

Alignment Jackson Elementary Team Meeting

March 24, 2016 8:30-10 AM

JPS Superintendents Conference

Members present: Dr. Michelle King, Ingrid Adams, Parthenia Fields, Sharon Turner, Shawnte Butler, Joyce Gwen Taylor, Chauncey Spears, Amber May

Guests: Henry Greenidge

1. Welcome & Introductions (Dr. Michelle King)

Guest: Henry Greenidge from Renaissance Academy Common Ground Covenant Church
Mr. Greenidge moved from Portland, OR. He is interested in developing successful music and coding programs for youth.

Dr. King: Coding in elementary is something we're trying to do more of

2. Review of Principles (Amber)

Principle #10 "Agendas of individuals and organizations are left at the door."

I'm on a lot of Alignment Teams, and this comes up on every team. If you're here, this is your agenda. We need to work within the process of Alignment to make sure we have the procedure to help our scholars be successful.

If your organization has been here for 50 years, how are your students performing in school? I was skeptical at first, because the Alignment Process challenged what we were doing at Operation Shoestring. It challenged us to do things differently/

It's not just about checking your agenda. It's about all of us having the same agenda.

Dr. King: Principle #4 stands out to me. "The committee process is collaborative." Amber fused this in. We have to work collaboratively. There are always things we have to overcome. We're three years in, and I'm watching things grow- programs, outcomes, community outreach.

3. Approval of Minutes

Mrs. Taylor moved. Amber seconded. Minutes from the last meeting were approved.

4. Literacy Activities Update

Total: 23/38 elementary schools being impacted (compared to 4 the previous year).

1. Barbara Bush Teen Trendsetters- mentors and elementary scholars are building relationships, and things are going well. We're going to sit down next week and talk about next steps. There were some concerns about the scholars selected. They must be 6 months behind in reading to qualify, and some of those selected did not fit the criteria. We want to make sure we continue this partnership with Barbara Bush. I commend Thea Faulkner, who has worked diligently with this group. 15 mentors and 15 mentees. About 300 total. Testimony from ELA Mentor who said she wished she'd had the program when she was in school. Families receive books to keep at home. It's a \$100,000 initiative. We have strategically selected schools. We selected schools based on need and proximity- easy partnerships (Isabel and Jim Hill, Brown and Rowan, etc.).
2. Tutor Mate- online remote tutoring program. 1st grade scholars at 5 schools in Provine feeder pattern. Early on, there was some red tape with electronic security. All of the schools are up and running now. Thea has the numbers. We selected Provine for its schools with academic challenges and within the same pattern teachers and administrators can collaborate.
3. Reading Mate was the birth of this committee. Our first literacy initiative to distinguish

itself from Book Buddies. We strategically said we'd focus in on third grade to prepare scholars for the STAR Assessment, using prescribed lessons/activities based on the test. We don't want to diminish Book Buddies, which is still building relationships and reading for pleasure. But we wanted to focus on scholar achievement. We also used Reading Mates to address some of the health issues (e.g. vision, hearing) of our scholars. Committee member Ms. Adams works with doctors and medical orgs- They offered full eye exams in the clinic last year at the four Reading Mates schools. We worked out transportation. Scholars' hand-eye coordination is still developing. Their social-emotional development is anxiety-provoking. We have students who get sick from their nerves. We had professionals teach our scholars relaxation techniques.

Anthony: Reading Mates was about, "Does the young person have what he/she needs?" - Not just teaching to the test, but looking at other needs of students. How do we articulate that we did this AND that it's an ongoing challenge as we scale up- from 4 to 23 schools? This is where we are, this is where we were, and this is where we are headed.

Amber: Another impact- There was a teacher at Smith who was instrumental in putting things together. She facilitated the program and helped translate it to the school environment. We used her structure as a model for other schools.

Dr. King: At one school, about 75% of students needed glasses. As teachers, we often miss those things- hearing and vision problems can be responsible for kids acting out.

Anthony: There's a policy in Illinois, where everyone has to be screened at birth for vision/hearing. This might be a policy to look at for Mississippi [if it doesn't exist already]. The policy piece is another opportunity.

Chauncey: It's the reality of a community in high-concentrated poverty. We can't assume that children are getting annual check-ups. We have to provide some of those wrap-around services to ensure that our students are successful.

I'm working with a team that is looking at accountability- The way we grade a school district could help shift the focus from test scores-only to offering wrap around services and measuring support of children and their access to care.

It takes collaboration and leadership. If we didn't have to worry about test score numbers, what would we focus on based on the needs of our community?

Joyce: There should be a hearing test for everyone at the start of formal schooling. Even if we don't have mandatory pre-k, could we do it at Kindergarten?

Dr. King: If we can require immunization shots, why can't we require eye and hearing exam? We need to keep bringing this to the larger conversation.

Parthenia: We've offered screenings for some of our communities. Now we have standing clinics in a couple of our communities.

Joyce: We have had a partnership with Jackson-Hinds, and they will come and do screenings with their mobile units. I have a contact.

Anthony: There's the potential to arm young people with the information to positively influence the health of their families.

Amber: We do screenings with St. Dominic's during our summer program. We're hoping to partner with United Health Care to do full breadth and depth physical exam. We're working with parents to help. Instead of taking kids out during the instructional day for appointments, they could come to the afterschool program to get checked out.

Dr. King: As we talk, we're birthing a new initiative to focus on the health of our elementary scholars. We need to make this happen. Like Chauncey said, what we monitor and watch is what we value. We have left behind our Pre-K – 2nd, because we're watching 3-5th grade state accountability achievement.

5. Double Jeopardy

Reflections on the reading -

Chauncey: What stood out to me is the focus on student academic achievement. Are we looking at the totality around what affects this achievement? Health? Stresses of being in a community where it's unsafe? These factors may have more of an impact on students than what they are doing in schools. Student achievement is not just what goes on in a building, but what happens in a community (e.g. racial segregation, concentration of poverty, lack of opportunities, students seeing relevance of education, etc.) As students get older, they make decisions about how they are going to prioritize education in the context of everything else they are dealing with. We have to see student achievement in broader terms.

Parthenia: We talk about the comparison between affluent communities and those where people are living in poverty. What can we take or learn from those communities?

Amber: I don't think that there aren't activities and resources here, but are they being used correctly and effectively? We do field trips, etc. We have 21st century grants. If you look at JPS, millions of dollars are being directed to these activities and opportunities. The funds are there, but are we using them effectively? Schools are being held accountable, but are community organizations being held accountable? It should not be all about me, my funders, and my program; it should be about the wellbeing of students.

Ms. Adams: When we first started Alignment, this reminds me of the conversation we had. It's not just academic, but how to address the complete person. The whole ecosystem.

Joyce: We put it aside as something we can't control. The difference with "more affluent schools" is parental involvement. Parents are desirous of children doing well and doing what they can.

Anthony: It's not about parent involvement or engagement. It's about how we're working with parents. We assume that they have skills and abilities that they may not have. We need to be coaches. This is part of the wraparound services. We may have some antiquated models of parent engagement (Parent-teacher conferences, etc.) What can we do differently?

Parthenia: We realize that we walk into situations with assumptions that people know what parent engagement is. We do what we know. In that place, how do we proxy? Find those mentors to support our young people.

Greenidge: I'm interested in supporting scholars through the reading initiative at our church. We have families dealing with a lot. We're going to give them books.

Anthony: We'll get you the summer reading list. Those books could be aligned.

6. Summer Reading (Dr. King)

The new summer reading books have been identified. There are events upcoming, like press conferences, kick-off (April 6th, tentative, at Murrah), bootcamps with community partners, etc. MPB will do one training for providers (April 20th, 10 AM-2 PM).

Anthony: Bootcamps may not have been well-attended last year, but they were high-quality, and we can't lose sight of that. Can we add another providers training to reach more people?

Dr. King: We did one last year. It was last minute, but we did it. MPB will only do one. We can do another one as a committee, if we'd like. Shawnte will reach out to Ms. Whisenton.

Let's find a date and do a Parent & Providers Training. We did it at Gallaway last year. I'd like to see some vendors present and Chauncey as guest speaker.

Chauncey: Send me a date, and we'll see. We'll be having community sessions re: accountability. We need more voices. I'll keep you posted

Meeting adjourned 9:50 AM.