

Barre Town Curriculum and Teacher Support Committee Meeting Notes October 20, 2015

Present:

Brenda Buzzell, Chairperson

Jen Nye, Principal

Julia Pritchard, Director of Special Services

Rick McCraw, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Karen Heath, 3-8 Literacy Specialist

Lindy Johnson, K-2 Literacy Specialist

The meeting was called to order at 8:05 AM.

Agenda:

- I. Review/Approval of Minutes
- II. Additions/Deletions to agenda
- III. Update of literacy programs and delivery models in grades K through 5
- IV. Discussion of Future Meeting Times

I. Review/Approval of Minutes

On page 2 of the September meeting “Caldwell” should be changed to “Calkins.” Otherwise, the draft minutes of May 6 and September 9 were reviewed and approved without change.

II. Additions/Deletions to agenda

There were no changes to the agenda except for sequence.

III. Discussion of Future Meeting Times

The November meeting will take place on the 17th, and the December meeting will be on the 8th. Times are 8:00 to 9:30.

IV. Update of literacy programs and delivery models in grades K through 5

Lindy spoke of lower grades literacy and Karen on the higher grades. Lindy began by distributing an overview of current K-8 literacy. (See handout.) Student activities are guided in part by Fountas and Pinnell assessment results, running records, etc. and are flexible over time.

Reading Workshop, brief description: Flexible small-group instruction occurs during the reading block. For instance, the teacher might be working with four students while the rest do silent reading.

Lucy Calkins: Being piloted in K, 1 and 2, and all grade 3 and 4 teachers are using it. Program is based on “mentor texts” that are often classic literature, although students may work with texts at varying levels depending on their needs.

Fountas and Pinnell is being used for phonics.

Are more children being successful? Lindy says they are. For instance, despite the controversy around heightened expectations for kindergartners, they are meeting the higher standards.

Students may begin receiving interventions in any grade.

Julia stated that there is a growing population of students who require support – more are being identified than previously.

All programs are being well adopted and received by teachers.

Brenda asked how students' writing is progressing. Lindy reports that there is a lot of enthusiasm for writing among both the teachers and the students.

Lindy also mentioned that a Calkins-trained instructor will be offering a three-credit course and presenting training on the BSU staff development days.

Karen addressed older grades literacy. Karen appreciates the ability to use Calkins to accurately render a student's reading level in a way accessible to both teachers and students. Karen reports that teachers are very pleased with Calkins and accepting it much better than what came before. Grades 3 and 4 are doing both reading and writing through Calkins.

Typical lesson:

- Whole-group instruction on a topic relevant to all students: Roughly a half hour long, followed by...
- ...30' – 45'/day of independent reading.
- During independent reading, teachers and paras pull individuals for small-group instruction. Small-group work includes students at all ability levels.

Instruction is informed by the mastery texts mentioned above.

Jen pointed out that a challenge of using the WIN time is appropriately staffing it. Karen: Focus of Q2 is informational text.

In answer to the question of where the emphasis on informational text came from, it was the NECAP. Students find informational texts to be very engaging.

VALLI program is still in use in the middle school to promote literacy instruction to promote multi-disciplinary literacy.

Karen is looking forward to everyone adopting Calkins. Grade 5 is coming on line next year. Grade 6-8 material does not exist yet.

Preparation for high school is good, according to Karen. Grade 8 SBAC scores were quite high.


The PSTL program ("Problem Solving Through Literature") is still in use to support high-achieving students. It does not take place during the enrichment block. There was discussion of whether it would be possible to move it to the writing block.

Reading Recovery is still being offered to those students who need it.

V. Future Agenda Topics

- November, two topics: (1) Next-Gen Science Standards with a teacher updating the committee on progress, and (2) How is the longer day working out and being accepted? (Tim and Jen)
- December: Health education with Lexa Jones and Lauren Singer
- January: Review of the Tech-ed Art position.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rick McCraw', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Rick McCraw
Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment