

QUINCY SCHOOL COMMITTEE

TEACHING & LEARNING SUBCOMMITTEE ~ Monday, February 29, 2016

A meeting of the Teaching & Learning Subcommittee was held on Monday, February 29, 2016 at 5:00 pm in the Coddington Building. Present were Mr. Bregoli, Mrs. Kathryn Hubley, Mrs. Emily Lebo, and Ms. Barbara Isola, Chair. Also attending were Superintendent DeCristofaro, Mr. Peter Dionne, Dr. John Franceschini, Ms. Beth Hallett, Mr. Michael Marani, Ms. Maureen MacNeil, Ms. Courtney Mitchell, Deputy Superintendent Kevin Mulvey, Mrs. Maura Papile, Mrs. Erin Perkins, Ms. Madeline Roy, Mr. Keith Segalla, Ms. Judith Todd, Mrs. Ruth Witmer; Quincy Education Association President Ms. Allison Cox; and Ms. Laura Owens, Clerk.

Dr. DeCristofaro opened the presentation on the Rapid Reset Initiative underway in several Quincy Public Schools: Sterling Middle School, Bernazzani Elementary School, and Snug Harbor Community School. During the School Improvement Plan, process, it was noted that several schools moved to Level 1 status: Atlantic, Point Webster, Parker, and Montclair. At the same time, several schools declined levels or had indicators that achievement had plateaued or showed signs of decline. Dr. DeCristofaro reviewed that through the District Improvement Plan process, the mission of success for all students requires continued review and reflection of goals, action steps, and frequent monitoring of student success. Through the effective schools model, district support is in place when schools look to make adjustments during the school year. At all schools, teachers, principals, and administrators began the year with data analysis and goal setting along with action steps in creating the School Improvement Plan. In the mid-year reflection process for Assessment Day 2, adjustments are planned based on student indicators to date in the school year. All schools discuss progress towards full-year goals and make shifts and adjustments. At each of the three Rapid Reset schools, the first step for implementing these adjustments was the voluntary formation of a Design Team by staff members representing all grade levels.

Mrs. Perkins and Ms. Roy shared examples of steps for Rapid Reset from each of the schools. These are specific to each school and each grade level team. Site-based approach to Professional Development will be tailored to the specific needs of the building, grade, or subject area. Localized professional development supports the immediate transfer of knowledge to practice. Professional Development calendars for the three schools were shared and different areas of focus identified.

Mrs. Witmer is assisting with Sterling Middle School's Rapid Reset. The Integrated Learning Team model has been in place for about 10 years at the elementary school and the model has evolved to a team approach, all teachers in the grade plus the academic program staff. Student work is discussed and formative data analyzed and student needs are addressed and interventions planned for students needing additional support. In building a middle school Integrated Learning Team model, the meetings are vertical by content area. Teachers are collaborating on developing formative

assessments that will travel through the grades, so student progress is apparent from Grades 5 through 8. For Mathematics, areas were identified that need additional support and a tutor was hired to supplement classroom instruction and reinforce foundational skills. Mrs. Witmer shared examples of the communication of vertical team meetings notes to all staff through the Rapid Reset newsletter. Through this communication, all staff have a view on the actions of all the grades.

Mrs. Perkins said that the use of data is the driving force behind this initiative and that the majority of the meeting time is for sharing interventions and supports to assist with struggling learners. Samples of Mathematics data review, with performance against skills and concepts and DIBELS results for ELA were shared. Before and after school activities support the Rapid Reset Initiative, including small group ELA and MCAS prep, homework support. All three schools are communicating in a variety of ways: staff newsletters, design team and grade-level team notes, calendars, and ILT data observations.

Moving forward, tiered instruction will be planned for returning and new students so that interventions are in place for September 2016. Teachers are sharing resources, strategies, and model units/lessons. District budget resources have allowed for Mrs. Witmer to work with Sterling Middle School, the services of the data coach, and other professional development opportunities. Assessment calendars will be created at the school level, utilizing the common formative assessments being developed. Family-School engagement activities will be offered each trimester, and a culture of high expectations will continue to be the consistent model.

Dr. DeCristofaro said the teacher leadership piece is the key to the success of this initiative, keeping the focus on student achievement, smaller class size, consistent population, enhanced school-wide communication, and just the right level of meetings (not too few, not too many). Dr. DeCristofaro acknowledged the principals and assistant principals, gave them the opportunity to address the School Committee.

Dr. Franceschini thanked School Committee for the support, the collegiality of the Sterling Middle School staff has been wonderful, listening to each other, all teachers both academic and academic program working together, implementing new strategies schoolwide. Ms. Mitchell said that Sterling's tutoring center is staffed by students and volunteer teachers each day after school.

Mr. Dionne shared that the Design Team meetings have been well-attended, with the whole staff participating enthusiastically. The close reading strategies are the evolution of guided reading strategies, the opportunities to observe each other's teaching. Student center time in classrooms has been refocused to infuse these close reading strategies. The Integrated Learning Team meetings expanded to include Math data and a close look at all students.

Ms. MacNeil thanked the staff at Snug Harbor for their dedication. Snug Harbor has introduced the Walk to Read model at Grade 5, is working with the Math consultant, have developed guided Math

lessons where exit tickets are generated by students and used as a planning tool. Mr. Marani said the team meetings are giving the staff opportunities for real-time integration of student achievement into customizing lessons.

Mrs. Lebo asked about the tutoring; this is being offered in addition to classroom instruction. Mrs. Lebo said that even though the Rapid Reset was designed for struggling students, she is glad to hear that all students are being reviewed in ILT meetings as accommodations for all levels of students important to parents. Mrs. Perkins said that guided math allows for customized work for above, on, and below level students. All students are being exposed to very complex text, close reading techniques for all levels. Mrs. Lebo said that modeling is a very powerful tool for teachers, especially when it is supportive, not evaluative. Mrs. Perkins said we are flipping the notion that professional development has to happen outside the classroom.

Mr. Bregoli asked how the success of this initiative will be evaluated. Dr. DeCristofaro said that at each school's Assessment Day 3 meeting, through professional development evaluations, and in continuing conversations with teachers. Teacher expectations are strong and they are realistic about goals and achievement. Mr. Bregoli asked if this will become a system-wide initiative. Dr. DeCristofaro said the ILT model for middle school is especially desirable. Dr. DeCristofaro said that in next year's budget, perhaps there will be opportunity for additional coaching positions.

Ms. Isola said that this is a great example of how a conversation about a concern turned into a collaborative effort among the Quincy Public Schools staff and administrators. As Dr. DeCristofaro said, change is difficult, particularly in the middle of the year, and it is great to see the responsiveness. Ms. Isola thanked all the principals and extended her thanks to their staff.

Mrs. Hubley made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:15 pm. Mrs. Lebo seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.