



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 March 9, 2009

Cris Anderson, NEA Grant	Bama Brown-Grice, Comm.	Ron Fancher, MATC
Victoria Frazier, MPS	Beth Giles, UW System	Reginald Ivy, MPS
Amy Johnson, MTEA	Joe Kmoch, MTEC	Dennis Oulahan, MTEA
Nobie Reed, Parent Rep.	Ruth Short, UWM	Louise Small-Hamilton, MATC
Betty Smith, Milwaukee Catalyst		

A number of Implementation Team members/representatives were absent from today's meeting due to the District Assessment Retreat and a Reading First event. Linda Post was out ill and Cris Anderson was asked to chair the meeting.

Announcements and Updates

- **Professional Development for NEA & SIFI Schools –**
 - Catherine Thome and Cris Anderson have been working closely to align and develop professional development opportunities for SIFI and NEA schools, particularly related to differentiation of instruction and teaching in a block, by pooling AYP, SIFI and NEA Foundation grant resources. There is yet a bit of an issue on what quality teaching in a block looks like. Scaffolded professional development on differentiation and the block schedule that delves deeper than that given on January 10th will be conducted on March 21, 2009 for up to 200 people.
 - Planning for next year's professional development will begin on March 24th and will include a component for paraprofessionals who work with literacy, math and reading. Input received at the NEA focus groups indicated the need for paraprofessional training related to pull-out programs. Inclusion of a

parent/family professional development component will also be discussed. All NEA/SIFI professional development opportunities for next year will be announced at the beginning of the school year.

- **Interim Executive Director Position** – No update at this time. Linda Post should find out the status next week.
- **External Literacy Review Response** –
 - A group of approximately 22 people met concerning response to the External Literacy Review. Participants broke into groups of 2-3 to pull out important components from the review and write up summaries, which revealed several big issues including professional development and rollout. Each group chose a topic they felt strongly about and developed recommendations. Groups are now identifying specific actions for the recommendations and developing a timeline. NEA and SIFI principals will be going through this same process on March 11th.
 - Responses to the review are still being taken. Bama Brown-Grice shared her response for Cris Anderson to take forward: Identify the names, titles and organizations of the parents/parent organizations involved in the meetings with the review team.
- **Learning Team Initiative** – The writing group has been meeting approximately every three weeks to go through all of the information from the retreat and working individually on various pieces to put together a document that is also supported by research and is in a language anyone not involved in the retreat can understand. The Characteristics of a High Performing Urban Classroom will be explicitly connected. Finalization of the first draft will be completed soon.

Continued Planning for Implementation Team Meeting with Students

A good faith effort was made for student involvement in today's Implementation Team meeting; however, proper organization could not be completed in time. The Implementation Team would like to have student involvement at its April 20th meeting or else its May 11th meeting. The Skunkworks Work Group will discuss this with its chair, Mike Langyel. Rather than dedicate the entire meeting to student input, one hour should be sufficient. Skunkworks would plan to develop a set of questions and have the students attend its work group meeting just prior to the Implementation Team meeting to get them prepared.

New suggestions for questions to students:

- If you could have made something different in your education, what would it be?
- How could your parents or guardians have helped you better and how could the school district have strengthened them to help you be more successful in school?
- What kind of college prep, access, and information are you getting from UW system schools? (It was noted that this feedback could be taken to the UW System for use in its efforts to look at ways of improving its systems.)
- What do you think about the type of instruction you have received in reading and writing?
- What could we have done differently to better support your literacy development?

- How do you feel the instruction can be made more relevant and more interesting?
- How do you feel discipline or classroom disruption can be handled differently?

Any other ideas can be forwarded to Janice Hagen at the MPA office (hagenjl@milwaukee.k12.wi.us).

Report on Teacher Leadership

Although there are positions of leadership for teachers, there has never been conversation or definition of what teacher leadership is in the district. Barnett Berry, who has done much research on teacher leadership across the country and has a teacher leaders network, has been asked by the NEA Foundation to connect the NEA Foundation Closing the Achievement Gaps grant sites (currently Milwaukee, Chattanooga and Seattle) through a virtual community. Some of the Milwaukee people recently had discussion with him and shared their feeling that the best place to start when connecting the sites would be for him to help them define what teacher leadership is. We are trying to find a way of identifying what teacher leadership is and who teacher leaders are and perhaps could ask them to help us craft some of the professional development alignment and opportunities that are needed. Perhaps we could also have conversations within the district among teacher leaders prior to the connection with the other grant sites. There should also be a conversation in the district on a differentiated compensation system related to teacher leadership. Comment was made that there should be added compensation for teachers who stay in the classroom. The Teacher & Principal Quality Work Group has recently had some discussion related to this concerning master educators as teacher leaders. Comment was made that the MPA Implementation Team should push the teacher leadership agenda.

Mr. Berry would like to meet with a group of teacher leaders here in May. Cris Anderson asked if the Implementation Team would be interested in meeting with him and sharing with him what we would want him to create. Comment was made about making sure good and appropriate software be used.

Cris Anderson will work on scheduling Barnett Berry to come in May for discussion on the virtual community and teacher leadership.

Work Group Reports

Teacher & Principal Quality Work Group

Currently working on:

- Cooperating Teacher Piece –The new subcommittee, which still needs a representative from Alverno, met on February 23rd and is working on developing a protocol around selection of cooperating teachers and student teachers, looking at providing some self-assessment materials online concerning becoming a cooperating teacher and developing something more in-depth for universities to work with the district. It is hoped that a document about the selection process will be available soon. Building in retention and recruitment will also be looked at.

- Discussion has also been going on around alternating semesters of service and professional development for cooperating teachers.
- Mentoring Surveys – DPI sends out annual surveys to initial educators and their mentors. There was little district response. The work group is trying to align a district survey with DPI's and craft a survey that is helpful to the district and is user friendly to obtain Milwaukee-specific data that can be used in decision making. Also being looked at is alignment with DPI and the New Teacher Center; work will be done with Sharon Nelson on that.

Something will be in place for these two major pieces of work by the end of this school year.

Skunkworks Work Group

- Work was accomplished to meet the need of getting students to an Implementation Team meeting.
- Preliminary discussion/work has taken place concerning possible application for a \$10,000 grant through America's Promise relative to dropout prevention. Essentially, this would involve doing a conference and follow-up afterwards, and would include mentoring and some things we know could help. There could be sustained efforts around it. If MPA would be interested in aligning the work, would need a fiscal agent, etc., for the grant. David Weingrod is willing to take the next steps if there is interest. Dennis Oulahan will put together additional information for consideration by the Implementation Team.

Comprehensive Literacy Work Group

The work group is discussing what the qualifications of a literacy coach should be and how to make it appealing but not overwhelming to get more qualified literacy coaches in the schools. The focus now is on literacy coaches getting a 316 Reading Teacher License first. Discussion was held about tying tuition reimbursement to this and allowing three years to complete certification.

Following this report, the Implementation Team held some discussion about current qualification requirements, reading licenses and literacy coach staffing in the schools. It is estimated that there are more than 20 schools that currently share a literacy coach. In the past, not many teachers with the Reading License were interested in working in high schools. The Literacy Work Group may be addressing the secondary issues at its next meeting.

Family Literacy & Tutoring Work Group

- The last tutor training conducted was at Marquette University for approximately ten service learning students. When it was learned that these students were to tutor correctional facility inmates, the training session was modified and new strategies were worked out for them. Cris Anderson stated that there are MPS teachers assigned to the jail who could probably be a resource for these tutors. Betty Smith will share this information with them.
- Betty Smith reported that she is in the process of closing her office and searching for a new job. There has been no resolution on funding of the MPA Family Literacy &

Tutoring Project/Coordinator Position since the funding put into the MPS budget process was pulled and never replaced.

- A couple more tutor training sessions need to take place in the community; however, scheduling is on hold while Betty Smith is unsure what can be committed to.
- Betty Smith has been representing the MPA at the Parent Congress. Despite the weather, 30 of the 40 people who registered attended the community collaboration on February 21, 2009 which focused on barriers to parental involvement. Attendees included community groups, MPS representatives, parents and a college student. Community members worked on determining what role the community can play to help remove the barriers and increase parental involvement. Responses were given to a number of questions, and these responses are currently being reviewed for common themes to help guide future direction. Contact information was collected from these groups that were once part of the original strategic planning team where the Parent Congress originated from and has been put into a database. A meeting is being planned for late March of a smaller group that could act as a Steering Committee to move the Parent Congress to where it should go. Another collaborative session may be held about another issue that is affecting parental involvement. A new reporter working with Alan Borsuk from the Journal/Sentinel was at the February 21st community collaboration, and it was indicated that there will be some reports coming out in August or September on the impact of what happens in the home on school and what happens when school goes home with the students and is reinforced there. The reporter's focus is on the uninvolved parents and who supports those students and how we can make things different for them.

Comprehensive Mathematics Work Group

No report was given.

Other

- **MMABSE Education Summit Reminder** - Wednesday, March 25th from 8:00 - 3:30 at the Wyndham Milwaukee Airport Hotel. Attendance is free—contact Pat Ellis to register at 414-410-4359 or paellis@stritch.edu. The summit is sponsored by MMABSE and the NEA Foundation Grant to Close the Achievement Gaps in MPS.
- **Planning for 3/20/09 Partners Meeting** – The Implementation Team agreed that a meeting should not be planned until it is possible to collaborate on it with a new Interim Executive Director.

Next Meeting – Monday, **April 20, 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 1:28 p.m.