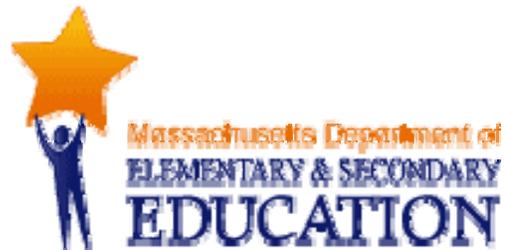




Salem Public Schools

District Accelerated Improvement Plan (AIP) 2015-16



Submitted September 2015

Revision 9/2015

Section 1: Introduction

Laying the Foundation for Reform

Salem Public Schools received a Level 4 accountability designation in 2011 and since then has engaged in the Accelerated Improvement Planning (AIP) process to guide and monitor its turnaround efforts. AIP strategic objectives have remained constant across all plans developed since 2012-13, and action steps have put particular emphasis on strengthening curriculum and instruction, building capacity for data use, and development of leadership practices.

As a result of the AIP, significant progress has been made in building a foundation to support teaching and learning:

- Curriculum maps outlining units of study aligned to the Common Core and Next Generation Science standards have been developed in ELA, mathematics, and science.
- Teachers have been trained to implement specific instructional models such as reader/writer workshop and have been provided high quality instructional materials to support planning standards-based lessons.
- A balanced assessment system of rigorous measures is in place and regular data meetings are held at schools to review data to inform instruction. Principals and data team's members have received coaching to support data practices.
- A district-wide instructional coaching model was implemented starting in 2013-14 with the goal of strengthening core instructional practice through an embedded model of support. Each school has a literacy coach and math and science coaches are shared across schools.
- An annual professional development plan ensures that teachers and school leaders are provided quality learning experiences.
- Evaluators have received significant training in how to write and deliver feedback that is high leverage and actionable.

In addition, to the foundational teaching and learning work, the AIP has driven significant reform in the area of student supports:

- A Positive Behavior Intervention Support System (PBIS) that proactively instructs and supports all students in following well-defined social and behavioral expectations.
- A coordinated cadre of behavior specialists, school adjustments counselors, psychologists and social workers that offer tiered behavioral and mental supports designed to keep students in the classroom and learning.
- An inclusive culture that supports teachers in engineering classroom activities that are culturally appropriate, engaging for a range of learning styles, and suitable for learners with various talents and interests.
- An emphasis on education in the least restrictive environment, that has supported the significant reduction of students in substantially separate classrooms and increased diversity within the general education programs.

Throughout the early phases of Salem's transformation process the district has taken deliberate steps, as detailed in the AIP, to support and develop teacher and school leaders. All new principals receive a mentor/coach to guide their transition into the principalship. In addition to this support, all principals in the district are provided ongoing coaching around the educator evaluation process.

This year SPS had three participants in the Lynch Leadership Fellowship—the Salem High School principal, the Director of Operations at Bentley Academy Charter School, and the district STEM Coordinator (now the assistant principal at Collins Middle School). These leaders participated in two weeks of intensive summer training and will receive coaching throughout the year in an effort to refine data and instructional leadership practices. This training not only strengthens the practice of existing leaders but is also helping to create a pipeline of aspiring school leaders.

In July 2015, the district launched an effort to cultivate a cadre of teacher leaders who have the skill to facilitate common planning time, support effective data use at the student level, and plan and deliver professional development. These teachers will play a critical role in sustaining improvement initiatives across schools.

Deepening the Work of our Three Objectives in the AIP

The main goal during the revision process of the AIP this year was to focus on a clear set of priorities that can provide cohesion to the work outlined in the plan. Consideration was also given to the fact that the priorities in previous versions of the AIP focused primarily on establishing and building basic structures, such as data inquiry protocols, that were not in place in Salem Public Schools at the time the first AIP was developed. The team felt very strongly that the initiatives and action steps to be included in this year's revision of the plan, had to deepen the work that was already started in the district, promote ownership of the work in the schools, while at the same time it focuses on a few initiatives and more streamlined metrics.

Initiatives Aligned to Key Levers

The initiatives under each of the objectives align to two structure levers and one major area of need outlined by our district data: **meeting the needs of our diverse learners; improving and deepening data practices; leadership structures and practices**. Each of the three levers informs the initiatives and action steps that deepen the work done under each objective.

The shift to work on strengthening school structures is based on the fact that highly effective schools have strong structures that drive improved student outcomes and accelerate school improvement. Our AIP focused on the following structures:

- High functioning Instructional Leadership Teams (and other leadership teams)
- Strong common planning time practices
- Data inquiry practices that are conducted at three levels: school, classroom/grade, and individual students which also track progress of all subgroups at school
- Clearly defined, implemented and supported rigorous instruction which is accessible for all learners

These structures, combined with the content of the state learning standards, become the “machinery” that drive reform and accelerated improvement in our schools.

As the staff at Salem Public Schools first began working on establishing their data practices through the partnership with ANet, the focus was on establishing the nuts and bolts of data inquiry. Data Teams were established at every school. The focus of this work was to build the capacity of these teams to conduct data inquiry cycles along with the principal. This goal was successfully achieved during the past two years.

With focus this year on leadership structures, we are envisioning transitioning the Data Teams into Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs). In addition to leading data inquiry cycles, ILTs also lead the charge in ensuring that the data cycles are conducted at the school, classroom and student level while also developing and supporting the priorities and professional development for the staff. The ILT should be closely informing and supporting the work of teachers during common planning time. The shift from just data leadership, into academic leadership is the key

in shifting every school into having an effective ILT. This is how the work is being deepened and refined through the focus on leveraging leadership structures such as the ILT and common planning time (CPT).

Streamlined Benchmarks closely align with Initiatives

Reflecting on last year's benchmarks, the team felt that there were too many benchmarks and action steps. Data collection and management was challenging and time consuming. This year, the team focused on less metrics that closely measure the impact of the three levers identified in our initiatives. The result is a much more streamlined and focused AIP with a few levers that repeat themselves in the initiatives under each objective.

The district leadership team meets regularly to analyze and monitor data that informs progress in other important areas of achievement such as student and teacher attendance; suspensions; SAT scores and AP course completion. The focus this year will be to develop and strengthen functions in our district that will support data analysis and reporting.

New Focus on the AIP Creates Cohesion

With the focus on deepening the work in our leadership and academic structures, our team has been able to align the professional development for principals to deepen their capacity to lead by leveraging these structures. This summer, we conducted a 4-day Summer Institute for principals, which included sessions on cohesive leadership structure; deepening data practices to include student level data; meeting the needs of our diverse learners – cultural proficiency; increasing rigor in ELA and math: text complexity and Common Core shift #3 Rigor in math. During the 4 days of the Institute, school leaders and their administrative teams learned collaboratively on these topics that directly support the initiatives on our newly revised AIP.

The topics of the professional development plan for principals and teachers for the year has also been closely aligned with the initiatives in the AIP. For example, we will be building the capacity of teachers to do standards based planning and supporting principals' ability to provide effective feedback based on instruction that is aligned to the Common Core. This alignment and support that the AIP will bring to Salem Public Schools includes the highest leverage initiatives and metrics that we believe will drive accelerated improvement in our district.

Engaging Stakeholders in Developing the Plan and Rollout

Over the past year, SPS engaged stakeholders in the work of the AIP in several ways. Principals have remained engaged every step of the way with the past year involving mid- and end-of-year surveys, an end of the year debrief, and a 4-day intensive Leadership Institute in August 2015. The strategic objectives of Salem's AIP -- improving data practices, meeting the needs of all learners, and leadership structures and practices were the foundation for the August Leadership Institute which gave principals the opportunity to go deeper in terms of leadership practice and focus in each of these areas.

The central theme of "Learning and Working Together as a Team" has framed all work and efforts of the new Salem Public Schools administrative leadership team. From the beginning, Superintendent Ruiz has conducted a series of "Entry Plan" engagements that range from one-on-one interviews with all district staff and school leaders to teacher and community forums, and other strategies to better understand the context around what is working and what needs improvement in the district. In July 2015 she engaged all members of the School Committee in an all-day retreat that provided an opportunity to reflect on the progress made on the AIP objectives as well as to identify and provide input on new priorities for moving the work forward. Her remarks during this year's opening Convocation also highlighted the importance of collaborative learning and clearly articulated the district-wide goals embedded throughout the AIP. The emphases on focus, coherence, and collaboration signal a level of alignment, intentionality, and appreciation for the everyday work of teaching and learning that has not been prominent in the district in recent years.

It is indeed a new day in the Salem Public Schools and one that is already inspiring the district's hard-working team of educational leaders to new aspirations. As Superintendent Ruiz emphasized in her Convocation remarks, Salem no longer seeks to simply exit its current Level 4 accountability status. We aspire to nothing short of being the best district in the state! *That* is the vision that will propel us forward and provide the fuel to engage all stakeholders--teachers, leaders, parents, community, and students--along with us. This is the journey worth taking and we are eager to accelerate our efforts and results this year.

Going forward we will continue to engage all stakeholders in a variety of ways. The table below outlines the planned forums and venues for engaging others in the work of the AIP

Core Audience	Engagement/Event Type	Date
School Committee members (and the public)	SC Meeting (present revised AIP) Quarterly Progress Monitoring Sessions Information on website Newspaper article/Op-Ed	9/21/15 TBD (Oct, Dec, March, June)
Principals/District leaders Principals/School Leaders (APs) /District Directors	Bi-weekly DLT Meetings Principal surveys with questions aligned to the AIP objectives that will give principals a voice and opportunity for input and feedback (and to assess the extent to which AIP objectives are reaching principals)	Every other week starting 9/24, 8-11am Pre-post (mid- and end-of-year)
Teachers	School-level presentations (principals will be given talking points and a deck/materials to share with teachers) Teacher surveys with questions aligned to the AIP objectives that will give teachers a voice and opportunity for input and feedback (and to assess the extent to which AIP objectives are reaching teachers) Key themes from objectives woven throughout this year's district PD offerings. Slides referencing AIP themes will be included during PD days as reference points	Fall 2015 Pre-post (mid- and end-of-year) District PD schedule
Other SPS Staff	Forums in central office and other locations	Fall 2015 Spring 2016
Parents and Community	Targeted presentations to key community groups such as Salem State University, Latino Coalition, Community Advisory Board, Salem Education Foundation, Salem Main Streets, Rotary Club, Special Education Parent Advisory Council, etc.	Ongoing throughout the year
Students	A student forum on the objectives of AIP	Winter 2016

Monitoring Our Progress in 2015-16

Although in previous years SPS held quarterly “highlight meetings” to review and monitor progress on AIP objectives, this year the SPS Leadership Team will schedule regular progress monitoring sessions to review the data collectively. Leaders will track progress on each of the below metrics, highlighting areas where progress is being made and going deeper in areas needing further attention and improvement. The benchmarks included below are part of a broader set of measures that SPS will be using this year to track the district’s progress toward its student learning and other goals. These measures include both district-wide trends as well as progress within each of our schools. Review of these measures will help us monitor progress and make mid-course corrections as needed.

The SPS leadership team will also monitor progress throughout the year at the school level. The focus of the instructional rounds will be guided by the topics/themes of the AIP but the structure will be co-created with each of the principals. In addition to the instructional rounds conducted by district leadership to monitor progress, principals will be expected to conduct at least four additional instructional rounds to assess and monitor their school’s progress in other areas. Principals will also be expected to share written feedback on all four of the instructional rounds conducted.

Section 2: Plan Summary

Strategic Objective #1: Embed a data-driven system that assesses and supports learning and improves instructional practices throughout the district

Strategic Initiatives	Action Steps	Who Will Lead?	When Will it Start?	When Will it be Complete?
1.1 Continue to build capacity to leverage school staff and structures to drive data-inquiry cycles across school, classroom, and student levels	Provide PD on highly effective ILT, CPT, IST, and other leadership teams	Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, Principals, ELL Director	August 2015	June 2016
	Develop data collection tools for local assessments, instructional rounds, and supervision/leadership coaching	Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, Principals, ELL Director	September 2015	October 2015
	Train and deploy teacher leaders to facilitate CPT	Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning	August 2015	June 2016
	Launch of expectations for data use and team structures during a 4-day Leadership Institute	Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, Principals, ELL Director	August 2015	August 2015
	Schedule, implement, support, and monitor data inquiry cycles at every school	Principals, Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, ELL Director	September 2015	June 2016

1.2 Refine and implement data practices to differentiate supports to meet the needs of our learners, with a specific focus on ELLs and SWDs	Provide professional development during District Leadership Team Meetings and coaching to all building leaders on leveraging the data cycle across levels: school, classroom, and student.	Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, ELL Director	September 2015	June 2016
	Refine data inquiry cycles at every school to include ELL and SWD populations' analysis, action planning, and progress monitoring.	Principals	September 2015	June 2016
	Provide PD for teachers on student level data analysis and action planning in order to create focused differentiation during tier one instruction.	Principals, Coaches	September 2015	June 2016

Strategic Objective 2: Increase instructional rigor in all classrooms across the district

Strategic Initiatives	Action Steps	Who Will Lead?	When Will it Start?	When Will it be Complete?
2.1 Implement instruction that is closely aligned to the rigor and shifts in the Common Core	Provide PD on text complexity and close reading strategies for leaders and teachers	Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, ELL Director, Principals, Coaches	August 2015	June 2016
	Provide PD on interdisciplinary, across content writing	Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, ELL Director, Principals, Coaches	January 2016	June 2016
	Train principals and calibrate their practice on the "look for" documents developed by SPS DLT	Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, ELL Director	October 2015	June 2016
	Continue instructional rounds with a focus on Common Core using the "look fors" documents developed by C&I.	Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, ELL Director, Principals	October 2015	June 2016

	Leverage teacher leaders to facilitate standards-based lesson planning.	Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, Teacher Leaders	August 2015	June 2016
	Use CPT to build teacher capacity to utilize standards-based instructional materials. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calkins reading and writing units, STEMScopes, Eureka math, Transition to Algebra 	Principals, Coaches	September 2015	June 2016
	Instructional coaches will support teachers in strengthening instructional practice through, planning, demo lessons, and non-evaluative observation and feedback	Coaches	September 2015	June 2016
	Develop a K-8 social studies curriculum closely aligned with the literacy standards	Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, Coaches	March 2016	June 2016
	Leverage K-8 science common assessments to drive rigor in science instruction	Principals, Coaches	September 2015	June 2016
	Continue to develop high school curriculum maps aligned to the Common Core	Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, High School Academic Director	September 2015	June 2016
2.2 Universally implement instruction that is scaffolded and involves a variety of entry points to meet the needs of all learners	Provide a three part PD series on Supporting Language Acquisition for all teachers and leaders to meet the needs of ELL students	Director of ELL	September 2015	June 2016
	Train all instructional coaches to provide non-evaluative feedback on scaffolded instruction and multiple entry points	Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, ELL Director	September 2015	June 2016
	Train all school leaders to provide feedback on scaffolded instruction and multiple entry points based on observation and review of lesson plans	Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, ELL Director	August 2015	June 2016

	Provide PD for all teachers and leaders on inclusive practices	Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, ELL Director	September 2015	June 2016
	Provide PD for all teachers and leaders on cultural competency	Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, ELL Director	September 2015	June 2016
2.3 Build capacity to leverage school staff and structures to implement a highly effective tiered support model	Provide PD on effective use of IST process to implement a robust tiered instruction system	Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, ELL Director, Principals	September 2015	June 2016
	Support principals in developing cohesive plans to support effective data cycles, the professional development needs of the staff and the deployment of coaches, and Tier 2 interventionists and other support personnel at the school.	Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, ELL Director	September 2015	June 2016

Strategic Objective 3: Ensure high quality leadership exists across the district that supports and monitors the continuous improvement of teaching and learning

Strategic Initiatives	Action Steps	Who Will Lead?	When Will it Start?	When Will it be Complete?
3.1 Monitor instruction that closely aligns with the shifts in the Common Core	Provide required PD to school leaders on observation, feedback, and evaluation of instruction aligned to shifts in the Common Core	Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, ELL Director	August 2015	June 2016
	School leaders will use the “Look Fors” document to inform their observations and feedback during their Instructional Rounds.	Principals	October 2015	June 2016

3.2 Support implementation of scaffolded instruction that involves a variety of entry points to meet the needs of all learners	Provide a three part PD series on Supporting Language Acquisition for all teachers and leaders to meet the needs of ELL students.	Director of ELL	September 2015	June 2016
	Principals will provide teachers feedback and support on the development of entry points in teacher's lesson plans and after observations of instruction.	Principals	September 2015	June 2016
	Principals will engage in Instructional Rounds with Central Office staff to identify common themes and areas of growth in supporting all learners.	Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, ELL Director, Principals	October 2015	June 2016
3.3 Leverage school staff and structures to implement a highly effective data-driven tiered support model and continuously monitor implementation	Provide mentoring and coaching for new leaders	Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, ELL Director	August 2015	June 2016
	Conduct onsite visits to monitor implementation of tiered supports	Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, ELL Director	September 2015	June 2016
3.4 Differentiate supports to schools	Continue to hold joint management/union transformation team meetings to guide and monitor turnaround efforts at Nathaniel Bowditch School	Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, ELL Director, NBS Principal, Salem Teachers' Union	August 2015	June 2016
	Formalize opportunities to support and guide the work at the Bentley Academy Charter School	Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, ELL Director, Chief of Systems Strategy	August 2015	June 2016

Section 3: Metrics

Salem Public Schools will use the following measures to monitor progress toward successful implementation of this plan:

Educator Outcomes

100% of classroom visits reflect instruction that aligns to Common Core “Look Fors” through Instructional Rounds

- By December 1st, at least 60% of classroom visits reflect instruction that aligns to Common Core “Look Fors” through Instructional Rounds.
- By February 1st, at least 75% of classroom visits reflect instruction that aligns to Common Core “Look Fors” through Instructional Rounds.
- By June 1st, 100% of classroom visits reflect instruction that aligns to Common Core “Look Fors” through Instructional Rounds.

100% of principals show evidence of focused feedback given to teachers about improving access to content, in monthly principal coaching sessions

- By December 1st, at least 75% of principals show evidence of focused feedback given to teachers about improving access to content, in monthly principal coaching sessions.
- By February 1st, at least 85% of principals show evidence of focused feedback given to teachers about improving access to content, in monthly principal coaching sessions.
- By June 1st, 100% of principals show evidence of focused feedback given to teachers about improving access to content, in monthly principal coaching sessions.

100% of schools show evidence of having a cohesive leadership structure that utilizes highly effective data practices to inform a tiered support model, as evidenced by district monitoring visits

- By December 1st, at least 50% of schools show evidence of having a cohesive leadership structure that utilizes highly effective data practices to inform a tiered support model, as evidenced by district monitoring visits.
- By February 1st, at least 75% of schools show evidence of having a cohesive leadership structure that utilizes highly effective data practices to inform a tiered support model, as evidenced by district monitoring visits.
- By June 1st, 100% of schools show evidence of having a cohesive leadership structure that utilizes highly effective data practices to inform a tiered support model, as evidenced by district monitoring visits.

Student Outcomes

100% of students K-5 will make one or more year's worth of growth on the BAS, measured in October, February, and June.

- Students on grade level will make at least one year's worth of growth on BAS.
- Students below grade level will make more than one year's worth of growth on BAS.

100% of 6th-8th grade students make one or more year's worth of growth on the ELA iReady measure, measured in October, February, and June.

- Students on grade level will make at least one year's worth of growth on ELA iReady measure.
- Students below grade level will make more than one year's worth of growth on ELA iReady measure.

100% of high school students will reach grade level benchmarks on district ELA & math Galileo measure(s), measured in October, February, and June.

- Students on grade level will make at least one year's worth of growth on district ELA & math Galileo measure(s).
- Students below grade level will make more than one year's worth of growth on district ELA & math Galileo measure(s).