



EEE COMMITTEE MEETING

September 10, 2013

A meeting of the EEE Committee was held on Tuesday, September 10, 2013 beginning at 4:00 p.m. in the Mellon Board Room. Committee members present: Angela Smith, Facilitator, Stan Yanchus, Greg Johnson, Dr. Laura Taylor, Dr. Judy Wiegand, Ileana Saveley, Melissa Kearns (sub for Cathy Mannen), Minnie Pearson, Alejandra Aguero, Jamar Brown, Gianina Baker.

Absent: Karl Radnizter, Amy Armstrong, Sarah Evans.

Also present: Trevor Nadrozny, Susan Zola, Orlando Thomas

Welcome and Introductions: Angela Smith, Facilitator, opened the meeting at 4:00 p.m. and welcomed committee members and guests. Ms. Smith said we are an intimate, but mighty group. Introductions were made.

Review of Meeting Minutes:

Ms. Smith said a copy of the minutes from the last meeting was included in today's packet and she asked the committee to take a few moments to review and make any changes or corrections. Dr. Taylor asked for corrections to the information in the minutes pertaining to Social Justice. A motion was made by Minnie Pearson, seconded by Laura Taylor to approve the minutes with corrections. Ms. Smith said her office will make corrections and send the revised minutes out to the committee.

Superintendent's Update – Dr. Judy Wiegand:

Dr. Wiegand referenced the District Settlement Agreement and the requirement to provide updates on achievement, special education, graduation rates, etc. to the EEE Committee. She shared that in January 2013, ISBE raised performance level or cut scores so the exams would align more closely with the college entrance level exams. Schools are now compared to national norms. Dr. Wiegand asked each Asst. Supt. to walk the Committee through their level. Dr. Wiegand added the presentation would not include ISAT scores.

Dr. Zola presented elementary benchmarks according to AIMSweb data. Kindergarten focuses on teaching explicit skills. Dr. Wiegand added kindergarten scores are strong, but the achievement gap is

still measurable. Dr. Zola said the next benchmark is third grade reading and math. Scores at that level are not going in the right direction. About half of our students are at the benchmark (meeting standards). Finally Dr. Zola reviewed the 5th grade benchmark data, the last elementary check before students advance to middle level.

Mr. Johnson commented that reading is going one way and math is going one way. Dr. Zola said overall these scores tell us we have a lot to do and some of that work needs to happen before students come to kindergarten. Dr. Zola mentioned specialist Jan Richardson and her work around literacy. She added Ms. Richardson works in a lot of high poverty, minority districts. Ms. Richardson has been working in the District the last two days with teachers and students. The District has invested in a lot of professional development related to literacy.

Sujata dey Koontz referenced Asian scores and tutoring opportunities in regards to supplemental help. *(Note that at the subsequent meeting on December 3, 2013, Ms. dey Koontz said she was speaking more about academic enhancement opportunities available for Asian students, not necessarily tutoring.)* It would be interesting to know how many of these students are getting outside help. Trevor Nadrozny said we can't assume that the Asian population is all ESL. Stan Yanchus asked about cohort comparisons, saying he believes that would be more helpful to evaluate the data. Dr. Wiegand did not use ISAT because cut scores are changed so often. She doesn't feel that is a true reflection of students' capability or the teachers'. Dr. Zola said Common Core Standards are really pushing teachers to rethink their craft. The bar is being raised and we see that in our piloted resources. Stan Yanchus said in terms of data it is important to get something that is accurate.

Alex Aguero inquired if there is a tracking system between kindergarten and third grade. Are children being tracked by certain demographics? Is there a specific school that is doing better between kindergarten and third grade? Why such a drop with a specific population and not others? Dr. Wiegand agreed with monitoring grade to grade, campus to campus. Dr. Zola said there is a common tracking system. Last year monitoring was done differently at each campus. Several interventions were being tried last year.

Angela Smith shared data from the middle level. She talked about factors that could be part of the breakdown resulting in gaps between subgroups. She added it is a little easier to determine, with just three middle schools, what initiatives are working. Reading and writing have been reintroduced and writing teams have been meeting across the three buildings. The writing piece will bring more than just curriculum, but also what students have to say. Ms. Smith said our numbers indicate a crisis (something Dr. Wiegand has already stated). As a result, the middle level has come up with a standard RtI system with focused interventions. Our teams have been studying and looking at data, instruction and practice across the middle schools. Ms. Smith also stated that through the principal evaluation process all data, particularly AA and SpEd, we will be tracked for progress. There will be more opportunities to intervene earlier with more frequent interpretation of data.

Jamar Brown inquired about SpEd data, asking how many students are actually incapable of getting the knowledge as a result of severe cognitive impairment. Dr. Wiegand said most SpEd students in that range are not included in this data, but instead take alternative assessments. Every group is compared to the National Norm.

Dr. Wiegand said the emphasis on SpEd tends to be according to IEP procedures as opposed to academic accountability. We need to change. The new assessment system is asking us to do something different. Mr. Thomas said there are also a limited number of students who can take the IAA. Dr. Taylor said that is a very small percentage of the whole. Dr. Wiegand referred to the broad range of disabilities under the SpEd umbrella. Gianina Baker asked if it could be looked at through another lens with multiple categories.

Dr. Taylor said in November/December the District will be capable of screening freshman and sophomore students. 2013 found scores dipped in general across the nation. Dr. Wiegand added we have approx. 70 high school students in the group with accommodations. Nationally their scores run 15 to 16. High schools follow the same trend seen in the earlier grades (i.e. AA scores are below national scores across the board). Ms. Baker talked about data analysis by school and looking at whether or not students are above or below where they were previously. Maria Alanis has taken over analyzing data related to ESL students.

Dr. Taylor provided preliminary data for graduation rate. She noted a significant drop in scores, she also stated in 10-11 the rates were calculated differently. Discussion was held about keeping track of student scores once they transferred to a private school. Dr. Taylor said we are doing a pretty good job with kids that started and ended with us. Dr. Wiegand said one of biggest difficulties is for students that transfer in and out to the Chicago area.

Dr. Taylor reviewed retention rates, noting a downward trend in retentions. Projections imply that we should be seeing improved graduation rates. Central's reclassification rate is also going in the right direction. Both high schools have implemented their own enrollment plan to meet with families and get a triangulation of data. Freshmen year is really important. Kids are provided with wrap around. Dr. Taylor said one goal is to get more minority students into our AP/Honors classes. Discussion was held about dual credit and qualifications for college placement. Dr. Wiegand said dual credit will be a good piece to add to the reporting data.

Attendance Data:

Mr. Thomas shared the dramatic decrease in suspensions at the high schools. Factors include being proactive on utilizing two options – Novak Academy and READY. The committee meets quarterly to assess and make decisions for alternative placements. That process has worked well to get students in better placements to meet their style/needs.

Elementary students have no options for a true alternative placement. DEAC looks at the disparity and when looking at the decrease at high school compared to increase at elementary there were not options for elementary. This year we have a program called ACTIONS that provides direct social skills instruction

and equip students to come back with a game plan. One of the hurdles is transportation. The good news is we have a small number of students needing to attend the program so teachers can make connections with students to follow-through. We also take referrals from campuses.

Dr. Wiegand said the BOE is very student-centered. Mr. Thomas talked about the alignment with transitions and the correlation between those difficult transition times. Mr. Brown said that is one his passions. He said policy wasn't changed, but the way we looked at kids was different. Mr. Yanchus talked about how we frame information shared. He alluded to the fact that 93 percent of students have *not* been suspended. Mr. Thomas said suspensions are reviewed by gender, ethnicity, etc. Both high school campuses have a faculty meeting each month. Centennial is working on an action research model to determine their instruction and practice in the classroom. Eddie Fergus has been contracted with the District to examine this area more closely. Mr. Johnson responded to a question from Ms. Baker about teachers' gap of how to take what they have learned back to the classroom.

Ms. Smith said some other items shared, besides data, at the Leadership Retreat was a staff development meeting schedule around cultural responsiveness. Some have teamed with the university and some will be working with Eddie Fergus so they have been teamed with experts in their field. Mr. Thomas said the small percentages of teachers that struggle are encouraged to attend courses offered by Dr. Edna Olive (PBF). The course is life-changing.

Ms. Aguero asked what is it the District wants from the Committee this year as the district appears to be doing a lot right now. Dr. Wiegand said she wants to examine students who come up for expulsion and understand where the disconnection began. She wants to shore up those areas to help keep students engaged. As a District and community we need to step back and define intelligence and how we look at that. Those are some areas we would love the committee to provide input and help with.

Ms. Smith said last year we set targeted goals that the committee was able to take to a deeper level. She reviewed how the Committee talked about kindergarten readiness and the momentum kicked off. Student voice was also a topic that derived from EEE and, as a result, the District and campuses have embraced this idea. She said she really felt we were linked to the community. Ms. Smith also gave a nod to the new EEE logo. She said she felt like the District and community began to mesh around supporting our students and when looking at unfavorable outcomes, we are standing together to say, "not our kids!" Ms. Smith said it is dangerous when kids don't feel they have value. Ms. Smith said the Committee needs to have discussion about the statement we want to go under our logo – what we want the banner to read. Ms. Aguero said she felt it would be a good idea to capture student ideas to include on the banner.

Dr. Taylor said we also want the committee to help get the message out and help the District build trust so that the community will see we are really trying to make a difference. Ms. Baker touched on Gifted access. Ms. Smith replied that is another area being addressed. Mr. Yanchus announced this would be his last meeting as his term on the committee expires. Ms. Smith announced that Committee Applications are in the meeting folders for those who wish to reapply for a term. The next meeting will take place after committee applicants have been chosen and approved by the Board.

Ms. Smith charged the committee to start thinking about some targeted things you want to give attention to as well as the inscription for the banner.

Imani Bazzell was in the audience and asked the Committee, “How are you interpreting the data on the ethnicity screen – as it pertains to multi-racial?” Dr. Wiegand said the purpose for our work is to take a look at AA. Ms. Bazzell asked what if they are caught up in the multi-racial category? She said that was an issue inherited from work done during the Consent Decree. Ms. Bazzell said multi-racial was counted in AA numbers under Consent Decree guidelines.

Adjournment: 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Gayle Griffin-Jordan
Recording Secretary