

KING OPEN SCHOOL COUNCIL

(Official Minutes)

School Council Meeting

Called for 6:00-7:30PM at the King Open School, 850 Cambridge St, Cambridge MA 02141

School Council Members Present: Principal Williams (Chair), VP May Petrov, Ada Riggins, Izzy Pereira, Bucky O'Hare, Neusa DaCosta, Jaenine Cortazar Rodriguez, Kait Souza, Jackie Gantzer, Alison Munroe, Shalini Ayre (Minutes), Jose Jimenez.

School Council Members Absent: Ruth Jones, Aram Harrow

A quorum of the King Open School Council being present, the Vice Principal, May Petrov called the meeting to order at 6.10pm, Wednesday January 17th, 2024, and read the call of the meeting.

Agenda:

- School Improvement Plan (SIP)
-

Minutes

- **Literacy action plan and curriculum review:**
 - The school improvement plan is grounded in district plans and considers family feedback.
 - The district is reviewing literacy curriculum for grades 1-5, with a possible decision on March 31st, but budget implications are unclear.
- **Literacy instruction and student progress monitoring.**
 - Jaenine (KO Literacy Coach) discussed the importance of small group targeted instruction and close reading strategies in the classroom.
 - The school's overarching goal of providing all students with opportunities to engage in class and read complex texts independently, with a focus on close reading and repeated reading at the JK level.
 - Noted that some families may not have seen the school's plan, and encourages them to review it, with a focus on providing targeted instruction and feedback to students.
- **Literacy progress reports for elementary school students.**
 - Suggested advanced notice and personalized reminders to parents about important school dates and events are provided.
 - Agreed and noted that the district has not been consistent in providing advance notice but will circle back to improve next year.
 - There is a desire for more detailed progress reports from teachers, including information on individual students' reading and writing levels.
 - Explanation given that the school is transitioning away from reporting students' reading levels and instead focusing on standards-based progress reports.

- **Math education plan for students.**
 - iReady reports are more detailed but not necessarily more informative, as they are meant to be formative rather than summative.
 - There are challenges of providing frequent progress monitoring data to parents, as students' scores can fluctuate due to various factors.
 - A 3-year plan to strengthen math instruction, starting with implementing the new curriculum "Illustrative Mathematics" with fidelity outlined.
 - The plan includes targeted small group instruction, Excel tutoring, and professional development for teachers, as well as using a protocol called "Learning from Student Work" to understand student abilities and amplify curriculum practices.
- **Math curriculum and teacher training.**
 - New teachers in the district will receive training in August on the curriculum and will be supported by math coaches.
 - WIN Block structure used in grades 3-5 for intervention and personalized instruction, with classroom teachers pulling small groups during that time explained.
 - Math intervention may involve using parts of the I am curriculum, as well as other resources like math, to support students with different skill levels and learning needs.
- **Student progress reports and instruction.**
 - Discussed the limitations of a screener used to assess students' abilities, particularly the lack of comparison to other students.
 - The importance of understanding a child's abilities in relation to grade-level goals, such as counting to 120 by the end of the year in first grade highlighted.
- **Using reports to inform parent-teacher conferences.**
 - Suggested using conferences with teachers to provide personalized information to families, including the most recent data and benchmarks.
- **Data and testing.**
 - Frustration expressed with data and screening. Acknowledged the importance of data and screening, but also recognizes the need for a more comfortable and less intimidating approach.
- **Reducing chronic absenteeism in a school.**
 - Plans to address chronic absenteeism by sending attendance letters, holding meetings with families, and creating a positive school environment.
 - Discussed efforts to address chronic absenteeism at school, including monthly community meetings and counseling services for general education students.
- **Student surveys and school climate evaluation.**
 - Teachers use a point system to quickly assess students' social-emotional learning (SEL) needs, with scores of 40 or below indicating a need for instruction.
 - The Social Emotional Learning team identifies students with unmet needs, and provides targeted interventions.
 - Importance of gathering feedback from students on their school experience is highlighted.

- o The evaluation process for educators includes surveying students on their feelings, with a focus on amplifying student voices and making them feel valued members of the community.
- **Absenteeism and newsletters in elementary school.**
 - o The school will meet with about 35-40 families who have chronic absences, as well as performance issues in the classroom, to identify supports and problem-solve.
 - o The district receives an updated Excel document every Friday with updated attendance data, including chronic absences and tardiness, coded as eight or more absences per year or per semester.
 - o Absenteeism in the first week of school discussed, with a suggestion it may be due to students returning from vacations or figuring out schedules.
 - o Instructional leadership team analyzing newsletters across grades and classrooms to create a more cohesive, regularly scheduled format for next year.
 - o School will ensure that K-2 family letters are sent home via ParentSquare or printed/PDF format but cannot be translated if sent via PDF.
- **Educational support programs for students.**
 - o Kait gave an overview of the math curriculum letters for kindergarten and fourth grade, highlighting the big ideas and images included in each letter.
 - o The newsletters are being replaced with videos that can be linked through parents, and that caregiver events for math and ELA will be sent home soon.
 - o Kait is excited about upcoming events and invitations.
 - o May provides feedback on additional support for families and an FAQ about the SIP.
 - o Principal Williams thanked everyone for feedback and discussed next steps, including a deployment plan and ending the two-year plan in 2025.

Action Points

- - Implementing the new Illustrative Mathematics curriculum with fidelity, especially in grade 1.
- Continuing to strengthen number sense instruction through math talks and small group instruction.
- Providing ongoing professional development and training for teachers on the Illustrative Mathematics curriculum.
- Hosting a Family Math Night event on February 2nd.
- Creating caregiver events focused on math for different grade levels (K-1, 2-3, 4-5)
- Monthly school-wide assemblies to elevate student voices.
- Continue with individualized needs of students – music therapy etc..