

**Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Center for District and School Accountability
Level 4 Monitoring Quarterly Progress Report**

District: Salem Public School District
Plan Monitor: Patricia Williams

Reporting Period: June – Aug 2013
Date of Report: 10/3/13

Introduction

This Quarterly Progress Report addresses Accelerated Improvement Plan (AIP) activities in the Salem Public School District from mid-June through August 2013. The district submitted its draft 2013-2014 AIP in July 2013, and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education provided recommendations for revisions and resubmission. During this quarter, those revisions were underway. (A meeting was held on September 4 with Salem district leaders and Department staff to discuss the AIP; subsequent revisions were made to the plan. The revised AIP was submitted on September 27 and approved on October 3.)

Preliminary 2013 MCAS results were available at the time of the report. MCAS results were mixed: some showed improvement, some reflected results lower than the previous year, and many were flat. The results do not reflect the accelerated improvements needed, and they provide insight into the serious work yet to be done to improve ELA and math achievement in the district. District leaders feel that accomplishments such as the completion of the curriculum maps, the placement of a literacy coach in each school, the gradual introduction of balanced literacy, and full implementation of the educator evaluation system will make 2013-2014 a more successful year.

AIP Objectives

Strategic Objective 1: Develop and implement an aligned curriculum and high quality instructional practices and expectations across the district

With the aligned curriculum in place for ELA and math, curriculum development continued to occur during the summer. High school teachers drafted 11 curriculum maps during the summer. Summer activities in ELA and math focused on helping teachers to understand the curriculum. Access to the curriculum was supported by entering all kindergarten through grade 8 ELA and math curricula as well as 11 high school courses onto Atlas, a web-based curriculum management system.

This summer Salem addressed its 2013-2014 focus on the districtwide improvement of English language arts instruction by conducting rigorous interviews for literacy coaches for each school. Those selected attended a 3-day Literacy Coach Institute to guide their work in supporting teachers in the implementation of the ELA curriculum. These coaches will report to the principals in their schools and will receive regular professional development from the assistant superintendent for teaching and learning.

The district prepared for the full implementation of balanced literacy in ELA classrooms K-8 in 2014-2015 by selecting 35 lab classroom teachers, including three lab classroom teachers for the Bentley School. These teachers attended a 3-day Lab Classroom Teacher Institute that focused on implementation of the district's reading and writing curriculum maps. The 35 teachers will implement balanced literacy in their classrooms with the support of the literacy coach and with regular support from coaches from the Teaching and Learning Alliance (TLA). In January these lab classrooms will be open for observation by the school's remaining classroom teachers. Although the expectation is that all teachers will implement balanced literacy in 2014-2015, all ELA teachers K-8 attended two days of training on balanced literacy as part of the professional development offered to teachers before the opening of school. Two additional professional development days are planned in November and January.

Math professional development will occur through seven facilitated sessions during the school year for K-8 teachers that will preview upcoming units. Principals will have responsibility for follow-up in classrooms on this training.

The work during 2012-2013 on curriculum development and improving instructional practices was critical for Salem students' future success, but that work did not translate into strong overall gains on 2013 MCAS results. It was difficult for students to show improvement when the district lacked a fully implemented aligned curriculum.

Strategic Objective 2: Establish a data-driven system that assesses and supports learning and improves instructional practices throughout the district

To develop a new set of common assessments aligned to the state frameworks and the Common Core, high school teachers were trained to develop assessments using the Galileo item bank. New assessments are in place, and their implementation will bring needed interim assessment data to high school teachers.

Data teams also received renewed attention during the summer. A full day of the Administrators' Institute was devoted to data-driven instruction and building strong data teams. Principals modified their data team membership. Approximately half of data team members were replaced. In 2012-2013, ANet coaches played a key role in the work of school data teams. During the summer, the district added a third ANet coach to strengthen their support for teachers. However, this year while ANet coaches will continue to model the effective use of data, they are expected to gradually turn over direction and control to the school team members.

Programs for high needs students occurred during July and August. 200 students with disabilities participated in the Extended Year Program, and approximately 150 English language learners at the elementary, middle, and high school levels were enrolled in extended learning programs.

Strategic Objective 3: Establish high quality leadership across the district that supports and monitors the continuous improvement of teaching and learning

The educator evaluation system was highlighted in two ways during the summer. One morning of the Administrators' Institute was devoted to educator evaluation, and the teacher professional development days before the opening of school included a full session on self-assessment and goal setting. Teachers were to emerge from their sessions with draft goals and educator plans to be refined in collaboration with their evaluators. Both the administrator and teacher events featured examination of a crosswalk document in chart form that highlighted district AIP priorities, related elements in the teacher rubric, and current district initiatives and professional development. The chart provides teachers with a framework for development of goals in line with district priorities. At both events, the focus tended to be on the evaluation system as it applies to teachers and less on the system as it applies to administrators, even though the system is an important lever to hold principals as well as teachers accountable.

Strategic Objective 3 included implementation of instructional rounds and the educator evaluation system. As noted in a previous QPR, while instructional rounds were implemented in each school last year, the specific instructional practices designated for observation were not consistent from one instructional round to the next, so it was not possible to measure increased numbers as defined in the benchmark. And the educator evaluation system was not fully implemented due to a late start. Neither initiative led to its planned outcome, so the district has not yet achieved the desired results.

Summary

Valuable work has been taking place in the district regarding the implementation of curriculum maps at all levels. Summer professional development opportunities have supported the training of the newly selected literacy coaches and the lab classroom teachers. As well, at the Administrators' Institute, district office administrators and contractors provided principals and other administrators with in-depth background on all aspects of the draft AIP.

Next Steps

- Use the educator evaluation system as an effective tool to leverage accountability for administrators and teachers.
- Monitor the implementation of each school's School Improvement Plan.
- Establish clear expectations for principals as instructional leaders.
- Monitor the support provided by principals and coaches to classroom teachers.
- Continue to improve instruction for high needs students, ELLs, and students with disabilities.
- Provide high-level professional development for literacy coaches.
- Support lab teachers as they lead the way in the implementation of balanced literacy.
- Continue to provide high quality professional development for all staff.
- Ensure that partners see their primary role as building capacity and sustainability in the district.
- Address the revision of the draft 2013-2014 AIP.

Evidence of Progress

NOTE: Because this report covers the months of June through August (a period typically used for planning, rather than implementation), ratings are not provided. The next report, covering September through November, will include ratings.

Objective 1: Develop and implement an aligned curriculum and high quality instructional practices and expectations across the district	Evidence of Progress
Initiative 1.1: Align the preK-12 curriculum with the MA common core	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELA curriculum maps in place
Initiative 1.2: Implement a common set of high quality instructional expectations and practices on behalf of all students	

Objective 2: Establish a data-driven system that assesses and supports learning and improves instructional practices throughout the district	Evidence of Progress
Initiative 2.1: Develop and implement a system of district wide interim assessments aligned to the core curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third ANet coach added • ANet coach to gradually turn over data team leadership to principals and school-based data teams • New ELA coaches selected and trained • TLA consultants work with principals, coaches, and teachers • Balanced literacy introduced gradually to all teachers • Lab teachers selected to begin full implementation of balanced literacy
Initiative 2.2: Implement an inquiry-based data cycle to adapt instruction and provide support to all learners	
Initiative 2.3: Build and implement support systems and practices to improve the performance of high need student populations	

Objective 3: Establish high quality leadership across the district that supports and monitors the continuous improvement of teaching and learning	Evidence of Progress
Initiative 3.1: Implement leadership structures and processes for the support and accountability of teaching and learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer Principals’ Institute held • Principals work with coaches to support teachers in implementing teaching and learning expectations • Consultants support principals, coaches, and teachers • Full session on the educator evaluation system for all teachers during school-opening professional development days • Teachers provided with crosswalk to connect district priorities with elements in the teacher rubric
Initiative 3.2: Establish a system of embedded professional development that provides administrators and teachers with the capacity to implement the new teaching and learning expectations	
Initiative 3.3: Implement the new educator evaluation system with fidelity throughout the district.	
Initiative 3.4: Provide adequate support and oversight at the district’s Level 4 school—Bentley Elementary School	