

Welcome Back Message

This coming academic year brings with it many leadership changes in ELT schools and at the district level. As always, we welcome new principals, teachers, and superintendents to this initiative and thank those who have come back for another year. Also, we invite new ELT principals to reach out to Moira Connolly (mconnolly@doe.mass.edu) and/or any of the other ELT principals with questions about the initiative. Thankfully, all of the principals in this network of schools have been incredibly collaborative over the years, sharing and supporting colleagues across schools and districts. This cross-school collaboration has been remarkably strong. Whether you are new to ELT or a veteran, be sure to tap into the resources within the network. If you would like information on anything in particular (schedules, intervention structures, enrichment details, etc.), please let [Moira](#) know and she will be happy to connect you with another member of the ELT network whose practices may meet your needs. **Let's continue the tradition of strong collaborative work.**

This newsletter contains a number of important items with multiple links to new or updated information, and though lengthy, we encourage you review it carefully, pass on the information to others as appropriate, and act where requested. This year we have also decided to include a school spotlight for each ELT Newsletter.

If you have not already done so, please take some time to review the Acting [Commissioner's Back-To-School message](#). We encourage you to keep abreast of key updates from the Department by reading the [Commissioner's Weekly Message](#) each Friday.



Metacognition poster reflecting some of Jacob Hiatt's best practices

METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES

What Students Do	What Teachers Do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make thinking visible Share what is being learned and why Actively listen and question Explain how a problem was solved Make connections to prior learning and related content Look for and talk through solutions Self monitor - "Do I understand what I'm doing?" Plan and think through a process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explicit instruction of strategies Model think-aloud Facilitate and scaffold discourse Tap into prior knowledge Visualize and demonstrate process Promote self-talk and growth mindset Ask open ended questions Make meaningful connections

For more details on their on-going instructional work or copies of their posters, contact Principal Jyoti Datta at dattaj@worc.k12.ma.us.

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School Spotlight:
Jacob Hiatt Magnet School
In our first newsletter of the year, we are sharing practices submitted by Jacob Hiatt Magnet School.

In newly defining itself as “a student centered, dynamic, and collaborative learning community,” Jacob Hiatt has refined its multi-year work around instruction and feedback. Instructional work is centered around metacognition (literacy and school culture/climate), explicit vocabulary, flexible grouping and collaborative learning. Together, teachers and administrators have identified what these look like in terms of student and teacher practices, which serves to clearly communicate expectations and build cohesion across classrooms. Posters have been created reflecting strategies to support best practices and school administration continues to rigorously observe instruction, providing timely and meaningful feedback to teachers.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2016-2017 SITE VISITS

We are looking forward to the 2017-2018 site visits, having been truly impressed with the work we had the privilege of observing last year during our full site visits. The following are just a small sampling of highlights from our visits which merely scratch the surface of all of the incredible things that are going on in these schools:

- ❖ At **Jacob Hiatt in Worcester**, school leadership is inspiring teachers to work with ownership toward student achievement and overall school improvement through collective work on their School Improvement Plan and intentional interventions.
- ❖ **Young Achievers in Mattapan** prioritizes the delivery of social emotional supports to its students as well as meaningful exploratory enrichment opportunities made possible through select partnerships with local organizations that are equally invested in the students at the school.
- ❖ Academic gains continue to be the trend at **Collins Middle School in Salem** for a variety of reasons, including (but not limited to) increasingly strong teacher leadership and distributive school leadership, transparent practices that have been adopted in classrooms by both teachers and students, and STEM pathways opportunities for students in each grade.
- ❖ **Guilmette Middle School in Lawrence** has transformed into a highly focused culture of pride and achievement under strong school leadership. Grade level and content area teachers have collaboratively developed a list of “look fors” for each content area that serve to help teachers develop and deliver lessons with relevance, rigor, and clear targets.
- ❖ At **Salemwood in Malden**, our site visit revealed, “The school administration distributes aspects of leadership to enable teacher involvement in instructional and organizational decision-making. School leadership continues to promote well-defined schoolwide instructional practices that are aligned with the mission and vision of the school. Through collaborative leadership, the school has developed a cohesive synthesis of its mission, vision, academic focus, and statement of rigor to promote student success and preparation for the next step in their education (finding in site visit report).” That just about says it all. . .
- ❖ The school culture at **Staff Sgt. James J. Hill Elementary in Revere** (formerly the William McKinley Elementary School) has been bolstered to **EVEN HIGHER** degrees by the move into the beautiful new building. One team member from a school outside of the ELT network remarked, “Hill could teach a course to other schools on school climate and culture.” Additionally, with the new building, staff have embraced the technology that is now fully available to them, which enables them to do so many wonderful things, one of which is telecast the morning announcements (largely delivered by students) in all classrooms.
- ❖ **Martin Luther King, Jr. in Cambridge** has also moved into its new building after long-last. The new building is incredible and the school community was thrilled to show it off when we visited in the spring! What a great environment to begin and progress in their deliberate work with Research for Better Teaching.
- ❖ **Kuss Middle School in Fall River** continues to deliver an array of interesting and engaging enrichment classes to all students, including a cooking class that is unique to the school and only available due to ELT.
- ❖ The inclusive environment at **Fletcher-Maynard Academy (FMA) in Cambridge** is one that has become a privilege to experience. FMA is such a unique school for how it has welcomed an identity built on inclusion, particularly of its Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) population. This sense of inclusion is pervasive throughout the school in all interactions, including those between students, with teachers, among colleagues, and with family and community members.

If you would like to reach out to any of the schools listed here, or other ELT schools, please contact Moira Connolly at: mconnolly@doe.mass.edu for a list of contacts. You may also find information on our profiles page at www.doe.mass.edu.

If you do not wish to be contacted by other school leaders, please let Moira know at the above email.

These humble highlights do not begin to fully capture the positive energy in these schools, the impressive instruction teachers are delivering to students, nor the focus of the leadership at these schools, so please do not hesitate to reach out to any of the schools or to Moira Connolly for more details.

ELT EXPECTATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND INDICATORS – REVISIONS

In 2013, our office, in partnership with the National Center on Time and Learning (NCTL) revised our ELT Expectations for Implementation (Expectations) and corresponding indicators in order to align them with the [Conditions for School Effectiveness](#) and to reflect the maturity of the Massachusetts ELT program. Based on feedback from report writers and site visit team members, we have determined that some of them are slightly redundant and do not fully capture the great work being done in our ELT schools. Hence, in an effort to build on the components that, over time, we have determined lead to the successful implementation of ELT, reflect continuous program improvements, and more generally align with the research on and evidence of proven turnaround practices. We have decided to revise and refresh the Expectations for Implementation and the indicators once again.

Please be assured that any revisions are meant to streamline more than disrupt. In the coming months, we will seek and incorporate your input in the hopes of implementing the new and improved Expectations for Implementation next year (2018-2019).

Stay tuned for additional information on future discussions. In the interim, if you have suggestions or comments that may help with this improvement effort, please email them to [Moira Connolly](#).

ELT ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS

ELT Site Visits

We have fully put our rating system into operation. Along with findings, we provided ratings to better communicate more clearly the quality of implementation as observed on site visits. We have received positive feedback on this system and will continue to utilize it in site visits this year.

Again, site visit teams will continue to develop findings supported by evidence, which will inform the rating assigned for each [Expectation for Implementation](#). The rating scale will allow us to convey more directly our assessment of performance on each Expectation. As a reminder, the scale is as follows:

Rating	Description
Exemplary	The school fully and consistently meets the expectation and is a potential exemplar in this area.
Meets Expectation	The school generally meets the expectation with no more than minor concern(s) noted.
Some Improvement Needed	The school meets some aspects of the expectation but not others with no more than moderate concern(s) noted.
Major Improvement Needed	The school falls far below the expectation and significant concern(s) are noted.

Just a reminder, during the 2015-2016 academic year, we reduced the number of findings on which we report-out at the close of site visits to three of the eight Expectations. As noted in a previous memo, our primary goal is accuracy and it is important that site visit teams have time to carefully and thoroughly review and corroborate the data collected during the visit before finalizing findings for each Expectation. In most cases, if there is sufficient evidence and team consensus reached during the visit, we will report-out findings on the following Expectations:

Expectation I – ELT design is driven by focused schoolwide priorities.

Expectation VI – Additional time is used to enhance school culture.

Expectation VII – School leadership is focused and collaborative.

Ratings will continue to appear in the written report only.

We are preparing to conduct 6 full ELT Site Visits for the following schools (Cohort II):

Boston Arts Academy, Boston
Frank M. Silvia Elementary School, Fall River
Greenfield Middle School, Greenfield
Newton School, Greenfield
Ferryway School, Malden
City View School, Worcester

Due to the volume of full visits in addition to check-in visits (see below), we need to complete during the 2017-2018 academic year, it may be necessary for us to begin conducting these visits in the fall and completing as many as possible prior to winter break. We will make every effort to accommodate schools in setting dates that are mutually convenient, as well as support schools in their preparation for their visits. If your school appears on the list above, please contact Moira Connolly as soon as possible should there be dates you would like to suggest for your visit. She will also be in touch with each of the above-referenced schools in the coming weeks with detailed information about these visits and what to expect.

Many of you have participated as peer reviewers on ELT site visit teams in the past and your insights as practitioners have been invaluable. ***If you, or members of your staff, are interested in participating as a peer reviewer on an ELT Site Visit team in this or future years (PDP points are available), please contact [Moira Connolly](#) for more information.***

Check-In Visits

Please note that we also plan to conduct half-day check-in visits to all **Cohort III** schools. Cohort III schools include:

Carlton M. Viveiros Elementary School, Fall River
Arthur M. Longsjo Middle School, Fitchburg
A.C. Whelan Elementary School, Revere
Garfield Middle School, Revere

These half-day check-in visits are designed to gather some observational and qualitative evidence regarding the schools' implementation of expanded time and provide feedback, although on a more limited basis than that of full site visits. We will contact individual schools and districts about the scheduling of these visits in the coming weeks, with visits beginning in the fall.

ELT Performance Agreements – Reminder of Changes - Cohort I, IV, V

All ELT schools receiving grant funding through Fund Code 225 will be drafting/redrafting ELT Performance Agreements (Performance Agreements) either this year or in the coming years. All **Cohort I, IV, and V** schools will be submitting new three year performance agreements this year. Performance measured against these agreements will inform funding decisions and are one of the means by which the Department monitors each school's implementation and outcomes.

Due to the adoption of Next Generation MCAS, which will not provide a true baseline for Performance Agreement purposes until results from 2018 are released and feedback from the field, we needed to modify the Performance Agreement template. Additionally, the following changes were put in place last year to streamline the required areas of the performance agreement:

- Rather than meeting PPI targets, assurances will be made by the school and district that they are committed to improvement.
- In discussions with members of the field combined with our experience in providing technical assistance and monitoring, difficulty with developing multiple quantifiable or measurable goals for the **Teacher Leadership and Collaboration** and **Enrichment** sections of Performance Agreements has become a persistent issue. In acknowledgment of these challenges, we now require **one goal, one objective, and one to two measures** each for the Teacher Leadership and Collaboration and Enrichment sections of the Performance Agreement. While we encourage schools to continue to innovate and assess progress in these areas on multiple fronts, for three-

year measurable goals, we anticipate that selecting fewer targets, but with more readily identifiable outcomes, will promote a higher degree of fidelity on which we can more confidently base funding decisions.

- New Performance Agreements will continue to be valid for **three years**, and will continue to be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure progress toward the goals outlined in these agreements. At the end of the third year of implementation of any Performance Agreement, a determination will be made regarding future funding. If funding continuation is granted, the school will set new goals for the next three-year term. ***This funding determination will be made based on student performance data, qualitative evidence of high quality ELT implementation primarily gathered via site visits, and success in meeting Performance Agreement measures.*** As in the past, continued funding during the Performance Agreement period is always subject to annual appropriations.
- If a school's academic performance causes significant concern based on sustained performance below expectations or more precipitous short-term losses, we will inform the Acting Commissioner, who may place a school on academic conditions that must be met in successive years in order to retain funding under the grant, regardless of the point in the three-year cycle of the school's Performance Agreement.

Schools Drafting New ELT Performance Agreements this Fall

For those schools scheduled to draft new Performance Agreements, the Department will conduct a webinar on the Performance Agreement format and creating outcome measures on **Thursday, October 5, 2017 at 3:30 p.m.** Registration and log in information will be sent in the coming weeks.

Please see the following schedule of Performance Agreement draft submission and revision due dates:

1. **Thursday, October 5, 2017** – Technical Assistance Webinar for all ELT schools
2. **Friday, November 3, 2017** – First draft of Performance Agreement due
3. **Friday, January 5, 2018** – Final signed Performance Agreement due to the Department*.

Throughout the drafting period, technical assistance and feedback will be provided by [Moirá Connolly](#). We also strongly encourage you to seek schoolwide collaboration in the development of all drafts of this document and that you align all goals and measures with current District and School Improvement Plans.

****Please note: Grant funding will be placed on hold in districts whose school's Performance Agreements are outstanding after the final draft due date until a satisfactory final draft is submitted and signed.***

FUNDING DECISIONS

As you know, Next Generation MCAS results will be publicly released in the coming months. After review of results, site visit reports, and analysis of progress toward meeting Performance Agreement goals, our team will present information on all Cohort I schools to the Acting Commissioner for his review. If data, site visit information, and progress indicate that funding should be discontinued, FY18 (school year 2017-2018) will be the last year of state funding for ELT. Please be sure that all district and school stakeholders are appropriately informed of the timing of this process.

We will continue to monitor school performance. Should there be schools of concern in Cohort I, Department staff plan to meet with Cohort I district and school leaders this fall to provide preliminary feedback on continuation of ELT funding based on data, progress toward meeting Performance Agreement goals, and implementation evidence gathered at their 2016-2017 site visits.

RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES

EARLY WARNING INDICATOR SYSTEM (EWIS)

The Department's Office of College and Career Readiness has posted some helpful information on the [Early Warning Indicator System \(EWIS\)](#). The state provides tools for districts to identify students at risk of not meeting important academic goals spanning first grade through high school graduation and beyond.

Using the EWIS tools alongside local context, educators can explore underlying causes leading to academic risk and develop additional supports to meet the unique strengths and needs of their students.

Resources	Early Warning Starter Kit	Using EWIS to Create Student-centered Supports	Building an EWIS Community
You are:	... new to using Early Warning data or you would like a refresher.	... comfortable with EWIS fundamentals. You want to understand students' needs and meet them with targeted interventions.	... an EWIS fan. You want to strengthen the use of EWIS at your school or district.
You might be interested in:	Why use EWIS? Highlights Spotlights: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EWIS Spotlight • Postsecondary Spotlight EWIS FAQ What it is & what it isn't	The Early Warning Implementation Cycle on-demand e-learning Using the EWIS Reports in Edwin	Guides: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Warning Implementation Guide • Updated Appendix A (Mar. 2016) Using EWIS in the context of Educator Evaluation

Use EWIS with other data tools to understand your school or district more deeply and plan strategic interventions:

Using Department's College Readiness tools:	Short instructional videos for using the Department's data tools to find enrollment, dropout, graduation and college success trends and early warning risks
Analysis of Dropout Data for 2016:	Excel workbook for analyzing characteristics of students who have dropped out of school
District Analysis & Review Tools (DART):	Tools for exploring district & school performance over time

GUIDANCE ON IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT REQUESTS (from the Commissioner's Weekly Update)

With the future uncertain for students previously covered under Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), the Department is again sharing [guidance that Attorney General Maura Healey issued in May](#) to school districts about immigration enforcement and requests for information from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Under ICE's current policies, ICE generally does not conduct immigration enforcement activities at "sensitive locations" such as schools, but the [guidance](#) offers advice on what to do if such instances arise.

The guidance follows an [advisory](#) the attorney general issued in March 2017 as a reminder that state and federal law require state educational agencies and local school districts to provide all elementary and secondary students with equal access to public education — irrespective of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, *or immigration status*.

As noted in May, Massachusetts public schools strengthen our Commonwealth by welcoming and educating all children.

The Department is grateful to districts for their help in maintaining supportive learning environments in which students and their families are treated with respect.

2017-2018 INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT REGIONAL NETWORKS

The Department welcomes educators from across the state to join our 2017–2018 mathematics, literacy, and science educator networks. These networks are designed to drive implementation of the 2017 Massachusetts Mathematics and ELA/Literacy Frameworks and the 2016 Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) Framework. We are calling on classroom leaders, school leaders, and district leaders to partner across districts to learn, to test and refine tools and strategies, and to innovate.

Networks to support implementation of the 2017 ELA/literacy and mathematics standards and the 2016 STE standards are available.

Math Networks	Literacy Networks	Science Technology/Engineering Networks	English Learner Education Networks
<i>Early Numeracy Network (Pre-K–3):</i> Steppingstones to Addition and Subtraction	<i>Early Grades Literacy Grant (Pre-K–3):</i> Promoting Integrated Pre-K–3 Literacy Learning Across Strands and Content Areas	<i>Elementary Science Networks:</i> Time on Science: Creating Robust Elementary Science Programs	<i>ELE Leaders Networks:</i> Strategic English Learner Education Programming
<i>Middle Grades Math Network (gr. 4–7):</i> Proportional Reasoning: The Bridge from Fractions to Ratios	<i>Middle and Secondary Literacy Network (grades 4–12):</i> Promoting Integrated Literacy Learning in Grades 4–12	<i>Middle Grades Science Networks:</i> Aligning STE Assessments to the Middle Grades STE Standards	
<i>Secondary Math Network (grades 6–12):</i> Access Math: Building middle/high coursework pathways for the future	<i>Secondary Literacy Network (gr 9–12):</i> Promoting Variety and Flexibility in Student Writing	<i>Urban Science Leaders Network:</i> Developing Authentic STE Assessments K–12	
<i>Urban Mathematics Leaders Network:</i> Advancing Access for English Learners	<i>Urban Literacy Leaders Network:</i> Designing Complex Literacy Tasks		

For Network descriptions, locations, dates, registration information, and other details, click (ctrl click) the following: [Instructional Support Networks](#) . This will bring you to the PDF containing detailed information.

LEADING THE NATION (from the Commissioner’s Back-to-School Memo)

Due primarily to Massachusetts' strong public schools, *U.S. News & World Report* recognized Massachusetts as the [best state in the nation this year](#). It was one of many recognitions for the Commonwealth's schools in recent months, and it is the strength and character of our state's educators and students that have made that success possible. I sincerely appreciate all that you and your faculty and staff do every day to help students.

To prepare you for the new school year and to help you keep your school committee, teachers, and parents informed and engaged, we have attached the following resources:

[The New Department Website](#): The new site has been designed to allow families and educators to more easily find information and resources, including a page to [subscribe](#) to Department newsletters;

[The Year Ahead](#): Major developments from the Department that will impact your 2017-2018 school year;

[Back-to-School Basics](#): A brief overview for parents on how the state and districts work together to support teaching and learning; [[Accessible version](#)]

[MCAS Parent Guide*](#): An interactive guide for parents on understanding the next-generation MCAS; and

Leading the Nation Poster: An 11"x17" [high-resolution](#) .pdf file schools can print and display to promote Massachusetts' upcoming celebration of student success in 2018. A [low-resolution](#) version of the poster is also available for sharing via email and social media. [[Accessible version](#)]

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION: "WHAT TO LOOK FOR" OBSERVATION GUIDES UPDATED AND AVAILABLE

The Department, in partnership with educators in the field, has developed a suite of straightforward observation guides to provide insight into what should be happening in particular content-area classrooms.

These "What to Look For" guides describe what observers should expect to see in a classroom at a particular grade level in a specific subject area. This includes the knowledge and skills students should be learning and using (as reflected in state learning standards) on the front page and examples of student and teacher behaviors aligned to the [Standards of Effective Practice](#) used in the state evaluation framework on the back page.

The observation guides are particularly useful to observers who may not have the subject matter experience to know what to look for in classrooms outside of their personal background. The "What to Look For" guides are resources to help educators efficiently identify what teachers and students should be experiencing in specific subjects and grade levels. Available guides can be accessed at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/observation/>.

[NEXT GENERATION MCAS - TESTING SCHEDULE AND RESULTS](#)

- The [2017-18 testing schedule](#) is posted online.
- Results from the spring 2017 MCAS, including results from the next-generation MCAS, will be publicly released in October.
- The 2018 grades 5 [W](#) and 8 [W](#) science and technology/engineering MCAS tests will consist of items that align both to the 2001/2006 and 2016 science and technology/engineering standards.
- In spring 2018, schools will be expected to administer computer-based testing for the MCAS ELA and mathematics tests in grades 4, 5, 7, and 8, as well as the science and technology/engineering tests in grades 5 and 8.
- Also in spring 2018, high schools will be expected to administer computer-based pilot tests in ELA and mathematics to some students in grade 10. This pilot is intended to help high schools prepare for the next-generation assessments and to field test the new test questions.

[I CAME HERE TO LEARN WEBINAR](#)

On Tuesday, October 3rd at 2:30 EST, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and its research partner on the GradNation State Activation Initiative, the Center for Promise, will present *I Came Here to Learn: The Achievements and Experiences of Massachusetts Students Whose First Language is Not English*. From analyzing student-level data and interviewing young people throughout Massachusetts, the researchers heard stories of strength, motivation, and a search for a better future. The Center for Promise team will provide a brief presentation of the research, followed by a moderated discussion. Respondents will offer insights from their experiences at the school, district and state level. The webinar will conclude with an opportunity for questions from virtual attendees. Please contact Marissa Cole, Associate Director, Center for Promise at marissac@americaspromise.org or Nyal Fuentes, Nfuentes@doe.mass.edu with any questions. Please register for the webinar at the link that will be sent to you.

Please register for *I Came Here to Learn: Insights from Research and Practice on the Achievements and Experiences of FLNE Students in Massachusetts* on Oct 3, 2017 2:30 PM EDT at:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/110960899679142657>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar. Brought to you by GoToWebinar® Webinars Made Easy®

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Audio PIN for Attendees: 386-587-077

CONTACTS

Here's to another great year.

As always, we welcome questions and feedback. For inquiries regarding MA ELT, please contact us in the Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign:

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