

New Bedford School Committee

Sub-Committee on Curriculum
Paul Rodrigues Administration Building
Rm. 224

Tuesday, June 26, 2012
Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order: Meeting began at 6:30 PM
2. Roll Call of Committee: Chair, Dr. Lawrence Finnerty, Mr. Joaquim Livramento, Dr. John Fletcher.
3. Review of Minutes: Mr. Livramento made a motion to accept the February 29, 2012 meeting minutes, seconded by Mr. Fletcher, all voted in favor.

4. Failing Student Interventions – Freshmen Academy

Handout on Apex Online Learning was distributed (attached).

Mr. Andrew Kulak, Headmaster at the high school, discussed results of the Apex Online Learning results for the school year up to the summer program. It was explained that as of this meeting more students were still working on their academics to move their learning. Approximately 158 students were identified and began the Apex program in March 2012. There was considerable attention given to the breakdown of the students participating in Apex. A total of 30 students successfully completed unit recovery by the end of the semester. Of the 158 students that participated 49 will be promoted to the 10th grade. It was estimated that during the summer of 2012 there would be 14 non graduates currently enrolled and more students would be enrolling because of a continuous recruitment of students.

Dr. Fletcher voiced concerns about the number of students that were being passed from 8th grade to 9th grade. Both he and Mr. Livramento asked questions about supports for these students. Dr. Fletcher mentioned the Jump Start program which helped those individual students with transitional problems before they were promoted to the 9th grade. Dr. Fletcher felt compelled to make a motion to have the Headmaster of the high school and the Superintendent work together in the identification of students that fall into this category and more importantly identify a program to meet the needs of these students. A motion was made by Dr. Fletcher to have the Housemaster and Superintendent to meet to discuss the "Bridge" program that was once discussed as a program to meet the needs of these students that are too old for the middle school, but not academically ready for the high school. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mr. Livramento and all members voted in the affirmative.

5. MKEA – Massachusetts Kindergarten Entry Assessment Initiative

Dr. Anthony C. Azar, Administrator for Curriculum and Instruction Pre K-12, announced that the New Bedford Public Schools was awarded a grant by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education based on a submitted District Proposal to:

1. Develop a system wide observation and assessment protocol for kindergarten age students for developmental stages and milestones, and
2. Use assessment information to inform curriculum and instructional practices in order to ready children for the challenges of the early elementary school years and to facilitate learning so that children will be proficient in reading and math by the end of grade three.

Dr. Azar said, as a district we must be able to:

- Identify what children are learning, what they are beginning to master, and what they still need to work on
- Use observations and simplify the process of recording and interpreting them
- Inform curriculum and instruction planning, and to
- Create summary reports as a way of recording progress and communicating with parents.

The Department of Education allocated \$107,033.00 for this initiative and Dr. Azar gave credit to a team of early childhood educators that was formed to help write the district's proposal. The team was represented by district personnel, principals and kindergarten staff. All stakeholders had an opportunity to join in the discussion and subsequent planning phase of the professional development model. Based upon this timeline, by the beginning of June 2014, three different cohort groups representing all of our elementary schools and 60 staff members will be trained in order to ensure that all Kindergarten teachers across the district will be effectively using this assessment program on behalf of our 1200 Kindergarten Students.

Dr. Finnerty asked if this was an entitlement grant or a competitive grant. Dr. Azar responded that the school district was in competition with 22 other districts for a portion of the \$600,000.00 grant. New Bedford's proposal was afforded 1/6 of the total amount based on the strength of their proposal.

6. New High School Course, "Introduction to Sports Medicine & Athletic Training"

(See attached description)

Headmaster Kulak explained to the committee that based on student need and staff input, the Department of Technology and Science developed this new course. A curriculum team looked at textbooks and core content and thus devised this new and exciting elective course for high school students.

7. District Learning Walks Update

(See attached handout)

Dr. Azar explained to the committee that the DLW was one of the more powerful tools to turn the district around and to move the learning for both teachers and students. The protocol was discussed and Dr. Azar explained to committee members that the process affords the administrative team to work with district personnel in order to walkthrough classrooms to see and hear what is going on. The participants use the DLW protocol to stay on task and to discuss the learning that they see and hear. It was mentioned that the DLW protocol is a tool to gather data to share with the school's stakeholders and to better their situation when the second and/or third walkthrough takes place.

Dr. Finnerty, Dr. Fletcher and Mr. Livramento all asked in different ways how this information/data will make the learning process better. Dr. Azar explained that immediately after the learning walk there are at least two times that individual groups debrief with each other and then when the entire team is finished with the walkthrough there is a debriefing with school administrators and district administrators. It is at this larger group meeting that suggestions for further strategies based on the learning walk protocol are presented to school administration. The expectation is that the school principal will use the feedback at their faculty meeting to share the instructional strategies with their staff. The DLW team will then schedule another walkthrough to see if the suggestions take hold.

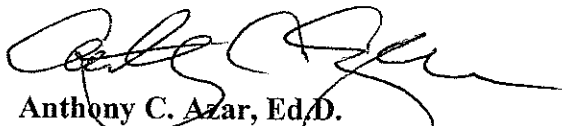
8. Other Business

No other business came before the committee

9. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Dr. Fletcher, seconded by Mr. Livramento. All voted in favor to adjourn at 8:08 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:



Anthony C. Azar, Ed.D.

Administrator for Curriculum and Instruction Pre K-12

