

QUINCY SCHOOL COMMITTEE

TEACHING and LEARNING SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, May 5, 2014

A meeting of the Teaching and Learning Subcommittee was held on Monday, May 5, 2014 at 5:00 pm in the 2nd floor Conference Room of the NAGE Building. Present were Mr. Bregoli, Mr. DiBona, 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. Kerry Ginty, Ms. Beth Hallett, Mrs. Meg McMillen, Mrs. Maura Papile, Mrs. Erin Perkins, Ms. Madeline Roy, Mr. Keith Segalla, Mr. Robert Shaw, Mr. Lawrence Taglieri, Ms. Judy Todd; Ms. Paula Reynolds, Citywide Parents Council Co-President; and Ms. Laura Owens, Clerk.

Ms. Isola called the meeting to order and introduced the first item on the agenda, a review of the Foreign Language programs. Ms. Roy presented a chart of information from other cities and towns on their Foreign Language programs for elementary, middle, and high school. 5 of 16 Gateway districts offer middle school foreign language, 3 of 6 DART comparison districts offer middle school foreign language. 71% of all cities/towns offer foreign language in middle school. This analysis doesn't provide details on whether these are core academic or specialist-based programs. Several other districts have unique elementary programs, including French Immersion in Milton, Italian in Medford, and two-way Spanish bilingual in Framingham.

In Quincy, all Grade 8 students take Spanish as a core academic class. There is currently one section of French at Atlantic. Instruction incorporates speaking and listening, grammar and vocabulary, reading and writing. Middle school principals are analyzing current programming and staffing as part of budget review. In Grade 9, students may take Spanish 2 (Standard or Honors) or retake Spanish 1, depending on middle school teacher recommendations.

Mr. Bregoli asked if we have language labs; our computer labs are utilized for this. Mrs. Hubley asked for the breakdown of students who retake Spanish 1 at high school. She said that parents have mentioned that Grade 7 Spanish might be helpful in students being better prepared for high school. Ms. Roy will follow up with the answer to this question.

Mr. DiBona asked for clarification on whether students are required to take Spanish in Grade 8. Ms. Roy said it is a requirement, unless a student has more pressing academic needs that may be addressed. Mrs. Mahoney asked about the program history in QPS. At one time, there was foreign language instruction in French and Spanish at Grades 7 and 8 and exploratory in both languages at Grade 6. Over time, budget cuts led to removing French as an option and Grade 7 instruction. Mrs. Mahoney said that the one year of middle school foreign language is an introduction to the

language. She asked how many high school students take a language other than Spanish, and how many students take two languages.

Ms. Isola asked if Gr. 8 students have Spanish every day and they do. She asked how many high school students take languages for more than the two required years. Ms. Isola asked for consideration for a middle school magnet program around foreign language. Another idea would be Grades 6-7 students having a foreign language elective.

Mrs. Hubley asked if two years of the same language were a graduation requirement and Mr. Shaw confirmed this. Mr. Bregoli asked if there had been a discussion about Latin being restored at the middle school level. Ms. Isola thanked the presenters and said this was the beginning of the discussion, with more to follow.

Dr. DeCristofaro introduced the next item on the agenda, reviewing the Ad Hoc Subcommittee meeting and subsequent discussions on the Instrumental Music program. Scheduling issues are being addressed moving forward at all middle schools to address time for band during the day without taking away from academic classroom time.

Ms. Hallett gave an overview of general music and choral program for elementary, middle, and high school levels. At the elementary level, general music teachers work with K-5 students on singing, music appreciation, rhythmic patterns, and beginning musical notation. The elementary staff has 6 full-time and 3 part-time teachers, 1 block per week for every student in elementary school. Winter and spring concerts at the elementary levels include all students.

At the middle school level, general music teachers work with all students and the curriculum includes music appreciation and music genres. Choral music is taught to Grade 5-6 students. Five middle school teachers see all students once per schedule cycle, an average of once per week. Rehearsal times are held before or after school on a voluntary basis. Winter and spring concerts include all students; students also sing at promotion and honor ceremony.

At the high school level, choral instruction is offered as an elective. Curriculum is focused on choral technique, sight reading, and performance skills. One choral director teaches at both high schools, and students attend one period per day. There is also a half-year elective available at QHS. Each high school has a select choir which meets after school once a week. Each school has a winter and spring concert, 'Tis the Season, rallies, graduation, and Grade 8 fly-ups. There are also outside events, including the Mayor's Inauguration, Rotary Club, and Community Service Learning celebration.

Mr. McCarthy asked Dr. DeCristofaro if there are staffing concerns. Dr. DeCristofaro said that Mr. Carew is very pleased with the growth of the program at both schools. Mr. McCarthy said it is great to see how both sides of the city benefit from his expertise.

Mrs. Mahoney asked if students in the middle school are required to take chorus; it is scheduled once per schedule cycle. For rehearsals, students often meet after school or before school. Mrs. Mahoney asked to discuss how band might be taught at a Grades 4-8 Sterling Middle School. Ms. Hallett said that Grade 5 middle school students are already taught on an instructional basis.

Mrs. Fredrickson then spoke about the Data Collection and Storage team's work on looking at the storage capabilities of Aspen, Baseline Edge, and EDWIN Analytics. Aspen has many security-related advantages, especially for teacher data. For DDMs, there will be pre- and post-assessments for all subjects and all grades; the data storage will be a massive task. Currently, information is imported into Aspen or keyed into a teacher's gradebook, but doesn't allow for analysis of progress over time.

Data Collection and Storage team consists of Mrs. Fredrickson, Ms. Roy, Mr. Keith Segalla, Mr. Robert Cavallo and Principals Dan Gilbert, Jim Hennessy, Steve Sylvia, and Larry Taglieri. Presentations have been made by a number of vendors, including Baseline Edge, our provider for Educator Evaluation. These systems' ability to store and protect information, re-associate data, and ease of importing data and documents are all criteria to be evaluated. Re-association will allow teachers to use historical information to see student's progression. The team is reviewing the pros and cons of each vendor's offerings. The next step is to visit school districts who are already utilizing these systems. A full presentation and cost estimate will be presented at a future School Committee meeting. Dr. DeCristofaro reminded the Subcommittee that this is an unfunded mandate, related to the District-Determined Measures and Educator Evaluations.

Mrs. Mahoney asked if we are looking at enterprise solutions that will work with Aspen. Mrs. Fredrickson said that everything we are looking at will communicate with Aspen in terms of rostering updates. Mrs. Fredrickson said it will be web-based, but whether it is cloud or server-based is still to be determined. Mrs. Mahoney asked if there are other considerations beyond assessment to consider. Mrs. Fredrickson said that the vendors are suggesting other considerations such as demographics. Mrs. Mahoney said that the ability to evolve into future needs and expectations will be key, mandates are pushing us in many different directions. Ms. Roy said the vendors are assisting in this process, as they are suggesting ideas to us. All of the vendors know that the landscape is continuing to shift. Mrs. Mahoney said we need to be able to generate the short term answers and continue to evolve, important not to get locked into something that won't be adaptive.

Mrs. Hubley made a motion to adjourn the Teaching and Learning Subcommittee meeting at 5:50 pm. Mrs. Mahoney seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.