

*Anne S. Wilson
Mid-Cycle Report*

Superintendent's Goals 2014-2015 (approved 10/03/14)

Student Learning Goal: I will work with the administrative team to enhance our ability to meet the varied learning needs of all students as measured by district common assessments and standardized assessments. I will place emphasis on reducing proficiency gaps for students in the SWD and LI subgroups. Proficiency gaps for students with disabilities and students from low-income homes will have decreased by 2% or more as reflected on Spring 2015 standardized tests.

Related Standard of Effective Administrative Leadership Practice:

Standard I: Instructional Leadership – Indicator/Element I-B-1, I-B-3, I-C-1, I-C-2, I-D-1, I-D-2, I-D-4, I-E-1, I-E-3

Standard II: Management and Operations – Indicator/Element II-C-2, II-E-1

Standard III: Family and Community Engagement – Indicator/Element III-B-1

Standard IV: Professional Culture – Indicator/Element IV-A-1, IV-D-1

Related SPS Strategic Objectives: #1 Ensure that all students have access to high quality, research-based, differentiated content and high-quality instructional practices in a safe environment; #2 Align district curriculum to content standards to enhance rigor and coherence; and #3 Analyze student-learning data consistently to inform instruction and improve student achievement.

Key Actions:

- Review and analyze student achievement data for aggregate, SWD and LI subgroups with administrative team. [Completed and ongoing work at individual schools.](#)
- Work with administrative team to analyze type of service delivery and other supports for students in SWD and LI subgroups and evaluate for trends related to achievement. [Completed and ongoing work at individual schools as well as district-level planning for FY16.](#)
- Identify measures of achievement in addition to standardized test scores and report progress for all students 2014-2015 and 2015-2016. [Common assessments and district determined measures have been identified and implemented in mathematics and ELA at the elementary level. Common assessments are in development at the middle school level with some being implemented. This work will be ongoing based upon evaluation of assessments currently in use.](#)
- Work with Assistant Superintendent to focus professional development activities to support implementation of standards aligned curriculum and effective instructional strategies, including specification of challenge learning opportunities. [In progress and continuing. Current year PD offerings reflect this work \(see attached PD offering grids in Exhibit A\).](#)

- Work with principals through focused classroom observations and de-brief sessions with school leaders and district curriculum and special education administrators. [In progress and continuing throughout the school year.](#)

Evidence:

- Agendas from relevant administrative team meetings. [\(attached – Exhibit B\)](#)
- Calendar of school visits for classroom observations. [\(attached – Exhibit C\)](#)
- Summary of actions taken as a result of data analysis. [\(provided at 10/8 and 10/22 SC meetings and updated as appropriate during the school year\)](#)
- School Committee presentations from Student Services and Teaching and Learning departments [\(10/8, 10/22,12/17 \(to be re-scheduled\), 02/11, 04/29\).](#)
- Report of district assessment data for selected common assessments, disaggregated by subgroups. [NY \(when assessments are completed, examples of selected benchmark data will be attached\)](#)
- Standardized assessment data, disaggregated by subgroup. [\(see MCAS 2014 data presentations\): MCAS 2014-Math, MCAS 2014-EL/A, and MCAS 2014-Summary.](#)

Mid-Cycle Update:

Beginning with the administrative training in August, the team has focused on building our capacity to meet the diverse learning needs of our students. In a multi-step approach including professional development and collaboration for administrators and classroom educators and using the supervision and evaluation process to enhance our work, the district has an explicit focus on this most important work. The following steps have been taken thus far for FY15:

- Administrative training and professional reading in the areas of: leading for success for all students, data driven instruction, professional capital, and instructional technology. [\(See related agendas attached\)](#)
- Administrator SMART goals include student-learning goals related to the identified areas of need, providing a focus on capacity building at the administrative level that is consistent across the school district.
- A “deep dive” analysis of the Spring 2014 MCAS data, including an emphasis on individual scores for students with disabilities and students from low-income homes. This work was coordinated with the work of team chairs and administrators have utilized the analysis to enhance learning opportunities at the school sites. This effort also includes work in the supervision and evaluation of staff.
- We (superintendent, director of student services, director of early childhood, site principal) conducted joint classroom observations and de-brief sessions at each school in October and with the mathematics curriculum coordinator in November and the ELA curriculum coordinator currently (December). The visits are not intended to be evaluative in regard to the classroom observations but are more focused on identifying areas of strength and challenge within our programs and our capacity to meet diverse student

needs. Results of these visits include modifications in scheduling, site leadership providing supervision, further research into necessary resources/staffing efficiency and effectiveness.

- Professional development has a coherent focus on meeting the needs of diverse learners through opportunities to analyze data, learn new strategies, share effective practice, and collaborative efforts to design units of study as well as common assessments. The implementation of the 1:1 devices at Curtis has provided daily opportunities to enhance learning for all learners as well as for teachers to have “in the moment” data regarding student progress, which enhances the teacher’s ability to make adjustments as needed or to provide specific support/challenge, in real time.
- Presentations to School Committee on 10/8 and 10/22 detailed specific actions that were taken as a result of review of 2014 MCAS results as well as examples of implementation of differentiation to meet the needs of students who require more challenge. Specifically, see: Slides 12, 22-26, and 31-32 of Ms. Dixson’s 10/22 presentation at : [District Goals Update 10 22 14-Student Services](#); Slides 4-7 of Dr. Soalt’s 10/8 presentation at: [MCAS 2014-EL/A](#); and Slides 4-11 of Ms. McGinty’s 10/8 presentation at: [MCAS 2014-Math](#).

Professional Practice Goal: Develop more effective ways to communicate school district progress. Publish a District Report Card by the end of the 2014-2015 school year.

Related Standard of Effective Administrative Leadership Practice:

Standard I: Instructional Leadership – Indicator/Element I-E-1, I-E-2, I-E-3

Standard II: Management and Operations – Indicator/Element II-E-1

Standard III: Family and Community Engagement – Indicator/Element III-C-1

Standard IV: Professional Culture – Indicator/Element IV-A-1, IV-A-2, IV-D-1, And IV-D-2

Related SPS Strategic Objectives: #3 Analyze student-learning data consistently to inform instruction and improve student achievement and #4 Align resources to instructional core needs in a manner that sustains excellence and enhances the effective and efficient use of resources.

Key Actions:

Convene a district-wide team to review available data and identify key data points to communicate. [In progress](#)

Facilitate development of District Report Card. [In progress](#)

Research whether there is a need for a Data Analyst position at SPS. [NY](#)

Evidence:

Agendas/Minutes from district-wide team meetings.

District Report Card distributed/posted to the community.

Recommendation regarding Data Analyst position.

Mid-Cycle Update:

The District Report Card team has been formed including: Kim Swain, Mary Will, Michael O'Brien, Stephen Wiltshire, Paula Moore, Betsy Grams, Annis Chwalek, Cara Maxwell, Bob Armour, and Anne Wilson. At our first meeting on 11/17, we articulated the goal of the team to be: Identification of salient data points for a one-page report card that would give information about district, including what is going well, where challenges lie. The report card would allow for clearer communication with the community and form the foundation for improvement efforts. The first report card would be shared in the spring of 2015 with a timeline for updates to be determined at a later date. The team brainstormed possible topics to be included in the report card and we divided into subcommittees to identify potential data points to be discussed at the next meeting. At the meeting on 12/8, subcommittees reported on potential data points within their assigned topic. Topics considered include: parents satisfaction; teacher satisfaction; breadth of offerings/extra-curriculars; student success/connectedness; student demographics; district finances; and assessment/achievement. *Minutes from the 11/17 and 12/8 meetings are attached – Exhibit D.

District Goals (approved June 25, 2014)

District Goal #1

Enhance our ability to meet the needs of all learners.

- a. Articulate a system-wide definition of inclusive education and determine necessary resources to enhance opportunities for all learners
- b. Expand strategies to address proficiency gaps, focus on SWD and LI subgroups
- c. Identify learning opportunities to challenge students who master content within the ELA and Math curriculum
- d. Embed a focus on inclusive educational practices and meeting diverse student needs within all professional development work
- e. Identify District Determined Measures (DDMs) and begin to report progress on District Common Assessments

Goal #1 Mid-Cycle Update:

Inclusive Education

A district-wide committee has been formed and has met on the following dates thus far: 10/29, 11/12, and 12/3. Ms. Debbie Dixon, Student Services Director, is the lead on this committee. A brief summary of the work of the committee follows, including:

accomplishments to date, what is “in progress” to be accomplished, and any challenges in the work. Please see slides 8-14 of Ms. Dixson’s 10/22/14 presentation to School Committee for additional relevant information at: [District Goals Update 10 22 14-Student Services](#).

Accomplished to date:

- Committee formed including representation from across the district (general education/special education, elementary/middle school)
- Three meetings held to date 10/29, 11/12, and 12/3/14
- Agreed that “inclusion” includes students receiving special education, students from low income homes, students of color, gender identity, ELL
- Explored beliefs :
 - Viewed “Including Samuel” and discussed implications for practice at SPS
 - Shared and discussed information previously presented to administrators including Principle of Least Dangerous Assumption, Tom Hehir’s definition of inclusion and a variety of additional inclusion definitions
 - Created a Wordle that captured the thoughts of the committee in words that reflect inclusive education (may be used as a document cover, poster, etc.)

In progress to be accomplished:

- Development of written definition/document
- Next steps include assigning tasks and work to present to whole group at next meetings

Challenges in this work:

- The range of beliefs and/or level of understanding is diverse and requires more conversation and exploration of myths and realities before establishing the SPS vision for inclusion
- There is no one universal definition of inclusion that exists
- Research is limited and tends to focus on students with significant disabilities while we are exploring inclusive education with the understanding that inclusion means a wide range of student profiles are addressed with our practices and protocols

Strategies to address gaps and need for challenge

We continue to address proficiency gaps and, in particular, we have focused on the Students with Disabilities (SWD) and Students from Low Income Homes (LI) subgroups. During the MCAS 2014 review presentation, we reported an increase in the performance of the LI subgroup in both ELA and mathematics, while the SWD subgroup performance increased in mathematics but decreased in ELA. To review the data, see slides 17-20 at: [MCAS 2014-Summary](#).

As presented during the School Committee meetings on 10/8 and 10/22, research based strategies are being implemented and others newly developed to address needs identified through MCAS and other assessments. Unit and assessment development and professional development offerings address gaps as well as the need to challenge students with a higher level of skills in a particular content/topic. Presentations at the 10/8 and 10/22 School Committee meetings included specific information regarding strategies which may be reviewed as follows: ELA here: [MCAS 2014-EL/A](#); Math here: [MCAS 2014-Math](#); and, Student Services, in particular slides #22-32, may be reviewed here: [District Goals Update 10 22 14-Student Services](#). Additionally, a “Superintendent Chat” for parents to share “what it looks like if my child is challenged at school” was held on December 9, 2014. Dr. Soalt and Ms. McGinty joined me for this “chat” where 8 parents attended and shared their thoughts regarding what challenge looks like for their children. During the conversation we learned that we need to improve how we communicate the many strategies that teachers use to differentiate instruction and learning opportunities and, in particular, how we plan for challenging all students. We also learned, not surprisingly, that there are varied ideas regarding what “challenge” looks like to individuals.

Attached please note the professional development calendar (Exhibit A) and a sample of curriculum development (Exhibit E) illustrating the work of administrators and teachers, led by our curriculum coordinators and math and literacy Coaches.

The SPS Professional development calendar reflects efforts to build educator capacity and our focus and emphasis on supporting and challenging all students, integrating technology as an instructional tool, and collaboration between general education and special education. The calendar and a brief description of the SPS 2014-2015 PD plan are included in Exhibit A attached to this report.

The administrative team has reviewed MCAS data as well as IEP data and is now working at the site level with Team Chairs and teachers to identify areas for improvement as well as to identify successful practices to be shared and continued. See more information in the summary for Student Learning Goal on pages 1-3 of this report.

A 9-person team of educators and administrators from SPS attended the METCO Directors Conference on December 5, 2014 where workshops relevant to addressing varied learning needs were presented. See the workshop descriptions here: [METCO Directors Conference 12 05 14](#).

Presentations regarding student engagement, family engagement, and supporting learners with varied needs were provided to the administrative team and to building faculty (during faculty meeting time) by Steve Desrosiers, SPS METCO Director.

District Determined Measures/Common Assessments

Kim Swain, Assistant Superintendent along with Jen Soalt, ELA Curriculum Coordinator and Maggie McGinty, Mathematics Curriculum Coordinator lead this effort in collaboration with teachers and site administrators.

Educators in the district continue to implement and evaluate common assessments. Data from common assessments are used to inform instruction at the classroom and district level. Some common assessments are used to differentiate instruction based on a student's entry point as indicated by results of a pre-test or inventory of skills prior to a new unit of study. Other common assessments provide formative data and, finally, end of unit common assessments provide information on achievement after a unit or course of study has been completed. Additionally, common assessments measure curriculum alignment with content standards and help us to identify any need for adjustments in curriculum. Our common assessments include a combination of newly implemented district created assessments and commercial assessments that have been used for many years to inform instruction. Note examples of common assessment usage in Exhibit E.

Some of the common assessments have been designated as District Determined Measures (DDMs) that will ultimately be used to designate a rating of impact on learning for each educator in the school district (teachers and administrators). A grid of the district DDMs is attached as Exhibit G. Note on the DDM grid that there are several areas marked as "Extension" indicating that we have been granted an extension to identify an appropriate DDM for that educator role from MA DESE. Identification of DDMs is a collaborative effort involving representatives from all educator roles. Ultimately, each educator will have two DDMs and in accord with the SPS approved contract language, the educator impact ratings will be designated based on three years of data. This is the first year for collection of DDM data; however, no ratings will be issued for FY15.

District Goal #2

- Develop a system-wide Tiered System of Support (social/emotional/behavioral needs)
- a. Convene district-wide team (including consulting experts as needed) to examine data and identify areas of social/emotional/behavioral need impacting school safety or access to education
 - b. Develop and communicate common language, understanding, protocols, and responses to all students social/emotional/behavioral needs for consistency across the district
 - c. Identify mental health resources within the school district and the community

Goal #2 Mid-Cycle Update

Tiered System of Support (TSS) District-Wide Committee

Ms. Debbie Dixon, Student Services Director, is the lead on this committee.

Accomplished to date:

- The TSS Committee has 14 members including school psychologists, school counselors, general educators, assistant principal, wellness staff, parent (SEPAC executive committee) and school committee member
- Two meetings have been held to date – 10/1/14 and 11/19/14
- All committee members were asked to review the MTSS link on the DESE website ([MTSS](#))
- Contracted with CSCORE who has provided 2 full day and 2 ILAP sessions of PD for guidance and psychologists
- Action plan template developed (see attached – Exhibit F)
- Existing data sources related to social, emotional, behavioral functioning were identified
- Potential other data sources needed were identified (ex. – number of hospitalizations for mental health issues)
- Subgroups within the Committee were identified to target specific components of the action plan
- Analyzed model of tier provided by CSCORE and generally accepted elements of the tiers

In progress to be accomplished:

- Gather information from each school regarding the elements of each tier that are in place
- Assign members to subgroups
- Schedule additional meetings with smaller subgroups with a report back to larger group

Challenges in this work:

- When breaking down the components of a tiered system, the scope is much larger than we realized
- There is much already occurring/existing in the district that we are learning about; it is our goal that all efforts on behalf of students with social/emotional/behavioral challenges will be combined under one umbrella – the SPS tiered system

Please see information provided at the 10/22 meeting by accessing Ms. Dixon's presentation here: [District Goals Update 10 22 14-Student Services](#). In particular, slides 33-36 include relevant information.

District Goal #3

Enhance use of technology as an instructional and learning tool.

- a. Implement 1:1 technology at the middle school
- b. Increase access to instructional technology at elementary schools
- c. Provide professional development (PK-8) through enhanced coaching model for instructional technology integration

Goal #3 Mid-Cycle Update

Accomplished to date:

- Successful implementation of 1:1 at grades 6 and 7 with laptop carts diverted to grade 8
- Enhanced technology access in elementary, in particular at grade 5 to enhance transition to 6th grade
- Successful implementation of instructional technology specialist position at middle school allowing for coaching with 1.0FTE focus on elementary and 1.0FTE focus at middle school
- Successful implementation of technician position at middle school allowing for 1.0FTE focus on elementary and 1.0FTE focus at middle school
- Completion of 2 full-day and 4-ILAP professional development sessions for middle school staff at 6th and 7th grade levels
- Two “Curriculum Showcases” for parents provided by staff to highlight 1:1 technology as an instructional and learning tool
- Professional development offerings in instructional technology and opportunities for teachers to share expertise (ongoing)

In progress to be accomplished:

- Continued professional development opportunities as well as time for educators to share expertise across the district

Challenges in this work:

- Providing dedicated time to build educator capacity to use technology as a teaching and learning tool
- Ensuring that we maintain the coaching, technical support, and associated resources necessary as we move to three grade levels of 1:1 devices for FY16

The Committee was provided additional information on the successful implementation and benefit to students at the School Committee meeting on 10/22. The presentation may be accessed at: [District Goals Update 10 22 14-1:1 Computing](#).

District Goal #4

Develop a method for ongoing Communication of School System Progress.

- a. Convene a district-wide team to review available data and identify key data points to communicate to school community and community at-large (include representation from staff, parents, administrators, SC)
- b. Develop a template for a District Report Card and publish first draft
- c. Research and determine need for Data Analyst position

Goal #4 Mid-Cycle Update

The District Report Card team has been formed including: Kim Swain, Mary Will, Michael O'Brien, Stephen Wiltshire, Paula Moore, Betsy Grams, Annis Chwalek, Cara Maxwell, Bob Armour, and Anne Wilson. At our first meeting on 11/17, we articulated the goal of the team to be: Identification of salient data points for a one-page report card that would provide information about SPS, including what is going well and where challenges lie. The report card would allow for more clarity in communication with the community and form the foundation for improvement efforts. The first report card will be published in the spring of 2015 with a timeline for updates to be determined at a later date.

For more information, see the summary in Professional Practice Goal on pages 3-4 of this report and Exhibit D, which includes minutes from the 11/17 and 12/8 meetings.

In progress to be accomplished:

- Team assembled and has met twice (next meeting is January 12th). The Team is working on establishing data points for the report card and will next design a template for a one-page "district report card"

Challenges in this work:

- Difficult to narrow data points and identify data which are both accessible, truly reflective of the district, and relevant to the intended audience
- Establishment of data collection and analysis process will take more time and potentially require more human resources and specific expertise