



# Boston Renaissance Charter Public School

## Minutes

### Academic Excellence Committee Meeting

Rescheduled from 02/08/2023

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#### **Date and Time**

Thursday February 16, 2023 at 9:00 AM

#### **Location**

Zoom Platform:

Meeting ID: 874 7312 3412

Passcode: 155295

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#### **MISSION**

The mission of the Boston Renaissance Charter Public School is to nurture and develop academic, social and emotional competence while building confidence, character and citizenship among its students.

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#### **Committee Members Present**

A. Buckmire (remote), D. Morris (remote), M. Gardner (remote), S. Dibinga (remote)

#### **Committee Members Absent**

*None*

#### **Guests Present**

C. Beckhusen (remote), Jessica Nicholas (remote), K. O'keeffe (remote), Kendra Leuken (remote), Stacia Copeland (remote)

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## **I. Opening Items**

### **A. Record Attendance**

### **B. Call the Meeting to Order**

M. Gardner called a meeting of the Academic Excellence Committee of Boston Renaissance Charter Public School to order on Thursday Feb 16, 2023 at 9:00 AM.

### **C. Approve Minutes from January, 2023**

D. Morris made a motion to approve the minutes from Academic Excellence Committee Meeting on 01-04-23.

M. Gardner seconded the motion.

The committee **VOTED** to approve the motion.

#### **Roll Call**

M. Gardner Aye

D. Morris Aye

A. Buckmire Aye

S. Dibinga Aye

## **II. Goals of the Academic Excellence Committee**

### **A. Review Committee Purpose, Goals & Objectives**

Marjorie Gardner (Committee Chair) wanted to remind the committee of our Purpose which is to measure the academic results against the Accountability Plan (oversight to ensure we are an academic success.)

When we meet during the 5 times throughout the year, we review school data and discuss academic programming that is taking place. During these meetings, as data is being presented, the committee members should be asking questions to ensure understanding of the data. These questions may be directed to the data coordinators or the directors.

Once data is presented and the committee members have asked questions and have a clear understanding of the data, I will then provide updates on academic initiatives and progress to the full Board of Trustees at each regularly scheduled Board of Trustees meeting.

## **III. Overview of Winter Benchmark Data**

### **A. Aimsweb**

Katie O'Keeffe presented data from the AIMSWEB Winter Benchmark. The chart presented compares the data from winter 2022, fall 2022, winter 2023 . The AIMSWEB Reading data (K2-6) is disaggregated into three subgroups and three tiers. The subgroups are; all students, students with disabilities, and English Language Learners (ELs).

A board member noticed when looking at all students in Tier I, the growth has been minimal. These are the students who receive base level instruction (the instruction that all students receive).

Ms. Lueken shared that based on the data, the instructional leadership team and the lower grade levels know that there is a sense of urgency around moving those red and yellow students. With implementation of some new programming that is in

place and that teachers are learning, research shows that when you learn something new, the data takes a dip and in this case it hasn't done that. The teachers are working really hard to implement and learn the new program and it is starting to positively impact the students.

A board member noticed the students in Tier 1 have increased and the students in Tier 2 and Tier 3 have stayed similar. When you break the data down by subgroups, Tier 3 took a dip and there was a direct correlation with Tier 1 increasing which is good.

Looking at the AIMSWEB Math data, A Board member noticed the increase in all students in Tier 1 between the fall and the winter and that the percentage of EL's stayed the same which is good.

A board member asked if the student's specific data is being tracked as well.

Ms. O'Keeffe explained that when individual data meetings are conducted with the classroom teacher, we look at the tier transition reports where we can see each individual child and see if they are meeting the student growth percentile that we would expect them to meet or if they transitioned tiers, etc.

A board member asked what the components of Early Literacy are in Grade 1 and wondered if there is a big jump in what they are expected to do from K2 and 1st grade in terms of the assessment?

Ms. O'Keeffe explained that Oral Reading Fluency factors into the composite score. In grade K the oral reading fluency is based on letter naming fluency and letter word sound fluency. The expectation is higher in first grade. That is the primary difference.

A board member noticed that with the exception of early literacy in Kindergarten, there is a reduction in Tier 3 and an increase in Tier 1 which is great. Is there anything that attributes to the more significant reduction when looking at Grade 2 in both Math and Reading?

Ms. Leuken explained that in 2nd grade they switch classrooms and are departmentalized for all of the Gen Ed rooms, not the inclusion rooms. Those are self-contained and teach all subject areas. We are in year three of this model and this is allowing teachers to focus on scaffolding and differentiating and creating stronger lesson plans and instruction during their content times because they're not focusing on all the content areas. We also have our teachers teaching on what they feel expert in. The extra supports are really adding a lot to the work that they're doing and at their grade level meetings they are closely thinking about the new programming. There is the new math curriculum in second grade which is Bridges. We're seeing great gains in Math, along with Foundations in ELA and tightening up the Literacy Block per our strategic plan.

Ms. Lueken also noted that in Kindergarten, based especially on the early literacy data, a lot of coaching supports have been put into place to focus on word recognition and those foundational skills for their literacy blocks. For examples, there's a coach, director, or assistant director in all of the classrooms every time during phonics instruction to support students and teachers and give feedback and model teaching. This is to help get all classrooms horizontally aligned. There is already a great turn around in that data.

Looking at upper school Aimsweb data, a board member noticed the increase in grade 5 reading from fall to winter. There was an overall increase in 5th grade in

both areas. Ms. Copeland shared that 3rd grade has shown an increase in both areas as well

A board member asked, looking specifically at 4th grade math, what's the expectation? Do we know why there are more students in the red? Do we know the specific skills?

Christine Beckhusen explained that the subtests for the upper school are all the same. There are 2 fluency subtests. One is mental computation and one is comparing numbers in triads. Then there are concepts and applications. In 4th grade, based on data, observation and teacher feedback, Illustrative Math wasn't working for the 4th grade cohort and they are now adapting some more hybrid pieces to focus on the standards and ensure that our students are ready for MCAS.

Ms. Copeland shared that with multi-tiered word problems, it's a skill that takes a little bit longer to understand and then show progress. So while it might not be reflected here right now, it doesn't mean that they're not getting it piece by piece. We just may not be seeing it in the data right now.

Ms. Nicholas shared, that to support the math instruction, there have been coaching cycles put in place to help new teachers. The directors have been attending the math content meetings to help with co-planning between teachers and group levels to help with the planning of math lessons to support the new curriculum.

Sixth grade data looks great. Ms. Nicholas gave a shout out to 6th grade math teachers. After looking at data, they noticed 1 cohort was not doing as well so they shifted their teaching style to more parallel teaching between the general and special education teacher.

Ms. Beckhusen shared that looking at the Tier Transitions and the overall composite of the percentages of students in each tier, the data may look stagnant. But looking at these numbers and seeing them all mostly in the higher range of that typical growth for student growth percentile is really heartening. It gives teachers some reassurance because when you look at individual students, it shows that the work that is being put in is having an impact on students and you can really see it through this lens when you can't necessarily see it on the tier transitions all the time.

## **B. i-ready**

Ms. Beckhusen presented K2 -6th grade i-ready data. For fall reading, the data is grouped into 3 subgroups; all students, students with disabilities, and EL's, comparing fall and winter data.

A board member asked the distinction between mid or above and early or on.

Ms. Beckhusen explained, standard scores or scaled scores have ranges of whether those scores are students that are performing like they would at the beginning of the school year of the grade level they're in. Early third grade and then the next level of scores would be mid third grade or above. At the winter time, we want to see students in that mid or above range. This shows that they're right in the middle of that grade level.

A board member asked how consistently i-ready is being used in the classroom.

Ms. Beckhusen explained that it varies by teacher or by grade level, but i-Ready says that the tests are designed in a way that students should be able to perform similarly to each other whether or not they're using the program regularly for instruction. It is also a Tier 2 intervention and our students who are Tier 3 would not be on it as much because they benefit from more guided instruction.

Ms. Leuken shared that after looking at our EL data with AIMSWEB and i-ready, in the lower school, we've switched the model to a lot more push-in EL Services. She wonders what last year's data looks like in regards to that and what that Trend will be going forward in terms of the model for ESL services.

A board member asked, specifically for lower school, what are your thoughts in terms of best practice for EL instruction?

Ms. Lueken shared, based on what is being observed in classrooms and what is being heard from staff, there's PD work to be done around making sure that the model is truly happening. Right now it looks like a small group within the classroom and that's not the best practice. There should be more co-teaching, providing the whole class with the best practices that EL's are trying to learn to build their skills. Then scaffolding and doing all of those things so there's a greater transfer of skills in the classroom and that's not what we're currently seeing. This is an area that we will be working on. Push-in services are preferable.

The data shows that we are performing similarly if not a little better than we were last year for grades K2-6.

A board member shared concern for the similarities from year-to-year. The concern is because the performance overall needs to improve and if it's still looking so stable, what is the rest of the year going to look like?

A board member asked, what more can be done to help the students that are one grade level below? Those numbers are so high and they're still one grade level below, is there going to be more intervention in place? These are the students that we could potentially push into that light green or dark green interventions. Could there be more tier 2 interventions?

Ms. Beckhusen explained that these students are definitely getting a little more attention. In our upper school individual classroom data meetings, we paid really close attention to the students that haven't shown as much growth as would be expected. Every classroom teacher has a handful of students who are either doing more specific targeted morning work or they're putting them on i-ready more regularly. There's specialists pulling extra small groups during the morning time. Every classroom has targeted some students where they have specific action plans based on the data. One thing we've done this year more so than last year is we've been spending more time with teachers looking at their classroom data and really thinking about the students holistically, whether it be attendance or behavior referrals, all of the pieces of the students and thinking about action steps that address all of those things as opposed to just an academic intervention or WIN group.

Ms. Lueken noticed the trend from last year for the three or more grade levels below and the trajectory from fall and winter and spring was not good in comparison. This year that looks like a downward trend which is huge when we're thinking about student growth percentile and how much we can expect out of a student in a given year.

Ms. Beckhusen also shared that another shift that we've made is that our after-school accelerated learning program is focusing on those students that are either early on or just below grade level.

A board member asked what more can be done to ensure that the dip we saw in the data from spring to fall of this year doesn't happen again going into next year?

Historically we see that from Spring to Fall. There are things that we can suggest for families and depending on resources some engage and some do not.

Ms. Copeland suggested that there are things to be done right at the start of the school year to catch and make up for the regression that might happen over the the break. Looking at that overall trend for where they're slipping, so then we can plan for it and front load that for next fall in those grade levels to hopefully proactively correct for some of that regression.

A board member asked about stability in grades 3 and 4 because that transition is telling us something. Is there vertical alignment happening or discussions between 2nd and 3rd grade teachers and 3rd and 4th grade teachers?

There needs to be some teacher development that needs to happen in fourth grade. We are noticing that there's been a consistent trend of decline from 3rd to 4th and some real serious conversations that are happening and need to continue to happen around some of the fourth grade teaching staff.

The i-ready growth report was looked at. The system sets goals for students. 27% of students who took both the fall and the winter tests have already met their end of year growth target as set by the system. Our goal on our accountability plan is that 50% of our students will meet that goal and so that feels on track as long as students continue growing around the same rate that they did in the fall.

### **C. Summary of Winter Data Meetings**

The summary of the winter data meetings is tabled until our next meeting.

## **IV. Closing Items**

### **A. Adjourn Meeting**

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
M. Gardner

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### **Documents used during the meeting**

- Winter Benchmark- Aimsweb + iReady Diagnostic Growth (1).pdf.url