

# **CURRICULUM SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING**

## **MINUTES**

**March 28, 2011**

1. CALL TO ORDER      **at 6:37 PM by Dr. Finnerty**
2. ROLL CALL OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS  
PRESENT: **Dr. Finnerty (chair), Dr. Fletcher, Ms. Pollock**
3. NEW BUSINESS:

A. *MCAS* – Helder Angelo and Dr. Francis described their visits to Brockton High School (BHS) and the success of their reform efforts. BHS was at the bottom regarding MCAS scores in 1998. The 1998 data showed a 72% failure rate that has now improved to 14%; a rate the staff at BHS still feels is too high. The attitude of the BHS staff was described as, “no student will fail.” BHS staff identified writing and literacy across the curriculum as an area to improve and it became the school’s reform focus. Dr. Francis and Mr. Angelo indicated that assessing student work in all content areas was a challenge at first but that the academic Directors provided professional development opportunities to assist staff. Ms. Pollock asked if progress in New Bedford could occur sooner than 13 years and Dr. Francis felt that we could move along quicker benefiting from Brockton’s example.

Dr. Francis also outlined two other initiatives for the next several months including John Safier’s Research for Better Teacher training sessions at the Middle School level. Dr. Jeff Howard’s Efficacy Institute will also be providing training and all efforts will be complementary with lessons learned from the BHS reform effort.

B. Drop-out Statistics -- Dr. Francis led a discussion of MCAS results and the recent presentation of the analysis by the Urban Initiative from UMASS Dartmouth. She also passed out a copy of “A Report on Dropout Prevention – Planning Initiative” prepared by the same Urban Initiative to subcommittee members

C. *Race to the Top* – Andrew O’Leary – Mr. O’Leary presented a “Race to The Top” (RTTP) provided the members a handout and he outlined the District RTTP Priorities as

- Positive School Culture
- Development of Professional Staff
- Development of Curriculum & Assessment
- Increased Rigor & High Academic Standards

RTTT Performance Measures include:

- By 2014, New Bedford’s percentage of students scoring proficient/advanced in ELA will rise to 49.1% from 45.6% in 2009, and in mathematics will rise to 52.6% from 39.6% in 2009.
- By 2014, New Bedford will reduce gaps for each low performing subgroup in ELA, and mathematics, as measured by CPI.
- By 2014, New Bedford will increase its graduation rate by 3.2 points to 58.9% from 55.7% in 2009.
- By 2014 New Bedford will see 67.9% of graduates enrolled in college within 16 months of graduation, from a baseline of 64.7% in 2009.
- By 2014, New Bedford High School will increase the percentage of high school graduates who have completed MassCore from 20% in 2010 to 24% by 2014.

4. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Update on College Readiness – Sue Anne Marks, Director of Pupil Personnel provided the subcommittee with information regarding system-wide efforts to expand the conversation regarding College Access. Efforts are underway at the Carney Academy and Hathaway Elementary schools to build a school-based college-going culture through discussions, celebrations, college days, visits and guest speakers. At Roosevelt Middle School a series of Family Workshops are planned to engage parents and to provide information about the college awareness process.

At the High School level Mrs. Marks has met several times with the guidance counselors to explain the expectation that each student will engage in the process of developing “Your Plan for College” via online tools. This will relate to RTTT goal 4B Implementing YourPlanforCollege.com Students will be able to:

- Access free tutorials and sample tests for MCAS, SAT and more
- Plan high school course load based on college and career goals
- Complete, track and submit college applications online, including transcripts, letters of recommendation and other required documents.
- Research financial aid options
- Research potential careers and take an interest assessment

B. Update on High School Science Curriculum – Anne Oliveira, Director of Science addressed the subcommittee regarding two new courses at NBHS this year.

a. *Principles of Aviation* – Low enrollment in the class has been a year long issue. Fourteen students enrolled in the first quarter and only five in the second quarter. Mrs. Oliveira does feel that the course is worth keeping and she will work with Bridgewater State University to make the necessary improvements. Problems have developed in the first year due to guest speakers who have not shown up to work with the students. The students do enjoy field trips to the airport. Dr. Finnerty suggested that a new name for the course; Scientific Principles of Aviation in order to make it clear to students that there is substantial scientific rigor to the course. Dr. Fletcher and Ms. Pollock suggested using the ROTC to recruit more students with Col. McGovern’s assistance.

b. *A.P. Environmental Science* -- Mrs. Oliveira indicated that this curriculum is prescribed by the College Board and is quite demanding. Latest enrollment data show 24 students; 14 female and 10 male. A very interesting aspect of the program is that young EPA Scientists are visiting the class to model lessons for the students. The course is provided to 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students primarily. Again, Mrs. Oliveira feels that the class should be retained for next year with improved efforts for student recruitment.

6. The Meeting was adjourned at 9:38 PM.

