

QUINCY SCHOOL COMMITTEE

TEACHING and LEARNING SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, March 24, 2014

A meeting of the Teaching and Learning Subcommittee was held on Monday, March 24, 2014 at 5:00 pm in the 2nd floor Conference Room of the NAGE Building. Present were Mrs. Kathryn Hubley, Mrs. Anne Mahoney, Mr. David McCarthy, and Ms. Barbara Isola, 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, Ms. Judy Todd; Ms. Allison Cox, President of the Quincy Education Association; and Ms. Laura Owens, Clerk.

Mrs. Perkins reviewed the status of the Early Childhood Program Improvement Plan goals for Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, and Grades 1-3. A goal this year was to analyze whole and small group instruction and the use of data to individualize instruction. The goal is to close achievement gaps as soon as possible in children's formal education, remediate deficits, and advance students as they are ready. As a part of the DDM initiative, Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten teachers have had time to work together through classroom visits, curriculum explorations, pacing guide updates, and identifying areas for assessment.

The NAEYC evaluation is completed at the Della Chiesa Early Childhood Center and the Snug Harbor Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten. Teachers create a detailed binder representing their work and everything from curriculum to safety and security issues are evaluated. The reviewer spends an hour in each classroom, reviews the binder and curriculum materials, then inspects school common areas, such as the playground. Safety concerns, missing evidence, or missed criteria are documented. No documentation has been requested to date and Della Chiesa was commended in their report. Additional schools will be completed this spring and during the next school year. Ms. Roy said the work of the teachers and Mrs. Perkins to prepare for this accreditation is extraordinary. Since the standards and criteria have changed since the last accreditation, even veteran teachers had to start afresh.

Mrs. Mahoney asked how often the accreditation is completed; every five years and this is the third accreditation in the program's history. Mrs. Mahoney asked if Kindergarten teachers without full-time paraprofessionals have had issues completing the additional work. Mrs. Perkins said that so far, the schools that have completed the process all have full-time aides. Mrs. Hubley noted that she had worked in the day care field and the amount of work that goes into this accreditation process.

Ms. Isola asked if there were any Pre-Kindergarten program wishlist items to think about at Budget time. Mrs. Perkins and Ms. Roy will work on preparing this.

Ms. Todd shared the progress towards the Middle School Math Inclusion Project goal. Teachers and administrators are collaborating on DDMs and Professional Development focused on Math. The Math resource guide identifies different reteaching strategies for teaching math skills that will bring students up to the standard level of instruction. Resource room teachers are utilizing this tool across the city, not just in preparation for assessments.

Classrooms were observed and best practices were developed from the observations: vocabulary and homework every day; utilizing common resources; targeting deficit areas. Teacher evaluations from professional development identified teacher priorities and alternative strategies. Consultant Christine Adams shared online resources and teachers used this as a springboard to research and share their own. A binder of best practices was created by each team, incorporating graphic organizers and other tools. An additional professional development session is planned and curriculum alignment will continue over the summer and focus on developing a pre-teach model to address deficit areas prior to inclusion. Dr. DeCristofaro suggested that this needs to be part of the upcoming middle school scheduling conversation. Ms. Isola is looking forward to seeing an impact on the MCAS scores, as this has been an area of concern.

The next item on the agenda was Home-School Connections. Ms. Roy spoke cited examples, including Squantum Elementary School's Common Core Standards presentation at a PTO meeting. The Wollaston Elementary School PTO had their annual MCAS presentation and included a ThinkCentral overview. Major shifts in Common Core and the impact on instruction and homework were shared. Atherton Hough had a curriculum evening focused on Grade 2 curriculum and Reading Eggs. Lincoln Hancock is preparing for an upcoming Math Night. Standards for Mathematical Practice will be emphasized; students use their strengths to assess how to approach a problem and come up with the correct solution.

Mrs. Perkins reviewed the Parent Academies; many of our teachers have appeared at multiple events at the school and district level and were generous about sharing their work. Understanding Your Child's Assessments was held last week; parents were engaged and really wanted to know how assessments and data were used to inform instruction. The Parent Academies have been successful in terms of teacher and administrator involvement. For next year, possible topics include grade-level expectations; transition from Pre-K to Kindergarten; how to support students with homework. In addition, there will be focus on how to recruit more parents to attend.

Mrs. Mahoney said that parents may not understand the value reading to your child every day and exposing children to language; a Pre-Kindergarten night might be a popular topic. Mrs. Hubley agreed that homework and study skills would be good topics for further exploration.

Mr. McCarthy thanked the presenters and is happy to hear the emphasis on Math skills; we have made many gains on the Literacy side, looking forward to similar progress for Mathematics. Mr. McCarthy said parents often express concerns about Math and being able to support students. Ms. Isola said that filming the presentations for sharing online and Channel 22 will help parents to learn about the issues.

Ms. Isola asked whether Open House or Parent-Teacher Conferences present opportunities for local workshops on resources and curriculum. Mrs. Perkins agreed this would be something to consider for the fall. Mrs. Mahoney suggested that PTO presentations could be filmed and shared as well. Online access might encourage future attendance.

Mrs. Hubley made a motion to adjourn the Teaching and Learning Subcommittee meeting at 5:55 pm. Mrs. Mahoney seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.