TERC and CMP math programs and the district -wide math assessments conducted three times a year. Reading First Early Literacy program uses DIBELS and GRADE assessments given twice a year to K-3 students. During interviews, the principal and assistant principal said that assessments for the middle school level are not as complete as needed. The collection of that data is part of the administration's planned look at programs and practices in the middle grades.

The Lawrence School District provides scope, sequence and pacing guides for grades 1-8 in mathematics and English language arts. They were present in the school and, in interviews and focus groups, teachers confirmed their availability to them for planning purposes. In the interview with the Assistant Superintendent it was stated that the guides are aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks but that the district- mandated programs drive the curriculum. The CEP's action plans also reference the Framework strands.

In mathematics, there is a *Framework Customization Manual*, designed to be "the reference point and guide for all mathematical teaching and learning in the district". (Superintendent quote from the manual). The review team also examined a District *Curriculum Accommodation Plan* (DCAP) which provides ideas and strategies for teachers working with "at risk" students.

During classroom visits, Panel Review members observed a variety of instructional practices from teacher directed to student oriented. In the range of classrooms visited, panelists saw engaged students and teachers with a command of their subject matter and good classroom control. The rooms were alive with examples of student work and references to learning standards as well as word walls, content walls, writing prompts, word and problem of the day. Teachers demonstrated a familiarity with peer partnering, differentiated instruction and cooperative learning techniques in their lessons. The CEP includes additional professional development for teachers in implementing these teaching techniques.

The Wetherbee School participates in the Resident Classroom, a voluntary district initiative. The principal and math staff developer explained that best practices were identified in teachers through observation and other selection criteria and that a teacher would open his or her classroom for a ten week period to practitioner-observers from within and outside of the school. A calendar of identified teachers and their schedules is distributed district wide.

Two other areas identified by the school and District in their respective educational plans to improve student achievement were increasing parental involvement and addressing the needs of

English language learners (ELL) in the classroom. In fact, the two areas may be closely linked as the District Summary documents show that 75 percent of Wetherbee students are Hispanic and 73 percent of the students are those whose first language is not English (FLNE).

Academically, Wetherbee, like all Lawrence schools, follows a structured immersion program focusing on providing English language learners with the literacy and academic skills necessary for success in school. In support of this program, the district has published a *Structured English Immersion Implementation Guide*. This provides teachers with information on such topics as best practices for ELL students, use of assessment and data in ELL classroom environments. Sixteen middle school students, coded non-English proficient, are currently in a self-contained classroom with two teachers, one of whom is bi-lingual.

Outreach to parents is impressive in both the school and district. Parents were observed volunteering in classrooms and the cafeteria. Parents have started a homework club after school requiring parental involvement but providing translation services to welcome mono-lingual parents. The Wetherbee Parent Handbook is printed in English and Spanish in one document. The district publishes a "Blue Book", a handbook to guide the operations of parent-teacher associations. A symposium, sponsored by the district in January, provided parents with the opportunity to register to participate in two recognized programs, the Parent Leadership Assistance Network (PLAN) and Every Parent Influences Children (EPIC). These activities are in line with the District goal of increasing and strengthening parental and community participation and involvement in all schools and with the Wetherbee school goal of improving parental participation in volunteer activities, PTA meetings, and school sponsored activities which focus on academics and curriculum as written in their respective improvement plans.

Plan books made available during classroom observations show that all teachers reference the curriculum strands and learning standards in their planning. This information was also displayed in the room for student reference during the lesson. Staff survey results show that 79 percent feel that district curriculum guidance and implementation support are both available and adequate.

Although not easily measurable, school morale is an important factor in achieving school improvement goals. The Wetherbee School is a bright, cheerful building with a welcoming staff and faculty at the front door, in the corridors and in the classrooms. Students were in class engaged in meaningful work. It seemed that every available space in public areas in the school was dedicated to displays highlighting reading, writing and math initiatives and student work. School intercom announcements referenced classroom high attendance rates and the SFA district skill of the week. A Valentine's Day bulletin board in the cafeteria not only had the usual hearts but an artist print identified by name and genre. In focus groups, students, said they felt safe and welcomed in the school and expressed confidence in their ability to learn. Parents said they appreciated the administration's efforts to involve them on the School Council and the School Leadership teams.

In summary, the leadership, faculty and staff along with considerable district support has completed an analysis of available data and program information and has identified and documented likely reasons for poor student performance. The school has just completed a mid-

year revision of their action plans and has put in place a system for regular monitoring of the plan's effectiveness.

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. The plan's improvement goals are clearly written with objectives related to the school's analysis of root causes for poor student achievement

The plan sets out all requisite elements of a sound improvement plan and both instructional change and student learning objectives are directly tied to specific findings in areas of identified weakness. For example, in math, learning objectives state that "students will be able to interpret word problems and to read, comprehend and analyze a variety of question types". In ELA, "students will be able to find the meanings of unknown words using multiple strategies...."

A reading of the plan and the leadership report and interviews with both the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent shows a focus on teaching and learning in the areas of mathematics and English Language Arts. Instructional change objectives include teachers modeling and instructing using multiple strategies to find the meaning of unknown words. Teachers will also utilize reading strategies in the math content area to enable students to understand the connection between reading and math.

Additional goals in the plan include providing additional professional development opportunities to teachers, additional student services and improving parent participation in school sponsored activities. These additional goals are meant to complement the academic goals based on the school's analysis of its needs.

The plan's objectives and goals are well written, specific and measurable and with continued District support, achievable. The grade 3 ELA goal is to reduce the percentage of students in the Warning category from 12% to 4% over a two year period. The grade 4 math goal is to reduce the percentage of students in the Warning category from 48 percent to 20 percent in one year. Although this goal is more ambitious than the ELA goal, the process in place in the school and district to monitor plan implementation is responsive enough to make necessary adjustments to succeed at this ambitious effort.

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

Yes. The program and instructional strategies written into the plan appear likely to lead to the desired improved student results. All of the program strategies mandated by the Lawrence School District are research-based with a demonstrated level of effectiveness and , if properly implemented, are likely to raise students' math and ELA scores.

The main reading program, *Success for All* (SFA), restructures the school schedules by requiring a 90 minute block of instructional time per day for literacy on the elementary level and a 60 minute block on the middle school level. It provides a prescribed reading curriculum which seems ideal for a newly opened Title 1 school. All teachers new to the system receive training in SFA implementation and returning teachers are offered refresher courses. The Wetherbee School received a Reading First grant and the district has adopted the Waterford Early Learning and KinderKorner programs to enhance early literacy instruction in grades K-3.

The standards based mathematics curriculum includes TERC *Investigations* for grades 1-5, and the *Connected Mathematics* program for grades 6-8, both with a strong emphasis on the use of manipulatives and authentic learning to make mathematical concepts concrete. Students identified through testing as being in need of additional help are given 20-30 minutes of tutoring each day as well as opportunities to attend extended day programs such as Project Read and Compute.

Literacy and Numeracy Enhancement Test Sophistication (LETS and NETS) are district developed materials designed to assist teachers in preparing students to perform confidently in test-taking situations such as MCAS. Instruction is provided during the school day for students scheduled for testing in the spring of each year.

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

Yes. The Wetherbee CEP is a comprehensive document, is clearly written, and provides a sense of direction for the implementation of improvement initiatives. The plan outlines a reasonable course of action, identifies benchmarks and action steps, as well as the person(s) responsible and resources required for carrying them out. There is clear linkage between identified improvement objectives and planned solutions.

Although the CEP has five improvement objectives, it is primarily focused on math and literacy improvement. The plan has specific evaluation methods but the benchmarks used to check periodic progress of student performance are not explicitly stated in the plan because they are embedded in the district mandated programs. Understandably, the Wetherbee plan is only months old and is a work in progress but because it is monitored closely by both the school and district, the need for this clarity will become evident overtime and make the plan easier to read .

The Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) is administered to students every eight weeks and students are re-grouped for instruction at their reading (Lexile) levels. Students needing additional assistance are provided with tutoring and literacy support classes both during and after school.

The TERC *Investigations* and *CMP* math programs have embedded assessments that, while helpful, do not provide sufficient student data according to the District Superintendent. Therefore, a district math assessment is administered three times a year (Oct, Feb, May) measuring growth over time and providing the additional information identifying student

weaknesses. The results are analyzed by the district and returned to the school to inform instructional practice and to guide revisions to the school's Action Plans.

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

Yes. The CEP was developed through a process that eventually involved the entire faculty, provides for a regular review of progress and has a process for evaluation and adjustment.

Beginning in February 2003, the Lawrence School District provided training, modeled after the Department of Education's PIM process, to a team of Wetherbee faculty selected from several of the four school sites in which they were working. After approximately 40 hours of work, the draft plan was presented to the entire faculty for review and input during a professional development day in May 2003. Teachers reviewed data and developed student learning objectives. A district-sponsored Leadership Institute provided the opportunity for staff to look at additional data and student learning objectives (SLOs) and they developed an action plan and measurable objectives for each one. As revealed in interviews with both district leaders and building administrators and in the Leadership Report, the plan was reviewed by the district office prior to the beginning of implementation. Because the Wetherbee School had been closed for the previous two years during renovations, there were no relevant previous improvement plans.

All stakeholders interviewed by the panel review team (faculty, staff, administration) had copies of and were aware of the plan's contents, understood their role in the plan's implementation and were actively implementing the plan. A copy of the plan was also available and accessible in the main office for community or parent review.

There are weekly grade level team meetings and monthly faculty meetings attended by faculty and administration used to examine instructional practices and to monitor student progress. The Assistant Superintendent informed the Review team panelists that school based administrators are required to conduct five informal walkthrough classroom observations each week to monitor plan implementation. A half day each month is used for building based professional development and for faculty to review progress made in implementing the plan.

The principal provided the Panel Review team with a copy of the recently completed half year updated Wetherbee action plans required by the district office and used by the district as a monitoring tool. This activity also provides the schools with an opportunity and a template to review and revise their objectives, timelines and outcome targets, where and when necessary.

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

Yes. The conditions for successfully implementing the goals and objectives of the improvement plan appear to be in place. The stakeholders at the school express confidence in the leadership style and abilities of the administration. The district office is supportive of the school's leadership and the school improvement initiatives.

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

Yes. The school leadership has quickly gained the confidence of the faculty and staff in guiding the school improvement efforts

In interviews with the Panel Review team, the principal and assistant principal clearly articulated their vision for the school and their knowledge of the CEP and district initiatives. This was impressive considering that the principal, although part of the PIM process, was only appointed to her position in May, 2003. The Assistant Principal, previously a teacher in the school but now with responsibilities for the middle school, was appointed to his position just before the Panel Review, in January 2004. (a second Assistant Principal, appointed to the position in August, 2003 and responsible for the elementary grades, was hospitalized during the time of the Panel Review).

Teacher survey results show that over 90 percent of the faculty consider the principal an effective leader and consider themselves to be well-informed about the improvement initiatives in the school. Teacher focus group discussions show all the administrators to be supportive, responsive to teacher needs and with high expectations for students, teachers and parents. Teachers also expressed that the weekly grade level meetings, which always include an administrator, provide them an opportunity to continue to be involved in decisions concerning the school improvement programs. Parent representatives on the School Council expressed confidence in the school leadership's efforts to involve more parents in the improvement initiatives.

The principal made available to the Panel Review team an assemblage of school and district materials related to curriculum, parent involvement, professional development and supervisory matters which, as the school had just recently reopened, provided background for panel deliberations.

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

Yes. There is much evidence that the faculty supports and is engaged in the planned improvement efforts.

The Wetherbee School PIM process began in February 2003 and the draft plan was presented to the entire faculty in May 2003 during a professional day set aside for that purpose. At that time,

the Leadership Report indicates teachers were able to discuss the evolution of the plan to that point and then became involved in providing input. The work done in the PIM process led to the development of the CEP. Teachers speaking in faculty focus groups said they felt that that activity was worthwhile and helped to provide a sense of common purpose when they moved to the new school. One teacher remarked, "The plan is working. It is the focal point of the whole school." Instructional staff surveys show that 97 percent of the staff feels that there is a well defined plan for school improvement.

Monthly grade level meetings provide an opportunity for the administration and faculty to review progress made in implementing the plan and to recommend adjustments to the School Leadership team where and when necessary. Each administrator is required to conduct five informal "Walkthrough" observations each week to assess instructional practice and to report these findings to both the instructor and the district office. These visits are meant to monitor plan implementation but also to identify best practices.

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

Yes. The District provides significant human and financial resources in support of the implementation of the district initiatives and the Wetherbee School CEP.

In separate interviews, both the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent spoke confidently and knowledgeably about the needs of the school and about the academic programs and services provided by the district in support of the implementation of the Wetherbee Education Plan.

District program initiatives include the SFA Reading program (K-8), the TERC *Investigations* math program (elementary) and *CMP* Math (5-8). Wetherbee has also been chosen as a Reading First school. To support the teachers in implementing these programs the district provides a Literacy/Writing Coach, a Math/Science coach and SFA facilitators (K-5, 6-8). Consultants with the Tufts University "Writers Workshop" program provide additional instructional support for teachers.

There are provisions made by the district for three full and 10 half days of professional development for all teachers. Teachers new to the district are provided with 10 hours of professional development in English as a Second Language instructional strategies. Monthly principal and assistant principal meetings are also used, in part, for professional development with a focus on leadership and instructional issues.

The principal's *Leadership Report*, as well as in interviews with the school administrators, describes training modeled after the DOE's PIM process that the district provided to all schools and included a team from Wetherbee School prior to its re-opening. The Wetherbee School plan was reviewed and feedback provided by the District Office of Assessment and Accountability and the School Support Specialist prior to implementation. In addition, its effectiveness is monitored by the District Review team through the district assessments and reports provided by the school.

CONCLUSION

In response to Key Question 1, the panel review team finds that the Wetherbee School does have a sound plan for improving student performance. The district-sponsored Performance Improvement Mapping (PIM) process informed and guided the inclusion of the necessary elements (goals, objectives, benchmarks, timelines resources) of the school's Comprehensive Education Plan. The plan's objectives are clear and measurable, and monitoring of program implementation is comprehensive and informative.

The Review Team finds that, in response to Key Question 2, the conditions are in place for the successful implementation of the improvement plan. There is a strong district presence, knowledgeable of the school's needs and supportive of the school's leadership and plan implementation. The school's leadership exhibits a firm command of the improvement agenda and the enthusiasm required to lead the process. The school's stakeholders express confidence in the school's leadership and continued district support and are actively implementing the plan.

**APPENDIX A
Team Members**

Joseph Trunk, Panel Chairperson, Consultant, School Works, Beverly, Ma.

Jim Neary, Panel Coordinator, Department of Education, Office of Accountability and Targeted Assistance, Malden, Ma.

Dr. Marilyn Gigliotti, Director of Elementary Education, Salem Public Schools, Salem, Ma.

Heather Martin Steenburgh, Title 1 Director, Benjamin Banneker School, Boston, Ma.

Richard D. Raiche, Supervising Principal, Comprehensive Grammar School, Methuen, 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