



Boston Renaissance Charter Public School

Minutes

Academic Excellence Committee Meeting

Date and Time

Monday October 24, 2022 at 9:00 AM

Location

Virtual Zoom Platform

marjorie Gardner is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting. Topic: Academic Excellence Committee Mtg. Time: Oct 24, 2022 09:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada) Join Zoom Meeting <https://brcps-school.zoom.us/j/87817036524?pwd=WFFGbFRpQ0Mrd1pLQThaV1ZCaFE3Zz09> Meeting ID: 878 1703 6524 Passcode: 974810

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.

Committee Members Present

A. Buckmire, M. Gardner

Committee Members Absent

S. Dibinga

Guests Present

C. Beckhusen, Devin Morris (remote), K. O'keeffe, Kendra Leuken, Rachel Beck, Stacia Copeland

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 Monday Oct 24, 2022 at 9:08 AM.

C. Approve Minutes from March 7, 2022

A. Buckmire made a motion to approve the minutes from Academic Excellence Committee Meeting on 05-25-22.

M. Gardner seconded the motion.

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

II. Data Update

A. Spring 2022 MCAS

Christine Beckshusen showed an overview of MCAS data from last spring. First set of data is ELA, Math, and Science, Technology & Engineering for all students in grades 3-6. The data is broken into 3 sub groups; All Students, Students w/ Disabilities, and English Language Learners. There are four performance levels; Red indicating students not meeting expectations, Yellow indicating students partially meeting expectations, Green indicating students meeting expectations, and Blue students exceeding expectations.

Devin Morris asked, "How many students at Renaissance in Grades 3-6?"

Christine Beckshusen answered, "About 400 students that took the MCAS last year"

Ms. Buckmire asked, "Is there a comparison to the state or our sending district in any future slides?"

Christine Beckshusen answered, "Not on these slides because we were focusing on our benchmark data."

Ms. Buckmire suggested that we look at how our students performed comparatively. It would be helpful to look at comparative data for the upcoming board meeting.

Marjorie Gardner stated, "The students with disabilities category is concerning. It is also concerning that our numbers are low for students meeting expectations across all subgroups, but the fact that we barely have any students with disabilities that are meeting expectations, one student that was meeting in ELA, this just seems concerning overall."

Ms. Buckmire agreed and stated that she is very concerned about the students with disabilities and the English Language Learners as well.

Ms. Beckshusen shared that later in the presentation we will hear from the directors about shifts that are being made and how these concerns are being addressed.

Devin Morris suggested that if we had Year over Year Data, it would be helpful knowing, specifically pre-pandemic, for some level setting.

B. Fall 2022 Benchmarking

Christine Beckshusen shared that overall, we are looking at assessments differently this year and focusing on building teacher understanding of the difference between skills-based assessments and standards-based assessments and how they can all be used to give us a meaningful picture of how our students are progressing throughout the year. Our data can form our core content instruction, which is our Tier 1 instruction that all students are getting, as well as support our What I Need (WIN) block time. We have 3 main data assessment

platforms that we are using this year. AIMSWEB (K2-6), where we are benchmarking 3 times a year and progress monitoring students whose scores indicate a need for monitoring in specific skills. We use I-ready, where we do diagnostic testing three times a year. We have the ability to use growth monitor assessments within I-ready as well and this data tells us how students are doing in comparison to grade level standards. We have a new assessment platform, PowerSchool Performance Matters which is being utilized for our curriculum-based assessments. This allows teachers to see how their students are performing with their direct instruction.

Marjorie Gardner asked if the data was shared with families, especially knowing what Tier their child is in and if they are receiving extra support services?

Christine Beckhusen shared that letters are being drafted to go to families giving an overview of what WIN is and what the different levels of support mean. Also, giving parents ideas of what can be done at home.

Rachel Beck added that in Upper School, they ask teachers to reach out to families and directors when teachers notice that a student is in danger of failing, in order to come up with a plan for that student before report cards come out.

Kendra Lueken added, in Lower School, a WIN letter went out to families and a data memo that went out to parent-friendly language so that they know what measures are happening with their kids.

Devin Morris asked if the platforms were family accessible, allowing kids to log in at home?

Katie O'Keefe shared that Aimsweb is not accessible to families, but I-ready is and the hope is that once we orient families to looking at the data, they will be able to access the parent portal on Performance Matters. One of the goals for Lower School, after the survey was sent out at the end of last year, is to not only include families in the data collection process, but also include the student in their own data collection so that they know what it means. Some teachers have shared some really good ideas and we plan on sharing them out through a "best practices" sheet. Teachers have had some real valuable feedback.

AIMSWEB Data

Lower School:

Katie O'Keefe shared the Tier Transition Reports. Eventually we will be able to compare these for all three benchmark periods.

If we look specifically at what areas students are falling into Tier 3 for, it does make sense. For example, for Grade 1, early reading, its concerning we have quite a few more students in tier 3 than we did last year, but that is due to the oral reading fluency benchmark assessment. This means that students are still working on those foundational skills such as; letter names, letter sounds, and phonological awareness and putting it all together to read a passage. We will be looking at how quickly this skill grows during progress monitoring and what trends we are seeing. Grade 1, Math fact Fluency is a weakness. Grade K, quantity total fluency was on the lower end and in Grade K, Heggerty and Foundations should help in the area of early reading skills. Grade 2 is working on mental computation fluency, which involves larger numbers and strengthening their number sense skills will help with that and Oral Reading Fluency which looks at speed and accuracy, making sure students get practice reading aloud, will build on this.

Ms. Lueken shared that the shifts that are being made, make us hopeful and will address a lot of these needs.

Ms. Gardner asked if there were times throughout the day that students are not only getting the practice, but exposure to certain skills?

Ms. Lueken shared that there are lots of different supports that will be outlined throughout the presentation. This is only year 2 with WIN and we did see some good growth last year and the hope is that as we get better and better with implementing this, we will see greater growth.

Ms. Buckmire asked how teacher reactions have been to this data?

Ms. O'Keeffe shared that overall, teachers feel that this mirrors what they have seen in their classrooms. Teachers are really on board with WIN this year and feel like they have the tools to reach these students and create movement.

Ms. Lueken shared that last year, there was a lot of growing pains with WIN, but this year, it has been accepted as a norm and people have seen the merits from it.

Devin Morris asked if there is something that you would attribute to the large number in tier three for grade one, new teaching staff, larger number of students compared to the other two grade levels?

Katie O'Keeffe shared that one of the reasons grade one looks this way at the beginning of the year is because they start the Oral Reading Fluency benchmark test and that is a big leap for some. This cohort came in with very low phonological awareness skills. It isn't unexpected to see grade one have these scores compared to the other grades.

Devin Morris shared that he now understands the wording choice used earlier. Something along the lines of, we're not the happiest with the data. He now understands that some of this was anticipated and to be expected with the jump from K to 1. This is context that he didn't have earlier on, but now it sounds understandable.

Ms. Buckmire thanked Devin for his feedback and shared that she thinks sometimes as educators, when we know the demand increases in 1st grade and it is the language we are used to, but to people who are not working in the school. It would be helpful for the November Board meeting to show comparative data for this as well, from last fall. Do we have subgroup data for SWD's and EL's?

Ms. O'keeffe shared that they have been working on pulling the disaggregated data. We have been in contact with Clever and Pearson. But we will have it by November 16th.

Upper School:

Christine Beckhusen shared the data for grades 3-6 in both reading and math. It's similar to lower school and we do have some concerning pieces of data. What stuck out is the number of tier 3 students in math and structuring our WIN blocks to address the skills that these students are needing more support in so they have better access to grade level materials as well.

Ms. Gardner asked about the tricky TRIAD fluency subtest and if this a skill that students were not very familiar with and could it have been a factor in the lower scores?

Ms. Beckhusen shared that this is a new skill subtest that students may not have seen. She said that it could have been a result of low fluency scores.

C. Fall 2022 Benchmarking Continued

Shifting to I-ready, we have a snapshot of our whole school's performance in Reading, showing a break down at each performance level. I-Ready uses a series of 5 levels, differentiating how far below students are from grade level and if students are at the beginning of grade level or reaching standards that are in the middle or above grade level. It then breaks down the different domains and an overall score and a score for each domain, phonological awareness, phonics, high-frequency words, and vocabulary. It then looks at reading comprehension and breaks that into literature vs. informational text.

Devin Morris suggested longitudinal data to know how the supports are working and to know who is shifting from 3 to 2 to 1.

Christine Beckhusen shared that when looking at Math, it is similar looking, and the domains are numbers and operations, algebra and algebraic thinking,

measurement & data, and geometry. We can see that there are more needs for students in upper school for math. We are gathering multiple data points to see what students need. It is encouraging to see that we are using valid platforms to guide our decisions.

We have ongoing cycles where students take their assessments, Katie and I analyze the data, share an analysis with the leadership team. The data is then shared with teachers and instructional support staff. Groups are created, identifying skills that need to be worked on and matching the curriculum resources we have with the skills that each group needs. WIN instruction is happening alongside core instruction. Progress monitoring on Aimsweb is done every 2 weeks, giving us a set number of data points. This tells us the likelihood of each student being able to reach the goal that is set for them, allowing us to see if we are using the appropriate materials, allowing enough time, etc. Teachers then receive feedback from directors, coaches, and facilitators.

D. Curriculum Updates

What I need (WIN) intervention blocks have been implemented with more fidelity using the progress monitoring tool from the Aimsweb platform. Students in K2-6 participate in WIN Blocks. They receive targeted instruction in skills and support that they need according to assessment data. Ms. O'Keeffe organizes WIN Handbooks that teachers utilize for figuring groupings and scheduling while looking at and keeping track of the data and figuring what tools they will be using for different groups. These are grade level specific and everyone who works with a specific grade level has access to these. This allows staff to see what interventions the students are receiving and how they are progressing. Students in K1 receive what they need throughout the day. These teachers use anecdotal data and it is used in different ways. Our WIN Cycles are 6 weeks and the time is split between reading and math. We start with the greatest need and they get a little bit of both to build those foundational skills. Progress Monitoring takes place 3 times per a cycle and we then shift the data based on the need. We want to make sure we see what is happening and give it a chance for the interventions to work and then we make shifts as needed based on the progress monitoring and what each child needs.

Upper School runs on 3-week cycles. Overall, it is 6 weeks, but we broke it up into two 3-week parts. Students receive a 3-week cycle of reading and a 3-week cycle of math. Students were grouped based on I-Ready and Aimsweb data. Student groupings best match the educator. For example, if a student is in Tier 2 or Tier 3, they are working with a specialist or a special educator. Students in Tier 2 & 3 are progress monitored every 2 weeks. Tier 1 students receive direct instruction 2 days a week and the other days they are working on an enrichment project or independent task or project. Academic Win takes place Monday through Thursday and Fridays are used from Social Emotional Learning. This ensures we are supporting our Whole Child Approach Model. Our groups most likely remain the same for two 6-week cycles. This also aligns with our winter benchmarking and has secure data to see if students are making substantial progress for us to move or change groupings.

Ms. Buckmire suggested showing videos of WIN Group instruction taking place at the next board meeting.

Devin Morris agreed and also stated that he understands that catching the magic during these videos may be difficult, but if you can get a few reps, it can be beneficial. This would also be beneficial for families to get a sense of what is

happening in the building. This would help with families understanding how they can support their child at home.

Devin Morris also recommended holding an MCAS 101 for families so that they understand what the impact is for the school and the students, etc. This would make even more sense to me as a family member and they would understand why they should care and give support at home. Videos are supportive because they give a better understanding of this and how it connects to everything else. Families need to understand the “why” first and the “what” will come. It builds that partnership component.

Curriculum Shifts:

Lower School:

Ms. Leuken shared that there are a lot of positive shifts happening. K1-2 is participating in MTSS Inclusive Academy. This focuses on the Universal Design for Learning and in lower school we have really looked at physical spaces and reorganized them to ensure our spaces are more inclusive for all students. There have been a lot of huge shifts around this. Previously we have had traditional classrooms and now they are very much not traditional looking. We have also shifted towards Theme Learning in grades K1-2. We have streamlined a more systematic content instruction. We worked last year on a literacy strategic plan. We updated curricula based on science of Reading Best Practices so we adopted foundations which was a huge gap for us last year for phonics in the past and then Haggerty for phonological awareness which directly ties to the data that we went over. It is a really nice quick hit and all of the students as part of their tier-1 instruction are receiving this regularly and with fidelity. We also updated our Wonders curriculum to 2020 for our core programming with the Theme-based program that BPS has had great success with and is nationally recognized. They have really great texts that we are supplementing with for diversity, equity, and inclusion purposes. Our Math curriculum pilots in K1 and 2nd grade is Bridges which incorporates hands-on learning with the use of lots of manipulatives. K2 and 1st grade are piloting Illustrative Math with more hands on, play-based, experiential foundational skills they are learning.

Upper School:

Ms. Beck shared as Kendra had said we are continuing our process with the MTSS Inclusive Academy. When looking at our physical spacing we kept in mind that students should be collaborating and talking a lot with each other and having that flexible seating as well. We have some students that sit at tables, some that sit on yoga balls, and some that prefer standing desks. We have worked on lesson design and content meetings. Part of UDL, one aspect is removing barriers that prohibit students from accessing tier 1 instruction. We are making sure that when we are designing lessons, we are being proactive and addressing any barriers that might come up and ensuring that there are self-differentiating ways for students to show their learning. We are also mindful of our math curriculum. We have been working with a Math Consultant who is also working with our math facilitator who gives feedback and support. We are also looking at a PD with some high quality math instruction. We are also working on higher-level questioning and the way we are presenting information to students. We have also updated our Wonders to 2020 and have started using Foundations and Heggerty in grade 3. Grades 3-5 are also using Wonders and reading one novel per a semester. Grade 6 has a more novel-based curriculum. Two of the 6th grade teachers are part of the Boston Debate League and do a lot of debates and discussions over the novels. For Math, grades 3 & 5 are using Bridges and grade 4 & 6 are using Illustrative Math. Both curricula really push students to think and use their voices. They are student

focused and centered. For Science, all of our staff has been trained in Project Lead the Way.

Student Services:

Ms. Copeland: We are working closely with both Upper School and Lowe School, as this is a Whole School Initiative. Looking at Students with Disabilities and ELs data over time, we haven't seen much change and we keep looking at what we can do to ensure students are getting the most out of their core content block. We have adjusted the amount of time students are taken out of their core content classes and have also ensured that our students in the substantially separate classrooms are being exposed to grade level content, along with the support they need. Curriculum coaches and facilitators have been going into these classrooms and giving feedback as well. We have looked at data of these subgroups with fidelity and worked with facilitators and directors and made adjustments to support these children more. These students have higher levels of social-emotional needs and we will continue to work with the mental health and student support teams and SEL coaches to support these students. We are working hard to support their social and emotional needs to ensure that they are accessing the curriculum. We are also really looking at why the gap continues to widen, not just at our school but across the state and the country and looking at ways to make actionable steps for these children. I am also working with the assistant student services director to look at the barriers that might be preventing this growth within our school system.

Ms. Buckmire asked if there has been any discussion about after school/before school tutoring for students, especially our students with disabilities and ELs.

Ms. Copeland shared that morning tutoring will be taking place soon for our lowest performing ELs. We will also be engaging in a conversation with upper school as well to discuss our students with disabilities who will be taking the MCAS, to be able to support them.

Ms. Beck shared that there have been conversations about specialists pulling groups in the morning. We are in the process of getting creative and moving forward with this.

III. 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

Documents used during the meeting

- 10_24 Academic Excellence Committee.pdf