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

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Table of Contents

Overview	1
Purpose	1
Selection of Districts	1
Methodology	2
Malden Public Schools	3
District Profile	3
Student Performance.....	4
Findings	7
Leadership and Governance	7
Curriculum and Instruction.....	8
Assessment.....	12
Human Resources and Professional Development.....	17
Student Support	19
Recommendations.....	23
Appendix A: Review Team Members.....	27
Appendix B: Review Activities and Site Visit Schedule.....	28

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 the review process 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 are most likely to be contributing to positive results, as well as those that may be impeding rapid improvement. Systems and practices that are likely to be contributing to positive results were identified from the ESE's District Standards and Indicators and from a draft report of the English Language Learners Sub-Committee of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education's Committee on the Proficiency Gap¹. Reviews are evidence-based and data-driven. Four to eight team members preview selected documents and ESE data and reports before conducting a two-day site visit in the district and a two-day site visit to schools. The team consists of independent consultants with expertise in each of the five areas listed above, as well as English language learner education (to collect evidence across all areas).

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

Malden Public Schools

The site visit to the Malden Public Schools was conducted from June 1-4, 2010. The site visit included visits to the Beebe (K-8) and Ferryway (K-8) schools, each of which was identified as a “gap closer” for its limited English proficient students, as described above. Further information about the review and the site visit schedule can be found in Appendix B; information about the members of the review team can be found in Appendix A.

District Profile²

The Malden Public Schools had an enrollment of 6,332 during the 2009-2010 school year. Students attended seven schools: The Early Learning Center (pre-K-K), Beebe (K-8), Ferryway (K-8), Forestdale (K-8), Linden (K-8), Salemwood (K-8), and Malden High School (9-12).

As Table 1 below shows, Malden students represent several races and ethnicities. English is not the first language of 40.6 percent of the students. The six languages most frequently spoken in the schools are English, Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, Vietnamese, and Chinese. During the 2009-2010 school year, the district received refugees from Haiti and China following earthquakes in those countries. Low income students constitute 58.8 percent of the population.

Table 1: Malden Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity & Selected Populations 2009-10

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity	Percent of Total	Selected Populations	Percent of Total
African-American	19.7	First Language not English	40.6
Asian	21.3	Limited English Proficient	11.1
Hispanic or Latino	19.1	Low-income	58.8
Native American	0.6	Special Education	14.8
White	35.6	Free Lunch	47.9
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	0.1	Reduced-price lunch	10.9
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	3.5		

Source: School/District Profiles on ESE website

Since the arrival of the current superintendent three years ago, the district has sharpened its focus on teaching and learning. A large and inclusive team led by three administrators: the

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

superintendent, assistant superintendent, and director of literacy and language acquisition, make and implement educational decisions guided by the District Improvement Plan (DIP), after careful analysis of data. The superintendent's recent combining of the roles of literacy director and English Language Learner (ELL) director has been a functional and symbolic change. The literacy needs of LEP students are addressed with strategies appropriate for all struggling students. Literacy needs are determined through formative assessments and addressed through a three-tiered model of instructional interventions. Leadership is classroom focused and hands on. The superintendent, central office administrators, principals, and coaches are in the classrooms and involved in conversations about understanding and addressing what the data shows about student achievement.

Student Performance³

In 2009, Malden students made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics in the aggregate. All subgroups, however, did not make AYP in either ELA or mathematics.

- The district's No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Accountability Status was Corrective Action-Subgroups for ELA, and Improvement Year 1-Subgroups for mathematics.
- The district's performance rating was high in ELA and moderate in mathematics.
- When 2009 results are examined within grade spans,
 - In both ELA and mathematics, with the exception of grades 9 through 12 in the aggregate, students in grades 3 through 5, 6 through 8, and 9 through 12 did not make AYP in the aggregate or for all subgroups.
 - AYP results for 2008 differ only slightly from those for 2009: The difference was that in 2008 students in grades 6 through 8 also made AYP in the aggregate in both ELA and mathematics.
 - Limited English proficient and formerly limited English proficient students were among the subgroups not making AYP in 2009 in either subject in grade spans 3 through 5 and 6 through 8. However, students did make AYP at grades 9 through 12 in both ELA and mathematics.
 - Special education students were the only subgroup that did not make AYP in either ELA or mathematics at any grade span.

Table 2 below shows little change in district MCAS test performance between 2007 and 2009. There have been some increases and decreases but little overall change in student proficiency rates. In particular, at grades 3 and 4, in both ELA and mathematics, the trend in 2009 has been

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

downward. Also of note, the proficiency levels are generally lower, sometimes considerably lower, in mathematics as compared with ELA. The exceptions are in grades 3 and 4: 40 percent of students are proficient in mathematics, while 39 percent are proficient in ELA in grade 4; and, the percentage of students who are proficient in mathematics is 7 percentage points greater than the percentage proficient in ELA in grade 3.

Table 2: Malden Student Proficiency Rates on the MCAS Test: 2007-2009

Grade and Subject	2007	2008	2009	Difference
Grade 10 ELA	65	67	73	+8
Grade 10 Math	63	64	65	+2
Grade 8 ELA	73	72	78	+5
Grade 8 Math	32	39	37	+5
Grade 7 ELA	70	64	65	-5
Grade 7 Math	33	41	38	+5
Grade 6 ELA	60	61	60	Same
Grade 6 Math	47	52	48	+1
Grade 5 ELA	49	46	48	-1
Grade 5 Math	35	33	42	+7
Grade 4 ELA	43	34	29	-14
Grade 4 Math	34	36	30	-4
Grade 3 ELA	47	37	40	-7
Grade 3 Math	49	46	47	-2

Source: School/District Profiles on ESE website

2009 proficiency rates for Malden limited English proficient and formerly limited English proficient (LEP/FLEP) students were low: 31 percent in ELA and 32 percent in mathematics. However, in this district where the proficiency rates showed little overall change between 2007 and 2009, analysis of the median Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs) of LEP/FLEP students by grade yields important information.

Median SGPs of 10 or more points above the statewide median of 50 are significant. Malden LEP and FLEP students are making significant growth in 7 of 10 measured areas: grade 5 ELA (59), grade 5 mathematics (67), grade 6 ELA (67), grade 6 mathematics (87), grade 7 ELA (61), grade 7 mathematics (72.5), and grade 8 ELA (60).

The LEP/FLEP median SGPs are below the statewide median in three measured areas: grade 4 ELA (47), grade 4 mathematics (40), and grade 8 mathematics (39). The median SGP is more than 10 points below the statewide median in only one measured area in the district, grade 8 mathematics. Malden LEP and FLEP students are making significant growth: In 2009, their median SGPs for ELA and mathematics were 61.5 and 59 respectively.

Median SGPs reveal important information concerning the Beebe and Ferryway schools. These are schools with challenging populations, and their percentiles show significant growth. First, both schools in ELA and mathematics overall are at or above the state percentile of 50. In ELA, the Beebe is at 58 and the Ferryway at 53. In mathematics, the Beebe is at 54 and the Ferryway at 50. This means students in these schools are improving at a rate faster than more than half the students in the state with similar testing histories.

Even higher and more significant are the median Student Growth Percentiles of FLEP, LEP, and LEP/FLEP students at the schools visited. See Tables 3 and 4 below.

Table 3: Median Student Growth Percentiles of FLEP, LEP, and LEP/FLEP Students at Beebe and Ferryway Schools: ELA, 2009

Category	Median Student Growth Percentiles
FLEP – Beebe	62.5
FLEP – Ferryway	61
LEP – Beebe	67
LEP – Ferryway	59
LEP/FLEP – Beebe	63
LEP/FLEP – Ferryway	60.5

Source: School/District Profiles on ESE website

Table 4: Median Student Growth Percentiles of FLEP, LEP, and LEP/FLEP Students at Beebe and Ferryway Schools: Mathematics, 2009

Category	Median Student Growth Percentiles
FLEP – Beebe	61
FLEP – Ferryway	58
LEP – Beebe	78
LEP – Ferryway	67
LEP/FLEP – Beebe	65
LEP/FLEP – Ferryway	63

Source: School/District Profiles on ESE website

Findings

Leadership and Governance

The superintendent leads the district through a collaborative team with a focus on teaching and learning. Effective systems are in place to improve student achievement.

Through interviews with district administrators, the review team found that the superintendent has direct knowledge of teaching and learning in Malden. The superintendent frequently visits classrooms, provides teachers with detailed feedback, and reviews this feedback with the building principals. The superintendent told the review team about the urgency of serving underserved students. Teachers are placed on improvement plans, and principals told the review team that these plans are effective in supporting teachers to grow and change.

The superintendent meets monthly with each principal to examine school data. The principals described these meetings as intensive and productive. According to one principal, the superintendent presents the data, and the principals explain the implications. The superintendent also makes it clear to the principals that school schedules must accommodate interventions for struggling students. The superintendent's annual evaluations of principals emphasize high expectations. These evaluations include a detailed review of accomplishments, data on students' academic strengths and needs, and specific recommendations for growth as an educational leader.

The superintendent's 40-member leadership team has a collaborative focus on improving student achievement. The DIP provides guidance and direction, and the team focuses on progress and needs. Questions are asked—how are we doing? What are we missing? The district leadership team includes principals, assistant principals, coaches, directors, and school committee and union members. This inclusive team uses a common language, and sets common goals for the district and staff. This approach eliminates highly separate power centers, or silos, and unites everyone in a single purpose. Through collaboration, principals understand the need for central office direction, and central office administrators understand the primacy of principals in accomplishing the overarching goal of improving student achievement.

From the superintendent's monthly leadership team meetings flows the shared assumption that streamlined, focused, and effective systems need to be in place to raise student achievement. By combining the ELA and ELL programs into one program led by a director of literacy and language acquisition, the district now offers tiered instruction to all struggling students based on assessment results, without reference to specific subgroup descriptors such as LEP, Title I, or special education. Content area directors search out formative assessments, train coaches, visit classrooms, and design and offer relevant professional development—all with the goal of delivering to students the instructional support they need to succeed. The principals, with their close proximity to classrooms, lead data teams, work collaboratively with district staff, schedule common planning time for teachers, and develop schedules sufficiently flexible to accommodate interventions.

Although this appears to be a perfect system, all involved were quick to tell the review team that a great deal more remains to be done. However, the review team heard and felt the conviction that the district has in place the broad outlines of a system that has the clear potential to make a significant difference in student learning. This explains the focus, commitment, and optimism expressed by teachers, coaches, principals, parents, directors, and superintendents. They feel part of a district that has found a way to make a difference. The superintendent is leading the staff in constructing a system with a single purpose: to provide students in classrooms with the instruction they need to learn at high levels.

The incompatibility of the school and municipal accounting systems makes it difficult to monitor budget expenditures.

The school committee, chaired by the mayor, advocates sufficient funding for all Malden students, and works closely with city officials to provide needed resources. In addition to city resources, the district has been able to secure a number of grants, and many programs, such as summer tutorial programs, would not exist without this additional funding. However, the technological infrastructure of the city makes it difficult to link the school budget directly to the city computer system. Separate computers are set up at various work stations in the school department to allow administrators to communicate with the city's accounting system. As a result, administrators, including the superintendent, are not able to access the current financial information about line item expenditures. The business administrator provides monthly updates to both the school committee and the administrative team, and is able to provide needed information to school administrators via the telephone or email.

The inability of school administrators, including the superintendent, to immediately access line item balances does not conform to sound budgeting practices, and could delay addressing the needs of a particular student or program. The incompatibility of the city and school department accounting systems wastes time and resources and hinders timely communication.

Curriculum and Instruction

The district curricula in the core content areas are aligned and integrated with ELL benchmarks and outcomes.

A review of the kindergarten through grade 8 curriculum documents indicated deliberate and thoughtful efforts to develop core curricula to address the needs of all learners, including ELL students. Curriculum documents include pacing guides; teacher resources such as texts, websites, and media; detailed learning objectives; key concept vocabulary; and specific links to the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks. Curriculum documents for kindergarten through grade 5 are organized by guiding questions and integrated literacy, science, and social studies. Grade 6 through 8 curriculum documents in ELA and the 2009-2010 draft social studies documents are organized by essential questions, while kindergarten through grade 8 mathematics curricula are organized by textbook chapter titles. The assessment sections at each level are less well

developed, and range from citing end of chapter tests to providing some suggestions for authentic assessments. The grade 6 through 8 social studies curriculum contains formative and summative assessments. The kindergarten through grade 5 curriculum documents, with the exception of mathematics, specifically reference the English Language Proficiency Benchmarks and Outcomes for English Language Learners (ELPBO). The review team confirmed that a grade 6 through 8 science curriculum is in place.

While the review team did not focus on the high school curriculum, nor observe instruction at grades 9 through 12, it is important to note the attention to the needs of ELL students in the high school curriculum. The high school teacher leaders told the review team in interviews that they use a skills-based rather than textbook-driven curriculum; this provides teachers and students wide latitude in the selection of developmentally and linguistically appropriate books.

Special school projects, such as the National Poetry Recitation Contest, enable students of all language abilities to participate while simultaneously building their language fluency and confidence. At the Beebe and Ferryway schools, similar events highlight for students and staff the potential for the student body to unite around showcasing students' growing capacity to use language skills. At Ferryway, a schoolwide art show displayed artwork from kindergarten through grade 8 students with written commentary for each piece provided by each artist. At Beebe, examples of student projects were displayed throughout the school; these were focused on the school's theme of water and integrated two or more curricular areas.

Malden uses technology creatively to strengthen and align its curriculum. For example, subject area coaches interviewed by the team described the development of wiki pages and blogs for general education teachers. These sites provide both general and ELL curriculum information.

Vertical and horizontal alignment of curricula and attention to the curricular needs of ELL students are reinforced in several ways. A districtwide leadership team, credited by subject area coaches with bringing uniformity to the curriculum, meets for three hours once a month, followed by meetings of the curriculum leadership team. The superintendent and the director of literacy and language acquisition are on both teams. General education teachers at both schools have common planning times each day. The ESL teachers are present when not teaching children. ESL teachers at the Beebe school expressed a feeling of isolation because they are not always able to attend, although they also agreed in interviews with the review team that they work closely with the literacy teachers.

Teacher leaders facilitate and log weekly teacher meetings. Common tests are given to all students and the results are analyzed to determine areas of the curriculum that need to be changed. The grade 6 through 12 ELA director and the kindergarten through grade 12 director of mathematics and data analysis both spoke knowledgeably about challenges for ELL students at all levels, and about the need to provide transitional opportunities as students acquire English skills. All program leaders and principals interviewed described close and productive working relationships with the director of literacy and language acquisition and her staff. A team of coaches in ESL, literacy, mathematics, science, and special education helps to ensure cross grade

alignment. Principals, coaches, and teachers are strongly encouraged to visit classrooms, and to support teachers to do so by providing coverage. In 2009-2010, high school teachers visited the middle schools.

Numerous comments from interviewees addressed the collaborative relationship between general and ESL staff, and the district's commitment to providing a quality curriculum to all of its students. The principal and teachers at Ferryway commented that ELL students get what everyone else is getting in the curriculum, and that nothing changes because the students are ELL students. One principal stated that while the focus is on all students, individual needs are identified, and ESL teachers consult with general education teachers on meeting the needs of these students. This principal went on to say that the director for language and literacy responds readily to requests for increased resources to meet emergent needs.

It is the review team's judgment that the quality of Malden's curriculum documents contributes to the ability of teachers in the general and ELL education program to effectively meet the needs of ELL students. The clarity and consistency of these documents, coupled with districtwide testing across schools and strong curriculum leadership, supports general and ESL teachers with common resources and high instructional goals.

Classroom observations and district documents support the commitment of teachers to ELL needs in lesson design.

In 94 percent of classes observed by the review team, lessons were positively and explicitly linked to students' primary languages and cultural backgrounds. In 96 percent of the observed classes, supplementary materials had been gathered to aid in the contextualization of the lesson. At the elementary level, all observed classrooms had a good choice of leveled readers with book topics that mirrored Malden's cultural diversity. Classrooms, particularly at the elementary level, were provisioned with visuals to enhance content area learning. Social studies posters showed adults and children of various ethnic origins. Displays of key vocabulary were found on word walls in most kindergarten through grade 8 classes. Explicit learning objectives were on display in most classrooms and were frequently accompanied by visual symbols.

In addition, the district provided the visiting team with a set of documents that clearly outline a three-tiered model of reading instruction and support for ELL students in kindergarten through grade 5. These documents present clearly and succinctly the assessment and instructional components for low risk grade level learners (tier 1), learners at some risk (tier 2), and learners at risk (tier 3). Timelines, benchmarks, supplemental services and staffing, and the flow between tiers are also included for each grade level.

The district is committed to setting common instructional expectations for all students. The superintendent summed this up in an interview with the review team by saying, "We are about the same things. Strategies are applicable across the board to struggling learners and those who need literacy development." The district has established an effective model of curriculum and instruction for all students.

The Beebe and the Ferryway schools have effective practices that create a respectful climate and ensure high-quality, standards-based instruction for ELL students in kindergarten through grade 8.

The review team observed 48 classes: 35 kindergarten through grade 5 classes, and 13 grade 6 through 8 classes. The team found partial or solid evidence of effective practice in nearly 100 percent of the classes observed. In 47 of 48 classrooms, the learning environment and structure of the classroom were organized to facilitate meaningful opportunities for students of different English proficiency levels to participate. In all 48 classes, the team observed that teachers used a variety of techniques to support students' vocabulary development, command of English language structures, and comprehension at all proficiency levels. The quality, quantity, and range of supplementary materials provided for scaffolding of instruction and contextualization of the lesson were aligned with students' developmental and English proficiency levels in 46 of 48 classrooms observed. Students were observed articulating their thinking and reasoning in 46 of 48 classrooms.

In some areas, practices were less well developed: in one third of the classes, the team did not observe lesson-embedded opportunities for students to apply new knowledge and content, and in one quarter of classes observed, the team did not observe on-the-spot formative assessments to check for understanding. Overall, however, throughout the two schools and at all grade levels, the team observed engaged students and high-quality, skillful standards-based instruction.

Malden has a strong support system to assist classroom teachers in meeting the needs of ELL students in their classroom. Professional development opportunities are rich and varied. A number of teachers have participated in ELL category training, including special educators who participate on school based teacher support teams. Some teachers and program leaders cited the content area institute held in the summer of 2009 as a significant training experience. The systemwide ELL and mathematics coaches and the building based literacy coaches directly support teachers with modeling, consulting, data assessment, lesson design, and intervention training. Ferryway teachers attributed the success of their ELL students to increased teacher proficiency gained through professional development. They also credited the school's earlier experiences with the Reading First program, and its emphasis on data analysis, with improving their skills.

Leaders maintain and review records of coach and staff interactions, and all coaches and leaders are required to complete a minimum number of classroom visits each week. Materials selected by teachers for instruction reflect careful planning to meet the needs of all learners. For example, the review team saw high interest reading materials at various readability levels in use at all grade levels. Visual aids and key vocabulary and lesson concepts were present in all of the classrooms. Decorative posters conveyed motivational messages and portrayed multi-ethnic adults and children. In a grade 3 classroom, a poster showing deserts in the Middle East and the Great Wall of China was labeled, "Let learning take you around the world!" In general, all classes had well-developed word walls with vocabulary from the core content areas.

The review team observed successful strategies to integrate regular education and ELL students and to maintain high standards in most classrooms. In one grade 2 science class integrated with ELA, students were asked to complete a Venn diagram to compare and contrast a butterfly and spider, in order to organize their ideas before writing a paragraph about both. As students worked independently, the teacher conducted one-to-one conferences with them on their writing. They then presented their work orally. A grade 6 review game on geography terms was lively and engaging, according to one reviewer. It required students to choose, define, and give hints so that another student could guess a word. In a grade 6 ELA class, students were asked to compare the novel *Terabithia* with the movie using a variety of ways including graphic organizers, paired student discussion, and writing. The teacher provided cues on vocabulary selection. One reviewer observed small group conversation that was animated and analytical. In many classrooms, teachers underlined key vocabulary when they wrote the student learning objectives on the board. For example, in a third grade classroom the teacher underlined the following words: “Today we will outline our seed ideas.”

Teachers held high expectations for student responses. One reviewer noted that students in a grade 5 science class always responded in complete sentences, and that there was excellent back and forth discussion about deductive reasoning. Reviewers found evidence in 42 of 48 observed classes of teacher questions that required students to engage in a process of application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. In addition, reciprocal teaching was a strategy frequently mentioned by teachers and leaders and observed by the review team as an approach to build student comprehension.

The team observed skillful use of effective strategies by teachers. In observations and in interviews, teachers and school leaders conveyed a jointly held acceptance of, and commitment to, helping ELL students succeed and flourish in Malden.

Assessment

The district has created a culture of accountability centered on a comprehensive assessment system. Assessment data is the primary and very public source of evidence used to communicate student progress and to make decisions about curriculum and instruction.

Leaders and teachers described to the review team how the district promotes a culture of accountability through the use of assessments, data collection, data analysis, and data based conversations. Accountability permeates the culture, providing a systemic and systematic approach to better understand, communicate about, and plan for improving instruction and the achievement of all students, including special education students, students at risk, ELL students, and homeless students. Accountability in Malden means holding leaders and teachers accountable for students’ learning. In fact, during interviews and focus groups, many leaders and teachers stated how deeply and personally they held themselves accountable for student achievement.

Foundationally, the culture of the district is embedded with the belief that all students can learn at high levels with the appropriate support and instructional strategies. The diverse cultural, ethnic, and linguistic heritage of the student population has encouraged the district to blend the ELA and ELL programs into a single instructional unit. There is also the expectation that teaching in the content areas should develop students' language and literacy skills as well as their content knowledge. This understanding of students' needs extends the purpose of assessment beyond content knowledge and skills into the realm of communication of knowledge and skills. For example, it is not unusual in an elementary classroom to observe teachers providing scaffolding by modeling the beginning of sentences as students meet the expectation to respond to a question in a complete sentence—"I like this book because...; or, I do not like this book because..."

Assessment data is accessible; it is collected, analyzed, monitored, and discussed by teachers and district and school leaders to understand achievement at multiple levels, including student, classroom, school, and district. It informs decisions about setting priorities, identifying students in need of support, modifying curriculum, adjusting instruction, recommending interventions, and communicating to all stakeholders how well students are progressing. As examples, teacher teams meet three times yearly to discuss each individual student's progress using data as evidence. At one school, teachers often invite the student to participate in the individual student meeting. There is always a parent/teacher meeting after report cards are distributed when achievement data is discussed and a translator is present, if needed. Daily common planning time for grade level or subject level meetings offers another format for teachers and coaches to share and review achievement data for individual students or groups of students. ESL specialists told the review team that they that they are unable to attend grade level meetings because these meetings are held during the periods when they most often work with students. They added that they do meet with teachers when possible at other times, and also confer with literacy coaches.

At the classroom level, teachers use multiple assessments to measure and monitor student academic progress and to inform instruction and curricular decisions, especially for language and literacy in kindergarten through grade 8. Teachers administer the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assessments three times yearly to measure phonemic awareness, the alphabetic principle, phonics, and fluency for students in kindergarten through grade 4. Students identified as at risk and at some risk are also monitored for progress during the second half of the year.

Students in grades 1 through 8 are assessed twice yearly with the Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GRADE) to measure vocabulary and comprehension. Students in grades 5 through 8 who read at stanine levels one through three on the GRADE are also assessed three times yearly with the DIBELS. Writing prompt assessments are administered to all K through 8 students three times yearly. Also, given students' weaknesses on open response type MCAS test questions, students in grades 1 through 5 complete open response questions correlated with each story in every reading unit in Reading Street, the district's language and literacy program. In grades 1 through 8, the mathematics assessments include district developed

pre- and post- benchmark tests for the various learning strands, Think Math assessments three times yearly in K through 5, and district developed benchmark, formative, and summative assessments in grades 6 through 8.

In grades 6 through 12, in addition to the typical classroom assessments, all students take common quarterly, mid-year, and final examinations in all core academic subjects as well as in art, music, and physical education. Also, high school teachers, guidance counselors, and leaders monitor Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT), Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), and Advanced Placement (AP) results to enhance understanding of student and curricular strengths and weaknesses. In fact, the district requires that all grade 10 students take the PSAT, and encourages them to repeat the test in grade 11. The school discusses these results with students to encourage them to enroll in higher level courses. For some, this means stretching to an honors level course; for others, it means enrolling in one or more AP courses. In addition to assessment data, the district uses highly tuned protocols for analyzing student work. This is another form of data to inform teachers about student performance and the next steps in instruction.

As a means of strengthening district accountability, the director of literacy and language acquisition requires student success teams (SSTs) to fully document the achievement of homeless students so that complete school records are immediately available when these students move on to a more stable living situation.

In 2009-2010, the district's new Scantron software provided teachers with more timely and useful information, disaggregating and reporting data quickly and efficiently. Data reports generated by Scantron are used at individual student meetings and to assess trends in achievement for subgroups, classes, grade levels, and schools. These data reports guide teachers' choices for interventions and teaching strategies for all students K through 8, especially struggling ELL and special education students in a consultancy model. During planning and preparation periods, specialists consult with classroom teachers on choosing appropriate interventions, guided by benchmarks and progress monitoring. Directors and other leaders told the review team that teachers welcome assessment data, look for it after assessments have been administered, and are gaining more confidence and expertise in analyzing data reports to determine how well students are progressing. Consultation is more informal at the high school. ESL teachers meet with classroom teachers in inquiry groups during professional development time.

Assessment data also informs teachers as they plan to differentiate instruction, particularly in ELA in kindergarten through grade 8. Teachers choose leveled readers to supplement the literacy program and scaffold instruction in whole classrooms and reading centers in order to customize it for students.

Although walkthroughs are a form of data-gathering used by principals, most schools operate under a widely accepted open door policy whereby the superintendent, principals, assistant principals, directors, coaches and other teachers frequently visit classrooms for part or all of the period. Coaches and principals confer with teachers on data reports, often after a classroom

observation. Together they interpret and discuss the implications, and potential strategies to use for a student, group, or whole class. This replicates the superintendent's sit-beside model of observing classrooms with the principals, followed by a meeting to discuss student achievement data and their observations about teaching and learning.

When planning assessments, teachers are strategic as well as tactical. For example, at the high school, ELL students are permitted to use dictionaries during examinations, with no stigma attached. Teachers model strategies for how as well as what to learn and include learning strategies on their examinations. For example, to facilitate reading comprehension high school students learn to mark up texts by circling words they don't know, highlighting important passages, and keeping two-column notes that provide space for questions and reflections. As a result, English examinations might include a text for students to mark up to demonstrate their understanding. Examinations and tests are formatted with ample white space to help students concentrate, make notes, and compute in mathematics. Tests at the elementary level are composed using fonts without tails, because these fonts are easier for young children to read.

The district has developed and implemented a comprehensive and balanced assessment system and a districtwide approach to using the results. The system consists of a process for organizing and analyzing achievement data to make effective decisions to improve instruction, programs, and services for all students, including ELL students and students at risk. All data is accessible for teachers and leaders to use at the various data meetings held at each school to monitor student progress, plan instruction, and inform curricular decisions. The broad accessibility of data and the focus on its use have not narrowed the district's perspective on the role schools play in the holistic growth and development of students. Schools pay attention to celebrations, recitations, ice cream socials, student art exhibits, and competitions in sport and poetry. In the opinion of the review team, Malden has balanced instruction and assessment with the developmental needs of students.

The district has developed a systematic intake procedure to identify ELL students, assess their English language proficiency, and place them at appropriate MEPA levels in classrooms taught by teachers with knowledge of effective strategies for ELL students. Staff frequently use achievement data and required language and literacy assessments to monitor and reclassify ELL students in a timely way.

In Malden, parents or guardians of all new students entering the public schools must complete the Parent Information Center's Home Language Survey, which identifies the languages students use to communicate with family and friends. When it is established that a student is an ELL student, defined as a student whose first language is not English and who cannot manage ordinary classroom work in English, the student is assessed for language placement before being given a grade and school assignment. Personnel at the Parent Information Center determine the initial placement of entering ELL students.

Once a student is assigned to a school, the language assessment team (LAT) at that school, the group ultimately responsible for the classification, placement, and reclassification of ELL

students, reviews the student's placement to ensure that it best meets the student's language and academic needs. The LAT comprises sheltered English immersion (SEI) and ESL teachers, adjustment and guidance counselors, the principal, reading specialists, and other professional staff who work with students. The LAT confirms initial placement and determines subsequent stage reclassifications through a weighted system based on teacher recommendations, student performance, and multiple assessments including the MELA-O reading tests, Language Assessment Scales (LAS) Reading/Writing, MEPA, MCAS, and additional formal and informal school based assessments. The LAT also considers the length of student enrollment in department programs. Stage classifications are consistent with the five MEPA levels of English language fluency for listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

There are two program placement options for ELL students—SEI and a Spanish dual immersion program housed at the Forestdale School, which Spanish speakers may choose and which recruits Spanish-speaking kindergarten students to participate. Currently, the Salemwood School has the only schoolwide full inclusion SEI program in the district. Many parents of ELL students choose placement in either the Beebe or the Salemwood School because of neighborhood location, and the fact that each has multiple SEI classrooms. Many teachers have participated in category trainings and use SEI teaching strategies. Under the protocol, special education students also classified as ELL are considered on an individual basis by a team with both ESL and special education expertise.

Once assigned, all documentation is submitted to the director of literacy and language acquisition to ensure compliance with federal and state laws and regulations and program criteria. Parents or guardians may withdraw a child from the ELL program, but are requested to have a conference with the director of literacy and language acquisition before doing so in order to review the recommended placement. If there is disagreement with the placement, the parent or guardian must sign a waiver before withdrawing the child.

Any member of the LAT can appeal classification and placement decisions to the LAT chairperson by presenting a rationale for the disagreement. The LAT reviews all appeals using all submitted data and student information. If a resolution is not forthcoming at the school level, the principal and the director of literacy and language acquisition are responsible for reaching a decision. When they cannot, the issue is referred to the assistant superintendent.

Once the student is assigned to a stage or level, the school supports the student's growth in language and literacy in a variety of ways through its three-tiered intervention model. The classroom teacher is the first line of support, instructing all students in the daily literacy block using whole-group instruction with the core program and small-group instruction using reciprocal teaching. When an ELL student requires supplemental support in any language or literacy skill, the ESL teacher provides supplementary instruction several times a week either in the classroom (push-in) or outside the classroom (pull-out), usually in a small group made up of students with similar needs. The decision to push in or pull out is a collaborative decision by the classroom and the ESL teachers based on schedules, students' needs, and time allocations. ELL students at the secondary level work with ESL teachers in a pull-out model, and also have other

support during guided study periods and after school. ESL teachers monitor students' progress using the MELA-O three times a year.

Students are also evaluated annually for proficiency in English and in the content area skills with the LAT in order to determine readiness for the next stage or for full integration into the regular education program. Evaluation of students' reading and writing skills also occurs annually with the MEPA assessment in kindergarten through grade 12. In addition, the classroom teacher assesses oral language development using the MELA-O assessment three times annually.

Full integration in the general education program generally takes place between semesters or school years, and there are high and firm exit criteria for students to meet. Once a student has exited the ELL program, there is a safety net provision. The student is monitored for two years, and documentation of this monitoring is included in the student's cumulative record. If the student experiences academic or adjustment problems, the LAT meets to determine and provide needed support to ensure a successful transition into mainstream classrooms.

The district has developed and implemented a clear and thoughtful procedure to determine language and course placement, and to identify requisite academic and social support services to ensure that ELL students are appropriately placed and encouraged to succeed in school. It is particularly noteworthy that many ELL students arrive in Malden with limited or irregular formal education, and from traumatic events overseas. While the review team was on site, members observed recently arrived Chinese and Haitian students whose families settled in Malden after devastating earthquakes in their former countries. The ELL program is constructed to treat these and other students individually within the context of a continuum to develop English language and literacy skills and to promote academic competence and confidence. As students move through the stages of the ELL program, they become stronger and stronger in using English to learn content knowledge and skills in core subjects and make meaningful academic progress. This is illustrated by ELL median Student Growth Profiles that exceed those of their peers statewide. In the review team's opinion, the district has demonstrated its commitment to each new ELL student's academic and social growth and development.

Human Resources and Professional Development

The superintendent's formal evaluations of the principals in the Beebe and Ferryway schools set high expectations for their growth as instructional leaders.

The two evaluations of principals examined by the review team were thoughtful and comprehensive. Each contained ample detail describing the principal's activities throughout the school year, and student performance data comparisons, accompanied by the superintendent's analysis. The evaluations also provided concrete and specific suggestions designed to promote the principal's professional growth, as well as commentary about the principal's professional relationships with both the superintendent and colleagues. Finally, each principal was given clear and comprehensive direction to guide continued professional growth, including specific next

steps for the principal to take, all targeting improved student achievement. Other district principals confirmed in interviews with the review team that this was the superintendent's practice with all principal evaluations.

The superintendent suggested in the evaluations that the principals should improve instruction by focusing on a small, reasonable number of teachers in need of immediate and sustained intervention, based on assessments and observation evidence obtained from classroom visits. The superintendent recommended that the principals provide the interventions through weekly classroom visits with feedback from them and directors, including recommendations for appropriate professional development.

The comprehensive manner in which principal evaluations are prepared by the superintendent results in a thorough reflection on past performance and accomplishments, identification of areas of concern, and a clear blueprint for next steps. The superintendent sets the bar high for the performance of principals and provides guidance and support for the improvement of performance.

To monitor and improve achievement for all students, school leaders use an effective supervision process involving frequent classroom visits.

The superintendent believes that a model consisting of frequent classroom visits by administrators and coaches followed by written or oral feedback has the potential to improve instruction. The superintendent frequently visits schools to observe classroom instruction and expects principals to devote 600 minutes each month to visiting the classrooms. This ensures that they are familiar with the range of instructional practice that students experience and that they work closely with teachers most in need of improvement.

This practice prompts important conversations both among teachers and between teachers and their coaches and principals. These need not begin as high stakes conversations. All conversations revolve around students, with the goal of increasing their performance. The underlying assumption is that classroom instruction is subject to constant improvement, and with data to focus the conversations, there can be little disagreement.

In the opinion of the review team, the practice of conducting classroom visits followed by feedback represents an effective supervision model, one that contributes to improvement of instruction and ultimately the achievement of all students.

The district leadership team makes data driven professional development decisions for the district.

Consistent with the superintendent's goal of having all staff speak a common language and pursue common goals, the inclusive leadership team makes professional development decisions for the district. There is ample professional development time in the district, including three full days for teachers at all levels, as well as early release days monthly in kindergarten through grade 8 schools and weekly at the high school. In this context, the district leadership team, representing all stakeholders, decides what is needed through use of data. The team determines

the content of professional development, the professional development program presenters, and whether professional development will be school-based or districtwide. Central office and school-based administrators are equal participants in the decision making and assist in the implementation of the program.

An example of a professional development initiative fully supported by the leadership team is the comprehensive effort to train all staff in SEI. Because of the team's decision, the director of literacy and language acquisition is leading what was characterized as a full court press to make this happen. SEI training is available after school, on weekends, and in some cases, during the school day. Stipends are offered to assist participants with child care or other expenses. The director and the assistant superintendent are teaching most of these workshops.

In addition to offering workshops with specific, required, and important content, the district is moving toward more job-embedded professional development. Coaches have been added at the schools to work with the teachers on data analysis and instructional methods. The superintendent, principals, and directors are also frequently in the classrooms providing feedback to teachers. Common planning time is provided in every school schedule to enable teachers to discuss what is happening in their classrooms, make decisions, and learn from one another. In addition, more teachers are being placed on improvement plans and receiving interventions from principals and directors.

Professional development is pervasive in the district in both the workshop and job-embedded formats. Decisions about the needs of teachers and the specific professional development topics to address these needs are made centrally by the leadership team. The assumption underlying these decisions is that struggling students need interventions that address specific needs, needs they may have in common with other students regardless of whether they are ELL, special education, or Title I students. The district's multi-faceted approach to professional development involving workshop training as well as support from coaches and administrators fosters improved instruction for all students.

Student Support

The superintendent has a strong commitment to providing interventions for struggling students, including ELL students, and this commitment is evident in personnel and programmatic decisions.

In an interview with the review team, the superintendent stated a commitment to underserved students and a desire to make their voices heard. In 2009-2010, the superintendent combined the positions of director of literacy and director of ELL literacy. There is now a single director of literacy and language acquisition. The rationale for combining the positions was that all students struggling with literacy and language acquisition could benefit from the same strategies and techniques. The district reinforces this approach with a preference for hiring elementary level teachers with dual certification in elementary education and ESL. Recently, the superintendent

set an expectation that school schedules include adequate time for interventions for struggling students, and conveyed this expectation personally in meetings with the principals at their schools. There is a clear message coming from the superintendent that the schools must address the needs of all of the learners.

Malden has taken action to implement this philosophy. The director of literacy and language acquisition stated that literacy instruction for ELL students is on the first tier of a three-tiered intervention scale because with the use of SEI strategies by classroom teachers, the classroom program is appropriate to the needs of most ELL students. Malden recently adopted the Reading Street program and Think Math. Part of the rationale for the selection of these programs was that both included specific support for ELL students. The district also purchased the Scantron assessment system, which provides disaggregated data to track the progress of subgroups on the district's formative and summative measures.

Under the leadership of the superintendent, the district has a strong focus on improving instruction for all students, including ELL students, and a philosophy of including ELL students appropriately in general education classrooms with SEI strategies and external support. The ELL literacy program is under the direction of the person responsible for all district literacy programs, creating a uniform service delivery system for all students. The superintendent gave high priority to allocating time for interventions for struggling students in school schedules. Programs in ELA and mathematics were selected in part because they made provisions for ELL students, and the district purchased an assessment scoring system in part because it facilitates progress monitoring of subgroups, including ELL students. These actions have the potential to improve teaching and learning for all students.

The district provides extensive and effective outreach to parents of ELL students.

A parent coordinator, funded through Title I, plays a key role supporting school outreach to parents. In interviews, the review team learned that each school holds a parent breakfast once a month. At these breakfasts, the staff presents information on such topics as ELA, mathematics, health, and student behavior. The district also offers adult ESL classes for parents at three of its schools at various times during the day and evening. Parents confirmed during their focus group meetings with the review team that these classes are well attended and enthusiastically received. In addition, in 2009-2010 the district hired part-time translators to translate central office documents into five major languages spoken in the district: Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, Vietnamese, and Chinese. The translators are also available to assist with communication at parent meetings and were present when the review team met with parents in each of the schools visited.

Parents at these meetings confirmed the frequency of the schools' contacts with them. They reported receiving messages in the form of letters, phone calls, flyers, and emails. In addition, each student receives a quarterly report card and a progress report at the mid-point of each quarter. Following the issuance of each report card, there is a meeting with the teacher, sometimes involving a translator. When asked what they do if they have a problem related to

their child's learning, parents stated that they contact a counselor or their child's teacher. Finally, when questioned about what they valued most about the school, almost all parents identified the teachers.

The review team found significant the way the district handled the review team's request for parent meetings, as well as the way parents responded at the meetings. The meetings at the schools involved approximately 10 and 12 parents and were attended by translators, although the parents often preferred to use their limited English in an intense and sincere effort to communicate. The review team understands that it is not a simple matter to bring parents to these meetings, particularly when they struggle with the language. The schools wanted parents at the meetings, and the parents wanted to attend. This determination to involve and support parents through whatever means is characteristic of Malden.

The high school has programs and practices in place that communicate high expectations for all students.

During interviews, it was clear that the high school supports all students. The process begins with a summer school support program for 50 grade 8 students transitioning to grade 9. Included in this program are students at 'Warning' or 'Needs Improvement' levels on the grade 7 MCAS test. All ELL students are automatically included.

The PASS Program offers all high school students tutoring on either a drop-in or scheduled basis. Interns and tutors staff the tutoring center. The program includes an after-school component that all athletes are required to attend twice a week. In addition, during grade 9, all students make a college visit. In this way, their sights are set early on the goal of college attendance. The high school holds college nights and financial aid nights for parents, and according to the guidance director, a particular effort is made to include parents of ELL students.

Malden pays the fees of all students taking the PSAT as sophomores. When the results are available in December, the high school schedules separate meetings for ELL students to help them better understand the test and interpret their scores. Counselors use the PSAT results to recommend courses and levels for students. All students are encouraged to take the PSAT again in grade 11.

All students in grades 9 through 12 meet individually with their counselors to select classes, which are offered at the college preparatory, honors, and AP levels. Honors and AP level courses are open to all students, and interviewees told the review team that the expectation is that most students will take a mix of honors and college preparatory classes.

The district participates in a grant program that promotes enrollment and facilitates success in AP courses. The high school offers 17 AP courses with multiple sections. According to administrators, the high school has had the highest growth in AP participation in the state. According to ESE data, the number of Malden juniors and seniors enrolled in one or more AP

courses more than doubled from 2006 to 2009, from 122 students (16 percent) to 249 students (31 percent).⁴

Because of these initiatives, ELL students are oriented to thinking about attending college and given opportunities to succeed through access to honors and AP level courses. The valedictorian for the Class of 2010 enrolled in the Malden schools in grade 8 speaking only Vietnamese, and graduated with a full scholarship to Yale University. The motto of high expectations for all students is not an empty phrase. Students at the high school are expected to achieve at high levels with appropriate support, including students whose first language is other than English.

The district has the same service delivery model for special education students as for ELL students, but according to analysis of MCAS scores, performance gaps for special education students are wider.

A belief permeates the district that struggling learners have common literacy needs that can best be addressed in mainstream settings using the three-tiered intervention model. These struggling learners might be members of several subgroups such as LEP, low income, Title I, and special education. The review team visited Malden because under this model two district schools had narrowed performance gaps between their ELL students and ELL students statewide—and thus all students statewide, from 2008 to 2009. However, the gaps in both ELA and mathematics between the Composite Performance Index (CPI) of Malden special education students and the CPI of state special education students are wider than those gaps for ELL students. For instance, in 2009 in ELA, the CPI for Malden special education students was 57.3, as opposed to the CPI of 67.8 for special education students statewide, a difference of over 10 points, whereas the CPI for Malden ELL students in ELA, 54.3, was only about 3 points lower than the CPI of 57.2 for ELL students statewide. In mathematics in 2009, Malden special education students had a CPI of 45.7, as opposed to the CPI of 56.9 for special education students statewide, again a difference of over 10 points, whereas Malden ELL students (CPI 54.7) outscored their statewide counterparts (CPI 53.1) by more than three points. The data indicates that the instructional model for special education students may not be completely meeting their needs.

⁴ See Malden data under the Student Support tab in the Data and Analysis Review Tool for Districts at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/dart/default.html>.

Recommendations

The district should continue to develop and refine the system already in place to provide targeted instructional support in its classrooms.

The classroom is central in this district, and the superintendent makes this focus a reality in two ways. First, the superintendent provides active supervision of classroom teachers and principals. He is in the classrooms providing feedback to teachers, and in the principals' offices discussing the implications of student achievement data. Second, he organizes all the school and district leaders and teachers and directs their energies to moving students to higher levels of achievement. While this is not yet a fully realized vision, the district is well organized and has implemented strategies to improve student achievement. The review team urges the superintendent and his staff to continue to develop and refine this instructional model to realize the potential of all students.

The district should consider increasing the integration of its general and ELL curricula.

A review of the documented kindergarten through grade 8 mathematics curriculum and grade 6 through 8 ELA and social studies curricula showed that they do not reference the ELPBO standards, although the team observed instruction in these subject areas that reflected teacher knowledge of the ELPBO standards. The kindergarten through grade 5 ELA/science/social studies curriculum documents do reference the ELPBO and provide some additional resources to meet the needs of ELL students. The district should consider including similar information in all of its curriculum documents. Furthermore, as it undertakes future curriculum reviews, it should ensure that references to the ELPBO and additional resources for ELL students are included in all future curriculum documents. District leaders and staff have invested much time and talent in developing a model program for ELL students; fully documenting this information in curriculum documents will ensure continued fidelity to the program and guide new teachers.

The district should consider developing a video database of effective instructional practices accessible to all instructional staff.

The review team observed 48 classrooms in kindergarten through grade 8 in two schools, the Beebe and the Ferryway. In nearly 100 percent of the classrooms, the team observed partial or solid evidence of skillful practices that the team considers a major contributing factor to the positive growth in achievement of ELL students. In interviews, teachers commented on the value of professional development, of the classroom support from coaches and other staff, and of modeling effective practice. The use of technology to capture the techniques embedded in instruction, techniques that help students learn English, provides an additional means of building capacity. It would be of benefit to all instructional staff, as well as colleagues in other school districts, to be able to see the effective strategies used in classrooms every day by other teachers and leaders.

The district should continue to develop the capacity of teachers to analyze and use assessment data to strengthen instruction and curriculum.

The capacity of district leaders to collect, analyze, and use achievement data to guide decision making has had a significant impact on how all educators in the district think about their work. Data is seamlessly included in all plans and discussions to improve curriculum and instruction. It guides priority setting for professional development offerings at the district level and in the schools. It also provides evidence for judgments about teaching and learning in the district.

In interviews, administrators and coaches noted that teachers were making progress and getting better in analyzing and using data. The review team suggests that the district continue to build teachers' capacity to use student achievement data to better understand and address the progress of students, in particular for subgroups not yet demonstrating meaningful growth. In addition, teachers should be encouraged to reflect on their own instructional work such as lesson plans, teacher-developed materials, and other tangible resources, rather than focusing entirely on data derived from student work. This would enable an already talented teaching staff to move to an even higher level of awareness about teaching in general and their own teaching in particular, and give them additional insights into ways to foster the growth and development of Malden's students.

The district should consider including in all curriculum documents more detail about the district's comprehensive assessment system.

The district's detailed assessment system, found in practice and described in interviews, is not reflected in the curriculum documents for almost all core content areas. Curriculum documents are like maps. They inform and guide new and veteran teachers in plotting a course of study through the academic program. As currently developed, the district's curriculum documents are rich in guiding and essential questions, key topics and skills, teaching strategies, and resources, but less complete in describing the options for assessment—formative, summative, and authentic. The curriculum documents do cite end-of-chapter tests, and sometimes offer suggestions for authentic assessments as well as prescribing various benchmarks and formative and summative assessments, but this varies by content area. The review team suggests that as curriculum documents are reviewed and updated, teachers and leaders consider augmenting the sections on student assessment. This effort will likely lead to new and more innovative ways to assess student work and progress, including measuring students' understanding more deeply, and additional ways for students to demonstrate proficiency in integrating knowledge.

School leaders should continue the supervision practice of frequent classroom visits to monitor and improve the achievement of all students.

The superintendent models the practice of supervision of teachers through classroom visits followed by feedback, giving it high prominence in the district. Principals conduct frequent classroom visits and follow-up conversations to improve instruction. By establishing a minimum of 600 minutes for classroom visits each month, the superintendent has increased the opportunity

for principals to observe and promote effective instruction. These practices create a context for teacher growth and higher student achievement.

The district should continue to provide ELL students with access to a challenging mainstream education while monitoring to make sure that students at all levels of English proficiency are receiving all the support they need.

ELL students who reach level 3 on the MEPA receive SEI in general education classes. Their literacy needs are met primarily with the interventions for other struggling learners. Language objectives support their developing mastery of English, and interventions address any specific needs identified by regular assessments. Expectations for their growth and increasing proficiency are the same as those for all other learners. In 2009, median Student Growth Percentiles for LEP, FLEP, and LEP/FLEP students at the Beebe and Ferryway Schools exceeded 60 in both ELA and mathematics in every case but one, where the median SGP was 59. See Tables 3 and 4 above. Nowhere in the district are high expectations for ELL students clearer than at the high school. Many high school students, including ELL students, rise to the challenges of advanced level classes and set their sights on college. However, 2009 proficiency rates for Malden LEP/FLEP students were low: 31 percent in ELA and 32 percent in mathematics. While continuing on the path of supporting the development of ELL students in general education classes and expecting them to achieve at high levels as they progress, the district should keep a close eye on the achievement and growth of its ELL students at various levels of English proficiency, to ensure that students at all levels are being provided with the supports necessary for them to achieve both linguistic and academic proficiency.

The district should evaluate the adequacy of support for special education students in mainstream classrooms.

Central office administrators frequently stated the belief that the needs of many special education students can be served in a mainstream setting using the same three-tiered intervention model in place for all students. However, there is a discrepancy between the achievement of ELL students and special education students under this service delivery model: the gap between district and state subgroup performance is considerably greater for special education students than for ELL students. The district should evaluate the adequacy of training for regular education teachers to address the needs of special education students in mainstream settings. This may lead to further professional development as well as additional refinement of the intervention model.

The city and the district should consider collaborating to purchase a single accounting system suitable for both city and district needs.

Currently, because of the dual accounting system, school administrators are unable to access financial information and in many cases must refer to paper records. In addition, the school district maintains a separate set of computers to communicate with the city's accounting system. The superintendent and the business manager do not have ready access to current line item balances in order to make decisions about programs and services. A new accounting system

would eliminate the need for the district to maintain additional computers, as well as duplication of effort.

Appendix A: Review Team Members

The review of the Malden Public Schools was conducted from June 1-June 4, 2010, by the following team of educators, independent consultants to Class Measures, Inc, an educational consultancy organization engaged by ESE and CDSA to conduct this review.

Rena Shea, Leadership and Governance

Christine Brandt, Curriculum and Instruction, and ELL support

Dr. Linda Greyser, Assessment

Dr. William Contreras, Human Resources and Professional Development

Patricia Williams, Student Support

Patricia Williams served as team leader.

Appendix B: Review Activities and Site Visit Schedule

Review Activities

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

The review team conducted interviews and focus groups with the following representatives from the Malden Public Schools: superintendent, assistant superintendent, director of literacy and language acquisition, special education administrator, ELA director 6 through 12, mathematics and assessment director, mathematics coach, literacy coach, special education coach, ESL coach, science coach, business manager, high school guidance director, high school teacher leaders, and principals.

The review team visited the following schools in the Malden Public Schools: Beebe (pre-K-8), Ferryway (pre-K-8).

During school visits, the review team conducted interviews with school principals, teachers, and parents.

- The review team conducted 48 classroom visits for different grade levels and subjects across the two 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 or follow-up Mid-cycle Report
- Staff contracts
- Long-term enrollment trends
- End-of-year financial report for the district for 2009
- List of the district's federal and state grants
- Municipal profile

The review team reviewed the following documents at the district and school levels]:

- Organization chart
- District Improvement Plan
- School Improvement Plans
- School committee policy manual
- Curriculum guides
- High school program of studies
- Calendar of formative and summative assessments

- Copies of data analyses/reports used in schools
- Descriptions of student support programs
- Student and Family Handbooks
- Faculty Handbook
- Professional Development Plan and program/schedule/courses
- Teacher planning time/meeting schedules
- Job descriptions (for central office and school administrators and instructional staff)
- Principal evaluations
- Procedures and assessments to identify LEP students and assess their level of English proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

Site Visit Schedule

The following is the schedule for the onsite portion of the review of the Malden Public Schools conducted from June 1-June 4, 2010.

Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
June 1 Orientation meeting with district leaders; interviews with district staff; review of documents	June 2 Interviews with district staff, principals, and school-based coaches; review of documents	June 3 School visits to the Beebe and the Ferryway; interviews with principals; classroom observations; teacher team meetings; teacher and parent focus groups	June 4 School visit: Beebe; team meeting; closing meeting with district leaders