

Massachusetts District Literacy Action Plan

Uxbridge Public Schools

Uxbridge, Massachusetts

Developed by: Director of Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment, Elementary School English/Language Arts Curriculum & Instruction Leaders, Elementary School Principals, Elementary School Reading Specialists, Elementary School Special Educators, Elementary School Teachers, Elementary School Team Chairs, and the Director of Pupil Services

Date: January 11, 2017



Acknowledgements

The Massachusetts District Literacy Action Plan found in this document was created using literacy partnership grant funds provided by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Office of Literacy. As part of that project, PCG Education prepared the *Guidelines for Developing an Effective District Literacy Action Plan* for the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in Fall 2009. This plan template corresponds to the *Guidelines* document.

We would like to acknowledge the members of our team that worked on the literacy action plans:

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Executive Summary

Both the Uxbridge Public Schools District Improvement Plan and the Uxbridge Elementary Schools Improvement Plans focus on the need to improve literacy instruction in the Uxbridge Elementary Schools, PK to 5. *We have a shared sense of urgency.* Grades 3-5 state test scores (MCAS Spring 2016) are low. There is an identified need to examine the state of the current core literacy instruction, the reading and writing assessment tools, the response to intervention for struggling students, the monitoring of student progress, and the plans for the future.

This literacy action plan specifies a literacy vision statement and identifies the key action steps proposed to achieve this objective. Our overarching goal is to increase student achievement through the delivery of high quality, consistent core literacy instruction. To reach our goal, we have identified six main focus areas:

- o Response to Intervention
- o Reading Instruction
- o Writing Instruction
- o Specialized Reading Instruction
- o Development of an Assessment Framework
- o Increase in Parent Involvement

This document describes the components of the district literacy action plan, as prepared by the Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, the two elementary school principals, the Director of Pupil Services, elementary school Team Chairs, reading specialists, special educators, and classroom teachers. There are eight components to this plan:

- Section 1: Connection Between the District Literacy Action Plan and Other District Goals/Improvement Plans
- Section 2: Why a District Literacy Action Plan is Needed in Our District
- Section 3: Literacy Vision Statement
- Section 4: District Literacy Improvement Goals
- Section 5: Action Plan Maps
- Section 6: Plan for Assessing and Reporting District Progress
- Section 7: District Expectations and Supports for Schools
- Section 8: District Literacy Team Membership

1. Connection Between the District Literacy Action Plan and Other District Goals/Improvement Plans

The following literacy-related goals for the district were presented to the Uxbridge School Committee by Superintendent Kevin Carney, as well as the Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Dr. Rich Drolet in September/October of 2016:

District Improvement Goal: Improving Literacy in the areas of close reading and writing to text. All educators K-12 will utilize instructional strategies in close reading and writing to text.

Key Actions

*Professional development opportunities, faculty meetings, and common planning times will be dedicated to teacher training, curriculum and instructional alignment and calibration, and the analysis of student work with respect to key literacy standards, in all disciplines.

*Adjustments and additions to existing curriculum maps will be made based on teacher feedback.

*Writing strategies such as POW, MEEET, and quick write will be used. Writing to exhibit mastery of content, process, and critical thinking skills will be incorporated into each content area.

Key Benchmarks/Outcomes

*Effective literacy teaching strategies will be observable in all classrooms throughout the district on a consistent basis.

*Common rubrics assessing student writing, and protocols for analyzing student work, will be implemented for all teacher teams.

(part of) **Superintendent Goal 1:** The Professional Development Committee will draft a three-year Professional Development Plan that addresses the instructional training needs for our educators. Specialized training for educators working in inclusion models will be a focus.

Superintendent Goal 2: Improving student literacy and learning skills in all content areas

*I will continue to work with the Curriculum Director and Principals to oversee a formal literacy plan for teachers to best help students grow as readers and writers.

Key Actions

*On a weekly basis, instructional leaders will collect student writing samples and review with departments/grade level teams for prompts and rubrics on a monthly basis.

Key Benchmarks

*Educators will strengthen students' assessment skills to gauge progress on reading and writing tasks.

*Educators will strengthen critical thinking questions and activities through writing prompt expectations.

- *The Professional Development Committee, in collaboration with Special Education leaders, will be able to identify and coordinate specialized training for educators working in inclusion models.
- *Pull-out instruction that is currently taking place in inclusion models will significantly reduce.

from **Taft's School Improvement Plan**

By June 2018, all teachers, in collaboration with the Taft Literacy Curriculum and Instruction Leader, reading specialists, and special educators, will build and revise lessons based upon the skills outlined in the Massachusetts State Standards for Literacy. Teachers will focus on the integration of higher order thinking skills and clearly defined learning expectations.

from **Whitin's School Improvement Plan**

- *All teachers will instruct students in SRSD (Self Regulated Strategy Development) to use the MEET graphic organizer in ELA, and the POW acronym in Math, for written responses to text for all students.
- *Teachers will design well-structured lessons that follow the SRSD for writing-response to text and Open Response Questions.
- *Analysis of student work related to SRSD (MEET & POW) will take place at Team Planning Meetings.
- *Teachers will continue to analyze student work data and monitor students that require RTI three times per week in literacy.
- *Teachers will analyze benchmark data (STAR Reading) three times per year and adjust practice based on the results.
- *Teachers will use integrated units, Leveled Literacy Intervention, Foundations, SRSD, and Empowering Writers to support instruction and assist student growth in literacy.

In addition, the District's DRAFT Strategy Overview is now being formed. From the **District DRAFT Strategy Overview:**

- *Implement a comprehensive literacy plan.
- *Adapt best practices for inclusion models that better meet the needs of all learners.
- *Inventory the K-5 reading program and design the district's literacy initiative to include materials, resources, training, and staffing.
- *Professional development and training will focus on strengthening instructional strategies in literacy across all disciplines, enhancing students' critical thinking organization skills, communication skills, problem-solving skills through technology, and self-driven learning.

In summary, we need to improve reading and writing performance in grades PK-5. We should look at the following:

- o Adopt and use a universal screener for reading
- o Create individual reading intervention plans
- o Review and revise the district's systems for reading supports and interventions
- o Review and perhaps revise the elementary core reading program
- o Conduct a review of student assessment data and implement appropriate professional development and revise systems of supports and intervention

In addition, here are some things we need to do to improve PK-12 teaching and learning and to support high levels of student growth and achievement:

- o Review and revise curriculum maps in ELA, making sure the integration of the Common Core State Standards is happening
- o Create and/or revise common assessments in ELA
- o Integrate technology to support teaching and learning in reading and writing
- o Add more challenging tasks for high-level learners

To review and revise reading supports and interventions for at-risk students, we need to:

- *Select and administer a universal screener
- *Establish eligibility and exit criteria
- *Progress monitor student achievement
- *Implement strategic intervention using the Leveled Literacy Intervention System
- *Establish professional learning community data teams led by the building Data Team Leader

2. Why a District Literacy Plan is Needed in Our District

The Uxbridge Public School District identified the need for a unified plan for literacy at the elementary level based on an extensive review of the results of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System results. Additionally, data from the Renaissance Learning STAR Reading Assessment, Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA-2) and QRI-5 revealed a need to examine and improve upon our literacy curriculum.

Our elementary students continue to perform average when compared with the state, or below average when compared to like-districts in the state and several neighboring communities on the English Language Arts MCAS. There have been low SGP (Student Growth Percentile) scores at the elementary level in recent years.

The increased rigor of the 2011 MA Curriculum Frameworks for ELA and Literacy and the need for students to become competent in 21st century skills have also contributed to the examination of the elementary literacy program. We know that literacy is key to academic success in all content areas. This, combined with the necessity of students to think critically, speak analytically, read across genres, and write across all content areas at a young age is paramount for our students to be successful.

Whitin ELA MCAS ORQ

(open response question) **average scores**

Grade 3: 1.84 (one ORQ only)

Grade 4: 1.68, **1.44**, **1.43**, **1.29** (four ORQs)

Grade 5: 2.16, 1.61, **1.35**, 1.57 (four ORQs)

UPS District Goal for ORQ scores is 2.5

*If every child was a perfect writer we would get a 4.0 average

0-1=Warning; 1-2=Needs Improvement; 2-3=Proficient; 3-4=Advanced

Whitin ELA 2016 MCAS Proficiency Scores

Grade 3: 53% Proficient or better (STATE: N/A this year)
(57% last year in 2015; STATE: 60% last year in 2015)

Grade 4: **46%** Proficient or better (STATE: N/A this year)
(53% last year in 2015; STATE: 54% last year in 2015)

Grade 5: 66% Proficient or better (STATE: N/A this year)
(67% last year in 2015; STATE: 71% last year in 2015)

School-wide Whitin was 55% Proficient or better in ELA

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ELA Student Growth Percentile Scores

2015 & 2016

Grade Level	ELA 2015	ELA 2016
Gr. 4 Whitin	32	32
Gr. 5 Whitin	38	38
Gr. 6 MMS	39	41
Gr. 7 MMS	42	61
Gr. 8 MMS	45	65
Gr. 10 UHS	47	54

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3. Literacy Vision Statement

The Uxbridge Public Schools will provide a learning environment that is intellectually and creatively stimulating for children and young adults to enhance critical thinking skills, collaborative problem solving skills, and leadership skills that will prepare students to meet the challenges of their adult lives.

IF we structure professional collaboration that is centered in identifying individual learning needs by analyzing student work and performance data, and if we provide differentiated, inquiry-based learning opportunities that are practical, relevant, and thought provoking for our students, **THEN** we will increase student engagement and ownership of learning, improve student achievement, and thereby enhance a sense of Uxbridge Pride that will inspire our community to be involved and invested in our local public schools.

There are identified expectations that support student learning and relate to the literacy goals already embedded in district, school improvement plan, superintendent, principal, and teacher goals. All educators will act upon the belief that, with appropriate supports, every student can achieve at high levels. All educators will share responsibility for the learning of all students by actively collaborating with colleagues, and personalize and differentiate instruction to engage and challenge learners at all levels.

The vision for literacy instruction in our elementary schools is to provide a progressive, research-based approach that is aligned with the Common Core Standards and incorporates phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, reading comprehension, and writing skills. We expect all staff members in our elementary schools to implement the reading and writing instruction in the classroom, in addition to providing specific interventions for at-risk students and high quality programs for students on education plans.

More specifically, teachers will

- Devote a required amount of time to literacy instruction
- Meet regularly with small groups of children for guided reading
- Use regular common assessments to inform instruction
- Integrate literacy across all curriculum areas
- Use technology to enhance literacy instruction
- Engage in professional development
- Collaborate with colleagues to share best practices
- Communicate regularly with families to share information

It is our goal that children will develop a lifelong love of literacy, while reading for meaning, writing with a purpose, speaking to communicate information, listening for understanding, and transferring these skills to new situations.

4. District Literacy Improvement Goals

Student Achievement Goals in literacy as presented in the 2016-17 Uxbridge Public Schools District Improvement Goals: All educators K-12 will utilize instructional strategies in close reading and writing to text, with the intention of decreasing the proficiency gap by 5% and increasing the number of students scoring in proficient or advanced ranges.

Student Achievement Goal in literacy as presented in the Superintendent's 2015-16 Goals: The district average on MCAS Open Response questions in ELA and Mathematics will be 2.5 or higher.

Action Goals presented in this DRAFT 2016 Literacy Action Plan

Goal 1:

To ensure high quality core reading instruction is implemented with fidelity. Utilize guided reading for all students. Adopt a balanced literacy program, including a comprehensive reader's and writer's workshop model.

Goal 2:

To establish consistent, rigorous and progressive instructional practices throughout grades PK-5, ensuring that the Response to Intervention (RtI) model meets the needs of those students who are reading below grade level benchmarks and enables all students to be successful readers, writers, and thinkers.

Goal 3:

To increase literacy achievement for students receiving special education services.

Goal 4:

To increase the quality of PK-5 student writing through daily explicit writing instruction based on Common Core State Standards.

Goal 5:

To articulate and enact a PK-5 literacy assessment plan that identifies assessment tools, a calendar for assessment administration, protocols for data collection and analysis, and a continuum of expectations for grade-specific proficiency in reading and writing.

Goal 6:

To increase student literacy achievement by strengthening the community-school partnership.

5. Action Plan Maps

Goal 1: To ensure high quality core reading instruction is implemented with fidelity. Utilize guided reading for all students. Adopt a balanced literacy program, including a comprehensive reader’s and writer’s workshop model.

Action Steps	Participants	Timeline	Anticipated Outcome
Conduct school visits to learn more about the implementation of a balanced literacy program	Curriculum Director, Principals, C&I Leaders, Grade Level Reps, and Special Educators	December 2016 – June 2017	<p>To increase awareness of successful instructional practices</p> <p>To include teaching staff in the process of adopting new approaches to reading instruction</p> <p>To increase awareness of challenges and benefits of implementation processes</p>
<p>Identify and facilitate professional development needed</p> <p>Establish an ongoing professional development calendar</p>	Curriculum Director, C&I Leaders, Principals, Pupil Services Director, Prof. Dev. Team	December 2016 – May 2017	<p>To schedule an overview of needed professional development at each building from 2017-2020</p> <p>To map out literacy professional development at the elementary schools for the 2017-18 school year</p>
Inventory and update PK-5 classroom libraries to reflect the Common Core State Standards and the need for more non-fiction texts	C&I Leaders, Reading Specialists, Classroom and Special Education Teachers	Spring 2017	To increase resources in all PK-5 classrooms
Initial adoption of Balanced Literacy	All Elementary Staff	September 2016 – June 2017	To incorporate and provide consistency in best practices for literacy instruction across grade levels

<p>Explore how <i>Foundations</i> is being utilized K-3</p>	<p>Curriculum Director, Principals, C&I Leaders, Reading Specialists, Classroom and Special Education Teachers</p>	<p>Winter/ Spring 2017</p>	<p>To do a crosswalk of what is being taught in each grade</p> <p>To implement common phonics instruction using the <i>Foundations</i> program</p> <p>To schedule professional development for teachers using the Wilson <i>Foundations</i> program</p>
<p>Inventory what is currently being taught at each grade in the Uxbridge elementary schools</p>	<p>Curriculum Director, C&I Leaders, Principals, Reading Specialists, Classroom and Special Education Teachers</p>	<p>Winter/ Spring 2017</p>	<p>To consolidate resources and determine what needs to be taught at each grade-level</p> <p>To develop Units of Study</p> <p>To facilitate collaborative conversations to increase awareness of how literacy is taught in Uxbridge</p> <p>To identify gaps in instruction and essential skills needed at each grade-level</p>

Goal 2: To establish consistent, rigorous and progressive instructional practices throughout grades PK-5, ensuring that the Response to Intervention (RtI) model meets the needs of those students who are reading below grade level benchmarks and enables all students to be successful readers, writers, and thinkers.

Action Step	Participants	Timeline	Anticipated Outcome
Examine current reading support model at the elementary schools	Curriculum Director, C&I Leaders, Principals, Reading Specialists, Special Education Teachers	December 2016 – December – 2017	To establish common procedures for reading service delivery To increase effectiveness and uniformity of service delivery
Utilize Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) as a primary intervention for at-risk students	Curriculum Director, Principals, Reading Specialists	September 2017	To establish uniformity of service delivery at the elementary school level
Use prescribed progress monitoring tools in 6-8 week intervals	Reading Specialists, Special Education Teachers	October 2017 – June 2018	To review student data and track student growth and achievement over time
Review LLI program	Curriculum Director, Principals, Reading Specialists	May – June 2018	To determine effectiveness of LLI in student growth and achievement

Review of student data	C&I Leaders, Principals, Reading Specialists, Classroom Teachers, Principals,	November 2017 – June 2018	To progress monitor and track student growth and achievement over time.
Establish entrance and exit benchmarks	Curriculum Director, C&I Leaders, Principals, Reading Specialists	September 2017 - September 2018	To establish uniformity of service delivery and to make best use of resources available with the goal of increasing student achievement
Create school-wide literacy schedules and intervention blocks	Principals, Teacher-Leaders, C&I Leaders	Spring – September 2017	To implement common and consistent times for literacy to be taught in grade-level classrooms To provide differentiated literacy intervention and enrichment for all students

GOAL 3: To increase literacy achievement for students receiving special education services.

Action Step	Participants	Timeline	Anticipated Outcome
Compare literacy data of students with IEPs to regular education students	Pupil Services Director, Evaluation Team Chairs, Special Educators, Principals, Classroom Teachers	Ongoing	To identify overall trends in strengths and deficiencies To provide consult time for regular education and special education staff
Examine individual student growth data in literacy for students with IEPs	Reading Specialists, Classroom Teachers, Special Educators	November 2017 – January 2018	To compare students to themselves to see how they are growing as readers individually
Examine current instruction and service delivery model	Pupil Services Director, Evaluation Team Chairs, Special Educators, Principals, Reading Specialists	Winter/ Spring 2017	To determine best practices in service delivery as related to literacy To determine staffing needs for literacy service delivery
Identify and visit high-performing neighboring school districts	Curriculum Director, Pupil Services Director, Special Educators	Spring 2017 – Winter 2018	To increase awareness of successful instructional practices To include special educators in the process of reviewing and reforming current instructional practices

<p>Create a long and short term professional development calendar</p>	<p>Pupil Services Director, Curriculum Director, Principals, Special Educators, Classroom Teachers</p>	<p>Spring of 2017</p>	<p>To increase capacity for in-district professional development</p> <p>To increase the effectiveness of specialized literacy programs utilized by special education teachers for at-risk students</p> <p>To increase awareness of local professional development opportunities</p> <p>To support teachers in the implementation of best practices</p>
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Goal 4: To increase the quality of PK-5 student writing through daily explicit writing instruction based on Common Core State Standards.

Action Step	Participants	Timeline	Anticipated Outcome
Provide ongoing professional development in the area of Common Core State Standards and writing instruction	Reading Specialists, Classroom Teachers, C&I Leaders, Principals	September 2016 – September 2017	To understand the expectations of the Common Core State Standards To create a working knowledge of best practices in the explicit teaching of writing
Adoption of Lucy Calkins Units of Study across all grades	Teachers, C&I Leaders, Reading Specialists	September 2018 – June 2019	To provide teachers with a common tool for writing curriculum, instruction and assessment aligned to the CCSS. To establish uniformity and commonality of instruction at the elementary school level
Adopt common writing rubrics at each grade level	Teachers, C&I Leaders, Reading Specialists	September 2017 – June 2019	To improve the accuracy of scores and establish commonality across schools
Administer and score pre and post on-demand assessments for each unit using common rubrics across each unit of study	Teachers, Reading Specialists	Ongoing	To provide teachers with data to inform instruction with the use of a common assessment To progress monitor and track student growth and achievement over time
Implementation of a common on-demand prompt writing protocol	Teachers, Reading Specialists	Ongoing	To establish uniformity and commonality of instruction at the elementary school level
Develop a scope and sequence of writing at every grade level	Teachers, Reading Specialists	Ongoing	To establish uniformity and commonality of instruction at the elementary school level

Update current writing curriculum in Atlas Rubicon	Teachers, Reading Specialists	September 2017 – June 2018	To articulate and communicate curriculum for schools, the district, and the community
Explore ways to integrate technology into writing workshop	Teachers, Reading Specialists, Technology Integration Specialists	September 2017 – June 2018	To engage students and infuse 21st century skills into writing instruction
Increase integration of writing into content areas	Teachers, Reading Specialists	Ongoing	To extend the learning into the content areas, giving students additional opportunities to communicate through writing

Goal 5: To articulate and enact a PK-5 literacy assessment plan that identifies assessment tools, a calendar for assessment administration, protocols for data collection and analysis, and a continuum of expectations for grade-specific proficiency in reading and writing.

Action Step	Participants	Timeline	Anticipated Outcome
Administer DRA2 three times per year in Grades 1 and 2 and twice a year in Kindergarten to all students	Reading Specialists, Teachers	Fall 2017, Winter 2018, & Spring 2018	To use a reliable identification for at-risk and to use student achievement benchmarks for each term
Administer the STAR assessment three times per year in Grades 3, 4, and 5 for all students	Teachers	Fall 2017, Winter 2018, & Spring 2018	To use a reliable identification for at-risk students in order to increase the number of students meeting grade-equivalent benchmarks for each term
Determine eligible pool of at-risk students to be administered the Benchmark Assessment System (Heinemann)	Reading Specialists, Principals	Fall 2017, Winter 2018, & Spring 2018	To identify the highest reading instructional level against expected benchmarks for each student To identify each term of students to receive Response to Intervention tiered instruction
Identify and/or develop common, grade-level formative reading assessments	Teachers, Reading Specialists	Ongoing	To develop and identify uniform formative assessment tools to measure student progress

<p>Create a scope and sequence map for writing curriculum, reflecting and revising timelines at the completion of each unit</p>	<p>Teachers, Reading Specialists</p>	<p>September 2017 – June 2018</p>	<p>To document the scope and sequence of the writing curriculum</p>
<p>Outline pre-assessment and post-assessment on-demand writing protocols, to include schedule and administration guidelines</p>	<p>Teachers, Reading Specialists</p>	<p>September 2017 – June 2018</p>	<p>To identify and outline clear expectations for administration of on-demand assessments that yield accurate and objective data across grade levels</p>

Goal 6: To increase student literacy achievement by strengthening the community-school partnership.

Action Step	Participants	Timeline	Anticipated Outcome
Establish literacy focused home-school communications	Teachers, Reading Specialists, Principals	Launch September 2017, then ongoing	To give parents strategies and ideas to support the reader and reinforce learning at home To inform parents of student expectations in literacy
Host Literacy Information events for parents	Elementary Staff	Ongoing	
Plan Kindergarten, Grade 3, and Grade 6 Move-up/Readiness Nights	Teachers, Reading Specialists, Principal	Spring 2018, then annually	To inform incoming kindergarten, grade 3, and grade 6 parents of the expectations for incoming students as they transition to new schools
Host Summer Reading Kick-off events	Elementary Staff, PTOs	Spring 2017, then annually	To continue reading progress over summer months and prevent regression

6. Plan for Assessing and Reporting District Progress

Uxbridge elementary schools will collect data on PK-5 student literacy achievement in the following ways:

- Use a common benchmark assessment system to identify students in need of intervention and enrichment regularly throughout the year
- Use common grade level reading assessments
- Utilize benchmark writing assessments in grades K-5

Additionally, the district will analyze MCAS student achievement and growth data.

The elementary Literacy Action Plan team will meet on a regular basis to assess progress on each goal and the corresponding action steps. The team will make instructional recommendations, based on data study, to the principals and teachers at each building.

7. District Expectations and Supports for Schools

Students will:

- Read a wide variety of text at their independent reading level
- Read at their instructional level with teacher support
- Be exposed to wide variety of high-level texts
- Increase stamina in reading and writing
- Generalize word study strategies within content literacy
- Read and write independently throughout the course of the school day and at home
- Identify and use reading comprehension strategies across subject areas

Teachers will:

- Dedicate a specified amount of time each day to literacy instruction
- Participate and seek out professional development through course work, classroom visits, reading specialists and consultants, curriculum and instruction leaders, and common planning time
- Sustain a focus on delivering high-level literacy instruction to all students
- Work collaboratively with colleagues and administrators
- Analyze results of common assessments with colleagues and adjust instruction accordingly
- Ensure all special education and Title 1 students are exposed to grade-level vocabulary, text, and comprehension skills

Administrators will:

- Provide professional development and resources for teachers and students to achieve success
- Consider teacher feedback and demands of literacy instruction when creating school and teacher schedules

- Create opportunities for teachers to visit strong balanced literacy programs and listen to teacher feedback
- Commit to common professional development and planning time for teachers
- Provide teachers with ongoing feedback on literacy instruction
- Meet regularly with teacher teams to discuss implementation

Parents will:

- Be supportive of and encourage literacy activities at home and in school
- Read to and with their children
- Ensure that students are exposed to a variety of literature
- Partner with teachers to support their children's literacy development

In order for the above expectations to be realized, the following district supports will be necessary:

- Additional budgetary allowances and scheduling flexibility for long term professional development
- Financial resources to expand classroom and book room library resources

8. District Literacy Team Membership

Name	Title/Role	School (if school based)	Email
Rich Drolet, Ed.D.	Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment		rdrolet@uxbridge.k12.ma.us
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Linda Simonds	ELA Curriculum & Instruction Leader/Grade 5 Teacher	Whitin Elementary	lsimonds@uxbridge.k12.ma.us
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