

6th Grade Forum – January 26, 2010

Regrouping Assessments:

- IB not affected; no IB students were affected by it (although all took it)
- Teachers didn't receive any background information on the assessments
- Communication was an issue
- Teachers knew it was coming 2 weeks in advance
- New plans were announced at emergency meeting
- Teachers given conflicting dates which created chaotic review sessions (review didn't prep for test)
- Confusion about mid-terms; what are they? How will they be used?
- Adequate notice was given about the mid-terms
- Weighting of the mid-terms was left to teachers as was policy re: inclusion in grades

Scoring:

- Teachers were not asked or compensated
- Some teacher given subs for a day to score their assessments – not all schools
- Teachers who were pulled could not do review for other assessment
- Teachers not given feedback on assessment results, so couldn't use with students
- Biggest Issue: couldn't plan because bad last minute information
- Math had 1 day of scoring, but no one scored their own students; an “interesting learning experience”
- Subs administered quarterly in some schools because teachers were scoring
- 3 assessments being administered around the same time (mid year, regrouping, quarterlies)
- Mid terms are a good idea because it prepared student for cumulative tests in high school
- If teachers are administering cumulative tests, they need time to prepare the students
- Some school had math review sheets, others didn't
- Not all grades should have midterms and finals.

Advisory:

- Teachers at most schools all received a “Guide to Advisory”
- Provided efficacy materials and also Jim Ellsworth and Betsy Nagurney material from Scofield
- It's advisory and students/teachers like it
- Teachers plan curriculum for advisory during administrative time, all doing same thing at same time in both cogs (not in all schools)
- In IB, try to tie advisory/efficacy work into IB
- Difficult to use a 5 time week program (Scofield's) in fewer days/less time (i.e. 20 minutes 1X per week)
- When advisory is always scheduled in the same subject, students say they're falling behind (some schools)
- Teachers spending prep time to plan/prepare for advisory
- One school uses 2nd step Program instead of Efficacy book; students like the video/workbook/discussion format
- Need more copies of videotape (have license but not duplicating equipment)
- Loves 2nd step, easy to use, 30 minute lessons; “Everything you want”
- None of the other schools know about it

- Extend the Advisory? Yes, as long as you don't lose academics/same academics (not longer time frame)
- Fluid schedule works well
- Prefer advisory more often but not necessarily longer
- Like the idea of having one group you are responsible for but that you don't grade; "this is what I want in Advisory"; miss homeroom environment
- Good time to do the Avid-like binders, etc
- Teachers have mixed groups from both houses; they like this
- Not all schools have advisory period
- May consider same group of advisory students for 3 years of middle school.

Special Ed/New Model:

- Who is MS representative on SRBI committee?
- When can students be given these reading interventions in MS?
- If you could design interventions for a 6th grader, what would it look like?
- 6th grade teachers are required to do differentiation in reading, but they don't have the resources in social studies and science
- 4 years ago, the social studies curriculum committee purchased two levels of textbooks and leveled trade books
- The teachers need to plan the differentiated lessons
- Teachers have adequate time to plan with special ed teachers in one school
- Got hit hard this year with lack of special ed staffing at one school
- Spec Ed teachers need an SRBI reading program
- There are a lot of students who are "needy" and not receiving what they need because of staffing issues
- Uneven access to Spec Ed staffing
- One school has an available lab and teacher interested with reading interventions but isn't allowed to do it
- Planning with Spec Ed is an issue
- Spec Ed teachers are doing a full load of regular ed courses where they're doing modifications within the regular ed curriculum
- Challenge of meeting times in IEP
- HS students liked Read 180 in previous experience.

Academic Enrichment:

- Teachers who don't teach AE don't know how students are assigned... Random? Reinforcing the math program? Remedial/Enrichment depending on student need.
- Just literacy with students assigned randomly i.e. not by need
- Teachers have lack of literacy diagnostic to assign students
- Also need math diagnostic
- AE teacher – student switches every quarter last year, this year they have same student all year. This is better.
- Have time to meet with academic teachers in one school, but not all.
- Much better that PLC's are scheduled this year
- In math it's support & enrich in 6th, just support in 7th & 8th (Foreign language for others)
- Access to tech. labs inequitable
- AE teacher – no common planning time for AE/acad classes
- No AE curriculum

- Many teacher concerns about how AE is used compared to how it was anticipated
- Students pulled from AE for band, etc.
- One school has no AE for literacy or math
- “It’s a weak link in the chain... but better than last year”.

PD/Services:

- The science PD was fabulous
- The 2nd beginning-of-the-year PD will be moved to October in 2010-11 so teachers can have more time in their classrooms
- It would be good to have a common mid-term week for MS and HS
- The format for the elementary (EM) math PD was highly effective and should be duplicated (i.e. small group embedded in the schools)
- Teachers need a PD model that doesn’t take them out of the classroom so often (one teacher said she was pulled out 22 days last year)
- Communication needs to be more dependable, direct and timely.