

APPROVED



# Boston Renaissance Charter Public School

## Minutes

### Academic Excellence Committee Meeting

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#### Date and Time

Wednesday April 24, 2024 at 9:00 AM

#### Location

marjorie Gardner is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting. Topic: Academic Excellence Committee Mtg. Time: Apr 24, 2024 09:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada) Join Zoom Meeting <https://brcps-school.zoom.us/j/87603403033?pwd=SS91Qjl2TjJCY0tLRExSMGJ6UGtXUT09> Meeting ID: 876 0340 3033 Passcode: 262671

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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

David Conrady (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 Wednesday Apr 24, 2024 at 9:00 AM.

### **C. Approve Minutes**

M. Gardner made a motion to approve the minutes from Academic Excellence Committee Meeting on 02-07-24.

D. Morris seconded the motion.

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

#### **Roll Call**

A. Buckmire Aye

S. Dibinga Absent

D. Morris Aye

M. Gardner Aye

## **II. Academic Update**

### **A. Update on ELA**

David Conrady (CAO) presented data and focused on how BRCPS students are closing the achievement gaps. I-ready data for the Lower School shows that we are seeing growth in Phonemic Awareness and High Frequency Words. The areas that are not showing as much growth are Vocabulary and Comprehension of both Informational and Literary texts. While we are seeing growth in areas, we are not seeing consistent growth. A board member asked if the low growth in Grades 1 and 2 is this due to teacher vacancies? Dr. Conrady shared when he looked at last year's data, these grades showed a similar growth pattern. When looking at the upper school data, Tier 3 is consistent and we are seeing more of the tier two students needing support moving to Tier 1 which is good. Some of the Aimsweb data is taken inconsistently. A board member asked, why is it taken inconsistently? Some may be due to absences and in the lower grades there are some teachers who are not consistently progress monitoring weekly or bi-weekly. When looking at i-ready data more closely for K2 and 1st grade, 50% of the students are on target to meet the annual growth percentage. To close the gap for the students who are not on target, we need to find Tier 3 reading support. In 2nd grade we're seeing 25% of students are meeting targets whereas if some students would continue this progress they would hit 11/2 to two years worth of growth in Reading. That's where we want them to be. In 3rd grade, everyone is making typical or accelerated growth, especially our highest level of learners. In 4th grade, our 1st-20%ile readers are not making the growth we want and we would need them to make 4 years of growth to catch up to being close to on-grade level. This is where we need to be more consistent with interventions, what we're using, how we're using the data, how we are tracking the data. A board member asked, how often is data is gone over with teachers at data meetings and if there is a different

plan for the 37 students in 4th grade? What conversations are being had or what are we doing differently for those certain groups of students? Dr. Conrady shared, some of the data meetings don't get to these pieces and there's not the urgency of what do we do next because we're not having coordinators or directors, myself or special education and ELL teachers looking at the data with the teachers. We don't have the right people at the table to help make plans or guide teachers to show what to do differently or decide if the right interventions are being used. .

A board member shared, if this is identified as an area of improvement, then I would want to see what the plan is or how data meetings need to be run and who's at the table. I would want to see specifics about how we're going to change that moving forward.

A board member asked, What mechanisms are in place to focus on those gaps in data? When we look at this same data next year, how are we looking year over year to identify specific students and then the targets and supports that teaching staff should implement to provide the supports to shrink that gap because we know the gap will widen?

Dr. Conrady shared that while we should be happy about the growth that some are making, the bigger piece is how far do they have to grow to be on benchmark? We still have kids that are 4 years behind and how can we accelerate?

A board member asked, this level of detailed data is being reviewed at Directors meetings.

Dr. Conrady shared that the data has not been reviewed as much as he would like. This is something he would emphasize next year because this data can be broken down by teacher and by grade level.. We can have coordinators and directors work with them about planning certain things in those different areas. If we need to pull in a special education resource to help support a Tier 3 instruction. I want to put some of this in place next year planning and have some of those supports built in because right now we're just doing lesson plans for the entire grade level when we know from class to class this distribution of students is much different.

Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) data, 35 students attended. The attendance rate was 80%. Standards were identified for certain students and progress monitored weekly. These were identified based on needs of previous MCAS results. Overall, according to Aimsweb, 8 students made progress above their expectations, 3 met their established goal, 1 made no significant progress and others did not have consistent progress monitoring or were not progress monitored at all because they were not in a Tier 3 level of need.

We are seeing growth in I-Ready in areas of Phonics and Phonemic Awareness and continuing with the big fidelity push of Foundations. We are not seeing the same growth in the areas of vocabulary, high frequency words, and comprehension. This is impacting the movement of students and being able to access higher level vocabulary and more complex text as they grow. Higher percentage of students tested "on grade level" on the Winter i-Ready Reading diagnostic in SY 23-24 (51%) than in SY 22-23 (35%), with the greatest positive difference being found in the domains of Phonics and Literature Comprehension. We are seeing low growth in 1-20th% groups; which includes many SwD and ML students. We are working with a consultants to look at how we use the Wonders curriculum in K2-2nd grade. There are inconsistencies from teacher to teacher.

Upper School is working with a consultant to do something very similar. Looking at where we have strengths and gaps within how we are using the current curriculum. We will be adding more minutes to the current ELA block. This year the block is 110 minutes and we were able to find 150 minutes for literacy next year. It focuses on a double dose of WIN in small group time and provides an opportunity for SwDs or MLs to be pulled out during that time versus another core time. Consistent instruction routines for ELA, making sure that teachers know exactly what their block looks like. We are trying to balance the pacing and sitting down with teachers next year and looking at their students and their skill sets and implementing small groups that target the skills of the students.

A board member asked, what are we going to do to get these students to move? Looking at the data, our SwD's and ML's are our biggest areas of concern. We are looking at i-ready data, but it isn't used with fidelity, and if what they are being taught doesn't match the standards that are being assessed, is this a true reflection of what our students are capable of doing?

Dr. Conrady responded, while it is not directly related to what is being taught with Wonders and Foundations, if we are using the curriculum with more fidelity, it will also match the gaps we are seeing.

A board member asked, how would you make sure that Wonders is being used with fidelity across grade levels and in both lower and upper school?

Dr. Conrady responded, we will identify what components of Wonders we are using. Are we maximizing the different supports within the guides? This will be part of the instructional routines. We will then do classroom walk throughs and observations.

A board member shared, we are in the middle of a literacy crisis nationally so this is a challenge that every school is facing. I hear from a process standpoint there are things in-house that need to be addressed, skill sets that need to be developed and accountability measures to make sure folks are utilizing the tools we have with fidelity. I'm not seeing the family engagement component to this. At home I know that there's a skill set that needs to be developed and it will vary from house to house. There's a point where you are learning to read and then you make the shift to where you are reading to learn. That's how I've always made the connection of why this is so important. Do teachers understand the urgency and why the data collection is so important. If a student is out and we need to fix an attendance issue, are folks making a connection between the attendance issue and understanding that the connection is not just the literacy. Our ability to capture the data is important because that's going to be able to help us support the student and the connection to the family engagement so that we are reinforcing those same practices at home. Are we finding ways to support families if they are unclear of these connections?

Dr. Conrady shared that coordinators are trying to plan that family engagement piece. A board member shared that we need to fix what we are doing as the priority and we have things to fix internally and there are things that we can't control outside of school. We need to fix what we can control.

Looking at the Math data, We have implemented Bridges with a great deal of fidelity. You will see a lot more systemic growth but you will still see gaps with that 1st to 20th%ile. We have the Bridges intervention piece, although we may need to look into another

supplement to help those areas. We still see that gap in Kindergarten and lower growth in 1st grade. If these were on track, we would see 140% growth in one year which is what we want.

In 2nd and 3rd grade, we are seeing 70% of those targets made and if we're doubling that we're looking at 140% growth in 2nd and 3rd grade. If you look at the consistency of where we're hitting with this curriculum and how it's being implemented, we can see that it is working, but we still have gaps in that 1st to 20th%ile that we need to find interventions for. We have some teachers using the Bridges Intervention kits and it will be interesting to see if the gap has closed and if there is target increase. If the growth isn't the same then we need to find that Tier 3 level of support. 4th and 5th grade showed Average to Above Average growth. 6th grade does not use Bridges. They use ixl and Illustrative Math.

A board member asked if there could be too many platforms being used and could this be why students aren't making growth?

Dr. Conrady shared, effective teachers look at the data from these platforms and then form their small groups accordingly, but not every teacher is doing this.

A board member shared, if it is effectively being used in those few classrooms, then it should be modeled, shared, and explained. It should be an area where all teachers are held accountable.

Dr. Conrady shared they are creating instructional practices that will show how to use the data to make small groups. This will be during PLC and content planning.

In Math, SwD's data shows that the growth is equal to or in some cases like 2nd grade, the growth is higher than students without disabilities.

Similar to ELA, 50 students selected for ALP and 38 students attended. Attendance was approximately 82%. Students attended a 6 week session (3 days/week). Weekly progress monitoring took place and Tier 2 Bridges Intervention Program was utilized. The standards that were selected were based on low MCAS standards. Students were progress monitored on Aimsweb. 4 students met their goal, 2 showed no growth, 3 made growth above expected target.

This year, we adopted Bridges onboarded ST Math. We are seeing increased growth on I-Ready from school year 22-23. We are seeing 6-10 more points on growth in classes using ST Math. We would like to Expand ST Math to Grade 3-5 for SY 25. In 6th grade we are seeing similar growth using IXL. For ML students who are using ST Math, we are seeing the gaps close. ST Math minimizes the use of language and this is beneficial for ML students. We continue to see lower growth in 1st-20th%ile groupings. We hope to onboard Bridges Intervention for school year 25, but we also need to identify a Tier 3 Math support.

### **III. Next Steps**

#### **A. For Next Year**

For next year, we're looking to reorganize planning blocks for teachers. We are looking at back to back specials, so we provide 85 minutes of planning time. The purpose would be to dig into content planning. The Math, Reading, and Science curriculum coordinators would be available to have more time to break down minutes and provide some tiered support to new teachers or teachers that need support with planning. This would also provide time for grade level team meetings would be to really focus on instructional strategies and what's the most effective instruction. This would also hopefully allow for EL and Special Education support for planning as well. We are also looking to create common instructional routines for math, reading and science. Creation of an Academic Support Team (AST) to be part of data meetings with teachers to review Tier 2 and 3 student groups and help problem solve instructional and academic supports. We have a lot of Tier 1 instructional strategies and we are looking at RBT professional development to support effective Tier 2 instruction. Having Curriculum Coordinators & Instructional Coaches help teachers look at benchmarking and unit assessments to assist in planning. There are a lot of things in place for next year.

A board member shared that for the next meeting, sharing something more concrete about the changes that are being made and what it will look like, including the systems and checks around accountability, who is doing what, etc because while this is good data to look at, and there are some ideas and notes, it doesn't feel actionable. As a board we have the responsibility to ask for. What are the action steps we are taking to address these identified problems.

A board member, shared that when we look at gaps in data, I am curious from a will and skill standpoint what you are up against. Where are the gaps with the teaching staff as opposed to gaps due to student absences. What support do you and leadership need on the teacher side of things. What accountability and support looks like.

Dr. Conrady shared that one of the challenges have been inconsistent staffing and there is an accountability piece that is missing. If we aren't looking at the data and making healthy decisions around that data, we aren't going to see that growth we need to see with students at grade level.

#### **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**

- 4\_24 A.E. Committee Meeting Slides (1).pdf