

QUINCY SCHOOL COMMITTEE

TEACHING and LEARNING SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, November 20, 2013

A meeting of the Teaching and Learning Subcommittee was held on Wednesday, November 20, 2013 at 3:30 pm in the Teacher's Dining Room at Quincy High School. Present were Mr. Paul Bregoli, Mrs. Kathryn Hubley, Ms. Barbara Isola, and Mrs. Emily Lebo, Chair. Also attending were Superintendent DeCristofaro, Deputy Superintendent Kevin Mulvey, Ms. Christine Barrett, Mrs. Jennifer Fay-Beers, Dr. John Franceschini, Mrs. Mary Fredrickson, Mr. Daniel Gilbert, Ms. Beth Hallett, Ms. Maureen MacNeil, Mrs. Maura Papile, Mrs. Erin Perkins, Ms. Madeline Roy, Mr. Keith Segalla, Ms. Judy Todd, and Ms. Laura Owens, Clerk.

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

Principal Christine Barrett presented the **Point Webster School Improvement Plan**, noting the transitions underway at the school. Nine new staff members complement the school's talented veteran staff. Reflecting on 2012-2013 goals, there are positive trends to report including moderate growth. Grade 5 Math growth was 72% and the Average Percent Correct was higher than state average. The Wellness goal of raising Anti-Bullying Awareness and creating a positive school culture was met. 2013-2014 goals: (1) Point Webster students will demonstrate an increased ability to read and comprehend literary and informational texts. This will be evident by an increase of 2% or more on the school-wide average percent correct in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standard for Reading (from a base of 67%) as measured by the Spring 2014 MCAS Standards Report (CU406). (2) Point Webster students will demonstrate an increased ability to persevere and use reasoning to solve increasingly complex math tasks and complete open response questions. This will be evident by an increase of 2% or more in the area of mathematics (from a base of 64%) as documented on the Spring 2014 MCAS Standard Report (CU406). (3) Point Webster Middle School will assist students and staff to achieve an optimal level of wellness by implementing wellness initiatives during the 2013-2014 school year. Initiatives will be based on the Healthy School Program sponsored by the Alliance for a Healthier Generation.

Beyond system-wide initiatives such as educator evaluation, professional development will be used for training Grade 5 teachers on the new *Journeys* reading program and to meet and collaborate by subject and grade-level teams. Point Webster offers many extended day programs, with over 200 students enrolled in 10 different programs. The school's enrollment is growing, with 52 new students this year; class size is favorable with all at 23 or below. Point Webster is home to the citywide STARS Special Education program.

Mrs. Lebo asked about the high percentage of students in Grades 7 and 8 in the Warning category for Mathematics. Ms. Roy and Ms. Todd spoke of the targeted interventions for this year: along with the new curriculum for all grades, instruction will include a reteach model and school wide inclusion.

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

Mrs. Jennifer Fay-Beers presented the **Central Middle School Improvement Plan** and began by thanking the School Committee for their support in building the new school. In reviewing last year's goals, there is positive movement and highlights include that in ELA, 82% of all students were advanced or proficient, with Grade 8 at 90%. In Mathematics, 68% of all students were advanced or proficient. The School culture goal was focused on student wellness and home-school communication. The implementation of Engrade decreased the amount of concerns surfaced at mid-term or report card conferences since parents were immediately aware of issues. The Aspen Student Portal is open as of this week, so parents will once again have this access to grades and assignments.

Goals for 2013-2014: (1) Central Middle School's total average percent correct will increase in the area of mathematics, specific to Open Response questions (from a base of 64%). This will be evident through well-crafted arguments and justified solutions for increasingly difficult constructed response questions as evidenced by the 2014 MCAS Standards Report (CU406). (2) The school's total average percent correct will increase 2% from a base of 76% over one year on open response questions on the ELA MCAS test with a specific focus on helping students cite textual evidence in order to support conclusions and inferences drawn from texts (Reading Anchor Standard 1). (3) To increase parent involvement and student engagement in Wellness initiatives during the 2013-2014 school year.

The ELA goal will be an umbrella goal for collaboration with Science and Social Studies. Collaboration among teachers determined the areas of focus for writing in Math as well. Teachers will continue to work in vertical and grade-level teams to support these initiatives. Wellness goals will be supported through Family Nights, student wellness ambassadors.

Additional staffing at Central Middle School this year included an additional Guidance counselor, a full-time Librarian, and a custodian to supplement the staff in the new building. Guidance counselors work with the same cohort through their three years at the school. The Librarian has a Science background and is working with the vertical team on Technology standards. New initiatives for Central include the technology and collaboration among teachers to train each other; ELL classes located near ELA teachers; iPads for teachers and students; document cameras; laptops and computer labs; and constant communication with parents (Instant Alert, Student Portal on Aspen).

For class sizes, the larger class sizes between 24 and 28 are in Grade 7 APC and Grade 8 Neighborhood. Mr. Bregoli asked about the traffic issues around the new building. Mrs. Fay-Beers talked about the planning that was done with the Quincy Police and Traffic Departments; over time, parents and students have figured out their individual drop-off and pick up locations.

Mrs. Lebo asked about Grade 6 growth and why Central Middle School is a Level 2 school; Mrs. Fay-Beers said that work is still to be done to narrow the achievement gap for subgroups. Targeted interventions include using the Student Support Block for reteach opportunities, technology to support visual learners, and Resource Room teachers; parent involvement is also key to continued student success, but this is sometimes a difficult transition in middle school.

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

Acting Principal John Franceschini presented the **Sterling Middle School Improvement Plan**, by reflecting on last year's goals. In Math, although the goal was not fully met, there was continuing improvement and the staff will focus on higher-level reasoning skills. For ELA, the school was below target of the goal, but making improvement. Teachers will focus on strengthening reading skills to support writing. The third goal was focused on decreasing the number of absences and tardies and here the school has made inroads in underscoring the importance of consistent school attendance. The last goal was focused on Wellness and there were many opportunities for participation, including before and after-school activities and the annual community road race hosted by Sterling.

For 2013-2014, the schools goals are: (1) Sterling Middle School students will demonstrate an increased ability to read and comprehend complex literary and informational text by producing detailed and relevant written responses. This will be evident by an increase of 2% on Sterling's average percent correct for ELA (from a base of 64%) as documented on the Spring 2014 MCAS Standards Report (CU406). (2) Sterling Middle School students will demonstrate an increased ability to use higher level reasoning skills to solve multi-step math tasks. This will be evident by an increase of 2% in the average percent correct for Open Response questions (from a base of 45%) as documented on the Spring 2014 MCAS Standards Report (CU406). (3) To continue to identify and implement new initiatives while enhancing Sterling Middle School's current Wellness initiatives based on the Alliance for a Healthier Generation framework and school inventory.

Science, Social Studies, Health, and Library teacher curriculum action steps will work towards achieving the ELA goal. Vertical teams will work together to assess and adjust interventions. Math scores have been far below state averages; the staff will be utilizing the reteach model and Study

Island support. Extended day opportunities will be available to utilize the computer lab and utilizing the Student Support Block to reteach/reinforce. The Math vertical team is identifying students that are lacking basic skills at each grade to invite to an after school program focused on foundational skills. Mrs. Lebo feels that the Math goal is too low; while last year's expectation was high (and not met), it sent a message. Mrs. Lebo is concerned that raising the Average Percent correct by 2% will not move the median to an acceptable level.

The Wellness goal is a continuation of last year's goal and emphasizes the school culture: recognizing the diversity of our student population, improvement on attendance and tardies, enhanced communication with parents/guardians, and community service initiatives. PTO attendance is on the rise, the monthly parent newsletters highlight teachers and specialists, and the school uses Instant Alert, the Quincy Public Schools website, and Channel 22. Report card conferences are filling up; community service initiatives are ongoing throughout the year and get students involved with the school and community.

Dr. Franceschini thanked School Committee for the much-appreciated security upgrades are much appreciated and updated that the process for new building is underway with the Massachusetts School Building Authority. Mr. Bregoli asked about population stability affecting performance; Dr. Franceschini said that student mobility is an issue across grade levels, but seems to be less of an issue so far this year.

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

Principal Daniel Gilbert presented the **Broad Meadows School Improvement Plan** by speaking of the common goals of the school staff and how the momentum carries into school-wide achievement. The consistent message to students, parents, and the wider community is that the staff has a high bar of achievement. The staff is committed to the Conditions for School Effectiveness, to engaging with students, and making community service integral to their lives.

The school's goals for 2013-2014 are: (1) Broad Meadows students will demonstrate a growing understanding of increasingly complex text. This will be evident by an increase of 2% on the school-wide average percent correct in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standard for Reading as measured by Spring 2014 MCAS Report (CU406), using the base of 65% correct. (2) Broad Meadows students will demonstrate an increased ability to persevere and use reasoning to solve increasingly complex math tasks. This will be evident by an increase of 2% on the school-wide average percent correct, as documented on the Spring 2014 Math MCAS Standards Report (CU406), from a base of

59.8% correct. (3) To promote healthy lifestyles for our students and staff by encouraging physical activity and proper nutrition.

This year's goals are aligned with the district goals and action steps align to meet those goals. The upcoming PARCC tests will require reasoning skills, problem solving, and conceptual understanding; the Student Support Block will be utilized to assist students who need assistance with foundational math skills (computer lab and teacher interaction). The Wellness goal is focused on continuing to promote healthy lifestyles and communicate with parents through newsletters and events such as the Turkey Triathlon. Anti-Bullying initiatives include Rachel's Challenge and Black Out Bullying Day.

Ms. Isola asked about class sizes; the highest class size is 24 students.

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.

Principal Maureen MacNeil presented the **Atlantic Middle School Improvement Plan** and spoke of the school's diverse population, academic achievement, and extensive extended day activities to enrich the middle school experience. Ms. MacNeil thanked the School Committee for the recent security upgrades and noted that Atlantic's student population is comprised of almost 50% of students whose first language is not English. While only a small percentage of students receive ELL services, for many, their only exposure to English is at school.

Last year, a variety of action steps contributed towards achieving the ELA and Math goals: inclusion and reteach for Math; many initiatives to support literacy. Extensive data analysis is focused on identifying areas of improvement. The percentage of students receiving Advanced or Proficient in all grades increased and student growth is strong for both Math and ELA. In support of the anti-bullying school culture goal, the students saw a presentation from the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center, the school hosted a parent information breakfast, and an end of the year school survey showed positive results.

Goals for 2013-14: (1) Atlantic Middle School students will demonstrate an increased ability to read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and efficiently. This will be evidenced by an increase of 2% or more (from a base of 70%) in the area of English Language Arts as documented on the Spring 2014 English Language Arts MCAS Standards Report (CU406). (2) Atlantic Middle School students will demonstrate an increased ability to persevere and use reasoning to solve increasingly complex math tasks. This will be evidenced by an increase of 2% or more in the area of Mathematics (from a base of 70%), with a specific focus on open response items (from a base of 65%), as documented on the Spring 2014 Math MCAS Standards Report (CU406). (3) The Atlantic

Middle School Wellness Team will identify and implement wellness initiatives based on the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's Healthy Schools Program framework and school inventory for the 2013-2014 school year.

Action steps for ELA will focus on reading and writing with common rubrics; in Math, modeling abstract thinking and quantitative reasoning. Wellness goal will promote extended day activities. Ms. MacNeil concluded her remarks, noting that Atlantic Middle School is a vibrant school community and she is proud to be principal.

Mrs. Lebo complimented the ELA base of 70% average percent correct. Ms. Isola asked about parent communication; Atlantic's bilingual Guidance Counselor is a tremendous resource who is known and respected in the community, handles oral and written translation.

Ms. Isola asked about class sizes, there are larger classes at all grades, especially Grade 7, where there is a large neighborhood population, including a number of new students. Mr. Bregoli asked about space; and while there are no extra classrooms at the school, the building is in good shape overall.

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.

Ms. Isola made a motion to adjourn the Teaching and Learning Subcommittee meeting at 5:30 pm. Mrs. Hubley seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.