

# QUINCY SCHOOL COMMITTEE

## TEACHING and LEARNING SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, January 27, 2014

A meeting of the Teaching and Learning Subcommittee was held on Monday, January 27, 2014 at 5:00 pm in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Conference Room of the NAGE Building. Present were Mr. Noel DiBona, Mrs. Kathryn Hubley, Mrs. Anne Mahoney, Mr. Dave McCarthy, and Ms. Barbara Isola, Chair. Also attending were Superintendent DeCristofaro, Deputy Superintendent Kevin Mulvey, 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.

Ms. Isola called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

Ms. Roy opened the presentation by noting that the meeting agenda is correlated to the second goal of the Teaching and Learning Subcommittee, to be kept updated on curriculum and assessment issues and needs. She reviewed that the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks incorporate the Common Core Standards; for Mathematics and ELA , the Frameworks are being fully implemented this school year. The Frameworks are the collaborative effort of DESE and teams of educators from across the state; they provide student learning outcomes and are considered a work in progress. Local communities use the frameworks to develop more specific curriculum. The new assessments (PARCC) will be based on the frameworks.

The Quincy Public Schools Curriculum Plan is in place to support all educators in the full implementation of these Frameworks, provide teachers and students with the materials necessary to meet the timeline for implementation, connect professional development opportunities, and address the RETELL guidelines. Grade level teams, vertical teams, and departments have analyzed the standards using the Crosswalks documents; and also have reviewed and realigned daily instructional practices and assessments. Model units have been provided by DESE and are being utilized as appropriate. New core resources have been piloted and purchased and analysis of gaps has been completed; information has been shared with parents through Family Nights, Parent Academies, and PTO meetings. Teams of teachers are revising or creating new pacing guides and course syllabi. Information about suggested, common, and DDM assessments is also included.

Mr. McCarthy asked whether Quincy is on schedule for the implementation. Ms. Roy said that we are on or ahead of schedule; DESE is expecting a lot to be accomplished and we are on track for this time-consuming transition. Teachers are spending a lot of time meeting in small and large groups. Grant funding and district funding have provided opportunities for summer work on pacing and curriculum alignment.

Ms. Isola asked for clarification about Common Core; in Quincy, we have always had frameworks and pacing and appropriate curriculum. Ms. Roy said there is a learning curve for using new materials and that in the 2nd year of implementation, teachers should feel more comfortable with extending how they customize instruction to their particular students. Ms. Roy said that the new Reading program, in particular gives a variety of resources and in the first year, teachers may find the wealth of possibilities overwhelming. Mrs. Mahoney noted that the Model Curriculum Units are another important avenue to assist teachers in implementing the frameworks.

Ms. Hallett introduced WIDA (the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment), under the umbrella of RETELL, but the standards are to be aligned with the frameworks for ELA and Math and replace the English Language Proficiency Benchmarks and Outcomes (ELPBO). These new standards are more comprehensive and relate to more than ELA, but include cross-curricular expectations. They are an overlay to the Math and ELA frameworks and are a way to modify instruction to meet the needs of different levels of English Language Learners (ELLs). Academic Language is the key to success for ELL students. WIDA provides English Language Proficiency Levels and directly links to the ACCESS for ELLs Assessment.

There are five English Language Development Standards that reflect the social and academic language expectations for ELLs, including Social and Instructional Language; the language of ELA; the language of Mathematics; the language of Science; and the Language of Social Studies. Music and Performing Arts, Humanities, Visual Arts, Health and Physical Education; and CTE also are complementary strands with their own language as well.

There are 6 English Language Proficiency Levels: Entering, Emerging, Developing, Expanding, Bridging, and Reaching (native language proficiency). There are four language domains: reading, writing, speaking, listening; writing is the most difficult to acquire. Sometimes students may be at the top proficiency level for listening and reading and be further behind in Speaking and Writing.

Over 200 teachers have been trained in WIDA and the training will be expanded to allow for a wider training. These standards will be fully implemented in the 2014-2015 school year. Ms. Roy said that DESE acknowledged the complexity of implementing these as an overlay and that teachers' creativity is key to the integration of WIDA.

ACCESS for ELLs replaced the MEPA exam; testing is currently underway. All four language domains are tested (Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing) and students receive scores for each, allowing for targeting instruction in areas needing development. Scores will be available in May. Over 1300 students are being tested in a five-week window. These scores are informative for all teachers, not

just ELL teachers. Specialists and classroom teachers can identify areas for modification and accessibility to help all students succeed.

Mrs. Mahoney asked for clarification on training. Ms. Hallett said this has been voluntary; 200 teachers across all grade levels are completing this training at night, on weekends, and over the summer. Ms. Hallett said that at the Professional Development team meeting, there was discussion of how to expand training further. Mrs. Mahoney asked about how teachers are being recruited to take advantage of the training opportunity. Ms. Hallett said that the SWELL Academy or other summer program instructors would be the next logical group to target for training. Teachers receive 15 PDPs for completing the course. Some schools have done site-based training on Tuesday afternoon during prep time. Mrs. Mahoney asked that for budgeting process, any information about stipends or other funding would be helpful. Videotaping trainings might help teachers see the value of training.

Ms. Todd presented on the Middle School Inclusion Math project, a collaboration with the DSAC Institute for Special and General Education Leaders. QPS's primary concern was defined as the low achievement of students with disabilities at the middle school level in mathematics. Contributing factors, barriers, and action steps were also identified. Inconsistent models for inclusion, professional development more focused on ELA were identified as contributing factors. Action steps were based on a clear, consistent definition of inclusion; establishing math focus teachers; new curriculum; involve teachers in planning for implementation of a consistent inclusion and reteach model. A DSAC Math Specialist will be meeting with teachers and principals and providing training on inclusion practices; observations are being conducted by team administrators. All of this work is aligned with the District's Educator Evaluation goals.

Dr. DeCristofaro said we are hoping to see the results of all of this hard work; Ms. Todd said while there has been some gradual improvement, we are hoping to see consistent, across the board improvement. Ms. Roy said we want all of our students to have a common math experience; common curriculum materials and instructional practices. Math teachers are part of vertical teams and DDM teams. Ms. Todd said that the PARCC test will not allow for the same accommodations that MCAS has; this will bring us in line with the rest of the country. Ms. Todd cautioned that there are basic skill deficiencies along with specific skill issues to be remedied.

Ms. Roy then presented on Home-School Connections: all teachers and principals are working to share information with families about the initiatives and transitions. For example, Lincoln Hancock Literacy Night, theme was The Gingerbread Man. All grade levels used this as a base by reading different versions, utilizing comparing and contrasting skills. Different grade levels had stations illustrating the work done at different levels through drawing and writing. Reading, writing,

reasoning, and thinking were all demonstrated. The Framework Anchor Standards and Foundational Skills are presented to students through "I will" statements. Bulletin boards of writing final copies are evidence of student achievement.

At the Middle School level, there will be a Parent Academy for the Aspen Student Portal at Central Middle School on January 28 at 6:00 pm. For High School parents, there will be nights for the Aspen Student Portal, and others for Transition to Grade 9/Course Selection, and Course Selection for Grades 10-12. Mrs. Mahoney asked for clarification of using Aspen to select courses for high school students; this will be done in March and utilized for the 2014-2015 school year. Ms. Isola thanked all of the presenters.

Mrs. Hubley made a motion to adjourn the Teaching and Learning Subcommittee meeting at 6:00 pm. Mrs. Mahoney seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.