

QUINCY SCHOOL COMMITTEE

TEACHING & LEARNING SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, November 12, 2015

A meeting of the Teaching & Learning Subcommittee was held on Thursday, November 12, 2015 at 5:00 pm in the Coddington Building. Present were Mr. Bregoli, Mrs. Kathryn Hubley, Mrs. Anne Maoney, and Ms. Barbara Isola, Chair. Also attending were Superintendent DeCristofaro, Mr. Peter Dionne, Ms. Beth Hallett, Mr. James Hennessy, Ms. Margaret MacNeil, Deputy Superintendent Kevin Mulvey, Mrs. Diane O'Keeffe, Dr. Maryanne Palmer, Mrs. Maura Papile, Mrs. Ann Pegg, Mrs. Erin Perkins, Ms. Madeline Roy, Mr. Keith Segalla, Ms. Judy Todd; and Ms. Laura Owens, Clerk.

Ms. Isola called the meeting to order, asking each Elementary Principal to present short summaries of their School Improvement Plans. Ms. Isola also noted that the Facility Needs will be referred to the Facilities & Security Subcommittee.

Principal Ann Pegg reviewed the **Merrymount Elementary School Improvement Plan**, reviewing some of the many student initiatives now formalized under the PBIS system. Grade 5 students are leaders, with a color guard that raises the flag each day. Unity Day calls attention to anti-bullying initiatives; for example, every child makes a link in a chain, positive ideas of how to be a supportive community member.

In reviewing the 2014-2015 MCAS goals, the ELA goal was not met across all grades. Grades 4 and 5 did achieve the goal, but Grade 3 showed a decline. For Math, last year's performance was sustained, although there were positive gains in Grades 4 and 5. In Science, gains were seen for all students and subgroups.

Looking ahead, Merrymount's professional staff will organize into voluntary study groups for ELA and Mathematics grade level vertical teams to focus on collaborative reflection on instructional practices and discussion of relevant readings.

Principal Maryanne Palmer presented the **Parker Elementary School Improvement Plan**, reviewing that while 81.4% of the school's students are high needs, the school has made significant progress towards narrowing the proficiency gap with consistent growth in both ELA and Math, above target performance in all subgroups. The students' gains can be attributed to collaborative efforts for student learning among all staff including classroom and program teachers, student support, and special education. All student needs are identified and met and collaboration is a priority when the grade level teams meet weekly with interventionists. Student work is reviewed and scoring rubrics developed. For this year's plan, teachers worked collaboratively to create action steps to contribute to schoolwide improvement.

Parker's third goal focused on the development of the whole person, health, wellness, and safety for students and staff. Dr. Palmer said the new windows are fantastic, make a huge difference in the school. Students have noted that the new windows are an expression of the community supporting the school. Ms. Isola asked about North Quincy High School student mentors; over 60 students come to Parker weekly to tutor students. Dr. Palmer said wonderful connection between the schools. Ms. Isola asked about family connections and Dr. Palmer said there is a big increase in parent involvement. Translation is available at the PTO meeting, but the school is still looking for ways to make the connections more fluid. Parents have the opportunity to learn English through the partnership with QARI.

Principal Diane O'Keeffe presented the **Beechwood Knoll Elementary School Improvement Plan**. The school is evolving into a more diverse community, while continuing to be strong. This year's Open House brought out more families than ever and the school does outreach to parents to contribute to different ways, such as volunteering in classrooms and the media center. The annual Fall Festival was once again a huge success and raised over \$20,000. An outdoor garden center is being planned with Girl Scouts for this spring.

In reflecting on last year's goal, the ELA goal was not met, although gains were realized. 74% of students were Proficient or above. For Mathematics, 78% scored in that category. For Science, 79% were Proficient or above, up 20% from the previous year. PBIS has been incredible at Beechwood Knoll; the school year began with setting expectations of behavior in all areas in the school, classroom, hallways, and playground. Students are recognized on a monthly basis.

Mrs. O'Keeffe noted that a new roof and doors and windows will be installed in Summer 2016. Mrs. Mahoney asked about summer maintenance work that required digging up the front of the school. Mrs. O'Keeffe said an extensive plumbing issue was resolved, which required underground access to piles. The lawn has been re-seeded and the request has been made for the plantings to be restored in the spring. Ms. Isola said that the Fall Festival had their Silent Auction online, which was a great way to extend the reach.

Mrs. Mahoney asked if it is usual that Grade 3 is having lower scores, and Mrs. O'Keeffe said this grade is not consistently an issue. Ms. Isola said that every year is a different cohort of students, the scores can skew either way from year to year.

Principal Peter Dionne presented the **Bernazzani Elementary School Improvement Plan**, noting that the Bernazzani school culture has benefitted from the Peace Builders character-building program funded through PTO. This program complements the PBIS model, encouraging students to become better citizens in their school and community. Grade 5 peer leaders model appropriate behaviors, and the school's hallways, restrooms, and lunchrooms have shown increasing improvement. The "Golden Spatula" is awarded by the lunch attendants for best-behaved class daily and the Quincy After School Child Care staff are also using the PBIS model.

In reflecting on last year's goals, two grades achieved the 2% increase for both ELA and Mathematics, while Grade 4 did not. In looking at percentage of Proficient and Advanced, for both high needs and non-high needs, all showed improvement in Mathematics, and for ELA, gains were realized in Grade 3. For Professional Development, the new Elementary Report Card and using Aspen are large initiatives to integrate into the schools and teachers have found it beneficial to have Special Education module and integrated student accommodation information.

Bernazzani had a new heating system installed this summer and Principal Dionne thanked Shelly Dein, and Dave Scott from Public Buildings and contractor PJ Kennedy for their excellent communication and response to issues. In conclusion, Mr. Dionne thanked former Bernazzani student and Eagle Scout candidate Lucien Theberge for building Bernazzani's outdoor classroom deck in the marsh next to the school with his father and other scout volunteers.

Ms. Isola asked whether the heating system ventilation has been adjusted to be less obtrusive and it has, thanks to Public Buildings.

Principal James Hennessy presented the **Wollaston Elementary School Improvement Plan** and thanked School Committee for unwavering support for lower class sizes. Wollaston School is a brighter place because of new windows and the new look of the school reflects the vibrant community inside the building. Wollaston is an active community, with engaged staff and stakeholders, student leaders and parents who donate and volunteer, in the classrooms and library, and by facilitating the docent art program. Wollaston's teachers are engaged across the Quincy Public Schools, with representatives participating on the Elementary Report Card, DDMs, and Professional Development Teams, and sharing their experiences with all staff.

In reflecting on last year's goals, for MCAS performance, the percentage of students scoring Proficient or above exceeded state levels for all grades and subjects except Grade 4 math. High Needs student CPI averages in the 80s across all subject areas and work continues on narrowing the gap. PBIS has been successfully implemented and the Wellness Goal action steps will expand this year as there will be opportunities for the student council to take on a more active role.

Mrs. Hubley asked about the school's front walkway needing repair. Mr. Hennessy said it is not dangerous, but there are cracks in multiple places.

Mrs. Mahoney asked about Docent Art at all of the elementary schools. Wollaston and Bernazzani have Docent Art presented by parent volunteers. Snug Harbor and Parker's Library Support Teachers present Docent Art as part of their curriculum. Beechwood Knoll had parent volunteers coordinating the program previously, but have not had the program for the last two year. Merrymount's art teacher incorporates Docent Art into the curriculum.

Ms. Isola suggested that the Citywide Parent Council might be helpful in organizing parents to support Docent Art programs at all elementary schools.

Principal Margaret MacNeil presented the **Snug Harbor Community School Improvement Plan**, a collaborative plan that reflects the work of all staff. At Snug Harbor, there is a strong sense of community and that parents are partners in education. Snug Harbor hosts many successful family events, including a monthly Kindergarten parent-child day and student council created parent-child Wellness events. Last year, the first ever family kickball game was held and over 80 students and families participated; a family soccer game was also held last year.

Snug Harbor provides a safety net for students in need of intervention, both academically and social-emotional. PBIS has been fantastic for the school, Ms. McNeil loves that the whole staff, including custodians and lunch attendants are involved. Students know they can be recognized by any adult in the building and recognize the value of that. Snug Harbor has an extensive array of before and after school programs in the arts, sports, and academics. Ms. MacNeil takes pride in the Snug Harbor community, test scores are one part of a complex puzzle of student achievement.

Reflecting on last year's goals, the 2% increase APC was not met in every grade level, but gains were made at several. Grade 3 students were high performers, up 5% in Math and 3% in ELA. For the Wellness goal, opportunities for physical activity are present throughout the school day. Teachers and guidance counselors are implementing social thinking curriculums, partnering with the GNC on parent nutrition.

For 2015-2016, all elementary schools have similar goals for Mathematics and ELA, to increase performance by 1% over the average percent correct level achieved on the 2015 MCAS Assessments.

Mrs. Hubley motioned to approve the Merrymount, Beechwood Knoll, Parker, Bernazzani, Wollaston, and Snug Harbor Elementary School Improvement Plans. Mrs. Mahoney seconded the motion, and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Ms. Isola noted the universal favorable review of PBIS from all elementary principals and on behalf of the School Committee, really appreciates the work done on the School Improvement Plans.

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