

QUINCY SCHOOL COMMITTEE

TEACHING and LEARNING SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, October 28, 2013

A meeting of the Teaching and Learning Subcommittee was held on Monday, October 28, 2013 at 3:30 pm in the Teacher's Dining Room at Quincy High School. Present were Mrs. Kathryn Hubley, Ms. Barbara Isola, and Mrs. Emily Lebo, Chair. Also attending were Superintendent DeCristofaro, Deputy Superintendent Kevin Mulvey, Mrs. Mary Fredrickson, Ms. Beth Hallett, Mrs. Maura Papile, Mrs. Erin Perkins, Ms. Madeline Roy, Mr. Keith Segalla, Mr. Stephen Sylvia, Ms. Judy Todd, and Ms. Laura Owens, Clerk.

Mrs. Lebo called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

Mrs. Perkins shared the **Literacy Program Improvement Plan**; the Literacy Program provides interventions to struggling readers in Kindergarten through Grade 3 to develop foundational skills that will provide students with the ability to read and comprehend texts across all disciplines. The Literacy Team uses a Three-Tier Model of reading interventions: Tier I students receive core instruction in regular classroom; Tier II are at some risk and require supplemental instruction; Tier III are at-risk for reading achievement and require intensive interventions.

Reflecting on last year's goal, Goal 1, which focused on decreasing the number of Tier III students to 8% was not met. The DIBELS Next Assessment was renormed with more rigorous standards, with the University of Oregon projecting an up to 40% increase in students needing services. Under the new benchmarks, 32% of students were identified as needing interventions. With the implementation of these benchmarks, the Literacy Program focus is shifting from remediation after failure to an early intervention model. For Goal 2, the goal of raising the number of students at Grades 2 and 3 who read above grade level by 10% was reached. A Literacy Needs Assessment was completed to analyze the Literacy practices in the district. Five areas of recommendation came from this assessment and several are included in 2013-14 goals.

Mrs. Lebo asked what happens at Grades 4 and 5 when student scores indicate interventions; Mrs. Perkins clarified that classroom teachers work with this population.

Ms. Isola asked if best practices are shared between schools. Mrs. Perkins said that information is shared through the Literacy team and many schools are adopting common elements, such as Walk to Read. Mrs. Lebo asked for the numbers of students at each school that are reflected by the percentages.

Mrs. Perkins thanked the School Committee for their commitment to staffing the Literacy program. Ms. Isola expressed concern that Tier II students are not universally offered services. She requested additional information about what the budget impact would be to add services for these students. Mrs. Perkins said that with the change in the DIBELS Benchmarks, additional students are in the Tier III, further adding to the caseload for the Literacy staff.

The Literacy Program Goals for 2013-14 are: (1) The Literacy Team will support the district goal of developing proficient students, through the building of foundational skills in grades K-3 so that students read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension. This will be evident by an increase in the number of Tier I student by 3%. Professional Development will include Pre-Kindergarten and classroom teachers; all teachers will be able to access the DIBELS Next Data System in order to monitor progress. (2) In order to address recommendation 1 and 3 of the May 2013 Literacy Need Assessment, by June 2014, the Literacy Team will support the elementary school teaching staff through the identification, alignment, and assessment of reading interventions. This will be evident through the development of an alignment guide, which identifies interventions and assessments that align with all core literacy components as well as the 2011 Massachusetts ELA and Literacy Framework.

Ms. Isola made a motion to approve the Literacy Program Improvement Plan. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Hubley and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Ms. Hallett then presented the **English Language Learners Program Improvement Plan**. This year, Quincy Public Schools English Language Learner students have more access than ever to mainstream curriculum. At the high schools, both schools now have full services at all grades, with nine ELL teachers and a part-time department head across the two schools. Additional positions were added for Elementary and Middle Schools in the FY2014 budget to meet the need for ELL services. For RETELL, 65 teachers completed the SEI Endorsement Course last spring and there are currently 8 courses, plus an Administrator Course running this fall.

Reflecting on last year's goals, Professional Development opportunities were provided to all Quincy Public Schools staff (ELL teachers and classroom teachers), including WIDA and ACCESS. ELL Vertical Teams worked on incorporating WIDA into everyday classroom instruction and ELL Curriculum Maps are being developed. For Goal 2, mandatory training for ELL staff for ACCESS for ELLs was completed. Additional teachers will be trained this year and ELL staff must be recertified; following this year, recertification will extend to every two to five years. Data is generated from this test that gives a clearer picture of the whole student.

In reviewing MCAS Assessment data, Quincy Public Schools is above state levels all grade levels for all curriculum areas tested. 98% of ELL students were proficient or above on the Grade 10 ELA MCAS. In Math, Grade 3 has 95% at proficient or above and Grade 4 has 92%. For Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives, Progress and Attainment were both exceeded, but the Cumulative PPI target was not achieved.

Goals for 2013-14: (1) Vertical Teams will focus specifically on improving ELL students' writing about increasingly complex texts. This will be measured by 80% of all ELLs increasing by their individual writing proficiency level on the 2014 ACCESS for ELLs assessment by 0.5. This goal will be supported through utilizing the *Cornerstone* and *Keystone* programs, collaborating on a crosswalk Curriculum Map between *Journeys* and *Cornerstones*. (2) ELL teachers will collaborate with each other to continue building, revising, and implementing full ELL curriculum maps for Grades K-5 by grade and English Language Proficiency Levels that align curricula to all aspects of the WIDA framework and the 2011 MA Curriculum Frameworks for ELA/Literacy. For the Middle and High School levels, the goal is essentially the same, but focused on Speaking proficiency. Mrs. Lebo asked for a breakdown of the current student levels on ACCESS that provide the baseline for the growth goal.

The ELL Team Goals (1) The ELL Team will fully support ELL program teachers in grades K-12 as they focus on their goal of improving ELL students Productive Language proficiency levels (Writing and Speaking) as measured by the January 2014 ACCESS for ELLs Assessment. (2) The ELL Team will work together to encourage each other and QPS Academic Teachers of ELLs to enroll in and complete the appropriate SEI Endorsement courses as part of the Massachusetts RETELL Initiative in order to properly support and evaluate teachers of ELLs at each school in the district.

Ms. Isola made a motion to approve the English Language Learners Program Improvement Plan. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Hubley and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Mr. Keith Segalla and Mr. Stephen Sylvia, Education Technology team co-chairs then presented the **Education Technology Program Improvement Plan**. Mr. Segalla began the presentation by noting that Education Technology is playing a significant role in teaching and learning at every school. From the elementary to the high school level, providing this technology is a collaborative effort including parents, teachers, administrators, the School Committee and Mayor. The Education Technology team is made up of principals, assistant principals, and administrators representing all grade levels. At the request of team members, the team will meet monthly this year to work towards the team's goals.

Goals for 2013-14: (1) The Educational Technology Team will continue to support and promote education technology resources that will work to enhance the teaching and learning experiences for both the staff and students in the Quincy Public Schools. We will provide focused outreach to our

staff, students, and parents on using these technological resources to support and strengthen the home-school relationship as it relates to student learning, virtual learning, library resources, and communication. Mr. Sylvia spoke of the Education Technology Team as a key opportunity for interaction with the Information Technology staff to hear the perspective of Principals and Program staff from Special Education, Curriculum, and English Language Learners. Mr. Sylvia highlighted particular action steps: At the elementary level, the new reading and math curriculums have technical components used in classrooms and at home. ThinkCentral is the online home for these programs and the team is focused on how teachers can be supported in fully utilizing the program. Ms. Isola asked about students who may not have home computer access; Mr. Sylvia said this is a constant area of analysis, and options for alternate access are discussed. At many elementary schools, curriculum initiatives are underway with Library Support Teachers for keyboarding, internet safety, and digital citizenship. In some locations, keyboarding is an extended day activity. Mrs. Lebo stressed the importance of keyboarding, this will be essential to PARCC completion. This spring's pilot will highlight the needs.

In collaboration with principals, the Education Technology Team will work to strengthen the home-school connection, sharing information about classroom technology integration and online curriculum resources at system-wide events, PTO meetings, and school-based curriculum events. Ms. Isola agreed that these are valuable ways to address parent anxiety over the new Common Core Standards and technology access.

(2) During the 2013-2014 school year, the Educational Technology Team members will assist with the design, development, and implementation of training or professional development opportunities to support classroom use of the educational technology, currently in place in the Quincy Public Schools. For example, ThinkCentral, Reading Eggs, Study Island, and Destiny Library Manager are all enhanced by data integration with the Aspen X2 Student Information System. For principals, teachers, and administrators, the Education Technology team will be assisting to support the Baseline Edge transition for educator evaluation.

Ms. Isola moved approval of the Education Technology Program Improvement Plan and Mrs. Hubley seconded the motion. On a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Ms. Isola made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:45pm. Mrs. Hubley seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.