

Lexington Public Schools

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To: Dr. Paul Ash
Members of the Lexington School Committee

From: Robyn Dowling Grant

Re: **English Language Learner Program: Update**

Date: May 4, 2011

In advance of the upcoming School Committee presentation on the English Language Learner (ELL) Program, here is an outline of the topics I intend to discuss that evening. On May 10, I will provide you with further information and details along with a powerpoint presentation.

1. Growth of the Program – Lexington's English language learner population has been increasing each year, mirroring the growth of residents who speak another language in our town. Over the past five years, the program has grown 78%, requiring a growth in teacher staffing and classroom resources.
2. Student Demographics – Across the Commonwealth, most school districts are experiencing significant growth in their population of students who are limited English proficient. Lexington's student demographic is diverse, representing students who arrive with extensive formal schooling, as well as some students with interrupted formal education. In each case, we strive to meet the students where they are academically.
3. Entry to and Exit from the Program – All students who enroll in the Lexington Public Schools complete a home language survey. Students are assessed when we learn that another language is spoken in the home. Any student evaluated who is not proficient in English is enrolled in the program until such time as they demonstrate English proficiency in the four domains of reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
4. Program Emphasis – Research shows that academic language proficiency is key to student achievement, particularly true for students with limited English proficiency. To this end, the ELL program uses research-based English language immersion materials as a vehicle for language instruction.
5. Successful Outcomes – Lexington's English learner program consistently makes Annual Measurable Achievement Outcomes (AMAO), a component of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under NCLB. Graduates of our program do particularly well due to result a comprehensive curriculum, excellent instruction by our certified ELL teachers, good follow-up monitoring, and exposure to Lexington's culture of high academic achievement.

6. Professional Development and Classroom Support – We continue to offer professional development to elementary and secondary teachers in effective classroom instruction for English learners. Our classroom teachers indicate that they appreciate the training and would like more. In response, we have updated our professional development courses to include extensive information on building vocabulary and promoting critical thinking and learning strategies. ELL teachers are spending more time in classrooms working with classroom teachers, offering assistance in “sheltering their instruction,” using techniques that make content instruction more comprehensible to a student who is not yet fluent in English. In each school, ELL teachers use technology to enhance their instruction.

I look forward to sharing with the School Committee more information about the district’s ELL Program and answering any questions you might have.

Sincerely,

Robyn Dowling-Grant

Robyn Dowling-Grant

Cc: Carol A. Pilarski

English Learner Education

Robyn Dowling-Grant, Ed.M.

May 10, 2011



Today's Topics

- ✦ Growth of the program
- ✦ Student demographics
- ✦ Assessment
- ✦ Metrics of success
- ✦ Professional Development
- ✦ Questions



Immigration and Massachusetts

★ The DESE reports 955,563 Massachusetts students, of which 16.4% speak a language other than English, and 7.2% are limited English proficient.



...And in Lexington

- ✦ From 2006-07 until 2010-11, the LEP population grew by 78%, from 196 to 350 students.
- ✦ 1296 students have a primary language other than English (FLNE) (20.4%).
- ✦ 350 students are limited English proficient (LEP) (5.5%).
- ✦ 274 English learners are at the elementary level.

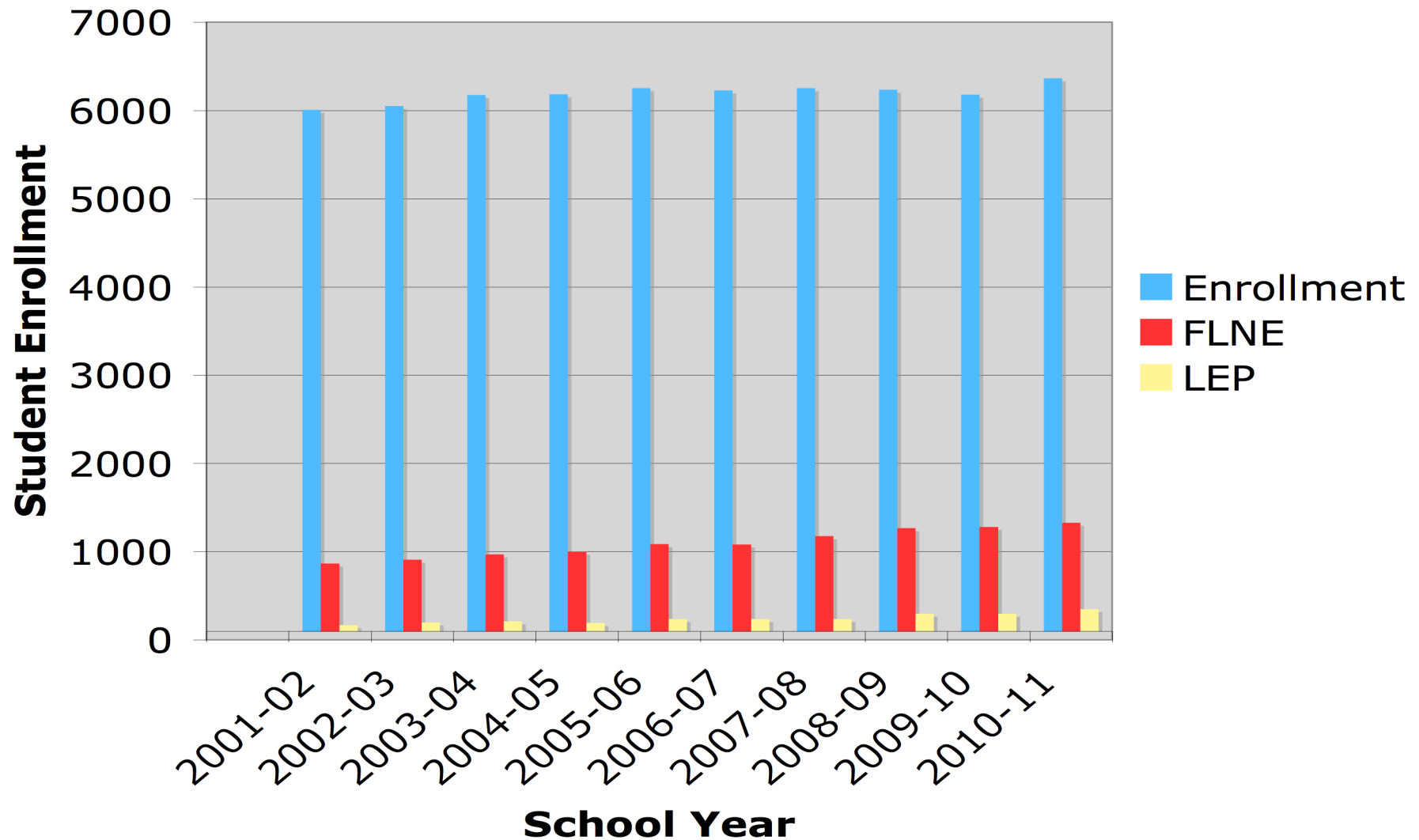
As of 03/2011

Who Are Our Students?

- ✦ 27.6% of our students are Asian.
- ✦ Our major language groups are Korean, Chinese (Traditional and Simplified), and Japanese.
- ✦ Our students come with over 50 languages, including Hebrew, Dutch, Russian, and the Indian dialects.

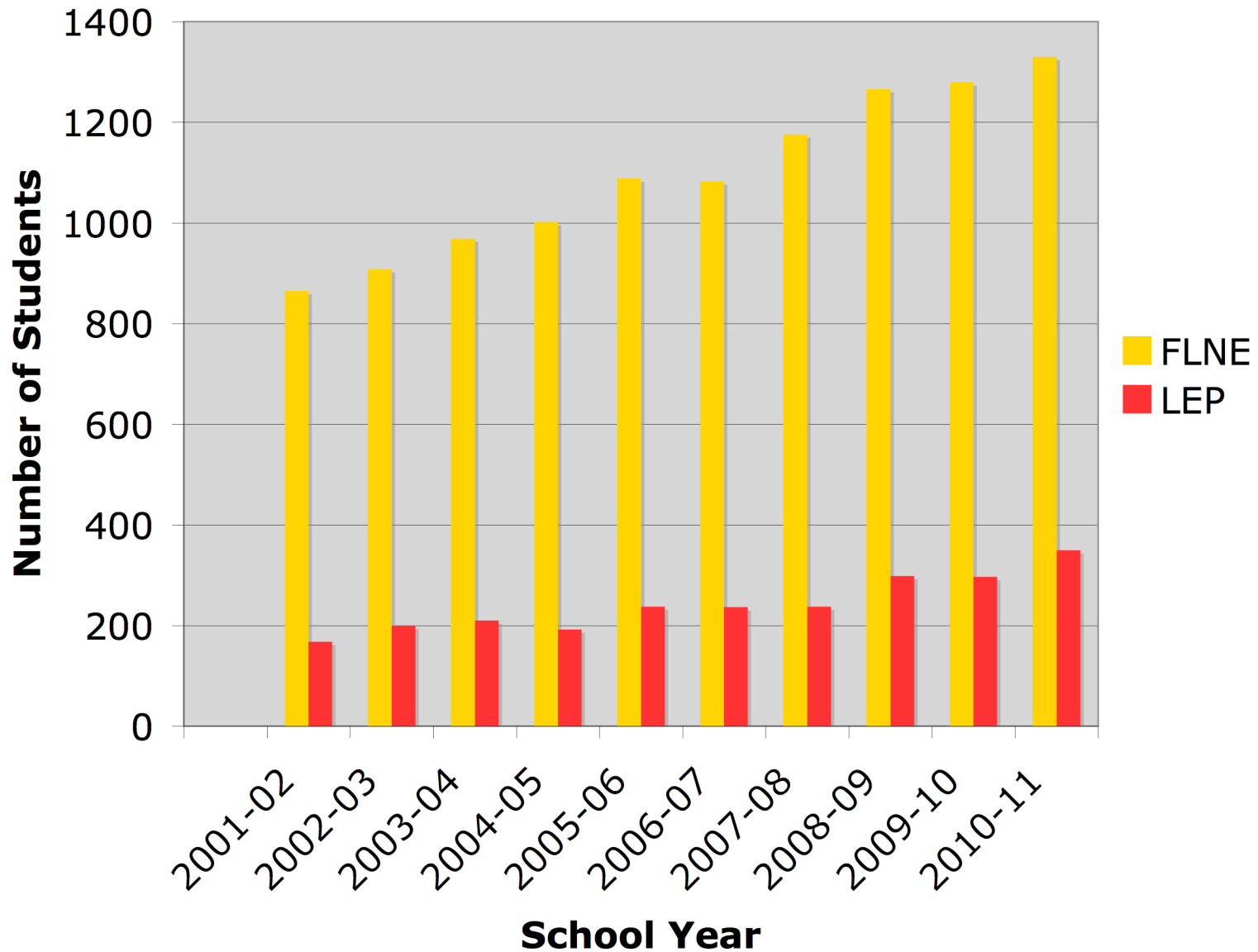


Growth of Foreign Language Speakers in Lexington



Department of Elementary and Secondary Education data

Growth of FLNE versus LEP



Department of Elementary and Secondary Education data

Our ELL Program - Identification

- ✦ All students who indicate a language other than English on their Home Language Survey are assessed.
- ✦ We use the Stanford English Language Proficiency Assessment which provides data in the domains of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Students who fall beneath the “proficient” score are placed in the program.

Our Program -Instruction

- ✦ Typically, identified students are provided with 30-45 minutes per day of English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction.
- ✦ Our instruction uses academic materials (*Avenues* at elementary level and *Keystone* at secondary level) as a vehicle for language development.
- ✦ Academic language is learned in context, which is necessary for optimal achievement.
- ✦ We place a strong emphasis on learning and using academic language.

What is Academic Language?

Academic Language is
“the set of words,
grammar, and
organizational strategies
used to describe
complex ideas, higher-
order thinking processes
and abstract concepts.”

Zwiers, 2008



Why Does Language Matter?

According to Graves & Fitzgerald (2006) systematic and comprehensive vocabulary instruction is necessary for English learners because:

- Content area texts contain sophisticated language;
- Reading performance tests rely on wide-ranging vocabulary;
- English learners' vocabulary instruction must be accelerated; and
- Deep understanding of word meaning is challenging for English learners.

When are Students Exited?

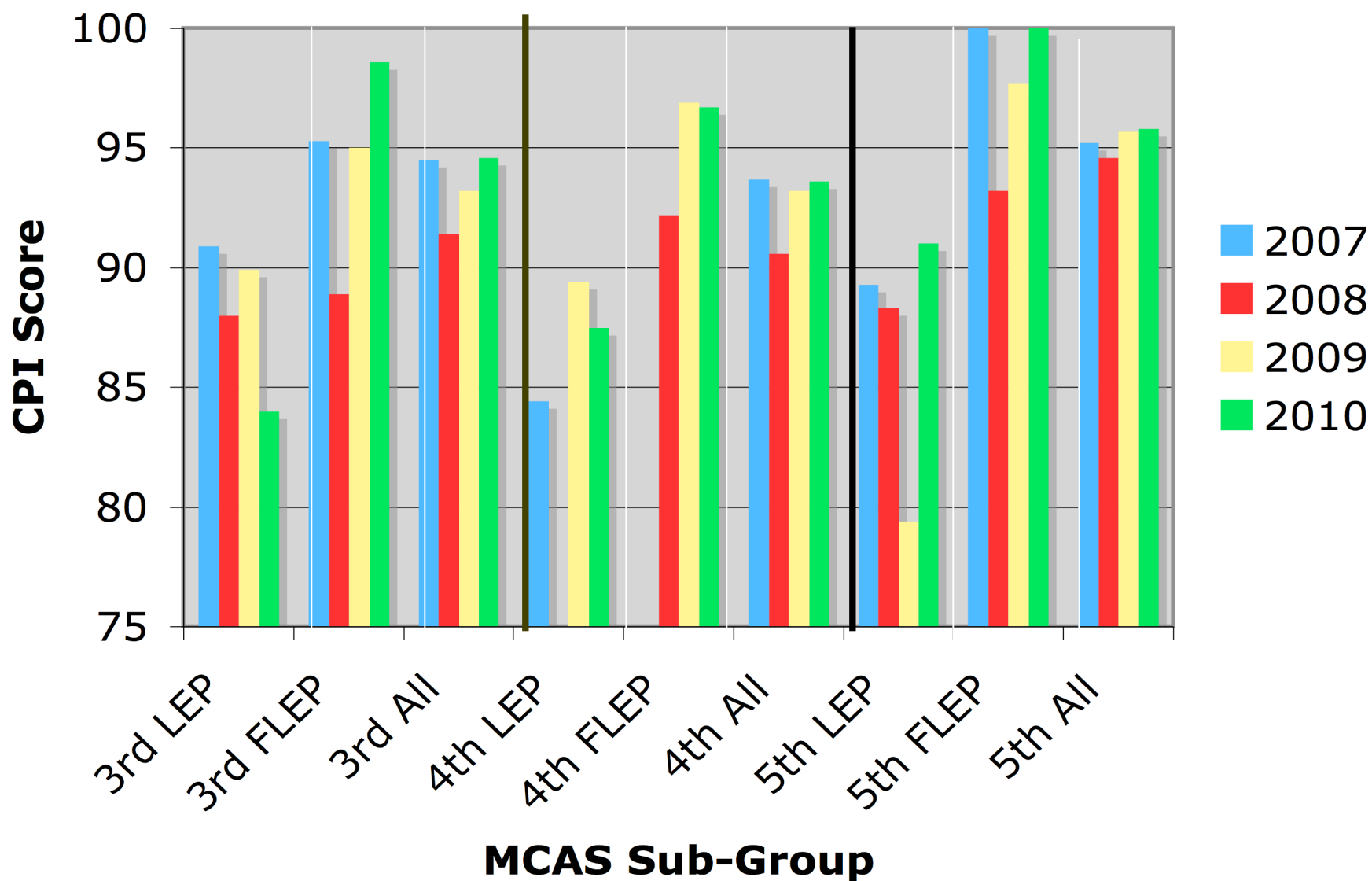
- ✦ Students are exited from the program when they have scored 510 on the MEPA, score “proficient” on ELA MCAS, and can perform well in the mainstream classroom.
- ✦ Students typically exit in 3-5 years .
- ✦ Since it takes 5-7 years to become fluent in academic English, most students require classroom support even after they exit the program.
- ✦ An exited student who is unable to perform in the classroom may be brought back into the program.

What is CPI?

(Composite Performance Index)

MCAS Performance Level	Reading Comprehension Raw Score	CPI Points per Student
Above Proficient	43-48	100
Proficient	35-42	100
Needs Improvement - High	28-34	75
Needs Improvement - Low	21-27	50
Warning - High	11-20	25
Warning - Low	0-10	0

MCAS Results 2007-2010



Professional Development and Classroom Teacher Support

- ✦ 154 teachers enrolled in category trainings since 2007
- ✦ Revised trainings to better serve Lexington students
- ✦ Provided native language texts in each of the schools (literature, resource books)
- ✦ All schools use technology in their instruction: 2 use Smartboards, 7 use projectors, and 1 uses ELMO)
- ✦ Teachers offer in-class support and provide language expertise when devising student intervention



Any
Questions?