



Our Mission

The purpose of the Milwaukee Partnership Academy (MPA) is to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS). The broad initiative of the MPA is to ensure that every child in the Milwaukee Public Schools is performing at or above grade level in reading, writing, and mathematics through shared responsibility for student success. The framework for the initiative is balanced literacy and mathematics: a comprehensive literacy program that provides skill development across all curricular areas and focuses on reading, writing, listening, speaking, deep thinking, and research skills; a comprehensive mathematics program that provides students an understanding of mathematical concepts, an ability to accurately and appropriately compute, an ability to solve mathematical problems by applying concepts, an ability to provide reasoning to solutions to problems, and an ability to see mathematics as useful and doable.

MPA Implementation Team Meeting Minutes from January 12, 2009

Phyllis Anderson, MPS
Pat Ellis, Stritch
DeAnn Huinker, UWM
Deb Lindsey, MPS
Beth Schefelker, MPS
Betty Smith, Milwaukee Catalyst

Bama Brown-Grice, MPS
Tiffany Fisher, MPS
Reginald Ivy, MPS
Linda Post, UWM
Ruth Short, UWM

Erik Conner, MPS
Victoria Frazier, MPS
Amy Johnson, MTEA
Lee Ann Pruske, MPS
Louise Small-Hamilton, MATC

Announcements and Updates

- **MPA Interim Executive Director Position** – The meeting with the potential co-executive directors has been scheduled.
- **Status of Sister Joel** – She is still in the hospital at Aurora St. Luke's in Room T9111. She had heart bypass surgery and a stroke afterwards that had paralyzed her left side. Her brain and speech are fine and she is now able to wiggle the fingers of her left hand. She has been unable to eat due to a bowel obstruction. She would appreciate our prayers.
- **Accountability & Support Group for Executive Director(s)** – There is need for a group that works with the executive director(s) on an ongoing basis and provides some oversight, direction, support and accountability. Discussion is taking place about the possibility of modifications to the Leadership Team with additional representatives from the critical partners, meeting perhaps monthly with the executive director(s) and keeping the connection with the Executive Partners. The Implementation Team was asked for comments or ideas. One critical thing identified was the need for representatives that are involved in the work of the MPA.

- **MMABSE Education Summit** - The Metropolitan Milwaukee Alliance of Black School Educators (MMABSE) Education Summit will be held on March 25th from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Wyndham Airport Hotel. This year's theme is maximizing partnerships to increase student achievement, and the keynote speaker is Libby Burmaster. Anyone interested in attending may E-mail Pat Ellis for the registration form at paellis@stritch.edu. There is no cost to attend; it is being funded by the NEA Foundation grant. Parents and community members are also encouraged to attend. Anyone involved in a partnership who might like to do a session should contact Pat Ellis.

Work Group Reports

Comprehensive Literacy Work Group

In the efforts to model the literacy coach model after the math model, work is being done on a job description/list of necessary qualifications and supports that need to be in place. K-12 qualifications are being considered.

Family Literacy & Tutoring Work Group

- Work is being done on training. A tutor training session has been scheduled at Marquette University for service learners, and another community-wide training session will be scheduled.
- The Parent Congress has a core group that has been organizing. On February 21st a community collaboration of parent organizations will take place at the Milwaukee Independent Living Center, and they will look at the area of parental involvement as it relates to the functional plan. They will review goals and strategies and identify what role they can play. These groups may be represented on the Parent Congress. Any suggestions of parent organizations or organizations that work with students can be submitted to Betty Smith or Reginald Ivy.

Skunkworks Work Group

The Skunkworks Work Group will be inviting other work groups to identify work group representatives to meet with them concerning the possibility of student involvement/input in work groups. Deb Lindsey volunteered to participate in the meeting. Skunkworks will work with Janice Hagen to send out an E-mail to work group co-chairs concerning this. When all interested representatives are identified, a meeting will be scheduled.

Comprehensive Mathematics Work Group

- Presentations about CABS, student work and other initiatives are being made again at DPI's New Wisconsin Promise event in January.
- MTL meetings are including a 90-minute assessment session around the work of Stiggins concerning making students aware of when and what they are learning and a 90-minute session on leadership, which offers support and tools to work with.
- A meeting with released high school Math Teacher Leaders was held last week on how the new curriculum is going (which was described as "so-so") and to gear up

for more inservices and meetings around implementation of the math curriculum and the block schedule.

- There are no candidates at this time for the Math Curriculum Specialist position. The five-person leadership team is currently continuing.
- UWM is offering four courses free of charge this spring for up to 35 participants each through the grant. A large number of people have submitted registrations. Bama Brown-Grice requested that training opportunities be made available to paraprofessionals.
- Beth Schefelker and DeAnn Huinker are serving on the elementary math group for rewriting the state standards. Henry Kranendonk is serving on the high school group and Astrid Fossum on the middle school group. Drafts will be going out for review later this spring.
- Deb Lindsey reported that part of the work on revision of the state standards is designed to serve as the foundation for a new state test. Several reasons for this are the needs for faster turnaround time on test results, having something at the high school level that provides more incentives for students to do well and is better linked to college and workforce readiness, and having an assessment that is in some ways computer adaptive and levels itself based on student responses. Deb Lindsey, Patrice Ball and Diane Rozanski from MPS are serving on DPI's Next Generation Assessment Task Force which is addressing this. An RFI (Request For Information) will likely go out soon and lead to an RFP (Request For Proposal). Any new state test would not likely go into effect for at least three years.

Anything important for consideration concerning state tests or state standards should be shared with Deb Lindsey at MPS or any of the others working on the state standards.

Update & Information Sharing on Learning Teams Initiative

The second retreat day on Learning Teams went well. Data from Day 1 was generated and used on Day 2 where additional data was generated for future use. The writing group will hold its first meeting on January 16th. This group is composed of Steve Percy, Vicky Frazier, Pat Ellis, Linda Post, Cris Anderson, Rick Bukosky, Linda Roundtree and Debbie Karow. Two meetings are planned and drafts will be sent out to everyone for feedback. Implementation Team members were asked to submit any additional resources or data that should be considered.

In connection with this, Deb Lindsey stated that some people involved in the work on Learning Teams should attend the Knowledge Transfer Session in Houston, Texas in February for the APQC benchmarking project on best practices in Professional Learning Communities that MPS is involved in. It was noted that there is a \$250 fee per person and other travel costs. Linda Post stated that perhaps some money can be identified to help cover the costs.

Continued Discussion on Teacher Leadership

Linda Post reported that a small sub-group that includes teacher leaders has been proposed as a better way to address the issues surrounding teacher leadership. What has gone on around the country in teacher leadership can be brought in as well as the Teachers Network and the group working with Barnett Barry. This sub-group would gather data, sort through things and perhaps frame out what teacher leadership would look like in MPS and what that means in terms of opportunities that would be provided.

- Amy Johnson volunteered to serve on the sub-group.
- Individuals from various teacher leader groups such as Math Teacher Leaders, Literacy Coaches and Literacy Specialists will be asked to participate.
- Linda Post will work with the MTEA to invite other types of teacher leaders to participate.
- Suggestion was made to include leadership from teacher-led schools.
- A group will be formed and an update will be reported back.
- A direct link with the Teacher & Principal Quality Work Group is envisioned.

Discussion on the MPS Literacy Initiative

Implementation Team members shared feedback concerning the External Literacy Review that was recently released and literacy concerns and needs in the district:

- Some of the bullet points near the end seemed generic and some of the recommendations are open to interpretation. It should be more explicit. Linda Post stated that the Implementation Team along with others will be playing a role in the interpretation and it will begin soon.
- An instructional plan and a professional development plan must be developed. Linda Post stated that there will be a number of meetings scheduled to tackle this. One area to be addressed is the Literacy Coach position/model. This is referred to in the audit where it says Literacy Coaches must have literacy knowledge—they should be licensed in reading. Linda Post has strongly recommended that conversation take place between math and literacy before decisions are made so there will be consistency.
- There should be more quantitative data if this review will be used to make major decisions about reading.
- A lot of the people who will be looking at this and working on it will be Literacy Specialists and others involved in literacy.
- It is being heard that there will be more alignment and focus on professional development.
- It seemed to focus heavily on the struggling reader, and concern was expressed about what the district may turn into with that focus.

- The constant thread of anti-NCLB detracted from the report. The problems in literacy are much more fundamental than assessment-driven accountability systems.
- It hit the mark on the need for a coherent, well-developed complementary professional development system so that everyone receives the same kind of training.
- An important point was the wide breadth of textbook adoptions, which is not good, especially given the high student mobility rate in the district.
- Investment is needed in the community and parents as partners in making change.
- Concerned about role of the principal and how they utilize Literacy Coaches and Math Teacher Leaders in their schools.
- The equitable funds distribution system does not meet the needs of struggling schools.
- Concerns about HR practices in placing teachers, were not addressed.
- In the challenging schools there is a greater turnover of teachers.
- Parents are also a key component in increasing student achievement; more parent involvement is needed. Additional strategies are needed to make parents aware of opportunities for training, what is going on/coming up in the district, and how it fits.
- A new observation identified in the report is the large number of adults supporting other adults versus directly supporting students. People in the schools that offer direct student supports are continuously being eliminated in budget cuts.
- There are problems with the coaching model.
- An important note was the call for better coordinated, more cohesive literacy district-wide.
- Training needs to be more intense and perhaps include more that moves towards additional licensure endorsements, certificates, etc.
- The sense of urgency needs to be communicated to all, especially at the classroom level. Linda Post stated that part of creating the sense of urgency will be in the rollout.

The External Literacy Review is going to the Literacy Self-Study Group. Linda Post stated that any further feedback should be submitted so that it can be considered by MPS.

The DIFI status is driving action and DPI mandates. There will be a heavy focus on literacy in the district. Much of what we have learned from the math partnership can be used. The Implementation Team is going to be asked to play some type of role in the interpretation of the External Literacy Review. This will begin soon. A couple of people on the Literacy Work Group will be asked to participate.

Next Meeting – Monday, February 9, 2009 at the REACH Center, 2342 North 27th Street, Room 116, **from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m.** (lunch at 11:30).

The meeting adjourned at 2:05 p.m.