

**NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL EDUCATION
FOCUSED MONITORING 2013 - 2014**

**Manchester School District
Middle School Mathematics Summary Report**



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Focused Monitoring Participants

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Name	School/District Office	Title
Karen Burkush	District Office	Assistant Superintendent of Schools
David Ryan	District Office	Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Ken Duesing	District Office	Assistant Director Student Services
Jodi Gutterman	District Office	Special Education Coordinator Middle Schools
Kimberly Organek	Southside Middle School	Principal
Brian McCafferty	Hillside Middle School	Principal
Forrest Ransdell	Middle School at Parkside	Principal
William Krantz	McLaughlin Middle School	Principal
Sarah Ambrogi	Board of School Committee Member	Board of School Committee Member
Polly Golden	District Office/Federal Projects	Professional Development Coordinator

ACHIEVEMENT TEAM

Intervention Subcommittee

Name	School/District Office	Title
Carey Hodges	Hillside Middle School	Grade 6-8 EL math
Crystal Kuhn	Middle School at Parkside	Grade 6 math
Terry Nelson	Southside Middle School	Assistant Principal
Tara Lindh	Hillside Middle School	Special Education, self-contained
Robin Galeaz	McLaughlin Middle School	Grade 7 math
Laura Lord	Hillside Middle School	Special Education, inclusion
Jennifer Harris	Middle School at Parkside	Autism Inclusion
Jen Cadieux	Southside Middle School	Grade 8 math
Kenneth Duesing	District	Administration

Assessment Subcommittee

Name	School/District Office	Title
Karen Burkush	District	Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Ruth Broderick	District	Math Implementation Specialist
Kristine Pelletier	District	ELA Implementation Specialist
Ermira Nakuci	Hillside Middle School	Math teacher
Caroline M. Norton	Southside Middle School	Teacher
Cynthia Courounis	Middle School at Parkside	Assistant Principal
Chris King	Middle School at Parkside	EBD Inclusion/RR
Shane Anderson	Southside Middle School	EBD teacher
Deb McCullough	Hillside Middle School	Grade 6 Math
Debby Frisella	McLaughlin	Special education, resource

Instruction Subcommittee

Name	School/District Office	Title
Mary Wade	McLaughlin Middle School	Math Teacher
Doug Claxton	McLaughlin Middle School	Math Teacher
Tim Otis	McLaughlin Middle School	Assistant Principal
Carlene Norton	Hillside Middle School	Math Teacher
Sue Hannan	Hillside Middle School	ELA Essentials
Shawn Baskerville	Hillside Middle School	Assistant Principal
Michelle Partin	Hillside Middle School	Math Teacher
Jodi Gutterman	District	Special Education Coordinator

The Manchester School District

The Manchester School District's mission is *to provide safe, healthy, nurturing and respectful environments in which all students have the opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills that will enable them to become life-long learners as well as positive and productive citizens. The success of our schools can only be achieved through collaboration and interdependence with the community. The District is committed to utilizing all resources towards this exciting challenge.*

The Manchester School District is the largest district in the state with approximately 14,737 students who are educated in twenty-two schools, including a developmental preschool (ages 3 to 5) in five of the fourteen elementary schools, fourteen elementary schools (grades Kindergarten to 5), four middle schools (grades 6 to 8), three high schools (grades 9 to 12), and a regional School of Technology (grades 10 to 12). Eight of the district's elementary schools are identified as Title I School-Wide schools.

The District is governed by a fifteen member committee that is elected every two years. The Mayor serves as chairperson of the Board. All of the schools provide opportunities for parents to participate at school or from home through parent associations and volunteer groups. Partnerships with the business community are highly valued. Schools enjoy one or more business/education partnerships.

As a community with an increasingly diverse population, the District offers a wide range of programs and initiatives. The English Learner (EL) program serves more than 2,000 students who, as immigrants or refugees, are non-English proficient. The EL program provides English language instruction and offers students assistance with cultural assimilation.

The school district is currently involved in a Strategic Planning initiative and last school year completed a school district audit, conducted by the International Curriculum management Audit Center. The school district used Focused Monitoring to develop a district wide elementary school improvement plan to reduce the achievement gap in mathematics. The plan is aligned with the new state accountability expectations.

Focused Monitoring

Focused Monitoring (FM) is a multi-year district improvement process aimed at reducing the achievement gap between students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers while raising student achievement for all students. The purpose of FM is to ensure that children and youth with disabilities ages 3-21 are afforded a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and are provided opportunities to learn in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). FM ensures that students with disabilities have access to, can participate in, and can demonstrate progress within the general education curriculum, thereby improving student learning.

The special education Program Approval team at SERESC is under contract with the New Hampshire Department of Education (NHDOE) to (1) assess the impact and effectiveness of state and local efforts, (2) monitor Local Education Agencies' (LEA) implementation of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) per federal mandate, (3) review current education research with participating districts and (4) provide technical assistance to participating districts.

Districts are selected to participate in FM based on a review of the achievement gap measurement using NECAP assessment data. The NHDOE anticipates that approximately twelve districts, including year one and year two districts, will participate in FM each year.

IDEA guarantees that FAPE is available to each qualified person with a disability who is in the school district's jurisdiction, regardless of the nature or severity of the person's disability. IDEA provides federal funds to assist states in carrying out this responsibility and to comply with the associated regulations. Federal statute 34 CFR Section 300.600 of the IDEA requires that states ensure that local systems comply with these federal regulations and meet the state's academic standards as they provide education programming for students with disabilities. The NHDOE, Bureau of Special Education supervises and monitors local school districts through a variety of activities including, data monitoring, site visits, and FM. The most time intensive and in-depth is FM.

Each participating district assembles a Leadership Team that will in turn establish the district's Achievement Team, to be broadly representative of its educational system. The team includes district administrators, general and special educators. The Achievement Team meets regularly to collect and analyze baseline data and new student performance data, both qualitative and quantitative, in order to answer an essential study question. The team produces a set of findings from its analysis of data and prepares an Action Plan for improvement for implementation the following year. The facilitation and technical assistance of the FM Process provided to the NH FM districts is through the NH Department of Education.

The Manchester School District and Focused Monitoring

In May of 2007 the New Hampshire Department of Education (NHDOE) Bureau of Special Education identified the Manchester School District as one of seven Focused Monitoring districts in the state, based on the achievement gap in NECAP results between students with disabilities and their nondisabled peers. It was determined by the Bureau of Special Education that the Focused Monitoring (FM) Process would make multi-year commitment of technical assistance to the Manchester School District.

The NHDOE requested that the FM Technical Assistants assume responsibility for the FM processes and support the District in conducting Root Cause Analysis processes, developing new school district improvement plans and creating an FM Report, including an action plan.

In 2012 the Manchester School District was selected by the State to undergo another round of Focused Monitoring. The achievement gap was not being closed in Manchester. By focusing on the achievement gap it is hoped that the District will truly improve the performance for all students in Manchester. FM will continue where it left off a couple of years ago. During Year 1, 2012-13 school year, the Focused Monitoring process involved working with the elementary schools. A Pre-K-5 Focused Monitoring report and action plan document were prepared and presented to the District Administration and to the Manchester Board of School Committee in June 2013. During Year 2, 2013-14 school year, the elementary schools began implementing its FM Action Plan activities and the focus turned to the Manchester middle schools.

Alignment of Focused Monitoring to the Title I Priority School Designations

New Hampshire is required by the US Department of Education to identify and prioritize for support five percent of the state's lower performing Title I schools. These schools, designated as priority schools, must develop a plan of school improvement aligned to seven key turnaround principles: providing strong instructional leadership, improving educator effectiveness, redesigning learning time, strengthening a school instructional program, using data to inform instruction, family and community engagement, and improving the school environment (non-academic factors).

In 2013, eight Manchester schools were designated as Title 1 priority schools by the State of New Hampshire. For Manchester this includes the following schools: Bakersville Elementary, Beech Street Elementary, Gossler Park Elementary School, McDonough Elementary School, Middle School at Parkside, Parker Varney Elementary School, Southside Middle School, and Wilson Elementary School.

In order to receive Title 1 funding, each of the designated priority schools are required to develop a school improvement plan aligned to the seven key school turnaround principles. For the 2013-14 school year the schools were allowed to submit a "plan to plan" document that would identify the process by which Manchester would address the seven key school turnaround principles.

For better alignment and to avoid duplication of school improvement activities the district decided to use the 2012-13 Pre-K-5 Focused Monitoring report and action planning document to develop its Priority School "plan to plan" for the elementary schools. The middle schools decided to utilize the NH Department of Education's Focused Monitoring process to examine the factors impacting the achievement gap in mathematics at the Manchester Middle Schools and to develop a priority school improvement plan aligned to the Focused Monitoring recommendations that will be implemented in the 2014-15 school year.

Manchester Middle Schools and Focused Monitoring Orientation

During the 2013-14 school year the Focused Monitoring process progressed into the Manchester middle schools that service students in grades 6-8. As of June 2013 student enrollments at the middle schools totaled 3,054 with the following enrollments at each school:

- Hillside Middle School, 817
- Mc Laughlin Middle School, 801
- Middle School at Parkside, 671

- Southside Middle School, 765

Parkside and Southside middle schools have been identified as priority schools by the NHDOE. As such, the NHDOE will provide additional resources and partnerships to these schools to support the focused monitoring process. This includes being a part of certain professional learning networks around the seven key principles.

At an initial planning meeting in June 2013 a group of middle school teachers, specialists, and district and school administrators met to:

- Overview the Focused Monitoring process, and role of the Leadership and Achievement Teams and the 5 Step Inquiry Process
- Discuss the “Essential Question” that will guide the Focused Monitoring Process in the Manchester Middle Schools
- Review a summary of the work of the Focused Monitoring Process in the Manchester Elementary Schools
- Review NECAP data for Manchester Middle Schools by conducting a Data Driven Dialog
- Identify in school based teams mathematics programs, initiatives and instructional supports for students in the middle schools.

At that initial meeting the group examined historical middle school NECAP math data for the district. The Manchester teams used the longitudinal data reports from the NHDOE to identify patterns in middle school student performance over time. The group identified the following patterns from the data:

- Manchester has the largest achievement gap in the State between identified and non-identified students
- While the gap closes between district and state for all students it remains the same for students with disabilities with IEPs
- The percentage of students proficient remains stable over time
- The gap between students with IEPs and their nondisabled peers remains consistent over time (no closing of the gap)
- Over time students with disabilities results go down, widening the gap

Manchester Middle School Focused Monitoring Summary Report

This summary report is intended to serve as a record of the work of the middle schools’ Achievement Team during the 2013-2014 school year. The school district identified mathematics as a focus area of study and analysis to determine why an achievement gap exists in grades 6-8. The team began the process by reviewing the essential question that will guide the process. Establishing the essential question for study purposes was important because the question generated multiple plausible answers, perspectives, and research directions and provided opportunities for analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. The question established is:

What educational strategies/practices need to be modified, enhanced, or replaced to ensure system alignment of instruction, curriculum, and assessments to all student subgroups so that all students are fully engaged in the general education mathematics curriculum and demonstrating growth in their mathematics knowledge?

This report provides responses to the essential question. It contains specific recommendations based on findings that will help focus the District’s work on addressing the identified factors that impact student achievement in the middle schools. The document is intended to be a synthesis of what the Achievement Team has accomplished.

The report includes an improvement plan with clear goals, research-based interventions and action steps to achieve the goal of narrowing the achievement gap between students with and without disabilities.

Establishing Achievement Team Sub-Committee Study Groups

At its first meeting in September 2013 the Achievement Team (AT) was asked to answer the following question: From your perspective, what is the cause of the achievement gap for students with disabilities in the Manchester School District? The AT was then asked to organize the "causes" of the gap and to create an affinity map of the brainstormed list of potential "causes". Based upon an analysis of the affinity map the AT identified three priority causes of the achievement gap and decided to break into three subcommittees to study these causes: (1) Instruction, (2) Interventions, and (3) Assessment.

The role and responsibilities of each subcommittee was defined and each began the process of identifying and prioritizing the data to be gathered, reviewed and analyzed in order to answer the essential question and to draft an action plan that aligns with existing district plans/goals. Each of the subcommittees was asked to:

- Define "best practice"
- Conduct research where gaps in expertise exist
- Identify, collect, and analyze data on "current practice"
- Present in writing recommendations for how the district could bridge the gap between "current" practice and "best" practice. These recommendations will inform the development of the district action plan
- Identify benchmarks for measuring improvement in current practice

Achievement Team Data Inquiry and Analysis Process

Get Ready for Inquiry

Math Gap Analysis Survey

As part of preparing for inquiry, the Achievement Team (AT) suggested surveying teachers on their math practices to get a better sense of what practices teachers were more (and less) confident using. The math survey questions that were developed focused on the following topics: District math curriculum planning; programs, texts, and resources for math; special education issues; teacher practices; teacher math content knowledge; professional development opportunities in math; assessments used in math; math supports for students; vertical and horizontal alignment of the math curriculum; depth of knowledge questions; understanding of Response to Intervention (RtI); distribution of emphasis in mathematics; and math structures currently in place. In general, teachers answered questions about their own abilities positively while questions around district support were more negative. Initial data suggested that teaching and instructional practices were not aligned among the four middle schools.

Math Gap Analysis Survey Follow-Up

As a follow up to the math practices survey the AT agreed that they needed to collect more relevant data other than simply teacher perceptions.

The Interventions Subcommittee identified four key areas to investigate:

1. What instructional practices are employed in the mathematics classroom (direct teaching, group work, individual work, and review); and how much time (%) is spent weekly on each of the practices?
2. What interventions, resources, and programs are currently in use in mathematics classes?
3. How are assessments used to :
 - Determine if a student needs an intervention?
 - Inform the selection of intervention practices?
 - Determine that an intervention has been successful
4. What criteria are used to determine an intervention is needed and to determine it is no longer needed once it has been implemented (e.g., entrance and exit criteria)?

The Instruction Subcommittee determined that they planned to “dig deeper” into the following:

1. What actually happens during instructional time?
2. What instructional practices are happening in the classrooms at effective schools?
3. Explore some general instructional practices, like
 - Direct Instruction
 - Blended Learning
 - Remediation
 - Intervention
 - Differentiation
 - Team teaching
 - Rotational Learning

The Assessment Subcommittee identified the following practices to investigate as key to success:

1. Are current assessments standards/curriculum aligned?
2. Are assessments monitored- progress must be tracked?
3. Are assessments analyzed and used to make informed decisions?
4. Are assessments used as a process to communicate information to stakeholders; inventory, survey, outcomes/evidence?
5. Is there a balanced system of diagnostic assessments, including formative and summative?
6. Are assessments improved through the use of professional development so all educators know how too effectively and efficient administer them and analyze results?
7. Are assessments specific?

Defining Best Practices

Before the subcommittees began investigating factors impacting student achievement, each subcommittee reviewed and discussed articles relative to best practices in their designated area of study.

- Based upon the readings and discussion **the intervention subcommittee** agreed upon an operational definition for classroom and school based student interventions. The committee also identified supplemental interventions already in existence at each of the middle schools. Though inconsistent among the middle schools some of the supplemental interventions included math resource rooms, reading resource programs, resource rooms for students with disabilities, guided discipline and

personalized supports in each of the schools, and behavioral interventions. The subcommittee recognized that the group had to identify data sources that could be investigated around mathematics and interventions.

- **The assessment subcommittee** brainstormed best practices based on selected readings. The subcommittee agreed that a balanced assessment system was necessary which includes providing common assessments throughout the district. The subcommittee agreed that current middle school assessment practices are not clear or consistent. The group identified the need to plan strategies for implementing best practices.
- After reading and discussing best practices for teaching mathematics **the instruction subcommittee** identified the instructional practices data needed to analyze the achievement gap. Data sources needed included:
 1. Materials/content/books, teaching practices among grades, schools and leveled classes
 2. Documentation on student course level placements from elementary school to middle schools
 3. Continuum of grades and levels – do students consistently stay in level 1 for three years or progress to level 2?
 4. Slower learners, regular education, and special education data all need to be examined.
 5. Can resource be opened to students without disabilities as part of RTI?
 6. Do students have an opportunity to work on their deficit skills in resource class with a specialized instruction?
 7. Are there criteria to move up in levels
 8. Is leveling doing students a disservice? Presumption on student capabilities
 9. Pacing and instructional practices at different levels.

Collect, Organize and Analyze Data

In November **the intervention subcommittee had reached consensus on an operational definition of intervention**. They decided they wanted to interview math teachers and school administrators at each of the middle schools to gather data on intervention practices. The following questions were developed to assist subcommittee members in gathering the data. At a subsequent meeting the subcommittee reviewed and discussed the results.

- What interventions practices and/or programs are currently in use in mathematics classes?
- What criteria are used to select a specific intervention program?
- What are teachers' levels of need for interventions?
- How are assessments used to inform selection of intervention practices?
- What resources are used in classrooms to help students learn mathematics?
- What criteria and data are used to determine student course level placement?
- How much time is spent in students doing group work during mathematics class?

This year, as part of the Focused Monitoring (FM) process the technical assistants **visited the Manchester middle schools special education programs during the month of March**. The purpose of these visits was to meet special educators, glean general information about the variety of special education programs in each school and to see and hear first-hand about the practices currently in place, with an emphasis on mathematics. These informal visits were entirely designed to assist the technical assistants to gain a better understanding of the Manchester

Middle Schools, the similarities and differences in special education services, and as time permits to have informal conversations with special educators regarding the services and math instruction provided to students with disabilities. The technical assistants identified themes that surfaced as a data source in answering the “essential question”. Prior to these visits the technical assistants requested any available special education program descriptions in order to gain a sense of the special education in all of the middle schools.

One of the data collection activities in March was a **review and analysis of instructional practices in mathematics**. As part of this process, school based teams, including the math teachers at each of the middle schools, conducted a review of the mathematics instruction provided to students who had been experiencing difficulty in math. The instructional review process required an in-depth review of a student’s math instruction by a team of educators who work with the student. The team examined the math curriculum, instruction and assessments provided to students, along with the types math support currently available. The results were summarized by the instruction subcommittee to identify patterns and trends in the delivery of math instruction in the Manchester Middle Schools. The Instructional Review Process was a job embedded professional development opportunity engaging teachers in reflective practice that was intended to uncover insights regarding mathematics instructional practice.

Some general observations and findings from the instructional reviews included:

- Staff were dedicated, knowledgeable and clearly cared about the students under review and wanted to do what it takes to help them learn.
- Participants clearly knew each student’s strengths and challenges (academic and non-academic).
- Participants felt the instructional reviews were an excellent opportunity to strengthen student learning results.
- Participants valued the opportunity for collective inquiry utilizing student data.
- Participants valued the opportunity to use a formalized and guided template for gathering and evaluating data.
- Participants valued the opportunity for collaboration between interventionists and classroom teachers.
- Records and student data were readily available for collaborative discussion and decision making.
- Having access to student interview data enhanced the process.
- Students under review each had non-school relate challenges that clearly impacted learning, some very significant.
- Students were not aware of the leveling system and how or why they were placed in a particular math level.
- There was no clearly articulated process for determining the math level that a student participates in; and the criteria for placement were not evident.
- The use of formative assessments to demonstrate success in meeting the math standards established by the school district varies.
- There was no evidence that summative assessments are designed in collaboration with teachers across the middle schools and grade levels.
- In level one classes Math supports and interventions exist for students with disabilities but are not as readily available for non-IEP students.
- Grade level team meetings are in place however the expectations of what happens at those meeting is not consistent in the schools.

As an extension of the Focused Monitoring Achievement Team activities, the district hosted a **focus group conversation** in April with district office administrators and middle school principals in order to gather feedback,

perceptions and suggestions related to the essential question. Data collected from the focus group conversations were reviewed, summarized and analyzed by the Focused Monitoring Achievement Team.

Findings: Factors Impacting Student Achievement

The AT needed to seek answers to the essential question from a holistic system perspective and examined interventions, instruction and assessment practices that impact students in both general and special education settings. During this phase the team prepared a set of findings from its data analysis. The findings provided the foundation for its system improvement plan.

Interventions Subcommittee Findings

- There is no systematic framework for developing and providing interventions beyond the general mathematics classrooms
- There is no systematic framework for determining the students who require intervention
- There is no systematic framework for identifying the necessary intervention
- There is a lack of specificity in determining/identifying the skill deficit
- There is no systematic framework for analyzing student data
- There is no systematic framework for progress monitoring and universal screening
- All of the above must be in place to provide effective interventions

Assessment Subcommittee Findings

Based off formative assessment/feedback, it was determined the district needs:

- A balance system of consistent assessments
- Informative methodologies
- A method of administering and collecting data
- Ability to ensure data is: available in a timely fashion; shared with stakeholders; and is used to inform instruction

Instruction Subcommittee Findings

- Need for math resource for non-identified students
- Consistent RTI definition and protocol is needed
- Guidelines for special education resource rooms across all middle schools are needed
- District wide formative and summative assessments need to be in place
- Consistent leveling policy needs to be implemented
- Revisit retention policy
- Criteria that facilitates transitions (elementary to middle, middle to high) need to be identified
- Chronic absenteeism needs to be addressed

Focus Group Thematic Findings

1. Superintendent Leadership: District leadership matters. Effective superintendents focus their efforts on creating goal oriented districts with a focus on student achievement. In a short period to time the new

Manchester Superintendent has crafted a vision for the school district and has established student achievement goals aligned to the vision.

“The Superintendent brought us together to plan the opening day of school, and to develop a common message to teachers and parents.” “The Superintendent’s has a vision of the big picture...everyone rallied around it.” “The Superintendent has demonstrated leadership, collaboration, and a strong sense of group leadership.” “There is a new and refreshing climate in which we work.”

2. Ensuring Collaborative Goal-Setting: Researchers found that effective superintendents include all relevant stakeholders, including central office staff, building-level administrators, and board members, in establishing goals for their districts. Although one of the district middle school principals was involved in crafting goals for the school district, some of the principals had limited or no knowledge or involvement in establishing the newly approved district goals.

“The district goals presented to the district have not been clearly communicated to the community.” “From a principals perspective I would have liked to have some input into the district goals.” “It would have been nice to have one of us in the room when the goals were developed, the same with the mission and vision.”

3. Expectations of Leaders for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment: In order to achieve the highest potential, both individually and collectively, it is necessary to clearly establish expectations and provide feedback to school leaders. District middle school principals are not currently evaluated on instructional leadership. A new leadership evaluation model is under development which will incorporate a focus on instructional leadership.

- a. “It has never been articulated to me regarding expectations for curriculum, instruction and assessment. We each have our own perspective, our own opinion sets that lead us to different places.” “There is a lack of common knowledge of leadership expectations around curriculum, instruction and assessment in the middle schools”. “Our evaluations are general.” “Instructional leadership is not defined and is done in different ways.”
- b. “We are not functioning as a middle school system and are largely driven by separate roads.” “We are hungry to work together and to have common expectations around instructional strategies and to have common expectations around instructional strategies to be used in classrooms and to have the related professional development to pull this off”. “Each of us can lead curriculum, but we don’t always do this through the same lens”. “This can lead to conflict and turf wars.”

4. Establishing Non-negotiable goals for Achievement and Instruction: Effective district leaders ensure that the collaborative goal-setting process results in non-negotiable goals (i.e., goals that all staff members must act upon) in at least two areas: student achievement and classroom instruction. Effective superintendents set specific achievement targets for schools and students and then ensure the consistent use of research-based instructional strategies in all classrooms to reach those targets. Currently the

school district has not set non-negotiable student achievement and instructional goals based on the district's strategic plan.

"Are there currently non-negotiable goals related to student achievement that principals are responsible for?" "No, this is still in process." "It is a challenge when we are still in process of determining what it is that must be taught." Are there non-negotiable instructional goals? "No."

5. Monitoring goals for achievement and instruction: Effective superintendents continually monitor district progress toward achievement and instructional goals to ensure that these goals remain the driving force behind a district's actions. The school district has articulated a vision for the future of the Manchester schools and established measurable goals. However, a clear strategy for monitoring and achieving the vision has not be articulated. Now that goals are established the school district will begin to build a plan of action to achieving those goals. Incorporated into the strategic plan will be the activities, resources, and timeline.

"Principals have not been asked to incorporate student achievement goals into their evaluation." "However, there is a de-mobilization of our efforts because of so many priorities, we are doing too many things." "There are 23 principals that want to be on the same page, can't we prioritize and pick a few things that we want to do well?" "We have a serious responsibility to do a better job as leaders on behalf of our kids." "We need the moral courage to educate people about our priorities." "Things are getting piled on and on and the resources are being taken away, at some point something has to give." We have created a system that isolates schools into subsets (Focus, Priority, SIG, Title I, etc.)."

Initial Recommendations

During this phase the AT formulated subcommittee recommendations; identified potential barriers to implementation; and prioritized the recommendations.

Intervention Subcommittee Initial Recommendations
1. Institute a universal screening process across all grade levels that can be used for diagnostic purposes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Create schedules for students instead of fitting student into predetermined schedule b. Group students and make schedules based on data. May be unique to each school. Each school will do the same things, but it may look different. c. Allow for flexible schedules around math and language arts instruction
2. Develop process for implementing flexible scheduling - prioritizing instructional time based on needs of students
3. Define criteria for student placement in Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3, based on data collected from universal screening, curriculum assessments, standardized tests, teacher observation , and any other available data sources
4. Define criteria for instructional practices to use at each level - Tier 1, 2, and 3
5. Determine researched based materials to use for intervention
6. Evaluate need for leveling in math classes
7. Provide a math curriculum specialist for the purpose of providing professional development on math instructional practices and review of data.
8. Provide professional development time (PLCs) to review and analyze data
9. Ensure that Intervention include explicit, systematic, and intensive instruction

Assessment Subcommittee Initial Recommendations
1. Recommend that Manchester School District focus time and resources towards supporting the effective practice of embedded formative assessment and feedback. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Manchester School District should provide every teacher with professional development on formative assessment and effective feedback. b. Manchester School District should develop a system for supporting professional development around formative assessment and feedback that includes modeling and coaching.
2. Manchester School District should provide a clear policy about which assessments are expected to be implemented and when (e.g. how frequently are students screened? When is the screening window?). Manchester School District should develop a system for monitoring the implementation and reporting

on the implementation.
3. Manchester School District should clarify teaching expectations in writing. This clarification would include expectations for implementing the assessment system and for using formative assessment practices in the classroom.
4. Manchester School District should provide training to principals on how to act as instructional leaders to support classroom expectations. The feedback teachers receive should be aligned with the teaching expectations.
5. Manchester School District should make available items, performance tasks, and common assessments (curriculum-aligned benchmarks) aligned with the MSD academic standards. Manchester School District clarify expectations for teachers to use these resources.
6. Manchester School District should develop and implement a common process/approach to developing grade-level common assessments and for analyzing the data ¹ .
7. Adopted a common protocol for increasing rigorous student talk across math classes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide professional development on Accountable Talk.
8. Identify common screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring tools to be used in all schools. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop a timeline for selecting and implementing screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring assessments. b. Provide teachers appropriate professional development on using the tools. c. Monitor the implementation of these tools.
9. Development a policy/protocol for communicating results to all stakeholders.
10. Evaluate existing programs for effectiveness - too many programs are implemented without consideration for effectiveness and effective programs are rarely shared between schools (or within schools)

Instruction Subcommittee Initial Recommendations
1. Math resource room for all students
2. Consistent RTI definition and protocol
3. Guidelines for special education resource room
4. District wide formative and summative assessments
5. Consistent leveling policy

¹ This does not refer to creating assessments in P+, but rather refers to the process of teachers collaborating to identify learning outcomes, develop assessments, and talk about the student work. This recommendation does not require the use of P+ or imply that the district needs a tool.

6. Revisit retention policy
7. Criteria that facilitates transitions from elementary to middle
8. Chronic absenteeism needs to be addressed
9. Behavioral challenges

Priority Recommendations to be Included in the 2014-15 Action Plan

Each subcommittee prioritized their recommendations and identified a limited number of recommendations to be addressed in the school district’s Action Plan for the 2014-15 school year. Each of the priority recommendations is identified as an objective in the Action Plan. Based upon the administrators’ focus group session, the Leadership Team identified an objective to be included in the 2014-15 Action Plan.

Assessment Subcommittee 2014-15 Objectives

Objective #1: The Manchester School District will focus time and resources towards supporting the effective practice of embedded formative assessment and feedback.

Objective #2: The Manchester School District will develop and adopt district-wide common assessments in mathematics (aligned with MSD standards and available for every unit). MSD will adopt a common process for analyzing results (e.g. Professional Learning Communities).

Objective #3: The Manchester School District will develop and implement a Balanced Assessment System.

Intervention Subcommittee 2014-15 Objectives

Objective #1: Based on the RTI model, define criteria for placement in Tiers 1, 2, and 3 based on data collection.

Objective #2: Define criteria for instructional practices and resources to use in Tier 1, 2, and 3 to ensure interventions are researched based and instruction is explicit, systematic, and intensive.

Instruction Subcommittee 2014-15 Objectives

Objective #1: The Manchester School District will ensure that Individuals responsible for math instruction/support have a solid foundation in mathematics.

Objective #2: Middle School students not proficient in mathematics will be provided additional time for direct and explicit math instruction during the school day by a math instructor.

Leadership Team 2014-15 Objectives

**Manchester School District
Middle School Mathematics 2014-15 Action Plan**

The Focused Monitoring Action Plan is intended to describe the specific Goals, Objectives and Strategies that will be implemented as a result of the yearlong FM Planning Process. This strategic process serves as 'roadmap' for advancing the learning for all students while projecting the specific strategies that will be address the achievement gap between students with unique learning challenges and abilities and their peers. The plan is designed as a document that can be reviewed and revised as necessary throughout the implementation year.

MEASURABLE STUDENT LEARNING GOAL 1: From the 2013 school year to the end of the 2017-18 school year, the percentage of students proficient or above in mathematics at each grade level as measured by state and district assessments, will increase by 20 percentage points.

MEASURABLE STUDENT LEARNING GOAL 2: The Manchester School District will design and implement a multilevel intervention system using data based decision making that employs screening (identifying students at risk) and progress monitoring data to prescribe supplementary interventions for students who do not respond to core mathematics instruction at the middle schools.

OBJECTIVE #1: Manchester School District will focus time and resources towards supporting the effective practice of embedded formative assessment and feedback.

In 1998, Black and William published the results of a meta-analysis of over 250 research studies on classroom assessment practices entitled "Inside the Black Box." They found firm evidence that formative assessment is an essential component of classroom work and that its development can raise standards of achievement, producing effect sizes between .4 and .7. Moreover, formative assessment practices tend to help low achieving students more than they help high-achieving students. One way to think about this latter finding is that formative assessment helps to develop metacognitive skills and enhance motivation differentially for low-achieving students because high-achieving students already have these resources intuitively or through other supports.

2004—William, Lee, Harrison, and Black, as a follow-up to Inside the Black Box, examined the achievement of secondary students in math and science who were exposed and not exposed to formative assessment and found a mean effect size of .32 when exposed to formative assessment interventions.

2004—Ruiz-Primo and Furtak measured the effect of three formative assessment strategies—eliciting, recognizing, and using information—in the science classroom and found that the quality of teachers' formative assessment practices was positively linked to the students' level of learning.

STRATEGIES/ ACTIVITIES	ESTIMATED RESOURCES Budget, Human Resources, Materials	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE Leader and Participants	TIMELINE Begin/End	MONITORING OF IMPLEMENTATION Evidence		EVALUATING RESULTS Evidence of Effectiveness	
				What & by whom	When	What & by whom	When
1) Institute a district-wide common assessment advisory work group with representation from all schools both classroom teachers and special educators	20 teachers (representatives from each school; PreK-12 general education teachers, special education teachers, coordinators, principals, assistant principals from all levels) Funds up to \$10,000 secured through the 2014 – 2015 Focused Monitoring Grant	Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Assistant Superintendent for Student Services Director of Federal Projects Executive Director of the Innovation Zone Assistant Director for Student Services Special Education Coordinators School Principals	Now until August 30, 2014	Finalized list of participants	By July 31, 2014	Finalized list of participants	By July 31, 2014
				Document with definition and examples by Common Assessment Advisory work group.	August 30, 2014	Document with definition and examples by workgroup in alignment with current assessment policy; Instruction 104.2	August 30, 2014
2) Common Assessment Advisory work group will define "formative assessment"	Funds up to \$10,000 secured through the 2014 – 2015 Focused Monitoring Grant	Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Assistant Superintendent for Student Services Director of Federal Projects Assistant Director for Student Services	August 30, 2014	Document with definition and examples by Common Assessment Advisory work group.	August 30, 2014	Document with definition and examples by workgroup in alignment with current assessment policy; Instruction 104.2	August 30, 2014

		Executive Director of the Innovation Zone					
<p>3) Communicate the definition to all teachers and staff. Develop a Formative Assessment Professional Development plan. Plan must include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear set of outcomes anticipated (e.g. increase in student motivation, increase in teacher confidence, increase in student achievement) • Annually focus on formative assessment job embedded PD • A clear connection between the definition of formative assessment and the components of high-quality PD (e.g. understanding learning progressions, questioning, providing feedback, student self-assessment) • Clarity of how the plan will develop teacher content knowledge, create opportunities for teachers to experiment and reflect, what outside professional development will be used, mode of instruction (e.g. online vs. in-person), role of PLCs, etc....) • Provisions for training leadership in formative assessment 		<p>Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction</p> <p>Assistant Superintendent for Student Services</p> <p>Director of Federal Projects</p> <p>Executive Director of the Innovation Zone</p> <p>Assistant Director for Student Services</p> <p>Special Education Coordinators</p> <p>Common Assessment Advisory work group</p> <p>School Principals</p>	By October 31, 2014	Completed Formative Assessment Professional Development plan	October 31, 2014	Communication protocols/Memo to all staff by the building level Principals	October 31, 2014

OBJECTIVE #2: Manchester School District will develop and adopt district-wide common assessments in mathematics (aligned with MSD standards and available for every unit). MSD will adopt a common process for analyzing results (e.g. Professional Learning Communities).

One finding during the Focused Monitoring study period was that clear expectations about what assessments were required and what assessments were optional had not been given. Teachers at one school reported that performance assessments were "required" while teachers at another school said they had not be told the assessments were required and had stopped administering them.

There is a mounting body of research showing that the use of regular assessment aligned with curricular expectations results in student learning gains (Hattie 2009 - formative evaluation, Lomos 2012 - PLCs, Bambrick-Santoyo 2010 - common assessments). Alignment of the assessment items to the mathematics content is the goal, because alignment directly affects student learning (Marzano 2003). The district should make available benchmark assessments in mathematics (that is, tests that are regularly administered within a designated window of time across the same course).

This recommendation links to the role of teachers as participants in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). The recommendation is that the district adopt a common approach and set of expectations for how schools will use PLC time. For example, the district might adopt the criteria from All Things PLC (a simplified description can be found here: <http://www.allthingsplc.info/evidence-submission-online>). Or MSD might use the rubrics and guidelines from DuFour et al. (2006) to establish expectations.

STRATEGIES/ ACTIVITIES	ESTIMATED RESOURCES Budget, Human Resources, Materials	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE Leader and Participants	TIMELINE Begin/End	MONITORING OF IMPLEMENTATION Evidence		EVALUATING RESULTS Evidence of Effectiveness	
				What & by whom	When	What & by whom	When
1) Develop and launch a work group on collaborative data analysis. Develop a definition; establish parameters for using results, etc.	Funds up to \$10,000 secured through the 2014 – 2015 Focused Monitoring Grant	Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Assistant Superintendent for Student Services Director of Federal Projects Executive Director of the Innovation Zone Assistant Director for Student Services Special Education	By August 2014	List of PLC workgroup participants	August 30, 2014	List of workgroup participants	August 30, 2014
				Written definition and plan		Written definition and plan	

		Coordinators School Principals					
2) Define and communicate common protocol for teacher analysis of results (e.g. PLCs)		Data Coaches Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Assistant Superintendent for Student Services Director of Federal Projects Executive Director of the Innovation Zone Assistant Director for Student Services Special Education Coordinators PLC work group School Principals	By September 2014	Written protocol	By September 2014	Written protocol	By September 2014
3) Demonstrate understanding of expectations for school-based teacher analysis teams.		Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Assistant Superintendent for Student Services Director of Federal Projects Executive Director of the Innovation Zone Assistant Director for Student Services	By December 2014	Principal Action plans- principals communicate expectations to school staff	December 2014	Utilization of protocol developed- teachers demonstrate expectations	March 2015

		Special Education Coordinators					
		School Principals					
4) Implement PLCs		Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction	January 2015	PLC work group agendas and minutes.	January 2015- June 2015	List of established groups.	January 2015- June 2015
		Assistant Superintendent for Student Services				PLC work group agendas and minutes.	
		Director of Federal Projects					
		Executive Director of the Innovation Zone					
		Assistant Director for Student Services					
		Special Education Coordinators					
		School Principals					

OBJECTIVE #3: Based on the RTI model, define criteria for: a. placement in Tiers 1, 2, 3, based on data collection, b. instructional practices to use within each level, which will be implemented with fidelity across the district in all Tiers.

STRATEGIES/ ACTIVITIES	ESTIMATED RESOURCES Budget, Human Resources, Materials	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE Leader and Participants	TIMELINE Begin/End	MONITORING OF IMPLEMENTATION Evidence		EVALUATING RESULTS Evidence of Effectiveness	
				What & by whom	When	What & by whom	When
1) Establish district-wide RTI work group that will:	Substitutes for meetings and observations	Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction	September 2014- June 2015				
a. Conduct an inventory of instructional intervention		Assistant Superintendent for	September 2014	Documentation of attendance. Draft	At each meeting	Committee has	June 2015

<p>resources currently used</p> <p>b. Define criteria for placement in tiers 1, 2, 3</p> <p>c. Define instructional practices for each tier</p> <p>d. Research intervention practices and progress monitoring tools</p> <p>e. Agree on intervention tools/resources needed/used</p> <p>f. Recommend screening progress monitoring tool</p> <p>g. Recommend and commit to an instructional intervention and implementation plan</p>	<p>Funds up to \$10,000 secured through the Focused Monitoring Grant.</p>	<p>Student Services</p> <p>Director of Federal Projects</p> <p>Executive Director of the Innovation Zone Assistant Director for Student Services</p> <p>Special Education Coordinators</p> <p>School Principals</p> <p>RTI work group</p>	<p>By November 2014</p> <p>By December 2014</p> <p>By February 2015</p> <p>By March 2015</p> <p>By April 2015</p> <p>By May 2015</p>	<p>documents – interval reports</p>	<p>beginning in September 2014</p>	<p>placement criteria for Tiers 1, 2, 3.</p> <p>Criteria is established and universally agreed upon. Students are placed in Tiers.</p> <p>Criteria is established and universally agreed upon. Students are placed in Tiers.</p> <p>Recommendation report</p>	<p>November 2014</p> <p>December 2014</p> <p>June 2015</p>
<p>2) Professional development is provided to all school staff on using and interpreting benchmark screening progress monitoring data</p>	<p>Workshops Principal Hours PLCs</p>	<p>Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction</p> <p>Assistant Superintendent for Student Services</p> <p>Director of Federal Projects</p> <p>Executive Director of the Innovation Zone Assistant Director for Student Services</p> <p>Special Education Coordinators</p> <p>School Principals</p>	<p>Priority schools by January 2015 Other schools by September 2015</p>	<p>PLC Agendas Attendance Records</p>	<p>Priority schools by January 2015 Other schools by September 2015</p>	<p>All students will be monitored using consistent tools</p>	<p>September 2015</p>

		RTI work group					
3) Benchmark screening progress monitoring tools are available in all schools		Principals	September 2015	Administration ensures tools are available	September 2015	Priority schools by Used in other schools by	February 2015 September 2015

OBJECTIVE # 4: Develop a principals' leadership team, focusing on curriculum, instruction and assessment through the perspective of instructional leadership. A professional learning community would provide the forum for learning, discussion and consistency throughout the district. Agendas and meeting norms will be established to facilitate the process and meeting minutes will be recorded.

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES FOR 2013-2014	ESTIMATED RESOURCES Budget, Human Resources, Materials	TIMELINE Begin/End	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE / OVERSIGHT Leader and Participants	MONITORING OF IMPLEMENTATION Evidence		EVALUATING RESULTS Evidence of Effectiveness	
				What & by whom	When	What & by whom	When
1) Continue to provide a clear set of instructional leadership standards (e.g. Balanced Leadership from McREL, NISL, etc.). Many principals were previously trained in the NISL standards and reported satisfaction with the quality of the training. a. Align evaluation with leadership standards. b. Provide professional development on instructional leadership for all administrators. Develop a	Superintendent Executive Team Funds covered by general fund, no other additional costs	July 2014 – June 2015	Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Assistant Superintendent for Student Services Director of Federal Projects Assistant Director for Student Services Special Education Coordinators School Principals	Quarterly reports to the BOSC Curriculum and Instruction Committee from Focused Monitoring Leadership and Achievement Team members.	Ongoing	Provision of professional development activities. Establishment of evaluation process that includes timeliness of ongoing feedback.	June 2015

<p>sustainable plan for training new administrators.</p> <p>c. Provide regular ongoing feedback to principals aligned with standards.</p>							
<p>2) Continue to revise the evaluations for leaders to reflect the research-based behaviors that are identified with leaders that have an impact on student achievement. District-level and school-level leaders' accountability should be based on expectations outlined in the district strategic plan.</p>		<p>July 2014 – June 2015</p>	<p>Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction</p> <p>Assistant Superintendent for Student Services</p> <p>Director of Federal Projects</p> <p>Assistant Director for Student Services</p> <p>Special Education Coordinators</p> <p>School Principals</p>	<p>Quarterly reports to the BOSC Curriculum and Instruction Committee from Focused Monitoring Leadership and Achievement Team members.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Provision of professional development activities.</p> <p>Establishment of evaluation process that includes timeliness of ongoing feedback.</p>	<p>June 2015</p>
<p>3) Continue to establish a process for collaboratively setting non-negotiable student achievement and instructional goals for principals based on the district strategic plan.</p>		<p>September 2014 – June 2015</p>	<p>Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction</p> <p>Assistant Superintendent for Student Services</p> <p>Director of Federal Projects</p> <p>Assistant Director for Student Services</p> <p>Special Education Coordinators</p> <p>School Principals</p>	<p>Written process</p>	<p>June 2015</p>	<p>Written process</p>	<p>June 2015</p>