

Alignment Jackson Elementary School Team Meeting

Thursday, October 29, 2015 8:30 AM
JPS Superintendent's Conference Room

Members present: Dr. Michelle King, Jeanette Whisenton, Ingrid Adams, Chauncey Spears, Kesia Horton, Joyce Taylor, Thea Faulkner, Deyanna Jenkins

1. Welcome and Introductions

Dr. King called the meeting to order at 8:38am. Everyone introduced themselves.

2. Principle of Committee Work

Principle #4: “The committee process is collaborative.”

Dr. King: This team is all about being collaborative. We need to work together to get the work done. Ms. Faulkner has given so much support. She has stepped up and run with the baton. Others have, too.

Question from the group: Are our meeting times Thursday at 8:30 or 9 AM?

Dr. King: We changed it to 8:30 AM. The principal meeting times have changed, and we're trying to work around the district's calendar. Our next regular meeting time falls on Thanksgiving, so let's change it to Thursday, Nov 19th, 8:30 AM. Dr. King and Ms. Taylor may not be here. We'll confirm availability and then send out a meeting invitation.

3. Approval of Minutes

Thea: I move to approve the minutes from last meeting, and please send forward any additional updates to Liz. Deyanna seconded.

3. Literacy Activities

a. Reading Mates

Dr. King: We're making progress on Reading Mates and preparing for a community meeting/orientation on the 12th of November (Thursday).

Review the draft of the Reading Mates ITP- to be approved by the Operating Board and released ASAP

- Dr. King: We need to switch out Green Elementary for Watkins Elementary
- Chauncey: I think we should remove the line, “For many students, literacy skills and long term academic success are impacted by poverty.” Not all students are in poverty, and we don't want to distract from what this ITP is all about by making it sound like we are solving poverty.
- Dr. King: I agree that we could remove the first line to get to the core of what we're talking about.

- Thea: Yes, we have to be careful how we message things. We've got to be careful not to present that our families are victims with little to offer - stop the "deficit" model. I think we need to connect the description directly to the services we're requesting from the community. I volunteer to update this ITP and send a draft out to the group later today.

Thea: Would it be a good idea to invite the Book Buddies volunteers to this meeting?

Dr. King: Yes. We want current volunteers and new volunteers to participate. Schools will have a meeting with whoever responds to the ITP. We hope the schools' adopters will step up. The interventionist or lead teacher at each school will be the contact person.

Liz: How many volunteers do we have for each school?

Dr. King: We don't have this number yet, but I'll be getting this info from the schools. We won't know this until we know the number of students who will qualify at the start date.

Thea: Book Buddies will continue to exist in addition to Reading Mates, is that right? Can volunteers for Book Buddies volunteer with Reading Mates?

Dr. King: Book Buddies is different. It is a program for 2nd graders. Volunteers can still participate in this, but we're trying to transfer all Book Buddies to the Reading Mate process; It's not an either/or. Volunteers can do both! Reading Mates will do what Book Buddies is not set-up to do; it deepens the work and allows us to quantify the impact that the tutors are having.

Thea told a story about a company who stopped supporting a school because of a leadership change; there was no data to justify the importance of the work, so the new leader did not continue the partnership.

Mr. Spears: That is a challenge for a lot of community organizations; They are volunteering their time and not thinking about strategic data tracking (or they count hours only). I know that Alignment Jackson is getting us to move to this. I wish there was even more support for organizations in our community to evaluate their services.

Dr. King: Yes. That is exactly what we're doing with Reading Mates. We take information by student. We consider the pre-data, a 4-week score/assessment, the score after another 4 weeks, and a final summative assessment. Last year, there was an overwhelming number of passing scores for these students! We as a district need to keep track of this; people want to know this information.

b. Teen Trendsetters

Thea: This initiative is an ideal situation - for us, by us. Middle/high school scholars are paired with elementary school scholars to help them improve their literacy skills. Since the last meeting, I've created a schedule. Some schools do not need transportation and others do. Transportation costs were the hold-up to start, but I made an executive decision to get rolling.

*\$5091 is the estimated cost for transportation through December.

I'm going to suggest that Callaway walk instead of take a bus, which will reduce the cost by about \$600. The others are not an option. I'm also willing to figure out how to cover some of this out of my Partners in Education budget.

*\$13,500 is the estimated cost for transportation from January through May.

There will be a total of 15 sessions.

Liz: Let's brainstorm as a committee some other possible ways to cut costs or make this work.

Thea: We have about 30 days to assess what we're going to do about 2nd semester.

Ideas Brainstormed:

- Could we release an ITP for Transportation? (We don't know district guidelines- liability, etc.)
- Could the same bus driver stay for an hour, rather than sending a second bus? (Thea looked into this, but the timing doesn't quite work out to use one bus for multiple situations.)
- Why do some schools have transportation on 38 days and some 19? It looks like some schools are going once/week and some two/week (This may be accommodating scholar's availability and when they were able to be received at elementary schools, but we could require schools to choose the one day for transportation when the majority of students are available.) *Thea will look into this.*

Liz: How many students are involved at each school?

Thea: The program advisors have this information. I'm sure we can find out.

Thea will email the bus schedule to Liz to send out to the group.

c. TutorMate

- We are first in the state to do this.
- Teachers were trained on October 19th. A couple of teachers missed the training and will need to be caught up to speed.
- The equipment was delivered on October 27th.
- Consent forms are due tomorrow
- Tutors will receive an hour of training (face-to-face) and given their scholar assignments. Sandra and Thea will go on-site to businesses for training/recruitment. Thea will recruit; Sandra will organize training.
- We were shooting for mid-October, so we're running behind. The schools that are ready can get started now. We should have all of the tutors we need by next week.
- The City will be involved. Hopefully Jackson State, too. Thea is making moves this week.
- Companies have been concerned about liability, time (30 minutes a week, 8 hours a year-vacation, etc), and office set-up.

Deyanna: Will conversations be recorded or monitored in any way? This might reassure company and provide safety for the schools. I know that there's a script, but what happens when

we get off the script? When kids get excited and want to talk about their day, how much flexibility is allowed for conversation, student excitement, etc.?

Thea: I know that background checks are done, but we will look into this.

Ms. Taylor: Are students taken away from the classroom for this?

Thea: I think so, because of access to the phone line, but I will double check.

4. Celebrations

Thea: Partners in Education- We just had our major event of the year, and I'm so relieved it's over. The focus was A plus behavior. We had the Murrah student debate team, an update from Alignment Jackson, and Dr. Mayers' presented a session on effective partnerships. There was a tone of excellence; We've got some A plus behavior in our schools. We highlighted this committee's new literacy initiatives (TutorMate and Reading Mates).

Meeting adjourned at 10:02 AM.