

## **Diagnostic Fact Finding Report Boston Public Schools October-November 2006**

### **Introduction**

#### *Purpose*

The diagnostic fact finding review at under-performing schools is a cooperative process designed to provide objective, constructive feedback about the adequacy, appropriateness, and effectiveness of teaching and learning in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics at the school, and the enabling elements that make instructional improvement possible.

Beginning with the district and school's understanding of the most pressing needs in four key areas; and their working hypotheses regarding the primary reasons for low student performance, the fact finders examine those key areas independently to verify, clarify, and deepen those understandings. At the same time, the fact finders examine instructional leadership at the district and school levels to identify strengths to build on, and diagnose weaknesses that may be impeding district and school improvement efforts. The Fact Finding Team members are listed in *Appendix A*.

The resulting Fact Finding Report offers clear findings and priority recommendations for action at the district level and for each school. District and school leadership teams will use the recommendations from the report to complete a final district intervention plan for these six schools and include the plan for intervention at the *John Marshall Elementary School*, which participated in an in-depth fact finding review in May and June of 2006. The district plan for intervention at the seven underperforming schools will be submitted to the Commissioner and the state Board of Education in January 2007.

#### *Overview of Report Structure*

This report opens with an executive summary of findings at the district level that emerged across the six schools reviewed, and relate to the reasons and conditions in place that have contributed to their students' low performance in mathematics and English language arts. It also provides recommendations for high-leverage recommendations that need to be addressed at the district level in order to support improved student performance at each individual school. The report then delineates the team's findings and recommendations for each school.

Six underperforming Boston Public Schools were visited from October 23 through November 14, 2006.

*William Trotter Elementary*—October 23 & 24  
*Solomon Lewenberg Middle*—October 26 & 27  
*Agassiz School*—October 31 & November 1  
*Mary E. Curley Middle*—November 2 & 3  
*John Winthrop Elementary*—November 6 & 7  
*William Russell Elementary*—November 13 & 14

## I. Executive Summary—District Level

### *What are the underlying causes for low performance at the schools?*

In the draft District Plan for School Intervention at underperforming schools submitted in advance of the fact finding review, Boston Public Schools provided solid analyses of the underlying reasons for persistent performance problems at six underperforming schools. The District also provided its plan for addressing some of these underlying reasons at each of the schools. In many cases, the Core Team’s findings coincide with the district’s findings that cut across the six schools. Key among these are:

- Limited accountability for implementing district programs fully and effectively, including inadequate instructional leadership for change,
- Insufficient mathematics content knowledge and pedagogy, and
- Low expectations for teachers and students.

To these the Team would add:

- Inconsistent and/or ineffective use of the existing performance evaluation system to drive instructional improvement,
- Lack of clarity and structural coherence for programs designed to serve students with special needs and second language learners, and
- Insufficient coordination, coherence, and strategic deployment of existing resources and personnel from the central office to maximize positive impact on teaching and learning in underperforming schools.

### *What are the prospects for improvement at these schools?*

The unanimous conclusion of the Fact Finding Team is that underperforming schools must be treated as separate entities within the District. While the schools vary in some respects, the fact is that students in these schools are receiving a less-than-adequate education and, without far-reaching, high-leverage interventions, are likely to be left further behind.

The significant improvements in teaching and learning that are needed to ensure the academic success of the students in these underperforming schools will depend on sound leadership for instructional change coupled with increased levels of flexibility and autonomy to enable school leaders and their staffs to implement substantial improvements in the classroom. While the designation as a “Superintendent School” offers those principals some relief and support, it is simply not sufficient to bring about the caliber of change that is necessary for success.

First, these schools must be staffed with successful experienced principals and headmasters, coaches and teachers, who will receive incentives to work in these schools. Since what happens in the classroom – exchanges among and between students and teachers – is the essence of education, these educators would preferably have expertise working in situations requiring major change. It is critical that, once the appropriate staff is in place, teachers remain at the schools working as teams. Creating these staffs will mean making major changes in hiring, assigning and

transferring of personnel in underperforming schools. This will require the creation of incentives for personnel to work in these schools.

Second, ongoing, mandatory professional development for principals, coaches and teachers is essential. In order to monitor and support significant instructional change, these principals must be knowledgeable in all curricular programs, conversant with the instructional approaches offered in their schools, and current with educational research on pedagogy and learning. Coaches must be trained in effective coaching procedures and knowledgeable about programs and methodology. Teachers must be aware of current findings in research on reading, writing and mathematics learning and facile with published programs and instructional approaches required by the district.

Third, these schools must find ways to schedule extra time for teachers, coaches and administrators to engage in educational dialogue and planning focused on raising student expectations to create a climate of academic excellence. It is also suggested that more academic learning time is needed for some students to catch up to their peers.

Fourth, all District employees working in and with these schools must hold themselves and each other responsible for creating and implementing a meaningful process of change. Accountability at all levels of the Boston Public Schools is necessary, beginning with the School Committee and Superintendent through the TRIAD administrators to principals, coaches and teachers, in order to achieve the day by day positive outcomes for students.

Needless to say, personnel and financial resources to accomplish this task must be found and utilized to ensure that the development and implementation of educational plans for these schools in fact takes place.

The District must be prepared to develop policies and modify practices in order to effect change. Current contract talks should reflect the fact that underperforming schools such as these six require a new kind of partnership between the district and the teachers that is focused solely on serving the learning needs of students. If there are contractual barriers to this goal, they must be removed in order to allow the flexibility and autonomy needed to ensure significant improvement in student achievement. The work to achieve this must begin immediately with a new dialogue among negotiators that recognizes the intolerable need in these underperforming schools.

The following Findings and Recommendations flow from findings at the six schools and in meetings with district administrators and personnel. They are designed to create a foundation for change.

## Key District Findings and Recommendations

***Finding 1: There are no concise, written short-term action plans (school year 2006-2007) for any of the six underperforming schools.***

At the TRIAD and building level there was no evidence of a concise year's written action plan, other than the two-year Whole School Improvement Plan (WSIP), at any of the six schools. While the two-year WSIP offers detailed activities for making changes in instructional practice, schools should outline three or four key short-term, concise action items drawn from the WSIP for immediate implementation as part of an action plan that will lead to increased student success. Such a plan would lay out specific responsibilities at the building, TRIAD and central office levels. The plan would also identify resources necessary to effect positive educational change in each school. It would also ensure that each person understands his/her role in bringing about those changes, and provide the mechanism for holding people accountable to specific actions and timelines.

### Recommendations

The principal in each of the six schools should develop, mutually with the TRIAD and Central Office administrators an action plan that sets forth a vision, goals, objectives, benchmarks, timelines and an evaluation process for the remainder of the current (2006-2007) school year.

The District completes a formal, annual evaluation of principals in underperforming schools, which includes an assessment of their success in implementing the concise written action plan.

***Finding 2: The teacher evaluation instrument is long, cumbersome and, in the view of some, complicated and prone to error. Furthermore, there is a disconnect between the purpose of the current evaluation and its use as an instrument to drive change or improve instructional practice.***

The evaluation of personnel does not appear to be a priority for some evaluators. As a result, evaluations are not done, not completed well, or completed with the sole intent of satisfying district requirements rather than monitoring and supporting improvements in teaching and learning. The results of the evaluation process do not appear to drive professional development programs that address instructional practices (e.g., content knowledge, differentiated instruction).

New principals report that they are becoming familiar with teacher evaluation in the preparation/orientation processes, and this should be followed through with ongoing training and support so that the evaluation process feeds directly into data-driven school plans for improving teaching and learning, as well as individual teacher development.

### **Recommendations**

Review the effectiveness of the teacher evaluation instrument and process so that it may be used more effectively as a vehicle for driving the improvement of instructional practices and the development of focused professional development programs.

Provide ongoing mentoring and monitoring for principals in underperforming schools in effecting meaningful evaluations not only of teachers in their building but also of other administrators.

***Finding 3: These schools have high teacher mobility rates, including some personnel whose evaluations are less than satisfactory.***

The practice of transferring personnel with other than satisfactory or better evaluations to underperforming schools is having a negative impact on school climate and on student achievement. It diverts the school leadership's attention from students and the instructional process when it is most needed, creates an unstable and inconsistent climate for learning, and neutralizes the impact of school-based professional development.

### **Recommendations**

In order to build stability and create conditions that enable a high-functioning professional learning community in underperforming schools, the district should compile current, accurate data on teacher turnover rates, and identify teachers with anything less than a satisfactory evaluation in all underperforming schools. Any teacher with less than a satisfactory evaluation should be removed, and only teachers with an evaluation of satisfactory or better should be allowed to transfer into an underperforming school.

Principals should be given final decision-making power in recruiting new staff into an underperforming school.

***Finding 4: Staff members in these schools are not taking full advantage of substantial academic professional development offerings in the mathematics content area.***

The district has been implementing a plan to reform mathematics instruction for the past six years. In addition to adopting new curricula in mathematics (*Investigations* at the elementary and *Connected Mathematics* (CMP) at the middle school level), the district has provided teachers the opportunity to participate in a series of six seminars designed to deepen conceptual understanding of the subject—Developing Mathematical Ideas (DMI) for elementary schools and other mathematics professional development for middle schools. Some teachers have utilized this opportunity to build their understanding of math.

However, there is strong evidence across the six schools that insufficient depth of content knowledge in mathematics is impeding full implementation of the district's math curricula and seriously limiting student achievement, indicates that many of the teachers at these schools are not availing themselves of this opportunity. The Team found many teachers currently working in

the six schools are taking the trainings on specific units prior to introducing them and many have taken some of the basic DMI offerings, but that many others have taken none.

### **Recommendations**

District policies and contractual obligations should be reviewed with regard to professional development in schools that have been declared underperforming. The District should work collaboratively with teachers to plan ways to prescribe professional development in areas that need to be strengthened in these schools.

The District should also find ways to make better use of the teacher evaluation protocol and process to direct staff members to participate in needed professional development to improve teaching effectiveness and support improvement goals.

### ***Finding 5: Underperforming schools require more highly qualified, experienced content coaching to support instructional improvements and guide strategic interventions for students.***

The district has assigned .5 math and .5 ELA coaches to the underperforming schools, but more is needed in order to provide better analysis of educational needs and data along with support to the teachers in underperforming schools. Lack of experienced and or newly-hired coaches with minimal experience or limited knowledge of district programs cannot support the level of need identified at underperforming schools.

### **Recommendations**

The District should increase coaching in all underperforming schools in both ELA and mathematics to full time. In the case of the smaller elementary schools, principals should explore teachers already on staff who might function as teacher leaders/coaches.

Only experienced coaches should be hired into these schools. Additionally, a full-time language acquisition coach should be assigned to those schools with ELL/SEI programs and/or substantial numbers of second language learners.

Although principals currently supervise the content coaches, the District should assess the capacity of all coaches currently assigned at each of these schools. Assignment of inexperienced or inadequate coaches to underperforming schools neutralizes improvements to teaching and learning.

### ***Finding 6: Programs located in underperforming schools, with large numbers of substantially separate students, may be a structural impediment to improving teaching and learning in these schools.***

High percentages of students with special needs, particularly at the Lewenberg (34%) Curley Middle Schools (20%), and Agassiz (22%), Trotter (19%) Elementary Schools, in part, as a result of the district's placement of L/AB Clusters, SAR classes of substantially separate students,

without appropriate support and monitoring, appears to be a factor persistently low performance and failure to improve at these schools.

### **Recommendations**

The District should contract an independent audit of current policies and procedures for program assignments; that is, how and why programs are assigned to schools.

The District should reduce the number of substantially separate students in these schools, and increase program models that ensure a Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).

### ***Finding 7: Sheltered English Instruction (SEI) program structures and curriculum are inconsistent and in some cases ELL students are not receiving ESL services.***

A sound, coherent SEI program is not being implemented consistently in the underperforming schools visited. In general the schools lacked the needed language acquisition coaching time. SEI teachers lack math content knowledge needed to effectively teach the mathematics curriculum. SEI teachers ask low-level questions that generate brief responses rather than higher-order questions that give the students opportunities to generate more oral language, which is a critical part of their English language development.

There is little evidence of ESL support services for those students in schools without ELL/SEI programs but who still need English language support. There is little evidence of District SEI/ELL supervisors providing support in the schools.

(Specific findings on programs, services, and instruction for second language learners at the Agassiz, Curley, and Russell Schools are attached to individual school reports.)

### **Recommendations**

Underperforming schools with significant ELL student populations should have experienced, full-time language acquisition coaches assigned and more support and supervision from the SEI/ELL Central office.

ESL support should be provided in those schools without ELL/SEI programs that nevertheless have English language learners enrolled.

### ***Finding 8: Existing resources at the central office are not being utilized in a focused and strategic way to support needed improvements at these underperforming schools.***

The centralized organizational structure of this very large urban district is not currently enabling the efficient deployment of expertise and resources to support significant and sustained improvements at underperforming schools. Staff and administrators from the offices of Curriculum & Instructional Practice, Language Learning and Support, and Unified Services (including special education) now work across all 145 schools. Responsibility for the schools is divided into three geographic TRIADS of roughly 50 schools each, and supervised by a Deputy Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent team. Although personnel from the various offices

are working at different times in the schools, the schedules, agendas, and follow-through for the work at any of these underperforming schools is difficult to track and appears to be inconsistent. The result has been limited positive impact on achievement for these students, despite the apparently significant investment of time and resources.

School Support Specialists (SSS) provide potentially powerful support to principals and Instructional Leadership Teams in both planning and implementing instructional improvement at the school-wide and classroom level. At present, capacity in this area is limited, and existing human resources are not being deployed for maximum impact in the underperforming schools visited.

- Two of the underperforming schools have been without any SSS assistance this year (TRIAD C).
- At other schools, teachers and administrators reported that they do not see SSS very often.
- SSSs are currently supporting improvement efforts in all schools with an NCLB status, making it difficult to provide the sustained, focused training and support needed at each underperforming school.

### **Recommendations**

Examine the administrative structure and procedures for deploying staff from the Curriculum & Instructional Practice, Language Learning and Support, and Unified Services offices to ensure that these supports and services are coordinated with the TRIAD and school-based structures to maximize coherent support for the underperforming schools.

The District must fill the three vacancies already funded by the State; and deploy all five positions most efficiently to ensure that significant support is being provided to underperforming schools.



## II. School Findings and Recommendations

The following six school reports each opens with a brief summary finding for the school. Key findings and priority recommendations follow for each of the four areas of inquiry that shaped the fact finding process: standards based teaching and learning, informing practice with data, time for teachers and students, and leadership for instructional improvement. Recommendations are made based on those findings.

More detailed quantitative summaries of the findings by both the mathematics and English language arts/literacy specialist classroom observer teams—reported out and processed at the end of each day of observation, and then at the end of each school review—are included in *Appendix C*.

### *Sources of Evidence*

The Boston Public School administrators submitted a *District Plan for Intervention in Underperforming Schools (DPI)* to the Department of Education prior to the diagnostic fact finding review. The plan offers the district’s hypotheses about the barriers impeding improvement efforts and/or student progress at each school, and outlines existing and planned interventions to address these barriers. The plan concludes with the district’s assessment of the status of necessary conditions for school improvement in the four key areas addressed in this report.

In addition, school leaders provided updated information on staffing data, programs and services, and a school leader report originally submitted in preparation for the Panel Reviews conducted at the schools in February and March 2006. The Panel Review Reports resulting from those visits were included in the Fact Finding Team’s evidence base. Additional evidence and information was gathered during the two-day on-site visit, which included:

- Classroom observations in all ELA and mathematics classes by teams of content experts, facilitated by content leaders from the Core Fact Finding Team,\*
- Focus groups with teachers,
- Interviews with the Deputy Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent for the triad in which the school is located, the principal, assistant principal, and other administrators working in the school, the school support specialist, language acquisition coach and mathematics and ELA/literacy coaches, and
- Observations of meetings of the instructional, math, literacy leadership teams and grade level teams and/or interviews with the team members.

Schedules for these activities varied slightly at each school, depending on grade levels served and starting times, which range in this district from 7:30am for middle schools to 9:30am for some elementary schools. A sample schedule is attached in *Appendix B*.

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\*Administrators from the Boston Public Schools elementary and secondary mathematics offices, the primary and secondary English language arts/literacy offices, as well as representatives from Office of Unified Services worked together with teams of content specialists and lead by a content lead. Staff from the Department of Education’s Office of Language Acquisition and Academic Achievement (OLAA) also participated in the diagnostic review at three of the schools where the size of the second language learner populations and the performance of those students warranted.

## **TROTTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL October 23 & 24, 2006**

### **Summary Findings**

Students at the Trotter School have not made adequate yearly progress in English language arts (ELA) or mathematics since the inauguration of the MCAS test in 1998. In its District Plan for Intervention in underperforming schools, the district cites a lack of strong leadership as a key cause for the failure of the instructional program. The district's analysis outlines "global" developmental needs in the areas of climate for learning, instruction, organization, communications and staffing, based on evidence and information culled from district monitoring visits, strongly supported by evidence and findings in the Panel Review Report from last spring and more recently confirmed during the diagnostic fact-finding review.

The district has taken steps to address some of these needs this year, including the appointment of a new leader, a reassertion of the district's structural model for sharing instructional leadership among several teams, and providing time in the schedule for those teams to meet. Improvements have also been made to the physical plant. The principal has divided responsibility for supervision of the four pods in this large elementary school between herself and the assistant principal.

However, given the comprehensive scope and level of need for improvement at the Trotter Elementary School, such interventions could, at best, produce incremental improvement over time. It is the team's judgment that the school needs to be restructured under new governance that provides district and School leaders the autonomy with regard to the programs, staffing and deployment of resources that will be required to provide Trotter's students the opportunities and supports needed to achieve at the highest levels. In the absence of some form of comprehensive intervention, it is unlikely that significant progress in student learning can be achieved.

### **1. Standards-Based Teaching and Learning—English Language Arts**

#### *Key Findings*

An effective standards-based workshop model for literacy instruction is not fully implemented by teachers.

- Teachers demonstrate knowledge of the discreet aspects of reading instruction, particularly in terms of phonemic awareness and phonics, two foundations of the Reading First initiative, but do not consistently interconnect the elements of early reading instruction – phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary and fluency – to comprehension.
- In grades K-3, not all faculty members use Reading First materials exclusively, and in some classrooms, the RF materials are stored on high shelves.
- Four of five first grade teachers new to the building this year have not been trained in the Reading First program.
- All but one of the fourth grade teachers report not having an overhead projector, a necessary piece of equipment to effectively implement the *Trophies* program. Teachers are, instead, printing out the transparencies images for each student.

- Student initiative, the primary asset of the workshop model, is not demonstrated in meaningful ways.

Teachers do not effectively differentiate instruction and expectations.

- Many teacher questions are factual, requiring recall only, regardless of student ability.
- Teachers organize and reorganize small groups for guided reading instruction, but they do not clearly differentiate materials or content for students working independently.

Teachers do not agree on the reading program to use. There is some evidence that teachers use self-selected activities and program elements, making it difficult to assess the effectiveness of the school's reading program as regards student achievement.

### *Recommendations*

Coaches should continue to help teachers solidify their understanding of the integration of the *Trophies* program and essential elements of the reading process with the reading workshop model.

**The principal and ILT should oversee a school-wide effort to enhance differentiated instruction practices and increase student engagement in higher-order thinking skills through oral and written discourse.**

**The principal and ILT should institute the mapping of ELA learning standards and curriculum to ensure alignment with state standards at all grade levels.**

**The principal should oversee a concerted, school-wide effort to commit to learning and using the same reading program(s) throughout the school and direct an initiative to study its effectiveness using intermediate benchmark assessments to evaluate student progress and needs throughout the school year.**

## 1. Standards-Based Teaching and Learning—Mathematics

### *Key Findings*

Mathematics lessons generally lack challenge and vigor, conveying low expectations for students and suggesting significant gaps in teacher content knowledge as evidenced by:

- Over-scaffolding in many lessons,
- A school-wide emphasis on procedures and algorithms,
- Presentation of unrelated facts without making connections,
- Instances of mathematical misinformation from teachers, and
- Frequently missed opportunities to extend the lessons into meaningful dialogue among students and between the students and teacher.

### *Recommendations*

**Teachers' basic mathematics content knowledge needs to be shored up beyond the basic three Developing Mathematical Ideas (DMI) Seminars offered by the district.**

**The mathematics coach should be assigned to the school full time and have access to all classrooms in order to facilitate standards-based instruction by:**

- **Participating in grade level teams to demonstrate how to use assessment data as a tool to guide instruction at and across grade levels, and focus interventions accordingly, and**
- **Modeling lessons and classroom management to help teachers use time more effectively and to address different learning styles.**

## **2. Using Data to Inform Practice—English Language Arts**

### *Key Findings*

Teachers do not use assessment data consistently to inform grouping and instruction.

- Some teachers had not established groups 6 weeks into the school year.
- Some teachers do not use assessment to pair students for reading aloud in class.
- There is little evidence of teachers using multiple forms of ongoing assessment to evaluate student learning.
- Statewide performance standards are not used to inform instruction or to develop benchmarks as targets for student learning goals.
- As of the fact-finding visit, teachers were not using the DIBELS assessment for grouping students.
- Informal, ongoing assessment of student progress in class is limited to oral questioning, mostly at a factual level, and to checking written work for errors. Little probing of student understanding is done.

### *Recommendations*

The principal should ensure that teachers are provided with training in the use of state performance (not content) standards in reading and writing to inform curricular planning and teaching practice.

- NCS Mentor, a digital training program provided by the state, is a useful tool to begin this work.

The principal and ILT should ensure that teachers regularly administer formative assessments in reading and writing that are “back-mapped” from state performance standards, in order to assess the rigor of curriculum and student expectations.

## 2. Using Data to Inform Practice—Mathematics

### *Key Findings*

In grades K-2, ongoing assessment is evident, probing questions are prevalent, and limited use of student feedback is made to direct the lesson. This was not apparent in grades 3-5, where teachers rarely explore student thinking, and checking for understanding tends to take simple forms such as “Any questions? Does everyone understand?”

Teachers are not using different types of assessment results to guide their instruction and/or focus interventions.

- As of the team’s visit, the district end-of-year assessments for Grades 1 and 2 had not been made available to the teachers nor had the Grade 3 MCAS results.
- Few of the analyses are completed in time to be effective tools to direct instruction in the classroom.

### *Recommendations*

**The district should ensure that assessment results are made available to schools in a timely and user-friendly manner, in order to enable teachers to utilize them effectively.**

**The mathematics coach should use assessment data at grade-level meetings to inform instruction and identify gaps in student learning and to identify trends across grade levels, so that intervention can be put in place in all classes as part of daily lessons.**

## 3. Time for Teachers and Students – English Language Arts

### *Key Findings*

Staffing of the literacy specialist job is insufficient to serve the needs of all students.

- The literacy specialist estimates that eight adults are needed to deliver *Trophies* “Interventions” help to all needy student for 35 minutes a day in groups of six, as recommended in the program. Currently the school has one specialist.

Teacher training in the use of required handheld technology to complete DIBELS assessments has not begun, although at the time of the visit, progress was being made in signing the contract regarding technology for the program.

There are no paraprofessionals in kindergarten classes. As a result, teachers feel, discipline and student attitude suffer.

It appears, from interviews, that new and young teachers struggle to find their footing in this underperforming school, and that there is not enough support for them to gain expertise.

### ***Recommendations***

**The principal should ensure that more literacy specialists are found and trained to deliver the *Trophies* “Interventions” program to students reading below grade level.**

- **One possibility is to offer the positions to retired elementary teacher volunteers.**
- **Another is to offer extra time for literacy learning after school or on non-school days.**

**The principal should include enough staff and time in the school schedule for all struggling students to receive adequate time for *Trophies* “Interventions” help.**

**The principal should ensure that teachers have training and adequate time to practice using all essential technologies to deliver required literacy assessments.**

**The principal and leadership team should search for ways to fill part-time or full-time Paraprofessional aide positions in the school.**

- **One possibility is to offer the positions to retired elementary teacher volunteers.**

**The principal should ensure that only successful, experienced teachers are assigned to staff the school, and that enough time and support are provided to ensure teacher success.**

### **3. Time for Teachers and Students - Mathematics**

#### ***Key Findings***

The 70 minutes of scheduled mathematics instruction time is sufficient, but not always efficiently used, for advancing the core mathematics curriculum. Much of the time is spent on issues relating to classroom management. This is more of an issue in grades 3-5 than in grades K-2.

Teachers have two grade-level subject meetings per week, one with the mathematics coach, who provides an agenda; the other is unstructured. There is also one inter-grade meeting per month and one mathematics leadership team meeting a month.

#### ***Recommendations***

**The principal and mathematics coach should ensure that classroom management in grades 3-5 is addressed in order for effective instruction to take place, making maximum use of the scheduled instruction time.**

**The mathematics coach should develop and distribute a clear agenda for all grade-level meetings.**

**The mathematics coach should model lessons regularly in order to effectively move instruction and learning forward and also to make to make sure that teaching time is used effectively.**

## **4. Leadership for Instructional Improvement**

### **DISTRICT**

#### *Key Findings*

Following a School Panel Review at the school in March 2006, the district made a change in leadership at the school.

- The new principal was appointed based on her experience as an assistant principal at one of the district's larger elementary schools, and more recently as principal of an early learning center.
- Given the acknowledged chasm at the school between district policies and their actualization at the school, the principal faces an extremely daunting, multi-faceted challenge in turning this school around.

There is no concise, annual written action plan for improving student learning in underperforming schools.

In its DPI, the district points to the new school leadership's objective to "determine which program(s) will have the greatest impact coalescing teachers' common beliefs and their ownership and impact on the students' ability and students' learning" to "enhance daily instruction." There is no evidence that this determination has been made, although the professional development plan was revised to devote more time to school climate.

The practice of transferring personnel with unsatisfactory evaluations to underperforming schools has an impact on school culture and on student achievement.

- Personnel transferred whose evaluations are either rated "do not meet expectations" or "incomplete," or are the result of litigation or settlement is detrimental to improving underperforming schools.
- Transfer of teachers with unsatisfactory evaluations diverts the principal's attention from students because of the need to assist, evaluate and assess the performance of the transferees when the priority should be to provide instructional leadership in the school.
- Teacher transfers present a major challenge in terms of the schools' ability to develop and implement a successful plan to improve student performance.

Teacher evaluations had not been conducted according to the contractual guidelines by the former principal. This has created a burden on the new principal.

- As a result, twenty-four teachers were to be evaluated by mid-November 2006, fourteen of whom are new to the school.

- Because this is a Superintendent School, the principal was given the authority to choose 50% of new staff from the open pool. Seven of these new teachers were interviewed and assigned from the excess pool, and seven were selected from the open pool.

The current teacher evaluation instrument is cumbersome and does not effectively contribute to improvement in teacher and student performance.

### *Recommendations*

**In concert with district Administration, the principal should develop and articulate a concise, written action plan that includes three or four priority goals for climate and instruction for this school year.**

- **This plan should be developed and shared with the faculty.**
- **Subsequently, this action plan should become the focus of the school's future WSIP.**

**The principal should clarify and strengthen the roles and accountability within the administrative structure for supervision, monitoring and support of the school leaders, coaches, and teachers in order to improve teaching and learning.**

**The district and principals should review the effectiveness of the teacher evaluation instrument in relation to its ability to improve instructional practices and student achievement.**

**The district should prevent the placement or transfer to underperforming schools of personnel who do not meet the evaluative criteria or who have incomplete evaluations. This also applies to teachers with evaluation issues resolved through grievances, settlements or litigation.**

**The district should ensure that the principal in underperforming schools has the authority to select all personnel needed to address instructional priorities, in accordance with state law.**

**The district should ensure that the principals in all schools are held accountable for completing the evaluation process with respect to district policy.**

## **SCHOOL**

### *Key Findings*

The leadership structure of the school currently includes the new principal, an assistant principal, a full time director of instruction, a part-time school support specialist, and .5 mathematics and ELA coaches.

The district has provided a part-time executive/part-time coach to support the previous principal. The position has been continued this year. It is unclear what direct impact this coaching position has on improving instruction at the school.

The leadership structure of the school currently includes the new principal, an assistant principal, a full time LAB coordinator, a part-time school support specialist, .5 mathematics and literacy coaches, and a full-time Reading First coach. The principal and assistant principal have divided into two pods each the responsibility of monitoring and supervising instruction in the four pods.

A culture of accountability has not been in place at the school for some time, and lines of administrator and staff responsibility for improvement remain unclear.

- The principal, assistant principal, executive/part-time coach, director of instruction, school support specialist, and coaches all play a part in supervising, monitoring and supporting improvements to instruction at the school.
- A new leadership team structure has been charted that includes deploying the ILT into six subcommittees. It has been suggested that the ILT meet twice a month. The ILT has met once this year and has no overarching agenda for its work this year.

There is no coherent vision or specific written plan for improving the climate for learning in the school.

- Some teachers report feeling safer in school this year. The team found little response, beyond general comment about optimism for the coming school year, to the question of what has changed at the school this year, or of what the common short and/or long-term goals are for improving instructional practice or raising student achievement.
- Three programs have been introduced, but not fully implemented at the school—Efficacy Program, Open Circle, and Cooperative Discipline. The team saw and heard some evidence of aspects of all these programs, and the principal and staff talk about the need to implement one fully. Teachers regularly report no clear consequences for behavioral disruptions. Newer teachers reported a large portion of their instructional time (85%) is taken up with classroom management of what they term as serious acting out behaviors while they are alone with students.
- Off-task student behavior during workshop time is evident in a sizable portion of the student population; and in several classes up to 30% of the students were not reading when expected. Student interactions around the school varied from positive and helpful to negative. Several incidents of hitting and a number of teasing incidents were observed.

A leadership team structure has been charted that deploys the ILT to work in six subcommittees, including the mathematics and literacy teams.

- It had been suggested that the ILT meet twice a month.
- As of the team's visit in late October, the ILT had met once.
- All of the subcommittees have met at least once, and in some cases more frequently, prior to the first ILT meeting.
- A group of teachers, administrators and coaches reportedly met together with the new principal between September and this first meeting on October 18 to set up the ILT

subcommittee structure and recruit staff who were willing and able to dedicate the necessary time, energy and effort to this work.

- The ILT's agenda for this year is focused on addressing the school climate issues.

The principal is laying the groundwork for a professional learning community that includes teachers, students and parents.

- Some teachers report feeling safer in school this year.
- The team found little response to the question of what has changed at the school this year, beyond general comments about optimism for the current school year, or of what the common short or long-term goals are for improving instructional practice or raising student achievement.

Three student behavior programs have been partially implemented in the past to address longstanding climate issues at the school—Efficacy Program, Open Circle, and Cooperative Discipline. None of these is fully operational in the school.

- The team found evidence that aspects of each of these programs exist, and the principal and staff all pointed to the need to implement one program fully.
- Teachers regularly report no clear or predictable consequences for behavioral disruptions in school. Newer teachers, in particular, reported a large portion of their instructional time is taken up with classroom management of what they term as serious acting out behaviors while they are alone with students.
- Off-task student behavior during classroom workshop time is evident in a sizable portion of the student population; and in several classes up to 30% of the students were not reading when expected. Student interactions around the school varied from positive and helpful to negative. Several incidents of hitting and a number of teasing incidents were observed.

There is evidence of teachers' low expectations for students, as reported by the administration, in the ILT meeting, and observed in the classrooms.

- Lessons appeared to be aimed at low performing students without meaningful differentiation and rigorous challenge for more able students.

### *Recommendations*

**In concert with district administration, the principal should develop and articulate a concise action plan that includes three or four priority goals for climate and instruction for this school year.**

- **This plan should be developed and shared with the faculty.**
- **Subsequently, this action plan should become the focus of the school's future WSIP.**

**The principal should clarify and strengthen the roles and accountability within the administrative structure.**

- **For supervision, monitoring and support of the school leaders and coaches.**
- **For supervision, monitoring and support for improving teaching and learning.**

**The principal and ILT should select one student behavioral program for the school and delineate a plan for consistent training, implementation, and support for teachers using the plan.**

- **The principal should develop and communicate a clear protocol for handling behavioral issues and inform all teachers of this protocol immediately, including procedures for calling for support when needed.**

**The principal should ensure that teachers raise expectations for student learning and incorporate differentiation into the curriculum and instructional practices on a daily basis.**

**The principal should develop and communicate a clear protocol for handling behavioral issues and inform all teachers of this protocol immediately, including procedures for calling for support when needed.**

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**SOLOMON LEWENBERG MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
**October 26 & 27, 2006**

**Summary Finding**

In the past seven years, students at Solomon Lewenberg Middle School have made adequate yearly progress in mathematics once, during the year 2003, resulting in an NCLB status of restructuring. The school's aggregate Composite Performance Index (CPI) of 39.5 in mathematics places it close to 30 points below the state target for Cycle IV (68.7). Students with special needs, who constitute 34% of the school population, are performing at 15 points lower than their Lewenberg classmates and at 47 points below state performance targets for Cycle IV in mathematics.

Yet there is no clear sense of urgency on the part of administrators and staff for improving student performance throughout the school, especially in mathematics. The most striking evidence of this lack of urgency are the failure to directly address identified gaps in instructional leadership in the area of monitoring and supervision of instruction, and in the absence of strategic academic intervention services for students at the school.

**1. Standards-Based Teaching and Learning - English Language Arts**

*Key Findings*

The school has a positive climate that can allow it to move forward toward a rigorous learning environment.

- Classrooms are organized and interactions are businesslike and cordial.
- The RESPECT curriculum has given teachers a common language to use with students.
- Teachers direct student actions and maintain control, basic ingredients in a well-functioning classroom.

The literacy coach meets regularly with grade-level teachers and assists them with curriculum content and pedagogy as well as with looking at student work in Open Response writing and persuasive compositions.

There is some evidence that the school fosters a standards-based environment in ELA.

- Standards and/or student learning objectives are posted and made evident to students in about half the classes.
- There is some evidence that students understand the 'larger picture' or the final goal of a lesson.
- Few exemplars are discussed and analyzed to assist students.
- Teachers identified three ELA student learning objectives after reviewing data a year ago, but there are no identifiable timelines or assessments in place that can help teachers track growth in these areas.
- The wide range of state standards, including oral language, deeper-level analysis of fiction and nonfiction, and research, is not in evidence.

An effective standards-based reading workshop model is being partially implemented.

- Some teachers model strategies (e.g. fluency reading aloud in one class) that are important to students developing proficient reading abilities. One teacher was observed asking students to visualize details as she read aloud. It is not clear whether stopping the reading for multiple personal student responses helped students see the details in the poem or not, however, since there were many responses to the details, some connected to the poem and some not.
- Modeling of other strategies (e.g. ongoing analysis, critical self-questioning, and revision of written work) is not evident. These processing activities are essential to students understanding the mental dialogues that occur habitually for proficient readers and writers.
- While some teachers ask students to review or defend their answers, a number of teachers ask questions that require only factual answers, and thus do not offer students frequent opportunity to think deeply or evaluate their reasoning.
- Differentiation of expectations and materials for students beyond guided reading groups is not a clear priority.

Student initiative is not an overt characteristic of learning at the school.

- Student-to-student interaction is generally nonexistent in most classrooms, which limits students' opportunity to practice self-directed learning.
- Teachers do not regularly provide opportunities for students to make meaningful personal connections, demonstrate logic, or lead discussion. As a result, students remain dependent upon teachers, a situation that does not enhance academic achievement.
- Students in observed classes spoke only in response to teacher questions. Question-and-answer sessions are not the same as discussion, which requires students to develop points of view and question others, both higher-order thinking skills.
- Many teachers do not ask follow-up questions such as, "Why do you think that?" or "How do you know?" that invite deeper investigation. This type of interaction encourages students to explain their ideas and develop a critical awareness of their theories.

### *Recommendations*

The principal and the ILT should make the goal of raising student ELA learning expectations a top priority in every initiative of the school, and include concrete and specific measures for progress toward this goal in its action plan.

Teachers should ensure that all teaching is standards based and coordinated, and that students can verbalize the context, purpose and goals of a lesson's activities.

## **1. Standards-Based Teaching and Learning—Mathematics**

### *Key Findings*

The district Connected Mathematics curriculum and pacing guide are used by all teachers.

- Classes are generally on schedule with the pacing guide, although teachers find the pacing aggressive.
- Objectives for the lessons are posted in most of the classrooms, although the language used to describe the objectives was only sometimes student friendly.
- Manipulative materials and other tools are available in most classrooms.

Classroom management is generally very good, suggesting that collaborative student work could be effectively implemented.

A clear expression of the necessary ramping up of student learning from grade to grade does not exist.

- There does not seem to be a cohesive connection among the mathematics being taught from grade to grade, as teachers lack a deeper understanding of mathematics being promoted in the classrooms.

Mathematics instruction across the school lacks challenge and vigor, indicating low expectations for students and limited teacher content knowledge.

- In 44% of the mathematics lessons observed, teachers displayed deep content knowledge and correctly presented concepts.
- Mathematics instruction across the grade levels is characterized by over-scaffolding.
- Observers reported instances of the presentation of unrelated facts.
- Differentiated instruction is not a feature of mathematics instruction in the school.
- Students tend to use/produce a single representation of a concept.
- Feedback from teachers is meaningful but is more often about processes and procedures and less often about concepts, strategies and “big ideas.”
- Observers report many missed opportunities to engage students in higher-level thinking. This made it difficult to determine the level of students’ higher-order skills.
- Observers reported evidence of students ready to move forward, but held back by teachers “micro-managing” learning.

Mathematics coaches are members of the Boston Teachers Union (BTU) and have no evaluative or supervisory authority in the schools in which they work. This structural condition limits a coach’s ability to influence significant changes in instructional practice.

### *Recommendations*

**SEI and special education teachers who teach mathematics in self-contained classes must shore up their mathematics content knowledge to avoid presenting incorrect or unrelated mathematical information to students. The principal should address teacher professional development under the regular teacher evaluation process.**

**The principal and mathematics coach should initiate regular Learning Walks with a specific purpose and provide timely and useful feedback to teachers. Specific actions should be outlined, with expected goals or outcomes and benchmarks for measuring progress during the next Learning Walk.**

**The mathematics coach should be present in classrooms to model effective lessons, move instruction and learning forward, and to make sure that teaching time is used effectively.**

**The principal and mathematics coach should ensure that a clear written agenda is in place for teachers' second common planning period, so that it is used constructively to move the mathematics agenda forward.**

**The principal and mathematics coach should ensure develop and implement a structured intervention plan for students who need it.**

## **2. Using Data to Inform Practice—English Language Arts**

### *Key Findings*

The district has scheduled multiple forms of assessment during the school year.

- SRI- (Scholastic Reading Inventory) in grades 7-8 administered in September, January and June.
- BPS formative assessments in ELA, mathematics, science and history, administered at the end of units of study.
- FAST-R (Formative Assessments of Student Thinking in Reading) measures MCAS skills, such as finding evidence and making inferences, is being used for the second year. This assessment is funded through a grant from Boston Plan for Excellence (BPE).
- GRADE (Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation), given at the ends of units of study, new this year. Mid-year and end-of-year data will be analyzed this year.

Teachers use some formative assessment in order to group students by need.

- The diagnostic GRADE assessment is administered in grade 6.
- They administer the SRI at the beginning of the year in grades 7 and 8 to determine students' reading comprehension level.
- Students are placed in regular or cluster classes based on their comprehension level and their level of independence, which is teacher determined.
- Special education students are moved into regular classes when they exhibit enough independence in following directions and completing work to warrant a "trial period." In this way, students feel more ready to try out a regular class assignment than if a change were expected to be permanent.

The use of assessment data to inform instruction is in the early stages of development and, once tied to state performance standards as well as content standards, is a promising effort at the school.

- Scheduled assessments are used to group and regroup students for workshop instruction.
- BPS-developed assessments that measure content knowledge in the core subjects are administered at the ends of units of study. While they give a profile of student content learning through the year, they do not assist teachers' with planning on a day-to-day basis.

- Ongoing, in-class formative assessments are not being used deliberately to inform everyday instruction, an essential element of the workshop model of teaching.
- Grade 8 teachers are looking at student work on a common persuasive writing prompt with the structure of the 6-Trait Writing curriculum, but there is no mention of using state performance standards – found in scored student work posted by the state – to create a common evaluation and teaching standard.

### *Recommendations*

**The principal and ILT should provide teachers with training in the use of state performance standards in Open Response and Long Composition writing to inform their curricular planning and teaching practices.**

- NCS Mentor, a digital training program provided by the state and now online, is a useful tool to begin this work.

**The principal and ILT should ensure that all teachers regularly administer in-class formative assessments in reading and writing that are “back-mapped” from state performance standards in order to assess the rigor of ELA expectations.**

- These assessments should include multiple kinds of demonstrations of learning. For instance, students should be presenting information and understanding orally as they lead the class, demonstrating critical thinking and questioning as they participate in discussions, and demonstrate research skills as they search for and present knowledge on topics of their choice.

## **2. Using Data to Inform Practice—Mathematics**

### *Key Findings*

District mandated assessments are being used regularly, and significant data is provided to the school.

- The school is developing the capacity to use data to inform instruction, especially core instruction.
- The mathematics coach, who is at Lewenberg twice a week, meets with different grade level groups once a week to discuss the mid-module and end-of-module assessments.

Grade-level analyses are not being extended to include looking at student work in depth to inform teacher instruction.

- Teachers need to use data to identify specific student knowledge, and then use that information to extend student knowledge to mitigate current needs.

### *Recommendations*

**The district should make MCAS data and the end-of-year district assessment results available to the mathematics coach and teachers in a timely manner for effective analysis to inform instruction.**

**The mathematics coach should use the assessment data at grade-level meetings to direct discussion on instructional strategies and to identify gaps in student learning, and also to identify common gaps across grade levels so intervention is put in place in all classes as part of the daily lesson.**

### **3. Time for Students and Teachers - English Language Arts**

#### *Key Findings*

Teachers for the most part feel they have adequate time for professional development and training.

- Based on interviews, teachers feel the summer training on the new America's Choice program was sufficient to prepare them to use the materials this school year.
- Teachers meet regularly with the literacy coach in grade cluster meetings to continue professional development in new programs such as *6-Trait Writing*.

Literacy workshop time is organized and runs smoothly for the most part, however, time for students to explore ideas, ask deeper questions and debate their theories is limited.

- A number of teachers use a timer to signify changes in the activity.
- Most teachers lead an organized, predictable workshop block.
- Discussion and analysis of quality student work are not primary goals of workshop time in many classrooms.
- Teacher questions are literal much of the time. In one class when students were asked to develop questions of their own, the questions were based solely on details presented in the text, and so were literal in nature. A discussion of levels of questioning can develop student awareness of their thinking and make excellent use of student questioning.

The literacy coach feels adequately supported in her new position.

- The change coach works with her regularly to review MCAS data and the language of test taking.
- She meets once a month with Central Office personnel regarding training on new materials and programs.
- The principal reminds teachers in bulletins several times a week to be on time to cluster meetings.

#### *Recommendations*

**The literacy coach should be assigned to the school full time to make the goal of raising student-learning expectations a top priority by:**

- **Continuing to guide teachers in integrating lessons and units of study with all state content standards,**
- **Emphasizing training for teachers in questioning techniques and higher-order thinking skills,**

- **Developing teacher capacity to create new units based on the America’s Choice program, and**
- **Training teachers to use student exemplars to help teachers and students analyze and adopt an understanding of the characteristics of state grade-level performance standards.**

### 3. Time for Students and Teachers - Mathematics

#### *Key Findings*

Eighty-minute mathematics blocks provide sufficient instructional time, which is not always efficiently used in advancing core curriculum.

- The district Connected Mathematics pacing guide identifies 57-minute lessons.
- Observers found the scheduled 80-minute mathematics blocks being used primarily to stretch these lessons with extensive scaffolding.
- Teachers report they need more time to teach the mathematics curriculum.
- The principal reports that the middle, “Explore,” portion of the mathematics classes seems to be where teachers are lagging.

Structured intervention is not available to students during the school day. As of the team’s visit the district’s supplemental educational services (SES) had not begun after school.

- The team heard conflicting information from staff and administrators about student eligibility for the program, the starting date, what would be offered and staffing.

There is no apparent link between the common planning time and measurable changes in instruction or assessment.

- Teacher schedules provide for two grade-level subject meetings per week, one with the coach who provides the agenda. The remaining meeting has no set structure, and no agendas were available for review by the team.
- There is also one inter-grade meeting per month.
- Teachers look at the raw data but do not regularly look at authentic student performance that produced that data.

#### *Recommendations*

**The principal and mathematics coach should develop a plan for the coach to ratchet up expectations for teaching and learning in mathematics.**

**The principal should clearly outline the mathematics coach’s role as leader of needed instructional improvements and authorize the coach to:**

- **Outline the agenda for the grade-level meetings that focus on data analysis to inform instruction,**
- **Work in all classrooms to model lessons in using teaching time effectively, demonstrating differentiated learning, and improving classroom time management,**
- **Train and monitor all teachers in using questioning techniques and in promoting higher-order thinking skills, including critical thinking and self-evaluation, and**

- **Clarify the function of the pacing guide as a tool for instruction in 80-minute mathematics blocks.**

**The mathematics coach should be assigned to the school full time to address the needs of the administration and staff and to support implementation of the annual action plan.**

## **4. Leadership for Instructional Improvement**

### **DISTRICT**

#### *Key Findings*

**The District Intervention Plan indicates a high level of awareness and understanding of the key areas for improvement at the school, including hypotheses for why those conditions exist, which include:**

- Mathematics content knowledge and pedagogy are lacking.
- A high percentage of students with diverse learning needs are assigned to the school, and
- A system for ongoing supervision, evaluation, and feedback to teachers is not in place.

**The district has taken steps to provide the necessary conditions for improvement at the school, including its designation as one of twelve Superintendent Schools and intensive special education support.**

- **Teachers at Superintendent Schools take 20 additional hours of mandatory school-based professional development.**
- **principals of Superintendent Schools control 50% of the new hires into the building.**
- **.5 Mathematics and literacy coaches have been assigned to the schools.**

The district assignment policy for students with special needs and/or its resource allocation is impeding improving student achievement at this school.

- 34% of school's students are identified as having special needs
- There are a number of special education classes housed in the school, including 4 LAB, 2 SAR, 4 LD, and 6 Resource Rooms.
- Human and other resources to address these diverse learning needs are reportedly not adequate to address them.

The instructional leadership team (ILT) is not working effectively to support higher expectations and/or significant improvement in student achievement.

- According to the principal, there is high turnover of ILT membership and the district no longer trains ILT members.
- The current ILT was established in mid-September, and prior to the team's visit October 26 & 27 had one meeting, which was reportedly focused on preparing for the fact-finding visit.
- The team found new members on the ILT who are unsure of their role in the school generally and had no plan for improving student learning and achievement.

- There is minimal participation and interaction during the ILT meeting observed by the team.

### *Recommendations*

**The district, along with the building administration, should develop a concise, annual, written action plan focusing on three or four goals for dramatically improving student performance. Beginning in 2007-08, the action plan should be the focus of the WSIP.**

**The district should prevent the placement or transfer to underperforming schools of personnel who do not meet the evaluative criteria or who have incomplete evaluations. This also applies to teachers with evaluation issues resolved through grievances, settlements or litigation.**

**The district should ensure that the principal in underperforming schools has the authority to select all personnel needed to address instructional priorities, in accordance with state law.**

**The district should review the effectiveness of the teacher evaluation instrument in relation to its ability to improve instructional practices and student achievement.**

**The district should ensure that principals complete meaningful evaluations for leadership staff (i.e. director of instruction, LAB coordinator and coaches) in underperforming schools. (See school section for more information).**

**The district should ensure that the principals in all schools are held accountable for completing the evaluation process with respect to district policy.**

**The district should reexamine its policy for assigning a disproportionate number of students with special needs to underperforming schools.**

**The district should provide orientation, training and ongoing support to ensure development and maintenance of high-functioning instructional leadership teams to plan, monitor and support instructional improvements in underperforming schools.**

## **SCHOOL**

### *Key Findings*

The administrative structure in place at the school is not working in a focused, coordinated, effective manner to dramatically improve student achievement.

- The principal has been leading the school since 1995. There is a full-time director of instruction (DI), and part-time change coach, .5 mathematics and literacy coaches, and a part-time school support specialist in place. There is also a LAB coordinator, who is new to this position.

- This is the first year that the school has not had an assistant principal and the loss of this position reportedly requires administrators to revise and expand their roles at the beginning of the school year.
- The principal, the DI and LAB coordinator now share responsibilities for teacher evaluation and student discipline.
- The effectiveness of the DI role in directing improvements in instruction is unclear. One of her responsibilities is administering the supplemental education services (SES) program grant. At the time of the team's visit, the program was scheduled to begin the following week, in mid-November.
- The role of the change coach in promoting change is unclear. She is hired by the school and works directly with the principal for up to 15 hours a week with a focus on "assisting the school with analyzing and interpreting data and preparing school reports and grants."
- The role of the mathematics coach as an agent of change and a force for improvement is not clearly defined; and the coach's time is insufficient to address the needs of the staff and to support instructional improvements.
- The instructional leadership team is not adequately monitoring and/or supporting instructional improvement at the school.
- The roles of the literacy coach, mathematics coach and the DI are overlapping and lack coordination.

The administration lacks a focused plan for improving persistently low student achievement in mathematics.

- The principal reports that she supports and adheres to the two-year Whole School Improvement Plans (WSIP) approved by the district and made available to the fact-finding team.
- The Panel Review Report from the Winter of 2006 states, "The issue of most concern in regard to the soundness of the WSIP related to aspects of the plan that involved monitoring and evaluating the progress toward the implementation of teaching strategies and accomplishment of student learning objectives." The team concurs.
- To date, the principal has no written action plan with priorities to be accomplished during the current school year or a systematic way of monitoring and supervising improvements to instruction. She reports that the district requires only an updated professional development plan this year.
- The school has two Read-180 classrooms for struggling students in reading and encourages all struggling students to participate in after-school programs for additional support in ELA and/or math. (As of the visit in late October, no such services were available.) The district began implementing the America's Choice Intervention *Ramp Up* program for struggling grade 6 students. There is no systematic plan for intervention or remediation for struggling students.

Extensive professional development is underway or planned for teachers, including:

- 37 out of 43 teachers and paraprofessionals are currently participating in Research for Better Teaching's (RBT's) *The Skillful Teacher*,
- Training for special education teachers in mathematics will be offered jointly by the district's program director for secondary mathematics and unified services, and

- A graduate-level special education dual certification program for regular education teachers through Northeastern University will begin at the completion of the RBT training.

### *Recommendations*

**The school administration should develop and articulate, in concert with district administration, a concise, written action plan that includes three or four priority goals for this school year for climate and instruction. This plan should be developed and shared with the faculty. Subsequently, this action plan should become the focus of the school's future WSIP.**

**The principal should examine, clarify and reorganize, as necessary, the roles, responsibilities and instructional expertise of the current director of instruction, LAB coordinator, change coach, and the literacy and mathematics coaches. The principal, with district assistance, should complete meaningful evaluations of leadership staff**

**All Administrative leadership reorganization decisions should be focused on raising staff and student expectations, in order to instill a greater sense of urgency in raising student achievement.**

**The district and principal should articulate a clear system for measuring the effectiveness of professional development and provide a coherent system to support the specific changes in classroom instruction expected as a result of the trainings.**

**The district and/or principal should ensure that the SES program is appropriately administered and that there is a school-wide plan for remediation to assist in the dramatic improvement in student achievement.**

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## LOUIS AGASSIZ ELEMENTARY SCHOOL October 31 & November 1, 2006

### Summary Finding

Students at the Louis Agassiz Elementary School have not made adequate yearly progress in the aggregate or in any of the subgroups in English Language Arts for seven out of the past eight years, and the school is in the second year of restructuring. Student performance declined in 2006 in ELA; and the school's Cycle IV Composite Proficiency Index (CPI) of 51.6 is 29 points below the State target. The principal, who has been at the school for twenty years, must be more directive in working with the staff, while at the same time demonstrate a more distributive style of leadership. This style change has to be a priority if major change is to take place in the delivery of the educational program to increase student achievement and MCAS scores. The principal, with the assistance of the district, should also review and evaluate the roles and responsibilities of the members of the leadership team.

One hundred and sixty-five of the 305 of the Agassiz students tested in ELA in 2006 were of limited English Proficiency (LEP). The SEI/ELL program would benefit from a thorough review of content and delivery, including the schedule for delivery of services. Students are being pulled out of critical ELA and mathematics programs, losing instructional time, in order to receive support. A full-time language acquisition coach should be assigned to the school.

The climate in the school is affected by the open classroom layout of the facility; however, there is also need for a strong discipline protocol, which would establish a climate more conducive to positive learning. That protocol should also be backed up with renovations to the building that would close the classrooms and create a more school like environment.

### 1. Standards-Based Teaching and Learning—English Language Arts

#### *Key Findings*

Teachers teach to standards and learning objectives in the Reading First program and the *Trophies* reading program.

- Even though *Trophies* has been implemented for several years in most grades, teachers are still acclimating to the demands of the initiative, and professional development continues to be offered to address their concerns.

The school has identified three ELA standards as the main school goals in the WSIP. Many teachers go beyond these three standards, asking students to defend or explain their answers, for example, or to make connections among texts.

- A teacher asked students to connect ideas from the current text to one read previously and acknowledged the connections students made.

- A special education teacher asked students who struggled with an answer if she should go to another student or not. Those who wanted to try were given scaffolding questions to help them answer the question.

An effective standards-based workshop model for literacy classes is only partially implemented by teachers.

- State content standards in the form of student learning objectives identified in the WSIP do not inform instructional planning in a meaningful way. Some teachers move beyond the three identified objectives, but the goals of reading, speaking and writing may in fact be unclear to the faculty.
- Differentiation exists at a superficial level, with students working as a whole class, independently and in small groups during literacy blocks. Some groupings seem to have little inherent purpose, however, and expectations are often the same for all students.
- The importance of instructing all students during the literacy workshop is not clearly established.
- Some teachers regularly ask higher-level questions of students, but the practice is not pervasive or geared, it seems, to individual students' readiness.
- Practices that cement student initiative and responsibility for learning are not evident.
- Students present their work to classmates occasionally, but as a rule, teachers lead all questioning and activities.
- Brief exchanges characterize most student talk in class, a situation that does not offer students meaningful practice in thinking deeply about and explaining student understanding.

Teaching with student exemplars is not a common practice.

- Rubrics are commonly seen, but these contain abstractions, not examples, of assignments.
- Anchor charts, built by students and teachers, are visible in classrooms. Like rubrics, these help students understand and check off elements or steps of a process or assignment, but they do not exemplify excellent work that students can analyze.

There is evidence of confusion about how to structure some aspects of literacy workshop.

- Students are pulled out of literacy blocks in order to receive SEI and ESL help. This schedule limits, rather than extends, the time these students have for literacy learning. Several students who returned to their regular class had already completed the work the class was doing and therefore did not include themselves in the class activity.
- The "Question of the Day," is mistakenly being used in a number of classrooms as a writing activity (sometimes with report-outs by several students). It is intended to be an oral activity for all students, so important for this high-ELL student population.
- While some teachers report "students have plenty of time to talk," it is unclear that they are encouraged to talk academically.

### *Recommendations*

**The principal, ILT and literacy coaches should develop plans to enhance teacher understanding effective workshop expectations and effective differentiation of instruction.**

**The principal should reassess the scheduling of students for SEI and ESL help to avoid literacy blocks, re-evaluate the role of paraprofessionals in the literacy classrooms, and redirect the use of the “Question of the Day” as an oral language-building activity.**

**The principal and literacy coaches should oversee an initiative to map the reading and writing curricula to state standards and ensure that learning expectations incorporate all State content standards in all classrooms. This includes dramatic presentation, research and discussion standards and the like.**

**School leaders should provide teachers with training in the use of state performance (not content) standards in reading and writing to inform curricular planning and teaching practice.**

- **NCS Mentor, a digital training program provided by the state and now online, is a useful tool to begin this work.**

## **1. Standards-Based Teaching and Learning—Mathematics**

### *Key Findings*

Teachers are using the *Investigations* pacing guide, and all classes are on schedule.

- Objectives for the lessons are posted in most of the classes.
- Notebooks are being used, but they provide little visible evidence of independent student thinking.

Teachers do not demonstrate the depth of content knowledge required to fully and effectively implement the *Investigations* curriculum.

- Objectives do not always serve as a tool for teaching and learning.
- Mini-lessons tend to be too long because of over scaffolding.
- Teachers make basic mathematical errors during instruction, some of which are then translated into the students’ notebooks.
- Very little differentiated instruction by the teachers was observed.
- Most students tend to use/produce a single representation of a concept.
- Opportunities to move students to higher-level thinking are frequently missed. Most teachers use the examples provided by the curriculum guide, with little variation from what is prescribed.

Mathematics lessons lack rigor and challenge.

- Teachers are underestimating the readiness of students, and lack of confidence in students’ ability leads to excessive scaffolding and use of simplistic examples.
- Feedback by the teachers is more often about processes and procedures and less often about concepts, strategies and the “big ideas.”
- Notebooks are being used, but with little independent student thinking visible.

The mathematics coach is well liked among the staff and appears competent in her dealings with the mathematics teachers on a one-on-one basis doing pre-conferences, observations, post-conferences and modeling lessons. However, she does not demonstrate the vision and depth of knowledge required to lead a school-wide effort to raise expectations for mathematics instruction in order to significantly raise student achievement.

### *Recommendations*

**The principal and ILT should make the goal of raising expectations for mathematics teaching and learning a priority.**

**The principal should develop and implement a plan to raise the mathematics coach’s level of mathematical knowledge.**

## **2. Using Data to Inform Practice—English Language Arts**

### *Key Findings*

The use of assessment data to inform instruction is in its early stages, and with due process and time, can lead to a better-informed faculty and student body.

- The grades 4-5 literacy coach understands the need to look at student work to “tease back MCAS” and address areas needing more training and instruction.
- Teachers use rubrics and anchor charts fairly regularly, but exemplars of student work with informative analysis are not evident in classrooms.
- State performance standards – scored student work posted by the state each year for each Open Response question and Long Composition prompt – are not used widely to inform teachers and students about the quality of student work expected on MCAS.
- Establishing aligned, grade-level benchmarks for student reading and writing skills has not occurred as part of the process.
- Grades 4 and 5 teachers have not been encouraged to use Harcourt reading assessments until midyear, although some teachers administer parts of unit tests. Educators miss opportunities to know more about student learning by not administering these tests.

### *Recommendations*

**The principal, ILT and literacy coaches should ensure that teachers regularly administer formative assessments in reading and writing that are “back-mapped” from state performance standards in order to assess the rigor of curriculum and student expectations.**

**The principal should ensure that the literacy coaches emphasize training and monitoring of all teachers in questioning techniques to promote higher-order thinking skills and ways to embed increased student responsibility for learning into instructional practices.**

## 2. Using Data to Inform Practice—Mathematics

### *Key Findings*

Assessments mandated by the district are being used regularly, and significant data is provided to the school.

- The end-of-year assessments from last year have not yet been shared with teachers to inform instruction.
- Performance/improvement goals have not been set for students and teachers based on this information.

### *Recommendations*

**The principal, mathematics coach and ILT should make the goal of raising expectations for teaching and learning in mathematics a priority.**

**The district should ensure that teachers use data to identify specific student knowledge and then use that information to extend student knowledge to mitigate current needs.**

- This must be done at the beginning of the school year and goals set for students and teachers based on this information
- These analyses can be extended to include looking at student work in depth to inform teacher instruction.

## 3. Time for Teachers and Students—English Language Arts

### *Key Findings*

Students are taken out of literacy workshop in order to receive SEI and ESL help. This schedule limits, rather than extends, the time these students have for literacy learning.

- Several students who returned to their regular class had already completed the work the class was doing and did not include themselves in the class activity or work on their own.

The amount of time for students to do “authentic reading” is not adequate to prepare students to be proficient readers, according to one literacy coach.

Teachers do not have enough time to discuss and process new skills and practices, according to one literacy coach.

While many teachers presented a satisfactory picture of their expectations and the opportunities students have for reading, speaking and writing, it is clear that the student body needs higher expectations and a variety of opportunities to demonstrate achievement in a number of ways.

### *Recommendations*

**The principal should change the practice of pulling out students for SEI and ESL help from literacy blocks. The district policy requires that these pull-out periods be in addition to literacy blocks.**

**The principal and literacy coaches should lead discussions among faculty members regarding time for authentic reading and for practicing new skills, and implement changes in scheduling and professional development as needed.**

**The principal, literacy coaches and ILT should analyze and address the contradiction between many teachers' assessment of the rigor of education at the school and students' low test results.**

## **3. Time for Teachers and Students—Mathematics**

### *Key Findings*

Sixty-minute blocks provide sufficient time for math instruction, and teachers have no difficulty adhering to the pacing guide.

- There is also an extra 10 minutes of instruction for which the district has a set curriculum.

Teachers do not have a designated time to get together as a grade-level team to discuss issues.

Structured intervention is available after school and provides 80 hours of instruction using the curriculum provided by the district. This program runs from November through May. It was available last year and will be available this year also. 148 students participated last year with a ratio of 6 students per teacher in these classes. More students could have been accommodated except for the fact that students use buses for transportation and these run at scheduled times.

The mathematics coach meets with the grade-level teams twice a month with the agenda already set, and may not include time for discussing teachers' immediate concerns related to teaching, students, and assessment.

Paraprofessionals appear to be used primarily as monitors of equipment or behavior rather than as instructional aides.

### *Recommendations*

**Structured time for teachers to meet and focus on improving student achievement in mathematics should be provided in the schedule.**

**The school should explore ways to be more creative to offer structured intervention to more students, including arranging transportation.**

**The principal should reassess the use of paraprofessionals, currently used primarily as monitors of equipment or behavior, and develop a plan to train and use them as instructional aides.**

## 4. Leadership for Instructional Improvement

### DISTRICT

#### *Key Findings*

The District Intervention Plan indicates a high level of awareness and understanding of the key areas for improvement at the school, including hypotheses for why those conditions exist. The plan

- Outlines the district's analysis of the underlying reasons for school performance problems and what is required to eliminate the barriers to improvement,
- Sets clear expectations for the leadership team's supervision, evaluation and observation of staff with follow-up through written and verbal feedback to staff,
- Provides assistance and direction to the principal in the development of a more effective distributive leadership style, and
- Provides opportunities for the principal to observe other schools with high performing instructional leadership teams and to incorporate best practices.

There is evidence that the teacher evaluation procedure has been marginal or ineffective in the past. Personnel evaluations are a critical component to assessing and improving classroom instruction that will raise student achievement.

- Results of the evaluation process do not appear to direct professional development programs that address instructional practices (e.g., content knowledge, differentiated instruction).
- There is evidence that meaningful evaluations of school leadership staff (assistant principal, director of instruction, coaches) have not been completed.

The transfer of personnel with unsatisfactory evaluations to underperforming schools has a major impact on student achievement in these schools.

- There is evidence of personnel transferred whose evaluations were either rated "do not meet expectations" or "incomplete," or were the result of litigation or settlement.
- Transfer of these teachers diverts school leadership's attention from students. School leadership must spend extra time assisting, evaluating and assessing the performance of the transferees, when the priority should be on providing instructional leadership to the school as a whole.
- Transfer of these teachers presents a major challenge to the schools' ability to develop and implement a successful plan to improve student performance.

No substantive progress has been made to install walls and/or complete other structural solutions in the building to alleviate excess noise that disrupts instruction.

### *Recommendations*

**The district should prevent the placement or transfer of personnel who do not meet successful evaluative criteria, or who have incomplete evaluations, to underperforming schools. This also includes those with evaluation issues that are resolved through grievances, settlements or litigation. The district should also provide and hold accountable the principal with the authority to select personnel needed to address instructional priorities.**

**The district and principals should review the effectiveness of the teacher evaluation instrument in relation to its ability to influence the improvement of instructional practices and student achievement. principals should use the instrument to direct teachers toward increasing their content knowledge in mathematics and English Language Arts, at least.**

**The district and principals should develop a plan to effect meaningful evaluation of leadership staff (assistant principal, etc) in underperforming schools.**

**The district should complete a formal, annual evaluation of the principal and include an assessment of her/his success in implementing a concise, written action plan developed between the principal and the district-level leadership that includes objectives, measurable benchmarks and timeline (beyond WSIP). The plan should highlight how district, triad and school goals will be addressed.**

**The Internal Panel Review report and faculty members cite the need to construct walls or other structural solutions in the building to decrease noise and disruption, and improve the learning environment. The Fact-Finding team concurs.**

- **Structural facilities issues, including walls, should be prioritized and addressed by the district for this school.**
- **The administrative leadership team (principal, assistant principal, LAB coordinator and coaches) should explore alternative ways of addressing school climate issues and improving learning environment.**

**The district should provide professional development for ILT members that focuses on program description, team building, communication, and their roles and responsibilities on the team.**

**The district should ensure that literacy, mathematics and language acquisition coaches (if appropriate) be assigned full time to underperforming schools.**

## SCHOOL

### *Key Findings*

There is a business-like climate in the school, with teachers offering each other support and assistance in grade-level meetings, and students generally following teachers' behavioral expectations. Walls are covered with informative charts and inviting visuals, and adults and children understand each other and established routines.

The school lacks an annual, concise written action plan that incorporates district, triad and building priorities designed to improve instruction and student achievement.

Personnel with unsatisfactory, incomplete or other poor performance-related evaluations have been transferred to the school, negatively impacting this school's efforts to improve student performance and the school leadership team's ability to successfully implement instructional improvement practices.

- The support required by the transferred personnel detracts from the principal's primary responsibility of providing instructional practices and student achievement across the school.
- The evaluation procedure is cumbersome, lengthy and, in many cases, ineffectively administered.

The principal has not consistently provided teachers with written and oral feedback as a result of classroom visitations. This is evidenced through interviews and the district Intervention Plan.

The SEI program structure and effectiveness are unclear. Issues surrounding the program include but are not limited to:

- Multiple proficiency levels being taught in the same classroom,
- The effectiveness of professional development for teachers in SEI/ELL, and
- The quality and rigor of instruction being delivered

The effectiveness of the principal's distributive leadership initiative to improve instructional practices and student achievement this school year is uncertain.

- The school lost one assistant principal due to declining enrollment. The principal expanded the duties of the remaining assistant principal to include student behavior management, among others.
- The principal has redirected his own priorities to be more active in classroom observations and direct as an instructional leader. An assessment of this transition by the deputy superintendent and assistant superintendent is ongoing.
- The ILT is meeting every two weeks and includes new members who are leaders at their grade levels.

While there is a businesslike climate in the school, teachers express frustration over lack of a clear behavior policy and walls to alleviate noise in the classroom pods.

- The open layout of the school magnifies the effects of occasional student misbehavior.

- Some teachers feel there is inconsistency in dealing with student misbehavior.
- The climate committee is not meeting.

### *Recommendations*

**In concert with district administration, the principal should develop and articulate a concise, written action plan that includes three or four priority goals for climate and instruction for this school year.**

- **This plan should be developed and shared with the faculty.**
- **Subsequently, this action plan should become the focus of the school's future WSIP.**
- **The district should approve and monitor the implementation of the plan.**
- **The plan should be revised annually to reflect action needed to improve student achievement.**

**The principal should assess the SEI program with regard to compliance issues, delivery of services and program structure. The evaluation should result in an action plan and recommendations to improve instructional practices and student achievement.**

**The principal should evaluate the assistant principal's effectiveness with regard to recent adjustments in duties and responsibilities.**

**The principal should provide immediate oral and written feedback following classroom observations that directly addresses instructional practices that lead to increased teacher effectiveness and improved student performance.**

**The principal should be more directive and hold others accountable for their responsibilities and performance.**

**The principal should develop a plan to support teachers and students with regard to enhancing the climate of the school.**

- **The principal should meet with the climate committee immediately and develop plans for establishing a consistent, all-school policy regarding student behavior. Furthermore, the principal should meet regularly with the committee to revise or amend the plan as needed and be held accountable for its implementation.**
- **The principal should initiate discussion with the district regarding building walls or modifying the building in some other way to improve the noise level in the pods.**

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## MARY E. CURLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL November 2 & 3, 2006

### Summary Finding

Students at the Mary E. Curley School have not made adequate yearly progress in mathematics in the aggregate, or for identified subgroups, with the exception of 2003, resulting in a status of restructuring. The Composite Performance Index (CPI) of 41.9 places the school at 27 points below state targets for Cycle IV (2005-2006). The Cycle IV CPI of 63.6 in English language arts places the school 17 points below the state target.

Mary E. Curley Middle School is scheduled to merge with the James Michael Curley Elementary School, located just across the schoolyard, to become a kindergarten through eighth-grade school. Clear and specific information about the details of the merger, its structural implications, and/or the educational benefits for the teachers and students in the new configuration has not been adequately communicated to the staff, who expressed anxiety about the future of the school and their positions within it.

### 1. Standards-Based Teaching and Learning—English Language Arts

#### *Key Findings*

Teachers follow the district's curricula, which address state standards. They use *America's Choice* materials and a workshop model to teach reading and writing.

- Teachers have mapped a brief "Readers and Writers Curriculum" for all three grades, dividing the year into quarters and including an eighth-grade persuasive proposal unit that precedes the MCAS assessment in March.
- In this first year of implementation of *America's Choice*, both seventh- and eighth-grade teachers are using the same author study on Gary Paulsen.

An effective standards-based workshop model for literacy classes is not fully implemented by teachers.

- Teachers are the center of attention and direction throughout most ELA class periods observed in the school.
- Student responsibility, a primary asset of the workshop model, is not demonstrated in meaningful ways.
- Differentiation exists at a superficial level, with students working as a whole class, independently and occasionally in small groups. Groups often seemed to have no inherent purpose, however, and expectations were most often the same for all students.
- Many teachers regularly ask higher-level questions of students, although the practice does not necessarily stem from a conscious effort to individualize and differentiate instruction.
- Practices that cement student initiative and responsibility for learning are not evident.

Evidence of ELA standards that require students to do research, orate, perform, or work in cooperative groups on projects, is limited. These performances are valuable ways for students to demonstrate knowledge and expertise, and they give students voice, authority over some of their learning, and reasons to engage on a different level.

**While there is a comfortable social-emotional climate in the school, there does not exist a pervasive sense of urgency about improving student learning.**

- The literacy coach is looking at assessment data with teachers and beginning a process of analysis.
- Teachers and students move mechanically through routines and procedures rather than with a sense of commitment to depth of learning.

### *Recommendations*

**The literacy coach should be assigned to the building full time in order to provide training and support for increasing teacher's instructional capacity in the following ways:**

- **To help ensure that teachers plan and regularly assess students using all the English language arts standards, including those not tested by MCAS, to increase student engagement and learning,**
- **To continue to help teachers solidify their understanding of the integration of all ELA standards with *America's Choice* curricula and to discuss various ways to formatively assess student learning,**
- **To assist teachers as they continue to research, discuss and share best practices with regard to the workshop model, particularly in terms of teacher modeling and use of exemplars, and**
- **To assist the principal and leadership team in overseeing a school-wide effort to enhance differentiated instruction practices and increase student engagement in higher-order thinking skills in oral and written discourse.**

## **1. Standards-Based Teaching and Learning—Mathematics**

### *Key Findings*

Observers find mathematics instruction at both ends of the spectrum, with little middle ground.

- In the advanced classes, the teachers are well prepared, the pacing is good, and differentiated instruction is apparent. Students are responsive and working well in cooperative groups.
- In the other classes, observers find teaching and learning secondary to a focus on discipline/classroom management. Students are not engaged in the content. Mathematical misconceptions by students and teachers are not addressed or corrected.

Special education classes, with an average of 7 students and 2 adults in them, are very well behaved. The lessons include differentiation, and learning is apparent.

The pacing guide and the district curriculum are not always being followed. The rigor of lessons is less than what it should be.

- Some teachers use the guide some of the time, while adding their own, non-standards-based materials as they wish.
- In SEI classes, mathematical misconceptions by the teacher and students go unchecked.

### *Recommendations*

**The principal and leadership team should make the goal of raising student-learning expectations in mathematics paramount in every initiative of the school.**

**Teachers who teach mathematics in self-contained SEI and special education classes should have additional training and support to deepen their content knowledge and prevent incorrect mathematical information from being presented to the students.**

## **2. Using Data to Inform Practice—English Language Arts**

### *Key Findings*

The use of assessment data to inform instruction is in its early stages of development, and once tied to state performance standards as well as content standards, is a promising effort at the school.

- State performance standards are understood by the literacy coach and she has begun to lead discussions with teachers about the grade-level work that is expected.
- A number of ELA performance standards are not evident in lessons.

Teachers administer formative assessments such as GRADE, MCAS, FAST-R assessments, and America's Choice and High Point quizzes to understand student learning. Classroom routines, very similar throughout the school, do not offer students a variety of ways to demonstrate understanding of concepts or acquisition of skills.

- GRADE assessments were taken the second week of school, and data returned to the school in October, and now, two weeks later, some teachers have not seen the data. The literacy coach received the data and distributed it in grade-level content meetings, which occur weekly and for some teachers individually.
- Evidence of teachers consciously using a variety of ongoing, in-class assessments such as dramatic reading or role-playing and student-led discussion, is limited, although teachers continuously assess student behavior in the classroom.

Summative assessments are administered at the ends of units of study and annually with the state. Results are analyzed by the literacy coach and discussed with teachers in grade-level content meetings.

- The literacy coach uses summative assessments as part of backward planning for literacy units. Some grade-level content teams have responded to this model of collaboration positively, planning common culminating performances that enable teachers to discuss

performance standards across the grade, an important element of standards-based education.

- Grade 8 teachers planned with the literacy coach the final product they want students to create to demonstrate skills of persuasive writing during the next unit of study, as they do for every unit.

Use of MCAS performance standards, the scored student work that is posted by the state for each Open Response and Long Composition each year at each grade level, is in its infancy at the school.

### *Recommendations*

**Leaders should provide teachers with training in the use of state performance (not content) standards in reading and writing to inform curricular planning and teaching practice.**

- NCS Mentor, a digital training program provided by the state and now online, is a useful tool to begin this work.

**The principal and leadership team should ensure that teachers regularly administer formative assessments in reading and writing that are back-mapped from state performance standards in order to assess the rigor of curriculum and student expectations.**

## **2. Using Data to Inform Practice—Mathematics**

### *Key Findings*

Assessments mandated by the district are being used regularly and should yield significant data that should help guide instructional improvements. End-of-year assessments from last year had not been shared with the teachers to inform instruction at the time of the visit.

- These analyses can be extended to include looking at student work in depth to inform teacher instruction.
- Currently, grade level meetings facilitated by the mathematics coach are not being used to review formative assessment data. MCAS data has been reviewed briefly.

### *Recommendations*

**The mathematics coach should ensure that teachers use data to identify specific student knowledge, and then use that information to extend student understanding to mitigate current needs.**

- This must be done at the beginning of the school year and goals set for students and teachers based on this information.
- These analyses can be extended to include looking in depth at student work to inform teacher instruction.

### 3. Time for Teachers and Students—English Language Arts

#### *Key Findings*

The literacy coach is an effective leader who offers teachers specific research information as she facilitates teachers' grade-level planning of units of study. Given more time, the use of assessment data could assist in planning and implementing performance-based units.

Some leadership teachers report that they do not understand assessments such as the FAST-R, and how to integrate their support of special needs students with the “bigger picture” of student learning.

While leadership teachers receive 40 hours of paid professional development time each year, it is not clear that teachers understand how to bridge the gap between what special education students can do and what is expected on MCAS tests.

- Some leadership teachers do not meet regularly in a common planning time.

#### *Recommendations*

**The principal should schedule the literacy coach full time at the school in order to direct increased teacher learning and student achievement in reading and writing.**

**The principal and ILT should develop a plan for leadership teachers to partner with regular education teachers to observe in classes and engage in peer dialogue regarding state content and performance standards and how to increase student learning.**

**The principal should develop a plan to accommodate leadership teachers' need for a common planning and discussion time across grades.**

### 3. Time for Teachers and Students—Mathematics

#### *Key findings*

Eighty-minute blocks provide sufficient instruction time, but the time is not always used efficiently in advancing core curriculum. The district curriculum pacing guide identifies 57-minute lessons, and the 80-minute blocks are used to stretch these lessons rather than for differentiating instruction to deepen student learning and/or for intervention.

There seems to be a lack of vision and clarity for improving teaching and learning in mathematics. As a result, agendas for the grade level meetings are not focused on identifying student needs and how to address them in the classroom.

### *Recommendations*

**The mathematics coach should plan grade level team meeting time focused on strategies to improve student achievement in mathematics.**

## **5. Leadership for Instructional Improvement**

### **DISTRICT**

#### *Key Findings*

The District Intervention Plan indicates a high level of awareness and understanding of the key areas for improvement at the school, including hypotheses for why those conditions exist.

- The District Intervention Plan outlines the district’s analysis of the underlying reasons for school performance problems and what is required to eliminate the barriers to improvement.
- The appointment of a new principal after the unexpected late resignation of the former principal is a positive step.
- Weekly and biweekly monitoring and assistance provided by the deputy and assistant Superintendents to the first year principal.
- Literacy and mathematics coaches’ schedules are now half time at the school.

Personnel evaluations are a critical component to assessing and improving classroom instruction that will drive student achievement. There is evidence that in the past the implementation of the evaluation procedure has been marginal or ineffective.

- Results of the evaluation process do not appear to drive professional development programs that address instructional practices (e.g., content knowledge, differentiated instruction).
- The principal has not completed meaningful evaluations of leadership staff in the building (e.g., assistant principal, director of instruction, coaches).

The practice of transferring personnel with unsatisfactory evaluations to underperforming schools has a major impact on school culture and student achievement.

- Personnel transferred whose evaluations are either rated “do not meet expectations” or “incomplete,” or are the result of litigation or settlement is detrimental to improving underperforming schools.
- Transfer of teachers with unsatisfactory evaluations diverts the school leadership’s attention from students because of the extra need to assist, evaluate and assess the performance of the transferees when the priority should be to provide instructional leadership in the school.
- These transfers present a major challenge in terms of the schools’ ability to develop and implement a successful plan to improve student performance.

There is evidence that individual education plans for students with special needs are not being followed. In addition, there is a lack of special education oversight by the district administrators.

There is evidence that IEPs are not being followed, that the practice of special education has been arrested, and that the evaluation team facilitator should be receiving assistance from the district.

Several concerns have been voiced regarding the structure of the LEP/SEI program. The concerns include but are not limited to:

- Instruction of students is not geared to raising students' level of language acquisition. Multiple proficiency levels are grouped in one class without appropriate differentiated instruction.
- SEI teachers do not have common planning time to discuss curricular, instructional and student issues.
- There is limited oversight of the SEI program at the district level, as evidenced by lack of language acquisition coach time (1/wk) and as reported by staff and administration.

### ***Recommendations***

**The district, along with the building administration, should develop a concise, annual, written action plan focusing on three or four goals for dramatically improving student performance. Beginning in 2007-08, the action plan should be the focus of the WSIP.**

**The district should prevent the placement or transfer to underperforming schools of personnel who do not meet the evaluative criteria or who have incomplete evaluations. This also applies to teachers with evaluation issues resolved through grievances, settlements or litigation.**

**The district should review the effectiveness of the teacher evaluation instrument in relation to its ability to improve instructional practices and student achievement.**

**The district should ensure that the principal in underperforming schools has the authority to select all personnel needed to address instructional priorities, in accordance with state law.**

**The district should ensure that principals complete meaningful evaluations for leadership staff (i.e. assistant principal, director of instruction, LAB coordinator and coaches) in underperforming schools.**

**The district should complete a formal, annual evaluation of the principal and include an assessment of the principal's success in implementing a concise, written action plan developed between the principal and the district-level leadership that includes objectives, measurable benchmarks and timeline (beyond WSIP). The plan should also highlight how district, triad and school goals will be addressed.**

**District leaders should provide the resources needed to assess the effectiveness of the special needs and SEI programs for compliance issues, delivery of services and program structure.**

**The district should ensure the assignment of full-time, literacy, mathematics and language acquisition coaches at underperforming schools.**

## SCHOOL

### *Key Findings*

The new principal has been carrying out her duties and responsibilities effectively.

- The principal's accessibility to faculty, students and parents is evidenced through observation and interviews with faculty members.

There is a significant commitment by the faculty, both new and experienced, to being members of the instructional leadership team.

The school is in transition and thus lacks a cohesive effort at this time to successfully implement the distributive leadership needed to improve student achievement.

- The principal is serving in her first year and has acting principal status due to the late resignation of the former principal. She has been deeply immersed in her responsibilities and is readily accessible to the faculty and school community.
- There is no evidence of effective distributive leadership emerging from the instructional leadership team that can assist the principal in driving instructional improvement and student achievement growth.
- The instructional leadership team has new membership that is enthusiastic and inexperienced.

There is lack of communication about the impending merger of the two Curley schools that is breeding anxiety within the school community.

- Teachers expressed anxiety over the lack of discussion and conflicting information about the merger and its impact on their positions and the school.

The School Improvement Plan indicated that the school lacks an annual, concise written action plan that incorporates district, triad and building priorities and designed to improve instruction and student achievement. The fact-finding team concurs.

- The principal expressed the need to increase academic rigor and raise expectations for all students. The Panel Review Report from the winter of 2006 states:  
"As written, the 2005-07 Curley Middle School WSIP is not clear and specific enough to guide improvement efforts. The areas of greatest concern relate to the lack of coherence between the areas of student weaknesses and identified causes, and the lack of priorities for strategies to address weaknesses and potential causes." The team concurs.

Compliance issues exist in both leadership and SEI programs.

- Administrators and faculty members expressed concern over the lack of district supervision and assistance for both programs.

Personnel with “unsatisfactory,” “incomplete” or other performance-related evaluation issues have been transferred to the school, which has negatively impacted the school’s efforts to improve student performance and the ILT’s ability to successfully implement instructional improvement practices.

- There are fifteen new faculty members at the school this year. Two are transfers with performance related issues. The support required by teachers transferred with performance issues clearly detracts from the principal’s primary job of improving instructional practices and student achievement across the school.
- In addition to being new as a principal and being charged with leadership responsibility to improve student improvement in an underperforming school, the principal is being required to address the performance issues associated with the transfers.

### *Recommendations*

**The principal should re-examine the duties and responsibilities of the leadership team (assistant principal and director of instruction), assess the individuals’ effectiveness, and determine the appropriate structure and administrative leadership needed to bring about successful distributive leadership within the school and to prepare for the impending merger with the James Curley Elementary School.**

**The principal should provide the instructional leadership team with the professional development needed to be successful contributors, such as goal setting, planning and implementation, group decision-making, and communication.**

**The principal should develop and implement a communication plan that includes a schedule of regular updates to the school community and highlights, among other issues, the following:**

- **the rationale for the merger**
- **how the merger addresses student needs**
- **the administrative restructuring plan**
- **the timeline and procedure to be followed in making staffing decisions**

**The principal should develop a concise, written action plan independent of the WSIP that incorporates district, triad and building priorities for needed instructional improvements. In addition the plan can serve to clarify direction, set expectations and establish accountability. The district should approve and monitor the implementation of the plan.**

**The principal should ensure that leadership and SEI programs are evaluated for compliance, delivery of services and program structure. The evaluation should result in recommendations and action plans to improve instructional practices and student achievement.**

**The district should prevent personnel with performance related issues from being transferred to underperforming schools. The district should also provide and hold accountable the principal with the authority to select personnel needed to address instructional priorities.**

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## JOHN WINTHROP ELEMENTARY SCHOOL November 6 & 7, 2006

### Summary Findings

The John Winthrop Elementary School has been declared underperforming and is in restructuring in English language arts and corrective action in mathematics. The principal has provided leadership for ten years and, while deemed easily accessible to students, staff and parents, has not imparted a sense of urgency to raise expectations in order to bring about a dramatic change in student achievement.

The principal and a teacher have attended a year-long course at Harvard in data analysis. They recently began to use MCAS and formative assessment data in the educational decision-making process (witness a full day Saturday professional development program). To continue to develop a culture of using data in the school, they will still need the full-time services for the year of a data/executive training coach to work with both the principal and the staff.

The district has increased ELA and mathematics coaching time to 2.5 days a week; however, it should be increased to full time along with providing a language acquisition coach for a day a week. coaches should develop a written plan for increasing student achievement and be provided training in group-facilitation skills. There should also be ESL services for ELL students (at least 27) attending the school as a result of parents' decisions.

The principal has received a \$350,000 grant for after-school programs which, when implemented and closely aligned with academic need, should increase student achievement in the classroom.

### 1. Standards-Based Teaching and Learning—English Language Arts

#### *Key Findings*

Classrooms feel safe and calm throughout the school.

- Students ask clarifying questions readily when needed, and willingly raise their hands to answer questions.

The Harcourt *Trophies* curriculum addresses the standards of the district and the State, and teachers teach according to the program's manual.

An effective standards-based, workshop model for literacy classes is not fully implemented by many teachers.

- Standards and learning objectives are not purposefully integrated and connected during lessons.
- Deep understanding of research on how students learn to read is lacking among teachers. Particularly in the primary grades, teachers appear to lack an understanding of how critical reading skills (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency and vocabulary) influence

comprehension. When taught in isolation, these skills do not shape understanding of printed text. Too many students are reaching grade 3 unable to decode words effectively and make progress toward understanding more complex texts.

- Differentiated instruction is not effectively implemented. Most lessons appear to be taught to the middle range of the students, leaving more able students without high expectations for learning. The most accomplished students complete the lessons on their own, the students in the mid range work to learn them, and those who struggle with reading get extra help from the teacher. Too many students are left to instruct themselves in this approach, which leads to lowered achievement levels, particularly for more capable students.
- Student initiative, the primary asset of the workshop model, is not demonstrated in meaningful ways.

Fewer than half the teachers observed have posted and refer to one or more standards during a lesson, and many teachers had either the wrong standard or learning objective posted or the standard was written in adult language, inaccessible to students.

### *Recommendations*

The principal and ILT should establish interim goals for raising student-learning expectations in ELA as a top priority in every dialogue and conversation of the school.

**Leaders should provide teachers with training in the use of state performance (not content) standards in reading and writing to inform curricular planning and teaching practice. NCS Mentor, which was introduced to teachers recently, should be used as a model for developing ongoing local assessments of student writing and common understandings about proficiency at each grade level.**

- **Teachers should have a sound understanding of the findings of the 2002 National Reading Panel Report, *Teaching Children to Read*.**
- **The principal, ILT and literacy coach should develop plans for professional development to address effective training for differentiation of instruction.**
- **The literacy coach should emphasize training and monitoring of teachers in the areas of questioning techniques and promoting higher-order thinking skills.**

**An experienced literacy coach should be assigned to the school full time in order to increase student achievement in reading and writing.**

- **An inexperienced coach is currently assigned to the school. He should receive significant support at the school and off campus to increase his knowledge of the programs as well as processes such as backward planning and use of standards and assessment to inform instruction.**

## 1. Standards-Based Teaching and Learning—Mathematics

### *Key Findings*

In some classes the lessons are planned and executed well, with the teacher asking probing questions to encourage student critical thinking.

The school has a mathematics facilitator, who attends training sessions run by the BPS Elementary Mathematics Department, and who collaborates with the mathematics coach.

Limited depth of content knowledge among teachers is evidenced as excessive scaffolding and lack of differentiation in the classrooms. Observers noted:

- Feedback from teachers is meaningful but insufficient for deep understanding. It is more often about processes and procedures and less often about concepts, strategies and the “big ideas.”
- There are many missed opportunities to engage students in higher-level thinking.
- A number of teachers have not taken advantage of the district-provided Developing Mathematical Ideas (DMI) seminars, as evidenced by the seminar attendance log provided by the district K-5 mathematics director.
- An Advanced Work Class (AWC) that includes both fourth and fifth grade students requires the teacher to address two separate *Investigations* units simultaneously during math lessons and is not working successfully. Students are not doing advanced-level work, and appear not to have the capacity to do so.

### *Recommendations*

**The principal should ensure that teachers take the DMI seminars and continue working with the coach to deepen their understanding of mathematical concepts.**

**The principal and district personnel should discuss how to use the teacher evaluation protocol to direct teachers toward increased content knowledge in mathematics and other disciplines as needed.**

**The principal should redefine the selection of students identified for the mathematics AWC. The class must be restructured for effective standards-based learning to take place.**

## 2. Using Data to Inform Practice—English Language Arts

### *Key Findings*

Teachers assess students’ reading skills, the first essential component of differentiating instruction. They use a variety of tools such as GRADE, Running Records or DRA to:

- assign leveled texts that are part of the *Trophies* program, and

- arrange students into groups that meet during the reading workshop for skills lessons.

The use of assessment data to inform instruction is in its early stages of development, and once tied to state performance standards as well as content standards, is a promising effort at the school.

- Reading MCAS data is part of a school-wide effort, and teachers are looking at student work, but establishing aligned, grade-level benchmarks for student reading and writing skills has not occurred as part of the process.
- State performance standards have begun to be analyzed through the use of NCS Mentor, but teachers have not yet adopted state performance standards to score local student Long Compositions and Open Response writing.

### *Recommendations*

**The principal should encourage teachers to use the *Trophies* end-of-unit tests to assess student growth in using effective reading strategies for tracking comprehension assessment.**

**The principal, literacy coach and ILT should ensure that teachers regularly administer formative assessments in reading and writing that are “back-mapped” from state performance standards in order to assess the rigor and alignment of curriculum and student expectations.**

## **2. Using Data to Inform Practice—Mathematics**

### *Key Findings*

Assessments mandated by the district are being used regularly and potentially provide significant data to guide instructional improvement.

- The district end-of-year assessments from last year have been made available to the teachers and the mathematics coach, but have not been used effectively to drive instruction. The coach realizes this is one of her priorities and has started working with the teachers on this initiative.
- In some classes the assessments are not graded in a timely manner so that students do not receive constructive feedback for effective learning and instruction immediately.
- The mathematics coach is facilitating looking at student work with grade-level teams once every five weeks. Teachers find these sessions useful, and the coach plans to do these more frequently, once her days at school increase.
- The mathematics and literacy coaches and a consultant facilitate school-wide professional development on data analysis. This is a focused program with presentations of NCS Mentor to analyze Open Response questions and identify areas for emphasis in teaching and learning. The mathematics leadership team has reflected on the Data Analysis PD, and various members of the team have made plans to carry the information back to their grade-level colleagues for discussion and implementation.

To date, the district has not yet made on-line data analysis of MCAS scores for use with faculty.

### *Recommendations*

**The principal should provide a full-time mathematics coach to support needed improvements to teaching and learning.**

- **A possible alternative is to identify a teacher to function as a lead mathematics teacher to support improvements to mathematics instruction across the grades.**

**The principal should continue to support the mathematics facilitator and the mathematics coach in order to improve instruction across the grades.**

**The coach—and/or the lead teacher—should articulate a plan for improving mathematics instruction, identifying specific, measurable goals for the year to give a focus to her work with the teachers, including using data to guide instructional improvements and deepening content knowledge.**

## **3. Time for Teachers and Students—English Language Arts**

### *Key Findings*

While the new literacy coach is an experienced and successful teacher (from a different school district), he has not been adequately trained and supported to lead urgent literacy improvement in the school this year.

- Coach was assigned in early October, well after the school year began.
- Coach has no experience with the curricula being implemented.
- Coach has been assigned a mentor, but meetings several times a month are not often enough to help him help teachers in a timely manner.
- Coach expressed frustration with not being able to help teachers more.

Professional development for teachers in the lower grades, particularly, appears to be lacking in terms of research on reading acquisition.

### *Recommendations*

**The principal should develop with the district an immediate plan to support the literacy coach more effectively for the remainder of this year. He has energy and commitment, but not the resources nor experience, to sufficiently assist teachers in the task of improving student reading and writing achievement.**

**The principal and the ILT should develop with teachers a plan to increase teacher understanding of standards as well as reading and writing research that will address the need to ramp up student learning this year.**

## **3. Time for Teachers and Students—Mathematics**

### *Key Findings*

Sixty-minute blocks provide sufficient instruction time. There is an additional 30-minute block for math instruction based on a curriculum created by the district for schools that do not make AYP. There is also TMM, Ten-Minute Math, which is an extra 10 minutes of instruction for which the district has a set plan to review curriculum. This instructional time is not used effectively in all classrooms, however.

The mathematics coach is part of the mathematics leadership team and works with the mathematics facilitator to organize the agendas and help run the meetings.

### *Recommendations*

**The principal should provide a full-time mathematics coach or add a mathematics lead teacher position to support needed changes in teaching and learning.**

## **4. Leadership for Instructional Improvement**

### **DISTRICT**

#### *Key Findings*

**The District Intervention Plan indicates a high level of awareness and understanding of the key areas for improvement at the school, including hypotheses for why those conditions exist.**

- The instructional leadership team (ILT) has not yet become a high functioning team.
- There is a lack of capacity for analyzing data among teachers.
- The schedule of literacy and mathematics coaching is insufficient.

**The district has taken steps to provide the necessary conditions for improvement at the school.**

- **.5 coaching support in each area, mathematics and ELA, have been assigned to the school.**
- The principal and one teacher have taken a year-long course in data analysis at Harvard during School Year 2004-2005.

The instructional leadership team (ILT) has begun to work as a team and must continue working as an integral part of the leadership solution at the school.

- In a meeting with the ILT, the team witnessed members developing a follow-up action plan regarding a recent Saturday staff development day.

There is no evidence of a concise, written action plan for the current school year focused on increasing student achievement.

Literacy and mathematics coaches have been assigned half time to the school; however, underperforming schools need additional time and expertise.

coaching expertise appears to be inconsistent and the staff does not immediately welcome and work with the coaches. Teachers must understand why coaches are in the school and what their responsibilities entail.

- The mathematics coach has been on maternity leave but works part time nonetheless. While an admirable plan in some ways, this creates some confusion over schedule and planning.
- The newly hired literacy coach is enthusiastic and committed, but needs professional development in responsibilities and how and where to access the resources of the district.

There is no evidence of ELL students being provided with English Language Learning support in the regular education program.

- At least 27 ELL students have been placed in the regular classroom by their parents' choice and there is no evidence of ESL services being made available to them.

Interviews with administration, staff and the school support specialist (SSS) indicate that the SSS has spent minimal time in the school.

- The SSS indicated that she is responsible for eight buildings.
- At least one SSS position is vacant in the district and in the process of being filled at the present time.

There are several substantially separate .4 special education classes in the building.

- Two classes are comprised of third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade students, which means the teacher teaches three years' curricula.
- There appears to be confusion among staff members about a policy regarding alternative MCAS assessment (if there is one) for the students in this class.

### *Recommendations*

**The district should continue to authorize funding for a full-time consultant/coach to work with the principal and the instructional leadership team to increase their capacity for identifying, understanding and analyzing data for decision making and participating in school leadership. The consultant might also provide executive coaching for the principal.**

**The district administration working with the principal should develop a concise written action plan for the current school year for dramatically improving student performance.**

- **The plan should include three or four specific goals with objectives, timelines, benchmarks and an evaluation process.**
- **This plan should be reviewed, evaluated and updated annually until the school is no longer categorized as underperforming.**

**The district should assign successful, experienced, full-time Literacy and mathematics coaches in this underperforming school until such time as a turn around has been achieved.**

- **This plan could provide the support necessary to the staff and at the same time enable coaches to become an integral part of the school's professional community.**

**The district should assign ESL support for those ELL students in attendance without support.**

**School support specialists should be assigned first to underperforming schools in the district in order to have the needed impact on the staff's ability to raise expectations and student achievement.**

**The district should review, revise if necessary, and communicate in clear understandable language the policy on alternative MCAS assessments.**

## SCHOOL

### *Key Findings*

The school has a positive climate that can allow it to move forward to become a rigorous learning environment/community.

- Classrooms are organized and interactions are professional and collegial
- Staff has a protocol in place for providing discipline interventions when the principal is out of the building or occupied in the instructional process.
- There is an obvious respect for the principal from the teaching staff.
- The building has been recently painted in a cheerful and inviting manner.

The staff recently completed a Saturday, day-long professional development program focusing on vocabulary development, determined to be an area contributing to low student achievement.

- The instructional leadership team (ILT) meeting observed by the team was held to create follow up educational activity to benefit the students and educational achievement.

The ILT is comprised of experienced teachers and coaches, reflecting a variety of grade levels, programs and years of experience.

There is strong evidence of parental involvement in a number of activities, and the principal is accessible to both parents and staff.

The principal has secured a multi-year grant in the amount of \$350,000 for after-school programming.

The administrative structure in place at the school is not working effectively to dramatically improve student achievement.

- The principal has been leading the school for 10 years.
- The principal is the only administrator in the school and as such is responsible for both the instructional and operational aspects of the school.

- The roles of the part-time Literacy and mathematics coaches as agents of change and forces for improvement are not clearly defined.
- The literacy and mathematics coaches' time is insufficient to address the needs of the staff to support instructional improvements.
- The principal and staff indicate that the principal is having difficulty observing in classrooms and following up with oral and written feedback.

The administration lacks a concise written action plan for improving the educational achievement of students for the year.

- The Panel Review from the spring of 2006 states, "The issue of most concern in regard to the soundness of the WSIP related to aspects of the plan that involved monitoring and evaluating the progress toward the implementation of teaching strategies and accomplishment of student learning objectives." The fact finding team concurs.
- The principal has no written action plan that includes goals to be accomplished during the current school year.
- The ILT has begun staff development activities and will review and revise them as part of a new short term written action plan.
- The school lacks a sense of urgency that an interim written plan could convey.

There is evidence that some use is being made of MCAS and formative assessment data to increase teachers' knowledge of its use.

- The recent NCS Mentor workshop represents a solid start on using data to inform instruction.
- Establishing aligned, grade-level benchmarks for student reading and writing skills has not occurred as part of the process.
- Teachers have not yet adopted state performance standards to score local student Long Compositions and Open Response writing.

There is an Advanced Work Class (AWC) established for fourth and fifth graders, but it appears that students were assigned to the class based on reading ability. Classroom observations and student performance data do not show that mathematics instruction and/or achievement are advanced for these students.

### *Recommendations*

**The principal should develop a written action plan with district administration for the remainder of the school year focusing on three or four major goals for improvement of student achievement (one of these goals should be how to use data in the decision making process). There should be objectives, timelines, benchmarks, responsibilities and accountability. This plan should be evaluated periodically and revised each year until the school is no longer declared underperforming.**

**The principal may need additional support with the daily operations of the school in order to better focus her efforts on instructional leadership and raising expectations and student achievement.**

**The principal should increase the time the data analysis/executive coach is assigned to work, particularly in the area of data identification, analysis and use in the decision making process.**

**The principal should continue to provide teacher training in use of NCS Mentor as a tool to set grade-level benchmarks and assessments to evaluate the rigor and alignment of school standards.**

**The principal and leadership team should re-examine professional development initiatives and coordinate with the current year's priorities and action plan.**

**The principal and literacy coach should re-examine the role and entry policies of the AWC and create a plan for improving the delivery of mathematics instruction in particular.**

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**WILLIAM RUSSELL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**  
**November 13 & 14, 2006**

**Summary Findings**

The William Russell Elementary School has been declared underperforming and is in corrective action for mathematics and in need of improvement for subgroups in English language arts.

An enthusiastic new principal has been assigned for the school year 2006-2007. He has inherited a legacy of minimal classroom monitoring and a number of staff having not been evaluated for three or more years. A plan to bring teacher evaluations up to date has to be developed and implemented.

Also, a review of the organizational and staffing pattern in the school should be initiated with the district and building administration to provide operational assistance for the new principal who has previous experience at the operational level for an elementary school. Reconfiguring existing staff should make it possible to arrange operational support and allow the principal to be more of an instructional leader.

Greater emphasis on professional development in the areas of differentiated instruction and standards-based instruction must be cultivated within the staff. Staff content knowledge in the area of mathematics has to be increased if there is to be an improvement in mathematics achievement.

English is not the first language of 50% of Russell's students, 30% of whom qualify for Sheltered English Instruction. The school needs for a full-time language acquisition coach. The SEI staff has begun an informal ELL Leadership team that could benefit from professional development in working together as a leadership team in this critical area. A full-time language acquisition coach could be beneficial for leadership team and classroom teaching support.

**1. Standards-Based Teaching and Learning—English Language Arts**

*Key Findings*

While there is a comfortable social-emotional climate in the school, there does not exist a pervasive sense of urgency around improving student learning.

- Teacher-student interactions dwell at the fact/rule level too much of the time, with little evidence of higher-level questioning or thinking.
- Students are not taught to take initiative or reflect critically on their learning.
- A clear expression of the need to ramp up student learning from grade to grade does not exist. Grades operate essentially autonomously rather than as a whole.
- Several external support services (Earthworks, Generations, Community Music Center) work with students weekly, but there is little communication between their onsite workers and teachers regarding student learning and needs.

Differentiated instruction for second language learners is a topic of discussion among teachers. Thirty percent of their students are designated as Limited English Proficient, and for fifty-two percent of students English is not the first language. Some teachers are studying the stages of English acquisition in grade level meetings, in order to better understand how to help newcomers and those with emergent skills.

An effective standards-based workshop model for literacy classes is not fully implemented by teachers.

- Formal word study is not clearly established by teachers.
- Scheduling and timing of the elements of the workshop model are inconsistent across grade levels.
- Differentiated instruction is not effectively implemented.
- Student initiative, the primary asset of the workshop model, is not demonstrated in meaningful ways.

Oral language, so important in a school with so large an ELL population, is not afforded optimal time and attention. Students must speak often and with rising expectation in order to practice the skills of the proficient reader and writer: questioning, exploring, summarizing, explaining, describing. Generally, teachers do most of the talking in classes and students answer questions, often with brief or one-word responses, losing repeated opportunities to practice oral language.

### *Recommendations*

**The principal and instructional leadership team should institute the mapping of ELA learning standards and curriculum to ensure alignment with state standards at all grade levels.**

The literacy coach should continue to help teachers solidify their understanding of the integration of the curricular programs, essential elements of the reading process and the reading workshop model.

The literacy coach and primary-grade teachers should fully investigate the elements of word study, district policies surrounding word study, and its importance in the learning to read process.

The principal should ensure that teachers understand and practice asking questions of various levels to ensure that students are problem solving and thinking deeply.

**Teachers should continue to share best practices regarding the use of various curricula and materials to increase student achievement.**

## 1. Standards-Based Teaching and Learning—Mathematics

### *Key Findings*

The district-mandated curriculum and pacing guide are used by all teachers.

- Objectives for the lessons are posted in most of the classes.
- The objectives do not always serve as a tool for teaching and learning. The objective in one kindergarten class said, “We will make patterns,” which is an activity, not an objective.
- Very little differentiated instruction by the teachers was observed. Most students tend to use/produce a single representation of a concept. In some SEI classes, students are grouped, but each group did completely different, unconnected activities.
- Learning objectives sometimes do not refer to specific Massachusetts standards.
- Opportunities to move students to higher-level thinking were frequently missed. In one kindergarten class, the teacher modeled the pattern in a hopscotch game and then asked students to repeat the same pattern without giving opportunity for them to explore other patterns. The class used this one pattern the entire period.
- At the start of a kindergarten class, two students were being counseled outside by an adult, another student was wiping desks, and another student was sitting in a “Time Out Chair” at the back of the room facing the wall. All students were pulled together 20 minutes after the start of school.
- In some classes, particularly grade 5, where the mathematics coach has the most interaction with the teachers, the lessons are planned and executed well, with the teacher asking probing questions and providing meaningful feedback. The notebooks in these classes are used in an appropriate way, with students’ reflections noted.
- In grade 4, feedback from the teachers is meaningful but insufficient for deep understanding. It is more often about processes and procedures and less often about concepts, strategies and the “big ideas.” There are many missed opportunities to engage students in higher-level thinking.
- In most classes notebooks are just being used as writing tools.
- There is wide variation in the amount of energy and engagement by the teachers.
- The pacing guide is used in all classrooms.
- Both excellent and poor teaching were observed.

All classroom teachers who were part of the Russell faculty as of last year reportedly participated in the three required DMI courses (24 hours). In addition, although they are not required to take them, all specialists participated in two of the DMI courses.

In some classes the instructional environment lacks challenge and rigor.

- Opportunities are not used to extend lessons into meaningful dialogues among the students and between the students and teacher, although in some classes these dialogues happen.
- Lack of teachers’ deeper content knowledge appears as lack of differentiation in the classrooms, with teachers directing activities for the sake of the activities and having low expectations for student learning.

The mathematics coach has skills and knowledge to assist in raising student achievement.

- The mathematics coach is at the school approximately 80 days in the year, which translates to about 10 days a month.
- The coach has content knowledge and employs effective coaching strategies.
- The coach has been instrumental in moving the mathematics department forward so far.
- The coach meets with different grade levels once every three weeks, facilitating looking at assessment and student work, asking probing questions, and asking teachers to think, reflect, and evaluate.
- The coach works with individual teachers who need and request her help.
- The coach is part of the instructional leadership team and is looked upon and respected as a leader in the mathematics department and the school.

### *Recommendations*

**The principal should assist teachers in understanding that student learning objectives must to be stated in student-friendly terms and should be made clear to the students with exemplars to demonstrate the end result. They should be used frequently as tools for learning and teaching.**

**The principal and ILT should oversee a school-wide effort to enhance differentiated instructional practices and increase student engagement in higher-order thinking skills.**

- **Teachers' basic mathematics content knowledge should be shored up beyond the DMIs.**
- **The principal should ensure that teachers take DMIs beyond the required three.**
- **The principal should ensure that teachers participate in the Unit Study Seminars (three-hour sessions for each grade-specific unit; five units per grade) whose content cannot be offered by the mathematics coach, due to time constraints. Teachers especially should participate in the seminar on Number Sense and Operations, as number sense is foundational to all mathematics.**
- **The principal and mathematics coach should initiate regular learning walks with timely feedback to the teachers.**

## **2. Using Data to Inform Practice—English Language Arts**

### *Key Findings*

The use of assessment data to inform instruction is in its early stages of development, and once tied to state performance standards as well as content standards, is a promising effort at the school.

- Reading MCAS data is part of a school-wide effort, and teachers are looking at student work. district grade-level benchmarks for reading exist for grades 1-5. In grades 1-3, the DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment) is used and has benchmarks for both comprehension and fluency. In grades 4 and 5, the SRI (Scholastic Reading Inventory) has grade level benchmarks for comprehension. These assessments are administered

three times a year, and their results are used to inform instruction, plan professional development, and identify what students need extra help.

- Implications for instruction beyond what to include in a lesson plan or what to expect from an ELL student at various stages of progress has not been addressed except through published curricular materials. Thus, visualizing to understand a text is a topic students at several grade levels are expected to do, but how that looks at different grade levels has not.
- Boston Plan for Excellence (BPE) is working with teachers as they learn to use the FAST-R (Formative Assessment of Student Thinking in Reading) and evaluate the information they gain from looking at results. While the training is in progress, teachers are not yet discussing these assessments as ongoing, in-class resources to make daily instructional decisions.
- Student progress in reading is tracked through the use of several assessments (DRA, Making Meaning assessments and conferences, Fountas and Pinnell word study assessments and FAST-R), but it is not clear how connected the resulting information is to instruction and grouping of students in class.

### *Recommendations*

**The principal and leadership team should provide teachers with training in the use of state performance (not content) standards to inform curricular planning and teaching practice.**

- **NCS Mentor, a digital training program provided by the state, is a useful tool to begin this work.**

**The principal and leadership team should ensure that teachers regularly administer formative assessments in reading and writing that are “back-mapped” from state performance standards in order to assess the rigor of curriculum and student expectations.**

- **An external provider might be enlisted to aid this effort.**

**The principal should ensure that all teachers engage in dialogue and classroom research regarding the use of in-class, ongoing assessment that informs daily teaching.**

- **This initiative should be connected to efforts to enlarge the repertoire of student academic activities and responsibilities in the differentiated classroom in the workshop model. Students should demonstrate, and teachers should consciously assess, student understanding and progress in multiple ways in class.**
- **All students, including ELL students, should be assessed regularly in oral as well as written demonstrations of English knowledge.**

## 2. Using Data to Inform Practice—Mathematics

### *Key Findings*

Assessments mandated by the district are being used regularly, and significant data is provided to the school.

- The district end-of-year assessments from last year have been made available to the teachers and the coach has reviewed these with the teachers.
- MCAS data had not been received by the school at the time of the visit, but the coach took the initiative of downloading the data and discussing it with the teachers during her grade level meetings – identifying gaps to inform instruction across the grade levels.
- Analysis of MCAS data identified several learning gaps across all grade levels, for example, locating fractions, decimals and percents on a number line. The coach and teachers are discussing how to inform instruction by using Ten-Minute Math (TMM) to address these gaps.

### *Recommendations*

**The mathematics coach should ensure that teachers learn to use data to identify specific student knowledge and then use that information to extend student knowledge to mitigate current needs.**

- **This should be done at the beginning of the school year and goals set for students and teachers based on this information.**
- **These analyses can be extended to include looking at student work in depth to inform teacher instruction.**

## 3. Time for Teachers and Students—English Language Arts

### *Key Findings*

All staff members have taken a course in SEI taught by the language acquisition coach.

Some teachers have not had sufficient training in some of the ELA curricular materials they are expected to use.

- There is significant confusion regarding word study, noted above.
- The importance and demonstration of fluency are not clearly understood by teachers.
- The word lists provided in *Making Meaning* units and texts, labeled “tier 3” words, are being used as vocabulary lists for study rather than as words to introduce for a particular text in question. The program’s intentions are that higher-level words are taught as vocabulary words for each unit.

### *Recommendations*

**The literacy coach should be assigned full time to the school in order to increase teacher learning and student achievement in reading and writing.**

**The principal should re-examine the scheduling of the school day and week in order to organize more time for teachers to share practices, look at student work, and develop common goals for raising student learning.**

**The principal should ensure that all teachers' SEI knowledge is revisited frequently in grade-level meetings to ensure that teachers understand and implement best practices with regard to second language learners.**

## **3. Time for Teachers and Students—Mathematics**

### *Key Findings*

**Sixty-minute mathematics blocks provide sufficient instruction time. There is also an extra 10-minute period of instruction for which the district has a set curriculum for review material (TMM - ten minute math).**

Teachers have two common planning times in a week. One of these periods is a grade-level meeting facilitated by the coach with a structured agenda and goals for the year. There is no agenda or structure for the second one and it is not clear how instrumental this is in moving the math department forward

Instructional time is not used effectively in all the classrooms.

### *Recommendations*

**The principal should articulate a plan for the second common planning time established in the six-period schedule. An agenda of specific topics and activities should be developed and summary notes should be made for each meeting.**

**The principal and mathematics coach should develop and oversee a plan to invigorate mathematics class periods to ensure that all teachers use time effectively.**

## 4. Leadership for Instructional Improvement

### DISTRICT

#### *Key Findings*

**The district Plan for Intervention indicates a high level of awareness and understanding of the key areas for improvement at the school, including hypotheses for why those conditions exist.**

- The instructional leadership team (ILT) has not yet become a high functioning, self-sustaining team.
- The schedule of literacy and mathematics coaching is still insufficient.
- The school schedule does not provide enough time on task.

**The district has taken steps to provide some conditions for improvement at the school.**

- **.5 mathematics and .5 ELA coaches have been assigned to the school.**

The staff has created a protocol for Learning Walks based on the actions plans of the Russell Whole School Improvement Plan. Five school-based Learning Walks (three in mathematics and two in ELA) have been conducted since January 2006.

The district has also implemented a protocol for monitoring visits with team-designated district staff and the principal.

The district has hired a new principal for the school during the summer of 2006.

There is no evidence of a district or building concise, written action plan for the current school year for increasing student achievement.

The new principal lacks support in the operational aspects of the Russell School.

- The principal has made a career change from business to education and while having experience in teaching and as an assistant principal (6 years), it has been at the middle school level.
- The principal in underperforming schools must be the primary instructional leader and should, therefore, have assistance in the daily operation of the school. Currently, there are no designated staff positions to provide operational support for the principal.
- Observation reflects that current staffing may be sufficient to provide operational support if it is reorganized.

Literacy and mathematics coaches have been assigned half time to the school; however, underperforming schools need additional time and experienced expertise in these coaches.

A language acquisition coach (LAC) is assigned to school one day a week. With the number of ELL students and the attendant staff assigned to the Russell School, there is a critical need for additional time for an experienced LAC.

### *Recommendations*

**The district administration working with the building administration should develop a written focused short term action plan (current school year) for dramatically improving student performance that should include three or four achievable goals, objectives, timelines, benchmarks and an evaluation process. This plan should be developed on an annual basis until the Russell School has shed the underperforming status.**

**The district should authorize full-time literacy, mathematics and language acquisition coaches for the school until such time as a turn around from the underperforming status has been achieved.**

**The district, working with the new building administration, should review the overall staffing at the Russell School and establish a school organization that supports the principal in the operational activities at the school.**

## **SCHOOL**

### *Key Findings*

A new, enthusiastic principal, focused on increasing student achievement and articulating increased expectations for students and staff, is assigned to the school.

A strong mathematics coach who has been accepted by the staff is a critical contributing member of school leadership.

The staff has been developing and participating in Learning Walks since the second semester of last school year. Five have been conducted at this time.

The instructional leadership team (ILT) has been reconstituted, and initiatives are underway to provide training in shared decision-making and distributive leadership.

The principal has revised the daily schedule from seven periods to six, thus providing more classroom instructional time and time for additional grade level meetings.

Previous school leadership did not sufficiently monitor and evaluate classroom instruction.

- Through the District Intervention Plan, observations and interviews evidence showed that little monitoring of classroom instruction was conducted by the previous principal.
- A number of permanent teachers have not been evaluated for the past three years.
- Little or no written feedback was provided to teachers.

The administrative structure in place at the school is not working in a focused, coordinated, effective manner to dramatically improve student achievement.

- The principal is the only administrator in the school and as such is responsible for both the instructional and operational aspects of the school.
- The roles of the part-time Literacy and mathematics coaches as agents of change and forces for improvement are not clearly defined.
- The Literacy and mathematics coaches' time is insufficient to address the needs of the staff and support instructional improvements.
- There are no functioning literacy leadership team (LLT) or mathematics leadership team (MLT). There is an informal English language learners leadership team (ELLLT), but how that is functioning is unclear.

The administration lacks a concise, written action plan for improving the educational achievement of students.

- The Panel Review Report from the Winter of 2006 states, "The issue of most concern in regard to the soundness of the WSIP related to aspects of the plan that involved monitoring and evaluating the progress toward the implementation of teaching strategies and accomplishment of student learning objectives." The fact finding team concurs.
- The principal has no written action plan with priorities to be accomplished during the current school year.
- The ILT has begun staff development activities and will review them as part of a new short-term written action plan.

The revised school schedule provides two periods a week for grade level meetings, but only one of these periods is structured.

- One period a week is to work with the literacy and mathematics coaches.
- The second meeting is not being consistently used for group or grade-level meetings.

### *Recommendations*

**The principal, with district administration help, should create a concise, written action plan for this school year to support accountability and follow through in regards to needed instructional improvements. This plan should focus on three or four major goals, and contain objectives, timelines, benchmarks and evaluation processes. There should be a similar plan developed annually until the underperforming status is reversed.**

**With the district administration, the principal should examine and clarify roles, responsibilities, and instructional expertise of the current staff so that the principal may focus his efforts on instructional leadership, including the monitoring of expectations for staff and raising student of achievement while receiving additional support in the daily operations of the school.**

**The principal and coaches should re-examine and coordinate professional development initiatives with the current year's priorities in the school's action plan.**

**The principal should develop a written schedule for teacher evaluations, classroom visitations and Learning Walks to be implemented this year. Written and oral feedback for staff should be an outcome of these and any “drop-in” visits.**

**The principal should immediately formulate literacy, mathematics and language acquisition leadership teams to promote the concept of distributed leadership in those areas.**

**The principal should immediately establish grade level and/or staff meetings for the second period provided in the week as a result of the rescheduling process.**

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Appendix A**

### **Fact Finding Team Members**

#### **Core Team Members**

**Eugene Thayer**, Chair, Consultant, former Superintendent, Framingham Public Schools and interim Superintendent, Concord-Carlisle and Lawrence Public Schools  
**Matt George**, Consultant, former Superintendent, Brockton Public Schools  
**Bridget Rodriguez**, Consultant, former Principal, Cambridge Public Schools  
**Janet Furey**, English Language Arts/Literacy Team Leader, Pathways International Consulting  
**Naseem Jaffer**, Mathematics Team Leader, Consultant, MassInsight Education, Boston

#### **Content Specialist Team Members**

##### *Mathematics*

**Life LeGeros**, Office of Math and Science, Massachusetts Department of Education  
**David Parker**, Office of Math and Science, Massachusetts Department of Education  
**Egbert Personnat**, Office of Math and Science, Massachusetts Department of Education  
**Jeanne Simons**, Office of Math and Science, Massachusetts Department of Education  
**Carol Lach**, Office of Math and Science, Massachusetts Department of Education  
**Linda Davenport**, Program Director, Office of Elementary Math, Boston Public Schools  
**Nancy Belkov**, Assistant Program Director, Office of Elementary Math, Boston Public Schools  
**Edward Joyce**, Program Director, Office of Secondary Math, Boston Public Schools  
**Brian Newsom**, Office of Secondary Math, Boston Public Schools

##### *English language arts (ELA)/Literacy*

**Laurie Slobody**, Office of Reading, Massachusetts Department of Education  
**Emily Russin**, Office of Reading, Massachusetts Department of Education  
**Heidi DeLisle**, Office of Reading, Massachusetts Department of Education  
**Tracey Martineau**, Office of Reading, Massachusetts Department of Education  
**Shannon Maul**, Office of Reading, Massachusetts Department of Education  
**Kathleen Lord**, Office of Reading, Massachusetts Department of Education  
**Mary Ellen Caesar**, Office of Reading, Massachusetts Department of Education  
**Liz Davis**, Office of Assessment, Massachusetts Department of Education  
**Joanne Grenier**, Consultant, former Curriculum Director, Marlboro Public Schools  
**Ann Deveney**, Program Director, Office of Elementary Reading, Boston Public Schools  
**Barbara McLaughlin**, Assist. Program Director, Office of Elementary Reading, Boston Public Schools  
**Lydia Torres**, Boston Public Schools  
**Jane Skelton**, Office of Secondary Reading, Boston Public Schools  
**Oneida Fox**, Unified Student Services, Boston Public Schools

### Appendix B—Sample Fact-Finding Schedule

<b>DAY 1: Elementary School</b>										
	<b>Core Team</b>			<b>Math Content Team</b>				<b>ELA Content Team</b>		
<b>Time</b>	Core Team A, B, C	Core Team D Link Math	Core Team E Link ELA	Panelist A Math	Panelist B Math	Panelist C Math	Panelist D Math	Panelist A ELA	Panelist B ELA	Panelist C ELA
<b>8-8:30</b>	Meet Principal	<b>8:15-8:30 Meetings with ELA content observers in Room B02 &amp; Meetings with math content observers in Room B01</b>								
<b>8:45-10:00</b>	Deputy Supt., Asst. Supt., SSS, SC, Teacher's	Grade x Math Team Meeting <b>9:30-10:30</b>	Literacy Coach Interview <b>9:30-10:15</b>	Grade 1 <b>8:30-9:30</b>	Grade 1 <b>8:30-9:30</b>	Grade 4 <b>8:30-9:30</b>	Grade 5 <b>8:30-9:30</b>	Grade K2 <b>8:30-9:30</b>	Grade 3 <b>8:30-9:30</b>	Grade 1 <b>8:30-9:30 (SEI)</b>
<b>10:15-11:30</b>	Interview Principal	Math Coach Interview <b>10:30-11:15</b>	Grade x ELA Meeting <b>10:30-11:30</b>	Grade 1 Rm 4A <b>9:30-10:30 (SEI)</b>	Grade 3 Room 12 <b>9:30-10:30</b>	K2 <b>9:30-10:30 (SEI)</b>		Grade 1 <b>9:30-10:30</b>	Grade 4 <b>9:30-10:30</b>	Grade K2 <b>9:30-10:30</b>
				Grade K1 <b>10:30-11:30 (SPED)</b>	Grade 2 <b>10:30-11:30</b>	Grade 2 <b>10:30-11:30 (SPED)</b>		Grade 5 <b>10:30-11:30</b>	Grade 5 <b>10:30-11:30</b>	Grade 2 <b>10:30-11:30</b>
<b>11:30-1:00</b>	<b>Working Lunch</b>									
<b>1:30-2:20</b>	Teacher Focus Group	Classroom drop-ins	Classroom drop-ins	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN
<b>2:30-4:00</b>	<b>Full Core Team meets – process and capture findings</b>									

<b>DAY 2: Elementary School</b>									
<b>Time</b>	<b>Core Team</b>			<b>Math Content Team</b>			<b>ELA Content Team</b>		
	Core Team A, B, C	Core Team D Link Math	Core Team E Link ELA	Panelist A Math	Panelist B Math	Panelist C Math	Panelist A ELA	Panelist B ELA	Panelist C ELA
<b>7:30 - 8:20</b>	Observe ILT Conference Room <b>7:30-8:20</b>	Meet w/ELA content observers <b>8:15-8:30</b>	Meet w/content observers <b>8:15-8:30</b>						
<b>8:30 - 9:30</b>	Interview ELL LT Conference <b>8:30-9:30</b>	Interview SST Nurse & Psychologist <b>8:30-9:30</b>	Grade 2 Team Meeting <b>8:30-9:30</b>	Grade 1 <b>8:30-9:30</b>	Grade 4 <b>8:30-9:30</b>	Grade K2 <b>8:30-9:30</b>	Grade 4 <b>8:30-9:30</b>	Grade 4 (SEI) <b>8:30-9:30</b>	Grade K2 (SEI) <b>8:30-9:30</b>
<b>9:30-11:00</b>	Grade 1 Team Meeting Library <b>9:30-10:30</b>	Focus Group of External Instructional Support Services <b>9:30-11:00</b>	Grade 3 <b>9:30-10:30</b>	Grade 5 <b>9:30-10:30</b>	Grade 4/5 <b>9:30 -10:30 (SEI)</b>	Grade K2 <b>9:30-10:30</b>	Grade 2/3 <b>9:30-10:30 (SEI)</b>	Grade 3 <b>9:30-10:30</b>	
			Grade 5 <b>10:30-11:30</b>	Grade 2/3 <b>10:30-11:30 (SEI)</b>	Grade 2 <b>10:30-11:30</b>	Grade 2/3 SAR <b>10:30-11:30 (SPED)</b>	Grade K1 <b>10:30-11:30 (SPED)</b>	Grade 2 <b>10:30-11:30</b>	
<b>11:30-1:00</b>	Working lunch								
<b>1:15-3:00</b>	Full Core Team Meets/Prepares for exit interview								
<b>3:00-4:00</b>	Exit interview with principal								

## Appendix C Classroom Observation Data

### *Introduction*

The diagnostic Fact-Finding Review in the Boston Public Schools deployed teams of content specialists in both English language arts and mathematics at each school to gather data and information on teaching and learning in the classroom. Two members of the core team with deep content knowledge in the core areas and extensive experience coaching, providing professional development, and observing and evaluating teaching and learning in the classroom led the content specialist teams.

A total of 23 content specialists participated in classroom observations during the two-day on-site reviews at six schools. Content observer teams were made up of staff from the Department of Education Offices of Mathematics and Reading, and program directors and staff from the Boston Public Schools Offices of Elementary and Secondary Mathematics and English language arts. Teams of 4-6 in each content area visited each school.

Specialists observed all of the math and ELA instruction in each building during the two-day visits. In the elementary schools and one middle school, teams observed every teacher during a full block for math and ELA. At the Curley Middle School, observations generally lasted 45 minutes in every class rather than the full blocks. During a working lunch and again at the end of each day, the teams met to debrief the observations across classrooms. The Math and ELA Content Leads facilitated those discussions and captured the findings. All of the observers used the same instrument, focused on eight standards, to gather data in both mathematics and English language arts classes. The observation tool and the summary quantitative results for English language arts and mathematics classroom observations at each school are attached. Findings resulting from team discussions about observed teaching and learning at each of the schools are embedded in the school level reports.

**NOTE:** The model for cooperative teams of classroom observers from both the state and the district was piloted at the Marshall Elementary School last spring. The collaborative efforts of the observer teams maximizes resources and enables a shared analysis of current conditions, aimed at the most focused, strategic and high-leverage recommendations to improve teaching and learning.

**Trotter Elementary School Classroom Observation Data**

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS**

	Observed	Not Observed	Opportunities	Percent
<b>1. STUDENT LEARNING STANDARDS</b>				
1.1. Evident and clear to students	9	14	23	39%
1.2. Exemplars demonstrate expectations of achievement	3	8	11	27%
Totals	12	22	34	35%
<b>2. ORGANIZATION OF THE LESSON</b>				
2.1. Well planned/organized; objectives stated; develops logically	11	12	23	48%
2.2. Time used efficiently and purposefully	11	12	23	48%
2.3. Multiple grouping strategies achieve learning objective	17	6	23	74%
Totals	39	30	69	57%
<b>3. CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT</b>				
3.1. Students appear safe and willing to take risks	22	1	23	96%
3.2. Appearance/physical org. contribute to positive environment	15	8	23	65%
Totals	37	9	46	80%
<b>4. STUDENT ENGAGEMENT</b>				
4.1. Students actively engaged; behavior appropriate	9	14	23	39%
4.2. Students engaged in learning in various ways	10	13	23	43%
4.3. Students examine thinking with questioning/data	4	19	23	17%
Totals	23	46	69	33%
<b>5. TEACHING</b>				
5.1. Depth of content knowledge evident/accurate	14	9	23	61%
5.2. Use of probing questions and student responses	8	15	23	35%
5.3. Prior knowledge incorporated; perspectives acknowledged	12	11	23	52%
5.4. Misconceptions anticipated/identified and addressed	11	12	23	48%
5.5. Classroom strategies incorporate multiple representations	4	7	11	36%
Totals	49	54	103	48%
<b>6. INSTRUCTIONAL TOOLS</b>				
6.1. Tools/resources are accessible/appropriate	2	10	12	17%
<b>7. EQUITY</b>				
7.1. Expectations; all participate; ideas valued; effort emphasized	17	6	23	74%
7.2. Various learning experiences provided for range of learners	6	17	23	26%
Totals	23	23	46	50%
<b>8. ASSESSMENT</b>				
8.1. Multiple types: diagnostic/formative	6	17	23	26%
8.2. Students responsible for learning w/directive feedback	9	14	23	39%
Totals	15	31	46	33%

### Trotter Elementary School Classroom Observation Data

MATHEMATICS				
	Observed	Not Observed	Opportunities	Percent
<b>1. STUDENT LEARNING STANDARDS</b>				
1.1. Evident and clear to students	5	16	21	24%
1.2. Exemplars demonstrate expectations of achievement	1	20	21	5%
Totals	6	36	42	14%
<b>2. ORGANIZATION OF THE LESSON</b>				
2.1. Well planned/organized; objectives stated; develops logically	7	20	27	26%
2.2. Time used efficiently and purposefully	13	14	27	48%
2.3. Multiple grouping strategies achieve learning objective	16	11	27	59%
Totals	36	45	81	44%
<b>3. CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT</b>				
3.1. Students appear safe and willing to take risks	17	10	27	63%
3.2. Appearance/physical org. contribute to positive environment	21	8	29	72%
Totals	38	18	56	68%
<b>4. STUDENT ENGAGEMENT</b>				
4.1. Students actively engaged; behavior appropriate	14	13	27	52%
4.2. Students engaged in learning in various ways	8	19	27	30%
4.3. Students examine thinking with questioning/data	8	19	27	30%
Totals	30	51	81	37%
<b>5. TEACHING</b>				
5.1. Depth of content knowledge evident/accurate	10	16	26	38%
5.2. Use of probing questions and student responses	6	21	27	22%
5.3. Prior knowledge incorporated; perspectives acknowledged	8	19	27	30%
5.4. Misconceptions anticipated/identified and addressed	6	21	27	22%
5.5. Classroom strategies incorporate multiple representations	11	15	26	42%
Totals	41	92	133	31%
<b>6. INSTRUCTIONAL TOOLS</b>				
6.1. Tools/resources are accessible/appropriate	19	5	24	79%
<b>7. EQUITY</b>				
7.1. Expectations; all participate; ideas valued; effort emphasized	11	16	27	41%
7.2. Various learning experiences provided for range of learners	6	17	23	26%
Totals	17	33	50	34%
<b>8. ASSESSMENT</b>				
8.1. Multiple types: diagnostic/formative	9	18	27	33%
8.2. Students responsible for learning w/directive feedback	10	17	27	37%
Totals	19	35	54	35%

**Solomon Lewenberg Middle School Classroom Observation Data**

<b>ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS</b>				
	Observed	Not Observed	Opportunities	Percent
<b>1. STUDENT LEARNING STANDARDS</b>				
1.1. Evident and clear to students	8	6	14	57%
1.2. Exemplars demonstrate expectations of achievement	4	10	14	29%
Totals	12	16	28	43%
<b>2. ORGANIZATION OF THE LESSON</b>				
2.1. Well planned/organized; objectives stated; develops logically	11	3	14	79%
2.2. Time used efficiently and purposefully	9	5	14	64%
2.3. Multiple grouping strategies achieve learning objective	10	4	14	71%
Totals	30	12	42	71%
<b>3. CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT</b>				
3.1. Students appear safe and willing to take risks	12	2	14	86%
3.2. Appearance/physical org. contribute to positive environment	14	0	14	100%
Totals	26	2	28	93%
<b>4. STUDENT ENGAGEMENT</b>				
4.1. Students actively engaged; behavior appropriate	12	2	14	86%
4.2. Students engaged in learning in various ways	10	4	14	71%
4.3. Students examine thinking with questioning/data	6	8	14	43%
Totals	28	14	42	67%
<b>5. TEACHING</b>				
5.1. Depth of content knowledge evident/accurate	13	1	14	93%
5.2. Use of probing questions and student responses	11	3	14	79%
5.3. Prior knowledge incorporated; perspectives acknowledged	9	2	11	82%
5.4. Misconceptions anticipated/identified and addressed	8	6	14	57%
5.5. Classroom strategies incorporate multiple representations	9	5	14	64%
Totals	50	17	67	75%
<b>6. INSTRUCTIONAL TOOLS</b>				
6.1. Tools/resources are accessible/appropriate	9	0	9	100%
<b>7. EQUITY</b>				
7.1. Expectations; all participate; ideas valued; effort emphasized	8	6	14	57%
7.2. Various learning experiences provided for range of learners	11	3	14	79%
Totals	19	9	28	68%
<b>8. ASSESSMENT</b>				
8.1. Multiple types: diagnostic/formative	12	2	14	86%
8.2. Students responsible for learning w/directive feedback	5	9	14	36%
Totals	17	11	28	61%

**Solomon Lewenberg Middle School Classroom Observation Data**

<b>MATHEMATICS</b>				
	Observed	Not Observed	Opportunities	Percent
<b>1. STUDENT LEARNING STANDARDS</b>				
1.1. Evident and clear to students	8	6	14	57%
1.2. Exemplars demonstrate expectations of achievement	4	10	14	29%
Totals	12	16	28	43%
<b>2. ORGANIZATION OF THE LESSON</b>				
2.1. Well planned/organized; objectives stated; develops logically	11	3	14	79%
2.2. Time used efficiently and purposefully	9	5	14	64%
2.3. Multiple grouping strategies achieve learning objective	10	4	14	71%
Totals	30	12	42	71%
<b>3. CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT</b>				
3.1. Students appear safe and willing to take risks	12	2	14	86%
3.2. Appearance/physical org. contribute to positive environment	14	0	14	100%
Totals	26	2	28	93%
<b>4. STUDENT ENGAGEMENT</b>				
4.1. Students actively engaged; behavior appropriate	12	2	14	86%
4.2. Students engaged in learning in various ways	10	4	14	71%
4.3. Students examine thinking with questioning/data	6	8	14	43%
Totals	28	14	42	67%
<b>5. TEACHING</b>				
5.1. Depth of content knowledge evident/accurate	13	1	14	93%
5.2. Use of probing questions and student responses	11	3	14	79%
5.3. Prior knowledge incorporated; perspectives acknowledged	9	2	11	82%
5.4. Misconceptions anticipated/identified and addressed	8	6	14	57%
5.5. Classroom strategies incorporate multiple representations	9	5	14	64%
Totals	50	17	67	75%
<b>6. INSTRUCTIONAL TOOLS</b>				
6.1. Tools/resources are accessible/appropriate	9	0	9	100%
<b>7. EQUITY</b>				
7.1. Expectations; all participate; ideas valued; effort emphasized	8	6	14	57%
7.2. Various learning experiences provided for range of learners	11	3	14	79%
Totals	19	9	28	68%
<b>8. ASSESSMENT</b>				
8.1. Multiple types: diagnostic/formative	12	2	14	86%
8.2. Students responsible for learning w/directive feedback	5	9	14	36%
Totals	17	11	28	61%

**Agassiz Elementary School Classroom Observation Data**

<b>ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS</b>				
	Observed	Not Observed	Opportunities	Percent
<b>1. STUDENT LEARNING STANDARDS</b>				
1.1. Evident and clear to students	18	3	21	86%
1.2. Exemplars demonstrate expectations of achievement	7	12	19	37%
Totals	25	15	40	63%
<b>2. ORGANIZATION OF THE LESSON</b>				
2.1. Well planned/organized; objectives stated; develops logically	14	5	19	74%
2.2. Time used efficiently and purposefully	11	8	19	58%
2.3. Multiple grouping strategies achieve learning objective	15	4	19	79%
Totals	40	17	57	70%
<b>3. CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT</b>				
3.1. Students appear safe and willing to take risks	16	3	19	84%
3.2. Appearance/physical org. contribute to positive environment	15	4	19	79%
Totals	31	7	38	82%
<b>4. STUDENT ENGAGEMENT</b>				
4.1. Students actively engaged; behavior appropriate	14	5	19	74%
4.2. Students engaged in learning in various ways	12	7	19	63%
4.3. Students examine thinking with questioning/data	10	9	19	53%
Totals	36	21	57	63%
<b>5. TEACHING</b>				
5.1. Depth of content knowledge evident/accurate	13	6	19	68%
5.2. Use of probing questions and student responses	15	4	19	79%
5.3. Prior knowledge incorporated; perspectives acknowledged	14	5	19	74%
5.4. Misconceptions anticipated/identified and addressed	13	6	19	68%
5.5. Classroom strategies incorporate multiple representations	15	4	19	79%
Totals	70	25	95	74%
<b>6. INSTRUCTIONAL TOOLS</b>				
6.1. Tools/resources are accessible/appropriate	15	4	19	79%
<b>7. EQUITY</b>				
7.1. Expectations; all participate; ideas valued; effort emphasized	10	9	19	53%
7.2. Various learning experiences provided for range of learners	14	5	19	74%
Totals	24	14	38	63%
<b>8. ASSESSMENT</b>				
8.1. Multiple types: diagnostic/formative	12	7	19	63%
8.2. Students responsible for learning w/directive feedback	8	11	19	42%
Totals	20	18	38	53%

### Agassiz Elementary School Classroom Observation Data

<b>MATHEMATICS</b>				
	Observed	Not Observed	Opportunities	Percent
<b>1. STUDENT LEARNING STANDARDS</b>				
1.1. Evident and clear to students	9	10	19	47%
1.2. Exemplars demonstrate expectations of achievement	11	8	19	58%
Totals	20	18	38	53%
<b>2. ORGANIZATION OF THE LESSON</b>				
2.1. Well planned/organized; objectives stated; develops logically	12	7	19	61%
2.2. Time used efficiently and purposefully	5	14	19	26%
2.3. Multiple grouping strategies achieve learning objective	16	2	18	89%
Totals	33	23	56	59%
<b>3. CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT</b>				
3.1. Students appear safe and willing to take risks	17	2	19	89%
3.2. Appearance/physical org. contribute to positive environment	18	1	19	95%
Totals	35	3	38	92%
<b>4. STUDENT ENGAGEMENT</b>				
4.1. Students actively engaged; behavior appropriate	16	3	19	84%
4.2. Students engaged in learning in various ways	12	7	19	63%
4.3. Students examine thinking with questioning/data	8	11	19	42%
Totals	36	21	57	63%
<b>5. TEACHING</b>				
5.1. Depth of content knowledge evident/accurate	7	12	19	37%
5.2. Use of probing questions and student responses	9	10	19	47%
5.3. Prior knowledge incorporated; perspectives acknowledged	9	10	19	47%
5.4. Misconceptions anticipated/identified and addressed	5	14	19	26%
5.5. Classroom strategies incorporate multiple representations	14	4	18	78%
Totals	44	50	94	49%
<b>6. INSTRUCTIONAL TOOLS</b>				
6.1. Tools/resources are accessible/appropriate	18	1	19	95%
<b>7. EQUITY</b>				
7.1. Expectations; all participate; ideas valued; effort emphasized	11	8	19	58%
7.2. Various learning experiences provided for range of learners	3	14	17	18%
Totals	14	22	36	38%
<b>8. ASSESSMENT</b>				
8.1. Multiple types: diagnostic/formative	7	12	19	37%
8.2. Students responsible for learning w/directive feedback	6	12	18	33%
Totals	13	24	37	35%

**Mary E. Curley Middle School Classroom Observation Data**

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS**

	Observed	Not Observed	Opportunities	Percent
<b>1. STUDENT LEARNING STANDARDS</b>				
1.1. Evident and clear to students	9	4	13	69%
1.2. Exemplars demonstrate expectations of achievement	5	8	13	38%
Totals	14	12	26	54%
<b>2. ORGANIZATION OF THE LESSON</b>				
2.1. Well planned/organized; objectives stated; develops logically	11	2	13	85%
2.2. Time used efficiently and purposefully	10	3	13	77%
2.3. Multiple grouping strategies achieve learning objective	11	2	13	85%
Totals	32	7	39	82%
<b>3. CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT</b>				
3.1. Students appear safe and willing to take risks	10	3	13	77%
3.2. Appearance/physical org. contribute to positive environment	12	1	13	92%
Totals	22	4	26	85%
<b>4. STUDENT ENGAGEMENT</b>				
4.1. Students actively engaged; behavior appropriate	9	4	13	69%
4.2. Students engaged in learning in various ways	8	5	13	62%
4.3. Students examine thinking with questioning/data	8	5	13	62%
Totals	25	14	39	64%
<b>5. TEACHING</b>				
5.1. Depth of content knowledge evident/accurate	11	2	13	85%
5.2. Use of probing questions and student responses	8	5	13	62%
5.3. Prior knowledge incorporated; perspectives acknowledged	8	5	13	62%
5.4. Misconceptions anticipated/identified and addressed	8	5	13	62%
5.5. Classroom strategies incorporate multiple representations	8	5	13	62%
Totals	43	22	65	66%
<b>6. INSTRUCTIONAL TOOLS</b>				
6.1. Tools/resources are accessible/appropriate	12	1	13	92%
<b>7. EQUITY</b>				
7.1. Expectations; all participate; ideas valued; effort emphasized	8	5	13	62%
7.2. Various learning experiences provided for range of learners	8	5	13	62%
Totals	16	10	26	62%
<b>8. ASSESSMENT</b>				
8.1. Multiple types: diagnostic/formative	10	3	13	77%
8.2. Students responsible for learning w/directive feedback	6	7	13	46%
Totals	16	10	26	62%

**Mary E. Curley Middle School Classroom Observation Data**

<b>MATHEMATICS</b>				
	Observed	Not Observed	Opportunities	Percent
<b>1. STUDENT LEARNING STANDARDS</b>				
1.1. Evident and clear to students	3	5	8	38%
1.2. Exemplars demonstrate expectations of achievement	4	3	7	57%
Totals	7	8	15	47%
<b>2. ORGANIZATION OF THE LESSON</b>				
2.1. Well planned/organized; objectives stated; develops logically	4	3	7	57%
2.2. Time used efficiently and purposefully	4	4	8	50%
2.3. Multiple grouping strategies achieve learning objective	4	4	8	50%
Totals	12	11	23	52%
<b>3. CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT</b>				
3.1. Students appear safe and willing to take risks	8	0	8	100%
3.2. Appearance/physical org. contribute to positive environment	7	1	8	88%
Totals	15	1	16	94%
<b>4. STUDENT ENGAGEMENT</b>				
4.1. Students actively engaged; behavior appropriate	5	3	8	63%
4.2. Students engaged in learning in various ways	4	6	10	40%
4.3. Students examine thinking with questioning/data	4	4	8	50%
Totals	13	13	26	50%
<b>5. TEACHING</b>				
5.1. Depth of content knowledge evident/accurate	3	4	7	43%
5.2. Use of probing questions and student responses	4	3	7	57%
5.3. Prior knowledge incorporated; perspectives acknowledged	4	3	7	57%
5.4. Misconceptions anticipated/identified and addressed	3	4	7	43%
5.5. Classroom strategies incorporate multiple representations	6	2	8	75%
Totals	20	16	36	56%
<b>6. INSTRUCTIONAL TOOLS</b>				
6.1. Tools/resources are accessible/appropriate	7	1	8	88%
<b>7. EQUITY</b>				
7.1. Expectations; all participate; ideas valued; effort emphasized	4	4	8	50%
7.2. Various learning experiences provided for range of learners	2	6	8	25%
Totals	6	10	16	38%
<b>8. ASSESSMENT</b>				
8.1. Multiple types: diagnostic/formative	3	5	8	38%
8.2. Students responsible for learning w/directive feedback	4	4	8	50%
Totals	7	9	16	44%

### Winthrop Elementary School Classroom Observation Data

<b>ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS</b>				
	Observed	Not Observed	Opportunities	Percent
<b>1. STUDENT LEARNING STANDARDS</b>				
1.1. Evident and clear to students	7	9	16	44%
1.2. Exemplars demonstrate expectations of achievement	6	10	16	38%
Totals	13	19	32	41%
<b>2. ORGANIZATION OF THE LESSON</b>				
2.1. Well planned/organized; objectives stated; develops logically	9	7	16	56%
2.2. Time used efficiently and purposefully	11	5	16	69%
2.3. Multiple grouping strategies achieve learning objective	9	7	16	56%
Totals	29	19	48	60%
<b>3. CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT</b>				
3.1. Students appear safe and willing to take risks	16	0	16	100%
3.2. Appearance/physical org. contribute to positive environment	16	0	16	100%
Totals	32	0	32	100%
<b>4. STUDENT ENGAGEMENT</b>				
4.1. Students actively engaged; behavior appropriate	12	1	13	92%
4.2. Students engaged in learning in various ways	8	8	16	50%
4.3. Students examine thinking with questioning/data	7	9	16	44%
Totals	27	18	45	60%
<b>5. TEACHING</b>				
5.1. Depth of content knowledge evident/accurate	7	9	16	44%
5.2. Use of probing questions and student responses	5	11	16	31%
5.3. Prior knowledge incorporated; perspectives acknowledged	10	6	16	63%
5.4. Misconceptions anticipated/identified and addressed	4	12	16	25%
5.5. Classroom strategies incorporate multiple representations	5	11	16	31%
Totals	31	49	80	39%
<b>6. INSTRUCTIONAL TOOLS</b>				
6.1. Tools/resources are accessible/appropriate	12	4	16	75%
<b>7. EQUITY</b>				
7.1. Expectations; all participate; ideas valued; effort emphasized	8	8	16	50%
7.2. Various learning experiences provided for range of learners	3	13	16	19%
Totals	11	21	32	34%
<b>8. ASSESSMENT</b>				
8.1. Multiple types: diagnostic/formative	8	8	16	50%
8.2. Students responsible for learning w/directive feedback	6	10	16	38%
Totals	14	18	32	44%

**Winthrop Elementary School Classroom Observation Data**

<b>MATHEMATICS</b>				
	Observed	Not Observed	Opportunities	Percent
<b>1. STUDENT LEARNING STANDARDS</b>				
1.1. Evident and clear to students	9	8	17	53%
1.2. Exemplars demonstrate expectations of achievement	9	8	17	53%
Totals	18	16	34	53%
<b>2. ORGANIZATION OF THE LESSON</b>				
2.1. Well planned/organized; objectives stated; develops logically	12	5	17	71%
2.2. Time used efficiently and purposefully	7	9	16	44%
2.3. Multiple grouping strategies achieve learning objective	14	3	17	82%
Totals	33	17	50	66%
<b>3. CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT</b>				
3.1. Students appear safe and willing to take risks	16	1	17	94%
3.2. Appearance/physical org. contribute to positive environment	15	2	17	88%
Totals	31	3	34	91%
<b>4. STUDENT ENGAGEMENT</b>				
4.1. Students actively engaged; behavior appropriate	14	3	17	82%
4.2. Students engaged in learning in various ways	12	5	17	71%
4.3. Students examine thinking with questioning/data	8	9	17	47%
Totals	34	17	51	67%
<b>5. TEACHING</b>				
5.1. Depth of content knowledge evident/accurate	13	4	17	76%
5.2. Use of probing questions and student responses	10	7	17	59%
5.3. Prior knowledge incorporated; perspectives acknowledged	11	6	17	65%
5.4. Misconceptions anticipated/identified and addressed	8	9	17	47%
5.5. Classroom strategies incorporate multiple representations	15	2	17	88%
Totals	57	28	85	67%
<b>6. INSTRUCTIONAL TOOLS</b>				
6.1. Tools/resources are accessible/appropriate	17	0	17	100%
<b>7. EQUITY</b>				
7.1. Expectations; all participate; ideas valued; effort emphasized	8	9	17	47%
7.2. Various learning experiences provided for range of learners	5	12	17	29%
Totals	13	21	34	38%
<b>8. ASSESSMENT</b>				
8.1. Multiple types: diagnostic/formative	6	11	17	35%
8.2. Students responsible for learning w/directive feedback	10	7	17	59%
Totals	16	18	34	47%

**William Russell Elementary School Classroom Observation Data**

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS**

	Observed	Not Observed	Opportunities	Percent
<b>1. STUDENT LEARNING STANDARDS</b>				
1.1. Evident and clear to students	18	3	21	86%
1.2. Exemplars demonstrate expectations of achievement	7	12	19	37%
Totals	25	15	40	63%
<b>2. ORGANIZATION OF THE LESSON</b>				
2.1. Well planned/organized; objectives stated; develops logically	14	5	19	74%
2.2. Time used efficiently and purposefully	11	8	19	58%
2.3. Multiple grouping strategies achieve learning objective	15	4	19	79%
Totals	40	17	57	70%
<b>3. CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT</b>				
3.1. Students appear safe and willing to take risks	16	3	19	84%
3.2. Appearance/physical org. contribute to positive environment	15	4	19	79%
Totals	31	7	38	82%
<b>4. STUDENT ENGAGEMENT</b>				
4.1. Students actively engaged; behavior appropriate	14	5	19	74%
4.2. Students engaged in learning in various ways	12	7	19	63%
4.3. Students examine thinking with questioning/data	10	9	19	53%
Totals	36	21	57	63%
<b>5. TEACHING</b>				
5.1. Depth of content knowledge evident/accurate	13	6	19	68%
5.2. Use of probing questions and student responses	15	4	19	79%
5.3. Prior knowledge incorporated; perspectives acknowledged	14	5	19	74%
5.4. Misconceptions anticipated/identified and addressed	13	6	19	68%
5.5. Classroom strategies incorporate multiple representations	15	4	19	79%
Totals	70	25	95	74%
<b>6. INSTRUCTIONAL TOOLS</b>				
6.1. Tools/resources are accessible/appropriate	15	4	19	79%
<b>7. EQUITY</b>				
7.1. Expectations; all participate; ideas valued; effort emphasized	10	9	19	53%
7.2. Various learning experiences provided for range of learners	14	5	19	74%
Totals	24	14	38	63%
<b>8. ASSESSMENT</b>				
8.1. Multiple types: diagnostic/formative	12	7	19	63%
8.2. Students responsible for learning w/directive feedback	8	11	19	42%
Totals	20	18	38	53%

**William Russell Elementary School Classroom Observation Data**

<b>MATHEMATICS</b>				
	Observed	Not Observed	Opportunities	Percent
<b>1. STUDENT LEARNING STANDARDS</b>				
1.1. Evident and clear to students	9	10	19	47%
1.2. Exemplars demonstrate expectations of achievement	11	8	19	58%
Totals	20	18	38	53%
<b>2. ORGANIZATION OF THE LESSON</b>				
2.1. Well planned/organized; objectives stated; develops logically	12	7	19	61%
2.2. Time used efficiently and purposefully	5	14	19	26%
2.3. Multiple grouping strategies achieve learning objective	16	2	18	89%
Totals	33	23	56	59%
<b>3. CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT</b>				
3.1. Students appear safe and willing to take risks	17	2	19	89%
3.2. Appearance/physical org. contribute to positive environment	18	1	19	95%
Totals	35	3	38	92%
<b>4. STUDENT ENGAGEMENT</b>				
4.1. Students actively engaged; behavior appropriate	16	3	19	84%
4.2. Students engaged in learning in various ways	12	7	19	63%
4.3. Students examine thinking with questioning/data	8	11	19	42%
Totals	36	21	57	63%
<b>5. TEACHING</b>				
5.1. Depth of content knowledge evident/accurate	7	12	19	37%
5.2. Use of probing questions and student responses	9	10	19	47%
5.3. Prior knowledge incorporated; perspectives acknowledged	9	10	19	47%
5.4. Misconceptions anticipated/identified and addressed	5	14	19	26%
5.5. Classroom strategies incorporate multiple representations	14	4	18	78%
Totals	44	50	94	49%
<b>6. INSTRUCTIONAL TOOLS</b>				
6.1. Tools/resources are accessible/appropriate	18	1	19	95%
<b>7. EQUITY</b>				
7.1. Expectations; all participate; ideas valued; effort emphasized	11	8	19	58%
7.2. Various learning experiences provided for range of learners	3	14	17	18%
Totals	14	22	36	38%
<b>8. ASSESSMENT</b>				
8.1. Multiple types: diagnostic/formative	7	12	19	37%
8.2. Students responsible for learning w/directive feedback	6	12	18	33%
Totals	13	24	37	35%

## **Standards-Based Teaching and Learning Standards**

### **1. STUDENT LEARNING STANDARDS**

- 1.1. The learning standards being addressed in the lesson are evident and clear to the students
- 1.2. Exemplars demonstrate expectations of student achievement.

### **2. ORGANIZATION OF THE LESSON**

- 2.1. The lesson is well planned and organized. The objectives of the lesson are clearly stated and connected with the learning standards of the larger unit of which it is a part. The lesson develops in a clear, logical manner.
- 2.2. Time is used efficiently and purposefully.
- 2.3. Multiple grouping strategies are used to achieve the learning that is the object of the lesson (e.g., individual, small groups, whole class, teacher-student).

### **3. CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT**

- 3.1. It is clear that the students appear to feel safe and are willing to take risks.
- 3.2. The appearance and physical organization of the classroom contribute to a positive learning environment.

### **4. STUDENT ENGAGEMENT**

- 4.1. Students are actively engaged in all aspects of the lesson. Behavior is appropriate for the lesson/activities.
- 4.2. Students are engaged in understanding and learning the content in various ways that include skill building, conceptual understanding, applying multiple problem-solving strategies, and real-world applications.
- 4.3. Students consciously examine their thinking by questioning their understanding of the content presented. Students support and defend their reasoning with data while using language appropriate to the discipline.

### **5. TEACHING**

- 5.1. Depth of content knowledge is evident throughout the presentation of the lesson. Concepts are presented accurately.
- 5.2. Through the use of probing questions and student responses, decisions are made about what direction to take, what to emphasize, and what to extend in order to build students' understanding.
- 5.3. Students' prior knowledge is incorporated as new concepts are introduced. When students raise comments, questions, and/or concerns, their perspectives are acknowledged and either redirected or affirmed, linking existing knowledge to new knowledge gained within the lesson.
- 5.4. Student misconceptions are anticipated/identified and addressed.
- 5.5. Classroom strategies incorporate multiple forms of representation (e.g., pictures, words, symbols, diagrams, tables, graphs).

### **6. INSTRUCTIONAL TOOLS**

- 6.1. Appropriate tools for learning are provided (e.g., measuring instruments, manipulatives, calculators, computers). All necessary resources for the lesson are easily accessible. Instruction and support are provided for use of tools.

### **7. EQUITY**

- 7.1. There are high learning expectations for all students. All students participate, and their ideas are valued. The belief is evident among all in the classroom that effort, not innate ability, is the key to significant learning.
- 7.2. Various learning experiences are provided that are appropriate for the range of learners in the classroom (i.e., differentiation by content, process, and/or product).

### **8. ASSESSMENT**

- 8.1. There is evidence of multiple types (e.g., group/individual presentations, written reflections, tests) of diagnostic and ongoing formative assessment.
- 8.2. Students are engaged in and responsible for their own learning, examining their results with directive feedback that enables revision and improvement.