



Lincoln Public Schools

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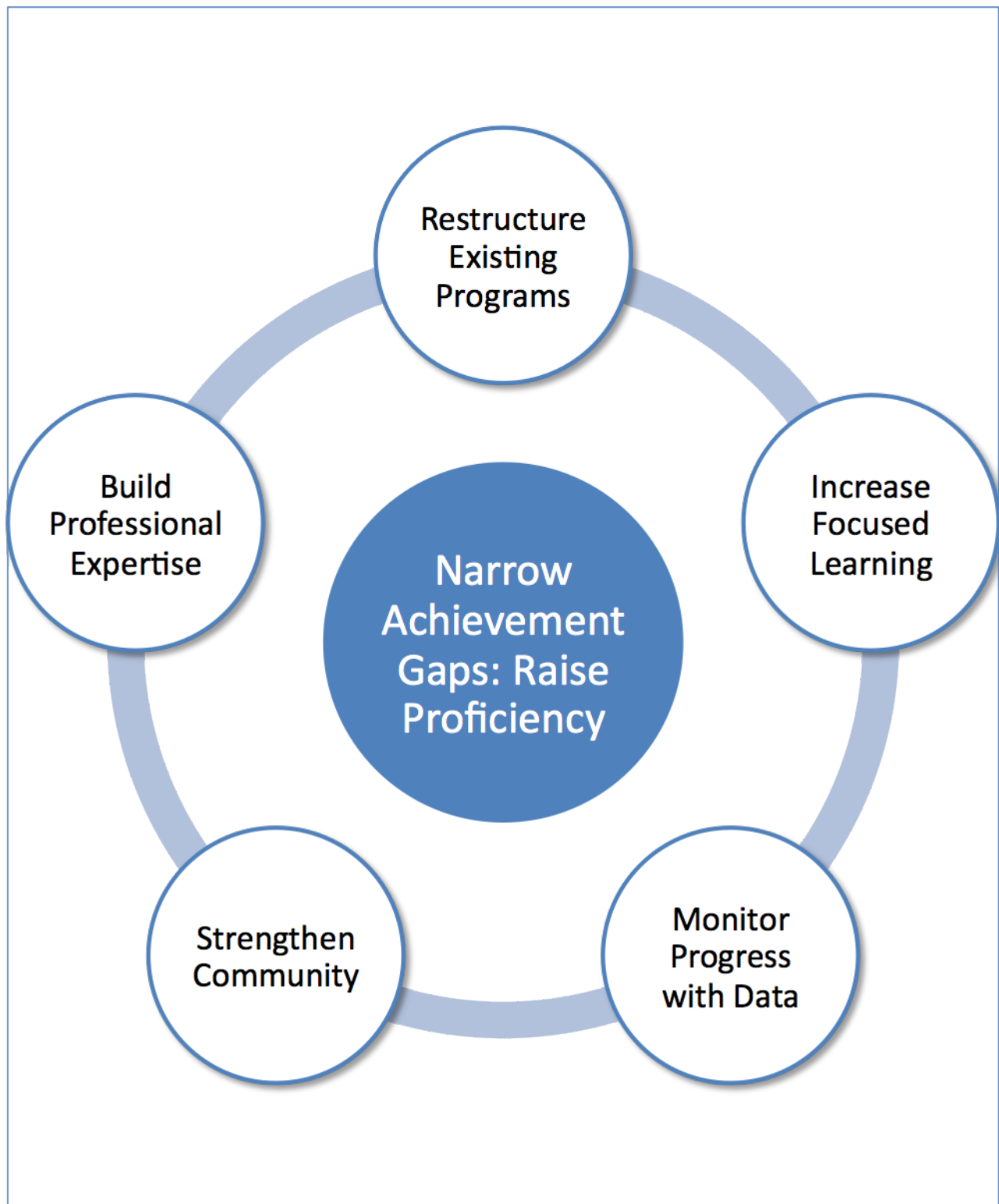
To: School Committee
From: Mary Sterling
Re: Plan to Narrow Achievement Gaps
Date: September 30, 2011

On January 13, 2011, the School Committee reviewed a report that provided data from several sources about achievement in English language arts and mathematics, disaggregated by racial or ethnic subgroup. The report also described current efforts at the district level and in the schools along with some discussion of next steps on each campus. This report builds on the efforts of the past school year and on work done by the Administrative Council during the annual summer retreat which took place in August 2011. We have developed a 5 point plan to narrow achievement gaps and raise proficiency for all students with a focus on English language arts and mathematics. This plan is district-wide and is incorporated into the School Improvement Plans in each school.

Our review of the data and efforts from the past school year, along with the recent release of the 2011 MCAS results has convinced us that we need to expand our consideration of "achievement gaps." Not only must we attend to gaps between students of color and white students, but we must also acknowledge and act upon gaps that exist for students whose performance is reported in three other categories: low-income, disabilities, and limited English proficient. In all of these subgroups, we can find data that provides evidence of progress. Yet for some students, the progress is not enough. We need to fulfill our commitment to the education of all students with a renewed effort to examine our programs and practices and to intensify our services to students.

Our plan is founded on a central mission: to narrow achievement gaps and raise proficiency for all students in English language arts and mathematics. We will use five interconnected strategies with a focus on students in grades K-8 who are not yet proficient in these two subjects. Each strategy consists of action steps which we have already begun or will undertake this year and in subsequent years. This multi-faceted approach is more likely to succeed than any single effort on its own. "Closing the gap must be more than a one-front operation" states Paul Barton in the lead article for *Educational Leadership*, "Why Does the Gap Persist?"ⁱ Taken together, our five strategies comprise a comprehensive effort that integrates program, teaching, learning, data, and the school and parent community.

ⁱ Paul E Barton, "Why Does the Gap Persist?" *Educational Leadership*, November 2004, Vol. 62, No. 3, p. 13.



**To narrow achievement gaps
and raise proficiency for all students,
we will use five interconnected strategies
with a focus on students in grades K-8
who are not yet proficient in ELA and Math**

1. Restructure existing programs

- Review and re-design schedules in grades 6-8 in Middle Schools to provide focused time for learning through Academic Extensions
- Restructure the METCO program to provide more academic support for Boston students K-8

2. Increase opportunities for focused learning

School year 2011-12

- Goal-focused Intervention Plans for selected K-8 students based on data about their performance
- Math and ELA Academic Extensions for identified students, grades 6-8 in middle schools
- Increase instruction, practice, and feedback for students K-8 in writing Open Response in ELA, Math, Social Studies, and Science
- Hanscom: Extra section of combined reading/math support class for grade 6 students
- Hanscom: Additional 60 min. of math per 6-day cycle, grades 6-8
- Hanscom: After-school homework sessions for students in grades 4-8, two days a week
- Lincoln School: Additional writing course of one trimester for students at grades 6 and 8
- Lincoln School: After school program for Boston students with academic focus

Summer Programs

- Title I summer program at Hanscom Middle School with focus on math and ELA skills for students entering grades 4-8
- Title I summer ELA and Math skills booster program at Hanscom Primary School for students entering grades 2 - 3
- Math Camp in Lincoln to reach diverse learners entering grades 3 - 4 at the Lincoln School
- Achievement Camp in Lincoln for students entering gr. K - 2 at Lincoln School with focus on math and literacy
- Transportation for Boston students to participate in Lincoln summer academic camps

3. Use data to monitor program and student progress

- Assign students in grades 6-8 to specific Academic Extensions in ELA and Math based on data about their needs and track data re performance at regular intervals
- Monitor goal-focused intervention plans using data to assess progress on goals
- Examine assessment data on all students to identify students in need of interventions
- Collect district and school data on student performance comparable to the data presented in the Achievement Gap report in January, 2011; conduct analysis and present report with recommendations
- Use data to evaluate impact of restructuring METCO Program and middle school schedules

4. Strengthen a sense of community to engage all learners

School Culture

- Utilize DDMS strategies in the middle schools and Responsive Classroom strategies in the elementary grades to strengthen student engagement, affiliation, and competence in school
- Conduct student survey regarding level of engagement and investment in learning

Family Involvement

- Communicate with families so they become familiar with events and learning expectations at schools
- Provide information to families about what they can do at home to support student learning
- Share goal-focused intervention plans with families, describe what they can do at home, continue dialogue about home and school efforts.

5. Build professional expertise

- Provide professional development on focused teaching practices to strengthen student skill in ELA and Math.
- Develop plan for teacher and administrator professional development in cultural competence.
- Sustain hiring practices to hire and retain faculty with culturally competent teaching practices.