

LPA Meeting Minutes

December 14, 2011

Meeting starts at 12:05pm with introductions around the room. In attendance: Linda Moore, Kendice Rollison, Randy Walthall, Pika Meyer, Kerry Williams, Suzy Rea, Chris Coppolillo, Laurie Neal, Lisa Horton.

Laura St.John: Assistant coordinator for school district. Her Job is bullying prevention. Laura's background is in counseling and psychology and in domestic violence, suicide etc. Bullying is on a continuum. Start lower grades/younger ages to stop trash talk, bad language and bullying to hopefully stop domestic violence and child abuse in adults. Bullying in schools is not witnessed 85% of the time by people in charge. When kids realize that adults aren't aware of what's going on, they may feel that the school culture is "it's a jungle out there". We don't want to send that message to our kids. Bullies are savvy. They don't want to get caught by adults. Little kids: bullying going on in school... kids are seeing it but we're not and when they don't see the adults addressing it, they think it's ok. Misunderstanding about what bullying really is. Our school district has adopted OLWEUS district wide. OLWEUS – Did study: 3rd grade through 12th grade. Peak time for bullying is 3rd, 4th & 5th grade. Kids are learning how to navigate. Girls taper off in high school in the bullying. Junior and Senior high school boys have an increase in bullying. Laura thinks it's because boys have been dealing with it for years and are now "taking it into their own hands".

How do you solve it? OLWEUS has 5 components:

School-wide committee: will address policies and procedures. 1) we will not bully, 2) we will try to include others 3) help others who are being bullied 4) tell adult in school or at home. The OLWEUS program is a very empowering program. Teaches & bystanders will become empowered by teaching them to help other kids who are getting bullied.

Individual component: how to intervene individually to provide support needed.

Classroom component: teacher and kids are comfortable talking about this and able to make individual interventions. Currently, teachers want to help but don't know what to do. There will be staff training, not just for teachers. Bus system will be included. They will learn how to intervene. What's a quick and easy way to intervene if you get a report of bullying?

Community: "it takes a village". Invite community members to come to training to have same language. Put stickers in window of stores – ex: "bully free zone" etc. How to promote the program so kids are engaged?

Parents: we don't use the words "bullies" or "victims". We talk about the student. Don't label the child or they won't be able to change behavior. Kids try out bullying behaviors, it's natural but we don't want them to get stuck there. Don't call someone a victim – this is learned helplessness. We say: student is getting "targeted". Educate parents. What are the dynamics? If you get a call that your kid is bullying or is getting bullied, how do you reach out to the school?

Implementation will happen over all 10 schools, starting with middle schools. Parent or 2 to be on core committee: 2 day training. Or parent can be included in teacher training. More money is needed for the program. Laura went to PACS to ask for money. Cost is \$10k for 10 schools for 3 years for electronic version. She got a spark grant and funding. Still need \$100-\$700/school. Laura got another grant for the program from Montana crime control. Asking PACS to donate what they can, even though no school will be left behind. Already purchased, money is to help implement.

#1 thing kids who got bullied said helped them: affirmation. Ex: "I'm sorry that's happening to you. No one deserves that." A hug from a friend sometimes helps. This is what OLWEUS does – teaches the targeted child that they're not the ones at fault.

Question for Laura: what goes out to parents for information about OLWEUS and bullying? Laura said there is a packet that goes home to parents. Parents need clarification on what is considered safe and healthy and what is "normal kids' stuff". Parents need clear communication and information.

Post discussion: How do you be graceful in the face of conflict? How do you argue your point if you disagree? In the past, if a kid came to an adult and said they had been bullied, teachers were encouraged to ask that student what they've done to address the situation. We want to continue to empower the kids – to teach them to be able to look someone in the eye, stand up straight, and say "stop it". If that doesn't work, come back and tell the adult and let the kids know that we will help them. We want the kids to be assertive without being aggressive. If that doesn't work, get help. Per Randy, OLWEUS is not a new curriculum; it's an approach that the community can use to reduce bullying. It's a framework for us to use and a process that kids will experience as a continuum throughout their school years. We want them to make mistakes when they're young and the stakes are small. Don't want them to get in trouble in high school when the mistakes affect them for the rest of their lives.

Randy presents the Principal update: Linda Babcock took a leave of absence and spent her year working with the Yellowstone park museums in the area. She created a compilation of her work: biographies of the people who shaped the Yellowstone region. Randy encouraged us to look at it and said Linda's work is a great tool for looking at Montana history.

Longfellow progress update: Goals and Outcomes 2010-2011 and Goals and Action plans 2011-2012. Randy presented this to the BSD7 school board. Board wants to know what were goals last year, what did you do to accomplish those goals, how did you do, what will you do going forward? On web, can access info: LT Strategic plan, click on Longfellow school, our goals, summary. Reading was a big goal: to target 92% proficient or above. We achieved 97% on the state exam for reading. CRT – 161 of 166 students scored proficient in reading. Key for us: got together by grade level and looked at data. Teachers assessed students along the way. Are they targets we need to address then plan interventions? Results speak highly of the work our staff did. In each grade, majority of kids are advanced proficient i.e. reading above grade level. None were "novice". Pika asked what happens with a child who struggles with reading? Are their grades included in the %? Randy answered that their grades are included. One of the reasons we're looking at changing things: i.e. "no child left behind"

because if bar is set at certain level, not all kids can meet the requirements academically. We hope that with reauthorization with the education bill that we can move toward a growth model of measure. How can we look at the growth when the student comes in and measure their progress over time? Some students could never get over the reading bar but they can grow and progress.

Math: goal was to hit 91%. State goal was 70% proficient and above and our kids averaged at 91%. Haven't been working on math interventions but have lots of kids in advanced proficient. Randy very pleased with math.

Writing goal: set a goal of 85% of proficiency. Had some changes to how we would measure. Our kids scored 84%. We are seeing that our kids are becoming better writers.

We're looking to identify standards that we want our students to be proficient in in all of the areas. We'll be hearing more about it. Montana joined smarter balance consortium – schools that pulled together to define for ourselves what we want our kids to know and be able to do. Consortium began putting together Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The CCSS will drive assessments and the reporting of those. This will be a significant change. We will pilot the new test in the spring of 2014 and will implement in all states in 2015. This would replace the CRT and is very “real world” stuff. Questions asked are amazing. A real life example for 8th grade question math dealt with heating bills over a period of time. Rigor of assessment is pretty big. Kendice asked whether any of this preps them for SAT or ACT? Randy said he does not know of any direct work between the SAT/ACT test writers and the CCSS, however he does believe that the CCSS will help prepare kids for many aspects of the SAT/ACT.

Response to intervention: has allowed us as schools to get around the “failure before help” model. The old model: you had to fail before you could get help. This allows us through our assessments to intervene and get them help immediately. Aids are blocked for instructional support to help with reading or math efforts.

Foundation goals: OLWEUS implementation. 130 parents participated in the parent survey last year. 92% of kids say it's easy to make friends at Longfellow. 94% of our kids know they can go to a staff member and get help. Randy wants to re-write questions for a survey this year.

Science: we continue to stay fairly flat. There are no state standards for science. There are no annual measures.

Where are we headed? Testing sometimes makes us lose track of the fact that we are teaching human beings. We don't want to be a reading and math center. We will emphasize that but our kids need art, exercise, science and time outside. Per Randy, as long as he is principal, he will not allow school to only be focused on reading and math.

Chris asked about personalized learning – wondering how much the kids are aware of where they're supposed to be. For instance do they know what their goal is? Randy said that in the past we've not done that well but we are working towards that. He feels that education as a whole has been “sage on a stage”; presenting a great lesson but are the kids learning anything? Our goal should not be about the

teaching of the lesson but what the kids are learning. Great teaching will create great student learning. Are kids getting it? He agrees that we need to follow up with the kids to find out if they are taking things away from the lessons.

Writing – working towards 3 types of writing. Kids are given a prompt about anything and any kid can write i.e. personal narrative.

College/career ready – real life, high level thinking activities that the world is big and students can be successful in it.

Meeting adjourned at 1:10pm.