



# Boston Renaissance Charter Public School

## Minutes

### Academic Excellence Committee Meeting

---

#### Date and Time

Wednesday November 8, 2023 at 9:00 AM

#### Location

Join Zoom Meeting <https://brcps-school.zoom.us/j/89995261073?pwd=a2UyRXVlejRveFNjYjc2alhkNUR0QT09>

Meeting ID: 899 9526 1073

Passcode: 651262

---

#### 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 (remote), D. Morris, M. Gardner

#### Committee Members Absent

S. Dibinga

---

#### 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 Nov 8, 2023 at 9:00 AM.

### C. Approve Minutes

A. Buckmire made a motion to approve the minutes from Academic Excellence Committee Meeting on 06-07-23.

D. Morris seconded the motion.

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

#### Roll Call

S. Dibinga Absent

D. Morris Aye

M. Gardner Aye

A. Buckmire Aye

## II. Academic Excellence

### A. Aimsweb Fall Bench Mark Analysis

Katie O'Keeffe, lower school data coordinator shared an overview of how we use AimswebPlus at our school and what it is. It is both a norm-referenced and criterion referenced universal screening, benchmarking, and progress monitoring tool used to assess literacy and math proficiency in grades K-6. These assessments help us identify students that are meeting or exceeding expected performance targets. It also helps us identify students who are at risk of not meeting their academic goals so that we can provide more targeted support and monitor the efficacy of the support we are providing. AimswebPlus is used in conjunction with I-Ready data to create WIN groups. We talk a lot about Tiers. Students are placed into Tiers based on their composite score. Tier 1 means a student is testing on target and is at low risk of not meeting end of year targets. Tier 2 means that a child is at medium risk of not meeting end of year targets and would benefit from strategic intervention to ensure progress toward efficiency. Tier 3 means that the child is at high risk of not meeting end of year benchmarks and requires intensive support in order to make progress.

The data shown is for grade K-6. The bolded titles are the subtests that contribute to the overall composite score.

Grade K Reading: Print Concepts, Initial Sounds, **Letter Naming Fluency**, **Letter Word Sound Fluency**, Auditory Vocabulary, Phoneme Segmentation

Grade K Math: **Number Naming Fluency**, **Quantity Total Fluency**, **Concepts and Applications**

Grade 1 Reading: **Oral Reading Fluency**, Letter Word Sound Fluency, Letter Naming Fluency, Phoneme Segmentation, Word Reading Fluency, Auditory Vocabulary, Nonsense Word Fluency

Grade 1 Math: **Number Comparison Fluency Pairs**, **Math Fact Fluency 1 Digit**, **Concepts and Applications**

Grades 2-6 Reading: Oral Reading Fluency, Reading Comprehension, Vocabulary  
Grades 3-6 also do Silent Reading Fluency

Grades 2-6 Math: **Number Comparison Fluency Triads, Mental Computation Fluency (Combined with NCFT to create NSF score), Concepts and Applications**

We look at all this data when we create our WIN groups, but only certain subtests will contribute to the overall composite score which is why we don't just look at the composite score when making the groups.

Comparisons were made between last year's fall data and this year. The data is separated into groups: All students, students with disabilities, and Multilingual Learners. It was also separated into benchmarking periods.

The data shows that we are similar to where we were last year at this time.

A board member asked if the number of Multilingual learners is the same as it was last year at this time.

When looking at the Reading data for first grade, the composite reading score is based solely off of the Oral Reading Fluency subtest. It is not the only score that we look at when we are creating WIN groups because we want to make sure we are supporting those foundational skills, but that is one of the reasons why we consistently see more students than we would like in Tier 3. In the previous year (K2) it is based off of letter sound fluency and letter naming fluency for fall, winter, and spring.

A board member stated that it is a bit concerning that more than half the first grade is in "the red" when looking at the reading data.

Katie shared that she relies heavily on the Nonsense Word Fluency subtest and when she is creating WIN groups because this indicates the student's ability to segment and blend. Then looking at the Word Reading Fluency subtest where we are looking at Sight Words. Gathering together those skills and then being able to read a passage fluently, which is a focus of first grade. The composite score is not necessarily indicative of how well their skills carried over from K2 to 1st grade. Looking at the Nonsense Word Fluency and Word reading Fluency would show us if the students were retaining the information from K2 up to 1st grade.

Math data was looked at and a board member asked if the new Bridges Curriculum has been beneficial. Ms. O'Keeffe stated that when looking at 3rd grade 22-23, who received Bridges all year and this fall they are scoring at 51%.

A board member asked what the students are expected to know between Kindergarten and 1st grade and 1st grade and 2nd grade?

Ms. O'Keeffe shared that number comparisons and concepts and applications.

A board member shared that the number of students in "the red" across all grade levels is concerning. It seems like fact fluency is a concern, especially when reaching those older grades. This always seems to be a trend.

Ms. O'Keeffe shared that fact fluency was a goal for lower school aligning from K2 to 2nd grade to address this concern.

Ms. Beck, Upper School Director, shared that it is interesting to see that with the implementation of Bridges the fall benchmarking is trending upwards. The current 6th graders switch from Bridges to Illustrative Math and Bridges is more traditional while

Illustrative Math is based on student discovery first and then teacher directed., wondering if this has an impact.

## **B. I-Ready Fall Bench Mark Analysis**

Christine Beckhusen presented the I-ready data starting with Reading and comparing fall 22-23 to fall 23-24. The overall numbers are fairly similar from last fall to this fall. We looked at all students, students with disabilities, and Multilingual Learners. We also looked at each grade level from last year to this year.

A board member shared that 4th grade seems to be starting in a much better place than they did last year.

A board member shared that 6th grade was a bit surprising because I thought 5th grade would have had a bigger impact.

A board member asked if the teachers have seen the data and what was the reaction from 6th grade.

Ms. Beckhusen shared that there was not a big concern because this was at the beginning of the year.

Ms. Beckhusen broke the data down by looking at the different domains. The domains were Phonological Awareness, Phonics, High Frequency words. We are starting at a stronger spot than last year in each of these domains. This could be due to the shift in the curriculum, focusing more on Heggarty and Foundations and making it a clear priority for all students. Hopefully this will continue to grow as students continue to receive that specific foundational, science of reading based instruction on those foundational skills.

A board member asked if I-ready is being consistently used across all grade levels.

Ms. Beckhusen shared that the I-ready assessments are designed to be reliable whether or not the students are using the instruction regularly. The instruction is used inconsistently depending on what other platforms are available to those certain grade levels and what the students need in their classrooms.

We also looked at Vocabulary, Overall Comprehension, Comprehension of Literature, and Comprehension of Informational Text. For these domains we don't see as much of a shift that we saw on the more decoding-based domains. The shift from decoding to understanding text is part of the initiative we have in place this year.

Looking at Math, the overall numbers are fairly similar compared to last year. We looked at all students, students with disabilities, and Multilingual Learners. We also looked at each grade level from last year to this year.

The Domains looked at are Numbers & Operations, Algebra & Algebraic Thinking, Measurement & Data, and Geometry.

A board member shared that when looking at 5th grade 22 and 6th grade 23, I am wondering growth for Renaissance students who have been at the school for a while vs. new students. Allowing us to look at trends of students and how that is contributing to what the numbers for these students look like. When looking at 6th grade to 6th grade 2022-2023 is not that drastically different, but the 5th to 6th looking at those same students from last year to this year, it looks a little concerning as we go from 34 to 51. It

makes me wonder what the factors are especially when looking at new students vs. returning students.

Ms. Beckhusen shared that we do have several 5th graders leave after 5th grade, so maybe looking at the demographics of which students are leaving and which are staying and seeing how that data tracks from one year to the next.

### **C. Whole School Action Steps**

Ms. Beck, Upper School Director shared that the school has taken on the PBIS Initiative (Positive Behavior Incentive System). This is to support the Social/Emotional aspect of our students. We are streamlining routines and procedure across the school. Ms. Lueken and I are working with the committee to develop a clear implementation plan that outlines over the next three years, which part of the PBIS we are going to commit to and build on from year to year to year. So far the two biggest buckets that we have focused on this year is streamlining the language of expectations, Being Safe, Being Respectful, and Being Responsible. We are streamlining how these actions look in the hallway, the classroom, with technology, etc. The students are exposed to the same language across both Upper & Lower school, aligning both vertically and horizontally. We have introduced "STAR TICKETS" and students can be given a ticket by any adult in the building for recognition of demonstrating one of the core actions anytime throughout the day in any part of the building. The tickets get entered into a classroom bucket, then put into a grade level bucket, daily. When the grade level bucket gets filled, the grade level gets to pick an incentive prize that they want to choose to celebrate their work around demonstrating the core actions of our school.

The Academic Team really wants to emphasize Writing. We have noticed historically that writing is a struggle for us across the board, across content areas. We are working together to streamline the process, the language, the graphic organizers, the rubrics, the exemplars vertically and horizontally so that it is really clear for a 1st grade teacher what is expected from their students vs. 6th grade teacher. We will use different Professional Developments throughout the year to meet the different needs of our teachers. We will also have students practice on-demand writing and process writing. We always want students to go through the process of Think., Plan, Write, Revise. We want a balanced opportunity for students to get exposure to both these writing.

### **D. Lower School Action Steps**

Ms. Prince Lower School Assistant Director talked about some grants that the lower school has been working with. The Ignite Tutoring Partnership is a grant received that allows us to work with 70 Tier 2 students (grade 1 and 2) to receive foundational literacy tutoring, virtually, in class during WIN or small group/independent time. We meet with them virtually on a monthly basis and they have completed some baseline assessments and meet monthly with us.

We also have our ST Math Partnership which was another grant that was received This is for K2-2nd graders spatial temporal math--encourages students to use discourse and problem solving skills. We are tracking this and students really seem to love it.

WIN has launched and a shift from last year to this year is that we have our reading and math specialists working across all grade levels which is allowing for vertical alignment and using data to action plan and close gaps.

We also have our Playful Learning Grant. We have a DESE coach we are working with and they support us with playful learning indicators K1-3 and supporting developmentally appropriate rigor, student independence and choice and leveraging student agency over learning.

A board member asked how the teachers overall are liking the Ignite Reading.

Ms. Prince shared that find the space to allow the students to work one-to-one with the virtual tutor has been really helpful. Kids are focused and engaged on-task.

## **E. Upper School Action Steps**

Ms. Beck shared that last year the upper school had their "Looking at Student Data" built into our Content planning meetings and we found that there wasn't really enough time to balance both. This year we separated the two so the teams have Biweekly Data meetings. We have done data meetings around MCAS, WIN, etc. This provides teachers with more regular support and PD on the data platforms and further develop teachers' data analysis skills and develop plans for response to the data.

Ms. Beckhusen has been scheduling 1:1 data meetings with our specialists. This allows for regular check-ins, especially around progress monitoring data which will create the opportunity to more closely monitor interventions.

KD McDonald, our curriculum coordinator for Math has been working to streamline Daily math exit tickets and ensuring that teachers are recording that data so we can see in that unit of instruction, how the students are doing and then using that data to guide WIN groups and WIN instruction.

Specialists have built in double dosing time within schedules in grades 3 & 4 to ensure gaps are closing; students are identified within 1:1 meetings with data coordinators & specialists

We also have Ignite Reading (10 third graders) and ST Math (16 fourth graders) for some of our students who are in need of that extra push and in need of that 1-to-1 tutoring.

## **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**

- 10.25.23 Academic Excellence Committee (2).pdf