Public Schools of Brookline

Dr. William Lupini – Superintendent
Mr. David Summergrad – Principal, Runkle School
Dr. Jennifer Fischer-Mueller – Deputy Superintendent

June 16, 2008
Guiding Questions

• What does the PSB achievement gap look like?
• How did we create the PSB plan?
• How are we closing the achievement gap?
• How are we leading the difficult and dangerous work of changing a high achieving school system?
• What are the beliefs and values that are required for the PSB to eliminate the achievement gap?
• Five years into the Equity Project, what are the data telling us?
What does the achievement gap look like in Brookline? (2003)

- Standardized Tests
  - MCAS
  - SAT
- Classroom Grades
- Course Enrollment
- Discipline records
- Post-secondary plans
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## 2003 Gr. 10 Math

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## Special Education by Race/Ethnicity

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<th>Ratio</th>
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<td>Asian</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>13%</td>
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<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>56%</td>
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How did we create the PSB plan to eliminate the achievement gap?

*Brookline’s Educational Equity Project: Taking Action, Getting Results*

2003 – 2004

Core Team
The Work of the Core Team

- Engaged in comprehensive research
- Reviewed student learning data
- Conducted 80 internal interviews
- Identified shared beliefs and assumptions
- Created an Action Plan
The Brookline Public Schools, pre-k to 12, is a well-respected system with a dedicated, skilled staff and diverse student population. While there are many high achieving students, there is a disproportionate number of Black and Latino/a students who are not achieving at their highest levels.

The Brookline Public Schools, pre-k to 12, is a dynamic and effective system in which all students are achieving at increasingly higher levels. To help realize this goal, expectations are continuously examined and challenged, and a student’s race or address is no predictor of achievement. Students, parents, teachers, administrators, and the community expect, support, and facilitate the highest achievement for every student.

Where are we now?

Where are we going?
Equity Project
Organizing Framework

- Beliefs and Assumptions
- Criteria for Long Term Effectiveness
- “The 4 Es”
  - Engagement
  - Expectations
  - Examine Our Practice
  - Evidence of Student Learning
Assumptions Grounding the Work of *The Equity Project*

1. The achievement gap is a tremendously complex issue. It is a symptom of a larger issue of social, economic and educational equity.

2. There are numerous actions/strategies that need to operate simultaneously, synergistically to close the gap; there is no single solution.

3. It is important to frame the problem. The achievement gap is an **adaptive problem**. Eliminating the racial achievement gap will require an investigation and inquiry into our beliefs, values, practices, and expectations.
Beliefs that Guide Our Work
(Based on MSAN’s Beliefs)

1. Students of all races can succeed in school.

2. Eliminating the racial achievement gap in our schools is the right thing to do.

3. Excellent schools are committed to the elimination of the racial achievement gap.

4. Schools are most effective in eliminating the racial achievement gap when they take responsibility for the ways in which their practices affect student achievement.
Beliefs that Guide Our Work

5. Racism in school harms students and affects the students’ ability to succeed. Excellent schools work to eliminate intentional and unintentional racism by constantly examining curriculum, teaching practices, and administrative policies.

6. Students come to school with a variety of individual strengths and needs. Our responsibility as educators is to recognize and build upon the students’ strengths while identifying and meeting the students’ needs.

7. Students benefit from strong family-school connections. As educators, we need to take responsibility for fostering effective family-school relationships.
Criteria for Long-Term Effectiveness

Adapted from the work of Beth Miller, Ph.D., “Critical Hours”

• Intentionality and accountability
• High quality staff
• Consistent participation over time
• Stable, strong infrastructure
  – Leadership
  – Financing
  – Reflection, Analysis, Evaluation of Process and Product
  – Public Engagement and Community Partnership
  – Professional Development
<table>
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<th>Year Range</th>
<th>Team Type</th>
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<tr>
<td>2003 – 2004</td>
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<td>2004 – 2005</td>
<td>System-level Action Teams</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005 – 2006</td>
<td>Building-based Equity Teams</td>
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<td>2006 – 2007</td>
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How are we closing the achievement gap?

The Equity Project’s “4 Es”

Engagement

Expectations

Examine Our Practice

Evidence of Student Learning
Program Review – Rigorous evaluation of curricula/programs by multi-stakeholder committees using research/data analysis

Phase I: STUDY
Phase II: PLAN
Phase III: IMPLEMENT
Phase IV: ANALYZE/REVIEW
Curriculum Scope and Sequence

Lack of curriculum coordination is an issue of educational equity

Example: Simple Machines
% of 4th grade students passing the Simple Machines pilot Pre-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Asian</th>
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<td>25%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>73%</td>
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% of 4th grade students passing the Simple Machines pilot Pre- and Post-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Asian</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>25%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass Post Test</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>80%</td>
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</table>
% of 5th grade students scoring P + A on 2005-2007 Science MCAS

- White: 69% (2005), 69% (2006), 76% (2007)
Instruction

• Child Study Teams
• Tripod Student Surveys
• Teacher Qualifications
Child Study Teams

“Adaptations to teaching and learning styles and classroom climates can and should be designed and implemented before making an assumption that a student’s lack of progress can only be ameliorated by special education.”

Is Special Education the Right Service?, MA DOE, March 2001
Tripod Student Surveys

• Student Engagement Targets
• Classroom Learning Conditions
Assessment

Common formative/summative assessment:

• Focus on student learning/seek evidence
• Use information/data to inform instruction
• Multiple data points/fuller picture
I taught Stripe how to whistle.
I taught Stripe how to whistle.

I don't hear him whistling.
I taught Stripe how to whistle.

I don't hear him whistling.

I said I taught him. I didn't say he learned it.
Challenges of a “high performing school district”

“We are just tinkering around the edges.”

Dr. Bill Lupini, Superintendent
The achievement gap is a tremendously complex issue. It is a symptom of a larger issue of social, economic and \textit{educational equity}.

It is important to frame the problem. The achievement gap is an \textit{adaptive problem}. Eliminating the racial achievement gap will require an investigation and inquiry into our beliefs, values, practices, and expectations.
“an adaptive problem requires people in the community to change their values, their behaviors or their attitudes. For this problem to be solved people are going to have to learn new ways of doing business.”

- Ronald Heifetz
Adaptive Change Requires:

• A community committed to continuous learning
• Involvement of key leaders
• A critical mass of stakeholders
• Awareness that people move through stages of change differently
• Use of multiple data points
• A balance of planning, doing and reflecting
• Time, persistence and commitment
Changing Values

New 5th Core Value: Education Equity

The Public Schools of Brookline strive to identify and eliminate barriers to educational achievement in our schools and in our community. To this end, we create policies and practices that are fair and just and provide educational opportunities to ensure that historically underserved or underrepresented populations can and will meet the same high standards for achievement expected of all students.
Strategic Planning

- Vision
- Mission
- Core Values
- Goals and Objectives
- Measurements
What is the evidence that we are making progress?
Grade 3 Math MCAS 2006-2007: Proficient + Above Proficient
Grade 7 ELA MCAS 2005-2007: Proficient + Advanced

- 2005:
  - Afr Amer: 65%
  - Asian: 88%
  - Latino: 52%
  - White: 91%
- 2006:
  - Afr Amer: 67%
  - Asian: 91%
  - Latino: 66%
  - White: 91%
- 2007:
  - Afr Amer: 53%
  - Asian: 86%
  - Latino: 76%
  - White: 90%
Grade 10 ELA MCAS 2005-2007: Proficient + Advanced

Afr Amer  | 2005 | 2006 | 2007
--- | --- | --- | ---
32% | 65% | 76%

Asian   | 2005 | 2006 | 2007
--- | --- | --- | ---
71% | 86% | 85%

Latino  | 2005 | 2006 | 2007
--- | --- | --- | ---
57% | 74% | 77%

White   | 2005 | 2006 | 2007
--- | --- | --- | ---
86% | 93% | 93%
Gr. 6 ELA MCAS 2006 – 2007
African-American/Black

- Advanced
- Proficient
- Needs Improvement
- Failing

2005: Advanced - 9%, Proficient - 6%
2006: Advanced - 43%, Proficient - 6%
2007: Advanced - 67%, Proficient - 19%
Cohort
Math African American/Black

<table>
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<th>Grade</th>
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<td>gr 8 2005</td>
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<tr>
<td>gr 10 2007</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>17%</td>
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Conclusions

We have not closed the achievement gap in the Public Schools of Brookline.

We are making meaningful progress.
Key Learnings

• Comprehensive planning is essential.

• Multiple stakeholder involvement is key.

• It is critical that educational equity be a system-wide goal and a communicated priority.

• This is long-term work. It is important to frame it as long-term work from the beginning.

• Be accountable. Go public with the data.

• Learning is “Taking Action.”
Key Learnings

• The structure should be dynamic; form and function need to match.

• Thinking big is essential, yet actions need to be focused.

• The actions must impact the classroom.

• Constant, clear, and open communication is essential.

• Identify and celebrate successes.
Extras
Addressing Two Common “Pushbacks”

• “What about students who are already high achievers? What about their needs?”

• “Are you hiring people based on race or on their qualifications?”
Equity newsletter apology

Quotes from letter:

“Not recognizing the stereotypes embedded in the photo is a painful and important example of our need for greater cultural awareness and sensitivity.”

“… we need feedback to broaden our perspectives and to develop our collective understanding beyond the dominant culture. We need to be certain that what we are communicating to this school system is always respectful of all.”
Equity newsletter apology

“… we need feedback to broaden our perspectives and to develop our collective understanding beyond the dominant culture. We need to be certain that what we are communicating to this school system is always respectful of all.”
Creating the Culture

Professional Learning Community:
• Shared norms and values
• Focus on student learning
• Deprivatization of practice
• Collaboration
• Reflection, inquiry, and analysis
Creating the Conditions: Structural

- Time to meet
- Physical proximity
- Interdependent teaching roles
- Communication structures
- Teacher empowerment and school autonomy
Creating the Conditions: Human/Social

- Openness to improvement
- Trust and respect
- Cognitive and skill base
- Supportive leadership
- Socialization
About Brookline

www.brookline.k12.ma.us

- Urban/suburban district next to Boston
- 8 elementary schools, 1 high school
- Considered a “high achieving school district” with a “tradition of excellence”
# Enrollment

## District
- Total Count: 6,142

## Race
- African American/Black: 8.3%
- Asian: 17.8%
- Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic: 3.6%
- Native American: 0.1%
- Native Hawaiian, Pacific Isl.: 0.0%
- White: 62.0%
Enrollment

Ethnicity
- Hispanic/Latino 8.1%
- Non-Hispanic/Latino 91.9%

Gender
- Male 48.9%
- Female 51.1%

Selected Populations
- Limited English Proficiency 7.2%
- Low-income 12.2%
- Special Education 18.0%
- First Language Not English 28.3%
An example of
“a new way of doing business”

Incoming Teachers’ Orientation
PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF BROOKLINE
AUGUST 29, 2007
Equity, Race and Cultural Competence: Beginning the Conversation

We will:

• Review data
• Explore a *continuum of cultural proficiency*
• Listen to the voices of Brookline students as they talk about the development of racial identity, equity and achievement
• Consider modern forms of racism, and how they impact teaching and student achievement
• Commit to one action
Reviewing the Data

What do you see?
What questions are raised for you?
At first glance, what does the data seem to say about race and achievement in Brookline?
Actions

✓ Talk to your principal about the work of the Equity Team.
✓ Work with your mentor to set a clear equity goal.
✓ Communicate with the families of your students. Ask parents to tell you about their children.
✓ Expand what you know. Question what you think you know. Read.
✓ Examine your pre-conceptions. Are they based on stereotypical views?
✓ Take an EMI course offered in Brookline.
✓ Learn about your own racial identity and how it can impact achievement.
✓ Examine your curriculum and teaching practices with colleagues.
✓ Set clear, consistent expectations.
✓ Be encouraging and demanding.
Program Review  2007-2008

Phase I: Study
• Social Studies
• Performing Arts

Phase II: Plan
• English Language Arts
• Science
• Physical Education/Health
Program Review  2007-2008

Implementation - Phase III/IV:

• Educational Technology
• Enrichment, Challenge & Support Program (ECS)
• Mathematics
• Visual Arts
Brookline’s Assessment System

• Assesses what is valued
• Uses a variety of assessments
• Documents student growth/learning over time
• Common across grade/course
• Generates results that are collaboratively analyzed to inform curriculum and instruction
Brookline’s Assessment System

- Provides multiple student learning data points for decisions about students
- Provides appropriate levels of accountability
- Provides evidence of what students are learning across multiple disciplines
- Provides a more complete picture of student learning in Brookline
Teachers’ Reactions

• Phase 1: Confusion and overload
• Phase 2: Feeling inadequate and distrustful
• Phase 3: Challenging the test
• Phase 4: Examining the results objectively and looking for causes
• Phase 5 – Accepting data as useful information, seeking solutions, and modifying instruction

(S. Trimble, A. Gay, J. Matthews, March 2005)