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TO: Mr. Glenn Brand, Superintendent of Schools
FROM: Deborah Bookis, Director of Curriculum and Assessment
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RE: Summer Professional Learning

This summer our educators logged many hours on campus, attending workshops and working collaboratively on Research and Development Projects. Below are some highlights.

Research and Development

Over one hundred twenty educators worked on over thirty-five Research and Development projects to create curriculum and assessment. Research and Development (R&D) projects are intended to substantively advance current practice. Proposals are written in the spring and are thoroughly evaluated by a committee of administrators and educators to make certain they incorporate the following components:

- ~ What problem or need in current practice does this proposal address?
- ~ How will the R&D rectify this problem?
- ~ How does the proposal incorporate new thinking?
- ~ What will be produced/created?
- ~ With whom and how will the product be shared?
- ~ What measures will be used to evaluate the success of the project?

This summer, projects ranged from creating *3D Graphics I and II Curriculums* to identifying *Supplementary Text Sets for Underrepresented Voices in Freshman and Sophomore English*, creating *Inquiry-Based Science Labs*, and *Re-visioning the Grade Six Science Curriculum*.

Technology Workshops

Google Drive

Educators earned how to share documents with parents, students and colleagues; create blogs; collaborate on documents; provide students with feedback on their writing; use templates and Add-ons; and more.

SmartBoard Training

Educators learned how to use the SmartBoard and Notebook software as an integral tool in their instruction. Participants wrote daily reflection pieces on how each of the course's lessons can inform and complement their instructional practice.

Our Mission is to prepare all students to attain their full potential as life-long learners, critical thinkers, and productive citizens of our diverse community and global society.

So You Have an iPad, Now What?

Educators learned how to access the App store, rearrange apps, multitask, configure iPad settings, and many other useful applications for teaching and learning.

Conflict Resolution

A three-day training was held for twenty staff members (classroom teachers, psychologists, counselors, and special educators) interested in expanding their skills in addressing various types of conflicts. Managing conflicts and disagreements and having difficult conversations are an important component of our work as educators. The goal of this training was to develop strategies, tools, and language to help participants engage successfully in different situations. Metropolitan Mediation Services (MMS), an organization that has offered mediation services in the Greater Boston area since 1984, facilitated the training. MMS provides mediation services to businesses, government agencies, schools, courts, social service agencies, and individuals from Greater Boston neighborhoods and families. They also provide conflict resolution training to business people, attorneys, judges, mental health professionals, and educators, among others.

Columbia University Teachers College, Homegrown Institute: Growing Readers Workshop for K-2 and 3-6

Columbia University Teachers College facilitated on our campus a four-day institute entitled: *Growing Readers Workshop*. The workshop focused on the building blocks – the conditions of learning – for creating a successful Reading Workshop: immersion, expectation, demonstration and engagement, approximation and responsibility, feedback/response, and practice, as well as the following components:

- ~ The central role of curriculum development and planning in the teaching of reading.
- ~ Units of study across the year in the reading workshop.
- ~ The components of balanced literacy.
- ~ Comprehension strategies.
- ~ Assessing and planning for work with individuals and small groups.
- ~ Read aloud and accountable talk.
- ~ Writing about reading.
- ~ Book Clubs.

Twenty-five K-6 educators focused their work together based on the question, “*How does this teaching build upon what I already know about the teaching of reading?*” Discussions stemmed from: assigning books vs. giving choice, moving around the room to give all students feedback, and taking cues from students.

6 Traits of Writing, K-6

This two-day interactive workshop allowed participants to dive deeply into the six traits of writing. The course covered: understanding what each trait encompasses, connecting the traits to the MA ELA and Literacy Framework, teaching students to become self-assessors, assessing student papers, applying mentor texts to teach genre and skill, and implementing mini-lessons as a part of the writer’s workshop.

Columbia University Teachers College, Teaching Writing Units of Study K-2 and 3-6

Columbia University Teachers College facilitated on our campus a two-day Institute: *Teaching Writing Units of Study*. Fifty-three classroom teachers and special educators learned the structure that undergirds the *Units of Study in Opinion/Argumentative, Information and Narrative Writing*. They also learned methods to use while teaching opinion/argumentative, information and narrative writing, as well as how to integrate assessment into curriculum.



Adolescent Literacy Summer Institute

Two *AdLit* coaches facilitated a three-day institute for twenty-six classroom teachers, special educators, and administrators. The topics addressed aligned closely with the MA ELA and Literacy Framework, as well as the work done in the previous year-long coaching with Acton-Boxborough educators. Core topics included: disciplinary literacy strategies, academic language and discipline-specific vocabulary instruction, motivating and engaging adolescents with text, choosing and using multiple texts, text-based questions and answers, and considering text.

Fostering Mathematical Practices K-5 and 6-12

This three-day workshop focused on implementing the Mathematical Practices from the MA Mathematics Framework in grades K-5 and 6-12. Twenty-eight educators connected the mathematical practices to the critical areas, learned the key ideas in each practice, learned a set of questions to prompt mathematical practice use with students, identified evidence of the mathematical practices in the problem-solving process, and learned several instructional routines to develop the practices.

Mentor Training

For new mentors, training sessions were held at the beginning and end of the summer in anticipation of working with their protégés. The workshop focused on peer observations, feedback, protocols, curriculum review, classroom management, and district policies and procedures.