



Lowell Public Schools

Data-Driven Decision Making and School Support

*Presentation to the Performance Management and School Improvement Subcommittee
February 16, 2022*





Agenda

1. Our theory of action for districtwide improvement
2. Key questions that drive the development of our model of support for schools
3. Characteristics of high performing schools
4. Our ongoing work to build a culture of data-driven decision-making across all schools and departments
5. Refining our model of differentiated support and accountability with improved access to and use of relevant data
6. Next steps for translating theory into practice



Our Theory of Action

Creating a pathway from the cradle to career success for every child

If we:

- Expand early learning opportunities from birth to age 5, through a coordination of services with community partners, ensuring that every child in Lowell is academically, emotionally and socially ready for kindergarten on Day 1;
- Increase access for all students to high performing seats through the continuous improvement of all schools, including an expansion of high demand programs and an intensive focus on turning around historically underperforming schools;
- Align the curriculum and secondary school programs with the expectations of colleges and the requirements of the future workforce; and
- Leverage the richness of Lowell's diversity by focusing all of our work on our fundamental commitment to equity.

Then:

- We can truly deliver on the inherent promise we make to each family who enrolls in our public schools by providing a high quality education to every child, and
- Ensure that all students – regardless of race, ethnicity, linguistic background or family income – graduate from high school ready to enter the college or career of his or her choice.



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Key Questions

1. What is high performance?
2. How do we raise all schools while simultaneously closing the performance gap among schools?
3. How are families informed and empowered to make choices among schools?



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Characteristics of High Performing Schools

All of which can be tracked, measured, and improved:

- Academic Learning
- School culture
- High quality teaching
- Leadership
- Community & Wellbeing
- Equity
- Adult Responsibility



How does data support this work?

- Ensure that educators are trained in best practices for data use
- Focus administrative tasks on school improvement goals
- Inform our community
- Continually strive for improvement of student outcomes
- Provide multiple measures of school performance and school climate and culture
- Provide data that can be useful for identifying schools in need of central office support
- Establish a baseline for setting short- and medium-term improvement goals



Background



**District underwent
Request for Proposal
(RFP) process to
identify a data
visualization solution**

**RFP was placed on
hold due to COVID-19
Pandemic**



**Reissued RFP
process**

**Did not prove to be
productive process as little
vendor interest and not an
alignment with district's
student management system
of Aspen (X2)**



**Rely on software
tools that were
already purchased,
open-source free
tools, or custom
creations**



Current State - Use of various tools across the district

01

Google Data Studio

- Free tool that takes data and turns it into informative and customizable dashboards
- Performance very slow
- Need to manually refresh the data

02

Microsoft Office/Google Suite

- Data is housed in and analyzed in Word, Excel, and PowerPoint and Google Suite products
- Rely on copy/paste methods, manual updates, and staff time

03

Structured Query Language (SQL) Server Reporting Services

- Platform to visualize various types of data including assessment, attendance, and course grades
- Data is in real-time
- Lacks predictive analytics that district seeks



Future State -

Proposed Options to **BUY** or **BUILD** a system-wide data system

Proposed Options	Description
Choose one of the vendors that the committee vetted through the RFP process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Sharing of data through .csv files using a Secure File Transfer Process (SFTP).● Aspen only has capabilities to export one table at a time.● Labor intensive for district staff.
Abandon the RFP process and explore other vendor companies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Explore vendors that did not respond to RFP process● Labor intensive for district staff.



Future State -

Proposed Options to create a system-wide data system

Proposed Options	Description
<p>Partner with Aspen and use their new data visualization platform.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 'Out of the box' data visualization tool. ● No ability to customize these views currently. ● Anticipated release date with the next 18 months.
<p>Partnership with UMass Lowell on creating a system-wide learning system.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Development of comprehensive dashboard for each school this spring. ● Lead the district in developing data systems that we seek to customize to our own specifications and create a sustainable system.



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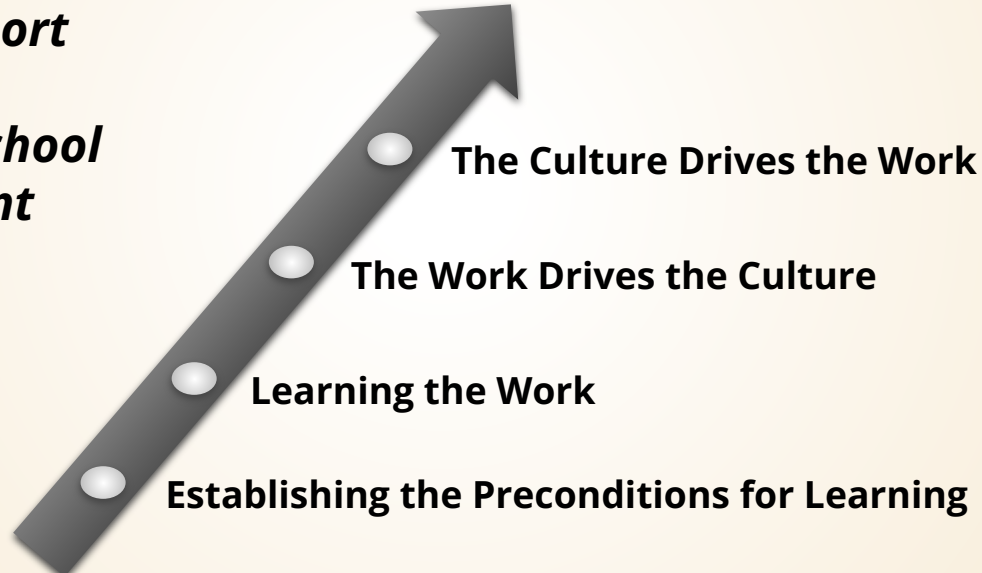
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DIFFERENTIATED SUPPORT & ACCOUNTABILITY

Providing schools with both the degree of site-based, decision-making flexibility and the type of external, centralized support they need when they need it

*School Support
Based on a
Theory of School
Improvement*

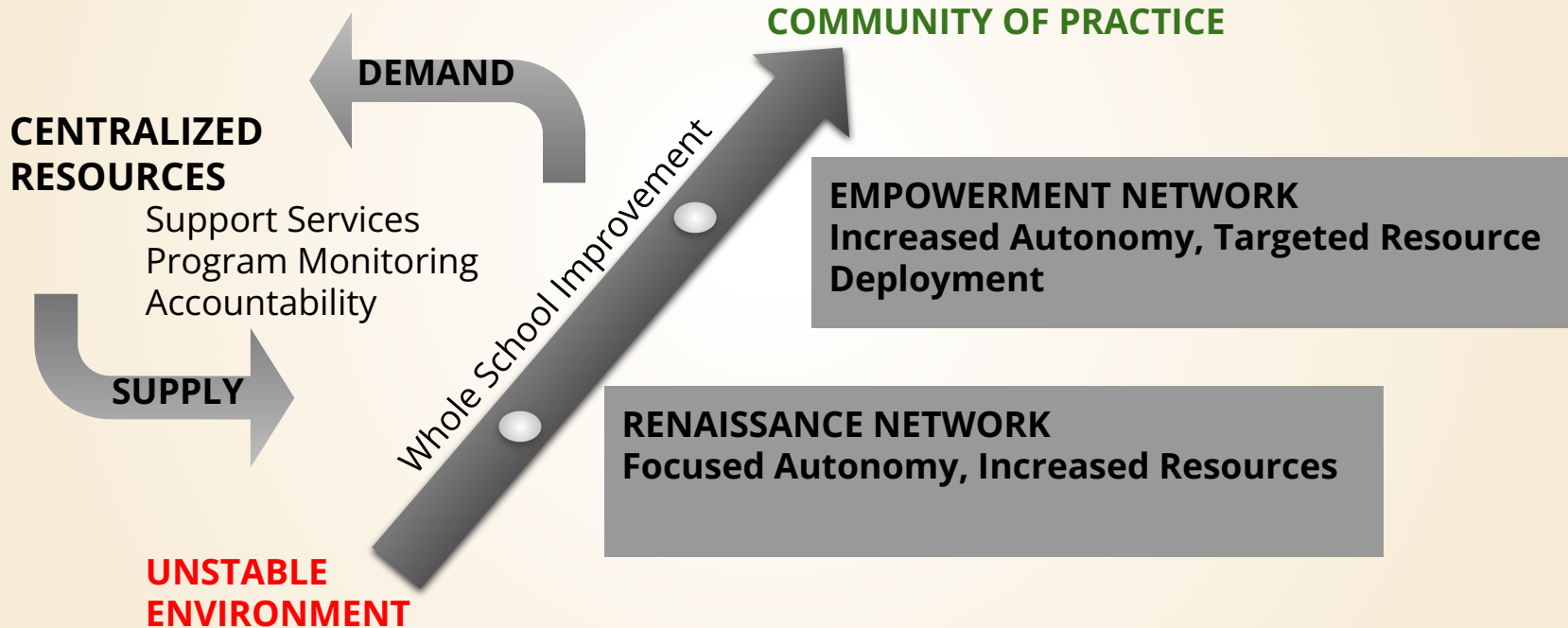
COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE



**UNSTABLE
ENVIRONMENT**

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RENAISSANCE NETWORK

- Collaborative development of school-based budgets
- Targeted Interventions for Students
- Increased Professional Development for Teachers
- Support for Engaging Families in the Learning Process
- Frequent on-site coaching and support

EMPOWERMENT NETWORK

- Greater discretion with school-based budgeting process
- Coaching and guidance to support school-based decisions
- Targeted resources provided based on individual school performance data
- Regular on-site progress monitoring and feedback
- School-based decisions influence centralized decisions



How does data support this work?

Systems and structures for visualizing and tracking progress and making adjustments:

- Teacher- and student-specific data that are used to improve instruction and target interventions.
- School structures for tracking progress and making mid-course corrections.
- Regular assessment of the fidelity of implementation of programs/curricula through classroom observations, conversations with teachers, and focused learning walks to identify areas where teachers need additional support in using the curricula.



Next Steps

1. Determine which data visualization option is most feasible and cost effective. (The recommended solution will be brought before the full committee for further discussion and approval as required by the District's fiscal policies and state procurement requirements.)
2. Develop a rollout plan for integrating the new data visualization platform into the ongoing work of school improvement, including refinements to the School Quality Improvement Planning (QIP) process.
3. Further tailor our differentiated school support model to ensure that every school gets the resources and supports that they need when they need them