



Academic Success Committee Meeting Summary November 2, 2017 • 9:00am

Committee Members

- Chair, Leslie Gray - Board of Education Vice-President
- Meeta Jain Patel, M.D. - Board of Education Member
- Dr. Don White - Superintendent
- Joan Woolwine - Interim Assistant Superintendent of Learning (C&I)
- Dr. Cynthia Heidorn - Interim Assistant Superintendent of Learning (Project Lead)
- Dr. Christina Sepiol - Assistant Superintendent of Learning (Pupil Services)

Other members of the community were in attendance, including building administrators, teachers, PTO members, and parents. Board President Jennifer Burns was also in attendance.

School Improvement Plans

Building principals from Walker, CHMS, Monroe, The Lane, Madison, and HMS presented their draft School Improvement Plans (SIPs) to the Committee. Interim Assistant Superintendent of Learning (C&I) Joan Woolwine and committee members thanked the building principals for their work in developing and continuing to implement their SIPs. All building SIPs address goals in the areas of ELA, Math, and SELAS. The plans are devised to allow for change and updates throughout the year. Different schools have different needs, making it necessary for buildings and grade levels to set goals based on their individual data. Each school and each grade level has a strategy to best meet their goals. The building principals noted that the plans are developed at the building level and that they belong to the teachers; the strategies represent what they want to do to positively influence student performance. The building principals further noted that the data and training from the ECRA group, the District's data partner, has been an empowering tool for staff and has assisted them as they continue to learn more about setting measurable, data-driven goals.

Committee members validated the importance of different schools and grade levels having individualized goals due to the unique needs of each school and grade level. In order to achieve uniformity across the schools, committee members asked whether the tools and data used to measure the goals should be uniform. Some SIP plans use NWEA MAP data or PARCC data to measure goals, whereas other SIP plans use the ECRA composite data to set measurable goals. The building principals and committee members agreed that it might be helpful to collaborate with ECRA to provide further guidance and training on this topic.

The building principals and committee members then discussed the difference between setting proficiency goals versus growth goals. Grade level goals in the majority of the SIP plans are set as proficiency goals to ensure that all ability groups achieve minimum state standards. The building principals and committee members discussed the importance of the use of a proficiency goal to address the needs of below grade level students whose needs would not be adequately captured with a growth goal because those students



need to exceed an individualized growth goal in order to achieve minimum grade-level standards. Committee members commented that higher level learners might need a growth goal to measure their progress due to the fact that they have already achieved minimum state standards, and asked whether it was possible to incorporate both a proficiency goal and a growth goal into the SIPs. Several building principals commented that their SIPs incorporate grade level proficiency goals to ensure that all ability groups achieve minimum state standards, but they also set a school growth goal to ensure that students who have already achieved proficiency also achieve adequate growth. The building principals and committee members agreed that this topic would be useful to revisit with ECRA after the District receives the Winter NWEA MAP data.

Committee members commented how pleased they were that last year the staff set high expectations regarding the establishment of goals, and that they would much prefer to see staff reach high and perhaps fall a little short, rather than to set lower goals. Madison School Principal Kim Rutan confirmed that this year's goals were aspirational like the prior year and further clarified that ECRA guided the principals to identify the percentage of students projected to meet the proficiency benchmark, and then the individual schools set goals to outperform the percentage of students projected to meet proficiency standards.

PARCC Update

Ms. Woolwine shared a PowerPoint presentation that provided a comparison of PARCC data amongst schools, as well as a comparison to the State and to trends over time. Ms. Woolwine shared that overall, D181 students are doing very well. She commented that the Department of Learning's goal is to continually increase the number of students meeting and exceeding Illinois Learning Standards. As she discussed individual school performance, she noted that most of the schools are close to 80% of students meeting or exceeding grade level benchmarks.

Committee members engaged in an extended discussion about the performance of specific groups, commenting that overall, low income students and students with an IEP had underperformed relative to their peers, males underperformed in ELA as compared to females, and middle school scores showed a decline. Ms. Woolwine commented that there is a need to address the "did not meet" group of students and noted that the Department of Learning is working with the Response to Intervention Committee to determine where additional support might be needed and to develop strategies to address areas for growth. She commented that the District has only begun to fully integrate the Common Core State Standards in its curriculum, and therefore the number of students meeting and exceeding state standards should grow over time as they have increased exposure to the standards.

Secure Common Assessments

Ms. Woolwine shared that through the Strategic Plan, there is a clear vision to create continuity and alignment across the District. The District adopted an ongoing teacher-driven curriculum, instruction, and assessment development model. The model involves input from teachers through Subject Area Committees (SACs), the Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Advisory Council (CIAAC), administrators, the Board ASC, and then the full Board of Education. She explained that part of the curriculum alignment process is also creating and administering common assessments linked to the standards. A common assessment is a district-created test that assists teachers in determining a student's mastery of content,



ensures that all students receive the same curriculum across a school district, and helps teachers and administrators ensure the curriculum is aligned to the standards and meets the needs of students. Ms. Woolwine explained that students' progress on the common assessments will be communicated with parents by sending home a cover sheet listing the standards being tested and the student's performance on each of the standards. She noted that the common assessments would count for a portion of a student's grade. Ms. Woolwine then explained the District's procedures for common assessments:

- Best educational practice requires that common assessments are secure and will not be sent home. The goal is to protect the integrity of the assessment and ensure that results are accurate and meaningful.
- The current math assessments are not common assessments. They are unit tests and will continue to go home.
- Teachers will continue to use formative assessments, quizzes, projects, and class participation to help determine grades.
- At this time, common assessments will not be used for placement decisions.

Ms. Woolwine reported that Dr. Cynthia Heidorn, Interim Assistant Superintendent of Learning (Project Lead), is leading efforts to incorporate the common assessments into Skyward, the District's student information system. The Skyward system will guarantee that the assessments are kept secure, and it will assist teachers in creating a parent report to provide families with information on how their student performed. Eventually, students will take the assessments online in Skyward, and the assessments will be automatically scored. Teachers will hand-score short answer and essay questions. The scores will be posted in the Skyward grade book. Teachers will use the item analysis to evaluate the assessments and to provide information to parents.

The administration has decided that until Skyward is fully operational and capable of delivering the necessary tools and reports to teachers and families, the common assessments will not be administered to students. Dr. Heidorn explained that the Department of Learning wants to ensure that the configuration is correct in Skyward for assessments. The teachers will then be trained on Skyward and assessments. She shared that it is her hope that the assessment component of the system will be fully operational by the end of the 2017-18 school year.