

Curriculum Committee of the Board Meeting Minutes February 12, 2018

The Curriculum Committee of the Colonial Board of School Directors met on Monday, February 12, 2018 at Plymouth Elementary School. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm by Curriculum Committee Chairperson and Board Vice President, Leslie Finegold. Present were Board President, Felix Raimondo; Board Members: Susan Moore, Mel Brodsky, Eunice Franklin-Becker, Jennifer Dow, Cathy Peduzzi, and Adam Schupack; Superintendent, Dr. Michael Christian; Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, Dr. Liz McKeaney; Curriculum Supervisors Katy Giovanisci and Maria Wileczek; Plymouth Elementary Principal, Rosemarie Gregitis; Plymouth Elementary Literacy Coach, Cecilia Quarino, and Reading Specialist, Jennifer Ramsden; Community Members, Linda Doll and B.G. Gangwich; Temple University Education Student, Ridge Park Elementary Parent, David Grillo and Administrative Assistant, Nancy Aiken.

Curriculum Committee Chairperson Leslie Finegold opened the meeting asking for any public comments and there were none. Dr. McKeaney welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Public Comments: There were no public comments on the agenda.

Dr. Liz McKeaney opened the meeting with a review of the agenda.

Dr. Katy Giovanisci, Curriculum Supervisor, presented a comprehensive overview and background of the District's K-5 Growth and Intervention Network (GAIN) initiative. Defined as a "systematic approach to provide focused, prescriptive instruction based on data that will grow the academic achievement of all students," the CSD GAIN framework is modeled after the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) used across Pennsylvania. Dr. Giovanisci explained that MTSS (formerly known as Response to Intervention -RTI) represents a broad set of research-based practices intended to help ALL students grow and succeed. Details of the CSD GAIN initiative, including research and related professional development were shared. Dr. Giovanisci highlighted the importance of ensuring CSD's curriculum is standards-aligned and responsive, and that high quality core instruction occurs across the district. The importance of ensuring a "whole-child" approach to GAIN, including positive behavioral supports, responsive classroom practices within a recursive and systematic problem-solving process, was discussed.

Throughout the presentation, Dr. Giovanisci, Mrs. Gregitis, Mrs. Quarino and Mrs. Ramsden flushed out the key elements of CSD's GAIN framework. These included:

- A Continuum of Evidence-Based Practices: Three levels, or tiers, of instruction. The intensity and duration of supports increase for tiers 2 and 3. The appropriate level of support for each student is determined by assessment data.

Tier 1- High Quality Core: instructional practices that are differentiated to help all students as part of general curriculum and instruction.

Tier 2 – Intervention: additional direct and explicit instruction to fill in achievement gaps and accelerate growth of skill/area in small group.

Tier 3— Intensive: Direct and Explicit Instruction with targeted lessons to address skill deficit.

- Data-Based Decision Making and Problem Solving: A variety of assessments provide data used to determine the success of a practice or student support. If the data shows a weakness in a practice, or shows that a student is not responding to supports, teachers and administrators work together during Professional Learning Time (PLT) and School Improvement Team (SIT) time to develop a plan of action to address student challenges.
- Continuous Progress Monitoring: The students in Tiers 2 & 3 are assessed more frequently and results used to adjust instruction.
- Focus on Fidelity of Implementation: Implementing core curriculum with fidelity means the practices and data-based decisions are consistent across buildings and within grades to support success for all students.

Mrs. Rosemarie Gregitis, Principal Plymouth Elementary, provided a summation of how GAIN is being implemented in her building. She highlighted the following:

- Continuous School Improvement Plan Process
- Data Driven Instruction
- Instructional Coaching
- Implementation
- Progress Monitoring

Mrs. Cecilia Quarino, Literacy Coach, elaborated on the importance of GAIN and the processes used to ensure student achievement and growth continues within Plymouth Elementary and across the district. She discussed how Professional Learning Time (PLTs) is used to review samples of student work, progress monitor students and adjust instruction. Mrs. Quarino also shared how data is used to ensure students are working at their correct level of difficulty (Enrichment, Tier 1, Tier 2). She also shared how GAIN/curricular resources and lessons were selected and stored (Google Drive Folder and In-house Closet Spaces) to help teachers' address the specific needs of their students. Mrs. Quarino described the differences between GAIN reading support and Guided Reading support.

Plymouth Elementary teacher and student reflection videos were used to provide their perspectives and experiences with CSD's GAIN initiative.

Reading Specialist, Mrs. Jennifer Ramsden provided additional details regarding the grouping and regrouping of students. She also presented examples of specific curricular resources and instructional practices used to "grow students" in each of the three Tiers. She noted that, "critical to the success of students is addressing foundational skills in the early grades" and "GAIN is helping us toward this goal."

Mrs. Gregitis ended the GAIN presentation with data demonstrating Plymouth Elementary students' acquisition of basic early literacy skills from beginning to the middle of the school year. Thus far, indicators of phonemic awareness, alphabetic principle, accuracy and fluency reveal student growth. It is anticipated that continued progress monitoring and Tiered instruction using the GAIN model will yield positive results.

Comprehensive Plan & Summer Programs

Dr. McKeaney provided a hand out regarding the Pennsylvania Department of Education's mandates surrounding comprehensive planning.

She tabled discussion of the Comprehensive Plan and summer programs until next month.

Discussion Topics

A brief Q&A session was held.

Questions and comments about the GAIN model were addressed. It was noted that implementing an evidence-based district model using a collaborative effort will help staff provide a continuum support for students and promote continuous growth. It was also noted that professional development and job-embedded coaching will continue to support teachers as they implement practices associated with multi-tiered system of intervention.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy C. Aiken
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Instruction and Assessment