



## **Academic Success Committee Meeting Summary**

**November 3, 2016**

**9:00am – 12:40pm**

### **Committee Members**

- Chair, Leslie Gray - Board Member
- Jennifer Burns - Board Member
- Mridu Garg - Board President
- Kelley Gallt - Assistant Superintendent of Learning (C&I)
- Dr. Don White - Superintendent

Other members of the community were in attendance, including building administrators, PTO members, and parents.

Below are notes specific to each Academic Success Committee agenda item, as indicated on BoardDocs.

### **Digital Learning Update**

The Digital Learning plan being presented to the Board of Education on November 14, 2016 recommends the following:

- Grades 3-5: The goal is to implement a 1:1 device ratio with iPads plus keyboards.
- Grades 6-8: The goal is to implement a 1:1 device ratio with Chromebooks that are similar to the devices purchased by D86.
- Grades K-2: Shared environment with iPads – 1 device per 3 students is the most likely environment planned.

Dr. White showed the committee the anticipated deployment calendar, and explained the grade level plan for implementation beginning with grades 3, 6 and 7 in 2017-18, and in subsequent years, for grades 3 and 6 (and each year thereafter to complete the phase-in). He clarified that those devices will stay with the student for the next three years. Current devices will continue to be used in the other grade levels during the three year phase-in period.

Ms. Gallt shared that this plan is contingent upon the Board of Education determining whether or not it is an initiative that the District can fund and sustain. The Business Department will be providing the Board with information to use for such planning. The goal of the digital learning initiative is to eliminate the reliance on PTO funding for the purchasing of devices, and to create consistency in the device-to-student ratios across all D181 schools.



Ms. Gallt shared that she and Matt Kunesh, Director of Technology, have been meeting with PTO representatives at each school to discuss and confirm the number of PTO-purchased devices versus District-purchased devices within each school. This information is being used to confirm District data in order to finalize the number of devices needed for purchase at each building in order to maintain a similar ratio at each building during the three-year implementation phase-in of the digital learning initiative. Ms. Gallt also shared that there were some inaccuracies found through this inventory process. For example, there is a need for additional devices during the three year phase-in period at Monroe School in order to continue providing a similar ratio level due to more devices aging out than originally thought. The District has corrected any errors and is grateful for the time spent with the building administrators and PTO representatives.

Ms. Gallt also shared that some PTO groups are considering using PTO funds to purchase additional devices during the three year phase-in period to ensure that the building maintains its current device ratio levels. Dr. White and Ms. Gallt both indicated that the administration is very open to this level of PTO support. Dr. White also discussed that 4th and 5th grades at Oak School would need to be supported during the phase-in period in order for Oak School to maintain its device ratios. Additionally, during the 2017-18 school year, 8th graders will be using MacBook Airs already in use to provide 8th graders with a 1:1 environment. There may also be a need to shift some District-owned devices to other buildings during the phase-in period as a means to sustain current device ratios. PTO-owned devices will not be reallocated to other buildings.

A Committee member asked if any PTOs indicated that this type of PTO financial support during the phase-in period would cause a hardship for an individual building. Ms. Gallt stated that financial concerns have not been shared by the PTOs being referenced, however the District is still in the process of meeting with the schools.

A question was asked about the possibility of a partnership with High School District 86 as a means to save costs. Dr. White shared that both districts have been in conversation. District 181 will not be considering the same costs of \$250 per device, as District 181 is working to utilize a lease system as well as a shared expense option between the District and community members. Dr. White also indicated that it doesn't seem likely students will own the devices, but a recommendation is planned to formally be presented to the Board on November 14, 2016 with more specifics. The committee reminded those in participation that while the Board has approved the digital learning philosophy, it hasn't looked at the fee proposal and what the District can afford, which includes developing a budget for professional development expenses. Approval for this type of plan is expected in the coming month(s).

Ms. Gallt discussed the need for professional development in the area of instructional technology, but pointed out that this must be done in conjunction with curriculum rollouts planned for the spring. Such



training will be provided during Institute Days and collaboration time (which occurs after school). The professional development is also likely to target an interdisciplinary approach. The staff development team will be creating a three-year professional development plan. Discussion also centered on utilizing the MRC Directors, identified classroom teachers, differentiation specialists, and instructional coaches to support professional development.

The committee discussed the significant level of curriculum work taking place and whether or not the system could handle additional professional development on instructional technology. Ms. Gallt stated that there is a great deal of professional development needed when rolling out curricula, however instructional practices must be considered alongside these efforts. She also stated that there is limited time, so the coordination of both curriculum and instruction professional development is critical. Ms. Gallt shared that some of this will need to take place at the start of the 2017-18 school year.

### **ECRA Data Presentation**

Ms. Gallt shared the District Strategic Dashboard (ECRISS). There are different components accessible to the public and even more tools available to the staff related to student performance, growth and projections. The dashboard provides information related to overall student performance, characteristics of the student population within the District, the Strategic Plan, and the strategies being implemented in order to realize each goal within the Strategic Plan. All of these areas are available to the public and include regular updates within the system, indicating the percentage of completion of the identified action step.

Ms. Gallt also shared two other areas of the dashboard that staff have access to which are not available to the greater public, as there is confidential student information housed within this side of the system. To date, all building leadership teams as well as identified specialists throughout the District have received initial training to support the use of ECRA as a means to assist with the School Improvement Process. Dr. Carol Larson, Director of Assessment and Program Effectiveness, shared that the information contained within the portal is based on local norms, not national norms. Dr. Larson also shared that ECRA creates a composite score based on District data, including MAP, AIMSweb, and PARCC scores. Ms. Gallt walked the group through a process of looking at areas of strength and growth.

Ms. Gallt shared information provided by ECRA regarding performance levels of the District, school building, and grade levels as it relates to mathematics and ELA. The committee also discussed the need to look at the data from multiple assessments and not just one assessment such as PARCC, which is a significant benefit to the partnership with ECRA. Ms. Gallt agreed with the committee members and highlighted that the information shared within the ECRA portal provides multiple data points for reading and mathematics, but only provides for one data point in the area of writing, as that is all that was collected during the 2015-16 school year. She shared that the 8th grade class



participated in the PSAT and that this data will be incorporated once District 181 receives the data from District 86. Grade level teachers also use classroom writing as a means to assess performance, though this is not included within the ECRA portal.

Ms. Gallt indicated that she has received feedback from families that writing is a concern, especially during the transition between elementary school and middle school, which makes it something the District must continue to monitor and problem solve.

The District is beginning to use the information within ECRA to shine a light on those things that can be improved so that staff can specify areas of need for individual students or groups of students. The committee also noticed that elementary feeder schools influence middle school performance.

It was made clear by the committee members that District 181's focus must be on curriculum development. Further support and focus in the area of ELA was discussed as it relates to elementary school. Ms. Gallt also shared that she intends to have further conversation with ECRA to determine if they will be able to assist with the refinement of mathematics placement criteria.

### **Learning Management System (LMS)**

Assistant Superintendent of Learning (C&I) Gallt shared that District 181 is currently investigating different LMSs to support the Digital Learning Initiative. A LMS is a software application or web-based technology that is used for the management, organization, and delivery of resources, instruction, and learning processes, which often include assessing and monitoring student progress. Specific tools within the LMS can enable students to work in collaborative groups, communicate with peers and instructors, post completed assignments, receive feedback, work from multiple locations, and more.

Currently, the District has Infinite Campus (IC), which has a curriculum and assessment side to its programming. Due to other issues related to IC experienced within the District, the administration may consider other systems. Ms. Gallt indicated that financially it seems to make sense to look at all components of IC and consider its strengths and deficiencies. Mr. Kunesh is in the process of investigating two additional LMS systems, Canvas and Schoology, which come with additional costs. Ms. Gallt and Mr. Kunesh are planning site visits to other school districts as a part of the investigation (i.e. Deerfield, Wilmette, Burlington). Ms. Gallt asked BOE members to consider attending these site visits. Committee members requested more information on the need and cost for an LMS. Ms. Gallt agreed to discuss this further at an upcoming Board meeting, possibly in December.

### **Building School Improvement Plans**

Ms. Gallt shared that the School Improvement Plans are scheduled to be presented to the Board of Education during the November 14, 2016 Board meeting. The plans will then be posted on the school websites. The plans are devised to allow for change and updates throughout the year. These plan



differ from past D181 school improvement plans. Different schools have different needs, making it necessary for buildings and grade levels to set goals based on their individual data.

The committee discussed the need to look for trends within the analyzed data, as well as within each plan. The Lane School Principal Angela Stallion shared that this is a process regularly practiced and that she has seen this work in a prior district. She went on to say that she believes the work being done at the building level in this area is remarkable. Even with the short amount of time for this work, she is proud of staff for the work they completed in order to make sure goals were written and implemented. It is also important to note that during a meeting of the District's Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment Advisory Council (CIAAC), the staff reviewed each plan and noticed some common themes. Those are being discussed and addressed. The building principals noted that the plans belong to the teachers; the strategies represent what they want to do to positively influence student performance. Ms. Gallt shared that building staff will all receive access to the ECRA data for the training on the November 4, 2016 Institute Day. She anticipated it would be an empowering tool for staff and assist them as they continue to learn more about goal setting.

### **Committee Summaries**

Ms. Gallt shared information regarding the work completed to date by each committee. She engaged the participants in a conversation about World Language. Committee members shared that they would like the World Language committee to consider French at the 5th grade level, and also to consider a three-year plan that may include the introduction of World Language at an earlier age. Dr. White stated that the administration must consider the instructional time currently available to core content areas, noting that staff cannot lose time allocated to core areas as a means to support other areas.

Additionally, Ms. Gallt shared that Math Committee members are continuing their work on common assessments, creating better methods for the communication of their work, and slight adjustments to the primary grade(s) report cards. While members are continuing this work, the administration is discussing ways to problem solve issues of instructional support when all mathematics courses are taught simultaneously. The team is currently providing options for immediate support, but a long-term solution is necessary by the start of the 2017-18 school year. Ms. Gallt also shared that the Science Committee is continuing to study resources with hopes of bringing back two options to the Board of Education in the month of December.

A committee member shared that District 86 is planning to require any D181 student participating in high school math courses during the 2017-18 school year to participate in those courses at Hinsdale South High School rather than at Hinsdale Central High School, as has been past practice. District 181 administrators are working together to develop a plan that will best serve our students, as the D181 administration is concerned about the additional travel time negatively impacting instructional time in other content areas. That plan is expected to be shared during an upcoming meeting.



### **Institute Day Training**

The training provided to teachers on November 4, 2016 included safety training through an active shooter drill provided by District 181 and local police departments. Additionally, time was allocated to staff to learn more about identified curriculum areas. Elementary classroom staff focused on mathematics, while other staff (both elementary and middle) focused on content specific to their discipline area. Committee members asked if ELA training would be provided to all staff during this 2016-17 school year. Ms. Gallt indicated it would be incorporated but likely not until the March or May Institute Days as the curriculum is still in the development phase. Once curriculum is developed, instructional practice will become an area of focus through the curriculum rollout.

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