

Achievement Gap Task Force
Meeting #1
Tuesday March 18, 2008
Minutes

1. Introduction of task force members – all 16 members were present
2. The Task Force’s assignment by the Supt and School Committee
 - Vito LaMura Reviewed the TF objectives as spelled out in Achievement Gap Report
3. Decision-Making and Minute-Taking Processes
 - Consensus would be preferred but is not required
 - Agreement on aiming for consensus but on some issues we may have to settle for “alignment” and move forward
4. Review of the Achievement Gap Report
 - Report has been presented to several of the stakeholder groups in the community
 - Report has been reported on by the Minuteman
 - Key point of emphasis: *Focus on lagging students does NOT hinder high achieving students*
 - i. Best practices help all students develop and helps faculty improve skills
 - ii. How do we get that message out to everyone?
 - V.L. shared some of the flavor of email responses he has received from the community
 - Then introduced a discussion on key assumptions in the report:
 - i. Intelligence is malleable and not fixed: very important premise that must be shared at all levels with community
 - ii. SPED has been established over time as the only remedy for struggling students
 - iii. We need more SPED and non-SPED interventions
 - iv. We need to be more consistent on our interventions across all 9 schools
 1. Each Elem school houses a distinct SPED program
 2. Now there are \$ budgeted for each school to have a similar reading program
 3. Need district coordination of interventions (SPED and non-SPED) so each school knows what the others are doing
 - v. While our ultimate goal is to serve all students we must have some interventions which focus on African-American students because there is clearly a racial component to the achievement gap numbers in Lexington
 - VL began a review of key recommendations in the report
 - i. All day kindergarten (#1), literacy instruction/mathematics instruction thresholds for elementary (#2), and bus monitors for all METCO late buses (#3) were reviewed and discussed
5. Establishing Immediately Achievable Objectives
 - The task force brainstormed “quick wins” that might be achieved between now and July 1st using approx. \$40,000 in funds that are available:
 1. Use interns to create a pool of faculty candidates of color
 2. Expand LHS MCAS tutoring program to include science
 3. Professional Development on data use
 4. Bus atmosphere/environment – provide learning supplies
 5. Boston based tutoring/support program for Saturdays
 6. Daily sub teacher to cover study halls at LHS and free up faculty for tutoring during school day
 7. Mentor training

8. Prof. Dev. for all faculty in literacy and numeracy
9. Role Models – speakers program, field trips
10. Drop in tutoring centers at MS and LHS
11. Early literacy/math specialists in elementary
12. Elementary executive functioning help
13. Data guru
14. Software
15. Prep kids for higher level courses
16. Thursday afternoon programs for elementary students
17. Coordinator of volunteers
18. Student leadership seminars on Saturdays

- What are the criteria by which we will judge and select short-term steps using this \$40,000?
 1. feasibility – the planning to logistics ratio (ROI)
 2. measurable
 3. time frame
 4. \$40,000 or less
- A subcommittee was formed to take the interventions and apply the criterion to winnow the list within 2 weeks (by April 1st) – subcommittee included Vito LaMura, Lynne Sarasin, Cheryl Prescott-Walden, William Huff, and Abbie Maxton

6. Next Meetings

- April 15th Tuesday 9-11
- April 29th Tuesday 9-11
- For next time task force members should read It's Being Done and the handouts in the packet given to us at this meeting
- The agenda for next time will include:
 - i. Short Term Wins intervention
 - ii. Scheduling changes for next year
 - iii. Summer programming for current and incoming students
 - iv. Long term steps
 - v. What is currently happening in LPS for interventions