



Somerville Public Schools

Education • Inspiration • Excellence



WINTER HILL COMMUNITY INNOVATION SCHOOL

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

September 2016 - September 2018

SCHOOL INFORMATION

School Name: Winter Hill Community Innovation School (WHCIS)

Grade Levels: PreK-8

Principal: Chad Mazza

Telephone: (617) 629-5680

Address: 115 Sycamore St. Somerville, MA 02145

Fax: (617) 623-8492

Web Site: http://www.somerville.k12.ma.us/winter_hill

NCES ID:

School Title I: Title I School (SW)

GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS

Amanda Payette, *Co-Chair/Teacher*

Sean Sullivan, *Parent*

Deb Dixon, *Teacher*

Tina Caruso, *Parent*

Matthew Collins, *Teacher*

Evan McAlear, *Teacher*

Jennifer Miller, *Community*

Adda Santos, *Parent*

Mary Lou Carey, *Community*

Virginia Azubuine, *Parent*

Julia Monroe, *Assistant Principal*

Chad Mazza, *Co-Chair/Principal*

Table of Contents

2016-2018 School Committee Goals	iv
Winter Hill Community Innovation School	1
Mission	1
Instructional Focus	1
School Goals (with Theory of Action)	1
School Information	2
Students.....	4
WHCIS Staff.....	6
Student Wellness Foci for the 2016-2018 School Years	7
Healthy Social-Emotional Development.....	7
Academic Foci for the 2016-2018 School Years.....	11
Grades 1-5 Small Group Reading Instruction	11
Appendix	A
Data Definitions.....	A

2016-2018 School Committee Goals

- 1. Increase achievement and access for all students. Reduce all performance gaps by half.**
 - Reduce/eliminate gaps in college admittance and persistence
 - Increase Advanced Placement/Honors access
 - Reach an SGP of 60 in the aggregate and for subgroups: Special Education, ELL, Black
 - Increase graduation rate
- 2. Develop and implement a comprehensive PreK-12 social-emotional learning framework that provides students with the skills they need for social and academic success.**
 - Student Initiated (self) referrals for counseling
 - Second Step consistency
 - Decrease dropout rate
 - Progress measure students receiving intensive social/emotions service
 - Decrease suspension rates, increase attendance rates
- 3. Increase engagement with the community to reflect the community in which we live.**
 - Increase diversity of parent participation in decision-making processes at school and district levels (participation on committees and their roles)
 - Strategic plan to increase opportunities for parent/family engagement and leadership
 - Parent guardian attendance at teacher conferences and ongoing communication, including use of technology-based tools
- 4. Continue to develop and implement innovative ways of measuring student academic performance and school quality such as formative assessment, performance-based tasks, and whole quality indicators.**
 - Creation of a cohesive targeted use of blended learning to address gaps and promote academic enrichment and performance-based tasks using best practice and online learning
 - Further development and implementation of broad-based whole school quality instrument
- 5. Develop a comprehensive plan for Universal Kindergarten Readiness that supports intellectual, physical, and social/emotional growth from birth to Pre-K.**
 - Early intervention services and outreach (number of referrals and subsequent number of children served, timeliness of referrals, parents feel like can get more info and services if they need it)
 - Increase in percent of outside providers/partners calibrating with SPS standards/program
 - Data tracking for birth-3 and playgroup participation
 - Successful implementation of online registration
- 6. Develop and implement a strategy to recruit, develop, and retain a diverse and talented staff.**
 - Trends in HR entry data relating to licensure, experience, race, ethnicity, language
 - Data on retention and from exit surveys
 - Staff climate surveys

Winter Hill Community Innovation School

Mission

Winter Hill Community Innovation School is a Community of Learners where:

- All teachers provide high quality, standards-based instruction in all subject areas;
- All teachers support students in producing high quality work that meets state standards;
- All students thrive in a fair and caring learning environment that fosters confidence and a sense of belonging;
- All students actively participate in a challenging curriculum that applies their learning to everyday situations, thereby enhancing students' intellectual, social, emotional and ethical development and deepening their commitment to values and good citizenship.

Instructional Focus

- The Winter Hill Learning Community will improve students' comprehension by identifying and synthesizing THE BIG IDEA, for each lesson, appropriate to Common Core Standards across all content areas. Students will show measurable growth in comprehension through various ongoing assessments.

School Goals (with Theory of Action)

We, the Winter Hill Community Innovation School Learning Community, believe that **IF:**

- Winter Hill's Instructional Leaders become increasingly adept at implementing best practices (checking for understanding, conferencing and looking at student work), including practices supporting the BIG
- IDEA in all content areas, that have been demonstrated to help improve student achievement; and
- Winter Hill students who need additional support across all content areas receive high quality interventions; and
- English Language Learner and Special Education students receive high quality differentiated instruction to meet their individual needs,

THEN:

- Student achievement at the Winter Hill Community Innovation School will consistently achieve an SGP of 65, as measured by State assessments.
- 85% of K-5 students will read with grade level proficiency

School Information

The Winter Hill Community Innovation School (WHCIS) is the Somerville Public Schools' only Innovation School. Greater autonomy and self-governance, and a deliberate and innovative approach to meeting their students' needs have facilitated specialized and individualized instructional strategy designed to meet the needs of a highly diverse community of learners, while maintaining a core focus on inclusionary practices. More than 63% of WHCIS students list a first language other than English, more than 26% are English Language Learners, and more than 27% are students with special needs. Nearly 75% of all Winter Hill students fall into the "High Needs" category.

Our instructional program centers around a vision of *ensuring that every student will be prepared for success in high school and beyond* by intensely and thoughtfully focusing on their work with each student during the time that a student is with them. *To achieve our vision, we make certain that each student, regardless of their academic level when they enter our school, will leave the eighth grade having met or exceeded Common Core standards.* In order to achieve that vision, WHCIS has embraced an Instructional Focus and Theory of Action that will guide them toward that end.

In broader terms, our goals include implementing an instructional focus that will improve students' comprehension across all content areas, and creating a school culture that has at its core inclusion, mutual support and respect, and an understanding and inquisitiveness about the world around us. Engaging the entire school community in creating and supporting that type of culture serves as the basis upon which the school can pursue more targeted goals that will help it achieve its vision.

Through consistent implementation of their "Theory of Action" the Winter Hill Community Innovation School is working toward consistently achieving a **Student Growth Percentile (SGP) of 60**, as measured by state assessments. By making a school-wide commitment to an Instructional Focus that will improve students' comprehension by identifying and synthesizing "the big idea" appropriate to Common Core Standards across all content areas, WHCIS is working toward a goal of **85% of students reading at grade level.**

Since our designation as an Innovation School in 2012-2013, WHCIS has taken a strategic approach to leveraging the autonomies that Innovation status affords to develop not only a curricular program that both challenges and supports students regardless of where they're at in their academic development, but also a school culture that promotes collaborative and innovative thinking and practices.

First and foremost, our **focus on inclusion.** With a student population that exceeds district and state averages in all five of the state's "Selected Populations" (First Language not English, English Language Learner, Students with Disabilities, High Needs, and Economically Disadvantaged), the focus on inclusion as a core tenet throughout the school is the driving force behind the development of academic, social-emotional, enrichment, operational, and professional development practices.

The Winter Hill Learning Community has taken the concept of inclusion far beyond the typical walls of blended classrooms and into the realms of professional development, goal-setting, leadership

development, and school culture. As part of our collaborative approach to teaching and learning, teachers regularly conference with students to analyze data, assess progress, and mutually set goals. Increased autonomy has allowed the Winter Hill to take a new approach to professional development that now includes cross-team, grade-level common planning time. Students are also actively engaged in school decision-making and in developing a positive school culture.

A second key driver that contributes to the Winter Hill's success is **our decision-making model that engages all members of its community**. School decisions are vetted by a school Governing Board that includes representation from school administration, teachers, parents, and community members. Students are also very actively involved in shaping the culture and academic program at their school.

Thirdly, a **consistent focus on student outcomes** and using data to jointly assess and set individual goals reinforces students' role as leaders in their own education and progress, and commitment to a culture of mutual support and respect.

A fourth key driver is our commitment to **social-emotional health** as a critical piece of a students' successful academic journey. In 2014, WHCIS adopted Responsive Classroom to their menu of social-emotional programming. The use of Second Step and Responsive Classroom support the development of a positive school climate and promote a common language school-wide.

Specialized therapeutic programs at WHCIS also support the social-emotional health of all students, not only those who most directly benefit from these programs. Bonnie, a service dog for one of our teachers, has become a valued member of the school community, fostering a sense of good will and inclusion. As does Linus, a canine member of the Dog B.O.N.E.S. therapy community, by providing a safe space for children on the autism spectrum to read and hone their literacy skills.

Out-of-school-time programming also plays an important role in supporting the social-emotional wellbeing of students, and in alleviating some of the stresses that high-needs families often face. Afterschool programming provides students with a rich array of enrichment programming and academic support. In fact, a greater percentage of Winter Hill students participate in the Afterschool Tutoring Program (ATP) than students from any other school at almost every grade level. Programs include:

- Daily after-school programming provided by Community Schools from 2:30-5:30pm, which includes tutoring, homework assistance, afternoon snack, and a variety of enrichment clubs;
- Partnership with Tufts University for before and after-school tutoring support;
- First Lego League where student innovators practice imaginative thinking through application of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math concepts (STEM);
- Photography Club promoting creativity, artistic abilities, technology integration and viewing the world from a difference perspective;
- Student Council/ Aspirations Team encouraging student voice and collaboration to positively impact our Learning Community through fundraising for local and world charities.
- Daily before school Sports Club promoting movement, exercise and teamwork.

Finally, **family engagement** plays a critical role in contributing to the school's success, and in providing stability for students and families. Working in close partnership with the Winter Hill PTA and various community partners, Winter Hill continues to strengthen the connection between home and school with a number of programs such as the weekend Backpack program which provides weekend meals to students and families in need, Wildcat Community Meals designed to bring the school community together on a regular basis, Wildcat Chats which are run by school counselors and are often offered in multiple languages to meet the needs of a diverse community, and a Family Literacy Initiative to help families learn and grow while their child learns and grows.

Additional Data

Non-Academic	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
Attendance			
% In School Suspension			
% Out of School Suspension			
Stability Rate			
Academic			
PPI (Proficiency Gap Narrowing)			
K-Readiness			
Grade 3 ELA Proficiency			
Grade 8 Math Proficiency			
ELL % Making Progress			
Grade 5 Math Growth Percentile			
School Culture			
Student Character & Wellbeing			

Students

WHCIS students have a central voice in the success of our Learning Community. There are two main student organizations that represent Winter Hill: *Student Council and Aspirations*.

Student Council

- The mission of student council is to work together to make a positive impact on our school and community. Some of the things we do include, planning events that unite our school, fundraising for school activities and local charities and encouraging student voice and participation

Projects

- New Year's Dance
- Pink Friday Fundraiser
- Teacher vs Student volleyball game
- Lip Sync battle

- Leadership Day
- School fundraiser *Operation Carnation* (in collaboration with Aspirations)

Aspirations

- The mission of Aspirations is to promote a culture of students who believe in themselves, are actively engaged in their learning, and feel a sense of purpose in school. As members of Aspirations we believe that students with high aspirations are in a position to reach their fullest potential, both in school and beyond. This year, the Aspirations Team at Winter Hill is focused on creating a sense of belonging for all students by celebrating our rich cultural diversity

Projects

- Cultural Dress Day
- School Cultural Cookbook
- Multicultural Festival

Demographic Data

	2015-2016	2016-2017
Total Enrollment		
Students with Disabilities		
First Language not English		
Limited English Proficiency		
Economically Disadvantaged		

Ethnicity	2015-2016	2016-2017
Hispanic or Latino		
Non-Hispanic/Latino		
Race	2015-2016	2016-2017
White		
Black/African American		
Asian		
American Indian		
Native Hawaiian		
2 or more races		

NOTE: Students in the race categories may also be Hispanic or Latino.

WHCIS Staff

Teaching Staff	Number
Teachers	47
Dually Licensed	31 (66%)
SEI Endorsed	39 (83%)
New to Winter Hill in 2016	11 (23%)
Number of Years Teaching	
1-3	13 (27%)
4-9	14 (30%)
10+	20 (43%)
Paraprofessionals	20
Other Staff	Quantity
Administrators	3
Secretary	1
Counselors	2
Family Liaison	1
Custodian	1
Utility Aide	2
Kitchen Staff	7

Student Wellness Foci for the 2016-2018 School Years

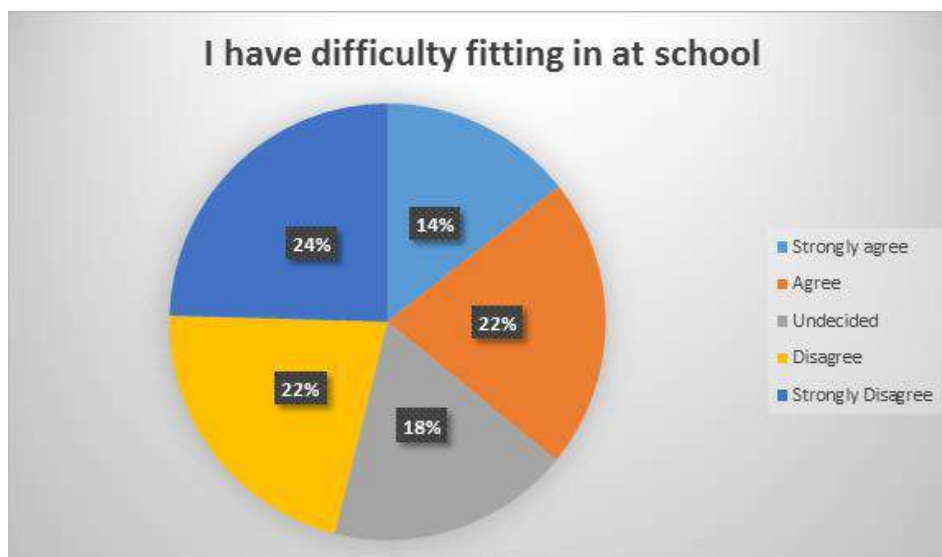
Healthy Social-Emotional Development

Data Story

Healthy social emotional development and creating a school culture that is inclusive and safe is a priority at WHCIS. We believe that in order to create a caring community of learners, students must play an active role in the development of a collaborative learning environment. As part of this initiative, we partner with our Student Aspirations Team to conduct a yearly survey to assess how students feel about school, their learning and their relationships with teachers and their peers. The survey questions use the “3 guiding principles” (self-worth, engagement, purpose) of the Students Aspirations framework to assess students attitudes about different areas of their learning environment.

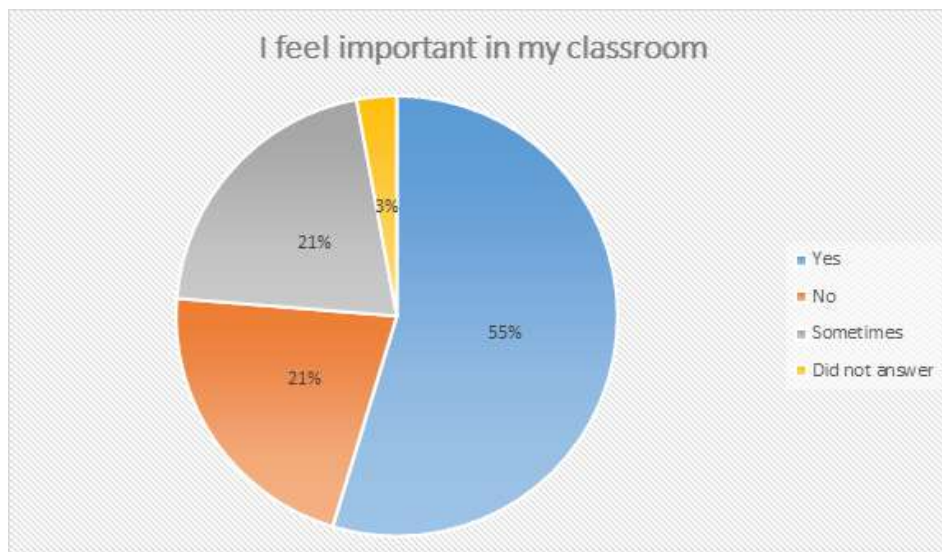
In analyzing the data from the survey taken during the 2015-2016 school year, it was learned that the most significant area of weakness was in the area of self-worth. In this category of questions, students were asked how they felt about their place and importance in school, as well as how they viewed their relationships with peers and teachers. According to the data, a large percentage of students report not feeling important in their classroom and report feeling negative about their relationships with teachers and classmates.

The questions “I feel important in my classroom,” “I have difficulty fitting in at school” and “I have never been recognized for something positive at school” had the lowest scores.

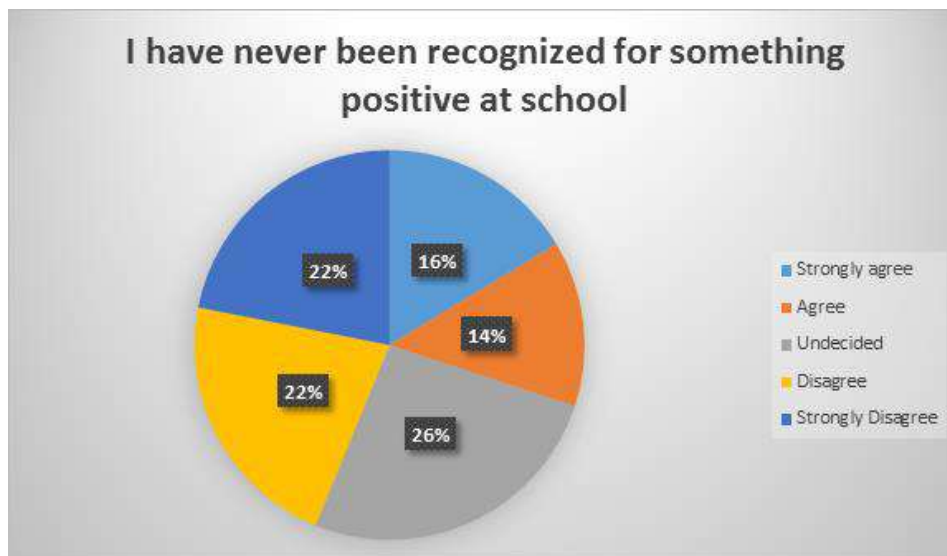


The pie chart above states how students responded when asked how they felt about fitting in at school. The data shows that 36% (*strongly agree* and *agree* questions combined) of students report they do feel like they fit in and 18% were undecided. As noted in the statement above, creating a school culture that is inclusive to all students is a priority at Winter Hill. It is concerning to learn that over one third of our students feel like they do not fit. This is an area that we strive to improve. It is extremely important that

our school environment nurtures the social/emotional health of our students and is a place where everyone feels they belong.



The pie chart above states how students responded when asked if they feel important in their classroom. The data shows that 21% report they do not feel important and 21% report that sometimes they feel important. At Winter Hill, we believe our school belongs to the students and that students should play an active role in creating a caring and collaborative learning environment. This kind of environment cannot exist if our students do not feel valued and important in their classroom, therefore one of our wellness goals will be to focus on increasing positive attitudes about self-worth in the classroom.



The pie chart above reflects how students answered a question about being recognized for positive things they do in the classroom. The data states that 30% of our students report feeling as if they are never recognized for the important things they do during the school day (strongly agree and agree

combined), and 26% answered undecided. It is important that we create an environment where each student feels successful and proud. We believe that Winter Hill must be a place that recognizes student achievements, no matter how small, and we will strive to build a positive learning community where students feel encouraged, supported and challenged by working to improve in this area.

We believe that students must have positive feelings about their self-worth and feel that they are cared for by the school community in order for them to learn and grow to their fullest potential. By working collaboratively to develop strategies that help students connect to the school community, and by supporting teacher's efforts to develop a meaningful classroom culture, we can improve the self-worth in our students.

Next Steps and Theory of Action

Next Steps

- *Analyze Whole School Effectiveness Data* for similarities
- *Convene Student Council and Aspirations Team* to review data and create follow-up survey
- *Analyze the data and determine who identified as not feeling important or fitting in at school*
- *Discuss possible student mentoring program*
- *Discuss Whole School Quality survey for grades smile - grade 2*
- *Define the questions-whole school vocabulary with definitions*
- *Translate into target languages*

Theory of Action

IF WHCIS works to improve students' feeling of self-worth by helping teachers create a caring and collaborative learning community; improve implementation of the responsive classroom model to help teachers improve relationships between teachers and students; uses principles from Students Aspirations team to create school wide programs and activities to help students connect with peers and make meaningful friends; creates a student mentoring program to help acclimate students to our school; implements the social curriculum Second Step to help students develop their social skills; create an incentive program to recognize positive social behavior;

THEN students will feel an increased sense of importance in school and feel more positive about their relationships with teachers and peers. Progress will be measured the School Effectiveness survey data. We will focus improving to 90% agreement in the responses to the following two questions:

- I like coming to Winter Hill School
- If I am having a problem , I can talk to an adult at school

Goal(s) for September 2016 – September 2018

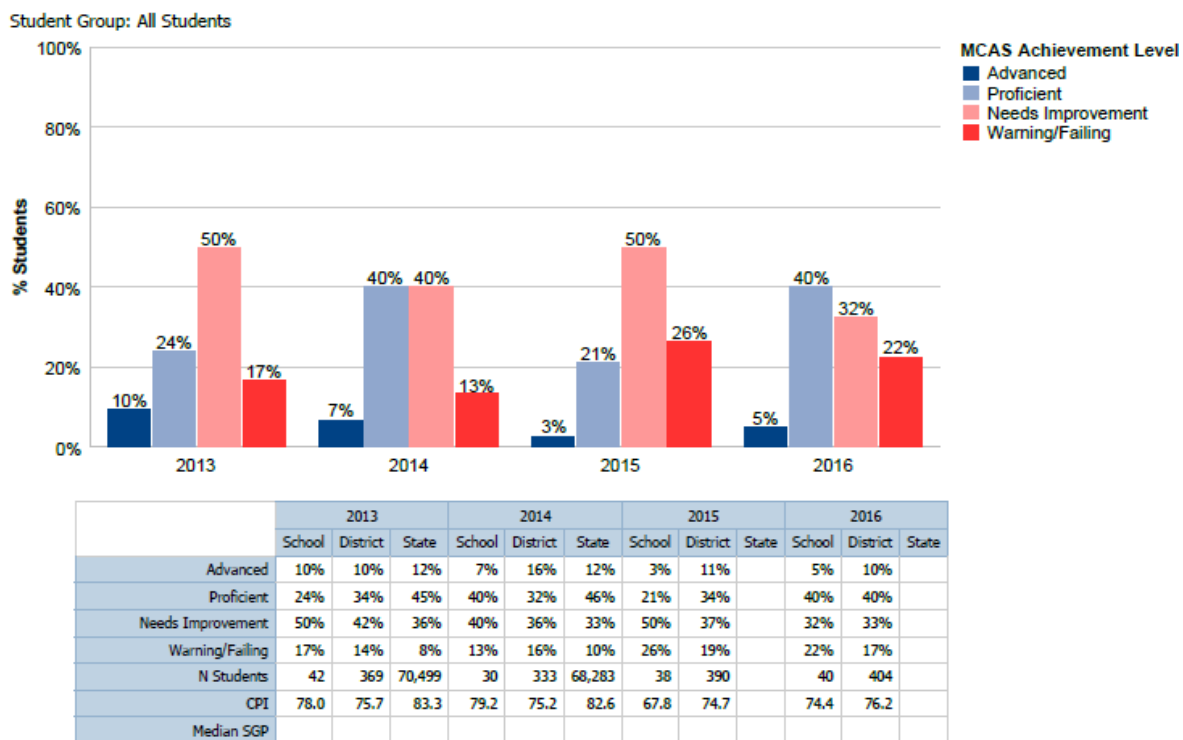
- By June 2017, 75% of students in grades 3-8 will respond with "agree" to questions 2 and 3 as measured by our Wellness Survey.

- By June 2018, 90% of students in grades 3-8 will respond with “agree” to questions 2 and 3 as measured by our Wellness Survey

Academic Foci for the 2016-2018 School Years

Grades 1-5 Small Group Reading Instruction

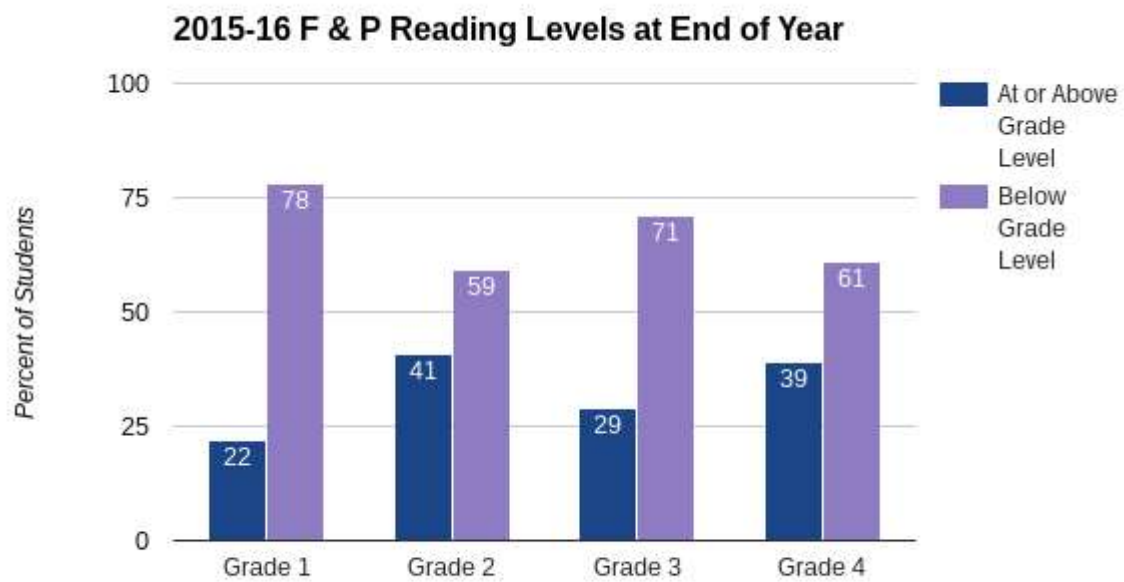
Grade 3 ELA MCAS Performance: slow growth over time.



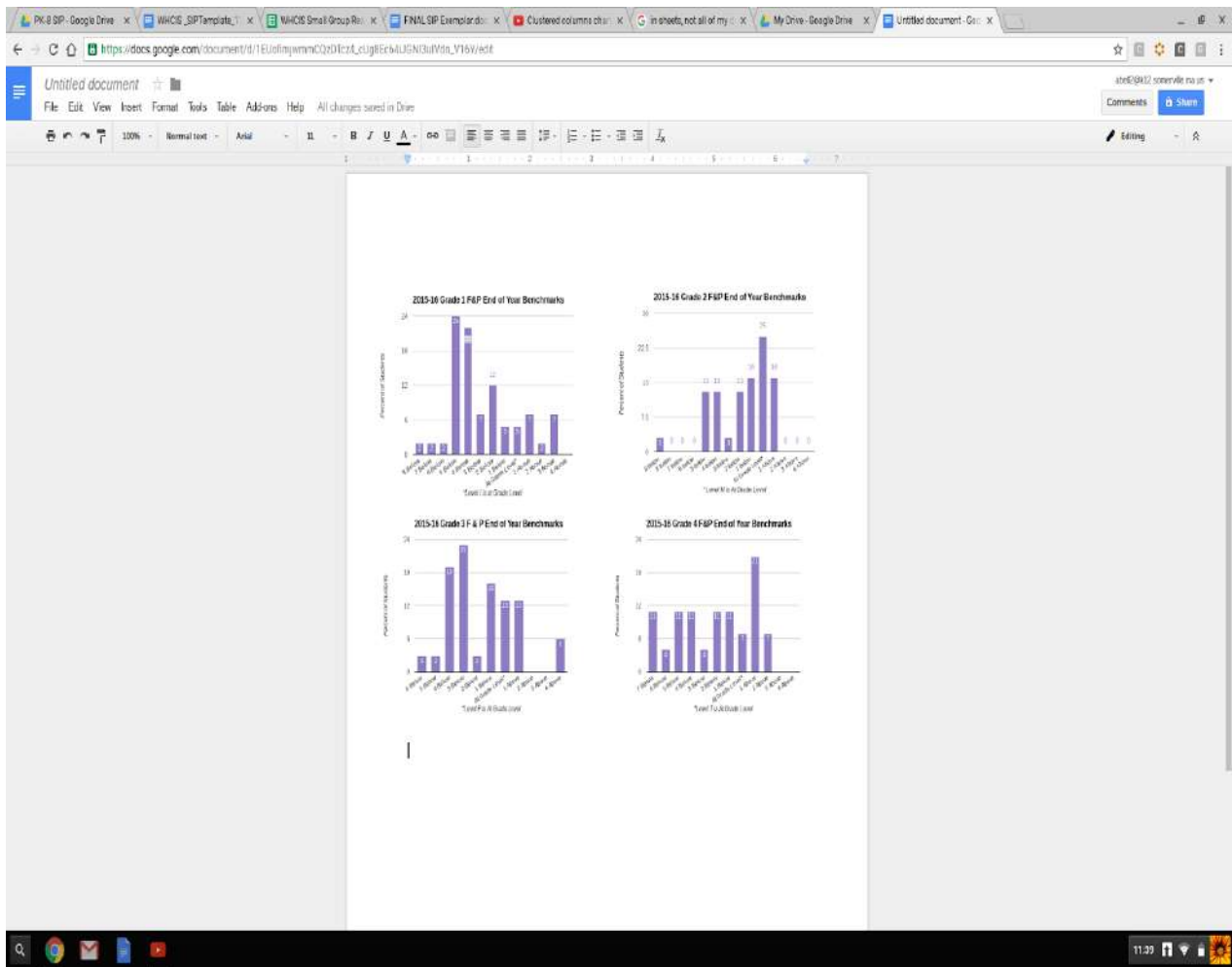
Spring 2016 state-level results in grades 3-8 ELA and Mathematics are not reported because most students in Massachusetts participated in the PARCC test.
NOTE: Achievement level percentages are not calculated for student groups of less than 10.

Grade level reading achievement at WHCIS has decreased over the past two years. These trends have continued despite the introduction of small group reading instruction and professional development for our teachers in grades K-5. The chart below illustrates the decline in reading achievement over the past two years. Over the years, WHCIS used balanced literacy instruction and Foundations as the primary form of literacy instruction in grades K-5. In September 2015 we implemented using the Fountas and Pinnell Assessment system to assess individuals and plan for small group instruction.

In the chart below the number of students reading at grade level versus the number of students reading below grade level is highlighted. In first grade, 22% of students at the end of the year were reading on or above grade level, while 78% were reading below. In second grade, 41% of students were reading on or above grade level, while 59% were reading below. In third grade, 29% of students were reading on or above grade level, while 71% were reading below. In fourth grade, 39% were reading on or above grade level, while 61% were reading below.

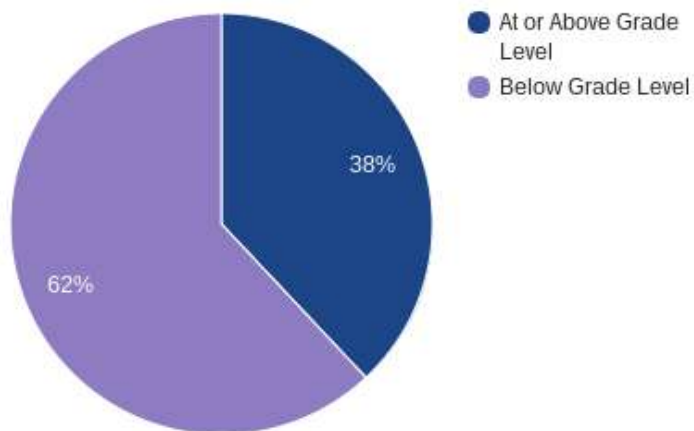


In the visual below, each grade is represented in a graph. Each graph shows the percentage of students that are at grade level and those that are above and below as measured by the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment. These graphs highlight the specific number of levels in which the student is above or below the grade level benchmark.

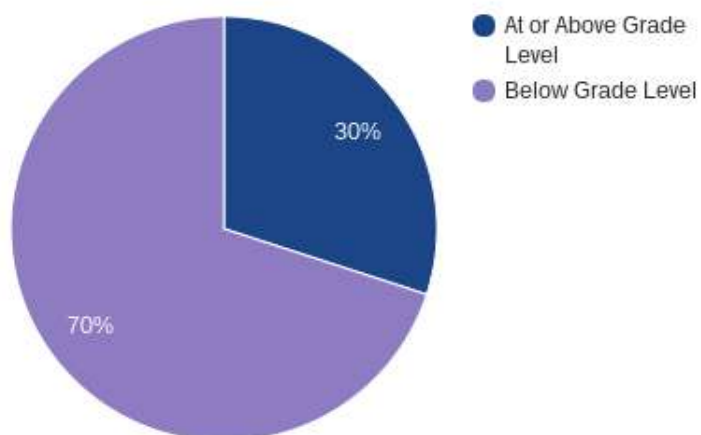


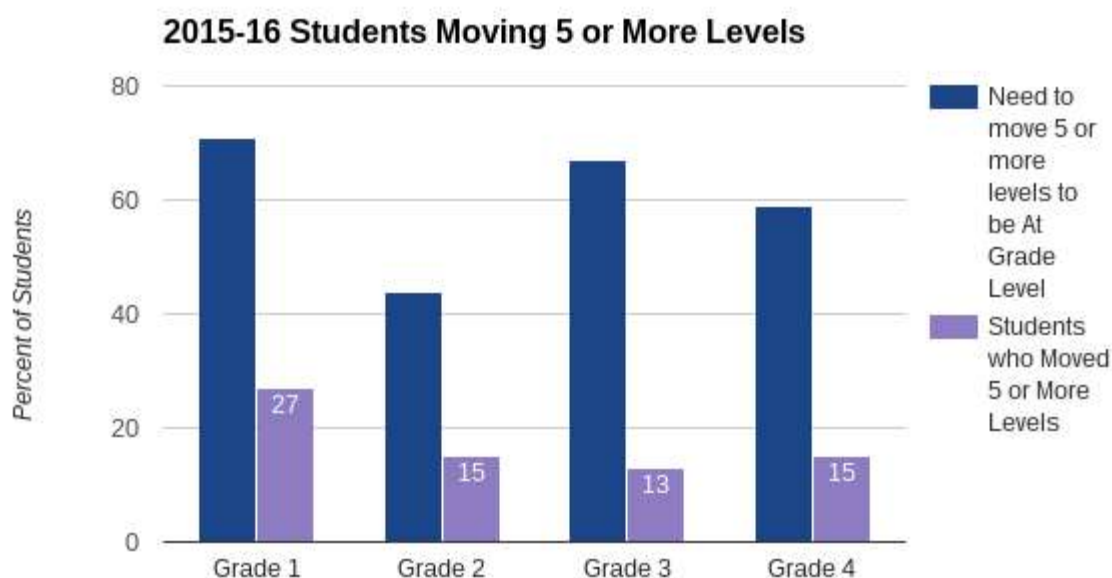
The charts below show the amount of students that are reading at grade level from the past two academic years. In 2014-2015 38% of students were reading on or above grade level. In 2015-2016 30% of students were reading on or above grade level.

2014-15 Gr. 1-3 F&P End of Year Benchmark



2015 -16 Gr. 1-3 F&P End of Year Benchmark





The chart above compares percentage students who need to move 5 or move levels to achieve grade level benchmarks and the actual number of students who moved 5 or more levels. In grade 1, 70% of students needed to move 5 or more levels, but only 27% of students achieved this benchmark. In grade 2, 42% of students needed to move 5 or more levels, but only 15% of students achieved this benchmark. In grade 3, 73% of students needed to move 5 or more levels, but only 13% of students achieved this benchmark. Finally, in grade 4, 58% of students needed to move 5 or more levels, but only 15% of students achieved this level.

Next Steps and Theory of Action

Next Steps

- Use of Small Group Reading Overview, Questions, and Expectations
- Gather additional information on subgroups i.e.: Special Education and ELL
- Look within those subgroups to see if there are addition subgroups that are consistently scoring below grade level
- Review current instructional practices around small group reading
- Analyze decoding vs comprehension. If comprehension, what specific skills?
- Teach teachers in 4th grade to administer test, including special education teachers
- Future F&P collect LASID

Timeline:

- December- January: review current instructional practices
- January- Re-assess all students grades 1-5
- February: gather additional information on subgroups (Special Education and ELL)
- December-June: Bi-weekly walkthroughs during small group instruction with feedback using the Small Group Reading Document

- Look at students in 1-3 who are receiving services from reading specialists - how much progress have they made?
- assessment look at targeting SPED and RS students first (data early January)
- Get full list of students receiving ELL/RS services (please include student LASID on your list)

Theory of Action

Our data shows that a majority of our students enter school below grade level in math and ELA, a gap which persists throughout their schooling. While we have been successful in helping our students make above average growth, we need to further accelerate this growth. In 2016-2017, we began implementing a school-wide focus on small group reading instruction, which combines deep assessment of reading skills and targeted skill instruction to advance students in their literacy skills. Furthermore, our internal student survey and focus group data demonstrate that our students are hungry to engage in high level content and a variety of opportunities to explain and share their thinking. These are all skills that are critical focal points of the new Massachusetts standards and essential to college and career readiness.

Our theory of action is two-fold:

- IF we know each individual student's specific academic strengths and weaknesses through a variety of assessments (ex. F&P, formative assessment), THEN we will be able to deliver targeted small group instruction and interventions that build critical literacy and math skills so students can access higher level content and skills.
- IF we plan for high level student questioning and provide multiple opportunities for students to explain, represent, and discuss their thinking, THEN students will apply their learning more independently in multiple contexts and demonstrate accelerated growth.

Goal(s) for September 2016 – September 2018

- By June 2017 students in all subgroups will demonstrate an average of 1.5 GE of growth each year in both ELA and Math on F&P and STAR assessments
- By June 2017, 85% of grades 1-5 students will achieve grade level proficiency based on the F&P assessment
- Since the baseline for MCAS 2.0 will be determined in 2016-2017, our goal for the 2017-2018 year will be an average SGP of 65 in both ELA and Math MCAS 2.0.
- By June 2017, 80% of students in grades 3 through 8 will respond "agree" to questions 4 and 5, as measured by our Wellness Survey
- By June 2018, 90% of students in grades 3 through 8 will respond "agree" to questions 4 and 5, as measured by our Wellness Survey

	SY2015-2016 Data Summary	Sept 2017 Benchmark	September 2018 Goal
Social Emotional Wellness	-2015-2016 <i>My Voice</i> data indicates weakness in the category of self-worth	-75% of students in grades 3-8 will respond with “agree” to questions 2 and 3 as measured by our Wellness Survey	-90% of students in grades 3-8 will respond with “agree” to questions 2 and 3 as measured by our Wellness Survey
Small Group Reading	-70% of grades 1-3 students reading below grade level, as evidenced by F&P data	<p>-85% reading proficiency for grades 1-5 students in F&P</p> <p>-1.5 GE growth for all subgroups on F&P and STAR</p> <p>-85% of students in grades 3-8 will respond with “agree” to questions 4 and 5 as measured by our Wellness Survey</p>	<p>-85% reading proficiency for grades 1-5 students in F&P</p> <p>-1.5 GE growth for all subgroups in F&P and STAR</p> <p>-90% of students in grades 3-8 will respond with “agree” to questions 4 and 5 as measured by our Wellness Survey</p>

Appendix

Data Definitions

- **PPI (Progress and Performance Index)** – A PPI of 75 means that a school is considered by the state to be making progress towards narrowing proficiency gaps.
- **Suspensions** – Percentages represent the percentage of disciplinary events that led to a suspension.
Stability Rate – The percentage of students who are enrolled in October 1st of the school year and remain enrolled through June 1st of the school year.
- **MCAS Proficiency** – The percentage of students who scored *Proficient* or *Advanced* on the MCAS Assessment.
- **Making Progress** – Based on performance on the ACCESS Assessment, the percentage of English Language Learners who are making progress towards English Proficiency.
- **Median Growth Percentile (SGP)** – For example, as SGP of 90 would mean that when all students at the school are ordered from highest to lowest scoring, the student in the middle had a 90 SGP. A 90 SGP means that this student scored as well as or better than 90% of students who had a similar achievement record over the past 3 years statewide, indicating very high growth.
- **K-Readiness** – A quantitative measure of overall performance on the Kindergarten Entry Skill Assessment (KESI). Scores fall between 1 and 3.
- **School Culture and Wellbeing** – These data were pulled from the Whole School Quality survey. Scores are on a scale from 0 to 5.