

# QUINCY SCHOOL COMMITTEE

## TEACHING & LEARNING SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

A meeting of the Teaching & Learning Subcommittee was held on Wednesday, January 31, 2018 at 6:15 pm in the Coddington Building. Present were Mayor Thomas Koch, Mr. Anthony Andronico, Mr. James DeAmicis, Mr. Douglas Gutro, Mrs. Kathryn Hubley, and Mrs. Emily Lebo, Chair. Also attending were Superintendent DeCristofaro, Deputy Superintendent Kevin Mulvey, Mr. Nicholas Ahearn, Dr. Beth Hallett, Mr. James Mullaney, Ms. Maura Papile, Ms. Erin Perkins, Ms. Kim Quinn, Ms. Madeline Roy, Mr. Keith Segalla, Mr. Edward Smith, Ms. Bridget Vaughan; Quincy Education Association President Allison Cox; Citywide Parent Council Co-President Courtney Perdios; and Ms. Laura Owens, Clerk.



Principal Nick Ahearn presented on the Elementary Digital Learning Team, which meets five times per year; each elementary school has at least one member and all grades are represented on the team, plus Literacy, Occupational Therapy, and Special Education. The team has been analyzing the state's new Digital Learning standards, reviewing online programs and apps that staff are using, and sharing best practices. Hour of Code was observed in schools across the city in December and exposes students to skills and career explorations. Digital Learning Week will be held in March, with multiple professional development opportunities offered. The team is also focused on preparations for computer-based testing, including keyboarding and readiness skills with test-specific computer tools.

Curriculum Team Administrator for Science Edward Smith presented on the Middle & High School Digital Learning Team, which has staff representatives from all grade levels, academic programs and support teachers, and all curriculum areas. Goals include student preparedness for computer-based testing as it expands to Grade 8 ELA, Math, and Science and Grade 10 Science. The team has established a subcommittee to align courses to the new Digital Learning Standards. The Hour of Code was also observed at the middle schools, a collaboration of Science, Technology/Engineering, and Media Specialists. Technology training offerings are a feature of Professional Development, 15 trainings offered on an upcoming Tuesday afternoon, ranging from beginners to advanced.

Mr. DeAmicis left the meeting at 6:30 pm.

District Digital Learning Week will be held in March 12-16, teachers and students are challenged to integrate a new digital practice into their classes that week. The team is brainstorming about a new survey for staff as one way of preparing to create new 2-year plan for September 2018.

Mr. Gutro is asked about how early digital learning begins. Mr. Ahearn said there are a variety of opportunities beginning at Kindergarten and Grade 3 is when the standard for keyboarding

begins. Students are expected to be able to type 5 x their grade words per minute. Mr. Gutro is concerned that students in middle school and high school may not have the skills to produce what is expected. Mr. Gutro would like to discuss further integrating keyboarding as a uniform skill at the appropriate grade level to ensure all students have this basic tool.

Mrs. Lebo noted that at the high school level there needs to be planning about where the digital learning standards belong. Mrs. Lebo asked suggested discussion on how much time students should spend on technology, where is the balance.

Dr. DeCristofaro suggested further exploration of keyboarding at a future Teaching & Learning Subcommittee.

Mr. Ahearn left the meeting at 6:45 pm.

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Coordinator of ELA Bridget Vaughan then reviewed changes for the 2018 edition of MCAS. There are major changes for ELA writing tasks, both in complexity and length. Students are being prepared through released practice items and digital resources related to their core texts at the middle school levels. Teachers are being supported through professional development. Students and staff have opportunities to practice with the computer-based testing tools and targeted students are being boosted through before and after school programs.

Curriculum Team Administrator Kimberley Quinn reviewed changes for the 2018 MCAS for Mathematics. Students are being supported in increasing achievement on the constructed response problems. These are multi-part word problems so practicing with these types of problems has been emphasized at all grades. In addition to the complexity of the problem, students completing the computer-based testing need to have the skills to utilize the tools to accurately complete the problems.

Mrs. Lebo said that the essay text box size is still an issue, will reach out to the Assessment office to see if there is any update. The Mathematics tools are unique to MCAS, which is tricky for students. Mrs. Lebo asked for clarification, students are expected to show their work when prompted.

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Director of Special Education Erin Perkins shared updates on Science Curriculum for elementary schools. Ms. Perkins said that Mr. Smith has been working with the elementary teachers to complete the pacing guides for the new Grades 3-5 Science, Technology, and Engineering standards, using a common template. Additional resources and suggested activities are being developed with the goal to finalize the pacing guides by April. Information will be shared across the system at the June 12 Professional Development meeting. Vertical teams have met to coordinate between elementary and middle schools; new curriculum materials have been

reviewed and the team is hoping to make a recommendation for purchases in the spring. The Science MCAS for Grades 5 and 8 will be computer-based this year and assess a hybrid of the legacy and new standards.

Mr. Smith said that the Middle/High School AP Pathways team has developed a common, inquiry-based STEM Assessment to assist in student placement for high school courses in Math and Science. Project Lead the Way is an Engineering program, expanded from Quincy High School to North Quincy High School this year. In recent weeks, grant applications have been submitted for all five middle schools to bring the curriculum and supplies and teacher training to all Technology Engineering classes. A STEM Fair schedule was shared with School Committee.

Dr. Hallett said that all high school Science classes have been aligned with the newly adopted Science standards. High School Science teachers and department chairs have spent significant time understanding the shifts and updating curriculum, pacing, and instructional methods to reflect the new standards. For Dual Enrollment, there are currently nine Honors Chemistry and nine Honors Physics classes currently underway at both high schools. Voluntary tryouts for Grade 10 MCAS Science Computer-Based Testing are being conducted at both high schools in June, these are field tests only.

Mrs. Lebo asked about Advanced Science classes, all schools had Grade 8 Advanced Science in 2016-2017. This year, all middle schools have Grades 6, 7, and 8 Advanced Science.

Mrs. Lebo asked about the scoring for Grades 5 and 8 Science MCAS, the performance levels will remain the same for this year. Mrs. Lebo is concerned because of last year's performance and the test being based on hybrid of legacy and new set of standards will be another set of challenges, plus it is computer-based. Ms. Roy said the middle school science teachers have taken a hard look at areas of to strengthen student achievement.

Mrs. Hubley made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 pm. Mayor Koch seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.