

English Mastery Council English Proficiency & Academic Achievement Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, June 18, 2020
1:00 PM

Meeting Location: Virtually via Lifesize

Call to Order; Roll Call

Blakely Hume, Education Programs Professional with the Nevada Department of Education, called the English Mastery English Proficiency and Academic Achievement Subcommittee Meeting to order at 1:01 PM on Thursday, June 18, 2020. A roll call was conducted and **quorum was established** (3 members present).

Members Present:

Lorna James-Cervantes
Bettye Haysbert
Karl Wilson (designee of Jonathan Moore)

Members Absent:

Antoinette Cavanaugh
Jonathan Moore

Others Present:

Blakely Hume

Public Comments #1

There were no public comments via email at that time.

Approval of Flexible Agenda

Motion: Approve Flexible Agenda

By: Karl Wilson

Second: Bettye Haysbert

Vote: Passed unanimously

Chair Cervantes said she hopes they are all doing well and thanked everyone for their flexibility in moving the meeting to this week so they're all able to attend. She apologized for not being able to meet last week, but there was an item that came up for work that she had to attend.

Approval of May 7, 2020 Minutes

Motion: Approve May 7, 2020 Meeting Minutes

By: Karl Wilson

Second: Lorna James-Cervantes

Vote: Passed unanimously

Chair Cervantes asked if everyone was ready for the presentation on the agenda, and Dr. Haysbert stated she wanted to say something.

Dr. Haysbert stated she knew how their students must feel when they come into the classroom and nobody acknowledges what they're going through in their lives. She said that's the affective part that opens students up to be able to receive whatever else they have for them that day. She said progressing through the agenda items without first allowing members to express themselves about what's been happening in the world is a perfect example of that.

Chair Cervantes expressed her apologies and said if they needed a little more time for others to reflect on what's happening and how the environment has been affecting them, she was happy to open the floor.

Mr. Wilson said as Chair of the subcommittee and with the flexible agenda, it was appropriate for the Chair to allow opportunities for people to discuss issues that they felt were important. He said he would support a decision to revise the agenda to provide the opportunity for such opportunity for members as they feel the desire to share.

Chair Cervantes said she agreed. She stated she had wanted to acknowledge the African-American plight but did not know if a moment of silence was the correct thing to do. She said Dr. Haysbert was right, that their affective filter is such an important part of the learning and they know that research around learning tells them learning itself does not operate in a vacuum. She said if there's something on their minds, they can't concentrate as well with the new work that's going on, so she was happy to open the floor.

Dr. Haysbert said there is something about not valuing people's feelings when it comes to education. She said if you look at the research that they are bringing forth, it's all about the teacher and student relationship and how do you ever get to know if you don't allow students to express themselves and see what's going on in their lives. She said people feel valued when you pay attention to them and want to know what's happening in their lives, and it is only after that will they open up to the learning environment. She said this is a really critical moment of how important it is to move from being so focused on the instructional strategy that has nothing to do with the individual that you're working with. She said this subcommittee meeting was a good example of this.

Dr. Haysbert said the teacher expectation piece was a good place to start. She asked how teachers are relating to their students in the classroom, and do they know how important it is to allow the students to be heard. She said if you begin to know who your members are, who your students are, you ask certain questions to bring them out. She said that signals I am concerned about you and I am aware that there's something going on with you that might be upsetting you. She said this is so important for how things are done in the classroom when they've got students in there who have needs that just need to be met before they try to do academics. She said people don't operate without feelings and for people who are pressed and discriminated against, their little antennas are up higher, and they're detecting what's going on, and if it's not feeling right, it's not sitting right, then they reject it.

Chair Cervantes apologized again to Dr. Haysbert. She said she tends to be very businesslike in her position as Chair. She said it's so much harder in the virtual setting to be able to read body language or have that connection to people that they have in a setting where they meet in the same room and can just make those relationships matter and get to know each other. She said she appreciated that Dr. Haysbert brought that to their attention because they are there to work and to learn together and they have to really be able to open themselves up for that kind of reflection and feedback.

Mr. Wilson thanked Dr. Haysbert for reminding them about the human side of the work that they do. He said there is a long pattern of injustice in society and how that impacts Dr. Haysbert as an individual and as an educator and advocate for children is part and parcel of her make-up. He said he thought it would be helpful for her to share what she is feeling.

Dr. Haysbert said they have been put in a timeout in this world to make some resets, and resetting means looking at doing some reflection and some introspection, to look at what it is that is not working in this world and how to make it right. She said she thinks educational institutions are the most racist institutions in this nation because they purport only European-Americans have done anything. She said they can't get multi-cultural education into the schools. She said it's just amazing how we keep this model going that isn't working for but one group of people. She said everybody in society comes through this institution and gets indoctrinated in the same way and comes back out and perpetuates the same values that the school has told they need to do.

Dr. Haysbert told members to think about how racist the school system is. She said African-American kids are not learning to read, and they were not allowed to be taught to read for centuries, and that's still happening. She said society does not talk about the uncivilized behaviors perpetrated upon African-Americans who have taken the burden of this stuff for centuries. She said it's a hard life and most have no way of knowing because they don't have to know and they can be oblivious to it. She said if the police aren't doing what they're doing because they're part of the society, they are being allowed to do it, and that has to truly stop.

Dr. Haysbert said they don't teach everybody's history and they've got to find a way of getting classrooms leveled so that kids can learn freely without the biases that exist in the schools. She said there are people in these classrooms who don't want to be there, and they're seeing how a smile can make a difference to these learners because they're hyper when it comes to that affect cause they have to be. She said in order to survive, they have to know who's on their side, and they do not participate to the detriment of their students, but that's what happens and if people working with them don't have any idea that this is happening, then part of that is why they're not achieving. She said they've got to get some equity in the classroom and get a handle on how and what is being taught and how that teacher relates to that learner. She said that's going to really make the difference.

Mr. Wilson said there was something that Dr. Haysbert shared that he has felt strongly about for a long time, and that is leveling the playing field. He said they need to make sure that every student and every parent has access to an education system that is inviting, supportive and encouraging in terms of high expectations. He said the attitudes and interactions of the educators do make a difference in terms of how people are welcomed and supported within the classroom setting.

Chair Cervantes said she agreed with both Dr. Haysbert and Mr. Wilson. She said every person in the world has biases, but the classroom is no place for those biases, and they have to provide equitable, not equal, opportunities for every one of their students and every one of their classrooms. She said she liked what Mr. Wilson said about leveling up the playing field. She said sometimes kids need to have them raised up so they can be on an equitable level with others because they don't have as much. She said they have to think on a level of what is right and best for all students.

Discussion: Some Current Research and Resources Regarding Read by Grade 3

Mr. Wilson stated in one of the earlier subcommittee meetings questions were asked related to what Nevada was already doing in terms of identifying students who are struggling in reading in the early years, and what is the role of the school working with the family to develop a literacy plan and provide supports and interventions. He said with that backdrop and at the request of subcommittee members, they invited representatives from the Nevada Department of Education to give an overview of the Read by Grade 3 program and help respond to those questions. He introduced the NDE Read by Grade Three team members as Dr. Kevin Marie Laxalt and Mr. Mark Rincon.

Dr. Laxalt stated the original law, SB 391, was passed in 2015 out of the Nevada State Legislature, and it served its purpose for approximately four years. She said during the last legislative session, Senator Tyrone Thompson led the way to engage some really powerful revisions of this law, which Read by Grade 3 now operates statutorily under the new law, AB 289. She said this past year has been a very important transformational year for Read by Grade 3 in that they've had to make changes based on the new law.

Dr. Laxalt shared a diagram of the organizational structure of Read by Grade 3 and explained the funding structure changed from competitive grants to legislative funding in every elementary school in the state, both public school district schools as well as charter schools. She said they have been working with all 17 school districts and all 27 charter programs, and they oversee 44 programs across the state. She said they do a lot of training called Train the Trainer for site level. She said at the actual schools they have approximately 406 site level elementary literacy specialists who are the leads for literacy in those elementary schools. She said they work with educators, they model, they train, they monitor assessments, and they make sure those youngsters who are struggling get their needs met based on this law.

Dr. Laxalt talked about the requirements that came out of the law and said there are funding, literacy specialist, assessment, parent notification, intervention, monitoring, growth, and reading requirements as well as a new layer of the law called instructional options. She said there are also reporting requirements. She said many sections of AB 289 directly impact students struggling with English proficiency or students whose native language is indeed English. Read by Grade 3 has been designed to capture all youngsters in the State of Nevada who are struggling in reading. She said one of the big shifts in the program changed the focus from K-3 students to ALL grades in an elementary school so that makes Nevada's Read by Grade 3 law quite unique across the nation.

Dr. Laxalt stated the new non-competitive grant process means that funds are automatically dispersed across school sites, primarily for the hiring of literacy specialists, but also for professional development for the educators at the site and sometimes some materials and resources as well. She shared that in fiscal year 2019, Read by Grade 3 worked with 14 school districts and three charter programs. She said the change to this year went to that 17 school districts and 27 charters. At the school level, they went from 251 schools during the last fiscal year to approximately 406 schools. There was an increase of support by 62 percent in the state. She said the last shift that occurred in the new law was that the primary law included a mandatory retention component for youngsters who were still demonstrating problems in reading at the end of Grade 3. She said those have been deleted by AB 289 and replaced with wording that indicates they now have mandatory intervention and extensive instruction for youngsters all the way through that elementary setting.

Discussion: Some Current Research and Resources Regarding RBG3 (continued)

Dr. Laxalt stated each local program is responsible for developing a local literacy plan. She said the specific components of their plan must align with AB 289. She said in 2015, Nevada released its State Literacy Plan and folks have been using that rigorously across the state throughout this whole time period, so they are aligning their local literacy plans back to the state literacy plan.

Dr. Laxalt stated another component the locals need to include are their Read by Grade 3 numbers along with a very thorough plan for intervention and intensive instruction. She said Read by Grade 3 also requires a description of the programs they're utilizing to improve reading proficiency of our English learners and a description of the plan to establish collaboration between teachers and the literacy specialists. She said the local literacy plans are very important to ensuring that Read by Grade 3 is successful at this time. She described how students are identified, what and when assessments are utilized, how the individual plans are developed, why regular progress monitoring is important, and the use of data-based decision making teams.

Dr. Laxalt said the subcommittee had specifically asked how is it that youngsters are identified as a student in need for Read by Grade 3. She answered they use the term Read by Grade 3 Indicator. She said the State Board of Education identified the 40th percentile rank on the MAP Growth Reading Assessment as the K-3 Read by Grade 3 Indicator. She said that means students who score at or below that mark or confirmed with teacher observation are mandated to receive Read by Grade 3 services.

Mr. Wilson pointed out that the 40% figure was used to ensure that students who were actually above the level considered for retention who were also struggling with reading would be identified to provide supports to minimize the potential that students might need to be retained. He said that initial screening was to ensure teachers were working with parents and students or students who were struggling even at a higher level than those that would be considered for retention. He said the retention component is now not part of the law.

Dr. Laxalt said for the 4th grade and beyond students, if they score below grade level expectations on their local Content Based Measure and/or confirmed with teacher observation, they are mandated to receive support through Read by Grade 3. She said once youngsters are identified, the law requires a parent/guardian notification process, and that occurs within 30 days of determining that a student is reading below grade level. She said the administrator must provide written notification to the parent/legal guardian.

Mr. Rincon gave an overview of the interventions and intensive instruction examples that could be provided by the Read by Grade 3 Program, including the Read by Grade 3 literacy specialists, parent training and early reading strategies and targeted instruction in the regular classroom. He said AB 289 requires students to have regularly scheduled reading sessions in some groups taught by a certified teacher with a background in literacy. He said specific instruction needs to be designed and targeted for reading deficiencies, and those include phonological and phonemic awareness, decoding skills, reading fluency, vocabulary and reading comprehension.

Mr. Rincon said the Read by Grade 3 program supports a statewide literacy infrastructure, and they have been funded to provide an oversight of literacy efforts at each site level. He said the Nevada Department of Education has provided a Train the Trainer model in literacy professional development with all programs and NDE staff has provided monthly Read by Grade 3 webinars across critical topics.

Discussion: Some Current Research and Resources Regarding RBG3 (continued)

Mr. Rincon said in addition, the Nevada Department of Education staff conducted two regional face-to-face literacy and assessment conferences in collaboration with NWEA. He said the Read by Grade 3 program has also been engaged in supporting families and communities at the school level. He said they have worked with national experts to support families when it comes to English Language Learners. He said NDE has offered a targeted webinar on developing a literacy family engagement connection to address the summer reading slide.

Mr. Rincon said the Read by Grade 3 Program has launched its first Nevada Read by Grade 3 Advisory Council, which includes 13 statewide experts who provide stakeholder input on Read by Grade 3 regulations, professional learning, and other requirements. He said the Read by Grade 3 has supported educators with literacy through COVID-19. He said in partnering with RPDP, the Read by Grade 3 program has conducted biweekly office hours to support Nevada's Read by Grade 3 personnel across the state. He said the Read by Grade 3 modeled effective distance learning strategies for literacy instruction using technology tools showing teachers how to integrate literacy instruction using distance remote learning, tablets and Google Classroom. He said they have collaborated with NDE on launching Read Nevada, a new statewide collaborative allowing any individual to access an assortment of books for free.

Chair Cervantes thanked Dr. Laxalt and Mr. Rincon for their presentation. She asked if there were any questions.

Dr. Haysbert asked what the actual impact for students of Read by Grade 3 was between 2015 and 2019.

Dr. Laxalt replied for the first three years, the programs were very small. She said they were allowed to use from a list of 12 different reading assessments, so it was very difficult for the program to determine the correlation between all the assessments. She said they came up with a measure called Rating Deficiency Rate, and they have reported on that rate annually to state policy makers. She said they did see Read by Grade 3 having an impact on K-3 youngsters who were English learners and then also, those who were identified with learning disabilities.

Mr. Wilson had a follow up on Dr. Haysbert's question. He said the subcommittee of the English Mastery Council had a specific assignment to look at students who were struggling in reading, who were not English learners. He asked did Dr. Laxalt have a feel for the number or percent of students that demonstrated greater reading ability outside of the English learner population.

Dr. Laxalt replied the desegregation of that between English learners and non-English learners have not been specifically analyzed within their data; however, during one of NWEA's presentations, they did drill down and look at the performance measures of youngsters across different racial groups. She said they did not request that data, but they did analyze it and can send that report that out to the subcommittee.

Dr. Haysbert said their work as a subcommittee should be trying to figure out how the English language learners will fit into this category as well.

Chair Cervantes said the Read by Grade 3 law is for all learners in the State of Nevada and receiving those data points from NWEA showing all student groups would be very beneficial. She said they could look at the results and make that a discussion item at the next meeting.

The Chair thanked Dr. Laxalt and Mr. Rincon for their presentation and taking the time to join their meeting. She said they appreciate the information, and they look forward to those data reports.

Presentation: Developing Content & Language Simultaneously for all Students

Chair Cervantes said the next presentation would be done by Mr. Ignacio Ruiz. She said he is the Assistant Superintendent for the English Language Learner Division of the Clark County School District. The work that he would be talking about is the work of English Mastery Plan in the Clark County School District. It was originally designed for English Language Learners. The subcommittee asked him to report today on the work that's being done in Clark County because there are parallels between work for English language learners and learners of non-standard English students.

Mr. Ruiz stated Focus 2024 is Clark County's district vision and their strategic plan. He said the district vision is to ensure that CCSD is providing high quality standards-based Tier I instruction for all students aligned to standards and supporting their educators in their instructional practice and also providing opportunities for all students. He said within that is their language development approach which is meant to enhance Tier I instruction and be integrated within every content area. He said the approach is to teach and integrate language and content simultaneously. He said staff looks at data to determine trends and gaps. As they identify those gaps, they plan potential structures and interventions for student groups.

Mr. Ruiz shared an assessment data overview. He said they look at historical data, trend data, and real time data. He said real time data is key as they're looking at intervention, structure, and support. He explained the many permutations of the data, including underserved populations, English learners and IEPs. He said going forward, their number one goal is continuing in their language development approach. He said the professional learning and coaching around that approach is very important to ensure that they are building the expertise of their educators and empowering them to best support the students.

Mr. Ruiz described CCSD's new regional systems. He said with their English learners they have a region support team that focuses on that language development support across the region for schools in regard to going back to the professional learning, coaching and consistency. He said the other piece that they're incorporating is a tiered school support looking at a tiered model of identifying high risk, medium risk, and lower risk schools across the district and as well as the region. He said it aligns with AB 219 and calls for schools that are demonstrating low achievement of English learners to establish corrective action plans.

Mr. Ruiz moved on to the Zoom initiative. He said they are seeing some impact using consistent and coherent systems and structures of support and interventions across their 38 Zoom schools. He said Zoom's approach is grounded in research, and the ELL Master Plan at CCSD was also grounded in research. He said under that research came the six principles of effective ELL instruction. He said the main piece of this approach is that they look at students in an asset-based lens and not deficit-based. He said the goal is developing autonomy to give all students the tools to become independent learners who are able to analyze, apply and explain their new learning. He said when they talk about content and language integration, this is where all of their teachers are teachers of language. He said there must be professional learning that supports that and brings all those components to build the expertise of educators as well as empower them.

Presentation: Developing Content & Language Simultaneously for all Students (continued)

Mr. Ruiz explained the instructional rounds process. He said the instructional rounds allow ELL divisions to see how ELL best practices look in the classroom by looking not just in the language lens, but also, the task analysis, the aligning and ensuring that it's standard-based. He said they look at trend data, their approach, how are they going to support students, what's the research behind it, and what are the pieces that they need to ensure that they are consistent and coherent across the board.

Mr. Ruiz shared some data analysis of students who attended the Zoom Pre-K classes or Pre-K program compared to those that did not in Kindergarten. He also shared data from the Zoom reading centers and said the Zoom students were more successful than others in the area of language.

Mr. Ruiz said as they were looking at how to best support kids and their achievement and setting up structures, this is a process of looking at the data and ensuring that the approach is grounded in research, and they have some additional resources and accountability around that.

Mr. Ruiz said he was happy to answer any questions.

Chair Cervantes said the Zoom schools are universal, so any student who lives within the zone of the school is able to participate in those Pre-K programs. She said although the focus of Zoom schools is on English learners, it does not mean that all students who are in need of those services would not benefit. She said the reading centers also focus on English learners, but any student in the school can use those reading centers. She said their data and growth won't show on the WIDA scores because they don't take the WIDA, but those students do receive services and have grown similarly.

Dr. Haysbert asked Mr. Ruiz to further explain "combined the language and the content." Mr. Ruiz said it boils down to the academic language that students are building within the content and the language they need to understand the content. Dr. Haysbert asked Mr. Ruiz what things are needed for them to exceed their goals.

Mr. Ruiz reiterated that it's academic language. He said as they are looking at it as teachers and the instructional piece, they ask how they are differentiating and purposefully planning for all students in the classroom, from the language learner to the non-ELL that is reading below grade level. He said they ask how teachers are accelerating that language and giving that access to the content in many ways. He said that differentiation and purposeful planning and the instructional rounds are key pieces.

Chair Cervantes said at CCSD, they had teams of teachers do instructional rounds focused in on the task being asked of all students in the classroom. She said instructional rounds have been the big focus this year. She said they keep the standard high, but then they scaffold, support and assist those students in meeting that grade level standard rather than reducing the expectation for those students.

Chair Cervantes and the other members thanked Mr. Ruiz for his presentation and hard work. Mr. Ruiz thanked the English Mastery Council for having him.

Mr. Wilson said Dr. Masewicz might be able to help understand the question that Dr. Haysbert asked regarding what it means to develop academic language. He said the work that Dr. Masewicz and Dr. Axtell have been working on with the English Language Development Standards is really about building teacher capacity to integrate language and content in a way that really builds the academic language of all students in the classroom.

Presentation: Developing Content & Language Simultaneously for all Students (continued)

Dr. Masewicz said much what Mr. Ruiz has talked about is the work that they are extending with the ELD Standards Framework and the instructional guidance document. She said Ms. Cervantes' great work within the Mathematics work group provided a lot of knowledge. She said she wanted to first answer the question regarding what their next steps to accelerate would be. She said they have the data for Clark and Washoe and across the state, which is represented in their Zoom report.

Dr. Masewicz said they are finding that they have to simultaneously develop the academic language within the content. She said the real next step is about the language development within the content area, which is what the ELD Standards Framework along with the instructional guidance document is intended to do in order to build capacity of teachers and other educators to understand the language within each content area.

Dr. Masewicz said the key pieces they noticed in the data is there is an upward trend of the content achievement of English learners. She said they find this in the schools that are doing the professional development around the application of language development within the content. She said all students will benefit from this simultaneous development within content which is the next shift that they will need to do in the state.

Chair Cervantes said she completely agreed with what Dr. Masewicz described. She said she has seen the level of work and planning being done for all students in the classroom. She said you see in reading centers or classrooms standard English speakers sitting right next to an English Language Learner and working on engaging in the same content area. She said often they're having to work together to meet the language needs and both are being scaffolded in those English language needs in order to meet the expectations of the content area. She said a big piece of it is that level of rigor and complexity within the text that's being used in the classroom and really making sure that they're engaging all students in highly rigorous and complex texts as expected at the grade level standard. She said part of the professional development is to continue to work and grow in that area as well.

Chair Cervantes said one of the keys is the idea of accelerating learning for students by giving them more time, opportunities, and smaller group settings to close the gaps with students. She said it is not by remediating their learning.

Dr. Haysbert said another thing is giving students more of what is working. She asked what could be accelerated even further in Zoom schools.

Dr. Masewicz replied it boils down to what's happening across the school in the core content Tier 1 classrooms. She said all students make progress in effective Tier 1 instruction that is rigorous, standard-based, but also includes scaffolds to the standard. She said remediation is not the key but acceleration is.

Dr. Haysbert said closing those gaps is very important and they need to help those students catch up.

Chair Cervantes said she agreed with Dr. Haysbert and would like to recommend looking around high quality Pre-K education or early childhood education in the state for students in their neediest schools. She said one of the differences between the Zoom Pre-K model and some other Pre-K models is Zoom is very academic and language development forward and it is socialization.

Presentation: Developing Content & Language Simultaneously for all Students (continued)

Chair Cervantes said it has an impact on the students who really are coming into Kindergarten closer to or on grade level. She said there should be coherence to the Pre-K models and early childhood models in the State of Nevada.

Dr. Haysbert said she would like to see if standard English learners are really being served by this model and asked is academic language the key for all learners.

Dr. Masewicz said it might be helpful to view some videos to see English learners and other students using the academic language in the classrooms. She said Stanford has several of those videos.

Mr. Wilson said those videos would give them a visual representation, which would help demonstrate the value of teaching academic language. He said with the new rigorous academic standards that have been adopted across the country for all students, there is an expectation that students be able to talk about, describe, analyze, explain, defend and argue points that require levels of language that in the past weren't the expectation. He said part of those skills are related to what we call discourse or the ability to use language in ways that demonstrate the ability to think, process and communicate about content. He said it's a challenge for all students, and teachers, to be able to express knowledge and understanding in ways that are much more sophisticated than what was expected of students in the past. He said oftentimes with an assessment all they would have to do is a multiple-choice response, but now there's the expectation for them to be able to articulate, describe and defend, etc., and that's language that English Learners and all students need in order to meet the new expectations around rigorous standards.

Chair Cervantes recommended that they pull some of the videos and watch them together at the next meeting and be ready to discuss what they're seeing and how that fits the ideas behind the English Language Development approaches that are being used in the state. She said that would be helpful in forming recommendations for the English Mastery Council as a whole if that would be acceptable to the rest of the group. She asked members if they wanted to have a discussion of item 7 now or postpone it, or would they like to take a few more minutes to discuss the teacher expectation articles that they read before the meeting today.

Dr. Haysbert said she would prefer the discussion at a later time.

Mr. Wilson said he was open to either option and said there might be some real value in the subcommittee taking a few minutes to distill out questions, concerns or suggestions that came to mind as they heard the presentations that they had today, especially in terms of what that might mean as they move forward towards development specific recommendations to the English Mastery Council either in terms of steps to take or follow-up questions that we want to pursue. He said there were a number of things shared today that piqued his interest in terms of finding ways that make sense to impact the performance of students whose reading is in the bottom quartile who are not English learners.

Mr. Hume said he could take notes based on their queries and that would be something to take to the full EMC next week if they want.

Chair Cervantes said Mr. Wilson's suggestion was a good one.

Presentation: Developing Content & Language Simultaneously for all Students (continued)

Chair Cervantes said she heard a question around the correlations between the English Language Development approach and the achievement of non-standard English Language Learners in their classrooms. She said there was also a question around what it looks like to work within an acceleration model versus a deficit model, understanding that all students need to accelerate their learning in order to close the gap with students. She said there was also the question about English Language Development within the content area and what does that look like for all students and how do they meet the needs of all students within classrooms around English Language Development and how does it look to be learning a language and content simultaneously.

Chair Cervantes asked were there other questions that the committee has.

Dr. Haysbert said she wanted to know the definition of a “standard” English learner and could there be a conversation around language development. She asked is the language that’s being developed through the language content development satisfying the needs of the language that needs to be developed in the standard English learner. She said with African-American and Latino students being at the bottom of everything all the time, this does not work for her anymore. She said they have got to find a way to make sure those learners are exceeding their goals and not just meeting them because otherwise, they’ll never catch up. She said she wanted to make sure they are using what they know works so that those learners are making leaps in their gains and actually meeting all the needs the learner has in the English language.

Chair Cervantes said Dr. Haysbert’s point was well taken, but she didn’t know if there was any one thing that anyone is doing that’s meeting all the needs of kids. She said another question she heard was what additional professional learning was needed for teachers in order to help them better support students in the classrooms.

Dr. Haysbert said they need to highlight the need for the affective domain to be more prominent in their schools which will add to the ability for those students to accelerate their learning. She said teachers are not getting professional development in those areas and they should.

Mr. Wilson said he was struck by the elements of the asset versus the deficit model for planning. He asked were there teacher professional learning opportunities that emphasize looking at student and family assets in terms of building those relationships and fostering high expectations and moving away from the thinking around these students are missing this or they don’t have that or really trying to build on assets. He said he would look forward to having a conversation about that.

Chair Cervantes said she could partially answer that question. She said within the professional learning the teachers are getting, there are actually several lessons around asset orientation and working with an asset orientation for students and families and engaging families within the work being done around the English Mastery Plan. She said there is emphasis on meeting students where they are and then working to always engage students at a high level within that work. She said also every staff member in the district completed course work as well in really looking at how to meet the needs of students and families through an equity lens of do they have implicit biases and do they know how to recognize those implicit biases within their ways of thinking and thinking about what can they do and what’s their role in addressing those biases within the work that they do on a daily basis.

Presentation: Developing Content & Language Simultaneously for all Students (continued)

Dr. Haysbert said she is seeing it a little bit differently and is thinking about those little things that teachers do in classrooms that signal to students that they are not okay such as lack of a smile or students trying to speak or talk to you and you don't look at them, or a teacher doesn't call on you when your hand is up all the time. She said it's little human things that are so very important for teachers to be aware of. She said there is training that allows teachers to make changes in their signals because it's an observational thing the colleague goes into each other's rooms, make their observation and reports back with discussions and making changes. She said it's a way to actually move teachers into making changes around the information that they're gathering about themselves as opposed to saying, let's think about it or let's work on it in this setting and then try to go back to the classroom and do it when I fall back into my regular patterns. She said teachers are in that training until they get that right.

Dr. Masewicz said she would concur and stated they can push out all of the professional development around language development and use of appropriate scaffolds at the grade level, but the issues that they are seeing in terms of the achievement of African-Americans and Latinos really has to do with implicit biases or racism that permeates the culture. She said until they address those implicit biases, their expectations and removing barriers really won't happen.

Mr. Wilson said one of the things that he really captured in their readings today was it's one thing to read about it or to talk about it, but when someone else comes into your classroom and observes behaviors and is able to talk specifically about those observations, that's when those crucial conversations about what is actually happening can have the ability to help them do that personal contemplation about how they talk and act and then identify areas that they aren't getting right in terms of how they interact with each other and then make changes. He said it's the application in terms of very specific observation of teacher actions that either are supportive of all students or are discriminatory.

Dr. Haysbert said that model provides an opportunity to get to some of the racist and discriminatory practices that people have without calling them out on it because what you're doing is you're observing how they're behaving toward people, and if those behaviors are different toward the black, Latino or smarter kids in the class, it's just pointed out, and if you're about change, you'll change that.

Chair Cervantes said one of the things they have to think about is the fact that as they are moving to the legislative session, they need to really look at how the state is funding education and ask what the supports for students are who need more and how is that funded.

Mr. Wilson said he didn't know if there was evidence yet, but Mr. Ruiz talked about working with schools that were required to do corrective action plans when there was low performance in terms of achievement for English learners. He said in the process of working with the schools to look at root causes and identify specific strategies, there seemed to be something powerful in terms of the school identifying needs and developing specific strategies that would address the needs that were identified. He said maybe requiring schools that are low performing in terms of reading achievement to develop a corrective action plan that addresses root causes would be a recommendation that would come from the English Mastery Council, not specifically about English learners, but for student populations that are just not getting the support they need to achieve greater levels of success.

Presentation: Developing Content & Language Simultaneously for all Students (continued)

Chair Cervantes said they came up with several excellent questions and talking points that they could bring back again for discussion. She said she could report the questions that they brought forward in the group in their meeting next week. She said at the next English Proficiency and Academic Achievement Subcommittee meeting, it might be beneficial for them after they've watched the videos and had a little bit more discussion around all the presentations they received that they come back around to the questions and say what are one or two recommendations that they recommend that the full English Mastery Council would adopt to take forward to the State Board of Education.

Mr. Wilson said that in order for the English Mastery Council to have an impact in this area, there needs to be very specific recommendations, and if they can prioritize those to the two or three that they feel would have the greatest impact, that that would help the State Board to hear recommendations that they can act on.

Chair Cervantes said she forwarded to everyone the article about nine building blocks of high performing systems. She said there were some really important parts or concepts within the way to think about schools and some approaches to take to improve the work in schools that they could consider as they are formulating their recommendations to the full EMC at their next meeting. She said before that meeting, she asked could members please review the teacher expectations articles that Dr. Haysbert gave them for today's meeting and the nine building blocks article as well as review the information from today's meeting. She said maybe members could draft out some thoughts that they have around recommendations to make to the full committee.

Public Comments #2

There were no public comments via email at that time.

Adjournment

Chair Cervantes thanked everyone and adjourned the meeting at 4:01 PM.