

2018-2019 District Goals Midyear Update

February 7, 2019

Coherent, Higher Order Thinking
Curriculum/Student-Centered
Learning

Literacy, Inquiry and Student Independence:

District-wide Multi-year Focus:

- Developing all students' abilities to comprehend complex texts is essential to their achieving depth of understanding, analytical and inferencing skills, and enduring independence as thinkers and learners, (hereafter referred to as 'literacy learning').
- These qualities and the attendant capacities for researching effectively and writing clearly and persuasively are essential for citizenship, college and careers in our constantly changing, technology charged and interconnected world.
- Doing so for all students is essential to the effective closing of our persistent learning opportunity gaps.
- In order to successfully close these gaps, the purposeful integrated teaching of general literacy in the elementary grades and disciplinary literacy in the secondary grades must be the responsibility of all educators.

Key Steps Identified in District Goals

- Strengthen educator understanding of the links between literacy learning and developing student independence in the context of inquiry-based, cross curricular, workshop model and project based-learning approaches.
- Involve at least 50% of teachers in framing long and short term literacy learning targets as “I can” statements that involve students directly in owning their progress, particularly in the collaborative unpacking of learning targets that reflect Common Core/Massachusetts Literacy Frameworks.
- Explore the creation of a district-wide teacher committee that will provide leadership in combining literacy learning instruction with student learning ownership practices.
- Expand with some K-12 consistency electronic portfolios that allow students to curate and reflect upon own work relative to literacy growth
- Link supervision and evaluation to literacy learning and student learning independence as systematically as possible.

Theory of Action

- Successful development of the abilities of all students to comprehend complex texts and express themselves in sophisticated ways depends upon:
 - the simultaneous shift of instructional emphasis to inquiry-based learning and student ownership of their own literacy learning goals and progress.
- While these pedagogical approaches themselves target key student outcomes, i.e., higher order thinking and independence, they intersect with:
 - literacy instruction as critical engagement and motivation mechanisms,
 - ensuring student persistence through the real challenges of becoming deliberate, critical and capable readers and writers

District-wide Framing of the Work and Facilitating Adult Learning- Midyear Update

- Used summer retreat and opening day keynote to frame the district-wide and school-based strategic steps towards improved literacy in ways that maximize teacher leadership, innovation and collaboration.
- Refined curriculum leaders' work plans (6-12), and focus (K-5) on identifying power standards in support of more effective integration of literacy learning with science and social studies and critical background knowledge development.
- Provided readings and professional development for teachers, teacher leaders and administrators re: literacy learning, student ownership and differentiation.

Literacy Learning Steps

- The curriculum leaders, in full-day work sessions led by assistant superintendent, Mary Lou Sallee, are actively:
 - defining K-12 expectations for elements of literacy, involving Claim-Evidence-Reasoning (CER) in reading and written expression, using student work, and
 - developing and deepening vertical conversations related to literacy; beginning K-8, integrate vertical work into K-12 curriculum leaders' work.
- The district is actively piloting the use of new data analytics tools (Student Insights) to advance this work.

Yet to be Done

- Provide additional PD in inquiry-based instruction that engages students' curiosity, provides them with in-the-moment opportunities to investigate interesting questions, and increases their reading engagement by providing time to pursue avenues of interest through internet searches of lesson-related topics.
- Visit other schools-districts that have practices in place from which we can learn.
- Identify district measures including common assessments and other comprehensive data to track student growth and achievement as we implement the plan.

Highlights of School-based Literacy and Related Work on Student Inquiry and Independence

DAVIS

Literacy

- Introduced faculty to 3rd grade MCAS data for the first time to highlight challenges in ELA (and math)

Inquiry/Integrated Studies

- Have provided PD on strengthening students (and faculties) scientific knowledge through inquiry and projects
- Expanded use of non-fiction text to match classroom integrated studies both social studies (teaching tolerance) and science
- Diversified the Book Room leveled guided reading selections that reflect the new science standards and provide windows and mirrors for our students and see growing independence in students accessing these books during integrated studies

Student Independence

- 75% of staff are using an online system for students to record their reflections all faculty are using protocols or processes for students to reflect on their learning

LANE

Literacy

- The Lucy Calkins Readers Workshop program is the core program being used to advance this learning- PD has been continuous and all 27 classrooms now implementing
- Staff-wide training in Fountas and Pinnell benchmark assessments is scheduled for March
- Scheduling for increased ELA time has occurred but is impeded at Grade 5 due to specials (FL, Proj Adv, etc.)

Student Inquiry

- Integration of science (with new inquiry-focused standards) with ELA has continued, units are UBD organized, and more authentic assessments are being used

Student Independence

- While there has not been an expansion of digital portfolios, 5th grade teachers did summer PD in helping students to set personal goals, curate and reflect on their work, and
- Most of Gr 4 has committed to the conferenced again for this Spring

Highlights of School-based Literacy and Related Work on Student Inquiry and Independence

JGMS

Literacy

- JGMS has to date devoted over 14 hours of school-wide PD on *Keys to Literacy (and an additional two days for coaches)*: JGMS's key avenue for advancing reading comprehension skills (e.g., critical thinking for close, analytic reading, main idea skills, text structure knowledge, graphic organizers, two-column notes, summarizing and generating questions)
- ELA, science, math and social studies teachers' professional goals and interdepartmental collaboration are focused best practices as have Math and Science with the focus on persuasive writing- claim, evidence, reasoning.

Independence

- Increased use of Google Classroom to communicate with students and families
- 6th and 7th graders have now created personal Google sites for work curation- more work needed to integrate these with major subjects and clarify guidelines to optimize student reflection

Literacy

- Departments have all focused meetings on disciplinary literacy- Social Studies department also analyzing MCAS scores and assuming responsibility for ELA portion. Major departments have begun to develop interim and benchmark assessments to measure students' progress
- Teachers are deliberately teaching reading skills in their content areas through the understanding of disciplinary literacy strategies
 - *Some of the English Department structured their Student Learning and Professional Practice goals around this action step; for example:*
 - I will develop my close-reading instruction and provide students with many formal and informal opportunities to practice reading comprehension in order to promote student growth in this area. Students will receive handouts of our class readings and will be instructed to mark up the text using one or two close reading strategies that we've been working on in class. At the end of class, I will assign students to complete an exit ticket that asks them to recall the information they read in class. Evaluating their use of close reading strategies, their exit tickets, and their Spring 2019 assessment, will be used to measure student progress towards reading comprehension.
 - *Student Learning Goal: Students will improve their active reading and interpretive skills to better develop arguments from given evidence and to choose evidence for a given argument as demonstrated on their end of unit assessment. Professional Practice Goal: I will develop a series of activities and readings within our terrorism unit to support students' development of active reading skills, ability to identify important information in texts, and summarize main ideas in order to help students succeed on our end of unit assessment around developing and defending arguments.*

Independence

- All Geometry, Algebra I, Algebra II, AP Calculus all using "I Can" Statements. Some teachers in other departments doing so as well. E.g., *"I can place Ngozi-Brown's article in a meaningful narrative of U.S. History"* or FL: I can participate in a short conversation by asking and answering simple questions on familiar topics (Interpersonal assessment from "La Voz Kids")

EQUITY AND DIVERSITY: TEACHING ALL STUDENTS

District-wide Work

- **Social and Emotional Learning, Closing Achievement Gaps and Strengthening Culturally Responsive Teaching**
 - Support for new Guidance Director's development of preK-12 social emotional curriculum and support system
 - Created K-5 Guidance and Counseling coordinator position
 - Changed name of guidance counselors to school counselors and renamed dept.: "Pre-K-12 Guidance and Counseling"
 - Added a Davis School adjustment counselor to FY20 budget
 - Guidance implemented a community roundtable to meet and greet area therapists for referral purposes
 - Delivered keynote and workshops on culturally responsive teacher/student connections
 - January PD day at all schools (follow-up meeting at JGMS) focused on equity issues
 - Fully implemented Interracial Parent Advisory Council
 - Have begun to assemble data on achievement gap closing progress relative to key equity programs
 - IPAC and EDC have undertaken research to find minority hiring fairs and connections in NYC and at historically Black Colleges so that administrators can conduct a recruiting tour this March
- **Personalized Learning and Effective Interventions**
 - Updated and adopted District Curriculum Accommodation Plan
 - District-wide work emphasizing push in (reading and Special Ed) and shared responsibility (classroom teachers and specialists) for struggling students
- **Special Education: Special Programs and Co-teaching**
 - Co-teaching training has continued (summer, 2018) as well as co-planning pull-out days
 - Leadership team and instructional coaches conducted a qualitative review of co-teaching
 - Budgeted for additional co-teaching coaching for FY20

DAVIS

Social and Emotional Development, Closing Gaps, and Culturally Responsive Schools and Classrooms

- January PD day focused on joint specials teachers and guidance dept. work on alignment and implementation of Teaching Tolerance standards- will extend to classroom teachers along with exploration of Responsive Classroom
- Nov. PD day focused on building prof. and para staff's capacity for addressing challenging and complicated student behaviors
- Purposeful purchasing of diversity reflecting texts and materials
- Worked with support staff to increase capacity to address social issues in developmentally appropriate ways with respect, e.g., to recess behaviors/issues
- Working to bring in authors from diverse backgrounds to address students

Improved Use of Data to Strengthen CPST (Child Problem Solving Team) Processes

- Developed flow-chart and timeline
- Created handbook/digital file with all processes and relevant info for staff
- Established practices for case management, follow-up supports and check-ins
- Have had professional conversations and coaching with teaching teams and support staff regarding classroom structures and teacher steps to effectively address dangerous or disruptive student behaviors

Special Education

- Have been working with special education reading specialist and NECC to improve programs and interventions to support students math and reading skills and emotional regulation

LANE

Social and Emotional Development, Closing Gaps and Culturally Responsive Schools and Classrooms

- To adopt and implement the Responsive Classroom program, all teachers were trained in August on interactive modeling, teacher language, logical consequences, and morning meetings-
- January PD day focused on:
 - learning about difficult conversations with students,
 - culturally responsive relationships/belonging and supporting brain science, and
 - identifying students who are not connected to adults or peers

Improved Use of Data and Strengthening RTI process

- Have effectively refocused W.I.N. time for academic and social/behavioral interventions (except when need is in multiple areas)
- Have strengthened Tier I reading and math instruction by, of the first time, having all students receive the same reading and math programs
- Each student now has an individualized reading goal as part of the Lucy Calkins assessments
- Piloting use of Student Insights with RTI (MTSS) team, and Gr.5 teachers are beginning to include "notes" in the program to help with JGMS transition

Special Education

- Strategies have been provided to general education teachers to support included students with autism, but quarterly meetings with specialists re: integration have not yet happened
- SAIL program review scheduled for April
- As planned, a third co-teaching partnership has been created

JGMS

Social and Emotional Development, Closing Gaps, and Culturally Responsive Schools and Classrooms

- Have implemented a student friendly version of HEART with a focus on specific behaviors- piloting sticker reward system- students referred to main office now complete a behavior reflection sheet relative to social and civic expectations
- Have established an affinity group for African American and Latino/a 8th graders
- Held faculty workshop focused on identifying unconnected students and culturally responsive connections
- Planning for March Tenacity Challenge
- Continued implementation of Calculus Project
- Implemented on-ramp Spanish and French classes

Data Use and Interventions

- Have finalized the intake, data collection, tracking forms and action plan/follow up process for SST
- New checklist for hospital re-entry and 51A filing

Have implemented team teaching model for reading specialists and science and social studies teachers

- Hand scheduled students to ensure equitable distribution of students with IEPs
- Ensured common planning time for co-teaching pairs

BHS

Social and Emotional Development, Closing Gaps, and Culturally Responsive Schools and Classrooms

- Created building-based EDC (which planned January PD day)
- Purposefully appointed diverse students to leadership positions (School Council, School Committee, Principal's Advisory Committee)
- Sent students to EDCO Equity Conference, who then facilitated PD workshop on "allies" during January PD day
- Whole faculty book read and study- *Overloaded and Underprepared*
- Mental health minutes added to all faculty meetings
- Signs of Suicide curriculum implemented in grade 10 health classes
- Parent info night on Signs of Suicide and Principal Roundtable on mental health services
- Challenge Success Implementation- administered student survey and evaluating the purpose of homework
- Broadening focus on post-secondary plans- Guidebook, which addresses post-secondary and not solely college planning, created and distributed, added more resources to counseling website, will invite gap year program to college fair
- Implemented a school adjustment counselor referral process

Improved Use of Data

- Continuing review of HH and AP data relative to traditionally underserved students
- Incorporating YRBS data in Health/Wellness curriculum

Special Education

- Implemented more clinical model of therapeutic supports for STEP program

Community Connections and Communication

District and Schools

- Letters to families and staff published in Bedford Citizen re: issues of race/racism
- Increased use of SeeSaw at Davis to share student work with families
- Parent forums at JGMS, BHS and Lane
- Adult Ed program for parents and grandparents of ELL students
- Use of Lexikeet and Smore for translation of family communication and ELE department is working on more translated documents
- Continued use of blogs and websites
- Interracial Parent Advisory Council engagement of diverse families