

# Wayland Public Schools

## FY15 System-Wide Goal Progress Report: Achievement Gap

**System-Wide Goal:** To narrow the achievement gap through the use of culturally proficient teaching strategies, data-based analyses, and, in general, by building on strategies that work.

**High School Strategic Initiatives:** (1) Increase student voice and engagement among our Boston resident students through the re-launch of a high school METCO Diversity Room and Leadership Council; (2) Foster collaboration among teachers through small professional development groups in order to employ cultural proficiency theory to inform practice and guide instructional strategies; (3) Collaborate with the Leadership for Equity group as we implement a new system-wide measurement tool.

A Accomplishments	C Challenges	E Exemplar
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Two groups of teachers explored “cultural proficiency” as their topic for yearlong, in-house professional development. In these groups, which met eight times over the course of the year, teachers guided their own study of best practices, the experience of students of color, and other relevant topics through readings and discussion.</li> <li>● As part of the Leadership for Equity initiative around professional development, the IDEAS (Initiatives for Developing Equity and Achievement for Students) course on Cultural Proficiency was offered at the high school, and five high school teachers enrolled.</li> <li>● At the request of our Boston resident students, a new “Diversity Room” opened in the Media Center, giving this cohort a place to gather, as well as a place to mingle with Wayland resident students.</li> <li>● The principal has met with the Boston resident students at least once per quarter to discuss various issues.</li> <li>● Two “Girls Groups” (one grades 9 and 10, one grades 11 and 12) for students of color run each month, facilitated by two faculty members.</li> <li>● There are plans to field a team for next spring’s “Tenacity Challenge” at Bedford High School, as well as METCO representation on a new Principal’s Advisory Council next year. A group of students participated in the IDEAS leadership conference in the fall.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Although we are excited by the potential for cross-cultural and cross-racial dialogue in the Diversity Room, it did not have the formal launch that we had envisioned. We will plan for a stronger introduction to the student body in the fall of 2015.</li> <li>● Bringing issues of culture and race to the forefront of our school-wide discussions is both imperative and challenging. We have explored the possibilities of speaker series, reframing Winter Week into a Culture Week, and other structures for inviting conversation. We are still finding the balance between what feels forced and what feels organic.</li> <li>● We have a need to define the achievement gap at Wayland High School with greater specificity, from which we would develop targeted intervention strategies and track progress over time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In response to a video that one of our Boston resident students made about microaggressions, much conversation among students and faculty ensued about issues of race and culture. There was great honesty in these discussions. A group of students and teachers wanting to talk more regularly about these issues (such as race in our curriculum, incidents of microaggressions in our school, responding to recent current events) has emerged. “Conversations” now meets weekly, and we hope that this group continues to grow.</li> </ul>

**Middle School Strategic Initiatives:** Employ culturally relevant curriculum and instruction and data analyses by expanding on last year’s work with Grit offering a second one-credit professional development course, “Raising Achievement through Grit and Persistence – Year 2 – A Focus on Deliberate Practice.”

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>A</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Accomplishments</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>C</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Challenges</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>E</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Exemplar</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● We extended our Grit work with the 7th grade cohort of Boston resident students focusing on deliberate practice using the article “The Role of Deliberate Practice in the Acquisition of Expert Performance” by Ericsson, Krampe, and Tesch-Römer as our anchor text. Over many weeks, the school’s literacy specialist taught students and coaches focused reading practices to make meaning of complex non-fiction articles:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Practice 1: Reading with a Pencil</li> <li>○ Practice 2: Linger with Titles</li> <li>○ Practice 3: Notice and Note Text Features (Don’t overlook the obvious!)</li> <li>○ Practice 4: Unpack Introductory Paragraphs: In Search of the Thesis</li> <li>○ Practice 5: Box and Name Sections</li> <li>○ Practice 6: Unpack Unfamiliar Words</li> <li>○ Practice 7: SO WHAT? And Celebrate!!</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Students paired with Wayland Middle School coaches to read a series of challenging articles from the <i>New York Times</i> and other places (that had gritty messages, such as “Losing is Good for You”), deliberately practicing these high-utility reading strategies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students have agreed to teach the faculty the lessons they learned about Grit and non-fiction reading at a fall faculty meeting.</li> <li>● Implemented Brainology (Carol Dweck’s online Growth Mindset education program) to all 6th graders this spring. This was funded by a WPSF grant.</li> <li>● Held an in-house retreat for 7th grade Boston resident students to discuss their experiences at Wayland Middle School through the lens of race.</li> <li>● A new teacher-led cultural proficiency group met monthly to discuss issues of race and racism and best ways to address situations that arise. The group also created a Teacher Advisory Group (TAG) activity celebrating diversity of language experiences.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Finding ways to share takeaway learning from our Grit professional development with the whole faculty, given the many demands on our professional development time.</li> <li>● Making space to discuss racial unrest plaguing cities, regarding police violence.</li> <li>● Increasing our collective cultural proficiency (outside the self-selected cultural proficiency group that meets monthly).</li> <li>● Using the district tool effectively to analyze and seek patterns in longitudinal data over time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● At our spring Boston parent meeting we focused on Writing Across the Grades. Four middle school teachers joined the meeting, and three of our students shared their work through opinion pieces. An overview was presented about the ways in which we teach writing through focus lessons. The night was well-attended and showcased students’ writing K-12. It was a powerful experience.</li> </ul>

**Elementary Schools Strategic Initiatives:** The administrative Leadership for Equity team is reaching out to all Wayland Public Schools staff to join one of five committees to continue our work toward closing the academic achievement gap between our Black and Latino students and White and Asian students. At the building level, we will analyze the work of the committee to determine school-wide areas moving forward. The following are the five committees:

- GRIT/TEC - Engaging students with faculty in conversations about learning.
- Data Team - Identify where the achievement gap begins in an effort to design effective interventions.
- Cultural Proficiency and Faculty PD - Plan for professional development opportunity for the spring of 2015 that will develop skills in this area.
- Boston Parent Nights - Continue to plan Boston resident family nights in Boston for the purpose of creating a forum for the Boston resident families and WPS staff to discuss school-related issues while developing stronger working relationships.
- Student Voices and Next Steps - Build engagement and empowerment of minority students.

Claypit Hill Focus: Continue to incorporate strategies from the winter/spring course “Strategies for Examining and Addressing the Academic Achievement Gap,” taken by 19 Claypit Hill staff members. Read the book *Whistling Vivaldi*, incorporating discussions at monthly staff meetings around stereotype threats, helping students to overcome this as we work to close this achievement gap.

Happy Hollow Focus: To review past practices of the Technology, Education and Connections (TEC) group in order to determine best practices to create a course/program that aligns with the middle school’s Grit program.

Loker Focus: Establish a Loker Leaders mentoring program for the Boston resident children to support culturally responsive classroom environments and instructional strategies.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● At all three elementary schools, we have continued to collect data on DIBELS, GRADE, GMADE, PARCC/MCAS, and SRSD over multiple years. We study this data as part of our RTI practice, and simultaneously use it to look at the achievement of our Black and Latino students in order to provide interventions that target individual learning needs.</li> <li>● In an effort to develop culturally responsive classrooms and increased student achievement, we have continued to bring in IDEAS facilitators to present workshops to our faculty at our monthly staff meetings.</li> <li>● Cross-district subgroups were formed to focus on the major initiatives developed by the Leadership for Equity group. Each group was comprised of administrators and staff members and each was charged with working on a different intervention to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In our continuing work as members of the Leadership for Equity team, it remains a challenge to effectively align elementary assessments and measures with secondary assessments and measures such that individual student data may be analyzed over multiple years.</li> <li>● Finding patterns over time that clearly identify factors indicative of at-risk academic performance which may lead to gaps in achievement.</li> <li>● Continuing to ensure that the faculty has opportunities to participate in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● As part of the Leadership for Equity team, we hosted two Boston family meetings in Boston on topics related to fostering the home/school partnership. The first included a long-range planning summit with families in five key categories: raising the bar, enhancing the curriculum, promoting health and wellness, employing technology, and exploring early childhood education.</li> <li>● This spring, at the second meeting, we had students share a specific writing piece that they were proud of</li> </ul>

<p>work to increase student achievement for Black and Latino students across the grades.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ At the Happy Hollow School, there were meetings to review past practices of the TEC group in order to build upon that idea to create an elementary model for developing perseverance, academic excellence, and a move toward advanced-level study coursework for our Black and Latino students at the 4th and 5th grade levels.</li><li>○ At Claypit Hill School, we read <i>Whistling Vivaldi</i> as a staff and set aside a portion of five staff meetings to discuss quotes from the book, as well as continuing the discussion of race, sharing strategies at each meeting as to how to best meet the needs of our students of color.</li><li>○ At Loker School, we participated in a February professional development with Elli Stern from IDEAS, focusing on recognizing and discussing human differences. The main objective within this focus was to examine the factors and barriers to having difficult conversations about race, racism, and privilege and develop strategies for more readily initiating dialogue and responding comments/questions/concerns related to race and racism.</li><li>● Continued to develop and expand the focus of our mentor program for Boston resident students at all three elementary schools.</li></ul>	<p>meaningful professional development related to creating culturally proficient classrooms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Challenges related to the implementation of the TEC program or a like model at the elementary school included securing personnel across the three schools to implement and maintain the program and finding the time to add it to the already full schedule.</li></ul>	<p>to build their confidence and enthusiasm about their writing. Staff presented the scope and sequence of the writing curriculum beginning with kindergarten, showing how it connects through the years to Grade 12. The student writing served as exemplars for each of the levels and demonstrated a strong developmental program that has the components to engage and motivate all level learners.</p>
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