

APPROVED



# Boston Renaissance Charter Public School

## Minutes

### Academic Excellence Committee Meeting

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#### Date and Time

Wednesday December 13, 2023 at 9:00 AM

#### Location

<https://brcps-school.zoom.us/j/87465624729?pwd=NHIZOVhPOWJlZlRdzZETIFLRzJmQT09>

Meeting ID: 874 6562 4729

Passcode: 002291

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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, D. Morris, M. Gardner

#### Committee Members Absent

S. Dibinga

#### Guests Present

C. Beckhusen, David Conrady, K. O'keeffe

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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 Dec 13, 2023 at 9:00 AM.

### **C. Approve Minutes**

D. Morris made a motion to approve the minutes from Academic Excellence Committee Meeting on 11-08-23.

M. Gardner seconded the motion.

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

#### **Roll Call**

A. Buckmire Aye

M. Gardner Aye

S. Dibinga Absent

D. Morris Aye

## **II. Update from Chief Academic Officer**

### **A. Update from Chief Academic Officer**

David Conrady, Chief Academic Officer provided the committee with an update on Academic Planning for 2023-2024 school year.

First is our Writing Initiative. After looking at our MCAS Data, we noticed that our students are having difficulty with writing tasks that required higher-level thinking and just the writing process in general. . As an academic team we decided that this is an area we really need to work on. The academic team has come together and put together some initial professional development, but we are also taking a look at what this looks like in the long term to ensure students are making gains in this area.

The feedback we got from teachers and looking at what research shows, we need to explicitly teach the writing process from thinking and planning about writing to the editing process. An initial PD was provided in November introducing an overview of what the Writing Initiative Plan will look like.

A slide was shown of what the initiative will look like over the next two years. In January there will be a PD around feedback cycles and writing supports for both Lower and Upper schools. We will also provide feedback and teacher support on what this looks like on a differentiated piece and what teachers need. Over the next six months we will be targeting and making sure everyone has a strong basis and making sure we are seeing this in the classroom and that we are providing coaching by our coordinators and coaches through content meetings and differentiated PD's.

The goal is to have opportunities this year to really learn what good writing looks like, identifying where we are making gains and where we still need supporting going into the next academic year.

9-10 teachers on our staff have completed the Keys to Literacy Coaching program. They will be used to support our teachers in various ways.

A board member asked, since the first PD, have you been in classrooms to see if this is being implemented?

Different grade levels have been exceling at this. We are seeing some consistent pieces being implemented. Grade levels have been analyzing and identifying areas that they may need more support, as well as normalizing grading horizontally across grade levels.

A board member asked who is leading these PD's and are there any train the trainer sessions? How does this get to improved instruction before the PD.

For the academic Team we have met and decided what we want to present at the initial Writing PDs. As we get more people on the academic team trained they will be able to help support. We wanted to make this something that wasn't brand new. We have had a lot of training in Keys to Literacy. We are trying to support the roll-out of this through PD's and content-led meetings through our coordinators, which is where the detailed planning is happening. We are also able to be targeted about with teachers who have the ability to be a top tier teacher with the writing instruction and how we can utilize them through modeling lessons. We are also working with an outside consultant along with the staff internally. We are also to implement writing across all curriculum, including specialty teachers and what it looks like in those classes, as well.

A board member asked if there will be any training for special education teachers, EL teachers or general education teachers that work with those students who may require more scaffolding when it comes to writing.

Mr. Conrady shared that a PD in January is happening to support teachers in this area and share supports that could be utilized. Having a growth mindset will be a big piece as we are implementing this both vertically and horizontally.

When talking about what what we are looking for in classrooms or what does the "perfect classroom" look like? We are establishing our coaching process around Clear Student Learning Objectives (GVC), Culture of Learning, Delivery of Instruction, Use of High Impact Teaching Strategies and Student output, accountability and differentiation. We have been working with training coaches and coordinators to help identify some of the things that we need to work on. When we go in to a classroom we are looking to make sure that all students must have access to and are able to meet the grade level standards to ensure equity in their current and future performance, that there is a clear focus of what the student is learning (are they able to to tell us what they are learning), and what they outcome of learning will be.

Currently our coaches and coordinators are working with those classrooms and newer teachers that need more frequent coaching. Currently the number of teacher vacancies and covering classrooms has slowed this process down where we aren't in as many classes as we need to be. Coordinators have assisted in some of that coaching role and are helping with and writing to support grade level planning. With our consultants we are targeting their work around the less intensive need classrooms. They are helping some of our average to above average teachers to grow to improve innovative instruction and classroom performance. This includes 28-30 teachers, 7 6-week cycles of 4 teachers each starting in January. The consultants are also working to help us develop a

WIN/MTSS handbook to provide some formal guidance and have more alignment for K1-6th grade with what WIN time looks like and what assessments are being used, decisions on what interventions students need and making sure if we are seeing gaps in their learning process, making sure we are providing them with the best intervention. We have another consultant that will be providing some Intensive MTSS Classroom management coaching and another partner that will provide guidance and support with the implementation of the Bridges Math Curriculum which is DESE Grant Funded.

A board member shared that the vacancies and attendance is really concerning. We can't make gains if we don't have teachers in the classroom.

Beginning in January, we will begin working with about 50 students to strengthen and accelerate their mastery of math concepts (ALP). This is grades 3-5 and will run 6 weeks.

ELA will begin in mid-February using a similar format as math. A Writing Boot Camp will begin in mid-April to provide a boost in writing skills for students in grades 3-5 as they prepare to take the MCAS.

A board member asked if there has been any discussion about how families will be made aware about these prioritizations or how you could communicate how these supports are being provided. Just thinking about the transparencies with families around these initiatives.

Dr. Conrady shared that as an academic team, both directors have started communication with families about what we are doing and explaining in monthly newsletters how families can help support the process.

A board member suggested adding "look fors" within these newsletters, such as here are the things you may notice a shift in with assignments, here's what you want to see in terms of writing and how these things can be reinforced at home. Incorporating this information into in-person or zoom events that teachers, grade levels, whole school would be beneficial.

### **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

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

- Academic Excellence Comm Update - Academics.pdf