

CHARTER SCHOOL OF INQUIRY

Academic Committee Meeting Minutes
 Meeting Date / Time: Friday, June 25, 2021, 2:00 p.m.
 Minutes Recorded By: Peter Dow

Committee Chair: Peter Dow			
Committee Members	Name	Present	Excused
	Mary Jo Pfeiffer	x	
	Marie Giancarlo	x	
	David Hetherly	x	
	Marguerite Battaglia	x	
	John Sheffield	x	
	Nichelle Gray		x
	Joseph Peek	x	
	Valerie Nolan	x	
Anne Henry	x		
Peter Dow			

MEETING AGENDA, MINUTES AND ACTION ITEMS

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action Item	Responsible Party	Due Date
Year End Data Results	Departing from the agenda order we began the meeting by looking at the year end Star data results because we thought it would inform our discussion of the other agenda items. John presented the result that showed that, in summary, we exceeded or targets by 7% in ELA and 6% in Math. The only grades that failed to exceed their targets were 3 rd grade Math (-10%) and 5 th grade Math (-6%). The complete data breakdown is contained in the attached report. The Star data confirm that our plan for meeting our performance targets is working. These reports indicate a	Make sure that these year-end data results are included in our year-end report and the Charter Renewal Application.	John Sheffield	Aug. 2021

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<p>Midyear Report from State Ed.</p>	<p>substantial improvement over previously reported data and a trend line that suggests that CSI will soon reach its goal of outperforming State averages. Already the school has exceeded the average proficiency scores of the Buffalo Public Schools where the latest findings for 3rd to 8th grade are 21% proficiency in math and 25% proficiency in language arts. Valerie noted that this provides us with ammunition in dealing with the State. Action: We need to build in this year-end data to the Charter Renewal Application.</p> <p>We discussed the inaccuracies and missing information in the State's Midyear report. For example, they cited that we did not have Individualized learning plans (IEPs) as called for in our Charter, but they never asked for them. Each student, in fact, has an IEP. They also criticized us for relying on a single source of data, but Mary Jo asked if there were other data sources that can be drawn upon during the renewal process next year. Marie responded that EDoctrina will be reintroduced in the fall which will ring together data from a variety of sources. There are assessments in our curriculum materials such as Open Court and Math Expressions, and teachers will be doing their own classroom assessments. There are teacher-developed rubrics for the</p>	<p>Committee members will share their review of Benchmarks Two and Three with John. John will edit the renewal application based on the committee discussion and these reviews.</p>	<p>John Sheffield</p>	<p>Aug. 2021</p>
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	<p>student-initiated inquiries. Therefore, we will have several sources of data to draw from in evaluating our implementation of the New York State Learning Standards next year. Marie said that this data is discussed with the teachers so that teachers have input into the formation of the learning groups. All these assessments will now be housed in one place. Mary Jo said it would be useful if there were some notes of these data meetings so that we could show the State how this data is being used with teachers when they visit us next year. Valerie noted that they “dinged us” for not evaluating the effectiveness of our professional development but the year-end data results in themselves prove the effectiveness of our professional development. Said John, “The proof is always in the pudding.”</p> <p>We further discussed how we can be proactive in showing the State how we are working with teachers to implement our commitment to data driven instruction. Can we show them, for example, how Marie, as Director of Curriculum and Instruction, models lessons in response to teacher requests and how she works with them to implement standards-based teaching. Marguerite suggested that we further strengthen this point by “memorializing it” in examples of written summaries for the</p>			
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	<p>teacher of what has been modeled and discussed. Mary Jo suggested that we be proactive with the State and make a list of all the things we want them to see and then arrange for them to see those things during the site visit next year so that we are not limited to responding only to the things they ask for. “We constantly have disagreements about data so let’s front load it with them next year.” John noted that he thought the current report was unfair because they verbally praised us for things that never made it into the written report. Valerie suggested that we remind them of the wonderful things that they saw in our response to the report. David Hetherly noted that a high point in the site visit for him was when Susan Gibbons, when remarking on the African American infusion, asked, “What advice can your team give to other schools? You could serve as a model for them.” In all of his experience working with the DOE, he said, he had never been asked such a question.</p> <p>Mary Jo cautioned about being too proactive in pushing our strengths when we are up for renewal. A better approach, she suggested, is to look for the gaps between what we have currently written and their midyear critique and strengthen our application accordingly. For example, the are looking for evidence of lesson</p>			
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	<p>differentiation to meet the needs of different learners. This should be reflected in the lesson plans. Marie pointed out that next year, with the implementation of the co-teaching model that involves primarily small group instruction, they will see how we are differentiating instruction.</p> <p>We also talked about the need to report this transition as a non-material revision, along with the staff changes we have made to implement this including the placement of two certified teachers in each classroom along with the non-certified teaching aids. Marguerite pointed out that the transition is not easy and requires time to implement it effectively. Mary Jo agreed but said that it depends on the model. Marie said that the teachers are well aware of the challenges. She said that the data shows that there are not a lot of kids that are “in the middle.” The lowest performing children are the ones who have suffered most from remote instruction, and we have a lot of work to do to meet the needs of this particular group of students. We also noted that the site visit report failed to acknowledge how we are handling inquiry-based instruction through student-led investigations. We decided, however, that nitpicking the report would be a less effective strategy than strengthening our renewal application to focus on the things that they missed,</p>			
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	<p>such as the importance of student-initiated questions. When doing this, Mary Jo cautioned, we need to pay attention to what the state considers to be “rigorous” instruction.</p> <p>We discussed how the committee could provide feedback regarding our review of Benchmarks Two and Three and concluded that the best way would be to send John a summary of our comments. Valerie said that she had not yet completed her review but thought that the section on social studies was rather weak because it spoke only about plans and not about what was actually taking place in the classroom. Peter had a similar reaction to the section on Literacy as it focused mostly skill development and not on building language capacity through reading and writing. Mary Jo urged that we make clear that Open Court deliberately uses direct instruction because they are still confusing that with our commitment to inquiry. We agreed that, rather than trying to go page by page through the benchmarks, we send John our comments after the meeting. Action: Committee members will share their review of Benchmarks Two and Three with John. John will edit the renewal application based on the committee discussion and these reviews.</p>			
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Rubric for Leadership Team to Assess PD.			John Sheffield & Committee Members	ASAP
	<p>John and David reported that the leadership team is in the process of developing a rubric for assessment of professional development based upon the review of a variety of rubrics used for this purpose and a consideration of how teachers are responding to the professional development sessions. When this rubric is completed it will be used to assess our professional development sessions. David pointed out that our rubrics will be based on the ten standards that the State has set for high quality professional development. In this way the leadership team can show the State that our professional development is meeting state standards. Peter pushed for linking professional development evaluation to <i>our own specific goals</i> for implementing our key design elements as well as the goal of meeting state standards. John pointed out that BOCES is CTLE certified and therefore their professional development already meets state standards. He also noted that next year the professional development will be centered specifically on three initiatives so that the evaluation of professional development will be much more focused next year. John indicated that he might include, if there is room in the application, an example of the rubric that the leadership team will be using to evaluate professional development. Action: John to</p>	<p>Action: John to include some reference to the rubric development in the charter renewal application. The committee will send John any suggestions for responding to the Site Visit report immediately as the response is due on Tuesday, June 29th.</p>		

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<p>Summer School Update</p>	<p>include some reference to the rubric development in the charter renewal application. The committee will send John any suggestions for responding to the Site Visit report immediately as the response is due on Tuesday, June 29th.</p> <p>David reported that parents are extremely enthusiastic about our plans for the summer school and enrollment is at 68 of the 70 maximum. We agreed to cap enrollment at 70 in order to meet the Boys and Girls Club ratio of ten students to one adult. The summer school is ungraded and organized according to skill areas. Marguerite asked how we are evaluating the summer program. Valerie responded that John and David and the staff have put together a very rigorous program that is focused on skill development. It will be evaluated to see how effective we have been in addressing the deficits created by COVID and how long the COVID effect lasts. This will determine whether we want to continue with a summer school in future years. One benefit in recruiting staff for the summer school has been that we have discovered some very strong people who we plan to keep on for the fall.</p> <p>The summer school staff is planning a variety of field trips including a horse farm in East Aurora, Explore and More Children's</p>	<p>Action: Continuous Implementation</p>	<p>David Hetherly</p>	<p>July 2021</p>
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<p>Other Business</p>	<p>Museum, the Power Vista, and the Freedom Wall on Ferry Street, the Michigan Street Baptist Church, and the Colored Musicians Club. Marguerite expressed concern that we were reaching only 70 of our 300 students, but Valerie pointed out that we will also be offering the Star “Freckles” program, a Star distance learning skill development program that will be available to all students who elect to use it.</p> <p>We had a brief discussion about management organizations that are taking over some low-performing charter schools and whether DOE is moving in that direction. The committee is impressed with the extraordinary achievements of John and the staff under the demanding conditions created by the COVID pandemic, and specifically noted the high level of participation in year-end state testing compared with the Buffalo Public Schools. The committee was also impressed with the way the school has built a relationship with parents during this period. At a recent parent roundtable there were 40 participants where the staff took it as an opportunity to explain the concept of Ubuntu.</p> <p>Peter asked what we are planning to do about the one-time infusion of federal funds, especially the third infusion that has</p>	<p>Action: John to put together a Task Force to consider how to invest the remaining COVID funds.</p>	<p>John Sheffield</p>	<p>ASAP</p>
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	<p>yet to be applied for. John said that after the second application is completed on July 1st we will be putting together a task force to consider the third application. Valerie asked Joe Peek about his reactions to the meeting. He said it is “very different from public school” where you are confined as an AP to your “own piece of the pie.” This, he noted, is like the upper levels of public school where you participate in major decision-making. He expressed excitement in being part of it. John noted that he has asked Joe to work with the Roswell Park initiative, the Community Task Force, and the African American Infusion Task Force. Action: John to put together a Task Force to consider how to invest the remaining COVID funds.</p> <p>The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.</p>			
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