

QUINCY SCHOOL COMMITTEE

TEACHING & LEARNING SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, November 16, 2015

A meeting of the Teaching & Learning Subcommittee was held on Monday, November 16, 2015 at 5:00 pm in the Coddington Building. Present were Mr. Bregoli, Mr. Noel DiBona, Mrs. Kathryn Hubley, Mrs. Anne Mahoney, Mr. David McCarthy, and Ms. Barbara Isola, Chair. Also attending were Superintendent DeCristofaro, Ms. Christine Barrett, Mr. Rick DeCristofaro, Jr., Mr. Michael Draicchio, Dr. John Franceschini, Mrs. Mary Fredrickson, Mr. Daniel Gilbert, Ms. Maureen MacNeil, Deputy Superintendent Kevin Mulvey, Mr. Keith Segalla; and Ms. Laura Owens, Clerk.

Ms. Isola called the meeting to order, asking each Middle School 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 Maureen MacNeil presented the **Atlantic Middle School Improvement Plan**, thanking School Committee for the many improvements to the building exterior: new landscaping, parking lot and dropoff area, and fields behind the school. The school looks wonderful and the staff appreciates all of the work. Atlantic Middle School is a safe environment for its students and staff. With over 52% of students coming from homes where the first language is not English, the academic accomplishments of the students are impressive.

In reviewing last year's goals, the schoolwide increase in average percent correct for ELA was just shy of the 2% goal. In Grade 8, there was an 8% increase in average percent correct over the previous year. In Math, the schoolwide increase in average percent correct was also just shy of the 2% goal, but students made gains in Open Response scores, which were above target. Grade 8 students gained 6% over previous year on average percent correct and posted a 16% gain for Open Responses. In Science, the average percent correct was 58%, a 4-year high that also surpassed the state average. For Health and Wellness, opportunities for physical activities are available to students before, during, and after school hours.

Ms. Isola asked about class sizes, several advanced classes are at 26 and 27 in Grades 7 and 8. Ms. Isola said the big gains are impressive, will be interesting to see if this is sustained moving forward.

Mr. DiBona asked about the Advanced classes at Atlantic Middle School. Ms. MacNeil said some students are in Advanced ELA or Math and some are in both.

Principal Rick DeCristofaro presented the **Central Middle School Improvement Plan**, noting that Central recently celebrated the 2nd birthday of the new building. In reflecting on last year's goals, the Math goal was exceeded by an increase of 6% on Open Response. In ELA, Central's students

sustained the overall average percent correct from the previous year, while excelling on certain strands. In ELA, 79% of Grade 8 Neighborhood students were proficient or above; 100% of Grade 8 APC students scored at this level. For the Wellness goal, Central's nurse started the "What's On Your Plate" nutrition information initiative and shared daily healthy tips. As with all the middle schools, numerous opportunities are provided for before and after school activity.

The PBIS initiative has been focused on instilling Respect, Attitude, Motivation, Safety (RAMS) as a core value. After two years in the building, the staff are altering some routines and reinforcing appropriate behaviors for inside and outside the classrooms. Guidance counselors are working with staff to coordinate grade level and class incentives. All APC staff are teaching neighborhood classes, some are the Advanced ELA or Mathematics sections. These new team alignments are providing new opportunities for collaboration and conversation. Teachers are working in cross-curricular and interdisciplinary teams and developing common rubrics.

Ms. Isola asked about the two higher class sizes, Advanced ELA and Mathematics at Grade 7.

Mrs. Mahoney asked about facilities issues involving leaks and Mr. DeCristofaro said those are new issues that surfaced last winter. The requests for additional cameras are to supplement the existing interior and exterior cameras.

Principal Daniel Gilbert presented the **Broad Meadows Middle School Improvement Plan** and spoke about quantifying scores as the student population evolves each year. This year's School Improvement Plan is intentionally based on improving the performance of the current students, so the baseline score was calculated from their 2014-2015 MCAS scores. Mr. Gilbert said that Broad Meadows is a community school, students are happy and engaged. Test scores are one measure of effective learners, but there are many other. With Mary Fredrickson's assistance, Broad Meadows staff has been able to analyze student performance for those being instructed in full Common Core curriculum and those who are being instructed in a modified Common Core curriculum.

In reflecting on last year's goal, for ELA, Broad Meadows surpassed the goal of increasing average percent correct by 2%. The staff is especially proud of the 19% for the students with disabilities. For Mathematics, although the goal was not reached, there were significant gains. The focus on Statistics and Probability paid off for both general and special education students. There is still work to be done, but many positive accomplishments to note.

For 2015-2016, the goals and action steps align with the district goals, with grade-level and curriculum area teams collaborating. Strong readers are better writers and this carries across all curriculum areas. In addition, the teachers are creating conditions for the standards for mathematical practice to flourish. The Wellness goal is a continuation goal and the school is also continuing to target engaging parents. Mr. Gilbert is very proud of the collaborative effort of all the Broad Meadows staff.

Mr. Bregoli applauded the efforts in looking at the whole child and not just focusing on test scores.

Ms. Isola asked about class sizes, there are several Advanced in the 24-25 student range.

Mr. Bregoli asked where the Learning Center Special Education students attend high school; the program is at North Quincy High School.

Principal Christine Barrett presented the **Point Webster Middle School Improvement Plan**, noting that the Point Webster staff strives to provide a positive impact on their students' lives, far beyond school day. Ms. Barrett is proud that Point Webster provides a positive, safe, nurturing environment.

In reflecting on the 2014-2015 goals, for ELA, Point Webster slightly exceeded the goal to increase average percent correct by 2%. For Math, the 2% increase was not met for all grades, but Grade 6 met the goal. For ELA, the overall number of Point Webster students scoring proficient or advanced increased 6%. For Mathematics, 8% increase in Grade 7 proficient or advanced. Science & Technology, Grade 8 had a 4% increase in proficient and advanced. While the staff takes pride in the results, there is still much work to be done. For the Wellness goal, Point Webster provided many opportunities, including healthy tips and the first annual kids fitness challenge day.

This year, Grade 5 students are operating under an elementary schedule with longer instructional blocks for ELA and Mathematics. Staffing increases in the FY2016 budget allowed for Technology instruction for Grades 5 and 6. *iReady Diagnostics* is being used to customize Mathematics instruction across the grades.

For this school year, goals mirror school and district goals. Action step planning focused on quality and building on the foundation of success. The Health & Wellness Symposium was a great opportunity to collaborate across all schools, sharing ideas and action steps. Point Webster also has a goal related to PBIS which has really contributed to the culture and climate. Expectations are shared clearly, with posters reminding students to "Stay on Point" in common areas.

Extended day programs continue to grow to meet the needs of students. Math Homework Assistance is new this year, as well as a Science Club to assist students in preparing for the Science Fair for Grades 7 and 8. Enrollment has been steady, while the ELL program has continued to grow. Ms. Barrett concluded by thanking School Committee for facility improvements, including the heating and air conditioning work done over the summer.

Principal John Franceschini presented the **Sterling Middle School Improvement Plan**, noting that the staff is focused on a new level of integration and planning for this year. Every day during the Student Support Block, a group of teachers have team time, sometimes curriculum or grade-level based. Art, Music, Physical Education, Health are committed to integrate with core classroom teachers in new ways.

In reflecting on last year's goals, the average percent correct for ELA was up 4%, with increases in all domains, especially Open Response which had growth at all grade levels. The Grade 5 classes are on an elementary schedule with 110-minute blocks for ELA and Mathematics. Extended time allows for thoroughly teaching lessons and also reviewing and reinforcing. For Mathematics, there was an increase of 1% overall for average percent correct. In Grade 5, students scoring proficient or advanced increased 26%.

In planning for this year, staff are looking to ways to motivate reluctant readers and writers, and have added before and after school opportunities. Homework Club is staffed by teachers volunteering three days a week before school and three days after school. 18 Quincy High School students are also committed to come to Sterling after school for tutoring and peer mentoring each week. For Mathematics, the *iReady Diagnostics* tool has been tremendously helpful in individualizing instruction.

The PBIS initiative has been very successful and Sterling is able to build on the success of Lincoln Hancock's pilot. Principal Witmer came to Sterling to train staff and the Grade 5 students are experienced in this model. Arbella Insurance continues to be a generous partner and has sponsored camera installation inside and outside the school. Sterling Middle School staff are also assisting in planning a new building, but teachers are focused on making the middle school experience special for their current students, some will be in high school before the new building opens.

Ms. Isola said she appreciates the focus on Mathematics. The Warning category is high for Sterling Middle School students, how can School Committee support their efforts. Dr. Franceschini said all staff are working on integrating Mathematical concepts and addressing different learning styles. Ms. Isola asked about class sizes and the higher classes are for specialists.

Mrs. Mahoney asked for a Teaching & Learning check-in for middle school Mathematics partway through the school year.

For 2015-2016, all middle 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. Mahoney motioned to approve the Atlantic, Broad Meadows, Central, Point Webster, and Sterling Middle School Improvement Plans. Mrs. Hubley seconded the motion, and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

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.