

School Panel Review Report William S. Greene Elementary School Fall River Public Schools

Introduction

The purpose of the School Panel Review process is to assist the Commissioner of Education in determining whether State intervention is needed to guide improvement efforts in schools where students' MCAS performance is not at a level that reaches the schools' Adequate Yearly Progress targets in English language arts or mathematics or both. The William S. Greene Elementary School met this criterion and was one of 21 schools selected for panel review in Fall 2005. The panel review was conducted on November 21 and 22, 2005.

The review panel's charge was to analyze data and written information on the school's performance and improvement efforts, visit the school, and meet with school and district officials in order to advise the Commissioner on the answers to the following two key questions:

1. Is the school implementing a sound plan for improvement, and what gains have been achieved to date as a result of this implementation?
2. Do the conditions appear to be in place for successful implementation of the school's improvement plan?

The panel's responses to the two key questions that defined the scope of its review are included in this report. These findings and conclusions are the product of the panel's analysis, discussion, and observation, based on the evidence available to it. A list of panel members who participated in the review is provided in Appendix A. A detailed schedule of the panel's activities is provided in Appendix B.

The panel's findings and conclusions on the two key questions, together with school performance data, will be forwarded to the Commissioner of Education for consideration in determining whether the Greene School is deemed underperforming. The panel was not asked to formulate a sound plan for school improvement where such a plan does not presently exist or to recommend a course of action to create the conditions for successful implementation of sound improvement strategies where such conditions at present do not appear to exist. Diagnostic and/or prescriptive intervention, where needed to assist an underperforming school, occurs at the next stage of the school review process.

William S. Greene School Profile

Enrollment

The Greene School serves students in Grades Pre-K through 5. Enrollment at Greene grew substantially in recent years, increasing from 208 in 2003 to 616 in 2004, due to the fact that the district combined school populations so that students could be educated at a newly built facility. Enrollment at the start of the 2005 school year was 612, which showed little change from total enrollment in the previous year. Between 2002 and 2005, student demographics changed only minimally, with White students constituting the greatest percentage at the school, followed by

Hispanic students, Black students, and Asian students. Greene’s percentages of students in these subgroups (see table below) are close to state averages. However, Greene’s percentages of Low-Income, First Language Not English, and Limited English Proficient students far exceed state averages. For example, the percentage of Low-Income students enrolled at Greene is 42 percent greater than the state average percentage for that subgroup. Proportions of Greene School student subgroups in 2005, as compared to state averages, are presented below:

Subgroup	2005 Enrollment (%)	
	School	State
Asian	5	5
Black	7	9
Hispanic	11	12
Native American	0	0.3
White	76	74
Low-Income	70	28
First Language Not English	45	14
Limited English Proficient	18	5
Special Education	17	16

The 2005 attendance rate at William S. Greene Elementary is 92.9 percent, with students absent 11.9 days on average. The school’s attendance rate stayed relatively stable between 2003 and 2005. The 2005 rate is 1.3 percent lower than the state average of 94.2 percent, but 1.6 percent better than Fall River’s district average of 91.3 percent. The school’s retention rate was 1.9 percent in 2004, the last year for which these data are available. Greene School’s in-school suspension rate in 2005 is 0.5 percent, while out-of-school suspensions average 9.8 percent. Averages in 2005 for the state are 4.5 percent for in-school suspensions and 6.1 percent for out-of-school suspensions.

Staffing

The 2005-2006 Greene School staffing report indicates that the school is comprised of two administrators, 41 teachers, one guidance counselor, a school psychologist, a school nurse, and two long-term substitutes. The principal has been at the school for six years and has a total of 29 years of experience in the district. Approximately 83 percent of the teachers have been at the school for five years or fewer, due in part to the fact that the school was only recently reconstituted when students and staff members from a number of district schools were blended together to be housed in a new facility. However, approximately 56 percent of teachers at Greene have been teaching for ten years or more, and almost all teachers are reported as highly qualified, with approximately 46 percent of teachers holding a master’s degree.

MCAS Overview

Students at William S. Greene are assessed in reading in Grade 3 and in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics in Grade 4. Greene’s Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) report for 2005 Mid-Cycle IV shows an accountability status of Identified for Improvement for English language arts and Restructuring for mathematics. In 2005, the school made AYP in ELA in the aggregate

and for both of its reported subgroups: Low-Income and White students.¹ In ELA, it failed to make AYP in the aggregate in 2004, but it made AYP for subgroups in that same year. Prior to that, Greene did not make AYP in ELA in the aggregate or for subgroups in 2003. The school made AYP in the aggregate in 2001 and 2002, but not in 1999 and 2000. In mathematics, the school failed to make AYP in the aggregate and for subgroups, which were the same reported subgroups as for ELA. In 2004, Greene made AYP in the aggregate and for subgroups, but for all previous years, 1999-2003, its aggregate performance did not permit the school to make AYP in math.

In 2005, the aggregate Composite Performance Indices (CPIs) for the Greene School were 75.0 in ELA and 53.5 in mathematics. Year-by-year aggregate CPIs are shown below:

Year-by-Year Aggregate CPI Data Summary		
Year	ELA	Math
2001	69.5	48.1
2002	69.7	52.5
2003	62.5	41.7
2004	68.1	56.1
2005	75.0	53.5
State Target 2005	80.5	68.7

GRADE 3

Reading MCAS Results

Results of the 2005 Grade 3 Reading MCAS for students at Greene are presented below:

2005 Reading	Percent		
	P	NI	W/F
Aggregate	54	38	8
Regular Education	52	45	4
Special Education	60	13	27

Greene's 2005 reading performance is a significant improvement over its performance in previous years, as is evidenced in the data included on the next page:

¹ In accordance with the federal No Child Left Behind Act passed in 2001, student performance is disaggregated by the following subgroups: Limited English Proficient, Special Education, Low-Income, African-American/Black, Asian or Pacific Islander, Hispanic, Native American, and White. A minimum of 40 students (or 5 percent of the total number of students assessed, whichever is greater) per subgroup is required to issue a statistically sound rating or determination of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). The subgroups meeting the minimum sample size at Greene in 2005 were Low-Income and White.

Aggregate Reading	Percent		
	P	NI	W/F
2005	54	38	8
2004	33	54	13
2003	31	61	8
2002	47	38	15
2001	23	73	4

As shown above, the percentage of students in the aggregate scoring Proficient in reading increased by 21 percent between 2004 and 2005, while the Warning/Failing category decreased by five percent during the same period.

GRADE 4

ELA MCAS Results

Greene School’s 2005 Grade 4 ELA MCAS performance for students in the aggregate is as follows:

2005 ELA	Percent			
	A	P	NI	W/F
Aggregate	1	21	49	29
Regular Education	0	20	65	15
Special Education	4	30	26	41
Limited English Proficient	0	9	18	73

As shown, nearly half of the school’s aggregate population scored in the Needs Improvement category, while 29 percent scored Warning/Failing. The school’s ELA MCAS performance data for students receiving Special Education services in 2005 is more broadly distributed than its data for Regular Education students, with four percent of the Special Education student subgroup scoring Advanced, while no Regular Education students scored in that same category. While 29 percent of students in the aggregate scored Warning/Failing, 73 percent of the school’s Limited English Proficient students scored at the same level.

Greene School’s ELA MCAS performance history is shown below:

Aggregate ELA	Percent			
	A	P	NI	W/F
2005	1	21	49	29
2004	0	24	51	26
2003	0	17	49	34
2002	0	13	71	17
2001	0	6	84	10

As is noted in the table, while increases in the Proficient category were achieved each year between 2001 and 2004, a slight decrease in students in the aggregate scoring Proficient took place between 2004 and 2005. Over the years between 2001 and 2003, there was a steady

increase in the Warning/Failing category; however, that percentage decreased in 2004 and stayed roughly the same in 2005. Between 2001 and 2005, the Needs Improvement category decreased.

GRADE 4

Mathematics MCAS Results

Grade 4 Mathematics MCAS results for Greene School students for 2005 are presented in the table below:

2005 Math	Percent			
	A	P	NI	W/F
Aggregate	0	6	46	48
Regular Education	0	8	58	33
Special Education	0	4	30	67
Limited English Proficient	0	0	18	82

On the 2005 Mathematics MCAS, virtually all (94 percent) of Greene School students in the aggregate scored in the Needs Improvement and Warning/Failing range. This level of performance is not unlike levels achieved by students at the school who require Special Education services and by those whose are Limited English Proficient.

This level of performance in mathematics has persisted for Greene over the past several years, as is shown in the aggregate MCAS results presented below:

Aggregate Math	Percent			
	A	P	NI	W/F
2005	0	6	46	48
2004	3	7	50	39
2003	0	5	40	55
2002	0	8	29	63
2001	0	3	48	48

Although the school maintained a small percentage of students scoring Proficient in math over the years between 2001 and 2005, most Greene Elementary School students scored in Needs Improvement and Warning/Failing.

PANEL RESPONSES TO THE KEY QUESTIONS

KEY QUESTION 1: IS THE SCHOOL IMPLEMENTING A SOUND PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT, AND WHAT GAINS HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED TO DATE AS A RESULT OF THIS IMPLEMENTATION?

After meeting with school and district personnel and undertaking document reviews, the Panel Review (PR) Team found that Greene's School Improvement Plan is not comprehensive and coherent. The strategies outlined in the plan are defined as activities or tasks and are written from the perspective of what the teacher will do rather than what students will know and be able to do. Further, the document does not contain action plans or specific strategies to address the needs of student subgroups. The School Improvement Plan (SIP) was constructed by a representative group. Although the Greene School staff members clearly understand their roles and are actively engaged in implementing the SIP strategies, it is unclear whether the current activities are likely to yield the necessary gains in student achievement at the school. SIP benchmarks and timelines are vague, and the school does not currently have a systematic monitoring process in place to review information and make adjustments to improvement initiatives.

A. Are the school's written improvement planning documents (including action plans) clear and specific enough to guide the implementation of planned improvement initiatives?

School Improvement Plans (SIPs) were submitted in preparation for School Panel Reviews scheduled in November and December 2005. Teams of three Department of Education staff members reviewed the written plans and completed summary assessments of their soundness, based on a Department rubric with specific indicators for five central components: overall clarity and coherence of the plan, identifying and prioritizing problems based on multiple sources of data, analyzing the causes of weakness in student performance, establishing improvement objectives and selecting strategies, and establishing benchmarks for implementation and outcomes. The judgment on the soundness of these written documents provided in the summary rubric was based solely on a close reading of the written documents submitted. It was not a final determination. The panelists used the summary rubric to inform their discussion of the written plan that each panelist had read individually prior to the review, and to help focus their time in the school on the implementation of the planned strategies. Final judgment on the soundness of the school's plan—and the panel's overall response to Key Question 1 in the Panel Review protocol—depended upon further information about the development of the plan and evidence of the plan's implementation that was gathered by the panel during on-site interviews, focus groups, and observations.

The PR Team concluded that the School Improvement Plan (SIP) is not clear and specific, and it does not contain the necessary key components to drive and monitor initiatives. The actions stated in the SIP are not always linked to student learning objectives and are not written to indicate what students will know and be able to do at the end of instruction; rather, they describe what the teacher will do.

Student learning objectives reference learning standards. For example, an English language arts (ELA) student learning objective states, "All students will identify the basic facts and main ideas in a text and use them as a basis for interpretation." The action plans in the SIP, however, are not specific enough to ensure proper implementation of the improvement initiatives. A cause related

to an ELA weakness is stated as teachers not providing enough “practice in test-taking skills in order to build stamina, perseverance, and concentration.” An instructional change objective states that “teachers will provide students with practice in MCAS style test-taking skills.” Even though there are identified strategies, those strategies are not linked to root causes. Another identified weakness is that “teachers are not using enough math vocabulary in their instruction,” and the resulting strategy identified in the plan is that “teachers will use common math vocabulary in their instruction in all content areas.” The “how and why” of instruction is not described. The improvement objectives are not written to indicate what the students will learn and be able to do as a result of teachers implementing SIP strategies.

The PR Team had additional concerns about the Greene School SIP surrounding the fact that scores were not disaggregated to reveal subgroups’ needs. This is particularly critical for English Language Learners, as the school’s population consists of 18 percent Limited English Proficient (LEP) students and 45 percent First Language Not English (FLNE) students. Given that 82 percent of the LEP subgroup scored in the Warning/Failing category in math and 73 percent of that subgroup scored in the same category in ELA during the 2005 testing, the plan’s lack of focus on supporting LEP students through specific and well-defined strategies is, in the judgment of the PR Team, a great oversight. The school notes that it sees commonalities in all students and believes that strategies for the aggregate will benefit those in specific subgroups, as well. However, the Panel Review Team believes that the lack of focused attention to subgroups may prevent the school from making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in the future.

As written, the SIP is not clear and does not contain the necessary elements to guide the planned improvement. It also lacks evidence that the learning needs of subgroups were analyzed and incorporated into specific learning objectives and strategies, particularly for the school’s large population of English Language Learners.

B. Was the School Improvement Plan developed through a process that supports its successful implementation?

The PR Team found that many individuals collaborated to write the School Improvement Plan. A representative Performance Improvement Mapping (PIM) team constructed the SIP, but untimely guidance on the plan from the district delayed the implementation of the SIP. Staff members at the Greene School understand the written plan and are doing their best to implement the improvement initiatives.

The PIM team that crafted the SIP consisted of the principal, assistant principal, reading and math coaches, five teachers, and the school support specialist provided by the Department of Education. The district has a process in place in which each completed school plan is submitted to central office, where it is evaluated according to an established rubric. Although Greene’s plan was submitted in June 2005, as of November 2005, the school had not received notification of the results of this district review. The principal noted that the school support specialist indicated that the school should “proceed with implementing the plan.” Nevertheless, members of the group that created the plan expressed an eagerness to receive an official assessment of the work they had done. The six-month delay in receiving official approval of the plan was of concern to some staff members, despite the fact that they stood by the document and had begun to implement it.

Interviews with focus groups and the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) confirmed that the staff supports the content of the planning document. Teachers participated in both large- and small-group analyses of MCAS scores. The ILT first reviewed MCAS results to determine students' strengths and weaknesses. The full staff was then asked to look at a scaled-down version of the results, and their review resulted in findings that were similar to those of the ILT.

Staff members stated that they each received a copy of the SIP. The principal shared the document with the School Council and Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), stressing the need for math improvement; however, a PTO representative and several School Council members told the PR Team that parents did not have direct input into the plan.

Through interviews, it became apparent to panelists that Greene's staff and administrators understand the plan as written and are following it, but the plan itself does not contain all necessary elements and is not clear and specific enough to bring about improvement. The principal confirmed this finding when she stated, "We were too broad." She also explained that the current plan is the second improvement planning document she has written at the school, and the process that she was taken through by district staff was different from the process used to create the school's original plan. Some of the steps in the PIM process were new, and the principal believed that she and the other plan developers "were rushed." Although the Department of Education provides a school support specialist for assistance, this person also has district-wide responsibilities. As a result, he was not available to focus solely on the Greene plan. The principal indicated that she knew that the resulting plan was not as good a plan as the first; she realized that the plan was "missing pieces."

Overall, the PR Team found that the plan was developed by a representative group and was communicated to all stakeholders. Professional development opportunities are connected to the plan. Although the school has some strategies in place to assess students, there is no evidence that there is a process to monitor the SIP.

C. To what extent is the school's staff actually implementing the plan?

Although the SIP is not a clear and specific document, the Greene School faculty is implementing the strategies stated in the plan. Teachers reported that they have a copy of the SIP and are informed of its initiatives. Teachers also reported that the principal provides the staff with a list of monthly objectives from the plan. The PR Team's observations in classrooms confirmed the use of strategies. Professional development opportunities are connected to the SIP, though there is some question as to the timeliness of these trainings.

According to the ILT, the monthly breakdown of objectives stresses what teachers "need to work on" and is viewed by most as being useful. Teachers stated that the goals are from "our plan, and everyone has a copy." There were similar comments during interviews indicating that the staff is focused and is working to "improve student achievement." During focus groups, staff members stated that the plan is "well designed" and "user-friendly." They made reference to various School Improvement Plan strategies that they are using in their classrooms. For example:

- Word walls and common vocabulary words
- Posted learning standards
- Teachers participating in read-alouds
- Use of leveled books for independent and guided reading groups
- *Math Investigations* strategies

- Differentiated instruction
- Students working on MCAS sample questions in math
- “Problem of the day” activities
- Students collecting and analyzing data to make graphs

Classroom observations indicated that the above-mentioned strategies stated in the school SIP were being implemented school-wide. For example, the PR Team observed some students graphing data and others participating in a problem of the day. This is evidence that *Math Investigations* is being implemented. In classrooms where there was more than one adult, each was working with a group of students, utilizing strategies that reflected the students’ academic level while other children were reading from leveled books with guided instruction. This reflects differentiated instruction, another goal of the school.

Many of the current efforts at the Greene are directed toward mathematics because the school is in Restructuring in this area. This focus was evident in classroom observations and interviews with staff members, as well as in a review of the school’s professional development opportunities. According to the Instructional Leadership Team and the PD schedule for the year, professional development at Greene is linked to the SIP. The focus is on differentiated instruction, *Math Investigations*, and standards-based units that are required by the district. The principal provided the panelists with the calendar of planned professional development opportunities for the year, consisting of both full- and half-day sessions. A review of this calendar indicated that the staff will have opportunities for further training in the areas that reflect goals in the plan. However, because the school implemented *Math Investigations* prior to the program’s district-wide adoption, teachers at the school made it clear to the PR Team that not all trainings have taken place in a manner that is conducive to improving their instructional practice. For example, many of the math program trainings, which are based on programmatic units, took place after the staff had taught the units in focus.

Faculty and staff at the Greene School expressed support for the plan. They are implementing SIP strategies, and this was noted in interviews with staff members and in classroom observations. As a result of the school’s status of Restructuring in mathematics, there is a school-wide focus on that subject area. Although professional development is linked to the SIP, it is not always occurring in a manner that is most likely to improve teaching practice. The PR Team determined that the written plan insufficiently links root causes to strategies in the SIP. As a result, it is unclear whether implementation of SIP strategies will yield the necessary gains in student achievement at the school.

D. What gains, if any, have been achieved relative to SIP goals or benchmarks through implementation of the plan?

Because the Greene School SIP is new (the plan was written for September 2005-2007), the PR Team is unable to report on the status of any gains that relate to the initiatives in the current plan. The SIP does not have clear benchmarks, and the school does not have a systematic process in place for monitoring and the effectiveness of SIP strategies and for making adjustments to the plan as needed.

The Greene School SIP does not contain clear benchmarks or timelines to measure the implementation of SIP strategies or related student performance gains. Timelines identified in the SIP are extremely broad. For example, many indicate “all year,” which does not account for

within-the-year adjustments. Such statements are more indicative of participation in the implementation of SIP strategies than of measuring strategies' effectiveness.

Self-assessments, Learning Walks, and classroom observations are used to evaluate the SIP, according to the principal and ILT. Learning Walks that were conducted last year were not linked to the SIP, but the principal told the PR Team that they will now focus on instructional change objectives, and constructive feedback will be provided to teachers. According to the principal and the ILT, all teachers are responsible for compiling a Documentation Binder, which contains samples of student work and instructional and learning objectives. The principal identifies the objectives for the month, and teachers complete a self-assessment rubric. Teachers indicated that the principal collects these documents. However, at the time of the PR Team visit, teachers reported that they had not yet been required to submit the binder to the office during the current school year. In addition, there is no evidence to indicate that the data, once collected, will be reviewed and analyzed in a systematic way so as to result in informed changes to the instructional plan.

The instructional leaders in the school report that "the kids are doing better," but there is no documentary evidence to confirm this statement. Members of the ILT told the review panel that the PIM team no longer meets on a regular basis to review the plan. Although this is due in part to the fact that the school's plan has not yet been officially approved by the district, it does not indicate promise for consistent monitoring and evaluation of SIP initiatives.

Currently, there is no system in place for reviewing and making adjustments to the SIP at Greene as a result of implementation. The SIP contains vague timelines and benchmarks, and the process for ongoing evaluation of the plan's effectiveness is unclear.

KEY QUESTION 2: DO THE CONDITIONS APPEAR TO BE IN PLACE FOR THE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SCHOOL'S IMPROVEMENT PLAN?

Based on evidence collected during the PR Team visit, it was determined that the William S. Greene Elementary School has effective leadership. Although the SIP needs work in order to improve in clarity and cohesiveness, the staff is actively engaged in its implementation. The PR Team, however, has significant reservations about the degree of support and involvement from the district, particularly as it relates to personnel resources and improvement planning guidance. Without the necessary supports from the district, it will be difficult for the school, under the current conditions, to successfully implement improvement initiatives.

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

The Greene School has effective leadership and sound management, and this is evidenced by resounding support from the school community. Staff members and parents were forthcoming in their support of the principal's management style and leadership abilities. Members of the school community talked about the positive school climate and the strong working relationships within the building, and these were corroborated during the PR Team visit.

Staff members and parents view the principal as the school's instructional leader and a good advocate for students. They spoke positively about their interactions with the school administrators. The principal has been at the school for six years, and three years ago, she led the

task of combining her school with two others to form the new 612-student building. With such a large complex, she requested and was granted an assistant principal two years ago.

Interviews with both the assistant principal and ILT members indicated that the principal is familiar with the district and its programs. They view her as knowledgeable in developing and guiding the SIP and also in the area of assessment. On the Department of Education (DOE) *Instructional Staff Survey*, 94 percent of staff members responded that they “strongly agree” or “agree” that the principal provides “effective leadership to guide and support staff efforts to improve the academic performance of... students.”

Members of the School Council indicated that they have a good working relationship with the school administration. Although the assistant principal has been at the school for only two years, parents and staff said that he is involved in the running of the school and attends meetings. The school offered workshops last year (for example, one on No Child Left Behind and another on drugs and alcohol), but only six parents attended. Parents asked the principal during the week prior to the panelists’ visit for a workshop on math to help them better understand the new *Math Investigations* program. They are confident that she will make the arrangements necessary to provide this workshop. They praised her receptiveness to their ideas and concerns, and they look forward to continuing the positive working relationship they have with the school leaders.

The PR Team determined that the school climate was calm and conducive to learning during its visit. When the school opened three years ago, there were three lunch sessions with over 200 students in each. Many students were misbehaving, and the principal believed that the large lunchroom sessions were contributing to the discipline problems. Because the principal did not want students to be punished for “what wasn’t their fault,” she added two lunch sessions. In this way, she believed she had created an environment that would allow students to participate in typical, social lunchtime behavior. This example highlights the principal’s good management capabilities in addition to the instructional leadership abilities that were attributed to her by the staff members who were interviewed.

In their attempt to control behavior in order to provide all students with an environment conducive to learning, Greene’s administrators and staff collaborated to develop a discipline process. During interviews, both staff and parents referred to the Greene Intervention Program and the Curriculum Accommodation Team for repeat offenders. Parents on the School Council spoke of their concern over the disruptiveness of some students in the classrooms. They understand the need for the defined disciplinary process that is now in place. Teachers and the assistant principal indicated that there are only a few students who exhibit poor behavior on a regular basis. They noted that the school has addressed this issue by setting up a team to focus solely on those students. In addition, the assistant principal told the PR Team that the number of retentions and suspensions has decreased over the last year. Panelists’ observations around the building revealed an orderly and safe environment.

The Panel Review Team concluded that the principal shows strong leadership and management skills in her effort to work with members of the school community to create a positive learning environment and to develop positive working relationships among staff members. The results of parent and staff focus groups indicated continued support for the school leadership. The superintendent also told team members that the principal “has the ability to support the School Improvement Plan.”

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

Staff members at the Greene Elementary School support the school's improvement efforts and agree that mathematics is a priority. The school's faculty supports the SIP initiatives and is actively engaged in implementing the plan's strategies. However, the Greene faculty does not believe it is possible to effectively implement all aspects of the SIP because of a reduction in staff.

Interviews with focus groups and the ILT confirmed that the faculty supports the content of the planning document but has some concern over the feasibility of implementation. Due to a reduction in staff at the school, teachers noted that aspects of the SIP are less likely to be effectively implemented than they would have been in the past. Greene School staff members who participated in various focus groups stated concern over the loss of several key staff members last year: the literacy coach, two paraprofessionals, and a teacher in charge. Because the plan was written based on the availability of these personnel, some staff members noted the difficulty in implementing the plan without having these positions in place. Because the school has not been able to fill these positions, teachers note that some help that they would have received from these staff members is now unavailable to them. Although administrators and staff members are concerned about the reductions in key personnel, they remain committed to helping students improve their MCAS results.

The staff is in agreement that math is a priority, as the school is in Restructuring in this subject area. One staff member commented that it was rewarding to see that, because of the plan, everyone is "on the same page." Although teachers stated that they do not have enough common planning time, they collaborate as often as possible and use the Looking at Student Work protocol. They have been trained in Differentiated Instruction and *Math Investigations*, but they indicated that they need additional workshops. Classroom visits by the PR Team confirmed that staff members are implementing strategies identified in the SIP (see question 1C). The lack of collaborative time, however, may impede their ability to assess and review the effectiveness of instruction.

An outside leadership consultant who worked with the faculty last year expressed to the PR Team that the staff is on board and enthusiastic. She also stated that staff members are optimistic that there will be improvement in student performance if the resources and district support are present.

The staff supports the SIP, is actively engaged in its implementation, and is committed to improving student performance at the school. However, the reduction in staff is of concern to both administrators and teachers, and it may affect the proper delivery of services to students.

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

Because the school does not have adequate personnel to implement the SIP and there does not appear to be a district plan to address this deficiency, the PR Team concluded that the district is not providing adequate support and guidance to address the needs of the school. The Greene School is in Restructuring in math, and this requires immediate attention that the district is not currently providing.

The district has been unable to replace the literacy coordinator, the teacher in charge, and two paraprofessionals, all of which are cited by the school as key personnel needed to effectively

implement improvement initiatives. The administration and staff believe that these losses will inhibit their successful implementation of the SIP, and they report that this has already had an impact. For example, due in part to the loss of the two paraprofessionals, there is not enough coverage in the lunchroom. This forces school administrators to forego other responsibilities so that they can patrol the lunchroom. Because the school has not been able to fill several positions, teachers note that some of the support that they would have received from key staff members is now unavailable to them.

The district provided a math instructional resource specialist last year to support teachers during the implementation of *Math Investigations*. The school also received the assistance of a math coach who continues to work on-site. This year, a consultant meets with all district math coaches once a week. Some of the training the coaches receive and some of the collegial work they undertake in these weekly meetings is for the purpose of informing coaches' practice with teachers in their respective schools. While this district support is significant, focus group discussions indicated that one math coach in a building with 612 students and 41 teachers is insufficient. The coach herself stated that there is not always enough time for her to use the training model. Teachers also relayed that there is little or no time to speak with the math coach after her visits "every couple of weeks." The coach views her role as that of modeling and coaching. Despite the benefit of a coach, many teachers voiced the need for continued training. They are concerned that they are not receiving the continued hands-on support that was provided last year during the implementation of *Math Investigations*.

The principal noted that she receives help from the district if she requests support. However, it was also reported that there was limited assistance in preparation for the Panel Review. During the week prior to the Panel Review, the principal of the Greene School was requested to submit a plan in two weeks indicating the needs of the school and how she will work with teachers to develop a better understanding of mathematics and math instruction. The ILT reported that the school has not received any written feedback from the central office indicating whether their SIP, which was submitted in June 2005, has been approved. Teachers also noted that because Greene is the largest elementary school in the district, the district may need to devote more support to Greene than it does to smaller schools.

The superintendent stated during an interview with panel members that there has not been a human resources department in the district for the last ten years and that there has not been adequate funding for professional development in the past. The superintendent is in the process of evaluating the district and has recently met with principals in order to assess schools' needs. Thus, it remains unknown what resources and personnel might be made available to the school. The lack of urgency in addressing the needs of the Greene School is a critical deficiency on the part of the district. The Greene School has been Identified for Improvement for three years, was in Corrective Action last year, and is now in Restructuring in mathematics. The need to improve student performance in this area has been clear for at least five years, and yet the district has failed to develop a detailed plan for assisting and providing key supports to the school.

In summary, the PR Team concluded that there are significant concerns regarding the loss of staff members and the lack of a plan on the part of the district to address Greene School's pressing needs. Although the superintendent is conducting a global needs assessment, it remains unclear what, if any, supports will be provided to address the needs of the Greene School in the near future in order to improve student performance.

CONCLUSION

The School Improvement Plan at the Greene School is not a comprehensive and cohesive document in its written form. The SIP presently lacks direction and evidence that the root causes have been identified and that strategies are based on addressing those causes. There is no well-developed action plan that defines benchmarks and sets forth a process to monitor the effectiveness of planned initiatives. There is clear effort and investment on the part of school administration and staff in developing and implementing SIP strategies, though action plans require modification to reflect instructional practices related to student learning.

Although the PR Team determined that the Greene School has effective leadership and a faculty that supports improvement efforts, the lack of necessary support on the part of the district makes it difficult to be sure that the conditions are in place for successful implementation of the SIP. Several key personnel needed to implement SIP initiatives at Greene are no longer present at the school as a result of personnel cuts made by the district. Although the superintendent is conducting a district-wide needs assessment, it is not clear how this will benefit the immediate improvement needs specific to the Greene School.

APPENDIX A
Team Members

Joe Trunk, Panel Review Chair, SchoolWorks LLC, Beverly, MA

Patty O’Leary, Panel Review Co-Chair, SchoolWorks LLC, Beverly, MA

Eve Laubner, Ed.D., Panel Coordinator, Massachusetts Department of Education, Malden, MA

Susan DiRubio, Panelist, Special Needs Administrator, Martha’s Vineyard Public
Charter School, West Tisbury, MA

Kimberly Hebert, Panelist, Guidance Counselor, Dartmouth Middle School, Dartmouth, MA

APPENDIX B
William S. Greene Elementary School
Fall River Public Schools
POTENTIALLY UNDER-PERFORMING PANEL REVIEW SCHEDULE
November 21 and 22, 2005

Day 1

- 9:00—9:30 a.m. **Panel Chairperson and Panel Coordinator meet at hotel** to discuss and clarify roles, prepare for the first team meeting, and review general logistics/schedule for the review.
- 9:30 a.m. —11:30 a.m. **Team meeting # 1:** Team meets for the first time to discuss each panelist's individual analysis; team forms preliminary judgments on key questions.
- 11:30 a.m.—1 p.m. **Lunch and travel to the school** (*NOTE: In districts undergoing multiple school reviews, superintendent interviews may be scheduled between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. at the hotel.*)
- 1:00 —2:00 p.m. Panel meets with the school's **Instructional Leadership Team**.
- 2:00—3:00 p.m. Panelists meet with the district **Superintendent** (and Assistant Superintendent, if appropriate).
- 3:15—4:30 p.m. Panel meets with the **Principal** (and one other school-based individual, if appropriate).
- 4:30—6:00 p.m. **Team meeting # 2:** Panelists synthesize interview information, further define findings, prepare questions, and develop a team strategy for Day 2 of the review.

Day 2

All activities take place at the school.

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

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

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

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

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

12:30—1:00 *p.m.* Panel uses time as needed to analyze findings and to gather more information.

1:00—2:00 *p.m.* Panelists meet with teacher focus groups; consultant Co-Chair is free to work on report.

	Panelist A	Panelist B	Panelist C	Panelist D	Panelist E
1:00-1:30 <i>p.m.</i>	Teacher Focus Group 1		Teacher Focus Group 3		Prepare report
1:30-2:00 <i>p.m.</i>	Teacher Focus Group 2		Teacher Focus Group 4		

2:15—2:30 *p.m.* Chair meets with the Principal to discuss next steps in the process.

2:30—5:00 *p.m.* **Team meeting #4:** Panel deliberates, organizes evidence, and formulates responses to key questions.