



Brightwood School
Springfield Public Schools
SCHOOL REVIEW

September 2009

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
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Center for School and District Accountability of the
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
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Overview

To meet state accountability requirements,¹ schools in restructuring are being reviewed for the purpose of providing a progress report to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. These schools will be visited for two days to ensure that the review team has sufficient time to be able to describe improvement efforts (including district supports) and conditions at the school.

This report, by a review team of contracted Department of Elementary and Secondary Education consultants, profiles the trends in student achievement at the Brightwood School over the last three years and responds to two overarching key questions based on evidence collected while on site.

Key Question 1: To what extent have the school and the district demonstrated the capacity to improve student achievement?

Key Question 2: Are the conditions in place to continue to support student achievement?

The visit to the Brightwood School is also part of the District Plan for School Intervention (DPSI) review for the Springfield Public Schools. The purpose of the DPSI review, being conducted in certain urban school districts, is to assess district efforts to support school intervention, including strategic decisions made to support ongoing school improvement. It also seeks to assess the impact of support given by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) for improvement efforts. DPSI reviews also carry out requirements for state audits of districts.²

The visit to the Brightwood School was conducted from June 8-9, 2009. Further information about the review and the schedule can be found in Appendix B; information about the members of the review team can be found in Appendix A.

¹ Under 603 CMR 2.00.

² See Mass. Gen. Laws c. 15, § 55A, as amended by St. 2008, c. 311, § 3, effective August 14, 2008.

Brightwood School

School Profile

The Brightwood School has experienced significant leadership turnover in the past five years. The current principal is the fifth person to occupy the position during that five-year period.

Brightwood serves students in grades K through 5. In the 2008-2009 academic year, Brightwood enrolled 422 students; the enrollment has increased slightly each year from the 2004-2005 academic year, when 358 students were enrolled.

Student demographic and subgroup information for the 2008-2009 academic year is provided in the following table.

Table 1: Brightwood Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity and Selected Population 2008-2009

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity	Percent of Total	Selected Populations	Percent of Total
African American	9.5%	First Language not English	45.8%
Asian	0.2%	Limited English Proficient	32.9%
Hispanic or Latino	85.4%	From low-income families	96.7%
Native American	0.0%	Special Education	20.8%
White	3.3%	Free-lunch	93.6%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.0%	Reduced-price lunch	3.1%
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	1.4%		

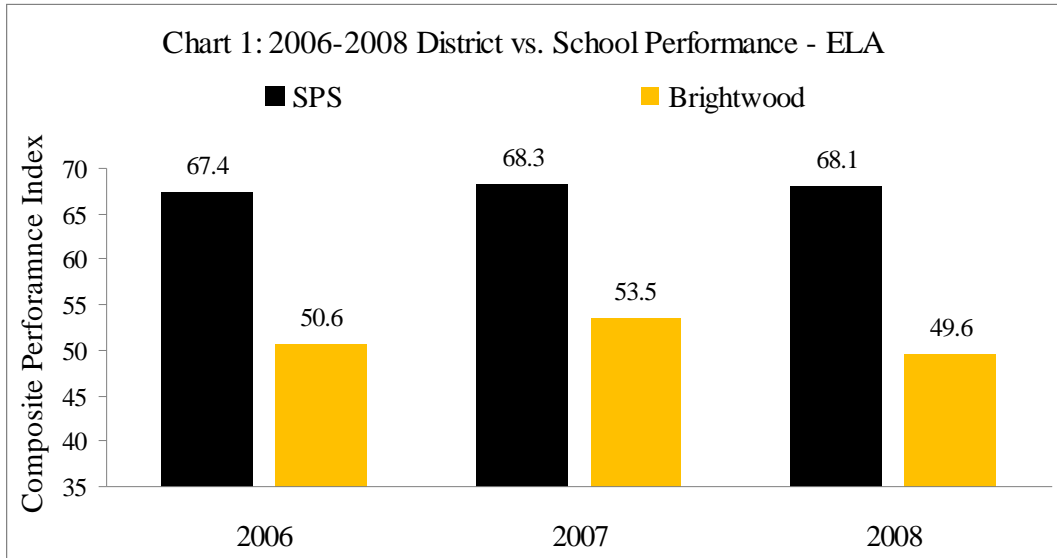
Student Performance

In 2008, the Brightwood School did not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in English language arts (ELA) or in mathematics. The school currently has an NCLB (No Child Left Behind) status of Restructuring Year 2 in ELA and mathematics.

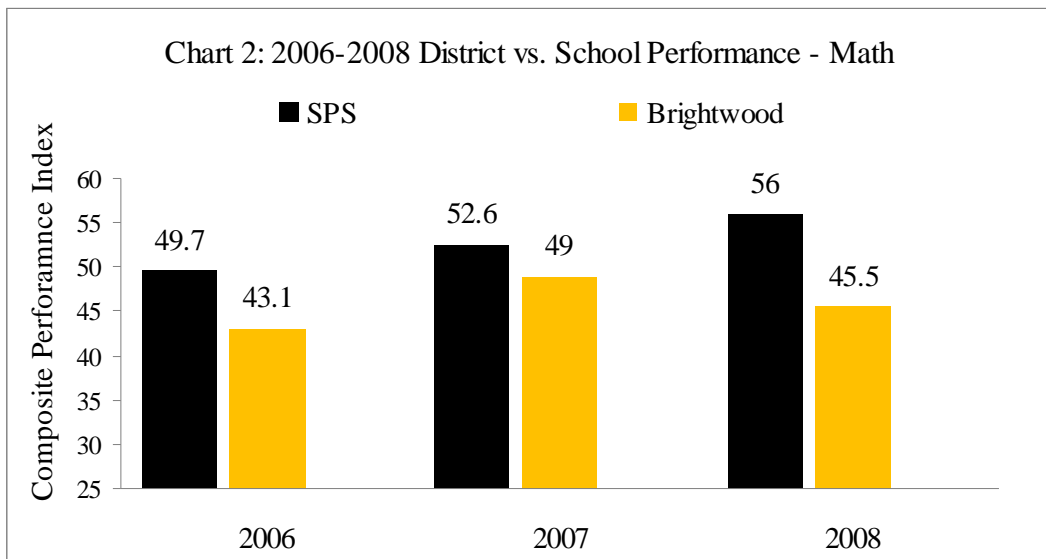
Table 2: Brightwood Adequate Yearly Progress History

		2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	NCLB Accountability Status
ELA	Aggregate	No	No	No	No	No	No	Restructuring Year 2
	All Subgroups	No	No	No	No	No	No	
Math	Aggregate	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Restructuring Year 2
	All Subgroups	No	No	No	No	No	No	

The performance of Brightwood students has remained stable on the ELA MCAS, with only slight fluctuations across years. The school's CPI (composite performance index) increased by 2.9 points from 2006 to 2007, but declined by 3.9 points from 2007 to 2008. The Brightwood School performed below the district during these years.



In mathematics, the Brightwood School's performance has also remained fairly stable across the three-year period. The CPI increased 5.9 points from 2006 to 2007, but decreased 3.5 points from 2007 to 2008. Brightwood's performance in mathematics was below the districts during these years.



Key Question 1: To what extent have the school and the district demonstrated the capacity to improve student achievement?

In 2008-2009, the Brightwood School has carried out some actions to improve the school's performance. The climate and culture at Brightwood have improved. Brightwood has made some progress toward implementing initiatives outlined in the School Improvement Plan (SIP). Implementation of key priorities is more consistent in some grade levels than in others. Professional development has been offered to support the implementation of some improvement strategies. The district has provided resources and technical assistance to assist the school in its improvement efforts.

Findings under Key Question 1

The school leadership's efforts to improve climate and culture at Brightwood have established an environment conducive to teaching and learning.

Brightwood's new principal has established several processes that had a positive impact on school climate and culture in 2008-2009. One of the primary efforts made by Brightwood leadership has been the creation of a safe environment by addressing student behavior. Across focus groups, there was widespread consensus that school climate has improved under the new principal's leadership. Teachers reported in focus groups that the new principal has been instrumental in addressing the student behavior problem at Brightwood.

In 2007-2008 Brightwood staff completed a districtwide survey on climate and culture generated by the Massachusetts Teacher Association (MTA). The school's results indicated that safety was a concern. In order to provide a safe environment at Brightwood, the school has enforced a code of conduct and used a department teacher and paraprofessional to address behavioral issues throughout the school. Brightwood's leadership facilitated training for teachers during the school's extended day sessions on the establishment of a responsive classroom, the crisis intervention team, and school-wide processes to address behavioral issues (e.g., the take-a-break room). At the time of this review, school staff calculated that there had been 350 fewer documented cases of behavioral issues in 2008-2009 than in the previous year.

The review team noted solid evidence of a climate characterized by respectful behaviors, routines, tone, and discourse in 87% (n=20) of the classrooms visited. This was exemplified by positive interactions between students and teachers, as well as by teachers using constructive language to reinforce classroom behavior norms.

The School Improvement Plan provides guidance to raise student achievement at Brightwood. The school has not fully implemented some improvement priorities.

The SIP outlines strategies to improve teaching and learning at Brightwood School. It includes performance goals, student learning objectives, action steps, and benchmarks to measure implementation. The new principal amended the SIP in July 2008, before the start of her first year at Brightwood. The current SIP is a multi-year plan designed to focus the school's improvement efforts through June 2010. The school has made progress implementing some

improvement initiatives outlined in the plan, but did not implement all of the improvement priorities scheduled for 2008-2009—particularly the district reading plan. Brightwood implemented some of the action steps to increase parental involvement that were outlined in the SIP.

Brightwood, in implementing improvement efforts, has begun to use data from the MCAS and other data sources provided by the district to identify areas of weak student performance. The SIP indicates, for example, that students do not consistently write with a clear focus, coherent organization, and sufficient detail (Massachusetts Standard 19). In order to improve writing performance, the school outlined several action steps, including the implementation of the Writer's Express (WEX) program for grades 3, 4 and 5. The school has made some progress toward implementing these action steps. In 2008-2009 teachers in grades 3 and 4 were using WEX, and the program was to expand to grade 5 in 2009-2010.

Although Brightwood completed some action steps to fulfill SIP objectives, the school has not made its desired progress toward accomplishing key SIP priorities, such as full implementation of the 150-minute district reading plan (using an annotated schedule for the literacy block) across grade levels. The school identified the effective implementation of the components of the district reading plan as a vital precondition to improving reading comprehension. According to the principal, ELA block compliance isn't there yet, making it difficult for the school to address comprehension adequately.

The Brightwood SIP addresses parental involvement. Specifically, the SIP lists a series of parental involvement strategies that Brightwood implemented this year, such as hiring a parent facilitator, preparing a parental involvement plan, and linking families to support and health services. Brightwood staff members have also started to conduct targeted outreach to the school's Somali families.

School-based professional development was offered to support the implementation of improvement initiatives.

The Brightwood School has piloted new improvement initiatives and worked to improve the delivery of both new and existing programs, including the literacy block, the new Writer's Express (WEX) program, and instruction to support English language learner (ELL) students. This year, the school experimented with a more unified and interdisciplinary approach to teacher training. Workshops and embedded support have focused on improving teaching and learning to address the implementation of school improvement priorities.

Instructional leadership specialists (ILSs) for mathematics, ELA (grades K-2), and ELA (grades 3-5), as well as the Reading First coach, provide teachers with professional development to address improvement initiatives. The ILSs and Reading First coach plan professional development for teachers and facilitate workshops during extended day sessions. In the 2008-2009 academic year, teachers received a total of 15 professional development hours (including 4 hours for ELA and 4 hours for mathematics). Topics for K-2 teachers included facilitating learning centers, assessment, and vocabulary development for ELL students; topics for grades 3-

5 teachers included open responses, WEX, testing strategies, differentiated instruction, and sheltered English instruction (SEI).

In 2008-2009, Brightwood's school-based literacy coaches—two ILSs for ELA (assigned to grades K-2 and 3-5, respectively) and a Reading First coach—delivered some professional development for teachers on how to set up the literacy block. The school indicated that teachers would receive bi-monthly training on effective implementation of the literacy block. Only one session, however, was offered to address this improvement priority: the February 9th extended day session was dedicated to organizing and facilitating reading centers.

The principal reported that in 2008-2009 the school experimented with a more cohesive and interdisciplinary model of professional development. Specifically, teachers received a two-week training in promoting reading comprehension and the making of inferences through science instruction and science learning centers. According to the Brightwood SIP, the ineffective management of science academic learning time had a negative effect on student performance, while reading comprehension was an area in which students struggled. The district science coach assisted the science Encore teacher and principal with the training, which consisted of an introduction, lessons in which teachers practiced using the material, direct support to facilitate classroom implementation, and feedback for teachers. Two weeks afterward, there was follow-up to the training during team (grade-level) meetings.

ILSs also support teachers directly in the classroom, observing and providing feedback on teacher practice, modeling instruction, sharing ideas and best practices, conducting monthly meetings, deciding on student grouping for interventions, and co-teaching. They use student data to identify which teachers need support, offering their assistance to those whose class data reveals areas of weaker student performance.

Additionally, as required by the district, each ILS spends 20% of his or her time working with one high-need group of students. For example, the mathematics ILS teaches in the 4th grade SEI classroom. The ILS for ELA in grades 3-5, who is enrolled in a training program for mentors through the New Teacher Center at the University of California at Santa Cruz, is mentoring five new teachers. This ILS meets with the new teachers each week and conducts lesson observations based on a specific topic or in accordance with the professional teaching standards.

The implementation of the district's reading plan, using an annotated schedule for the literacy block, has been a focus of the school. Consistent implementation of the reading plan during the literacy block was more evident in grades K-3.

The school identified teachers' inconsistent implementation of the district reading plan as a factor that has impeded growth in student performance. As a result, Brightwood School has focused on implementing the district's 150-minute reading plan (using an annotated schedule) with fidelity. The district reading plan dictates how instructional time for the literacy block should be used, allotting specific amounts of time to whole group and teacher-directed instruction, structured small group instruction, vocabulary development, and writing.

During classroom visits, the review team observed more consistent implementation of the literacy block in grades K-3 than in grades 4 and 5. Specifically, the review team observed K-3 teachers presenting writing lessons and conducting read-alouds, and observed students in learning centers focused on developing phonemic awareness, vocabulary, oral language, writing, and listening comprehension. In one second grade classroom, for example, the teacher led a guided reading group with one small group of students, while a second group of students sat at the ABC word center, where they (1) wrote each word three times, (2) put the words in alphabetical order, and (3) put the words in a sentence. A paraprofessional assisted this group of students, while an ESL teacher worked with a third group of students in a separate classroom.

The school's Reading First coach and the ELA ILS for grades K-2 monitor literacy block implementation frequently. Specifically, they conduct monthly progress monitoring, as well as regular classroom observations in grades K-3—the grade levels covered by the Reading First grant. If the Reading First coach notices that a teacher is not implementing the district reading plan with fidelity, the coach works directly with the teacher to support his or her practice. (The Reading First coach is required to work directly with teachers, supporting instruction, as well as monitoring implementation of the Reading First components.) The Reading First coach and the ELA ILS for K-2 reported that growth occurred in classrooms where teachers followed the annotated schedule. The Reading First coach provides an additional layer of support for teacher practice at the lower grade levels that may ensure fidelity of implementation.

The review team observed less consistent implementation of the literacy block in grades 4 and 5. In one classroom, the review team observed students working independently to define words from a dictionary, rather than in small groups or as a whole class. In another classroom, students were answering mathematical problems during the literacy block. The ELA ILS for grades 3-5 visits classrooms and provides some feedback to teachers. It is not clear whether systems are in place to follow up with teachers who are not implementing schoolwide practices correctly. The principal has conducted some informal observations in grades 4 and 5, but reported that the managerial components of her job make it difficult for her to monitor the upper elementary classrooms regularly. The school leadership team also reported that monitoring for the upper grades is “all over the place.”

In 2008-2009 the Brightwood School has implemented district initiatives and has received district resources that support school improvement.

In the 2008-2009 academic year, Brightwood School established the new district attendance protocol and implemented the Writer's Express program in grades 3 and 4. Both of these initiatives have assisted with school improvement. The district provided the school with an additional ILS for ELA, who works on site in the school, offering additional coverage and support to advance the school's improvement priorities. The district also made three mentors available to the new principal to provide guidance and support during her first year.

Brightwood School staff now carries out the district's new attendance protocol, which consists of a series of actions initiated upon a student's first absence. At Brightwood, the parent facilitator is in charge of attendance-related outreach to families and collaborates with the guidance counselor

and the data entry specialist to monitor and follow up on student absences. Student attendance has improved at the school. Brightwood has exceeded the principal's 92% attendance goal. Daily attendance in 2008-2009 ranged between 92.5% and 94.5%.

After piloting the Writer's Express (WEX) program in 2007-2008, the school implemented the program in grades 3 and 4 in 2008-2009. The district prepared teachers to use WEX by offering several half-day professional development sessions and provided a WEX coach to model the writing program on site and debrief with teachers. Teachers reported that because of WEX students are enjoying the writing process and are writing with greater ease.

The district has assigned staff to support ELA instruction at the school. In addition to funding an ILS for mathematics and for ELA, the district provided Brightwood with an additional ILS for ELA. As a result, the school offers ELA professional development and support targeted to grades K-2 and to 3-5. The district ILS for ELA visits Brightwood regularly and works with both of the school's ILSs for ELA, observing instruction and the implementation of the literacy block, as well as observing ILSs model literacy skills (e.g., teaching genre, using big books) for teachers. The district ILS for ELA also satisfies her required time working with students in a third grade classroom at Brightwood, focusing on writing strategies (WEX).

As a first-year school administrator, the principal was assigned three mentors, including a turnaround specialist, a master principal, and a school management mentor. The principal interacts primarily with the turnaround specialist assigned to Brightwood, who provides guidance and support to the first-year leader.

Key Question 2: Are the conditions in place to continue to support student achievement?

Findings under Key Question 2

Brightwood School MCAS scores have remained fairly stable the past three years in both ELA and mathematics. The school is in restructuring in the aggregate for both subject areas. The school has experienced significant leadership changes during the past few years and is currently under the leadership of its fifth principal in five years. The new principal has implemented several initiatives that have yielded improvements in the current school year. It is too early, however, to know how student performance may be affected.

The school has made progress in increasing support for English language learners. Implementation of interventions for struggling students and students with disabilities has improved although issues with placement and monitoring persist. Under the direction of Brightwood's school-based coaches, teachers analyze data to monitor student progress and determine student grouping. The rigor of instruction is inconsistent across Brightwood classrooms. Through the use of school-based coaches, there are some processes to provide feedback to teachers, particularly in the lower grade levels. There is not a consistent system to provide formalized feedback to improve teacher practice across the school, particularly in grades 4 and 5.

District resources and professional development have assisted the school in improving its support for ELL students.

Support for ELL students has improved at Brightwood. The district has provided the school with resources and technical assistance targeting the improvement of instruction for the school's ELL students, including a review of the school's services for ELL students, professional development workshops and embedded support, and the piloting of a new core reading program focused on developing academic vocabulary. Classroom visits conducted by the review team indicated that teachers are using strategies to support English language development.

In order to improve services for ELL students across the district, the new superintendent requested the Education Alliance at Brown University to work in partnership with the Department to conduct a review of Brightwood's programs for ELL students in fall 2008. The district has also offered Brightwood teachers ELL-focused professional development. The district's ILS for sheltered English instruction works on writing in the second grade, observes teachers, and shares strategies. Furthermore, SEI and ESL teachers reported that the district is "generous" with ELL training. For instance, of the four categories of training required by the Department, the district offers three, and will offer category 4 next year. The school's SEI and ESL teachers completed the category 1 and 2 workshops. The principal is encouraging all teachers to participate in the training.

The district facilitated the Hampton Brown Avenues program pilot in Brightwood's SEI classrooms and ESL classes. (Avenues is a research-based reading program that supports vocabulary development through non-fiction text.) Teachers reported that their input informed the implementation of the pilot process. Specifically, they indicated that school and district

leaders acted on teachers' concern that ELL interventions before Avenues was piloted (e.g., ERI) addressed isolated skills but did not target academic vocabulary development. In focus groups, teachers said that they were very pleased with Avenues, reporting that the thematic units are more engaging, that the writing component is richer, and that the program provides a strong push on academic vocabulary. Teachers also noted that with the program students are more confident in learning English.

During classroom visits, the review team found solid or partial evidence that content was presented within students' English proficiency and developmental level in 26% (n=23) and 43% of the classrooms visited, respectively. For instance, a teacher prompted students to imagine that a character from a book was their newest classmate and asked them to provide directions to guide this character to the nearest restroom. The teacher recorded students' detailed descriptions (e.g., look for the water fountain on the left) on a flip chart. The chart served as a visual record that facilitated student participation. With the chart, students could build on the descriptions their classmates provided and determine the best order for the instructions. After modeling this process, the teacher instructed students to use the same approach and prepare directions to a different school spot. Students would eventually share these directions with their classmates and check whether other students could recognize the place they described. By asking students to write about a familiar location, the teacher leveraged students' personal knowledge and effectively scaffolded the process of writing connected sentences in a paragraph.

The focus on programming and services for ELL students is a recent development. While there is evidence that some practices are being implemented at the classroom level, it is not clear whether implementation is being monitored to ensure consistency across SEI classrooms. The selection of Avenues has been positively received by school staff. However, it is not clear whether there is a plan to gather data to determine program effectiveness and impact on student learning.

Interventions are in place at Brightwood. However, issues persist with the school's support for at-risk students, particularly special education students.

The school has made progress in providing interventions and support for at-risk students and students with disabilities (nearly 21% of the school's population). However, issues with appropriate placement persist, particularly with the school's special education population. The leadership team reported that improving placement and effectively grouping students with disabilities and other students who are struggling was a focus this year. But the range in assessment scores is still too wide within pull-out groups and, as a consequence, students with the greatest need are transitioned from one group to another the most often.

Interventions are conducted in pullout groups. Special education students are pulled out during the entire mathematics block and during 90 minutes of ELA, while ELL students work with ESL teachers during guided reading time. The school uses a series of interventions to support students with special needs, as well as those who are struggling. Interventions include Read Well, Soliday, Read Naturally, Reading Recovery, SPIRE, and Soar to Success. It is not clear, however, how interventions are selected or matched to individual students' needs. Special education teachers reported that they have received training on some of these interventions (e.g.,

Sunday, Read Well), but also reported that they would like to receive more updated and targeted professional development. Special education teachers receive support from the school's ILSs, who are available to observe special education classes, answer questions, and provide feedback. It is not clear how the interventions are monitored for fidelity of implementation.

There is some monitoring of student progress in special education classes. Teachers reported that they monitor student progress with the assessments that accompany the interventions. For instance, teachers reported using Sunday's assessments for progress benchmarking. One teacher reported monitoring phonemic awareness with SPIRE assessments. Teachers indicated, however, that there is no regular time built into the schedule for either ELL or special education teachers to meet with classroom teachers to discuss students' progress or to make modifications to interventions.

The school's leadership team reported that the school has fallen behind in completing individual student success plans—a process to move struggling students out of the at-risk category. Each plan lists the interventions in place to support the student's progress. Currently, there are at least 225 incomplete plans.

Brightwood teachers use a variety of interventions to address students who are struggling as well as students with disabilities. However, it is not clear how the interventions are chosen or matched to students' needs, if all teachers have been properly trained, or if interventions and supports being provided are properly monitored to ensure that they are increasing student learning.

School-based coaches analyze data and use it to help teachers monitor student progress, group students, assign students to interventions, and improve their instruction.

With the guidance of the Brightwood's ILSs for mathematics and ELA, as well as the Reading First coach, the school has processes to analyze data. The school's ILSs and Reading First coach analyze student data with teachers during weekly team (grade-level) meetings. ILSs engage teachers in data analysis and guide teachers in the process of examining MCAS results, district benchmark assessments (DBAs), and unit tests. The school has used the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) for its district reading benchmark assessment, but will use the Fountas & Pinnell assessment in 2009-2010. The school also uses the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), Grade, Differentiated Reading Instruction (DRI), and Sunday assessments.

In focus groups, teachers reported that school-based coaches provide and interpret data charts during team meetings. Data is used to monitor student progress, guide student grouping, and assign students to interventions. The Reading First coach and the ELA ILS for grades K-2 conduct monthly progress monitoring (using, e.g., DIBELS). Both of Brightwood's ILSs for ELA analyze students' monthly writing samples and prepare charts for teachers that outline strengths and weaknesses. The ILS for ELA in grades 3-5 analyzes the October, January, and March DBA results and discusses student performance with teachers. The ILS for ELA (3-5) reported prompting teachers during these conversations to analyze bar graphs or scores,

determine potential gaps, and propose next steps, asking teachers to write down one strategy they could implement to address problem areas.

The mathematics ILS collects quarterly DBA data, as well as data from monthly and end-of-unit assessments, and presents item analyses to teachers. If the data reveals that students struggled with a particular topic, teachers review student data and identify students not meeting benchmarks, and the topics are revisited. The mathematics ILS instructs teachers to link the topic that was problematic for students with the new topic, rather than stop the pacing of lessons. The ILS for mathematics stated, “Teachers don’t stop and go back to re-teach the entire concept.”

In focus groups, teachers generally reported perceiving data analysis favorably. Teachers provided examples to illustrate how data analysis has had an impact on their work in the classroom. Teachers in grades K-3, for example, indicated that monitoring provides useful information on student progress, while teachers in grades 4 and 5 reported that analyses provided by the ILSs help guide their instruction. One teacher reported that the analysis from one set of writing samples indicated that her students needed support in writing conclusions and writing with richer detail.

The Brightwood School is focused on using data to understand student performance. School-based coaches conduct most of the analysis and are instrumental in supporting staff in data use. While most teachers are able to discuss the data, others are in the elementary stages of understanding the use of data to improve teaching and learning.

The rigor of instruction in Brightwood classrooms is inconsistent. Processes to provide teachers feedback on instructional practice are more consistent in the lower grades.

Efforts at Brightwood School to improve teaching and learning have been previously described in this report. Although effective practice is evident at Brightwood, there are also pockets of instruction that continue to require improvement. Many classrooms visited by the review team showed characteristics of effective instruction, particularly in the lower grades, where processes to monitor instruction and provide teachers with feedback are more consistent. However, many classrooms lacked rigor.

The review team conducted visits to 23 classrooms across content areas and grade levels at Brightwood, including sheltered English instruction (SEI) classrooms and special education classes. The review team found evidence of effective instruction in these visits. There was solid evidence that available class time was maximized for learning in 35 percent (n=23) of the classrooms visited. The review team also noted solid evidence that lesson pacing supported active student engagement in 30 percent of classrooms visited. In one classroom, for example, a teacher effectively managed time: the teacher reviewed vocabulary pertaining to the activity (e.g., “probability,” “chance,” “outcome”) to activate prior knowledge, explained the procedure for the activity, and facilitated a hands-on activity (a probability game in which students rolled a pair of dice and determined whether certain sums were rolled more often than others). While solid lesson pacing and active student engagement were noted in approximately one-third of classrooms, only partial or limited evidence was noted in other classrooms.

The review team also noted an inconsistency in the rigor of instructional practice. That is, rigorous instruction was detected in some, but not all, classrooms. In 78 percent of the classrooms, there was no evidence of questions that required students to engage in a process of application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. During classroom visits, the review team observed that instruction was mostly teacher-centered. In 70 percent of the classrooms, instruction was delivered with a single technique (e.g., only teacher-led, with students completing independent work). Furthermore, most lessons were not structured to allow students to articulate their thinking and reasoning (70 percent), or to give students the opportunity to apply new knowledge and content (78 percent). In 65 percent of the classrooms visited, there was no evidence of students inquiring, exploring, or problem-solving with a partner or in small groups. These higher-order thinking skills are central to rigorous classroom instruction and are being elicited at only a limited rate in Brightwood classrooms.

The leadership team reported that instructional improvement is more evident in grades K-3, where the school's Reading First coach and the ELA ILS for grades K-2 conduct regular classroom observations. K-2 teachers reported that the principal conducts informal observations and provides them with some written feedback. The ELA ILS for grades 3-5 visits classrooms. However, unlike the Reading First coach, the ILS role is designed to offer assistance to teachers who solicit their support. In addition, implementation of strategies learned during professional development is more frequently monitored in the lower grades. The principal conducted a few informal observations focused on the classroom environment in grades 4 and 5 this year, but does not regularly monitor classrooms. According to school leadership, as late as March the focus of their work with the upper grades was on classroom environment rather than instruction.

Classroom visits conducted by the review team suggest that there are pockets of quality instruction that provide the school a resource to build upon. There are also areas that require focused attention and improvement. Current processes to provide teachers with feedback on their instructional practice are more consistent at the lower grade levels, where the Reading First coach provides an additional layer of support. In order to continue to increase the rigor of instruction across Brightwood classrooms, all teachers require frequent and specific feedback to improve instruction and classroom practices.

Appendix A: Brightwood School Review Team Members

The review of the Brightwood School in the Springfield Public Schools was conducted from June 8-9, 2009, by a team of educators from SchoolWorks, LLC on behalf of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Gwendolyn Casazza, Consultant, SchoolWorks

Dr. Janet Williams, Consultant, SchoolWorks

Appendix B: Review Activities and Schedule

Activities conducted at the Brightwood School

The following activities were conducted as part of the review of the Brightwood School, Springfield Public Schools.

- The review team conducted interviews and focus groups with the following representatives from the Brightwood School:
 - Principal and leadership team (lead teacher, or head teacher who oversees administrative duties in the absence of school administrators; and ELA ILS for grades 3-5)
 - Improvement planning team, including instructional leadership specialists for mathematics, ELA (K-2), and ELA (3-5), and Reading First coach
 - Teachers from grades K, 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5
 - ESL and special education teachers
 - Paraprofessionals
- The team conducted 23 classroom visits at the school in ELA and mathematics in grades K, 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. The review team visited sheltered English instruction (SEI) classrooms and special education pullout classes.
- The team reviewed the following documents at the district and school levels:
 - School Improvement Plan (2008-2010), addendum, and principal reflection
 - Extended day schedule (2008-2009)
 - ILS agendas
 - Learning Walk feedback
 - Principal performance goals

Schedule for review of the Brightwood School

Brightwood School Site Visit Schedule – Monday, June 8, 2009		
Time	Team Member 1	Team Member 2
7:30–8:30 AM	Team arrives at school; morning meeting	
8:30–9:30 AM	Focus group with school leadership	
9:30–11:30 AM	Classroom visits	
11:30–12:00 PM	Focus group with school-based coaches	
12:00–1:00 PM	Lunch; mid-day meeting and team debrief	
1:00–2:00 PM	Focus Group with kindergarten, grade 1 and grade 2 teachers	Classroom visits
2:00–2:30 PM	Follow up with school-based coaches	
2:30–3:30 PM	Focus group with special education teachers	Focus group with ESL teachers
3:30–5:00 PM	Team debrief and evidence sorting	
5:00 PM	Team departs	

Brightwood School Site Visit Schedule – Tuesday, June 9, 2009		
Time	Team Member 1	Team Member 2
7:30–8:30 AM	Team arrives at school; morning meeting	
8:30–9:30 AM	Follow up with school leadership	
9:30–10:30 AM	Document review and team debrief	
10:30–11:30 AM	Classroom visits	
11:30–12:00 PM	Document review	
12:00–1:00 PM	Lunch; mid-day meeting and team debrief	
1:00–1:30 PM	Classroom visits	
1:30–2:30 PM	Focus group with grade 3, grade 4, and grade 5 teachers	
2:30–3:00 PM	Focus group with paraprofessionals	
3:00–5:00 PM	Team debrief and evidence sorting	
5:00–6:00 PM	Team report of evidence and key learnings with school leadership	
6:00 PM	Team departs	