

Minutes

Advanced Academic Programs Advisory Committee (AAPAC)

December 5, 2016

10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Committee Members in Attendance:

Jeff Feinstein, Faye Wagoner, Marta Nazario, Carrie Feord, Chao Wei, Annmarie Swope, Latisha Elcock, Shelby Sebert, Karen Via, Terri Radziewski, Daina Lieberman, Nicole Beadles, Janet Curtis, and Carol Horn

AAP Staff in Attendance:

Kirsten Maloney, Beth Baldwin, Margot Dickey, Jeff Lonnett

The meeting commenced at 10:32 a.m.

Principal and AART Panel

Carol welcomed the panel of AARTs and principals – Shane Wolfe (Aldrin principal), Chris Lewis (Aldrin AART), Jacqui Greene (Braddock AART), Keesha Jackson-Muir (Braddock principal), Cynthia Choate (Glen Forest principal), Patty Edwards (Glen Forest AART), and written answers by Katie Le (Cunningham Park principal).

Annmarie moderated the panel from 10:32 through 11:45.

Question 1: Do you have a full time AART at your school -- why is this important? If your AART is part time, how do you determine the priorities for their work?

- Written response from Katie Le: Our AART is part time. Her first priority is to service identified students, but a close second is for her to serve in roles of coach or consultant for teachers because the greatest impact on student learning is to influence instruction that takes place on a daily basis.
- Shane Wolfe shared the challenge of finding funding for full-time AART that they had previously had. They had to phase in a 3-day a week vs a 5-day a week. Noted that “always kids first” is their guiding principle – but when it comes to screening and other administrative tasks, it does pull the AART away from kids. Having to cut back to part-time has impacted job embedded professional development – this is a area his AART doesn’t have the needed time when she is on a three-day/week schedule.
- Hi AART, Chris Lewis, noted that her schedule is mostly groups one after another. The strategy lab runs without her so that does not take her time. While there she sees Young Scholars, level II and III, Philosophers Club, and GEMS before and after school. One major difference is that whereas she used to see groups 2x a week; she now sees them only 1x a week.
- Jacqui Greene noted priorities have been:
 - Support local level IV through co-teaching and co-planning.

- Embed high level instruction schoolwide (e.g., implementing M2 and M3 – at least one unit a year – schoolwide). Professional learning through AAP Cafes (teachers get professional learning points) supports this.
- Young Scholars work towards efforts to close the achievement gap.
- Having 1 ½ AARTs allows Jacqui to work with grades 3-5 while the PT AART (Jenni) works with K-2.
- Keesha Jackson-Muir noted that she uses Title I funds to fund 1 ½ AARTs for her school. She noted that she used to be an AART and knows how hard it is to have two schools and that she knew that role would be a priority for her when she became principal.
 - The goals for her school are based on her population – many students often come to school behind with over 70% poverty and ESOL - so they consider all of their students Young Scholars. This necessitates that all students be taught critical thinking skills, and you can't expect teachers to know how to do this if they don't have the support. The AART is critical in providing that support. If we want students to become the "Portrait of a Graduate," having students access this curriculum is important.
 - Recommended at least one full-time AART per 500 kids. It depends on the population at the school – some high poverty schools may need more AART support. It also depends on the capacity of the AART – are they able to work nights and weekends? What is their organization and capacity to coach?
- Cynthia Choate noted that her school is similar in demographics to Braddock but larger. She has 2 full-time AARTs. She uses some Title I money and some general ed. money to fund 2 full-time AARTs b/c this is a priority for her.
 - Use co-teaching schoolwide – ESOL co-teaching, special Ed inclusion, and AART co-teaches. The AARTs attend all of the CLTs and are a member of the teams. All grade levels are implementing some curriculum from AAP curriculum framework because the AARTs are there and able to support. AARTs are also part of the coaching team at her school.
 - Exposure to AAP curriculum and strategies is her priority – It helps teachers look at their children differently when they see the thinking that goes on even though a child may be a second language learner.
 - Every year there is an element of AAP curriculum in the school plan. They are also offering the PBL class to 45 teachers this spring.
- Patty Edwards, AART at Glen Forest, noted that being able to offer professional development in CLTs and through co-teaching has brought forth the teacher belief that students can do this higher level curriculum and they are taking on the challenges for the innovation portions of the school plan.

Question 2: As an AART, how much of your time is with students vs administrative?

- Written response from Katie Le: Roughly half, depending on needs of students and staff.
- Patty Edwards at Glen Forest – spends 100% of time with students this time of year. When it gets to screening time it might be an 80/20 split.

- Jacqui Greene – spends most time with students but also a good deal of time with teachers to plan. Does a lot of administrative responsibilities after hours, which she admits isn't necessarily a model for work/home balance.
- Chris Lewis 95% of time is spent with students.

Question 3: How much time outside of the work contract is spent on work?

- Estimated 20+ hours extra per week on nights/weekends
- Noted that snow days, when they happen, are spent almost entirely on preparing for screening
- Requires constant prioritization and reprioritization. You don't get time to plan during the contract day b/c you're working with students and teachers
- Shane Wolfe noted a full-time AART would be at the top of his wish list, but he does not get any dollars that he can put towards this position. His class sizes are already on the higher side (25-32 because he does not have a cap) and adding to general ed teacher staffing is also a focus of his.
- All principals agreed that if we're going to be a world-class school system that we can't do it without putting a full-time AART in every elementary school.

Question 4: Are you able to meet the needs of students who don't have deficits while trying to meet the needs in a school where a lot of students come with deficits?

- Keesha Jackson-Muir noted that in year 4, they are meeting their needs. Building the local level IV has supported this growth. Before, most of resources were going to students with needs. She asked her staff if as a parent, that would be acceptable? Over time, their mindset shifted as they saw the curriculum working and they learned to differentiate. Best practices are best practices.
- Cindy Choate noted that when you differentiate instruction and use flexible grouping, you are meeting their needs. But everyone is using the AAP curriculum, like Document Based Questioning, as the starting point. It is scaffolded, but the thinking is happening.
- Patty Edwards noted that the engagement level in working with higher level materials was high when given access. Ex with DBQ - Some students were writing papers for their persuasive argument – others were writing a paragraph with sentence stems.

Question 5: What kinds of training are required to become an AART?

- Jacqui Greene noted there are a variety of routes to become endorsed – FCPS and state endorsement are comparable in terms of quality.
- Cindy Choate noted that it's also important that it's open to all teachers. There are many opportunities.
- Keesha Jackson-Muir noted that it's content specific and tied to standards so that teachers can focus where their needs are.

Question 6: How do you provide Professional learning and support for all teachers in order to implement the Young Scholars model, a continuum of AAP services, and the AAP curriculum?

- Shane Wolfe noted that principal leadership is also critical in understanding the impact of a strong AAP program and having a full-time AART.
- Keesha Jackson Muir noted that it critical to have both the full-time AART as well as the resources the AART is training them to use.
- Cindy Choate noted that professional development is built in in many ways. It is embedded in teacher planning in CLT time. The AART builds in a piece to help them prepare for that so they can use the curriculum. Often times the AART just has to get them started and then the teachers take over once they understand the resources better. Once her staff knows how to use the resources, they will present to other teachers. She reiterated that buying the materials is an important part of the whole. She also reminded everyone that schools are different and budgets are different depending on size of school and Title I that also impacts.
- Shane Wolfe noted that Chris Lewis built mobile strategies labs to be able to handle the capacity of his school and that has allowed the teachers to take over the teaching of the strategies labs.

Question 7: What have you given up in order to have this focus?

- Cindy Choate noted that she doesn't feel she's given anything up – but perhaps she decided to spend money on AAP resources instead of another text book. It also is different from year to year and the needs of your school. Every school has to look at demographics, new teachers, districtwide-wide focus, and many variables when making these decisions.
- Patty Edwards noted it's driven by the vision/focus of your school.
- Shane Wolfe noted that when prioritizing, the teacher leaders within the school have a lot of input into where the priorities are.

Question 8: In what ways does your AART collaborate with other instructional leaders? And how does their work help support closing the achievement gap?

- Keesha Jackson-Muir noted they've been able to close the achievement gap from double digits to zero. They have a leadership team that meets weekly at the school and the AART is a critical part of that. Each leader brings ideas and curriculum to the table to look at the student needs and develop a plan of action. The AART has to work with literacy, math, and technology – and the principal has to be sure to include them on all of those conversations.
- Jacqui Greene noted that AARTs are perfectly poised to teach in interdisciplinary ways and they need to be able to collaborate with all of the specialists in the building.
- Patty Edwards noted that collaboration is one of the most important things – when they come together, the teacher leaders want to be sure they are coming together as one united front for the students and to make it understandable and cohesive for the teachers.

- Written response by Katie Le: In the past, we had a resource teacher who led professional development and pulled small groups of Young Scholars, which teachers agreed raised the level of rigor for students in the classroom. This year due to funding, we lost that position. A classroom teacher is our YS lead, and Young Scholars professional development is a part of a focus on culturally responsive teaching. Our former Level IV resource teacher is now a classroom teacher, who serves as our lead. She provides services through a coaching model, particularly focusing on our third grade new teachers.

Question 9: Can you elaborate a bit more on collaboration with parents and counselors?

- Patty Edwards noted parents are invited to informational sessions, to come into classrooms, and be part of the community. Counselors are part of the teacher leadership team and the school planning.
- Keesha Jackson-Muir noted that the social curriculum is just as important as the academic curriculum (risk taking, student-to-student interactions, executive functioning skills)
- Jacqui Greene noted there are also a lot of other parent outreach opportunities and gave the example of book cafes that were very successful and is planned to meet regularly. As AART she noted the important role of advocating for students and guiding parents through understanding the school system, the AAP screening processes, and what the local level IV does for their school.
- Shane Wolfe noted that parents are now running the strategies lab at his school.
- Cindy Choate and Patty Edwards noted other outreach in terms of bringing parents into the schools as partners in their child's learning.

Question 10: What additional funds/resources are needed to ensure access and continued innovative and challenging AART?

- All agreed – full-time AART at every school without taking from the general education budget.

Annmarie will follow up with panel members to get information about afterschool offerings at the school via email.

Committee Business:

- Annmarie introduced new members.
- Next meeting will focus on Young Scholars presentation and starting to get into work groups.
- Faye Wagoner made motion approve minutes from last meeting. Latisha seconded. Minutes were approved.
- Faye Wagoner brought up that she read the response to the school board and wanted to find out about how to follow up with folks in charge of the Capital Improvement Plan on the recommendation. Carol will look into that and get back to Faye.

Carol shared AAP office updates:

Screening:

- Jan 13 is the level IV referral deadline – turn in forms to local schools – We hold the deadline strictly and parents can submit at any time from the first day of school. Referral form is available on the AAP website or by contacting the AART at the local school

Other work:

- Had a great meeting with the CAG schools last week – having the measurable goals and meeting as a pyramid is very helpful to ensure focus on the work
- Elementary professional development for fall will wrap up on Dec 12
 - We held 15 day-long sessions in all four core subject areas
 - Sessions were filled with wait lists but we were able to provide training to 400 teachers
- Secondary winter institutes are coming up – one day per subject area coordinated by Beth
- Kirsten continuing to work with 8 Region 3 schools – each school working on a focus area
 - supporting teachers through planning/modeling/coaching
 - helping facilitate innovation cohorts using AAP curriculum
 - helping support innovation goals that integrate use of AAP curriculum
- PBL
 - 8 courses this semester - 3 open; 5 paid by school and 11 courses planned for spring – mostly paid by schools at their request
 - Jeff has been working to support/do introductions for many groups – about 40 schools; region 4 principals, AP sessions, pyramid leadership
 - Training for multiple departments of 5 high schools as part of the PBL Innovation Plan (under Best Practices)
- Four middle schools (Franklin, Thoreau, Irving, and Herndon) are clustering level IV eligible students. Lanier plans to do this next year. It is not a plan to become a level IV center, but is an option for eligible students to be clustered and receive curriculum.

Other topics and updates:

- Approval of Minutes

Move to adjourn – 12:02 p.m. by Latisha Elcock. Seconded by Chao Wei.