A Case Study in Realigning Public Value in School Choice and Enrollment

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A Case Study in Realigning Public Value in School Choice and Enrollment

Doctor of Education Leadership (Ed.L.D.)
Capstone

Submitted by

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in partial fulfillment of the graduation requirements for the degree of
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Dedicated to Juliet, Isabella, and Lina

You are the source of unconditional love
that drives me to try and lead and love without fear.

Table of Contents

Abstract

What role does an enrollment system play in providing every child in the United States with a high-quality education? Integration and school choice literature highlight the saliency of the topic (Ben-Porath, 2012; Orfield and Frankenberg, 2013; Ryan, 2010; Viteritti, 2010). This capstone is designed to address how an increasingly diverse school district with a history of persistent political debate about school choice can create a sustainable enrollment system that affords every child access to a high-quality education. The paper details Framingham Public Schools' efforts to engage in the early stages of a multi-stakeholder and multi-year effort toward this end. Moore's (1995, 2013) strategic value triangle offers a helpful conceptual tool to develop a shared public value proposition for an improved enrollment system and the operational capacity and political legitimacy to accomplish that vision. The paper also explores the author's leadership lessons in using a participatory approach to facilitate this work.

Chapter One: Introduction

The December 16 morning headline in the Framingham Patch read, "Framingham Superintendent: Buying Bethany Property Will Not End School Choice. Framingham Selectmen unanimously voted to give its support to purchase property on Bethany Road for a new school" (Petroni, 2015). The night before, Superintendent Dr. Stacy Scott stood in front of a joint session of the Framingham School Committee and the Town Selectmen and shared rising enrollment numbers and demographic maps showing the distribution of schools, which are primarily on the north end of town, and the distribution of our student population, living primarily on the south end of the district. I was midway through my ten-month doctoral residency with Framingham Public Schools. As I watched from the back of a packed town hall committee room, I was inspired to see my mentor so seamlessly bring these boards to unanimous votes of support on the first stage of a land purchase to build a new school on the south side of the district. Susan Petroni, the town's ever present blogger, was on site to capture the details:

> Selectman Cheryl Tully Stoll asked Scott if the purchase of the Bethany property would eliminate school choice, and create neighborhood schools. Scott said no. The Superintendent said the district's "controlled" school choice program would need to stay in place until the district could "create consistent quality across the system" and have "equitable operations" at each school, that "everyone can walk to" (Petroni, 2015).

The fact that she chose to highlight one question specific to school choice is telling of the saliency of the topic in Framingham.

School choice was implemented in Framingham in 1998 with the goals of desegregating schools, providing instructional choice, and maximizing classroom space. Debate continues as to whether these goals have been met and whether they are still relevant. Multiple task forces have reviewed the controlled choice system over a twenty-year period and yet "persistent political pressure to solve the [choice] problem" (S. Scott, personal communication, January 29, 2016) continues. I first learned about this challenge when I interviewed with Framingham Public Schools (FPS) in the winter of 2015 in search of a doctoral residency. I asked a member of the senior leadership team,[1] "What project would add most value to the district?" He didn't skip a beat before answering, "School choice, without a doubt. It's not working. We have got to figure this out" (personal communication, March 2015). He added, "I worry that parents on the north side are abusing the system because they don't want their kids to go to school with kids on the south side" (personal communication, March 2015). He explained that the district was divided along north and south lines that correlated with race, class, and language. He was also worried that the district was spending four million dollars busing kids all over town. Lastly, he framed the topic like the third rail on a subway track that carries the electric current, as an issue in the community that no one wants to touch.

Framing the Problem of Practice

This capstone explores how to create an equitable and politically sustainable enrollment system in this context. Specifically, *how can an increasingly diverse school*

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[1] The senior leadership team is comprised of the superintendent, assistant superintendent, chief human resources officer, executive director of the superintendent's office, chief operations officer, chief academic officer, and special assistant to the superintendent.

district with a history of persistent political debate about school choice create a

sustainable enrollment system that affords every child access to a high-quality

education? To answer this question, in 2015, FPS began a multi-stakeholder and multi-year review of its school choice policies and processes. Dr. Scott asked me to lead the early stages of this work.

The problem of practice evolved in three distinct ways. First, the initial charge, to *review and provide recommendations on school choice* was expanded to *review and provide recommendations on school choice and enrollment*, because the term enrollment more aptly captures the larger questions of school assignment without assuming that choice is the best mechanism. Part of the review process was asking stakeholders to envision the assignment system we want, not just the one we have. Second, the project raised questions regarding the purpose the enrollment system serves. Specifically, should the district recommit to the original goal of desegregation? Third, as the district developed a vision of embracing our students' diversity as our greatest strength through equitable, diverse, and balanced schools, the challenge became how to create an enrollment system and supporting structures that can operationalize that public value proposition.

Framing the Context

A brief description of demographics, current choice processes, district vision, student outcomes, operational challenges, and political opportunities sets context for this case study.

Demographics. Framingham is a growing and increasingly diverse district comprised of approximately 8,500 students from around the world. In 2000, students

were identified as 5% Asian, 7% Black, 17% Hispanic, and 71% White. At the same time, approximately 12.8% of students were identified as English Language Learners (ELL) and 11% of students were from Brazil (MA DESE, 2016; FPS October 1, Report, 2000). Currently, students identify as 6% Asian, 6% Black/African American, 25% Hispanic, 3% Multi-Racial, and 60% White (MA DESE, 2016). English Language Learners now comprise 18.6% of students and approximately 18% of students are from Brazil (MA DESE, 2016; Bilingual Home Language Surveys, FPS). Framingham is also an increasingly language-rich community. Currently, 39% of students speak multiple languages and 75 different languages are spoken (FPS School Committee Presentation, personal communication, January 5, 2016).

Framingham schools are diverse, particularly compared to schools in large urban districts. However, there are still discrepancies in demographics across the 14 schools. For example, at Wilson Elementary, 85% of students qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL). At Hemenway Elementary, 27% of students qualify for FRL (Internal FPS X2 Report, Retrieved March 7, 2016). See also Appendix A for a snapshot of district and school demographic information. School demographics overall mirror neighborhood demographics. The town of Framingham itself is divided, and somewhat segregated, by the Massachusetts Turnpike (Interstate 90), which runs through its midsection.

Map 1: Current Population Density and School Location

North of Interstate 90:

Total Population - 22,321
Population > 18 - 17,370
Population < 18 - 4,951

Median Household Income (2015) - $96,228
Number of Households < $35,000 / year - 1,498

Legend

Framingham Schools

Population / sq. mile

720 - 1,300
1,400 - 1,700
1,800 - 2,500
2,600 - 3,500
3,600 - 6,500
6,600 - 10,000
11,000 - 23,000

South of Interstate 90:

Total Population - 43,860
Population > 18 - 34,742
Population < 18 - 9,118

Median Household Income (2015) - $62,357
Number of Households < $35,000 / year - 5,757

Source: 2014 American Community Survey (Social Explorer, 2016).

As the maps in Appendix B show, north and south lines somewhat correlate with class, race, and language. For example, 80% of families making less than $35,000 live south of the Massachusetts Turnpike.

How school choice works. The district's current school choice system is based on the original 1998 controlled choice plan. Under the system, families complete a choice

application and prioritize the nine elementary schools during a January-to-April formal

registration period. Students who have a sibling at their first-choice school receive a

guaranteed spot at that school. Families who select their home-district school receive

preference for that school. Home-district boundaries are more cohesive in the north and

more divided in the south.[2] No preference is currently given to race, socio-economics, or

language status. Racial-balance mechanisms were part of the 1998 controlled choice

design but were altered soon after implementation due to parent complaints (Schworn,

2000). Students identified for special education programs and as ELLs have been placed

by the special education and bilingual departments.[3]

     As explored throughout this paper, the current choice system has both strengths

and challenges for creating diverse environments and affording students a high-quality

education. At a basic level of success, ninety percent of parents that participate in the

formal registration window receive their first or second choice. However, this rate is

based on data that excludes many bilingual and special needs students (Internal FPS

Reports, 2007-2015). Also, schools with the highest state accountability status ratings

often fill up quickly with students who have sibling guarantees and home-district

boundary preferences. This pattern, combined with previously limited capacity for ELL

services, means that students who live in the southernmost parts of the district and

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[2] Two schools operate without home-district boundaries. King Elementary, the district's newest school, gives preference to students who live within one mile. Barbieri Elementary operates a two-way bilingual program and is assigned through sibling guarantee and first-choice requests.
[3] This practice recently changed for the special education department as they added more inclusion programming. It will also change in the 2016-2017 school year for ELL students who will now participate in the regular choice process with the bilingual department confirming program availability.

students who are learning English as a second language have less access to these schools. Furthermore, the over ten percent of families who enroll after the formal registration window can experience limited or no choice and delays in getting their children into school. These students disproportionately live on the south end of the district, are new to the country, and are learning English as a second language.

Middle school assignments are based upon a feeder pattern and one in five parents report that their child's eventual middle school was one of the most important factors when choosing an elementary school (2016 Choice Survey). Framingham has one comprehensive high school. A middle school charter, a regional vocational technical high school, and several private schools run their own enrollment processes. The 2015-2016 school choice review focused primarily on kindergarten through eighth-grade (K-8) enrollment in Framingham Public Schools.

District vision. Dr. Scott explained that when he entered the district in 2012 there was high community demand for a conversation about choice but that he "initially pushed off the conversation because our first work was to set the district up to be more fruitful" (personal communication, January 28). During Dr. Scott's first three years as superintendent, he focused the district on raising the quality of instruction in every classroom. Dr. Scott took over the district following a Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) report that highlighted a lack of overall progress on standardized assessments and serious system-wide quality and equity gaps. DESE noted a lack of district-wide alignment of curriculum and a lack of instructional focus and academic support in relation to the needs of Framingham's diverse student population (FPS, 2014).

13

Toward the goal of raising the bar for instruction in all settings, Dr. Scott has focused the district on 1) creating excellence in curriculum, instruction, and professional development; 2) building strong leadership; and 3) promoting community engagement. Successes include implementing higher-quality curriculum such as Engage New York, creating embedded professional development structures including model classrooms in all schools, and establishing "the strongest relationship with the political and business communities that this town has maybe ever seen" (Local Business Developer, personal communication, February 22, 2016). This work has set a new foundation for what is possible in the district.

Student outcomes. Overall, student growth is strong and many subgroup gaps are closing. The median Student Growth Percentile (SGP), measuring student growth in relation to peers with similar proficiency rates, rose eleven percentile points for English Language Acquisition (ELA) and nine percentile points in math since 2012. Notable gains are also seen in the Composite Performance Index (CPI) and SGP for student subgroups (Appendix C). For example, a previous CPI gap of more than three points between Framingham students and the state in special education closed in 2015. This success is of note for the choice review because the special education department has put concerted effort into revamping its program placement. For example, the district now provides more inclusion services and therefore more choice for parents. The district has

also rebalanced special education programs so that fewer students have to move schools.[4]

The SGP data also shows exceptional student growth across multiple subgroups

(Appendix D). For example, the median SGP for ELL Students in ELA increased ten

percentile points from 2012 to 2014.

Some academic gaps persist, as is seen in subgroup proficiency rates on the

Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) from 2006 to 2014

(Appendix E). For example, while Hispanic/Latino proficiency increased 6% over a 9-

year period, a 33% gap between Hispanic/Latino students and white students remains.

This data raises questions about opportunity gaps within schools and across schools.

A disparity in academic performance across schools appears associated with

geographic, socio-economic, racial, and linguistic lines in town. The following patterns

are noted in the elementary and middle school accountability status ratings found in

Appendix A:

- Only one K-8 school on the south side of town has a DESE accountability status

  rating of Level 1 or Level 2 and only one K-8 school on the north side of town has a

  Level 3 DESE accountability status rating[5]

- All K-8 schools with a Level 3 DESE accountability status rating have a FRL rate

  over 50%

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[4] Before 2012, many special education programs were grouped by grades K-2 and 3-5 at different schools causing students in those programs to change schools.

[5] I focus on K-8 schools because FPS has only one comprehensive high school. Furthermore, the high school accountability dropped from Level 1 in 2014 only due to low participation rates. Brophy Elementary, which has a Level 3 accountability status rating, is on the north side of town but feeds into Fuller Middle School on the south side of town.

- Only two of eight K-8 schools with a Level 1 or Level 2 DESE accountability status rating have FRL rates over 50%

The range of performance of schools on PARCC Mathematics is also instructive.

Table 1: Mathematics Median SGP and PARCC Levels 4 and 5 Performance
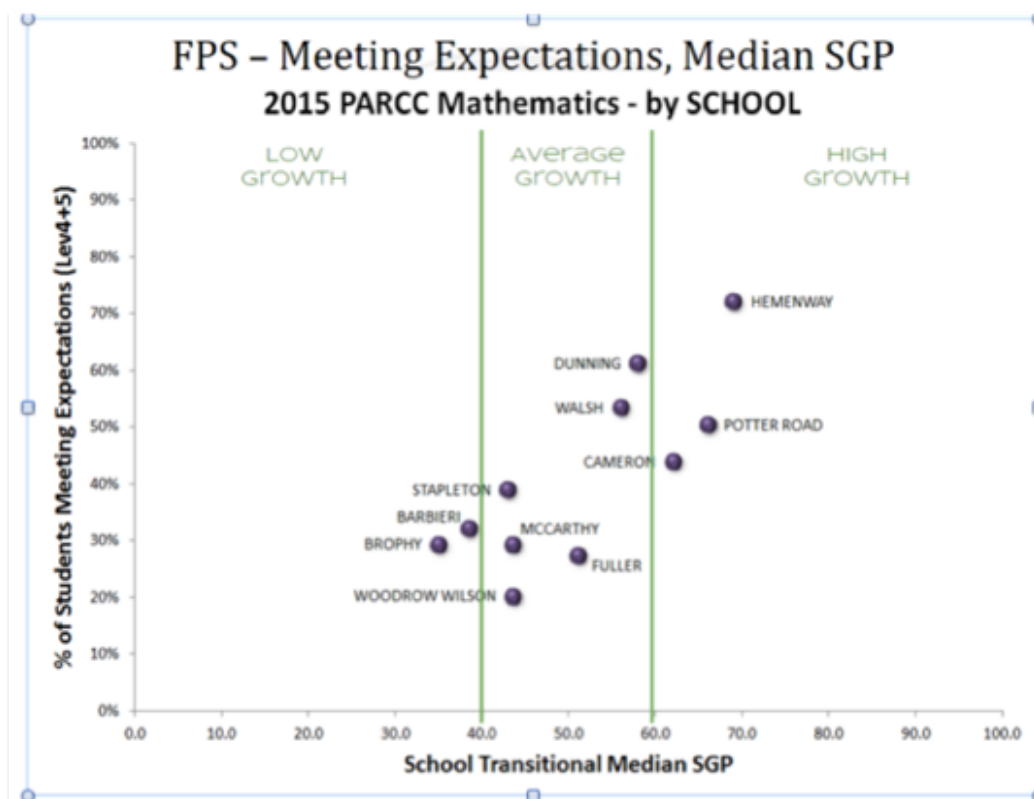
Source: Internal FPS Report (December 2015).

Barbieri, McCarthy, Fuller, and Wilson in the bottom left quadrant are all on the south side of the district and have higher concentrations of students living in poverty.[6]

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[6] Brophy is on the north side of the district but feeds into the south side middle school and has the second highest rate of poverty in the district at 71% FRL.

Furthermore, an internal study of Framingham elementary schools, run as part of the 2016 choice review, showed that students identified as low-income in schools with 50% or higher FRL rates have an aggregate 5.8 lower CPI in math. This study is explored more in the Review of Knowledge for Action (RKA) chapter of this paper and sample data is shown in Appendix G.

There is fair debate in the field and within Framingham as to the role that students' school assignments play in student outcomes. Clearly, there are factors beyond the equity of a choice and enrollment system that influence student performance and achievement gaps, such as district-wide curriculum and professional development. A conclusive analysis of these variables is beyond the purview of this review. Such data is offered in the context of the guiding question for my work: how do we create a sustainable enrollment system that affords a high-quality educational experience to every child in Framingham? I explore possibilities for how more equitable choice and enrollment systems can support the accelerated achievement of all students and further decrease subgroup opportunity and achievement gaps.

Perennial operational challenges. Dr. Scott articulated in a 2013 Report, "A comprehensive solution to overcrowding in Framingham Public Schools has been sought for some time" (Scott, 2013, p. 4). He further asserted that "educational planning in Framingham has been reactive rather than based upon a long-term, purposeful strategy" (p. 6). Since that time, the district strategically opened up a new school. However, many schools are over capacity for classroom space and are using converted locker rooms, storage closets, and portable classrooms. As seen on Map 1, the distribution of the

population versus the distribution of schools creates a transportation challenge that is related to, but bigger than school choice.

New political opportunities. Two current projects could radically alter the geographic balance of schools. Dr. Scott is determined to build a new school on the south side of the district. In January of 2016, the district also received preliminary approval for a Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) grant to rebuild its most dilapidated middle school building, also on the south side of the district. These possibilities raise the importance of a long-term plan to answer such enrollment system-related questions such as: What should the grade-level configurations of these schools be? Should they be built with unique instructional models and offer magnet-type choices? If there were schools within walking distance, would students benefit from more of a neighborhood system?

In sum, Framingham brings rich demographic, system, educational, and political strengths and liabilities to the quest of providing high-quality education to all students.

Roadmap of the Capstone

In chapter two, I use Moore's (1995, 2013) strategic value triangle as an organizing framework to review the public value proposition, organizational capacity, and political legitimacy of an enrollment system. I then explore the pros and cons of integration as a public value proposition and draw a distinction between desegregated environments and equitable, diverse, and balanced schools (Gándara and Aldana, 2014; Lewis, Diamond, and Forman, 2015; L. Teitel, personal communication, 2016). I also analyze the promise and perils of choice as a mechanism for assigning students to schools. Lastly, I lay out the prospects of participatory leadership as a means of aligning public value and creating political legitimacy and support for an improved system.

This capstone serves as a case study in *how to create* a politically sustainable enrollment system that affords every student with a high-quality education. In chapter three, I detail my efforts to answer this question as I managed a two-part strategic project. First, I aimed to build internal capacity within the current enrollment system. Work in this domain included serving as the interim director of the Parent Information Center (PIC). Second, I began a multi-stakeholder multi-year review of choice and enrollment processes and policies. This aspect of the work included convening the 2015-2016 School Choice Review Task Force, which developed a vision and long-term strategic plan for creating more demographic diversity in schools and the supporting structures necessary to realize that diversity as strength. In chapter four, I detail the results of the project.

In chapter five, I analyze Framingham's current system and the project. I propose that, at this point in its history, Framingham has lost sight of the purpose of providing choice, resulting in more focus on facilities management issues. The task force's vision returns the district to the roots of the original controlled choice plan, proposing a renewed value on diversity in schools. The task force also proposes to create the equitable infrastructure and balance in programs necessary to ensure high-quality education for all students. This proposition is at an infant stage in its development and requires attention to building operational capacity and political legitimacy. I close this paper with implications for myself as a leader, for the district, and for the sector.

Chapter Two: Review of Knowledge for Action

In this Review of Knowledge for Action (RKA), I draw from research, practice, and my twenty years of professional experience in search of how Framingham can create a politically sustainable enrollment plan that affords every child access to a high-quality educational experience. I first overlay the strategic triangle (Moore, 1995, 2013) as a guiding framework for the bodies of knowledge most applicable to the charge. Moore guides leaders to establish a shared public value proposition and to monitor and build the capacity and political legitimacy and support necessary to actualize those aspirations. I next explore the prospect of integrated schools as a possible value proposition for Framingham's enrollment system. I also analyze literature on school choice to explore the pros and cons of choice as a mechanism for student enrollment. In the last section of this RKA, I analyze the benefits of a participatory-leadership approach to build the political legitimacy and support for an equitable and sustainable system.

The Strategic Public Value Triangle

Moore's strategic triangle (1995, 2013) provides a helpful organizing framework to begin this RKA. The ideal organizational strategy clarifies mission and purpose, provides sources of legitimacy and support for that mission, and explains how the enterprise will be organized and operated to achieve the declared purpose (Moore, 1995, p. 71). In this section, I look at the relevance of this model to Framingham's quest to create a politically sustainable enrollment system that affords all students access to a high-quality education.

Determining the best means of configuring school enrollment in Framingham presents a complicated set of technical and political challenges. The district is grappling

with questions of mission such as: Have the goals of creating demographic balance, providing instructional choice, and maximizing facilities from the original 1996 Racial Balance and Equity Plan been met? Are these the right goals for the future of Framingham? The choice review task force named lack of political capital as a key obstacle in implementing previous initiatives to make choice more equitable. Classroom and program space challenges highlight issues of operational capacity. Therefore, Moore's conception of creating public value by aligning these domains is particularly salient to the choice review.

I found myself at times overwhelmed by the intersection of multiple perspectives, constituencies, and operational components related to school choice in Framingham and therefore aimed to use the strategic triangle as a grounding and organizing frame. As Moore himself describes, the model "set out a framework that public managers could use to manage strategically in the complex conditions they confronted" (Moore, 2013, p. 102). Moore describes how "the concept focuses managerial attention *outward*, to the value of the organization's production, *upward*, toward the political definition of value, and *downward* and *inward,* to the organization's current performance" (citing Linsky,1994, p. 73). Each variable can be seen as independently powerful. However, the leadership challenge is to raise all three in alignment.

Figure 1: Strategic Public Value Triangle
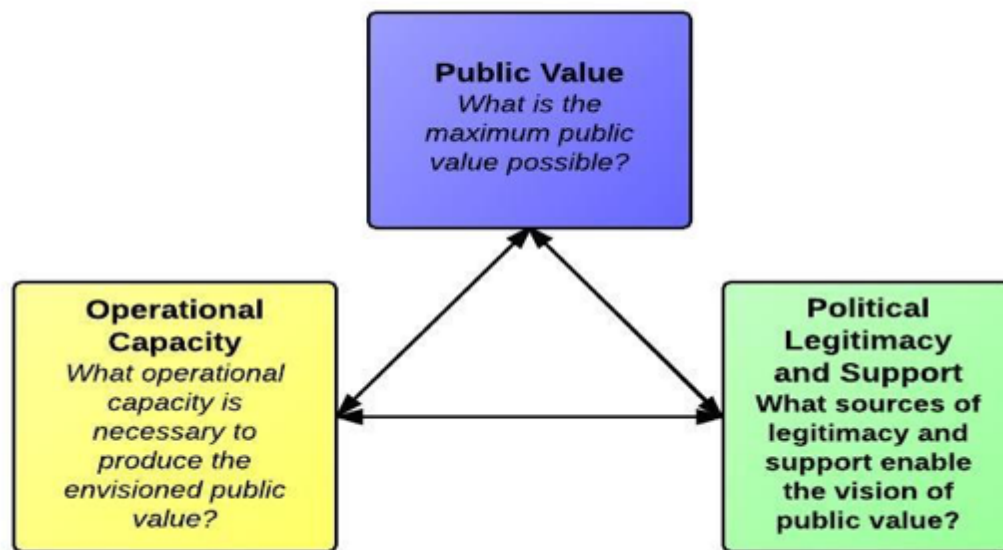
Source: Adapted from Moore (1995, 2013).

Utilizing this framing, I suggest that research on enrollment systems most relevant to Framingham's quest will highlight the public value proposition that an enrollment system can offer, inform the best means of operationalizing that value proposition, and provide guidance on garnering political legitimacy and support for implementation.

Integration as a Public Value Proposition

When I pushed most groups or interviewees in Framingham, the conversation about school choice quickly became a conversation about segregation and integration. Many stakeholders were quick to share their concern regarding a historical irony—the choice system was designed to desegregate schools but can cause re-segregation when parents make their choices based on the demographics of schools. Framingham schools are more diverse than many systems across the country but school demographics still

appear similar to neighborhood demographics. See, for example, poverty rates in Appendix A. Theoretically, student trends in a choice system would not so closely follow neighborhood patterns.

In this section, I analyze the pros and cons of integration as a potential public value proposition for Framingham's enrollment system. Lewis et al. (2014) lay helpful context, "Recent scholarly and public conversations have given renewed attention to integration as a goal, an aspiration, and/or 'imperative'…While the costs of persistent segregation remain clear, the call for integration as the unequivocal answer is more contested" (pp. 22-23). I find Lee Teitel's (personal communication, 2016) work to reframe integration toward the goals of diverse and equitable environments most relevant. I also find Gándara and Aldana's (2014) guidance on balancing bilingual language programming and diversity goals instructive to Framingham's work.

Diverse schools provide multiple advantages for students. Integrated environments are shown to improve student academic outcomes for all racial and socio-economic groups (Frankenberg & Orfield, 2012; Mickelson, Bottia, & Lambert, 2013; Ryan, 2010). Research on the long-term impacts of school desegregation on adult life outcomes for participating minority students shows significantly increased educational, occupational, college and adult earning outcomes (Johnson, 2011). There is also support for the benefits of diverse environments found within other fields. For example, researchers at Columbia Business School found that "heterogeneity in race, ethnicity, gender, cultural background, sexual orientation, and other attributes— is a key ingredient of flourishing societies" (citing Herring, 2009; Galinsky et al., 2015, p. 742). The authors further assert that the benefits of diversity can be seen within nations, organizations, and

groups. Ryan (2010) frames the benefits of integrated environments in both educational and political terms, "In short, integrated schools are superior to segregated ones both as a matter of education policy and as a matter of political strategy" (p. 15). Bridging educational policy and political strategy was an important theme within my project.

Ryan also provides caution regarding the inequitable costs of segregation, "Past experience indicates that schools separated by race, ethnicity, and class will not offer equal educational opportunities" (2010, p. 13). Citing evidence from the National Center for Education Statistics (2002), Ryan details how "students who move from high-poverty schools to middle-income schools generally improve their academic performance and increase their chances of graduating. Indeed, some studies find that middle-income students in high-poverty schools perform worse than poor students in middle-income schools" (2010, p. 276). One hypothesis as to the negative effects of segregation is seen in the systemic effects of low expectations. Schools with heavy concentrations of students of color, living in poverty, and learning English as a second language tend to provide a low-level curriculum, inequitable resources, and less rigor (Noguera, 2008). For example, Jackson (2009) finds clear correlations of lower-teacher quality in schools with higher concentrations of Black and Latino students and students living in poverty.

The relationship between these general trends and the reality of Framingham is a complicated one. In some ways Framingham is bucking these trends and in other ways it mirrors these findings. Dr. Scott raised the bar on curriculum and instruction and purposefully steered high-quality programming, such as International Baccalaureate (IB) and Science Technology Engineering Arts and Math (STEAM), toward schools on the historically under-resourced south side of town. The positive effects of these instructional

improvements are seen in overall increased academic outcomes for students and improved subgroup growth rates on state assessments. An analysis of student results on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) broken down by the Composite Performance Index (CPI) shows how Framingham is closing many subgroup gaps. However, there is still a marked difference in outcomes by schools that appears to be associated with concentrations of poverty. We divided elementary schools into those with greater than 50% FRL rates and then looked at CPI subgroup scores. A snapshot of this study is included in (Appendix G). The data shows a general trend of more affluent schools showing higher performance rates for multiple subgroups. For example, students identified as low income have an aggregate 5.8 lower CPI in math and a 3.6 lower CPI in ELA in schools with greater than 50% FRL rates. However, this same gap has closed 8.3 CPI points in math and 10 CPI points in ELA since 2012. Furthermore, the gaps are less pronounced for some subgroups, such as for Black/African American students (.2 in 2015) and Hispanic/Latino students (2.4 in 2015). In the context of the choice review, the question emerged as to the role that more integrated environments could play in further reducing achievement and opportunity gaps.

I also find reasons to be cautious about an automatic drive toward integration. When the problem of segregation is framed from a deficit angle and defined as an issue of not enough white middle-class kids, integration perpetuates the myth of white middle-class superiority. Lewis et al. (2014) cite Patillo (n.d.) to give pause, "Promoting integration as the means to improve the lives of blacks stigmatizes black people and black spaces and valorizes whiteness as both the symbol of opportunity and the measuring stick for equality" (p. 23). "In schools, can separate be equal?" ran the headline of an opinion

piece by Farah Stockman in the Boston Globe. The article pointed out that some of the highest-performing schools in Boston are charter schools that are made up of primarily Black and Latino students. "Forty years after a judge ordered that busing be used to desegregate Boston's public schools, charters are upending conventional wisdom about how academic excellence for Black and Latino students is achieved" (Stockman, October 8, 2015, para 4). Kimberly Steadman, Co-Director of the successful Brooke Mattapan Charter School was quoted, "'There's nothing about a school that makes it better by having more white kids'" (Stockman, October 8, 2015, para 6). What do these cautions mean for the value of integration?

Lewis et al. (2014) provides a nuanced and helpful framing, "Thus, while scholars are perhaps correct in identifying segregation as a linchpin of inequality, if we treat achieving desegregation as an endpoint we will not be able to intervene on the many mechanisms through which racial hierarchies are perpetuated even in desegregated spaces" (p. 34). Furthermore, while school integration can be a very powerful educational and political strategy, it should not stand in the way of other necessary organizational work, nor should the challenges fall on the backs of our children. As Dr. Scott has framed, "We cannot ask children to do what adults cannot do" (personal communication, December 2015).

In this vein, Founding Director of Harvard's Reimagining Integrated Schools Project, Lee Teitel, distinguishes between desegregated and integrated environments. He points out that while desegregated environments may technically have a diverse student body, they can also replicate the inequities of segregation with tracking and other forms of institutional racism. He proposes that a move toward integrated and equitable schools

26

would be a move toward environments that are constructed in a manner that are diverse but also that are culturally competent spaces for learning.

In response to a questionnaire posted through social media asking, "Please share any other input on Framingham Public Schools choice and enrollment system," a parent offered, "Attempts to diversify our schools need to be more than shuttling kids across town. There are huge community and societal barriers not being addressed resulting in the either exclusion or non-participation of non-white families, south-side families in north-side school communities" (Anonymous, personal communication, November 2015). This comment exemplifies the nuanced challenge in Framingham. How can Framingham tap into racial, socio-economic, and linguistic diversity as a strength?

I highlight two critical conditions toward making integrated environments equitable. First, diversity of staff is at least as essential to creating equitable environments as the diversity of student body (Orfield and Frankenberg, 2013; Noguera, 2008; Villegas, 2007). Second, districts should work to develop cultural competency, with an emphasis on high expectations for all students, among all educators (McAllister and Irvine, 2000; Noguera, 2008; Scott, 2006). Though an enrollment system itself cannot diversify the workforce and create culturally relevant pedagogy, these variables are important in making sure that the benefits of diverse student environments are realized.

Also relevant to Framingham's quest to create diverse and equitable environments is research on how to balance the benefits of bilingual language programs and student diversity. Gándara and Aldana (2014), citing research from Rumberger and Tran (2010), detail how data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress shows "the single factor under the control of schools that contributed to the difference in achievement

between EL [English Language] and non EL students was their level of segregation" (p. 742). The authors detail the benefits of multilingualism. They also argue that educators often view integration and language programming as competing commitments and that this offers a false dichotomy. The authors challenge districts to "undo years of segregative practices and use Latino students' linguistic assets to desegregate the nation's classrooms and reduce the risk of triple segregation that afflicts Latinos" (p. 744). One of Framingham's greatest strengths is in offering a range of bilingual programs including two-way Spanish immersion, Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) in Spanish and Portuguese, and Sheltered English Instruction (SEI). Framingham is particularly poised to deliver on the author's guidance that districts have the opportunity to use students' linguistic assets as integration tools by promoting dual immersion, IB, and multilingual magnet programs. The challenge for Framingham is to be able to build enough capacity in multiple schools to offer that programming with an expanding bilingual population.

In sum, the notion of reimagining integration as not just desegregated but as diverse and equitable environments is most relevant to Framingham's vision (Teitel, 2016). Furthermore, literature on balancing the goals of integrated environments with language needs is relevant to Framingham's increasing language diversity. As I move throughout the paper and use the term equitable, diverse, and balanced schools, I refer to equity in terms of opportunity and outcomes, diversity in terms of students and staff, and balance in terms of schools and programs.

Choice as an Enrollment Mechanism

I look here specifically at the pros and cons of school choice. I analyze the tension within the school choice debate in the field, not to resolve it but to tease out the most helpful management elements. Within this debate, I find evidence of the importance to equal access of information and equitable preferences within choice processes. For the purposes of this discussion, I define school choice in the broadest sense of the term, as a system that allows parents to choose among more than one educational option.

The promise of choice. School choice at its best catalyzes civil rights, instructional improvement, and community feedback. The need to provide educational choices to families and students is often framed by proponents as a civil rights issue. Viteritti (2010) uses Coons and Sugarman's (1999) work in this area to demonstrate the essential elements of this rationale, "What I find most compelling about their work is the power of their moral argument, which tells us that choice could serve as an instrument for the pursuit of social justice… First, we cannot justify consigning poor children to failing schools when other alternatives are available. Second, school choice should not be a privilege confined to the economically advantaged" (2010, p. 207). In line with this argument, Noguera (2008) articulates the concept of captured populations, in which families living in poverty can feel trapped in failing schools. Relatedly, Viteritti and Hothschild (2003) portray how choice exists for affluent parents regardless of policy. Providing public choice frees families and parents to pursue higher-quality options that raise life outcomes, particularly for those most disadvantaged by the current system.

The literature on magnet schools helps to expand the potential promise of district-managed open-enrollment systems. I use a working definition of magnets in the broadest

sense as schools that provide a specialized curriculum and draw students beyond their home boundary. According to the Civil Rights Project, magnet schools comprise the largest system of choice in the U.S., were designed to accomplish the twin goals of innovation and integration, and produce strong results (Siegel-Hawley and Frankenberg, 2012). Cobb, Bifulco, and Bell (2008) assert the academic promise, "Through a comparison of magnet lottery participants, an analysis of student achievement in inter-district magnet schools found that magnet high schools have positive effects on students' reading and math scores" (as cited in Seigel-Hawley and Frankenberg, 2012, p. 8). These results indicate strength in Framingham's instructional offerings at Barbieri, King, and Wilson. These schools offer two-way Spanish immersion; Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM); and IB programming respectively. Barbieri has a more magnet-like registration process with less preference given to home boundary. It is the only elementary school on the south side of town and the only elementary school with a higher than 50% FRL rate to have a Level 2 (as opposed to Level 3) state accountability status rating.

Open enrollment systems can also provide an indirect benefit in the form of feedback, "Parent choice, a form of exit, can also play a role, but rather than operating directly on schools, it is filtered through the district's monitoring of enrollment patterns; requests to transfer become a signal of a problem and both can supplement and be supplemented by voice" (Henig, 2010, p. 33). As summarized above, there is a sizeable literature base documenting the promise of school choice to drive equity and excellence.

The peril of choice. Conversely, many authors challenge that choice has an inequitable past, present, and future. Ben-Porath (2012) argues that the espoused values

of using choice as a lever for equity are often incongruous with policies and

implementation of choice systems. He cites Bifulco and Ladd (2007) to document the

propensity for racial segregation within choice systems. Also, Ben-Porath (2012) further

argues that "School choice mechanisms are unequally distributed across racial lines, with

Black and Latino students much more likely to enroll in non-selective schools within the

school choice environment" (p. 178). Ironically, students who may most need the

highest-quality choices are consistently shut out of systems of choice. Ben-Porath

continues, "school choice seems to be least effectively available to minority and poor

children with special education needs" (p. 185). There is also evidence of increasing

racial and socioeconomic segregation within some choice-based reforms (Carlson, 2014;

Gulosino & Lubienski, 2011).

Lavery and Carlson (2014), in studying inter-district open enrollment patterns,

find evidence that students of more economically advantaged homes take advantage of

such choice systems at significantly higher rates than their peers living in poverty. They

further point out that "this finding is at odds with common rhetoric and misconceptions

regarding a primary goal of school choice programs—permitting disadvantaged students

to attend higher-quality schools" (p. 771). The authors also detail concerns that school

choice may raise the unintended consequence of increasing student mobility, particularly

for disadvantaged populations.

Arguments against school choice are not confined to civil rights perspectives.

Economic arguments can be found on both sides of the divide. Viteritti (2010)

demonstrates how the political realities of public governance mitigate the applicability of

applying free market theories to the sector. Betts (2005) further details the incongruence

31

of market theory and the realities of public education. She first concedes that "in the perfectly competitive world in which education is not a single service but a complex set of variables, families would move to the school that best matched their children's needs" (2005, p. 21). However, she continues to detail how choice systems violate the economic assumptions needed for perfect competition. For example, perfect competition requires free entry and exit, homogenous services, and numerous suppliers and buyers. She also points out the fallacy of such assumptions citing long wait lists to get into the best schools within districts that offer open enrollment.

The polarized debate can create a zero sum game that is less relevant to the dilemmas of a district than more nuanced management discussions. Given the realities of a segregated housing market in which affluent parents have choice in real estate and the fact that there are a handful of private schools and one charter school in the area, school choice exists whether it is sanctioned by FPS or not. Even critics such as Orfield and Frankenberg (2013) and Payne and Knowles (2009) find the most promise of equity within the intricacies of how school choice is managed. Beal and Beal (2013) challenge readers to move beyond pure market analogies and instead consider the merits of an analogy of the National Football League (NFL). The authors point out how there is controlled competition for the benefit of the common good in the NFL. This analogy raises the follow-up question: what are the elements of the most effective and level playing field for students?

Orfield and Frankenberg offer insight into the most equitable means of managing choice, "Knowledge that choice options exist is one important aspect of the selection process, but knowledge about what selection to make is both equally essential and even

more elusive" (2013, p. 262). Information fairs, accessible hours for parent registration centers, counseling on school choices, and family engagement workshops can provide equitable access to such knowledge.

Another aspect of promising practices with equitable infrastructure can be found within setting explicit diversity goals and equitable preference systems. The Civil Rights Project finds that magnet schools have had the most success in creating high and equitable outcomes when their goals of innovation and of racial balance are prominent (2012). In my experience as an administrator, districts are particularly reluctant to pursue racially explicit goals due to political and legal concerns about community backlash and or lawsuits. Such aversion is often cited due to the Supreme Court's 2007 *Parents Involved* decision. However, a closer analysis of the case indicates that while districts can not institute racial quotas there is latitude for diversity goals. As Tefara, Frankenberg, Siegel-Hawley, and Chirichigno (2011) explain, "A majority of the Justices recognized the important goals of diversity and avoiding racial isolation in K-12 public schools, but the Court struck down particular aspects of the Seattle and Louisville student assignment plans because, in the Court's view they were not carefully designed to achieve those goals" (p.8). While preferentially using individual student racial data requires a high standard for legal acceptance, districts can still pursue integration goals within choice processes and policies. Acceptable options include choice policies that give preference to socioeconomic and language status. Orfield and Frankenberg (2013) provide case examples of Berkeley, CA, Cambridge, MA, and Louisville, KY to highlight districts that have found legal and innovative ways to reach their diversity and equity goals.

The Prospect of a Participatory-Leadership Approach

The choice review process in Framingham was designed to engage the community in a discussion of how to create a sustainable enrollment system that affords a high-quality education to all students. The effectiveness of any such initiative may be as dependent upon political variables as educational ones (Moore, 1995, 2013; Noguera, 2008). Furthermore, school districts can be disconnected from their communities and apply bureaucratic levers of control (Mehta, 2013). In this project, we tested an alternative approach of trying to engage multiple stakeholders in collective problem solving. Toward this goal, I explore the research on community engagement, briefly explain Scott's (2006) cultural analysis tool that guided much of my facilitation work with the choice review task force, and close with the importance of engaging in meaningful conversations about race and class.

I define participatory leadership as an approach that engages multiple stakeholders in the coproduction of public value (Bovaird, 2007; Moore, 1995). Participatory can be confused with participative and consultative practices. Cray, Inglis, and Freeman (2007) frame, "A common meaning of participatory leadership is when followers are involved in decisions through consulting or through meetings where information and ideas are exchanged before the leader makes the final decision" (p. 301). Kezar (2001) provides a cautionary tale that this collaborative version of participatory leadership may actually disenfranchise voices by raising expectations and yet not altering fundamental power dynamics. My goal here is to use participatory engagement as a means of creating collective responsibility and action. As Dr. Seana Lowe Steffen, the Executive Director of the Restorative Leadership Institute, articulated in a personal

interview, "You are clearly not talking about consultative practices but an authentic co-production of possibilities, with an honoring decision-making framework in which people know where they can participate and coproduce" (personal communication, April 2014). Bovaird (2007) expands upon this notion with a charge, "What is needed is a new public service ethos or compact in which the central role of professionals is to support, encourage, and coordinate the coproduction capabilities of service users and the communities in which they live" (p. 858).

There is a strong research base for placing community, family, and student partnerships at the center of school improvement efforts (DeCastro and Catsambis, 2009; Henderson and Mapp, 2012; Mapp and Kuttner, 2013). School choice opens up unique possibilities for community engagement in providing an avenue for students and families to co-construct the choice plan and school choices within it. In fact, as a principal who opened a public school of choice in Mapleton Public Schools, I found that it was the participatory dialogue of families, students, and teachers in the act of creating an instructionally unique school that inspired school improvement.

Furthermore, Heifetz et al. (2009) assert that the more adaptive a challenge the more necessary a collective community process becomes. An adaptive challenge has no clear technical answer and involves disconnect between the espoused values and the reality an organization faces. The question of, how an increasingly diverse school district with a history of persistent political debate about school choice can create a sustainable enrollment system that affords every child access to a high-quality education, is a quintessential adaptive challenge. The conversation about what the choice system should look like in Framingham is in many ways a conversation about what the community

values and what it is willing to do to actualize those values. Therefore, we created a participatory approach to the choice review.

In terms of facilitating participatory processes, Scott (2006) provides groups with the cultural analysis tool. It is designed "to support creative problem solving and vision making in teams" (p. 6). The model works through seven distinct but interrelated steps including problem identification, factor analysis, visioning, and action planning. Scott also provides a values assessment tool that allows users to map personal values, perceived organizational values, and ideal values. Having the benefit of direct coaching from the author, I drew heavily from Scott's facilitative model.

Part of my charge was to use the choice review task force to create and model productive conversations about a topic that had been noted as a difficult one for the town. A last piece of the participatory-leadership approach applied to the project is found within the need for explicit conversations about race, power, and class (Milner, 2015; Singleton, 2014). The adaptive conversation about choice in Framingham mirrors the adaptive conversation about choice across the country. Carr (2013) describes that the separation between choice advocates and proponents "is often less about contrasting politics than about how our race, class, and differing life experiences shape our beliefs and understanding. It's harder to talk about these divides because we must venture out of political realms and into more personal ones, and the risk of offense rises. Too often we aren't even speaking the same language" (p. 137). The power of explicit conversations about race and class is seen within Montgomery County's equity work as a case study (Childress, Doyle, and Thomas, 2009). Diversity training, in part, led to structural adjustments to decrease racial and socioeconomic opportunity gaps.

RKA Conclusion and Theory of Action

Using Moore's strategic value triangle (1995) as a guide, the search for the most equitable and sustainable enrollment model in Framingham begins with determining the purpose of the system. I explored integration as a potential public value proposition. I aimed to move beyond a dichotomous debate about the pros and cons of integration. Drawing from Gándara and Aldana (2014), Lewis et al. (2014), and L. Teitel (personal communication, 2016) I distinguish between desegregation and integration. I find that a nuanced framing of equitable, diverse, and balanced schools is most relevant to Framingham's context. I also sought to move beyond the polarized debate about school choice. I find that there is promise in instituting equity mechanisms, such as socioeconomic variables, into choice processes. Magnet schools also offer a relevant means of inspiring innovation and diversity. Lastly, the prospect of a participatory engagement process provides a transition to my theory of action for the project.

Theory of Action

If we…

➢ Build capacity in the Parent Information Center (PIC) to effectively operationalize the benefits of the current enrollment system;

➢ Engage staff, families, and the broader community with opportunities to provide input;

➢ Convene a diverse and representative task force;

➢ Identify the key challenges and strengths, align community values and beliefs, and develop a positive vision of an improved enrollment system; and

➢ If we develop a five-year scope and sequence for the stakeholder conversations and

the action steps needed to reach that vision

Then **the district will have the roadmap necessary to create an effective and**

politically sustainable enrollment system. The next two chapters detail my tests of

these assumptions.

Chapter Three: Description of Strategic Project

Project Overview

How can Framingham create a politically sustainable enrollment system that affords every student a high-quality educational experience? My work to answer this question fell into two primary work streams. First, I sought to build capacity within the current enrollment system by serving as interim director of the Parent Information Center (PIC). Second, I began a multi-stakeholder multi-year community engagement process aimed at reviewing what was working and what could be improved within our choice processes and policies. This aspect of the work included soliciting input from staff, families, and the community. It also involved convening a diverse and representative task force that was charged with modeling productive conversations about choice and developing a long-range strategic plan to create a more equitable and sustainable system.

It was a great honor to serve as special assistant to the superintendent for my residency. In line with my aspirations of becoming a superintendent, Dr. Scott and I developed a portfolio of projects. My work beyond the choice review included supporting the development of a Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) process, managing a high-stakes human resources situation, supporting the assistant superintendent with improving district communications, developing a professional learning community (PLC) for new administrators, and providing general service as a member of the senior leadership team.

My strategic focus on school choice was determined early in my residency, however as described in this chapter, the scope of the project was developed more organically over the first semester. Many factors combined to inspire the 2015-2016 choice review, including the prospect of new schools, persistent political debate about

choice, changing demographics, achievement gaps, and perennial capacity challenges described in the introduction.

In the fall of 2014, a Framingham weekly working group called the Projections, Enrollment, and Choice Meeting began planning for the 2015-2016 task force. A member of that team later explained, "we kept circling the same issues." The draft charge that I inherited from that group read: "The Framingham Public Schools has charged the Choice Review Task Force with analyzing the choice process and developing recommendations for redesigning current school zones and feeder patterns while ensuring a standard of equitable services and resources in all schools" (personal communication, May 4, 2015). However, as Dr. Scott and I analyzed the context, we determined that this may have been too prescriptive a starting place.

In August, Dr. Scott and I began meeting for weekly lunches. Sitting at Terra Brasilis in downtown Framingham, I proudly shared how a Framingham principal had told me, "Kevin, that is so great that you are working on school choice- you know the last few people who have touched this have not lasted too long" (personal communication, August 2015). Dr. Scott kindly responded that he might want to keep me around and maybe I should pace myself. He also let me know that if I needed to arbitrarily create a new choice plan by April in order to complete my capstone, I should focus on another project for the paper. He was clear that the choice review needed to be an extended one and that I should value process over any arbitrary timeline for products. He explained how, therefore, I should create and model healthy community-wide dialogue about a topic that has been a difficult one for much of the town's history. In terms of the timeline, I assured him that I had flexibility within the capstone. I also audaciously thought that I

could conduct a meaningful engagement process and work through the political challenges fast enough to *solve* the choice challenge before the end of my residency.

The goal of the system for the last three years, he also explained, has been to create excellence in all schools. Therefore, choice in Framingham should not be a choice away from a low-quality school because there should be high quality in all schools. In a follow up with the senior leadership team, Dr. Scott emphasized how, above all else he needed me to "build the architecture and curriculum of the task force and community conversation so that we can appropriately sequence the essential elements of the implications for change over a multi-year plan" (personal communication, August 26, 2015). We determined three initial project goals to guide my choice-related work: **1) serve as interim director of the Parent Information Center; 2) facilitate the 2015-2016 School Choice Review Task Force as a participatory process for community engagement; and 3) provide recommendations to the superintendent that ensure equity and excellence within choice processes and policies.**

What started as a project focusing specifically on improving choice became a broader project focused on how to create an enrollment system that is designed to promote diversity and ensure high-quality schools for all. As this public value proposition became clearer, the question became—how do we create that system?

Historical context. This quest had really begun twenty years earlier. A 1996 Long-Range Voluntary Racial Balance and Educational Equity Plan set the foundation for the controlled choice system. Mark Smith, superintendent of Framingham from 1996 to 2003, clarified the goals:

Framingham's Racial Balance and Educational Equity Plan is also[7] based on two

beliefs about how best to educate children for success in the 21st century. The first

is the conviction that schools which include children representing the racial,

ethnic, and cultural diversity of society will better prepare our students to succeed

than will schools which are segregated…The second educational belief that

underlies the educational equity plan is that parent choice of an elementary school

will be good for elementary education (Smith, M., personal correspondence,

2001).

Multiple stakeholders described to me how the plan was only partially implemented and

results have been mixed in achieving these goals. For example, the district stopped using

race as a variable in placement decisions. Former staff members described a gradual

erosion of the focus on race that was tied to small groups of individuals complaining and

superintendent turnover (personal communication, January 2016 and March 2016). As a

case of the early political pressure, home district boundaries gained preference as detailed

by the MetroWest Daily News, "critics of the school choice policy maintain that giving

minority students expanded choice to attend schools, often those in affluent, white

neighborhoods, denies white students educational opportunities" (Schworn, 2000).

Framingham schools are more diverse than many counterparts across the country but FPS

has not met the initial Racial Balance Policy goal of each school being balanced within

10% of the district's overall minority/majority ratio. Currently, the range of

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[7] This same letter previously described the use of Chapter 70 racial balance funds for a 90% match for construction costs for several schools.

demographics is most pronounced when comparing Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL)

rates. In 1997, there was a 67% difference in FRL rates between the schools with the

highest and lowest poverty concentrations— Woodrow Wilson had an FRL of 79% and

Hemenway had a FRL of 12 % (Internal Report, personal correspondence, November 10,

1997). As seen in Appendix A, the gap between those same schools stands at 58% in

2016. This context created opening questions for the review process that included: Have

the goals of the original choice plan been realized and are they still relevant? Is more

demographic diversity our goal and/or equity in outcomes? Could we have one without

the other?

Multiple task forces had reviewed the choice system over the last twenty years

and yet Dr. Scott described persistent pressure to *solve the choice problem*. I reviewed the

findings and reports of six previous task forces and study groups from 1997-2013 and

spoke with several retired superintendents and key actors in the choice program. A

pattern appeared that the conversation had become less and less about the goals of

diversity and instructional themes and more and more about facilities management. For

example, a 2010 choice task force proposal and a 2011 choice study both focused

primarily on grade-level configurations and transportation. The 2010 plan was rumored to

have blown up politically. The 2011 study concluded that given the reality of the location

of schools versus the location of students, there was no financial gain to moving to a

home-boundary student assignment system. This conclusion has not seemed to deflect

detractors from using the costs of transportation in the continuous debate about choice.

This history, of a pattern of review and debate, seemed relevant to the project in that it

confirmed the importance of a healthy process and begged the question as to what problem we were trying to solve.

Within this context, I set out to: 1) learn about and build operational capacity within the current enrollment system and 2) engage the community in a participatory process to review and provide recommendation on choice/enrollment processes and policies.

Project Component One: Building Operational Capacity

Dr. Scott had been working to redesign the PIC office and the choice review was intended to indirectly help with this effort. Circumstances led to PIC becoming the first priority.

Registration crisis. The director of PIC abruptly resigned a week before the start of the school year. On Thursday, August 25, parent calls came streaming through the superintendent's office. Parents were frustrated that they could not get through to PIC to get bus information. New families were told that they would need to wait over three weeks to register for school. After conferring with several members of the senior leadership team, I went down to PIC to check in on what they needed. I came back two hours later with a long list of concerns and we pulled an impromptu war-room session with Dr. Scott, Dr. Tiano,[8] and several department heads.

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[8] I refer only to Dr. Scott, superintendent, and Dr. Tiano, assistant superintendent, by name because of their unique positions. All other current staff names are purposefully shared as a more general role.

PIC was booking appointments three and a half weeks out; this back up would mean that several hundred students[9] could miss starting school with their peers and would lose valuable instructional time. The software system that was supposed to give out bus stop information was inaccessible. The phone was ringing nonstop and over two hundred calls were on voicemail. PIC had moved offices over the summer and several of the phone lines were not working. Dr. Scott appointed me as interim director of PIC. It seemed we could not fully dive into developing a community-wide review of choice until we addressed the immediate and urgent enrollment needs.

We strove to expedite registrations so that new students could start school as soon as possible. With the full weight of the superintendent's office, we were able to quickly bring in additional staff to support the customer-service demands. The technology department set up additional phone lines and laptops for a call center-like operation. We hired several bilingual, retired, and part-time staff to take most of the customer service demands off the registration team. Secondly, we tried to set high-expectations for a positive and more inter-dependent office culture by making those expectations clear and holding frequent staff meetings. Thirdly, we moved paper and pencil tracking systems for registration appointments and classroom space availability to shared electronic databases so that all related departments had live access. In addition to streamlining appointments, these electronic databases were designed to make it easier to monitor school capacity for

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[9] It was difficult to get an exact estimate of the student impact. Sixty-five students were on the registration books but calls for additional appointments were coming in by the hour.

bilingual education and Sheltered English Instruction (SEI)—program areas that proved to be the tightest on classroom space.

I share the following vignette that highlights both my rustiness as a manager and the potential obstacles that could stand in the way of a more improved system. By early September, we caught up on customer service and language testing. However, the registration team could not keep up with the actual registration appointments. In what seemed an easy decision at the time, I appointed a language proficiency tester to learn how to also conduct registration appointments. The PIC team raised concerns that it would take work to train her but did not propose another solution. The situation raised contract questions but I had assumed that we could process new student enrollments within two weeks so they seemed like moot points. I began phasing out all temporary support. Not addressing the contract concerns directly proved to be a mistake as student registration appointments spiked again. By the time I realized we needed the help, this language proficiency tester had got wind of all of the concerns and was not interested in additional duties. Eventually, we figured out that we had not violated the contract as the woman was not an official temporary hire. However, this lost time cost up to 20 students up to an additional week out of school.

Dr. Scott appointed a local Framingham resident and seasoned administrator as the executive director of a redesigned Family and Community Engagement (FACE) office, now overseeing PIC, adult ESL, attendance, and our early childhood alliance. I stayed on as interim director through much of October. She and I were able to tag team day-to-day operations and we collaborated to restructure the office. By the middle of October, we selected a strong candidate, a Brazilian woman with an accounts

management background, to assume the directorship of PIC. As I phased out of a direct

management role, I continued to work closely with these leaders to support their

transition and to coordinate our efforts to make the choice process more seamless and

equitable. As I transitioned out of the PIC directorship, I tried to take the lead in

addressing a language programming capacity issue. This situation is described below.

TBE space challenge: Is there room at the inn? Just as we expedited

registrations, we ran out of space in bilingual education programs. Fifty percent of the

466 students registering from August 10 to October 31 were identified as learning

English as a second language (Internal FPS X2 Database Custom Report, retrieved

February 17, 2016). By the end of October, the district was over capacity in TBE

Portuguese in kindergarten and first grades.[10] The program is hosted by Wilson

Elementary. It is worth noting that Wilson is on the south side of the district and is

approximately 80 percent Brazilian[11] (Principal, personal communication, n.d.). In

response, the director of bilingual education worked with Wilson's administrative team to

raise class size. By late October, we were limited to one to seven classroom seats in third-

through-fifth-grade TBE-Portuguese and in bilingual Spanish programming across the

district.

The new director of FACE and I brought this challenge to a team of central

administrators and principals at a weekly enrollment meeting on October 27, 2015. As we

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[10] Capacity here is defined as over the class size guidelines of 22 for kindergarten, 24 for first and second grade and 25 beginning in third grade. Note also that Framingham has both union contract language and school committee policy on class size caps though there is administrative discretion.

shared the numbers, the collective tension was expressed by a veteran principal, "It is so frustrating to keep having the same problem come up over and over" (personal communication). Several principals then pointed out that if the district had followed through on a previous proposal in 2013 to move fifth-grade students at Brophy and McCarthy to Fuller Middle School, or implemented a 2010 proposal to redistrict elementary schools into kindergarten-to-second grade and third-grade-to-fifth grade pairs, then we wouldn't be in this predicament. At this point in the project I knew those to be salient examples of how charged the enrollment system could be. However, I was not (nor am I) convinced they solved the more systemic challenges, so I prodded, "what problem are we trying to solve?" The room began to heat up with popcorn comments:

- "Our real issue is that we don't ever hold the line with a small vocal group" (Principal).
- "We keep talking about not having enough classroom space but we don't have a student capacity issue we have a program capacity issue" (Senior Leader).
- "Our real issue is that we least prioritize those who have the most need" (Principal).
- "Those students who have the highest needs are the least priority within our systems. Students who are new to the town/country and those learning English as a second language are placed after general education is filled" (Central Director).

We continued to see an increase in students from Latin America, particularly Brazil. In consultation with Dr. Tiano and the bilingual education department, I took the lead in an attempt to add more Portuguese language programming. We conducted enrollment meetings with principals and relevant department heads and conducted multiple school site visits to look at possible space options. In November, I pitched a plan to the senior leadership team to open a second TBE Portuguese strand. When this option proved infeasible, we developed a plan to place students in more distributed classrooms

across the district. This plan served as a mini test of the challenges and opportunities of

adding more language programming. In the results chapter I share relevant observations

and data points in relation to this plan.

In sum, I began the project by building capacity in the current enrollment system

because the registration crisis and program space challenges necessitated that focus.

Managing through these challenges gave me an invaluable opportunity to learn about the

current system. I now transition to my project work to conduct the community-wide

review process.

Project Component Two: Facilitating a Participatory School Choice Review

In this section, I describe my work to facilitate stakeholder engagement, review,

and provide recommendation on district choice processes and policies. **This component**

involved two interdependent tasks: 1) engaging multiple stakeholders with

opportunities to share input on the current system and 2) facilitating the 2015-2016

School Choice Review Task Force. The task force was charged with modeling

productive conversation about choice and developing recommendations for how to create

an equitable and sustainable system.

Community engagement. Previous history served as a guide to the dangers of a

truncated engagement process involving any changes within the enrollment system. For

example, the failed, and still much discussed, 2010 proposal to merge elementary schools

into kindergarten-to-second grade and third-through-fifth grade pairings did involve a

series of community forums. However, it appears that the communication was done after

the overall plan was set. Dr. Scott gave texture to the importance of providing

opportunities for input when, in the midst of a task force conversation about how

previous plans had been derailed by small groups of politically connected people, he asked, "But have we given people the chance to really be heard?" (S. Scott, personal communication, January 20, 2016).

With Dr. Scott's detailed guidance, I conducted two community-wide updates with embedded questionnaires, two school committee presentations, and two press interviews. I also conducted two parent focus groups, one student focus group, one combined student and family focus group, and one staff focus group. I was able to hold informational interviews with the senior leadership team, central administrators, principals, parents, two clergy members, four retired staff members (including two superintendents) and two former school committee members.

As interim director of PIC, through the course of school visits, and as an active member of the senior leadership team, I was able to have more informal, but nonetheless informative, conversations with hundreds of family members, students, staff, and community members. I also facilitated administrative meetings by sharing choice-related questions or data. For example, I brought the question of how we should define the term equity for the choice review to an October meeting with the principal and central director teams.

Task force. The above engagement structures were designed for the larger district community to provide feedback on the current choice system and share ideas for improvement, but as described in the RKA of this paper, we aimed to use a participatory-leadership approach that went beyond just input into the realm of coproduction (Bovaird, 2007; Moore, 1995). We therefore used the task force to serve as a steering committee to model productive conversations about choice and to develop a long-range strategic plan

to create a sustainable and equitable enrollment system. Before moving to results I detail

here a synopsis of the task force's work from September 2015 through March 2016.

Summer 2015: Getting started

By September, we had settled on a charge for the task force to **"analyze current**

choice processes and policies and develop recommendations to ensure that choice

processes and policies support Framingham Public Schools drive toward excellence

and equity. The choice conversation is as much about process as product. Therefore,

our primary task is to create and model a process for productive community-wide

dialogue about our critical charge" (Agenda, personal communication, September 16,

2016).

In order to model and engage in productive dialogue we assumed that a

demographically diverse group of representative individuals would provide the insight

and perspectives we needed. The 14-member core team somewhat mirrored district racial

and ethnic demographics of the district with the task force identified as: 14%

Black/African American, 7% Asian, 7% Hispanic/Latino, 72% white. Furthermore, 7%

of the group was Brazilian, 7% fluent in Portuguese, and 14% fluent in Spanish. Not

counting me, 50% of the team was comprised of staff and 50% family/community

members. The group included a school committee member, former school committee

member, town hall selectman and member of the standing committee on education,

Bilingual Parent Advisory Council (PAC) chair, representative of the special education

PAC, two veteran principals, FACE and PIC leadership, and the assistant superintendent.

One third of the group had served on previous choice task forces between 1997 and 2013.

The executive director of the superintendent's office deserves credit for setting up most of the team and for creating a comprehensive binder containing previous choice studies, relevant policies, and district data before I started my residency in June. The team met for a total of nine times between September 2015 and March 2016.

First semester: The search for trust, goals, and problems

Our September meeting focused on establishing a shared baseline of knowledge about the system and building relationships and trust among the team. Department heads from building and grounds, transportation, special education, and bilingual education joined our first meeting and were asked to share department strengths and challenges related to choice. Most of the meeting focused on facility and capacity issues of some kind. For example, both of the operations directors shared concerns regarding limited classroom and bus seat space. The special education and bilingual education directors shared the challenge of providing specialized programs across the district.

In the preparation for this meeting, one of the directors claimed that choice was taxing the system and that we should just provide equitable services in all buildings and assign students based on home-district boundaries. A small debate ensued about the benefits of more specialized language programs. I moved through it rather quickly. I told the directors that I needed them to share the strengths and challenges they see through their departments but let the task force have some time to develop their own conclusions.

These early sessions with the task force were designed to build a strong holding environment (Heifetz et al., 2009) by engaging the team in community building exercises and setting norms. I also focused on two primary areas of questioning: what are we trying

to accomplish (our aspirations) and why is there a gap between our aspirations and reality (the adaptive challenges)? The task force developed the following initial goals:

- Ensure equity as defined by ensuring that every child receives the quality of instruction and support they need to excel
- Ensure every school is an excellent one as defined by multiple measures
- Ensure that FPS embraces its diversity of language, race, and socioeconomic status as strengths
- Provide students the benefit of innovative educational approaches

Feedback from several high-level leaders indicated these were too abstract to be helpful. These statements later formed the basis of our belief and value statements that I share in the results chapter of this paper.

Much of our focus the first semester was also on identifying our most critical problems related to school choice using the adaptive leadership model. I showed a video of Heifetz explaining adaptive challenges. We then analyzed department reports, personal experiences, results of our first community-wide questionnaire, demographic maps, student performance data, and input from district administrators to generate a list of the most salient technical and adaptive problems related to choice. This list is shared in Table 7 in the results chapter of this paper.

Second semester: Realigning our purpose

I had assumed that by the end of December, we would have a clear set of goals and a definition of the most adaptive problems we were trying to solve. As planned, we could then move into recommendations for improvement. However, I hit a road block. In addition to the lack of clear goals, I struggled to synthesize the large number of opinions about choice. While there was district-wide agreement that a problem existed, there was also a lack of clarity around the problem we were trying to solve. I kept pressing the task

force on problem analysis but we were not producing any tight conclusions. I was

worried that I would lose them if we didn't get to a focus on possible recommendations

soon. Dr. Scott joined the December meeting and stayed with me to debrief. He let me

know that he could not have been happier with how I was managing the choice

conversation as a whole. He also pointed out that I was mixing a lot of frameworks and

warned me about the dangers of rushing a community engagement process. In January,

we adjusted the task force charge to read:

Goal #1: Create and model a process for productive community-wide dialogue about school enrollment in Framingham.

Goal #2: By March 23, 2016 the Task Force will present initial recommendations <u>on how to create</u> an equitable and sustainable enrollment system. This will include:
- Findings from the review including a statement of the key problems and strengths of Framingham's Controlled Choice System
- Identification of the values and beliefs that can guide an improved plan
- A positive vision of an equitable and politically sustainable enrollment plan
- A clear five-year scope and sequence of the engagement structures, policy decisions, and action steps needed to build an equitable and sustainable enrollment plan
- Analysis and recommendations on the strengths and areas of improvement within the Task Force and study process itself

The spring semester then became a flurry of activity to realize these revised goals.

Elements of the long range plan and data regarding the process are shared in the

following chapter.

Chapter Four: Project Results to Date

I group results according to the two primary components of the project, building operational capacity and facilitating the participatory review process. Results for the purpose of this capstone include relevant comments, feedback, and observations that informed a deeper understanding of the strengths and liabilities within my leadership. Results also include such data that is helpful to assess the strengths and challenges within the current enrollment system and the viability of future plans.

Project Component One: Building Operational Capacity

Registration crisis. Dr. Scott assigned me to PIC in part to stabilize the situation but we were both also both clear that the role provided me a unique opportunity to learn about the strengths and challenges of the current system. Table 2 summarizes a brief snapshot of my leadership objectives and corresponding results during my tenure at PIC.

Table 2: Leadership Objectives as Interim Director

Objectives	Key Results
Provide short-term leadership support	• Created electronic tracking for capacity placement • Decreased lag time from call to registration from 3.5 weeks to 10 days • Delayed response to union complaint cost at least 20 students to be out of school for an additional week (20 appointments x 1.5 hours) • September school committee briefing feedback indicated that they had heard what they needed to—*the situation was under control*
Provide an assessment of current staff capacity	• Supported assistant superintendent and new executive director in hiring: increased diversity and bilingual capacity in office • Addressed office culture challenges related to customer service and complaints
Provide an assessment of the systemic issues	• Identified challenges of getting solid enrollment projections; however, failed to develop new projections fast enough to support TBE challenges • Moved from paper and pencil scheduling and student tracking to shared electronic tools to increase capacity for inter-department collaboration

In terms of assessing my own leadership, the most important success was the overall expediting of enrollment. However, my inability to align stakeholders fast enough to

work through the union cease and desist letter still cost a group of students' instructional time.

I also used the opportunity to learn about system-wide strengths and challenges. I share here a modified public value scorecard (Moore, 2013) as a means of tracking my observations related to public value, operational capacity, and political legitimacy and support.

Table 3: PIC Public Value Scorecard

Strategic Triangle Domains	**Parent Information Center Specific Observations**
Public value	• Purpose in providing choice seemed unclear and staff were anxious to close the choice window for convenience • Controlled choice was described to me as primarily a means of controlling for class size • No mechanism for demographic balance beyond language program placement
Operational capacity	• Choice system allows Framingham to place students where there is room and therefore overall keep class size relatively low (under 22 for K, 24 for 1-2, and 25 for grades 3-5) • Systems still require manual entry and are not linked to student database • Challenges with getting solid projections make programmatic planning difficult • Lag times disproportionately affected students learning English as a second language • Many students did not have choice; both after the September 15 cutoff for choice and because of lack of space on busses and classrooms • Some departments expressed strong preference for sending students to their "home boundary school" and repeatedly expressed concern that choice was stretching them too thin
Political legitimacy and support	• Multiple principals expressed concern that I had taken away their say in taking new students by moving to electronic tracking and bypassing previous practice of consulting with them before placing new students • Union concerns about hiring temporary support raised questions regarding potential obstacles for implementing future equity reforms

In terms of assessing the overall system, the experience gave me the benefit of getting to know Framingham as a strong community. Multiple administrators and secretaries came to support the office. The directors of special education and bilingual education spent almost as much time in the PIC office as I did. We had strong internal

and external candidates and yet rightfully chose to hire an internal candidate for both the

new director and office manager indicating strength of the leadership bench. Specific to

choice, the overall notion of having a parent information center, with language

assessment and parent liaisons matched the description of best practices in my RKA

(Orfield and Frankenberg, 2013). In terms of challenges, the experience left me worried

about inequity with regard to students who enter after the early enrollment period. During

the registration backup, for example, a minimum of 31% of students who registered

during this window had just recently moved from another country and 50% were learning

English as a second language (Internal FPS X2 Database, retrieved January 2016).

TBE space challenge: Is there room at the inn? The process of trying to expand

TBE programming yielded relevant data on the opportunities and liabilities that may lie

ahead for the district in balancing language programming across schools. The range of

bilingual programming emerged as a relative strength in Framingham. However, the

ability to grow language development capacity to meet Framingham's language diversity

emerged as a significant challenge. Again, I use a modified public-value scorecard

(Moore, 2013) to track my observations according to the strategic triangle domains.

Table 4: TBE Public Value Scorecard

Strategic Triangle Domains	TBE Observations
Public value	• Framingham offers a robust range of bilingual programming from Two-Way Bilingual, TBE, to SEI • Dilemma of overloading Wilson (where the strongest bilingual and bicultural teaching seemed to be taking place) and pushing students out into schools potentially less prepared to meet their needs highlighted tension between goals of integration and providing the benefits of specialized programming
Operational capacity	• Low class size is an asset but is also highly protected by principals • Supply of bilingual programs does not meet demand • Difficulties in projecting for increases in specific populations and program needs
Political legitimacy and support	• Fears regarding TBE surfaced: multiple stakeholders described how Brophy used to be the most desirable choice school until they picked up the Spanish TBE program

	• Though I coordinated with several central office leaders I did not align stakeholders (senior leadership team and principals) to the extent necessary to overcome the challenges of opening another TBE Portuguese strand mid year; I also received feedback that I presented a soft pitch for the proposal

The situation highlighted the need for better student projection data. The initial plan to

build a second TBE Portuguese strand at King Elementary required accelerating a

construction project. Operationally, it was difficult to make mid-year budget adjustments

of this magnitude with soft student projections. In November we knew that we were out

of classroom space but we did not know how many students would come in mid year. In

fact, in January we saw fewer Brazilian students than anticipated and it appeared we

would not have enrolled enough students to justify a new program. However, by March

16 we had placed 29 students in Sheltered English Instruction (SEI) classrooms who

would have otherwise been better served in bilingual classrooms. When it became

necessary to place students in non-TBE classrooms, the bilingual education department

tried to strategically place students in clusters and add native language tutors. In the end

the bilingual department spent almost $200,000 on native language support, double the

original budget (Central Administrator, personal communication, March 15, 2016).

Relatedly, the situation highlighted tension among building principals and central

office leaders with regard to meeting the needs of diverse learners in all settings. Related

personal communication included:

- "I see that this [notification of new student] says with tutor support......I don't know how we are supposed to spread _____ any thinner.......and, we don't have the ESL staffing support for a non-English speaker........these students are not getting what they need. It is so frustrating!!" (Principal, n.d.).
- "Over the past few weeks we have received 5 new, bilingual Portuguese students at_____, none of whom speak English. I'm beginning to get concerned because these students need lots of support and the rest of the class receives instruction in

English. We are working hard for the students learning English to get them ready to go into the 3rd grade integrated classrooms. I'm concerned for a number of reasons. Number one - I'm not sure what the plan is for these five newcomers going into third grade. There is a huge jump from second to third in the curricular demands. Number two: All instruction in second grade is in English and there are no Portuguese supports. Number three: You are now asking the second grade teacher to teach the majority of her class in English and the five newcomers in Portuguese which is difficult to do. Number four: The class now stands at 16" (Principal, n.d.).

- "I am struggling to balance the need for assigning more equitable resources and adding to a perception that 'these kids' can't learn without extraordinary additional supports" (K. King, November 13, 2015).
- "I feel like I need to beg and plead to get these kids into school" (Central Administrator, March 8, 2016).

Lastly, this situation highlighted the challenge of balancing the benefits of bicultural and bilingual environments such as Wilson and more of an integrated placement plan.

In summary, these results demonstrated operational, public value, and political support gaps. These situations also reinforced the need for a comprehensive review of the enrollment system.

Project Component Two: Facilitating a Participatory School Choice Review

Next, I share results and lessons learned from the broader community engagement structures. I then transition to the 2015-2016 Task Force's work to develop a long-range plan for how to create an equitable and sustainable enrollment system. I conclude with an assessment of the task force process and of key executive leaders' assessments of the viability of the Long-Range Plan for Excellence and Equity in School Choice and Enrollment.

Community engagement. This aspect of results falls into two categories of stakeholder input: 1) key observations from informational interviews, focus groups, and meetings and 2) feedback and data from community wide questionnaires.

Informational interview and focus groups

Families, staff, and community members shared a wide range of opinions about choice. The following table highlights examples of my observations and of the input from these informational interviews and focus groups.

Table 5: Stakeholder Conversations

Stakeholder Group/Month	Key Observations

Informational interviews/ongoing	• When asked, what do you love about Framingham the vast majority of respondents replied with *our diversity.* However, there were a range of opinions as to whether the diversity goals had been realized.
	• **Comments related to diversity:**
	    • "I think that the diversity goals are over-rated" (Parent, personal communication, November 2015).
	    • "Well the Hispanic families want to be separate. Some of it might have to do with affordable housing and stuff on the south side but most of it is that it seems like they really want to live by themselves" (Parent, personal communication, November 2015).
	    • "The town itself has never come to grips with its diversity" (Retired Superintendent, personal communication, February 16, 2016).
	    • "I can support diversity to a point but enough is enough" Community Member, personal communication, March 28, 2016).
	    • "She [local political leader] wants neighborhood schools but not for the reasons that some people in town do and she does not want to be associated with that fraction." I asked if that fraction was about people "not wanting those kids in my school." His response, "Yes." (personal communication, January 6).
	• Transportation costs dominated many active town members' concerns, "I told that Thayer [superintendent 1987-1996; 2007-2009] that if he did this he was going to have to send taxis to everyone's house and now look what is happening?"
	• Several parents expressed a desire for more neighborhood cohesion.
	• Staff concerns focused most on communication and relational trust.
	• Several interviewees stated that our biggest challenge related to choice was that small groups of politically connected people derailed previous plans to improve the system. Examples cited included the reason that racial preferences were pulled soon after the system was implemented, lack of follow through on previous efforts to introduce socio-economic preferences, and the 2010 and 2013 grade level configuration plans failed.
	• Several former actors in the 1990s original choice plan expressed disappointment that the district had lost sight of the original focus on diversity and instructional models:
	    • "We really thought we were going to get truly different models, but except for the two-way bilingual it never really happened" (Parent Activist, personal communication, September, 2015).
	    • "Themes were really an afterthought" (Former School Committee Member, November, 2015).
	    • "My biggest disappointment about choice was that I could not get principals to be as bold as I would have liked to develop strong identities in their schools" (Former Superintendent, personal communication, March 2016).
	• **Other notable comments:**

	• "We keep circling the same issues" (Veteran Staff Member, personal communication, December 2015). • "[I] worry that people will see Bethany as a push toward neighborhood schools and then will be greatly disappointed" (Senior Leader, personal communication, January 5, 2016). • "Kill school choice" (Community Member, personal communication, January 5, 2016). • *Those maps show that unless we want to put over a hundred dollars into building more schools on the south side of town, Framingham has a choice, and not a neighborhood system* (School Committee Member, personal communication, February 2, 2016). • *I thought that when I ran for my seat that we should go back to neighborhood schools but now I think our job is to make sure choice works and schools are more equitable* (School Committee Member, personal communication, February, 2016).

Admin meeting/ October, 2015	• October administrative meeting highlighted range of definitions of equity:
	  • "Equity is defined as the person who is on the 'in' team. That team gets more resource and support" (Principal, personal communication).
	  • "Schools getting what they need" (Principal, personal communication).
	 • The conversation was played forward to the task force by a principal representative on the team and was instrumental to our *later commitment to define equity as every child receiving the quality of instruction and support that they need to excel.*

Student focus group/November, 2015	• Most students expressed overall appreciation for teachers, stating *that their best teachers in their whole lives are at Fuller*. • Two students expressed concerns about teachers being disrespectful.
Town-wide PTO/ December, 2015	• Strong concerns about how choice is not working. • In particular, a realtor shared that choice makes selling homes difficult when he can't guarantee a school. Parents also expressed stress around choice process and how they don't like competing as PTO groups for new parents during the spring choice window. Parents expressed overall satisfaction with their own schools. • Several parents expressed concerns about losing the benefits of neighborhoods. • Staff member attending observed, "that was an interesting meeting, they seemed really upset but my guess is that if you polled them they all would actually be in support of a choice system versus being told where to go to school through assignments" (personal communication, December 2015). • One parent present requested a follow up meeting to press for the idea of keeping space in other schools to lower her school's high mobility rate.
Staff focus group/ December, 2015	• Shared concerns that high-mobility rates create hidden costs. • One teacher shared an example that she had only 11 students that were with her for the entire year but that with the mobility she taught 34 students total.
Parent and student focus group/ February, 2016	• Wilson families expressed high levels of appreciation for IB programming and the bicultural and bilingual community at the school. • A few parents expressed concerns that north side families don't choose the school because of its location and reputation.

My first observation from these conversations was that I had to ask very few questions. In general, stakeholders were charged up and ready to share their opinion as soon as choice came out of my mouth. As a whole, interviews and focus groups highlighted the range of

61

opinions about choice. A desire for more neighborhood cohesion was also cited as reason to move away from choice. Sharing demographic maps sometimes changed these conversations significantly. A number of long-time and active residents told me that they did not realize the disproportion of students versus schools was so great. Several interviewees worried that though the original intention of the choice system was to better integrate schools, it was having the opposite effect. Others countered that without choice, schools would be more segregated. Most parents and students that I spoke to were happy with their own school, even if they had concerns about the choice process.

Community updates and questionnaires

The first community wide update and questionnaire went out in November. There seemed to be more comments on Facebook about the announcement than the eighty-seven responses to the survey. Concerns focused on the open-ended nature of the questions: 1) What are your hopes and dreams for all students in Framingham? 2) What is most important to you when looking for a school? and 3) Please share any other input on Framingham Public School's enrollment policies and procedures? The underlying point seemed to be that if we could not statistically analyze the results we were just going through the motions. I purposefully switched to use the term questionnaire as opposed to survey to help alleviate some of this concern. There were also several comments on social media about how suspicious it was that I was facilitating this process as an outsider and graduate student. The responses themselves, definitely demonstrated the range of perspectives on the topic. Examples include:

- "I love school choice. The process was great. We got our first choice and we are extremely happy with it."

- "[The] only reason we moved to the south side of Framingham is because we knew we would still be able to choose which school."
- "School choice is a failure."
- "I dream of an approach to education that was able to achieve strong schools and equal access to education for all without compromising the sense of community in our neighborhoods."
- "FPS school choice has ironically had the opposite effect of its original intent. You have very highly ethnically segregated schools. It is extremely common in some neighborhoods for parents to bus their children to many different schools via a 1.5-2-hour round-trip bus ride every day rather than attend their neighborhood school if it houses an ELL population. These long bus rides themselves, which serve no purpose than to insulate white children from the ELL population, does not benefit the children educationally and fractures neighborhoods…The Choice program feeds into the fear that 'some' schools are underperforming and scared parents opt for 2-hour bus rides to send their child to school with a majority Caucasian population were the scores are naturally much higher due to the absence of language learners who struggle with the test initially. We say it is the 'best fit' school, but really what parents are choosing in most cases is to 'choose' a white school."

Again similar to my informational interviews, it seemed that everyone had an opinion about choice but that there was very little consensus, internally and externally, about the patterns of perceived strength and weakness.

The demographic data on the responders was also informative. Seventy-seven percent of respondents identified as living on the north end of Framingham. This stood in juxtaposition to our data showing that 35% of families with school-age kids live north of the Mass Pike (American Community Survey, 2014). Similarly, 89% of respondents identified as white and yet only 60% of the student population is white. Furthermore, only 10% of respondents indicated they spoke a language other than English, in comparison to 40% of the district.
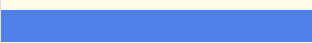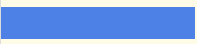
This data appropriately raised concerns about an imbalance in the perspectives being gathered. In order to make sure that we engaged more diverse voices we adjusted the spring semester update and questionnaire to solicit more representative response rates.

First, Dr. Scott sent the questionnaire embedded in a personal letter that was sent out through principals' e-mail lists. Hard copies were provided in school buildings and through PIC and adult ESL classes. A member of the task force sent the questionnaire out with a personal note to a bilingual parent group. The 335 respondents were slightly more representative of the community[12] with 68% of respondents indicating that they lived on the north side of town, 73% identifying as white, and 28% identifying as speaking a second language.

As seen in Table 6 this questionnaire was also designed to ascertain more concrete questions, such as how parents make their school choices.

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[12] Note that the second semester questionnaire responses include responses as of March 30, 2016 and that this questionnaire was still live as of the publication of this paper.

Table 6: Most Important Characteristics in Choosing Schools

When you were looking for a school for your child, which of the following were MOST important to you? (please select no more than three)		
Answer		%
Reputation of academic quality		66%
Location close to your home		42%
Reputation of the teachers and staff		41%
The theme, identity or instructional model of the school (e.g. Two-Way Bilingual, IB, STEAM)		36%
I chose my child's elementary school based on the middle school they would be assigned		18%
Reputation of safety		15%
Reputation of the principal		14%
Other		10%
The other students who attend the school		8%
I did not have a choice when selecting my school		4%

It was a surprise to me that thirty-six percent of respondents indicated that the theme, identity, or instructional model of the school are among the most important variables. Many of my informational interviews had shared that they felt themes were watered down from the original choice plan. This data point was informative for the task force's work to build an action plan to strengthen instructional models in more schools.

In sum, I was proud to provide between 400-500 stakeholders the opportunity to provide feedback on how choice was working in Framingham.[13] Making sense of the conflicting opinions about choice and prioritizing challenges without losing sight of strengths proved to be a more difficult task.

Task force. On that note, I transition to my work with the 2015-2016 School Choice Review Task Force. The task force was designed to serve as the overall steering committee for this larger engagement approach. I use this section to share the results related to the task force itself. Results are grouped by my theory of action components to use a diverse and representative task force to *identify the key challenges and strengths*; *align community values and beliefs*; *develop a positive vision of an improved enrollment system*; and *develop a five-year scope and sequence for the stakeholder conversations and action steps needed to reach that vision*.

Key challenges and strengths

The following list emerged from our initial attempts at problem identification.

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[13] This estimate includes informational interviews, focus groups, 87 responses to our first semester questionnaire and 335 responses to our second semester questionnaire. Please also note there is no way of knowing whether there is duplication in questionnaire respondents as they were not tracked for confidentiality reasons.

Table 7: Adaptive and Technical Problem Identification

Equity:

Not enough capacity in the system, specifically more schools on the north side but more students live on the south side	Technical
Not enough capacity, particularly in bilingual and ELL Programs	Technical
Meeting varied special education needs requires more specialized programs that cannot be offered in all settings	Technical
Inequity of resources across schools	Technical
Distribution of power along geographic, language, race, and socioeconomic lines	Adaptive
Segregation	Adaptive
Stayed clear of a few loud voices in the past	Adaptive/Technical
Students who need the most support are fit into the plan after the fact; we least prioritize those students with the highest needs	Adaptive/Technical
Institutional racism	Adaptive
Lack of belief in the ability of all kids	Adaptive
Lack of ownership for all kids	Adaptive

Innovation

No real instructional choices, themes were not strong enough to provide meaningful choice	Technical
We do not know how to truly innovate	Adaptive
Fears regarding loss of confidence if try things truly new	Adaptive

Other

Not enough space in schools	Technical
Transportation challenges	Technical

Source: Task force discussions, administrator meetings, and 1:1 interviews (2015-2016).

Using the cultural analysis tool, teams completed an analysis of the factors and

contributors to those problems.

Example, problem analysis notes:

| Factor: Afford. housing | Factor: Redline zoning/ lending/ political resources | Factor: Cultural comfort cultural enclaves: Portuguese Italian | Factor: Education levels/ suburban lifestyle values and privelege | **Problem** Inequitable distrubtion of power across geographic, language, race, and socio-economic lines |
| Factor: Varying degrees of school quality | Factor: Inclusive and exclusive cultural and linguistic norms i.e. Town Hall | Factor: Lack of belief in the ability of all kids | Factor: Staff not mirroring diversity of students: lack of reflection of community | |

It is worth stating that this meeting was split into two working groups. Both teams chose to focus on the key problem of *the inequitable distribution of power across geographic, language, racial and socioeconomic lines.*

In January, I used the cultural analysis tool (Scott, 2006) to simplify the following problem statements to be more within our locus of control. We also used the long-range plan as an opportunity to translate what had been intense small group conversations into statements that could be shared with a wider group of stakeholders.

Problems/Challenge Statements
Long Range Plan for Excellence and Equity in School Choice and Enrollment

Vision:
While Framingham schools are more diverse than many schools across the country, there is still a range of demographics across schools. For example, there is a 58%

difference between the school with the highest rates of Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) and the school with the lowest FRL. Framingham has begun to close many achievement gaps but there are still large gaps in proficiency levels across racial, socioeconomic, language, and disability groups. Some of these gaps appear related to geographic lines in town. ***What are ways in which an enrollment system can increase diversity and decrease achievement gaps?***

Capacity:
The district is growing. Many schools are currently at capacity, already having converted locker rooms and storage closets into instructional space. Superintendent Dr. Stacy Scott articulated in a 2013 facilities report, "**A comprehensive solution to overcrowding in Framingham Public Schools has been sought for some time**" (Scott, 2013, p.4). He further asserted that, "Educational planning in Framingham has been reactive rather than based upon a long-term, purposeful strategy" (p. 6). Furthermore, much of enrollment growth takes place after the spring choice window and budget development process, leaving some families without choice, higher mobility in some schools, and the challenge of resourcing changing needs.

Process:
Over the course of the last twenty years, multiple task forces have named the equity problems within school enrollment and made recommendations but many plans have not been implemented. **Attempts to focus on equity within the enrollment process have not always had the political capital to succeed.**

At times over the last thirty years, **the conversation about choice/enrollment has been charged.** The task force therefore focused on the goal of modeling productive conversations about the topic. Learning from past history, this review also focused on hearing from a diversity of voices. We are left with the question: ***how do we sustain a conversation so that all voices are heard?***

I focused less on strengths in the initial stage of the process. Feedback to this point was rightfully critical in a midyear check in as a team. We have included a statement of strengths in the long-range plan that include, "We have a vibrant and diverse student body, we have an active family community that holds high expectations for continuous improvement, the choice system provides the opportunity to create demographic balance in schools, and the choice system provides instructional options for parents" (personal communication, March 2016). Team members commented how, even

if they came late in the game for our work, these strengths will be helpful communication talking points.

<p align="center">**Community values and beliefs**</p>

By January, the conversation about choice was more and more a conversation about aligning community values toward a clearer purpose. I added a question to the spring questionnaire to that effect. The following word image demonstrates the frequency of the responses to the question, what do you value most about Framingham?

This image became a key piece of presentation materials for the choice review as a means of mirroring back to the community the value placed on diversity.

In order to align values, the task force also completed a values assessment (Scott, 2006) to identify personal values, current organizational values, and the ideal values that should guide our decision. After reviewing our initial aspirations and discussing areas of discrepancy between current organizational values and our ideas, we settled on the following:

<p align="center">**Beliefs and Values**
Long Range Plan for Excellence and Equity in School Choice and Enrollment</p>

- We believe in equity as defined as every child receiving the quality of instruction and support that they need to excel.

- We believe that every student, in every neighborhood, deserves a high-quality educational experience.

- We believe that Framingham should embrace the diversity of language, race, socioeconomic status, and learning needs of our students as strengths.

- We believe in a diversity of unique educational approaches.

These beliefs are included in the long-range plan as context for the vision and action

plans that follow. They are also shared to help guide future decisions.

Positive vision of an improved enrollment system

The most significant result from the task force is a proposed public-value

proposition in the form of a vision statement. After months of problem analysis, the task

force looked into the future and articulated our ideal enrollment system:

Vision Statement
Long Range Plan for Excellence and Equity in School Choice and Enrollment

Imagine the power of a school system that embraces student diversity as its greatest strength. Imagine an enrollment system that balances the benefits of integrated environments and specialized programs. Imagine all students are in the best place to meet their needs and that we have socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, language, and special education diversity in our schools.

Imagine that the diverse cultures of our students will be drawn upon as a strength in teaching and learning. Imagine that the diversity of staff mirrors that of our students. Imagine that supports follow students and each child has the resources they need to succeed. Imagine walking into every school and seeing equally high-level teaching and learning. Imagine all students enjoy learning! Imagine schools teach students without restraints of time.

Imagine that when families choose schools, they have access to multiple and meaningful measures of progress. Imagine that families and kids feel a strong sense of community in their schools, neighborhoods, and across town. Imagine that achievement and opportunity gaps are closed. Imagine Framingham's enrollment system is equitable and sustainable.

Is this an enrollment system you can believe in?

Once the task force had solidified this vision, in late February, the work of action

planning toward this vision began to flow with great enthusiasm.

Five-year scope and sequence

The following excerpt from the long range plan clarifies the first steps in making

this vision a reality.

The immediate focus of the district should be on making the current choice system more equitable. Until or unless the system can guarantee high quality and close proximity to schools for all students, students are best served in the current, but improved, choice system. Our strongest leverage points for improvement are found within making adjustments to the controlled choice assignment process and in building the necessary infrastructure, such as cultural competency in all schools, to realize our vision.

As evidenced by this statement, the task force did not make a conclusive

recommendation about choice as the best mechanism for Framingham. However, the

team did reiterate Dr. Scott's point in the opening story of this paper. Our hope was to

direct energy away from a false debate about choice and toward improving the current

system. The last piece of the long-range plan is a series of action plans that are designed

to map out a five-year scope and sequence for the stakeholder conversations and action

steps needed to realize our vision.

Summary of Goals and Recommendations
Long Range Plan for Excellence and Equity in School Choice and Enrollment

1. **Create socioeconomic, racial, linguistic, and special education diversity in all schools**
2. **Develop structures and supports that embrace cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic, and learning differences as strengths**
3. **Provide an equitable range of instructional models that match students' strengths and needs**
4. **Create an equitable and needs-driven funding formula**
5. **Increase bilingual programming to better meet students' needs**
6. **Diversify the professional workforce to mirror students' diversity**
7. **Bolster community engagement efforts**

8. **Align new-school development plans to the long-range equity and enrollment vision**

Our commitment to diversity is listed at the top to communicate its value. This strategy again returns to the foundation of the 1996 plan, but it also aims to go even further with other structures necessary to create equitable schools. For example, every single action planning group, including the team focused on student-driven funding, identified some level of need for training regarding cultural competence/anti-racism training/high expectations for all students. The concept of balance is fleshed out within the goals of *increasing bilingual programming to better meet students' needs* and *aligning new-school development plans to the long-range equity and enrollment vision*—as efforts to create more balance in programs and schools.
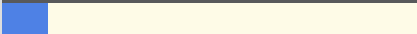
I share a few highlights of the multi-year map to *create socioeconomic, racial, linguistic, and special education diversity in all schools* as they show the level of detail the teams put into the work and as serve as an example of how the sequencing looks in other plans. First this plan recommends ways of immediately making the choice system more accessible by better advertising the choice enrollment window through bilingual press and by making more inclusion seats available in all schools. For 2016-2017 the plan maps out a public-relations campaign to educate the community about positive student learning outcomes related to diverse schools. By 2017 new guidelines are proposed for adding socioeconomic status as a variable in the choice process. Each plan maps these type of steps out through the year 2020.

On March 23, the task force presented its initial findings in the form of this long-range plan to Dr. Scott. It was an evening of discussion, trepidation, and celebration as seen in the following comments about the work to date:

- "I didn't see where this was all going at first but it came together beautifully."
- "I still feel a level of uncertainty- what is going to happen?"
- "Now we need an executive summary and to go out and reengage the other stakeholders who can operationalize these aspirations."
- "It is more than I could have hoped for."

In order to assess the viability of the plan I also surveyed the task force on their confidence levels in the plan.

Table 8: March Task Force Feedback on Long-Range Plan

The 2016 choice review will result in an effective long-range plan for the district to create an equitable and sustainable enrollment system. 5 = Strongly Agree 4 = Agree 3 = Neither Agree or Disagree 2 = Disagree 1 = Strongly Disagree		
Answer		%
5		11%
4		89%
3		0%
2		0%
1		0%
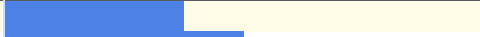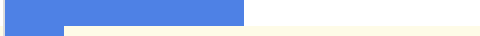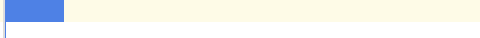
Overall comments were positive and in line with the following response, "I think the plan takes into account a wide variety of factors, as best as possible, that address short-term issues i.e. space as well as long-term factors i.e. growing population" (personal communication, March 2016). However, one person expressed concern that it is still unclear where this plan will take us.

Productive community-wide dialogue

As Dr. Scott had charged me to honor the process as much as the product, I also assessed the task forces' ability to model and create productive community-wide dialogue. Results mid-year were mixed. Task force members expressed different levels of

confidence in the process as a whole. In a mid-year check in some members expressed

appreciation for taking the time to build relationships and taking our time to really

understand the underlying issues. A couple of members expressed how they were unclear

on our overall purpose. One member put her feedback in historical context, "This feels

like groundhog day. It seems like we have already done this. It seems like we are circling

the same issues for all of these years. I am worried we are just going to reproduce another

plan that is not implemented" (January 19, 2016). I also assessed the task force's

perceptions of the process in March.

Table 9: March Task Force Feedback on Process

The 2016 choice review created a productive process for community-wide dialogue about school enrollment in Framingham. 5= Strongly Agree 4= Agree 3= Neither Agree or Disagree 2= Disagree 1= Strongly Disagree		
Answer		%
5		38%
4		50%
3		13%
2		0%
1		0%
Please briefly explain your rating:		
Text Response		
I found all of the exercises that were done early in the process although initially not well understood as to how they would move the project forward, helped everyone come to some conclusions about what needed to be done rather quickly.		
There was excellent outreach into the community and multiple interviews with people who have history with the schools. It is always nice to get more representation from lower socio-economic groups as well as recent arrivals.		
I think the communication was perfect. Mr. King took the time to reach out every group or voice in the district.		
I truly believe that bringing all parties to the table to discuss the issues can send a district in the right direction. Let's begin the "discussion."		
Not clear how involved the community is.		
The conversations were extremely interesting as the correct stakeholders were involved and covered many different perspectives. It would have been interesting how the conversation would have gone had there been a parent from the group that is from the very affluent section of our population who are often the very loud naysayers when the district approaches the racial/socio-economic divides.		
5: I strongly agree with this statement. I think this was a great process with representation from all different opinions. I very much enjoyed participating in this group.		
The framework is there. Determining the best way to measure whether the dialogue will be truly community-wide will be important as many members of our community are heard from less than others.		

The statement that "many members of our community are heard from less than others" stood out. We had initially designed the review to engage a diversity of voices. The task force was noted for being diverse in much of the process feedback; however, the group was still predominantly white and middle class. We slightly increased participation among bilingual parents, parents on the south side of the district, and parents of color in the second questionnaire. These results indicate that the next stages of the process will benefit from even more concerted efforts to ensure more diversity of voices and participation. Also in terms of process, comments from members of the senior leadership indicated that the plan can provide a concrete prototype to engage in deeper conversations with staff members for how to strengthen and operationalize the plan.

Toward the goal of modeling productive community-wide dialogue, the task force was able to engage in some difficult conversations. Specifically, members raised their concerns as to how racism, classism, and unequal power dynamics in town have negatively affected the success of our choice system in the past. In a November task force meeting in the context of defining our most adaptive problems a mother responded, "Okay Kevin, if you want to know what the real elephant in the room is, it is racism in this town" (personal communication, November 18, 2015). Then a joke came out of uncomfortable silence. Several comments were made in follow up about how the challenges are more about socioeconomic and language differences. I struggled as a facilitator in the moment. I did not want to subjugate the importance of race as I often see happen in conversations about equity (Singleton, 2014). But I also wanted to honor that these individuals were called to the room because they know their town. We continued to wrestle with the intersection of race, class, geography and power. In follow-up

conversations some members expressed appreciation and yet others expressed concern that we were not focusing enough on making recommendations. One member stated that we were still speaking in code. In March, a task force member stated a desire to push conversations deeper and for us to "be more uncomfortable" (personal communication, March 2016).

Another example of the task force trying to model productive conversations came in our January meeting. A parent expressed concern that we had not accounted for special education gaps in our initial problem identification. She also stated that parents needed to know that autistic students had to go to Wilson where most of the students don't speak English. A task force member with experience at Wilson, stated that this perception was not true. After several minutes of a slightly tense exchange, Dr. Tiano interjected how powerful it was that we were modeling how to work through these kind of misconceptions in our system. These two individuals later paired for action planning around the goal of creating more demographic diversity in schools. I have less evidence of my ability to transfer these small group conversations to the larger community.

The road map

My theory of action for this project concludes with the assumption that if I implemented all of the above strategies, **then the district will have the road map necessary to create an effective and politically sustainable enrollment system.** Toward assessing this assumption, I share the following survey results of four senior and executive leaders who were most involved in the process and will be most likely involved in implementation.

Table 10: Key Senior and Central Administrative Feedback on Plan and Process

The 2016 choice review will result in an effective long-range plan for the district to create an equitable and sustainable enrollment system. 5 = Strongly Agree 4 = Agree 3 = Neither Agree or Disagree 2 = Disagree 1 = Strongly Disagree		
Answer		%
5		25%
4		75%
3		0%
2		0%
1		0%

Please briefly explain your rating:
Text Response
I believe having the conversation and the documentation are very positive steps in the right direction, however so much around 'creating an equitable and sustainable enrollment system' depends on a belief system grounded in equity and access and having the fortitude to ensure consistency; that sometimes does happen, as we have seen in the past. Also, budget decisions get made that do not reflect this objective.
There will be an effective plan to move ahead with action steps designed to create equity. Full equitable enrollment may not be achievable without additional facilities.
It sets a good foundation with a lot of concrete actual items.
Agree...It brings the research, background and relevant topics to the forefront. The focus on the process is key as this task force should be viewed on the continuum of all the efforts past and future to deal with equity in our schools.

The challenges within our current system are clearly articulated. 5 = Strongly Agree 4 = Agree 3 = Neither Agree or Disagree 2 = Disagree 1 = Strongly Disagree		
Answer		%
5		33%
4		67%
3		0%
2		0%
1		0%
Total		100%

Please briefly explain your rating:
Text Response
These past few months there has been more consistent documentation and conversation that goes out to the public about the needs of our students and the challenges that we face. Though we have communicated through letters to the whole school community, there has been little conversation on this topic at administrative meetings or principals' meetings. Unfortunately it is when we are dealing with budget situations that this topic always comes up and solutions are few especially when there are no additional supports.
Although the challenges are articulated in the plan, it seems to me that a number of school personnel and community members still do not fully understand the challenges, or they get stuck on on one or two issues.
Clarity of the challenges is definitely there as you have framed the relationship between the basic problems.
Agree - still, when peel back the onion, layers will become layers...it's a process.

In relation to the question regarding the overall process, the comment that our task force

should be seen within a continuum of "all the efforts past and future to deal with equity in

our schools" is instructive for framing that the work of improving the enrollment process

is ongoing. Under the question of clarity of challenges, the comment that "community

members still do not fully understand the challenges, or they get stuck on on one or two issues" names the importance of the next stages of the community engagement process.

In summary of results, we managed through the registration crisis. With the new leadership team and tighter systems, the district should be able to avoid future registration backups. My time at PIC also highlighted the relationship between operational capacity and public value. For example, I left the role wondering what the purpose of choice was; it appeared more as a mechanism for conveniently placing students in schools with the most room. The TBE capacity challenge highlighted the need for, but also tension regarding bilingual programming.

Informational interviews and focus groups demonstrated the wide range of opinions about choice. The most significant result from the task force is a vision of an enrollment system that proposes to shape the system around embracing students' diversity as our greatest strength. The team created both short-term solutions for strategies that can be implemented now and long-term steps to build up to future decisions. Assessment of the process shows the promise of engaging multiple stakeholders but that there is now a need for more engagement with principals and teachers. I close with a complement from Dr. Scott, "The report is a strong indication of the journey. I was proud. You should be proud of turning this corner with a large number of concrete suggestions for a complicated issue…what you have created is a strategy for equity and for pulling challenges together in a way that helps create a strong culture" (personal communication, March 30, 2016).

Chapter Five: Strategic Analysis

How do we create a sustainable enrollment system that affords every child access to the highest-quality educational experience in Framingham? In this section, I use Moore's (1995, 2013) strategic triangle to identify the relative strengths and challenges of the district's current choice system and of my strategic project work toward this question. In analyzing the public value, it appears that over the last 20 years, Framingham has lost sight of the purpose of providing choice. Furthermore, there is simultaneously high affinity for and tension regarding the proposed public value proposition to create diverse, equitable, and balanced schools. An analysis of the operational capacity shows a need for expanded language programming. Inquiry regarding the domain of political legitimacy and support raises questions about disparate levels of power across town and the pros and cons of the participatory process used to manage the project.

Public Value

The domain of public value charges leaders to determine the collective purpose of an organization or initiative. In this section, I analyze the overall purpose of offering choice in Framingham. I then look at Woodrow Wilson Elementary School as a case study in the complexities of integration as a proposed public value proposition for the district. Lastly, I assess the strengths and challenges that the 2016 Long-Range Plan for Excellence and Equity in School Choice and Enrollment brings to the search for public value in Framingham.

Setting purpose. The most difficult aspect of managing the project was in trying to get clarity about the current goals of our enrollment and choice system. Such mission

drift has resulted in a lack of a clear public value proposition. Framingham's overall vision of excellence and equity sets a strong foundation. However, the specific goals of the current enrollment system were unclear as I entered the district. When asked what is the purpose of our current student choice system in Framingham, many high-level leaders responded with comments such as "it has morphed" and "we don't really have one" (personal communication, February 2016). It also appears that facility and transportation issues have been privileged and there has been less focus on the goal of creating demographic diversity. Before improving the system, we needed to know for what purpose.

One salient sub-question, then, is should Framingham recommit to the original goals of racial balance? A November 16, 2001 School Choice Review Report concluded that "the program, as presently managed, has not fulfilled the objectives of enrolling a student body at each school that is racially balanced" (p. 4). The measurement for success was defined by the original plan that *each elementary school is to be balanced within 10% of the district's overall minority/majority ratio* (2008 Task Force Report). A review of DESE profile data from 1996 to present shows that the district has not achieved this goal over a twenty-year period (MA DESE District Profiles, retrieved February 2016). While the higher purpose of creating more diverse environments became an essential element of our long-range plan, the task force struggled to define specific targets and metrics. I realize that there are serious legal questions in this domain that need to be vetted. But we struggled philosophically too. Capping the percentage of minority students seemed to perpetuate a notion that white-middle class students are the enrollment commodity for schools. However, leaving goals undefined would ensure a lack of

accountability. Before I expand upon the task force's search for a nuanced proposition, I look at one school as illustrative of the challenges of framing school diversity goals.

Woodrow Wilson as a case in the complexity of the search for public value.
Woodrow Wilson Elementary School provides an example of the strengths and challenges of the current choice system. It also serves as a bridge to the proposed public value proposition of diverse, equitable, and balanced schools. With approximately 80% Brazilian students and 85% of students qualifying for Free and Reduced Lunch, Wilson is a diverse school, depending upon how diversity is defined. Wilson recently became an International Baccalaureate (IB) school. Early in his tenure, Dr. Scott placed a proven principal and a strong local and bilingual assistant principal at the school. Most parents at the school expressed overall very high rates of satisfaction and named IB, bilingual, and bicultural aspects as most valued.

Meanwhile, a couple of Wilson parents shared concerns with me that they did not actually have choice because they were assigned based on language needs. The school is also located near the Framingham Women's Prison and a chemical plant. Very few parents from the north end of town choose Wilson. I am impressed with instruction but observed less instructional rigor at Wilson than at some of the higher-performing schools on the north side of the district. Overall, student academic performance and growth rates in ELA are increasing. However, as I look at stagnant math growth in 2015 and the overall correlation between high-poverty schools and lower subgroup performance in both national research and our internal studies, it is important to ask the role that an enrollment system can play in further improving outcomes. Related to the public value proposition, should Wilson be more integrated?

In an undated memo, a former Framingham superintendent wrote to his senior staff about the perennial challenge of Wilson being segregated. He noted that if the district was going to get parents from the north to enroll there, the instructional model at the school would have to be very compelling (personal communication, n.d.). At the early stages in the project, I agreed with this assessment of the need to integrate Wilson. Now, I think the more apt question is how to continue to improve Wilson while at the same time replicating its level of cultural competence and bilingual support in other schools. This assertion is not just a philosophical one but also in response to the reality that, even if it were the right move to have a primarily Brazilian school, changing demographics necessitate expansion of Portuguese language programming.

A revised proposition: diverse, equitable, and balanced. The task force's new vision for the enrollment system aims to return the district to the foundation of the 1996 Long-Range Voluntary Racial Balance and Educational Equity Plan but now with a revised, and more nuanced, public value proposition. As we pushed the question as to what we want to accomplish, a re-commitment to the goals of demographic diversity arose. For example, the long-range vision asserts, *imagine all students are in the best place to meet their needs and that we have socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, language, and special education diversity in our schools.* We also made a commitment to the other aspects of infrastructure necessary to create equitable settings. Action plans such as *developing structures and support that embrace cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic and learning differences as strengths* and *diversify the workforce to mirror students' diversity* help to move beyond desegregation goals and push into the benefits of student and staff diversity and equitable infrastructure and outcomes as discussed in the RKA of

83

this paper (Teitel, 2016). The task force action plan to *increase bilingual programming to better meet students' needs* and *align new-school plans to the long-range enrollment vision* provides direction toward the notion of balancing programs and diversity goals as discussed by Gándara and Aldana (2014).

There is strength and liability in this broader set of goals. The long-range plan pushes beyond questions of enrollment because after the task force solidified on such a powerful vision, they responded to the question, now what would it take to realize this vision? Part of the answer was directly related to school assignment, namely a commitment to student diversity, but part of the answer was that other initiatives were needed. Assuming that my diagnosis that the current enrollment system suffers from mission drift is correct, the district may still struggle to keep the focus on such a broad public-value proposition tight. Success, in large part, will depend on the operational capacity to close the gap between the espoused goals and our reality.

Operational Capacity

The domain of operational capacity provides public leaders the opportunity to legitimize and actualize the public value proposition. Here, value is used to frame investment and commitment. First, I explore how the Parent Information Center (PIC) and Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) situations demonstrate system-wide strengths as well as technical and adaptive gaps. Second, I explore the merits of a working definition of equitable choice as distinct from controlled choice. Lastly, I look at the need for more student-focused planning in general and more Portuguese-language programming in particular.

Parent Information Center. In terms of strengths, PIC is structured in line with the recommendations of Orfield and Frankenberg (2013) to provide families with a one-stop and equitable experience in navigating the choice process. Furthermore, the language assessment process is designed to ensure that students are placed in the most appropriate language program. However, these systems ended up most disadvantaging students who were new to the country and learning English as a second language when they had to wait weeks for registration appointments. Why did these systems fall apart at the beginning of the year? There were multiple mitigating circumstances: the office moved over the summer, there was a three-percent increase in students, and the PIC director unexpectedly resigned the week before school started. Several senior leaders and central directors were quick to blame the previous director for the debacle. However, I quickly became empathetic when I heard complaints about how she could not produce solid student enrollment numbers and I was preparing for a September school committee presentation. I could not get an accurate report from our database. I turned to three departments to verify how to pull the numbers and received three different answers. Furthermore, PIC staff reported that though this year's backup on registrations was the worst in memory, it was not uncommon for new students to experience delays in registration at the beginning of the year.

The PIC situation highlights a few system-wide challenges: 1) systems, departments, and roles are segmented; 2) the lack of clarity with regard to the public value proposition erodes PIC's perceived value; and 3) the district is still catching up to Dr. Scott's vision of excellence and equity. In an August senior leadership retreat, I shared how I noticed a pattern that people described their own department as much

stronger than others' departments. Siloes are not uncommon in organizations but they still present major liabilities. While the special education departments and bilingual education departments stepped in graciously to help me manage the PIC crisis, other offices were reluctant to even change communication protocols to speed up processing.[14] Furthermore, the union cease and desist letter I received in September highlighted not only a tendency but an assumption that work should be segmented.

The intersection between the notion of creating public value and operational capacity is seen in my diagnosis that Framingham's purpose in offering choice was unclear. Lack of clarity for what choice offers the district diminished the importance of the PIC office. I want to make sure that such a critique does not oversimplify the work that Dr. Scott has already done to begin to rectify the above challenges. He inherited huge operational and educational gaps. He rightfully focused first and foremost on improving classroom instruction. My assignment on choice was in part designed, even before the PIC crisis, to address the need to revamp the office. While Dr. Scott is pushing the district to new levels of performance there is still a gap in the intersection of public value and operational capacity. Some of the work of closing this operational gap may just take more time for systems to catch up to the bold direction.

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[14] Each department and school provided PIC a list of the people that they wanted included in e-mails and hard copy files. For some, this list included the principal and secretary; for others, it included a handful of roles. This practice meant that PIC registrants spent as much time sending follow-up e-mails and dispersing copies of files as they did with registration appointments. When we communicated that we were streamlining these practices to save time, several offices complained. A couple of offices insisted that they could not check the district database if a parent contacted them before they received an e-mail regarding a new student.

Sustainability. The project also raises questions of sustainability. In terms of the project, Dr. Scott, Dr. Tiano, and I have begun transitioning the management of the long-range plan to the new Executive Director of FACE. She is a talented leader who is deeply connected to the community so she will lead the next stages well. The plan is designed, in part, to align multiple departments around the vision of embracing student diversity as our greatest strength. Actualizing that vision will require a new level of commitment across departments and between departments and schools. Directors and principals express a passion for the district but also deep initiative fatigue. Operationalizing the plan requires a commitment on the part of the district to slow down new initiatives. The district needs to develop the operational capacity necessary to realize the benefits of the enrollment proposition and the other important work already on the table.

The need for more bilingual programming. Framingham offers a robust range of language programs. The two-way Spanish program at Barbieri serves as an example of best practices from the research base. These strengths are seen in terms of the twin goals of demographic balance and instructional innovation within its magnet-type school choice offering and the benefits of bilingual language programming (Gándara and Aldana, 2014; Seigel-Hawley and Frankenberg, 2012). Barbieri is one of the few schools beating Framingham's current odds. It is the only school on the south side of town with a Level 2 DESE accountability status rating and only one of two schools with a Level 2 status and a FRL above 60%. Barbieri and Woodrow Wilson were also noted by multiple teachers and parents for their ability to provide a bicultural and culturally embracing environment. In terms of additional strengths in this area, the district's focus on English language coaching and sheltered English instruction training should allow for more

language programming capacity across all schools in the district. However, the most immediate priority for improvement of the current enrollment system is to open a second TBE-Portuguese program and our inability to open one fast enough to meet rising demand points to system gaps.

Operational liabilities in this regard include the need for more solid and student-specific projection data. When I pitched the idea of opening a second TBE-Portuguese strand in November, I did not have any solid projection numbers. This fact, combined with the difficulties of mid-year budget adjustments and stakeholder concerns described in the political legitimacy and support section of this chapter, made it very difficult to justify a second program.

The need for better student enrollment data presents a combination of technical and adaptive issues. The New England School Development Council (NESDEC) historically runs the district's student projections and had recently predicted the district's enrollment would level off beginning in 2016. In a December meeting with a NESDEC representative and several senior leaders and department heads, I shared concerns that the council's projections were off target. We had already enrolled more students midyear than they predicted we would have the next year. The representative responded that he had not received accurate reports over the years, saying "garbage in, garbage out" (personal communication). However, we have also challenged their cultural assumptions about predicting growth based on birth rates and construction projects without better accounting for immigration. We have also asked them to do a more in-depth demographic study. Language program projections are as important as total enrollment projections. If I

had been able to produce a clearer projection of bilingual students in November, I might have been able to make a better case for the addition of the TBE strand.

Before shifting to the political aspects of the challenge of expanding bilingual programming, I look at my own leadership from the operational lens. I went into a November 15 senior leadership meeting with every intention of clearly advocating to build a second TBE strand. The meeting was the first time in the residency that I did not get the senior leadership support for a proposal. I made several tactical errors. First, I had involved the senior leadership team in the research around the proposal but had not previewed my actual recommendation with key individuals. Second, despite being clear myself that TBE was the better option, I received feedback, framed as a compliment from one senior leader, that my actual pitch came across as neutral. She described how she appreciated that I objectively described the pros and cons of building a second TBE strand or taking advantage of the opportunity to have all schools step up their language capacity. These tactical errors have implications for myself as a leader and I share them here as a piece of why the need for more bilingual programming still stands.

Controlled choice, convenient choice, or equitable choice. Lastly, in terms of operational capacity, I look at the notion of controlled choice. Orfield and Frankenberg (2013) describe controlled choice, originating in Cambridge, MA, as a method of school choice that allows districts to overall honor parent preferences while maintaining the control mechanisms to balance student demographics in relation to the demographics of communities. Framingham describes its system as controlled choice. However, the district does not currently have any control mechanisms for creating demographic balance beyond program placement. In Framingham, choice too can be a bit of a

89

misnomer. The district has moved the needle on offering more choice to special

education and students learning English as a second language by building more inclusion

programming. But I worry most about students who register after the April window.

Many do not have choice. They are either assigned by their home boundary or more often

wherever there is room. This gives PIC *controlled choice* to balance classroom size. A

benefit is that Framingham keeps relatively low class sizes. However, this definition of

controlled choice is far from an equity or diversity mechanism.

Political Legitimacy and Support

The 2016 Long-Range Plan for Excellence and Equity in School Choice and

Enrollment, at its best provides a prototype for a new public value proposition for the

enrollment system and a description of the infrastructure necessary to actualize it. Now

the question becomes, how do we make such a broad statement as *imagine the power of a*

school system that embraces student diversity as its greatest strength into a collectively

established purpose (Moore, 1995). The vision statement is an initial step toward that

end. Two particular aspects of this political work are most salient to Framingham's

continued quest. First, there is both resonance and tension with regard to the value of

diversity. For example, difficulties in expanding language programming punctuate

underlying politics of race, class, and immigration in town. Second, the participatory

approach used throughout this strategic project provides advantages to the district but

also creates a challenge for how to bind the dichotomous debate about choice.

Community values: diversity, equity, and power. I have used the concept of

public value as somewhat synonymous with purpose and mission. The term value also

transcends into the actual values with which a leader seeks to align. Moore frames such

work in both philosophical and political terms, "The first challenge of constructing a public value account is to explore the philosophical basis for the values encoded in a policy mandate or an organizational mission…In democratic societies, getting clarity about the values to be produced by and embodied in a public agency is always a political as well as a philosophical task" (2013, pp. 90-91). The enrollment plan provides the district the opportunity to operationalize the community's highest values. There is both resonance and tension in Framingham over the concept of embracing diversity as strength. Framingham in this respect faces a quintessential adaptive issue. There is a gap in the espoused values of embracing diversity and equity and the reality of opportunity gaps and segregation patterns.

On one hand, when asked, *what do you value most about Framingham,* the majority of respondents in both informational interviews and a community-wide survey stated *diversity* with resounding consistency. I struggled to reconcile this affinity for diversity with xenophobic comments and segregated patterns across racial, socioeconomic, and linguistic lines. Xenophobic comments ranged from multimedia propaganda aimed at discouraging Brazilians from moving to Framingham on the part of two blatant white supremacists on Town Meeting, to subtler comments about *these kids*. A member of a town committee ranted in a January meeting about how we were wasting money on bilingual programs and added that these programs explain why we are getting so many kids who don't speak English (personal communication, January 27, 2016). Dr. Scott was clear in his response, "We are a nation of immigrants," and is working to educate stakeholders on the benefits of our bilingual approach. Nonetheless, I worry that the energy that administrators seem to spend fighting off comments about *these kids* taxes

efforts such as expanding TBE programming. We also can't expand bilingual programs if we can't pass a budget.

Part of the challenge of adding bilingual programming can be seen in this political context. Several comments that Brophy was the most coveted school in the choice process until the TBE Spanish program was moved there added to speculation that schools were reluctant to open TBE programming based on fears that bilingual students would lower test scores and the perception of their school. I did not find any direct evidence of this concern, but I did observe different degrees of pushing back on the bilingual office and PIC when bilingual students were placed at schools. Most of this was phrased as advocating for kids but it came across to some central staff as avoiding *these kids*. I did not explore this tension point sufficiently enough to draw conclusions, but it would feel out of integrity not to raise the need to do so in future work, in the quest to embrace diversity as our greatest strength.

The task force described an imbalance of power in town that breaks down across geographic, socioeconomic, racial, and language lines. Such imbalance seems to have made instituting more equitable reforms difficult. This adaptive problem was cited in our problem analysis work as the reason that many previous reforms were not implemented. A former school committee member admitted to me that, although it was incredibly unfortunate, it was just easier to move bilingual programs than any other programs because there was less political resistance. As I pored over demographic maps from the 1970s and looked at the relationship between poverty rates and school closure locations (positive) and the relationship between population density and school closures (negative) I became all the more concerned about the historical opportunity gaps (see Appendix B).

These examples left me with questions about how to set up future plans for success far beyond the current administration. I see how Dr. Scott is judiciously altering the power relationships in town. For example, even while some town politicians are skeptical of bilingual programs, he has nurtured state legislative funding specifically for language programs. This new political context creates the opportunity to improve the current choice system to be more equitable but also the opportunity to create the long-term vision for the enrollment system we want, not just the one we have. However, even in the best of political situations, my job was to kick off a multi-year process on a topic with a sometimes tense past. How do I set things up to be politically sustainable when the work has just begun? The next stage requires a delicate follow-up act that will require intense focus on improving the current choice system while being open to future enrollment mechanisms.

Bounding participatory leadership. The project demonstrates the power of engaging diverse stakeholders in problem solving; questions of who participates, who does not, and how to sequence stakeholder engagement; and a dilemma with regard to open-ended community questions.

The task force was designed on a conceptual level to serve as a holding environment (Heifetz et al., 2009) for the larger community-wide conversation. The project demonstrates the benefits of engaging diverse stakeholders (Mapp and Kutner, 2013; Noguera, 2008) in collective problem solving. As a small group, the task force was also able to effectively use the cultural analysis tool as a method to engage in meaningful conversations about our most difficult challenges, namely issues of race, class, and power dynamics. A task force member told me, "This is the first time on a committee that we

have been able to have this level of open and honest conversation" (Parent, personal communication, March 9, 2016). The cultural analysis tool also demonstrated the benefit of clear protocols within a constructive process.

We saw some dividends of engaging the larger community in the choice conversation through a participatory engagement approach. Multiple stakeholders, including school committee members, expressed new levels of understanding of the complexities and inequities within the current system. We have also secured multiple ideas and offers to improve the system from the engagement structures themselves. For example, a parent recently contacted me and asked if she could do further cartographic studies for us as part of her graduate work in information systems. She is now writing a proposal to use the choice project maps to run demographic projections by home-district boundary. Most of all, there are 14 diverse and politically connected individuals, who served on the task force, that are ready to fight for our new vision of embracing student diversity as our greatest strength.

I struggled in the early stages of the project to appropriately bound the participatory approach used for the project, both in terms of the line of questioning and with participation. My leadership of this work, like all leadership approaches, was built upon a series of assumptions. My initial theory of action could be simplified as: *if we just have a conversation about our most adaptive challenges related to choice, then a miracle will happen.* I anchored much of the first half of my project work on Heifetz et al.'s (2009) point that the most common fatal mistake of those exercising leadership is to treat an adaptive problem as a technical one. In support of the point, I observed a pattern that previous task force reviews focused too much on the technical details of choice. While

94

there was no miracle, I did find leverage in addressing both the day-to-day operational and adaptive aspects of the work.

The project also raised questions about who participates, who doesn't, and how to sequence stakeholder involvement. For example, I focused on the principal team and central director team early on in the project. In my first round of informational interviews I realized that as a former principal and central office leader I was too comfortable engaging these teams and deprioritized community engagement. I purposefully pivoted. It also became important for a short period of intense work by the task force to close ranks and flesh out our thinking as a small group. This leaves future engagement of the principals, central directors, and teachers as a critical next step.

The project also leaves a dilemma as to how to put political capital into improving the system while the long-term commitment to choice is unknown. By taking a participatory and open-ended approach, we inspired creative thinking. We have also raised the expectations in the community for providing input on the best means of configuring our enrollment system. We have not resolved the split in town and within the district over preferences for neighborhood versus choice systems. The task force reinforced Dr. Scott's message that until we have high-quality schools within close proximity to all of our students, choice is the best enrollment mechanism. As we build more schools on the south side there could be an actual possibility of meeting this high-quality and proximate threshold. These schools are realistically five to ten years away. The district will need to simultaneously harness political capital to institute immediate equitable reforms within the choice system while continuing to engage the community in the best means of designing future schools.

In conclusion to this analysis, I propose that, at this point in its history, the district strayed from the original reasons for offering choice. In response, we used the choice review to reset our purpose. In so doing, we drew from the 1996 Voluntary Racial Balance and Educational Equity Plan but developed a revised and more nuanced vision—to create diverse, equitable, and balanced schools. I explore the implications for legitimizing and operationalizing such a public value proposition in the next chapter. Ultimately, Framingham has the opportunity to embrace diversity as strength by aligning public value, operational capacity, and political legitimacy and support.

Chapter Six: Implications for Self, Site, and Sector

I positioned this paper as a case study to help convey how the rich context of people and places frames leadership challenges and opportunities. Cases also raise questions and lessons that are applicable to other settings. Here I share the implications of this project for myself as a leader, for Framingham, and for the sector as a whole.

Implications for Self

I was a competitive triathlete in college and still race a few times each summer. Endurance sports, in general, and the triathlon, in particular, serve as metaphors for how I view life. There is an expression in triathlons to *race your strengths and train your weaknesses*. I use this subsection to highlight project strengths as they relate to key implications for myself as a leader. I also explore some of my challenges in service of developing future leadership goals.

Racing strengths. In terms of relative strengths, the project highlights two key factors for utilizing a participatory-leadership approach: build trust and develop a strong authorizing environment. Like a training plan, they are relatively simple in concept but can be difficult to practice.

Building trust

I see organizational culture as the fuel that drives organizational success and the elements of relational trust (Bryk and Schneider, 2002) as the essential ingredients of that fuel. This case demonstrates the importance of establishing trust, as an individual and among teams, particularly when engaging multiple stakeholders in adaptive work. I aimed to use the residency as a learning experience for how to enter an organization and add value in a relatively short period of time. My previous district experience was in an

environment where I had the benefit of fourteen years of relationships and an established reputation. Bryk and Schneider highlight four components of relational trust that are strongly associated with student achievement gains in schools: respect, personal regard, competency, and integrity. I see now how I was able to draw on these essential variables within my entry, service as PIC director, and work with the task force.

Relationships are essential for education and leadership to be effective. I found that taking the time to strategically enter the district provided me the opportunity to connect with multiple people in a way that developed respect and personal regard relatively quickly. As I entered the district in June, I had the opportunity to visit every school and conduct informational interviews with the principal and central administrative teams. I focused these meetings on learning about individuals' own experiences in joining the district, what they loved about Framingham, and what they would most like to improve. I tried to make these conversations as informal as possible, sometimes walking with principals through classrooms and having brief discussions in the hall, and sometimes sitting with leaders for extended time as they shared their work.

I did not focus narrowly on choice but this set of informational interviews provided key context for how to position the choice work. For example, concerns about equity gaps across schools and within schools helped to shift our focus from choice to the larger enrollment system questions. The informational interviews also served as an early opportunity to build critical relationships. There were times when the work pace picked up later in the school year when I wondered if I should have been more strategic in using this early time more explicitly for the choice review. However, I realize that the time spent scanning the overall environment and listening to many of the key district players

provided me some of the relational capital necessary to ask more provocative questions, such as those related to inequitable patterns across town, later in the review.

I have always engaged in a few informational interviews when entering a new role. However, my entry plan in Framingham was structured as a listening tour and I reached fifty individuals early in my tenure. I also shared the patterns I was observing in a formal memo and presentation to Dr. Scott and the senior leadership team. This step of sharing my observations in a more formal way was new for me. I previously used entry plans just for the benefit of my own learning. It helped set up a cycle of inquiry that I used throughout my work with other stakeholders, the task force, and the larger community: listen, mirror back what I heard, and continue to adjust future questions based on feedback. I will carry this inquiry approach to developing context and trust as I move into my next leadership role.

Serving as the interim director of PIC provided an opportunity to earn trust in other ways. Here Bryk and Schneider's framing of the importance of competency and integrity are helpful. By focusing on the immediate task of getting students into schools, I was able to demonstrate to Dr. Scott, the principal team, the school committee, and the larger community, that I was up for challenging tasks and would above all focus on students' needs. Though my day-to-day management was comprised of a realistic combination of strong and weak decisions, my willingness to wade into the job at hand and our success in decreasing wait times provided me with a reservoir of trust that I might not otherwise have found so quickly.

I have thus far drawn upon the variables of respect, personal regard, competence, and integrity in discussing ways that I built trust as a leader. However, the implications

for building relational trust go beyond the individual level; in fact, Bryk and Schneider's research focuses on collective relationships in schools. Relatedly, the project confirms the importance of building relational trust within teams and organizations, particularly with a participatory approach that aims to address fundamental power issues of race and class. The time that we spent with the task force in building community and discussing values to guide our work built the holding environment (Heifetz et al., 2009) necessary to begin to analyze the more adaptive issues of power and equity in play. I will continue to prioritize building culture through building relational trust, even when that means that I need to go slow to go fast.

Developing a strong authorizing environment

These efforts to build relational trust in general, and my service as interim director of PIC, in particular, provided me informal authority to engage in the larger enrollment review. I also learned about how to judiciously draw upon the power of formal authority.

The role of special assistant to the superintendent provided me a strong authorizing environment. I aimed for my residency to be a student-teaching-like experience for the superintendency. I realize that similar to student teaching, my leadership work was facilitated by Dr. Scott's authority. Furthermore, as an aspiring superintendent, it is important to note the power of Dr. Scott creating the task force as a superintendent's charge. A school committee task force would have been chaired by an elected official with considerably less latitude. Both my and the task force positioning under the superintendent provided credibility to the process and confidence for the team and community that our recommendations would matter.

Clearly, superintendent power is far from absolute. I tried not to take my access and leadership authorization for granted. When I was a principal, some teachers thought of my office as the magical place where, if they just got a kid into the room, their discipline problems would melt away. I came to realize that there was a magical air to the principal's office but only if it was used sparingly. As I watched directors and principals lob problems at Dr. Scott that really were their problems to solve, I realized that I, too, carried a false assumption that if I just brought a problem to the boss, my duty was done. A case in point was my first attempt to get the TBE Portuguese strand off the ground. I came to adopt a more servant-leadership philosophy and tried to mentor other leaders into taking ownership for more fully vetting problems and solutions before bringing them forward.

Dr. Tiano further authorized my leadership with mentoring and active participation on the task force. I also made sure to assert my own authority when needed, diving into crisis management situations, presenting directly to the school committee, and through general service on the senior leadership team. Again drawing from my service at PIC, when I presented to the school committee in September, I received word that they got the message they needed: the situation was under control. I sensed that this gave me authority in their eyes to manage the choice work, which allowed me to push an adaptive and potentially risky participatory process.

In sum, I was able to draw upon my personal strengths in building trust and from a strong authorizing environment. I aim to hold on to these lessons in my future. These strengths worked in tandem to provide the fuel and the power to overcome several

obstacles in the project. On that note, I turn to the implications for my learning found within some of the most salient challenges.

Training for challenges. I know that I get stronger by pushing my limits. The residency, in general, and facilitating the choice review, in particular, allowed me to test some of my leadership limits and set new learning goals. I look here at the learning that came from the most prominent challenges within the project: 1) maintaining clarity of purpose, 2) bounding complexity, 3) pacing high-stakes work, and 4) orchestrating meaningful conversations about race, class, power, and equity.

Mixed results on clarity of purpose

I find that running up a mountain, while physically exhausting, is relaxing because the goal is clear. I am proud to have steered the choice review in a way that pushed questions of the higher values and purpose we seek. A veteran central administrator came up to me the morning after we presented the initial long-range plan, "It was truly remarkable that we were able to focus on the larger system instead of this becoming another conversation that goes in circles about classroom space challenges" (personal communication, March 24, 2016). Ironically, a facilitation weakness was in not being clear around purpose during the early stages of the work. One task force member stated, "I found that all of the exercises that were done early in the process though were not initially well understood as to how they would move the project forward helped everyone come to some conclusions about what needed to be done rather quickly" (personal communication, March 2016). I take this comment as confirmation of both strength and liability. I steered the conversation in a unique and purposefully adaptive manner. However, early in the work, I was unclear as to how all the pieces were going to

fit together. For a time, I hid behind abstraction. Through using the cultural analysis tool, I learned the benefit of using tighter and structured protocols to scaffold constructivist activities such as visioning.

Binding complex work

I am comfortable with ambiguity. It is a strength and a liability. I see it as flexibility, which I believe to be currency in leadership. However, the project also taught me the importance of bounding complex work. Heifetz et al. (2009) describe how the sign of becoming an adult is saying a hard no at least once a day. I didn't say no enough in the project. My early question of what is working and what can be improved in the choice system is indicative of this overly wide angle. The tighter the problem of practice became, the tighter the outcomes. But this focus came late in the game. Relatedly, while I believe heart and soul in the benefits of a participatory approach, I now see how it needs to be bound and managed with a tighter political focus. In fact, Dr. Scott's coaching around community updates reinforced that the more complex the issue, the more important clear and simple language is with the public. Lastly, my initial failure to get the second TBE Portuguese strand started in November illustrates the importance of clear and succinct proposals.

Pacing the work

Endurance sports are as much about pacing as they are about skill. I am definitely a long-distance athlete and not a sprinter. As I previously described, I believe in the importance of building relational trust which sometimes requires a go slow to go fast approach. My major successes at this point in my career took years to accomplish. I founded Explore Elementary in 2006. We developed a strong staff culture but showed

103

weak student performance gains in the first year. Over time, we were able to build upon the foundation and significantly improve outcomes. The school was bestowed the Colorado Commissioner's Choice Award for Getting Results in 2011. I came into the residency with trepidation about how to create value in an organization in less than ten months.

When Dr. Scott told me in August that he needed me to prioritize the process and develop a long-term roadmap, I by no means disagreed with the importance of these tasks. However, I also privately felt that anything that could be framed as a plan to plan would be a leadership failure. I did not share that concern until I wrote this paper. I also audaciously thought I could race through a community-engagement process fast enough to somehow *solve* the choice problem, even though I was not certain what that problem even was. I realize now that this audacity cost me a level of discipline and efficiency.

Throughout the project, I constantly asked myself how to move the work faster. However, having heard that at least one superintendent may have lost their job over the debate about choice in Framingham, I was particularly cognizant of the political charge around the topic. Dr. Scott served as sage counsel on pacing. For example, in a December task force meeting, he observed that I moved past problem identification too quickly and tried to do a critical visioning exercise in 20 minutes. He counseled that skipping key steps in such a collective problem-solving process results in an organization having to repeat that work at a later, potentially more painful, time.

There were other areas where I could have simply pushed faster. I facilitated an October meeting with principals asking how we should define equity for the choice review. I remember a key moment as the debate escalated about the range of

104

demographics across schools. I had the opportunity as a facilitator to push for a tighter definition of equity among the group and to dive into the complex relationship between school characteristics and student performance. I held back, justifying that it was a stressful time of the school year and that I would have plenty of other opportunities. Alas, the year got away and I never directly returned to the conversation, outside of the task force. I learned: push the pace when I can. This anecdote also serves as a helpful transition to share leadership goals.

Immunity to Change. One area in which I seek to push my personal limits is framed within Kegan and Lahey's Immunity to Change (ITC) framework (2009). The model provides a helpful structure for a leader to establish a goal and to identify the hidden loyalties and assumptions that hold back effective action. My ITC goal for the residency was ***to orchestrate productive conflict to drive equity.*** I find that while I love actual debates where the structures and expectations for disagreement are expected, I still struggle with pushing into more intense impromptu conflict. Through the ITC model, I came to realize that I operate with a hidden assumption that if I displease people with whom I respect, particularly authority figures, I will lose my sense of value. Stacking my capstone committee with authority figures whom I respect, practicing taking more risks in sharing critical feedback, and engaging in more open debate in meetings provided me the growth opportunities to begin to dispel some of my ITC assumptions. However, I see that orchestrating productive conflict is an important area to push the envelope as an aspiring superintendent who needs to learn how to manage a politically elected board.

I also see that I most hedge my bets when it comes to engaging in conversations about race, class, and power for fears of saying things that might make people

uncomfortable or be construed as racist or classist. I teed up conversations about race and class but held back from pushing for a tighter definition of equity and diversity. This leaves some remaining work for the district. I also realize there is a lot of privilege to unpack in this tendency and that it is important leadership work to do if I am going to serve diverse communities well. My next ITC goal is to facilitate meaningful conversations about race, identity, and power that drive equity.

As the residency race comes to a close, where do these leadership lessons put me? In terms of clarity of purpose and binding complex work, my next steps are to frame goals and work at the right level of abstraction, ask more detailed questions early in the development of future projects, and be more succinct and direct in my communication. In terms of pacing high-stakes work and facilitating meaningful conversations that drive equity, as an athlete I believe in a growth mindset and the power of practice. I also commit to continuing to race what is potentially my greatest personal public value: the ability to develop strong culture and authority by building relational trust.

Implications for Site

What would it take for Framingham to embrace student diversity as its greatest strength? I focus my implications for Framingham on recommendations for building public value, operational capacity, and political legitimacy and support for a more equitable and sustainable enrollment system. Under each domain, I highlight extensions of the long-range plan and recommendations for the next stages in the process. I also use this section to recommend areas for future inquiry.

Public value. The task force, at its best, has laid down a new public value proposition. What are the next steps in aligning the district around a tighter public value proposition for the enrollment system?

Framing the work

The task force vision returns the district to the origins of the 1996 Racial Balance and Equity Plan. However, I did not find justification for arbitrary racial balance quotas within my RKA and conversations with district staff and parents. I heard a longing for more nuanced goals of creating more diverse, equitable, and balanced environments and for finding ways to embrace students' diversity as a strength. This framing is at a high level of abstraction, however it is tighter than when the choice review began. The most immediate implication is to use the proposition as the starting point for the next stages of the work.

Continued engagement

Banking off the strengths of the participatory approach, the long-range plan can be presented as a prototype. It is designed to be a living and breathing document and is 95% ready for larger public consumption. This provides an opportunity to steer back to the principal and administrative groups and engage them in design thinking about how to operationalize the vision and plans. These sessions are scheduled for April. The district should be ready for a workshop with the school committee by May and larger workshops with community stakeholders by June. As the circle of engagement expands out again, it is important to frame the proposition with conviction but also to continue to listen for ideas for improvement. This participatory cycle will increase political legitimacy and clarify the operational capacity to carry the plans forward.

Providing instructional choices

Unique instructional choices provide the opportunity to personalize learning and break down segregation patterns. I don't hear a high level of system-wide commitment to providing unique choices that I would otherwise expect in a choice system. This gap warrants further analysis. The 1996 plan focused choices on loose themes such as literacy and community-based schools. We have learned a lot in 20 years as a profession about the difference between loose themes and more research-based instructional models.

There are strong anchors for building on the strengths of instructional models. As shown in the second semester questionnaire, over one third of parents reported that they chose their child's elementary school in Framingham based on the instructional model or theme. I also heard excitement about the prospect of instructional autonomy with two principals who are participating in a Center for Collaborative Education (CCE) design process. I recommend accelerating the CCE work to include more schools. Brophy, Fuller, and McCarthy could especially benefit from this work as they have struggled the most to develop identities that attract more students.

Operational capacity. PIC is now on track. Current operational capacity liabilities include the difficulty of getting good enrollment projections and relatedly, the need for setting a second TBE-Portuguese strand up for success. However, just saying that there is a need is clearly insufficient. Here operational capacity and political dynamics are intertwined. For example, there is a tension in the system about placement of new students and how to best serve students who are learning English as a second language. This tension is worth further exploration. *Do all teachers and principals see themselves as English language development teachers? In what ways do principal fears*

108

that they do not have the capacity to serve more students learning English as a second language need to be honored with more resources and in what ways do these fears point to a belief gap?

Secondly, I want to use this opportunity to highlight the task force recommendation that we create new policies for creating diverse environments. Specifically, the district has the opportunity to create more equitable choice. Equitable choice mechanisms include providing preference to families living in poverty and holding more seats for Sheltered English Instruction (SEI). I would also like to offer my own recommendation to reserve seats for students who move into town after the early enrollment window and to extend choice for new families throughout the school year.

Political legitimacy and support. In terms of building legitimacy, I map out my political recommendations and frame a lingering question about choice versus neighborhood schools in Framingham. I close with implications of the participatory and big-tent approaches.

I realize that the aforementioned policy changes would require tremendous political capital. A public relations campaign that articulates the benefits of diverse environments for all students is needed. The school committee should be in a reasonable place to support equitable-choice-related policy reforms by January 2017, after Town Meeting and the national election. I also recommend that the district continue to show demographic maps in public presentations. There has been frequent and considerable surprise, even among very active townspeople, in seeing the distribution of schools versus population and poverty patterns across town. Informing people of the current

reality through such visuals can take some of the dichotomous debate down a notch and build the political capital to make the system fairer.

The prospect of building up to two new schools on the south side of town also changes the conversation about choice. Until these pieces are known, it is difficult to facilitate a realistic decision about the benefits of neighborhood versus choice models. I fully support Dr. Scott's assertion that until and unless Framingham can ensure a high-quality school in every neighborhood, controlled choice should remain. However, even if it is five to ten years out, for the first time in thirty years, this possibility is on the horizon. The short-term challenge is to present these possibilities without overpromising or taking the wind out of the political capital necessary to make equitable reforms.

Though not without its own liabilities, this case study demonstrates benefits of a participatory-leadership approach within the district, particularly given the town's high expectations for involvement. In terms of the question of who participates, there are two critical implications. First, the political legitimacy of the long-range plan will now depend on our ability to engage principals, staff, and other stakeholders in providing feedback on specific action plans and owning the larger vision. Second, additional efforts should be made to ensure that stakeholders who fully mirror the diversity of the community are included in critical decisions in the district.

In terms of unfinished work, I would also like to take this opportunity to name the importance of housing policy. It fell outside of the reach of this review because of time constraints. However, there is a clear and powerful relationship between the topics that Orfield and Frankenberg (2013) detail, "Physical isolation in housing markets segregated by race and class is a fundamental reason why choice is necessary and attractive but also

110

why choice alone will not solve the intractable problem of segregation" (2013, pp. 262-263).

Lastly, I acknowledge that I took a big-tent approach to the themes of diversity and equity. We calibrated at a high level of abstraction. This leaves the district with the benefit of a visionary public value proposition. It also leaves the difficult work of aligning multiple stakeholders around tighter definitions and commitments.

Implications for Sector

This capstone provides important leadership implications regarding how to build value, legitimacy, and capacity for creating more equitable outcomes for our nation's youth. Specifically, the public value proposition of equitable, diverse, and balanced schools is worthy of further debate and research. Analysis of Framingham's choice system and of the project design highlight the interaction of adaptive and technical leadership challenges. In terms of political implications, the project raises the question of *public value for whom?*

In search of public value in enrollment systems. This paper highlights the need to move beyond false dichotomies within debates about choice and integration. Choice proponents need not stand in opposition to the desire for community that often is framed by neighborhood school advocates. Schools can become both more diverse and more embracing of diversity without instituting assumptions about white-middle class kids as the enrollment commodity. More specifically, the project raises the prospect that we can move beyond desegregation and toward equitable, diverse, and balanced schools. This proposition raises the need for further analysis as to the distinctions and relationships between equity, diversity, and balance. Toward this end, I hope that Framingham can

serve as a systems-level case in the work of institutes such as the Harvard Reimagining Integration Project.

The case raises the question of how to explore multiple aspects of identity and inequity without devaluing the importance of confronting racism. I have shared more data related to socioeconomic and language status and this data highlights significant equity gaps. However, the mother that told me that the real elephant in the room was racism in town (personal communication, November 18, 2015) serves as a poignant reminder of the work we still need to do as a country to break down racial and ethnic inequity. Frankenberg and Orfield help frame the national significance of Framingham's challenge, "The United States today is a suburban nation that thinks of race as an urban issue, and often assumes that it has been largely solved" (2012, p. 2). Suburban and urban leaders will need to be prepared to lead meaningful conversations about race and ethnicity if we are going to break down equity gaps within and across schools.

The relationship between technical and adaptive work. The project also accentuates a leadership trap that comes from treating technical and adaptive work as separate. I initially viewed my service as interim director of PIC as distinct from the choice review and wrote the first draft of this paper without its inclusion in the story. I have come to realize that, in fact, diving into the technical details of the job at hand helped me to build the trust and authority I needed to push the adaptive nature of the conversation. The reality of districts, messy and layered systems that they are, is that technical and adaptive challenges are intertwined. Furthermore, effective leaders are able to take concrete technical steps in a way that addresses the adaptive work. The Long-Range Plan for Excellence and Equity in School Choice and Enrollment provides an

attempt to lay out a realistic combination of steps, some designed to secure more immediate technical fixes while others scaffold the district to confront the more adaptive challenges.

The relationship between public value, operational capacity, and political legitimacy. For the sake of organization, I have focused on the elements of the strategic triangle as more distinct than they are in the realities of day-to-day leadership. For the benefit of other leaders engaging in system-level leadership, I would like to articulate that it is the dynamic interplay between these pieces that actually moves systems. Crises such as the registration backup at PIC are not just operational issues but have political implications that undermine the public value of the system. My ability to build relational trust, in part by building operational capacity, created a stronger authorizing environment that allowed me to facilitate conversations about our higher purpose.

There is a thread of power and of values between the elements that is worthy of further analysis. A participatory-leadership approach provides an opportunity to collectively establish a vision and to coproduce answers for how to reach that vision. It also raises questions about who participates and who decides. Moore (2013) describes how "the work of sustaining a political agreement about the values to be pursued is relentless and ongoing" (p. 91). It is unrealistic to expect political consensus across all stakeholders in the pursuit of public value propositions that drive equity. But we can relentlessly ask "whose vision and purposes?" (Moore, 1995, p. 100). I challenge myself and superintendents across the country to relentlessly ask ourselves, *have we developed the necessary relational trust and political networks in the diverse communities that*

comprise our districts in order to be confident that our public value propositions are

truly representative of the strengths and needs of all students?

Conclusion

This capstone seeks to address how an increasingly diverse school district with a history of persistent political debate about school choice can create a sustainable enrollment system that affords every child access to a high-quality education.

This project began with a charge to facilitate stakeholder dialogue and review and provide recommendation on Framingham's choice processes and policies. A registration crisis required immediate attention to issues of operational capacity. The focus of the project also expanded to *choice* and *enrollment* in order to explore the best means of student assignment to accomplish our goals. Early in the project, it was difficult to ascertain what those goals should be. In order to determine how to improve the system, we first had to clarify what purpose it served. As we did this, the most prominent question was whether the district should return to the desegregation goals of 1996 that inspired the choice plan in the first place. The 2016 School Choice Review Task Force determined that the answer should be yes and no. The team proposed a vision that moves beyond desegregation by celebrating diversity and prioritizing equity. Once this clarity of purpose was found, the question became how to create that system. The answers include restructuring the choice system to include diversity mechanisms and also building equitable infrastructure such as more cultural competency training and bilingual programming.

Though my initial hypothesis that *if we just have a conversation about our most adaptive challenges, then a miracle will happen*, has not proven to be true, there is promise within a participatory-leadership approach that builds public value, political legitimacy, and operational capacity. The process of building an equitable and sustainable enrollment system has only just begun, but Framingham has a unique opportunity to serve as a national model of what it means to embrace student diversity as our greatest strength.

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Appendix A: FPS Demographic and Performance Snapshot

FPS Schools	Total Enrolled	FLNE	ELL	SWD	High Needs	Low Income (FRL)	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic/Latino	White	Multi/Other	School Performance Percentile*	Accountability School Level*
Barbieri Elementary School	690	57%	39%	21%	73%	67%	1%	3%	69%	25%	2%	26	2
Brophy Elementary School	531	59%	40%	19%	79%	71%	6%	6%	54%	31%	3%	9	3
Dunning Elementary School	484	37%	20%	19%	51%	32%	15%	6%	10%	66%	4%	60	1
Hemenway Elementary School	565	17%	7%	20%	40%	27%	7%	4%	10%	75%	4%	90	2
Juniper Hill School	282	24%	10%	39%	48%	30%	6%	7%	24%	57%	6%	N/A	N/A
King Elementary School	164	45%	36%	10%	58%	48%	10%	6%	18%	58%	8%	N/A	N/A
McCarthy Elementary School	594	23%	11%	33%	72%	61%	2%	13%	26%	52%	7%	9	3
Potter Road Elementary School	514	46%	28%	14%	58%	44%	4%	4%	6%	81%	4%	63	2
Stapleton Elementary School	419	19%	7%	27%	56%	44%	5%	6%	16%	68%	5%	14	2
Wilson Elementary School	576	82%	54%	16%	96%	85%	1%	9%	18%	70%	2%	15	3
Cameron Middle School	537	47%	5%	27%	76%	64%	2%	7%	20%	68%	3%	38	2
Fuller Middle School	470	52%	30%	26%	76%	65%	3%	7%	36%	51%	3%	20	3
Walsh Middle School	700	35%	5%	24%	53%	39%	9%	5%	30%	53%	4%	61	2
Framingham High School	2094	37%	10%	15%	54%	43%	6%	7%	21%	64%	2%	64	3**
DISTRICT TOTAL =	**8620**	**41%**	**19%**	**21%**	**63%**	**51%**	**5%**	**6%**	**26%**	**59%**	**3%**	**NTA**	**3**
DISTRICT K-8 TOTAL =	**6244**	**44%**	**23%**	**22%**	**66%**	**55%**	**5%**	**6%**	**28%**	**57%**	**4%**		

Student demographic data from internal FPS database (X2), retrieved March 7, 2016

*MA DESE District Profiles, retrieved March 7, 2016

**FPS accountability status dropped from Level 1 to 3 from 2014 to 2015 due to participation rates

Appendix B: Demographic Maps, 2014, 2000, and 1970

Current Poverty Concentration and Schools
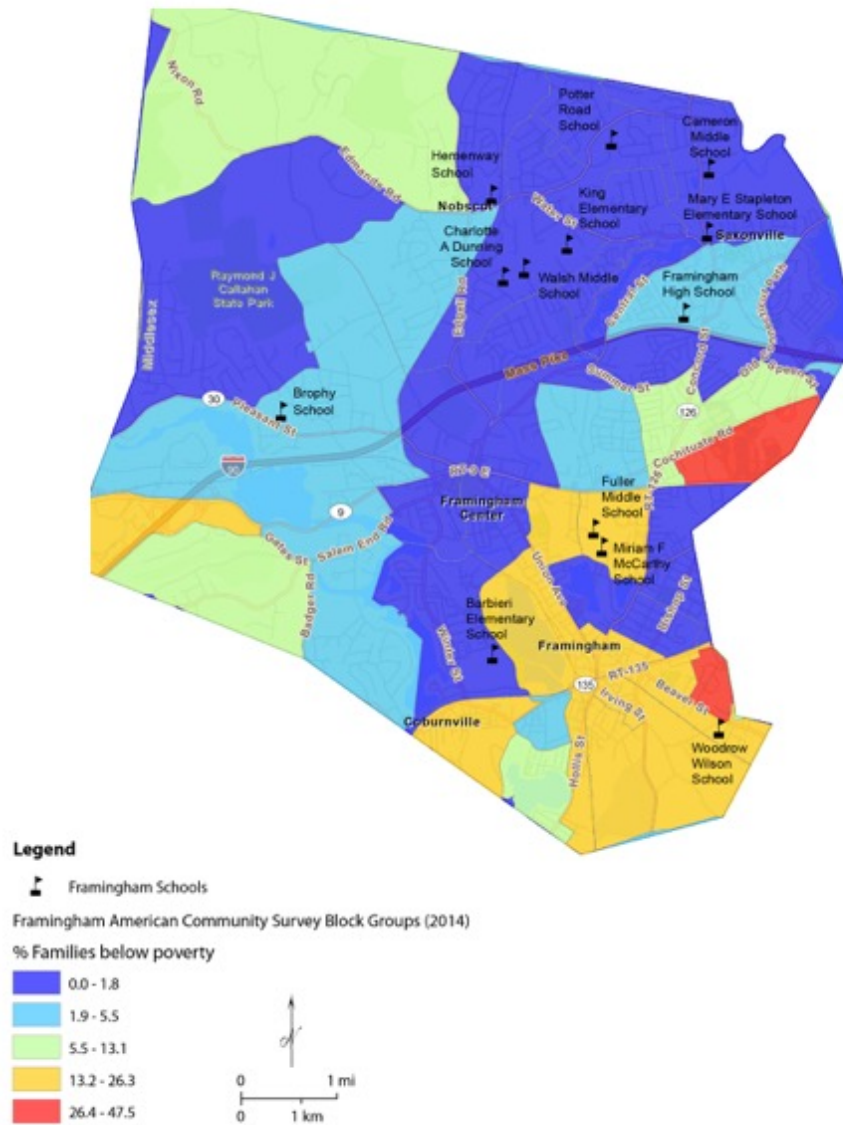
Source: 2014 American Community Survey (Social Explorer, 2016).

Current Population Born in Another Country
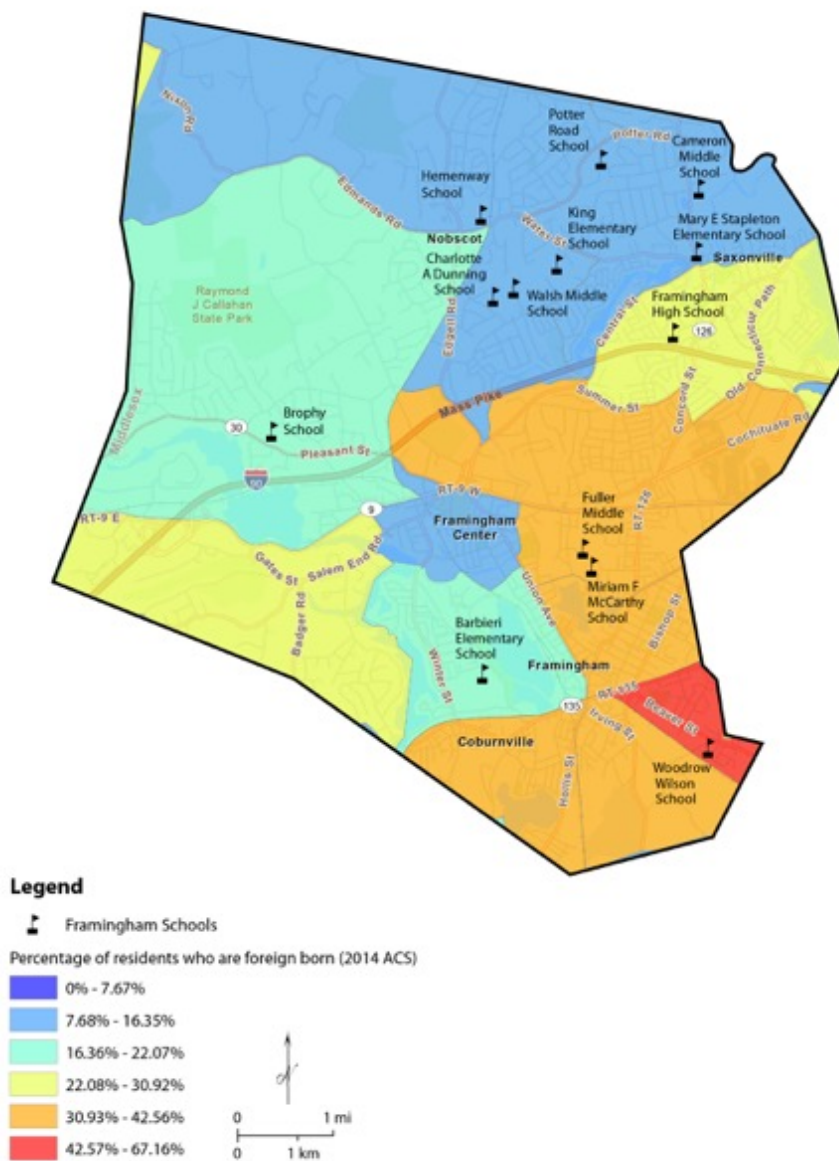
Source: 2014 American Community Survey (Social Explorer, 2016).

2000 Population with Juniper Hill   2000 Poverty with Juniper Hill
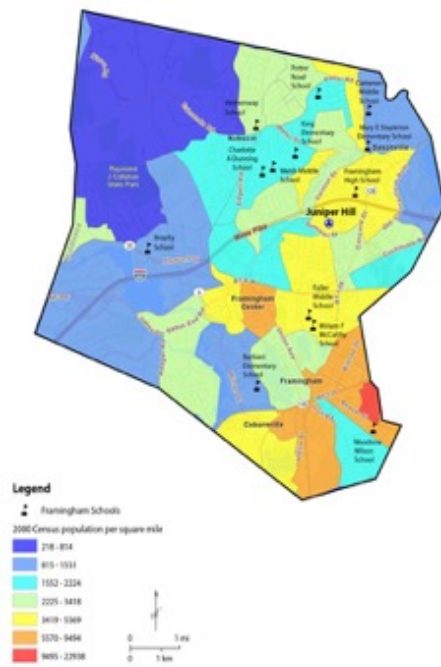
1970 Population and Closed Schools   1970 Poverty Concentration and Closed Schools
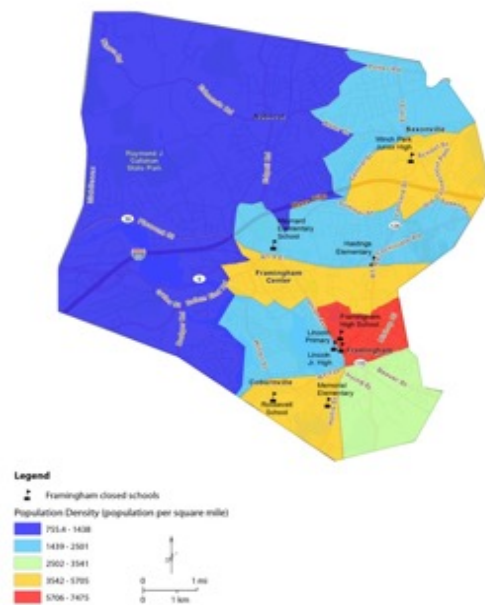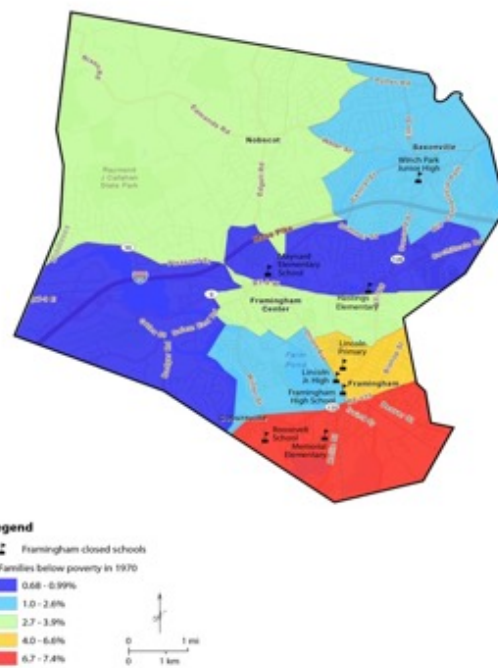
Source: 2000 Census Data,1970 Census Data (Social Explorer, 2016).

Appendix C: Student Outcome Improvement by CPI and SGP

Snapshot of Combined MCAS and PARCC CPI and SGP for All Grades

CPI Performance Gap Reduction Special Education

Source: January School Committee Report (2016).

Appendix D: SGP by Subgroup

MCAS ELA - median SGP by Subgroup

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Stud. w/ Disab	38	41	39	42.5	42	46	51
ELL/Former ELL	54	49	54	54	50	57	60
Low-Income	43	46	48	47	46	51	55
All Students	49	50	51	49	46	52	55

MCAS ELA - median SGP by Ethnicity

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
African American/Black	53	50.5	48.5	46	44	49	58
Asian	58	56	60.5	57	51	59	60
Hispanic/Latino	43	46	45	48	44	52	54
White	50	51	52	49	46	51	54
All Students	49	50	51	49	46	52	55

MCAS Math - median SGP by Subgroup

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Stud. w/ Disab	41	43	43	43	40.5	47	47
ELL/Former ELL	51	48.5	50	50	41.5	60	59
Low-Income	47	46	47	48	41	53	55
All Students	49	50	50	51	46	54	55

MCAS Math - median SGP by Subgroup

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
African American/Black	57.5	45	48.5	48	50	56	52.5
Asian	60	58	61	57	51	58	62
Hispanic/Latino	46	45	45.5	50	44	53	51
White	49	51	50	51	46	53	55
All Students	49	50	50	51	46	54	55

Source: MA DESE, Internal FPS Reports (2016).

Appendix F: Student Performance Data Proficiency Gaps

English Language Arts - %Student Proficient or Higher

%Student Proficient or Higher in ELA by Ethnicity*

Due to small N size Amer.Ind. or Alaska Nat. data removed

% Students Proficient and Above

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
African Amer./Black	54%	53%	56%	54%	50%	54%	50%	47%	45%
Asian	76%	73%	74%	75%	83%	78%	79%	82%	85%
Hispanic/Latino	37%	39%	38%	38%	38%	38%	38%	34%	40%
White	68%	71%	70%	72%	72%	73%	70%	69%	70%
All Students	61%	64%	63%	64%	64%	64%	62%	60%	62%
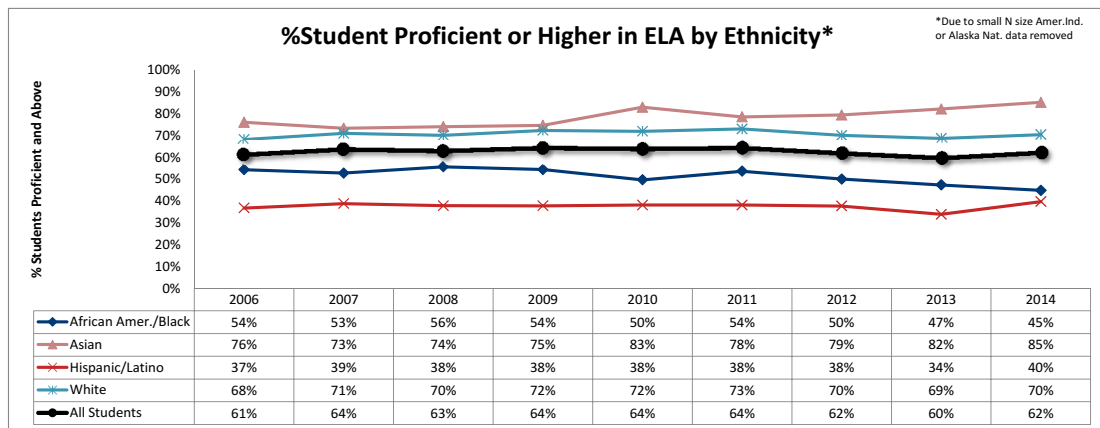
Mathematics - %Student Proficient or Higher

%Student Proficient or Higher in Math by Ethnicity*

Due to small N size Amer.Ind. or Alaska Nat. data removed

% Students Proficient and Above

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
African Amer./Black	34%	33%	39%	40%	38%	38%	34%	35%	29%
Asian	68%	73%	72%	74%	79%	75%	77%	81%	79%
Hispanic/Latino	23%	27%	32%	27%	27%	26%	26%	30%	29%
White	53%	61%	62%	63%	63%	63%	59%	61%	62%
All Students	47%	53%	55%	55%	55%	54%	51%	53%	53%
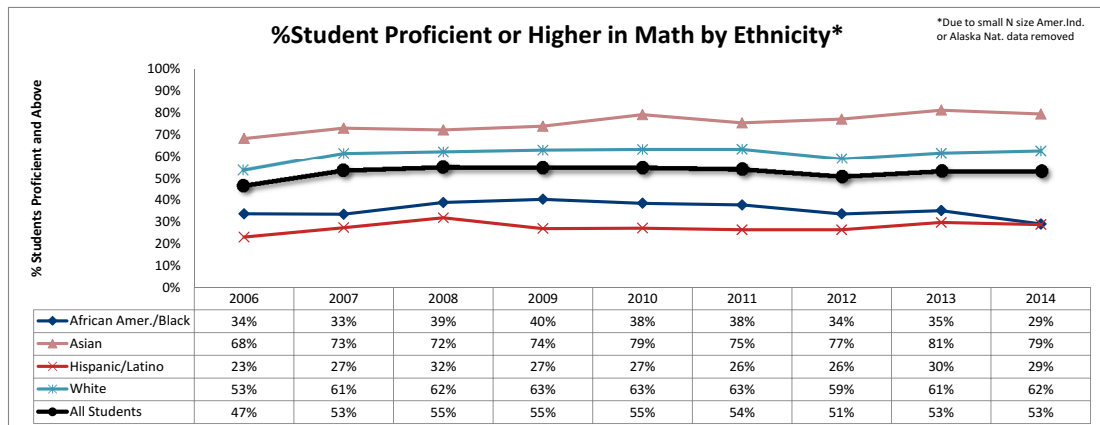
K-8 Science & Technology/Engineering - %Student Proficient or Higher (HS not included)

%Student Proficient or Higher in K-8 STE by Ethnicity*

Due to small N size Amer.Ind. or Alaska Nat. data removed

% Students Proficient and Above

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
African Amer./Black	31%	23%	36%	32%	27%	24%	25%	18%	23%
Asian	61%	52%	63%	62%	58%	60%	68%	58%	66%
Hispanic/Latino	18%	18%	19%	17%	21%	11%	16%	16%	15%
White	50%	48%	50%	54%	53%	50%	51%	48%	47%
All Students	43%	40%	43%	45%	44%	40%	43%	39%	39%
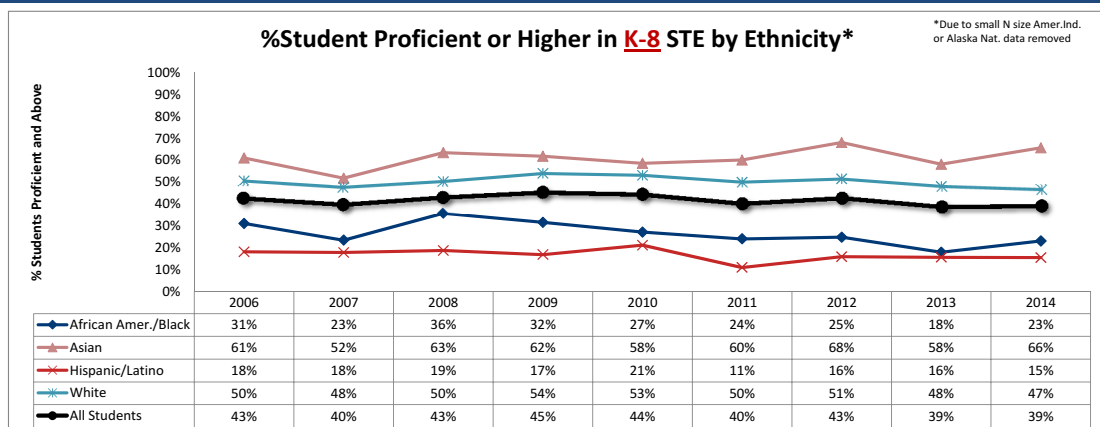
Source: MA DESE, Internal FPS Report (2016).

Appendix G: CPI Subgroup Gap Study

CPI gap by Low Income School Population
(schools with >50% FRL compared to schools with <50% FRL)

Gr3-5 Mathematics

Gr3-5 Math CPI for ELLs
Schools with >50% FRL — Schools with <50% FRL
ELLs <50% FRL: 65.7 (2011), 68.6 (2012), 67.9 (2013), 71.9 (2014), 64.8 (2015)
ELLs >50% FRL: 58.2 (2011), 48.9 (2012), 51.3 (2013), 52.0 (2014), 54.3 (2015)

Gr3-5 Math CPI for Low Income
Schools with >50% FRL — Schools with <50% FRL
<50% FRL: 71.4, 69.4, 68.1, 69.6, 69.7
>50% FRL: 63.4, 55.6, 61.8, 64.0, 63.9

Gr3-5 Math CPI for SWD
Schools with >50% FRL — Schools with <50% FRL
<50% FRL: 71.8, 63.5, 62.4, 61.2, 66.0
>50% FRL: 55.8, 51.8, 55.3, 57.1, 60.2

Gr3-5 Math CPI for High Needs
Schools with >50% FRL — Schools with <50% FRL
<50% FRL: 74.9, 71.4, 70.6, 71.4, 72.5
>50% FRL: 64.6, 57.3, 62.9, 64.7, 63.8

Gr3-5 Math CPI for General Ed
Schools with >50% FRL — Schools with <50% FRL
<50% FRL: 93.6, 92.4, 93.1, 94.2, 93.1
>50% FRL: 89.3, 90.1, 91.0, 90.6, 87.4

Gr3-5 Math CPI for All Students
Schools with >50% FRL — Schools with <50% FRL
<50% FRL: 86.2, 83.8, 83.1, 83.6, 83.8
>50% FRL: 71.0, 65.2, 68.9, 70.5, 70.2

Schools with > 50% FRL					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
ELL	58.2	48.9	51.3	52.0	54.3
SPED	55.8	51.8	55.3	57.1	60.2
Low Incom	63.4	55.6	61.8	64.0	63.9
High Needs	64.6	57.3	62.9	64.7	63.8
GenEd	89.3	90.1	91.0	90.6	87.4
All Student	71.0	65.2	68.9	70.5	70.2

Schools with < 50% FRL					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
ELL	65.7	68.6	67.9	71.9	64.8
SPED	71.8	63.5	62.4	61.2	66.0
Low Incom	71.4	69.4	68.1	69.6	69.7
High Needs	74.9	71.4	70.6	71.4	72.5
GenEd	93.6	92.4	93.1	94.2	93.1
All Student	86.2	83.8	83.1	83.6	83.8

Source: MA DESE, Internal FPS Report (2016).

Long-Range Plan for Excellence and Equity in School Choice and Enrollment
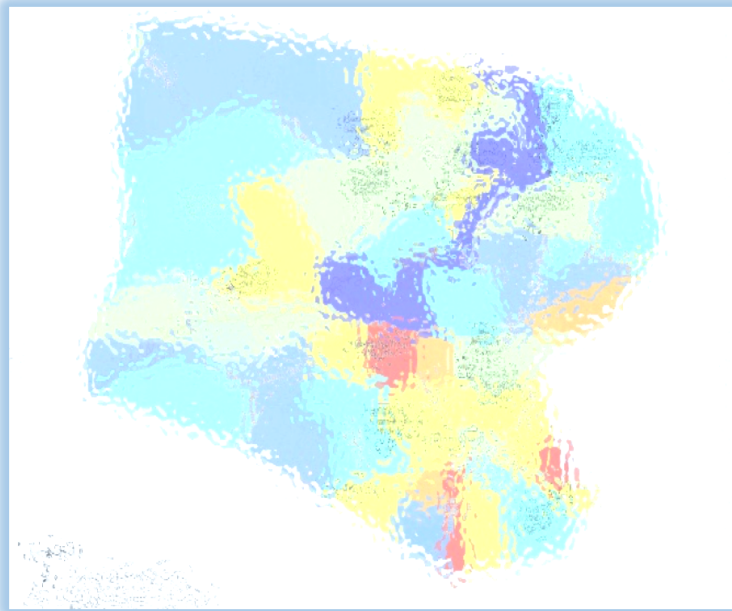
Framingham Public Schools
2016 School Choice Review Task Force
WORKING DRAFT FOR INTERNAL REVIEW
Revised April 7, 2016

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[15] I have excluded the long-range plan appendices as most are duplicative of the capstone appendices.

Choice and Enrollment Vision Statement
Framingham Public Schools

Imagine the power of a school system that embraces student diversity as its greatest strength. Imagine an enrollment system that balances the benefits of integrated environments and specialized programs. Imagine all students are in the best place to meet their needs and that we have socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, language, and special education diversity in our schools.

Imagine that the diverse cultures of our students will be drawn upon as a strength in teaching and learning. Imagine that the diversity of staff mirrors that of our students. Imagine that supports follow students and each child has the resources they need to succeed. Imagine walking into every school and seeing equally high-level teaching and learning. Imagine all students enjoy learning! Imagine schools teach students without restraints of time.

Imagine that when families choose schools, they have access to multiple and meaningful measures of progress. Imagine that families and kids feel a strong sense of community in their schools, neighborhoods, **and** across town. Imagine that achievement and opportunity gaps are closed. Imagine Framingham's enrollment system is equitable and sustainable.

Is this an enrollment system you can believe in?

Problem/Challenge Statements

There are multiple challenges that lead to our charge to:

1) Model productive community-wide dialogue about what is working and what can be improved in our choice and enrollment system, and

2) Develop a long-range plan for how to create an equitable and sustainable enrollment system.

Toward this work, three sets of challenges emerged:

Vision and Purpose:

The original Controlled Choice Plan was based upon the 1996 Racial Balance and Equity Plan which had four primary goals:

1) Create demographic balance,

2) Provide unique instructional choices,

3) Maximize the use of facilities, and

4) Diversify staff

Many stakeholders report that over time the facilities aspect of the goals have dominated the others. Twenty years after the development of this plan, we ask: *Have these goals have been realized? What do we want our long-term goals now to be? How do these aspirations align with Vision 2020?*

While Framingham schools are more diverse than many schools across the country, there is still a range of demographics across schools. For example, there is a 58% difference between the school with the highest rates of Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) and the school with the lowest FRL (Appendix B). Framingham has begun to close many achievement gaps but there are still large gaps in proficiency levels across racial, socioeconomic, language, and disability groups. Some of these gaps appear related to geographic lines in Framingham. ***What are ways in which an enrollment system can increase diversity and decrease achievement gaps?*** See also Appendix A for demographic maps and Appendix C for student outcome data by elementary schools broken down by the percentage of students who qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL).

Capacity:

The district is growing. Many schools are currently at capacity, already having converted locker rooms and storage closets into instructional space. Superintendent Dr. Stacy Scott articulated in a 2013 facilities report, "**A comprehensive solution to overcrowding in Framingham Public Schools has been sought for some time**" (Scott, 2013, p.4). He further asserted that, "Educational planning in Framingham has been reactive rather than based upon a long-term, purposeful strategy" (p. 6). Furthermore, much of enrollment growth takes place after the spring choice window and budget development process, leaving some families without choice, higher mobility in some schools, and the challenge of resourcing changing needs.

The district is over capacity for classroom space in the Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) program for Portuguese and has had to increase class size. From October 1, 2014 to October 1, 2015 students identified as limited English proficient increased from 15.8% to 18.6%% of the total population (DESE SIMS October 1 Enrollment Report 5, retrieved March 21, 2016). Schools are struggling to build more capacity to better welcome and support students learning English as a second language.

Approximately two thirds of the student population live south of the Mass Pike, however, two thirds of K-12 schools are north of that line. This reality creates a transportation challenge that is related to, but much bigger than school choice. It also necessitates that we improve the current choice system while also asking how we can create more geographic balance in the future.

Map 1: Population Distribution and Location of Schools Divided by the Mass Pike

North of Interstate 90:
Total Population - 22,321
Population > 18 - 17,370
Population < 18 - 4,951

Median Household Income (2015) - $96,228
Number of Households < $35,000 / year - 1,498

Legend
♟ Framingham Schools
Population / sq. mile
720 - 1,300
1,400 - 1,700
1,800 - 2,500
2,600 - 3,500
3,600 - 6,500
6,600 - 10,000
11,000 - 23,000

South of Interstate 90:
Total Population - 43,860
Population > 18 - 34,742
Population < 18 - 9,118

Median Household Income (2015) - $62,357
Number of Households < $35,000 / year - 5,757

Source: 2014 American Community Survey (Social Explorer, 2016); See also Appendix A for additional maps.

The possibility of a Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) planning grant to renovate Fuller Middle School and a new school on the south side of town provide an advantageous time to look forward into the future and ask: *What are our highest aspirations for a choice and enrollment system? What is working and what can be improved within our current system to reach those aspirations?*

Process:

Over the course of the last twenty years, multiple task forces have named the equity problems within school enrollment and made recommendations but many plans have not been implemented. **Attempts to focus on equity within the enrollment process have not always had the political capital to succeed.**

At times over the last thirty years, **the conversation about choice/enrollment has been charged.** The task force therefore focused on the goal of modeling productive conversations about the topic. Learning from past history, this review also focused on hearing from a diversity of voices. **We are left with the question:** *how do we sustain a conversation so that all voices are heard?*

In sum, there is a need for a long-range roadmap for how to create an effective and sustainable enrollment system. Components of the plan include:

- *Statement of key problems and strengths within Framingham's controlled choice system;*
- *Identification of the values and beliefs that can guide an improved plan;*
- *A positive vision of an equitable and politically sustainable enrollment plan;*
- *A five-year scope and sequence of the engagement structures, policy decisions, and action*
  steps needed to have an equitable and sustainable enrollment plan; and
- *Analysis and recommendations on the strength and areas of improvement within the Task Force and study process itself.*

Framingham Strong

Framingham offers many great strengths, some general and some specific to the choice and enrollment process. Among these strengths, the 2016 School Choice Review Task Force noted:

- We have a vibrant and diverse student body
- We have an active family community that holds high expectations for continuous improvement
- The choice system provides the opportunity to create demographic balance in schools
- The choice system provides instructional options for parents
    - For example, Framingham offers Two-Way Bilingual (Dual Language), International Baccalaureate, and Science Technology Engineering Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) as instructional models in three of our schools
    - Approximately one third of respondents to the 2016 Winter Choice Questionnaire indicated that the instructional model of the elementary school was among the top three MOST important things they considered when choosing a school
- The choice system allows the district flexibility with placements to maintain lower class-sizes
- The choice system allows the community to avoid the pains of redistricting
- Ninety to ninety-eight percent of families that participate in the spring choice process historically receive their first or second choice of schools
- Thanks to recent efforts on the part of the Special Education Department, fewer students on Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) need to transition between multiple schools and more have choice
- The district offers a research-based range of bilingual education programs including Two-Way Spanish Immersion, Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE), and Sheltered English Instruction (SEI); because of efforts to increase the number of SEI endorsed teachers more students learning English as a second language will have choice in 2016
- Parents report how much they love and appreciate principals and teachers in schools (see also Winter Choice Survey results, Appendix D)
- Schools have built strong communities
- Framingham offers a robust range of academic programs and honors the arts in each school
- Framingham has built infrastructure, in line with national research, to support effective choice processes. For example:
    - The Parent Information Center was recently restructured to increase accessibility and bilingual capacity
    - Over 70 % of respondents to the 2016 Winter Choice Questionnaire indicated that school tours were among the three MOST important sources of information when choosing a school

Beliefs and Values

- We believe in equity as defined as every child receiving the quality of instruction and support that they need to excel.

- We believe that every student, in every neighborhood, deserves a high-quality educational experience.

- We believe that Framingham should embrace the diversity of language, race, socioeconomic status, and learning needs of our students as strengths.

- We believe in a diversity of unique educational approaches.

- We believe that creating an equitable and sustainable enrollment system will require ongoing and open communication, the development of trust, continued creative-thinking, and a shared commitment to making a difference in the lives of **all** students.

Summary of Recommendations

The following action plans are designed to provide an initial roadmap of what it will take to reach our vision of a school system that *embraces student diversity as its greatest strength*. The plan returns the districts to the roots of the 1996 Racial Balance and Equity Plan but with new **2016 goals to**:

1. **Create socioeconomic, racial, linguistic, and special education diversity in all schools**
2. **Develop structures and supports that embrace cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic, and learning differences as strengths**
3. **Provide an equitable range of instructional models that match students' strengths and needs**
4. **Create an equitable and needs-driven funding formula**
5. **Increase bilingual programming to better meet students' needs**
6. **Diversify the professional workforce to mirror students' diversity**
7. **Bolster community engagement efforts**
8. **Align new-school development plans to the long-range equity and enrollment vision**

Additional Notes:

The immediate focus of the district should be on making the current choice system more equitable. Until or unless the system can guarantee high quality and close proximity to schools for all students, students are best served in the current, but improved, choice system. Our strongest leverage points for improvement are found within making adjustments to the controlled choice assignment process and in building the necessary infrastructure, such as cultural competency in all schools, to realize our vision.

Continued community engagement provides the district the opportunity to gain valuable feedback on the current process and to make future decisions regarding new schools. The Long-Range Plan for Excellence and Equity in School Choice and Enrollment was therefore written as a living and breathing document.

Strategic Goal #1: Create socioeconomic, racial, linguistic, and special education diversity in all schools.			
Objectives	1. No school will exceed the district Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) by more than 15% 2. All schools will have the capacity to support a minimum of 25% ELL by 2017 3. TBE programming will be offered in a minimum of four schools by 2018 4. The racial and ethnic diversity of each school will overall mirror the diversity of the community as a whole		
Success Metrics	• FRL rates by school • The number of SEI endorsed teachers • The number of bilingual staff • Demographic information by school • Student performance data by subgroup		
	Five Year Roadmap and Action Steps	**Dept./Persons Responsible**	**Resources Needed**
2015-2016	**Planning Year:** Educate FPS families about programs in all schools Implement immediate improvements for making choice more equitable: advertise pre-registration with diverse stakeholders- i.e. bilingual press; provide more choices to SPED and ELL parents based on new capacity in schools	FACE/PIC FACE/PIC/KK Bilingual/Sped	Media, radio, Patch, and PR presentations to community

	Explore benefits of socioeconomic and language preferences being added to home boundary and sibling preferences	School Choice Task Force/ FACE/PIC/Senior Leadership and Superintendent	
	Create demographic and program profile for each school see Appendix D	KK	
2016-2017	Apply for the United States Department of Education *Stronger Together* Grant	FACE/PIC/Grants Office	Staff time
	Educate the community about the programs in our schools, the data related to each school, and the positive student learning outcomes for all students that come from diverse, equitable, and balanced settings; see appendices for examples of demographic maps, data, and annotated bibliography (forthcoming)	Assistant Superintendent/FACE	Community Support
	Conduct site visits to districts with socioeconomic balance programs- see for example CPS Controlled Choice Plan	Long Range Equity Steering Committee	$240 for subs
	Develop language for revised Racial Balance Policy: Assignment of Students to Schools JCAA	FACE/Superintendent's Office	
	Consider other policy changes related to preference system (consider in particular mobility rates and how some schools lock early because of inequity of home boundary preferences and sibling guarantee): options to consider holding first window to 2 under class size and/or allowing for a	FACE/Superintendent's Office	

	second round of choice in September		
	Reevaluate progress quarterly	Long Range Equity Steering Committee	
2017-2018	Propose new guidelines to add socioeconomic status to choice preferences by no later than June 30, 2017	Supt's Office/School Committee	
	Revise Kindergarten Handbook to reflect new choice policies by November 1, 2017	PIC	
2018-2019	Assess impact of revised choice guidelines in relation to objectives	PIC/FACE/ Long Range Equity Steering Committee	
2019-2020	**Monitor and assess for:** • Free and reduced lunch more equally dispersed - target no more than 15% above or below average • Capacity for language programs in all schools • Racial and ethnic diversity • Special education and bilingual program balance • Impact of above on student-learning outcomes	Supt's Office/FACE/Long Range Equity Steering Committee	

Strategic Goal #2: Develop structures and support that embrace cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic and learning differences as strengths.			
Objectives/ Key Results	1. Provide universal access to materials and forms (translations) for all 2. Provide universal access to school information and tours 3. Provide universal access to programming such as SAGE, AP and honors classes and maintain high expectations for all students 4. Develop and conduct annual and in-depth cultural sensitivity PD for all staff 5. Schools value student languages by providing PD in languages to staff (i.e. Portuguese and Spanish classes for teachers) 6. Connect with community resources such as FSU to create programs that encourage college for all 7. Create spaces that are physically and culturally welcoming		
Success Metrics	• Academic and extracurricular participation rates by subgroup (AP, SAGE, honors, etc.) • Cultural responsive PD survey feedback • Academic and social emotional outcomes by subgroups		
Five Year Roadmap	**Action Steps**	**Dept./Persons Responsible**	**Resources Needed**

2015-2016	**Planning year:** Develop action plan as part of choice review process	Choice Review Task Force	
2016-2017	Collect and review FPS data regarding subgroup participation in SAGE, AP and honors classes as well as suspensions and expulsions. Share information at each school	Central Admin/Principals PBIS teams	
	Select and/or develop internally, in-depth culturally responsive PD that addresses socioeconomic and cultural differences and personalizes the curriculum to address specific needs at FPS	PD Dept./Bilingual Dept./ with internal and external experts from the field	$___ [17]
	Ensure that ALL internal documents[16] are translated i.e. course selection forms for FHS (that go to 8th graders) must be translated (note concerns that parents cannot access this important information)	FHS guidance in conjunction with the translation department	Translation services $___
	Have staff walk their individual schools with students and parents from other countries to determine where signage and other changes can be made to create a more welcoming environment	Individual staff at each school	Creative resources to create changes as needed
	Maintain/grow the connection with College Center at FSU and FSU Diversity Inclusion Office	HR and all staff responsible for hiring/FACE staff	

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[16] This action step is aimed to include academic and extracurricular documents.

[17] Budgeting is in progress with department directors; note that if no $ is listed for an action item the assumption is that the item would be budget neutral.

2017-2018	Provide in-depth culturally responsive PD that addresses socioeconomic and cultural differences in an in-depth manner. Focus should include setting of high expectations for all students	Education Ops, PD Dept.	$___
	Develop structures and PD specific to high-mobility Continue focus on College and Career Readiness at FHS (Bilingual)	Educational Ops, PD Dept. FHS	$___
	Develop language classes for staff representing the languages of students (i.e. Spanish for teachers, Portuguese, etc.)	PD Dept.	$___
2018-2019	Provide in-depth culturally responsive PD that addresses socioeconomic and cultural differences in an in-depth manner	PD Dept.	$___
	Monitor effectiveness of training by integrating pre and post assessments and 3- month follow up with teachers	PD Dept.	
2019-2020	Provide in-depth culturally responsive PD that honors socioeconomic and cultural differences in an in-depth manner and raises high expectations for all students	PD Dept.	$___

Strategic Goal #3: Create an equitable range of instructional models that match students' strengths and needs in all buildings.			
Objectives/Key Results	1. Establish baseline staffing for schools 2. Establish support levels based on student needs 3. Establish protocols for school autonomy based on model 4. Provide instructional choices to families		
Success Metrics	• Consistent data team protocols for school-based instructional model designs • Annual program and position evaluation • Identification of academic and social emotional programming that should be consistent across all schools and those that should be unique by model		
Five Year Roadmap	**Action Steps**	**Dept./Persons Responsible**	**Resources Needed**
2015-2016	Gather baseline staffing information for each building and review available data (DONE) Highlight areas of discrepancy between schools and analyze discrepancies for possible reasons for differences by asking	Asst. Superintendent. and principal representatives Superintendent's Office Superintendent's Office	

	WHY? Reach out to Directors of Health and Wellness, Special Education, and Bilingual Education Offices to solicit input: What would be their recommended ideal baseline staffing for designated enrollment? To what extent is there a recommended baseline and/or do different schools need different things?	Superintendent's Office	
	Discussion with Principals regarding staffing spreadsheet data, what should be supported as an ideal baseline, etc. (TO DO) Discussion question: *What would be a recommended baseline of materials for various programming/curriculum?*	COO	
2016-2017	Investigate appropriate PD supports for model specific programs Develop specialized PD committee to include members of King, Wilson, Barbieri, Curriculum, and PD departments to specifically focus on programming for each building • Specialized PD committee will investigate appropriate PD opportunities for each school and how to adequately fund these	Principals and PD Dept. PD Dept.	Staff Time

	opportunities. • Summer 16/17—Schools develop school model specific PD plans Identify social emotional components that are consistent across schools and components that are purposefully distinct and related to school models	Health and Wellness Dept. in conjunction with principals	
2017-2018	Finalize model-specific PD plans through School Improvement Plans	Principals with Learning Ops	___$
2019-2020	Assess PD Plans	Superintendent's Office/Long-Range Equity Steering Committee	

Strategic Goal #4: Create an equitable and needs-driven funding formula.

Objectives/Key Results	1. **Create budget flexibility for unforeseen enrollment increases and variability** 2. **Develop capacity in all schools to better meet ELL needs** 3. **Implement changes in a manner that is level-funded and that holds schools harmless**		
Success Metrics	Data driven funding decisions Student performance data		

Five Year Roadmap	Action Steps	Dept./Persons Responsible	Resources Needed
2015-2016	**Planning year:** • Study Weighted Student Funding Formulas (Phase 1) • Provide language supports in schools to better meet changing demographics (Phase 1)	Choice Task Force/ Operations Dept.	
2016-2017	Study Weighted Student Funding Formulas (Phase 2) Assess staffing/programming for: • Per Pupil Expenditure (avg. and by school) • Per Pupil Expenditure for ELL (avg. and by school) • Per Pupil Expenditure for students on FRL (avg. and by school) Prioritize language supports in schools to better meet changing demographics (Phase 2)	COO/Business Ops/ Finance Committee Bilingual Dept. in conjunction with Superintendent's Office	 $____

	Determine areas to consolidate resources	Business Ops	
	Move human resources based on student needs	Human Resources	
	Determine core staffing, rationale, and how data will be collected	Superintendent's Office	
2017-2018	Implement a weighted student driven funding pilot for _____ % of funds focus on: • ELL • Poverty • Student mobility rate	Business Ops	
	Use post town budget to target late registration needs	Superintendent's Office	
	Invest in preschool with the goal of evening the playing field for new students	Superintendent's Office	$____
2019-2020	Assess pilot and determine viability and effectiveness of full scale WSF implementation	Business Ops with Superintendent's Office	

Strategic Goal #5: Increase bilingual programming to better meet students' needs.

Objectives/Key Results	1. Place students by the best language program and not by space restrictions 2. Increase SEI capacity 3. Balance the benefits of specialized programs and demographic diversity		
Success Metrics	• Program placement • SGP rates • School diversity goals		
Five Year Roadmap	**Action Steps**	**Dept./Persons Responsible**	**Resources Needed**
2015-2016	**Planning year:** • Expand SEI model to include all schools in the district • Increase capacity for TBE at Fuller • Plan for professional development for staff on race, culture and identify • Form SLIFE committee to meet needs of students and align to state guidelines • Commit to awarding bilingual students who meet criteria with Bilingual Seal and certificates of bi-literacy • Fund foreign language at K-5 (Chinese Mandarin and Portuguese as world languages at King and Wilson)	Bilingual Office	

2016-2017	Open second TBE Portuguese for K-2	Bilingual Dept. with Superintendent's Office	*$___* *Limited additional costs if priced into classroom expansion*
	Solidify an inclusion philosophy—creating a learning atmosphere in which students and teachers feel respected by and connected to one another	Bilingual Dept.	
	Narrow teacher-student ratio for direct ELD service	Language Assessment Team/Bilingual Dept.	*$____*
	Make program placement decisions to best fit needs of students requiring specialized programs (TW, TBE and SEI)	Bilingual Dept.	
	Strengthen partnership with Framingham State College for SEI Model Classrooms	Bilingual Dept.	
	Provide ongoing dialogue opportunities with parents for staff who work with English Learners	Bilingual PAC/ Bilingual Dept.	
	Support a strong Bilingual PAC	FACE/ PIC/ Bilingual Dept.	
	Implement initial identification and placement recommendations for SLIFE students	FACE/PIC/ Bilingual Dept.	
	Create programming options for SLIFE identified students at grades 6-12	FACE/PIC/ Bilingual Dept.	
2017-2018	Open full strand of second K-5	Bilingual Dept.	$___

			Limited additional costs if priced into classroom expansion
	TBE Portuguese program	with Superintendent's Office	
	Continue strengthening ELD instruction within SLIFE, SEI and TBE programs to meet DESE requirements for Time on Learning	Bilingual Office	
	Conduct community focus groups on possible new schools; include questions regarding bilingual program options; conduct translated survey outreach to parents, community stakeholders, etc.	FACE	
2018-2019	Create a culture of appreciation for linguistic and cultural diversity of our students and staff (see also Action Plan #2)	FACE	
	Continue planning for new school with language needs as priority; create list of resources needed and funding sources	FACE	
	Hire administrators, classroom teachers, specialists, paraprofessionals and ELD teachers as needed	Bilingual Dept./HR/ All Hiring Officers	
2019-2020	Assess need for and community interest in Two-Way/Dual Language Portuguese (or another language) Program and/or K-8 language focused school	FACE/Bilingual Office	
	Evaluate effectiveness of above strategies	Long-Range Equity Steering Committee	

Strategic Goal #6: Diversify the workforce to mirror students' diversity.

Objectives/Key Results	1. Increase racial/ethnic diversity of faculty/staff by 15% over a 5-year period 2. Increase bilingual capacity of faculty/staff by 25% over a 5-year period 3. Increase SEI qualifications by 35% over a 5-year period		
Success Metrics			
Five Year Roadmap	**Action Steps**	**Dept./Persons Responsible**	**Resources Needed**
2015-2016	**Planning Year:** Develop short-range and long-range diversity plan	Human Resources	
	Cultivate diversity pipeline partnerships	Human Resources	
	Establish baseline data	Human Resources	
	Set basic diversity expectations with hiring officials	Human Resources	
	Communicate diversity goals to all hiring officers	Human Resources	
2016-2017	Continue district participation in the MA Partnership for Diversity in Education	Human Resources	
	Provide hiring information to district and staff task forces	Human Resources	
	Determine if we will partner with a non-traditional diversity teacher pathway	Human Resources	

	Explore Today's Students for Tomorrow's Teachers	Human Resources	
	Establish a FHS scholarship for minority students studying education	Human Resources	
	Develop relationships with community organizations such as Metro West and diversity ethnic groups	Human Resources	
	Strengthen Framingham State University relationship in particular with the post BA program	Human Resources	
	Develop relationships with universities with strong records of diversity of student body.	Human Resources	
	Explore paraprofessional career pipeline for certification.	Human Resources	
	Maintain outreach to Adult ESL students regarding FPS opportunities.	FACE	
	Identify and recruit recent bilingual graduates	Human Resources	
	Increase racial and ethnic diversity of staff members by 4% annually	All Hiring Officers	
	Increase bilingual staff capacity by 8% annually	All Hiring Officers	
	Increase SEI certification by 9% annually	All Hiring Officers	
2017-2018	Create a professional recruiting plan for Framingham Public Schools	Human Resources	Marketing firm

	Monitor the consistency of the district diversity commitment	Long-Range Equity Steering Committee	
	Conduct feasibility study for paraprofessional program for certification	Human Resources	
	Create a database of national school districts with a diverse teacher workforce and begin marketing and recruiting for Framingham Public Schools in those areas.	Human Resources	
	Implement Today's Students for Tomorrow's Teachers or other student teacher outreach programs targeting minority students.	Human Resources	
	Increase racial and ethnic diversity of staff members by 4% annually	All Hiring Officers	
	Increase bilingual staff capacity by 8% annually	All Hiring Officers	
	Increase SEI certification by 9% annually	All Hiring Officers	
2018-2019	Research top in state employers with diverse workforce.	Human Resources	
	Require all new teachers and administrators to complete cultural competency coursework in their first year of employment.	Human Resources	
	Re-engage community and School Committee members in value of diverse workforce	Human Resources	
	Increase racial and ethnic diversity of staff members by 4% annually	All Hiring Officers	

	Increase bilingual staff capacity by 8% annually	All Hiring Officers	
	Increase SEI certification by 9% annually	All Hiring Officers	
	Monitor diversity hiring results and report on same. Begin mapping out second phase of diversity hiring program	HR/Long-Range Equity Steering Committee	
2019-2020	Assess effectiveness of strategy and continue with high-leverage initiatives	HR/Long-Range Equity Steering Committee	

Strategic Goal #7: Bolster community engagement efforts.

Objectives	1. Promote informed decision-making in school choice 2. Increase participation in spring choice process among all sub groups 3. Provide ongoing opportunities for feedback and input		
Success Metrics	Number of families that register by deadline in April Unique visits/clicks online # of workshops Increase attendance at Kindergarten Fair # of schools with video of kindergarten tour # of unique clicks on kindergarten tour 2nd mailing to remind families to register Increased number of pre-registered students (by race, socioeconomic, and language status)		
Five Year Roadmap	**Action Steps**	**Dept./Persons Responsible**	**Resources Needed**
2015-2016	Make sure parents understand choice process so we get high early registration	FACE/PIC	
	Provide families, students, staff, and the larger community with multiple opportunities to provide feedback on what is working and what can be improved within choice process	KK/Task Force	
	Communicate plan and solicit feedback: • Align senior leaders on Vision, Goals, and Objectives (February/March) • Engage in design-thinking	KK KK/FACE	

	protocols with the plan serving as a prototype with principal team, central directors, and admin council (April) • Provide similar workshops for the community (May-September) Reconstitute the School Choice Review Task Force as the Long-Range Equity Steering Committee for continued accountability	Superintendent/FACE Superintendent/FACE	
2016-2017	Provide educational workshops about school choice/system to make informed decision/choose best or most appropriate school at library, Memorial Building, etc. Increase bilingual attendance at Kindergarten Fair by means of: • Translated e-communications • Mass mailings (such as ongoing and translated community updates) • Diverse media (print, oral, online)- community Cable-Framingham Access, Patch, social-media (FB, Instagram, Twitter etc.) Metro West Daily News, Framingham TAB, FramBORS • Childcare and food offered to make even more family friendly Increase bilingual capacity, by hiring bilingual staff in all schools and departments, to better serve families and translate print materials (see also Staff Diversity Action Plan #6 Create video of school tour to post online	PIC/FACE PIC/FACE All hiring officers FACE/Access Framingham	Staff time $____ $____

	Create: picture scrapbooks online of current activities (within the past two years); brochures/handouts about current services, esp. and special Ed at each school, including feeder school (make a flowchart/diagram)	FACE	$____
	Create program brochure that lists where TBE, bilingual, STEAM, world language and other programs are held	PIC	$____
	Incentivize early registrations through raffles and prizes	PIC	
	Measure late registrations who received the original mailing	PIC	
	Maintain communications with families to ensure comments and concerns are addressed • Schedule quarterly superintendent listening tour/coffee sessions • Update program website • Provide organizational chart online • Add/update FAQs to website • Secure college internship/volunteer to coordinate and maintain communication activities such as focus groups, website, social media	Superintendent's Office	
	Develop a joint initiative with Town-wide PTO and FPS to engage families in 1) participating in choice process, 2) providing ongoing feedback on choice process	PIC/FACE/Town-wide PTO	
	Hold a series of community meetings to share key Choice Review Documents and to solicit feedback on	FACE/Superintendent with members of the 2016 Task force	

	more specific questions related to Action Plan #1 and MSBA Process: **Share:** • Vision • Challenges • Data from Appendices: ○ Maps ○ Equity gaps ○ Research base in support of diverse, equitable, and balanced schools **Focus questions relevant to 2016 implementation; see also Action Plan #1:** Create Racial, Socioeconomic, Language, and Special Needs Diversity		
2017-2018	Create virtual tours of all schools (with translation) to allow access for parents who are working or have transportation challenges	Assistant Superintendent/FACE	
	Policy initiative to educate families regarding Chapter 70- including local state legislative delegation and School Committee	Superintendent's Office	
	Assess above and continue with most effective strategies	Long-range Equity Steering Committee	

Strategic Goal 8: Align new-school plans to the long-range enrollment vision (may merge with #7).

Objectives/Key Results	1. New campus(es) will add to the instructional choices available to parents 2. New campus(es) will increase the proximity for _____% of students on the south side of town 3. The community will have multiple opportunities to inform key decisions related to new campus(es) 4. New buildings will increase demographic diversity in all schools		
Success Metrics			

Five Year Roadmap	Action Steps	Dept./Persons Responsible	Resources Needed
2015-2016	Present Long-Range Equity and Excellence in School Choice and Enrollment Plan Core Documents to MSBA Building Group (May 2016) Conduct demographic study with particular focus on increased accuracy of overall, school-based, and student language needs projections	KK/FACE/ Assistant Superintendent COO/KK	 NESDEC Contract $6500
2016-2017	Hold focus groups for parent and principal input into new school design	FACE/Ed. Ops	
2017-2018	Assess impact of new school(s) on demographic balance in all schools - Run GIS simulations with maps	Building Operations	$9500

	- Conduct second demographic study		
2018-2019	Determine instructional models of schools based on student and parent feedback	Superintendent's Office	
2019-2020	Assess impact of new school(s) in terms of the overall vison and goals of the Long-Range Plan	Long-Range Equity Steering Committee	