

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

### **(Official Report)**

#### **Roundtable Meeting**

**March 8, 2018**

Called for 6:05 p.m. in the CRLS Henrietta S. Attles Meeting Room, Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, 459 Broadway, Cambridge, for the purpose of discussing the Counseling Program Review.

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

Also Present: Dr. Kenneth N. Salim, Superintendent of Schools  
Dr. Carolyn Turk, Deputy Superintendent  
Dr. Anda Adams, Asst. Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment  
Ms. Barbara Allen, Executive Director of Human Resources  
Mr. James Maloney, Chief Operating Officer (ABSENT)  
Ms. Claire Spinner, Chief Financial Officer  
Ms. Maryann MacDonald, Asst. Superintendent of Elementary Education  
Ms. Jean Spera, Interim OSS Coordinator  
CRLS Principal Damon Smith  
Mr. Dan Weathersby LC S  
Ms. Lynn Williams, Guidance Counselor Coordinator  
Ms. Stephanie Richards LC C  
Ms. Janani Nathan LC L  
Mr. George Finn LC C  
Ms. Jodi Mace LC S  
Mr. Dan Monahan, CEA President  
Ms. Elizabeth Liss, Education Liaison for Mayor's Office

Mayor McGovern in the Chair.

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. and read the call of the meeting. Mayor McGovern informed everyone that this Roundtable meeting is being recorded by audio and visual devices. There is no public comment and then turned the meeting over to Dr. Salim who gave an introduction and then turned the meeting over to Ms. Katie Gray who gave a presentation on Unique Potential Consulting.

Ms. Gray thanked Dr. Salim, Dr. Turk, and the school counselors. She gave her background in school counseling, and as an administrator with experience with over 28 years as a practitioner. She has also been president of the MA School Counselors Assoc. She started her own consulting company about 10 years ago.

#### **Guiding Questions**

1. What is the role of the CRLS guidance counselor in a 21<sup>st</sup> century high school?
2. What systems and supports need to be in place for counselors to deliver proactive curriculum that supports all students?
3. How do we define success for CRLS students – both while they are in school and at the time of graduation?
4. How can the program's effectiveness in student learning be measured?

Ms. Gray explained that she will return to these questions throughout the presentation. She will frame the report around the above 4 questions and the CPS District Framework.

### **District Plan Framework**

**Provide all students in all student groups, with the knowledge and skills they need to achieve their goals and postsecondary success as engaged community members.**

- Provide equity and access to increase opportunity and achievement
- Provide engaging learning for students and staff to strengthen instruction for all types of learners
- Support the whole child as an individual
- Expand and strengthen family and community partnerships
- Improve implementation and progress monitoring

### **The Program Review Process: 4 Days on-site**

#### **Interviews:**

Upper School guidance counselors and school social workers  
Upper Schools Heads of Schools  
CRLS Principal  
Guidance Coordinator  
Guidance Counselors  
CRLS social workers  
Guidance secretary  
RSTA Executive Director and Career Counselor  
Extension School guidance counselor  
ELL program leaders  
Superintendent Salim

#### **Focus Groups:**

Caregiver Group for grades 6-12  
Upper School education representatives  
CRLS education representatives  
Upper School Student Representatives  
CRLS students in grades 9 and 10  
CRLS students in grades 11 and 12  
CRLS Deans  
Community Partners

### **Best Practices in Massachusetts for School Counseling**

- MA Model 2.0 is the guiding document to describe current best practices for schools interested in implementing a comprehensive school counseling program.
- It is a framework and a resource to help school counselors shift from a reactive service delivery approach to a more proactive, data driven, programmatic approach to serving ALL students.
- MA Model 2.0 is organized into 4 sections:  
**Foundation, Accountability, Management and Delivery**, each of which guidance counselors (and administrators) to think about the different components of a counseling program. It loosely follows the principals of backwards design.

### **MA Model 2.0**

#### **Foundation:**

A strong foundation helps to answer guiding question What is the role of a guidance counselor in a 21<sup>st</sup> century high school? And How is student success defined?

A school Counseling programs foundation serves as the ground upon which the rest of the program is built.

Beginning with the end in mind, it articulates what the desired outcomes are for students.

- The school counseling program needs to have a **clearly defined, results driven vision (focus)**
- This vision clarifies what it is that school counselors can contribute to the overall goals of the district.

- Program results need to be shared regularly with stakeholders so that the important role guidance counselors play in academic achievement and school improvement is understood throughout the community.

### Foundation current practices at CRLS

#### Current Practices

The most common response to the question “what do you see as a guidance counselor’s primary function?”

To form relationships with students  
Getting students into college scheduling

What student success looks like

Getting into college

#### Commendations

The district is open to learning from  
This program review

The Guidance department has developed goals that begin to align  
Their work with the district’s improvement plan

Guidance counselors have identified one data driven goal using EDWIN analytics

While not formally stated as the primary measure of student success, the graduation rate and college going rates are higher than the state average.

#### Foundation: Recommendations

1. Form a team of stakeholders (sometimes referred to as an “advisory council”
2. Have the advisory council review district data (using the DART success after High School and Edwin tools) and the school improvement plan to
  - a. Identify and then prioritize the data points school counselors can impact
  - b. Develop data driven goals for the school counseling program
3. Share goals broadly
4. Connect the identified goals to school counseling standards
5. Update the department’s mission statement to reflect this work.

#### In Summary...

Currently there is no agreed upon focus for the work of guidance counselors, thus, the first step toward having a school counseling program aligned with MA Model 2.0 is **to have a clearly defined focus anchored in data driven objectives**. Rather than forming relationships with students as the primary focus, counselors and stakeholders need to determine what data driven student outcomes should be the focus of the school counseling program. The role of the counselor is to deliver a scope and sequence of standards based on programming and tiered interventions that supports these outcomes.

#### MA Model 2.0 Accountability

Guiding Question #4 How is program effectiveness measured?

The Accountability section of MA Model 2.0 provides the counseling program with a framework for evaluating its effectiveness and demonstrating how it is an essential art of the school system.

Massachusetts school counselors must collect and analyze data that demonstrates how the counseling program supports student achievement and school improvement, as well as college and career readiness.

As in backwards design model, assessment strategies and tools are developed BEFORE the counsel lessons/interventions are mapped out.

## **Foundation: Current Practices @ CRLS**

### **Current Practices:**

- Measuring program effectiveness intentionally and regularly is not part of current practice.
- Data required by DESE is collected and reported each year
- The guidance team has recently participated in data training provided by DESE
- There are vast amounts of data available for counselors to use, but there is currently no time scheduled to review it regularly
- The lack of accountability data leaves the school community with little information about how students benefit from the counseling program.

### **Commendations**

- The guidance coordinator is aware of the importance of data and has taken steps to train her team in its use
- The guidance coordinator has prepared a document using data to raise awareness of issues relative to college persistence
- The authors of the school improvement plan recognize the role guidance can play in supporting district initiatives

### **Accountability Recommendations**

1. Establish a regular "Data Meeting" for all counselors
2. Determine what data will be collected and when to evaluate the effectiveness of a program or service
3. Look at district data trends to inform content of tier 1 interventions
4. Establish criteria for tier 2 interventions using discipline, attendance and or grades
5. Learn how to generate and disseminate charts with concise explanations of counseling interventions
6. Adopt a continuous improvement mindset

### **In Summary...**

In order to establish the counseling program as an essential component of student success, CRLS counselors must begin to collect and analyze data that demonstrates how the counseling program supports student achievement and school improvement as well as college and career readiness.

### **MA Model 2.0**

#### **Management**

A strong focus on management helps to answer guiding question #2

Question #2 what systems/supports need to be in place for proactive curriculum delivery?

The Management System of MA Model 2.0 describes how the counseling department is organized to provide programs and services to students.

In order to manage a comprehensive school counseling program, a systemic approach is necessary.

At the school level, counseling programs need to have various organizational tools in place.

Following the backwards design analogy, logistics like when, where, for how long and by whom counseling lessons/interventions will be delivered must be decided so that the learning activities can be shaped accordingly.

## **Management: Current Practices @ CRLS**

- CRLS counselors are in reactive mode
- They are not the masters of their own time
- Guidance counselors are spending great deal of their time in meetings, doing administrative work and on scheduling
- There are no systems or structures in place that are aligned with MA Model 2.0 management system.
- This current model is inefficient, ineffective and unintentionally culturally biased.

**Management: Commendations**

- Guidance counselors work very hard to get to know their students by meeting with them individually or during community meeting time.
- The Guidance Coordinator completed a comprehensive guidance service delivery analysis
- Quality lesson plans have been developed
- Current job descriptions (especially for the career counselor) are aligned with MA Model 2.0
- There is valuable information presented on the School Counseling page(s) of the CRLS website

**Management: Recommendations**

**Organizational Issues:**

MA Model 2.0 advocates that management “agreements” be created to support effective school counseling program delivery aligned with district identified goals. The agreements address:

- The identified needs of the students and the school (based on data analysis)
- The assignment of students to specific counselors (based on data analysis)
- Where and when counselors have the pilot,
- Consider access to students to deliver curriculum
- The responsibilities of individual counselors for program management and delivery
- The professional development priorities for the school counseling department
- The priorities for guidance counselor evaluation

**Management: Recommendations (continued)**

Strategic Implementation of a Gradual Paradigm Shift

Year 1: Getting Started (planning)

**Strategic Implementation of a Gradual Paradigm Shift (continued)**

Year 2: Scaling Up (a little)

- Explore steps to expand the pilot
- Consider the kind of systemic changes needed to expand the pilot
- Create a strategic plan to move the pilot through this and following phases
- Create written agreements with counselors documenting how much time will be spent on the initiative
- Conduct the extended intervention, evaluate and create a results report

Year 3: Plan for further expansion (expand, revise and update the strategic plan)

Year 4 and Beyond: Continue the process bringing the initiative to scale

**Management: Additional Recommendations**

- Writing Days for counselors to complete letters of recommendation

- Professional development to move from cultural proficiency to culturally responsive practice,
  - Use data to identify caregivers and students who need a different approach to supporting their child's progress through high schools as well as the post secondary planning process
  - Create meaningful programming for 1<sup>st</sup> generation students
  - Conduct outreach and engage students and caregivers from other cultures in having a successful high school experience as well as supporting them through the post secondary planning process

## In Summary...

*In order for any significant changes to be made to improve the quality and inclusiveness of school counseling programming at CRLS, the way counselors spend their time must change. The culture of seeing one student at a time and waiting until the end of junior year to begin post secondary planning must shift. The inordinate amount of time some 12<sup>th</sup> graders spend with their counselors must shift by putting more responsibility on students, which in turn requires that they be taught more about post secondary planning starting much earlier. This will require both a shift in the culture of the whole community as well as a willingness on the part of the administration to rethink how counselors can access groups of students in a manner that allows more than lectures, assemblies or reminders.*

This is the statement that jumped out at Principal Smith:

***If social/emotional health and college and career readiness are true priorities, there must be time in a student's schedule to participate in learning activities that intentionally teach the competencies associated with these outcomes.***

### Delivery

(4<sup>th</sup> point mentions the fact that the RSTA career counselor delivers curriculum

### In Summary...

Counselors must begin to use their relationship building skills in a much more deliberate and intentional way by delivering tiered interventions with a specific, agreed upon school wide focus with measurable student outcomes. These tiered interventions must reflect culturally responsive practice and be data driven so as not to exclude those who have trouble asking for help.

### In Conclusion...

By rethinking priorities, implementation strategies, ect. The district may be able to improve the utilization of existing personnel rather than looking to add another counselor as the solution to current inefficiencies and inequities.

Mayor McGovern thanked Ms. Katie Gray for the presentation and then he asked the Members to limit themselves to 2 questions for the first round.

### First Round of questions and answers:

Ms. Nolan thanked all that participated for the presentation and is excited about looking at other models. She asked if there is a document that shows how other schools have organized it – by grade or have counselors focus on one thing and others concentrate on something else.

Ms. Gray doesn't know the exact answer however she suggested the counselors use their strengths.

Ms. Nolan asked about our alums, parents and workforce, AVID, breakthrough - have you been able to reach out to them. Could we be more efficient?

Ms. Gray suggested an electronic survey. Dr. Turk added that there was a block set aside for Ms. Gray to speak with our partners.

Ms. Dexter was thankful for the presentation also. She thinks of the work of counselors with the root word, guide. How do our counselors guide the students through so many choices and opportunities?

Ms. Gray would break them up by grade and then try to expose them to all of the possibilities of learning. She stated that the students wish they knew about all of what is out there. It needs to be thoughtful enough to have exposure and reflection.

Ms. Dexter asked about a pilot project.

Ms. Gray used an example, the idea of MYCAP. The district has to decide where their priorities are.

Mr. Fantini asked if other school systems practiced the 2.0 Model.

Ms. Gray answered that they are all works of progress. No one is doing it 100%, it is a huge system change. There are some MA Model 2.0 workshops. It is a culture change and a systemic change. There is a lot of pushback from students and parents that want to keep the individual attention instead of group settings. Guidance Department cannot do it alone; they need the support of the Principal and the central office.

Mr. Fantini asked how large her staff is, if 4 days long enough to do an analysis.

Ms. Gray answered that she is the whole team.

He wonders if she runs his reports and presents them to the counselors before they are presented to the committee of the whole. Ms. Gray answered that they made one change and 4 days is typical.

Ms. Bowman thanked her for the presentation. She acknowledged that all of our staff works very hard; she appreciates that being included in the report. She asked about students perception about college readiness is not worth their time. Is this in the students head or is it a systematic reality?

Ms. Gray stated that they all said they knew their counselors; the younger students go to the counselor for help in scheduling.

Ms. Bowman asked about the cohort model with counselors? If kids don't have the supports from home, can they get the needed support from cohort?

Ms. Gray stated that delivering curriculum doesn't take the place of one on one. If the kids have the mindset, they will be less needy for the basics.

Vice Chair Kelly asked about doing advisory starting in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Is the model only from 9-12 or does the model go down to the elementary.

Ms. Gray likes the 6<sup>th</sup> grade model. She would like to think out of the box and not do only academics. Ms. Gray stated it is amazing how much information can be crammed into kids using Google Drive.

Mr. Kimbrough stated it is awesome to see his former co-workers here; he is glad to see them again. He is glad this review is taking place. He would like to know how Ms. Gray feels about shifting cultures for a wider range of acceptance for our students, for some any college will do, for others, success means getting into a school on the I 95 corridor.

Ms. Gray responded that a lot of this is around a culture shift. Doing away with stereotypes is difficult. Having students come back and share their experiences is valuable, especially if they can share that they make more money than the students went the I 95 Route.

Mr. Kimbrough asked about vulnerable students vs. the privileged students.

Ms. Gray answered there are ways of identifying who those students are and supplying support, finding the people who work well in that capacity makes the most sense. Using data to know who is at risk and then helping to ensure they do not slip through the cracks.

Mayor McGovern stated it is nice to be on a Committee when you have a former guidance counselor and two social workers. He asked about time to do the work when you have a 200 plus caseload of kids. What is the recommended load and when can we be proactive? He brought up the fact that the learning

communities used to have two clerks, it was cut back to one clerk, the counselors picked up some the paperwork. What is the difference between guidance counselors and social workers? 250 kids to one counselor is not financial reality. Giving clerical duties to counselors with Master's degrees is wrong.

Ms. Gray responded that she had valuable support from her administrative assistant, it was huge. She agreed with him. It needs to be a community effort.

The Chair agrees that it has to be a community effort, but how do you organize it? Does she have any short and long term goals? What are the next steps?

Ms. Gray's response was, looking at how much time is spent in IEP and the clerical piece; give non counseling duties to others.

Ms. Kelly in the Chair 7:35 p.m.

### **Second Round of questions and answers:**

Ms. Nolan stated there may be tension for counselors in moving to a leadership role. Advisory may be where the students develop relationships with kids. She didn't see anything about monitoring student performance and knowing when someone is falling off track.

Ms. Gray stated that it could be an interesting model but it would be hard to do. It would require a lot of professional development. Schools adopt the concept of advisory, they expect it to happen easily and that is not always realistic. It is important to pick the right people to do the work. Adults and students both have different skills and weaknesses. Levering technology may be a way to make sure every child is caught up, but it takes away from learning time. The first line of defense when a student is failing should not be the counselor, it should be the teacher.

Ms. Dexter stated most high schools are very complex environments; she compared Lexington High to CRLS. Same amounts of students, but the parents are mostly two per family with both having masters degrees. What is the cost of not having a lot more guidance counselors beyond the kids don't know all of the pathways? It is too much for the teachers, they are trying to teach the curriculum. Kids don't take advantage of many of our resources because they don't know it is there.

Ms. Kelly commented on the fact guidance is extremely importance. There are also the psychologists and the social workers. There can be some overlap but there are also specialists. There are the academic deans and dean of students, social workers, guidance counselors and the clerks.

Ms. Bowman spoke on the fact that more money for more guidance counselors may not solve the problem. She asked how Ms. Gray came up with the fact that we don't use our data for problem solving.

Ms. Gray answered that the Edwin Analytics and they have targeted 9<sup>th</sup> grade cohorts. It is an example, but it is too small. It is common to look at data on D's and F's at the end of a semester, but it is often too late. It is not intentional enough. She doesn't think there is a data meeting intentional enough to keep at it. She also asked Dr. Salim if there was a final report. He answered no. Ms. Gray informed all assembled that she also looked at the upper schools, but tonight she deliberately focused on CRLS.

Ms. Bowman stated that she feels Ms. Gray needs to highlight what we are doing well with data; even if only for morale.

Mr. Fantini is guessing that we will be moving forward and trying to implement this 2.0 model. He knows all of the guidance counselors. He believes in them and in systems, we have a model in Level Up on this. We have a strong guidance department and she sold him on moving forward with this, he hopes she stays with us.

Dr. Salim made final comments thanking her for her experience from many different systems and engaging in the difficult work. It is an important first step of this review. He spoke of the work of the counseling team and Principal Smith and when it comes to next steps, what are we going to do to align the district plan and combine our resources into it. Long and short term – we cannot wait for a seven year process. We look forward to continuing this work, he thanked the counselors for being here this evening.

On a motion by Ms. Kelly, seconded by Ms. Bowman, the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Dosha Beard  
Executive Secretary  
to the School Committee

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

Cambridge Public Schools  
School Counseling Program Review: CRLS

Prepared by:  
Katie Gray  
Unique Potential Consulting  
March, 2018

The Chair announced that the School committee voted to go entertain a motion to enter into Executive Session with the intent of hearing a CEA Unit A Level III grievance as part of collective bargaining and for the purpose of discussing collective bargaining and litigation strategy with respect to this grievance as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining and litigation positions of the School Committee.

On a motion by Ms. Nolan, seconded by Ms. Dexter, on the following roll call, it was voted to go into Executive Session for the purpose stated: Fantini YEA; Ms. Kelly YEA; Mr. Kimbrough YEA; Ms. Nolan YEA; Ms. Bowman YEA; Ms. Dexter YEA; Mayor McGovern YEA.

The Chair announced that no votes will be taken and the Committee will not reconvene in open session.