

Curriculum Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: October 17, 2016 @5:00 p.m. – SSC

Members:

Attendance

Annette Johnson	Yes	<u> x </u>	No
Kirsten Strand	Yes	<u> x </u>	No
Suzanne Bement	Yes	<u> x </u>	No
Diane Argueta	Yes	<u> x </u>	No
Jennifer Dalrymple	Yes	<u> x </u>	No
Dr. Marion Hoyda	Yes	<u> x </u>	No
Heather Kincaid	Yes	<u> x </u>	No
Beatrice Reyes Childress	Yes	<u> x </u>	No
Araceli Ordaz	Yes	<u> x </u>	No

Ms. Kincaid opened the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

I. Special Education Model: Cost Analysis Presentation

Ms. Bement presented on the change in the district’s special education delivery model. The first benefit was to reduce the number of instructional classrooms; also, it increased the exposure of special education students to the general education curriculum. The next step is for students to attend their home school; however, the district doesn’t currently have the full continuum of special education services at all buildings.

Having special education students in general education classrooms benefits all students and helps facilitate PLC participation and collaboration. This improves overall test scores and is a product of the district’s participation in a Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) data cohort.

Some key terms to know are “co-teaching,” which refers to one teacher having special education certification and one with general education certification. The teachers co-present, co-plan, and co-evaluate lessons. There are six different co-teaching models; in district, it’s defined as previously stated but the district is using all six models of co-teaching at this time.

“Full inclusion” is defined as special education students having full participation in a general education classroom for 100% of their school day. General education teachers provide instruction, and support is provided to special education students via itinerant teachers, resource teachers, and assistants. This year the district implemented what is called the “supported service delivery model,” wherein resource teachers are doing push-in services to general education classrooms to support students with special needs. The resource teachers support students in multiple classrooms, across multiple grades.

Ms. Bement presented a bar graph concerning the number of resource teachers in each building and a corresponding chart of the values. She explained the desired trajectory for each school in terms of placement of co-teachers. Some schools are at full implementation, but Ms. Bement would like to add some teachers at certain schools for next year.

Ms. Strand asked why the largest and smallest schools seem to need the same number of teachers; Ms. Bement explained that it has to do with the ability to do push-in services. Special education ratios and numbers are a bit lower than in a general education classroom. Teachers are now working with only two grade levels (e.g., K-1, 2-3, etc.), so they’re able to participate in the PLC process instead of being a resource teacher that traditionally was K-5 where they just had to pop in different classrooms across the building. Now teachers can focus their efforts on assessments and how they can really drive instruction.

An added bonus is the ability to support kids in the problem-solving process and the interventions. Allen currently has the most Kindergarten classrooms outside of the BKC, so that's where the focus lay there.

Ms. Johnson asked if the district is moving teachers around, is it reducing special education staff on the other side; Ms. Bement explained that district is not necessarily reducing the number of staff; instead, it's reducing the number of self-contained classrooms. Traditionally in the district, students with learning disabilities who still had average to above-average intelligence were put in self-contained classrooms away from their peers in order to provide support and services. That's an antiquated model that the district is trying to move away from. Some self-contained classrooms are necessary for students with intellectual disabilities or emotional needs or autism, for example, but we'd really like students with learning disabilities to be with their peers to the greatest extent possible, and the law mandates that as well.

Ms. Bement presented another visual showing ratios. She explained the data contained in the visual is from September, and the district usually has a lot of student movement (move ins and move outs) up until approximately November, at which point we should know the true ratios.

During the 2016-2017 school year, the Special Education department collapsed seven of its self-contained classrooms throughout the district, which then freed up seven teachers to put into resource teacher positions. This was in addition to the board-approved five additional resource teachers as well as six additional teaching assistants. Particularly at the K-1 level, where early learning is so crucial and it's important to ensure support, we wanted to make sure if the teachers couldn't be in one classroom the students would still be supported with the assistants. For the 2017-2018 school year, we are looking to collapse five self-contained classrooms which would be cost neutral as these are already existing positions, and will be asking the board for two additional resource teachers and two additional assistants. To see the program to fruition, over the next two years, we will be looking at collapsing six classrooms and asking the board for two additional resource teachers. Additional assistants will not be needed because those would come from the collapsed classrooms.

The district is currently implementing co-teaching at the high school and Ms. Bement presented visuals showing numbers. She would like to add an additional four teachers for the 2017-2018 school year with the focus for co-teaching on graduation requirements. For 2018-2019, she would like to add an additional four teachers with a focus on graduation requirements as well as college prep.

Special education is expensive in terms of staff but we do have different funding sources. For those for whom we are unable to use grant funds, the district is able to claim a reimbursement, so for certified teachers, for example, we're able to claim \$9K of their salary; and for assistants, we are able to claim \$3,500 of each salary.

Outplacement facilities are another budget line item totaling \$6.5 million. Of that total, \$4.5 million is for outplacement tuition. One-hundred-twenty-four students are currently outplaced. Two million dollars currently goes to Hope D. Wall school, which is a joint institution the district runs with District 129. Seventy-four students are currently being served there. District 131 currently uses 25 various facilities. Ms. Bement presented a chart showing how much the district is reimbursed for tuition for outplacement. Last year was at 95%; do not have a rate for this year yet as it's generally released by the state sometime in December.

Middle schools were supported last year with specialized curriculum; for example, Trans Math for our sixth grade students. Starting this year, we asked the teachers to use the general education district curriculum since that is what the fifth graders coming into sixth grade were using. Next year, the seventh graders will be using the district curriculum and will be as eighth graders the following year. The reason we could not switch it all at once is due to how the middle schools feed into the high school as far as course requirements, so gradually exposing them to general education curriculum was done to ensure high school graduation rates wouldn't be impacted.

Mr. Darby asked if there is research supporting the effectiveness of the co-teaching model; Ms. Bement replied that research shows co-teaching is effective if it is done with fidelity, and when the six models are truly being utilized and the teachers are both being used effectively. Anytime a special education student is exposed to general education curriculum or their general education counterparts, expectations are higher for them. It's actually mutually beneficial because general education students will often support students with special needs in the classroom, so it helps them learn about different types of learners. Research also shows that if you're able to teach something to someone else, your own retention rate for that material is around 95%, so it helps those kids who are pairing up with their special education peers. It also tends to improve behavior and social-emotional outcomes as well.

Mr. Darby asked if district is seeing effectiveness now, for example with 2nd graders? How is the district collecting data to support and justify the program? Ms. Bement said it's a good question. This is the first year we have been doing this at the K-1 level but it's also the first year new curriculum is being implemented. Ms. Bement stated that we can take the baseline data to see where the kids are going and can also follow their time, their EE codes, which is their educational environment. An IEP is a fluid document and the team can increase or decrease minutes based on a student's needs. We can track the amount of time kids are in general education, so if an IEP team feels a student is not being successful they can look to move to a more restrictive environment and provide more supports, so that would be a data component we could look at. We can also track the overall district test scores as well.

Ms. Johnson asked since the program was in place last year, is there data; Ms. Bement explained that it was a little different model because it was true co-teaching, not a supported delivery model, but there was a lot of success with it which was one of the things that drove the decision to move in this direction. The Kindergarteners experiencing success at the Kindergarten center were going back to their home schools for first grade, so it wouldn't have been appropriate to send them into a self-contained classroom or for resource support. We wanted them to be in general education 1st grade classrooms because we knew they had been successful there for Kindergarten. Also, from a cost-effectiveness standpoint, Ms. Bement knew it would not be appropriate to ask for co-teachers for all the elementary schools, both bilingual/special education teachers and then special education teachers, so we stacked the deck so that the resource teachers who are implementing at the K-1 level are bilingual certified teachers, so we are able to get more bang for our buck. Those kids were able to return to their home school in a general education classroom and be successful in that setting with the support of a resource teacher coming into that classroom to help the student as well as the general education teacher.

Ms. Johnson asked how the class operates with a co-teacher – does the teacher pull the kids aside and work with them or do they instruct together – how does it work; Ms. Bement explained that the district is doing true co-teaching at the high school, with two full-time teachers all day long, and there are six different models. There's where the teachers will actually take turns, e.g., one day the special education teacher will do all the instruction and the next the general education teacher will. There's the "one teach/one observe" model which is station teaching so the kids are actually going into different stations and getting instruction; there's parallel teaching wherein both teachers are both in front of the class, working collaboratively. There is alternative teaching, where a small number of students are selected to be in a section and they're working with one teacher while the other teacher is doing full class instruction. There is teaming which is the equal distribution of the teaching, and then there is "one teach/one assist" where the teachers go around the classroom taking turns checking in with all students. If co-teaching is done seamlessly, the kids don't know which teacher is the special education teacher and which is the general education teacher, but that takes time. It's been described as almost like a marriage – there's an ebb and flow and an art to it. Last year, the district's special education paid teachers after school to have the opportunity to plan together, because that's one of the things that's difficult – finding that common planning time. The teachers co-teaching this year have already established that relationship.

Ms. Johnson asked how many students in an average class; Ms. Bement stated that in a co-teaching model, there aren't official caps for class size, but more students with special needs are able to participate in the classroom. For comparison, in a self-contained special education classroom there can only be a maximum of 13 students. In a co-teaching model, you can have a full class, but you still have to adhere to the 70/30 guidelines, where no more than 30% of students have IEPs.

Ms. Strand asked if students at Magnet have IEPs; Ms. Bement explained that Magnet currently has students who receive special education services. The model is that to the greatest extent the teacher will do push-in, but there's also some pull-out time to work with students. We have social work and speech support at Magnet as well.

Ms. Bement said the district is transitioning out Trans math at the middle school and once that's done will be moving toward implementing co-teaching. The idea is to build it from the ground up with young students and collapsing it at the high school.

The CSC was traditionally a special education preschool program but Ms. Bement has been working closely with the preschool principal to move some of the programs out into the elementary buildings and moved some general education preschool programs in. Also have blended classrooms composed of some students with IEPs and some without, housed at O'Donnell and Oak Park. Also moved one of the blended programs to Gates.

Ultimate goal is greater exposure of special education students to the general education curriculum. Would also like to build capacity with our supported delivery model. We need full professional development covering differentiation and to talk about different instructional delivery. Would like to expand selection of co-taught courses at the high school. Would like to refine the middle school co-teaching model for district alignment. Also, continue to expand learning opportunities for preschool students.

Ms. Johnson would like the two interim superintendents to weigh in and look at some data to ensure everything is running in the most cost-effective manner.

II. ACCESS Scores

Ms. Argueta explained that ACCESS stands for "Assessing Comprehension Communication in English." It's a state-mandated test and meets federal requirements to monitor student language growth. It has several purposes: to monitor student progress in acquiring academic English; to generate results that serve as one criterion to decide with English learners have attained the language proficiency necessary to participate in general education classrooms; to assist in providing information to evaluate bilingual program effectiveness; to identify the ELP levels of students with respect to the WIDA ELP standards; and to provide information to enhance instruction and learning for English learners.

Ms. Argueta presented bilingual program enrollment figures from 2013 through this year. Numbers have remained relatively consistent, with a small spike in 2015. In 2015, almost 5,000 students were serviced in bilingual programs. ACCESS is administered to students between January and February of each year and approximately 4,500 students took it last year (Pre-K is not required to take ACCESS which accounts for discrepancy).

For the first time in 2015-2016, the ACCESS test was administered online. Ms. Argueta believes that affected student performance. She added that there were a lot of technology glitches on the test site end, not the district end, which she believes also affected student scores. ISBE was provided feedback regarding those issues, which included students being kicked out and having to restart the test. After reviewing the complaints, ISBE still found the scores to be valid.

ACCESS exit score criteria prior to 2014 only required two areas of competency: literacy (reading and writing combined) and an overall score. In 2014, the reading and writing were split up and their overall

score in order to exit was raised. Ms. Argueta explained that the majority of students score low in the writing portion of the test which then lowers the overall score. Consequently, fewer students meet the criteria to exit the program which is reflected in the bar graphs Ms. Argueta presented to the committee. Most students who meet exit criteria are at the 3rd grade level. As mentioned earlier, we're looking at more opportunities for Spanish-speaking or Sheltered students to be in classrooms with their English-speaking peers and we're open to ideas to further support students at the middle school level.

At the ninth grade level, Ms. Argueta speculates that the technological difficulties experienced in the online test administration affected the results, noting the small number of 9th grade students who exited the bilingual program as compared to previous years. The majority of the tech issues were at the high school which is a red flag.

Even more than looking at exits, we want to look at English language growth from year to year. Ms. Argueta presented a graph showing that growth from 2015 to 2016. Students tend to show more growth in 1st through 3rd grades vs. 4th, 5th, or 6th. Most concerning are the middle school grades, 6 through 8, in which the majority of students do not show growth. As mentioned, we'll be looking at what other supports or interventions we can implement for those grade levels.

Ms. Johnson confirmed that not every school district takes ACCESS online; Ms. Argueta said many smaller school districts don't have the resources so are still using paper/pencil but more and more are moving to taking it online. Ms. Johnson said she's seen reports that indicate that students who take it with paper and pencil seem to do better. Students not only have to take the test, but they have to master keyboard skills as well when they may not have ever had a computer at home. She believes the sooner students are exposed to English, the better they'll do. When she visited the bilingual classrooms at the Kindergarten Center, kids were answering questions all in English.

Ms. Argueta noted that they've been having conversations about how to bridge native language instruction to English even in bilingual classrooms.

Ms. Strand asked how EA's program compares to other districts, like Elgin, that have a high percentage of Spanish speakers; Ms. Argueta said it depends, since every district has its own program and its own students. We like to look at our students and service them based on their needs vs. looking at other districts. Elgin U46 has a complete dual language program.

III. Bilingual Programming Recommendation

Ms. Argueta explained that the program philosophy for 2017-2018 will be to ensure students are college and career ready in this ever-changing global society but more specifically, to achieve academic excellence in two languages – English and Spanish – and to obtain a multicultural understanding and appreciation for the different cultures represented in our program.

The programs mission is for students to establish and maintain a robust, standards-based curriculum that promotes high academic achievement in both English and Spanish in a learning environment that strives for academic excellence and cultural competence.

Transitional bilingual programming will provide content-area support in native language and serve as a bridge for students to transition to from their native Spanish language to English. Content support will be provided via a sheltered English instructional environment. The idea, at least initially, is to provide more sheltered instruction opportunities for students.

We're taking a closer look at ACCESS literacy levels for students to see how they can be better served. The current school year will be devoted to planning for those changes or reinstatement of some of those service options, which will include offering sheltered services for preK-5th in 2017-2018. Will also need effective communication with the board, other staff, and parents so everyone is clear what the options

are for students. Ms. Argueta will ensure all forms are available and will continue to collaborate with central office staff to identify instructional staff, resources, and professional development to ensure everyone is clear what that sheltered instruction needs to look like so teachers are prepared for the 2017-2018 school year.

Ms. Strand asked about “reinstatement” – specifically, when is the last time it was used, i.e., when are we reinstating it from? Ms. Argueta explained that this year, district has bilingual Pre K, Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grades. There is no Sheltered 2nd grade instruction with the exception of one building. Based on student need, in 2017, we will provide sheltered instruction for a whole classroom if necessary. If not, will only provide it for a small group of students.

Ms. Strand asked how it’s being handled currently – are students either in bilingual or being pushed into an English classroom before they’re ready? Ms. Argueta stated for Pre K - 2nd right now, there are two options: bilingual or general education. In Pre K - 3rd, district provides bilingual (native language) instruction; then in 4th and 5th, sheltered instruction, which is also available in 3rd grade. “Reinstatement” refers to having 2nd grade sheltered instruction again, which wasn’t available this year.

Ms. Johnson asked if kids are failing ACCESS due to not having the academic background. Ms. Argueta said some believe the ACCESS test is very difficult for any student that has low academic English-language proficiency. That’s one of the reasons the district is looking at how to provide more sheltered instruction for ELL students to help better support them.

Ms. Argueta said ACCESS is definitely a very tough test and the state recently raised the scores so students would have the opportunity to get more support with their English language skills if needed.

Eligibility for bilingual services is determined via a screener administered before the beginning of the school year. In our district, students are screened for Pre K, and re-screened for Kindergarten. Screeners get more difficult as students move from Pre K to Kinder to 1st grade.

Ms. Argueta showed the committee the visual breakdown of how students are placed in bilingual based on either their screener or ACCESS scores.

Students who speak a language other than Spanish are designated TPI (transitional program of instruction) students and if they qualify, they are placed into a sheltered classroom. All Pre K teachers are ELL-endorsed to meet student needs.

Last school year, the district provided a sheltered Kindergarten which was only kept for one year. Currently, it’s all bilingual. Going forward, we’re going to reinstate sheltered Kindergarten instruction. In the past we had enough students for two classrooms.

We will also have sheltered 1st grade instruction in 2017-2018.

Ms. Strand asked the reasoning behind getting rid of sheltered instruction originally; Ms. Argueta stated it was a different philosophy geared toward biliteracy, which the district is still focused on but on a narrower level.

Ms. Johnson asked if ACCESS just measured oral proficiency or if there are other parts to the test; Ms. Argueta said ACCESS tests listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The students in Kindergarten are only given oral proficiency at the beginning of the year for placement purposes because they haven’t taken the full ACCESS at that point.

No changes will occur going forward at the 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade levels.

At the 6th and 12th grade levels, we made changes. Minimum requirement of one core area where students receive ESL instruction from a teacher who is ESL-endorsed. These are considered long-term EL students so we want to ensure we provide them with continued support.

Bilingual services are only offered to students who are new to the country and who fall into minimum literacy proficiency levels. If a student is new to the country at the high school level, we don't automatically place them in bilingual; instead, we look to see where they fall score-wise and provide services accordingly.

We have started to look at some changes that may need to occur at the 6th-12th grade level, including possible part-time programming or updates, particularly at the middle school level where we see students struggling the most with huge language growth.

Ms. Argueta stated the district follows school code and state rules and regulations regarding a home language survey which is how the district identifies students who will then be screened for bilingual services. The decision to screen is based on what is stated as the primary language spoken at home. If it's anything other than English, the state mandates a screener.

Ms. Strand clarified that if a parent indicates that primary language spoken at home is English, the student is not screened; Ms. Argueta agreed. Someone asked if parents can opt out of the screening and Ms. Argueta stated they could not. They can, however, opt out of bilingual services after the screening. Also, once in the program, parents can opt to withdraw them. Parents can also request students be reinstated into the program.

Ms. Argueta then presented on the two-way dual language program. Students will be taught academic literacy and content in both English and Spanish with a focus on developing proficiency in both languages. Proposal is for a K-5th grade two-way dual language program to be implemented at one school in two classrooms beginning at the Kindergarten level. Half (50%) of the day, instruction would be in English with the other 50% in Spanish. Student participation would be determined via a lottery. Ms. Argueta reminded the committee that she presented at two previous committee meetings regarding the research behind dual language and its advantages.

The current school year would be devoted to program planning and we would be looking to actually implement the dual language program in classrooms in 2017-2018. We're currently developing a dual language committee to plan all aspects of implementation, including deciding on a site. We're also educating principals as to what all would be involved with the program. In 2018-2019, the dual language instruction and the two-way program would spread to two grade levels, Kindergarten and 1st grade. We would only go up to 5th grade.

Ms. Strand stated the research she's read, which is admittedly not extensive, said that if dual language isn't going to be done at the middle and high school levels then don't even bother, because the effect doesn't translate. We'd be spending a lot of time and money for something that stops at 5th grade and isn't going to carry over. Dr. McDonald stated the thinking was to make a commitment to go to 5th grade because this is a very different concept than what the district has had before. We were thinking that putting it in one location and having a lottery, presuming parents will opt in. Doing it for one year then not doing it really isn't an option, so we thought a reasonable compromise would be to commit to do it for five years and in that time, if the program is really successful and is something we want to implement at more locations and/or grade levels, then that option exists. Alternatively, if it's not

successful, it's easier to transition a smaller group back when they enter middle school, so that was the rationale.

Ms. Argueta agreed, stating district will monitor the program's effectiveness and the slower, smaller rollout would give time to determine what else is needed as the years pass. Ms. Strand said then the district is not saying only up to 5th grade; rather, they're making the commitment at least up to 5th grade. Dr. Hoyda said originally the district proposed through middle school but decided instead to make a firm commitment to K-5th years, monitor it, and hopefully the momentum will be there to support it further.

Ms. Johnson asked if the program wouldn't have to be at the BKC; Ms. Argueta said that's been discussed as a possible option.

IV. Fred Rodgers Magnet Update

Ms. Rowley presented about the Fred Rodgers Magnet Academy. She noted the Magnet uses the district curriculum as the base but then enrich and extend that learning to meet the needs of the students we serve. It was established in 2008 with 25 students per class. At that time, it was a school within a school, so 3rd through 5th grades were serviced at O'Donnell and the 6th through 8th grades were serviced at the East Aurora Middle School campus and 9th through 12th graders are serviced at the high school where they still are at.

In 2013, Magnet became a real school, coming together in one building serving 3rd through 8th grades. Were also able to expand from 25 students to 75 students in each class.

The biggest criterion for attendance is that students have to live within the boundaries of the East Aurora school district. Students are not allowed to pay tuition to come from another district. Students moving out of the district lose their spot at Magnet.

As mentioned, the school uses the same base curriculum but 5th through 8th grades get some different encore classes. Instead of a traditional foods class, for example, that teaches nutrition and where students bake cookies, our students were charged with building a solar oven to see if they could bake the cookies with that. They also looked at traditional yogurt vs. Greek yogurt and why Greek yogurt was becoming popular. The 8th graders extracted DNA from strawberries to then see if they could cross the DNA.

The school has a very lively choir and music program. Of the 75 sixth graders this year, 68 are in band.

Magnet received a grant from the Dunham Foundation that allows a true one-to-one laptop program where students take their computers from home to school and vice versa. The majority of textbooks are online although we do have a paper copy available. Ms. Rowley noted that the focus is on keeping students college and career ready and part of that is keeping all books electronic.

All sports are offered except wrestling and football can either go back to their home school or can go to Waldo since it's within walking distance of the Magnet Academy. With our numbers, Ms. Rowley doesn't foresee ever being able to support either program as a standalone at Magnet.

Magnet also offers all the extracurricular activities available at any other middle school: student council, honor society, peace jam, etc., as well as all the elementary activities offered at the other schools. Proud to say Magnet has the greatest number of stipends in the district outside of the high school because Magnet runs a full venue of elementary and middle school sports and activities.

The student selection criteria are via lottery. Look at a variety of things for students to be deemed qualified including test scores, grades, teacher recommendation, and a student essay. All students who meet a minimum score on that rubric are considered qualified and all qualified students then go into a

lottery. March 15th is usually the lottery date where 75 students are chosen at each grade level. We have 75 open spots at 3rd grade every year and for 4th through 8th grades you're really applying for a spot on the wait list, which is maintained year to year. So if you apply as a 3rd grader and are placed on the wait list, as long as you continue to meet qualifications, you remain on the wait list in the years following. Ms. Rowley shared a visual representation of wait list numbers for each grade level. Currently there's about a class at each grade level on the wait list.

Ms. Strand asked if a student could be removed. Ms. Rowley said if student met criteria in 3rd grade then Magnet's charge is to make sure student continues to meet those criteria. A handful of students participate every year in mandatory summer school. There have been approximately six students over Ms. Rowley's five to six year tenure at Magnet where they've met with the families of students and counseled them out of the program although no student will be forcibly removed. Families are shown test scores and interventions and suggestion is made that the student may do better elsewhere.

Ms. Rowley showed data and achievement visual depicting ISAT/PARCC test scores 2014 through 2016 comparing Magnet with overall student scores for all students in the state. Magnet staff isn't complacent about scores; instead, they look at what we can do to continue to move forward. Through PLCs, are looking to get more of an apples-to-apples-comparison since Magnet is semi-selective and scores within the district and even the state aren't really a fair comparison. We've looked at some of the magnet schools in Chicago but those are highly selective which is a little different from where we are. So that's something we're looking at: how do we know the program is successful other than we're seeing students who are meeting when they come in moving from "meets" to "exceeds."

The question then becomes, what's working, and why is it working at Magnet? One piece is that we only have 75 students per grade level with a total of 450 students in the building and they stay there from 3rd through 8th grade, so we meet them when they're eight years old and they leave when they're 14. Those are really formative years. The school just feels different, and it's small. So Ms. Rowley went to her staff and said we're having success, help me explain it, and we also asked parents. Ms. Rowley presented bullet points that helped explain, including the following from teachers and staff:

- Freedom for "out of the box" thinking – teachers and students
- High expectations from parents, students, and teachers
- Enriched curriculum
- Teachers are given freedom/trust on how they deliver the content
- Classes that allow kids to focus on STEM areas that interest (motivate) them
- 1:1 access – students can check IC and self-correct to monitor progress
- Study hall to work one on one with teachers, & teachers are willing to give up their personal time
- Teachers believe students can achieve high standards
- Elementary teaches science and social studies every day, math and reading are integrated
- We teach kids how to overcome "failure" and use strategies for success

Other points, noted by parents and community involvement include the following:

- Parents care about academic achievement
- Parents are involved and attend events
- Open communication

- Parents have more access to communication via e-mail because they can use their student's computer
- Parent contacts – develop a relationship with the entire family
- Parents want their kids to be here too
- Many of our families have exposed their children to more real world experiences

Other items listed:

- Unique offerings (chess club, STEM club, fitness club, etc.)
- Opportunities to help others, grow student leadership
- Field trips: STEM focus, hands on
- Academic competitions: science fair, history fair, FPS
- More years of contact in clubs/activity – continuity and commitment
- Higher % of kids can participate because raw #s are smaller

And further, according to the students themselves:

- Students want to be here
- Students support one another
- Self-motivated
- Relate experience here to future goals (college)
- Leaders, good role models
- It's cool to be smart here – learning isn't a stigma, intelligence is not something to hide
- Students raise each other's expectations
- Students thrive on collaboration
- Students want to share their learning
- Students have a peer group that is like-minded

Ms. Rowley noted that Ms. Bement made the point earlier about inclusion classrooms: students raise each other's expectations. Our kids will tell each other, "We don't do that here; knock it off."

Ms. Rowley presented more visuals highlighting Magnet's unique character. Magnet doesn't really have teacher turnover. The two openings in the last couple years have both been retirements. That's significant because a 6th grade teacher whose student is having a bad day can go back to that student's 3rd grade teacher and 4th grade teacher – there's a consistency there that kids don't always get in their lives.

Magnet teachers also take advantage of a lot of professional development both in district and out on their own personal time.

Parents and community are incredibly involved.

Magnet has a lot of unique offerings and academic competitions and because it has fewer kids at each grade level, a higher percentage of students can participate.

Staff buys into the sense that students are all "our kids." Additionally, still have recess for 6th through 8th grades. Staff works together as a family.

V. Kindergarten Report Card Approval

Ms. Ordaz thanked Ms. Simoncelli-Bulak and other district administrators for their work prior to Ms. Ordaz joining the district.

In 2011, Kindergarten teachers met during SIP days with Director of Elementary Education to begin creating a standards-based report card; later that summer, report card assessments were created.

During the 2012-2013 school year, Kindergarten teachers district-wide implemented the new standards-based report card, meeting during SIP days to continue revising. The following concerns were compiled: the fact that the report card was not parent friendly; not in Spanish; and too much to assess/lack of focus on major/priority standards.

Teachers continued to voice concerns throughout the year so in spring 2014, a meeting was held with central office administration and Kindergarten teachers to discuss concerns. It was decided that a report card committee would be formed to meet the following school year.

During the 2014-2015, the Kindergarten Report Card Committee, with representation from full day, half day, general education, bilingual teachers, and building and central office administration, met to discuss concerns, set short- and long-term goals, consult with reading/math facilitators for pacing, and look at other district's report cards.

The report card proposal was completed in April 2015 and included the following changes: standards worded in parent friendly terms; in English and Spanish; foundational skills sheet created for bilingual and general education classes; sheet to be shared with parent rather than a ranking of 1,2,3,4 on report card; recommendation of trimesters due to timing of parent/teacher conferences and amount of report card assessments for kinder. Feedback gathered from parents and Kindergarten teachers.

In the fall of 2015, the committee's proposal was reviewed and approved by all Kindergarten teachers during a SIP day. During the winter, the proposal was brought to the curriculum board committee, and in the spring, discussions were held regarding keeping quarters as opposed to trimesters for the sake of consistency with other grade levels.

Ms. Ordaz then presented the report card as parents see it now and the proposed changes.

The proposed timeline for the changes is as follows:

- October - Kindergarten teachers and Principals informed of the proposed timeline and informational item to the full board
- November - Action Item at board meeting and once approved, Infinite Campus would be updated with the new format and aligned to all buildings
- December - Information shared with parent liaisons
- January - Distribution of new Kindergarten report card during the 2nd quarter

Ms. Strand asked if committee would have a chance to see the full report card; Ms. Ordaz said absolutely, that the foundational skills sheet can be presented at the full board meeting. Committee agreed.

VI. New Business

Ms. Kincaid asked the committee if they had any other new business to add for the next committee meeting besides the following:

- a) **Student Mentoring**
- b) **High School Course Proposals**
- c) **Average Class Size Per Building**

Committee did not.

VII. Public Comments

Gerry Mestek, union president and Cowherd middle school teacher, had questions regarding special education. He specifically wanted to know how long co-teachers are going to be assigned as a unit, e.g., year-to-year, or for many years. Mr. Mestek said consistency not only helps teachers, but also the students.

Mr. Mestek also asked about class sizes – will special education students be in smaller classes to increase their chances of learning and grasping the study skills and academics they need, or are classes going to be 30+ students. He feels that’s an important consideration.

Mr. Mestek asked what sort of professional development will be offered to the special education and/or co-teachers to prepare them for dealing with the different needs/skill levels they’re going to encounter among students. He feels co-teachers should attend PD sessions together so they can understand and take it back to the classroom.

Mr. Mestek also said stability is important. Wanted to know if co-teaching is put into place now, will the district be changing it in two years. He wants students to be able to have that stability so they become self-sufficient and can manage a general education class and be college ready.

Mr. Mestek also has concerns regarding the bilingual program, specifically, dual language. He is unclear how it will work, particularly with young students who score poorly on the tests. For example, if a young child comes in only speaking English and scored poorly on tests, is that student still going to receive instruction in Spanish half the day and English the other half. If a student is already struggling with one language, it doesn’t make sense to throw a second one in to confuse them further.

Mr. Mestek believes the district needs to focus on getting the Spanish speakers to be effective in bilingual – get them to speak both languages and be proficient so that when they do take their tests they’ll be able to do well, and also to deal with a community that predominantly speaks English. Students will not be at home all their lives and Mr. Mestek feels district needs to focus on the longer-range goals.

Ms. Johnson said can add some of Mr. Mestek’s concerns to new business – what are our average class sizes now, for example, in all the buildings. She asked if we have many classrooms that have more than 30 kids or have we limited that.

VIII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.