

7061-9411
February 2008



Report to the Legislature:

School Leadership Academies Training Initiative

Line item 7061-9411
February 2008

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February 2008

Dear Members of the General Court:

It is with pleasure that I submit this *Report to the Legislature: School Leadership Academies Training Initiative* pursuant to Chapter 61 of the Acts of 2007, line item 7061-9411 which reads in part:

“For the creation of leadership academies for principals and superintendents ...,that ... shall focus on expanding and increasing the capacity of the principal or superintendent to be an instructional and educational leader within the district or school; ... that... training shall include... effective personnel evaluation, curriculum development, with a focus on aligning the district and school curriculum with the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks,...school based management skills with a focus on distributed leadership, data analysis skills that enhance the capacity of the principal or superintendent to use student achievement data to drive instructional change and techniques for developing collaborative relationships with parents and community organizations.”

In FY 08, the legislature appropriated \$1 million to support the second year of a program to develop and implement School Leadership Academies for principals and superintendents to increase their capacity to provide effective instructional and educational leadership. This program was first funded for \$1 million in FY 07.

After many years of Education Reform initiatives, the Department of Education has seen strong evidence that a new kind of leadership for instruction is the key to successful school reform and significant improvements to teaching and learning statewide. Two years ago the Department of Education began to address in earnest the statewide need for recruiting, developing, and sustaining leaders to take Education Reform to the next level, and find ways to support all students to the highest level of achievement. Toward this end, and with support from the Massachusetts Legislature and the Wallace Foundation, the Department has been working with the Massachusetts Education Leadership Alliance to define what “strong instructional leadership” looks like; develop state performance standards to guide school leaders; provide training and support for current educational leaders to be successful; create the pre-service components to enable current and future leaders to meet the rigorous demands of educational leadership in the twenty-first century; and establish licensure requirements that link directly to professional administrator responsibilities and to training programs; expand on current recruitment and retention policies

The shared need for developing school leaders in a cohesive and systematic way among the broad range of size, geographic location, and type comprising the 389 districts in Massachusetts requires inventive ways to maximize existing capacity while developing new structures and systems to support school improvement initiatives. In FY 07, funding from the legislature enabled

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the Department of Education to join with the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS), the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC), the Massachusetts Elementary School Principals Association (MESPA), the Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators Association (MSSAA), Future Management Systems (FMS), a consultant firm experienced in leadership and organizational development, and Atlas Communities, a school reform partner, to launch new leadership development initiatives as the Massachusetts Education Leadership Alliance.

Central to the Commonwealth's current district and school leadership development effort is the wide-scale engagement of urban educational leaders in the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) instructional leadership training program. In FY 08, line item 7061-9411 funds approximately half of the cost of the NISL leadership training program. The trainings are part of an ambitious statewide effort to provide instructional leadership training and support to all school principals in the state over the next several years. The research-based principles of learning, teaching, and curriculum upon which the NISL training is built also serve as a reference point for the array of other professional development offerings the Leadership Alliance delivers or supports. The two-year NISL Executive Development for School Leadership curriculum focuses on standards-based instructional systems; data analysis skills related to student achievement; learning theory to practice; and distributed leadership strategies.

The Leadership Alliance created a Leadership Academy to explore the costs and benefits to five small and rural school districts with limited infrastructure of combining resources to secure the leadership development programs needed to enable them to meet the needs of current and aspiring leaders. Beginning with Leominster, Fitchburg, Ashburnham, Athol-Royalston, and Winchendon as pilot districts, the goal of the project is to meet the growing needs of the selected region by delivering a strong systemic approach to leadership development that is aligned with the larger statewide system. In addition, this Regional Leadership Development pilot program has provided an opportunity for these five districts to collaborate and share training and resources beyond the Leadership Academy offerings.

In addition to providing NISL instructional leadership training to principals, superintendents, and central office staff in the five regional pilot districts, the Leadership Alliance is offering the following leadership services to school and district leaders in the 5 pilot districts and other districts prioritized for state assistance: leadership coaching support for NISL participants, Aspiring Leaders Program, Transitions Program, Small and Rural School District Network, Cultural Proficiency, and Superintendent Hiring Process. See report for details.

The Department respectfully requests continued funding of \$1 million in FY 09 to enable the Department and the Massachusetts Education Leadership Alliance to continue, with its partners, to provide critical support to local school districts across the state through the National Institute for School Leadership Executive Development Program and the Leadership Academy initiatives.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact Juliane Dow, Associate Commissioner or Bobbie D'Alessandro, Director of Leadership Development.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Nellhaus
Acting Commissioner

**School Leadership Academies Training Initiative
Funded by Line Item 7061-9411**

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School Leadership Academies Training Initiative

Introduction

It is with pleasure that I submit this *Report to the Legislature: School Leadership Academies Training Initiative* pursuant to Chapter 61 of the Acts of 2007, line item 7061-9411 which reads in part:

“For the creation of leadership academies for principals and superintendents ..., that ... shall focus on expanding and increasing the capacity of the principal or superintendent to be an instructional and educational leader within the district or school; provided further, that said training shall include, but not be limited to: training in effective personnel evaluation, curriculum development, with a focus on aligning the district and school curriculum with the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks established pursuant to chapter 69 of the General Laws, school based management skills with a focus on distributed leadership, data analysis skills that enhance the capacity of the principal or superintendent to use student achievement data to drive instructional change and techniques for developing collaborative relationships with parents and community organizations.”

In FY 08, the legislature appropriated \$1 million to support the second year of a program to develop and implement School Leadership Academies for principals and superintendents to increase their capacity to provide effective instructional and educational leadership. This program was first funded for \$1 million in FY 07.

After many years of Education Reform initiatives, including working with under-performing schools to address the needs of their students, the Massachusetts Department of Education has seen strong evidence that a new kind of leadership for instruction is the key to successful school reform and significant improvements to teaching and learning statewide. Two years ago the Department of Education began to address in earnest the statewide need for recruiting, developing, and sustaining leaders who will be prepared to take Education Reform to the next level, and find ways to support all students to the highest level of achievement. Toward this end, and with support from the Wallace Foundation and the Massachusetts Legislature, the Department has been working with the Massachusetts Education Leadership Alliance to:

- Define what “strong instructional leadership” looks like in a standards-based educational system by specifying the skills and knowledge required.
- Develop state performance standards to guide school leaders and provide a tool for holding leaders accountable.
- Provide training and support for promoting the knowledge and skills required for current educational leaders to be successful.
- Create the pre-service components to enable current and future leaders to meet the rigorous demands of educational leadership in the twenty-first century.
- Establish new licensure requirements that link directly to professional administrator responsibilities (standards) and to leader training programs.
- Expand on current recruitment policies and build systems of support to attract and retain proven instructional leaders in the lowest-performing schools, where they are needed most.

- Provide training and support for leaders in small and rural districts.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive leadership development continuum in Massachusetts.

Many of the pieces needed for a comprehensive statewide system of leadership development and support are now in place. The hard work going forward will be to refine, expand and sustain these efforts at a high level of quality as they are brought to scale statewide. This will require a strategic and ambitious vision for comprehensive leadership development in the Commonwealth over the next ten years that results in the various pieces being brought together to form a coherent system for recruiting, retaining, supporting and continually developing educational leaders along a continuum of skills, knowledge, and behaviors from pre-service to mastery. In partnership with the Springfield and Boston Public School Districts and the Leadership Alliance, the Department has articulated a vision for a cohesive leadership continuum that includes clear action plans to achieve short-, intermediate-, and long-term goals.

Accomplishing these goals will require the formation of strategic partnerships and coalitions between and among constituencies that are invested in the provision of high quality public education, like the Massachusetts Education Leadership Alliance.

The Massachusetts Education Leadership Alliance

Massachusetts continues to face a critical shortage of experienced and well-prepared school leaders – a shortage facing many states across the nation. Recent studies through the Massachusetts Elementary School Principals Association (MESPA) indicate that over the next five years, 42 percent of Massachusetts principals will retire. Also, the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents reports that 133 superintendents left their positions 2004-2007, and annual turnover of Superintendents is anticipated to continue at the rate of 45-50 per year. If Massachusetts is going to compete with other states for the diminishing resource of school and district leaders, “growing our own” may be the most effective tool.

The shared need for developing school leaders in a cohesive and systematic way among the broad range of size, geographic location, and type comprising the 389 districts in Massachusetts requires devising inventive ways to maximize existing capacity while developing new structures and systems to support school improvement initiatives. In FY 07, funding from the legislature enabled the Department of Education to join with the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS), the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC), the Massachusetts Elementary School Principals Association (MESPA), the Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators Association (MSSAA), Future Management Systems (FMS), a consultant firm experienced in leadership and organizational development, and Atlas Communities, a school reform partner, to launch new leadership development initiatives as the Massachusetts Education Leadership Alliance.

In FY 08 the Leadership Alliance partners are continuing to work together to plan and deliver a program of Leadership Academy offerings designed to strengthen instructional leadership and support effective organizational management in Massachusetts public schools and school districts. Leadership Alliance members have collaborated to identify unmet professional development needs of current school and district administrators and school committee members and have developed program offerings to address those needs. Leadership Alliance members have also committed to

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infusing cultural proficiency training into all of the Leadership Alliance's leadership development initiatives.

During a summer planning retreat in August 2007, Leadership Alliance members reviewed their initial training programs and began to look at new models and best practices to refine, coordinate and expand on them. The programs and services organized by the Leadership Alliance to date, and funded in whole or in part through line-item 7061-9411, are described below.

National Institute for School Leadership Executive Development Program

Central to the Commonwealth's current district and school leadership development effort is the wide-scale engagement of urban educational leaders in the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) instructional leadership training program. In FY 08, line item 7061-9411 funds approximately half of the cost of the NISL leadership training program currently underway in Massachusetts. The trainings are part of an ambitious statewide effort to provide instructional leadership training and support to all school principals in the state over the next several years. The research-based principles of learning, teaching, and curriculum upon which the NISL training is built also serve as a reference point for the array of other professional development offerings the Leadership Alliance delivers or supports.

The two-year NISL Executive Development for School Leadership curriculum focuses on:

- training in standards-based instructional systems aligned by the Department of Education and NISL staff with the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks,
- training in data analysis skills related to student achievement data,
- capacity to take learning theory into practice, by providing skills and knowledge to enable principals to be instructional leaders in literacy and math in their own schools, and
- training principals in distributed leadership strategies that will assist in developing the professional capacity of school staff.

Beginning in FY 07, supplemental curricula for serving students with special needs, serving second language learners, and leading improvements in science instruction are being developed to further enhance the NISL training program to more fully address the needs of Massachusetts public school leaders.

With the cooperation and support of Leadership Alliance members, the Department is deploying the NISL Executive Leadership Training Program for School Leaders in three ways: 1) training highly qualified, experienced district and school leaders to deliver the NISL curriculum; 2) organizing the delivery of the NISL training program to prepare school leaders to meet the challenges of increased accountability; and 3) providing technical assistance to districts and to other states to tailor and implement the NISL program in their particular context.

In 2005, a cohort of 55 selected principals and district administrators from the highest need districts participated in the NISL "train the trainers" program and became certified to deliver the Massachusetts NISL curriculum to their local district and school leaders. The FY 07 leadership line item allowed us to launch, in September 2006, the first eight cohorts (240 participants) being trained by the 55 certified trainers. Those eight cohorts of school leaders are scheduled to complete their 18-month long NISL training in June 2008.

In FY 08, participation in the Commonwealth's NISL training program has more than doubled, from 240 participants from 14 districts that began training in FY 07, to 700 superintendents, principals, district administrators and school leadership team members from 25 high need districts

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now participating this year, receiving their training as part of nine new regionally-based training cohorts.

Significantly, the FY 08 leadership line item has allowed the expansion of the Commonwealth's NISL program by launching new training cohorts in three of the largest urban districts (Boston, Worcester, and Lawrence). As well, in October 2007 the Department selected another cohort of 40 highly qualified educators to become NISL trainers. Once they complete their training, this newly minted cohort of NISL trainers will join the original cohort of 55 trainers, increasing to nearly 100 our state's pool of certified in-state trainers qualified to deliver NISL training.

To ensure consistency of quality and fidelity of curriculum, executive coaches from the national NISL staff are providing support to the in-state NISL training teams currently delivering the NISL curriculum to Massachusetts district and school leaders. To further enhance the consistency of quality and fidelity of delivery of the curriculum across so many training cohorts, the Department has invested in the development of a Massachusetts NISL training facilitator's guide, which will be used by the training teams beginning this year. The guide includes specific strategies and tools for teaching the NISL curriculum and checking for learning, and emphasizes approaches that have proven successful in training the first eight Massachusetts school leader cohorts.

Additional Benefits of the NISL training

The National Institute for School Leadership has collaborated with a number of private and public universities in Massachusetts to encourage institutions of higher education to offer graduate credit to participants who successfully complete the NISL training program toward the award of principal licensure and/or graduate degrees. In June 2007, Lesley University admitted the first group of NISL participant principals to its doctoral program. Participants in the Commonwealth's NISL training program will receive 24 graduate credits at Lesley for successful completion of NISL training, and will qualify for reduced tuition for other doctoral program costs.

An agreement was recently reached with Fitchburg State College to grant graduate credits toward a master's degree or administrator certification (CAGS) for completion of the NISL curriculum, as well as reduced tuition. A private university in Florida, Nova Southeastern, has also made arrangements with NISL to grant 24 graduate credits and reduced tuition in their leadership doctoral program. These agreements attest to the caliber of the curriculum, and provide added incentive for district and school leaders to make the substantial commitment of time and effort required for full participation in the Commonwealth's 18-month NISL executive leadership training program.

Also, as the first state in the country to develop a statewide leadership training effort with the NISL curriculum at its center, Massachusetts has drawn interest from leaders from ten other states who have visited to observe our unique system of program delivery during the past year, and are now working with NISL to begin statewide training programs of their own. (NISL training is being offered at the district level in 18 states.)

Leadership Academy

Pilot for Regional Leadership Development

In March 2007 the Leadership Alliance created a Leadership Academy to explore the costs and benefits to five small and rural school districts with limited infrastructure of combining resources to secure the leadership development programs needed to enable them to meet the needs of current and aspiring leaders. Beginning with *Leominster, Fitchburg, Ashburnham, Athol-Royalston, and Winchendon* as pilot districts, the goal of the project is to meet the growing

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needs of the selected region by delivering a strong systemic approach to leadership development that is aligned with the larger statewide system. In addition, this pilot program has provided an opportunity for these five districts to collaborate and share training and resources beyond the Leadership Academy offerings.

In addition to providing NISL instructional leadership training to principals, superintendents, and central office staff in the five regional pilot districts, the Leadership Alliance is offering the following services to school and district leaders in the 5 pilot districts and other districts prioritized for state assistance:

Leadership Services

Leadership Coaching Support for NISL Participants

The Leadership Alliance identified as a priority a need for coaching support for principals and district leaders participating in the NISL training program who are attempting to successfully implement new instructional leadership strategies in their schools. In February 2007, the Leadership Alliance trained thirty coaches who are now providing services to both individual participants and district teams, in addition to all principals and superintendents in the five pilot districts. In 2008, the Leadership Alliance's coaching services will include:

- ongoing coaching support for all leaders in the five districts in the pilot region,
- ongoing training and support by the 30 coaches for six urban districts trained in FY 08 to deliver support to other leaders in their own districts, and
- ongoing coaching services for all NISL districts upon completion of the training.

Aspiring Leaders Program

The Leadership Alliance is supporting a two-year training for 43 aspiring leaders that includes a series of one-day trainings on topics such as the legal aspects of student discipline, utilizing professional learning communities to improve instructional practice, and using data to guide strategic planning, among others. Through this program, leaders aspiring to be superintendents also participate in the MASS Executive Institute (Annual Conference) for Superintendents. Similarly, aspiring leaders at the elementary and secondary school level attend the MESPA. and/or MSSAA annual conferences for school principals.

The Leadership Alliance recruited, trained and hired six veteran principals at the elementary, middle, and high school levels to serve as facilitators for the Aspiring Leaders Program. The facilitators will coordinate the delivery of mini-practicum experiences for program participants in the five Educational Leadership Alliance pilot districts. Implementation of this in-district practicum experience began in mid-January 2008.

As a result of the volume of requests by aspiring leaders who have already signed up for future trainings, the Leadership Alliance will support the formation of a second cohort of 34 aspiring leaders, to begin training in early 2008.

Transitions Program

The Leadership Alliance designed the Transitions Program to expand the state's capacity to systematically provide support to new superintendents and school committee members during times of leadership transition. Working with school committees and new superintendents is proving to be an effective support for both parties. Currently the Transitions Program is providing services in the Leadership Alliance's five pilot districts, and anticipates expanding to serve three additional priority districts during FY 08.

In addition, a guidebook is being developed that will provide superintendents and school committees with information and recommendations on leadership strategies that have proven

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effective for managing change during times of leadership transition. A self- assessment tool to help district leaders determine district needs in relation to transition issues will be available to districts online in Spring 2008.

Small and Rural School Districts Network

In response to many requests from small and rural districts for support to meet systemic needs inherent in a standards-based educational environment, the Leadership Alliance has supported the formation of a small and rural school leaders' network. Using the Massachusetts Urban Superintendent Network as a model, this new network will provide a forum for superintendents to discuss common concerns and share information on effective practices. The network will help district leaders identify shared needs and will facilitate collaborative efforts to address shared challenges. The Network will also provide a vehicle for advocating, as appropriate, with federal and state officials and legislative bodies, to address specific challenges confronting small and rural schools and districts.

Women's Education Leadership Network (WELN)

The Women's Educational Leadership Network (WELN) is a joint partnership between the Department and the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, and is funded in part by the Wallace Foundation. The Network's mission is to create, promote, and support a culturally diverse network where all women recognize their leadership potential, have opportunities to act on that potential, and mentor a future generation of women leaders. Efforts to further this mission have led the WELN planning group to focus on forums for women from all over the Commonwealth to share the rewards, goals, and challenges of women in leadership positions in education.

To that end, the WELN has hosted four day-long conferences held in March and December 2006, and April and October 2007. Current and aspiring women leaders representing 85 districts and four education collaboratives from across the Commonwealth have attended WELN events and have explored the topics of: *Gender and Race in the Superintendency; Budget, Finance and Politics; Achieving Balance in the Superintendency; as well as Politics and Relationship Building for those in Educational Leadership Roles*. Approximately 100 women per session came together to explore these topics as well as to discuss and share the distinct style of the woman leader, and ways to support one another in the male dominated profession of the public school superintendency.

Conference attendees have included not only district leaders (superintendents, assistant superintendents, curriculum coordinators, budget & human resource directors, SPED directors & pupil services directors) but also school leaders (principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders) as well. This data suggests that WELN conferences have led to increased connection among women administrators within individual districts as well as throughout the Commonwealth.

Cultural Proficiency

Beyond tolerance or diversity training, cultural proficiency is an understanding of the role of culture in teaching and learning. Blindness to the impact that culture has on school culture, expectations, and student performance remains a barrier to helping all of our students to attain academic proficiency and prepare for productive citizenship. Several members of the Leadership Alliance are on the Steering Committee for Statewide Cultural Proficiency. Four seminars to help define and promote cultural proficiency among state leaders and professional organizations were convened from October 2007 to January 2008. The seminars illuminated how one's own culture and immersion in the dominant culture can limit both teaching and learning by highlighting some of the learning styles, world views and learning needs found among African-American, Asian, and Latino students. These seminars have promoted the development of new insights among educators, causing

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participants to consider data on students' performance from more culturally aware perspectives. Among the 150 attendees of the institutes were representatives from all of the professional organizations in the Leadership Alliance, and from individual school districts, higher education, professional development organizations and community organizations.

Superintendent Hiring Process

Based on requests from their member districts, the Leadership Alliance partners are developing a tool for assessing superintendency candidates, conducting the interview process, and assessing superintendent performance. These tools will be available to districts online in FY 08.

Evaluating Program Effectiveness

At each stage of implementation of the Leadership Alliance's leadership development and support initiatives, in addition to Department information and data an outside evaluator will provide feedback to guide continuous improvement of the Leadership Alliance programs.

Currently an evaluation of the first phase of the NISL trainings, conducted by Meristam, is in progress. The draft Executive Summary of that evaluation report is attached as Addendum C. The evaluation is ongoing, and the final report will be published on the Department's website in Spring 2008.

The Department is planning a formal evaluation in year two of the comprehensive Regional Leadership Development program in the Leadership Alliance's 5 pilot districts. An independent evaluator is designing the evaluation instrument, and the evaluation will take place beginning in Spring 2008. A board of advisors from the professional associations will provide input to the evaluation. Goals of the evaluation will include assessing whether the training has ongoing relevance to the field, is improving the quality of instructional leadership in the Commonwealth, and is contributing to improved student achievement.

The Leadership Alliance has been gathering data and information from the five pilot districts to determine the cost effectiveness of this regional approach to begin to think about broadening the scope to other regions.

From June – December 2007, as part of its on-going participant evaluation of the Leadership Alliance's Aspiring Leaders program, the Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators Association (MSSAA) has collected participant evaluations from each activity and professional development program that program participants have attended. In addition, to help shape future decisions regarding the cultural proficiency development efforts, the Cultural Proficiency Steering Committee has been gathering data from students and teachers about their school experience and the impact of cultural barriers on student achievement.

Going forward, the Leadership Alliance will look at the larger picture and how these evaluations can be coordinated and synthesized to help determine the effectiveness of each element, as well as their value within the larger system of leadership.

Recommendations for FY 09 Funding

Continue to Build Capacity and Ensure Sustainability

The work of the Massachusetts Education Leadership Alliance has been challenging but productive. The collaboration between the Department and statewide professional organizations has led to the identification and definition of the unique training needs of different constituent groups. The Leadership Alliance members are committed to the planning and development of cohesive and effective training and support for school and district leaders.

A great deal of progress has been made as a direct result of these collaborative efforts. However, more work is needed to address the ongoing conditions and needs of the profession.

- *Isolation:* Administrators are not fully prepared to single-handedly take on the mantle of leadership.
- *Little or no support:* Both novice and veteran leaders arrive on the job without either the systemic assistance or support they need to succeed. This results in significant turnover, and diminishes the likelihood of positively impacting student achievement.
- *Lack of systemic training:* Many of today's leaders are ill prepared to manage and integrate instructional leadership and organizational management.
- *Inadequate political skills:* District leaders often do not have the skills to develop productive partnerships with their municipalities, leading to ongoing struggles over budgets and appropriations.

Continuation and expansion of the Massachusetts Education Leadership Alliance's unified leadership development initiatives will enable the Leadership Alliance to continue to build an effective and cohesive system to support our state and its school districts in recruiting and retaining outstanding leaders, increasing the number of high-quality principal and superintendent candidates, building leadership skill levels of all leaders to improve student achievement, and creating a cohesive training model for leadership at every level, including school committees and community leaders.

The experience of the past two years must be built upon to construct a cohesive statewide leadership development system as follows.

- Programs organized by the Leadership Alliance will continue to be staffed by experts from the Department, educator associations, consulting partners, and universities to: recruit potential leaders; assess leadership capability; provide high quality, coordinated and relevant professional development; and, support mentoring and coaching to sustain effective leadership practices.
- The Leadership Alliance will continue to focus on the training and support needs of all leaders in the educational system, rather than an isolated focus on one or two specific positions. Leadership Alliance members consider school district leadership teams to include:
 - Superintendent: CEO for the school system and community leader;
 - Principal: Instructional leader and building manager;
 - Teacher Leader: Mentors and coaches for delivery and assessment of teaching and learning activities in the classroom;

- School Committee: Policy setters for educational and organizational alignment and community relations;
 - Central Office Administrators: Staff providing instructional and educational support services for school leaders;
 - Union Representation: Partners in implementing education policy;
 - Municipal Representation: Partners in funding education policy.
- Regional peer networks will be expanded to provide ongoing support that will include forums for coordinated dialogue, full group and job-alike professional development programs, and role-based coaching and mentoring to support effective practice. Exemplary leaders for inter-and intra-district teams and role-alike groups will facilitate network activities.

The Department respectfully requests continued funding of \$1 million in FY 09 to enable the Leadership Alliance to continue to provide critical support to local school districts across the state through its Leadership Academy initiatives and to expand the promising initiatives and regional pilot programs described in this report. FY 09 funding would be used to support the following programs and services.

1. NISL training for an additional 300 school and district participants;
2. Training of “Train the Trainer” cohort of district-based NISL trainers (40);
3. Evaluation of the comprehensive Regional Leadership Development program and Leadership Services support programs in the Leadership Alliance’s 5 pilot districts to determine feasibility of extending regionally coordinated leadership development services to additional high-need districts;
4. Coaching services for NISL trained district and school leaders and district leadership teams;
5. Networking structures for Urban Superintendents Network and Small/Rural District leaders;
6. Aspiring Leaders Training, with a mentoring component;
7. Expansion of the transition program for superintendents and school committee members;
8. Support and refinement of the Women’s Educational Leadership Network (WELN);
9. Development of a Human Resource Management Services component;
10. Development of public policy to institutionalize a cohesive leadership development system for the state; and
11. Formative program evaluations for continuous improvement.

In FY 09, the Massachusetts Education Leadership Alliance expects to lead a working group of constituents in the development of clear state policy on the development of leaders at every level of education. The success of Education Reform and the future of public education in Massachusetts will rely, in part, on institutionalizing a cohesive leadership development system

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for recruiting, training, supporting and sustaining the large number of educational leaders that will continue to be the driving force for quality public education.

FY 09 Massachusetts Education Leadership Alliance Proposed Budget

Pilot- Expand Comprehensive Leadership Development and Support program to five additional districts from suburban, rural and urban locations, with a goal of serving 50 districts over a period of four years.

Leadership Development and Training Initiatives	Cost
Aspiring Leaders: Training, Recruitment, and Mentoring	\$ 60,000
Coaches & Coaching Services for NISL Districts	300,000
NISL Training for Principals and Leadership Teams	300,000
Coaching / Training/Support for Pilot Districts	50,000
Small/Rural Superintendent and Women’s Education Leadership Networks	20,000
Human Resource Management Services and Public Policy Development	30,000
Transitions Program for Superintendents/School Committees	100,000
Cultural Proficiency - Training and Integration	80,000
Facilities and Materials	10,000
Program Evaluation	50,000
TOTAL	\$ 1,000,000

Conclusion

Over the past four years, the Massachusetts Department of Education has developed an ambitious strategic effort to address the statewide need for recruiting, developing and sustaining school leaders prepared to support all students to the highest level of achievement. With funding from the legislature and support from our Leadership Alliance partners, Massachusetts has developed and is implementing a statewide cohesive leadership development system for aspiring and current leaders.

This leadership training and support strategy, centered on the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) Executive Development Program, is being successfully implemented in 25 high-need urban districts and in five small rural pilot districts. Preliminary program outcomes indicate that the NISL program’s immediate goal of building effective leadership for standards-based education is showing signs of success.

A shared knowledge base and common language are enabling cross-district learning and collaboration among school and district leadership teams. Results also show that following NISL training, school leaders are spending more time in classrooms supporting teachers and improved classroom instruction. Understanding how to use student performance and other data to support instructional decisions has been increased. Principals are reporting that NISL training has had a positive effect on the design, operation and effectiveness of their school leadership teams; and they are actively seeking ways to share NISL strategies both within their school and district setting.

The involvement of Massachusetts professional organizations of principals, superintendents, and school committees represented in the Leadership Alliance has been critical in identifying and

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defining the unique needs of different constituent groups. The goal of attracting and retaining high quality leaders, and building the skill level of all leaders (to include school committee members and community leaders) is well under way. School and district leaders are already reporting the positive impact.

If our long-range goals are to expand the scope of educational leadership to focus more strategic and coherent effort on improving student achievement, the Leadership Alliance must be sustained and the leadership development services it provides must be expanded and refined. In a time of scarce resources in many school districts, continued funding is essential to enable the Department and its Leadership Alliance partners to provide critical support in a cost effective and strategic manner to high need urban, small/rural and under-performing districts. By coordinating our efforts and maximizing resources, we will promote and facilitate a more cohesive leadership development system for Massachusetts.

Appendix A – Chapter 61 of the Acts of 2007 Line Item 7016-9411

“7061-9411....For the creation of leadership academies for principals and superintendents pursuant to section 58 of chapter 15 of the General Laws; provided, that said training shall focus on expanding and increasing the capacity of the principal or superintendent to be an instructional and educational leader within the district or school; provided further, that said training shall include, but not be limited to: training in effective personnel evaluation, curriculum development, with a focus on aligning the district and school curriculum with the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks established pursuant to chapter 69 of the General Laws, school based management skills with a focus on distributed leadership, data analysis skills that enhance the capacity of the principal or superintendent to use student achievement data to drive instructional change and techniques for developing collaborative relationships with parents and community organizations.

Appendix B—Districts participating in NISL training as of 1/24/08

Commissioner's Districts

Boston
Brockton
Fall River
Holyoke
Lawrence
Lowell
New Bedford
Springfield
Worcester

Other districts

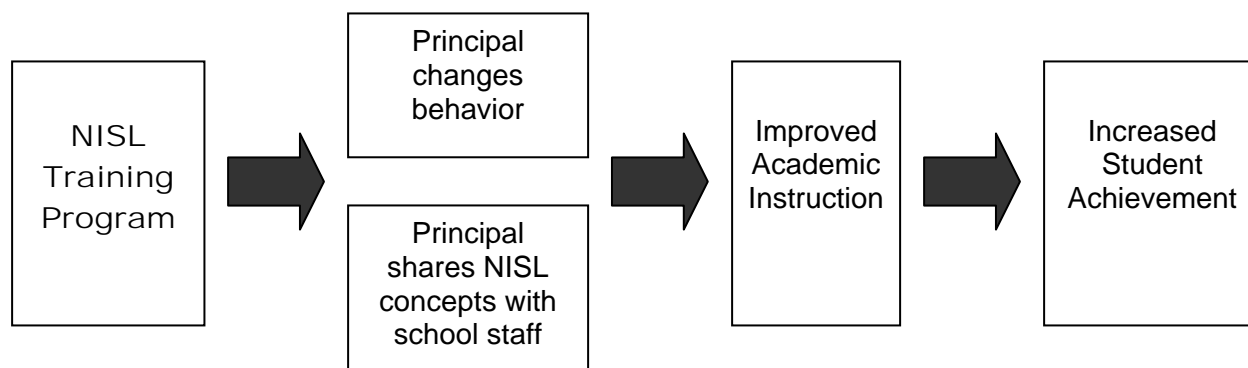
Chelsea
Chicopee
Fitchburg
Haverhill
Holbrook
Leominster
Lynn
Malden
Pittsfield
Randolph
Revere
Somerville
Southbridge
Westfield
Winchendon

Appendix C--Preliminary Evaluation Report on Massachusetts Implementation of the NISL Program; Meristam Group

Executive Summary

In July 2005, Massachusetts began the first state-level implementation of the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) program. This program seeks to support and guide education administrators in developing, deepening, and applying instructional leadership knowledge and skills. The effort was organized and led by the Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE), in cooperation with the Urban Superintendents Network, and also involved the National NISL office.

Ultimately, the NISL program seeks to substantially improve student academic achievement by promoting high-quality, standards-based academic instruction in the schools. However, neither students nor teachers are direct participants in the training activities conducted by the NISL program. Instead, the program is focused on school principals and other school administrators. This reflects the belief that successful student achievement and high-quality academic instruction depend upon the presence of effective, standards-based instructional leadership. As a result, the NISL program seeks to ensure that effective, standards-based instructional leadership becomes the core of the school principal's role.



To achieve this leadership development outcome, the program seeks to shift fundamental values, beliefs, and assumptions of principals and other administrators around what it takes to be an effective school leader. This involves building a deeper understanding of what constitutes primary evidence for student learning, changing how principals allocate their time during the day, and developing a principal's ability to strengthen the decision-making and critical thinking capacities of their faculty.

Implementation of the NISL program is not considered to be the sole responsibility of NISL. Rather, this responsibility is shared between the NISL National office, the Massachusetts DOE, and the participating local school districts.

At the heart of the NISL program is the NISL curriculum, which is designed to guide principals in becoming effective, standards-based instructional leaders. The creation and ongoing revision of this curriculum is the primary responsibility of NISL. The curriculum encompasses fourteen units organized into four courses. The four courses are designed to be taught sequentially in a series of full-day training sessions.

In addition to the activities, which occurred during the full-day training session, the NISL program included several other elements. All units and the coaching institute had "pre-work" involving selected readings and online activities related to the topic of the unit. In addition, all the units and the coaching institute also assigned "homework" which generally guided the participant in applying in their school the concepts and methods presented and discussed during that unit. Many of the homework activities also helped to link and integrate the current unit with previous units.

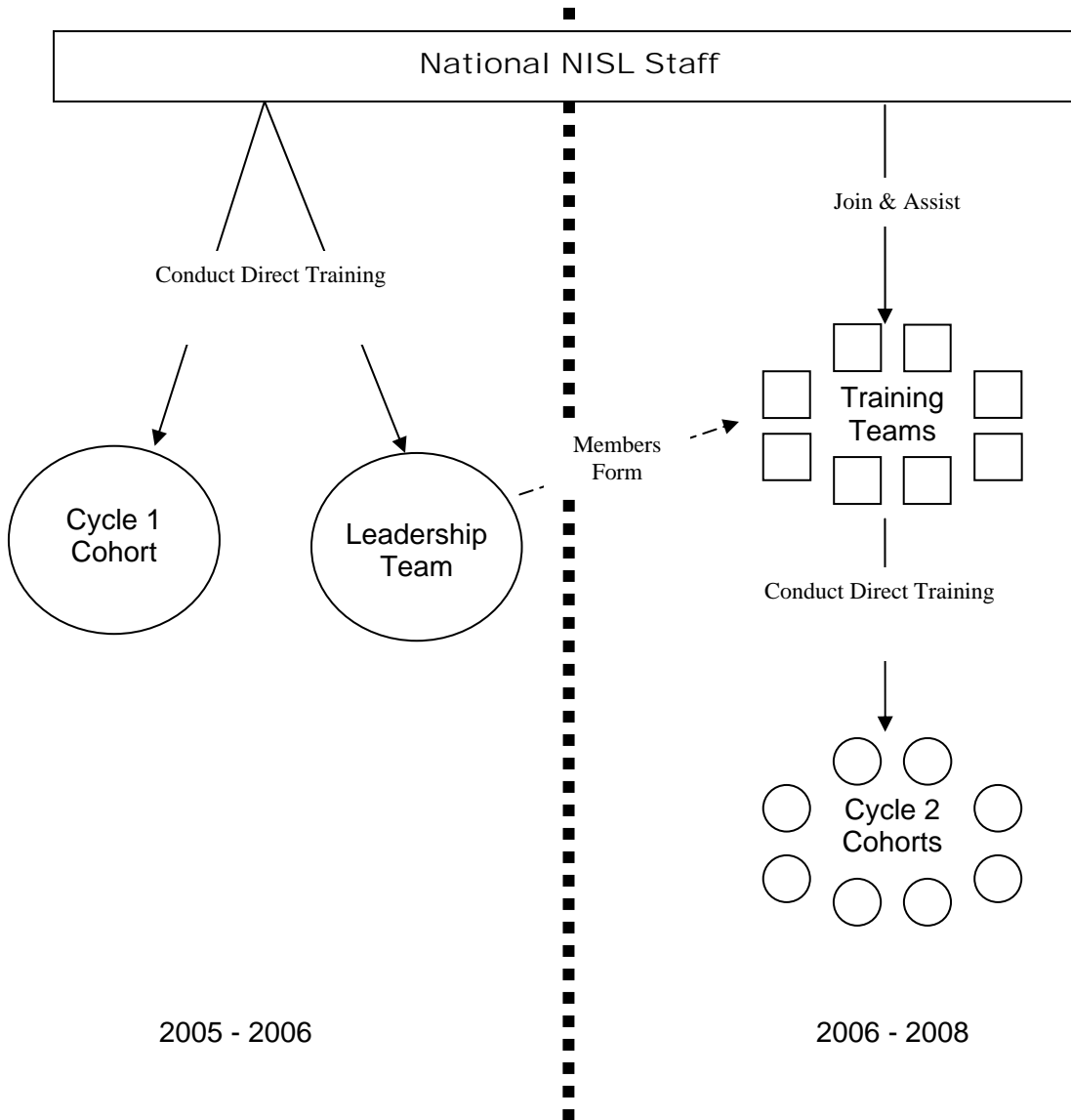
NISL employs a "train-the-trainer" approach to implement its program. Such an approach includes two types of training. The first type of training focuses on preparing administrators and consultants to use the NISL curriculum to train other school administrators. The result of this type of training can be considered

“NISL trainers.” The second type of training focuses on groups of local principals and other administrators and prepares them to apply and use the NISL concepts and methods to improve instruction and increase student achievement. The result of this type of training can be considered “NISL end-users.” The intent is for National NISL staff to focus their time primarily on the first type of training. The local trainers (who successfully completed the first type of training) focus their time primarily on the second type of training. In theory, this approach allows the NISL program to quickly move to scale.



Thus far, implementation of the NISL program in Massachusetts has encompassed two training cycles. The 1st training cycle began during the summer of 2005 and continued through the summer of 2006. The 2nd training cycle began during the summer of 2006 and is ongoing. It will conclude during the summer of 2008. A third training cycle is scheduled to begin in the summer of 2007.

Thus far, only one group of administrators, consultants, and university faculty (“Leadership Team”) has participated in the first type of NISL training discussed above – receiving training to become NISL local trainers. In addition, eleven groups of Massachusetts administrators (“Participant Cohorts”) have participated in the second type of NISL training – receiving training in the application of NISL concepts and tools in their schools and districts. There was one NISL cohort in the first training cycle and ten in the second training cycle. Eight of the ten cohorts in the second training cycle were funded by the Massachusetts DOE. The other two were funded by their local school districts.



NISL Participant Cohorts (2005-2008)

- Holyoke Cohort – 26 participants including 19 principals & 6 district administrators
- Brockton Cohort – 24 participants including 6 principals & 9 district administrators
- Fall Rive Cohort – 36 participants including 23 principals & 5 district administrators
- Fitchburg-Leominster-Somerville Cohort – 34 participants including 20 principals & 13 district administrators
- Lowell Cohort – 32 participants including 18 principals & 11 district administrators
- Malden-Revere-Chelsea Cohort – 32 participants including 11 principals & 10 district administrators
- MESPA Cohort – 29 participants including 12 principals & 15 district administrators
- New Bedford Cohort – 30 participants including 27 principals & 2 district administrators
- Pittsfield Cohort – 31 participants including 16 principals & 9 district administrators

Preliminary Recommendations	
Training Team Recruitment	Massachusetts DOE should play a more direct role and employ an expanded set of criteria in recruiting for new members of the local training teams (Leadership Team).
Training Team Preparation	Greater emphasis should be placed on strategies for integrating local issues while maintaining a focus on key issues and on employing interactive training methods.
Certification as Local Trainer	Criteria involving demonstration of content knowledge and training skills should be used along with attendance for certifying NISL local trainers. Structured opportunities should be provided for Leadership Team members who required more time to receive their certification.
Composition of Local Training Teams	Although variable in composition, local training teams should be balanced between local administrators (“insiders”) and consultants/administrators from other jurisdictions (“outsiders”) and should possess skills needed to fulfill complementary roles associated with the NISL training. Local training teams should play a significant role in sustaining NISL in their school district.
School District Participation	Superintendents should involve all school principals in the NISL program at once rather than having them participate incrementally because potential benefits outweigh identified challenges.
Involvement of District Leadership	The Superintendent and members of district leadership should fully participate in the NISL program. They should receive targeted training more relevant to challenges associated with district-wide implementation of NISL concepts and strategies.
NISL Program Follow-up	Structured follow-up after the NISL training program ends should occur in each participating district. Follow-up effort should combine both district-sponsored and DOE-sponsored activities.
NISL Curriculum	DOE and NISL should continue its plans to review and revise the NISL curriculum to better reflect the interests and challenges of Massachusetts school districts. In addition, the NISL <i>Instructor’s Guide</i> should be revised to provide trainers greater guidance in appropriately incorporating local issues and challenges into the training without detracting from the NISL key concepts.
Training Methods	NISL should increase its reliance on interactive, group activities rather than a “stand and deliver” training approach.
Instructional Materials	Pre-work or homework should be appropriately incorporated into the NISL training sessions. Emphasis should be placed on identifying and addressing any problems with on-line access to NISL materials.
NISL Coaches	The roles and responsibilities of the NISL Coaches regarding planning, facilitation, intervention, and debriefing should be explicitly defined. They should meet regularly to ensure consistency in their efforts.
Maintaining Fidelity	Fidelity instruments and processes for the NISL training program should be created. Emphasis should be placed on promoting appropriate flexibility and opportunities for adaptation to local needs while avoiding undue rigidity and standardization.