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To: School Committee
Mickey Brandmeyer, Superintendent
From: Stephen McKenna and Sharon Hobbs, Principals
Re: Report on Lincoln School's METCO Program Reorganization Plan
Date: September 26, 2011

Introduction

In May 2011 the School Committee authorized a reorganization of the METCO staffing at the Lincoln School to include a half-time METCO Director who will report to the principals and the superintendent effective for the 2011- 2012 school year. In addition, the reorganization also included a half-time academic advisor position that would allow for an increase in the availability of targeted interventions and support for all students in grades K-8. The existing Social Worker, in addition to her current responsibilities would also serve as a secondary METCO contact for parents if the METCO Director was not available. The existing full time academic advisor position and the bus monitor positions would continue as they have in the past.

Implementation and Evaluation Team

Part of the School Committee decision included Superintendent Brandmeyer's recommendation that an Implementation and Evaluation Team would be developed to identify whether the reorganization is providing appropriate academic support, sufficient leadership and improved communications to continue to strengthen our efforts to ensure academic success for METCO students. The team members have been identified and will include: Principals Steve McKenna and Sharon Hobbs, METCO Director / Academic Advisor Lateefah Franck, parents Becca Fasciano and Ed Walker, Social Worker Amy Hood, Academic Advisor LaToya Rivers, Teachers Scot Dexter and Steve Cullen and METCO Inc. Associate Director, John Shandorf. Meetings will be open to the public and will be scheduled in each trimester December 8, 2011, March 22, 2012 and June 6, 2012 from 3:15-4:45 P.M.

Role of the Academic Advisors

The model of using academic advisors is designed to be dynamic and responsive to specific learning and social emotional needs identified through assessment data, teacher observations, communications with families and daily interactions with staff. The reorganization plan that was put in place this year includes a conscientious effort to provide supports that narrow achievement gaps and addresses the academic needs of METCO students from kindergarten through grade 8. The academic advisor roles are a key factor in the day-to-day support and encouragement we provide to children attending the Lincoln School through the METCO program. Literacy and math interventions and extensions, after school tutoring, homework support, vocabulary development, parent communication and setting students up for success with regular check-ins are all a part of these roles.

In K-4, Lateefah has reviewed preliminary 2011 MCAS results, spring Fountas and Pinnell Literacy Benchmark Assessments, Everyday Mathematics assessments and the assessment data gathered during the spring and summer METCO intake interviews. Using this information and collaborating with literacy and math specialists groups have been identified and goal focused intervention plans have been developed to target specific learning needs for children not meeting district benchmarks. Initially, Lateefah's support will be focused on grades 3-4 with scheduled intervention efforts directed to math learning. Gwen Blumberg and Jennifer Whitt will provide literacy support services. In grades K-2 Lateefah will be consulting with classroom teachers to provide academic support both in class and as a pull out. She will also attend common planning team meetings in grades K-4 on a periodic basis in order to review formative and summative assessment data and to develop SMART goals that target areas of need. The home-school collaboration and connection that is so important to developing a comprehensive effort to encourage students' academic growth will be an additional part of Lateefah's role.

In grades 5-8, the academic advisor serves students in a variety of different ways. Through the evaluation and review of data collected in the 2010-2011 7th grade math class, through performance in class, and MCAS scores we have identified a cohort of students for whom Academic Advisor, LaToya Rivers will teach a grade 8 math class daily. This class is in addition to their regularly scheduled Math class. Lateefah and LaToya have also identified times during the day where LaToya will support math instruction in Grades 5 and 6. LaToya has a grade 6-extension offering called, Get Organized, aimed at helping students to organize themselves for the demands of transitioning from the elementary to middle school model. She is focusing on helping students to be better prepared for class by prioritizing homework. In addition, LaToya meets with small groups of students during times when they are in a "team" time that is connected to the performing arts block. Any METCO student having "team" on their schedule may see LaToya for additional academic support. It is a time to get organized, ask clarifying questions and lay out a plan for the afternoon. They are missing silent reading, but "team" is the time set aside in the schedule for students to get additional support. It serves to compliment and support their other coursework. LaToya also collaborates with teams during common planning time to support students and to strengthen the communication with parents regarding programs students attend in Boston.

After-School Extended Learning Program

Lateefah and principal, Sharon Hobbs have developed a plan to restructure the after school tutoring program in a way that students are grouped together according to needs identified through MCAS and common assessments. Reorganized as an Extended Learning Program, the academic after school program will service Boston students in grades 5-8. The program will provide immediate and intensive reading and math instruction. This program will service about 20 students identified through the 2011 MCAS as needing improvement in math and ELA. Teachers and tutors will provide the students with an additional hour and a half of review, preview, and intervention, 3 times per week, adding 4.5 academic hours to their school week. Goal focused intervention plans will be developed to target specific learning needs for students.

Program Logistics: Beginning September 19, 2011, all students, grades 5-8 (with minor exceptions) will stay in Lincoln from 2:50-4:15 Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday each week. Students not receiving targeted intervention will have the opportunity to complete homework assignments as well as check in with their teachers/academic tutors, and use Lincoln school resources. Other options for students not receiving targeted interventions include participation in sports, drama and Lincoln based clubs.

Transportation

There will be a late bus that picks up the students and takes them home.

Staffing

The staff for the program will include a homework monitor who will monitor students in the library and 3 teachers/academic tutors who will provide services to the students 3 days a week for about 90 min.

Evaluation of the METCO Program

Bringing together the varied perspectives of members of the Implementation and Evaluation Team the program reorganization and new structure will be evaluated in multiple ways. First and most important, the success of the model that includes the work of two academic advisors will be assessed through student improvement on assessments such as the Fountas and Pinnell Reading Benchmark Assessment, the Every Day Math and Impact Math end of unit assessments, and the Goal Focused Intervention Plan results and monitoring. We have baseline data on each of these measures and will be monitoring progress throughout the year to determine if this has resulted in increased student achievement and a narrowing of achievement gaps.

A parent survey will be developed and employed to assess questions like: Is my child receiving the right level of academic and social emotional support?; Is there sufficient, timely and clear communication?; Are families feeling well connected to the school community?; Are questions answered in a timely fashion?; Is a half time Director accessible? Principals will schedule informal conversations at coffees in Boston each trimester in order to add to the data collected for assessing the success of the current model. The Implementation and Evaluation team input will also be solicited to ensure that a comprehensive review of the program adjustments has taken place.

Lincoln School's METCO Program Brochure

A new brochure has been developed for families to provide information on the Missions of the Lincoln Public Schools and METCO, contacting the school and frequently asked questions. This is designed as a communication tool and resource for both incoming and current families.