

Quality Assurance Committee
Special Meeting to Review Restructuring Plans
Minutes
November 29, 2006
5:30 p.m.

Attendance: Chairwoman Thompson, Commissioner Henley, Commissioner Elliott. Board staff L. Dunsmoor, QA Liaisons C. Holloway and M. Cianca, Director of Testing J. Silvers, Principals L. Dianetti, J. Munno, M. Andrecolich-Diaz, V. Ramos, and other administrators.

Commissioner Henley convened the meeting with a quorum at 5:40 p.m. Chairwoman Thompson arrived at 5:41 p.m.

Commissioner Elliott asked that the record reflect her desire that meetings begin when they are scheduled to begin.

Monroe High School
Linda Dianetti, Principal

Highlights:

- The goal at Monroe is improving the academic achievement of all students with increased attention to the following subgroups: Students With Disabilities, Blacks, Hispanics, and Socio-Economic Status.
- Staff development is important because better teaching will improve learning.
- Data on every child is tracked to improve instruction.
- There is increased teaching time for Grade 7 math classes and Grade 8 repeating students.
- A full-time bilingual principal works with programs to support students, parents and faculty.
- The Restructuring Plan is monitored by the School-Based Planning Team.
- Commissioner Elliott questioned the effect building leadership is having on the African American population at the school; Chairwoman Thompson noted the brief time allotted for questions and asked that Commissioner Elliott focus on the topic at hand. Commissioner Elliott said leadership has everything to do with academic achievement and said she would telephone Ms. Dianetti so the two could discuss the issue further.
- In response to Commissioners Thompson and Henley, Ms. Dianetti said double periods for math provide needed extra time for students in the classroom for acceleration or remediation. Other schools have found that the additional time helps students improve their scores and cited Marshall, Freddie Thomas and Douglass.
- Commissioner Henley asked about mid-level math scores, specifically what the specialists are doing to help improve the scores of Students With Disabilities. Ms. Dianetti said they are working on reading skills,

which are an integral part of math problems, and with teachers to be sure they understand the NYS Standards.

- Ms. Dianetti said teachers are held accountable for student achievement through the use of common assessments, the issuing of grades every six weeks and by working together sharing successful strategies.
- Commissioner Thompson asked about social promotion and whether a staff member could “fudge” his or her way through. Ms. Dianetti said it would be difficult to do so because of the State assessments and Regents exams. Commissioner Elliott commented that teachers don’t have to “fudge” because of a NYS law requiring that students be promoted according to certain age parameters.
- Asked to identify the top three challenges facing Monroe, Ms. Dianetti identified:
 - Additional technology needs
 - Getting students to ask for help
 - Parent participation at school
 - Establishing a peaceful school community

Marshall High School
Joseph Munno, Principal

Highlights:

- Comprehensive English strategies to improve performance include:
 - Adjusting scope/sequence so that all students receive the same level of instruction (def)
 - Additional resources for students
 - Focusing teachers on goals/objectives
 - A baseline for each student
 - Common assessments, frequent observations, student/teacher conferences and common planning time
 - SED resources -- a literary specialist from St. John Fisher College
- Math A strategies to improve performance include:
 - Testing all students sooner
 - Requiring minimum score of 65 in Math A to pass course so that more students’ scores on the state exam are in level 3 or 4
 - Ensure all students receive same level of instruction
 - Collegial circles to share strategies
 - Individualized plans for students
 - Math academic wing
 - Building-based math specialists and SED math specialist
- In response to Commissioner Henley, Mr. Munno said math teachers can learn to teach reading and the specialists assist with that effort.
- Regarding tracking, Mr. Munno said he uses looping, in which students stay with the same teacher for two years, as well as grouping by level or challenge.
- Mr. Munno said strategies must be flexible and responsive to data.
- He identified Marshall’s top three challenges as:

- Getting families in to school as partners
- Motivating students to graduate
- Ensuring that once they graduate they are ready for college, employment or military service

Jefferson High School
Mary Andrecolich-Diaz, Principal

Highlights

- One academy director is assigned to Foundation Academy to focus on improving instruction.
- An additional administrator has in-depth knowledge of LEAP/ELL.
- Small learning communities provide focused and ‘family style’ support for Grade 7 and 8.
- The Early Intervention Team works in partnership with the Urban League.
- Professional development is provided in partnership with Midwest Regional Support Center.
- Weekly Instructional Council meetings are held.
- Additional professional development is provided for staff.
- New instructional programs include Springboard (differentiated instruction), Transition, the Entrepreneurial Partnership with the U of R and Kaufman Foundation, and the James Town Navigator Reading program.
- Common assessment and data analysis are used at all levels.
- Additional supports for students are available during and after school.
- Additional parent involvement opportunities are available.
- The Parent Liaison works with the entire building but focuses on the Foundation Academy.
- Regarding the staff member who had spoken at a recent Board of Education meeting regarding violence and fights at Jefferson, Ms. Andrecolich-Diaz said the staff member could have gone to her or to his union with concerns.
- Commissioner Elliott asked about Jefferson’s reputation and students being forced to attend; Ms. Andrecolich-Diaz noted that her building is filled at Grade 7 and she and her staff work on Jefferson’s image every day. She cited additional home visits and a recent Community Forum held at the building.
- The three top challenges facing Jefferson are:
 - Getting data on time from the state
 - Mandates from the federal government without supporting resources
 - Mobility of LEAP/ELL students

Frederick Douglass Preparatory School
Vicki Ramos, Principal
Karl Kania, Acting Assistant Principal
Ms. Hill, School-Based Planning Team Parent

Highlights

- The ‘Three Rs’ are rigor, relevance and relationships.
- Standards-based and outcome-based instruction are used.
- There is a school-wide literacy focus.
- Double periods are held in ELA and Math.
- Instructional programs/initiatives include Expeditionary Learning, Fast ForWord, co-teaching, College-Bound Academy; new in 2007-08 will be the Early College Years partnership with SUNY Brockport.
- Assessment initiatives include common assessments, data analysis, baseline data, student portfolios and professional development.
- Professional development focuses on goal-setting, school-based goals, vertical planning, the coaching/critical friend framework, collegial circles, and instructional specialists.
- Monitoring of the improvement plan encompasses the School-Based Planning Team, common assessment data analysis, instructional specialists/academy directors, team meetings/collegial circles.
- Ms. Hill said the School-Based Planning Team has begun meeting at 7 a.m. to accommodate her schedule and she consistently attends meetings.
- Ms. Ramos explained that Connected Math shows students that there is more than one way to solve a problem.
- Approximately 90 percent of teachers are participating on collegial circles.
- The school improvement document is reviewed three times per year and annually.
- Douglass’s three top challenges include:
 - Receiving recognition that there is growth within brackets; students are progressing even if that does not translate on standardized assessments
 - Receiving the data from the state
 - A staff stretched by the building population

Chairwoman Thompson thanked the Principals for their presentations.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Henley, second by Commissioner Elliott, adopted at 7:10 p.m.