

Worcester Public Schools Chandler Elementary School School-Level Redesign Plan

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III. School-Level Redesign

School Name: Chandler Elementary	District: Worcester Public Schools
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A. School Level Redesign Overview

Students who attend Chandler Elementary School reside in the most economically disadvantaged and crime-ridden section of the city. When Chandler was designated as a Level IV school, it reinforced the sense of hopelessness felt by residents of that neighborhood.

Initially, the concept of the school redesign did not resonate in a neighborhood where most community members had not graduated from high school. However, district leaders organized informational sessions to engage families and community members in the effort to build a school culture in which everyone is dedicated to high achievement.

Chandler Elementary School embarked on its new journey in the summer of 2010, with the goal of becoming an oasis of hope and opportunity in a rough, inner-city neighborhood. This goal can be accomplished by the forging of strong and meaningful school, family and community partnerships. The creation of the Redesign Team is the initial step in this journey.

1. School-Level Redesign Team

Newly-named principal of Chandler Elementary, June Eressy, took a purposeful approach to building the Redesign Team. The process was opened to all, representing the range of stakeholders in the school community. It was her vision that all who wanted to be included should be. Only in this way would the community at-large feel ownership over, not only the school redesign process, but over the school itself. It followed naturally that these stakeholders would agree to serve as members of the school's Instructional Leadership Team and have remained active members to this day.

Meetings are held on a weekly basis. Data analysis, needs assessment, discussion, and problem solving are discussed in a collaborative forum where all team members have an equal voice in the decision-making process. When consensus is reached on a specific issue, it is presented to the entire faculty for vetting. Implementation of a collaborative redesign process has helped to reshape a school culture that previously was without voice in the decision-making process. Utilization of the shared leadership model in the critical work of school redesign sends the message that collaboration is essential and necessary to the success of the initiative.

A team selection matrix was devised in order to pick the members of the Redesign Team. Criteria used for the selection was: visionary, sees the big picture; skilled practitioner - demonstrated ability to help students and adults learn; knows the instructional core and school design; relationship builder/collaborator/facilitator; skilled communicator; project manager; speaks honestly and shares ideas and makes things happen – knows the system. The use of this matrix allowed the building of a team that provided a balance of skills and perspectives.

In order to ensure all members of the school community had a voice in the redesign process, it was imperative that a wide range of representation of stakeholders serve on the team. This includes community members, parents, and teachers. Teachers who are members of the team include a cross-section of practitioners, grade levels, and subject areas.

Profile of team members:

June Eressy, Principal, Chandler Elementary School, leads the redesign team. She brings with her 25 years of experience as a teacher and administrator in the Worcester Public Schools. Ms. Eressy's service to the district includes her tenure at University Park Campus School (UPCS) one of the country's highest performing urban high schools. As a founding faculty member of UPCS, Ms. Eressy designed the school-wide literacy program, which provided the foundation for the school's success in fostering student achievement for all students. After serving as principal of UPCS and Claremont Academy, Ms. Eressy

was appointed Quadrant Manager at the district level. She holds a Master of Education, with a concentration in English, from Worcester State College. She also holds National Board Certification in Early Adolescent English Language Arts and is a Milken National Educator.

Other members of Chandler's Redesign Team include:

- *Carenza Jackson, Assistant Principal*, began teaching Mathematics in the Worcester Public Schools in 2002. Shortly thereafter, she was appointed as Mathematics Department Chair. This leadership role provided Ms. Jackson with the opportunity to build collaborative teams, identify school-wide instructional practices and construct an aligned, standards-based, math curriculum. As an instructional leader, Ms. Jackson is committed to training teachers to use data to identify individual student needs and differentiate instruction in content, product, and process.
- *Joan Gold, Instructional Coach*, has been a teacher in the Worcester Public Schools for 27 years and has held the positions of first grade teacher, Reading Recovery teacher, Reading First Coach, NCLBIT, Literacy Coach and Instructional Coach. Mrs. Gold has had extensive experience with assessment, diagnosis, intervention, and remediation of children with reading challenges. At Chandler, Mrs. Gold will work with teachers across grade levels on interventions, enrichments, and professional development.
- *Hafsa Dandia, Instructional Coach*, brings with her 13 years of teaching experience across Kindergarten through Grade 6. Her area of expertise is Mathematics. She will work with teachers across grade levels to implement a Mathematics intervention program.
- *Elizabeth Breen, Grade 5 teacher*, holds a Master of Arts in teaching degree from Clark University. Currently in her third year of teaching, Ms. Breen has hosted numerous math demonstration lessons for teachers, coaches, and administrators. She has designed a pilot program for departmentalizing Mathematics in Grade 5.
- *Melissa Capstick, Teacher of Special Needs*, provides inclusion services to students with disabilities. As an inclusion specialist, Ms. Capstick works closely with classroom teachers to ensure they are meeting the needs of this challenging population.
- *Betsy Kelleher, teacher of English as a Second Language*, brings with her 3 years of background as a Sheltered English Immersion teacher. She has also served as a volunteer teacher in Ecuador, with the organization WorldTeach. Additionally, she served as an after school tutor in Harlem for the Say Yes to Education program, while working on her Master's Degree at Columbia University.
- *Joshua Cohen, Grade 2 teacher*, works closely with Special Education and English Language Learner teachers to create a model of group stations utilized throughout the school.
- *Mary Meade-Montaque, Quadrant Manager*, brings both a school and a district perspective. Her expertise is in instructional leadership, in addition to designing new schools. She brings 32 years of educational experience that has crossed all levels from Pre-kindergarten through college. She has served as a high school chemistry teacher, curriculum specialist, college chemistry and experiential education professor, elementary principal and currently is a district administrator. She holds a bachelor's and master's degree in Chemistry and has completed her doctoral coursework in Educational Leadership. Additionally Mary Meade-Montaque is a Milken National Educator.
- *Reverend Dr. Sarai Rivera*, community member, is the Co-Senior Pastor of Christian Community Church and Program Director of the ICC Community Kids Club, a faith-based program located at Chandler Elementary.
- *Iris Martinez, parent representative*, is the mother of three children currently attending Chandler Elementary. She is an active member of the PTO and has been part of the redesign process since its inception.

In analyzing data to show what points were critical to the failure of the school in the past, it was shown that students with disabilities and English Language Learners have been persistently underserved at Chandler. For this reason, the inclusion of teachers with expertise in these areas is critical to the success of our redesign efforts.

2. Baseline data and needs analysis

A variety of data was gathered and analyzed to identify critical areas of concern in student performance and progress at Chandler Elementary. The school team has reviewed the data and this review has informed their decision-making process. The sources include MCAS, as well as data from local assessments such as Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), and the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS).

Performance levels, patterns and achievement gaps were analyzed to assess the current status of the school and to identify important issues to address in the development of a strategic Redesign Plan based on the Conditions for School Effectiveness. A comparison of student performance on MCAS across the grade levels at Chandler Elementary to that of students across the state indicates statistically significant differences between the two populations. While some of this variation can be explained by differences in the demographics (i.e. poverty level of students, Limited English Proficient students), substantial gaps remain that warranted attention. As indicated in Table 1 below, in 2009 – 2010, 98.8 percent of students at Chandler Elementary were low income students, 17.9 percent were special education students, and 57.1 percent were Limited English Proficient. Of Chandler Elementary students in Grades 3 through 6, only 18 percent obtained a score in English Language Arts that was proficient or above in 2010, compared to 68 percent statewide. In Mathematics, just 16 percent of students at Chandler Elementary were proficient or above in Grades 3 through 6, compared to 59 percent statewide.

Table 1: MCAS Results 2010 – Chandler Elementary versus State

Grade	Subject	% Advanced/ Above Proficient		% Proficient		% Needs Improvement		% Warning	
		Chandler	State	Chandler	State	Chandler	State	Chandler	State
3	Reading	0	14	16	49	48	30	36	8
	Mathematics	0	25	12	40	32	24	56	11
4	ELA	0	11	14	43	34	35	52	12
	Mathematics	2	16	11	32	43	41	43	11
5	ELA	0	16	17	47	37	28	46	10
	Mathematics	10	25	10	30	28	28	53	17
6	Science and Technology	0	15	8	38	35	36	58	11
	ELA	0	15	28	54	31	21	41	9
All	Mathematics	3	27	14	32	28	25	55	16
	ELA	0	16	18	52	37	24	45	8
	Mathematics	4	26	12	33	33	27	51	15

Despite the challenging demographic student profile at Chandler Elementary, they hold to the expectation that all students can meet high standards. They come to this conclusion because a review of other schools in district and statewide shows some students in similar demographically comprised schools are succeeding. As indicated in Table 2 below, there are five schools in Worcester that are very similar to Chandler Elementary in terms of demographics, yet the students at these schools are both performing high on MCAS and their rates of growth on MCAS relative to academically similar students statewide exceed that of students at Chandler Elementary. This suggests that it may very well be factors that are controllable by the school that could be changed in order to turn this school around.

Table 2: Comparison of Chandler Elementary to Demographically Similar Schools

<i>School</i>	<i>Grades served</i>	<i>Total enrollment</i>	<i>% of Low Income</i>	<i>% SPED</i>	<i>% LEP</i>	<i>ELA: % Adv/Prof.</i>	<i>Math: % Adv/Prof</i>	<i>ELA SGP</i>	<i>Math SGP</i>
Worcester Canterbury	Pre-K through 6	360	94.7	24.4	45	32	25	58	63
Worcester Chandler Elementary	Pre-K through 6	347	98.8	17.9	57.1	18	16	33.5	49
Worcester Chandler Magnet	Pre-K through 6	375	87.7	16	65.6	27	24	64	65
Worcester Columbus Park	Pre-K through 6	362	90.6	23.5	46.7	59	51	78	81
Worcester Lincoln Street	Pre-K through 6	243	91.8	18.5	44	27	33	43	59
Worcester Union Hill	K through 6	311	97.4	19.9	38.9	21	18	40	54

Lack of Adequate Yearly Progress on MCAS

A review of data used for determining Chandler Elementary School's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for 2010 reveals a failure to meet expectation for both student performance as well as improvement. While the school met expectations for both participation in MCAS (100 percent for English Language Arts (ELA); 99 percent for Mathematics) and student attendance (94.6 percent), Chandler Elementary fell well short of its targets in both ELA (50.9 CPI) and Mathematics (46.2 CPI) in student performance and improvement. When different subgroups (including Limited English Proficient (LEP), special education, low income students, Black/African American students and Hispanic students) are examined and compared to school-wide performance and improvement in the aggregate, it is apparent that all sub-populations within Chandler are also struggling to meet AYP (*See Attachment A: AYP data*).

It is for this reason that the educational interventions described below are not specific to any one group of students within Chandler Elementary but target all students within the school. Where the number of students is sufficient to calculate CPI, not a single subgroup with Chandler Elementary met student performance or improvement expectations in 2010.

Examining school performance over time, while Chandler Elementary made AYP in Mathematics in the aggregate in 2008, it has failed to do so in both 2009 and 2010. Over the same 3 year period, the school did not make AYP at all in ELA.

Student Growth on MCAS

An examination of student growth provides an indication of the rate at which students in different grade levels within Chandler Elementary are improving over time relative to an academic peer group across Massachusetts. While Grade 4 and 5 students at Chandler Elementary are well below the median SGP, the 2010 performance of grade 6 student in mathematics is perhaps showing some signs of recent improvement efforts. The SGP for Grade 6 students was 56.45 in 2010, indicating that Grade 6 students at Chandler are growing at faster rates than academically similar students across the Commonwealth.

Table 3: Chandler Elementary MCAS – An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Student Growth Percentiles (SGP) by Grade Level: 2010

<i>Grade</i>		<i>ELA</i>	<i>Math</i>
04	Mean	33.36	45.40
	N	47	47
05	Mean	37.26	36.09
	N	42	43
06	Mean	45.44	56.45
	N	32	33
Total	Mean	37.91	45.11
	N	121	123

Examined over time, the median SGP in ELA for Chandler Elementary decreased from 2009 to 2010 from a SGP of 41 to 33.5.

Student Performance on MCAS subtopics in state standards

The analysis of MCAS data also included an examination of trends over time in student performance on items within different subtopics in state standards (*See Attachment B: Student Performance on MCAS, subcategories trend*). The data revealed significant differences between the percent of possible points attained by Chandler Elementary students in *Reading and Literature* on the ELA MCAS across grade levels as indicated in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Difference between the Percent of Possible Points Attained in Reading and Literature MCAS Items between Chandler Elementary and State by Grade Level

<i>Grade Level</i>	<i>Gap with State</i>
Grade 3	-23
Grade 4	-22
Grade 5	-21
Grade 6	-23

Student Performance on Local Assessments

Analyses of locally-based assessments such as DIBELS (Kindergarten through Grade 1), DRA (Kindergarten through Grade 3), and MAP Kindergarten through Grade 6) also indicate substantial gaps in the performance of students at Chandler Elementary relative to their peers in other district schools. As indicated in Table 4 below, only a small percentage of students are meeting the beginning of year DIBELS benchmark at Chandler. While Kindergarten students are progressing through the school year, Grade 1 students are not. In fact, for the past three years, a lack of student growth is evident.

Table 5: Percent of Students at Chandler Elementary Reaching Benchmark on DIBELS

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Beginning of Year</i>	<i>Middle of Year</i>	<i>End of Year</i>
K	07-08	12	36	69
	08-09	14	49	81
	09-10	19	52	73
1	07-08	48	34	36
	08-09	60	41	49
	09-10	64	85	73

On the DRA, students at Chandler Elementary in Grades 1 through 3 are also meeting district benchmarks at lower rates than their peers in other Worcester schools (see Table 6). Although the performance of Grade 2 students approaches that of Grade 2 students in the district, the rate at which Grade 1 and Grade 3 students are meeting the DRA benchmark is significantly lower with a 17 percent gap at Grade 1 and a 29 percent gap at Grade 3.

Table 6: Percent of students meeting benchmark on the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) by grade - Chandler Elementary vs. District

Grade	Number of Students	School - % Meeting DRA Benchmark	District - % Meeting DRA Benchmark
1	51	43	60
2	54	52	54
3	37	30	61

An examination of student performance on the MAP also provides an opportunity to look at the performance of students at Chandler Elementary in fine-grained ways to inform improvement planning and to develop hypotheses for exploring the causal links between educational strategies and interventions and student outcomes. For example, Table 7 below contains school level data on the percent of students meeting MAP growth targets (fall to spring administrations) by grade level from 2006 through 2007 to 2009 through 2010. The data here suggests that Chandler Elementary may be making progress in closing the gap with overall district performance in Mathematics but less so, or not at all, in Reading. This suggests targeted intervention in reading may be a prudent course of action.

Table 7: Percent of Students Meeting MAP Growth Targets: Fall to Spring

MATHEMATICS	Grade	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
District	2	43.8%	48.9%	43.4%	49.7%
	3	55.3%	59.0%	59.2%	63.4%
	4	58.7%	66.6%	63.6%	64.2%
	5	56.1%	64.5%	61.0%	62.1%
	6	59.3%	69.4%	64.9%	65.0%
	Chandler Elementary	2	26.3%	50.0%	19.4%
3		29.3%	60.6%	45.8%	65.4%
4		42.3%	58.3%	45.0%	53.3%
5		40.9%	56.5%	46.4%	53.7%
6		38.1%	63.2%	45.2%	58.6%

Table 7 (continued)

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	Grade	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
DISTRICT	2	39.7%	49.0%	45.9%	49.9%
	3	47.2%	53.8%	50.4%	50.2%
	4	46.6%	50.3%	52.7%	53.2%
	5	53.1%	51.1%	52.3%	53.6%
	6	47.0%	52.6%	54.1%	51.8%
Chandler Elementary	2	15.4%	48.7%	38.7%	24.2%
	3	23.1%	54.5%	37.5%	40.0%
	4	40.7%	39.4%	42.5%	48.9%
	5	33.3%	34.8%	46.4%	45.0%
	6	63.6%	40.0%	54.8%	37.9%

As a result of the data analysis, we have identified four priorities that are essential to incorporate into the redesign:

- Implement a targeted school-wide reading program
- Implement targeted interventions, supports and extensions
- Increase professional development to impact student achievement
- Engage families and community members as stakeholders

3. Redesign Model

Worcester Public Schools evaluated each of the four federal intervention models required for school redesign for its potential to support rapid, sustained school performance improvement. Student performance data and the context of the school contributed to the decision to implement the Transformation model.

The Transformation model is most appropriate for Chandler Elementary School due to the specific needs of students and specific assets of the school, its principal and staff. The district’s past successes in transforming schools to produce rapid, sustained improvement in student performance can be seen in results of University Park Campus School (UPCS) and the eight schools recognized as Commendation Schools in 2010 by Governor Patrick. June Eressy provided the leadership to transform University Park Campus School. The needs of Chandler Elementary School mirror those seen in University Park Campus School. She and the staff removed barriers due to poverty, delivered high quality, culturally competent instruction, and met the diverse needs of English language learners. District and school data demonstrate the power of leadership and instructional excellence in mediating persistent low student achievement and extinguishing the achievement gap.

The Worcester School Committee voted on April 12, 2010 to adopt the Transformation model and the required components after discussion and debate during public meetings in March and April 2010. The district administration began implementation of the four required components of the Transformation Model at Chandler Elementary School in the spring of 2010.

Worcester Public Schools continues to develop and increase teacher and school leader effectiveness. The superintendent replaced the principal at Chandler Elementary School with Ms. June Eressy. The district continues to use a rigorous, transparent, and equitable evaluation system for teachers and principals. The October 2010 results of the Joint Resolution Committee granted contractual

flexibility requiring teachers in Level IV schools to receive a full summative evaluation annually. The teacher evaluation process ensures high quality educator performance. The principal uses the evaluation system to identify and remove those who, after ample opportunities have been provided for them to improve their professional practice, have not done so. Through participation with the state's Race to the Top application, Worcester Public Schools will be making improvements to its evaluation system and implementing this system in all schools. Improvements will include the use of data on student growth as a significant factor as well as other factors such as multiple observation-based assessments of performance and ongoing collections of professional practice reflective of student achievement. Teachers and principals will be involved with the improvement and implementation processes.

In October 2010, results from the Joint Resolution Committee granted the school district contractual flexibilities pertinent to improving student performance at its Level IV schools. Each underperforming school may receive an aggregate award based upon students' performance measured by the Composite Performance Index established by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. These awards may be for school use only. This strategy is specifically designed as an incentive to attract and retain staff with skills necessary to meet the needs of the students in a transformation school.

During the pre-implementation phase, summer 2010, a rigorous professional development program was provided for the Chandler Elementary School staff. The principal and teaching staff developed improved capacity in literacy practices, positive behavior intervention strategies (PBIS), and cultural competency. The October 2010 results of the Joint Resolution Committee granted contractual flexibility allowing the principal to schedule up to ten days of professional development during the month of August. Teachers may be required to participate in professional development up to and including ninety additional hours.

Two new instructional coaching positions were implemented at the start of the 2010 – 2011 academic year at Chandler Elementary School. These two positions provide the staff with ongoing, high-quality, job-embedded professional development that is aligned with the school's comprehensive instructional program and designed with school staff to ensure they are equipped to facilitate effective teaching and learning and have the capacity to successfully implement school reform strategies.

The October 2010 results of the Joint Resolution Committee granted contractual flexibility that supports the improved capacity of teachers to address the needs of students with special needs and the needs of English language learners. Teachers at underperforming schools may be requested to be licensed in Special Education or complete 40 hours of special education training / English as a Second Language (ESL) or complete all SEI category training by June 30, 2012 to enhance teacher effectiveness.

Worcester Public Schools is implementing comprehensive instructional reform strategies at Chandler Elementary School. Student data and research guide decisions for selecting instructional tools. For example, Fast ForWord®, an adaptive, technology based tool, has been integrated into the school's repertoire of instructional tools to support literacy development of students, particularly English Language Learners. Five studies of Fast ForWord met the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) evidence standards. Fast ForWord provides each student with individualized support and real-time data regarding student progress and intervention strategies to teachers. Data generated from Fast ForWord informs instruction and supports teacher effectiveness. For example, Fast ForWord generates content specific vocabulary lists tailored to the individual needs of students to support the development of academic vocabulary and help teachers provide every student with comprehensible input. Literacy is a critical component of all content areas, as seen in the Common Core Standards.

Chandler Elementary School is providing all students with increased learning time and has created a community-oriented school. Worcester Public Schools has implemented a schedule that increases learning time by 90 minutes each day. The additional learning opportunities allow all students to experience a comprehensive academic core that includes Reading / Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social studies, and the Arts. Moreover, all students have access to enrichment activities that contribute to a well-rounded education. The added time supports the delivery of supplemental and intervention level services as well. Additionally, Supplemental Educational Services (SES) are provided on Saturdays.

The October 2010 results of the Joint Resolution Committee granted contractual flexibilities supporting the implementation of common planning time at Chandler Elementary School. Teachers engage in thirty minutes of common planning time each day. Teachers collaborate, plan, and engage in professional development within and across grades and subjects.

The district's comprehensive accountability system has four strategic goals for district and school improvement. One of these areas is focused on fostering high levels of family and community engagement, commitment and partnership. The Chandler School Accountability Plan (*See Appendix B: Chandler – Chandler School Accountability Plan*) implements and monitors actions relative to parent participation and two-way communication. The October 2010 results of the Joint Resolution Committee granted contractual flexibility requiring all teachers to engage in home / school communication. Additionally, Chandler Elementary School hosts quarterly progress monitoring meetings for parents and community members. These meetings help to keep the families and public informed about new developments and improvements at the school.

The principal's operational flexibility has been augmented by the October 2010 results of the Joint Resolution Committee, as cited above. The district continues to pursue additional, appropriate levels of principal autonomy to implement fully a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student achievement outcomes.

Worcester Public Schools ensures the school receives ongoing, intensive technical assistance and related support from district resources the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and Focus On Results, the district's transformational support provider. One of the district's two quadrant managers is assigned specifically to provide support to the district's two Level IV schools. Principals have direct access to the Superintendent and her executive leadership team for immediate support. This support ranges across all district systems including curriculum and instruction, facilities and operations, research and accountability, and human resources. The district pursues and aligns resources and creates and adjusts policies and practices to support the successful transformation of Level IV schools. The state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education provides regular consultancy via in-person meetings, webinars, conference calls, and professional development conferences. State funding streams targeting the needs of Level IV schools help to develop capacity for resources. Focus On Results delivers professional development opportunities for leadership and instructional improvement.

The theory of change supporting successful transformation of the district generally, and its two Level IV schools particularly, relies upon changing systems rather than parts, depends upon multi-dimensional thinking and teamwork rather than linear thinking and accomplished individuals, and is grounded in inclusive processes for decision-making that span all stakeholders. Practices at the school, to this point, have been contrasting to the district's theory of change.

In the past, great attention was given to the improvement of isolated components across the domains of instruction, operations, and human resources. A deficit model was the foundation for this approach. Great attention was paid to the pursuit of a silver bullet to fix that which was identified as the problem. The contemporary approach is to consider the complexity and inter-related nature of district and school improvement. Data-informed decisions lead to the improvement of systems. Sense-making tools are useful for breaking barriers posed by complex problems. Additionally, partnerships and teamwork that cross traditional boundaries are useful to multiplying the district's capacity to support school transformation. The district's theory of change requires new thinking and action. The voice of all stakeholders, most importantly that of students, is valued in the district's theory of change. Decisions are best made by those who are closest to the issue under consideration for improvement. This powerful theory of change has begun to demonstrate a shift in student performance, the first in eight years. The district is on track for transforming practice and student performance at its Level IV schools.

4. Stakeholder support

The Superintendent assured the district met federal and state requirements for stakeholder engagement, the formulation of stakeholder recommendations and the establishment of the

Superintendent's Turnaround Plan for Chandler Elementary School by implementing the State Turnaround Plan Timeline. (*See Appendix B: Chandler – Turnaround Timeline*)

A Local Stakeholder's Group was organized to represent constituencies from the school. The group was composed of not more than 13 individuals, as prescribed by state guidelines. Among those areas designated are representatives from: the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education; School Committee; teachers union leadership; school administration; school teaching staff; parents; social services; workforce development agencies; Department of Higher Education or Early Childhood Education; and community stakeholders. This group convened for a series of six four-hour meetings for the purpose of using data and the Essential Conditions to frame recommendations to fuel the Superintendent's Turnaround Plan.

Meetings were conducted within established team norms. Data was used to inform decision-making. The team relied upon consensus to guide the group decisions and to support the recommendations. Meeting evaluations were conducted at the conclusion of each meeting to support participant satisfaction and high levels of productivity throughout the process. The district's Chief Academic Officer, Dr. Jeffrey Mulqueen, facilitated each meeting. The team used a tool for evaluation for the Local Stakeholder's Group. Respondents remained anonymous so they would feel free to express their deepest concerns. This evaluation helped tremendously to inform the process and helped to facilitate intensive discussion.

Each stakeholder was responsible for two-way communication with his or her constituents. A standing item on each meeting agenda ensured that stakeholder feedback was discussed and used in the process leading to recommendations. Additional feedback was requested from stakeholders at the conclusion of the meeting schedules.

The Worcester Educational Collaborative publicized the process and promoted stakeholder feedback. (*See Appendix B: Chandler – Community Meetings*) Community meetings involving teachers, parents and the broader community were conducted at the school to convey the results of the local stakeholder group meetings and to solicit additional feedback (*See Appendix B: Chandler – Superintendent's Memo*). The District's website was used to publish information regarding the recommendations compiled by the Local Stakeholder's Group and to gather feedback. Superintendent Boone, Chief Academic Officer Dr. Mulqueen and Principal June Eressy of Chandler Elementary School integrated feedback into the Superintendent's Turnaround Plan. Quarterly updates and progress monitoring meetings are under way. These were held in December of 2010, and will be held in February, April and June of 2011.

These meetings take place at the school. They are meant to support meaningful engagement of stakeholders in the implementation of changes and ongoing involvement in two-way communication. Meetings agendas and the recommendations of each Local Stakeholder's Group provide evidence of the meeting content (*See Appendix B: Chandler – Meeting agenda*).

The Teacher's Union voted to support the District's Race to the Top application. In signing the Memorandum of Understanding the Teachers Union has agreed to support the federal turnaround models, including staffing and teacher evaluation requirements for Level IV schools.

The involvement of the Teachers' Union in the district's Innovation Schools process also serves as evidence of the support for conditions relevant to the Transformation Model. Innovation Schools grant wide-ranging autonomy regarding policies, staffing, curriculum, budget expenditures, schedule and calendar and professional development. Innovation Schools are on schedule for implementation in the Fall of 2011.

The School Committee engaged the Teachers' Union in negotiation and subsequently relied upon the Joint Resolution Committee process to remove contractual impediments to school improvements. The Joint Resolution Committee process was initiated by the Superintendent on July 1, 2010. The results of the Joint Resolution Committee have provided additional supports to ensure a full and effective implementation of the Transformation Model and the support of staff and parents in the school to be served.

The Superintendent’s Turnaround Plan for Chandler Elementary School incorporates all the recommendations from the Local Stakeholder’s Group (*See Appendix B: Chandler – Local stakeholders*).

B. Critical Issues, Key Priorities, Key Strategies and their Relationship to Conditions for School Effectiveness

Overview

As Chandler Elementary School’s data is examined and the brutal facts confronted about its lack of achievement, the critical issues in the district must also be examined. The ability to turn around the low student achievement at Chandler Elementary School is contingent on how successful both the school and the district are in addressing their critical issues. Improving teaching and learning is everyone’s work.

The Worcester Public School district and Chandler Elementary school must align resources and supports to improve student learning. The belief that “all students can achieve high standards, given significant time and support” is a non-negotiable belief that all staff members and educational stakeholders must adopt (Fullan, Hill & Crevola, 2006, p. 12).

Building a school culture that is student focused and supports teaching and learning is an intentional process. It should be the touchstone of the organization the how of the organization, how individuals are inspired, and how they approach their work (Elbot & Fulton, 2008). Quite simply, this is the vision of Chandler Elementary for the future.

The following chart outlines the district and school critical issues, key priorities and key strategies linkages.

District & School Critical Issues, Key Priorities and Key Strategies Linkages

District’s Critical Issues	District’s Key Priorities	District’s Key Strategies	Chandler’s Critical Issues	Chandler’s Key Priorities	Chandler’s Key Strategies	Essential Conditions
Lack of a systematic approach to human capital development throughout the system	Develop the systems capacity for leadership and instruction	Hire, develop and retain effective instructional leaders Implement structural shift Develop a system of supports	Lack of leadership and teacher capacity to positively impact student learning	Develop leadership and teacher capacity to support and deliver High Quality Teaching and learning	Hire, develop and retain effective instructional leaders Coaching Instructional Leadership Team Focus on Results Support Quadrant leadership support	1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 11
Lack of a systematic, standardized approach to core, supplemental, and intensive	Provide all students with access to high quality standards based instruction	Implement three tiered instructional model with fidelity	Low percentage of students performing at grade level in English Language Arts and Mathematics	Implement a 3-tiered approach to instruction to address academic and socio-emotional issues	Guided Reading Interactive read-alouds Writing	2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 11

instruction					Adaptive technology	
Lack of systematic supervision and evaluation	Link adult efficacy to student results	Develop and implement a data informed evaluation system for teachers and administrators	Low student Growth percentages in English Language Arts and Mathematics	Develop a balanced assessment system to measure student and adult development	Implement student assessment system that utilizes WPS HQT&L framework to guide teacher supervision and evaluation	4, 5, 7
Lack of partnerships to accelerate and sustain district improvement	Align partners to district improvement work	Distribute leadership to partners through education and engagement	Lack of partnerships to accelerate and sustain school improvement	Develop coherent focused collaborations between home, school and community to receive outstanding results for all	Build Chandler Elementary to be a community hub of student and family supports Use the City of Worcester as Chandler Elementary School's extended campus	7, 9, 10

Research indicates that students' academic achievement is greater when students' academic learning time increases (Silva, 2007, *On the Clock: Rethinking the ways Schools us Time*). In addition, the national conversation on the power of an expanded school day has increased in recent years as evidenced by schools that have incorporated increased learning opportunities. Chandler was originally one of the schools involved in this state's pilot that was at the time called "Expanded Learning Time." As the state initiative has learned, that "expanded time" will not in itself accelerate student learning unless the "gift of time" is effectively **targeted** to the overall improvement effort; based on those lessons Chandler's redesign team has re-engineered how they will use this time to more effectively support the overall school turnaround effort. According to the research from the National Center on Time and Learning the expanded time should be linked to three key areas:

Additional time for Core Academics

The school uses additional time in order to accelerate learning in **core academic** subjects by making meaningful improvements to the quality of instruction in support of school-wide achievement goals.

Additional time for Enrichment

The school uses additional time (either in core and/or specialty classes) to offer **enrichment** opportunities that connect to state standards, build student skills and interests, and deepen student engagement in school/learning in support of school-wide achievement goals.

Additional time for Teacher Leadership and Collaboration

The school uses additional time to build a professional culture of **teacher leadership and collaboration** (e.g., designated collaborative planning time, on-site targeted professional development) focused on strengthening instructional practice and meeting school-wide achievement goals.

In order for time to be effectively leveraged as a school improvement strategy, the Chandler Elementary leaders and Instructional Leadership Team examined the instructional schedule within and beyond the school day. They have developed a schedule that protects **core instruction** by providing an uninterrupted block of instructional time for literacy and math and allows significant instructional time for science, social studies and enrichments. Teachers are building efficient, consistent procedures for transitions within the classroom and throughout the school day to maximize time-on-learning. Additionally, through the use of data, targeted interventions are being implemented to provide the “**core and MORE**” for students during the expanded time. Instruction during the expanded school day and Saturday school learning opportunities are directly aligned with students’ intervention plans to support accelerated learning.

Based on the work of the National Center on Time and Learning and the research the Chandler team has done as to ‘what works’ in other schools in both Massachusetts and nationally, the characteristics of good work for them outlines how they plan to ensure the effective use of increased time:

They must be:

- Highly focused in their use of time
- Relentless in their use of data to improve core instruction
- Constantly identifying struggling students and match them with instructional supports (double or triple dosing) based on data
- Using clear structures and protocols for additional teacher collaboration time
- Engaging all faculty in setting and reaching school-wide achievement goals
- Engage students in a small number of high-quality well-planned enrichment electives tied to the schools

They must avoid:

- Using the additional time to try too many new initiatives and partnerships
- Assuming they know what “the data” says and don’t take time to zero-in on student needs
- Adding time for academics without making sure the current time is as strong as it can be
- Using a “one size fits all” approach rather than targeted and data-oriented instructional supports
- Not providing enough guidance and structure for teacher collaboration time
- Offering too many enrichment activities that don’t connect to the instructional focus

The staff has begun to address some of the deficits in their school with activities that are taking place. Chandler Elementary School students attend after-school programming five days per week for 90 minutes of instruction and also receive three hours of instruction in Saturday School focused on English Language Arts and Mathematics interventions, and are supported with adaptive technology to accelerate learning. Intervention for students includes sessions in Fast ForWord and Headsprout; targeted Mathematics remediation and additional opportunities for reading and writing. In addition students participate in a variety of enrichment programs to enhance their learning in the core areas. Enrichment opportunities include beginning Spanish, Science Exploration, Art, Drama, and Community Awareness.

Leadership and Governance

Effective school leadership is a key lever in achieving and sustaining high student performance. Reeves (2009) states that “of all the variables that influence student achievement, the two that have the most profound influence are teacher quality and leadership quality” (p.67). Schools that are successful in sustaining high student achievement have created school cultures where there is shared inquiry and decision-making. Teachers collaborate with each other and with administrators through coaching, reflection, collegial investigation, and study teams to enhance teaching and learning and solve instructional problems (Blasé & Blasé, 1998). To this end, the Worcester Public Schools is committed to ensuring that each school is led by a collaborative, data driven, instructional leadership team that includes a principal, assistant principal, coach, and teacher leaders.

The Instructional Leadership Team’s (ILT) primary role is to lead the improvement of teaching and learning. The ILT uses data to make decisions about the school’s instructional program and spearheads and monitors the implementation of the schools key priorities and strategies.

Superintendent Boone recruited and appointed an experienced principal, June Eressy, to become the principal of the school. (*See Appendix B: Chandler – Resume*) Ms. Eressy was given autonomy to select her leadership team. Katzenbach & Smith (2003) define a team as “a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable” (p.45). Ms. Eressy selected a team of individuals whom she felt:

- demonstrated leadership and interpersonal abilities,
- possessed deep content and pedagogical knowledge and skills,
- were committed to high achievement for all students, and
- had the ability to problem solve with others

In addition to hiring her leadership team, Mrs. Eressy personally interviewed all prospective faculty members and contacted references for all potential job candidates. Current faculty at the school who wished to continue employment there were required to attend an informational meeting where Ms. Eressy shared her vision for the school and outlined specific expectations she had of all faculty members. If they were still interested in committing to Chandler Elementary School following this meeting, Ms. Eressy interviewed them individually. During the interview process interviewees were asked specific questions to determine:

- their commitment to generating high achievement for all students,
- their effectiveness in enabling students to achieve high levels of academic growth
- their content and pedagogical knowledge
- their ability to build strong relationships with students, families, and the community and
- their ability to work collaboratively with colleagues to foster a positive learning culture

The assistant principal and non-teaching teacher-leaders are hired annually at the discretion of Mrs. Eressy. Teaching teacher-leaders may be hired to fill vacancies thereby expanding her autonomy. The teaching teacher-leader’s work year has been expanded from 183 to 210 days.

The principal currently has complete hiring autonomy with her leadership team. It is the commitment of all district leaders to pursue means by which the principal will have complete hiring authority with all faculty. To this end the Worcester Public Schools will propose full principal hiring autonomy through amendments to the Turnaround Plan, using the Joint Resolution Committee. If the district is unsuccessful through the Joint Resolution Committee process it will employ a second option, converting all Level IV

teachers to teacher-leaders. (The 2010 results of the Joint Resolution Agreement grant the principal hiring authority over teacher-leaders)

Financial incentives include approximately 450 additional work hours for teachers at \$30 per hour. The assistant principal and non-teaching Teacher-Leaders also work an additional 27 days, earning a stipend of \$6,142.50 and \$5,625 respectively.

It is the expectation of the district that teachers become more qualified than their peers by receiving approximately 90 hours of targeted professional development per year. Additionally, Level IV school teachers will benefit from daily common planning, during which they will discuss best practices and strengthen their individual teaching practices.

Selected Level IV educators will have the opportunity to work flexible, staggered schedules, as necessary, to support student achievement and facilitate parental and community involvement. Additionally, assistant principal leaders and non-teaching Teacher-leaders have the flexibility to determine when it is most beneficial to work the additional 27 days, in consultation with Mrs. Eressy.

Within the overall district's budget limitations, the school principal, in consultation with the site council, is provided full budget autonomy regarding the allocation of staff and all non-staff financial resources provided to the school through the budget process. This autonomy includes the allocation of teachers across grade levels, the manner in which classroom teachers are utilized within the school, and the full authority regarding the instructional supply and material budget provided to the school. The school's allocation of staff and non-staff resources are based on the overall district budget status, and differentiation of the allocation may vary by individual school based upon special populations served, programs offered or other needs of the school. In this case, the school is provided additional local, state and federal resources as described below. Details on this are provided in the Financial and Asset Management section located on page 25.

School Level

At the school, the concepts of leadership and governance extend into all areas; Chandler's Instructional Leadership Team is a study in shared leadership. The team meets on a weekly basis in order to plan initiatives, discuss strategies, and serve as a sounding board for the concerns of the greater school community. In order to ensure that all team members have an equal voice at the table, there is no assigned chairperson of the ILT. Instead, that position rotates on a weekly basis which gives each team member the opportunity to lead the work. In addition, meetings are open to one guest member a week, in order to provide a forum for faculty to pose questions and address concerns. The instructional coaches are key members of the Chandler ILT. They organize classroom visits so that teachers can share best practices; facilitate debriefings following observations; and publish a newsletter. The Chandler model for the ILT helps to create a professional learning community of highly reflective teachers.

Leadership and governance as a team undertaking

Behind every successful school there is a great leader. Good leaders become *great leaders* when they commit to becoming lifelong learners. To that end, Mary Meade-Montague, the Quadrant Manager and Focus on Results staff work together as partners to support Chandler in their improvement work. The team is committed to providing rich and rigorous coaching support to the leaders at Chandler Elementary School.

What they have learned is that the best learning is accomplished when coaching is connected to:

- the school's improvement work aligned to *high quality teaching and learning*
- the strengths and challenges of the *current leadership*
- what the data says are the *urgent needs* of the school
- prior coaching sessions
- things within our locus of control

They have also learned that school leaders are on the fast track, often leaving them without the time to see things in a *connected manner* and *from a balcony's view*. Oftentimes, and in particular at Chandler Elementary the leaders are running on all engines and with an overwhelming sense of urgency to “do it all now”. The leaders are beginning to change their approach in response to the leadership provided by Focus on Results (FOR) and the Quadrant Manager. The FOR transformational partners and the district's Quadrant Manager have partnered, to provide systematic and strategic support to the leaders of Chandler Elementary school.

Unlike many coaching situations, they have made a commitment to *align their coaching support*, offering the school laser-like support that will keep the work moving at a rigorous, yet reasonable, pace. As opposed to offering separate support with separate agendas, they have decided that the best coaching will come if they work in collaboration. This will ensure the supports offered will be *connected and continuous*. The protocol they find to be most helpful to the school leadership team is as follows:

- √ Step One: On-site coaching visit to school by FOR staff, Quadrant Manager or both. This visit includes executive coaching and technical support around the improvement work at Chandler Elementary. The coaching support is offered to the building principal, instructional coaches, and, at times, the Instructional Leadership Team.
- √ Step Two: The school leadership works in collaboration with FOR and/or Quadrant Managers to set measurable next step action plans.
- √ Step Three: Follow up support is offered to the school to ensure that the action items are being executed as outlined.
- √ Step Four: FOR staff and Quadrant Managers meet to discuss current realities of the school including *strengths and challenges*. These rich discussions enable them to create an agenda for their next cycle of coaching.
- √ Step Five: Cycle continues as they work in collaboration to return to **Step One** and move forward.

In addition to coaching support and technical assistance, the FOR staff and Quadrant Managers help school leaders to *access resources* that will help the leaders of Chandler Elementary to lead the improvement work at the school. Such resources may include programmatic resources, human/fiscal resources, research, and exemplary models. They know that without the necessary resources, leaders can only do so much to ensure that their *teachers are able to teach* and their *students are able to learn*.

Educational research validates the role of leadership in turning around schools. Low performing schools require effective leaders who can set a direction, develop people, redesign the organization, and can manage the instructional program in order for schools that have to turn around and sustain positive impact on student achievement (Leithwood & Strauss, 2009). Worcester Public Schools is committed to accelerating student achievement in all of its schools. For this improvement to take place strong principal leadership and strong instructional improvement needs to occur (Camburn, Rowan & Taylor, 2003). With the support of Focus on Results staff, district leadership has begun to align resources and focus their efforts on improving student achievement. Prior to this time there was no alignment across central office departments and little targeted district support to schools.

To further the development of its leaders, Worcester Public Schools, with the support of its' FOR partner, over the last two years, has developed a variety of professional development opportunities for leaders to enhance their skills. These include NISL (National Institute for School Leadership) training, Principal Leadership Accountability Network (PLAN) meetings, monthly Principals' meetings, instructional leadership meetings, school learning visits, and monthly Coaches Meetings.

In the spring of 2010, 60 district and school leaders completed a two-year leadership development program through NISL. NISL offered high-quality, research-based professional development that was designed to give individuals the critical knowledge and skills they need to be instructional leaders and

improve student achievement in their schools. The cohort-based training enabled WPS leaders to learn from each other, share strategies, and build common approaches to address the challenges they face.

PLAN meetings provide an opportunity for principals to engage in professional learning and collegial support to enhance effective leadership focused on school and district improvement. Braun and Carlson (2008) affirm that a network of colleagues with varied experience provides a system of support not only for veteran leaders but also it provides the support that new leaders need to grow. This kind of network channel provides principals the opportunity to discuss the district's focus and share strategies of best practices to support the focus. Principals are assigned to particular groups and have one day of uninterrupted time to meet monthly.

Monthly Principals' meetings convened by the district provide a forum for principals and the district's educational leadership team members to build expertise and align practices across the district.

Instructional leadership meetings provide a monthly opportunity for school-level instructional leadership team members from all of the district schools to participate together in professional learning to strengthen core instruction. Meetings are usually structured by school level with opportunities during the year for vertical teaming.

The Worcester Public Schools organizes school learning visits four times a year as an opportunity for Instructional Leadership Teams – ILT – to visit another school to learn about their school improvement journey. ILT members from the school visited share their successes, challenges, and next steps in accomplishing the district's leadership expectations in a way that can help all teams reflect on the work back at their own schools. During the school learning visit school teams complete a walk through in order to observe their colleagues best practices.

Focused Instructional Coaches meet as a group monthly. These meetings are facilitated by our FOR partners, the Quadrant Managers, and the Director of Supplemental Support. The focus of these meetings is to build the coaches' expertise in the delivery of the district's tiered coaching model and to share best practices.

Human Resources

Teacher Development

Beginning in the Spring of 2009, the District Leadership Team recognized there was a missing link to the improvement work in Worcester Public Schools. While there were coaches in most buildings, there was not a plan linked to their role in the improvement work. Beginning in the Fall of 2009, coaches began to receive rigorous, ongoing training and technical support that helped them to better define their important role of ensuring all teachers had the necessary tools and supports they needed to be successful in the classroom.

In Worcester Public Schools, coaches are committed to a *Tiered Approach* for delivery of services. As the case is with students, teachers need a solid foundation on which to build their practice. To that end, the coaches, principals and the district leadership team have committed to providing all faculty members the opportunity to engage in professional development linked to their school-wide focus and evidence-based practices. This occurs at Tier One and comes through the execution of a targeted professional development plan. Tier One support from coaches can come in many forms (facilitation of professional development, participation on the school's Instructional Leadership Team, facilitation of faculty meetings, book studies, newsletters, etc.). Coaches in WPS realize this approach should result in at least 80 percent of all faculty members having the necessary tools to support the students they serve.

Equally as important is the commitment of the WPS coaches to ensuring that Tier Two and Tier Three supports are in place for the teachers who may need the "and more." The theory behind Tier Two is that some groups of teachers may need "and more" beyond "the core." This type of support is best seen as coaches facilitate grade level/department conversations, targeted book studies, a grade level/department blitz, etc. This type of support must be directly linked to Tier One.

Tier Three coaching is specific, laser-like and unique to the individual who needs much more. This type of coaching is set in motion by the recommendation of the principal who, through learning

visits, observations, and data analysis, determines that the needs of the teacher are prohibiting the individual from delivering on the promise of high quality teaching and learning opportunities.

In addition to coaches, a teacher-leader will be hired for Chandler Elementary School. A teacher-leader is one who will work with teachers as a mentor/partner in helping him or her to reach excellence within in the practice of teaching. The teacher-leader will walk side-by-side with the teacher and provide examples and modeling activities to help the teacher reach his or her fullest potential.

Implementing the Redesign Plan and building the school culture at the school requires great skill and dedication from teachers. The teachers must have deep knowledge and passion for their subject matter, an unflinching belief that all students can be successful, and the willingness to do whatever it takes to get them there.

In the summer of 2010 the newly formed faculty of Chandler Elementary School began their improvement journey together by participating in a Summer Institute targeted to address key priorities identified through careful analysis of the school's data. The Summer Institute focused on two areas of need: academic performance and school culture. In order to build teacher capacity, intensive training in Guided Reading conducted by the Fountas Group of Lesley University, focused on the need for teachers to differentiate their instruction to appropriately challenge and engage all students within a common classroom. It also highlighted the importance of adapting activities to address the specific strengths, weaknesses, and learning styles of each student. As an extension of this strategy, teachers are developing individualized learning plans for every student in order to effectively monitor their progress and continuously adjust their instruction based on student need.

While the careful design of the academic program is critical, it is not the sole driver of student success. It is necessary to build a school culture where faculty, students, families, and community members work together to solve problems and improve results. Efficacy training, provided by the Jeff Howard Group of Harvard University, was provided to faculty and staff in order to raise awareness and foster cultural competency. Training in the Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) introduced a clear system of behavioral expectations that has already become embedded at Chandler Elementary School.

In order to sustain these initiatives, extensive, targeted, and creative professional development must be provided on an ongoing basis. To that end, the practices and programs listed below have been provided to Chandler Faculty.

- Hiring of two instructional coaches
- Daily common planning time of 30 minutes
- Faculty development of school-wide instructional focus
- Faculty development of best instructional practices
- Faculty development of core values
- Implementation of Instructional Leadership Team
- On-site Guided Reading Training
- Training in Interactive Read-Alouds
- Continuation of PBIS Training
- Being A Writer Training
- Completion of school-wide writing prompt
- Development of common writing rubric
- Development of grade level assessments in ELA and Math
- Instructional Rounds
- Realignment of Mathematics curriculum to reflect core standards

Through the Joint Resolution process the Worcester Public Schools has solidified structures to ensure the ongoing professional development for the teachers of Chandler Elementary School. This includes provision for daily common planning and 90 hours of additional professional development time beyond

the current teacher contract. The inclusion of regular and structured common planning time will be extremely important to planning improvement in student performance. District leadership recognizes the importance of providing all teachers with time to collaborate together on teaching and learning. The current teacher's contract provides this provision for secondary school teachers, however not for elementary school teachers.

To acquire this provision for elementary school teachers, on May 4, 2009, the Worcester School Committee, issued proposal #15, during successor collective bargaining for the teachers' contract, which expired on August 31, 2008: *Article XXVII Work Year, Hours, Work Load – Increase the length of the elementary teachers' work day to be comparable to that of secondary teachers.*

This proposal would increase elementary teachers work days by 30 minutes per day. These 30 minutes per day would be used to provide elementary teachers with a 30 minute preparation period each day.

If contract negotiations are not successful in this area, district leadership will still work to accomplish this provision for elementary teachers. Specialists, such as art, music and physical education teachers will be assigned to provide each class with additional instruction, no less than twice per month, 30 minutes prior to the end of the students' day. On common planning days, teachers' end of day duties will be substituted for common planning time in accordance with *Article XXVII (29)*, which would make provision for a total of 45 minutes of common planning time.

The new Massachusetts Evaluation Model will be negotiated with the teachers' union. Teachers and the Principals from Level IV schools will have the opportunity to determine which measures of student growth shall be used, refine the observation process (including the quantity and frequency); and determine the professional evidence to be reviewed (i.e. lesson plans, teacher written comments on homework papers and examinations).

The principals and teachers of Level IV schools are re-evaluated by receiving significant discretionary funds based upon student growth. Subject to available funds, beginning in the 2010 – 2011 school year, each underperforming school may receive an aggregate award based upon students' performance measured by the Composite Performance Index established by DESE.

These awards may be used for school-use only. The allocation of the awards shall be determined by a majority vote of a committee made up of six staff members, elected by the staff, six community members, and the Principal of the school. Each member shall have one vote. The Superintendent must approve all expenditures. The aggregate school reward shall be issued in the following manner: 11 to 15 point increase – CPI Mathematics or ELA - \$30,000 and a 16 + point increase – CPI Mathematics or ELA - \$50,000.

Schmoker (2002) states it is quite possible and not unusual to find poor performing schools turning around poor student performance because they follow simple methods. Among these simple but effective strategies are teachers working in teams and consistently and regularly paying careful attention to standards targeted at low-performing students. McKee, Boyatzis and Johnston (2008) go further to state that "one person or one pair or even one team cannot stand alone, cannot single-handedly change the emotional reality of an entire system" (p. 182). Elmore (2000) concurs with this statement by adjuring teachers to stay away from the isolationist styles of the traditional educators and become engaged in collaboration and sharing of best practices with their colleagues. However, using the words of Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) Schmoker (2002) warns these plans must remain simple so that they do not confuse teachers and add to "fragmentation and overload" (p. 3). He states that simple, targeted, teacher-invented methods of solving student performance problems are usually far more effective and easily replicated.

In order to ensure that common planning time is used effectively to positively impact student achievement, specific guidelines have been put in place regarding how this time should be utilized. Two days a week, teachers meet by grade level to discuss weekly lesson plans, identify common instructional tools and assessments, analyze data, create individualized learning plans and monitor student progress. One day is designated for reading and the other is designated for math. Teachers meet across grade levels two days a week to map curriculum, identify learning gaps that span grade levels, and share best practices through peer observation. As with grade level meetings, one day is dedicated to reading, while the other

is dedicated to math. The remaining planning session is devoted to Redesign Team meetings, PBIS team meetings, and other targeted planning groups, such as “Guided Reading” and “Being A Writer.”

Students social, emotional and health needs

In order to support all students to achieve at high levels the school will design and implement a school-wide tiered system with three focus areas: attendance, social-emotional, and academics. The Chandler Elementary Response to Intervention (RtI) process will use the scientific method for decision-making: 1) analyze data to clearly define the learning or social-emotional challenge - the team analyzes the gap between current performance and expected performance – this may call for more specific diagnostic assessments; 2) develop a plan – interventions are designed to specifically address the student’s strengths and weaknesses; 3) implement the plan – monitor fidelity of implementation concerning approach, time allotted, materials used; 4) evaluate student progress to determine next steps – to increase support if necessary, maintain current level of supplemental support, or discontinue support because student is demonstrating proficiency.

A fulltime School Adjustment Counselor (SAC) will collaborate with teachers, administrators, the school nurse, parents, and social-service and health agencies to ensure that students attend school daily, arrive on time and are ready to learn. Payton, J. et al, (2008) found that social-emotional learning programs improved students’ social-emotional skills, attitudes toward self and others, connection to school, positive behavior, and academic performance and that these programs were effective across the K-8 grade range for racially and ethnically diverse students from urban and suburban settings.

Chandler Elementary has established a clear set of school-wide behavioral expectations as part of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and teachers guide students to develop and demonstrate these behavioral competencies on a consistent basis. All students will participate in the Second Step social skills curriculum co-facilitated by classroom and health teachers. These universal expectations provide a proactive, preventive approach and will serve approximately 80-90% of students. Students who require additional support (approximately 5-10%) will receive targeted interventions such as check-and-connect, additional behavioral coaching from the SAC or participation in the Steps to Respect curriculum. For individual students who present with more chronic, severe social-emotional challenges, additional intensive supports will be provided through collaborative, strengths-based planning with family members, school personnel, and social-service agencies as appropriate. Chandler Elementary faculty will develop social-emotional supports that are clinically, linguistically, culturally and developmentally appropriate for each student.

Students at Chandler Elementary reside in one of the poorest sections of Worcester that possesses all the ancillary issues that poverty brings: unemployment, homelessness, crime, drug abuse, and lack of health care. In addition, the children of this neighborhood attend a school that has been designated persistently underperforming. It is no wonder these students feel a collective sense of hopelessness. It is the staff’s responsibility to restore a sense of possibility and achievement to them. Hiring a staff that shares the belief that all students can be successful is the first piece of the puzzle. At Chandler, they have made a commitment to create a school culture where student opinions are valued and respected and where achievement becomes reality. They are striving not to reach proficiency, but to exceed it. The following programs and policies have been put in place to support student achievement and focus on three specific areas: intervention, incentives and college-to-career readiness.

Interventions

- Individualized Student Success Plans
- Review of Accommodations for Students with Disabilities
- Review of Accommodations for English Language Learners

Incentives

- Student Goal Setting for MAP Testing
- After School Program (Intervention and Enrichment)
- Student Development of Core Values
- Introduction to PBIS
- POWER UP Assembly
- Student Participation in Morning Announcements
- Daily Award for Cafeteria Role Model
- Award for Student of the Month
- Award for Citizen of the Month
- Award for Perfect Attendance (Quarterly)

College and Career Readiness

- Mentoring Program
- Student Banking Program
- Library Card Program
- Career Fair
- Anti-Bullying Initiative

The Chandler Elementary faculty, coaches, teacher-leader, and administrators have started and will continue to develop and refine a three-tiered system of instruction to ensure academic success for all students.

- Tier One: Core Instructional Curriculum (all students)
- Tier Two: Core Instruction and Supplemental Resources (students who need additional support – group or individual)
- Tier Three: Core Instruction and Intensive Supports (students who need intensive intervention and specialized resources on an individual basis)

As they organize this coordinated system of instruction they will consider the demographics of their students: 92 percent are eligible for Free/Reduced lunch, 63 percent are from homes where English is not the first language, 46.6 percent have Limited English Proficiency (LEP), and 13.5 percent qualify for Special Education services. Through professional development teachers must become proficient in instructional practices that support all students of Chandler Elementary. The full faculty will complete all of the Category Trainings and receive training in differentiated instruction and techniques to support students with special needs. Currently LEP students receive instruction from an ESL licensed teacher and a certified ESL instructional assistant in an ESL Lab focused on building English proficiency through content area instruction. Students who present with an identified social-emotional disability receive instruction in one of three Structured Therapeutic Educational Program (STEP) classes with certified teacher and instructional assistant support. The school serves other students with special education needs through an inclusion model with pull-out targeted interventions such as Wilson Reading instruction.

The purpose of a tiered system of instructional support is to ensure that all students have access to core instruction, provide early intervention linked to monitoring progress, make decisions about entry and exit from supportive interventions, and catch students up with their peers as quickly as possible. Therefore, qualified professional educators will provide all intervention services and address academic standards identical to those in the regular classroom.

Family-school relationships

Pearce (2003) contends, “to win followers, leaders must transfer more than information. They must also transmit what they see and feel so that others see and feel it.” The leadership at Chandler Elementary School aspires to build trust with families and community and educational partners, create a

shared context for enhancing the school culture, and committing all to the action of improving student performance.

Building trust is a fundamental requisite for individuals to openly listen to each other. To create the conditions for changing Chandler Elementary School there must be open and honest dialogue about the current conditions of the school and the need to improve. Communication about change begins with building credibility and trust. All school faculty must elicit their commitment to delivering on high expectations for all students. They must express their belief all students can achieve to high levels of excellence in order for stakeholders to trust that the change being communicated will be positive and in their best interest.

The work at the school has just begun and they realize they have much farther to go. Creating a shared context for enhancing the school's culture involves creating a common understanding of the improvement work. To create this shared context each component of the Chandler Elementary improvement work will be regularly communicated to stakeholders. Frequent opportunities will be given for stakeholders to ask questions along the way to ensure an understanding of the work. Pearce (2003) states "the greater the change, the greater the need to break things down into steps people can picture themselves taking."

Transforming the culture of the school to focus on student achievement will not happen easily. It is necessary that all stakeholders commit to this action. The leadership of the school is using Kotter's (1996) eight stage process of creating transformational change as a framework for advancing change in their school. They are establishing a sense of urgency, creating a guiding coalition, developing a vision and strategy, communicating the change vision, empowering broad-based action, generating short-term wins, consolidating gains and producing more change and anchoring new approaches in the culture.

An Outreach Coordinator will be hired for the school. The role of the Outreach Coordinator will be to develop and nurture partnerships with parents and community members. The Outreach Coordinator will also organize learning opportunities for students in and around the City that complement curriculum goals to augment student learning.

Engaging Parents in the School Community

The work over the past few months has only solidified the observations of Hernandez, Krieger, Coffman, Lopez (2002) who note that family involvement makes an enormous difference in student achievement and healthy development.

When schools provide information, encouragement and opportunities for partnership, parental involvement increases. School staff will engage in frequent, reciprocal and continuous communication. Teachers will be expected to reach out to families in a variety of ways including newsletters, parent-teacher meetings, school-family events, emails, and phone calls. Our plan is to build honest, trusting relationships where school and home work together to improve student outcomes.

It is not possible for the school to become a vibrant learning community without the establishment of strong and meaningful school-family partnerships. The previous culture of the school did not encourage this type of alliance, so trust needed to be established to effectively engage families as shareholders in their children's education.

Since many of the families have had minimal positive school experiences, it is incumbent upon staff and administration to provide a warm and welcoming environment. The school staff will make every effort to involve families by putting the following research-based strategies in place:

- Make expectations clear to families and regularly communicate student progress to them
- Develop opportunities for teachers and families to talk about how families can contribute to the education of their children
- Create a variety of family education programs
- Build relationships with families by having ongoing conversations with them about the role of teachers and families in student learning (Gordon, 2006)

The following initiatives are being put in place during this first year to support family involvement:

- Regularly scheduled neighborhood meetings to inform parents of the progress of Level IV Redesign – these meetings take place on a quarterly basis and serve to keep parents aware of the progress that is being made at the school. Each of the sessions begins with a light dinner and is followed by opening remarks from district administration. Ms. Eressy then offers an update on the initiatives that have been put in place at the school and documents their progress. Break-out groups are then facilitated by community organizers who collect feedback and questions from the parents. The meeting culminates with a sharing of this information, which is later printed and distributed to participants.
- Open door policy with principal and assistant principal – Both Ms. Eressy, the principal and the Assistant Principal, Ms. Jackson have made parents aware they are willing to meet at any time regarding student or family issues. Parents have responded in an overwhelmingly positive manner to this administrative change and are beginning to view the school as a welcoming and warm place.
- Appointment of full time school adjustment counselor - One of the recommendations of the local stakeholder group was the addition of a full time adjustment counselor. The district accommodated this request by appointing Mr. Marvin Negron, a bilingual counselor to this position.
- Appointment of full time school nurse – The stakeholder group also recommended the appointment of a full time school nurse, which was likewise accommodated by the district.
- Partnership with Family Health Center – This relationship provides access to the nearby Family Health Center for our families, not only for well visits but also for referrals for social-emotional issues. In addition, a physician is on site on monthly basis to answer questions and concerns of parents. This year, flu shots were provided to parents and staff members.
- Ronald McDonald Dental Care Mobile – makes quarterly visits to the school to provide check-ups and fluoride treatments to the students.
- Creation of Parent-Teacher Organization – For the first time in many years, a parent teacher organization has been created at Chandler. A core group of approximately 15 people meet one Wednesday evening a month in order to discuss school issues and plan fundraising events. For example, parents planned our first Family Movie Night, which was an overwhelming success attended by 300 people. Several additional events are planned for the coming months, including a parent child dance and spaghetti supper. Future fundraising activities include a Scholastic Book Fair. Parents have enthusiastically supported these initiatives and are excited to be part of the planning process. Their participation is critical if our redesign efforts are to be successful.
- Scheduling of family academic nights (Mathematics and ELA) – Because many of the parents have limited experience in a school setting, it is important to involve them not only in the social-emotional component of Chandler but in the academic component as well. Information gathered at Level IV meetings indicated that parents feel ill-equipped to assist their children with homework. For this reason, the staff has designed Math and Literacy Nights, where parents will have the opportunity to participate in activities led by their children. It is their intention that by involving parents in activities such as these, it will serve to make involvement in their children's academic life less intimidating.
- Active involvement of parents in the disciplinary process – Parents are notified of their children's disciplinary infractions in a timely manner. Ms. Eressy and Ms. Jackson make parents aware that they rely on them to be active partners in the disciplinary process.
- Creation of Parent Newsletter – The PTO is in the process of beginning a monthly newsletter to parents to keep them informed of school activities and updates.

- Adult Education classes (Spring) – On-site ESL and GED classes are being planned for the Spring. This is another area of critical need identified at the Level IV neighborhood listening sessions.

It is important for the families of Chandler Elementary School to know the faculty can not handle the task of educating their children by themselves. The help of families is pivotal to the success of each child in the school.

Engaging the Community

“Whether a school succeeds or fails in its mission depends in no small measure on the degree of support received from the nation and from the community it serves.” (Boyer) Engaging the community in Chandler Elementary School will provide an opportunity to tell the school’s story to a wider audience and also provide an opportunity for the school to learn from the community.

The school has been a community school for several years; however the former leadership did not welcome the community to be partners with the school. This was a critical error and one that the current leadership is working diligently to correct. The new leadership of Chandler Elementary school would like to make the school the hub of the community. Rather than being one of many separate entities within the neighborhood They envision Chandler Elementary building bridges to other community sectors by welcoming the public into the school at every possible opportunity.

The new leadership would like to see Chandler Elementary be a school and community center in one, partnering with other agencies to provide programs and services to meet the community’s need. While the school leadership is primarily focused on improving student achievement, they recognize the need for after school and evening programming which combine educational, recreational and mentoring activities to ensure students have the opportunity to develop to their full potential. Partnerships that are currently being cultivated include:

- The Guild of Saint Agnes is a child care agency which will begin to provide after-school care on site beginning at the end of February. This fully accredited organization will operate from 3:30 to 6:30 p.m. and during all school vacations.
- United Way of Central Massachusetts provides support to Chandler in a number of ways. These include funding field trips, planning on-site activities, and involving students in community outreach.
- The College of the Holy Cross is working with the Chandler leadership team to form a partnership between students in their Education Department and the faculty. This past semester, six students volunteered in the primary level classrooms.
- Anna Maria College seeks to begin a partnership between their Education Department and the faculty. This will include hosting student teachers for practicum and pre-practicum service. The teachers will also co-teach Education classes at the college level.
- Southeast Asian Coalition provides cultural enrichment activities and translation services to the school community.
- Worcester Interfaith, a faith-based organization, sponsors the on-site ICC Kids Club two nights a week. This provides homework help, arts and crafts, and recreation to the students.
- The Ecotarium has included the Grade 5 students in their exploring science initiative. Their staff has joined together with the Chandler staff on-site to teach science curriculum, and the students have traveled to their facility to view the planetarium show and to experience other explorations.
- Saori Weaving is a local artisan group that is providing free apprenticeships to members of the 5th and 6th grade classes.
- Joy of Music provides a classical music program to the students.

The City of Worcester offers a wealth of educational and cultural opportunities for students. The faculty of Chandler Elementary School will use the city of Worcester as its campus. This will provide students with the opportunity to engage in a variety of learning experiences that will contribute to their educational growth.

Engaging community members to partner with the faculty of Chandler Elementary School in the education of students will broaden the knowledge base of what actually works in schools. Gordon (2006) states that “the more community leaders and school leaders share information about what actually works in the classroom the more the national debate between the “insider” and “outsider” perspectives on education reform becomes moot.”

Financial and Asset Management

A three-year financial plan for the school has been provided (*See Attachment C – Three Year Financial Analysis*) As the financial plan illustrates, total spending at Chandler Elementary School is proposed to increase by approximately \$1 million per year by the during the redesign period. Of this funding increase, \$793,656 is proposed through the redesign grant, while the remainder will be funded through operating, grant, and community support sources.

The school is currently staffed with 17 Kindergarten through Grade 6 classroom teachers with an average class size of 20.5 to 1. In addition, the school is supported by 6 special education, 1 ESL teacher, and 2 ESL tutors to support the student population. In addition, the school is staffed with 2 literacy tutors to provide additional intervention services for students. The school has a full time nurse on staff. The school has a parent liaison that is used to provide a school-to-home information to parents.

Using current grant funds, the school operated a half-day pre-school program that provides early academic experiences for three and four year old students, some that require services through an IEP. Using federal stimulus funds, the school has two instructional coaches that provide job embedded professional development to teachers at the school. This professional development is developed through the use of student test data and the school’s instructional leadership team.

Looking forward, the budget proposes an Outreach Coordinator position for the school. The purpose of this position will be to develop partnerships with community organizations, higher education institutions, and local businesses in order to provide supplemental resources and support to the school. This position will be funded through the district’s operating budget. The school is participating in a Promise Neighborhood grant focusing on community outreach. This includes partnerships with higher education within the city, including Clark University, Assumption College, Anna Maria College, and Worcester State University. The school will focus these partnerships on a community school model as well as enrichment opportunities for students. This would include adult and ESL education for parents of students attending the school.

In addition, the school will implement a school vacation feeding program through the district’s School Nutrition program. The purpose of this program is to provide nutritious meals to students during non-school periods. The district’s School Nutrition program is nationally recognized for innovative programs, including a successful local farm-to-school program. The district has identified city capital funds to be used to improve technology supports at the school, to include the replacement of classroom computers and laptops, installation of interactive whiteboards, and the purchase of digital document projectors for instructional use to display student work.

Additional funds are being identified for staff development opportunities through Title IIA and III to support high quality teaching strategies for teachers, to include ESL category training for all teachers.

The Redesign Grant proposed budget includes funds to provide increased learning opportunities for students by 90 minutes per day for each day of the school year. In addition, the school has scheduled 30 minutes daily of common planning time for teachers. This time has been added to the school day for all teachers. In addition, the proposed budget includes 90 additional hours of professional development for teachers, to include work during non-school days, including during the summer. This time is in addition to the 20 hours of time required under the existing collective bargaining agreement with teachers.

The budget also reflects additional professional instructional and support positions for the school. First, a Teacher-Leader position has been proposed to support high quality teaching and learning at the school. Also, the budget reflects a full time librarian position for the school. Currently, because of previous district-wide budget reductions, the district provides librarian positions at secondary schools only. Also, the budget proposes to increase the level of student support positions (School Adjustment Counselor) by 0.5 FTE position. This position will provide the social-emotional and behavioral supports needs for the student population. In addition, the budget would increase the level of health education support by adding 0.5 FTE of additional teacher support.

The budget also reflects additional funding for instructional supplies and materials, such as leveled readers and additional library materials.

The district is prepared to allocate the necessary resources to sustain funding of this plan after the Redesign Plan period, although the district would look to reduce this initial funding based on a gradual release of capacity building strategies, such as spending on staff development and instructional coaching as the level of individual teacher capacity increases. The district would be prepared to continue the appropriate level of increased learning opportunities and/or supplemental services that may be needed at the end of the Plan period. In addition, the district is seeking permanent collective bargaining changes that would allow for an expansion of the teacher work day across the system for elementary teachers that would be used for common planning time.

The district is prepared and has the capacity to provide direct instructional, financial, and human resources support during the Redesign Plan using existing resources available to the district. This includes a district level administrator position that has been assigned to provide direct support to the school. Again, as individual capacity is developed at the school level, the level of district support will be adjusted accordingly during the plan.

Instructional Design and Delivery – Transformation model

High quality instruction is key to increasing student learning and achievement. The leadership and faculty of Chandler Elementary School are committed to providing effective instruction in every classroom, every day, for every student. In order to move forward in a coherent, accelerated manner, Chandler Elementary needs to establish curricular and instructional alignment.

In a standards-based instructional system the expectations of what students should know and be able to do are clear to all involved in the educational process. Teachers must develop deep knowledge of the content and performance standards for each grade level. The common core standards for English Language Arts and Math include rigorous content and application of knowledge through higher-order skills. These internationally benchmarked standards are essential for college and career readiness in a 21st Century, globally competitive society.

All Chandler Elementary students will have access to academically challenging standards-based instruction. In collaboration with district-wide curriculum liaisons the Chandler Elementary Instructional Leadership Team will facilitate the development of curriculum maps (Kindergarten through Grade 6) aligned with the Massachusetts Frameworks and/or Common Core Standards in all content areas. These maps will identify the content and procedural knowledge and competencies that students must demonstrate and apply at each grade level as well as the assessments used to monitor students' progress.

Through participation in vertical team curriculum mapping sessions, faculty will increase their understanding of the academic standards their students must achieve and use this information to guide instructional planning for whole class, small group and individual students as well as to guide instructional pacing throughout the year. Common grade-level reading, writing and content area assessments will be developed, administered and collaboratively scored in order to develop shared understanding and expectations for high standards for student performance. The Chandler Elementary faculty started the curriculum mapping process in their summer professional development sessions. They will continue this process in vertical team professional development meetings throughout the school year.

During common planning time the Focused Instructional Coaches will support teachers as they develop lesson plans based on these curricular maps. In weekly lesson plans teachers will outline

instructional strategies to support core instruction, Tier Two supports and Tier Three interventions as needed based on each student's learning profile. The principal and assistant principal will review lesson plans to monitor alignment with curricular goals, grade level pacing, alignment with the school's identified best practices and details guiding differentiated instruction within the classroom.

The administrative team will provide feedback regarding lessons plans to assure that instructional planning, strategies, and assessments facilitate active student engagement in learning linked to standards and objectives that reflect high expectations. The FIC and teacher-leaders will guide the instructional planning of their colleagues in daily common planning time to develop consistent school-wide practices and support teachers as they implement these best practices in daily classroom instruction. The Worcester Public Schools Framework for High Quality Teaching and Learning outlines shared expectations and indicators of effective instruction with three focus areas: 1) Organization of the Classroom; 2) Instructional Design and Delivery, and 3) Student Ownership of Learning. The Chandler Elementary teachers, FIC, teacher-leader and school administrators will use this framework to guide improvement of teaching and learning across the school.

Through analysis of student outcome data and review of recommendations of the local stakeholder group, Chandler Elementary developed a clearly articulated school-wide instructional focus and identified a small set of best practices that will guide their improvement work. On-going professional development and job-embedded coaching will deepen teachers' knowledge and commitment to an effort-based theory of intelligence and strengthen their implementation of these best practices.

- Balanced Literacy Instruction in the five area of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension
- Guided Reading and Interactive Read-Alouds
- Writing: 90-90-90 schools emphasize non-fiction writing
- Differentiated Instruction
- Adaptive Technology: Fast ForWord; Head Sprout
- Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports: to maximize time-on-learning and focused student engagement

Assessment that connects instructional delivery and human capital development

The leaders of the Worcester Public Schools and of Chandler Elementary School know that a human capital development strategy designed to increase instructional effectiveness is key to achieving accelerated academic growth and high achievement for all students of Chandler Elementary. A system of frequent, meaningful assessment of student progress in all content areas is central to this goal as is a teacher supervision, evaluation and professional development system that incorporates student achievement gains as one measure of teacher effectiveness.

Chandler Elementary leadership and faculty view assessment as a tool to promote learning for students and adults. Student data will be used to design and implement an instructional program that is research-based and vertically aligned from one grade level to the next as well as aligned with state academic standards. Chandler Elementary faculty will develop a balanced assessment system to measure student growth in order to track student progress within and across grades, determine growth trajectories, and adjust teaching and learning opportunities appropriately. As Chandler Elementary develops a comprehensive student assessment system they will include summative assessments *of* learning as well as formative assessments *for* learning (Stiggins, 2004).

Summative assessments such as the MCAS and MEPA will provide the faculty with important information regarding student mastery of standards and language development and of their current status toward achieving proficiency. The Instructional Leadership Team will analyze this data to determine individual student achievement, trends in sub-group, grade level, and school performance, areas of strength and weakness in curriculum design and delivery, effectiveness of intervention strategies, and individual and collective professional development needs.

Formative assessments *for* learning are designed to provide feedback to both the teacher and students about how the student is progressing so that timely adjustments can be made to ensure that students achieve targeted standards-based learning goals within a set time frame. William et al (2004) found that when teachers used assessments *for* learning aligned with tiered instructional supports students demonstrated significant gains in achievement on high-stakes tests and Black et al (1998) found that the largest gains were made by low achievers-therefore, contributing to closing the achievement gap.

The school faculty will use results from DIBELS, DRA, MAP, word reading tests, school-wide writing prompts, anecdotal records, and quizzes to adjust teaching and learning, inform the development of Student Intervention Plans and monitor the effectiveness of core instruction and Tier Two and Tier Three interventions and supports. Student progress requires close monitoring that will be facilitated through a benchmarking system designed for core instruction (every five weeks) and Tier Two and Tier Three interventions (every two to four weeks).

Chandler Elementary teachers will employ classroom assessment strategies to check for student understanding and application of knowledge and skill. These strategies will include:

- questioning that is well-framed, provides adequate wait time, and provides rich follow-up discussion
- feedback with detailed comments that include next steps
- peer and self-assessments linked to rubrics, exemplars, and exit slips; and active student engagement in the assessment process to encourage student ownership as active agents in their own learning

The teachers will have students document and evaluate their own progress to increase self-monitoring, meta-cognition and confidence to maintain persistence and grit. The school has established classroom, grade level, and school-wide data displays that indicate students' current performance on MAP, DRA, or DIBELS. Students know their current status and use this information to complete goal-setting sheets with their teachers. These displays also serve as the foundation for collegial dialogue focused on next steps with instructional practice to facilitate each student's accelerated academic performance.

The combined mobility rate for Chandler Elementary School is 77 percent. To develop a sense of the current performance level of each student who transfers into the school mid-year, the teachers and administrators will retrieve a student information snapshot from the district-wide data system, SAGE. This report provides DRA, DIBELS, MAP, MEPA, and MCAS testing results throughout the student's tenure in the Worcester Public Schools. The report also indicates if the student is eligible for ESL and/or special education supports. Based on information from the SAGE snapshot, the entering student can be assigned to the appropriate supports immediately with minimal interruption in their instructional programming.

As they gather and analyze student assessment data, Chandler Elementary faculty will participate in the Student Support Process with an administrator, the Focused Instructional Coaches (FIC) and teacher-leader to develop Student Intervention Plans that outline student strengths and challenges, current learning profiles, priority skills the student needs to meet or exceed grade level standards, and instructional strategies for teachers in order to scaffold the student to reach or exceed grade level standards. In 90-90-90 schools, teachers and administrators paid particular attention to students who presented with below grade level reading and writing, as lack of proficiency in these areas has significant influence on student success in other subjects. Therefore, these students spent significant time in literacy

intervention based on their assessment results (Reeves, 2009). The Student Intervention Plans will guide student's instructional journey during and beyond the school day with a focus on literacy development across content areas.

In collaboration with Instructional Coaches, the Chandler Elementary ILT will develop common assessments that are horizontally and vertically aligned. The school has completed and analyzed two school-wide writing prompts that teachers have collaboratively scored. In 90-90-90 schools writing assessments allowed students to demonstrate the thinking process they used to respond to an academic challenge and seemed to help teachers obtain better diagnostic information for future instructional planning (Reeves, 2009). The student work from additional common writing prompts and common benchmark assessments will be analyzed in common planning time or in data meetings facilitated by the FIC,(Focused Instructional Coaches) teacher-leader and/or administrators. These assessments will provide faculty with immediate, formative feedback on how students are progressing toward proficiency and generate discussions about instructional practice and professional development needs.

The school leaders know that in order to rapidly accelerate the academic achievement of all Chandler Elementary students they must develop the competencies of the all adults in the school and continuously monitor instructional practice in tandem with close monitoring of student achievement. They know that they must develop and increase instructional and leadership capacity of teachers in order to reach and sustain significant gains in performance so that all students meet or exceed grade level standards. High frequency, individual progress monitoring for students and for adults will become the Chandler Elementary way.

The principal and assistant principal have developed a schedule for daily classroom visits or mini-observations which include observations of student engagement with learning tasks, elements of the organization of the classroom and PBIS expectations for student and adult behaviors, language-rich interactions, connection of the lesson to learning standards and objectives, evaluation of the rigor of learning tasks and other aspects of the Worcester Public Schools Framework for High Quality Teaching and Learning (HQT&L). The administrative team will continue these mini-observations and provide meaningful, timely feedback to teachers verbally or in writing. Based on these regular classroom visits, participation in common planning, curriculum mapping, data meetings, and professional development sessions, as well as through analysis of classroom based student assessment data summaries, the principal and assistant principal will identify individual and collective professional development needs. They will collaborate with the ILT, FIC, teacher-leader to design and provide the professional development support through workshops, collegial observations, job-embedded coaching and modeling to guide teacher development. This will be an iterative process with the expectation of improved teaching practice in order to better support student learning.

The teachers will participate in full summative evaluations on an annual basis. The Chandler Elementary principal used the HQT&L framework in professional goal setting with each teacher and noted that the summative evaluation will provide commentary regarding the Principles of Effective Teaching aligned with the HQT&L document as well as indicate one of four levels of performance: Not Meeting Standard, Progressing Toward Meeting the Standard, Effective at Meeting the Standard; and Highly Effective at Meeting the Standard. The annual summative evaluations will inform the principal's staffing decisions for the next school year with a focus on achieving the goal of rapid academic improvement for all students.

Conclusion

In three years, the implementation of Chandler's key instructional strategies will have created a vibrant community of readers, writers, and thinkers. The teachers will be fully trained in guided reading protocols, allowing them to differentiate instruction for students. Common planning time will afford teachers the opportunity to collaboratively discuss these protocols and examine data that will allow them to continuously tailor their instruction to meet specific student needs. These needs will be articulated in individualized student learning plans. Reading, writing, and thinking will be embedded in daily instruction, with teachers serving as facilitators who make it possible for students to take ownership of

their learning. Mathematics instruction will reflect flexible grouping based on examination of data. Appropriate interventions and enrichments will be provided based on the RTI model. It is not enough, however, to leave the measure of success to anecdote. Formal and informal assessments will be put in place to measure student progress. This includes MCAS, MEPA, MAP, DIBELS, and DRA. It also includes continuous progress monitoring through classroom assessments as well as through school-wide writing assignments. Consistently examining data and using the findings to inform changes in instructional practice will support all students as they work to achieve proficiency.

In order to ensure success, teachers will continue to receive meaningful professional development that reflects the needs of the school population. Both students and teachers are encouraged to take risks. Participating in embedded professional development such as rounds, allows them to learn and grow from observing one another. Although teachers have developed awareness that their teaching practice is directly linked to student achievement it is incumbent upon the school principal – Ms. Eressy – to ensure that all teachers continue to maintain high expectations for all students.

There is a discernible shift in school culture. Parents who have not attended school functions in the past, now attend on a regular basis. The PTO is thriving; parents are anxious to volunteer. There is a school-wide set of behavioral expectations which promotes a culture of mutual respect; but the work has just begun.

Three years from now, Chandler Elementary School will be the hub of the neighborhood. Students will receive high quality, effective instruction by every teacher, every day. Parents will have the opportunity to take advantage of on-site learning opportunities. Community agencies will be Chandler's partners in promoting safe and healthy schools. To paraphrase a part of the school's instructional focus, the staff and students will be able to say – "We've got the power!"