

QUINCY SCHOOL COMMITTEE

TEACHING and LEARNING SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, November 8, 2012

A meeting of the Teaching and Learning Subcommittee was held on Thursday, November 8, 2012 at 3:30 pm at Quincy High School. Present were Ms. Barbara Isola and Mrs. Emily Lebo, Chair. Also attending were Superintendent Richard DeCristofaro, Ms. Christine Barrett, Ms. Jennifer Fay-Beers, Mrs. Mary Fredrickson, Ms. Beth Hallett, Ms. Maureen MacNeil, Mr. James McGuire, Mrs. Maura Papile, Mr. Keith Segalla, Ms. Judy Todd, Mr. Lawrence Taglieri, and Ms. Laura Owens, Clerk.

Mrs. Lebo called the meeting to order at 3:30 pm.

Mr. Lawrence Taglieri presented the **Broad Meadows Middle School** by reflecting on the opening of school and welcoming Grade 6 students from six different elementary schools; two hundred families attended this year's Open House. Extended day activities are up and running in the morning and afternoon at the school and the school has a dedicated staff of collaborative teachers and very active parents.

Reflecting on last year's goals, the Open Response goal was not met, but the students showed progress and outscored the state average on these types of questions. The goal of teaching research skills has been integrated into the Broad Meadows curriculum and was prescient in anticipating the Common Core Standards requirements. The anti-bullying initiatives were successful in educating the students and resulted in a decrease in the number of peer issues.

The Broad Meadows vertical teams met to review the data and strands and decided on a literacy focus across all curriculum areas for the ELA goal, utilizing the lessons from the Keys to Literacy professional development. Math initiatives include *OnCore* math, *VMath* for Special Education, *Study Island*, Math Assist, and utilizing the Student Support Block to focus on High Needs Improvement students in regular education for Math enrichment.

The school's goals for 2012-2013 are: (1) To enhance our students' literacy skills in all subject areas through the expanded use of informational texts with a focus on vocabulary acquisition and usage. We will measure this goal by exceeding a Composite Performance Index of 92.8 on the 2012-2013 MCAS, our target for closing the proficiency gap in ELA. (2) To increase the number of students scoring advanced by ten percent and to decrease the number of students scoring failing/warning by ten percent on the Mathematics portion of the Spring 2013 MCAS Test. (3) To promote healthy lifestyles for our students and staff by encouraging physical activity and proper nutrition during the 2012-2013 school year. The school's Wellness goal is promoted by the school nurse, physical education teacher, and health education teacher and promotes individual choices; many of the

school's traditional fundraisers/community service are active and the staff encourages all children to get involved.

In terms of facilities, both the Quincy Public Schools and the school's PTO have been enormously supportive of technology investment. The staff are very enthusiastic and have integrated technology into their classrooms.

Ms. Isola complimented the integration of the research goal into the literacy goal and addressing the issue of plagiarism. Mrs. Lebo complimented the project-based learning for Science and Social Studies and the integration of literacy into all of the curriculum areas.

Ms. Isola made a motion to approve the Broad Meadows Middle School Improvement Plan. Mrs. Lebo seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Mr. James McGuire presented the **Point Webster Middle School Improvement Plan**, speaking of the school's and how hard the dedicated staff works to fill parental, social, emotional gaps for this middle school population. Point Webster provides many positive academic opportunities and makes a difference for all students.

For 2011-2012, , goals for moving students out of the Warning and Needs Improvement categories for MCAS testing in ELA, Math, and Science into proficiency were not met across the board, but success was shown at multiple grade levels. The school is making progress, just missing the target PPI by one point (74 vs 75); for the high needs subgroup, the PPI was 63 vs a target of 65. Point Webster is classified as a Level 3 school due to the students with disabilities population that are hosted in the citywide Behavioral Growth and Development and Language Development classes. The school's demographics are challenging: almost 76% of the students are in the high needs category. For the goal of education on the subject of anti-bullying; the formal nature of the protocol has made a difference for students and the staff team is more adept at handling the situations as they arise.

Goals for 2012-13 are focused on student growth:(1) To increase the median Student Growth Percentile to 55% across all grade levels in ELA. (2) To increase the school aggregate Math Student Growth Percentile to 51 or higher. (3) To continue to provide the students of Point Webster Middle School with a safe and nurturing learning environment that provides students with an anti-bullying effort and protocol that aims to end bullying at our school. (4) A Healthier Generations School Wellness Team will be identified to design and implement wellness goals, to increase physical activity for students daily and through annual schoolwide events, to increase physical fitness and proper nutrition for staff by providing healthy activity choices; and to promote health food choices for all Point Webster Middle School staff and students.

Mrs. Lebo asked about funding for the Activity Stipend Account given the expiration of the 21st Century grant. Dr. DeCristofaro said that the elementary and middle school activity budget is being

reviewed and there will be funding forthcoming. Mr. McGuire said that before and after school activities are up and running despite the lack of definite funding source.

Ms. Isola made a motion to approve the Point Webster Middle School Improvement Plan. Mrs. Lebo seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Ms. Christine Barrett presented the **Sterling Middle School Improvement Plan**. The Sterling Middle School is a Level 2 school and showed moderate student growth at Grades 6 through 8; at Grade 5 there was dramatic growth. Students with disabilities showed an increase in proficiency and many categories that were below target still showed improvement over previous years. MEPA scores also showed positive growth. Last year's MCAS goals were met by various grade levels, especially grade 5 for Math and Science. There was positive improvement in the attendance and punctuality rates across all grades.

Goals for 2012-2013: (1) During the 2012-2013 school year, Sterling Middle School's Math MCAS results will have a 12% or higher schoolwide increase from Needs Improvement to Proficient. (2) During the 2012-2013 school year, Sterling Middle School's ELA MCAS results will have a 10% schoolwide increase from Needs Improvement to Proficient. (3) Sterling Middle School will decrease the number of absences and tardies in 2012-2013 compared to 2011-2012. (4) To identify and implement new wellness initiatives based on the Alliance for a Healthier Generation framework and school inventory.

Initiatives supporting the goals for this year include the Keys to Literacy focus on Vocabulary Routines and Comprehension to support Reading in the content areas and educational technology. The third goal is a continuation goal, focusing on improving attendance, including tardiness. The Wellness goal includes inserting activity during the day, working with the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, and retooling the school store to provide healthier choices.

Mrs. Lebo suggested adding a specific improvement target to the attendance goal. Ms. Isola asked about facilities issues that affect safety. The public address system has continued to be an issue as well as the telephone and internet access that is affected by the rain. There are many facilities issues for Sterling that will hopefully be addressed by a larger rehabilitation of the school.

Ms. Isola made a motion to approve the Sterling Middle School Improvement Plan. Mrs. Lebo seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Ms. Maureen MacNeil presented the **Atlantic Middle School Improvement Plan** by reviewing some of the highlights of this school community: the diverse population is served by the many extended day activities that enrich the middle school academic experience. The Atlantic staff is focused on providing a safe and secure school environment for their students. Looking at 2011-2012 goals, the majority of grades and subgroups met the MCAS goals, even if the aggregate did not. In grade levels

where the goals were not met, the achievement level was still very high. Growth data is very positive, with almost all grades within the moderate growth range with the exception of Grade 8 Math. Mrs. Lebo noted that Atlantic's scores and growth are phenomenal given that close to 50% of students do not speak English as a first language. Last year's anti-bullying goal was successful, recorded incidents declined. An assessment tool was used with students to survey feelings about the school climate, with generally positive results.

The school's 2012-2013 goals are: (1) Within the 2012-2013 school year, Atlantic Middle School will meet or exceed the 2013 CPI target at all grade levels in both the aggregate and high needs subgroups. Each discipline will continue to develop and implement successful instructional practices, strategies, activities, rubrics, and assessments designed to increase MCAS scores across the curriculum. Initiatives include a focus on nonfiction, Keys to Literacy, piloting the Common Core – aligned *Big Ideas* Math program for Grade 6 and *OnCore* in Grades 7-8. Numerous technology upgrades also support and enrich the educational experience. (2) The issue of bullying will continue to be addressed building-wide over the 2012-2013 school year by providing professional development/training for staff, relevant information for parents, and a range of in-class and extra-curricular presentations, lessons, activities, and initiatives for students. The emphasis will continue to be on providing a clear anti-bullying message, facilitating incident reporting, helping students develop appropriate responses to bullying, and ensuring a consistent, quick, and appropriate school response. In the spring, an evaluation tool will be provided to students in order to assess school climate and the effectiveness of the anti-bullying initiatives.

Initiatives to support the school's goals include an after-school mentoring program for newly-arrived students, to assist them in adjusting and making social connections sponsored by Quincy Asian Resources; MARC presentations; and presentations on bullying and cyber-bullying by the Quincy Police Department.

Ms. Isola complimented the plan's action steps that promote the anti-bullying goals, the emphasis on self-esteem, and the connection to academic achievement. Ms. MacNeil reiterated that the extended day programs are a big part of this support. Mrs. Lebo asked about whether any of the facilities issues are safety issues; Ms. MacNeil feels that the parking lot paving, outside flood lights, and stairs are all safety issues to be addressed.

Ms. Isola made a motion to approve the Atlantic Middle School Improvement Plan. Mrs. Lebo seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Mrs. Jennifer Fay-Beers presented the **Central Middle School Improvement Plan** by reflecting on last year's accomplishments including the implementation of a rotating class schedule that addressed staff concerns and models the high school schedule. Central Middle School is looking at parent engagement and educating the staff on ways to connect with parents in other ways than disciplinary or academic concerns. The school's focus on technology issues is partly about allaying fears by

providing training, tutoring, and support for integrating technology in the classroom. All of these accomplishments are preparation for the move to the new building.

Central's goals for 2012-2013 are: (1) To increase the percentage of students who score in the proficient or advanced category by 3% in all areas of the 2013 MCAS by aligning the curriculum to the Common Core. (2) To create a school culture that supports academic achievement and student wellness strengthening the connection between home and school during the 2012-2013 school year.

For initiatives to support the school's goals, the staff is using *Study Island* earlier as an intervention, curriculum area teachers are teaching Reading in the content area and using new informational texts. School culture goals are supported by Mix It Up Day (lunch table assignments) and Rachel's Challenge for Grade 7 students. In a post-presentation survey, Grade 7 students requested more Mix It Up days and other ways to interact with different students regularly.

Ms. Isola asked about the correlation between the growth model and MCAS scores. Growth is within the moderate range with the exception of Grade 6 Math. Mrs. Lebo complimented the emphasis on technology and professional development. Mrs. Lebo asked about the Accountability Data and expressed concern about the CPI which is based on 4-year weighted average.

Ms. Isola made a motion to approve the Central Middle School Improvement Plan. Mrs. Lebo seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Mrs. Lebo requested that at a subsequent Teaching and Learning Subcommittee, there be a discussion of some of the issues raised during the SIP presentations. Mrs. Fredrickson said she is working on additional information for presentation at the Teaching and Learning Subcommittee meeting on December 17.

Ms. Isola made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:35 pm. Mrs. Lebo seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.