



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 April 20, 2009

Phyllis Anderson, MPS
Beth Giles, UW System
Joe Kmoch, MTEC
Dennis Oulahan, MTEA

Patrice Ball, MPS
Bernadette Halloran, MPS
Mike Langyel, MTEA
Linda Post, UWM

Ron Fancher, MATC
Reginald Ivy, MPS
Deb Lindsey, MPS
Betty Smith, Milwaukee Catalyst

Announcements and Updates

- **Interim Executive Director Position** – A meeting was scheduled for Bill Andrekopoulos, Tom Morgan and Alfonzo Thurman to meet with the two co-executive director candidates.

- **Literacy** –

Linda Post reported that the external literacy review response from the writing team that included MPA members was submitted to Catherine Thome and is being reviewed.

Patrice Ball, MPS English Language Arts Curriculum Specialist, presented an update on the MPS Comprehensive Literacy Plan and what is happening with literacy in the district that included a PowerPoint presentation and handouts, including information about the work thus far, major components of the plan, programs, other considerations and next steps (see attached).

Additional Presentation Comments:

- Sharonda Robinson was hired as the MPS Literacy Curriculum Specialist; her focus is in reading and she will supervise the Literacy Specialists as well as work with the Literacy Coaches.
- Takisha Weatherall-Jones was hired as the new MPS Professional Development Specialist; she will see that professional development is coordinated across the district.
- Commonalities from the listening sessions are being used to inform the plan.
- The definition of literacy is being updated and includes digital literacy.
- We learned from the comprehensive mathematics model/plan.
- The PK-High School Plan grade level bands are PK-2, 3-5, and 6-12.
- Professional development will be comprehensive, including teachers from all disciplines, paraprofessionals, parents, administrators and other school leaders.
- Technology in the plan is both a separate area and also threaded throughout.
- All of the comprehensive literacy information can be accessed on the MPS Portal including feedback on the external review and feedback on the plan once it is out, as well as research, meeting minutes, resources, learning targets, rubrics, documents available for purchase, professional development and more (see attached instructions for access).
- Argument is being made for the need of a literacy person in all schools at the secondary level.
- A literacy plan for the district must be submitted in June.

Implementation Team Comments:

- There is a push for alignment.
 - There is good opportunity over the next six months to work collaboratively and move forward some good ideas.
 - Suggestion was made and supported at the Accountability Support Group meetings that stimulus money be used for literacy.
- **Learning Team Initiative** – A draft will go out soon to retreat participants and Implementation Team members for feedback. A “Characteristics” stand-alone piece will be finalized which will also be part of a larger document that addresses membership, communication and other things discussed at the retreat. Discussion is taking place concerning assessment and accountability around the learning team. A rubric for self-evaluation and reflection may be modified or developed. Another area to be addressed is how to share the information district-wide with a consistent framework.
 - **Assessment Systems** –

Deb Lindsey reported that the district conducted a retreat concerning revision of District Policy 7.38 - Balanced Assessment System. The impetus for revising the

policy has several origins including findings and implications regarding assessment in the literacy review, unique assessment needs of alternative schools that serve students for short periods of time, early childhood assessment issues, the implication from the special education lawsuit for a better universal screening of students, and the likelihood of the state assessment system changing within the next few years. The District Assessment Retreat involved approximately 40 people from across the district and will serve as the launching point for next discussions which will include high schools and the new ACT districtwide assessment. Work groups will be formed for high school and early childhood; those interested may participate on these work groups. The goal is to take a vetted assessment policy draft to the Superintendent within the next two months. If it is determined there will be a new assessment, implementation would not take place this fall, but rather in the following school year.

Rethinking of statewide assessment is taking place concerning formative, summative and benchmark assessments. Deb Lindsey, Patrice Ball and Diane Rozanski are the district's members of the State Superintendent's Next Generation Assessment Task Force comprised of individuals from business, higher education and K-12 school districts across the state. Part of its purpose is to establish a common language foundation and purpose statements for assessment in the state and help delineate roles (state vs. district vs. school) for these three forms of assessment. It seems commonly believed that we will have online assessment nationwide within about five years or so. There is interest in an assessment system like Oregon's which has online assessments with the testing window open nearly all year, allows students to take the state assessments up to three times anytime throughout the school year, and uses the highest score for accountability purposes for AYP. One of the six principles finalized at the last task force meeting was regarding assessing as close to the target or standard as possible, which is very important in literacy because skills such as research are hard to assess on a standardized test; assessments using technology would help in this area and others. There is a national standards movement and a national test movement. Conversation is being driven by many states. Conversation is taking place about the need to include assessment literacy in professional development and in multiple stakeholders. Assessment literacy is a foundational piece and it is hoped this will be funded by the State.

Dennis Oulahan stated that we should have assessments we can get results on quickly so that teachers can put them to use and have the information they need to make decisions about instruction and we should also broaden the whole concept of assessment. Deb Lindsey indicated that the district is trying to capture this in the balanced assessment system and the State is trying to capture it as well. The MPS Division of Assessment & Accountability is working on creating the conceptual design for a teacher dashboard in the data warehouse. Help is needed in identifying what things are most important for teachers to see every day. Deb Lindsey will send something to Dennis Oulahan to share with others for input. Beth Giles volunteered input from the UW System Institute for Urban Education program graduates. The design phase is to be completed by the end of the school year, and there is funding next year to build it.

Teacher Leadership

Barnett Berry is coming to Milwaukee and meeting with the MTEA Executive Board, members of the Teacher & Principal Quality Work Group and Implementation Team and other teacher leaders to discuss teacher leadership. Results will be reported.

Family Literacy & Tutoring Work Group

There have been discussions concerning funding the Family Literacy & Tutoring Project/Coordinator position held by Betty Smith. Some funding has been identified at MPS; however, additional funding of approximately \$40,000 is still needed. Some of the costs were discussed. Linda Post will inquire about use of MPA funds for one of the costs identified.

Discussion was held concerning the need for stronger connections with grant writing. Linda Post reported that \$150 million of stimulus money has been put into the Title II Teacher Quality Partnership Grant Initiative; a grant should be pursued.

Discussion was held concerning ideas for the PIRC grant and better alignment of the contracted state parent center (currently Parents Plus) with the district including support for at least one staff person that works closely with the MPA and Family Literacy & Tutoring work, parent training and support for parental involvement. Additional possibilities, details and alignment should be thought out and discussed. Legal obligations of the state parent center should be identified.

Finalize Details for Implementation Team Session with Students

The Skunkworks Work Group reported:

- Student Group - Decision was made to invite the original group of approximately 12 students the work group met with from Washington High School
- Date/Time - The session will probably take place during the regular Implementation Team meeting in May
- Questions –
 - It is preferred to keep questions very general; suggested questions are:
 - What has and has not worked at MPS for you?
 - What should we keep doing?
 - What should we stop doing?
 - What would you do instead?
 - More specific questions could be asked if needed
 - Skunkworks can lead the questions

Points from discussion:

- Possible locations were discussed; a comfortable space designed for appropriate communication is needed—Washington High School or the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board will be pursued first
- There should be follow-up and an ongoing process which is communicated even if the process is not yet formalized
- Need to look at structure and determine how to institutionalize it
- Be careful not to make promises we may not be able to deliver
- Idea for an ongoing activity involving student voice -- bring in students annually to gather more details concerning the climate survey results to assist with addressing issues that have been identified through the survey

Next steps:

- Dennis Oulahan will continue working with Evan at Washington to work out the details of location, time, etc.
- Skunkworks will send the final version of the questions to Janice Hagen and Linda Post, which will be distributed to all attendees including students
- Skunkworks will contact UWM concerning suggestions for lunch
- Invitations will go out to Executive Partners and perhaps the School of Education Deans; an RSVP will be requested

Invitation to related activity involving student voice:

Betty Smith distributed a flier and invited everyone to attend the National Council on Educating Black Children's community forum on April 22nd concerning what the African American male needs in order to succeed academically. The information will be sent out to all MPA members.

Next Meeting – Monday, May 11, 2009, 12:00 to 2:00 p.m. (lunch at 11:30), **location TBD.**

The meeting adjourned at 2:04 p.m.

Major Components of Plan

- Review of literacy initiative in MPS
- Context of current reality (demographics, programs, professional development)
- Literacy definition
- PK-High School Plan in grade level bands (aligned curriculum, instruction, and assessment)
- Reading
- Writing
- Content-area literacy
- English language learners
- Special education students
- Three tiers (all students, additional support, and interventions)
- Technology

Other Considerations

- Elements of DIFI
- 21st Century Literacies / Partnership
- Change of Practice Regarding Consistency
- Support - Resources and Personnel (secondary)
- Revision of ELA State Standards
- Balanced Assessment System
- State Adolescent Task Force
- Regional / National Standards

Program(s) Will Include:

- Integrated reading and writing approach; explicit instruction
- Five elements of reading instruction (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension)
- Digital literacies
- Differentiated Instruction
- Intervention
- Cultural Relevance
- Balanced focus / non-fiction and fiction
- Visual literacy
- Assessment
- Professional Development
- Family literacy

Next Steps

- April 24th - next meeting
- Employ feedback from DPI
- May - share revised draft for feedback
- June - communicate major elements
- Summer and Fall - begin implementation; focus on professional development

Access MPS Portal

1. Access MPS site
2. Login and Password
3. Authentication Source
4. Access Resources

Literacy Contacts

- Patrice Ball / 414.475.8099
ballpl@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
English Language Arts Curriculum Specialist
Focus = Literature, Writing, Oral, Language, Media & Technology, and Research & Inquiry
- Sharonda Robinson / 414.475.8458
robinss@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
Literacy Curriculum Specialist
Focus = Reading and Supervisor of Literacy Specialists