



SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Minutes)

Roundtable Meeting

October 30, 2018

Called for 6:00 p.m. in the CRLS Henrietta S. Attles Meeting Room, Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, 459 Broadway, Cambridge, for the purpose of discussing Elementary Staffing.

Members Present: Ms. Bowman, Emily Dexter, Mr. Fantini, Mr. Kimbrough, Ms. Kelly, Ms. Nolan, Mayor McGovern

Also Present: Dr. Kenneth Salim, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Carolyn Turk, Deputy Superintendent
Ms. Barbara Allen, Executive Director of Human Resources
Dr. Alexis Morgan, Asst. Supt. for Student Services
Dr. Anda Adams, Asst. Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
Mr. James Maloney, Chief Operating Officer (ABSENT)
Ms. Elizabeth Liss, Education Liaison for Mayor's Office
Ms. Claire Spinner, Chief Financial Officer
Ms. Maryann MacDonald, Asst. Superintendent of Elementary Education
Mr. Dan Monahan, CEA President
Ms. Caitlin O'Donnell
Ms. Karen Engels

Mayor McGovern in the Chair

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

The Chair read the call of the meeting and informed everyone that the meeting is being recorded and televised. There is no public comment.

Mayor McGovern turned the meeting over to Dr. Salim who gave opening remarks regarding tonight's presentation on Elementary Staffing.

Ms. MacDonald began by explaining that the Teaching and Learning Team is excited to have just completed eighteen hours of reviewing each school's school improvement plan. They are elevating the work around inclusion practices.

Elementary Staffing Roundtable October 30, 2018

Tonight's goals are to come to a shared understanding of our current enrollment and staffing at our elementary schools and to understand the needs of our students as they specifically relate to staffing on the school and district level.

Roundtable Meeting Agenda

Share CPS elementary enrollment trends and current class size
Define the problem(s)
Discuss general and differentiated staffing
Connect staffing to District Plan priorities
Discuss possible next steps

Enrollment and class size was discussed.

Enrollment drives the amount of extra support that may be needed in a classroom. There is one aide hour for every 13 students.

The preliminary elementary enrollment is 3,837. There has been a reduction in the amount of families that qualify for the free and reduced lunch program. The higher percentage of schools with free and reduced lunch also is the percentage of the schools that have a higher amount of staffing.

Evaluating solutions for addressing student needs.

Are we utilizing staff and resources in the most effective ways to meet these needs?

How do we differentiate staff allocations through an equity lens so that each school has the support it needs to serve all students?

Common Elementary Classroom Staffing

Classroom Teachers plus Specialist Teacher

Art, Music, Phys Ed, Instructional Technology Specialist, Library Media Specialist, World Language

Paraprofessionals

Full-time aide(s) in all JK/K, OSS & SEI classrooms

+ additional allocation for grades 1-5:

1 aide hour for every 13 students

+ additional 1.0 FTE for 1st grade cohorts with more than 45 students

Interns are in some schools.

It was added that the work with the CEA is very much appreciated with working on the contract for the Paraprofessional educators in their buildings. Ms. MacDonald wanted it to be part of the record that they are in full support of this collaboration.

Specialized Supports for Students were discussed.

Every school has a Literacy Interventionist. There are additional Literacy Interventionists placed where needed and additional general funded Social Workers are at the schools also. Presently, the district has four Social Workers.

Ms. MacDonald turned the rest of the presentation over to the educators.

Mr. Monahan, CEA President, stated they are fortunate to work in a system with so many resources. It is an incredibly complex system. There are three educators present this evening to represent all of the elementary teachers in the system. They will be sharing many of the pressure points around education.

Ms. O'Donnell stated that the considerations for paraprofessional staffing and general education staffing are the same. The survey showed that across the same grade levels across schools, some classrooms have shared paraprofessionals, interns, or no support. For clarity she encouraged the Members to read appendix A, figure 4 in the handout from the CEA Political Action Committee (on file in the School Committee office). Teachers' opinions vary on what the best systems are for the classrooms; obviously the teachers with no support will tell you that the system is not working. Paraprofessionals and interns are not interchangeable. They have two different goals, it was also noted that, paraprofessionals tend to stay in a school system and interns tend to be temporary. Some schools are not able to interview or attract interns and they are looking for ways to remedy that.

Ms. Engels explained what goes on during a school day. The responsibilities have increased for elementary teachers. The rollouts are staggered for teaching new curriculum and new standards; there

are also ELA standards that have been recently rolled out. While their expectations have increased, there has been less support. One teacher cannot teach more than one small group of students at the same time. Ms. Engels stated she is lucky because her class has another adult in the room with her that is able and qualified to help do the job. Unfortunately, the Paraprofessionals are expected to take on the work of an educator; however, Paraprofessionals need to multitask over paperwork, homework and preps. Most elementary teachers teach 32 different classes per week. They cannot actually do an hour for prep for each class. The number of minutes that she is with people other than students is after the contractual hours and after a full day of teaching

Ms. O'Donnell stated it used to be one hour for every nine students and the Paraprofessional support has decreased.

Mr. Monahan stated that relating to class size, model and attrition, he really values the sub-separate class being pushed into the general education class when possible; however, it increases the class size and creates a different problem. There can be no denial that there is an increase in students that are suffering from trauma and other emotional issues attending school.

Ms. Engels expressed that the needs of an individual child in the moment of a crisis is indescribable for a new teacher. What are the staffing needs for teachers to be able to focus on teaching without the disruptions caused by extreme irregularities? When teachers cannot do the job they were hired to do you end up with teacher burnout.

Ms. O'Donnell spoke about the substantially separate classroom which can have children with autism, where the ratio can be one teacher and two paraprofessionals working with six kids. The reality is that there are children without autism and that are not on the spectrum that also need 1:1 in general education classrooms.

Ms. Engels brought up the fact that some interventionists have been hired as extended term subs. They are doing the work of full time employees. The kids with the most level of struggle should be receiving the most level of help from teachers with the most experience in that pedagogy.

Mr. Monahan spoke on Recommendations:

1. Transparency in Paraprofessional and Intern Staffing Allocation, they are asking for increased transparency in paraprofessional ratios
2. Transparency in OSS Staffing Allocations
3. Return to Previous Paraprofessional Allocation Ratios
4. Increase Support of Paraprofessional Professional Learning (there is more about this in the document) Ms. MacDonald had done a lot of work on this.
5. District-Wide Intern/Practicum System
6. Articulate Interventionist Models and Increase Allocation
7. Increase Social Worker and Counselor Allocations

Dr. Salim spoke about how they can address solutions for student needs and how to differentiate between different supports looking through the equity lens.

Dr. Morgan spoke on the strategic initiatives, stating that there is a limited amount of time teachers have for co-planning which lead to little success in teacher collaborations and little success in student outcomes. What is the role of a Paraprofessional? Is it to help the teacher gain more independence or is it to give more support to the student?

District Plan Strategic Initiatives

- 3.2 Develop and expand inclusive practices
- 3.4 Develop MTS for academic and SEL

5.2 Grade Span Reviews (2017 ERS Elementary Program Review)

There was a conversation on how to develop and expand inclusive practices. The Members were walked through the steps to Strengthen Multi-tiered Systems of Support, which included:

- Implement SEL framework at each school
- Provide SEL Professional Development and coaching support
- Build administrator, instructional coach and teacher capacity on using data
- Improve classroom instruction (Math and Literacy coaches in every school)
- Identify best practices for Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention

Dr. Morgan also mentioned working with the VPA Director to work with our special area teachers to make sure the OSS students have all of the supports they need with relation to the arts.

Mayor McGovern exited the meeting at 6:55 p.m.

Vice Chair Kelly in the Chair

Ms. MacDonald spoke on the desire for all to own inclusive practices and to strengthen the multi-tiered system to include all sides of the triangle. They really need to move forward to implement practices for the students that need intervention and support. They intend to build upon the recommendations that the School Committee gave them last year. Some examples are looking at staffing schedules at each school and examining how they are using time and staff at schools. The most vulnerable students have the most fractured schedules; they are currently working to improve that.

ERS Elementary Program Review Recommendations

- Extend the School Day
- Create time for teacher collaboration
- Focus resources on accelerating learning for students who are farthest behind

- Create new staffing schedules
 - Integrate specialized teaching staff into classroom instruction
 - Additional classroom teacher to create opportunities for flexible groupings

The presentation ended at 7:05 p.m.

Vice Chair Kelly thanked everyone for the presentation. She stated it was very helpful to have two teachers in the room along with the CEA, having both the educators and the district represented. She mentioned an element that was skipped over from the Elementary Program Review, which was focusing resources on accelerated learning for students who have fallen the farthest behind, suggesting it can be a rich discussion to have at another meeting.

Dr. Salim also mentioned that the Principals are here to share their building perspectives as building leaders.

Vice Chair Kelly opened the floor for questions and discussions.

Ms. Nolan reiterated that Cambridge has more resources than other districts in this state, and acknowledged that we are making progress. She would like the Principals to address how staffing decisions are made regarding full or part time Paraprofessionals.

Principal Byers stated that they don't think about staffing outside of time and space. At the Graham and Parks school they have a lot of Interns; there will always be an adult present when a teacher needs support.

Ms. Nolan asked how effective is the staffing? So much has changed over time; it makes sense that it is not as effective as it was thirty years ago. How do we know what is the most effective use of resources?

Ms. Engels stated that when teachers become overwhelmed they cannot improve their practice and keep up on all of the newest trends. When the most seasoned, competent teachers become overwhelmed, it stands to reason that new teachers will also become overwhelmed.

Ms. Nolan stated she wished all classes were able to have two full time teachers.

Principal Ford responded that their model of having a special educator and a general education teacher in every classroom is bringing them closer to closing the achievement gap with the special education students.

Ms. Bowman thanked everyone for the presentation and stated what would have been very helpful for her is if they had been able to pull out specific data points for students with special needs. She brought up White supremacy and how we hire from a racial aspect: we hire many Paraprofessionals of color and White teachers.

Ms. O'Donnell commented that she is very concerned about that as well. Around the distribution of interns in our data base, there is a systemic problem. We need to create a voucher pool for Paraprofessionals to get a higher education and qualify for positions. Ms. O'Donnell stated they need to figure out how to implement equity and not just say the word.

Mr. Kimbrough asked in what ways do students demonstrate how much they understand the work they are doing.

Ms. Engels answered that her pedagogical belief is the most effective way to allow kids to demonstrate what they have learned is with projects and research.

Mr. Kimbrough asked what the racial equity lens looks like as it relates to staffing.

Ms. MacDonald cannot speak for each Schools' Improvement Plan, the members of the Administrative Council are going through the book Culturally Responsive Teaching & the Brain by Zaretta Hammond, others are working with Dr. Amante. Jamie Frost is using the Montessori method. All schools are involved in the work around cultural proficiency. Some schools are farther ahead than others, but they are all in the work.

Mr. Kimbrough asked what data points are being used to measure the effectiveness of the push and pull out model.

Dr. Morgan answered that they are looking at MCAS data to see which students are getting pushed in or pushed out support, they are also using results from Panorama, climate survey data, and disciplinary data; and are interviewing teachers and students as well.

Principal Ford stated that at the RTI meetings they are looking at the IEP's at the school levels and are using their fast screeners and benchmark levels.

Vice Chair Kelly appreciates that they are auditing the IEP's. They have not received a lot of information on this in the past.

Emily Dexter has waited three years to have this conversation. She understands this presentation to say that more help is needed in the classroom and it is possible that professional development is a waste of time and money.

Emily stated that we do not have luxurious staffing in the first grade. She mentioned the huge equity gap at the Montessori, and we have fewer Paraprofessionals now than we had in prior years. It is upsetting to her that we have less staffing and more students.

Ms. MacDonald stated the November 13th Roundtable will address this issue.

Mr. Fantini stated that the school that has the most Paraprofessionals is the best staffed school. The most powerful slide for him was the one that stated the steps to strengthen multi-tiered system of support.

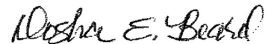
Ms. MacDonald stated that the elementary Principals need to agree that there are some common experiences in all elementary schools. They are going to celebrate that they more alike than different.

Mr. Fantini suggested that teachers get vouchers for bringing in student teachers. The Paraprofessionals could use them to get an education and as a pipeline for higher education. We do use Interns we should play a role in moving that forward. Since we have social promotions in our schools, it is good and bad. We are still letting low income kids and kids of color flunk. Workforce development and kids going into remediation has to end. What does remediation mean? There needs to be more transparency about that issue. It was important to have the variety of perspectives at this Roundtable, the School Committee has been given a lot of food for thought and we need to figure out how to support the students that need it the most.

Ms. Bowman acknowledged what Mr. Fantini stated about the correlation of students of color that exists here in Cambridge and does not happen everywhere.

On a motion by Ms. Bowman, seconded by Ms. Dexter, the meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Attest:



Doshia Beard
Executive Secretary
to the School Committee

Distributed Back-up Documents (copy on file in the School Committee office):

- Elementary Staffing Roundtable CEA Political Action Committee
- Elementary Staffing Roundtable PowerPoint presentation