

New Bedford School Committee

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

Thursday, November 7, 2013
Meeting Minutes

1. **Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance: Meeting began at 6:30 PM**
2. **Roll Call of Committee Members: Chair, Dr. Lawrence Finnerty and Mr. Joaquim Livramento**
3. **Review of Minutes: Mr. Livramento made a motion to accept the July 9, 2013 meeting minutes, seconded by Dr. Finnerty, all voted in favor.**
4. **New Business**

4a. *Reading Street Pilot*

During the 2013-2014 school year, Grades 3, 4, and 5 at Hayden McFadden and Parker students have been using *Reading Street* as an English Language Arts and Literacy Program.

Dr. Durkin spoke about the pilot and future implications.

The goal is to include this in 2014-2015 Budget Requests, and we may want to bring this same presentation forward to the full Committee. Our children need to be exposed to a variety of genres and literature. Good literature and non-fiction. Example, this story is about Lewis and Clark, and written with the perspective of the dog in the boat. The program addresses a variety of skills teaching students to be critical readers. It employs an exciting approach. Our current *Open Court* Literacy Program is eleven years old. The *Reading Street* program is aligned to the Common Core.

Guests: Hayden-McFadden – Principal, Wendy Weidenfeller, Julie Bosworth (Gr. 3), Maggie Lawrence (Gr. 4). Parker – Principal, Debra Letendre and Sarah Ventura (Gr. 5).

Julie and Sarah spoke about the anthology and discussed the core program.

A Reading Street consultant, Yvette Robida, is providing support for teachers and the schools, and has provided embedded professional development. In addition to workshops, the consultant is attending TCT meetings with teachers. Online support is also provided.

A Literacy Block of 120 minutes is important to implement the program with fidelity.

Dr. Livramento asked, “How much time is needed to prepared for program implementation?” Teachers responded that they attended a one-day training in August, and other trainings throughout the school year. They also participate in collaborative planning to discuss and plan implementation. Principals are trained along with the staff, and this is an important component of the training.

Julie Bosworth, Gr. 3 at Hayden-McFadden spoke to more specifics of the program. Every week the program has a question with a cross-curricular connection to science and social studies, and a concept map is worked on throughout the week that helps students' answer the weekly question by the end of the week. *Amazing Words* are associated with each unit to expand vocabulary in reading and writing. Specific comprehension skills and strategies are taught on a cyclical basis. Two weeks are spent on each reading selection and these selections are all different genres. Instructional strategies are included in the materials. Common assessments are provided with the program, and these assessments track vocabulary, application of comprehension skills and strategies, and an open response question. Students are required to go back into the text and find evidence to support their answers.

Assessments are given weekly and are tracking student's progress on meeting proficiency towards the standards. Unit Assessments are given about every 6 weeks. Assessments are aligned with same types of questions that have been released as PARCC assessments and assess higher-order thinking skills.

Maggie was previously an ELL teacher, and feels this program provides a lot of background knowledge for students. It also teaches strategies for learning vocabulary and helps students make meaningful connections with real-life experiences.

Sara Ventura then spoke about *Selection Vocabulary*- Students are introduced as of Day 1- the words are posted in the room for the week, match the theme of the story, and picture cards are used to discuss the meanings of the words throughout the week. They learn this new vocabulary, read it in the related selection, and use the words in their writing. They are also assessed on the vocabulary on weekly tests and unit assessments.

Mr. Livramento asked, "Is there a phonics component to the program?" Sarah Ventura responded that there was a phonics component, explaining there is a "see it, say it" component in Grades 4 and 5, and in Gr. 3 spelling patterns are explicitly taught along with phonics.

Students were given a *Reading Street* baseline assessment at the beginning of the year, and are provided specific interventions based on that data. Students who have scored on grade level or advanced are being challenged to read chapter books. Supports are provided with the program to allow all students (special education and English Language Learners) to access the programs.

Maggie Lawrence spoke about the Sleuth Component (Gr. 4 example) – 40% Fiction to 60% Non-Fiction- Helping students to read like a detective. Students read shorter high-interest passages, apply close reading skills to read "closely" and find evidence to support answers. Students in Maggie's class use a magnifying glass to truly "read like a detective". Students then apply the knowledge they have learned in performance assessments such as writing, plays, etc.

Dr. Durkin said that we will raise student learning in New Bedford with three elements in place: where the content is stronger, instructional delivery is better, and students are actively engaged. Programs don't teach, it is the teachers who are delivering the instruction who are helping students become more engaged in their learning. With teachers having this material and program, they can now spend more time to plan for interventions and being creative to meet students need.

For implementation next year, we are currently gathering information for costs for a full K-5 materials and program implementation for 2014-2015, professional development costs, and in-district coaching for program implementation.

In January, Hayden-McFadden will be doing a parent night presentation on *Reading Street*. At Parker, they will be providing a Parent Assessment Night in the next month for parents of Grades 3-5 students and *Reading Street* will be discussed also that evening.

4b. Discussion on Rigor

NBPS Rigor Rubric – This summer, the principals developed an initial definition of rigorous instruction, and from that definition specific elements and indicators from the educator evaluation system teacher rubric were identified, with specific look-fors for each element

“Rigorous instruction is defined as 1) tasks that are at grade-level or above and require higher order thinking, 2) asking students to explain and defend their thinking anchored in text, 3) and promoting student persistence on challenging tasks.”

Instructional Tracker- Administrators have been asked to conduct 10 mini-observations of learning per week, and spend at least two hours on instructional time per day. This tracker defines the various types of activities a Principal is involved in on instructional time each day. Now we are going deeper by provide for more data on the quality of this time, versus the amount of the time.

In addition, DMC developed a “rigor survey”, asking administrators to view videos of instruction, and then provide feedback and ratings. From Principal and Central Office Administrators’ Feedback, they were identified into three groups and will be provided three different tiers of support on providing growth-producing feedback to educators.

K-2 Literacy Framework Implementation Tool-

Calibrating expectations on what good literacy instruction looks like.

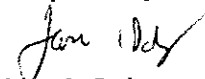
Dr. Durkin wants Principals to be in classrooms because to lead the work, you need to know the work.

5. Other Business

Data on the 2012-2013 school year implementation of Educator Evaluation was shared.

6. Motion to adjourn made by Mr. Livramento, seconded by Dr. Finnerty. All voted in favor to adjourn at 8:18 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Jane L. Daly
Assistant Superintendent
Accountability & School Improvement

Next Meeting: TBD

