



Massachusetts Department of
ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY
EDUCATION

Review Protocol: District Systems and Practices Addressing the Differentiated Needs of All Students

Spring 2010

Spring 2009 Reviews place emphasis on students with disabilities

Spring 2010 Reviews place emphasis on students with limited English proficiency

Spring 2011 Reviews place emphasis on low-income students

Spring 2012 Reviews may consider racial and ethnic minorities

Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (ESE)
Division of Accountability, Partnership & Assistance
Center for School and District Accountability
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148

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Overview

Purpose:

The Center for School and District Accountability (SDA) in the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) is undertaking a series of reviews of school districts to determine how well district systems and practices support groups of students for whom an achievement gap exists. The reviews will focus in turn on how district systems and practices affect each of four groups of students: students with disabilities, English language learners, low-income students, and students who are members of racial minorities. Spring 2010 reviews aim to identify district and school factors contributing to relatively high growth for limited English proficient (LEP) student performance in selected schools, to provide recommendations for improvement on district and school levels to maintain or accelerate the growth in student achievement, and to promote the dissemination of promising practices among Massachusetts public schools. This review complies with the requirements of Chapter 15, Section 55A to conduct district audits in districts whose students achieve at high levels relative to districts that educate similar student populations. The review is part of ESE's program to recognize schools as "distinguished schools" under section 1117(b) of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which allows states to use Title I funds to reward schools that significantly closed the achievement gap. Districts and schools with exemplary practices identified through the review process may serve as models for and provide support to other districts and schools.

Methodology:

To focus the analysis, reviews will explore five areas: **Leadership and Governance, Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment, Human Resources and Professional Development, and Student Support.** The reviews will seek to identify those systems and practices that are most likely to be contributing to positive results, as well as those that may be impeding rapid improvement. Systems and practices that are likely to be contributing to positive results were identified from the ESE's District Standards and Indicators (see Appendix H) and from a draft report of the English Language Learners Sub-Committee of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education's Committee on the Proficiency Gap¹. Reviews are evidence-based and data-driven. Four to eight team members will preview selected documents and ESE data and reports before conducting a two-day site visit in the district and a two-day site visit to schools. The team will consist of independent consultants with expertise in each of the five areas listed above, as well as English language learner education (to collect evidence across all areas).

Reports:

Reports will include a description of the **district context and background, demographic and student achievement data, and findings and recommendations.**

¹ *Halting the Race to the Bottom: Urgent Interventions for the Improvement of the Education of English Language Learners in Massachusetts and Selected Districts*, December 2009

The Review Process

Selection of districts:

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) identified 36 Title I schools in 14 districts where the performance of students with limited English proficiency (LEP students) exceeds expectations. All Massachusetts schools receiving Title I funds were eligible for identification, with the exception of reconfigured schools or schools that did not serve tested grades for the years under review. ESE staff analyzed MCAS data from 2008 and 2009 to identify schools that narrowed performance gaps between LEP students and all students statewide. The methodology compared the MCAS raw scores of LEP students enrolled in the schools with the predicted MCAS raw scores of LEP students statewide. The methodology also incorporated whether LEP students improved their performance from 2008 to 2009. “Gap closers” did not have to meet AYP performance or improvement targets, but did have to meet 2009 AYP targets for participation, attendance and high school graduation, as applicable. (For more detail about identification of gap closers, see Appendix I.) Districts with gap closers were invited to participate in a comprehensive district review to identify district and school practices associated with stronger performance for LEP students, as part of ESE’s distinguished schools program, “Impact of District Programs and Support on School Improvement: Identifying and Sharing Promising School and District Practices for Limited English Proficient Students.”

Review team:

The review team will be made up of independent consultants, usually 4-8 to a team. The consultants will have expertise in the areas of **Leadership and Governance, Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment, Human Resources and Professional Development, and Student Support**, as well as in English language learner education. All team members will receive training in the protocol.

Preparation for the review:

Before the site visit, the team will review documents provided by the district and information on the district provided by ESE. This will help them prepare thoughtful questions for interviews and focus groups. On two days before each site visit, the team will meet at ESE to review documents, sort evidence, and prepare questions.

Site visits:

- Days 1 and 2 will focus primarily on district interviews and document review.
- Days 3 and 4 will focus primarily on school visits, classroom observations, teacher team meetings, and focus groups with teachers and parents.

The Department and site coordinators will work collaboratively with the district to establish a specific schedule for the site visit that meets the needs of the district and its schools, to the extent possible. What works for one district may not work for another.

The site visit will begin with an introductory meeting with key district leaders. At this meeting the leaders will provide the review team with an overview of their approach to meeting the needs of LEP students. The site visit will culminate with a final meeting that will provide the district with an overview of the team's evidence and emerging themes from the visit.

During the site visit a series of interviews and/or focus groups will be conducted to gather information. The various interviews and focus groups are listed on the sample Site Visit Schedule, below; questions are based on indicators in each area (see Appendix H). The purpose of interviews and focus groups at schools is to understand the impact of district systems and practices on their staff, students, and parents.

The district liaison will work to establish an appropriate schedule for school visits and set up focus groups that are appropriately composed. The liaison should work with principals to schedule times for principal interviews and teacher team meetings. The school may propose a classroom observation schedule; in any case, some observations may be random.

As the site visit progresses, the review team may request follow-up interviews to ask questions that emerge after focus groups, classroom observations, etc. These follow-up interviews will be conducted with whoever the appropriate person is to answer the questions that have emerged. This will be the team's opportunity to make sure that the evidence it gathers is complete.

NOTE: *Focus groups should include no more than eight individuals to the extent possible. With the exception of meetings with leadership teams, supervising staff should not be scheduled in focus groups with those under their supervision.*

Sample Site Visit Schedule:

Time	Day 1	Day 2	Time	Day 3	Day 4
7:30-8:00	Team Arrival	Team meeting and Document Review	7:30-11:30	School Visits: (Up to four schools, one team member per school) Interviews with school leaders, beginning with the principal and site liaison Classroom visits Teacher team meetings	School Visits: (Up to four schools, one team member per school) Interviews with school leaders Classroom visits Teacher team meetings Follow-up Interviews
8:00-8:30	Orientation Meeting with District Leaders				
8:30-9:45	Interview with Superintendent Interview with Curriculum Director	Interview with Superintendent Interview with K-8 Curriculum Team			
10:00-11:15	Interview with ELL Director or Director of Pupil Personnel Services Document Review	Interview with Human Resources Director and key team members Document Review			
11:30-12:30: LUNCH AND TEAM MEETING					
12:30-1:15	Interview with Professional Development Director and key team members Document Review	Interview with Title I, McKinney Vento, Student Support, Special Education Directors Document Review	12:30-3:00	School Visits: (Up to four schools, one team member per school) Interviews with school leaders Classroom visits Teacher team meetings	Team Meeting
1:30-2:45	Interview with Student Assessment and Program Evaluation staff Principal interviews	Interview with 9-12 Department Heads Principal interviews			
3-4	Team Meeting	Team Meeting	3-4	Teacher and Parent Focus Groups (two team members each)	Closing Meeting with District Leaders

Review Team Activities during District and School Visits:

Activities	Description
Orientation meeting	District will have a chance, informally, to give an overview of its approach to meeting the needs of its LEP students.
Document review	The team will review materials that the district provides on site.
Interviews with district leaders	Superintendent, assistant superintendent(s), curriculum supervisors at the district and department levels, chief financial officer, controller or purchasing director, HR director, and/or ELL director or director of pupil personnel services.
Interviews with school leaders	School leaders include the principal and may also include key assistants (e.g., assistant principals, curriculum director, and/or lead teachers).
Other interviews	Leadership may identify other interviewees who could inform the review.
Teacher focus group	Groups of teachers, typically representing all grade levels, make up focus groups. All teachers who teach LEP students should be invited. The focus group(s) will be scheduled so that invited teachers may attend after school hours.
Parent focus group	Parents from the school council(s) or ELL PAC may be invited.
Classroom visits	Classroom visits will be conducted throughout the school visit. Classroom visits are designed to understand instructional practices and improvement efforts across the school; they are not evaluations of individual teachers. More information is provided in Appendix D.
Teacher team meetings	The team may observe regularly scheduled teacher team meetings. Team members will ask questions only if invited to do so.
Closing meeting	The review team coordinator will share with the district what the team has learned on site and what the team is still sorting out.

Evidence collection:

Using a researcher's perspective, the team will gather evidence from multiple sources among the data, documents, interviews, focus groups, observed teacher team meetings, and classroom visits. The evidence should be triangulated: it should come from more than one source. This ensures that the finding is based on sufficient evidence. It is important for team members to suspend their judgment about the district and its schools until after the evidence is triangulated. Notes of interviews, classroom observations, etc., should be objective; subjective notes are not useful. The team will look at the evidence collectively, as each team member has focused on a particular set of indicators within the set of standards. It is important for the team to check for mutual understanding by summarizing, restating, and asking follow-up questions, especially when evidence appears contradictory. The researcher is curious, not skeptical. The researcher endeavors to ensure accuracy and mutual understanding, not to discover a "gotcha." The evidence that the researcher has gathered may or may not contradict district perceptions of district conditions. In the event that such a contradiction presents itself, the review team member has the responsibility to share the evidence collected by the review team and ask the district for its interpretation. The team will endeavor to develop a shared understanding of diverging interpretations. If unable to do so, the team will at least be transparent in acknowledging the difference between district and team perspectives (on site as well as in relevant findings).

Analysis of evidence:

The team collectively analyzes the data gathered by each team member and makes connections among evidence gathered for each standard. The team considers the body of evidence in analyzing what impact the district's systems have on support for LEP students. The team uses its professional judgment as to the quality of district systems and practices and the likelihood that these systems and practices contribute to sustained and improving achievement levels among LEP students.

Emerging themes:

From this analysis, the team develops emerging themes to share with the district at the end of Day 4. The themes are *not* equivalent to "findings." The team has not yet had sufficient time to sort through all the evidence for each standard and consider the full analyses from each team member in order to determine the final set of findings that will appear in the written report. However, in order to ensure transparency, in the closing meeting the review team coordinator will share with the district what the team has learned on site and what the team is still sorting out.

Writing the Report

Process for the report:

- At the end of the site visit, the review team shares emerging themes with the district; it uses these themes as a basis for preliminary findings.
- After the site visit, during its findings development meeting, the review team completes the analysis of information collected during the review and develops preliminary findings, at least one for each standard. It may begin to discuss possible recommendations at this meeting.
- Using the report template and report template guidance, each review team member takes responsibility for drafting the full text of a set of preliminary findings, based on all notes taken and evidence collected by the entire team during the site visit.
- Each team member brings hard copies of the full text of this set of preliminary findings to the written findings review team meeting following the onsite review; before doing so, they should post their drafts, labeled with version and date, in the DSA review team dropbox. Each finding is refined with team feedback to ensure accuracy, consensus, and fulfillment of the requirements for findings stated in the next section. Using the requirements for recommendations two sections below, the team considers each finding to determine whether to make a recommendation based on it and develops recommendations based on the findings.
- Team members revise the drafts as agreed at the written findings review team meeting, adding the recommendations; they post the revised versions in the CDSA dropbox by the time requested.
- The review team coordinator compiles members' drafts into one document before putting it, properly labeled, in the dropbox by the due date. In compiling the drafts into one document, the review team coordinator makes sure that findings and recommendations written by different members of the team are not unduly repetitive (some overlap is acceptable). Usually reports will be 20-30 pages.
- The Department reviews the draft—drafts that do not meet requirements will be returned to the review team coordinator for revision—and clarifies any questions with the review team coordinator. The Department then sends the draft, without the recommendations, to the district to review for factual errors. Team members should be available after the district's review in case there are any questions about their parts of the report.
- The Department finalizes the report, including the recommendations, sends it to the appropriate personnel in the district, and posts it on its website at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sda/review/district/>.

Findings:

- Finding statements should make a single point.
- The number of findings should be determined by the evidence; usually, there should be from one to three findings for each of the five standards.
- Findings should be priority findings: that is, those that highlight a significant strength or challenge.
- Findings do not need to be listed in priority (rank) order. The strength of the language used in finding statements should be used to demonstrate significance/importance. Instead, the findings should be in a logical sequence determined by their subject matter. Placement of findings may also be affected by whether they are positive or negative.

- Finding statements should identify key strengths and challenges, especially those that have had the greatest or least impact on the district's ability to address the needs of LEP students.
- **Each finding statement should be supported by an analysis describing the team's evidence, the impact of the finding, and the team's judgment.**
 - **Evidence** from multiple sources among the data, documents, interviews, focus groups, observed teacher team meetings, and classroom visits. **The analysis** should make connections among the different pieces of evidence used to support the finding statement.
 - **Impact** and significance of the finding for education in the district. The analysis should explain to the reader why this finding is important.
 - Professional **judgment**. The team's judgment as to the quality of district systems and practices and the likelihood that these systems and practices contribute to sustained and improving achievement levels among LEP students.

Recommendations:

- The review team develops recommendations based on the district's strengths and challenges and contextual factors identified by the findings. Recommendations must be based on the findings and evidence included in the report; describing the evidence leading to the recommendation (see next bullet) will help to ensure that they are.
- For each recommendation, the report will provide a brief explanation, describing the evidence leading to the recommendation and how next steps could build greater capacity to support student learning. The description of the evidence and of how the recommendation would build greater capacity may be presented in a series of bullets or in a connected narrative, but whichever method of presentation is chosen should be used for all of the recommendations.
- Recommendations may be considered by the district:
 - as a possible way to build greater capacity to support student learning;
 - as validation for continuing its current systems and practices; or
 - as a further reason to adopt planned changes to those systems and practices.
- If the team makes recommendations for new initiatives, it should consider prioritizing them.
- If the team makes recommendations to continue current systems or practices or to follow through on planned changes, it should make sure to phrase them accordingly in order to acknowledge the district's accomplishments or plans.
- Recommendations may be used by districts to enhance their capacity to support LEP students' learning and by the Department to inform the assistance and monitoring activities it will implement in the future to help districts build their capacity to support LEP students' learning.

Expectations for the Team and District

The review places a value on engaging the district in understanding its own systems and practices as they relate to serving the needs of LEP students. The process is evidence-based and designed to promote learning and improvement. Clear communication among the district, its schools, and the review team is essential to the process. All review team members have extensive experience in the area they are reviewing, are governed by a Code of Conduct (see Appendix C), are objective, and minimize disruption to teaching and learning.

Expectations for the review team coordinator:

- Exhibit the highest professional standards and be responsible for ensuring that the team does so, as well.
- Maintain and post daily team meeting notes.
- Conduct a daily review of the schedule with the team and ensure that all interviews, focus groups and classroom visits are attended and go smoothly.
- Maintain good channels of communication with the district and schools at all times.
- Take responsibility for facilitating all team meetings on site.
- Schedule school and classroom visits on site.
- Take responsibility for organizing the team and keeping copies of team notes.
- Keep district and school leaders informed of the team's progress and developing themes throughout the visit.
- Take appropriate actions to follow up on any questions by the team.
- Present the team's emerging themes to district leadership at the end of the visit.
- Write a section of the review report and oversee the writing of the entire report.

Expectations for review team members:

- Before the site visit, read district and school documents and participate in document review and question preparation.
- Arrive punctually for all team meetings and appointments in the district. See outline of review team activities below.
- Participate fully and collegially on teams, take direction from the review team coordinator, and make requests to the district through the review team coordinator.
- Organize notes and additional evidence to share with other team members by the end of each site visit day.
- Complete assigned section of report according to report template guidance.
- Participate in refining the draft of the report, ensuring that it contains sufficient evidence, is accurate, and reflects the consensus of the team.
- Abide by the Code of Conduct for Reviewers in Appendix C.
- Abide by the Guidelines for Classroom Visits (see Appendix D).
- Adhere to deadlines.

Outline of Review Team Activities:

- Document review and question development meeting (two days)
- Site days in district (four days)
- Findings development team meeting (one day)
- Written findings review team meeting (one day)

Expectations for the district:

- Explain the purpose and process of the review to all staff.
- Before the site visit, send the documents requested and work with the coordinator to finalize the schedule.
- Provide confidential team meeting space with Internet access and access to a copier during each day on site.
- Provide a space for each interview (not the team room).
- Welcome the review team and recognize that its efforts are on behalf of its students.
- Work with the review team to ensure that the visit runs smoothly.
- Engage faculty and other stakeholders to reflect on district systems and practices and their impact.
- Provide the review team coordinator with any additional documents requested.
- Maintain good communication with the review team coordinator throughout the review, conveying any concerns or other feedback from staff.
- Respond frankly to the review team's developing themes and provide additional evidence when necessary.
- After the site visit, invite all participants in the review to complete a brief online survey (to be supplied) to give the Department feedback on the review process.

Appendix A: Checklist of Data/Documents Provided by ESE

(including information previously submitted to ESE by the district)

Documents to be provided by ESE before the site visit	
1. District Profile Data	
2. Comprehensive Annual District and School Data Review* (when it becomes available) *See definition in Appendix G.	
3. Latest Coordinated Program Review Report or follow-up Mid-cycle Report	
4. Any District or School Accountability Report produced by Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA) or ESE in the past three years	
5. Teacher's Contract 2009	
6. Staff Report (Highly Qualified)	
7. Long Term Enrollment Trends	
8. End-of-Year Report	
9. List of Federal and State Grants	
10. Municipal Profile	

Appendix B: District Task Checklist

This checklist may be used by the district to prepare for the review. As well as the documents the district is to provide for the review, it includes key tasks that should be completed before the site visit.

PLEASE NOTE:

- *Electronic documents are preferred if available.*
- *All documents requested in this list should be provided only if the district already has the materials on hand. This list is in **NO WAY** a request to create new documents or analyses; the review team is looking to understand the current systems and practices that the district is using to meet the needs of LEP students.*
- *If documents are on the district website please indicate. And if documents do not exist or can be made available only on site, please indicate.*

Documents to be provided by the district before the site visit	
1. Organization chart	
2. District Improvement Plan	
3. School Improvement Plans	
4. School committee policy manual (if readily available; otherwise to be viewed on site)	
5. Curriculum guide	
6. High school program of studies	
7. Calendar of formative and summative assessments	
8. Copies of data analyses/reports used in schools	
9. Descriptions of student support programs	
10. Program evaluations	
11. Student and Family Handbooks	
12. Faculty Handbook	
13. Professional Development Plan and current program/schedule/courses if available	
14. Teacher planning time/meeting schedules	
15. Teacher evaluation tool	
16. Classroom observation tools/Learning walk tools	
17. Job descriptions (for central office and school administrators and instructional staff)	
18. Principal evaluations	
19. Procedures and assessments to identify LEP students and assess their level of English proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening	
To be arranged by the district before the site visit	
1. All administrators, faculty, and staff made aware of the visit and its purpose	
2. Private meeting space for review team secured for days in the district office	
3. Access to copier, printer, and Internet provided	
4. Meeting space secured for district level interviews (different from team room)	
5. Lunch arrangements for the review team made (the team can reimburse)	
6. District prepared to provide documents requested on site	
7. School schedules, directions to schools, maps, and description of parking arrangements if needed made available in team room	

Appendix C: Code of Conduct for Reviewers

1. Carry out work with integrity.

- a. Treat all those you meet with courtesy and sensitivity. Try to minimize stress.
- b. Allay anxiety through mutual respect and valuing opinions. Show an interest in what is said.
- c. Focus attention and questions on topics that will reveal how well students are learning.
- d. Protect sensitive and confidential information.

2. Act in the best interests of students and staff.

- a. Emphasize that students come first and are at the center of the review.
- b. As much as possible, minimize disruption to teaching and learning.
- c. Do not criticize the work of a teacher or anyone else involved with the school.
- d. Classroom visits are used only to understand instruction at the school. Classroom visits are not evaluations. Specific feedback and information about individual teachers will not be shared with any school personnel.
- e. All teacher interviews are anonymous. Only the superintendent will be identified by name; other individuals will be identified by position only, where appropriate, in both oral and written reports.
- f. Try to understand what leaders and teachers are doing and why.

3. Base findings on evidence.

- a. Findings must be robust, fully supported by evidence, and defensible.
- b. Findings must be reliable in that others would make the same finding from the same evidence.
- c. Be prepared to ask questions to establish whether a view is based on evidence.
This applies, as well, to review team members' findings.
- d. Discussion with staff and review team members is part of the process to create a validated and reliable evidence base from which findings are made.

Appendix D: Guidelines for Classroom Visits on LEP Reviews

GENERAL GUIDANCE

Classroom visits are one source of information for the review team on instruction in the district. The team will visit a representative range of grade levels and both SEI and ESL classes. It is expected that classrooms will be visited for no less than 20 minutes to allow the team to derive an understanding of the lesson and the classroom climate. Visits may be scheduled or spontaneous.

Classroom visits should reflect a typical experience for students and teachers. Teachers do not need to address the classroom visitor or provide an explanation of the lesson. The classroom visitor may walk around the classroom to review student work or classroom postings, if appropriate.

Classroom visits are NOT evaluations of individual teachers. Specific information about individual teachers will not be shared with any school personnel. Review team members will not provide feedback to individual teachers.

Guidelines for the review team for classroom visits:

- Referring to the Instructional Inventory Record Reference Sheet (Appendix F), record factual data on the Instructional Inventory Record (Appendix E) using quotes, tallies, or descriptions.
- Label Instructional Inventory Record with descriptive characteristics, not identifiers such as teacher names.
- Avoid distractions to the class.
- Review samples of student work in folders, portfolios, or displays.
- Talk to students (if appropriate): *What are you learning? Why are you learning it? How do you know if your work is good? What do you do if you need help?*
- Talk to teachers (if appropriate): *What did you hope your students would learn? Why? What do you look for to know if your students met lesson objectives?*
- Make sure that each class visit is for about the same amount of time.

Guidelines for discussion during team meetings (all to occur in the team meeting room):

- All team members share evidence related to each characteristic.
- They state factual evidence and do not make judgmental or subjective statements.
- The team shares and tallies the evidence (No Evidence, Partial Evidence, Solid Evidence) for all classes/characteristics using the Instructional Inventory Spreadsheet.
- The team shares highlights (big ideas, trends, areas of strong practice, areas of need) from the aggregated evidence they collected.
- The team discusses overarching trends, strengths, and challenges observed.
- The team reaches consensus on the trends across classroom visits.
- No data identifying individual classes is distributed to teachers.
- A team member enters data into the Instructional Inventory Spreadsheet and shares it with the team.

Appendix E: Instructional Inventory Record

District: Grade(s):	School:	Observer:
Date:	# Teachers: ____ # Assistants: ____	Time In: Time Out:
Content/Subject:	# Students: ____ # ELLs: ____	Part of Lesson: B M E
Key: <u>N</u> = No Evidence <u>P</u> = Partial Evidence <u>S</u> = Solid Evidence <i>(Describe only evidence observed in the lesson.)</i>	Type of Class: Newcomer ESL SEI Content Sp. Ed. General Ed	
	MEPA Levels of ELLs: (Provide this information if available.) Level 1: __ Level 2: __ Level 3: __ Level 4: __ Level 5: __ FLEP: __	

N	P	S	Characteristic	Comments
Organization of the Classroom				
			1. Classroom climate is characterized by respectful behaviors, routines, tone, and discourse.	
			2. A learning objective (not simply an agenda or an activity description) for the day's lesson is evident. Applicable language objectives are evident and aligned to the ELPBO for ELL students.	
			3. Available class time is maximized for learning.	
Instructional Design and Delivery				
			4. Instruction links academic concepts to students' prior knowledge and experience.	
			5. Supplemental materials are aligned with students' developmental level and level of English proficiency .	
			6. Presentation of content is within the students' English proficiency and developmental level .	

			7. Depth of content knowledge is evident throughout the presentation of the lesson.	
			8. Instruction includes a range of techniques such as direct instruction, facilitating, and modeling.	
			9. Questions require students to engage in a process of application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.	
			10. The teacher paces the lesson to ensure that all students are actively engaged.	
			11. Students articulate their thinking and reasoning.	
			12. Students are inquiring, exploring, or problem solving together, in pairs, or in small groups.	
			13. Opportunities for students to apply new knowledge and content are embedded in the lesson.	
			14. On-the-spot formative assessments check for understanding to inform instruction.	
			15. Formative written feedback to students is evident.	
			Total tally (15 characteristics)	

NOTES:

Appendix F: Instructional Inventory Record ELL Reference Sheet

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>SEI Link</i>	<i>Examples of Practice</i>
Organization of the Classroom		
1. Classroom climate is characterized by respectful behaviors, routines, tone, and discourse.	The learning environment, atmosphere of the classroom, and structure of the classroom are organized to facilitate meaningful opportunities for students of different English proficiency levels to participate in relevant, communicative practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Teacher(s) and student(s) speak in a polite and respectful manner. •ELLs raise hands, volunteer, ask questions, and participate throughout the lesson. •Classroom environment demonstrates respect for different cultures and languages.
2. A learning objective (not simply an agenda or an activity description) for the day's lesson is evident. Applicable language objectives are evident and aligned to the ELPBO for ELL students.	Explicit, grade-level content and language objectives are evident , displayed and are based on standards found in the ELPBO and appropriate Massachusetts Curriculum Framework.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Content and language objectives are clearly stated, written and communicated in a way that all students comprehend, identify, and respond to (e.g., use of visual, graphic organizer, pictograph, lesson map, manipulative, overhead etc.). •The teacher states the objective(s) of the lesson, connects objective(s) to one or more "big ideas" from previous learning, provides students with a rationale for learning, and revisits lesson goals at the end of the lesson.
3. Available class time is maximized for learning.	Activities are well-planned and paced appropriately to students' abilities and English language proficiency levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The teacher establishes a purposeful and well-paced lesson structure (e.g., activator to open the lesson; a summary for closure; a "ticket out the door" for assessment). •Students follow classroom routines well enough that minimal time is spent on listening to instructions and organizational details (e.g., attendance, distributing materials). •Students begin work when the class is scheduled to begin. •Students transition smoothly between learning activities.
Instructional Design and Delivery		
4. Instruction links academic concepts to students' prior knowledge and experience.	Lessons are positively and explicitly linked to students' primary language, cultural backgrounds, and/or individual experiences .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruction/activities facilitate the teacher and student(s) to use linguistic comparisons for directions, vocabulary, and/or content (e.g., L1/L2 similarities, cognates, false friends, use of bilingual dictionaries, root words, prefixes, suffixes). • Instruction/activities encourage students to use cultural, linguistic, and personal experience in activities, dialogues, experiments, projects, journals, and some formative assessments.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruction/activities motivate students to use personal experience when engaging in content-related activities.
5. Supplemental materials are aligned with students' developmental level and level of English proficiency .	Supplementary materials have been purposefully gathered to aid in the contextualization of the lesson , and methods for scaffolding of instruction are in place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher actively supports student learning with manipulatives, pictures, visuals, adapted text, graphic organizers, and multimedia to address students' learning needs. • Texts used for classroom instruction and independent reading have been carefully analyzed for potential language demands that may challenge ELLs ability to access the material. • ELLs have access to materials that present concepts and processes in a variety of ways (e.g., word-picture reference material, easy English prompts, audio recording of book/story/article).
6. Presentation of content is within the students' English proficiency and developmental level .	Instructional strategies support all students' vocabulary development, command of English language structures, and comprehension , at all proficiency levels, by using a variety of techniques.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Throughout the lesson, the teacher employs techniques that facilitate comprehension (e.g., speaking at a slower rate, using gestures/body language, modeling, paraphrasing, scaffolding instruction, using supporting visuals, manipulatives, or picture-rich materials). • Key vocabulary and English language structures necessary for understanding and applying content and skills are presented in an appropriate context and used in teacher-student and student-student interaction. • The teacher pre-teaches vocabulary and provides students with differentiated vocabulary support for communicative and/or academic vocabulary (e.g., English picture dictionaries, vocabulary lists with easy-to-comprehend English definitions or synonyms, present tense/past tense verb lists).
7. Depth of content knowledge is evident throughout the presentation of the lesson.	The content is communicated in a manner that facilitates student access to the content . Concepts are presented in a way that ELL students can comprehend, identify, and respond to.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concepts and ideas are explained in multiple ways to facilitate student understanding • The teacher and student(s) use academic vocabulary and challenging language structures (with scaffolding if necessary) during interaction related to lesson objectives and content. • The teacher identifies and corrects misconceptions through exploration and discussion when necessary.

<p>8. Instruction includes a range of techniques such as direct instruction, facilitating, and modeling.</p>	<p>Instruction uses a variety of multi-sensory materials and a range of techniques to support the content and language objectives of the lesson.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruction, materials and student grouping consider students' prior knowledge, linguistic/cultural experience, and previously learned content. • The teacher models thinking, metacognitive approaches, use of academic language and comprehension strategies (e.g., think-alouds, ask and/or listen to a peer, narrated trial and error). • Appropriately scaffolded instruction makes use of manipulatives, technology, or other means to support student understanding. • Students gain access to the lesson through direct support from the teacher or other adults in the classroom.
<p>9. Questions require students to engage in a process of application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.</p>	<p>Instruction and assessment provide opportunities and time for elaborated student responses during teacher-student and student-student interactions, including questions that provide for and promote higher order thinking.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Probing questions challenge students to explore concepts/big ideas. • Teacher phrases questions to engage ELLs of different proficiency levels. • Students have appropriate wait time to brainstorm, collect their thinking, rehearse responses, collaborate with a peer, and/or write before responding. • ELLs ask questions that demonstrate knowledge of content and synthesis of presented information.
<p>10. The teacher paces the lesson to ensure that all students are actively engaged.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher uses time effectively to allow students meaningful participation. • Wait-time is utilized to allow for oral responses from all ELL students.
<p>11. Students articulate their thinking and reasoning.</p>	<p>ELL students communicate their thinking processes through several possible modes (e.g., modeling, gestures, verbal, non-verbal, illustrated, written, and/or physical response).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students make sense of an activity, justify their conclusions, express agreement or disagreement, and evaluate learning/thinking processes. • Students engage in pre-writing, concept mapping, brainstorming, or role-play activities to support thinking and reasoning. • Classroom atmosphere respectfully tolerates errors in ELL language production and promotes self-corrections (e.g., by peer interaction, call and response, choral response, content-related chants). • Instruction employs strategic use of techniques that promote student interaction (e.g., think-pair-share, turn-and-talk, and around-the-clock buddies). • Scaffolding (e.g., sentence stems)

		allows students to engage in activities involving speaking and writing
12. Students are inquiring, exploring, or problem solving together, in pairs, or in small groups.	Students are engaged in sustained verbal interaction , often in small groups, in order to complete carefully designed academic tasks that include speaking, listening, reading, and writing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students participate orally and/or through physical response (e.g., identifying pictures, using manipulatives/equipment) in group or pair activities designed for the particular lesson's objectives. • Students elaborate on their answers, ask clarifying questions, and support their reasoning with data and evidence. • Students articulate their understanding with appropriate content language or by responding physically to content language prompts.
13. Opportunities for students to apply new knowledge and content are embedded in the lesson.	Students apply new vocabulary, language structures, skills, and content knowledge to solve unfamiliar problems or to approach unfamiliar tasks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruction, activities and assessment integrate listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills for all language proficiency levels. • Students have multiple opportunities to apply new knowledge in meaningful context(s), dialogue, activities, experiments, and projects. • Students present their work to the class through verbal presentations, illustrations, and/or demonstrations. • Students' performances and work products demonstrate progress toward mastery of academic language proficiency and content objectives.
14. On-the-spot formative assessments check for understanding to inform instruction.	Assessment is varied, appropriate for language proficiency level(s), and occurs throughout the lesson for both content and language objectives (in all language domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruction and assessment facilitate a range of responses for students to demonstrate their understanding. • The teacher uses quick, on-the-spot assessments (e.g., thumbs-up/down, ticket to leave, student demonstration, white board response, or teacher interactions) to gauge student understanding. • Students receive respectful, immediate and explicit feedback to guide their learning of vocabulary, language structures, and content knowledge and skills. • Teacher and peer output correction of the language structures (not related to content mastery) of ELLs is limited, related to lesson objective(s), and offered in a respectful manner.

<p>15. Formative written feedback to students is evident.</p>	<p>In consideration of varying English proficiency levels, instruction and activities encourage the use of key and appropriate vocabulary when talking about and/or writing about content during class time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students receive specific and timely written (with visuals or translated materials, if appropriate) feedback regarding their progress toward mastering content and language objectives. • Rubrics with standards-based criteria frame feedback to students and consider language and content objectives. • Students use feedback to rephrase, revise, and practice language and skills related to grade level content and knowledge. • Students design rubrics (with or without assistance from the teacher) to evaluate their progress in mastering language and content objectives.
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Appendix G: Definitions of Terms Used in this Protocol

Benchmark assessment: an assessment that is given at regular and specified intervals throughout the school year, is designed to evaluate students' knowledge and skills relative to a specific set of academic standards, and produces results that can be aggregated (e.g., by course, grade level, school, or district) in order to inform teachers and administrators at the student, classroom, school, and district levels.

Category training: professional development for teachers of LEP students in four categories as prescribed in Attachment 1 to a memorandum dated June 15, 2004, from the commissioner of elementary and secondary education. (See p. 8 at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/sei/qualifications.pdf>.)

Comprehensive Annual District and School Data Review: a form of assistance to districts and schools being developed by the Department. The reviews will include multiple data elements and will allow districts to compare themselves with similar districts or other districts of their choice and schools to compare themselves with similar schools or other schools of their choice.

Formative assessment: assessment questions, tools, and processes that are embedded in instruction and are used by teachers and students to provide timely feedback for purposes of adjusting instruction to improve learning.

Framework for district accountability and assistance: the Department's guidance as to actions to be taken by the district and by the Department for accountability and for assistance at each of five levels, for the purpose of improving student achievement. Both the priority for assistance and the degree of intervention increase from Level 1 to Level 5, as the severity and duration of identified problems increase. Under the framework, districts hold their schools accountable for educating their students well and assist them in taking the necessary steps toward that end; the Department holds districts accountable for both of these functions and assists them in taking the necessary steps to fulfill them.

Levels 1-5: the levels in the framework for district accountability and assistance in which schools and districts in the Commonwealth are placed.

Tiered instruction: a data-driven prevention, early detection, and support system that guides the allocation of school and district resources with the aim of providing high quality core educational experiences for all students and targeted interventions to struggling students who experience learning or behavioral challenges.

Appendix H: Selected District Standards and Indicators

*(Note: additional areas for LEP reviews are in red boldface within the indicators;
Conditions for School Effectiveness (CSE) are in italics.)*

Leadership and Governance

1. Focused School Committee Governance
2. Effective District and School Leadership
3. District and School Improvement Planning
4. Educationally Sound Budget Development
5. District Systems for School Support and Intervention

Curriculum and Instruction

1. Aligned, Consistently Delivered, and Continuously Improving Curriculum
2. Strong Instructional Leadership and Practices
3. Sufficient Instructional Time

Assessment

1. Data Collection and Dissemination
2. Data-Based Decision-Making
3. Student Assessment

Human Resources and Professional Development

1. Staff Recruitment, Selection, Assignment
2. Supervision and Evaluation
3. Professional Development

Student Support

1. Academic Support
2. Access and Equity
3. Educational Continuity and Student Participation
4. Services and Partnerships to Support Learning
5. Safety

Leadership and Governance: School committee and district and school leaders establish, implement, and continuously evaluate the effectiveness of policies and procedures that are standards-based, driven by student achievement data, and designed to promote continuous improvement of instructional practice and high achievement for all students. Leadership decisions and actions related to the attainment of district and school goals are routinely communicated to the community and promote the public confidence, community support, and financial commitment needed to achieve high performance by students and staff.

1. **Focused School Committee Governance:** School committee members are informed and knowledgeable about their responsibilities under the Education Reform Act. In their policy-making and decision-making they are guided by improvement plan goals and informed by student achievement data and other educationally relevant data. The performance of the superintendent is annually evaluated based on the attainment of the goals in the district improvement plan, MCAS results, and other student achievement data. Together with the superintendent, the school committee creates a culture of collaboration and develops contracts and agreements which encourage all stakeholders to work together.

2. **Effective District and School Leadership:** The superintendent promotes a culture of transparency, accountability, public confidence, collaboration, and joint responsibility for student learning within the district and broader community. **The director of programs for English language learners is a member of the district's leadership team and district and school leaders communicate shared ownership for the learning of all students.** The superintendent effectively delegates educational and operational leadership to principals, program leaders, and administrators, and annually evaluates their performance in their roles based on the goals in the district and school improvement plans, MCAS results, and other relevant data. *The district and each school take action to attract, develop, and retain an effective school leadership team that implements a well-designed strategy for accomplishing a clearly defined mission and set of goals, in part by leveraging resources and obtaining staff commitment to improving student learning. Each school leadership team a) ensures staff understanding of and commitment to the school's mission and strategies, b) supports teacher leadership and a collaborative learning culture, c) uses supervision and evaluation practices that assist teacher development, and d) focuses staff time and resources on instructional improvement and student learning through effective management of operations and use of data for improvement planning and management (CSE #1).*

3. **District and School Improvement Planning:** The district and school leaders have a well-understood vision or mission, goals, and priorities for action that are outlined in a District Improvement Plan. The plan's performance goals for students, **including English language learners,** and its analysis of student achievement data drive the development, implementation, and modification of educational programs. Each school uses an approved School Improvement Plan that is aligned with the district's plan and based on an analysis of student achievement data. District and school plans are developed and refined through an iterative process that includes input from staff, families, and partners on district goals, initiatives, policies, and programs. District and school leaders periodically report to the school committee, staff, families, and community on the extent of the attainment of the goals in the plans, particularly regarding student achievement.

4. **Educationally Sound Budget Development:** The superintendent annually recommends to the school committee educationally sound budgets based primarily on its improvement planning and analysis of data. The budget is developed and resources are allocated based on the ongoing analysis of aggregated and disaggregated student assessment data to assure the budget's effectiveness in supporting improved achievement for all student populations. District leaders promote equity by distinguishing among the needs of individual schools' populations and allocating adequate resources to the schools and students with greater needs. Each school's administrators are actively involved in the development of its budget.

5. **District Systems for School Support and Intervention:** *The district has systems and processes for anticipating and addressing school staffing, instructional, and operational needs in timely, efficient, and effective ways. Using these, it monitors the performance of students and conditions in each school. **The development of district policies, the school budget, and the strengthening of district supports to schools specifically consider the needs of ELL students.** The district also identifies any persistently low-achieving and/or struggling schools; makes any needed changes in staffing, schedule and/or governance; and supports an ambitious, yet realistic plan for school improvement, including goals, timelines, and benchmarks, with explicit consequences for not meeting benchmarks. The district provides its lowest achieving and struggling schools with additional monitoring and effective support for improvement. (CSE #2)*

Curriculum and Instruction: The curricula and instructional practices in the district are developed and implemented to attain high levels of achievement for all students. They are aligned with components of the state curriculum frameworks and revised to promote higher levels of student achievement.

1. **Aligned, Consistently Delivered, and Continuously Improving Curriculum:** The district and each of its schools have curriculum leadership that ensures consistent use, alignment, and effective delivery of the district's curricula. Teachers and other staff make effective use of curriculum guides for all content areas that include objectives, resources, instructional strategies, timelines, and assessments. The district has an established, documented process for the regular and timely review and revision of curricula based on valid research, the analysis of MCAS results and other assessments, and input from professional staff. *The district ensures that each school's taught curricula a) are aligned to state curriculum frameworks and to the MCAS performance level descriptions, and b) are also aligned vertically (between grades) and horizontally (across classrooms at the same grade level and across sections of the same course). At Levels 4 and 5, priority for alignment is given to mathematics and English language arts. (CSE #3). **There is integration between the general and ELL curriculum, and the district has an ESL curriculum based on the English Language Proficiency Benchmarks and Outcomes (ELPBO).***

2. **Strong Instructional Leadership and Practices:** The district and each of its schools have leadership and support for effective instruction. District and school leaders address instructional needs and strengths that are identified through active monitoring of instruction and ongoing use of formative and summative student assessment data. *The district ensures that instruction reflects effective practice and high expectations for all students, focuses on clear objectives, uses appropriate educational materials, and includes a) a range of strategies, technologies, and supplemental materials aligned with students' developmental levels and learning needs; b) instructional practices and activities that build a respectful climate and enable students to assume increasing responsibility for their own learning; and c) use of class time that maximizes student learning. Each school has a common understanding of the features of high-quality standards-based instruction and a system for monitoring instructional practice. (CSE #4). **Instructional leaders emphasize, reinforce and monitor the use of language acquisition and content instructional practices that support ELLs at all levels and have a good working knowledge of ELE programs and practices.***

3. **Sufficient Instructional Time:** The district allocates sufficient instructional time for all students in core content areas. **The district also ensures that ESL instruction for students at MEPA Levels 1-5 is sufficient: for Levels 1 and 2, at least 2.5 hrs/day, for Level 3, 1-2 hrs/day, and for levels 4 and 5, 2.5 hrs/wk.** The allocation of time is based on analyses of student achievement data and focused on improving proficiency.

Assessment: District and school leadership use student assessment results, local benchmarks, and other pertinent data to improve student achievement and inform all aspects of its decision-making including: policy development and implementation, instructional programs, assessment practices, procedures, and supervision.

1. **Data Collection and Dissemination:** District assessment policies and practices are characterized by the continuous collection and timely dissemination of data. District and school staff members have access to user-friendly, district-wide and school-based reports on student achievement and other relevant data. **The district organizes and analyzes data necessary for making effective decisions to improve ELL instruction and programs, including disaggregated grade level data on enrollment, home language and English proficiency, program participation, outcomes, and teacher qualifications (See Table 15) This data is presented in a user-friendly manner to the appropriate administrators, and administrators have clear and detailed action steps to implement the findings of the data teams.** All appropriate staff and community members are made aware of internal reports and external review findings.

2. **Data-Based Decision-Making:** The district is highly effective at analyzing and using data to drive decision-making. District and school leadership annually review student assessment results, external and internal reviews, and other pertinent data to prioritize goals, maximize effectiveness in allocating human and financial resources, and to initiate, modify, or discontinue programs and services. **All programmatic and instructional policy decisions are considered with respect to the impact on ELL students.** District and school leaders monitor student achievement data throughout the year in order to ascertain progress towards goals identified in the district and school plans, and to make needed adjustments programs, policies, services, or supervision practices. All professional staff members are supported and expected to use aggregated and disaggregated student achievement data regularly to improve performance.

3. **Student Assessment** *The district ensures that each school uses a balanced system of formative and benchmark assessments to guide instruction and determine individual remedial and enrichment requirements. Benchmark assessments are given 4 – 8 times per year. At Levels 4 and 5, the district ensures that assessments in English language arts and mathematics are prioritized. (CSE #5)* **The district administers a home language survey through enrollment staff that are trained in the administration of the survey and the rights of ELLs with and without disabilities to a FAPE in the LRE. The district has and monitors the implementation of a process to provide and interpret English Language Proficiency tests for all FLNE students. The district and school provide course options for students with different languages and levels.**

Human Resources and Professional Development: The district identifies, attracts, and recruits effective personnel, and structures its environment to support, develop, improve, promote, and retain qualified and effective professional staff who are successful in advancing achievement for all students.

1. **Staff Recruitment, Selection, and Assignment:** The district's policies and practices to identify, recruit and select staff result in the employment of effective individuals who are committed and qualified to meet student needs, contribute to a professional learning community, and, in the case of teachers, provide high quality instruction in their content areas. **Teacher selection and assignment practices result in all appropriate students receiving ESL instruction and content instruction by a teacher qualified to teach LEP students.** All members of the professional staff have appropriate Massachusetts licensure. In the event of unfilled professional positions, individuals are hired on waivers and provided mentoring and support to attain the standard of substantial annual progress toward appropriate licensure. The district places a high priority on

retaining and maximizing the impact of effective professional staff by creating new roles and career opportunities for exemplary teachers to have responsibility for instructional leadership and to enhance student learning. *The district ensures that each principal has the authority, guidance, and assistance needed to make staffing decisions based on the school's improvement plan and student needs. At Levels 4 and 5, principal authority includes the ability to select, hire, transfer, and assign staff to positions in the school without regard to seniority, and to evaluate and choose to retain faculty based on content knowledge, performance in promoting student learning, overall performance, and commitment to the school's mission and strategies. (CSE #6)*

2. Supervision and Evaluation: The district's evaluation procedure for administrators' performance fulfills the requirements of the Education Reform Act and is informative, instructive, and used to promote individual growth and overall effectiveness. Compensation and continued employment for administrators are linked to evidence of effectiveness, as assessed by improvement in student performance and other relevant school data. The district ensures that school leaders regularly use research-based supervision processes to monitor and support teachers to meet instructional and program expectations focused on improved student learning. **The district and schools place priority on the supervision and evaluation of ESL teachers and instructional practices.** Through effective supervision practices, administrators identify the strengths and needs of assigned staff in order to plan effective implementation of district and school initiatives, assess the application of skills and practices learned from professional development, provide guidance for improving performance, and provide struggling teachers with opportunities for additional professional development and support. The district's evaluation procedure for teachers' performance is research-based, effectively implemented, and fulfills the requirements of the Education Reform Act. After following due process, the district and schools take action to remove persistently low-performing staff.

3. Professional Development: The district and schools use student achievement data, program and instructional practice assessments, and information about staff needs to create a professional development program that supports teachers to develop and maintain content-area expertise as well as research-based and content-specific instructional practice. **The district provides all four levels of Category training and has a system to monitor and ensure that a sufficient number of teachers have Category training in each school to service the needs of the population.** The district maintains a strong commitment to providing sustained learning opportunities aligned with a common core of professional knowledge for educators at all stages in their careers. Teachers and administrators new to the district or to their assignments are provided with an orientation, coaching and/or mentoring, and support throughout their first years. The district provides systematic supports to make the transition from novice to accomplished educator more effective and professionally rewarding by encouraging professional growth and providing recognition. *Professional development includes a) both job-embedded and individually pursued learning, including content-based learning, that enhances a teacher's knowledge and skills and b) structures for collaboration that enable teachers to have regular, frequent department and/or grade-level common planning and meeting time that is used to improve implementation of the curriculum and instructional practice. At Levels 4 and 5, the district provides a) effective English language arts and mathematics coaching with a ratio of 1 coach to 25 teachers for each subject and b) time dedicated to leadership-directed, collaborative work, during which teachers are not responsible for supervising or teaching students, consisting of no less than one hour per week and, in addition, no fewer than five days (or their equivalent) per year. (CSE #7)*

Student Support: The district provides quality programs for all students that are comprehensive, accessible and rigorous. Student academic support services and district discipline and behavior practices address the needs of all students. The district is effective in maintaining high rates of attendance for students and staff and retains the participation of students through graduation.

1. **Academic Support:** The district has policies, procedures, and practices that promote student high achievement, support course completion, reduce grade retention, and encourage on-time graduation. *The district has an effective system for identifying all students who are not performing at grade level. Each school schedule is designed to provide adequate learning time for all students in core subjects; for students not yet achieving at grade level in English language arts and mathematics, the district ensures that each school provides a) at least 90 minutes per academic day of instruction in English language arts and in mathematics and a tiered model of instruction and individualized support in those subject areas; and b) appropriate supplemental instruction (for example: homework assistance, tutoring, Saturday school, summer school). At Levels 4 and 5, the district ensures that the school a) provides all students needing support access to supplemental academic programming in two or more of the following ways: before, during, or after school, on Saturday, or during vacation time; and b) if it is an elementary school, offers full-day kindergarten and provides preschool services. (CSE #8) The district guides and monitors schools to ensure that ELL students participate in after-school, extended day, MCAS preparation, and any other support programs. The district develops and the school(s) offer “a range of innovative programs for English language learners that are appropriate for the age and English proficiency of students.”*

2. **Access and Equity:** District and school staff members work to close achievement gaps by using aggregated and disaggregated data on student participation and achievement to adjust policies and practices and to provide additional programs or supports. Inclusive classrooms and programs that use an integrated services model minimize separation of special populations from the mainstream of school activity. **The district has a standardized procedure to assess special needs of ELL students and monitors schools to ensure that ELL students have access to the appropriate testing and special education services as needed regardless of language ability.** The district and schools work to promote equity through such means as increasing the proportion of underrepresented subgroups in advanced and accelerated programs. **The district guides and monitors schools to ensure that ELL students are prepared and encouraged to participate in Advanced Placement and other accelerated programs.** Beginning at the middle school level, leaders actively create pathways to ensure that all students are prepared for post-secondary education and career opportunities upon graduation.

3. **Educational Continuity and Student Participation:** District and school policies and practices promote student attendance, which is continuously monitored, reported, and acted upon. They also promote and track staff attendance and participation, and appropriate provisions are made to ensure continuity for students. District and school policies and practices also help all students make effective transitions from one school, grade level, or program to another. **The district and schools monitor student attendance and academic performance as students transition into mainstream in order to support continued academic improvement and participation through graduation.** Entering and mobile students are promptly placed in educationally appropriate settings using information from skill and other assessments when prior school records are not accessible. Transient and homeless students have timely and equitable access to quality programs supported by district oversight, policies and practices to address their needs. Fair and equitable policies, procedures, and practices are implemented to reduce suspensions, exclusions, and other discipline referrals. Policies and practices are implemented to reduce or minimize dropping out, and the district has practices to recover dropouts and return them to an educationally appropriate placement.

4. Partnerships and Services to Support Learning: *Each school addresses the social, emotional, and health needs of its students by creating a safe school environment in which student needs are met in systemic and systematic ways, including through a) the provision of coordinated student support services and universal breakfast (if eligible); b) the implementation of a systems approach to establishing a productive social culture that minimizes problem behavior for all students (e.g. Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports); and c) the use of consistent schoolwide attendance and discipline practices and effective classroom management techniques that enable students to assume increasing responsibility for their own behavior and learning. (CSE #9)* **The district provides student-centered interventions and services delivered by culturally competent staff and organized in a way that supports English Language learners. “Culturally competent programs” hire bilingual and bicultural outreach staff and provide linguistically appropriate services and clear information for parents, in their own language, to understand how to engage and re-engage their children in school. The district mandates and supports informed choice for parents of ELLs and ensures that information about program choices and outcomes are available in a linguistically accessible form.** *The district ensures that each school develops strong working relationships with families and appropriate community partners and providers in order to support students’ academic progress and social and emotional well-being (CSE #10); such community partners and providers as human service agencies, corporate and civic sponsors, and higher education give students and families access to health, social, recreational, and supplemental educational services.*

5. Safety: The district supports schools to maintain safe environments for students. The district has a comprehensive safety plan that is reviewed annually with local police and fire departments and is used to create aligned school plans. The district provides ongoing training for appropriate staff in dealing with crises and emergencies, as well as opportunities for all staff and students to practice safety procedures.

Appendix I: Identification of Gap Closers

Definition

Schools that narrowed performance gaps between LEP students in the school and all students statewide from 2008 to 2009.

Eligibility

Not required to meet 2009 AYP performance or improvement targets, but had to meet 2009 AYP targets for participation, attendance and high school graduation, as applicable.

Source Files

Final mcas2008 megafile 101608_ayp.sav; Official MCAS2009_megafile_ayp090409.sav

Identification Process (Summary)

1. Identify LEP students enrolled in Massachusetts schools in 2008 and 2009.

At the student level:

2. Expand the Composite Performance Index (CPI) range in ELA and Math from 0-100 to 0-175 points for all students.
3. Generate a linear regression using raw scores as the outcome variable and LEP status as the predictor variable to compute the difference (residuals) between individual LEP students' 2009 raw scores and the predicted 2009 results for LEP students in the state (limited to students who took 2009 regular MCAS tests).

At the school level:

4. Aggregate the expanded CPI to identify schools with positive overall gains for LEP students from 2008 to 2009.
5. Aggregate the residuals to identify schools with positive overall residuals.
6. Standardize the above two figures and combine them together, the sum of which comprises a "gap closing index."
7. Rank order all schools by gap closing index.

Identification Process (Detail)

1. Identify LEP students enrolled in Massachusetts schools in 2008 and 2009.
2. In the 2008 and 2009 megafiles, respectively, expand the ELA CPI and Math CPI above 100 points in order to identify students performing above the Proficient level on ELA and Math MCAS tests as follows:

2008-2009 ELA/Math

Grades 4-8, 10

Scaled Score	Expanded ELA CPI
200-208	0
210-218	25
220-228	50
230-238	75
240-248	100
250-258	125
260-268	150
270-280	175

2009 Grade 3 ELA

2009 Grade 3 Math

Raw Score	Expanded ELA CPI	Raw Score	Expanded Math CPI
0 -10	0	0 -7	0
11-20	25	8-20	25
21-27	50	21-24	50
28-34	75	25-29	75
35-37	100	30-32	100
38-39	125	33-34	125
40-42	150	35-37	150
43-48	175	38-40	175

2008 Grade 3 ELA

2009 Grade 3 Math

Raw Score	Expanded ELA CPI	Raw Score	Expanded Math CPI
0-10	0	0-7	0
11-22	25	8-21	25
23-28	50	22-25	50
29-35	75	26-29	75
36-38	100	30-32	100
39-40	125	33-34	125
41-42	150	35-36	150
43-48	175	37-40	175

3. Compute an “Expanded ELA CPI change” figure and an “Expanded Math CPI change” figure as follows:
 - a. Average the 2008 and the 2009 Expanded ELA CPI and Expanded Math CPI figures for LEP students by school, respectively, then:
 - i. At the school level, for LEP students, subtract the 2008 Expanded ELA CPI from the 2009 Expanded ELA CPI.
 - ii. At the school level, for LEP students, subtract the 2008 Expanded Math CPI from 2009 Expanded Math CPI.
 - b. Compute the standardized scores of the Expanded ELA CPI and Expanded Math CPI change figures for LEP students (a standardized score describes how many standard deviations the school’s average CPI change for LEP students is above or below the mean across all schools serving LEP students).
4. Compute the difference between individual LEP students’ raw scores and the predicted raw scores of LEP students statewide:
 - a. At the student level, compute the difference between individual target LEP students’ raw scores and the predicted raw score of LEP students in the state (limited to students who took standard 2009 MCAS tests).
 - b. Average these differences by school and by subject.
 - c. At the school level, standardize the average difference in ELA.
 - d. At the school level, standardize the average difference in Math.
5. Compute a “gap closing index”:

If all four standardized scores are positive, create a gap closing index by adding the four standardized scores together. The index reflects the extent of the CPI increases of LEP students, as well as how much the school’s LEP students performed above the state’s predicted performance of LEP students. The higher the index, the better the school did in closing the achievement gaps between its LEP students and all students in the state.
6. Compile a list of gap closers for LEP students using the following criteria:
 - a. The school had 20 or more LEP students who were enrolled on October 1, 2007 and took standard 2008 MCAS tests;
 - b. The school had 20 or more LEP students who were enrolled on October 1, 2008 and took standard 2009 MCAS tests;
 - c. The CPI change from 2008 to 2009 is positive in both subjects for LEP students, meaning that the CPI for LEP students increased in both subjects over that year;
 - d. On 2009 MCAS tests, LEP students in the school performed better than the expected performance of all LEP students in the Commonwealth in both subjects; and
 - e. All groups in a school receiving 2009 AYP determinations met 2009 AYP targets for participation, attendance and high school graduation rate, as applicable.