

ENGLISH MASTERY COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 30, 2019

9:00 A.M.

Meeting Locations:

Video Conference

OFFICE	LOCATION	ROOM
Department of Education	9890 South Maryland Pkwy Las Vegas, NV	Board Room
Department of Education	700 East Fifth Street Carson City, NV	Board Room

Call to Order

Chair Sharolyn Durodola called to order, from Las Vegas, the meeting of the English Mastery Council at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, January 30, 2019.

Roll Call

Present

Blakely Hume conducted a roll call. **Quorum was established** (twelve members present)

Council members present in Carson City: Diane Barone, Laurel Crossman, Gladis Diaz, Jonathan Moore, Maija Talso, and Paula Zona

Council members present in Las Vegas: Nancy Brune, Diana Cantu, Lorna James-Cervantes, Sharolyn Pollard-Durodola, Duncan Lee, and Lori Navarrete

NDE staff present in Las Vegas: Karl Wilson, Deputy Attorney General David Gardner

NDE staff present in Carson City: Blakely Hume.

Absent

Council Members: Barbara Harris

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Council Chair Sharolyn Pollard-Durodola.

Public Comments #1

There were no public comments in Carson City or Las Vegas.

Chair Duradola welcomed and introduced Dr. Jonathan Moore, the Department of Education’s Deputy Superintendent of Student Achievement. Karl Wilson explained that Dr. Moore serves as the ex-officio member as the appointee of the State Superintendent. He is representing the State Superintendent in these meetings of the English Mastery Council.

Chair Duradola welcomed and introduced Attorney General David Gardner who replaced Deputy Attorney General Greg Ott. She guaranteed that the Council would have many interesting questions for him going forward

Approval of November 8, 2018 Meeting Minutes

Motion: Nancy Brune motioned to approve the November 8, 2018 Minutes. Laurel Crossman seconded the motion. Motion carried and the Minutes were approved.

Approval of Flexible Agenda

Motion: Lori Navarrete motioned to approve a flexible Agenda. Maija Talso seconded the motion. Motion carried and the flexible Agenda was approved.

Update on Subcommittee Work

Standards & Curriculum Subcommittee Update

Maija Talso reported that the subcommittee has not met since the last EMC meeting. They are continuing to support the standards framework project that's being spearheaded by Cole and Sophia. The standards framework that's been developed over the last couple of years was brought in front of teachers or is being brought in front of teachers in sort of focus groups so that they can just do a brief overview, walk through of the structure of the documents and give their impression of how useful they would be in terms of planning. The second step should be a pilot where they actually put the document in the hands of teachers to use over the course of a few weeks to really put it in to practice.

Ms. Talso stated that the focus groups were mostly completed prior to the winter holidays. Overall, the feedback was good and teachers found the information contained on how to differentiate for EL's within the content area very useful. However, teachers struggled because it was cumbersome and took too much time to figure out how it was organized. So the formatting and the organization were the main critiques. One pair of co-teachers, a high school science teacher and a high school EL teacher, asked to take the science framework with them so they could start piloting it.

Dr. Navarrete asked besides the ELA framework, what are the other content areas and are those frameworks completed. Ms. Talso said her understanding was that all of them are completed K-12 for science, math, ELA and social studies.

Chair Duradola asked Ms. Talso how issues related to format and organization of content will be addressed and will that entail more development or modification. She asked is this something that could be addressed in professional development where there is an explicit description summary of how to utilize the framework and what are the next steps.

Ms. Talso stated she thought that all of the teacher feedback was going back to Sophia and Cole and they will restructure it a little bit. After that restructuring is done, that would be when they go to teachers to pilot it in the newer version. Ms. Talso thought that the timeline was that this be approved by the State Board in May or June, so she wasn't sure how feasible that would be if they really wanted to get feedback from teachers who've piloted it and be able to incorporate that feedback.

Chair Duradola thanked Ms. Talso and stated she was looking forward to feedback of the pilot because it was a really important step that is sometimes missed in education.

District Policy and Criteria Planning Subcommittee Update

Laurel Crossman provided the District Policy and Criteria Planning Subcommittee update. She stated that the subcommittee has not met since the last full EMC meeting where they presented drafts of their

recommendations. The three areas that they narrowed down to focused were mostly on assessment, curriculum, and teacher capacity.

Ms. Crossman stated that the other thing that they discussed was a plan to conduct a 25-minute to 30-minute presentation training to school board members at a conference of the Nevada Association of School Board Members. Members discussed the pros and cons of presenting either Friday, 3/8 or Saturday, 3/9. They decided Saturday would work best because their presentation could be incorporated into the training for all the school board members.

Ms. Crossman stated that she thought Saturday would be ideal and she would finalize details and get back to everyone.

Chair Duradola stated there were many questions that came up across the subgroups around assessment practices for EL's in the state, both in rural and urban settings. In light of that, they invited some guests to the meeting for some presentations.

Carson City School District Guest Presentations: GATE

Laurel Crossman stated there was some discussion in previous meetings about the under identification of EL's in GATE and Honors programs and the over identification of EL's in Special Education programs. They had discussed having a review of the assessment practices used by the different districts. She introduced a team from the Carson City School District: Susan Keema, Associate Superintendent, Dr. Christine Lennox, Assistant Director of Student Support Services, Rudy DeLeon, Lead School Psychologist, Joanna Kaiser, GATE Implementation Specialist, and Dr. Laura Austin, Director of the English Learner Program.

Joanna Kaiser gave an overview of the Gifted and Talented Program in Carson City and how they identify gifted and talented students and what they are doing to address the nationwide problem of under identification of minority students in GATE education. The National Association for Gifted Students says schools should be identifying six to 10 percent of the student population but that is just not happening. High achieving children from poverty and from minority groups are 2.5 times less likely to be identified for and served in gifted and talented programs in schools.

Ms. Kaiser stated that Nevada Revised Statutes states "A pupil who is gifted and talented must participate in not less than 150 minutes of differentiated education activities each week." In Carson City, they know a student isn't gifted for only 150 minutes during the week, so they provide every student identified as gifted and talented placement in a classroom with a teacher who is GATE endorsed.

Ms. Kaiser stated that although the state qualifies gifted and talented students scoring at that 98th percentile, Carson City uses the second bullet that states, "The team may use alternate assessment procedures for a pupil from another culture...a pupil who is environmentally or economically deprived or a pupil who has a disability." That is the area of the state law that in Carson City they identify students not just the top 2 percent, but they look at students from other cultures, students who are economically disadvantaged. They're looking at about 10 percent of the population and identifying them on a multitude of measures, not just a cognitive ability test. They do have a cognitive assessment, the COGAT, but they also use academic assessments like the SBAC and MAPS. They use teacher observations and they look at special circumstances, for example, if a student is McKinney-Vento or if a student is at a Title I school or on free and reduced lunch.

Ms. Kaiser highlighted Carson City's GATE identification statistics compared with state and national numbers. She went into specifics about different identified groups. One striking difference was that on the state process they take the score for the whole COGAT, but in Carson City they use a sub test score (nonverbal) which very important for English Language Learners.

Carson City School District Guest Presentations: GATE (continued)

Ms. Kaiser stated that they're looking at accessing the speed of English language acquisition, and they're monitoring the rate of mastering reading, writing, listening and speaking skills in English. That's why they're looking at ACCESS scores as another point of consideration for nominating these students.

The GATE services in Carson City are comprehensive: they have an elementary cluster program starting in third grade and a new program called Young Scholars starting as early as first grade. They have after school programs, enrichment programs, and summer programs. There's a GATE parent group and they even have a GATE parent book club. There are two models used in middle school and high school, either the cluster model or the immersion model. Every GATE student in Carson City from third grade through eighth grade is with a GATE endorsed teacher.

Dr. Navarrete asked if they had looked at the number of EL's who were being nominated. Ms. Kaiser said they were very concerned about the number of EL's being nominated, and that's when they came up with the idea of looking at ACCESS scores. If a student has an ACCESS score of 1.0, if they're gained language of 1.0 or higher, they must be nominated.

Dr. Navarrete asked what percentage of students in the Carson City School District are ELL's. Ms. Kaiser said 14.5 percent. Nationally, English learners make up only 3 percent of students in gifted programs, even though 11 percent of students in schools offering gifted and talented are English learners. That's why Carson City is looking at ACCESS scores to further identify students.

Ms. Talso asked if assessments were available in multiple languages or are they all in English. Ms. Kaiser said they were looking into getting the COGAT in Spanish and/or having a translator there when they give the directions.

Chair Durodola asked if there was any financial support for teacher training or for teachers pursuing the ELAD endorsement. Ms. Kaiser stated that teachers are fully reimbursed for the 12 graduate credits and they get a \$500 stipend.

Susan Keema stated they hire a consultant to teach the courses, teachers get their credits through Southern Utah University for a lower price as far as the credits are concerned, and then they're reimbursed once they get the endorsement on their license. They utilize the GATE funding that is given to the district per identified pupil from the state to fund this training for teachers.

Chair Durodola asked how is GATE funding decided and distributed across other school districts and what does it look like. Ms. Keema stated that the comparison between the state identification process versus what they're using at Carson City, funding is tied to each pupil. Each pupil is required now to have a GATE endorsed teacher for 150 hours, a minimum, and if they're identifying only the top 2 percent, the highly, highly gifted students in the classroom, versus what the national recommendation would be, the funding is going to go down the longer they use the state's process. So that training and the support from the classroom people is through that grant money that can follow-up after the training occurs could be in jeopardy in years to come, in all districts.

Dr. Navarrete asked why they use the COGAT versus the WISC V or the Woodcock-Johnson Cognitive.

Mr. Rudy DeLeon, School Psychologist for the District replied the reason they use the COGAT is the ease in which they're able to assess 10, 20, 30 kids in a two to three, four-day period. Using the WISC or another standardized measure is a lot more time intensive and requires more people to conduct those assessments in a timely manner. The COGAT is six subtests and it does have standardization for the various populations of minority students.

Carson City School District Guest Presentations: EL's and Special Education Services

Dr. Christine Lenox gave an overview of the Carson City Special Education Services. The district is very supportive in the fact that they provide opportunities for all the teachers to get training for highly qualified sheltered instruction, so within 18 months of employment, staff has been trained in HQSI. Courses are offered for ELAD endorsement as well. For native language supports, they have highly qualified professional interpreters which means they must speak and write at an advanced level. Low incident languages are supported with a translation service, and they require a TESL endorsed teacher to sit on their IEP teams.

For the data that they have available, they utilize Mastery Connect and the Nevada Academic Content Standards are broken down into measured instructional units. And then the benchmarks and assessments and data are gathered quarterly for all district students so they can see where students are sitting within the standards. They also utilize ACCESS scores. This provides them an understanding of the English proficiency levels. Students are considered proficient when they reach Level 4.5. Academic progress can be impacted for proficiency up to 10 years. Their measure of academic progress, report card grades and then an Individual Language Education Plan is created for our students who have growth of less than .5 for ACCESS.

Mr. DeLeon talked about identification of struggling students and gave a description of tiers that each school uses.

Tier 1 is classroom-based interventions to address academic deficits in reading or math that would address a need for intervention in that targeted area. Generally, Tier 1 is classroom based with no outside assistance; however, if the teacher is not successful with the student, then they have an intervention team at each school site that would work in collaboration with the teacher to address some of those identified deficits.

If student is not responding to a classroom-based intervention, then they move on to a **Tier 2** approach. Tier 2 is looking at that same deficit in reading, math or writing, but it assumes a more intense role. So, there's more focus on the specific deficit on those areas. The intervention team, in collaboration with the teacher, works in looking at the data generated and assessing how that student is doing.

Tier 3 is a more intense intervention than Tier 2 and 1. And at this point things like language determination is considered and discussed. There can be requests for an assessment in both languages at the discretion of the team and targeted interventions are more intense in nature and usually require more time. So, after a period of time the data is looked at and decisions are made based on data generated at Tier 3. At this point the team talks about if a disability is suspected. If so, then that's leading towards a discussion of considering a Special Education evaluation. If the team suspects there's a disability, they reach out to the parent to get a prior notice to assess, and that assessment will be completed within 45 days. By this point they've determined it's really not an issue of the student's language; they're suspecting an actual disability.

With the suspected disability, the evaluation is going to be administrated in the student's native language or in a manner in which the English as a second language is not an issue like a non-verbal measure. Consideration is given to see if evaluation can be given in more than one form, like oral or written, and the information is gathered from multiple sources, parents, school records, and staff within the school. They look at the student's background history and want to know if the student attended a preschool setting with English speaking peers. They consider the dynamics of the bilingual conversation at home where maybe the receptive is really good in one language but the receptive or expressive is different. When did the student start learning English? When did the family come to live in the community? What is the student's primary language in the home? How does the student's learning progress compare with his or her siblings? Did the student receive previous schooling? How is their attendance? If the student missed more than 10 percent of school over that year, previous years, that would impact the education. How is the home life? Are there medical considerations?

Carson City School District Guest Presentations: EL's and Special Education Services

Mr. DeLeon stated that the IEP team includes a TESL endorsed teacher. This person has the knowledge to address the language acquisition and then recommend appropriate programming. The parents absolutely are involved in this part of the process and informed of their rights in their native language. And highly qualified trained interpreters are available who can translate this information to the families. The IEP teams consider appropriate placements and supports and location for the student's education and extracurricular activities.

The IEP outlines a formal plan and how it's going to be monitored. All people who work with the student are engaged in creating the plan, and they look at it from whole and they make sure everyone is aware and has access to the document as they move forward working with the student.

Dr. Navarrete said she would be interested in knowing how many EL's are represented compared to their typical peers or their comparative group in the categories of LD, EBD, speech language and maybe even intellectual disabilities because those are the categories where EL's are overrepresented. Is it comparable to national data?

Dr. Austin said she didn't have general population data but did have their district data. They have a disproportionate identification of English learners in the district very much commensurate with the national trends. Right now 14 percent of their students are English learners. Of that 14 percent, 22 percent have an IEP which is more than double the national recommended average of identification of English learners. They had an audit done of their EL program done in 2015 and it was found that they were over identifying in the area of speech and language. There are 247 of their 1,099 students who have an IEP, and 18 of those students are identified as CLS, Cognitive Life Skills, with severe cognitive impact, intellectual disability. They take the alternate ACCESS test instead of the ACCESS 2.0.

Dr. Navarrete asked if they were considering purposeful involvement of an ELL person at the RTI tier to help with evaluation of progress to see is it an ELL problem, a language problem or a deficit? An unidentified speaker said they created a committee to evaluate their speech and language process and they developed new protocols with the help of a state level speech language representative. They've looked at their own data and are meeting with intervention teams to address these specific issues.

Dr. Brune asked if the Department could provide the Council with statewide school district data about what percentage of ELL's have IEP's. Mr. Wilson replied yes, the Department would get that data for the EMC.

Ms. Crossman pulled up data from several districts and Dr. Navarrete said what came to mind was that long-term English language learners are being identified. So, as they get older they're ELL's and they're not exiting or they're exiting and changing identification from ELL to LD or speech language.

Ms. Cervantes said they have to look more closely at the data before making assumptions. She wondered if the reason the percentage is increasing at the upper grades is because of the number of EL's that are exiting at those levels, and therefore that person is just higher because there are fewer EL students at the upper grades because of exits within the students. There's a definite distinction between students identified at the secondary level versus those who are still in Special Ed services at the secondary level.

Dr. Austin said her recommendation was that they focus on high-quality enriched Tier 1 instruction. That is where she thinks they need more data gathered on the level of student engagement for English learners. There's a training process for their teachers; each take 45 hours of high quality structured sheltered instruction. But where they need to go next with that is they need to see how well it's being implemented in the classrooms.

Data shows that students who participate in Pre-K longitudinally do better by third grade in reading overall. There's a limited Pre-K program in Nevada and Dr. Austin would like to see universal Pre-K instead.

Carson City School District Guest Presentations: EL's and Special Education Services (continued)

In Carson City, there are 140 seats for Pre-K and it's an inclusion program by requirement. That's the way it should be. But with that said, that does limit the number of English learners who are not Special Needs who can participate in Pre-K. They need to study the effectiveness of the instruction and also expectations for how quickly a student learns and particularly when it's not their native language.

Additionally, Dr. Austin would like to recommend a more culturally sustaining curriculum across the state and a more culturally sustaining approach, at least in rural districts.

She would like to see native language instruction given to parents as an option, particularly when a student is not progressing as quickly as the school district would like. In a literacy development, she would like to see that literacy development in the native language be offered.

Educators need to study what they expect of their students and how quickly they are identifying that they have a disability when actually what they are asking them to do is cognitively very difficult.

Chair Duradola said she was reminded that often the problems that are encountered later on are due to instructional inconsistencies in language learning, and the students end up never getting strong literacy foundation. She thanked the Carson City team for their thorough, thought provoking information.

TESL Subcommittee Update

Dr. Lori Navarrete provided the TESL update. She stated that the TESL Subcommittee met on January 23, and at that meeting, Kristin Withey and Kat Collins from the Nevada Department of Education did a follow-up presentation on building capacity of school administrators to support the needs of ELL's using the NEPF. The presentation was informative and the conversation that followed prompted many questions and possible next steps from the committee. The Nevada Department of Ed is working with stakeholders to develop a tool kit and rubric to support monitoring of the NEPF implementation. The TESL Subcommittee is interested in the results of the monitoring, especially as it relates to best practices for EL's.

There was consensus after the presentation that there definitely needs to be more training on the NEPF and how it can promote best practices for EL's. They all agreed it's a hard effort when so many people need training and money is limited. She asked how can educators collaborate and use all of the stakeholders to get the word out about the relationship of the NEPF and ELL best practices. The team discussed possible grant opportunities and collaborations with the new Nevada TESL organization as well as presenting this content at the upcoming State Board of Education Conference and other conferences to ensure that effective and ongoing training of the NEPF and its implications for ELL's is being done effectively. It was suggested by one of the members that maybe the EMC would focus on administrator PD moving forward.

The second big task at the meeting was examining the work Dr. Navarrete and Mr. Hume did on a "Debunking TESL Myths" document. This myths document is to be shared with Nevada stakeholders, administrators, teachers, policymakers, higher education, and teacher educators to clarify misunderstandings around working with EL's. The group pared down the myths, categorized them, commented on organization and language, and offered suggestions and comments. The document is still a work in progress, but progress is definitely being made.

Chair Duradola said they wanted the EMC to be able to look at the draft because this is a working draft and their input is welcome. They could have a shortened version for distribution and then perhaps a more comprehensive document could be made available on the English Mastery Council website. Chair Duradola asked the group to look at the draft and identify some of the myths that they thought were really salient and should be part of their presentation to the school boards. She also wondered how other subcommittees might be able to utilize the tool around the myths in their subcommittee work. Chair Duradola said the myths

document might also be utilized by school administrators for “look-fors” during teacher observations. The myths also provide a context for what you’re looking for and what you should not be focusing on. There are some areas in terms of cross-pollination and collaboration across these subgroups related to the work that’s coming from the TESL Subcommittee, especially around the myths. It was decided that the group would prioritize their top ten myths and send them to Chair Duradola, Dr. Navarrete, Mr. Hume, and Mr. Wilson.

The third item that was discussed in the TESL Subcommittee had to do with the ELAD webinar and frequently asked questions document that was developed in the fall for institutions of higher education that are embedding the four TESL classes into their elementary and secondary education degrees. They must be implemented, elementary by 2020 and 2022 for secondary. Some questions that came out from members were how are the institutions doing, are they already embedding these courses, are they already requirements in degrees. The committee developed five ELAD guidance questions for NSHE institutions. They’re going to interview each of the four NSHE institutions to see how they’re doing on the ELAD course embedding into the degrees and where they might need support from the Department of Ed or NSHE.

And finally, in response to many questions about the ELAD endorsement, Dr. Navarrete said that the TESL Subcommittee needs to go back to the frequently asked questions document and flesh out the section on in-service teachers so that teachers can have more clarity. They did a really pretty good job on the pre-service, but the in-service section of that document and webinar was more limited, so she recommends that the subcommittee go back and extend that part of the document.

Fall 2018 Subcommittee Chair Report

Chair Duradola stated that in addition to the myths document, they discussed looking at curricula that are available within the state. They talked about many definitions for what that term means, the ELL framework as a type of curricula in terms that it sets forth a standard of expectations for teaching behaviors and learning.

There is one final EMC Committee meeting on May 8th.

Public Comments #2

There were no public comments in Carson City or Las Vegas.

Adjournment

Chair Durodola thanked everyone for their participation and hard work and adjourned the meeting at 10:48 a.m.