

English Mastery Council Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 21, 2021
8:00 AM

Call to Order; Roll Call; Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Lorna James-Cervantes called the meeting of the English Mastery Council to order at 8:00 AM on Thursday, January 21, 2021 via Lifesize videoconference.

Mindy Montoya conducted a roll call. **Quorum was established** (eight members present).

Committee Members Present:

Bettye Haysbert
Diana Cantu
Lorna James-Cervantes
Laurel Crossman
Gladis Diaz
Sharolyn Pollard-Durodola
Karl Wilson (Jonathan Moore's designee)
Paula Zona

Committee Members Absent:

Nancy Brune
Antoinette Cavanaugh
Jonathan Moore

Others Present:

Blakely Hume
Sophia Masewicz
Mindy Montoya

Chair Cervantes led the group in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comments #1

Mindy Montoya stated there were no public comments via email at the time.

Approval of Flexible Agenda

Motion: Approve Flexible Agenda
By: Diana Cantu
Second: Laurel Crossman
Vote: Passed unanimously

Approval of September 24, 2020 Minutes

Motion: Approve September 24, 2020 EMC Meeting Minutes
By: Laurel Crossman
Second: Paula Zona
Vote: Passed unanimously

Principal Presentation and Panel Discussion

Chair Cervantes introduced the following three Clark County School District principals from Zoom schools who serve in high EL populations with low income families and are “beating the odds” by showing outstanding growth every year in their academic achievement or outstanding proficiency among the students in their school.

- Judy A. Jordahl, Principal, Fay Herron Elementary School
- Rebecca Tschinkel, Principal, Ruben P. Diaz Elementary School
- Ann Schiller, Principal, John C. Fremont Professional Development Middle School

Chair Cervantes stated the purpose of inviting the principals is to give them the opportunity to provide information about their school and answer the following questions: (1) What makes your school a leader in change and success for students? (2) How have you changed the school’s climate to one of success? (3) Highlight your work with ELs and non-standard English learner populations. She said at the conclusion of their presentations, the Council will get the opportunity to ask questions.

Chair Cervantes stated they identified these three schools a few years ago while Dr. Sophia Masewicz was traveling for her Zoom monitoring, speaking to principals of schools that were finding success and trying to understand what was different about what the principal and staff members were doing that may not be happening at the schools that are not finding the successes.

Principal Judy A. Jordahl spoke on her experience at Fay Herron Elementary School. Ms. Jordahl stated she’s been at the school for ten years. When she started, the school was ranked as the lowest school in the district. The student population has dropped from approximately 1,100 students to 750, and 97-98 percent of which English is their second language and 100 percent of which are free or reduced lunch. Ms. Jordahl said ten years ago, approximately 80 percent of the student population were taking WIDA testing and considered true ELL, but the number has since dropped to approximately 47 percent of the student population. She explained that a school becoming a leader is a process that takes place slowly over time and requires implementation of strong teachers as leaders, who then step up and coach other people in areas where they may be the most successful. She discussed strengthening Tier I instruction first and then branching out to Tiers II and III to strengthen the grade levels and implementing school-wide programs, such as school-wide math vocabulary and school-wide language vocabulary. She discussed the non-negotiables in teaching: review; honing in on what kids need for success; supporting teachers. She explained the importance of involving the community and parents in improving the state of a school and indicated that to be successful requires a combination of many different things, including gaining trust and building relationships with parents and the community. She further stressed the importance of trusting teachers to be the experts. She explained her leadership philosophy whereby she spends significant time in classrooms observing, delegating formal evaluations to the assistant principal, and working closely with math and literacy coaches who work directly with the teachers. She described the emphasis-on-language approach used in her school beginning as early as pre-K, requiring all children to speak in full sentences. She explained that in the intermediate grades, the children are the leaders while teachers function more as monitors/facilitators of the groups. She discussed the use of sentence framing to help students verbalize and use vocabulary. She further stated that her school uses intense vocabulary instruction with the use of context clues and repetition.

Chair Cervantes asked Ms. Jordahl to discuss the strategies she used at her school, which once had high chronic absenteeism, to reduce the chronic absenteeism to one of the lowest in the district.

Principal Jordahl credited staff and two key people in her school community in reducing chronic absenteeism: a parent coordinator and a school counselor, both of whom monitor attendance beginning the first day of school. She said families of children absent from school receive a phone call and discussed the necessity of home visits in ensuring attendance as well as rewarding with positive incentives. She indicated that with virtual classes, teachers are informing aides of absences and the aides are then reaching out via phone call to the families.

Principal Presentation and Panel Discussion (continued)

Principal Ann Schiller spoke on her experience at John C. Fremont Professional Development Middle School. Ms. Schiller stated that Fremont Middle School is one of the oldest schools in Las Vegas and was considered the neighborhood school back in the day. Several notable Nevadans had attended Fremont Middle School, including governors, Congresswoman Shelley Berkley, as well as notable doctors and businessmen. She indicated Fremont Middle School is doing many of the same things that Ms. Jordahl indicated Fay Herron School is doing. Ms. Schiller indicated chronic absenteeism has been the biggest struggle at her school and explained the school's goal is to get the middle schoolers to high school because middle school is a place where students can fall through the cracks. She indicated she has been at the Fremont Middle School for 15 years, first as an assistant principal and then later as principal and that change in a school is a slow process. She discussed the major restructuring of the master schedule in her school, which began in 2010, to include two 55-minute advisory periods per week exclusively dedicated to improving student reading skills. She explained that all staff in her school, regardless of area of expertise, are English language learner teachers as this is a shared responsibility and school-wide goal.

Principal Schiller discussed the school's partnership with UNLV GEAR UP and the benefit of this partnership for classroom learning, afterschool programs, and tutoring as well as the school's partnership in 2013 with R & R Advertising in an anti-bullying campaign. As a result of this partnership, the school was able to write and implement a curriculum called the Lancer Code, which incorporates loyalty, accountability, nobility, courageousness, empathy, and respect. Ms. Schiller explained that in 2016, the school renamed advisory to power hour and began increasing math skills. In two years' time, the school was able to nearly double its points on the NSPF star rating from 35 to almost 70. She explained that in that time period, Zoom was paying for the Evaluate Program and the school was able to build a culture around Evaluate in English and in math that included monthly testing and school-wide incentives, the competitiveness of which excited students. She said since the district has discontinued payment for that program, the school is searching for another similar program. She explained the importance of consistent proctoring of students in such a highly transient environment and discussed the importance of longevity of staff and indicated the stability of staff and support staff in her school, with staff leaving primarily only for retirement. She stated things were going well and standardized test scores were continuing to rise until the beginning of the pandemic in March of 2020, at which time the school began to endure the struggles of remote teaching and as a result, has lost some student progression that she hopes will be regained as schools continue to go back to in-person learning.

Principal Rebecca Tschinkel spoke on her experience at Ruben P. Diaz Elementary School. Ms. Tschinkel stated when she began at Diaz Elementary in 2014, the school was one of only two gender-based schools in the district. She explained that when the school became a Zoom school, because of Zoom's consistency requirements, Diaz Elementary needed to transition from gender-based to no longer gender-based, which was a large adjustment for intermediate students who had only ever been in a same-sex classroom up to that point. She echoed Ms. Jordahl's earlier statement that change is a slow process that takes time and discussed beginning the change process with adjusting Tier I instruction and getting all staff on board with the process, continuing high expectations without excuses, providing professional development, and administering needs assessments. She also echoed Ms. Schiller's point of the importance of staff longevity and indicated that she also has been able to maintain a solid staff, all of whom are on the same page in terms of school-wide non-negotiables. She indicated the non-negotiables are in print: use of sentence frame; formulaic expressions; all students are required to speak in complete sentences; all students are expected to explain their thinking.

Principal Tschinkel explained some of the limitations of working in a virtual environment, such as the inability to hear from every student when asking higher-order-thinking questions. Ms. Tschinkel credited Zoom funding for many of the achievements of Diaz Elementary and expressed her uncertainty that the school could continue to move forward as successfully if that funding were to disappear. She indicated that her school will have higher turnover this year than in the past due to more retirements than usual and indicated her agreement with Ms. Jordahl regarding school leaders needing to spend significant amounts of time in classrooms as well as conferencing regularly with teachers in order to define needs and improve morale. She expressed that this year, chronic absenteeism has been at an all-time high at Diaz Elementary thus leading to a push among educators to actively engage students in virtual lessons. She explained that the school has performed a lot of home visits, particularly during the pandemic, but to do so has been a struggle.

Principal Presentation and Panel Discussion (continued)

Chair Cervantes indicated to the Council that one of the differences between these three schools and others of comparable size in the district is the level of expectation and rigor in the lessons. In addition, these schools are teaching to the grade-level standards with an expectation and urgency that all standards should be taught to all students. Chair Cervantes opened the floor to the Council for questions.

Dr. Sharolyn Pollard-Durodola thanked the principals and asked them to expand on the restructuring of Tier I instruction that took place in their schools.

Principal Tschinkel explained that her school started by looking at their PLC structure and creating long-range plans. Once the long-range plans were created, the next piece was to look at assessments and the most effective way to assess summatively and formatively. Once the assessments were refined to address the depth of the standard, the school next moved to the instructional piece and determined what students needed to be asked to do in order to demonstrate mastery. Ms. Tschinkel explained that her school spends time refining rubrics, particularly in the area of writing. In addition, the school provided professional development on the five big ideas of literacy, which Ms. Tschinkel explained were not being demonstrated in the intermediate grades at that time. Ms. Tschinkel explained that the school also did PD in math and looked closely at the standards being taught and defined aspect of rigor in math. Ms. Tschinkel indicated that five to six years into the process, the long-range plans are still being refined.

Principal Jordahl signaled her agreement with Ms. Tschinkel's explanation and added two points: it served the district well that all of the standards had been touched upon prior to the pandemic so that no chunk of standard learning was lost at the end of the year; secondly, Ms. Jordahl indicated that this is something being carefully investigated now for next year because there will be significant change in the long-range plans going forward as pacing has not been able to be as strong as in the past.

Principal Schiller added that when looking at Tier I instruction at the middle school level, it was important to teach teachers to break down chapters, do outlines, front load vocabulary, and to teach the whole thing as a lesson. Ms. Schiller indicated that the teachers who have come to the middle school from the elementary level appear to be better at Tier I instruction, breaking down concepts, and coaching kids through material than teachers with a high school mindset.

Sharolyn Durodola commented on the fact that the principals referred to opportunities in which teachers are peer coaching or observing and as such, that must have been part of this process as well as the planning process and indicated to the principals how helpful this was.

Karl Wilson asked the principals to elaborate on the concept of non-negotiables in their schools, what those non-negotiables are, and how to go about establishing and maintaining the non-negotiables that have made a change in the learning process and in student outcomes.

Principal Jordahl indicated that her school has accomplished this through teamwork and committees and deciding as a staff what those non-negotiables should be through purposeful planning and discussions about what is working, what is creating good learning and a sense of purpose. Ms. Jordahl described using school-wide expectations rather than grade-level expectations, and gave the example of using the word "vertices" rather than corner when teaching about triangles at every grade level beginning with Pre-K.

Principal Tschinkel concurred with Ms. Jordahl and further indicated the importance of PLCs and PD in developing non-negotiable standards. Ms. Tschinkel further discussed the importance of turn-and-talk academic peer-to-peer discourse non-negotiables and indicated that her school had spent some significant PD time focusing on this subject, at the end of which teachers were asked to list all the elements of academic discourse, rank themselves, and then use that information to create an academic action plan to strengthen an area of weakness within themselves to ensure that school-wide academic discourse and peer-to-peer academic discourse was being utilized consistently.

Principal Presentation and Panel Discussion (continued)

Principal Schiller discussed teachers changing the mindset that the standards are just something that needs to be put in a lesson plan to follow; the standard is also for the student. Ms. Schiller discussed how at the beginning of every class, the standard is explained and broken down in student-friendly terms. By using this technique, a student who is asked what they are learning today can then answer exactly with the standard-based learning in which they are engaging in class.

Dr. Durodola asked in what ways the teachers are monitoring their own growth as they are planning out instructions for students.

Principal Tschinkel responded that because teachers struggle with what self-monitoring looks like, her school embeds the self-monitoring into professional development so that it can then be seen in classrooms. Ms. Tschinkel stated her teachers use a four-to-one rubric in class and the primary grades are not using the one-to-four scale as much and are breaking down the professional development piece of what needs to be strengthened and breaking down the steps in the standard with which they struggled the most. Ms. Tschinkel discussed helping target assistance based on the teacher's specific needs rather than focusing on one aspect across the boards.

Paula Zona requested email addresses for the three principals in order to initiate possible future discussion.

Chair Cervantes indicated that with the permission of the three principals, the emails could be sent to members interested.

Dr. Bettye Haysbert asked about the achievement data for African-American students.

Principal Jordahl indicated that her school has only a very small sub-group of approximately 25-26 African-American students and this is an area in which she has been concerned as it links directly to attendance and the school has more difficulty in gaining attendance with the African-American and white students and has seen greater success with reaching its Hispanic population of students.

Principal Schiller explained that the African-American population in her school has been steadily increasing in her time at Fremont Middle School and is now at nearly 20 percent of the school. Ms. Schiller indicated attendance has been a struggle for this population and this population does perform lower and echoed Ms. Jordahl's statement that the Hispanic population in her school is making bigger gains and improvements and expressed hope in bringing up the other groups in her school to that level as well. She further indicated that the GEAR UP and TRIO programs through UNLV have helped significantly.

Principal Tschinkel echoed her agreement with both Ms. Jordahl and Ms. Schiller and indicated that the African-American population at Diaz is very close to the one at Fay Herron and is also a concern at her school. Ms. Tschinkel discussed addressing this by creating a grade-level-wide Tier II intervention and having the coaches help address some of the other subgroups. She discussed transiency in her school as being an issue with attendance and indicated to the Council that currently with distance learning, the school is targeting students for one-on-one mentoring to help with attendance issues.

Principal Jordahl concurred with Ms. Tschinkel's assessment of this group being the most transient group in her school as well. Ms. Jordahl explained that several African-American teachers in her school have partnered as mentor role models for some of these students. She indicated she did not have metrics for the Council on the success of this initiative but did indicate that this is definitely a concern in her school.

Principal Tschinkel discussed the focus on hiring staff members of color to help represent the students in the population of her school and indicated the importance of trying to get more candidates that represent the population and students in the schools.

Diana Cantu asked the principals what other issues might be creating the lower numbers in the African-American demographics given that all students are receiving the same type of instruction.

Principal Presentation and Panel Discussion (continued)

Principal Jordahl responded that attendance is a large part of the problem and also indicated that there is less parent support in the African-American subgroup than in other subgroups and did indicate to the Council that she is open to any suggestions to help better reach that population.

Principal Schiller agreed with Ms. Jordahl and indicated that working with outside partners like UNLV GEAR UP and TRIO have made a difference. In addition, she noted the importance of students building relationships with mentors who mirror them.

Principal Tschinkel indicated her agreement with both Ms. Jordahl and Ms. Schiller's strategies and further explained that using Tier I strategies, having students in the Zoom center, and teachers being able to work with Tier II has helped at Diaz.

Chair Cervantes stated that one of the things schools need to look at is whether or not students are showing growth in the school, regardless of proficiency level. Chair Cervantes thanked the three principals for their presentations.

English Language Development Standards Framework Update

Dr. Sophia Masewicz explained that this was spearheaded by the English Mastery Council based on feedback from educators. She stated that educators from across the state, experts in EL, district personnel, and many others were involved in the development of the ELD Standards Framework. Dr. Masewicz recognized both Sharolyn Pollard-Durodola and Chair Cervantes for their dedication and commitment in the creation of these standards and stated that the foundation of the standards is focused on content of ELD, math, science, and social studies and is the connection that the teachers make between the ELD standards and the Nevada academic content standards. She stated the ELD standards are organized around the disciplinary practices of the four content standards of ELA, math, social studies, and science, and the ELD Standards Framework provides best practices for ELs. She stated the rollout and implementation is now in year two and explained a three-year roadmap was developed that connects the strategic plan of the Nevada Department of Education around values such as equity inclusion. She further stated that a three-year action plan outlines the work and deliverables over a three-year period, including engagement with district and charter schools and the initial rollout, which included a webinar for approximately 200 people in which the ELD Standards Framework was introduced. A second webinar is planned for January 26 to connect the NEPF and the ELD Standards Framework. She stated the Nevada Educators Performance Framework (NEPF) is the evaluation standard used by all districts in the state of Nevada, with the exception of Washoe. Based on feedback from educators, videos and vignettes were created to demonstrate what the ELD Standards Framework looks like in practice. There will be ten webinars that will be completed between January and May that focus on the ELD Standards Framework general content practices for educators. The purpose of the ELD Standards Framework is to help all educators to really understand the language needs, academic needs, and content needs for English learners. She explained the last piece of the rollout is the development of ELD Standards Framework coursework, and the anticipated timeframe for completion is February through June of 2021.

Dr. Masewicz explained that the district policy subcommittee is looking closely at the data to really understand what is working in the districts in terms of their policies and plans. She stated the data comes from information provided from the districts via desktop monitoring. She indicated one of the concerns was around the participation of English learners in advanced programming and stated EL students represent approximately two percent of the enrolled population and AP students represent approximately four percent of the enrolled population. She stated the data indicates the percentage of kids with IEPs in K-5 is higher than expected as reported by school districts and there have been questions around the different models and how effective those models are in Nevada. She indicated the largest number of students are in the academic language acquisition through content, which is Clark County. She explained that districts with less than 100 ELs, the language instructional programs would be sheltered instruction and that most districts with small populations of under 100 ELs are using the pull-out model, districts with 100 to 500 ELs are moving more to sheltered instruction as a model. She stated districts with 500 to 2,000 ELs are using a mixed model of pull-out, sheltered, content-based EL instruction and co-teaching, and the largest districts do have some variation in the different models, but are largely using pull-out. She stated Clark is using the academic language model.

English Language Development Standards Framework Update (continued)

Laurel Crossman asked for the statewide percentage of ELs. Dr. Masewicz reported that the statewide percentage of ELs is around 14 percent. Ms. Crossman suggested that the Council examine where African-American student populations fall on the GATE advanced placements and the SPED, and whether or not there is appropriate representation or if there is under-identification.

Dr. Durodola thanked Dr. Masewicz for providing a comprehensive report and commented she was impressed with the LIEP slide that looked into instructional practices for ELs based on student enrollment. She indicated it would be helpful if they did a deeper dive in terms of students who are in the lower profile in their academic achievement and the instructional practices at those schools where they are served by school enrollment demographics. She further commented it appears the same type of process is needed for underperforming students who are not ELs.

Chair Cervantes concurred with both Ms. Crossman and Dr. Durodola's suggestions and requested a member of NDE help the Council look at how students in the lowest percentile of achievement in the state are represented in GATE, in advanced programming, and in IEPs so that the Council could then make some appropriate recommendations in that area. Chair Cervantes indicated the Council's interest in hearing from schools that are beating the odds in terms of growth with African-American and non-traditional English-speaking students.

Work Group Breakout Discussion

The meeting recessed at 10:05 so that EMC members could join their work groups. The meeting reconvened at 11:15 a.m.

Share-out on EMC Work Group Updates

Chair Cervantes confirmed all members were present and asked the workgroups to discuss their work during the breakout sessions.

TESL Work Group:

Diana Cantu informed the Council that the TESL workgroup discussed the evaluation of ELAD and how it would look and work, both with or without funding. Ms. Cantu suggested an agreement between higher-education institutes and individual schools who have hired newly graduated ELAD educators so that the institute and the students could work together. She also suggested teachers reach out to institutions in their involvement with ELAD and indicated the bigger issue is the lack of money. She explained the workgroup would like to do a survey but has not yet decided on what the survey will look like. She indicated their desire for teachers to be observed but explained there are not yet decisions regarding who would conduct the observations and how they would be funded. She indicated TESL and the Council should begin thinking about the funding and where it will come from before discussing any actual plans for the survey or observation. She further discussed the necessity of a survey tool to evaluate the effectiveness of the ELAD-endorsed teacher to teachers who do not hold the ELAD endorsement. She concluded by explaining that the TESL committee currently has more questions than answers, the biggest of which is the question of funding.

Chair Cervantes suggested considering a connection between NEPF and the year-one and year-two probationary teachers who have just come out of Nevada Higher Ed institutes to see how successful the teachers have been in their first years of teaching. Blakely Hume discussed the necessity of funding for next steps with this project and asked what the Council wished to do regarding the evaluation process.

Chair Cervantes asked if Dr. Durodola could explain how the funding flows for her when she is doing research, and asked if it is done by proposal that is put forth within the department and then approved.

Dr. Durodola explained that if a project is going to be funded via grant, then that would mean the applicant would have a waiting period, potentially up to eight or nine months, and when the funding arrives, the grantee receives indirect costs, which means the grantee receives a certain percentage and then the money will be distributed based on what has been budgeted, for example, to personnel, materials, and whatever other costs are included in the proposal. She explained that regardless of the project and funding, the project needs to go through an internal review Board, which looks for things like ethical issues.

Share-out on EMC Work Group Updates (continued)

TESL Work Group (continued):

Chair Cervantes suggested that between now and the next meeting, the TESL committee should begin to touch base with EMC members, institutes, school districts, and the Department of Education to try and procure funding for the work ahead.

Blakely Hume indicated that he can facilitate some of this for the TESL work group.

District Policy and Criteria Planning Work Group:

Laurel Crossman informed the Council that the first plan is to provide feedback to all of the districts on the English learner plans that were reviewed. She stated the feedback needs to go back to the districts for review and adjustments. She indicated they are concerned with the difference among the state's school districts given that some are hybrid, some are partially remote, some are fully remote, and some are just beginning to bring back younger students who have not been in an onsite classroom environment since the beginning of the pandemic in March of 2020. She pointed out that even schools that have returned to full in-school learning have had setbacks to returning full-time to an in-school setting due to things like quarantine and wildfires. She indicated that if districts were asked to provide feedback on the English learner plans at this time, they would not have time to adequately address the feedback and do the necessary work at the level needed. For that reason, the work group proposed postponing asking districts for feedback until fall of 2021 with a return date for changes and corrections in spring 2022. She discussed the lack of substitute teachers and the needs of students who have been traumatized by the loss of a family member and how those needs have now changed from prior to the pandemic. She addressed the concern of upcoming funding and the need for funding for remediation, for credit recovery, and for social and emotional learning. She discussed the impact of COVID on ELs and indicated that while all students have been affected by COVID, ELs and students who are financially insecure have been more greatly affected. She stated that part of the problem lies in families who do not have job security and may not have the opportunity to adequately quarantine when needed and feedback from principals regarding some students needing the most to be in hybrid learning are the ones that are fully remote and therefore are not as engaged. She discussed looking into the lower quartile of academic achievements and echoed Ms. Jordahl's statements from her presentation about looking into different or better strategies to use with African-American students. She discussed looking at the institutional practices utilized in school that have higher achieving kids in the lower quartile.

Gladis Diaz added that the inequity of healthcare for minority students as an issue with students being able to attend school and/or quarantine as needed. Ms. Diaz further added that the level of service with home visits has changed because the needs of students and families have changed. She reiterated Ms. Crossman's point that many students are now dealing with the loss of a family member as a result of the pandemic and the school now needs to prioritize helping these students deal with loss.

Paula Zona acknowledged that the work proposed by the work group to be done is important but that it has needed to take a backseat to the day-to-day work that needs to be done in the buildings and requested the support of the full Council to push back the date to look at further district policies.

Chair Cervantes indicated her support both for the proposal of pushing the recommendation to fall of 2021 and looking into how districts are meeting the needs of students in the lowest quartile.

Karl Wilson indicated that pushing the timeline to fall 2021 would be in the purview of the EMC as long as the annual review process was completed in a timely fashion.

Ms. Crossman indicated that to complete the review would be a simple comparison of district policies from the last time to ensure they were current and up-to-date.

Mr. Wilson indicated that in 2019, the statute was amended to say that districts, in addition to their policy, need to include a plan for implementing that policy and suggested that clarification was needed regarding the role of the EMC in reviewing. For that reason, he indicated he would like to get back to the District Policy and Criteria Planning work group following that review.

Share-out on EMC Work Group Updates (continued)

District Policy and Criteria Planning Work Group (continued):

Chair Cervantes indicated that if the plans need to be reviewed for change, having a quick, executive summary outlining the changes might help the committee to accomplish the review faster. Chair Cervantes suggested the EMC recommend giving feedback to the school districts in the fall and would wait for Mr. Wilson's feedback regarding whether both the plan and the policies need to be reviewed annually.

Mr. Wilson stated the EMC's request that districts include plan-specific strategies for low-performing, non-English learners might not be doable without a change to the existing statute or administrative code.

Ms. Crossman concurred with Mr. Wilson and further explained that the potential need for additional district policy for students in the 25th quartile was a topic for discussion within the policy subcommittee and raised the question of whether or not the EMC wants to recommend a plan for more than what is currently in place.

Dr. Durodola asked if the EMC had access to the policies for students in the 40th percentile and below. Ms. Crossman questioned where those plans are filed. Ms. Zona indicated the plans are in the hands of teachers and are monitored by administration and passed onto the student's teacher the following year as a historical record of strategies that have been implemented in hopes of improving the student's status.

Chair Cervantes indicated that in Clark County, the plans are uploaded so that the plan follows the student from grade to grade throughout the district. She reminded the Council of the presentation from the Department of Education in the spring about the Read by Grade 3 expectations, which covered the requirements, the legislation, and the school districts' feedback.

Dr. Durodola indicated there does not appear to be a school-wide plan where principals are a part of this process for students in the lower percentile. She agreed that the evaluations done by teachers are critical but opined that school leaders need to be part of the process as they are the ones who should be using the data to develop a vision for how to provide help to students. She opined that there appears to be a crack in the school infrastructure in terms of a plan for how to help the most vulnerable students in the 25th percentile and below.

Ms. Diaz indicated Washoe County mirrors Clark County in that the plans are uploaded and follow the students throughout their school career. She indicated there are set guidelines in place as to additional support for students, and once implemented, that information is tracked in the student's data folder, which is updated weekly by teachers.

Dr. Durodola questioned what kind of data the English Mastery Council could access in order to have an accurate snapshot of the actual looks of instruction and goals for those in the lower percentiles.

Chair Cervantes informed the Council that the state adopted the MAP assessment to be used for primary grades across all districts in order to meet the expectations of the Read by Grade 3 legislation and suggested inviting a presenter to a future meeting to explain how the work is done across the state in hopes of helping to guide the work of the subcommittees.

Ms. Crossman asked if there was a way the EMC could recommend best practices for each district to address the lower quartile of students based on data received from the districts. She indicated that one of the challenges with the Read by Grade 3 legislation was that no funding was included with it and instead districts needed to apply for grants to try and meet the initiative. She stressed the importance of asking for additional funding when asking districts to implement additional things.

Chair Cervantes indicated that for the next meeting, she will request a presentation on Read by Grade 3 specific to the criteria for ILPs and also include a possible discussion on what specific criteria, curriculum, and strategies the EMC should be recommending as part of those plans for the districts.

Share-out on EMC Work Group Updates (continued)

District Policy and Criteria Planning Work Group (continued):

Dr. Durodola commented that the EMC does not feel as though there is a clear understanding of what the practices are in terms of instruction and language through content learning for the children in the 25th percentile and below.

Chair Cervantes recalled a presentation done by the Department of Education the prior year regarding school improvement and a comprehensive study using data from the state that identified specific gaps in learning and recommended ways to diminish those gaps. Chair Cervantes indicated she will find and summarize that information with the help of Mr. Wilson and Mr. Hume for the next agenda.

Ms. Crossman reminded the Council that this year may not provide reliable data from the MAP testing due to the pandemic, and it is not a usual year where teaching and learning are not taking place in a typical way. Chair Cervantes concurred and explained that she is seeing similar trends with the data in her district.

Diana Cantu concurred and shared a story regarding a child who scored in the 98th percentile on the MAP testing but when testing him one-on-one on sight words, the child only knew two words, both of which were letters: I and A. Ms. Cantu opined this indicated that the parents may have sat with the child and helped him through the MAP testing at home. For that reason, Ms. Cantu opined that this year's data was potentially skewed and that using the previous year's data would likely provide better accuracy.

Dr. Haysbert indicated that including the learners, who traditionally have not been included, in the process could be a strategy that would help in the future as they could communicate what they need in order to be successful in the classroom.

Chair Cervantes thanked Dr. Haysbert for her feedback and indicated it was a good segue into the next workgroup's presentation.

English Proficiency and Academic Achievement Work Group:

Chair Cervantes indicated that there were four main areas on which this committee wanted to focus their work: looking at expectations that are being placed on the students; how relationships are being built with students; discussing motivation and its relevancy to students; and individual models that support struggling students. She stated the committee discussed the presentation of Dr. Masewicz regarding the English Language Development Framework and discussed the need to look at native English speakers and question why are they not succeeding in school and what is needed to help them to succeed. She further stated the committee discussed the fact that students do not develop a love for reading and language and proficiency at reading and language without time and practice. She indicated the Zoom initiative was successful because it was very prescriptive in that universal pre-K was implemented for all students in the school zones, reading centers were focused on teaching kids how to read and teaching teachers how to teach small groups, and additional time was implemented through the use of an extended school year or an extended school day.

Dr. Haysbert discussed the Learning to Read Our Way initiative, the roots of which were in San Francisco, but now is used world-wide as a reading strategy. She stated the strategy arose from a compilation of research showing effective ways of teaching African-American and Latino students. Dr. Haysbert indicated that the initiative also encompasses the recent research around choice for learners. She asked Dr. Durodola at what point the committee would make recommendations and/or show outcomes to the state. Dr. Durodola deferred to Chair Cervantes for the answer to Dr. Haysbert's question.

Chair Cervantes answered that by the next meeting and even before, the members could begin drafting the recommendations to bring forward to the state. She indicated the process of then bringing those drafted recommendations to the main EMC Council, who would then weigh in with recommendations, changes, and/or additions, and then after adoption of the recommendations of the full EMC, those recommendations would then go to the Nevada Department of Education for possible implementation at the state level.

Share-out on EMC Work Group Updates (continued)

English Proficiency and Academic Achievement Work Group (continued):

Dr. Durodola emphasized the importance of including a lot of data regarding the recommendations and commented on a perfect opportunity for a study that purposefully samples African-American students using interviews on their perceptions of instruction to understand where they're successful, where they are not successful, what their relationships like with their teachers, and what encourages them and/or impedes them in the learning process. She indicated that this is a study that can be done by writing a proposal, going through a school district's research/review committee, and obtaining permission to do so with the Nevada Department of Education as a collaborator. She indicated that this suggestion came about from Chair Cervantes' questions regarding the research process with Dr. Haysbert's vision of missing critical ingredients in supporting students in the lower percentile.

Ms. Crossman raised the question of growth mindset versus fixed mindset in students and expressed an interest into researching this concept within the lower quartile. She indicated that children come into kindergarten with the thought they can learn everything and anything and they're ready for it, but by third grade, 45 percent of those children have a fixed mindset that they are not good at a particular subject or that they are not as smart as someone else. She indicated the importance of professional development for teachers in the area of growth mindset.

Dr. Durodola discussed a teacher/researcher who specifically studied girls in math and STEM using the interview process she outlined and indicated to the Council that she would ask the teacher/researcher if she could share some of the interview questions from the probe in hopes of helping the EMC to understand this type of proximal data.

Dr. Haysbert described the doll test to the Council wherein African-American preschoolers in the 50s were given a white doll and a black doll and asked to choose an attribute for each doll. She stated that each time, the preschoolers chose a negative attribute for the doll that looked like themselves. She indicated that this proves Ms. Crossman's point that children pick up information about who they are expected to be and how they are expected to perform very early on.

Dr. Durodola stated that the doll study was recently replicated by a graduate student and the recent study showed that the phenomena discovered from the study in the 50s is persistent in today's society as well.

Chair Cervantes indicated the importance of educators to be conscious the subtle messages they deliver through body language, through response to others, and through reaction to others for exactly the reasons outlined in the study discussed by Drs. Durodola and Haysbert.

Nevada Department of Education Update: EL Impact from COVID-19

Karl Wilson noted his intent to highlight eight specific points, but given time constraints, asked to abbreviate the presentation to just one or two of the items and then follow up with a brief summary of the additional items for the EMC.

Chair Cervantes concurred and indicated to Council members to please note specific questions on the material and bring them to the next meeting to be included as an agenda item.

Mr. Wilson indicated that many of the items that will be summarized in written form have to do with this school year and the impact of COVID on assessments and the identification of English learners and the extension of testing windows in order to accommodate as many students who are English learners as possible. He informed the Council that the US Department of Education just updated their frequently-asked-questions document related to those issues. He stated the legislative session for Nevada starts February 1, and one of the issues defined in the 2019 legislative session had to do with the pupil-centered funding plan, a part of Senate Bill 543, that looks at overhauling Nevada's funding system for school. He explained the plan would specifically transfer the majority of categorical funds such as Zoom, Victory, and SB 178 into a new funding formula with added weight for funding for English-learning, at-risk, and gifted and talented students. He explained that the state funding mechanism already has a weighting related for SPED students with an IEP. He indicated that depending on the extent of the funding, this could bring limited services to schools with small populations of English learners or could potentially decrease the funds to schools with high concentrations of English learners.

Nevada Department of Education Update: EL Impact from COVID-19 (continued)

Mr. Wilson stated that SB 543 specifically outlined the uses for those weighted funds in terms of programs or services. He outlined multiple allowable programs and services and reminded the Council that the question of the new funding formula for school support will be a continuing conversation. He indicated that he does not have all the information regarding the plan but will provide information to the Council as it is made available.

Public Comments #2

Blakely Hume indicated to the Council that the next scheduled meeting was on March 18, 2021.

Mindy Montoya stated there were no public comments via email at the time.

Adjournment

Chair Cervantes adjourned the meeting at 12:33 PM.