

INSTRUCTIONAL SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
October 4, 2017
4:00 p.m.

Spencer Borden Elementary School Community Room
1400 President Avenue
Fall River, MA 02720

A roll call at 4:00 p.m. showed:

Mr. Coogan: Present Mrs. Panchley: Present
Dr. Costar: Present

Also present were Principal Aimee Bronhard, Ms. Julia Carlson, Ms. Shayna Morgan, Dr. Siobhan Ryan, and Ms. Michele Sharpe.

Mrs. Panchley read the Open Meeting Law. A salute to the flag followed.

1. **Discussion:** Curriculum MAPS

Ms. Carlson stated that, when she first started in her position, the district had been awarded a \$50,000 grant for four schools to look at curriculum and instruction within the buildings. Part of the money was utilized for professional development over the summer for their teachers. Ms. Carlson spent quite a bit of time going into every single building working with every building leader who talked a lot about what they were using versus what someone else was using and they saw that every building was using something different. The Superintendent had come before the School Committee with some aligned goals and one of them was having coherence and alignment across the district. They had their department heads and coaches develop teams of teachers to write their new curriculum maps. The maps are completely standards aligned. That was the first step. They have just been awarded another \$100,000 to continue the work. When they started, they really dove into what professional learning communities (PLC) were. They did a summer institute where they highlighted not only professional learning communities but the actual curriculum. They have two schools right now that are going to be piloting the six-week PLC cycle which is a way to not only dive into the work that needs to be done in classrooms but having it more systematized so that they are also looking at student outcomes and student work in order to drive instruction throughout the year.

Over the district, they have two instructional strategies, one for numeracy and literacy and one for SEL for three quarters that they are doing district wide. During the admin time, they spend a lot of time going over the PLC cycle and the importance of understanding each of the different areas. All the work that they are doing is all aligned to each of the weeks of the PLC cycle. Their main work has been Week 1 which is pacing and making sure that they're backwards mapping from the end of the unit assessment through that unit so that they are making sure that they not only know what the kids need to know but that they are also understanding it and responding if they are not.

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Ms. Carlson announced that Frank Farias has updated the Fall River Public School homepage to include a button that says “Curriculum” which opens a page that contains all the content areas. Upon clicking on ELA, it opens up the curriculum map for the year. Almost every content area is up but they are waiting on social studies, physical education, health, and the arts. She is also working with the director at Durfee in CTE. They do have curriculum maps but they are really waiting to employ more teachers to update the curriculum maps so that they are relevant. One of the great things about the maps is that they are not school specific.

What she heard a lot of was that some schools are Reading Street schools and there are other schools that are focused on STEM. She wanted to encourage teachers to use Reading Street as a resource for how to achieve literacy but it’s not necessarily the only resource. What they did was really work with the teachers to specifically put backwards mapping on standards and put multiple types of resources in the resource column so that teachers can really employ the art of teaching but they have multiple ways of getting their students there. She also wanted to talk about cultural alignment. Their ELL and special education numbers are going up. That’s another area that Fernanda Vera-Cruz has been working with her ELL team to differentiate each of the maps for their ELL population and foundation population. Lisa Moy is working with her team to differentiate for the special education population. She explained that, if a student is a 2nd grader, it doesn’t matter if they are in an inclusion class, a self-contained class, a community-based classroom, they’re being introduced to the same curriculum. However, the resources and the differentiation will look very different based on the needs of the students within the class. If you’re in a community-based class at Spencer Borden or you’re at one at Henry Lord, it will still be the same curriculum and the teachers will be able to move effectively during the PLC plan and decide how they want to roll that out. She stated that this was a collaborative effort and she is very proud of the work. She thinks they still have a number of teachers to give their input.

She stated that the next big phase is making sure all the maps are up. The ELA and math coaches and department heads have met a couple of times. The next level is having teachers write lesson plans so that they will have a bank of lesson plans for each unit. They will have the unit and lesson plans for each week and multiple examples so that teachers, whether they’re a veteran or a new teacher, will get more ideas so that, when they get into planning sessions at their schools, they can make the best decisions for their students. The end goal is that their students increase in their literacy and numeracy which is also a big goal for the Superintendent and for the district as a whole.

For professional development, they picked the two instructional strategies for three quarters. They have just completed their principal meeting where they did a rollout of the instructional strategies and training for all principals. Now the principals are taking this back to their buildings, coaches, and department heads and they will be training their staff. They will be starting this tomorrow on their first half day. Ms. Sharpe and Dr. Ryan, as members of the OOI team, are mentoring and offering support for schools. They’ve developed a cycle where, each month, they’re visiting every school and utilizing a walkthrough form that looks for the key areas that they are trying to grow in. The only area that will change will be the middle area because those are the actual instructional strategies that are specific to that period of time. Once they complete their walks, their team gets back together to calibrate on whether or not they’re looking for the right things. The mentor will then meet with the

principal and their coaches and she will have all the information and she'll debrief with them on what classes they went into and what they saw. It's not teacher specific. They are not there to evaluate teachers. They are there to give feedback to the principals to see if there are certain trends that they are lacking in or, if they're really great in an area, they can highlight that. They've been very organized and structured around curriculum instruction in order to be more focused as well as offer more support for their principals so that they're more successful and effective. Everything they want to do is in the areas of alignment, coherence, and equity.

Transcriber's Note: At 4:10 p.m., Superintendent Malone and Principal Eric Bradley entered the meeting.

Dr. Costar asked if principals would receive feedback of where they are in a specific area as compared to other schools. He thinks that principals would like to know if they are on target with other schools. Ms. Carlson stated that, on the calendar, there is a block out time so each of the members on the Office of Instruction team are going to all 16 schools. She may only be visiting four schools but Ms. Sharpe may be visiting four schools and Dr. Ryan may be visiting three schools. They would meet after that and go through all the data. That will go to all principals. Dr. Ryan and Ms. Sharpe will actually go to the principal that they are mentoring and that's when they will debrief their specific schools' findings. Ms. Carlson isn't sure that it will be in comparison to other schools but she thinks they will be able to draw conclusions but that would have to be a conversation between the principals. The focus really needs to be on what's working and what they need to grow. That is really the Office of Instruction's role in supporting principals. Sometimes principals get so inundated with operations and behaviors that curriculum and instruction – the main thing that is going to drive them forward – gets put on the backburner. Their team is going to be that extra layer of support. Ms. Carlson stated that, at the end of the cycle, they should see some type of increase the next time because they're going to be coming back again. The reason they want the coaches there is because they know what grades they're going into, they know what to focus on, and the coaches may want to dive into that before their next walk. The purpose is so that they can leave the meeting with actionable steps to follow up on because that's what they will be looking at for the next time they do their walk.

Mr. Coogan asked if the teachers are still going to have to do lesson plans or if they will be able to get by with just the curriculum maps. Ms. Carlson believed that teaching is an art and the lesson plan is the painting on how it's going to be delivered. She doesn't think the curriculum maps will ever take the place of lesson planning. The outcomes are all identical, they're all focused on the same standards. She feels like she really knows the teachers when she looks at their art. She needs to see the lesson plan to see that. What she would like to have is a bank because, when she was a new teacher, there were times when she wasn't sure what she would be teaching that day. At each of the schools, they have a common planning time where they can start this from Day 1.

Mr. Coogan said that, when he was working at the high school, he would see kids funneling in from all over and some kids weren't taught certain subjects or weren't taught it as much as other kids were. Ms. Carlson stated that they have an amazing team who have been on board with this. Mr. Coogan asked if it could be tweaked if needed. Ms. Carlson stated that it was a living document

that can be revised. They are in the process of taking down all the old curriculum on Moodle which no one was using and some teachers didn't even know about. They want the curriculum maps to be something that they are using every day in their classroom.

Ms. Carlson asked if they could move the item of Advanced Placement Overview up so that Ms. Morgan could talk about that since it kind of goes along with her presentation. Mrs. Panchley agreed but wanted to ask a question about the curriculum maps while they are still on the subject. She had a question about the world language maps and when those start. She said that it seems like they are all over the place at the middle school level with what they're offering, when they're offering it, and how often they offer it. She thinks that is something that needs to be looked at. Ms. Carlson stated that foreign languages are one of the maps that have not been completed yet. The original grant that they received was for English Language Arts and Mathematics so that's where they focused first but, with the new grant, they did get permission to do all content subject areas. Health and PE have already started on them, social studies at the high school has started on them, but for languages, they would need to get an addition for that. She has talked to Principal Desmarais at the high school and she's had very brief conversations with Principal Pontes at the middle school. They would need to get a lead and teachers to write those maps.

Superintendent Malone stated that, overall, world languages is an area that they're concerned about. They're not in a place yet where they have a really good articulation of a program. Mrs. Panchley said that there are inconsistencies even within the same school. Both of her sons went to Kuss and one son had Spanish I for half a year in 6th grade and 7th grade and a full year in 8th grade then went on to SPA II. Her other son had SPA I for a half year in 7th and 8th grades but didn't continue for Spanish II. Superintendent Malone said that they will continue the discussion here then maybe discuss it in a Policy Subcommittee, as well. If a state college requires two years of world language but the district doesn't require it for graduation, they need to figure out how to navigate that. They need to be more consistent.

Superintendent Malone asked if Ms. Carlson was going to share the walkthrough from yesterday. Ms. Carlson stated that yesterday was their first principal walkthrough at Fonseca where they utilized the form she gave them a copy of. Across the board, people were amazed with the change in culture, climate, and the management at Fonseca. The general feedback from all the principals was very aligned and structured. Principal Lisi now has very clear and specific action steps that she will have support on. They broke it up into strengths that they saw in the classroom, needs, and action steps to follow up on. Superintendent Malone stated that the value in this was the conversation afterward. The feedback that was provided to Principal Lisi was powerful. This is an improvement from what they saw last year.

Mr. Coogan stated that this was kind of like a teacher evaluation in that it shows what is going on in the classroom. Ms. Carlson clarified that the purpose of their walks is not evaluative. Every principal has received a copy of the form. They had 40-50 people collaborate on this walkthrough and there was a lot of information. They tried to take the three big buckets in what they're really looking for and what's going to drive them the most. Principals can make this personal to their buildings if they so choose. In her meeting with the principals she's evaluating, she suggested that

they not overload the teachers every single time and to just pick specific things they really want to work with teachers on. The whole point is that they want teachers to be successful.

2. **Discussion:** Advanced Placement Overview

Ms. Morgan stated that she has been at Durfee for a while so she's seen qualitatively their history with advanced placement. They've had some ups and downs with their enrollment. The report she prepared came from a lot of different sources but she got most of the data from Mass Insight and the College Board. Right now, they are partnered with Mass Insight. They've been partnered with them since 2009. Before the partnership, historically, the participation in AP classes were pretty exclusive. She wasn't able to access the participation rates because the College Board only had up to 2010 but she does know the qualifying scores. In 2008, there were only 44 total qualifying scores. In 2009, there were only 30 qualifying scores. When she looked at some of the instruction that was going on, it wasn't aligned with the AP curriculum so there were some struggles. The leaders at the time decided to do something different and they applied for the grant with Mass Insight and they became partners. In the summer of 2009, they decided to vet some teachers for ELA, math, and science because they wanted to get new teachers who had masters degrees to attend the AP summer institute.

Another thing that they did was offer a pre-AP training. Mass Insight used to be partnered with the National Math and Science Institute so they had a very strong pre-AP training. They trained some teachers in pre-AP and then they saw increased enrollment and increased qualifying scores. Mass Insight provides data sharing and the two summers of AP SI training. They do two-day professional development workshops for AP teachers that are differentiated workshops where they bring in presenters to discuss topic areas that teachers identified that they need help with. The strongest component is the Saturday sessions. The Saturday sessions are ELA, math, and science. They used to have three Saturday sessions but now they have two for each of the topics. One is the mock exam. They gather the kids as a cohort. New Bedford, Central Falls, and Seekonk kids would all join Durfee kids and they would rotate to a different section. Durfee High School has the highest participation rate in Saturday sessions. The students would get incentives but they also enjoyed the sessions.

For the mock exams, Mass Insight grades them then gives the reports back so that they can do some data analysis for small group and whole group instruction. They also received support from content specialists. She doesn't think that they took enough advantage of having content specialists come in. Within the last couple of years, she's been able to use them more but it's spotty. Science was good but math needed some work. She does not feel that the pre-AP program is where it needs to be. Right now, they are sustaining partnerships so they pay money for this. The LOA that they are looking at right now is Saturday sessions and mock exams and getting some data reports and content. They've seen a real increase in enrollment. This year, they have 527 AP enrollments. Last year they had 240 qualifying scores. The percentage scores have stabilized at 52%.

Dr. Costar asked if Ms. Morgan could explain the dip the numbers took. Ms. Morgan explained that, in the years where the numbers took a dip, the district had significant teacher turnover. A few of the teachers that were teaching AP left. They also had kids sign up for AP subjects who weren't ready

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so that is why there is a bit of a dip in the percentage scores. Dr. Ryan asked what the qualifying score was. Ms. Morgan stated that the qualifying score was 3 or above.

Ms. Morgan also wanted to look at comparisons to see how they did in comparison to the state and the global. When she looked at 2017, 62.5% of the students received a 3 or above on an AP exam. When compared with the rest of the state and the global, Fall River is higher than the global. She took the means of every class and was surprised that the mean for Calculus BC was lower than the Massachusetts mean. In three areas they are higher than the state mean: Studio Art 3D, Studio Art Drawing, and Physics II. Dr. Costar said that he assumed that they didn't have a lot of students taking art so the mean could represent two outstanding students. Ms. Morgan stated that was correct. Dr. Costar said that he thought Physics might have a larger number. Ms. Morgan said that Physics had 17. Mrs. Panchley asked how they struggled with Physics I but do well in Physics II. Ms. Morgan thinks that it's capacity. She thinks that they need to rethink what they're doing and who is teaching Physics I. Dr. Costar asked if they had a larger number of students taking Physics I than Physics II. Ms. Morgan said that it was about even.

Ms. Morgan noted that they had a data increase after partnering with Mass Insight. The scores dropped around 2013 due to high turnover in staff. They're seeing the numbers rise again and the staff stabilizing. AP teachers are getting better at their craft. They have deans in instructional leadership and a lot more people looking at curriculum. She also sees that there are a lot more discussion about what's going to get kids ready for AP. They're trying to get that vertical alignment by having the AP Biology teachers talk to Biology teachers. They also have an application process which Mass Insight was not happy about because they didn't want to be restrictive. Durfee's AP program is very open and will accept any child who applies. The application process is just so that they can see if the student is going to complete the application. There are some cases where they look at the application and look at their scores. Last year, they had teachers recommend students and touch base with teachers to make sure that the students are ready.

Mrs. Panchley said that she remembered talking about this at a previous School Committee meeting with Mass Insight and they weren't happy about the application process but the School Committee pushed back. Ms. Morgan said that a College Prep kid could take an AP class but they want to make sure that the student can bring something to the table. Ms. Carlson stated that Mass Insight's concern was that they don't want any exclusionary factors, such as minorities or marginalized students. They want everybody to have the opportunity but she agrees that if they don't have some kind of process then they're going to have a lot of drops. There's a huge cost in getting the teachers prepped and ordering the test. Ms. Morgan stated that she had an incident where a teacher recommended one whole class in AP Biology and it messed their numbers up. Dr. Costar agreed that students had to show some kind of demonstrated effort and passion. Ms. Morgan stated that they try to encourage students to take AP classes. She said that 20.8% of high school seniors scored 3 or higher on one or more AP exams. They are also expanding their options for AP with AP Physics II, AP Seminar, and AP Arts. As for the challenges, she feels that they are a little bit stagnant. She thinks they need to target some of their challenging areas: AP Chemistry, Physics I, and Calculus BC. She wants to increase the number for their subgroups. They're seeing a drop off in boys and they are not seeing minority enrollment. She thinks that they need to think about training new teachers to keep it

sustainable because it is very difficult when a teacher leaves or moves into another position. The biggest focus she wants to have is on their vertical alignment.

Superintendent Malone stated that this was part of an overall strategy that was implemented years ago that's showing results. They moved from the 5th percentile to the 11th percentile at Durfee within a year. He wants to make sure that the rigor is there and that kids can solve complicated problems. Ms. Morgan stated that the problem is that some of the students are good at memorizing but that's not true knowledge or true learning. She'd like to see focus placed on transferrable skills.

3. **Discussion:** Health and Wellness Curriculum

Ms. Sharpe stated that two years ago Brad Bustin had put a proposal together to have Botvin LifeSkills program for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade which was accepted. So 6th, 7th, and 8th grade is receiving the LifeSkills health curriculum which is, not only a curriculum that works with children about self-esteem and positive relationships, but it's also a prevention program to educate schools about choices and how to hopefully stop them from making the wrong choices as it pertains to alcohol and drugs. This proposal is the same one that she brought forward the last time she met with the subcommittee but she elaborated a little bit more. The packet contains an opening letter, the grant that she wrote for this and was awarded funding for, the scope and sequence for the program for Grades 3, 4, and 5, and also some of the lesson plans. She also included the alignment that would be done with the curriculum for the Mass frameworks so that they can see that some of the subjects they will be discussing aligns with their current curriculum. One of the district goals is for SEL. In SEL, they're looking at students to have knowledge in being resilient, engaged, and having empathy and respect. She would like to add this program for Grades 3, 4, and 5 for just one of the trimesters and teach it over a nine-week period. They would have 8-12 lessons.

There is one thing that's not on the scope and sequence which Ms. Sharpe would like to see added and that is nutrition. She feels that is important. They do have two programs that come in and work with the elementary: the nutrition program from Mass Extension and the Katie Brown program who are currently working with 4th and 5th grade students. These programs are only for a short time and they are limited in the capacity of what they can do. She knows that there were some concerns about talking to young kids about drugs and alcohol. The scope and sequence shows that it's very age appropriate. It's not the same as what they're going to see at the high school. It's more about giving them information so that they will have the self-worth to resist peer pressure. The sequence of the eight units are self-esteem, decision making, smoking information, advertising, dealing with stress, communication skills, social skills, and assertiveness which are all skills students should have in order to make the right decisions. The recent studies have shown that kids will have exposure to drugs and alcohol as early as the age of 10. It is recommended that a prevention program be put in at least two years prior to that. She feels that this is important for looking at the whole child not just academically but social emotionally. This is a program that will help with skills in this area.

Dr. Costar stated that he thinks that the concern is, when the curriculum interfaces with real life problems, he wondered what kind of training staff would receive for students who may have discussions about situations that are occurring with them. There may be students who are drinking or

doing drugs or sees a relative doing this. He thinks that there needs to be a way to interface that with some kind of intervention strategy with adjustment counselors. Ms. Sharpe said that in 6th, 7th, and 8th grade when they are teaching health, there are other questions that arise that are not in the curriculum. She's met with teachers and discussed ways to be able to circumvent that. Even at the high school level when talking about drugs and alcohol, some students have gotten emotional and teachers have given those students the option to opt-out of the classroom. In the training, it talks about how to have these conversations with younger children. She will be the one doing the "train the trainer" for the elementary level. She likes this program because it gently explains certain subjects to children. She stated that phys ed teachers have the best relationships with students because they see all the students and the kids identify with them. She wants phys ed teachers to teach this subject because kids need these relationships to feel safe in the classroom.

Dr. Costar said that he understands wanting to take the gentle approach but he wants to make sure that the teachers are trained in the event of a safety issue or an abuse issue with the child and that there is someone the teacher can go to who is qualified to make an assessment and decide if there is another step that needs to be taken. Teachers, principals, and counselors are mandated reports so, if a student is talking about not having food on the table or their parents being intoxicated every day, that needs to go another step to someone who is trained to decide when it's time to contact someone else. Ms. Sharpe stated that sometimes these things are discussed at the morning meetings at schools. They're good about having protocols in place so that they know what to do. Anne, one of the School Adjustment Counselors, and Karen, the school nurse, have looked at this curriculum and they feel this is very valuable.

Mr. Coogan stated that he understood that this needed to go in a sequence but he would like to see this at the beginning of a term. He would like the adjustment counselor to be in the room for the initial presentation. He thinks this is something that is important for the success of the entire city. He would like to see the subject of drugs be highlighted because it's such a big problem. Ms. Sharpe stated that she wanted to get this message out there because she wants the kids to have the knowledge so they can make the right decisions. The earlier kids try drugs, the more apt they are to become addicted to it. Mrs. Panchley asked if he was proposing that the curriculum get deeper at Grades 3-5. Mr. Coogan clarified that it doesn't necessarily have to be deeper but he would like to see a light shone on this because he believes that kids are already seeing it.

Mrs. Panchley thinks that this is a good program and she felt that way the last time it was presented. Dr. Costar agreed, as long as there is someone to pick up the ball if something comes out. Mrs. Panchley agrees with the subject of self-esteem and good decision making but would have a problem if they got too deep in the drug talk in elementary school. Ms. Sharpe said that they touch on it at the elementary level but they dive more into it in middle school. Mrs. Panchley said that she understands that there are some kids that are being exposed to it but some kids are not. Dr. Costar said that there were different developmental issues at the elementary level. He hopes that they do not have 3rd and 4th graders who are using but there are 3rd and 4th graders whose parents are users. When kids are exposed to anything that talks about this, being 3rd and 4th graders, they're going to blurt things out. He thinks that there needs to be an interface between curriculum and intervention so that the teacher has a go-to person in the event there is a student who is affected by this subject. In

middle school, there may be children who are a little more reticent because maybe they have tried different things but, if they start to talk about things, there needs to be an interface for a teacher to go to an adjustment counselor if they're concerned about a student. That's the only concern he has about this. He likes the part about respect and self-esteem and those issues which ties into the bullying policy. They have an extensive policy but what they really need to work on is school climate. This could set a good climate of how they treat one another.

Ms. Carlson said that to help this culture and climate, the Superintendent really wanted to have social-emotional learning at the forefront. Each of these instructional challenges are geared toward that. The first quarter is morning meeting. The whole essence of it is to build relationships with students so that, if they do go to a teacher to say that their mom is passed out every day when they go home, the teacher will know that they will have a school adjustment counselor with the student so they can discuss these things. She stated that there was a lot of research on the "Just Say No" campaign, which was focused on drugs and alcohol versus social-emotional learning of student recognition of themselves. The latter is not effective if students don't know how to recognize their feelings or that something is bad. She has had students who didn't know that something was bad because it was normal for them. Some students were more resistant because they didn't want to believe that their mom was bad. What they found when they did introductory rights and wrongs was that the kids started to understand their place. She thinks this is a good program that has a lot of proven results.

Mrs. Panchley asked if this needed to be referred to the full School Committee. Superintendent Malone said that they have rolled it out. It was voted on previously. This is just sharing where they are. They will need to come back some time in the future and have a serious conversation about sex education. It's a missing piece in their curriculum at the ages where they need it to be.

Mrs. Panchley asked if he meant for middle school. Superintendent Malone confirmed that he did.

Ms. Sharpe said that the curriculum that she developed was based off of the National Sex Ed frameworks that is taught. For the young kids it's just teaching them about their body and changes. It's age appropriate. At the 5th grade level, they recommend talking about body changes.

Superintendent Malone announced that this will be brought to a future Instructional Subcommittee meeting and will need to go to the full Committee. Dr. Costar stated that the state said that they need a developmentally appropriate curriculum for K-12 to deal with these issues.

Transcriber's Note: At 5:07 p.m., Superintendent Malone and Principal Bradley left the meeting.

4. **Discussion:** Respect for Human Difference Taskforce

Ms. Carlson announced that they were just starting up a Respect for Human Difference Taskforce. She explained that this doesn't just have to do with LGBTQ issues within schools but also the marginalized populations. At the next meeting, they will be able to report what their action plan is for the year and the key items that are related to curriculum and instruction that they want to focus on. Dr. Costar asked who the taskforce consisted of.

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Ms. Carlson stated that the taskforce consisted of school adjustment counselors, curriculum instruction staff, Barbara Allard, and high school staff. Many high schools have been at the forefront of bringing about groups like GLAAD and LGBTQ clubs. They're not just looking at what they're doing in the schools but compliance issues. Right now, they're complying across the board, they're just looking at how to move forward. The purpose of this group will be on curriculum and instruction in each of the schools. Dr. Costar asked if Ms. Carlson would consider adding community members to this taskforce. Ms. Carlson said that she would and she can send out what they have right now and, if they want to add anything to it, they can.

Transcriber's Note: At 5:09 p.m., Principal Bradley returned to the meeting.

5. **Discussion:** K-8 Social Studies Curriculum

Dr. Ryan stated that they still have a social studies curriculum in the middle schools but social studies has not received a whole lot of attention in K-5. Fall River seems to be more focused on MCAS and ELA and Math. Social Studies is usually only taught in elementary schools if a teacher has a passion for it.

Dr. Costar said that he had asked for this to be put on the agenda because he has had concerns about it. He had a parent inform him that she had questioned a group of teachers about her child's report card which showed that her daughter did not meet expectations in the level of social studies. When the parent asked the teacher what her daughter could be doing differently, she claimed that the teacher said it was because she hadn't taught social studies yet. He doesn't feel that kids should be graded on social studies if they are not learning it. When he was in school, there was a scope and sequence in social studies that started in the elementary grades. They learned about geography in second or 3rd grade. In 4th and 5th grade, they learned about Greek history and Egypt. He wondered when students learned about the foundation of their country. He thinks social studies has fallen by the wayside and their producing kids who don't know history.

Dr. Ryan stated that the Board of Education realized that there is a huge deficit among young people and among a lot of their teachers who have had no social studies education except for the requirements they had in high school because there are some middle schools in the state that don't offer social studies. To the definition of *readiness* for graduating high school, they added "civic life" so they are preparing students for college, career, and civic life. They charged the Department of Education to start revising the curriculum standards which have not been looked at since 2003. She is one of the panel members revising the framework. They hope to have it finished by Christmas, sent out to experts for review, and it will go before the board next June. Once that goes into place, there will be a new scope and sequence and a determination about whether or not social studies is going to be assessed. There is a very strong civics component that starts in the elementary grades up through high school. The goal is to make sure that they are graduating informed children that know how to participate in the world around them.

Mrs. Panchley stated that it was a vicious circle because no one wants another subject to be tested on MCAS but, if they don't, it's never going to be taught. Dr. Costar said that he doesn't think that kids

should be graded on social studies if teachers aren't teaching it. Mrs. Panchley agreed that it should just say N/A next to social studies on the report card. Ms. Carlson said that they have a meeting with DESE tomorrow to discuss social studies. She stated that one of the next steps is to employ teachers to embed history into their curriculum. They can do this in the novels that they read in class.

Dr. Ryan has been going to the state meetings and will be bringing back the curriculum but they're not waiting until next June to start implementing it in the schools.

Dr. Costar asked if they have social studies textbooks. He said that he believed they did at the high school. Dr. Ryan said that the middle schools also have textbooks. Ms. Carlson said that the principals received a spreadsheet yesterday where they have to fill out what texts and workbooks they need because it's so vast amongst the schools. Dr. Costar asked if Ms. Carlson could report to the Committee what her findings were. Ms. Carlson said that she could do that.

Dr. Ryan stated that she attended a meeting in Andover where the superintendent is very passionate about social studies and has written some books. He is actually the founder of Educators for Social Responsibility that they use in their middle schools. He intends to reintroduce civics curriculum in the elementary schools that he developed when he was superintendent of the Louisville Public Schools. He started by talking about fiction and a lot of great stories in elementary schools and using books to develop empathy and social emotional skills in students to get them to understand what happened in the past and how they are where they are today. Dr. Costar said that history has certain facts that are content based but they lend themselves to compare and contrast questions. They may be able to find this in some literature and tie it in with the facts.

6. **Discussion:** Piloting Trimesters for Grades 6-8 at K-8 Schools (Doran and Henry Lord)

MOTION: Dr. Costar-Mr. Coogan: To approve piloting trimesters for Grades 6-8 at Doran and Henry Lord and refer this item to the full School Committee for a vote.

Discussion:

Principal Bronhard stated that she has not been at Henry Lord for a full reporting year so she can't speak to the challenges that come with having a trimester reporting schedule and a term schedule; however, when she started at Henry Lord in June, she did take the opportunity to sit with all of her teachers and one of the resounding things that came out through her teacher conversations, particularly with her 6th, 7th, and 8th grade teachers, is that the idea of having two completely different reporting periods becomes a bit cumbersome mainly because they always feel like they're reporting. To be all on one schedule would be helpful in building a community. As they look for parent engagement opportunities to educate their parents around when they can expect reporting periods, open houses, and parent-teacher conferences, they're off a cycle on that as well because they have the elementary grades that report out at the trimesters and the upper grades reporting out at a term basis. It becomes very difficult for parents who don't understand why their children are getting report cards at different times and struggle to keep up with knowing when they should be getting report cards at different times for different students. Additionally, in X2, one of the things that has come up is that they can't have both grading windows open at the same time so she can't have her teachers doing trimester and putting their grades in while teachers are putting in their grades for terms. They end up either hurrying teachers to get grades in or they close grades a little earlier just

so they can make the reporting period and reopen another window. She doesn't see the benefit of being on two different reporting periods for a small group of students. She got some feedback from principals she spoke to at the middle level and they questioned what they do with kids who transition from school to school.

Principal Bradley and Principal Bronhard put a phone survey out to parents to get their opinion on piloting the trimesters. Thirty percent of parents at Henry Lord responded and 65% were in favor of shifting to one-size reporting model, which would be the trimester, to align with the rest of the school. Dr. Costar asked if some of their schools were on trimesters and some were on terms because they were K-8 schools but all other elementary schools across the district were on trimesters and all middle schools were on terms. Principal Bradley stated that that was a recent change that was made in the last 18 months with the elementary schools switching to a trimester. It was a mid-year change and Doran immediately wrestled with the same challenges as Henry Lord. The strength of community schools is that they sometimes have all of a parent's kids attending the same school but it makes it challenging for families to have to attend multiple open houses and parent-teacher conferences. The idea of having two consistent conference nights with the trimester breaks would really draw families in.

Mrs. Panchley asked if they could do it the opposite way and have the reporting schedule be term based. As a parent, it would frustrate her to not know how her child was doing until December. The purpose of a report card is to inform parents so she never understood why they went to trimesters in the first place because she feels like they're holding off a month on telling parents how their child is doing at the beginning of the year. The feedback at the time was, at the elementary level, it takes time to assess kids and know how they're doing and teachers want to gather more data so she voted yes. But she feels like parents should know how their child is doing before December. Principal Bradley stated that at the middle level, they would still have a progress report and that would still continue.

Dr. Costar said that he assumed this recommendation was for Doran and Henry Lord but that Morton, Kuss, and Talbot would remain on terms. Principal Bradley said that was correct. Dr. Costar stated that it sounded like there wouldn't be a problem if one of those students transferred to Doran or Henry Lord but he was concerned about students who transferred to one of the other middle schools from Doran or Henry Lord. Principal Bradley stated that that was one of the questions that arose but they haven't had many students transfer in or out. In the last year at Doran, there weren't more than 10 students who transferred in at the middle school. Most of the students they received moved into their attendance area. They may have had one student transfer out. When a student comes in at the middle level, a teacher tries to understand the student's educational background in order to calibrate their score.

Mr. Coogan said that, with the strengthening of the curriculum maps, that would make the students transition even easier. The grading window may change but what they're learning isn't. Ms. Sharpe said that, in working with the phys ed teachers in Grades K-8, she knows they quickly have to get their grades in for elementary then shift to the middle level. Ms. Carlson said that it was also difficult for principals because they have so many days for teachers to input their grades after testing.

She's not a huge fan of trimesters but, in talking with Principal Bronhard, she feels that this needs to be a building/principals' model because they are the ones being tasked with the culture and climate in their building. Now that they're getting equity, consistency, and alignment across the district, it should not matter when the report cards are going out.

Principal Bradley said that, in regards to the specialists, all of them contractually have a certain number of hours that they need to be at a school in the evenings. They miss the opportunities to come together with families because it's more than they're contractually obligated to do.

Mrs. Panchely asked if he and Principal Bronhard would rather have the whole school on trimesters instead of quarters. Principal Bradley said, at this point, yes. Given the number of students they have in PreK-5, there are more students on the elementary side and a smaller number on the middle side. Principal Bronhard said that, coming from the high school, quarters are what she knows but she can see in the first month at the elementary level, all the testing they do to make sure they have a solid handle on their baseline data for all their math and ELA. She can see how this takes time and doing standard-based report cards as quickly as October, they would not be releasing information that is truly assessing where children are in regards to meeting standards. She'd like to identify ways to regularly communicate with families that isn't just on a formal reporting period.

Mrs. Panchley asked if this needed to be referred to the full School Committee. She believes it does. Principal Bradley said that they were just asking for a pilot at this point. Dr. Costar stated that at another subcommittee meeting, he was told that there were two things they could do: they could vote to approve this and send it to the full School Committee with the subcommittee's recommendation or they could vote to refer this to the full committee so they could have this discussion. Ms. Carlson asked if that meant that Principal Bradley and Principal Bronhard would need to hold off on any changes until it goes to the full School Committee. Dr. Costar stated that the whole School Committee needed to vote on this. Mrs. Panchley asked Ms. Casey when the agenda for Tuesday night's School Committee meeting needed to be posted. Ms. Casey said that it needed to be posted tomorrow. Mrs. Panchley asked if Ms. Casey could get this item on that agenda. Ms. Casey said that she could. Mr. Coogan said that, even if they move it to the Committee with a positive, they still have the opportunity to discuss it.

All were in favor	None were opposed	Motion passed
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MOTION: Mr. Coogan-Dr. Costar: To adjourn.

No discussion

All were in favor	None were opposed	Motion passed (5:36 p.m.)
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Respectfully submitted,



Administrative Assistant

Documents Referred to:

Instructional Subcommittee: October 4, 2017

- PowerPoint presentation re: Curriculum Maps
- Handout re: Advanced Placement Overview
- Proposal re: Health Education in Grades 3, 4, and 5
- Handout re: K-8 Social Studies Curriculum
- Handout re: Trimesters vs. Terms

ADA Coordinator: Gary P. Howayeck, Esq. - 508.324.2650

Please note: A videotape/DVD of this meeting is on file in the School Committee Office and is available for review by contacting the Administrative Assistant for the School Committee Services