

Quincy Public Schools Curriculum Committee Minutes

Board Office Conference Room #231

February 13, 2012 – 5:30 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Committee members present: Ann Behrens, Zigrida Brown, Mary Christensen, Steve Krause, Jeff Mays, Jim Rubottom, Jody Steinke, Patricia Viniard.

Committee member(s) absent: Jan Cory.

Board members, staff and others: Jody Cooper, Christie Dickens, Laurie Fiorenza, Diane Glaub, Ed Husar, Jeff Kerkhoff, Lonny Lemon, Rick Owsley, Gus Rieckhoff, Julie Schuckman.

1. Call to order

Steve Krause, committee chair, called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

2. Information provided to Committee

- A. Race to the Top. The committee had a phone conference with Jonathan Furr, who is the former general counsel for ISBE. Now in private practice, Mr. Furr has played an integral role in developing Illinois' "Race to the Top" (RTTT) proposal and he continues to work with ISBE on a contractual basis regarding this initiative. Illinois was awarded \$43 million from the U.S. Department of Education for RTTT. Half of this amount will be used to fund state initiatives, and the other half will be distributed to LEA's (local school districts). Mr. Furr noted that although ISBE would have preferred to award the LEA portion through a competitive application process, the USDE has required ISBE to make the local portion available to *any* school district that applies and agrees to the RTTT requirements. The \$21.4 million will be distributed to participating districts based on Title I population. It would be a 4-year grant period—from this spring through December, 2015.
- *Timeline:* ISBE will be sending out materials to districts this week that includes a "letter of intent" along with information regarding expectations for potential participants. Districts must submit a letter of intent by February 29. Once ISBE receives these, districts that executed the letter of intent will receive notification regarding the amount of funding they would receive, at which time the districts will decide whether or not they wish to commit to participating. It was noted that the letter of intent must be jointly executed by the school district administration and the local bargaining unit.
 - *Financial considerations:* Superintendent Lemon and others expressed concerns about the amount of local funds that may need to be diverted in order to meet the requirements of RTTT. Particularly, Superintendent Lemon noted that there is a concern about the technology (not just hardware, but also bandwidth and infrastructure) needed for implementation, and some worry that the district might need to use most or all of the RTTT money just to meet the technology requirements. Mr. Furr cautioned that participating districts must adhere to **all** of the requirements of the initiative—they may not choose to adhere to the extent that district resources permit. Superintendent Lemon's understanding is that there will be a significant time commitment required during the month of March by participating districts, and he expressed concern about the time constraints of administrative staff. Mr. Furr said that during March participating districts will be developing and defining the scope of their plan, but noted that the actual work to carry out the commitments would generally not be required until the following school year and beyond.

- *What will participating school districts gain by participating in RTTT?* Participating school districts will get a “leg up” (through financial and resource support) to implement initiatives that districts will have to meet in the coming four to five years anyway. These initiatives include: Transition to the Common Core State Standards; Prepare staff and students for the new PARCC assessments; and, Develop the instruments and processes required by PERA (Performance Evaluation Reform Act), including an evaluation system that includes a student growth component.
- *What are the requirements of RTTT that go “above and beyond” the initiatives that districts will be eventually implementing?* Districts participating in RTTT would be required to meet additional requirements and would also be required to speed up certain existing timelines. Some specific examples noted in the meeting include: RTTT districts must meet the PERA (Performance Evaluation Reform Act) requirements (see above) one year earlier than non-RTTT districts; The evaluation system must include, in addition to a student growth component, a peer evaluation component; Participating districts must implement 2 (or more) STEM programs of study; The district must implement an ILP (Individual Learning Plan) program for students commencing in grades 7; and, Each RTTT district will participate in and utilize *ISLE* (Illinois Shared Learning Environment). When the information arrives from ISBE, this list may need to be adjusted or added to.

B. Initiatives Update. Trish suggested the committee may want to review the initiatives update over two meetings, particularly since the data was just provided to committee members today. Committee members have had questions regarding the costs of initiatives, and that information can be added for next month’s meeting. Committee members discussed the following points from the report.

- *Early Childhood*: This program data was added to the report based on requests from committee and Board members. Follow-up data on student achievement has been tracked to current 3rd graders. The data shows that 68.2% of low income students who **attended EC** scored a “meets” or “exceeds” on the 2011 ISAT Reading test, compared to 59.6% of low income students who did **not attend EC** scored at the meets or exceeds level. Regarding the kindergarten-readiness skills of EC students, Member Mays suggested that this information could be posted on the district’s website in an effort to inform parents/guardians regarding what incoming kindergartners need to know in order to be successful.
- *Literacy*: Data shows gains by students being served in Tier 2 intervention, which is provided in a small group setting, and Tier 3, which is the one-on-one Reading Recovery program for first graders. There was some discussion about gains being reported by text levels and what that means. Trish will work with principals and interventionists to look at a better way to report the data, so that there is context and a point of reference or comparison.
- *Math*: At the K-3 level, math intervention is being provided by one full-time (not since beginning of year, however) and one half-time teacher, and the data show that the students receiving this intervention have made growth. The intervention is new this year, and Trish noted that in an attempt to give support to all K-3 schools they are finding this is “spreading it to too thin” with the limited amount of support. Therefore, if the funding is available next year, a different plan of implementation will be considered.
- *AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination)*: The district’s involvement with AVID ended as of this year due to the cost involved with continuation in the network. Junior and Senior High administrators liked the framework and the premise of AVID and worked with staff involved to

develop a replacement—College and Career Readiness, or CCR. Participating students are typically underachieving students with strong academic potential. Junior and Senior High administrators reported that CCR students are more actively engaged in classes due to increased self-confidence. CCR students are required to take at least one upper level course. Senior High data shows an increase in students' GPA, with the exception of a slight decrease at grade 11; Jody Steinke said that may be attributed to the fact that a number of the juniors are taking an AP class for the first time. Committee members expressed appreciation for Junior and Senior High administrators for developing our own program that has saved money and is meeting the needs of this targeted population. Jody Steinke also recognized Jim Rubottom's support in allowing Knapheide employees to come to QHS and tutor/mentor CCR students.

3. Recommend to the Board of Education for Action

N/A

4. Consider any other matter relating to the Curriculum needs or concerns of the District

Chairman Krause asked for a report on the WorkKeys meeting held recently at Knapheide Manufacturing, arranged by Jeff Mays and Jim Rubottom. Member Rubottom said there were about 35 in attendance, representing education and business. At the meeting, a representative from ACT and from Elgin schools talked about the process and potential involved in having employers utilize the WorkKeys assessment. Two of the three WorkKeys assessments are already administered to Juniors on Day 2 of the PSAE exam, so possibilities regarding how and when to administer the third exam were also discussed. Since that meeting, Member Rubottom noted that Knapheide is planning to move forward with this initiative, and John Wood Community College has agreed to conduct the testing.

5. Questions and comments from the Public

6. Adjourn: 6:40 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: Monday, March 12 – 5:00 p.m.

Potential location @ Teen Reach site – details will follow