

Action Plan
for
Equity and Excellence

Lexington Public Schools

May 5, 2009

Submitted by the Achievement Gap Task Force

PREFACE

In January 2008, Superintendent Paul Ash accepted the report, *The Achievement Gap in the Lexington Public Schools: Documentation, Research, and Recommendations*, and set the Lexington Public Schools on a course that very few high-performing, suburban school districts had dared to take. All available measures of student achievement in the Lexington Public Schools indicated that African American and Hispanic students at all levels were significantly (some might say “shockingly”) underperforming when compared to their White and Asian peers. Lost in aggregate measures of achievement that put Lexington among the top performing districts in the state and the country, the small numbers of African American and Hispanic students in Lexington were “getting by,” but far too few were achieving at proficient or advanced levels. Dr. Ash made it clear that the status quo was academically, socially, and morally unacceptable. The findings of the Achievement Gap Report were presented to all elementary, middle, and high school faculty; to the School Committee at its annual meeting in Boston; to the PTA Presidents’ Council; and to the public. Dr. Ash quickly accepted the first recommendation in the Achievement Gap Report: empanel an *Achievement Gap Task Force* (AGTF) with a charge to create a research-based Action Plan for closing those gaps while improving achievement for all students.

The AGTF convened for the first time in March 2008, met nine times over the past year, and regularly posted meeting minutes and other documents relevant to its work on the LPS website. What follows this introduction is the Lexington Public Schools’ *Action Plan for Equity and Excellence*. The plan includes a number of actions targeted to address our METCO students’ unique needs. This is entirely appropriate and necessary. However, the great majority of actions are those which will affect all students in a positive way. For this reason, the *Achievement Gap Task Force* has been renamed to the *Equity and Excellence Task Force* (EETF), a more inclusive and more accurate description that does not in any way abandon the original intent of the Superintendent. This plan was reviewed and revised by the task force before forwarding it to the Superintendent and the Administrative Council for further review and revision. It is vital to underscore the fact that this is a living document, one that will change as experience and research demand. Therefore, regular reporting of the task force to the School Committee in public session is necessary to ensure transparency, to sustain the sense of urgency for this work, and to report results.

The work of the task force has been informed not only by data and research, but also by the findings of the Montgomery County (MD) Visiting Team, who have seen and studied firsthand the practices and processes of one of the most successful gap-closing school districts in the country. What is abundantly clear is this: the practices that produce narrowing and closing of racial, ethnic, and socio-economic achievement gaps are the practices that will improve achievement for all students. Professional Learning Communities that develop standards-based common assessments linked to data-driven instruction via tiered-intervention strategies will benefit all students. Enhancing and measuring not only student achievement, but also student engagement will benefit all students. Structuring a school day with abundant extended learning opportunities for students and common planning time

for teachers will benefit all students. Wise and widespread use of technology and imbedded, on-going, targeted professional development for all staff will benefit all students.

If we are to succeed in this endeavor, the most profound change must be one of scientific acceptance, not just belief that all students can achieve at proficient or higher levels. There are schools across this country (see Karin Chenoweth's [It's Being Done: Academic Success in Unexpected Schools](#)) where acutely disadvantaged children are achieving and gaps are being closed. For decades, educators had been asked to *believe* that all children can learn at high levels. However, in spite of well-intentioned efforts, the achievement gaps among subgroups have persisted, throwing many into doubt. Finally, however, educational research has led to the development of an increasingly unified body of best practices which validate the claim that academic ability is developable, not fixed by aptitude or biological endowment. No longer should educators or anyone else use race or poverty or other external factors as excuses. No longer should educators accept underachievement as something beyond their control. Understanding the fact that academic ability is malleable, we will close the gaps in academic achievement among different groups of students when we have effectively taught all of our students how to learn by using high-quality teaching and instruction of rigorous, relevant curriculum in every classroom.

We would like to express our deep appreciation to the members of the Achievement Gap Task Force (listed on a subsequent page), who voluntarily served for many, many hours to develop a plan for the benefit of all students. We also know that without the leadership and fierce determination of Dr. Ash and his representative on the task force, Dr. Celli, the Achievement Gap Report could easily have joined multiple, aging binders gathering dust on office shelves. Finally, we acknowledge that the most important factor in a student's success in school is a skillful and dedicated teacher. To the faculty of the Lexington Public Schools, who must make the *Action Plan for Equity and Excellence* a daily reality for all students, we owe a great present and future debt.

Steven Flynn and Vito LaMura, Co-Chairs

Equity and Excellence Task Force

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NOTE: For easy reference, each item in the Action Plan is numbered by Phase (1, 2, 3, or 4) and the order in which it appears in that phase. The phases refer to the fiscal years of this four-year plan: Phase 1 was FY08, Phase 2 is the current FY09, Phase 3 is FY10, and Phase 4 is FY11. Thus, an action item numbered 2.5 is the fifth item in Phase 2 (FY09).

RESPONSIBLE PERSONS

Throughout this report on the Lexington Public Schools *Action Plan for Equity and Excellence*, reference is made to the titles of the *Person(s) Responsible* for the planning and implementation of various aspects of the plan. Rather than repeat those individuals' names again and again in the body of the report, their names are listed below:

Achievement Gap Task Force (AGTF):

Steven Flynn, Co-Chair & Clarke Middle School Principal
Paul Ash, Superintendent
William Cole, High School Dean
LaDawn Dubose, Boston Parent
Stephanie Grimaldi, K-5 Literacy Department Head
William Huff, Boston Parent
Abigail Maxton, Diamond Middle School Counselor
Elaine Mead, Harrington School Principal
Phyllis Neufeld, LEA President
Cheryl Prescott-Walden, METCO Director

Vito LaMura, Co-Chair
Lynne Celli, Deputy Superintendent
Rachel Cortez, Lexington Parent
Sharon FitzGerald, K-5 Math Specialist
Deborah Hoard, Lexington Parent
Edith Lipinski, K-5 Math Specialist
Kathleen McCarthy, K-5 Literacy Department Head
Anna Monaco, Clarke Middle School Asst. Principal
Nancy Peterson, Fiske School Principal
Jennifer Wolcott, Lexington High School Faculty

Central Office Administration: Paul Ash, Superintendent; Lynne Celli, Deputy Superintendent; Carol Pilarski, Assistant Superintendent; Robert Harris, Assistant Superintendent; Mary Ellen Dunn, Assistant Superintendent; Linda Chase, Director of Student Services; Chris Greeley, Assistant Director of Student Services

Curriculum Leaders: Kathleen McCarthy, K-5 Literacy Department Head; Karen Tripoli, K-5 Mathematics Department Head; Stephanie Grimaldi

Director of Technology: Marianne McKenna

Library Media Specialist: Brenda Rich

Literacy Leadership Committee: Kathleen McCarthy; Mary Anton-Oldenburg, Bowman Principal; Linda Chase; Robyn Dowling Grant, ELL Coordinator; Chris Greeley; Cheryl Prescott-Walden; James Russo, Special Ed Supervisor; Lynn Sarasin; Beverly Hegedus, Special Ed Supervisor; Stephanie Grimaldi

Mathematics Leadership Committee: Karen Tripoli; Martha Batten, Estabrook Principal; Martha Bakken, Special Ed Supervisor; Chris Greeley; Cheryl Prescott-Walden; Robyn Dowling-Grant

METCO Staff: Cheryl Prescott-Walden; Joel Villegas, High School Counselor; Gail Cody, Middle School Counselor; Barbara Nobles, Elementary Social Worker; Cheryl Crowder, Elementary Social Worker

Montgomery County (MD) Visiting Team: Lynne Celli; Vito LaMura; Steven Flynn; Nancy Peterson, Fiske Principal; Laura Lasa, LHS Dean; Cheryl Prescott-Walden; Martha Bakken; Rosanne Barbacano, Bowman Faculty; Jesse Richardson, Estabrook Faculty; Kari Zbikowski, Fiske Faculty; Kathy Martin, Harrington Faculty; Gail Grimes, Hastings Faculty; Eddie Davey, Clarke Faculty; Abigail Maxton; Dane Despres, LHS Faculty; Gary Simon, LHS Mathematics Department Head; Phyllis Neufeld, LEA President

Principals: Natalie Cohen, Lexington High School; Steven Flynn, Clarke Middle School; Joanne Hennessy, Diamond Middle School; Mary Anton-Oldenburg, Bowman Elementary; Jade Reitman, Bridge Elementary; Martha Batten, Estabrook Elementary; Nancy Peterson, Fiske Elementary; Elaine Mead, Harrington Elementary; Louise Lipsitz, Hastings Elementary

School Committee: Margaret E. Coppe, Chair; Rodney Cole, Vice-Chair; Thomas R. Diaz; Mary Ann Stewart; Jessie Steigerwald

Action Plan for Equity and Excellence

PHASE	ACTION	STUDENTS	LEVEL	STATUS
1.1	Form the Achievement Gap Task Force (renamed: Equity and Excellence Task Force)	All	System	In operation April 2008
1.2	Pilot middle school tutoring support using substitute teachers to free up teacher volunteers	All	6-8	Completed June 2008
1.3	Implement full-day kindergarten	All	K-5	In operation September 2008
1.4	Establish METCO bus-time programs	METCO	K-5	In operation October 2008
1.5	Collaborate with the Harvard Achievement Gap Initiative	All	System	In operation April 2008
2.1a	Establish elementary Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)	All	K-5	In operation August 2007
2.1b	Establish middle school Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)	All	6-8	In operation August 2007
2.1c	Establish high school Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)	All	9-12	In operation August 2008
2.2a	Create common planning/PLC time in the elementary schools	All	K-5	In operation August 2008
2.2b	Create common planning time in the middle schools	All	6-8	In operation August 2008
2.3	Visit the Montgomery County, MD, Public Schools	All	System	Completed October 2008
2.4	Provide up to 2 hours literacy and 1 hour math instruction daily in the elementary schools	All	K-5	Piloting schedule in 2008-2009
2.5a	Develop tiered intervention system for literacy in the elementary schools	All	K-5	Piloting program in 2008-2009
2.5b	Develop tiered intervention system for literacy in the middle schools	All	6-8	Full implementation in September 2009
2.6a	Develop tiered intervention system for mathematics in elementary schools	All	K-5	Planning future implementation in 2008-2009
2.6b	Develop tiered intervention system for mathematics in middle schools	All	6-8	In operation August 2008
2.7	Develop, plan, and budget for mandatory, after-school extended learning program for elementary METCO students	METCO	2-5	Planning implementation for September 2009
2.8	Improve METCO parent-school communication	METCO	System	Planning program in 2008-2009
2.9	Provide METCO parents with training to support achievement	METCO	System	Planning program in 2008-2009
2.10a	Develop a mentor program for K-8 METCO students	METCO	K-8	Planning for future implementation in 2009-2010

2.10b	Develop a METCO Scholars program at the high school	METCO	9-12	Planning for implementation in August 2009
2.11	Conduct a comprehensive review of METCO resource allocation, job descriptions, programs	METCO	System	To be completed June 2009
2.12	Improve data storage/retrieval systems; provide tech support/training	All	System	Planning future implementation in 2008-2009
2.13	Provide funds to support the Action Plan	All	System	In operation FY09
2.14	Publish all available results data on a regular basis	ALL	System	In operation March 2009
3.1	Create Data Teams linked to School Improvement Plans to monitor academics and student engagement	All	System	Planning future implementation in 2009-2010
3.2	Develop common formative assessments	All	K-8	To be completed June 2010
3.3	Maximize extended learning time: intervention/enhancement	All	System	On-going effort w/ substantial progress by September 2010
3.4	Develop tiered intervention system for literacy	All	9-12	To be completed September 2010
3.6	Increase secondary enrollments in higher level courses (with requisite support) to a level at least 50% of general population	METCO	6-12	To be completed September 2010
4.1	Develop common formative assessments	All	9-12	To be completed September 2011
4.2	Develop mandatory summer school	METCO	System	To be completed by summer 2011

NOTE: Following this summary chart are the expanded action items for all of Phase 1 and Phase 2. There is at this writing only one expanded item from Phase 3. The Task Force will be working with the responsible person(s) to complete the expansion of all items in Phases 3 and 4 by the start of school in August 2009.

Action 1.1: *Create an Achievement Gap Task Force (AGTF) as recommended in the January 2008 report, The Achievement Gap in the Lexington Public Schools: Documentation, Research, and Recommendations*

Target Groups: All LPS Staff and Students

Person(s) Responsible: AGTF Co-Chairs

Revisions: 11/20/08; 3/10/09; 4/21/09

Timeline: Phase 1 (FY08) **ACCOMPLISHED**

Benchmarks/Performance Targets:

1. Create and seek approval for an expanded Action Item template in October/November 2008
2. Upon approval of template, distribute to accountable leaders for completion by December 15, 2008
3. Distribute METCO parent survey in fall 2008; collect and analyze results in fall 2008
4. Examine the findings of the Montgomery County, MD, visiting team in the fall 2008; adjust Action Plan accordingly
5. Report to School Committee at its fall 2008 Boston meeting
6. Develop an oversight and reporting plan for the remainder of FY 09 by February 1, 2009
7. Determine how to merge AGTF and Montgomery County visiting team by February 1, 2009
8. Report to School Committee in May 2009

Budgetary Implications: None

Accomplishments:

1. Formed 15-member Achievement Gap Task Force (AGTF) in April 2008 with representatives from the CO, building administrators, teachers, curriculum leaders, METCO director, Lexington and Boston parents
2. Expanded membership in fall 2008 to include an additional elementary principal and the LEA president
3. Created an Action Plan draft in the fall of 2008, which was subsequently revised and provisionally approved by the Administrative Council
4. Met nine times to date
5. Recommended and received approval for additional math/language arts tutoring by volunteer teachers at Clarke and Diamond in May and June 2008
6. Recommended and received approval to purchase multiple books-on-tape devices for elementary METCO student use during bus ride to/from Lexington
7. Developed METCO parent survey in November, 2008; distributed survey to all Boston parents by Nov. 20, 2008
8. Reported to School Committee at its November 18, 2008, meeting in Boston: activities of AGTF to date; Action Plan preliminary draft; preliminary findings of visit to Montgomery County, MD
9. Completed AGTF review of Action plan first draft on March 10, 2009; completed Administrative Council review on April 14, 2009
10. Merged AGTF and Montgomery County group on April 16, 2009; renamed to Equity and Excellence Task Force (EETF)

Action 1.2: *Establish middle school tutoring support using substitute teachers to free up teacher volunteers*

Target Group: Grade 6 -8 Students

Person(s) Responsible: Middle School Principals

Revisions: 1/9/09; 2/15/09; 3/19/09; 4/21/09

Timeline: Phase 1 (FY08) **ACCOMPLISHED**

Benchmarks/Performance Targets:

Pilot a program of extended learning in mathematics/literacy during May and June 2008

Budgetary Implications: \$3000 of FY08 funds

Accomplishments:

1. Reviewed English/language arts and mathematics MCAS results on students identified as not achieving proficiency in grade 6 and 7 in 2007
2. Identified students from all subgroups who were not yet receiving intervention support
3. Examined DASSP item analysis
4. Identified teacher volunteers to do tutoring; matched students to teachers
5. Met eight times per week for four weeks for one-to-one intervention in mathematics only; isolated specific items to work on from May 5, 2008, to June 6, 2008, but due to the short period of time, results not measurable
6. Examined MCAS data in depth, respective of each individual student; targeted content vocabulary and open response questions for skill intervention; met for one-on-one intervention sessions once a week for four weeks; 50% of the 12 students showed improvement from 2007 to 2008 on MCAS

NOTE: Skills differences on test items emerged in reading fluency, not only on English questions but also as applied to mathematics items. Students had difficulty with open response questions, which often account for 20/54 points on the MCAS tests. Students needed more time to read passages and needed to be prompted not to “rush through the test.” Students needed to use highlighters to underline important facts, check their work to catch errors, write in the margins to remember ideas, and use graphic organizers to structure their thoughts. Students with a choice between several graphic organizers needed to know which one was appropriate to use.

Action 1.3: *Implement Full-Day Kindergarten (FDK) program, made possible by DESE Transition and implementation grants*

Target Group: Twenty FDK classrooms

Person(s) Responsible: Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Elementary Principals, Kindergarten Teachers and Elementary Curriculum Specialists

Revisions: 1/14/09; 2/1/09

Timeline: Phase 1 (FY08) **ACCOMPLISHED September 2008**

Benchmarks/Performance Targets:

1. Plan for and implement full-day kindergarten by September 2008
2. Plan for evaluation of FDK success: assessment surveys to be distributed to parents and teachers on April 27, 2009, with results to be presented to School Committee on June 16, 2009

Budgetary Implications:

The continuing implementation of the FDK classes at the tuition rate per student of \$1075 will be largely dependent on the state's budget (July 1, 2009). Tuition may need to be increased.

Accomplishments:

1. Welcomed 388 students into 20 FDK classrooms on the opening day of school in FY09
2. Welcomed nine students into a half-day Kindergarten program at the Bowman school based on parental requests
3. Charged a tuition fee of \$1025 for each student; made scholarship money available to those families unable to pay based on the district's and state's sliding fee scale
4. Met three times to date as a FDK Task Force to review the status of the first year of implementation
5. Developed evaluation/feedback surveys for teachers and parents (distribution in late April 2009) to assess the success of the program
6. Modified the Kindergarten Orientation for parents to reflect the current FDK program and the elimination of the dedicated half-day program

Action 1.4: *Establish METCO bus-time programs*

Target Group: K-5 METCO Students

Person(s) Responsible: METCO Director, AGTF, Library Media Specialist, METCO Elementary Staff

Revisions: 1/29/09; 3/12/09

Timeline: Phases 1 and 2 (FY08 and FY09)

Phase 1 ACCOMPLISHED

Benchmarks/Performance Targets:

1. Purchase a series of PlayAways (books on tape devices) in June 2008 as recommended by the AGTF for use on METCO elementary buses during the afternoon rides home
2. Purchase additional supplies to complement/supplement the actual PlayAways in September 2008
3. Introduce the goals and use of PlayAways to elementary METCO Transportation and support staff in the fall 2008; train staff in ways to implement and manage the program
4. Introduce goals and list of PlayAway titles to K-5 librarians and parents in fall 2008
5. Implement PlayAway program on elementary buses in October 2008
6. Evaluate impact of PlayAway program in spring 2009

Budgetary Implications:

- FY08: Purchase of PlayAways for approximately \$3800
- FY09: Additional supplies for approximately \$900
- Anticipated additional expenses: approximately \$400 for replacement batteries and headphones

Accomplishments:

1. Purchased PlayAways in June 2008
2. Completed inventory and labeling in September 2008
3. Purchased additional supplies in September 2008 (ear buds, splitters, organizational boxes, carrying cases, labels, color coded dots, etc.)
4. Notified librarians in September 2008
5. Held METCO staff training in October 2008
6. Introduced program to students and parents and implemented in October 2008
7. Developed and implemented a system-wide plan for evaluation of program in November 2008; included students' rating system, story summaries, tracking of books
8. Collected data on PlayAway use in February 2009 (bus monitors and METCO social workers)
9. Reported preliminary results to AGTF in February 2009
10. Continued revision of plan to develop the educational benefits of listening to Playaways K-5: retelling, writing, and sequencing from February to April 2009

Action 1.5: *Collaborate with the Harvard Achievement Gap Initiative*

Target Groups: AGTF and District Leadership

Person(s) Responsible: Superintendent and
AGTF Co-Chairs

Revisions: 1/12/09; 2/1/09

Timeline: All Phases (FY08 to FY11)
Phase 1 ACCOMPLISHED

Benchmarks/Performance Targets:

1. Communication bi-annually with Dr. Ronald Ferguson and his Achievement Gap Initiative (AGI) team
2. Attend the annual Harvard AGI Conference
3. Disseminate AGI Conference papers and presentations
4. Evaluate and act upon promising findings of AGI Conference

Budgetary Implications: None

Accomplishments:

1. Met (Superintendent and AGTF Co-Chairs) with Dr. Ferguson in spring 2008 to discuss the LPS initiative
2. Invited by Dr. Ferguson to attend and present at AGI Conference in June 2008
3. Attended (AGTF Co-Chairs, District Leadership Team, METCO Director, and LEA President) AGI Conference; presented Lexington's gap-establishing research and preliminary gap-closing plans to the conference in June 2008
4. Attended (an AGTF representative) a March 10, 2009, seminar on recent publications sponsored by Harvard's AGI; reported findings to the Superintendent

Action 2.1a: *Implement data-informed, action-oriented Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in elementary schools*

Target Groups: K-5 Staff and Students

Person(s) Responsible: Central Office and Principals

Revisions: 1/15/09; 3/12/09

Timeline: All Phases (FY08 to FY11)

Phase 1 ACCOMPLISHED

Benchmarks/Performance Targets:

1. Provide professional development for staff on the development of PLCs in FY08
2. Initiate and support Professional Learning Communities from FY08 to the present
 - a. Form grade level PLC teams at each school
 - b. Meet 30 minutes per week or one hour every other week.
 - c. Develop SMART goals focused on student achievement in mathematics or language arts
3. Provide professional development for staff on formative assessments in FY09
 - a. Select teacher to represent each PLC in every school at workshops
 - b. Attend workshops and work with PLC teams to expand and refine use of formative assessments in the classroom.

Budgetary Implications:

LEF grant funds supported the following:

- Attendance at PLC institute for administrators in the summer 2007 and school-based teams in the summer 2009
- Professional development keynote speakers in the fall 2007 (Dr. Richard and Ms. Rebecca DuFour)
- Professional development workshops on formative assessments in November, January, and March 2009 (Performance Pathways)

Accomplishments:

1. Created PLC team SMART goals
2. Developed PLC team feedback forms
3. Developed formative assessments
4. Held PLC sharing in May 2008 and May 2009
5. Monitored student performance (Lexington benchmarks, MCAS)
6. Created a systematic process in which teachers work together, analyze curriculum, and deliver classroom instruction to support student learning

Action 2.1b: *Implement data-informed, action-oriented Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in middle schools*

Target Groups: Grade 6-8 Staff and Students

Person(s) Responsible: Central Office and Principals

Revisions: 1/15/09; 3/11/09

Timeline: All Phases (FY08 to FY11)

Phase 1 ACCOMPLISHED

Benchmarks/Performance Targets:

1. Target professional development to support staff participation in PLCs
2. Initiate and support Professional Learning Communities starting in 2007
 - a. Create PLC teams
 - b. Focus dialogue around the delivery of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to increase student learning
3. Continue to build capacity for staff to function as high performing Professional Learning Communities

Budgetary Implications:

LEF grant funds supported the following: (Future budget needs are to be determined)

1. Professional development in the area of Professional Learning Communities
2. Curriculum mapping
3. Creating common assessments.

Accomplishments:

1. Shared action research in FY07 and FY08
2. Created content PLCs for each curriculum area following presentation of Dr. Richard and Ms. Rebecca DuFour
3. Dedicated PLC work to curriculum mapping, creating common assessments, data analysis, and instructional techniques
4. Continued to provide professional development in the use of technology, curriculum mapping, and creating common assessments
5. Analyzed and disseminated MCAS results using data analysis software
6. Identified areas for curricular and instructional improvement for students (specifically not making AYP)
7. Created a systematic process in which teachers work together, analyze curriculum, and deliver classroom instruction to support student learning

Action 2.1c: *Implement data-informed, action-oriented Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) at Lexington High School*

Target Groups: Grade 9-12 Staff and Students **Person(s) Responsible:** Central Office and Principal

Revisions: 1/20/09

Timeline: Phases 2 - 4 (FY09 - FY11)

Benchmarks/Performance Targets:

1. Provide professional development for staff on the development of PLCs in FY09
2. Initiate and support Professional Learning Communities starting in 2008
 - a. Form grade-level and course-based PLC teams
 - b. Establish common planning time during and after school for PLCs to meet weekly
 - c. Establish PLC team norms
 - d. Develop SMART goals, determine essential standards, and develop, administer, and analyze a common assessment for a single common unit
3. Provide professional development for staff on common assessments in FY09

Budgetary Implications:

LEF funds supported the following: (Future budget needs are to be determined)

- Attendance at PLC institute for administrators and some faculty from each department in summer 2008
- Professional development keynote speaker in fall 2007 (Dr. Richard and Ms. Rebecca DuFour)
- Professional development conference on common assessment in November 2008 for a team of six representative faculty and administrators

Accomplishments:

1. *Journey Coalition* formed from faculty and administrators who attended PLC Institute in summer 2008
2. Team sent to Common Assessments Conference in November 2008
3. PLCs established and norms set in November 2008
4. Team Smart Goal reported out to department leaders in January 2009
5. Common Assessment developed, refined, and forwarded to department leaders in March 2009

Action 2.2a: *Create Professional Learning Community (PLC) time for classroom teachers in grades K-5*

Target Group: K-5 Teachers

Person(s) Responsible: Elementary Principals

Revisions: 12/7/08

Timeline: Phase 2 (FY09) **ACCOMPLISHED**

Benchmarks/Performance Targets:

1. Create school-wide schedules that provide common PLC time of 30 minutes per week for all grade-level teachers for the 2008-2009 school year
2. Maximize opportunities for additional grade-level PLC time through scheduling of specialist classes in each building for 2009-2010 school year

Budgetary Implications: None

Accomplishments:

1. Created 30 minutes per week of common PLC time in addition to contractual preparation time at each grade level by adjusting specialist schedules
2. Created opportunity for support staff (math specialist, literacy specialist, guidance counselor, special educators) to meet with classroom teachers during common PLC times
3. Created PLC team SMART goals
4. Developed PLC team feedback forms
5. Developed formative assessments
6. Held PLC sharing in May 2008 and May 2009
7. Monitored student performance: Lexington benchmarks, MCAS
8. Created a systematic process in which teachers work together, analyze curriculum, and deliver classroom instruction to support student learning

Action 2.2b: *Create common planning time for teachers in grades 6-8*

Target Group: Grade 6 – 8 Staff

Person(s) Responsible: Middle School Principals

Revisions: 1/9/09

Timeline: Phase 2 (FY09) **ACCOMPLISHED**

Benchmarks/Performance Targets:

1. Increase common planning time for teachers in 2008-2009 school year
2. Collaborate on creating master schedules in the summer 2008
3. Provide PLC professional development

Budgetary Implications: None

Accomplishments:

Principal collaboration resulted in the following:

1. Provided one planning block (in the master schedule) for grade level content teachers to meet
2. Provided one planning block for special education teachers
3. Provided one planning block per week for co-teachers
4. Dedicated contractual meeting time to PLC work
5. Sent teachers to the PLC Institute in the summer 2008

Action 2.3: *Visit Montgomery County, MD, Public Schools to learn about best practices in closing achievement gaps for all students*

Target Groups: K-12 Staff and Students

Person Responsible: Deputy Superintendent

Revisions: 1/15/09; 4/15/09

Timeline: Phase 2 (FY09) **ACCOMPLISHED**

Benchmarks/Performance Targets:

1. Form representative team to visit Montgomery County, MD, Public Schools: K-12 teachers, elementary, middle school, and high school administrators, Central Office administrators, Student Services, METCO, LEA President, and the Chairs of the Achievement Gap Task Force
2. Create framework to focus visit : advanced readings, focused questions for site visit, including visits to schools in Montgomery
3. Visit Montgomery County, MD Public Schools in October 2008
4. Reconvene team to synthesize information/data learned from visit
5. Develop power point presentation to be shared with School Committee/public highlighting *take-aways*
6. Plan building-based panel discussions to get the message out regarding *take-aways* from Montgomery County
7. Plan roles of visiting team to Montgomery County and the Achievement Gap Task Force

Budgetary Implications:

- \$10,000 for airfare, hotel, car rental and ancillary expenses to be paid from FY 09 METCO budget (Achievement Gap line item)
- Additional expenses to be determined during ongoing roll-out and replication of best practices

Accomplishments:

1. Held two planning meetings in October 2008: discussion of background readings, review of Montgomery County data/outcomes, review of framework for visit
2. Completed visit from October 28-30, 2008
3. Held follow-up meetings to synthesize information/data/best practices
4. Prepared power point for School Committee/public; presented to School Committee on November 18, 2008
5. Participated in Panel Discussion at School Committee on December 4, 2008
6. Scheduled faculty meetings in all buildings on February 2, 2009, to present *best practices & take-aways* from Montgomery County visit
7. Scheduled voluntary follow-up meetings at each building to share materials from Montgomery County visit and answer and further questions
8. Merged AGTF and Montgomery County group on April 16, 2009; renamed to Equity and Excellence Task Force (EETF)

Action 2.4: *Provide 600 minutes per week of literacy instruction at grades K-2, 450 minutes of literacy instruction per week at grades 3-5, and 300 minutes per week of mathematics instruction at grades K-5*

Target Group: Elementary Schools

Person(s) Responsible: K-5 Literacy Department Head, K-5 Mathematics Department Head, and Principals

Revisions: 1/15/09; 3/10/09; 4/14/09

Timeline: Phase 2 (FY09)

Benchmarks/Performance Targets:

1. Create elementary schedule that has 600 minutes per week of literacy instruction at grades K-2 and 450 minutes of literacy instruction per week at grade 3-5
2. Create elementary schedule that has 300 minutes per week of dedicated mathematics instruction by September 2009 in all 6 elementary schools

Budgetary Implications: None

Accomplishments:

Piloted elementary schedule for targeted literacy and math instruction during 2008-2009, including 2 hours daily literacy instruction and 1 hour daily math instruction

Action 2.5a: *Develop a multi-tiered intervention system for literacy learning and instruction at the elementary schools*

Target Groups: K-5 Teachers and Students

Person(s) Responsible: Principals and Literacy Leadership Committee

Revisions: 2/24/09; 4/17/09

Timeline: Phases 2 – 4 (FY09 –FY11)

Benchmarks/Performance Targets:

FY09 (Phase 2)

1. Pilot tiered intervention (see report to the superintendent: *Reading Support Services, K-5: A System-wide Approach to Instruction and Intervention*) and progress monitoring using AIMSWEB (a benchmarking and progress monitoring system for ensuring student achievement) at Bowman School in grades 1 and 2
2. Hire specialized reading teachers to provide specific reading instruction to students in Tier 3B
3. Evaluate the Response To Intervention (RTI) pilot and make recommendations for revisions and programs
4. Report to superintendent and elementary principals about successes and failures of the RTI pilot
5. Begin to develop a system-wide plan for Child Study Teams 2009-2010

FY10 (Phase 3)

1. Expand the literacy leadership committee to include elementary principals and classroom teachers
2. Review elementary English Language Arts Curriculum
3. Revise district assessment grid
4. Plan for progress monitoring in all elementary schools
5. Disaggregate all available data for struggling students to define effective and ineffective teaching practices
6. Plan and budget for any programs or materials needed to meet the needs of struggling students
7. Determine a phonics intervention for the toolkit

FY11 (Phase 4)

1. Develop a plan for customizing in Tier 1 instruction using the updated curriculum
2. Plan for changes to tiers 2 and 3 instruction
3. Implement and monitor an excellent multi-tiered approach to literacy instruction in all schools that includes progress monitoring

Budgetary Implications:

- Phase 2 (FY09) Budget Implications
 - AIMSWEB Pilot: Approximately \$23,000 (sped grant)
 - Leveled Literacy Interventions: \$15,000 (literacy dept budget)
- Phase 3 (FY10) Budget Implications
 - Curriculum review cycle (Curriculum budget)
 - Expand RTI to all elementary schools: \$45,140 (possibly funded with federal stimulus dollars)

(NOTE: Action Plan and subsequent decisions will inform budget needs to implement progress monitoring and changes to instruction in tiers 1 and 2 in FY11)

Accomplishments:

1. Developed a system-wide, multi-tiered approach to literacy instruction and intervention
2. Reported the plan to the superintendent in June 2008, to all elementary teaching staff in October 2008, and to School Committee in December 2008
3. Received a state grant for AIMSWEB, a benchmarking and progress monitoring system for ensuring student achievement
4. Trained 28 teachers to use AIMSWEB at Bowman School
5. Implemented progress monitoring and benchmarking of grades 1 and 2 students at Bowman using AIMSWEB
6. Convened the Literacy Leadership Committee monthly during FY09
7. Presented information to elementary teaching staff about upcoming curriculum review cycle and best literacy practices in December 1, 2008
8. Purchased and implemented a structured literacy intervention program (Leveled Literacy Intervention) at Fiske, Bowman, Harrington, Hastings, and Bridge (to be purchased July 1, 2009, for Estabrook)
9. Provided supplementary curriculum materials to teachers to improve their understandings about best practices in literacy
10. Scheduled on-site graduate courses in literacy related to RTI

Action 2.5b: *Develop a tiered intervention system for literacy at the middle schools*

Target Groups: Grade 6 -8 Teachers and Students **Person(s) Responsible:** Principals and Deputy Superintendent

Revisions: 1/15/09, 4/14/09

Timeline: Phase 2 (FY09)

Benchmarks/Performance Targets:

Implement a tiered literacy intervention program by September 2009 to support students not making effective progress

Budgetary Implications: None

Accomplishments:

1. Analyzed 2006 – 2008 MCAS results in all subjects
2. Created a guided study program
3. Created a profile of what constitutes effective progress in literacy
4. Assessed 2008 MCAS student data to determine participants
5. Established three-pronged literacy system:
 - a. Decoding
 - b. Reading comprehension
 - c. Creating cognitive structure when reading (advanced reading comprehension)

Action 2.6a: *Develop a tiered intervention system for K-5 mathematics*

Target Groups: K-5 Teachers and Students

Person(s) Responsible: Mathematics Leadership Committee

Revisions: 1/15/09; 4/14/09; 4/15/09

Timeline: Phases 2 and 3 (FY09 and FY10)

Benchmarks/Performance Targets:

FY09 (Phase 2)

1. Convene Mathematics Leadership Committee to meet monthly
2. Begin drafting a plan to provide consistent, system-wide, multi-tiered instruction and intervention to improve learning for all students; articulate a clear continuum and coordination between general education (including METCO and ELL) and Special Education Services in mathematics
3. Begin to evaluate existing Tier One and Tier Two models
4. Develop and offer professional development in assessment-driven mathematics intervention for Special Educators, ELL teachers, and METCO staff by June 2009

FY10 (Phase Three)

1. Review the year three recommendations of the Mathematics Curriculum Review Task Force
2. Complete a draft plan to provide consistent, system-wide, multi-tiered instruction and intervention to improve learning for all students; articulate a clear continuum and coordination between general education (including METCO and ELL) and Special Education Services in mathematics
3. Continue evaluation of Tier One and Tier Two models including gathering more information and making recommendations for improving instruction at Tier One
4. Summarize and present best practices in mathematics instruction at Tier One to elementary staff
5. Identify, pilot, and evaluate current and additional models for delivering Tier One and Tier Two instruction
6. Evaluate Tier Three and Tier Four Instruction (Special Education)
7. Provide joint professional development for Mathematics Specialists and Special Educators
8. Investigate and pilot intervention programs and progress monitoring tools such as the following:
 - a. *Assessing Math Concepts Anywhere* (Palm Technology)
 - b. *Fastt Math*

Budgetary Implications:

Action Plan and future decisions will inform budgetary needs: pilots, programs, progress monitoring tools, staffing, and professional development.

Accomplishments:

1. Team attended Education Development Center Summer Institute, *Leading for Success: Building Capacity to Improve Math Learning for Students with Disabilities*, in July 2008
2. Convened Mathematics Leadership Committee in fall 2008
3. Reviewed current Tiered Intervention model in 2008

Action 2.6b: *Develop a tiered intervention system for mathematics in middle schools*

Target Groups: Grade 6 – 8 Teachers and Students

Person(s) Responsible: Principals and Deputy Superintendent

Revisions: 1/15/09

Timeline: Phase 2 (FY09)

Benchmarks/Performance Targets:

Implement a tiered mathematics intervention program to support students not making effective progress

Budgetary Implications: None

Accomplishments:

1. Offered a math intervention course in grades 6, 7, and 8 in FY08 and FY09 (see chart below)
2. Collaborated on math intervention at both middle schools
3. Strengthened collaboration between math intervention teacher and grade level math teachers
4. Selected students based on MCAS scores
5. Analyzed MCAS scores to develop individualized student plans

Jonas Clarke Middle School 2007 AYP Data - Summary		Jonas Clarke Middle School 2008 AYP Data - Summary		William Diamond Middle School 2007 AYP Data - Summary		William Diamond Middle School 2008 AYP Data - Summary	
Student Group		Student Group		Student Group		Student Group	
Mathematics	Actual	Mathematics	Actual	Mathematics	Actual	Mathematics	Actual
Aggregate	91.0	Aggregate	92.3	Aggregate	91.9	Aggregate	94.0
Lim. English Prof.	88.0	Lim. English Prof.	93.3	Lim. English Prof.	93.9	Lim. English Prof.	92.4
Special Education	68.5	Special Education	70.3	Special Education	70.0	Special Education	80.4
Low Income	63.6	Low Income	71.0	Low Income	72.8	Low Income	75.0
Afr. Amer./Black	61.0	Afr. Amer./Black	63.2	Afr. Amer./Black	68.8	Afr. Amer./Black	75.7
Asian or Pacif. Isl.	96.3	Asian or Pacif. Isl.	98.0	Asian or Pacif. Isl.	98.7	Asian or Pacif. Isl.	98.7
Hispanic	76.2	Hispanic	78.8	Hispanic	77.1	Hispanic	87.0
Native American	-	Native American	-	Native American	-	Native American	-
White	92.1	White	92.4	White	92.0	White	94.2

Action 2.7: *Develop, plan, and budget for a mandatory, after-school Extended Learning Program for at-risk, elementary METCO students*

Target Group: Grade 2-5 METCO Students

Person(s) Responsible: Deputy Superintendent and K-5 Department Heads in Mathematics and Literacy

Revisions: 1/12/09; 4/14/09

Timeline: Phase 2 (FY09)

Benchmarks/Performance Targets:

1. Improve the reading and mathematics skills for the at-risk students
2. Reduce the percentage of students on warning and needs improvement by 75% on the state MCAS examination within one year
3. Use the annual MCAS tests to assess student skills in reading and mathematics
4. Develop common formative and summative assessments to assess student skills in reading and mathematics

Budgetary Implications:

See Appendix for the April 20, 2009 memo from the Deputy Superintendent concerning this program's proposed budget of \$56,202, which will be offset by reallocating funds from the current K-5 METCO tutoring program

Accomplishments:

In FY09, a committee is planning the September 2009 implementation of this Program. See the above referenced April 20, 2009 memo in the Appendix for further information and details.

Action 2.8: *Improve communication between METCO parents and the Lexington Public Schools*

Target Groups: METCO Parents and K-12 Staff

Person(s) Responsible: METCO Director, Equity and Excellence Task Force (EETF), and Deputy Superintendent

Revisions: 1/30/09

Timeline: Phases 2 – 4 (FY09 – FY11)

Benchmarks/Performance Targets:

FY09

1. Review district Parent/School Communication Protocols for effectiveness via gathering and collating data from individual principals
2. Collect and collate data from Boston parents regarding their opinions about home/school communication
3. Determine level of comfort for Boston parents in communicating and interacting with school personnel around school issues by using data from parent survey and conversations with parents
4. Determine need for translation services for specific populations of Boston parents via data collection; develop protocol for addressing those needs along with K-12 District ELL Coordinator
5. Determine needs of and obstacles for faculty in communicating effectively with Boston parents by gathering data from Principals and staff

Budgetary Implications:

Workshop leader stipend for preparation and delivery is to be determined

Accomplishments:

1. Developed and disseminated Parent Survey in November 2008; analysis to be completed spring 2009
2. Developed parent telephone chain (updates ongoing)
3. Offered transportation to Boston Parents for elementary parent/teacher conferences in October 2008 based upon need and requests
4. Held discussions with all principals regarding communication needs, desires and strategies

Action 2.9: *Provide METCO parents with training to support student achievement*

Target Group: METCO Parents

Person(s) Responsible: METCO Director, EETF, and Deputy Superintendent

Revisions: 1/13/09; 3/9/09; 4/17/09

Timeline: Phases 2 and 3 (FY09 and FY10)

Benchmarks/Performance Targets:

FY09

1. Survey parents regarding their needs/desires for greater understanding of curriculum expectations, developmental needs of their children, and how they can help their children succeed
2. Develop a series of parent education workshops targeted to the needs of the parents.
3. Enlist support of mathematics, reading/language arts, guidance and METCO personnel to develop specific workshops
4. Engage LPS staff and/or workshop leaders to deliver parent education series on scheduled dates in Boston
5. Develop an evaluation tool for parents to give us feedback regarding the effectiveness of the workshops

FY10

1. Schedule, deliver and evaluate a series of four parent workshops during the course of the year
2. Target Monday evenings in the fall for curriculum topics, and Monday evenings in the spring for topics related to transitioning, future planning and communications

Budgetary Implications:

Budget for rental space in Boston, refreshments for each workshop session, small planning stipend for LPS staff who deliver workshop sessions, stipend for consultants who deliver workshop sessions, and costs of copying any necessary materials: approximately \$2,000 annually

Accomplishments:

1. Held focus group discussions and surveyed parents regarding their desires/needs for parent education topics/workshops in October 2008
2. Implemented monthly parent group conversations at monthly parent meetings, starting in October 2008, in Boston about the achievement gap, what parents can do, and what parents need as support
3. Offered parent workshop entitled *Getting the Most out of your Child's Conference: Partnering with Teachers* at the November 2008 parent meeting in Boston
4. Rallied significant parent support for and attendance at the November 2008 School Committee meeting in Boston where the AGTF Action Plan and report of the Montgomery County visit were shared
5. Offered a parent workshop entitled *Developing Effective Communication with Your School Community* in April 2009

Action 2.10a: *Develop and implement a mentoring program for all K-8 METCO students*

Target Group: K-8 METCO Students

Person(s) Responsible: METCO Director and Principals

Revisions: 1/30/09; 3/9/09; 4/14/09

Timeline: Phases 2 and 3 (FY09 and FY10)

Benchmarks/Performance Targets:

1. Gather data to determine the number of schools with active mentoring programs as well as schools that need support to begin or strengthen their programs
2. Identify a pool of faculty/staff K-12 committed to serving as mentors to students in need of additional support and connection
3. Develop a Faculty/Student Mentoring Model which can be adapted at each school to meet the needs of individual circumstances at the building level (scheduling, availability of interested faculty and students, parental permission, etc.)
4. Provide professional development training in mentoring to interested faculty (recommend June or summer training session to prepare for fall implementation); Training session to be developed by METCO Director and building Principal/administrator volunteer
5. Implement METCO student/Faculty Mentoring at each building based upon the availability of trained staff

Budgetary Implications:

Budgetary impact will be more evident based upon the number of faculty/staff who sign up for the initial summer training (e.g., summer workshop rate is \$150/day X 30 staff taking workshop = \$4500). Staff Trainers for summer workshop (\$300/day X 2 Trainers = \$600.00). Other costs associated with implementing a new/re-energized mentoring program include budget for mentor group activities (1-2 times per year) including transportation, supplies, and refreshments for kick-off session at each mentoring site. Projected total budgetary impact: \$9600.00

Accomplishments:

1. Interviewed several principals and faculty connected with mentoring programs at the elementary and Middle school levels from November 2008 to March 2009
2. Met with high school faculty /administration regarding high school student needs and proposal for student-to-student mentoring proposal

Action 2.10b: *Establish a METCO Scholars achievement and mentoring program at LHS*

Target Group: Qualified 9-12 METCO Students **Person Responsible:** LHS METCO Counselor

Revisions: 4/17/09

Timeline: Phases 2 and 3 (FY09 and FY10)

Benchmarks/Performance Targets:

1. Develop structure for program including oversight, daily management, calendar of events, expectations and objectives for students, application and selection process, training, and anticipated cost in spring 2009
2. Secure funding and reserve space for essential activities in spring 2009
3. Recruit and select in spring 2009 the first cohort of Scholars, first cohort of adult mentors, and potential underclass candidates to be mentored
4. Run the first cycle during the 2009-2010 school year
5. Report on first cycle's activities and progress in May 2010

Budgetary Implications:

- METCO funds support August 2009 kickoff and training session for Scholars in Cohort One
- Cohort One programming funds for 2009-2010 from METCO funds
- Future budget needs to be determined

Accomplishments:

1. Developed proposal for pilot program (see appendix)
2. Selected training vendor and secured date for August kickoff and training session for scholars
3. Identified Cohort One candidates
4. Developed application materials and selection protocols
5. Developed curriculum materials and calendar for first cycle

Action 2.11: *Conduct a comprehensive review of METCO resource allocation, job descriptions, and programs*

Target Group: All Schools

Person(s) Responsible: Superintendent and Principals

Revisions: 1/12/09; 3/21/09

Timeline: Phase 2 (FY09)

Benchmarks/Performance Targets:

1. Meet with the METCO Director to establish the program's mission and goals by February 2009
2. Determine how well funding is aligned with the mission and goals
3. Review the effectiveness of the K-5 METCO tutoring program, and, if appropriate, develop an alternative approach to support academic achievement
4. Revise the program, job descriptions, and resource allocations as needed
5. Establish METCO Director FY10 goals by June 2009

Budgetary Implications: None

Accomplishments:

1. Established the program's mission and goals in February 2009
2. Held meetings between the METCO Director and all principals from January to April 2009 to determine their needs
3. Reviewed the effectiveness of the K-5 METCO tutoring program in March 2009
4. Decided to reallocate K-5 METCO tutoring funds to establish an after-school, elementary math and literacy program on 22 Thursday afternoons, starting September 2009 (See April 20, 2009 memo in Appendix)

Action 2.12: *Implement and improve data storage/retrieval systems, and provide technical support/training*

Target Groups: All Schools and Staff

Person(s) Responsible: Superintendent and Director of Technology

Revisions: 1/12/09; 3/21/09; 4/20/09

Timeline: Phase 2 – Phase 4 (FY09 – FY11)

Benchmarks/Performance Targets:

FY09

1. Implement the first phase of the transition from Rediker to Aspen-X2 by February 2009
2. Review technology consultant's report and recommendations in June 2009

FY10

1. Establish the capacity for electronic document storage by September 2009
2. Establish district data planning and core oversight team by October 2009 to identify and validate specific student data sources currently recorded in the district, review access and security roles around that data, define best practices for storage and retrieval, begin to develop custom report templates and to identify available resources both within district and outside
3. Implement the final phase of the transition from Rediker to Aspen-X2 by January 2010
4. Use federal stimulus dollars to provide training to teachers and administrators in using the new data retrieval and management systems
5. Use federal stimulus dollars to expand the district's capacity to collect student data, manage the data, and use it to change instruction that leads to improved student learning

FY11

1. Continue use federal stimulus dollars to provide teacher and administrator training
2. Train professional staff to begin using the new data systems to monitor student performance by September 2010
3. Implement the transition from Eutactics and other data bases to Aspen-X2 , if appropriate, by September 2011

Budgetary Implications:

1. \$42,000 has been included in the FY 10 budget to make recommended changes
2. Federal stimulus dollars will be used to expand the district's data retrieval and management systems and to provide needed professional development

Accomplishments:

Implemented the first phase of the Aspen- X-2 system in March 2009 (Rediker can no longer be used to record data)

Action 2.13: *Provide funds to support the Action Plan for Equity and Excellence*

Target Group: All Schools and Staff

Person(s) Responsible: Superintendent and School Committee

Revisions: 1/12/09; 3/21/09

Timeline: All Phases (FY08 – FY11)

Benchmarks/Performance Targets:

1. Present the preliminary Action Plan to the School Committee in October 2008
2. Recommend to the School Committee a budget that includes the funds needed to implement the Action Plan
3. Present fully detailed and reviewed Action Plan to School Committee in May 2009
4. Apply for the new Federal *Race to the Top Funds* when they become available in the fall

Budgetary Implications:

- Lexington will receive an additional 1.4 million dollars from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. At least half of the one-time funds must be used as a long-term investment to increase our capacity to educate students. Funding on-going costs will be discouraged.
- The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act includes competitive grants to help schools close the achievement gap. The grant applications and selection criteria will be published in the fall of 2009

Accomplishments:

1. Presented the preliminary Action Plan to the School Committee in October 2008
2. Recommended to the School Committee a FY10 budget that includes the funds needed to implement the Action Plan

Action 2.14: *Publish all available results data on a regular basis*

Target Group: All Schools, All Staff, and the Public

Person(s) Responsible: Administrators,
Staff and the EETF

Revisions: 3/19/09; 4/14/09

Timeline: Phases 2 – 4 (FY09 –FY11)

Benchmarks/Performance Targets:

1. Begin reporting of results data with the Superintendent's Bulletin in spring 2009
2. Identify a reporting structure and schedule in spring 2009

Budgetary Implications: None

Accomplishments:

1. Reported to School Committee at its fall 2008 meeting in Boston
2. Reported to Town Meeting in March 2009
3. Published results in Superintendent's Bulletin in March 2009

Action 3.1: *Form data teams linked to school improvement plans at each school in order to monitor both academics and student engagement*

Target Group: All Schools and Staff

Person(s) Responsible: Principals and Superintendent

Revisions: 1/12/09; 3/21/09; 4/14/09

Timeline: Phases 3 and 4 (FY10 and FY11)

Benchmarks/Performance Targets:

1. Write FY10 school improvement plans (SIPs) using the SMART goals format
2. Include both academic and social engagement goals in the SIPs
3. Achieve the academic and social engagement goals in all schools' SIPs by June 2010
4. Develop the purposes of the data teams, their organizational structure, and procedural operations at each school during FY10
5. Provided initial training for data teams by September 2010, with on-going training as needed
6. Use data teams to track student academic performance and student engagement (e.g., use of student surveys) by September 2010.
7. Identify the type and source of student data the teams will monitor by the end of FY 11

Budgetary Implications:

Use of federal stimulus dollar to provide data team members with needed professional development

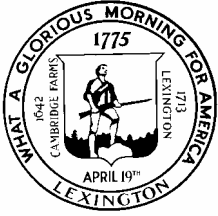
Accomplishments:

Began research in FY09 into how Data Teams are used in other systems such as Montgomery County, Maryland

Appendix

APPENDIX: Action Plan for Equity and Excellence

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Lexington Public Schools

146 Maple Street ❖ Lexington, Massachusetts 02420

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Memo to: Dr. Paul B. Ash, Superintendent

Memo from: Dr. Lynne M. Celli Sarasin, Deputy Superintendent

Date: April 20, 2009

RE: Thursday Afternoon METCO Extended Learning Program

Consistent with the School Committee and Superintendent's district-wide goal of closing the achievement gap and the commitment to a substantive program evaluation of METCO to evaluate the effective and efficient use of funding, the K – 5 elementary principals, Cheryl Prescott-Walden, Kathy McCarthy, Karen Tripoli and I are pleased to submit the following proposal. The proposed program is also consistent with goals identified in the Action Plan that is being presented this evening by the Co-Chairs of the Achievement Gap Task Force. The attached proposal outlines a Thursday afternoon extended learning program in literacy and mathematics for 48 of the most at-risk METCO students in grades 2-5.

Currently, we employ METCO tutors that service each elementary school. While they have worked very hard, these METCO tutors have not been formally trained in literacy and mathematics instruction, and are not licensed teachers. The rationale for proposing this program is to ensure that our most at-risk METCO students have the best possible teachers assisting them with their learning. This includes redesigning the METCO program to include licensed, expert teachers in literacy and mathematics to serve our most needy students.

Therefore, in order to use the funding from the METCO program in the most effective and efficient way, the proposed Thursday afternoon extended learning program includes the hiring of 8 licensed teachers in literacy and mathematics. The proposal includes the use of the current METCO tutoring funds to hire the 8 licensed teachers. Research has proven that targeted intervention provided to at-risk students by licensed teachers will produce the most successful learning outcomes for these students.

The goal of the program is to provide targeted, standards-based intervention in literacy and mathematics in order to cycle students out of the program at mid-year once they have met established benchmarks and exit criteria. METCO students who are designated as at-risk at the time

that openings become available will then cycle into the program. Ultimately, the plan is to provide standards-based intervention for as many at-risk students as possible in one school year.

In order to realize this goal, the following steps (measures) will occur:

- Utilize Thursday afternoons for targeted literacy and mathematics interventions for the most at-risk METCO students in grades 2-5 at all schools.
- Hire and train 2 licensed teachers (one in literacy and one in mathematics), per 12 students to staff program.
- Hire 1 Instructional Assistant per 12 students to assist the licensed teachers.
- Identify Coordinator.
- Develop the curriculum to be used in the program. Kathy McCarthy, Interim K-5 Literacy Department Head, and Karen Tripoli, K-5 Mathematics Department Head will coordinate this effort, together with the licensed teachers hired for the program. Establish learning benchmarks and assessments.
- Establish benchmark entrance/exit criteria for at-risk METCO students currently in grades 3-5. Kathy McCarthy, Interim K-5 Literacy Department Head and Karen Tripoli, K-5 Mathematics Department Head will coordinate this effort.
- Identify resources/materials needed for successful delivery of the program.
- Create parent announcements and permission forms.
- Create intra-district bus routes to transport eligible students from home schools to Bridge or Hastings.
- Create Thursday afternoon bus routes for identified students.
- Schedule parent orientation meeting early in the fall to inform and educate parents about the program objectives, understanding of the curriculum, and ways in which they can assist their children at home.

Budget Proposal for Thursday Afternoon Extended Learning Program

Projected costs:

Transportation from Lexington to Boston (non-program students – additional time/mileage	\$1,100.00
Intra-district transportation -22 sessions – METCO students in tutoring program	\$1,188.00
Transportation from Lexington to Boston (program students)- Additional time/mileage	\$1,100.00

Supplies for program (approximate)	\$2,500.00
Teaching staff - 2 licensed teachers (literacy & math) per 12 students (48 students total – 24/site) = 8 teachers (4/site) x 22 sessions @ \$50/hour x 4 hours/week	\$35,200.00
Aides - 1 Aide per 12 students x 22 sessions x # of groups @ \$21.50/hour x 3 hours/week	\$5,676.00
Snacks for students (approximate)	\$500.00
Coordinator of Program (stipend)	\$1,500.00
Professional Development Leaders (2) x 475 x 3 days	\$2,850.00
Professional development session for teachers (8 teachers x 3 days x 150/day)	\$3,600.00
Lunch transport	\$688.60
Rental of space for 2 parent meetings in Boston	\$300.00
TOTAL	\$56,202.60

Proposed schedule of 22 sessions (subject to change)

September 17, 24, 2009 – (1 principal day)	
October 8, 15, 22, 29, 2009	1 evening parent meeting in fall
November 12, 19, 2009	
December 3, 10, 17, 2009	
January 21, 28, 2010 – (1 principal day)	
February 11, 25, 2010	
March 11, 18, 25, 2010	
April 8, 15, 29, 2010 – (1 principal day)	
May 20, 27, 2010 – (1 principal day)	1 evening parent meeting in spring
June 10, 17, 2010	
(21 sessions ***budget for 22 sessions)	

Proposal for the Establishment of a METCO Scholars Program at LHS

Presently in the Lexington Public Schools (LPS) there are multiple efforts through PLCs, Tiered Intervention, and expansion of SPED and non-SPED support programs to target students who are struggling academically. Also, through the Achievement Gap Task Force, additional interventions specifically for low achieving students of color in LPS are being designed and introduced. This proposed program goes in a slightly different direction in that it primarily supports instead those Lexington HS students from Boston who demonstrate that they have exceptional ability. The goal is to create a strong cadre of exceptional student leaders, designated as “METCO Scholars,” and have them thrive within the METCO program, where today there are few and those that do exist are isolated. A significant feature of this initiative is the emphasis on building relationships between (1) the METCO Scholars themselves to form common bonds of support, (2) METCO Scholars and adult mentors to gain valuable insight and support, and (3) METCO Scholars and the underclass students they in turn mentor to give back and pass along valuable insight and support.

Based on elements of Brookline High School’s African American Scholars Program and Shaker Heights (OH) High School’s MAC Program, the LHS METCO Scholars Program initially will impact from 10 to 20 Boston students in grades 9-12. Rather than focusing on the low end of the achievement gap where students are struggling to pass classes and graduate from high school, the LHS Scholars Program aims to take good students and help them become great students and great leaders.

The METCO Scholars Program is a recognition program that identifies Boston residents at LHS who are exceptional in their achievement and their potential for leadership. It is a responsibilities program that forces these students to stretch and reach for even higher goals and set even higher standards for themselves. Finally, it is a rewards program that gives them access to supports and knowledge resources and, most of all, personal relationships that will help them be successful now and in the future. It does this through field trips, seminars, weekly and monthly meetings, and mentoring relationships with strong, successful adults and with other students. The LHS METCO Scholars Program honors academic commitment and fosters a culture of high scholastic achievement by METCO students at Lexington HS.

In the first year the program will pilot and SMART goals will be created which focus on selecting a cohort of scholars and a cohort of prospects for them to mentor, developing a schedule of annual, monthly, and weekly program activities, developing the infrastructure and personnel to run the program, and establishing the expectations, standards, and requirements of program participants. Given the successful rollout of this pilot, we anticipate that SMART goals in future years will include:

- Increasing the number of METCO students “stretching” to enroll in higher level classes
- Increasing the average SAT and MCAS scores among this same group
- Enabling more METCO students to earn admission to National Honor Society
- Increasing scholarship opportunities and the acceptance rates of METCO students to competitive colleges

The LHS Scholars Program will be financed through modest amounts of LPS and METCO funds, but will utilize the talents and time of existing staff at Lexington HS and in LPS METCO. The LHS METCO Guidance Counselor will coordinate the program. He/she will serve along with four other LHS faculty/staff members on the Scholars Program Committee. They will commit for at least two years, to select the students, organize the activities, and report out on the results. The Committee members will do the bulk of the planning. Adult volunteer mentors, drawn from the local and surrounding community will be utilized to commit to formal 1 on 1 or 1 on 2 mentoring of the scholars. This mentoring commitment will likely include the monthly meetings and possibly communicating in person, by phone, or in writing on a monthly or semi-monthly basis with their scholar.

In a manner similar to the State Scholars Initiative of the federal government, adult mentors will talk to our LHS METCO Scholars about why an academically challenging course of study is important and how it will help them down the line – regardless of whether they go on to college or go straight to work. Students will benefit from this opportunity to think about their education in relationship to their life goals. Thus Lexington HS staff, local businesspeople, and community leaders will work together to motivate and support the Scholars, recognizing their success at critical steps along the way. Mentors might further engage Scholars with tutoring sessions and recognition ceremonies. The Program Committee will reach out to area colleges and universities for incentives like scholarships and other financial assistance to METCO Scholars.

The Program will be rolled out through the following phases and actions:

1. In April 2009 the Scholars Program Team will be formed
2. In May 2009 the Team will select 5-10 male and/or female students from the class of 2010 and 5-10 male and /or female students from the class of 2011 to be Scholars for the 2009-10 school year. The students will possess good leadership skills and an LHS gpa of 2.3 or higher.
3. In August 2009 a full day retreat in the Boston or Cambridge area will be held in which the Scholars will receive team building, leadership, and mentoring training; and also listen to inspirational speakers and learn more about the responsibilities and benefits of being an LHS METCO Scholar.
4. Beginning in September, monthly meetings of 1-2 hours after school will be organized for the Scholars to attend. These meetings will be theme based and will include discussion of outside readings, motivational speakers, providing critical networking opportunities for them, and helping them develop skills as mentors and as peers in their study circles.
5. Beginning in September or early October, a weekly Study group will be implemented and attended by those students currently holding the title of LHS METCO Scholar. This study group will help the Scholars understand the importance of studying alongside others and help them continue to bond.
6. In November 2009 5-10 class of 2012 and 5-10 class of 2013 students of color will be identified as potential LHS METCO Scholars and will be assigned one of the current Scholars to serve as a one on one mentor.

The primary benefit of being a scholar is to learn leadership skills and develop an identity as a leader among peers at school. Additional benefits of being a scholar include receiving clear instruction and interventions that result in greater academic achievement, having a powerful honor for college application and work resumes, receiving material benefits like prizes and rewards from Program Staff including discounts on educational materials etc, and, lastly, being able to attend inspirational meetings with motivational figures and VIPs. In order to be successful these benefits are made manifest and the program promotes the understanding that being a Scholar is a coveted honor.

In order to be selected as an LHS METCO Scholar students must:

1. Be in the LHS METCO Program
2. Have a career unweighted GPA of 2.3 (C+) or above
3. Have a positive or improving academic, behavioral, attendance, and disciplinary record
4. Demonstrate solid character, leadership potential, and a strong work ethic
5. Submit a convincing essay on what they would contribute to the METCO Program and LHS as a Scholar and as a mentor for younger students
6. Have a successful interview with the LHS METCO Scholar Program Team

The GPA limit of 2.3 would currently result in nineteen potential candidates for selection in May/June 2009 for the 2009-2010 school year. These nineteen include thirteen females (six of them will be seniors and seven of them will be juniors) and six males (four seniors and two juniors). A reasonable yield would be 50-60% resulting in 10-12 scholars for 2009-2010. The reason for the fairly low yield rate is that some students will

choose not to participate, some have behavioral histories or recent declines rather than improvement, and some will likely perform poorly in the interview or essay.

Responsibilities and requirements for all Scholars are as follows:

- At all times maintain a record that brings honor on the Scholars and METCO Programs
- Consistently attend weekly afterschool study group meetings (typically 1-1.5 hours long)
- Consistently attend monthly Program meetings afterschool (typically 1-1.5 hours long)
- Attend annual summer training meeting in Boston area (all day)
- Meet annual service requirements:
 - 10 hours per year of service as either a 9th grade FAC tutor, 10th grade MASC tutor, 8th grade visitation leader, or METCO peer tutor (these CAN also count towards LHS community service requirement).
 - Annual METCO Scholars Program service project (typically lasts one day)
 - Effectively mentor the assigned 9th or 10th grade student who is a prospective Scholar (Mentors are formally evaluated for their effectiveness each semester)

The weekly study meetings are a critical part of the program. They are more than just opportunities for the Scholars to come together and study and do homework. Learning objectives for weekly meetings include having participants reflect upon their accomplishments of the week, understand the benefits of studying together, internalize strategies for independently settling down to work and being productive, and appreciate the direct relationship between studying/preparation and achievement. The meetings also provide opportunities for adults to meet with the Scholars and guide them including their adult mentors, LHS staff, and others. Students are required to attend the weekly meetings unless they have prior approval from the committee or in an emergency.

Objectives for monthly meetings include having students find inspiration to achieve, understand the role they play in the program and that the program plays in their lives, and also appreciate the impact they have on others in our school and in their community. The model is to have 30 minutes of a guest speaker around a given topic and then spend 30 minutes discussing a reading that was assigned from the previous month's meeting. The expectation is that students will attend all of the monthly meetings except in the most extreme situations. Students who fail to meet expectations for attendance and service will be warned that they risk removal from the program. A clear rubric is being established for students to know what is expected of them and to establish checkpoints for improvement plans prior to being formally removed from the program.

Potential Expenses and Budget (estimates)

Possible costs are estimated between \$2770 and \$3130 for the first year. This low number reflects efforts to find resources and engage with community members for collaborative initiatives.

The Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity (METCO) Program: Mission and Goals

Mission

The purpose and Mission of the METCO Program is to “...promote desegregation in the Boston and Springfield Public Schools, increase diversity in METCO receiving districts, enhance educational opportunity and academic achievement for METCO students {and} provide students of participating school districts the opportunity to experience the advantages of learning and working in a racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse setting.” (M.G.L. Chapter 76, Section 12A)

The priorities of this fund source are to:

- provide Boston and Springfield students further opportunities to achieve at high levels the learning standards of the state curriculum frameworks; and
- enrich both the urban and suburban communities by providing opportunities and support for quality cross-cultural understanding and appreciation.
(DOE grant document)

Goals:

In keeping with the District’s Action Plan for Equity and Excellence, the major goals of the Lexington METCO Program are as follows:

- Facilitate access to quality integrated educational experiences for students in the district via METCO, and provide support for those students in academic, social/emotional and developmental areas.
 - Support the development and implementation of expanded learning opportunities and academic support for struggling elementary students via after school tutorial programs in literacy and mathematics, and in-school tutorial assistance at the secondary level.
 - Support the development and implementation of adult/student mentoring programs at the K-8 level, and a METCO Scholars student/student mentoring program at the high school.
 - Provide, monitor and evaluate elementary METCO bus time programs to assist students in language and literacy development, as well as more exposure to literature.
 - Provide building based support to students around issues related to transitions, academic achievement, strategies for success, confidence and social pragmatics
 - Provide consultations and coaching to faculty/staff around working with Boston families including students, parents and community based resources.
- Facilitate greater understanding and partnerships between METCO parents and school personnel in order to effect the academic achievement and social development of students.
 - Facilitate increased effective communication between METCO parents and school personnel.
 - Coordinate and offer a series of parent workshops designed to increase parents’ understanding of issues related to curriculum, achievement, and pathways to support their children’s academic and social success.
 - Assist in the development of professional development opportunities for faculty/staff in areas of cultural awareness and sensitivity, cross-cultural communication, and the impact of expectations on achievement.

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