



Lynn Public Schools Review of District Systems and Practices Addressing the Differentiated Needs of English Language Learners

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This document was prepared on behalf of the Center for District and School Accountability of the
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Overview

Purpose

The Center for District and School Accountability (CDSA) 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 review may serve as models for, and provide support to, other districts and schools.

Selection of Districts

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. 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 (described above), "Impact of District Programs and Support on School Improvement: Identifying and Sharing Promising School and District Practices for Limited English Proficient Students."

Methodology

To focus the analysis, reviews explore five areas: **Leadership and Governance, Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment, Human Resources and Professional Development, and Student Support**. The reviews seek to identify those systems and practices that most likely contribute to positive results, as well as those that may impede rapid improvement. Systems and practices that are likely to contribute to positive results were identified from the ESE's District Standards and Indicators and from a draft report of the English Language Learners Subcommittee 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 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. To collect evidence across all areas, the team consists of independent consultants with expertise in each of the five areas listed above, as well as English language learner education.

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

Lynn Public Schools

The site visit to the Lynn Public Schools was conducted from May 12-13 and from June 1-4, 2010. The site visit included visits to the following schools: Tracy Elementary School (K-5), A. Drewicz Elementary School (K-5), and Robert L. Ford School (K-5), all of which were identified as “gap closers” for their limited English proficient students, as described above. Information about the members of the review team can be found in Appendix A; further information about the review and the site visit schedule can be found in Appendix B.

District Profile²

The Lynn public school district serves approximately 13,373 students in grades Pre-K-12 at 24 schools: 17 elementary schools, 3 middle schools, and 4 high schools. The district consists of an ethnically and racially diverse student body. The following chart depicts the various student subgroups that exist within the Lynn district for the school year of 2009-2010.

Table 1: Lynn Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity & Selected Populations, 2009-2010

Enrollment by Race/ Ethnicity	Percent of Total	Selected Populations	Percent of Total
African-American	12.8	First Language not English	50.7
Asian	9.7	Limited English Proficient	25.9
Hispanic or Latino	47.6	Low-income	78.4
Native American	0.4	Special Education	16.3
White	26.1	Free Lunch	69.2
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	0.0	Reduced-price lunch	9.2
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	3.4		

Source: School/District Profiles on ESE website

The Lynn public school district also serves a linguistically diverse student body. Over 40 languages are represented within the district, with Spanish (76%), Khmer (7.3%), French (2.4%), Vietnamese (1.8%), and Arabic (1.2%) being the predominant languages spoken by Lynn limited English proficient (LEP) students. The table on the following page displays more information on the district’s LEP students.

² Student demographic data derived from ESE’s website, ESE’s Education Data Warehouse, or other ESE sources.

Table 2: Number of LEP students in Lynn, 2009-2010

	A Drewicz Elementary	Robert L Ford	Tracy Elementary	District	State
Limited English Proficient (LEP)*	176	229	163	3,465	59,158
LEP and Regular Education**	155	218	149	3,071	49,842
LEP and Special Education**	21	11	14	394	9,316

Sources: *School/District Profiles on ESE website; **ESE data generated from Student Information Management System (SIMS) data

Children identified as LEP have the following options for language support:

- (1) Structured English immersion (SEI) provides intensive English as a second language (ESL) instruction and sheltered content instruction. In grades K-5, this class setting is recommended only for students who are in Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment (MEPA) levels 1 or 2.
- (2) Regular education classroom provides sheltered content support and some ESL support. This class setting is recommended for students who are in MEPA levels 3, 4, or 5. Newcomer classes are for students with limited formal schooling and are located at one middle school and one high school in the district.
- (3) Parents may opt out and decline to enroll their children in the recommended language support setting.
- (4) A parental exception waiver option is available; parents may apply at their child's school for a waiver for an alternative program.

In the 2009-2010 school year, the district employed approximately 901 teachers – 89% percent of whom were highly qualified, and 98% of whom were fully licensed in their teaching assignment. When necessary, the district will hire a teacher on a waiver. If a teacher, however, does not fulfill first-year waiver requirements, that teacher is not granted a waiver for the second year.

The district has partnerships with local universities to recruit new teachers. Gordon College is one source of teacher candidates for the district and a pipeline for ESL-licensed recruits. The district also hires candidates from Salem State College and Boston University.

Student Performance³

The district has a No Child Left Behind (NCLB) accountability status of Corrective Action Subgroups in both English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. The NCLB performance ratings for ELA and mathematics are moderate and low, respectively. In 2009, the district made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in the aggregate for both content areas; however, it did not attain AYP in subgroups for both content categories.

Since 2008, the district has made AYP in the aggregate for ELA. However, the district has not made AYP in subgroups for ELA since 2007. In 2007 and 2008, but not 2009, the district made AYP in the aggregate and subgroups for both content areas. In 2008-2009, in grades 3-5, the district did not make AYP in ELA for the African-American, special education, low-income, Hispanic/Latino, formerly limited English proficient (FLEP), and LEP subgroups. In the same time period, in grades 3-5, the district did not make AYP in any of its student subgroups.

A review of the Massachusetts ESE warehouse data indicated that the district has typically performed at a moderate-to-high level on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests. For example, in ELA in 2009, the composite performance index (CPI) for the district was 76.5. In mathematics, the district's CPI in 2009 was 66.9.

Moreover, since 2008, FLEP and LEP students in the Lynn district have outperformed their peers in the state in both ELA and mathematics. In ELA in 2008, the CPI for FLEP district students was 79.9, compared to the state's CPI for FLEP students of 75.8; the CPI for LEP district students was 58.4, compared to the state's CPI for LEP students of 54.1. In 2009 in mathematics, Lynn LEP students achieved a CPI of 56.3, compared to the state's CPI for LEP students of 53.1.

The subgroup of students with disabilities, however, lags behind the state in terms of its MCAS performance in ELA and mathematics. For instance, this subgroup attained a CPI of 58.8, while state peers achieved a CPI of 67.8 in ELA for 2009. Similarly, in mathematics, the students with disabilities subgroup made a CPI of 50.1, behind the state's CPI of 56.9.

The table on the following page displays the enrollment numbers, AYP status, and CPI scores for the Lynn district and the schools visited during the English language learner (ELL) review.

³ Data derived from ESE's website, ESE's Education Data Warehouse, or other ESE sources.

Table 3: 2009 District and School AYP Status

District/ School	ELA					Mathematics				
	Status 09	CPI 09	CPI Chg 08-09	AYP Agg	AYP Sub	Status 09	CPI 09	CPI Chg 08-09	AYP Agg	AYP Sub
Lynn	CA	76.5	0.0	Yes	No	CA	66.9	-1.2	No	No
A Drewicz Elementary	RST1-A	71.9	3.6	Yes	No	II1-A	66.8	-2.3	No	No
Robert L Ford	CA-S	80.7	-2.0	No	No	RST2-A	70.0	-1.9	No	No
Tracy Elementary	--	78.9	3.6	Yes	Yes	--	80.3	-1.4	No	No

Note: A or Agg = Aggregate; CA = Corrective Action; CPI = Composite Performance Index;
 II1 = Identified for Improvement year 1; II2 = Identified for Improvement year 2; RST1 = Restructuring year 1;
 RST2 = Restructuring year 2; S or Sub = Subgroup

Source: School/District Profiles on ESE website

Findings

Leadership and Governance

The superintendent's goals are driving current improvement initiatives.

The current superintendent for the Lynn Public Schools (LPS) has held this role for one-and-a-half years and – before becoming the district's superintendent – served as the LPS deputy superintendent for three years. When interviewed, the superintendent reported that a current district improvement plan (DIP) has not yet been created; the district's most recent plan was developed in June 2008. In lieu of updating the DIP, the superintendent presented 10 goals for the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 academic years.

The review team examined a district document listing the superintendent's goals and corresponding objectives. Of these goals and objectives, district leaders reported that the following are current priorities:

- (1) Supporting data-driven decision making
- (2) Expanding departmentalized instruction to grades 3, 4, and 5
- (3) Supporting full inclusion for English language learner (ELL) students
- (4) Increasing support for ELL students by recruiting and placing English as a second language (ESL) teachers in schools with and without structured English immersion (SEI) programs.

There is no indication of whether or how student performance data were used to develop these goals. The document reviewed by the team does not reference student assessment or subgroup data or gaps in student performance. Nor does the document provide a data-based justification for changes in district practices, such as the decision to fully integrate ELL students in mainstream classrooms and gradually eliminate SEI classrooms.

It is not clear how stakeholders – including staff, families, and district partners – were consulted in the process of developing the two-year goals. During focus groups, district staff members stated that there has been some resistance to departmentalization across elementary schools, particularly in grade 3. Of the three schools visited, only Drewicz Elementary School departmentalizes instruction in all three grade levels, providing evidence that this key leadership initiative does not have a broad base of support at the school level.

Principals have discretion over how Title I funds are allocated.

The superintendent and district leaders indicated that the district does not provide guidelines for each school's use of Title I funds. Interviews with school leaders confirmed that each principal has the autonomy to spend the allocated Title I funds.

Ford School leadership stated that the 2009-2010 Title I monies funded a distance learning network/ NASA teacher who runs a NASA lab in the school. The review team visited the NASA science lab and a computer lab, but did not observe students in these facilities during their visit.

Interviews with Ford School leadership also revealed that Title I funding was used for a parent evening literacy program that teaches three levels of English classes and includes a general educational development (GED) component. In a focus group, school staff members indicated that the Ford School also used Title I funds to support an after-school tutoring program held on Tuesday and Thursday. Leadership had not elected to use Title I funds for a reading, mathematics, or ESL teacher. The review team did not find evidence of direct support services provided to ELL students during the school day.

At Drewicz Elementary School, school leaders reported that 2009-2010 Title I funds covered the salaries of two reading teachers and one curriculum and instruction teacher (CIT). The reading teachers primarily provided 30 minutes of direct literacy support to students. School staff indicated that the small groups facilitated by the reading teachers may include ELL students. In a focus group, school leaders stated that Drewicz Elementary School will lose special education support staff and, due to a shortage of Title I funding, will have to cut its CIT position in 2010-2011.

At Tracy Elementary School, Title I monies were used to fund a reading teacher who provided direct support to K-5 students. Additionally, Title I funds were used to pay the salary of a CIT/special education teacher to provide direct support to grade 4 special education students (0.4 FTE), provide teachers with classroom support in ELA and mathematics, assist with the school's data analysis efforts, and facilitate grade 4 MCAS preparation (0.6 FTE). School leadership reported that leftover Title I funds were used to acquire access to the Study Island Program for a Saturday MCAS preparation course; the \$2,000 spent on this purchase provided every student in grades 3, 4, and 5 with online access to the web-based program at school and at home.

In summary, principal autonomy over how Title I monies are spent has resulted in varying use of these funds across each of the schools visited, and has had an impact on the amount of direct academic support provided to ELL students.

Current levels of ESL staffing limit the amount of ESL instruction provided.

District leaders reported a goal of increased inclusion of ELL students and, toward this end, eliminated kindergarten SEI classes in the 2009-2010 year and provided schools with increased ESL services. The district's provision of ESL services is also a response to a corrective action mandate; the district's goal is to provide ESL support in all schools. However, current ESL teacher coverage was limited or absent at the Drewicz Elementary School, Ford School, and Tracy Elementary School, affecting the degree to which ELL students across MEPA levels receive sufficient ESL instruction.

District and school focus groups indicated that in 2009-2010, itinerant ESL teachers were placed in seven district elementary schools – Tracy, Drewicz, Cobbett, William P. Connery, EJ Harrington, Ingalls, and Brickett – to support ELL students in SEI and mainstream classrooms. These schools were identified as having the highest need for ESL support. District staff members reported that additional ESL teachers will be placed in district schools, including the Ford School, in 2010-2011.

The following table summarizes the number of ELL students at the Drewicz, Ford, and Tracy schools across MEPA levels.

**Table 4: ELL Students According to Spring 2009 MEPA Level:
Drewicz Elementary School, Ford School, and Tracy Elementary School**

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Drewicz Elementary	1	18	30	59	42
Ford	5	25	59	68	98
Tracy Elementary	6	15	26	30	30

Source: MEPA data on ESE website

District and school staff members corroborated that the Ford School does not currently provide ELL support services to students. With 229 students identified as limited English proficient (LEP), the ELL student population at the Ford School is the highest of all three schools visited. As indicated in Table 4 (above), the Ford School also has the highest number of students in levels 2 and 3.

At the Drewicz and Tracy schools, one ESL teacher provides direct support to expanded ELL student populations. School staff members reported that, in 2009-2010, many of the level 1 and level 2 students from the Callahan School’s former SEI classrooms were transferred to the Drewicz and Tracy schools.

The ESL teacher at the Tracy Elementary School provides direct support to 156 grade K-5 students. Focus groups indicated that the ESL teacher provides reading intervention support to grades K-3 students two times per week, 20 minutes each time. The ESL teacher meets less often with students in grades 4 and 5.

Teachers and staff at Drewicz Elementary School reported that one ESL teacher serves approximately 180 students. School staff members reported that, due to time constraints, the ESL teacher spends the first, third, and fourth week of every month with students in grades K, 1, and 2; support in grades 3, 4, and 5 is limited to students who demonstrate the highest need, such as newcomer students who have recently arrived from other countries or students from former district SEI classrooms at the lowest levels of English proficiency.

Curriculum and Instruction

The district has developed curriculum and instructional resources to foster sheltered instructional practices among SEI and ESL teachers.

The Language Support Program staff has developed two sets of documents to support the inclusion of sheltered instructional practices across the district’s schools. The first – sheltered English immersion (SEI) curriculum guides – were developed for SEI teachers in self-contained

K-5 classrooms serving ELL students at levels 1 and 2. The second – an English as a second language (ESL) teacher’s guide – was developed for itinerant elementary ESL teachers who support ELL students in mainstream classes at levels 3, 4, and 5 of English proficiency.

A review of district documents indicated that the SEI curriculum guides are based on the English Language Proficiency Benchmarks and Outcomes (ELPBO). The SEI curriculum guides are organized according to grade level (K-5) and divided into reading and writing sections. As stated in the SEI guide introduction, these curriculum documents were developed to assist the teachers with designing standards-based and differentiated lessons for ELL students. Since the LPS schools selected for review did not have SEI classrooms, the review team was unable to observe the implementation of the SEI curriculum guides.

Focus groups at the district level indicated that LPS intends to integrate the SEI curriculum guides with the district curriculum into a single set of curriculum documents. In the meantime, district staff members reported that the Language Support Program personnel are working with ESL teachers to adapt the district’s ELA curriculum guide during monthly common planning sessions; the current areas of focus are vocabulary and reading comprehension. This statement was corroborated by a review of ESL teacher planning time agendas. According to the January, March, April, and May agendas, one topic of discussion was how to use specific comprehension strategies outlined in the LPS ELA curriculum guide to support ELL students. For example, visualization (or creating mental images) was the ELA focus strategy in January.

In 2009-2010, the Language Support Program developed the English as a second language (ESL) Teacher’s Guide to Instruction in order to provide the district’s ESL teachers with concrete practices to support ELL students. The ESL teacher’s guide lists resources for teaching ELL students, as well as research-based considerations for teaching ELL students and effective instructional strategies for teaching oral language, vocabulary, reading, writing, and assessment. The ESL teacher’s guide also includes materials for each of the focus areas. The section on vocabulary, for example, contains lesson ideas for vocabulary learning, a sample lesson plan for developing personal dictionaries, and, as well, graphic organizers for teachers’ use.

Staff members at the Tracy and Drewicz schools reported that the ESL teacher’s guide was distributed to ESL teachers. Although the guide was not intended for mainstream classroom teachers, school leaders at Drewicz Elementary School reported instructing teachers to use the vocabulary strategies and the accompanying graphic organizers; mainstream teachers reported using these resources in their classrooms.

In summary, the review team found evidence of the district’s efforts to disseminate resources to ESL teachers and provide them with guidance on effective English language development strategies. The accessible ESL teacher’s guide provides useful information, strategies, and resources on how to teach and assess ELL students. Some mainstream classroom teachers have had access to the ESL guide and reported using it to shelter instruction in their classrooms. Due to the planned elimination of SEI classrooms, teachers across the district have an increased need to improve their capacity to teach ELL students.

The district has added supplementary programs that meet student needs, particularly those of ELL and special education students.

Focus groups with district staff and a review of documents indicated that the district has recently revised the phonics and spelling component of the ELA curriculum to supplement identified weaknesses in the Harcourt Reading series adopted in the district's grades K-5. According to district staff members, teacher feedback prompted the implementation of the Wilson and Telian Reading Programs across district elementary schools to provide students – particularly ELL and special education students – with more targeted phonics instruction.

The district's roll-out process was systematic and involved: (1) initial professional development for staff in grades 1, 2, and 3; and (2) follow-up model lessons and monthly meetings facilitated by the LPS curriculum department that included make-and-take sessions. The use of these reading programs, particularly the Wilson Program, was evident at the Drewicz and Tracy schools. Faculty members at Drewicz Elementary School reported receiving training in the Wilson Reading Program, indicated that phonics is regularly taught in grades K-3, and stated that phonics binders are available for each classroom teacher. Tracy Elementary School teachers also reported using the Wilson Program. Teachers in one grade level, for example, described using the Wilson Program four times per week to teach sight words and how to name letters and their corresponding sounds. At the Ford School, focus groups indicated that instead of the newly-adopted Wilson Program, the One Way Phonics Program is used.

Classroom observations indicated that the Calendar Math Program supplements the Houghton Mifflin mathematics textbook adopted across the district's elementary schools. The review team observed the use of the Calendar Math Program in classrooms across all schools visited. In one classroom (grade 1), a teacher was observed using the day's Calendar Math lesson to teach mathematics (e.g., patterns, telling time, counting and grouping dollars and cents). In addition to including real-world mathematics connections and activities to develop students' number sense, the Calendar Math lesson provided students with opportunities to learn and practice the English language. Students were observed eagerly responding to the teacher's questions about the current and previous month, days of the week, time, and different amounts of money.

The district's response to teacher feedback about supplementing the gaps in the reading resulted in a more consistent implementation of adopted supplementary programs. Also, adding the Calendar Math Program to elementary school classrooms enhanced the district's basic mathematics elementary textbook. Furthermore, these supplementary programs provide a multi-modal approach that develops key skills central to the academic success of ELL and special education students.

Principals are highly visible at the three schools and provide instructional leadership to reinforce the implementation of instructional priorities.

Across each of the three schools visited, the visibility of principals and their roles in ensuring consistent implementation of instructional priorities were evident.

Across schools, the principals and leadership teams have identified instructional priorities that, during focus groups, were articulated by teachers and staff. At the Ford School, for example, teachers reported that improving mathematics vocabulary through the use of mathematics word walls was a school focus. At Drewicz Elementary School, teachers and staff members reported that tiered instruction was a school priority. Additionally, school leaders and staff stated that vocabulary development is a schoolwide focus and that each teacher is expected to teach the word of the day; each student is expected to define the word, write two synonyms, draw the word, and use it in a sentence. The review team noted that the words of the day were displayed in school hallways. Teachers and staff members at the Tracy Elementary School confirmed the following instructional priorities identified by the school leadership team: tiered instruction, literacy centers, and small group instruction. The review team observed the implementation of these priorities across the classrooms visited.

Teachers at the all three schools indicated that their principals visit classrooms often to monitor instruction. Teachers reported that the principals are visible and walk through classrooms frequently. Teachers at the Tracy Elementary School stated that the principal will often sit and work with students at their desks, while teachers at Drewicz Elementary School reported that their principal will provide oral feedback and, in addition, has modeled lessons.

In focus groups, teachers confirmed that principals review lesson plans. At Drewicz Elementary School, teachers are expected to submit daily lesson plans each month, as well as evidence folders with student work. The review team examined the lesson plans of a few teachers and found that lesson plans referenced the standards covered, objectives, key vocabulary, activities, and assessments. Most of the lesson plans were prepared by using a standard Excel template. At the Tracy Elementary School, lesson plans are submitted every Monday. In an interview, Tracy Elementary School leadership reported that instruction observed during walkthroughs was expected to align with lesson plans and the curriculum.

Across schools, principals are visible and school staff members expressed a common understanding of instructional priorities and expectations established by the school's leadership. The observed school leadership practices ensure the consistent implementation of instructional practices (e.g., purposeful lesson planning and implementation, vocabulary development, literacy centers) that support learning for all students, including ELL students.

Assessment

The impact of the district's efforts to support data-driven instruction was evident across the selected schools.

Data-driven decision making is a district goal and is listed as one of the superintendent's top priorities for the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 academic years. There is evidence that this key initiative is improving school data analysis practices.

Training was provided to schools to support the implementation of the superintendent's data analysis initiative. Focus group discussions indicated that the district facilitated professional development on data-driven decision making for all schools during fall 2009. Also, district and school staff members reported that an external grant to improve K-3 literacy instruction has supported embedded data team training in 14 of the 17 LPS elementary schools, including the Tracy and Drewicz schools, since 2008-2009. The grant covers the cost of a consultant from an external vendor to assist each school with data analysis. District staff members stated that each school was allotted five visits from the consultant in 2009-2010 and that schools decided how to use the time (e.g., 3 days for data teams and 2 days for walkthroughs).

Across schools, teachers examine assessment data, including the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), an assessment measuring student fluency and phonemic awareness; MAZE, an assessment gauging student reading comprehension; MCAS; and common district benchmark assessments based on the mathematics and ELA curriculum guides. According to focus groups at the district and in schools, teachers receive assessment results for their own classrooms. District staff members reported that color printers were purchased for each school to assist with the preparation of DIBELS and MAZE reports; teachers reported examining these print-outs in data analysis sessions.

The review team examined assessment reports. Color-coded, user-friendly class reports listed individual student performance on the DIBELS and MAZE (e.g., low risk, some risk, at risk) and each student's performance compared to his or her peers, as well as the student's race, and whether the student is ELL, low income, Title I or receiving special education services. The reports do not indicate student MEPA performance levels. The district benchmark results are presented on line graphs that compare student progress between assessments, as well as differences among schools.

At Tracy Elementary School, assessment data for each grade level is displayed on a wall in the room in which monthly curriculum (or grade-level) meetings take place. As a result of this practice, Tracy Elementary School's faculty members can examine their performance in comparison to their peers. As stated by school leadership, "Nobody works in isolation...each grade level knows that we look at their scores. Everybody owns the school and nobody owns the classroom."

The superintendent's initiative also includes the implementation of common planning time across schools to provide time for data team meetings. All three schools confirmed that common

planning time is used for data analysis. Staff at the Tracy Elementary School, for example, stated that monthly curriculum meetings are used to examine assessment data and share materials and suggestions. At a recent curriculum meeting, teachers were asked to bring and share center ideas. Staff members from each of the three schools reported that principals are present during data analysis sessions and lead the schools' efforts to analyze student assessment results.

The review team found evidence that teachers have developed a basic understanding of data analysis. Staff members at the Drewicz and Tracy schools stated that the results are used primarily to group students, identify students for small group instruction, and place students in reading groups. Focus groups at the Ford School revealed that teachers use assessment data to determine placement in an after-school tutoring program. District and staff members at the Tracy Elementary School stated that DIBELS and MAZE analyses focus on strengths and weaknesses and provided examples of how they used assessment results. If a student's MAZE scores are low, for example, this student's oral reading fluency will be examined to determine whether the issue is reading accuracy or speed. If the issue is accuracy, teacher remediation will focus on phonics; if the issue is speed, the remediation will focus on fluency.

District staff members reported participating in school data analysis sessions to monitor implementation efforts and address identified gaps. As an example, district staff members reported that in response to low phoneme segmentation scores across the district's kindergarten classrooms, teachers were provided with training on this component of phonological awareness. The district's literacy coaches also used the DIBELS data in their work with teachers. One coach reported working with a kindergarten teacher whose students were struggling with phoneme segmentation; the coach modeled how to use an Early Reading Intervention (ERI) kit and how to pace instruction more slowly when working with a small group.

The district has prioritized the development of school capacity to conduct data-based decision making and provided schools with professional development and common planning time to support its efforts. District staff members (including those from the district's curriculum department) and literacy coaches provide follow-up support to help teachers address gaps in student performance. Faculty members across all three schools cited principals as drivers of school data analysis work. Teachers have developed a basic capacity to analyze student assessment data to monitor individual student progress.

Human Resources and Professional Development

The district has made a strong commitment to provide professional development in the area of sheltered content instruction to all staff.

Evidence collected from documents, focus groups, and classroom visits indicated that the district has prioritized professional development to enhance mainstream teachers' capacity to support ELL students in the classroom.

According to district-level focus groups, all school staff members have access to training on all four categories of sheltered content instruction training sessions (see Table 5). The review team examined a calendar with multiple training opportunities for each of the four categories during

the school year and summer, including seven courses for category 1, six courses for category 2, four courses for category 3 (as well as monthly re-qualifying tests), and seven courses for category 4. The calendar examined by the review team listed separate training opportunities for elementary and secondary teachers. Focus groups with district staff and coaches indicated that the district has certified category trainers.

District leaders reported that LPS encourages teacher participation in category training by allowing them to choose to attend trainings during the school day or to attend after-school sessions and receive professional development points (PDPs) that can be used toward salary step increases. According to a district leader and school staff members, individual professional development plans (IPDPs) identify ELL endorsement as a professional development goal.

In focus groups, teachers at the Drewicz and Tracy schools corroborated that category training was a priority for the district and that their principals support the district’s efforts to provide teachers with this training. District records and focus groups with school staff revealed that a majority of teachers at the Drewicz and Tracy schools have received training in categories 1, 2, and 3. The following table provides a summary of staff participation rates for each of the four category training sessions, as noted in district records:

**Table 5: Summary of Staff Participation in SEI Training as of Spring 2010:
Drewicz Elementary School, Ford School, and Tracy Elementary School**

	Category 1: Second Language Learning and Teaching	Category 2: Sheltering Content Instruction	Category 3: Assessment of Speaking and Listening	Category 4: Teaching Reading and Writing to LEP Students
Drewicz Elementary (Total = 35*)	14	25	23	4
Ford (Total = 27*)	3	16	8	1
Tracy Elementary (Total = 23*)	17	15	17	3
*Total number of staff participating; numbers in the category columns indicate the number who participated in the training for each category.				

Source: Lynn Public Schools

Results of focus group discussions indicated that the district has extended training opportunities to other key district and school staff members. The new district mathematics and literacy coaches received sheltered content instruction professional development. In a focus group, the new district mathematics and literacy coaches reported that they have received category training and that their role includes helping teachers integrate features of a sheltered instruction observation protocol into lesson planning during common planning time. In a focus group, district staff members reported that all paraprofessionals have received category 2 training.

Evidence collected during school visits corroborated the district's emphasis on providing category training to its staff and its impact on mainstream classroom teachers. In focus groups, teachers revealed a basic knowledge of sheltered instructional strategies that provide ELL students with access to language and grade-level content. Across focus groups, teachers at the Drewicz and Tracy schools referenced strategies for sheltering content instruction, including providing wait time, visual support, context for new vocabulary, and graphic organizers. In focus groups, teachers described their role in supporting ELL students in their classrooms; one teacher stated, "We are all ELL teachers."

The review team found evidence that the presentation of content was within students' English proficiency and developmental level in 63% of the 41 classrooms visited. In one classroom, for example, grade 5 students were analyzing a double bar graph that was displayed on a SMART Board and that depicted how many eggs broke and how many survived in an egg drop activity completed the day before. Students were observed reading the graph to compare and contrast the egg survival rates of their classroom and the classroom next door. Mathematics vocabulary terms relevant to the lesson (e.g., compare, contrast, x-axis, and y-axis) were posted on a sheet of chart paper; each word included a Spanish translation for a student who had recently arrived from Latin America. The teacher gave students ample time to examine the graph and formulate responses, and wrote each response next to the projected image of the graph. The teacher underlined key mathematics vocabulary (e.g., more, same amount, in all) included in the posted responses, and explained to students that these terms should be highlighted in their writing.

Evidence collected during classroom visits indicated that approximately half of the mainstream teachers in the Tracy and Drewicz schools were observed using supplemental materials (e.g., graphic organizers) to support ELL student learning. At both Tracy and Drewicz schools, the review team found strong evidence that supplemental materials were aligned with students' developmental level and level of English proficiency in 58% of 12 classrooms visited and 46% of 13 classrooms visited, respectively. In a kindergarten classroom with beginning English speakers, for example, a teacher used a poster with an illustration of a right hand and left hand for an addition activity. (The objective was to add numbers up to ten.) The teacher guided the students in reading a number sentence depicting how many paper buttons they had to place in each hand (e.g., 2+6), and how to add the buttons (e.g., 2+6=8). After the guided practice was completed, students were observed practicing this addition activity independently and correctly placing and adding the buttons on a practice booklet. At the Ford School, the review team found solid evidence of this indicator in 6% of the 16 classrooms visited.

The district has matched its initiative to increase the integration of ELL students in mainstream classrooms with extensive sheltered content instruction professional development opportunities. In two of the three schools visited, category training was a professional development priority. Across focus groups, teachers provided examples of sheltered instruction, and the review team found evidence that the training has provided teachers with a basic capacity to deliver sheltered instruction to ELL students.

The district’s monitoring of category training implementation within classrooms and enforcement of category training participation across schools has been limited.

As previously described, the district’s efforts to offer category training has provided teachers with a basic capacity to deliver sheltered instruction to ELL students. In focus groups, district staff members stated that the priority has been to get teachers trained in all four categories, but that it is has been challenging to monitor teachers’ use of sheltered instructional strategies in the classroom. One school staff member stated that what happens after a teacher receives category training is “...up to that teacher.”

Interviews with district staff indicated that Language Support Program staff members were planning to conduct a survey to learn about what sheltered instructional strategies teachers are using in the classroom. The review team examined a sheltered instruction walkthrough protocol the district uses. The protocol collects evidence of lesson preparation and instruction (e.g., language objectives; teacher’s speech; and the integration of reading, writing, listening, and speaking). However, district staff members stated that, due to a reduction in administrative staff, their capacity to conduct walkthroughs is limited. Therefore, the decrease in administrators affects district efforts to ensure consistent implementation of category training across schools.

There is no evidence of consistent monitoring of teachers’ use of sheltered instructional strategies within schools to address potential gaps in teacher implementation. For instance, it is not clear how and to what extent teachers are referring to the ELPBO or purposefully planning instruction to provide ELL students with opportunities to read, write, speak, and listen to English – a topic introduced in category 1. During classroom visits, the review team found a posted language objective in 1 of the 41 classrooms.

Although the district keeps records of teacher participation in category training, it is not clear how the district is enforcing school participation in category training across schools. District records indicated that Ford School teachers have not received category training to the same extent as teachers at the Tracy and Drewicz schools.

Student Support

There is inconsistent support and outreach to promote the involvement of parents of ELL students.

The district’s Parent Information Center (PIC) is the initial point of contact for the district’s Language Support Program and provides linguistically-appropriate services and information for parents who do not speak English. District focus groups and a review of documents revealed that the PIC is the location where parents enroll their children and where parents of students identified as LEP are advised on the language support options available to their children. The district’s *Parent/Guardian Resource Guide* describes placement options for ELL students (e.g., SEI, regular education, newcomer, and opt-out). District staff members stated that the guide is translated into Spanish, French, Haitian Creole, Arabic and Khmer; also, a short version is available in Vietnamese. The district staff member in charge is a native Spanish speaker.

Discussions in focus groups indicated that the staff from the New American Center (a district partner) is available to explain program options in low-incidence languages.

While translation services are offered at the central office, the availability of interpreters and bilingual staff was very limited in the schools visited. Discussions in focus groups indicated that each of the three schools visited has one or two bilingual staff members who provide translation support to colleagues in either Spanish or Khmer. Teachers also reported asking bilingual parents to assist with translation. Teachers across all three schools reported, however, that parents bring their own translators or that students are called upon to translate for their parents. One Spanish-speaking parent reported that it was not clear how parents who are not fluent English speakers can collaborate or provide support to the school, stating, “Even if we want to help, we cannot.”

Parent education programs are present at some, but not all, schools. Focus groups indicated that the Ford School uses Title I funding for a parent evening literacy program that teaches three levels of English classes and includes a GED component. School leadership reported that six Ford School teachers and two students from Gordon College serve as instructors; Gordon College students also provide child care services. In an interview, a school leader stated that the sign-in sheet for December had 250 names, while the last session held in May had 180 signatures. Although school leadership reported that figures are not formally tracked, approximately 50-60% of participants are parents of Ford School students. School staff indicated that the GED component of the parent program had 24 participants, and that participants of this parent program included extended families, as well as individuals referred by the court system. Programs such as the one offered at the Ford School are not available at other sites.

In summary, the shortage of bilingual staff in schools limits the degree to which parents of ELL students receive linguistically-appropriate services and clear information regarding how to effectively partner with the school and support their children’s academic success. Education initiatives to teach English and provide educational opportunities to the parents of ELL students are concentrated in one school and, although well attended, are not widely available to parents throughout the district.

Recommendations

Develop a data-driven DIP with input from all major stakeholders, as well as a process to monitor the implementation of improvement initiatives.

The district has outlined 10 goals and objectives for the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 academic years. Of those 10 goals and objectives, district leaders reported the following as priorities:

- (1) Supporting data-driven decision making
- (2) Expanding departmentalized instruction in grades 3, 4, and 5
- (3) Supporting full inclusion for ELL students
- (4) Increasing support for ELL students by recruiting and placing English as a second language (ESL) teachers in schools with and without sheltered English immersion programs

It is not clear whether or how student performance data were used to develop the district's goals or how stakeholders were consulted in the development process.

The review team recommends that the district:

- Identify and prioritize specific performance goals and benchmarks as the principal focus of district improvement, ensuring that the analysis of student achievement and student subgroup data drive the development, implementation, and modification of district initiatives.
- Gather input by all major stakeholders to inform the development of district goals and initiatives. Meaningful participation from a representative group of stakeholders – including staff, families, and district partners – creates a broad base of support for district improvement initiatives.
- Provide adequate professional development and support to ensure effective implementation of new initiatives. Recognize schools that effectively implement the improvement initiatives, and hold schools that do not implement the district expectation accountable. Implementation monitoring is likely to yield consistent, districtwide practices that support instructional improvement and have an impact on student learning

Develop guidelines for the use of Title I funds that are tied to student performance.

Principal autonomy over how Title I funding is spent has resulted in the inconsistent use of these monies across schools, and has affected the amount of direct academic support provided to ELL students across the schools visited.

The review team recommends that the district:

- Establish guidelines for the use of Title I funding, basing decisions for Title I expenditures on identified student needs. Parameters will ensure that consistent and equitable processes guide the use of Title I funds, and that school staffing and expenditures directly support student needs. For example, if a school identifies gaps in ELL student performance and wants to raise ELL student achievement, Title I monies should be aligned to fund specific interventions or staff that will improve the performance of ELL students.

Leverage resources to increase ESL staffing and equitable support across schools.

Current ESL teacher coverage was limited or absent at the Drewicz Elementary School, Ford School, and Tracy Elementary School, affecting the degree to which ELL students across MEPA levels receive sufficient ESL instruction. With limited funds, ESL support staff members are being placed where they are most needed.

The review team recommends that the district consider the following options:

- Continue to secure external funding (e.g., Salem State College grant for free ESL certification training) to provide teachers with pathways to ESL (dual) certification. Also, continue to work with current partners (e.g., Gordon College) and seek new partnerships to recruit ESL certified staff for job openings. Increasing the number of faculty members with ESL certification ensures that a greater number of school staff members have the knowledge and ability to provide ESL instruction to students.
- Encourage schools, particularly where gaps in ELL student performance have been identified, to utilize Title I funds to pay for additional ESL teachers.

Integrate the SEI documents with the core curricula and disseminate the ESL teacher's guide to all teachers.

The Language Support Program has developed two documents to support the inclusion of sheltered instructional practices across the district's schools: (1) sheltered English immersion (SEI) curriculum guides; and (2) English as a second language (ESL) teacher's guide.

The review team recommends that the district build on its curriculum development efforts and:

- Integrate the SEI curriculum guides with the district's core curricula. The draft SEI curriculum guides are based on the ELPBO and were developed to assist SEI teachers in self-contained classrooms with designing standards-based and differentiated lessons for ELL students in their classrooms. By combining the general and ELL curriculum, mainstream teachers will also have access to the ELPBO to purposefully plan instruction for ELL students.
- Disseminate the ESL teacher's guide to mainstream classroom teachers. The Language Support Program staff developed the 2009-2010 ESL teacher's guide to provide ESL teachers with information, strategies, and resources on how to teach and assess ELL students. This guide can also serve as a useful resource for mainstream teachers across the district who, due to the elimination of SEI classrooms, have an increased need to improve their capacity to teach ELL students.

Consistently reinforce and monitor category training participation and implementation.

District staff members stated that the priority has been to get teachers trained in all four categories. However, it is not clear how the district is enforcing participation in category training across schools. District records indicated that Ford School teachers have not received category training to the same extent as teachers at the Tracy and Drewicz schools. Also, district leaders reported that, as a result of a reduction in administrative staff, the capacity to conduct walkthroughs is limited.

The review team recommends that the district:

- Reinforce the expectation that teachers complete all four categories of sheltered English instruction training. Increasing the number of category trained teachers will likely improve school capacity to consider the language learning needs of ELL students and to provide ELL students in English-only instructional settings with access to grade level content.
- Require all school administrators to complete appropriate category training, expanding school leadership capacity to support and monitor sheltered instructional strategies in mainstream classrooms. Design an observation tool to be used by district and school-level administrators to monitor the effective implementation of category training, or train district and school-level administrators to utilize the existing sheltered instruction walkthrough protocol.

Target recruitment efforts to increase the number of qualified bilingual staff members in district schools.

While translation services are offered at the central office, the availability of interpreters and bilingual staff was very limited in the schools visited. One Spanish-speaking parent reported that it is not clear how parents who are not fluent English speakers can collaborate or provide support to the school, stating, “Even if we want to help, we cannot.”

The review team recommends that the district:

- Increase the number of bilingual staff in schools, ensuring that parents of ELL students receive linguistically-appropriate services and clear information regarding how to effectively partner with the school and support their children’s academic success.

Create a district parent support program and secure other funding sources to support parent literacy needs across schools.

In one of the schools visited, Title I funding is used for a parent evening literacy program that teaches three levels of English classes and includes a GED component, rather than to provide direct support to students (or ELL students) during the school day. Parent education initiatives are concentrated in this one school and, although well attended, are not widely available to parents throughout the district.

The review team recommends that the district:

- Create a district parent support program, providing the parents of ELL students with the opportunity to learn English and participate more fully in their children's academic programs.
- Consider securing private funding sources to support a district parent literacy program, prioritizing the use of individual school funds to directly support student learning.

Appendix A: Review Team Members

The review of the Lynn Public Schools was conducted from May 12-13 and June 1-4, 2010, by the following team of educators – independent consultants to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Donna Harlan, Leadership and Governance

Les Edinson, Curriculum and Instruction

Carol Schraft, Assessment

Anne Lane, Human Resources and Professional Development

Gwendolyn Casazza, Student Support

Anne Lane served as the coordinator of the review team.

Appendix B: Review Activities and Site Visit Schedule

Review Activities

The following activities were conducted as part of the review of the Lynn Public Schools.

- The review team conducted interviews and focus groups with the following representatives from the Lynn Public Schools central office administration: superintendent, deputy superintendent, director of curriculum, assistant director of curriculum for reading/ELA, assistant director of curriculum for mathematics, ELL director, ELL program specialists, director of grants and Title I, student assignment manager, acting special education director, and mathematics and literacy coaches.
- The review team visited the following schools in the Lynn Public Schools: Ford School (K-5), Drewicz Elementary School (K-5), and Tracy Elementary School (K-5).
 - During school visits, the review team conducted interviews with school principals, teachers, ESL teachers, reading and reading intervention teachers, curriculum and instruction teachers (CIT), special education teachers, and parents.
 - The review team conducted 41 classroom visits for different grade levels and subjects across the three schools visited.
- The review team reviewed the following documents provided by ESE:
 - District profile data
 - District and school data review
 - Latest *Coordinated Program Review* report
 - *District Accountability Report* produced by Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA) or ESE
 - Staff contracts
 - Reports on licensure and highly qualified status
 - End-of-year financial report for the district for 2009
 - List of the district's federal and state grants
- The review team reviewed the following documents at the district and school levels (provided by the district or schools):
 - *Superintendent's Goals for the School Year 2009-2010 and 2010-2011*
 - School improvement plans
 - School committee policy manual
 - End-of-year financial report for the district for 2010

- Curriculum guides for ELA, mathematics, and sheltered English immersion
- Copies of data analyses/reports used in schools
- District common assessment calendar
- Descriptions of student support programs
- SEI program evaluation plan
- Student and family handbooks
- Faculty handbook
- Professional development plan and program/schedule/courses
- Teacher evaluation tool
- Sheltered instruction walkthrough tools
- Job descriptions (for central office staff)
- Principal evaluation tool
- Procedures and assessments to identify LEP students and assess their level of English proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening
- ELL category training records
- Teacher highly qualified reports for Ford, Tracy Elementary, and Drewicz Elementary schools
- Teacher's schedules
- Sample lesson plans
- District report cards
- Common planning time meeting agendas and minutes
- Tutoring lesson plans
- SEI course participation list
- 2010 Language Support Program end-of-year report
- 2009-2010 elementary school classroom organization chart

Site Visit Schedule

The following is the schedule for the onsite portion of the review of the Lynn Public Schools conducted from May 12-13 and June 1-4, 2010.

May 12	May 13	June 1	June 2	June 3	June 4
Orientation meeting with district leaders; interviews with district staff; review of documents	Interviews with district staff; review of documents	School visits (Ford School and Drewicz Elementary School): interviews with school leaders; classroom observations; teacher and parent focus groups	School visits (Ford School and Drewicz Elementary School): interviews with school leaders; classroom observations; teacher focus groups	School visits (Tracy Elementary School): interviews with school leaders; classroom observations; teacher and parent focus groups.	School visit (Tracy Elementary School): interviews with school leaders and staff; classroom observations; follow-up interviews; team meeting; closing meeting with district leaders