

SCHOOL POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, November 28, 2011

A meeting of the School Policy Subcommittee was held on Monday, November 28, 2011 at 3:30 pm in the Special Education Conference Room at Quincy High School. Present were Mrs. Elaine Dwyer, Ms. Barbara Isola, Mrs. Emily Lebo, Mrs. Anne Mahoney, Mr. Dave McCarthy, and Mrs. Jo-Ann Bragg, Chair. Also attending were Superintendent DeCristofaro, Mrs. Colleen Roberts, Mr. Keith Segalla, Ms. Mary Frederickson, Ms. Maureen MacNeil, Mr. Larry Taglieri, Mr. Peter Chella, Ms. Jennifer Fay-Beers, Mr. Jim McGuire, Ms. Christine Barrett, and Ms. Laura Owens, Clerk.

The meeting was called to order at 3:35 pm by Mrs. Bragg.

Ms. Maureen MacNeil presented the Atlantic Middle School Improvement Plan. Ms. MacNeil cited the school's diverse population and the school's culture of excellence where students learn to think critically and skillfully in a safe and secure environment. She noted that the school has 474 students, 236 on free or reduced lunch, and 58 ELL students. Ms. MacNeil reflected on last year's MCAS goals, which were focused on the ELL and SPED populations and not fully met across all grades and subgroups. Overall student growth was very positive; Grade 6 Math ranked 41st in the state out of over 500 schools. The staff is working on analyzing curriculum strands on Assessment Days and revising lesson plans and instructional strategies accordingly. The school's third goal, related to anti-bullying, was very thoroughly explored; many steps were completed to inform staff, parents, and students about the new state law and QPS policy. A survey was developed and circulated to confirm that there was a new level of awareness about the issue within the school community.

The goals for 2011-2012 are: (1) Within the 2011-2012 school year, students who are members of subgroups as defined by AYP protocol (ELL, Special Needs) will increase their aggregate percentage in the proficient/advanced ranges of the English Language Arts, Math, and Science MCAS tests by 2% and decrease their aggregate percentage in the warning/needs improvement ranges by 2%. Each discipline will continue to develop and implement successful instructional practices, strategies, activities, rubrics, and assessments designed to increase MCAS scores across the curriculum. (2) The issue of bullying will continue to be addressed, building-wide over the 2011-2012 school year by providing professional development/training for staff, relevant information for parents, and a range of in-class and extra-curricular presentations, lessons, activities, and initiatives for students. The emphasis will be on providing a clear anti-bullying message, facilitating incident reporting, helping students develop appropriate responses to bullying, and ensuring a consistent, quick, and appropriate school response. In the

spring, an evaluation tool will be provided to members of the school community in order to assess the effectiveness of the anti-bullying initiatives. Both goals are a continuation of last year's goals with new action steps added in, including *Study Island*, Keys to Literacy, new Common Core Standards and Massachusetts framework, Rationalizing Numbers workshop for teachers.

After discussion of the content-area pre-tests developed by Atlantic staff, student growth rates, community service, facilities concerns (parking lot settling a safety issue), and the impressive Professional Development plan, Mrs. Lebo moved to approve the Atlantic Middle School Improvement Plan. Mr. McCarthy seconded the motion, and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Principal Larry Taglieri, accompanied by Assistant Principal Peter Chella, presented the Broad Meadows School Improvement Plan. Mr. Taglieri reflected on the school's 2010-2011 goals, noting that the MCAS goal which related to Open Response was not met. The goals relating to research skills and anti-bullying awareness were very successful. For the research skills goal, each grade focused on a different presentation format. For the anti-bullying initiative, the staff felt that awareness around the issue resulted in less suspensions and discipline issues.

For 2011-2012, the goals are the same but with some new action steps: (1) Increase our students' overall performance on ELA and Math MCAS Open Response questions by 4%. (2) Continue to develop a comprehensive program for the teaching of middle school research skills and having each student produce a research project by June, 2012 following the proper procedures and guidelines. (3) To inform and train faculty, staff, students, and parents on the Quincy Public Schools anti-bullying policy and the corresponding Massachusetts state law. Mr. Taglieri cited *Study Island* (exploring creation of Open Response items), Keys to Literacy, rational numbers workshop, Professional Development on the new Common Core standards and Frameworks as items supporting the new action steps.

During the discussion that followed, subcommittee members inquired about how Technology standards are covered since there is no longer separate instruction in this area. Mr. Taglieri and Mrs. Roberts both confirmed that through the school's research project initiative and curriculum area Vertical Teams, efforts are being made to integrate those strands. Technology purchases are supported by the PTO. There was also discussion about class size, AYP (Broad Meadows is a Level 1 school, but did not make AYP in Math or ELA), the school's population (310 students, 57 students on IEPs, 13 students in SSTs, 4 ELL students, 155 students on free/reduced lunch), and several areas for clarification needed in the SIP. At the conclusion of the discussion, Mrs. Lebo moved for conditional approval of the Broad Meadows School

Improvement Plan, pending the revisions requested by the subcommittee. Ms. Isola seconded the motion, and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

The next item on the agenda was the Central Middle School Improvement Plan, presented by Mrs. Jennifer Fay-Beers. She started by reviewing the school's 2010-2011 goals and some of the recently implemented innovations, such as individualized schedules and the daily Student Support Block time. Mrs. Fay-Beers also reviewed the staff's suggestions to the 2011 MCAS score analysis, including focusing on geometry skills, coordination between ELL and ELA teachers about non-fiction texts, utilizing *Study Island*, creating an MCAS mini-prep course for transfer students, and analyzing the new Common Core standards in terms of the effect on the accelerated Math program.

Central's goals for 2011-2012 are: (1) To improve student performance on Open Response Questions both in class and on the 2012 MCAS by increasing the number of students who score a 3 or 4 by 10% and decreasing a score of 0 or 1 by 10% by May 2012. (2) To increase the percentage of students who score in the proficient or advanced category by 3% in all areas of the 2012 MCAS and on school performance by engaging students using 21st century skills. (3) To increase parental involvement by 10% through improved parental engagement opportunities by June 2012. Central's staff is implementing Challenge Days focused on Open Response and students building up the stamina and skills needed to succeed on these types of questions. Part of the plan to achieve Goal 3 is planning for the new Central Middle School through a focus on building staff technology skills and helping parents stay informed on different topics, such as anti-bullying, especially as it relates to technology (Facebook, texting).

During the discussion that followed, there was a review of the school's population (586 students, 214 free/reduced lunch, 24 ELL students), discussion of MCAS data, including a request to review school's data without AP students, and facilities issues (Maintenance has been very responsive to things as they come up; nothing major will be requested given the construction of the new facility underway). Grade 8 did not have the same dip in scores as other middle schools and Mrs. Fay-Beers cited the changes in the Math team staff in the last few years and the vertical planning time the Math team has invested. At the conclusion of the discussion, Mr. McCarthy moved approval of the Central School Improvement Plan, pending corrections on page 5. Mrs. Dwyer seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Mr. Jim McGuire presented the Point Webster School Improvement Plan next, reviewing the challenges and opportunities for the school and citing the school's place as a consistent and supportive learning environment for the students. The school has a total of 381 students, 212 students on free/reduced lunch, and hosts several citywide SPED programs. Both of the 2010-

2011 MCAS-related goals were met by some, but not all of the grade levels. These two goals, along with the third goal that was focused on anti-bullying initiatives, will carry forward into 2011-2012 as they are ongoing.

Point Webster's goals for 2011-2012 are: (1) To decrease the percentage of students in the Needs Improvement and Warning categories on the ELA and Science MCAS by 5 percent. (2) To decrease the percentage of students in the Warning category on the Math MCAS by 5 percent at each grade level. (3) To provide the students of Point Webster Middle School with a safe and nurturing learning environment through the continued anti-bullying protocol formally established in our 2010-2011 School Improvement Plan. Point Webster's staff is implementing *Study Island*, Keys to Literacy training, working on analyzing the Common Core standards and Massachusetts frameworks, implementing a school-wide initiative about writing research papers. Mr. McGuire also cited QPS's commitment to technology and the recent installation of 25 new computers for the school's computer lab.

In the discussion that followed, the subcommittee asked about after school programs (currently no 21st Century grant funding, but planning to re-apply), complimented the Grade 8 student growth, and reviewed the school's facility issues. Ms. Isola made a motion to approve the Point Webster School Improvement Plan. Mr. McCarthy seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

The last item on the agenda was the Sterling Middle School Improvement Plan, presented by Ms. Christine Barrett. Ms. Barrett began by reviewing the school's 2010-2011 goals and MCAS results. The Math MCAS goal was met and the ELA goal was met by Grades 6, 7, and 8, but not in Grade 5. The school showed moderate growth in both categories and moved from a Level 3 to a Level 2 school. The school's third goal related to anti-bullying awareness and was successfully implemented through a number of school-wide initiatives. Sterling is also in the third year of the DESE STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) grant and received \$25,000 that funded summer programs, field trips, after school programs and landscaping improvements to Sterling.

For 2011-2012, Sterling's goals are: (1) Sterling Middle School's percentage correct on short answer items will increase by 1% overall on the 2012 Math MCAS as compared to 2011 Math MCAS. (2) During the 2011-2012 school year, Sterling Middle School's goal is to improve ELA MCAS multiple-choice questions regarding "Understanding Text" by a total of 33% compared to the last two years. (3) Sterling Middle School will move 4% of students in Grade 5 and Grade 8 from Warning to Needs Improvement or higher on the 2012 Science, Technology, and Engineering MCAS. (4) During the 2011-2012 school year, Sterling Middle School will increase

student attendance and punctuality by 10%. Ms. Barrett cited the school's Professional Development Plan (and the focus on increasing staff technology abilities), QPS support for smaller classes and additional Skills and Resource staff, and the new curriculum-related action steps in working towards these goals.

In the discussion that followed, the school's population was discussed (352 students, 252 students with free/reduced lunch, 54 students on IEPs, 17 students in CARES program, 20 students receiving ELL services), along with mitigation funds from BJs and Lowe's (used for technology purposes), curriculum-area pre-assessments (developed by Sterling staff members working in vertical teams), and facility needs. There are several safety issues relating to the phone system not functioning on rainy days and door locks. At the conclusion of the discussion, Ms. Isola made a motion to approve the Sterling Middle School Improvement Plan. Mrs. Dwyer seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

During each of the Middle School Improvement Plan presentations, there was some discussion about how to indicate new action steps for goals carried over from previous years. It was decided that the SIP template will be updated for next year so that all schools can make this distinction.

The High School Improvement Plan review meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 30, 2011 at 3:30 pm in the Special Education Conference Room at Quincy High School. There will be other agenda items for this meeting relating to School Committee Policy.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 pm.