

# CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Goals for 2010-2012

Mission Statement: The Cambridge Public Schools will be a diverse urban school system that works with families and the community to successfully educate all of its students at high levels.

The Cambridge Public Schools and the Cambridge School Committee will promote high expectations for all students. In conjunction with all stakeholders (students, families, teachers, administrators, elected officials, the greater Cambridge community), expectations for student achievement will be raised. Our school system is dedicated to promoting academic excellence and social justice throughout the district.

For the period 2010-2012, the School Committee and Administration will focus efforts on three major areas as detailed below.

(1) *Improving achievement for all students*, with a particular emphasis on reducing the achievement gaps that currently exist for students in certain sub-groups including students of color, low-income students, students for whom English is not the first language, and students with special needs. This goal also addresses providing challenge for our highest-achieving students. Specifically, CPS aims to raise the Composite Performance Index (CPI) and the percent of students performing at the proficient/ advanced levels on the MCAS for all students in accordance with the table and graphs on pages 4 and 5 of this document.

*To achieve this goal, we will:*

- provide professional development for principals, assistant principals, coordinators, coaches and classroom teachers in differentiated instruction, thus enabling teachers to employ a variety of instructional strategies to challenge and support the diverse needs of students in their classrooms every day

Professional development in Differentiating Instruction will be the district focus for administrators, coaches and teachers beginning in the summer of 2010 and continuing throughout the 2010-2012 school years. Training for administrators and coaches will occur during the week of August 23, 2010 along with a plan for ongoing professional development throughout the year. Professional development for middle grade teachers in Differentiated Instruction will be introduced during the week of August 30, 2010 and will include a plan for teachers to continue the work during scheduled middle grade meetings over the next two years.

- focus K-5 professional development on Response to Intervention (RTI) techniques, a general education intervention to support struggling students to avert referral to Special Education

Starting in the fall of 2010, some schools will be piloting the first phase of Response to Intervention (RTI). The first phase (first year) of implementation will consist of:

- \* Defining RTI
- \* RTI training
- \* Identification of staff that will constitute the RTI team
- \* Identification of current interventions already being implemented at the school
- \* Creation of a database to be stored in YARDS

This first phase will be completed by the end of the 2010-2011 school year.

- train principals, coaches and classroom teachers in the use of student data, including growth data in setting improvement targets that are in alignment with the new state requirements

All district/ school administrators and coaches will be trained in the use of student data, including student growth data during the week of August 23, 2010.

Administrators and coaches will be expected to use both MCAS and other performance data to set specific improvement goals for their schools and departments. Teacher training in the use of data will be a priority over the next two years. Teachers will be supported by administrators and coaches in using data to focus on the needs of their individual class and students.

- build a professional learning community in which teachers and other educators will be afforded time and structure to collaborate as a group of professionals focused on improving student achievement; teachers will analyze performance data and student work to tailor instruction to meet individual student's needs

Presently some schools have created professional learning communities (PLCs) within their schools to study and improve instruction; these school-based PLCs will continue to be supported. In addition, the Middle Grades Improvement Plan calls for the creation of citywide professional learning communities for middle grade teachers. These PLCs will be formed and supported during middle grade collaboration time over the course of the 2010-2012 school years.

- train administrators, coaches and classroom teachers in the use of the Youth and Resource Development System (YARDS)

The first phase of the YARDS implementation will include the following:

- \*Training for all administrators and coaches in accessing student data in the YARDS system (Winter 2011)
- \*Training teachers to access individual student's profiles that include student information and longitudinal assessment data (Winter 2011)
- \*Completion of the CPS pilot in collaboration with the Department of Human Service Programs to facilitate communication and data sharing between school personnel and non-school service providers (Winter 2011)

- design and implement formal mentoring program for principals to support them as instructional leaders in their buildings

A summary of the current mentoring system for principals and proposed ideas for improvement were discussed at the Principals' meeting on June 10, 2010. The

superintendent and cabinet members will review feedback and additional considerations from that meeting in finalizing an enhanced program of mentoring and support for principals to be implemented over the course of the 2010-2011 school year.

- continue to revise, fully implement and report out assessment measures in addition to MCAS, so that student performance can be captured fully, and delineate how the measure of each alternative assessment will be used to improve the quality of instruction and learning

The district will continue to improve and expand upon the exit portfolios in eighth grade as a measure of student performance. Currently there are five (5) schools that require an exit portfolio from their eighth grade students,

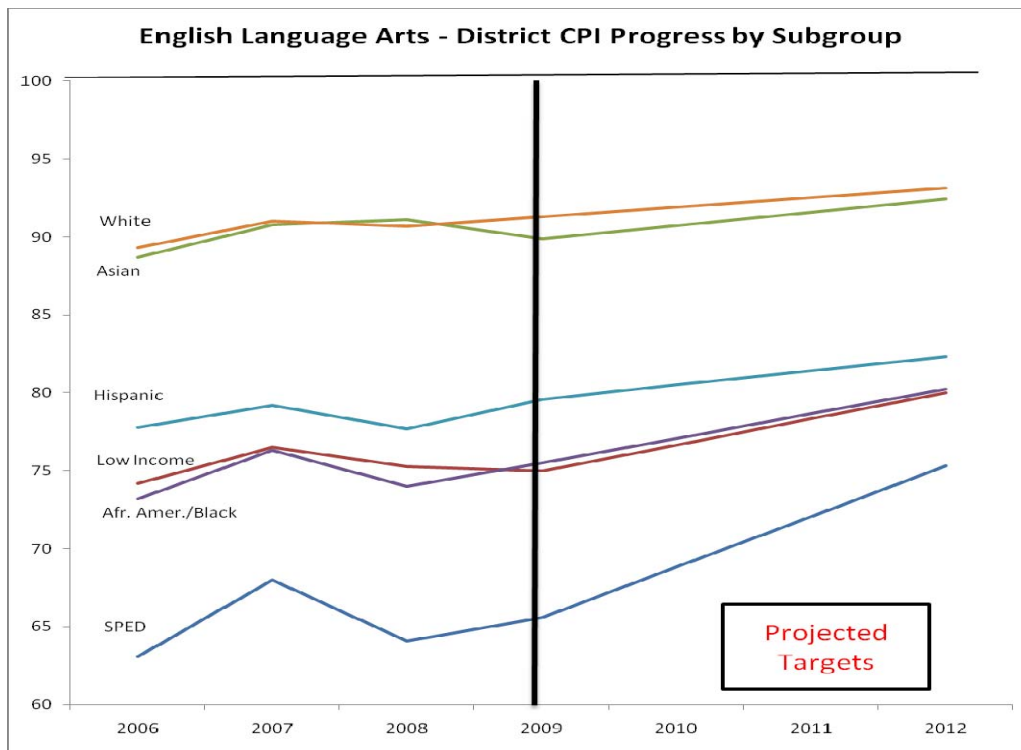
An JK-Grade 12 Assessment Summit will be held during the 2010-2011 school year with the goals of:

- \* mapping all of the authentic assessments that are currently administered in CPS
- \* identifying areas of gaps and redundancies
- \* determining what information is collected and how it is used to improve instruction
- \* refining current methods of reporting information to families and other constituents

- CRLS will continue to develop rigorous academic core courses embedding 21st century skills and high expectations for all students, thus providing students in both college preparatory and honors level courses substantially similar skills and content, with appropriate supports and challenges, to maximize intellectual development for each student and to provide equitable opportunities for all students to achieve at high levels
- strengthen the system of supervision and evaluation of teachers and administrators by using student growth data and other indicators of success including alternative assessments to track the effectiveness of teachers and schools in improving student academic achievement including test scores while holding adults accountable for their practice (this step will entail negotiations with the Cambridge Teachers Association to create a system that is fair and transparent to staff and effective for children); and
- introduce a coherent system of program evaluation, empowering the district to make thoughtful decisions about which programs have the greatest positive impact on student achievement (mathematics and ISP will be the first programs to be evaluated starting in the 2010-2011 school year, although in time all curriculum areas will join a four-year cycle of evaluation to ensure that teaching and learning standards are well-conceived and aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks).

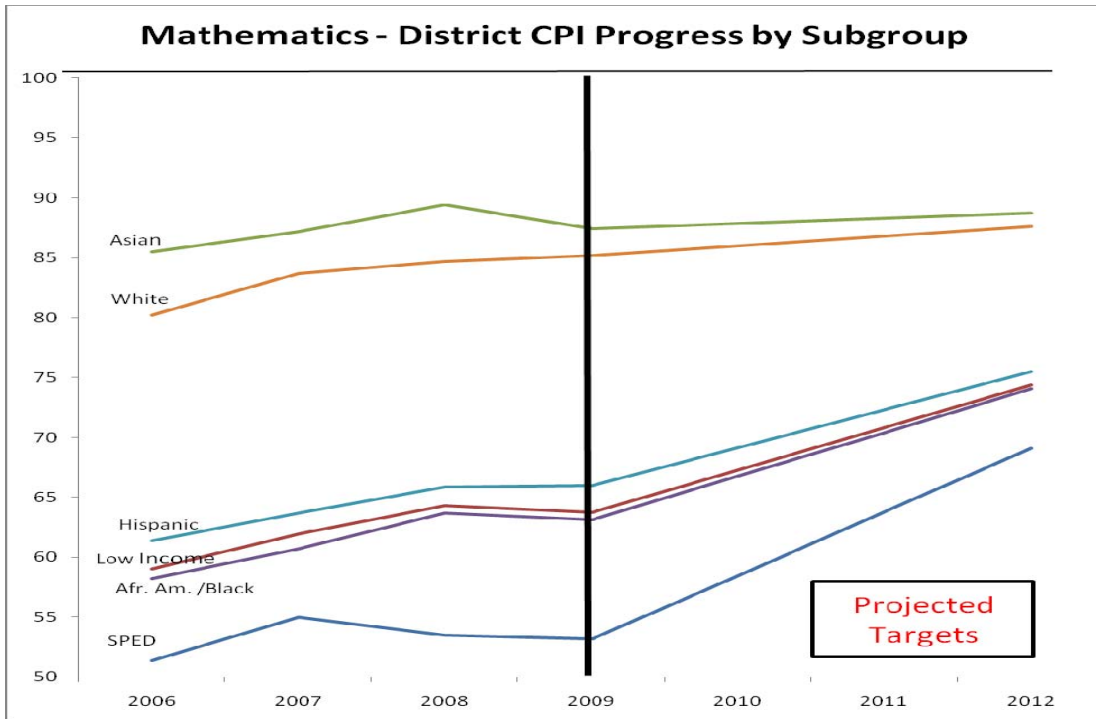
The following graphs and charts set specific improvement targets for the district’s MCAS performance in English Language Arts and Mathematics. The targets reflect specific improvement goals from 2009 through 2012. While these goals are ambitious, they reflect the district’s commitment to closing the achievement gap among subgroups of students in the Cambridge Public Schools.

The Cambridge School Committee and the CPS administration have agreed to report MCAS performance both in terms of the overall Composite Performance Index (CPI) and the percent of students performing at the proficient/ advanced levels of the test. The charts below reflect both measures of student progress on MCAS. It should be noted that the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) is currently reviewing both the MCAS test and the proficiency rates for district/school accountability. CPS accountability measures will align with any changes in state requirements over the duration of this plan.



Projected Targets - ELA - CPI				
	2009	2010	2011	2012
SPED	65.6	68.8	72.1	75.3
Low Income	75.0	76.7	78.3	80.0
Asian	89.9	90.8	91.6	92.5
Afr. Amer./Black	75.5	77.1	78.7	80.3
Hispanic	79.6	80.5	81.4	82.3
White	91.3	91.9	92.5	93.2

Projected Targets - ELA - % Proficient & Advanced				
	2009	2010	2011	2012
SPED	27%	37%	46%	56%
Low Income	45%	52%	58%	65%
Asian	73%	77%	80%	84%
Afr. Amer./Black	46%	53%	59%	66%
Hispanic	53%	58%	64%	69%
White	79%	82%	84%	87%



Projected Targets - Math - CPI				
	2009	2010	2011	2012
SPED	53.2	58.5	63.8	69.1
Low Income	63.7	67.3	70.8	74.4
Asian	87.4	87.8	88.3	88.7
Afr. Amer./Black	63.1	66.8	70.4	74.1
Hispanic	66.0	69.2	72.3	75.5
White	85.2	86.0	86.8	87.6

Projected Targets - Math - % Proficient & Advanced				
	2009	2010	2011	2012
SPED	16%	28%	39%	51%
Low Income	31%	40%	49%	58%
Asian	71%	74%	77%	81%
Afr. Amer./Black	31%	40%	49%	58%
Hispanic	34%	43%	51%	60%
White	67%	71%	75%	79%

(2) *Building a safe, supportive and nurturing environment in schools*, allowing students and staff to focus on the work at hand without distraction. Research and common sense suggest that attending to the social and emotional needs of students will produce a learning environment that allows students to do their best academic work in school. The district will measure progress toward this goal through school climate survey information that is collected and reported annually.

*To achieve this goal, we will:*

- conduct a district-wide study of our Special Education programs, to ensure that staff are delivering services in an effective and efficient manner and that parents are empowered to serve as essential partners in supporting their children's performance in school

WestED was contracted by the district to complete the special education program evaluation. During the week of May 24-28, 2010 all Cambridge staff were invited to participate in group interviews. At the end of September and throughout the fall, the following steps will be taken:

- \* Parent/family group interviews at different times and locations
- \* Staff and parent online survey
- \* Classroom and delivery of service observations
- \* Individualized Education Plan (IEP) reviews
- \* School visits

A preliminary list of recommendations will be shared with the district by no later than November 1, 2010 as some recommendations may have budgetary implications. A full report is expected by no later than January 30th 2011.

- Work with Developmental Designs to implement a new school climate survey; incorporate additional school climate indicators into the annual Health Survey

A timeline for review and implementation of the school climate survey will be completed prior to December 2010.

- implement an anti-bullying initiative, building upon the district's successful experience with the Responsive Classroom and Developmental Design programs, designing a database of incidents of bullying in our schools, and training administrators on their legal and organizational responsibilities in addressing this ongoing issue in public schools

A comprehensive timeline for district-wide programming, training, and review of research on effectiveness of programs will be developed during the summer of 2010.

- work with principals, school staff and families to strengthen school/family communication; develop and implement strategies that welcome potential and new families across all demographics in each school as well as strategies that strengthen family involvement.

A Home-School Connections Task Force will convene in the fall of 2010 for the purpose of identifying and sharing specific steps CPS schools might take to strengthen school/family communication.

- collaborate with the Department of Human Services and other City/community service providers to develop a coherent set of opportunities for students to engage in out-of-school time (OST) programs and activities that complement, extend and enhance students' work in school by facilitating easy and efficient communication between school staff and OST providers;

An analysis of enrollment data of CPS student participation in OST programs will be completed over the course of the 2010-2012 school years; this data will be stored in the YARDS system in order to establish a baseline against which future trends will be determined.

- produce a user-friendly guide for parents about after-school and summer programs, enabling them to make wise decisions about enrichment opportunities as well as programs that are geared toward reducing the traditional "summertime loss" of academic knowledge and skills, thus keeping students on pace to begin each new school year ready to learn and progress

CPS will collaborate with other city and community providers to produce a user-friendly guide for families about OST programs specifically targeted for students in the middle grades; the guide will be completed by the spring of 2011.

- (3) *Instituting long-range planning* as a built-in aspect of the School Committee's and Administration's approach to budgetary and programmatic decision-making. While the annual budget cycle is key to producing spending plans for each school year, it is imperative that major policy decisions be made within a context of longer-range conditions, so that policies and programs, developed jointly with the School Committee, can be sustained and strengthened over time.

*To achieve this goal, we will:*

- engage the staff and community (and the citywide school council) to analyze existing proposals for middle grades education, develop alternative options, and present for School Committee action a recommended policy to be voted before the end of the 2010 calendar year;
- collect and analyze pertinent data regarding the success and limitations of the existing Controlled Choice Policy and practices, and make recommendations for adjustments to the policy;
- collaborate with the City Manager, School Committee, and City administration to develop a long-range facilities plan that realistically portrays the City's ability to manage student enrollment, educational policy initiatives, administrative functions, and available resources;

- work with City officials to develop plans for an early childhood center as part of the long range facilities study and
- work with the City Manger's office to develop a five-year budget forecast by December 1, 2010, taking into account assumptions about state aid, collective bargaining agreements, the cost of employee benefits, and other variables that will affect annual budgeting practices, thus replacing the tendency to enact short-term, budget-balancing decisions with an approach that considers sustainability and growth in a time of limited resources.