

Panel Report
Candidate Compass School Review
Machon Elementary School
Swampscott Public Schools

INTRODUCTION

The Program

The Commonwealth Compass Schools Program is one part of the Massachusetts School and District Accountability System. The purpose of the Compass Schools Program is to recognize and celebrate improvement in Massachusetts' schools, and to disseminate information and encourage networking and sharing of ideas, effective practices, and models for success. The program is intended to provide a means for the schools to share their expertise with other schools in the state.

In this Mid-Cycle III year, sixty schools from among the top thirty most improved schools in mathematics in 2003, the thirty most improved schools below state targets in one or both (ELA and mathematics) that made AYP for all reported subgroups in 2003, and/or from among the strong semi-finalist applications from last year were invited to participate. Twenty-eight of the schools chose to apply by submitting completed applications that included written responses to three questions on the initiatives undertaken to improve student performance at the school in the past three or four years. School leaders and staff were asked to focus on those programs and practices that they think have had the most positive impact on their students' performance. Four high schools, five elementary schools, and one kindergarten through eight school were selected as finalists. Ten finalist candidate schools were scheduled for closer review to learn more about their highlighted programs and to determine willingness and capacity to serve in the program. Data and information gathered from the applications review process of these schools will be published in a report this fall.

The Commissioner will designate up to ten schools to serve as 2004 Commonwealth Compass Schools. Compass Schools receive special recognition and a \$10,000 grant to support the participation of their administrators and staff in information sharing and dissemination activities over the next year.

The Report

This report summarizes the findings and analyses of a small team of education professionals during a one-day visit to the Machon School on June 9, 2004. The report will assist the Commissioner in determining which schools from among those visited will be designated to serve as 2004 Commonwealth Compass Schools.

The panel evaluated data and written information on the school's performance and improvement efforts, including the school's two-part Compass School application; and then visited the school

to meet with school leaders, staff, parents and students and visit classrooms in order to answer the following two key questions:

1. Is this school using effective improvement initiatives that could be replicated in other similarly profiled schools?
2. Are the conditions in place for this school to serve as a model of effective practices and successful improvement initiatives?

The panel's responses to these two questions frame the report. In the process of answering these questions, the report focuses primarily on the initiatives that the school identified in its application as having had the most positive impact on student performance.

The findings and conclusions presented here are the product of analysis, discussion, and observation, and are based on the evidence made available to the panel before and during their visit. A list of panel members who participated in the school panel review is provided in Appendix A. A detailed schedule of the panel's activities is provided in Appendix B.

School Profile

The Machon Elementary School is one of four elementary schools in the Swampscott School District. The Machon School serves students in grades kindergarten through 5, currently serving 176 students. Enrollment between 2001 and 2004 averaged 200 students. During this period of time, 95% of the student population was made up of White students, less than 2% of the population was made up of Hispanic students, 1.5% Black students, and 1.25% Asian students. Zero percent of the student population is identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP). 3.5% of the students at the Machon School have a primary language other than English (FLNE). 12.25% of Machon students are eligible to receive free or reduced price lunch.

Between 2001 and 2003, the attendance rate at Machon School averaged 96%, with an average number of days absent being 8.

The retention rate averaged less than 1% during this time period. Out-of-school suspensions averaged 3% while in-school suspensions averaged less than 1%.

Staffing

Machon School students are taught by an instructional staff that includes fifteen full time teachers. Additionally, there is a full time principal, who also serves as the district's Director of Technology that comprises the school's administrative staff. Also on staff are a school-wide guidance counselor, a full time school-wide Reading teacher, a full time school-wide Math teacher, and a part time school-wide Math teacher. Many teachers are certified in multiple areas,

and all are certified in the subject areas in which they teach. Only eight teachers have five or fewer years of teaching experience.

MCAS Results

Students at Machon School are tested in the MCAS in grade 3 in Reading. In grade 4, students are tested in English Language Arts (ELA) and in Mathematics. In both Cycle II (2001-2002), and Mid-Cycle III (2003), the school was found to have made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in both ELA and mathematics.

Student Performance in English Language Arts

In Cycle II, Machon School received a performance rating of *Very High* for its Proficiency Index (PI) of 93.9 in ELA. Its 8.2-point improvement over Cycle I (1999-2000) was rated *Above Target*. Participation rates in the ELA test in Cycle II were 100 percent in 2001 and 100 percent in 2002. Machon School's Mid-Cycle III report shows a participation rate of 100% in the aggregate, a Composite Proficiency Index (CPI) of 97.9, reflecting achievement of AYP and a CPI change of 1.4. In Cycle II, Machon School saw its students make significant gains in the proportions scoring at the Proficient levels of performance as well as a significant decline in the proportions scoring at the Warning level. In 2000, 3% of students scored at the Advanced level, 28% at Proficient, 67% at Needs Improvement and 3% scored at the Warning level. In 2001, 3% of students were Advanced, 81% Proficient, 17% in Needs Improvement, and 0% scored at the Warning level. In 2002, 3% of students performed at the Advanced level, 71% were at Proficient, while 26% were at Needs Improvement and 0% scored in the Warning category. In 2003, the percentage of students scoring in the Advanced category was six, the percentage of Proficient students rose to 79, 15% were in Needs Improvement, and 0% failed the ELA portion of the test.

Student Performance in Mathematics

In Cycle II, Machon School received a performance rating of Moderate for its Performance Index (PI) of 77.4 for its 0.1-point increase over Cycle I, the school received an improvement rating of On Target. The school's participation rates in the mathematics portion of the MCAS test in Cycle II were 100% in 2001 and 100% in 2002. Machon School's Mid-Cycle III report indicates a participation rate of 100% in the mathematics portion of the MCAS test. Their Composite Performance Index (CPI) rose to 93.8 in the aggregate, indicating a CPI change of 16.4. In 2000, 22% of students performed at the Advanced level, with 19% at Proficient, 42% were at Needs Improvement, and 17% at Warning. In 2001, 8% of students were Advanced, 19% Proficient, 72% in Needs Improvement, and 0% Warning. In 2002, 8% of students were Advanced and the proportion of Proficient students rose to 32%, while 58% were at the Needs Improvement level and 3% scored at the Warning level. In 2003, the percentage of students

scoring at the Advanced level rose to 27%, the percentage of students scoring at the Proficient level rose to 55%, 18% in Needs Improvement and 0% scored at the Warning level in the mathematics portion of the test.

In both ELA and Math, Machon students continue to surpass both the district and the state, with significantly lower numbers of students at Machon scoring at the Warning level. The number of students scoring at the Advanced and Proficient levels continues to rise.

Panel Responses to the Key Questions

KEY QUESTION 1: Is This School Using Effective Improvement Initiatives That Could Be Replicated In Other Similarly Profiled Schools?

Yes. Machon School has established and prioritized three effective improvement initiatives that could be replicated in other schools with a similar profile. First, Machon School has established a school-wide culture that is conducive to learning, which began as an entry plan initiated by the current principal coming on board seven years ago. That entry plan started out as a mission that morphed into an action plan, developed by stakeholders of all constituencies, for the school as a community, that was quantifiable, realistic, and effective. Second, Machon leadership and staff have made significant improvements to their reading program, with particular attention towards improving instructional practice by creating a reading skills matrix for each grade level, including entrance and exit milestones for each grade level. Third, Machon staff members have improved writing instruction by creating a writing skills matrix and an accompanying writing rubric and writing skills checklist that is used consistently school-wide and that is based on MCAS scoring guides.

A. Which improvement initiatives have had the greatest impact on student performance results?

A careful review of school documents, data provided by the Department of Education, classroom observations, individual teacher interviews, and focus groups with teachers and parents corroborated the Principal's prioritized outline of school improvement initiatives that have had the greatest impact on student performance.

According to leadership and staff at the Machon School, the improvement initiatives that have had the greatest impact on student performance fall under the three broad, aforementioned practices, which include the establishment of Machon School as a community that is conducive to learning, based upon the mission and vision that became the school's action plan, that was developed by groups of parents and teachers and subsequently bought into by all stakeholders; the restructuring and improvements made in Machon's reading program school wide; and the

establishment of a consistent writing rubric that guides writing instruction school wide. Teachers and the Principal point to improved student performance on the open response MCAS scores in ELA and mathematics as further evidence of the effectiveness of the programs, as well as increasingly improved scores in more informal classroom assessments, math unit tests, writing assessments, and STAR testing, administered three times a year by the principal, which is a computerized, empirical, longitudinal assessment that shows progress or regression for individual students over a given period of time.

It is this consistency across grade levels, teachers maintain, that is largely responsible for the gains in student achievement across all student groups at the school. When asked whether achievement gains could be substantiated with assessment data, teachers referred Panelists to the steadily increasing student score results of the end-of-unit process tests to assess reading and writing, student reading response journals, STAR reading diagnostic test results, as well as school-wide assessment results in reading and writing that are tied to end-of-year exit milestones and benchmarking for all grade levels in reading and writing.

Teachers were observed during the Panel visit conducting a variety of reading, writing, and math lessons in their classrooms. Each was conducted in a quiet and orderly fashion free of distraction and in which student focus on the task at hand was clearly evident. Teachers were observed conducting student centered lessons. Many of the initiatives highlighted by leadership and staff were observable in classroom lessons. Classes were observed using small learning groups where student centered learning activities were being conducted. Students were observed to be brainstorming in preparation for a writing activity; others were discussing the school-wide writing rubric and how it would relate to their personal writing goals for that particular assignment; others were encouraged by their teachers to go further in their writing, by encouraging them to “tell me more.” Several classes were participating in whole group mini-lessons that were conducted as a means of introduction to the writing process. Students were observed to be involved and attentive in a variety of settings, and readily participatory in all observations. Students were also observed to be self-motivated, as they were observed to be working by themselves and also in small groups where individual students were at differing stages of completion in the writing process. Students were enthusiastic participants, and even volunteered to talk about their classroom routines and practices with panelists. In the words of one-second-grade student, “the Machon School is awesome!”

Other initiatives that the school is engaged in that they attribute their student performance improvements to include the following:

- Development and implementation of a school wide Code of Conduct
- Increased improvements in 2-way parent communication
- Writing instruction and scoring rubric that includes prescriptive comments for all students

- Implementation of a two and a half hour, uninterrupted, daily literacy block
- Weekly writing assignments for all students
- A monthly writing prompt for all students in grades four and five
- Professional development and on-going training for all teachers in Project Read
- Collaborative scoring of student writing and related discussion at school wide faculty meetings
- Establishment of interactive Machon School website that includes resources for parents and the opportunity for parents to communicate with leadership and staff
- Bi-weekly school wide assemblies to foster on-going improvements in school culture and climate
- Establishment of a student council to instill a sense of greater community beyond the individual classes
- Maintaining writing portfolios for all students
- Emphasis on learning, practicing, and maintaining basic math facts as part of school culture
- Title I teachers support students needing remediation in mathematics, using both an in-class and a pull-out model
- Summer reading Olympics to avoid regression

Supporting the programmatic improvement initiatives cited above are collaborative efforts that have become part of the culture and daily schedule of the school. These efforts include the formation of grade level teams, monthly staff meetings where teachers engage in Looking at Student Work (LASW), and the regular analysis of data by all staff members, across the school community. The focus of the grade level team meetings is on issues of curriculum and instruction, and these teams meet for an hour each week to discuss instructional strategies, review student work, share best practices and coordinate instruction across content areas. Data analysis is an ongoing initiative at Machon; teachers unanimously spoke in focus groups and in interviews about using formal and informal student testing results to refine and focus their classroom instruction in an on-going manner. They also point to the culture that has been established at Machon under the leadership of the current principal as one that is not only conducive to learning for students, but for staff as well. Teachers report “they are in each other’s classrooms all the time.” The kindergarten and grade one teachers enthusiastically spoke about teaching lessons in their particular areas of strength in each other’s classrooms. It was obvious to Panelists at Machon that the school culture promotes and supports teachers supporting each other and learning from each other on an on-going, formal and informal, basis.

The collaborative efforts, as well as the program initiatives/enhancements cited above, are broadly supported by multiple assessments and the school’s integration of data analysis into all phases of the decision-making process. Because of the continuous availability of on-site support in the form of grade-level teams, as well as the availability of a lead teacher in the areas of both literacy and math, teachers are able to collaborate on problem solving techniques and strategies

that proactively maintain an effective environment for learning. Teachers in interviews and focus groups made frequent references to MCAS, as well as multiple forms of classroom assessments as evidence of their students' academic improvement. Furthermore, the grade level teams are adept not only at looking at student work but also in looking at assessment data to identify weak areas in the curriculum, to improve instruction, and constantly revisiting and updating their reading and writing skills matrixes to inform and refine classroom practice.

B. How did the school plan their improvement initiatives and put them into practice?

The 1997-1998 school year saw the hiring of Kevin Cushman and the subsequent beginnings of major improvement initiatives at Machon School. Upon assuming the principalship at Machon, Mr. Cushman initiated an entry plan for himself and for the school. Out of this entry plan would grow a mission and action plan for improvement efforts and philosophical and pedagogical change at Machon. The idea was to establish a shared vision by involving all constituencies in the process. Community assemblies were held for parents and community members to attend. Those in attendance at these community assemblies were asked to brainstorm and list on large sheets of poster paper in the Machon gym what they would like to see change at Machon. They were then asked to prioritize areas that were in need of improvement. The next step was to present staff members with this information. At a staff meeting, these prioritized areas were introduced to staff as the entire faculty went through an identical process, identifying areas in need of improvement at Machon and the subsequent prioritization of these needs. Leadership and staff came together to have meaningful dialogue about what this would mean for Machon, how change would happen and what the desired results would be. The areas that stood out as being most pressing and in need of change were school culture and climate, and the need to improve instruction in reading and writing. Using principles of backwards design and identifying what the ideal desired outcomes would be, the school then embarked upon making specific changes that would improve school culture, morale, and instruction in all academic areas, but most specifically in the areas of reading and writing. A uniform Code of Conduct was established for all students and approved by the parent community. Teachers in focus groups reinforced parental buy-in of this plan by reporting that they know of many parents who have the school's Code of Conduct posted in their homes, and use it as a framework for behavioral expectations at home, again reinforcing the strong home-school relationship at Machon. Similarly, a staff handbook was created by the principal and approved by all staff that delineated expectations of staff in many areas.

When faced with the overarching priority area of improving instruction in reading and writing, the principal posed a question for staff at a faculty meeting, "How does teaching reading to a whole class accommodate different learning styles?"

It was this question that generated much discussion among staff regarding their many various approaches towards teaching reading and structuring a literacy block. He then asked teachers, “In a perfect world, how would you like students to come to you, and how would you like them to leave, “ in terms of their skill base with regard to reading. This was the genesis of the ability of staff to talk about pedagogical practices in a safe environment. It was important to the principal that all voices were heard. Teachers were encouraged to discuss what they were teaching in reading at the present time, which led to a discussion around what components should be added to the literacy program. The staff then engaged in looking at principals of backwards design to look at where each student should end up in terms of skills acquired at the end of each grade level. This work generated the school’s Reading Skills Matrix that included both phonemic and comprehension elements. It clearly defined what skills students should have when entering a particular grade level, and what skills they should then have upon leaving. This matrix is constantly revisited, updated, and refined since the 1998 – 1999 implementation of these skill matrixes. Machon staff report that their instructional practice in reading has improved dramatically and that students have responded to these high expectations. In fact, in several areas, skills have been moved down a year, to an earlier grade level, as students and teachers have become more aware of what levels of student performance they can expect as students arrive in September. The Writing Skill Matrix was developed in a similar fashion. Added to the this skill matrix was a scoring rubric that would be used in grades 3 through 5 that was consistent with the language of the MCAS scoring rubric for open response questions, but retooled to be made more “kid-friendly.” Leadership and staff describe the skill matrixes as a codification of the developmental philosophy of meeting children where they are, and individualizing instruction from there.

These initiatives have been so successful at Machon for establishing a collegial culture that is conducive to learning and for sustaining improvements in reading and writing, that the school is poised to replicate the process in the 2004 – 2005 school year to initiate improvements in mathematics instruction. Leadership and staff report that they will hold community assemblies for parents, similar to those held in 1998, to create a mechanism where parents can identify the most pressing needs in the area of mathematics. Staff will then engage in their own professional development and collegial discussions that will lead to the development of a mathematics skill matrix.

C. Does the school think these initiatives be successfully used in similar schools? Why?

Yes. The Machon School staff and leadership stated in interviews and focus groups that the improvements in reading and writing, including developing skill matrixes in each area and the development and consistent use of a writing rubric, grade level teaming that engages in Looking at Student Work, principal’s entry plan that established a unified school mission, vision, action plan and the, and the ongoing analysis and use of data to guide instruction could easily be replicated in other schools. Both leadership and staff reiterated to Panel members that “any

school could do this, at any time.” When asked what key aspects of their programs and initiatives could be replicated by other similar schools, primary grade level teachers stated that “the whole writing program could be replicated, and how to make the formal, deductive writing process developmentally appropriate for primary level students.”

In fact, the district has already adopted Machon’s reading and writing skill matrixes as well as their unified Code of Conduct and incorporated them into the district’s other elementary schools practices. Machon staff indicated that the initiatives have been achieved with the bulk of effort coming from an organizational structure in which leadership, decision making, and accountability are shared, as well as clearly communicated goals and expectations. Key to the success of these efforts appeared to the Panel to rest in the staff’s positive attitude toward leadership, colleagues, students and a faculty empowered by evidence of the effectiveness of their efforts. It was made clear to the panel through teacher interviews and focus groups that the initiatives are replicable because they are grounded in beliefs and processes that are indicative of a positive school culture. All parties interviewed by the Panel agreed that the success of improvement initiatives is not empirically inherent to programs themselves but rather in their implementation and leadership’s support of these initiatives and programs.

KEY QUESTION 2: Are The Conditions In Place For This School To Serve As A Model Of Effective Practices And Successful Improvement Initiatives?

Yes. The Panel believes that the school is both capable and well positioned to showcase the successful practices they have highlighted and to substantiate to visitors the effects their efforts have had on improving student performance. Throughout the Panel’s visitation with leadership, teaching faculty and building staff, the Panel encountered a highly collegial school community that is eager to talk about and share the successful strategies they have employed. Furthermore, they appeared able to demonstrate the effectiveness of their efforts in terms of student performance gains and able to convey professionalism, high standards and accountability for teaching and correspondingly high expectations for student learning. The Principal is a fluent and effective communicator, and teachers are comfortable with having their practices scrutinized.

A. Do leadership and staff have a shared understanding and use a common language to describe the changes/initiatives that have led to improvements in teaching and learning?

Yes. Leadership and staff demonstrated a shared understanding and a common language for the initiatives they have implemented and for the improvement that Machon students have shown. When asked by the Panel, in individual interviews and focus groups, what teachers believe are the causes of high student achievement at the school, teachers consistently responded with a list of efforts in their areas of expertise that included the school-wide, consistent use of writing rubrics, prescriptive comments, a solid working knowledge of the reading skills matrix, high levels of collaboration that are marked by peer observations and co-teaching as well as

collaborative teaching, grade level CPT, ongoing communication, collaboration, and support from the Lead Teachers, LASW during faculty meetings, site based professional development, and using assessment data to guide and continually refine instruction. The visiting Panel also found, throughout the day and across the visited community, a notable consistency in language and ideas among staff surrounding the principles and methods supporting the improvement efforts. The Principal and staff also emphasize sustaining the improvements they have made by continuing to identify specific student weaknesses or gaps in learning through ongoing assessment, looking at and scoring student work collaboratively during faculty meetings, and then targeting instructional strategies and materials to fill those gaps as the key in the process of continuous improvement. Leadership and staff report that they will continue to refine and sustain the current improvement initiatives as long as students continue to show steady, consistent improvement over time.

B. How effectively do leadership and staff articulate the connections between specific changes and improvement initiatives they have implemented, and the improvements made in teaching and learning?

Leadership and staff are skilled at articulating the connections between the initiatives they have chosen to improve student performance. They consistently refer to the adoption of a common scoring writing rubric, for improvement in MCAS scores in the areas of ELA and Math open response questions. Teachers unanimously attributed their students' successes to the initiatives that have been outlined, including the school-wide implementation and ongoing professional development in Writing Workshop, focused common planning time, and the use of data analysis to guide instruction. According to one teacher, "each student gets individualized attention as a result of these initiatives and that has led to improved student performance." Teachers reported seeing a noticeable increase in their students' critical thinking skills, particularly notable on 4th grade MCAS results in English/Language Arts (ELA) and an increase in problem solving in 4th grade Mathematics scores on the MCAS test. Teachers in the primary grades report that the improvement initiatives have really changed the way they provide instruction, in that looking at student assessment data has helped them to incorporate content area skills from the state frameworks into their teaching in a developmentally appropriate way. All teachers report the use of the skills matrix in informing their classroom practice in that they have a very clear knowledge of the skills they need to impart upon their students before they leave that particular grade level.

C. Is there a school wide focus on, and sufficient investment in, continued improvement of student performance?

Yes. The Machon School has developed school-wide improvement initiatives, improvement planning processes and monitoring procedures that indicate to the Panel substantial investment in the continued improvement of student performance. Staff members report a consistency of language that is grounded in the improvement initiatives, and a dedication to smooth transitions for students, both horizontal and vertical, across all grade levels. The entire school community participates in the interpretation of data and the diagnosis of weaknesses in curriculum, instruction and student learning. The school has petitioned the district to allow some of their district sponsored early release days for professional development to be building based, in order to revisit their identified improvement initiatives and evaluate their success and plan for next steps. The broadly cooperative organizational structure that is in place indicated to the Panelists that the school is well positioned to continuously monitor the effectiveness of current efforts and to identify any new areas of weakness that appear.

Student assessment is a large part of the culture at Machon. Not only does it provide for collegial discussion and professional development at staff meetings, but teachers also state that ongoing assessment allows them to “see progress week after week.” The principal collects and reads each and every piece of assessment data from all classroom teachers. He reads all of the student writing projects and provides feedback to teachers. Along those same lines, the principal meets with each teacher on a monthly basis to discuss assessment data. Teachers report that at the end of each of these meetings, he asks, “what do you need me to do?”

Furthermore, leadership and staff report that they intend to replicate the process undertaken as part of their “entry plan” to initiate programmatic and instructional improvements in reading and writing in 1997 – 1998 next year with regard to strengthening and improving their mathematics curriculum. Leadership and staff report that they will conduct community assemblies and engage staff in thought-provoking and rich discussions around improving instruction in mathematics and again, using principals of backwards design to identify where they would like students to be at the end of each grade level, in a broad sense, in mathematics and go forward from there.

D. Does the school appear to have the capacity to host site visits and to participate in various activities to share effective strategies and practices with other schools in the state?

Yes. The Machon School is a clean, well-maintained school that is one of four elementary schools in Swampscott. There are multiple rooms and areas that can be utilized as space for meetings and presentations. The Machon School staff demonstrated professionalism and enthusiasm for what they do and have accomplished. All interviewed staff displayed a willingness to share what they have learned with others, including best practices, organizational changes, implementation of programs and initiatives, uses of data and the professional development of which the staff have taken advantage.

Machon staff regularly engages in peer observations and are experienced in welcoming their peers into their classrooms for classroom observations, co-teaching, and are also comfortable giving and receiving feedback as a result of these types of observations. They indicate a willingness to share programs and practices, and are experienced in engaging in post-observation discussions with their peers to ask and answer questions related to instructional practice.

E. Does the panel recommend that this school be designated to serve as a Commonwealth Compass School?

Yes. The panel cannot identify any reasons why the Machon School should not become a Commonwealth Compass School. There are many elements in their instructional program that could be adapted in other schools; and the leadership and the staff have demonstrated the ability to provide articulate and substantive information on what they are doing to improve student learning and are able to clearly articulate how they are doing it.

CONCLUSION

The Machon School has implemented several programs and initiatives over the past several years that have led to improvement in student achievement. The improvement results in both reading and mathematics at Machon School have been both significant and impressive. The Panel extracted three key initiatives that have led to student improvement in the 4th grade MCAS test in both ELA and Math. First, Machon School has established a school wide writing initiative, in which teachers use a common scoring rubric and language to inform instruction. Second, Machon School teachers have developed skill matrixes in both reading and writing that have helped to facilitate both horizontal and vertical dialogue among staff, strengthening collegiality and improving instruction in literacy. Third, Machon School has developed a culture of collaboration, collegiality, and shared decision-making vis-à-vis the strong instructional leadership of their principal.

These initiatives have persuaded the panel to recommend the Machon Elementary School be considered for designation to serve as a Commonwealth Compass School.

Appendix A Panel Members

Erin Furey – Chair, Massachusetts Department of Education, Malden, MA
Jeannine Durkin – Coordinator for School Improvement/Accountability, Lowell Public Schools
Kathy Podesky – Principal, Minot Elementary School, Wareham Public Schools
Jacquelyn Robinson – Consultant, Salem, MA

Appendix B Candidate Compass School Panel Review Schedule

All activities take place at the school

7:30—8:00 a.m. Panelists meet to prepare for day
 8:00—8:30 a.m. Panelists meet with the Principal
 8:30—9:00 a.m. Panelists meet with focus groups

Panelist A	Panelist B	Panelist C	Panelist D
Focus Group A	School Site Council Group	Student Focus Group #1	Student Focus Group #2

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

	Panelist A	Panelist B	Panelist C	Panelist D
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
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

11 a.m.—12:30 p.m. 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
and prepare for teacher focus groups

1:00—2:00 p.m. Panelists meet with teachers in groups*

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

2:15—2:30 p.m. *Chair* meets briefly with the principal to discuss next steps in the process
Panelists collate notes from focus teacher groups

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

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

1. Classroom Observations. Panelists will observe two classes each, followed by individual interviews with the teachers observed. The purpose of the classroom observations in candidate Compass Schools is to learn the extent to which the improvement initiatives the school has described as having the most positive impact on student achievement are in evidence in the classroom and throughout the school. Observers will also gather additional detail/information on those specific programs and practices.
2. Individual Teacher Interviews The purpose of the teacher interview that follows the panelist’s observation of that teacher’s classroom is to:
 - Clarify the evaluator’s impressions of the classroom dynamic and learning environment
 - Determine each teacher’s understanding of the initiatives cited in the application as having had the most positive impact on student achievement; and the extent to which the improvement initiatives are guiding their classroom practice (for instance, curriculum, instruction and assessment).
 - Determine what has changed at the school over the past three years.
 - Determine each teacher’s role in implementing the improvements made to student performance at the school.
3. Teacher Focus Groups The purpose of the teacher focus groups is to:
 - Determine each teacher’s understanding of the initiatives cited in the application as having had the most positive impact on student achievement; and the extent to which the improvement initiatives are guiding their classroom practice (for instance, curriculum, instruction and assessment).
 - Determine what has changed at the school over the past three years.
 - Determine each teacher’s role in implementing the improvements made to student performance at the school.

Taken together, the observations, individual teacher interviews, and teacher focus groups will provide a comprehensive view of the staff’s understanding of, and participation and investment in, the programs and strategies to improve student performance.

Machon School
Swampscott Public Schools