

Called for the purpose of creating a uniformed, standardized way of ensuring that all students are transitioning from grade to grade with the necessary skills to begin the following school year at grade level.

Members Present: Mr. Kimbrough, Ms. Dexter Ms. Kelly,
Also Present: Assistant Superintendent Adams, Mr. Monahan,

A quorum of the Sub-Committee being present Mr. Kimbrough called the meeting to order at 3:01 PM and read the call of the meeting.

Mr. Kimbrough stated that when he was teaching and working 1:1 with a student, he assigned work over the Summer but that was against our rules. Some students need to take remedial classes to ensure that they have achieved the necessary skills to get a diploma so they can go on to college or a profession.

He turned the meeting over to Dr. Adams who is sitting in for Dr. Turk. She met with the elementary staff and today we are concentrating on grades JK-5 report card and reporting progress. There is some interest in having a common report card for all elementary schools. Right now they all have different report cards. Every school sends out a progress report or report card three or four times a year. Parent conferences are held twice a year and one building has one a year. Other ways teachers communicate to parents about how the kids are doing is through phone calls, emails, Aspen, home visits, IEP meetings and three times a year screeners in reading/literacy and math skills. If a child receives a warning families are told that we are doing additional work to bring them up to grade level. Screeners are given in K-2 and grade 3. Kids that meet expectations are not necessarily screened again during the year so they are not over assessed.

Dr. Adams stated do parents know what the kids need to know to go on to the next grade level. When we talk about the gap it is in the standards, not between kids.

Ms. Dexter asked how often do IEP meetings happen? Ms. Kelly said it is on a cycle usually once a year and the plan lasts for three years and in between if a parent wants additional testing. Ms. Kelly thinks it would benefit us if we knew what the percentages are overall.

Ms. Adams added the clearest way to define things is through report cards, however some families define the student's happiness, it varies what they measure if the student is successful.

Mr. Kimbrough believes we need to compare kids where they're at rather than where they are on the standards. The standards are from DESE; how are they reported to parents?

Dr. Adams responded most standards are from the DESE Curriculum Frameworks and we have adopted CASTLE frameworks for social/emotional which are built into the report cards.

Mr. Kimbrough asked are they communicated on a standard report card? Dr. Adams replied that they vary from school to school. She gave out samples from different schools (on file in the School Committee office). Some differences are the progress level some use numbers and some use letters. Most are two pages front and back. Principals think it would be good to standardize them all. Unless you have kids in two schools a parent wouldn't necessarily know there are different report cards.

Mr. Kimbrough thinks some parents would not know what “Knows Spelling Principals” means. It is not clear and needs to be more specific as to what we want our kids to know so the parent knows where the kids need improvement and they can do additional work with the kid.

Mr. Monahan thinks there could be a standard comment that could go on the top of the report card. It needs to be simple and clearly communicate these are things we did this year and give parents resources they can work on over the summer.

Ms. Kelly added looking at the grade level there are expectations that the teacher has for the student. How do we communicate that so parents are able to understand it?

Dr. Adams has a concern about having comments on top of the report card because the Teachers give additional feedback and that the entire report card probably won't be read.

Ms. Dexter asked how often does a parent initiate an IEP vs a Teacher?

Mr. Kimbrough replied some kids have issues with pronunciation on their IEP but it does not affect their understanding of what they are reading.

Ms. Dexter added that some parents know about interventions. We don't hold kids back in the system if they don't have the skills they will still go on to the next grade.

Dr. Adams stated the District Plan has a multi-tier system of support. Literacy screeners give a holistic view of our students. We have a strong Literacy Coaches.

Mr. Kimbrough asked what does the intervention look like if students need additional help reading?

Dr. Adams replied kids that need intervention are being pulled out of core classes. We can't pull them from the specials, lunch or recess for help. Other districts have intervention for all kids or personalized learning in small group instruction in literacy or math that need to be built into the schedule.

Ms. Dexter asked what is the process for kids that are struggling during the summer?

Dr. Adams responded that we have Title I summer learning, ELL summer opportunities, COMPASS in partnership with Lesley, we are working with MIT and Mass General on a new summer program that will focus on kids that need reading support, and we are partnering with the city to make it a full day program instead of 3 hours at the elementary level. In the Upper schools we support kids struggling in Math that want to move to the Accelerated Math Program (AMP).

Ms. Kelly asked what is the Mass. General Program and MIT? Ms. Adams answered they are using the Lexia Program but Ms. MacDonald has more information.

Mr. Kimbrough stated the next steps at the elementary level would dove-tail on what Ms. Nolan is doing around our summer programs and streamlining kids and their performance during the school year. He is

concerned that there is not a standardized, universal way using best practices to be sure kids are on grade level so parents know.

Dr. Adams mentioned it is the same for professional time for teacher professional development and the time it takes.

Mr. Monahan stated from the educators' side regarding clear communication should we reach out to parents who have kids not on grade level and ask what would have helped you to understand and be able to access resources that are available? Is it a letter, phone call? What is the right way to do that?

Mr. Kimbrough added we have kids that will take exams as a sophomore now to take college level courses; maybe reach out to those parents to see if we are missing any gaps.

Dr. Adams thinks it would have to be parents that have good relationships with teachers for them to reach out saying your child has been struggling for five years, etc.

Ms. Dexter thinks it would be helpful to have a list of summer programs that are available by grade level.

Mr. Kimbrough thinks we have done a good job with 9th grade students. We should see if kids that are failing went to the summer programs to find out if the intervention is working.

Ms. Dexter said we have some kids that take 5 years to go thru high school.

Ms. Kimbrough answered that he doesn't think we have a lot of kids that go for five years, they usually would go to the High School Extension or drop out but we could ask Principal Smith.

Dr. Adams thinks Summer Programs need to give enrichment and nurture who they are but don't lose vision of summer vacation.

Mr. Kimbrough stated that parents of color need to have the information to make decisions whether kids go on to college to assure that they are on point.

What are the next steps? Dr. Adams will meet with the Principals about improving/aligning report cards, are there any specific summer programs and how do we measure if they are effective.

Motion to adjourn at 3:59 PM by Ms. Dexter seconded by Ms. Kelly.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Gist
Confidential Secretary to the School Committee