Alignment Jackson Elementary School Team Meeting
Thursday, December 10, 2015 8:30 AM
JPS Superintendent's Conference Room

Members present: Amber May, Chauncey Spears, Dr. Michelle King, Kesia Horton, Thea Faulkner, Parthenia Fields

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Principles of Committee Work
Amber: Principle #7. Focus on the "team" part. A lot of the time, we are looking out for ourselves, but it is our job to make sure this info doesn't stay here and we get others involved.

3. Approval of the Minutes
Chauncey moved to approve. Amber seconded. Minutes approved.

4. Discussion (referring to handout)
Anthony: This puts a context to the work that is deeper than just getting reading mentors, etc. On page 5, a link is drawn between child trauma and adult onset of disease medical/psychological/social problems. The adult is affected, too. This reminds me of the importance of teacher support, etc. in our schools. The way we've structured Reading Mates is what addresses these kinds of situations.

Michelle: We are experiencing social-emotional issues in our system very early (even in Pre-K). Sometimes we can't even teach students who are acting out based on things that happened at home. Our teachers and administrators are not equipped for this. This is very real. The team needs to ask for community support.

William: Is there an opportunity to create an ITP for help with these kinds of mental health situations? Have other teams done this?

Anthony: In Nashville there's an example. YES AND. I think we could incorporate this component into things that already exist. Reading Mates helps with this, for example. It helps to have a stable adult showing up consistently. We can add more social-emotional pieces.

Kesia Horton: Have you ever heard someone say, "one year of bad takes 7 years of good to overcome"?

Thea: Sometimes we throw parents under the bus when they need the same supports we're offering the kids. They have some of the same invisible scars.

Anthony: When we hear about obesity in the south, we always blame it on diet and exercise. When obesity (according to the article) can also be linked to women who are victims of sexual abuse. How do we heal broken people? Love them harder? How do we not just take the same old siloed approaches without looking at the entire landscape? It's an awesome opportunity to lead- do things differently.

Thea: This also reminds me of the need for more nutrition and exercise opportunities for young people.

5. Literacy Activities Update (Thea)

a. Barbara Bush

The following schools are participating:

- Callaway/North Jackson
- Forest Hill/Van Winkle
- Lanier/Smith
- Murrah/Spann
- Chastain/Boyd
- Provine/John Hopkins
- Wingfield/Wilkins
- Jim Hill/Isabel
- Cardozo/Bates
- Rowan/Brown

There is a total number of required sessions. Program advisors understand that they may need to make up some sessions in the spring.

There are two schools- Lanier and Forest Hill- that have not started yet. They agreed to start on January 7th.

There were some issues with mentee selection (needed to be at least 6 months behind in reading) and mentors not filling out the necessary paperwork, but all of these issues have been resolved. Some technology-related issues are being resolved with Tracy (at Barbara Bush) right now. We think the issue might be JPS' technology, so they have been told to talk to Erin.

Anthony: What if we bring some of the high school students together and elementary students together so we can figure out what's going on and how to improve? This may be an opportunity to hear from the young people and send a message that this work is valuable (from more than just the program advisor).

Thea: I like the idea of sharing best practices. It may be a good idea to bring the program advisors, too, so that they can learn from each other.

Dr. King: I like both ideas. I do want to do some kind of recognition celebration with the scholars (maybe in February). Also, I'd like to see this program in action, so I can tell its story and get some publicity on it, too. We want a solid "students impacted" number. I'm very pleased to hear about those schools that have gone above the required number.

I've said this before: We are the first in Mississippi to do this, so we're setting the bar.

b. TutorMate

While our initial goal was working with corporate/business executives, this proved tricky with all of the red tape involved. So I've filled in the gaps with some university students.

Jackson State honor society will help us out – It is embedded in their curriculum to do this initiative. They have 87 students and have committed to 60 volunteers. (Raines & Lake elementary). On January 13th, we will have a meet & greet with Dr. Gray and some Jackson State leaders- meet & greet to thank the honor societies for taking this on.

I also met with UMMC; we have 36 students registered now, but a call for volunteers went out to 900

people, so I assume we'll have more (Pecan Park)

By January, we'll be ready to roll out.

Dr. King: Thanks for driving this forward, Ms. Faulkner. Let's go ahead and pre-assign schools to the local businesses you're waiting to hear back from, and give me an update on Jan 1st.

Anthony: Have we set a schedule with the schools?
Thea: Not yet, but we could create this schedule before Christmas break. There will be a total of 16 sessions.

c. Reading Mates
Reading Mates vs. Book Buddies- We're not saying "there are no more book buddies." Reading Mates' focus is on individual skills, individual tutoring and mentoring, based on their needs. We want "Book Buddies" to rethink how they do it. Our committee is providing an example of a new structure – one that impacts the district's goals and benefits the students- not just the volunteers- and is supported by data.

Kesia: MPB may be able to partner w/ school like Watkins, which is close to our office. We were looking to do some stuff at Barr; I wonder if we could take some strategies from Reading Mates,

Parthenia: I can speak to our community specialists/leaders and see if they have the capacity to partner, as well.

Dr. King: I want to use the winter screening as our baseline for these students. We won't have testing until May, so we could continue Reading Mates through April.

Anthony: Volunteers want clear instructions and timelines. "January 12th with a 6 or 8 week window" would be helpful.

Thea: I can talk to the teachers to help us figure out what the timeline window should be.

Dr. King: 3 major data points- winter screening, spring screening (before the scholars leave), and then the state test.

I remember the former director of 1000 Black Men saying, "We need to know exactly what you want or need us to do with these scholars." Our community is asking for this structure. We need to be responsible for this. We want Reading Mates to be the structure for the literacy piece.

Chauncey: Is there an age limit? Could we use university students for this?

Dr. King: Yes; They just need to go through the volunteer process. Thea, could we reach out to Southern Farm? Ask if they have volunteers going there currently to work with students, so we can redirect what they're doing.

Thea: Could we put out a call for volunteers? Social media, email, etc. Let's re-frame this ITP and send it out. Volunteers should reach out to the principal or lead school contact for scheduling.

Celebrations:
Dr. King: I appreciate all of you. Let's continue the work. Yesterday, the superintendent invited all media outlets to come talk (editors and CEOs; JFP, Clarion Ledger, TV stations, etc.). We need to share the great things that we're doing, so the story will be told.

Thea: One of the media outlets wants to celebrate a woman in the district- we recommended Dr. King and Ms. Chinelo Evans. Dr. King needs to be celebrated.

Anthony: "Principal for a Day" was a moving experience for those involved. It's a district-wide initiative that has resulted in more understanding and support of our schools. City councilman, business leaders, doctors, lawyers, etc. participated.

This is a lot of work. We can't do school like we did yesterday. Thanks to Dr. King- your trust and transparency. This committee has shifted the way we do business.

Meeting adjourned.

Next meeting: January 28th, 2016