Worcester Public Schools

District-Level Redesign Plan

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I. Executive Summary

District and school redesign are not new concepts in Worcester. Since 2009, the district has demonstrated its capacity and commitment to address the complexity inherent in transforming district and school performance and removing the barriers hindering sustainable, accelerated high levels of student achievement. Indicators of student achievement within subgroups of the student population highlight the need to remedy persistent underachievement and the overarching achievement gap. Worcester Public Schools is committed to every student attaining high levels of achievement and becoming college and career ready.

Worcester Public Schools uses "Systems Thinking*"* to frame its overall approach to district and school redesign. The concepts of systems thinking provide a broad framework, or mental map, to see, to think, to understand, to diagnose, and to act more effectively (Haines, Stephen, 2000 *The systems thinking approach* St. Lucie Press). Systems thinking serves as a sense-making tool that guides the redesign process in Worcester that is leading to accelerated performance. Tools provided by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, such as the Conditions for School Effectiveness Self-assessment, support redesign team members as they answer questions about the extent to which the district and schools are meeting standards to ensure effective teaching and learning in every school in the district. Purposeful data analysis illuminates the current state of performance, informs each team's prioritization and selection of high-leverage strategies aligned to accelerated performance, and supports the formative and summative measurement of success and areas of continued need. The use of systems thinking distinguishes Worcester Public Schools as a focused learning community from other districts.

The WPS' theory of action guides the decision-making of district and school redesign teams as they engage in the iterative process leading to sustained accelerated student performance. The work of Jim Collins, *Good to Great*, has been influential in the development of the shared theory of action. High values for people, the use of data, organizational focus, alignment of action, the use of technology to support improvement, building momentum toward breakthrough, and the core values of excellence, equity, and choice are components of our theory of action. When adults implement a shared vision of research-based, high quality teaching and learning, effective communication structures, and high quality professional development, students will achieve at higher levels and achievement gaps will close (Worcester Improvement Framework, 2009).

Experience and research have important functions in the redesign process and have contributed to the insight needed for effective planning. Several key leaders in the district have grass-roots experience in turning around school performance resulting in high levels of student achievement. Superintendent, Dr. Melinda Boone contributed to the success story of Norfolk Public Schools , Norfolk, Va.. Doug Reeves, author and researcher, documented the process in Norfolk leading to rapid, sustained high levels of student performance and closing the achievement gap. Dr. Jeffrey Mulqueen, Chief Academic Officer, produced similar results with a highly diverse student population in New Britain, Conn. His work illustrated all students can reach high levels of academic performance despite diverse backgrounds.

The recently-appointed school principals at Chandler Elementary and Union Hill also have proven track records. June Eressy, principal of Chandler Elementary School, gained national recognition for her success in generating high levels of student achievement while she was principal of University Park Campus School, Worcester. Student performance highlights University Park Campus School as a top-performing high school in the United States. Marie Morse, principal of Union Hill School, is recognized for her ability to accelerate and sustain high levels of student performance while serving as Principal at Clark Street School, Worcester. Clark Street School is designated as a Level I school by the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and earned distinction in 2010 as one of eight Worcester schools named by the Governor as Commendation Schools for academic growth and continued success in closing the achievement gap. Other examples of success in generating rapid, sustainable high

levels of student performance can be found within the ranks of central office, its external turnaround support provider, and school personnel.

The plan for the Worcester incorporated a wide range of research and literature contributing to the evidence-based approach to our redesign efforts. We recognized that new thinking is needed to accomplish the district's audacious but attainable outcome of every student attaining high levels of achievement and college and career readiness.

Change is inevitable, but it brings challenges. Challenges to the status quo or to conventional thinking can result in conflict. The district leadership remains firm in decision-making that is rooted in student success. Outcomes from the Joint Resolution Committee decision to grant contractual flexibilities illustrate the district's commitment and capacity to confront and remove barriers to student success. Continued adjustments to policies and practices related to teacher selection, assignment, and compensation, principal and teacher evaluation, increasing learning opportunities, and school-level resource and staffing flexibilities must be evaluated and tuned to the needs of students. Documented successes outside of the district and relevant literature are important to the benchmarking process. Additionally, district and school redesign planning incorporates multiple sources of data including demographic, achievement, perceptual and observational. Analyses are useful for identifying root causes, prioritizing issues, and determining specific redesign options and purposeful intervention and support strategies. The improvement process is strengthened when strong linkages are made between district and school level critical issues, key priorities, and key strategies. Experience, research, literature, and data analysis led to the implementation of the Transformation Model at Chandler Elementary and Union Hill schools.

Improved student results are indicators of district success during the pre-implementation phase of redesign. The following imbues us with the confidence that we are moving forward:

- Growth in every grade tested across Grades 3 through 8 in both English Language Arts and Mathematics
- Double-digit gains in Grade 3 Reading
- Eight Worcester schools named by the Governor as Commendation Schools for academic growth and continued success in closing the achievement gap
- Burncoat Senior High School was one of 10 schools recognized statewide for the largest combined increase in the percent of students scoring Proficient and Advanced.
- In 2009, Worcester Public Schools demonstrated the first district-wide increase in Grade 3 Reading in eight years and the highest rates of Proficient and Advanced in Grades 3, 5, 7, 8, and 10 for Language Arts and in Grades 3, 7, 8, and 10 for Mathematics. These trends continued in 2010.

Increases in student performance signal the effectiveness of the district's actionable strategies, such as hiring, developing, and retaining high quality instructional leadership from the office of the superintendent to the classroom, aligning resources to provide all students with access to high quality standards-based instruction, and creating sustainability by aligning partnerships with the district's improvement framework and intended outcomes for students. Worcester Public Schools is uniquely positioned to accelerate the ongoing improvement work. The infusion of federal school improvement funds to support the implementation of the Transformaton Model at Chandler and Union Hill used in a focused manner aligned with our current approach will assist WPS in producing rapid, sustainable, high levels of student achievement.

II. District-Level Redesign

1. Analysis of Key District Needs and Challenges
Pre-implementation phase

The Worcester Public Schools has been engaged in district redesign since 2009, with the hire of Superintendent Melinda J. Boone, Ed.D. Her arrival in Worcester marked a departure from the past as she

is the first superintendent to be hired from outside the school system in 45 years. A passionate leader who has a demonstrated history of commitment and professional expertise, the Worcester School Committee hired Dr. Boone to build upon the district's history of success in a way that transforms Worcester Public Schools into the preferred educational choice for families. Her leadership contributed to the successes of the Norfolk Public Schools, Norfolk, Va., in generating rapid, sustained high levels of student performance and closing the achievement gap (Reeves, Doug, 2004. *Accountability in Action*. Advanced Learning Press, p. 94).

Dr. Boone recognizes accelerating student achievement and closing the achievement gap for students in Worcester require the capacity and commitment of the district, schools and community. The educational system is working as it was designed to work, but the way it was designed to work is not adequate to the present needs and expectations. Currently, all students are expected to learn at high levels (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and An Act Relative to the Achievement Gap of 2010). Systemic innovation is required. "[Systemic] changes cannot be successfully implemented without strong moral leadership as well as great technical skill (Schlechty, Phillip C., 2005. *Creating Great Schools*. Jossey-Bass, p.xii). District redesign in Worcester requires a strong team to provide sufficient leadership and technical skill to accelerate learning and leverage rapid, sustained improvement.

Subsequent to her hire, Dr. Boone redesigned the organizational structure of the school district to align district departments and systems with school improvement. She identified four key executive leadership positions, Chief Financial and Operations Officer, Chief Academic Officer, Chief Research and Accountability Officer, and Human Resource Manager. The function of each position provides leadership across the system to generate improved student results. Dr. Boone sought to fill each position on her executive leadership team with the right person, ensuring each member shared her passion and broadened the team's professional expertise. She used Competency Based Interview techniques to select candidates for leadership positions or retain those already in positions.

Each candidate's technical skills were assessed by asking them to describe their behavior according to the situation in which it occurred, the action they took, and the outcome. Dr. Boone used results described by each candidate as an important indicator of success. Additionally, candidates were assessed for motivation and cultural fit. Executives who ignited the transformation from good to great get the right people on the bus and build a superior executive team. (Collins, Jim, 2001. *Good to Great* Harper Collins).

Not only was it critical that each person have a record of results, but that those results could be generated in Worcester. Dr. Boone selected the following individuals to fill the executive leadership positions:

Brian Allen, M. B. A.
        Chief Financial and Operations Officer

Jeffrey Mulqueen, M. Ed., M. S., Ed. D.
        Chief Academic Officer

Mr. David Perda, M. A.
        Chief Research and Accountability Officer

Stacey Dubois-Luster, Esq.
        Human Resource Manager

The Superintendent and her executive leadership team commit to a Theory of Action (Collins, Jim, 2001. *Good to Great* Harper Collins) to enact their espoused values and to reach their intended outcomes in their role as the district's early Redesign Team. Resumes for key district-level personnel have been included. (*See Appendix A: District Level – Resumes*)
   1. First who…then what. Get the right people on the bus, the wrong people off the bus, and the

right people in the right seats – and then figure out where to drive it. The right people are the organization's most important asset.

2. Confront the Brutal Facts. Maintain unwavering faith that you can and will prevail in the end, regardless of the difficulties, *and*, at the same time, have the discipline to confront the most brutal facts of your current reality.

3. Be the best in the world at our core business, educating students.

4. Develop a culture of discipline. When you have disciplined people, you don't need hierarchy. When you have disciplined action, you don't need excessive controls. When you combine a culture of discipline with an ethic of entrepreneurship, you get the magical alchemy of great performance.

5. Think differently about the role of technology. Never use technology as the primary means of igniting a transformation, yet carefully apply selected technologies.

6. Relentlessly move the system in one direction, turn upon turn, building momentum until a point of breakthrough, and beyond.

7. Use core values of excellence, equity, and choice to transform the system and sustain improvement.

Superintendent Boone and her executive leadership team used multiple sources of data, including internal and external evaluations of the district and its systems to identify key challenges (Table 1). Additionally, the team used the Essential Conditions for School Effectiveness to frame action steps needed to address the identified challenges. The team recognized that its actions needed to be framed in the context of a system to successfully address the complexity of improved student results.

The three key challenges to accelerated improvement across the district as identified by the executive leadership team are 1) shift from a system of compliance to a system of results, 2) link adult action to student results, and 3) align internal and external systems of support with the instructional core and intended high levels of student achievement.

Table 1 - Data Sources Used to Identify Key Challenges

Data Source	Identified Priorities	Essential Condition
Perceptual Reports from External Turnaround Provider – Focus on Results 2008 - 20010	• Improve linkage between adult actions and student results • Bring greater focus to teaching and learning, starting with core instruction • Align actions and resources to core instruction	1 – Effective District 2 - Leadership 3 – Aligned Curriculum 4 – Effective Instruction 8 – Tiered Instruction 11 -Strategic Use of Resources
District and Commonwealth Priority Schools Plan for Improvement 2008	• Align standards-based teaching and learning • Use data to inform practice • Provide adequate time to teachers and students • Support local leadership autonomy	3 – Align Curriculum 4 – Effective Instruction 6 – Principal Authority 7 – Prof Development 8 – Tiered Instruction
Department of Justice Review and District Agreement 2008	• Implement consistent supports for students with special needs and students whose first language is not English • Align the capacity of teachers with the needs of all students	4 – Effective Instruction 7 – Prof. Development 8 – Tiered Instruction 10 – Family Engagement

Coordinated Program Review 2008	• Improve service delivery to raise achievement of students who have special needs and students whose first language is not English • Improve capacity of staff to support social-emotional needs of students • Improve supports to parents whose first language is not English	3- Aligned Curriculum 4 – Effective Instruction 8 – Tiered Instruction 9 – Social/Emotional and &Health 10 – Family Engage
District Plan for School Intervention (DIPSI) Review 2009	• Use external turnaround partner (FOR) to support improvement • Create a more effective coaching model • Implement professional development to support improved capacity • Improve use of data throughout the system	1 – Effective District 5 – Assessments 7 – Prof. Development
Human Resource Department Audit 2009	• Increase cultural / ethnic diversity among faculty to mirror the student population • Align Human Resource functions with student results	1 – Effective District 9 – Social/Emotional & Health
Longitudinal Review of State Assessment Results (MCAS) 2005 - 2010	• Improve the performance levels of all students and reduce the achievement gap, particularly for students who have impoverished economic backgrounds, students with special needs and students whose first language is not English.	2- Effective Instruction 8 – Tiered Instruction
Longitudinal Review of Student Discipline, Attendance, and Graduation Rates 2005 - 2010	• Ensure access to core content for all students • Improve student promotion and graduation rates	2 – Leadership 3 – Aligned Curriculum 4 – Effective Instruction 8 – Tiered Instruction
Longitudinal Demographic and Enrollment Trends 2005 - 2010	• Build system capacity to address the trend of increasing numbers of students whose first language is not English • Build system capacity to address the trend of increasing levels of poverty	1 – Effective District 3 – Aligned Curriculum 4 – Effective Instruction 8 – Tiered Instruction 9 – Social/Emotional and Health 10 – Family Engagement

		11– Strategic Use of Resources
Community Meetings re: Level 4 Schools, Innovation Schools, and District Redesign 2010	• Increase stakeholder voice in district decision-making • Provide community with data about district and school performance • Improve instructional rigor, relevance, and cultural competence.	10 – Family Engagement 9 – Social/Emotional Health 4 – Effective Instruction 8 – Tiered Instruction
Partnership Summit 2010	• Align partnerships to instructional core and intended outcomes for students.	10 – Family Engagement
Massachusetts Evidence Based Home Visiting Program: Needs Assessment 2010	• Worcester is one of the top 12 At-risk Communities in Massachusetts • Student and family non-academic needs require improved wrap-around services	10 – Family Engagement

During the pre-implementation phase, the executive leadership team initiated and completed a strategic and actionable plan composed of corrective actions to address the three key challenges to the acceleration of rapid, sustained improvement in district, school, and student performance.

1) Shift from a system of compliance to a system of results
   • Designed and published a results oriented vision for the district (the Worcester Compact) to establish a concrete direction for the district
   • Designed and implemented a District Redesign Team to ensure sustainability of redesign initiatives
   • Developed and distributed leadership throughout the organization via central office support and the district's external turnaround provider (Focus On Results)
   • Built communication channels with key stakeholders, including students, parents, school personnel, higher education, and the community
   • Used the Conditions for School Effectiveness as a screening tool for decision-making throughout the district
   • Designed and implemented an accountability team composed of a broad base of internal and external stakeholders for the purpose of designing a Comprehensive Accountability System for all levels of the system
   • Implemented monthly school learning visits to transfer best practices throughout the system

2) Link adult actions to student results
   • Redefined the function of central office as a service provider for school improvement

- Revamped and standardized high school course descriptions and offerings to reflect standards
- Defined and published the Worcester Framework for High Quality Teaching and Learning
- Initiated Implementation Audit via the Leadership and Learning Center (Doug Reeves)
- Implemented the Innovation School component of the Act Relative to the Achievement Gap, 2010 using the Conditions for School Effectiveness as a screening tool
- Implemented the Comprehensive Accountability System for district and school levels
- Initiated weekly meetings between Human Resources and the instructional division to align human capital with student needs
- Defined and proposed a Policy for Teaching and Learning to drive systematic rapid, sustained improvement throughout the district
- Designed and adopted a 5-phase curriculum revision cycle to ensure a high quality written curriculum that is congruent with district expectations for student learning

3) Align internal and external systems of support with the instructional core and intended high levels of student achievement.

- Built a zero-based budget to align financial resources with student results
- Aligned state financial supports (Commissioner's Memorandum of Understanding) with district redesign and school transformation
- Shifted district resources to implement interventions fully and effectively via an instructional coaching model
- Restructured the instructional division under the Chief Academic Officer to mirror school transformation and the implementation of a three-tiered instructional model
- Redefined key job descriptions of central office personnel to align with the needs of transforming school performance
- Restructured School Committee Standing Committees to reflect the organizational shift to support district redesign and school transformation
- Established weekly written communication from central office instructional division to schools regarding leadership, instructional improvement, and district progress
- Established meetings for principals to interface directly with the Chief Academic Officer
- Initiated dialogue with local community social-emotional and health support agencies
- Partnered with Boston Connects to apply for I-3 grant funding to support the implementation of a sustainable wrap-around service delivery model

The results of this early work demonstrate positive impact on student achievement and set the stage for expanding and deepening district redesign.

Results of Adult Actions

1) Shift from a system of compliance to a system of results

The Worcester Compact sets ambitious but achievable vision for all students to achieve at high levels of performance by 2012. Feedback from a broad base of stakeholders, including parents, teachers, administrators, and community members indicate that the vision has taken root and set the direction for the district. "Improving the numbers and providing safe learning spaces are legitimate goals, but they can't replace the power of a larger vision, persona and shared, as the driving forces behind improving schools." (Senge, Peter, 2000. *Schools that learn*. Doubleday, p. 22).

The increasing scope of district improvement required the commitment and capacity of a redesign team with broader membership than that of the executive leadership team. To that end, Dr. Boone and the executive leadership team designed a cross-functional District Redesign Team called the L.E.A.P. Team

(Lead, Educate, Accelerate, and Perform). The acronym calls to mind the challenge and nature of transformation needed in the system, as well as key responsibilities of each member of the team.

Traditional teams are one-dimensional and based on defined tasks with hierarchical coordination. Unlike traditional teams, the Worcester District Redesign Team is designed to be multi-dimensional and extend beyond the traditional organizational boundaries. "The viability of any organization depends on its ability to adapt actively to the changing requirements…. A modular structure embedded in a multi-dimensional scheme can achieve the required level of flexibility and redundancy to create an adaptive, learning system." (Gharajedaghi, Jamshid, 1999. *Systems thinking: managing chaos and complexity*. Butterworth Heinemann, p. 97). The concept is to continue to expand membership of the District Redesign Team deeper and wider throughout the organization.

Membership is determined by the level of coherence with the district's vision as well as the ability of the member to add to the district's power-to-do. It is afforded to those who have the capacity to contribute to the fruition of the district's vision. Power-to-do can be thought of as the power to enact the Essential Conditions of School Effectiveness as a decision making mechanism throughout the school district. In this design, the capacity of the district to accelerate improvement that is rapid and sustainable will be accomplished by duplicating special purpose modules throughout the learning community.

A third phase expanded membership to include the district's external transformation provider, a representative from the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and representation from school principals. A fourth iteration of the District Redesign Team expanded to the work of other teams, including the Comprehensive Accountability System Team, Innovation Schools Local Partnership Group, and Level IV Schools Local Stakeholder Group.   The latest expansion extends membership beyond the district's boundaries. The Redesign Team now includes The Community Accountability Team, facilitated by the Worcester Education Collaborative and Colleges of Worcester Consortium, and the Promise Neighborhood work, supported by the United Way and Clark University.

District redesign work has also moved more deeply through the organization, as supported by the District Accountability Plan (2010). Each division of central office contributes to accelerating school effectiveness and student achievement. Data teams are emerging under each division. An example is the instructional division's Delta Team. This team's organization mirrors the three-tiered instructional organization of schools and seeks to enact the values of *integrity* (actions matching words), *every student ensured access to the core curriculum* (high quality standards), and *social justice* (linking equity and excellence by meeting the needs of individuals). The weekly agenda includes celebrations of successes, progress monitoring of strategy implementation, dialogue relevant to problem-solving, and adjustments needed to increase individual and team efficacy.

An increase in the number of pathways opening communication among all stakeholders can be seen in the district.   "Leaders must instill commitment in others rather than merely demanding compliance. The unmistakable conclusion of contemporary social research is that people are eager to commit. They are truly starved to connect with competent, trustworthy leaders." (Pearce, Terry, 1995. Leading out loud. Jossey-Bass, p. ix). The Superintendent delivered her first State of the District address to the community in 2009, as well as opening schools with an interactive, televised community meeting for the district's staff. The instructional team publishes a weekly electronic communication, *Leading to Succeed*. The Chief Academic Officer conducts in-person meetings with school principals each month called the "Breakfast of Champions." The district's updated website is a useful communication tool for parents, teachers, administrators, and the community. The Superintendent conducts monthly meetings with her High School Advisory Council as a way of garnering student voice for decision-making and addressing student issues. The School Committee's monthly meeting of the Standing Committee for Teaching, Learning, and Student Supports has become a popular mode of communication relative to District Redesign as well as general issues regarding instruction.

The instructional division's redesign supports the development and distribution of leadership throughout the district. Monthly school visits support the transfer of knowledge about best practices and encourages collective commitment to continuous improvement.

The District's Comprehensive Accountability System came on-line during the summer of 2010.

It was composed by a broad base of stakeholders including school and district level representation. Membership included parents, the business community, higher education, and social agencies. Four distinct but inter-related goals for improvement unite the district, schools and community: 1) Academic improvement among all students, 2) Develop and maintain safe and secure schools, 3) Foster high levels of family and community engagement, commitment and partnership, and 4) Develop a formal communication system in order to better transfer information of effective practices and needs. On December 6, 2010, each school and district department received formal feedback about its first accountability plan from review teams composed of school and district staff to maximize accelerated performance. These accountability plans help to inform our decision making process. (*See Appendix A: District Level – Quadrant Office Accountabliity Plan*)

2) Link adult actions to student results

On August 19, 2010, district and school level administrators convened for a workshop called, "School Improvement: *The Central Office raison d'être*," part of the district's annual Summer Leadership Institute. *(See Appendix A: District Level – The Central Office raison d'être)* The new organizational structure was introduced to the district and clarification made regarding the functions of central office as *service provider* to schools for their improvement. Feedback from schools regarding the effectiveness of these structural changes has been very positive.

Secondary level course descriptions were aligned to standards, providing greater access for students to core instruction. Implementation occurred in the spring of 2010. Next steps include the development of common formative and summative assessments.

The district defined and published its Framework for High Quality Teaching and Learning as a way of defining and standardizing expectations for teaching and learning across the district. *(See Appendix A: District Level - High Quality Teaching and Learning).* This framework has three pillars, 1) Organizing the classroom, 2) Instructional design and delivery, and 3) Student ownership of learning. Implementation of the Worcester Framework for High Quality Teaching and Learning began in the fall of 2010. The district monitors the implementation via classroom walkthroughs conducted with school administrators. An Implementation Audit is underway, conducted by Doug Reeves's Leadership and Learning Center. The goal of the implementation audit is to provide the district with baseline data regarding the implementation of the Framework for High Quality Teaching and Learning and to develop high leverage strategies to improve instructional practices. In February 2011, Doug Reeves will provide feedback to district and school level administrators regarding the implementation and to support the district's next steps in accelerating school performance.

The district used the Conditions for School Effectiveness as a decision-making tool to develop guidelines for possible approval of Innovation Schools. A Local Partnership Group, composed of parents, the teaching staff, administration, community, social service agencies, and higher education, convened to develop guidelines using the Conditions for School Effectiveness. Subsequently, the Worcester School Committee adopted these guidelines to support the development of Innovation Schools in the district. The district received seven Innovation School Proposals. The Screening Committee has approved five of the seven proposals for next steps in the development process.

The Manager of Human Resources meets weekly with the district's instructional division for the purpose of examining practices and policies influencing the delivery of services to students. Human capital is the key to the district's success. These meetings result in greater alignment between its human capital and student needs.

The Worcester School Committee's Standing Committee for Teaching, Learning, and Student Supports brought the Policy for Teaching and Learning to the table for consideration in February 2010. It is currently being vetted by stakeholders. This important policy will govern practices across the domains of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and professional development. It focuses support from central office on school improvement, and focuses school support on the instructional core. The Policy for Learning delineates expectations for the implementation of a three-tiered instructional system that

provides each student with access to rigorous standards in core instruction, tier two support to take meaningful next steps, and intensive instruction as needed. Anecdotal, formative, and summative data are used to inform instruction and ensure all students are afforded meaningful instruction. Student performance informs teachers' about their professional development needs to ensure human capital development matches student needs.

The Worcester School Committee adopted a 5-phase curriculum renewal cycle in November 2010. This policy milestone defines expectations for the development and continuous refinement of curriculum, aligning high quality standards and student needs with meaningful instructional supports. "Just as a finished architectural blueprint must contain everything needed to guide the actual construction of a building…it is necessary to first design the "big picture" blueprint of a comprehensive instruction and assessment model….before attention turns to "building" each individual component." (Ainsworth, Larry, 2006. *Common formative assessments: How to connect standards-based instruction and assessment.* Corwin Press, p. 11). A broad base of stakeholders ensures each content area is supported by a curriculum and system of assessments that are rigorous, relevant, and culturally attuned.

3) Align internal and external systems of support with the instructional core and intended high levels of student achievement.

Constrained local and national economic conditions required new thinking to balance the district's budget while accelerating student achievement. Zero-base budgeting was implemented as a method of focusing resources to achieve the district's intended outcomes regarding student achievement. This approach allowed the district to realign its resources, reducing its FY 2010 budget by approximately $8 million while maintaining small class sizes and comprehensive programming focused on college and career readiness, and continuing to support improved capacity through quality professional development. Funding provided by the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to the district via the Commissioner's Memorandum of Understanding was strategically positioned to positively impact the system's alignment with instruction and high levels of student achievement. Local funding and grant resources were reconfigured to support the addition of a full-time instructional coach in each elementary school. Through this process, all funding streams were examined and focused to support rapid and sustainable improvement in the district, schools, and classrooms.

Feedback from principals and central office administrators informed the Chief Academic Officer's decision to restructure the instructional division of central office. The new structure mirrored the three-tiered instructional improvement system implemented in schools and provides clear alignment between the service delivery system of central office and the needs of schools. Additionally, job descriptions were evaluated and revised to better align with the intended outcomes of the central office team. With the organization of central office instructional staff members into a district-level instructional data team called Delta, the implementation of improvement strategies, ensuring mutual accountability and accelerated school performance could be monitored.

Increased levels of communication and engagement with stakeholders build ownership and contribute to the decision-making process. The School Committee's monthly Standing Committee for Teaching, Learning, and Student Supports has become well attended by teachers, principals, and community members. The Chief Academic Officer meets twice each month with principals to diminish barriers to accelerated improvement. Feedback has been very positive and attendance continues to be high. Raising student achievement is a complex task, particularly when addressing the needs of students who have diverse economic, ethnic, and language backgrounds. Social-emotional and health needs of students contribute to the complexity of raising student achievement. Worcester Public Schools has learned from the success of Boston Connects and has begun to engage local support agencies to mirror this proven approach to supporting children and families. The development of successful partnerships resulted in the award of a Promise Neighborhood planning grant to the United Way.

Actions taken to address the district's three key challenges to accelerated student performance have had a positive impact on student achievement during the pre-implementation phase of District Redesign. The chief measure of success of these interventions is sustained measurable gains in student

learning. In Worcester Public Schools, this is measured by both MCAS and district/school internal measures. In 2010, Worcester Public Schools demonstrated significant gains in student learning as measured by MCAS.

- Growth in every grade tested (Grades 3 through 8) in both English Language Arts and Mathematics
- Double digit gains in Grade 3 reading
- Eight Worcester schools named by the Governor as Commendation Schools for their academic growth and continued success in closing the achievement gap
- Burncoat Senior High School was one of 10 schools recognized statewide for the largest combined increase in the percent of student scoring Proficient and Advanced

In 2009, Worcester Public Schools demonstrated the first district-wide increase in Grade 3 reading in eight years and the highest rates of Proficient and Above in Grades 3, 5, 7, 8 and 10 for English Language Arts and in Grades 3, 7, 8, and 10 for Mathematics. These trends continue in 2010 (*please see Figures 1 and 2*).

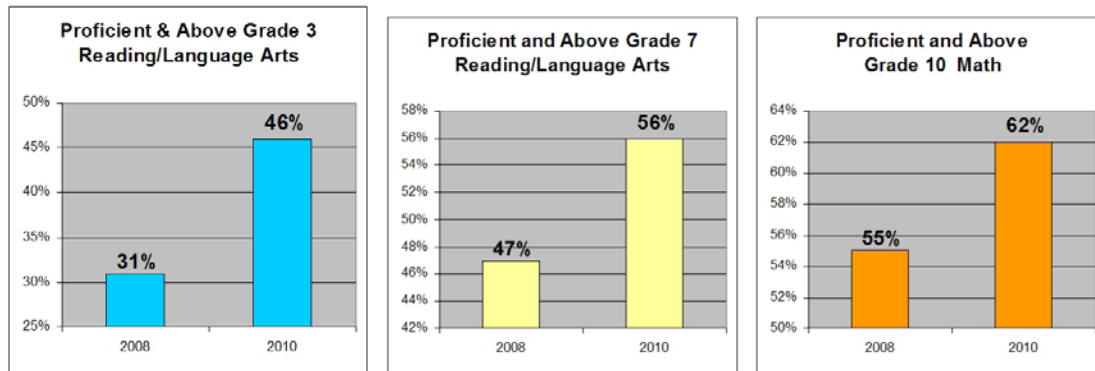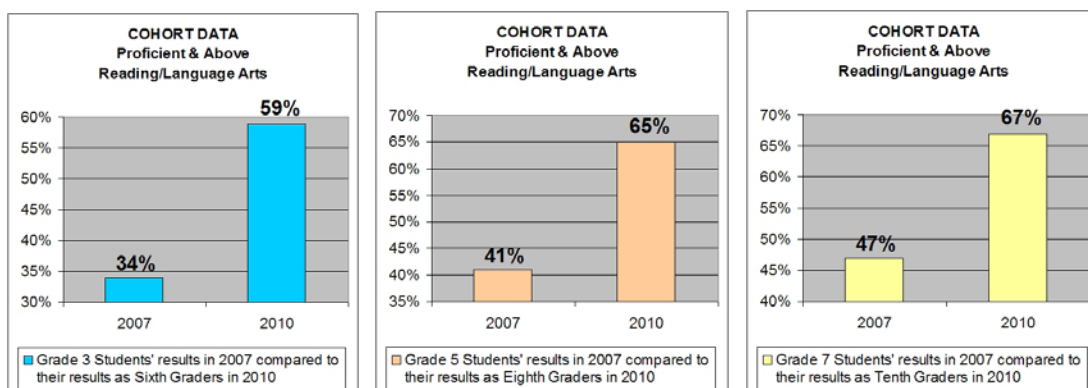**Figure 1 – Trend data from 2008 to 2010.**

Figure 2 – Cohort Trend Data for 2007 – 2010.

Worcester Public Schools: Cohort Data 2007 – 2010
Proficient and Above in Reading/English Language Arts MCAS

2. Key Strategies and Theory of Action

Worcester Public Schools uses a phased approach to improvement focused on the probing and use of data, broad-based participation, and ongoing refinement to the plan. An example of the district's use of data to drive accelerated student achievement can be seen in its development of the Worcester Improvement Strategy.
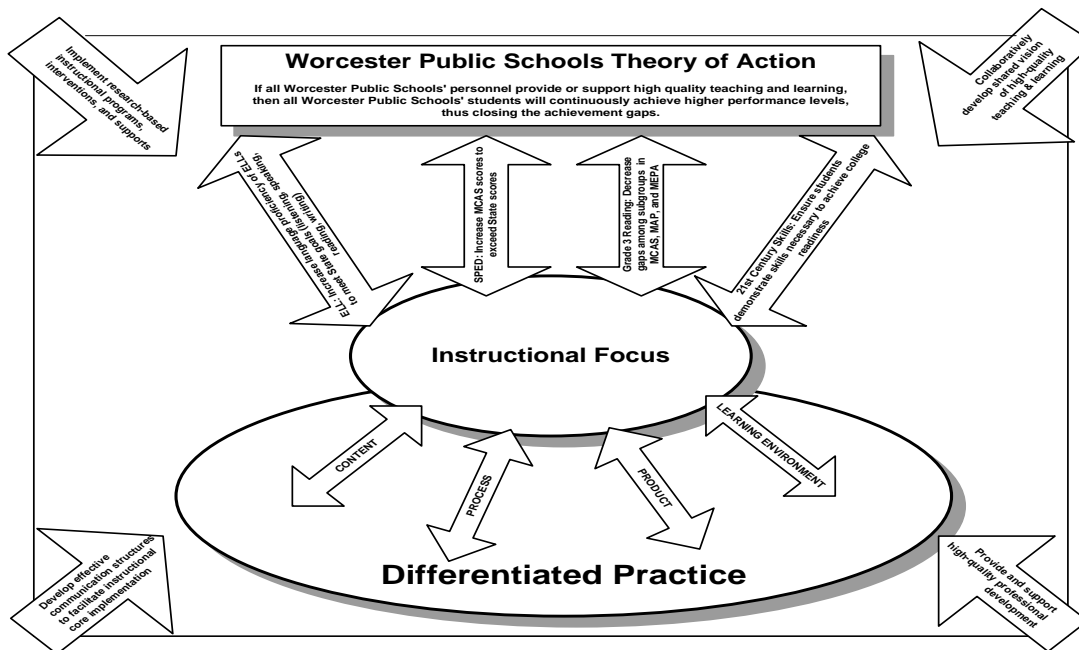
The District Redesign Team (LEAP) engaged in root cause analysis and created the Worcester Improvement Framework so that it would align to the Worcester Compact (see Table 2). The Executive Leadership Program for Educators (ExEL) at Harvard University informed and guided the LEAP team through data analysis and strategy formation.

Table 2 – Worcester Compact

Worcester Compact	
Delivering on high expectations and outstanding results for all students 100% of students will be guaranteed a rigorous core curriculum resulting in measurable gains in student learning	
Attained by 2012	*Attained by 2013*
80% of students will be proficient in reading and math by Grade 3. 80% of students will be proficient in ELA and math by Grade 8.	100% of graduates will successfully complete high school coursework that prepares them for both college and career

The work of the LEAP team resulted in the Worcester Improvement Framework (see Table 3). The *Worcester Improvement Framework*, illustrated below, shows the connection between highly-leveraged adult actions and student outcomes. When adults implement a shared vision of research-based, high quality teaching and learning, effective communication structures, and high quality professional development then students will achieve at high levels and achievement gaps will close

Table 3 – Worcester Improvement Framework

Worcester Public Schools Theory of Action

If all Worcester Public Schools' personnel provide or support high quality teaching and learning, then all Worcester Public Schools' students will continuously achieve higher performance levels, thus closing the achievement gaps.

Implement research-based instructional programs interventions, and supports

Collaboratively develop shared vision of high-quality teaching & learning

SPED: Increase MCAS scores to exceed State scores

Grade 3 Reading: Decrease gaps among subgroups in MCAS, MAP, and MEPA

ELL: Increase language proficiency of ELLs (Bilingual, reading, listening, writing, speaking) to meet State goals

21st Century Skills: Ensure students demonstrate skills necessary to achieve college readiness

Instructional Focus

CONTENT

PROCESS

PRODUCT

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Differentiated Practice

Develop effective communication structures to facilitate instructional core implementation

Provide and support high-quality professional development

The Executive Leadership Program for Educators (ExEL) at Harvard University in association with the Wallace Foundation began as a way to help improve urban and high need districts and help state departments of education bring high quality teaching and learning to scale. The initiative builds on and integrates several separate programs and approaches being used in Harvard's graduate schools. ExEL is a collaborative effort of Harvard's Business School, Graduate School of Education, and Kennedy School of Government involving faculty members working together with district and state superintendents and their teams to build on the knowledge and skills of participating teams in four essential areas: teaching and learning; system development and organizational coherence; leadership and team building, and state and local networks.

Ongoing data analysis during 2010 has uncovered four critical issues for the district, 1) lack of a systematic approach to human capital development throughout the system, 2) lack of a systematic approach to three-tiered instruction, 3) lack of systematic supervision and evaluation, and 4) lack of alignment of partnerships with the acceleration of student achievement.

An organization's success in improving performance depends critically upon the capabilities, skills, and motivation of the people working in it (*Education Criteria for Performance Excellence*, Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2010-2011). The identification of the district's first critical issue, regarding human capital development, led it to identify High Quality Teaching and Learning as its key priority. Developing the skills and knowledge of the workforce, most importantly classroom teachers, is the district's key strategy for improvement.

The Delta team's analysis of 2009 results from MCAS, MEPA, graduation rates, and Advanced Placement (UMASS Donahue Institute, 2010) illustrates the district's second critical issue for systematic implementation of a three-tiered instructional model. This analysis revealed a limited link between English language acquisition and graduation rates. Additionally, a discrepancy exists between the percentage of students enrolled in Advanced Placement courses and the percentage of Hispanic students in the district. In this example, a causal link was established. English Language Learners (ELL) have had

limited graduation success due to their lack of access to high quality standards in core instruction. The district's second key priority is to ensure that all students have access to core standards and appropriate instructional supports. The district's key strategy is to support effective instructional design and delivery in every school.

Systematic supervision and evaluation practices are essential to improving schools as places where adults can make a difference for students (Saphier, Jon, 1993. *How to make supervision and evaluation really work.* Research for Better Teaching). The district's lack of systematic supervision and evaluation frames its third critical issue. As a result, the district's third key priority is to use data to link the efficacy of adults to student results. The district is committed to developing and implementing a rigorous evaluation system and is anticipating support for this strategy through the State's Race to the Top grant.

Several data sources served to identify the last critical issue, improved alignment of partnerships to support accelerated student achievement. Results from the 2010 Partnership Summit, 2010 Innovation Schools Local Partnership Group, and 2010 Comprehensive Accountability System Team point to the need for greater alignment of partnerships with the district's intended outcomes for student learning. The district's fourth key priority is to distribute leadership through partnership by increasing the coherence between partners and the district and schools through education and engagement. Partnerships that support the instructional core and reinforce positive feedback, loop between the organization and the community and cultivate the scale and sustainability required for the success of schools and students in the 21st century (Coburn, Cynthia, 2003. *Rethinking change: Moving beyond numbers to deep and lasting change.* Educational Researcher, Vol. 32, No. 6). Developing partnerships aligned to the district's focus is the fourth key strategy.

The district's four key strategies focus on human capital development, instructional delivery, systematic implementation of core, supplemental and intensive supports for students, and partnership development strategically in support of accelerated, sustainable change across the district. These four strategies bring sharper focus to the Essential Conditions for School Effectiveness and provide a solid foundation for the District Improvement Framework, as illustrated in the District Improvement Coherence Framework (Table 4). The key strategies represent the district's coherent set of actions that are deliberately undertaken to strengthen the instructional core with the objective of raising student performance district-wide. "Gaining coherence at the district, school, and classroom levels will make a district's chosen strategy more scalable and sustainable" (Public Education Leadership Project (PELP), adapted from Tushman and O'Reilly's Congruence Model, 2002.)

The Worcester Improvement Framework identifies four priority targets for improvement: (1) improved performance of English Language Learners (ELL), (2) improved performance of students with identified exceptionalities, (3) improved literacy performance among Grade 3 students, and (4) improved college and career readiness of all students. The Worcester Improvement Framework ensures focus and coherence among schools and throughout the district.

Table 4: District Improvement Coherence Framework

Priority Needs	Critical Issue	Key Priority	Key Strategy	Essential Conditions	Worcester Improvement Framework
1) Improved achievement for English Language Learners (ELL)	Lack of Systematic Approach to Human Capital Development	Develop the System's Leadership and Instructional Capacity	Hire, Develop, & Retain Effective Instructional Leaders Align District Function to	1, 2, 7, 10, 11	Provide & support high quality professional development

			School Improvement		
2) Improved achievement for students with special needs	Lack of a Systematic, Standards-based Approach to Core, Supplemental, and Intensive Instruction	Provide All Students with Access to High Quality, Standards-based Instruction	Implement a Three-tiered Instructional Model with Fidelity	3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 11	Implement research-based instructional programs
3) Improved Reading and Math achievement for students in Grade 3	Lack of Systematic Supervision & Evaluation	Link Adult Efficacy to Student Results	Develop and Implement a Data-informed Evaluation System for Teachers and Administrators	1, 2, 4, 5, 6	Develop shared vision for high quality teaching and learning
4) Improved college & career readiness for every student	Lack of Partnerships Aligned to Accelerate and Sustain District Improvement	Align Partners to District Improvement Framework	Distribute Leadership to Partners through Education and Engagement	1, 8, 9, 10	Develop effective communication structures to support core instruction

The district's actions to accelerate student achievement during the pre-implementation phase demonstrate its capacity and commitment to use school improvement funds to support school redesign plans and the successful implementation of the transformation model and strategies. Pre-implementation accomplishments include: 1) the recruitment, screening, and selection of the executive leadership team; 2) the alignment of district resources with school transformation: 3) changes in practices and policies to enable the implementation of interventions fully and effectively: and 4) an approach that supports sustained reform regardless of additional funding.

Pre-implementation results demonstrate the use of extensive and detailed analysis of current, accurate and precise data to formulate pre-implementation redesign action plans to transform the district and its schools. Data sources include state assessments of student performance, longitudinal studies of student discipline and graduation rates, state assessments of district systems, perceptual data from the district's external transformation provider, survey and anecdotal information from community and partnership meetings, evaluation feedback from the Department of Justice, audits of district systems that integrate classroom observation and staff interview by independent consultants, and a community study conducted by the Massachusetts social service sector.

Evidence of the pre-implementation plan's impact on student achievement provides testament to the extent to which the district is strategic and thorough in its planning and approach. A clear theory of action, prioritized key actions, strategies, and leverage points using the Conditions for School Effectiveness will continue to shape the district's transformation process as it moves into the deeper, more precise work needed at each of its Level IV schools. Additionally, rapid and sustained improvement across the district demonstrates the district's capacity and commitment to bringing similar results to schools with Level III and Level IV designation via similar, albeit more targeted work.

3. District Redesign and Planning

The district continues to build a stakeholder-based, multi-dimensional model to structure its District Redesign Team, Figure 3. Central to this structure is the superintendent and the cross-functional membership of the LEAP team. Although the superintendent is the formal chair or leader of the team,

extensions of the team take it beyond the formal boundaries of the school district. A professional profile for each member of the. (See *Appendix A: District Level- Resumes of District Level Leaders*) Membership is determined by the level of coherence with the district's vision as well as the ability of the member to add to the district's power-to-do.   Power-to-do can be thought of as the power to enact the Essential Conditions of School Effectiveness as a decision making mechanism throughout the school district or at a particular school. A multi-dimensional team design multiplies the transformational power of the organization to accelerate and sustain student achievement. Team membership extends from the schools to the MA DESE. It includes the district's external turnaround partner, Focus on Results and goes beyond traditional boundaries to include community organizations and higher education.   The diverse representation among the team's membership optimizes the team's potential for innovative thinking. " The key to innovation…resides inside the heads of people, the more diverse the better" (Page, Scott, 2007. Diversity powers innovation. Center for American Progress).

        This concept fueled several important improvement processes in the district, including the Local Stakeholder Groups for Chandler Elementary School and Union Hill Elementary School. The Local Stakeholder Group of each school convened for six, four-hour sessions during May and June 2010. Evaluations of these processes were very strong and positive across the stakeholder continuum. Additionally, the diverse representation added to the ownership for improvement in student results at each school. The Local Stakeholder Group's recommendations, framed by the Essential Conditions for School Effectiveness, were incorporated into the superintendent's Turnaround Plan.   Quarterly meetings, scheduled for December 2010, February, April, and June 2011 at each school provide ongoing updates and progress monitoring of improvement efforts. Careful attention was given to team membership. It was important that the team be cross-functional, possess a wide range of qualities including technical and adaptive.

Figure 4 – Multi-dimensional District Redesign Team
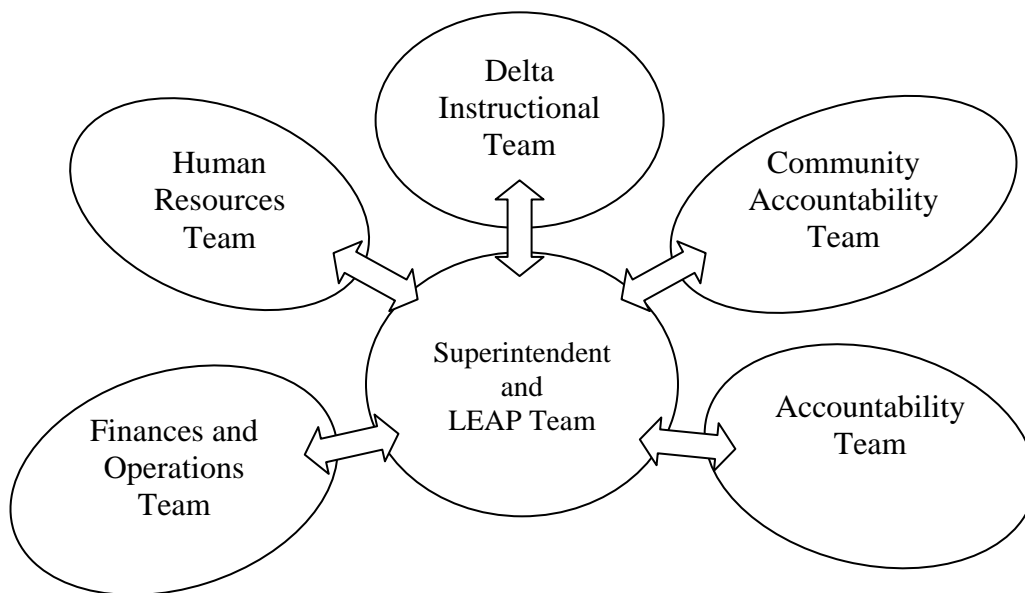
The District's Redesign Team is goal oriented and relies upon effective team processes to manage meetings. Facilitation responsibilities are shared among the members. Meeting agendas are constructed to improve district and school performance through high impact adult action. Organizations improve effectiveness by learning how to monitor, control, and constantly improve systems (Sholtes, Peter, 1994. *The team handbook: How to use teams to improve quality.* Joiner.) Effective facilitation supports the team's focus and ensures high levels of participation. Consensus building is highly effective with the cross-functional membership. Decisions are based on data, not guesswork. The use of a scientific approach has become standard procedure. The focus is on improving how the work gets accomplished (process) instead of simply what is accomplished (results).

4. School Redesign Leadership Pipeline

The District Plan for school leadership and staffing is based upon a Theory of Action that deliberate and competent leaders can improve student performance, given the autonomy to select staff capable of providing high quality instruction, with intensive professional development, coaching and evaluation.

The District will utilize national and local media and online recruitment to attract high-quality educators. Principals and their Instructional Leadership Teams (ILT) will determine any additional minimal qualifications to impose upon otherwise qualified candidates including, but not limited to, dual-licensure in special education or English Language Learners, (ELL), etc. Principals may also include ILTs in the meeting and interview process. *(For an example of the work of the ILT, see Appendix A: District Level – ILT Newsletter.)*

Internal candidates who seek to transfer will be required to meet any increased qualifications. Vacancies for Level IV schools will be advertised separately from other vacancies and will include a mandatory information session prior to becoming eligible to apply. Principals and ILTs may meet with prospective transfer candidates to determine their appropriateness for the vacancies.

Imposing the same increased scrutiny for internal transfers as for external applicants may result in limited union unrest, however the District is confident that, given the reduced standard for dismissal, teachers who are not prepared for such demands will not pursue such vacancies.

Staff from the District's Human Resources Department will meet monthly with Principals and Assistant Principals to determine which teachers need additional support and which teachers may need to be dismissed for failure to meet standards. All such teachers shall be notified of their skill deficits on or before February 1 of each year.

The Level IV schools are fully staffed for the 2010 – 2011 school year. Accordingly, the District provides no cost opportunities for teachers to become dual-licensed in ELL. No-cost professional development is also available in other areas, including pedagogy and most content areas. However, the District is developing a pipeline for vacancies which will inevitably result from attrition.

Leadership at the Level IV schools has been determined. Drawing on exceptional human capital within the district, Superintendent Boone recruited and appointed two experienced and accomplished principals to lead the district's two Level IV schools. In April 2010, June Eressy was selected to become the principal of Chandler Elementary School and Marie Morse was selected to become the principal of Union Hill School.

Dr. Boone realized Ms. Eressy's nationally recognized work in eliminating the achievement gap in another urban, low-income school in the city of Worcester would be instrumental to the turnaround process of Chandler Elementary School. Ms. Eressy had proven experience in using data to conduct frank and honest assessments of a school's needs, setting rigorous goals to improve student learning, helping staff use data in ways to create personal connections with students, developing plans for students to improve their learning and holding teachers personally accountable for student improvement.

Mrs. Morse is recognized for her ability to accelerate and sustain high levels of student performance. Her prior experience as principal of Clark Street School demonstrated successful implementation of data teams, systematic instruction, and partnership development. Clark Street School

is designated as a Level I school by the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and is distinguished as one of the eight Worcester schools named by the Governor as Commendation Schools for its academic growth and continued success in closing the achievement gap.

Dr. Boone was confident Ms. Eressy and Mrs. Morse could confront the brutal reality of the current condition of each Level IV school and bring the schools to greatness (Collins, 2001). (EC#2-Effective school leadership)

Principal Eressy and Principal Morse were given autonomy to select a leadership team. (EC#6 – staffing authority) 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). The principals selected teams of individuals who:

- 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.

Each principal is confident that her team is capable of successfully implementing the transformation model due to the high quality process used to select teachers for leadership positions.

The district will continue its partnership with Focus on Results, the external turnaround support provider. Focus on Results is a national leader in helping districts and schools accelerate improved student achievement. Recommendations from the District Plan for School Intervention (DIPSI) Review, 2009, and improved student performance results, illustrated in Figures 1 and 2 above, support the continuation of this partnership.

The liaison provided to the district by the state provides ongoing consultation for Worcester Public Schools. This important support ensures access to a wide variety of potential partnerships for future consideration, should the need for additional external partners arise.

5. External Partner's Pipeline

The district has partnered with Focus On Results (FOR), an international consulting firm dedicated to finding results-oriented solutions to the challenges of educating all students at high levels. The consulting firm provides direct services to principals, teachers and district leaders – working to improve instruction and results for all students.

Our transformation partners, Focus on Results, provide executive coaching and technical support to our schools. While the support to each school is built around their individual strengths and challenges, the foundational principle remains the same: to help school leaders build systems and structures that support high quality teaching and learning in every classroom, every day. Specifically executive coaching support focuses on helping school leaders use data, refine practices, reallocate resources, and increase their presence as instructional leaders. Each visit consists of targeted and specific executive coaching for the building principal and focused instructional coach (elementary/middle school) around their current improvement efforts. At the conclusion of each visit, schools are left with next steps that are intended to help the school continue to move forward in their work. Follow up support is offered between visits ensuring that the next steps are more than just words on a paper.

6. Effective District Systems for Planning, Supporting, and Monitoring Implementation

Worcester Public Schools has restructured its central office as a support to school improvement generally, and to ensure effective monitoring and school redesign for Level IV schools specifically. Additionally, principals of Level IV schools have direct access to the superintendent and her executive

leadership team to maximize efficient support as needed.

Leadership development and the implementation of core instruction are supported by two district Quadrant Managers. One of these Quadrant Managers is responsible for supporting the two Level IV schools, Chandler Elementary School and Union Hill Elementary School. This Quadrant Manager provides support and monitors the implementation of school re-design efforts. Quadrant Managers provide line supervision for the district's curriculum liaisons, ensuring the deployment of curriculum support to schools. Quadrant Managers plan and implement systematic leadership development among principals via weekly, on-site engagement.

The Manager for Supplemental and English Language Learner Supports is responsible for supporting effective supplemental programming across the district. The Manager for Special Education and Health Services is responsible for supporting the effective delivery of intensive level programming at schools across the district. The Manager of Professional Development is responsible for the design and implementation of a coordinated professional development plan that integrates and aligns district- and school-level learning. The remaining central office managers are responsible for developing and maintaining high quality supports for schools that clear the way for a focus on instruction. This strategic approach to supporting accelerated results across the district, particularly at Level IV schools, is aligned with district's four key strategies, Table 4.

Principals and Instructional Leadership Teams participate in a variety of networking opportunities each month. Principals meet with job-alike peers in PLAN (Principal Leadership Accountability Network) meetings to share best practices, improve capacity, and focus on school and district improvement. 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 structured with school level input and provide opportunities during the year for vertical teaming.

The Worcester Public Schools organizes school learning visits four times during each school year as opportunities for school instructional leadership teams (ILT) to visit other schools 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. A walkthrough is an organized tour through a school's classrooms and other instructional areas to collect specific evidence about how well the school is implementing instructional practices to support the delivery of solid, core instruction, which supports every student, every day. A walkthrough is not simply time spent in classrooms, but also includes prep time and follow up to organize, analyze and use data collected to support the improvement efforts throughout the entire school. These learning visits, as identified by City, Elmore, and Teitel (*Instructional rounds in education: a network approach to improving teaching and learning*, Harvard Press 2009) address the gap between professional development and our ability to implement knowledge and skills offered by professional development by forcing us to look at underlying assumptions about instructional improvement and identifying and addressing the structural gaps that prevent meaningful implementation of various initiatives.

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

A well developed feedback loop is useful for monitoring and adjusting instructional support for schools across the continuum of core, supplemental and intensive instruction and professional development. Managers report progress and results weekly to the Chief Academic Officer during Delta Team meetings as a standing agenda item.

Staff assignment policies have been mentioned before (*please see section 4: School Redesign Leadership Pipeline*).

Students assignments will be handled in this way: Both Chandler Elementary and Union Hill

schools are neighborhood schools. Under our current system, there are streets assigned to each of these two schools. Children who reside within these neighborhoods will be eligible for enrollment at these schools.

Since July 2010, the facilities are being reconfigured to support the implementation of the School Redesign plan through efforts that will allow for a safe and welcoming school environment and enhancing space that allows for high-quality teaching and learning.

Repairs at Union Hill Elementary School have addressed practical and aesthetic concerns. A new roof was installed at the school. All new school furniture has been purchased and installed. Most classrooms and hallways have been repainted. A new ceiling has been installed in the school's main hallway. Student bathrooms have been renovated. To address a welcoming environment, a new reception area has been created and installed in the main office of the school. On the exterior, the fencing surrounding the school has been repaired. New installations include window screening, a flagpole and a planting bed. The reading intervention program is being housed in a new computer lab. Additionally, the Worcester School Committee has approved $530,000 in funding that will allow for the repaving of the school yard and playground area, additional bathroom renovations, floor repairs and boiler replacement.

Since July of 2010, Chandler Elementary School has had its facilities reconfigured to support the implementation of the redesign plan through efforts that allow for a safe and welcoming environment and enhancement of space that allows for high quality teaching and learning. A new roof was installed at the school and the playground was repaved. New ceiling replaced old in selected area. Space was converted that created classroom space as well as space for a library. New flooring has been installed, interior and exterior spaces have been painted and enhancements were made for spaces used for Kindergarten classes.

Additionally, the Worcester School Committee has approved $230,000 in funding that will allow for bathroom renovations, ceiling, floors and window repairs.

At Union Hill School, the school began increased learning opportunities that include 90 additional minutes of instruction. This started on December 6, 2010. All students are provided regular or special education transportation at the end of the expanded day.

At Chandler Elementary School, the school began increased learning opportunities that includes 90 additional minutes of instruction. This started on December 6, 2010. All students are provided regular or special education transportation at the end of the expanded day.

Ongoing, intensive technical assistance will be provided to each Level IV school by the district. During the pre-implementation phase, the district's Quadrant Office, Chief Academic Officer, Chief Financial and Operations Officer, Grant Department, Chief Accountability Officer, and Manager of Human Resources supported the implementation of School Turnaround Plans, the Early Implementation Grant, and the Bridge Grant. District resources coordinated responses to and engagement in the Joint Resolution Committee process. Level IV principals have direct access to the superintendent, her executive leadership team, and a Quadrant Manager to support efficient, timely action to clear barriers to improvement.

Each Level IV school, as other schools in the district, uses its Accountability Plan to monitor short-term goals every five weeks and adjust strategies as determined by the analysis and use of data. The Chief Research and Accountability Officer will monitor each school's measurable annual goals and related benchmarks. Each school accountability plan was reviewed in November 2010 for quality by a cross-functional team of school- and district-level educators. The Quadrant Manager met with each principal to deliver feedback and support improvements as needed. Weekly formal communication and site visits between Level IV school principals and the Quadrant Manager support the monitoring of intervention implementation. Quarterly progress monitoring meetings are scheduled in December 2010, February, April, and June 2011 to engage each school community in the process of school improvement and to celebrate success.