

QUINCY SCHOOL COMMITTEE

TEACHING and LEARNING SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, February 24, 2014

A meeting of the Teaching and Learning Subcommittee was held on Monday, January 27, 2014 at 5:00 pm in the 2nd floor Conference Room of the NAGE Building. Present were Mr. Paul Bregoli, Mr. Noel DiBona, Mrs. Kathryn Hubley, Mrs. Anne Mahoney, 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.

Ms. Isola called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm. Senior Curriculum Coordinator Madeline Roy opened the presentation on the upcoming transition to the PARCC. The new Common Core standards are more rigorous and complex and have significant changes and shifts from prior standards. Their strong emphasis on reading, writing, critical thinking, and analytical skills must be assessed and MCAS does not assess these skills. With Massachusetts currently implementing full adoption of the Common Core State Standards, new assessments to reflect these new standards have been in development by a consortium of 18 states called the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC).

The two summative assessments in development are Performance-Based (PBA) and End-of-Year (EOY). Indications to date are that PARCC will provide a more robust assessment system than MCAS; educators from DESE were very involved in the creation of plan. The PBA will focus on extended tasks, applications of concepts and skills; the End of Year Assessment would be innovative, computer-based items. The transition from MCAS to PARCC will go on through 2015, beginning with a field test in randomly selected schools/classrooms beginning in spring 2014. The field test items will be assessed in Fall 2014 and if the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) votes to accept PARCC, all students in grades 3-8 will take PARCC rather than MCAS in 2015. MCAS will be given for Grade 10 students through 2018.

Fifteen states will be participating in this spring's field test, involving randomly selected schools and students, including 65% of schools in Massachusetts. In Quincy, three elementary schools, all five middle schools, and North Quincy High School will be involved in field testing the PBA. For the EOY, two different elementary schools, three of the five middle schools, and both high schools will be participating. A total of 397 students will take the field test, some online and others in the traditional paper/pencil format. The testing window overlaps with MCAS (March for ELA and May for Mathematics); all students that participate in the PARCC field test will also take the MCAS.

No student, school, or district results will be reported for the PARCC field test. The purpose of the field test is to examine the quality of items to assist in creating the final assessments; to pilot assessment administration procedures; and to give schools and districts the opportunity to experience the administration of PARCC. For the online assessments, accommodations will be available to all students, including use of keyboard, audio amplification, highlighter, magnification, spell checker, and text to speech. Other accommodations will be available to ELL students and students with disabilities. Communications to parents will include general information posted on the QPS website and social media platforms and letters sent directly to the families of students participating in the PARCC field test.

PARCC has been developed to be technology platform agnostic and the consortium will provide training, site readiness, and customer support. IT has been working through the Readiness Toolkit, assessing devices, site Internet speed/bandwidth, operating system upgrades, and accessories.

Mr. Bregoli received confirmation that MCAS and PARCC will be administered on different days and they will be. He also asked about accommodations for students with IEPs; students who currently take the Alternative MCAS will not be field tested at this time. Mr. Bregoli is concerned about stress on students and the loss of time on learning.

Mrs. Mahoney asked if communities were given the option to not participate, but this was not an option. QPS was allowed to negotiate specific schools based on technology readiness issues. Mrs. Mahoney suggested that parent communications need to explain the process as clearly as possible, without assuming that parents have any background information.

Mrs. Hubley asked if there would be an issue with overlap with AP testing in May for high school students; this is unlikely because PARCC testing doesn't impact Grade 12 students and the schools will work to ensure there is not an issue for any Gr. 11 AP students. Mr. DiBona asked for clarification on the impact on MCAS testing. Mrs. Fredrickson said that MCAS is the first priority and will not be impacted by PARCC scheduling.

Mr. Bregoli asked for clarification on whether there will be two tests again next year, but it will be either PARCC or MCAS, depending on BESE's decision after the field test items are analyzed. Mr. Bregoli asked about accommodations such as reading math problems aloud, currently granted for MCAS. Ms. Todd said that some accommodations that were allowed for MCAS will not be allowed (for example, using a calculator). Mr. DiBona asked about sample tests; these can be found at the PARCC website: <https://www.parcconline.org/samples/item-task-prototypes>. Mrs. Hubley suggested emphasizing that there test results will not be generated for schools or sent to parents.

Ms. Isola asked about the potential for the Grade 11 tests providing endorsements and whether colleges are collaborating on this. Mrs. Fredrickson said this is in the early stages, no specifics have been provided yet. Ms. Isola asked if there was information about how BESE will make their decision and Ms. Roy said there has not been any information about rubrics or criteria released yet.

Ms. Isola said that this transition is particularly difficult since we don't know what the implications are for students and parents. When MCAS was implemented, many concerns were expressed by parents and administrators, but in the long run, the transition has been positive. Ms. Isola hopes that the BESE will allow an opportunity for public comment to assist with acceptance. Ms. Isola thanked the Curriculum and Assessment for their efforts.

Mrs. Mahoney made a motion to adjourn the Teaching and Learning Subcommittee meeting at 6:20 pm. Mrs. Hubley seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.