



# **Revere Public Schools Review of District Systems and Practices Addressing the Differentiated Needs of English Language Learners**

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# Overview

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## ***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 Gap<sup>1</sup>. 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.

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<sup>1</sup> *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

## Revere Public Schools

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The site visit to the Revere Public Schools was conducted from June 8 - 11, 2010. The site visit included visits to the following district school: Paul Revere School (grades K-5), 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 Profile<sup>2</sup>***

The Revere Public School District serves approximately 6,145 students in grades Pre-K-12 at 11 schools: 7 elementary schools, 2 middle schools, and 2 high schools. The following chart displays the race/ethnicity characteristics of the district for the 2009-2010 school year.

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

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity	Percent of Total	Selected Populations	Percent of Total
African-American	3.9	First Language not English	44.7
Asian	6.9	Limited English Proficient	10.2
Hispanic or Latino	40.0	Low-income	71.0
Native American	0.7	Special Education	15.0
White	45.1	Free Lunch	57.4
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	0.0	Reduced-price lunch	13.6
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	3.4		

Source: School/District Profiles on ESE website

More than 21 languages are spoken by limited English proficient (LEP) students within the Revere district. The predominant languages represented include the following: Spanish (62%), Arabic (15%), Portuguese (6.2%), and Vietnamese (4.9%). The table on the following page displays more information on the LEP students at the Paul Revere Elementary School and the district.

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<sup>2</sup> Data derived from ESE’s website, ESE’s Education Data Warehouse, or other ESE sources.

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

	Paul Revere Elementary	District	State
Limited English Proficient (LEP)*	58	625	59,158
LEP and Regular Education**	47	562	49,842
LEP and Special Education**	11	63	9,316

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

In grades K-8, students identified as LEP are placed in mainstream classes in their neighborhood schools with English as a second language (ESL) support. At the high school level, all level 1, 2, 3, and 4 LEP students receive mathematics, English language arts (ELA), history, and science instruction in self-contained classrooms.

In the 2009-2010 school year, the district employed approximately 425 teachers – 99% percent of whom were highly qualified, and 99% of whom were fully licensed in their teaching assignment. The student/teacher ratio was 14.5 to 1.

### **Student Performance<sup>3</sup>**

The district has a No Child Left Behind (NCLB) accountability status for 2009 of Corrective Action for subgroups in ELA and No Status in mathematics. The NCLB performance ratings for ELA and mathematics are high and moderate, respectively. In 2009, the district made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in the aggregate and in all subgroups for both content areas.

Since 2007, the district has made AYP in the aggregate for both ELA and mathematics. In 2009, the special education subgroup in grades 6-8 and 9-12 did not make AYP in ELA. During the same time period, in grades 3-5, the White subgroup did not make AYP in mathematics; in grades 6-8, the special education, low-income, Hispanic/Latino, former limited English proficient (FLEP), and LEP subgroups did not make AYP.

A review of the ESE Education Data Warehouse data indicated that the district has consistently performed at a high level. In 2009, for example, the district received a composite performance index (CPI) score of 84.0 in ELA, compared to the state's CPI of 86.5. In mathematics, the district attained a CPI of 75.5, compared to the state's CPI of 78.5.

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<sup>3</sup> Data derived from ESE's website, ESE's Education Data Warehouse, or other ESE sources.

Furthermore, FLEP and LEP district students have performed at moderate to high levels, repeatedly surpassing their state peers. In 2009, for example, FLEP district students attained CPI scores of 84.5 in ELA and 79.2 in mathematics, compared to the state’s respective CPI scores of 79.3 and 70.8. LEP district students earned CPI scores of 58.2 in ELA and 60.6 in mathematics, compared to the state’s respective CPI scores of 57.2 and 53.1.

The district’s low-income subgroup also demonstrated high performance, often exceeding the performance of their state peers. For 2009, in mathematics, the low-income district subgroup attained a CPI of 73.2, compared to the state’s CPI of 64.5; in ELA, the low income district subgroup gained a CPI of 82.0, against the state’s CPI of 75.5. However, the subgroup of students with disabilities slightly underperformed the state. For instance, the ELA 2009 CPI score for the students with disabilities subgroup was 62.6, compared to the state’s CPI of 67.8; the mathematics CPI score for the district subgroup was 53.2, compared to the state’s CPI of 56.9.

The following table displays the AYP status and CPI scores for the Revere district and the school visited during the English language learners (ELL) review.

**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
Revere	CA-S	84.0	1.9	Yes	Yes	--	75.5	1.5	Yes	Yes
Paul Revere Elementary	II1-S	82.6	-1.7	No	No	--	83.3	1.0	Yes	Yes

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 district improvement plan and department action plans are based on broad themes and lack measurable targets.**

The 2009-2010 Revere Public Schools District Improvement Plan (DIP) identifies the following four themes:

- (1) Student learning/curriculum and instruction
- (2) Teacher learning/professional development
- (3) School and community involvement
- (4) Planning and support systems

District leaders reported that the following were identified as the 2010-2011 themes:

- (1) Meeting the needs of all learners through inclusive models
- (2) Tiered instruction models
- (3) Using data from assessments and other sources to increase student achievement

Emerging themes identified in the teacher surveys and from district director input are refined and finalized through conversations among the top district leadership team. Once the district's top leadership establishes the DIP themes, each district director and principal is instructed to develop a district department plan (action worksheet) or school improvement plan (SIP) based on those themes.

The review team examined the 2009-2010 DIP and ELL department action plan and noted that each document included a list of activities with no prioritization. The 2009-2010 DIP, for example, lists 6 to 17 objectives for each of the four themes (listed above). Theme 1 (Student learning/curriculum and instruction) identifies 17 objectives, including: continue to expand digital media, videoconferencing, and distance learning opportunities for all students; identify and implement differentiated instruction models to meet the diverse learning needs of all students; and continue to strengthen schoolwide Title I programs. The lack of prioritization gives equal weight to all activities and does not provide focus or allow for an objective assessment of the results.

District and department action plans do not indicate how or whether student assessment data were analyzed to identify improvement initiatives. District leaders reported that the DIP themes are based on teacher professional development surveys and on conversations with district directors, rather than on the analysis of student performance data. This lack of specific analysis of student achievement inhibits sustained and improving achievement levels among students and

specific student subgroups because there is no reference point from which to demonstrate progress.

The goals or action steps in the plans do not focus on student performance as evidence of accomplishment. The ELL action plan, for example, indicated that the ELL department will continue to develop more collaboration between ELL teachers and content teachers in order to improve instruction and learning for teachers and ELL learners. There is no evidence that the ELL department is using specific student achievement data to gauge growth or progress. Student progress cannot be determined without specific objectives that will reveal measurable results.

## Curriculum and Instruction

### **ESL resources are not sufficient to effectively support the language learning needs of ELL students across Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment (MEPA) levels.**

District leaders and teachers reported that staffing is insufficient to provide the minimum required ESL instructional time during the school day. The Paul Revere Elementary School has one ELL teacher who provides ESL support in classrooms and in pull-out sessions in the ELL resource room. District and school staff reported that Paul Revere Elementary School ELL students are provided with only 30 to 45 minutes of direct ESL instruction per day, regardless of assessed language proficiency levels. The amount of ESL time is not adjusted to meet the varied language learning needs of students at different MEPA levels.

The following table summarizes the number of ELL students at the Paul Revere Elementary School across MEPA levels.

**Table 4: ELL students according to MEPA level, Spring 2009:  
Paul Revere Elementary School**

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Paul Revere	7	12	16	23	2

Source: MEPA data on ESE website

There is no evidence of an ESL curriculum for the district's elementary grades. Instead, the school supports ELL students through a reading series that is used with all students. District leaders reported that Revere Public Schools (RPS) adopted the *Reading Street* reading series with ELL components and companion materials for grades 1-5. According to an interview, ELL teachers piloted the *Reading Street* materials and developed modifications to support students at earlier English proficiency levels. A review of documents indicated that an ESL curriculum was developed for grades 6-8 and grades 9-12.

The district's curriculum standards and benchmarks do not reference the English Language Proficiency Benchmarks and Outcomes (ELPBO). District staff reported that teachers have been introduced to the ELPBO document. In observed classrooms, however, the review team did not see language objectives based on the ELPBO. In summary: Although ESL curriculum materials were developed for the middle and high school levels and *Reading Street* ELL companion materials are utilized, an ESL curriculum is not yet established for the elementary grades and there is no integration between the general and ELL curriculum. When visiting mainstream classrooms, the review team did not find evidence of lesson planning or delivery that explicitly considered language learning opportunities for ELL students across the four language domains (reading, writing, speaking, and listening).

**Instructional strategies used in the Paul Revere Elementary School classrooms facilitate learning for all students, including ELL students.**

In accordance with the district's preference for inclusion, ELL students are placed and served in mainstream classrooms. Although focus groups and classroom observations revealed that teachers do not specifically consider the language learning needs of ELL students when delivering instruction, teaching practices observed by the review team at the Paul Revere Elementary School were viewed as supporting all learners, including ELL students.

There was evidence that instruction linked academic concepts to students' prior knowledge and experience in 80% (n=10) of classroom visits. In one kindergarten classroom, for example, a teacher was observed using the Lively Letters program to review a series of words that the class had previously developed. This review provided both ELL and mainstream students with an additional opportunity to learn and remember new vocabulary, and reinforced previously-taught phonemic awareness skills.

The review team noted that the presentation of content was within the students' English proficiency and developmental level in 60% (n=10) of classrooms visited. For instance, in one grade 2 classroom, a teacher presented a lesson on measurement. The teacher reviewed key vocabulary necessary for understanding the content (small, medium, large, cup, pint, quart). The vocabulary words were displayed in writing and through images projected on a Smart Board. Prior to the lesson, the teacher had introduced the concepts of measurement through an ice cream eating activity – utilizing a familiar and high-interest activity to facilitate access to content-related concepts for ELL and mainstream students alike.

In 70% (n=10) of classrooms visited, students were observed inquiring, exploring, or problem solving together, in pairs, or in small groups. In three classrooms, the review team observed students reading with a partner. In one of these three classrooms, students in a mathematics lesson were reading with their buddies. Opportunities to work with peers to complete academic tasks provided ELL students with opportunities to speak, listen, read, and write in English.

As previously described, there was no evidence that mainstream teachers consider language learning opportunities for ELL students across the four language domains when developing and implementing lessons. Although teachers' explicit awareness of English language development

was not apparent, the review team found evidence that instruction delivered to all students at the Paul Revere Elementary School supported language learning for ELL students.

## **Assessment**

**The Paul Revere Elementary School uses multiple assessments to track individual student progress throughout the year.**

District and school focus groups identified the following sources of student data in district elementary schools:

- The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), an assessment measuring student fluency and phonemic awareness, is administered in September, January and May;
- Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GRADE) is administered in September and May to assess student reading comprehension, while vocabulary and comprehension subtests are used for progress monitoring;
- Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS);
- District benchmark assessments for ELA and mathematics are administered at the start of the year as a pretest and then quarterly; and,
- Program-embedded assessments.

There was evidence that assessment results are disseminated across the district's schools. The review team noted a data wall at the Paul Revere Elementary School that displayed class progress on the DIBELS and GRADE assessments from year to year. Additionally – according to district staff members – once each district benchmark exam is scored, teachers receive an item analysis, the average score for the class and peers, and how many students in the class answered the items correctly. The ELA benchmark assessment tests the standards as they are covered in the curriculum. District staff stated that the district mathematics benchmark assessments are iterative. Questions revisit the same benchmark over the course of a year to ensure mastery and retention of the skills and content. As a result, teachers can compare student performance on specific items across quarters.

District directors reported that school-level staff members own the data. Through the Bay State Reading Initiative (BSRI), data team meetings are facilitated three times a year to analyze assessment results. The school-based BSRI data team is composed of the ELL teacher, the special education teacher, coaches and the principal. The team shares data findings with classroom teachers at each grade level. Although district and school staff members analyze MEPA data to make decisions regarding the reclassification of ELL students at the Paul Revere Elementary School, focus groups indicated that MEPA and Massachusetts English Language Assessment-Oral (MELA-O) data are not referenced in school data discussions.

Focus groups with school staff members and documents revealed that the data team and all classroom teachers examine student growth on the basis of the DIBELS, GRADE, and benchmark data. Teachers use assessment results to categorize students who make ambitious, typical, and less-than-typical growth. District and school staff indicated that DIBELS and GRADE results and teacher recommendations are used to identify students for interventions; teachers also reported using student data to form reading groups.

In summary, there is evidence at the district and school levels that staff at the Paul Revere Elementary School analyze multiple sources of student assessment data to monitor individual student progress over time. Teachers and school leaders reported using assessment results to identify students for interventions and to form reading groups. The absence of MEPA and MELA-O results in school data discussions, however, limits school capacity to plan and deliver targeted interventions that are aligned to the levels of English proficiency of the school's ELL student population.

## **Human Resources and Professional Development**

### **The district provides funding and opportunities for career advancement.**

The district provides money, time, and opportunity for teachers and district staff to advance into leadership positions and on the salary scale.

Exemplary teachers often provide and facilitate district professional development sessions, according to a district leader. According to district staff members, teachers with National Board Certification (NBC) credentials receive a \$3,000 salary increment and may earn more for their involvement with mentoring programs. Focus groups and documents indicated that nationally board-certified teachers facilitate the three-day induction and orientation for new teachers and are often assigned as mentors for new teachers. Currently, the district has about 16 nationally board-certified teachers.

In focus groups, district leaders stated that teachers of grades 4 and 5 may increase their salary by completing a master's degree in mathematics program at Lesley University, fully paid for by the district. Three cohorts, each with 30 teachers, completed the Lesley University program and received a master's degree in education. District and school staff indicated that every teacher of students in grades 4 and 5 is required to get licensed in mathematics.

According to focus groups, various administrators have risen through the ranks and advanced to administrative positions within the district, including the deputy superintendent, assistant superintendent for curriculum, instruction, and assessment, ELL and foreign language director, standards-based education director, Title I/literacy director and special education director. District and school staff also provided examples of staff positions that were filled with qualified internal staff, such as the staff at the Parent Information Center (PIC).

Career advancement opportunities offered by Revere Public Schools represent an investment in the professional development of its staff and supports improved instruction for all students, including ELL students.

**The district’s professional development offerings are not based on student data and do not include measurable outcomes.**

Interviews with district and school staff indicated that there is a commitment to providing a selection of teacher professional development opportunities. In focus groups, school staff described the wide breadth and abundance of professional development opportunities that are offered by the district. However, the review team did not find evidence in focus groups or documents to indicate that these offerings are based on identifiable student achievement data or include measurable outcomes.

District directors develop a series of 10-hour professional development courses (or, directors’ meetings). Teachers are required to select one 10-hour director’s meeting to take throughout the year and receive 10 professional development points (PDP) for completing the course. The review team examined the 2009-2010 RPS directors’ meetings list. According to the document, teachers may choose from a menu of 36 course options. A district leader indicated that teachers would have 48 options in 2010-2011. According to documents and interviews, each 10-hour director’s meeting was presented over a span of five 2-hour sessions held in 2009 (October and December) and 2010 (February, April, and May).

The 2009-2010 catalogue of directors’ meetings listed a wide expanse of training opportunities, including courses on implementing adopted textbooks (e.g., *Reading Street*, *enVision Math*), technology (e.g., video and editing as an instructional tool), teaching (e.g., writing, interactive thematic instruction), planning (e.g., common planning for algebra), and assessment (e.g., implementing formative assessments). Each director’s meeting listed in the district’s professional development catalogue identified an appropriate audience, such as chemistry teachers, grade 6-12 ELA teachers, or grade 3-5 teachers with 0-3 years of experience. Principals have an additional 10 hours of professional development.

District leaders reported that the ELL department facilitated a series of directors’ meetings in 2009-2010. Documents listed two ELL directors’ meetings for the 2009-2010 academic year: ESL methods and materials (with an identified audience of middle school and high school teachers) and the category 4 training (with an identified audience of grades 6-12 teachers).

The 2009-2010 district and ELL department professional development plan documents presented multiple areas of focus, but did not specify the results of a needs assessment process or present an analysis of gaps in student and student subgroup performance. According to focus groups, directors solicit teacher feedback to determine the content of the directors’ meetings.

There is no evidence that district and school leaders are monitoring the implementation of professional development across classrooms. District and school staff members reported that walkthroughs do not have a specific focus. Several district staff discussed the use of three-minute

walkthroughs as a means of determining what is happening in classes. There is no formal process for capturing or disseminating feedback. Note taking is not required, and feedback is provided through informal conversation or brief notes. There does not appear to be a relationship between the walkthroughs and the professional development offered to teachers.

In summary, professional development is driven by teacher preference. There was no evidence in focus groups and district documents to suggest that training provided to teachers is based on student achievement data or the specific needs of student subgroups, such as ELL students. A system to monitor or provide teachers with feedback on their implementation of professional development has not been implemented.

### **District and school leaders advocate for sheltered English instruction training.**

District and school staff reports and documents indicated that all four sheltered English instruction (category) trainings are offered and teachers are encouraged and expected to take them.

As previously described, the category 4 training session (that is, teaching reading and writing to ESL learners) was offered as one of the 10-hour professional development course options in the 2009-2010 academic year. Teachers who completed the district's 2009-2010 category 4 training received 10 PDPs. According to documents, multiple category 1, 2, and 3 training sessions were offered throughout the 2009-2010 academic year; for example, the RPS category training calendar lists nine category 3 sessions from September 2009 to May 2010. District documents also indicated that five teachers, including the Paul Revere Elementary School ELL teacher, are certified category trainers.

Participation in category training is voluntary. District leaders explained the district policy concerning professional development: "You can't tell people what to take....teachers pick what they want." However, according to district documents, teachers are expected to complete at least one of the four categories each year. Interviews with district leaders indicated that the superintendent is committed to category training. The superintendent explained how the district "begs and pushes teachers" to enroll in the district's category training sessions. Written documents explaining the requirements for category training were developed by the district and disseminated to all staff members.

Despite the voluntary nature of professional development in the system, focus groups conducted at the Paul Revere Elementary School indicated that the principal is a strong advocate for category training. Teachers reported that the principal has pushed hard for the completion of category training by all staff. According to teacher focus groups, the principal views all staff as ELL teachers and is trying to get all of the Paul Revere Elementary School staff members to complete category training.

District records indicated that over one-third of the staff members at Paul Revere Elementary School have completed categories 1, 2, and 3. The table on the following page 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:  
Paul Revere 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
Paul Revere Elementary School (Total = 34*)	12	13	12	1

\*Total number of staff participating; numbers in the category columns indicate the number who participated in the training for each category.

Source: Revere Public Schools

In summary, although category training is voluntary, district and school leaders strongly encourage mainstream teachers to complete the training. Multiple training sessions were offered in the 2009-2010 academic year. The district had made progress in persuading mainstream classroom teachers to complete the category training sessions, providing teachers with basic knowledge on supporting ELL students in English-only instructional settings.

## **Student Support**

**The Parent Information Center’s multilingual staff members serve as links between families and the district’s schools.**

The Parent Information Center (PIC) was established 15 years ago to serve the Khmer population and, two years ago, re-opened in a dedicated space. The superintendent reported that the PIC was reopened to offer families a central location at which to enroll their children and to access the district’s schools. The ELL department is housed at the PIC.

During the time that the PIC was closed, families new to the district were required to enroll their children in their neighborhood schools. With this arrangement, schools were in charge of assessing students’ oral and written proficiency levels in English. According to district leaders, this resulted in less-than-adequate support for families who recently arrived from other countries or who did not speak English. According to the superintendent, of the 6,200 students enrolled in the district, there were 1,200 transfers into and out of RPS. Without the PIC, this large influx and outflow of students would have overburdened schools with the registration and intake process.

The district was purposeful in its re-establishment of the PIC. The district visited parent information centers in neighboring districts to conduct research, and determined the importance of hiring native language speakers to work at the PIC. The district converted a large art room, which offered a large, open space in the current PIC. The review team visited the PIC, noting the

cleanliness and warmth of the space, as well as the friendliness of the staff. Review team members witnessed two parents being served by the PIC staff.

In addition to two secretaries, the district hired five linguists (or interpreters) to staff the PIC. District leaders stated that several PIC staff members are former paraprofessionals who previously worked in RPS schools who were recommended for PIC staff positions by principals. The PIC's interpreters are fluent speakers of Spanish, Arabic and French. District staff members indicated that Spanish and Arabic are currently the languages with the highest need for translation.

According to focus groups, the PIC's linguists are available to provide translation services across the district's schools. The Paul Revere School community includes families who speak Arabic, Spanish, Albanian, Armenian, Bosnian, Portuguese, Vietnamese, and Turkish. Translation for languages not spoken at the PIC is available from various community contacts as recommended by the PIC staff, such as community members who speak the languages represented at the schools.

The primary function of the PIC staff is to conduct student language assessments, as well as to identify and place ELL students. Students and families are referred to the PIC by school and district staff members. When families arrive to enroll their children, PIC staff members administer the home language survey. If a parent responds that the student speaks a language other than English at home, the PIC staff will conduct the Idea Proficiency Test (IPT) and Language Assessment Scales (LAS) assessments and interpret the results.

According to focus groups, all students who are identified as LEP are placed in their neighborhood school. PIC staff members notify the school's ESL teacher of incoming ELL students; a placement form is sent electronically to the school to inform the staff of each new ELL student's arrival. Additionally, a district leader reported that during the school year, the ELL department sends updated rosters that specify students' MEPA levels and indicate when they arrived in the United States.

The PIC also serves the function of centralizing the translation of school-to-home communication. The superintendent reported that the district tries to simplify translation work by developing a single letter or memo. Once the letter or memorandum is translated by PIC staff, the translated document is provided to schools for dissemination to the district's families. For example, one single letter with information about bullying was developed and distributed.

The reopening of the PIC provided the families of students whose first language is not English a dedicated place and trained personnel to service and provide support for the entire family. Students and families are greeted warmly and treated with professional attention. The PIC's staff members ensure that ELL students are properly identified and placed, that multilingual communication is effectively handled, and that families can navigate the district's schools and available support systems.

## **Recommendations**

**Use student performance data to identify district priorities and measurable performance goals.**

DIP themes are derived from teacher surveys and district director input, and are refined and finalized through conversations among the top district leadership team. Once the district's top leadership establishes the DIP themes, each district director and principal is instructed to develop a district department plan or school improvement plan (SIP) based on those themes.

It is not clear how or whether student performance data are used to develop the district's goals and improvement initiatives. District leaders reported that the DIP themes are based on teacher professional development surveys and on conversations with district directors, rather than on the analysis of student performance data.

The review team recommends that the district:

- Identify specific student performance goals as the principal focus for district improvement initiatives and design DIPs indicating subgroup progress targets and growth targets, ensuring that improvement efforts explicitly target student performance and student subgroup needs. By doing so, the district can identify specific initiatives that are the likely to have the greatest impact on improving the achievement of all of their students.

If the district, for example, identifies gaps in ELL student performance and wants to raise ELL student achievement, performance benchmarks should be set and teacher professional development should provide sustained opportunities to improve sheltered English instruction. Teacher professional development should then be monitored and evaluated against ELL student subgroup performance benchmarks.

**Develop district and school professional development plans to reflect the district's assessments and analysis of student performance and align with the District Improvement Plan.**

There was no evidence in focus groups and district documents to indicate that training provided to teachers is based on student achievement data or the specific needs of student subgroups, such as ELL students. A system to monitor or provide teachers with feedback on their implementation of professional development has not been implemented.

The review team recommends that the district:

- Develop a procedure for designing professional development offerings based on district improvement initiatives and disaggregated student performance and growth data. By aligning professional development to student achievement, efforts to improve classroom instruction will address gaps in student performance.

- Design professional development to provide teachers with sustained and embedded opportunities to learn and master best practices that strategically address student performance gaps and improve student learning and performance.
- Monitor the implementation of the professional development to evaluate the impact on student achievement and growth, and hold schools and teachers accountable for their ongoing professional development plans. A process to monitor implementation of professional development will support the fidelity of implementation of new practices.

**Provide direct ESL instruction time for ELL students on the basis of their English proficiency level and integrate MEPA and MELA-O data in school data discussions.**

At the Paul Revere Elementary School, there is a wide distribution of English proficiency levels. However, all students – no matter their MEPA level – receive approximately 30 to 45 minutes per day of ESL instruction. Currently, the allocation of ESL instructional time is based on staffing availability. Also, although district and school staff members analyze MEPA data to make decisions regarding the reclassification of ELL students at the Paul Revere Elementary School, MEPA and MELA-O data are not used in school data discussions.

The review team recommends that the district:

- Review the placement and schedule for all ELL students in grades K-12 and provide the recommended ESL instructional time for all students, ensuring that services for ELL students are determined by student needs rather than staffing availability.
- Integrate MEPA and MELA-O data in school data discussions, increasing the capacity of school staff to develop interventions that effectively address the distinct academic support needs of ELL students at different levels of English proficiency.

**Continue to emphasize category training for the district’s mainstream teachers.**

District and school staff members reported, and documents corroborated, that all four category trainings are offered, and that participation in category training was voluntary. Focus groups conducted at the Paul Revere Elementary School indicated that the superintendent and principal are strong advocates for category training. District records indicated that more than one-third of staff members at the Paul Revere Elementary School have completed each of categories 1, 2, and 3.

There was no evidence that classroom teachers considered language learning opportunities for ELL students across the four language domains when developing and implementing lessons. However, teaching practices observed by the review team at the Paul Revere Elementary School were viewed as supporting ELL students.

The review team recommends that the district:

- Continue to set the expectation that teachers complete sheltered English instruction (category) training. Monitor the effective implementation of category training by designing

and implementing an observation tool to be used by administrators and school leaders. A process to monitor and provide teachers with feedback on their implementation of sheltered English instruction will hold teachers accountable to incorporating the newly acquired strategies and verify whether teachers need follow-up support.

- Require all school administrators to complete appropriate category training, developing the capacity of school leadership to support and monitor the use of sheltered instructional strategies and the integration of language learning opportunities across classrooms.

## Appendix A: Review Team Members

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The review of the Revere Public Schools was conducted from June 8 - 11, 2010, by the following team of educators – independent consultants to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Team members responsible for each area were:

Donna L. Harlan, Leadership and Governance

Cathleen Kral, Curriculum and Instruction

Sue Jamback, Assessment

Dale Bishop, Human Resources and Professional Development

Gwendolyn Casazza, Student Support

Sue Jamback served as the review team coordinator.

## Appendix B: Review Activities and Site Visit Schedule

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### Review Activities

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

- The review team conducted interviews and focus groups with the following representatives from the Revere Public Schools central office administration:
  - Superintendent
  - Deputy superintendent
  - Assistant superintendent for curriculum, instruction, and assessment
  - ELL and foreign language director
  - Title I/literacy director
  - Special education director
  - Standards-based education director
- The review team visited the following school in Revere Public Schools: Paul Revere Elementary School, (K-5).
  - During the school visit, the review team conducted interviews with school principals, teachers, and parents.
  - The review team conducted 10 classroom visits for different grade levels and subjects across the school. It must be noted that, at the time of the review, staff members at the Paul Revere Elementary School were preparing to move into a new building.
- The review team reviewed the following documents provided by ESE:
  - District profile data
  - District and school data review
  - District or School Accountability Report produced by Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA) or ESE in the past three years
  - Staff contracts
  - Reports on licensure and highly qualified status
  - Long-term enrollment and graduation trends
  - End-of year financial report for the district for 2009
    - District budget
    - List of district's federal and state grants

- The review team reviewed the following documents at the district and school levels:
  - Organization chart
  - District Improvement Plan
  - School Improvement Plan
  - Curriculum guide
  - High school program of studies
  - Calendar of formative and summative assessments
  - Copies of data analyses/reports used in schools
  - Descriptions of student support programs
  - Program evaluations
  - Student and Family Handbooks
  - Faculty Handbook
  - Professional development plan and program/schedule/courses
  - Teacher planning time/meeting schedules
  - Teacher evaluation tool
  - Principal evaluation Survey Monkey
  - Classroom observation tools
  - Job descriptions for central office
  - Procedures and assessments to identify LEP students and assess their level of English proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening
  - Parent Information Center brochure and procedures
  - ELL category training records
  - ELL teacher schedule

## Site Visit Schedule

The following is the schedule for the onsite portion of the review of the Revere Public Schools conducted from June 8 - 11, 2010.

June 8	June 9	June 10	June 11
Orientation meeting with district leaders; interviews with district staff; review of documents	Interviews with district staff; review of documents	School visit to Paul Revere Elementary School; interviews with school leaders; classroom observations; teacher team meetings; teacher and parent focus groups	School visit to Paul Revere Elementary School; interviews with school leaders; classroom observations; teacher team meetings; follow-up interviews; team meeting; closing meeting with district leaders