

**Woonsocket Special Education Local Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
June 7, 2007**

Attendees: Lynn Kapiskas, Susan Niles, LuAnn DiSpirito, David Ibarra, Paula Dube, Jane B. Stone-Tatro, Thomas P. Tatro, Maria C., Dawn Cote, Michelle Johnston, Brenda Galvin, Allen L. Auclair (School Committee member), Ayoola Alegbeleye, Elaine Hazzard and Carole Lerner (Assistant Director and Director of Woonsocket Special Education Department)

Old Business

The meeting began with a video entitled "Getting Ready for RTI: Staff Training on Key Principles, Implementation Issues" provided to SELAC by Elaine Hazzard, Assistant Director of special Education. She offered that SELAC may retain the tape for a period of time to permit others to view the same.

Summary of RTI videotape is attached. It's here to stay. It concerns qualifying students as learning disabled (LD). We have 12-13 categories in RI (different disabilities) that qualify children for services. The federal government is telling schools that the old way of qualifying students for LD is not appropriate. The old way is testing (IQ, educational test) and if the educational test scores are a standard deviation and one-half below the IQ score, then child is LD (this is simplified). This is called the discrepancy formula. This deviation may be caused by other problems (ex: child who moves a lot, child with parent in Iraq and resulting anxiety, low socio-economic group, culturally deprived, etc.) rather than actual LD. Universal screening already exists at elementary school level for reading – DRA. Classroom teacher is to do extra to help a student who is not a grade level on DRA. This is Tier 1. We must also look at the classroom and how material is being presented as well. Maybe a child won't perform well in this environment. Maybe they need a small group to get them over the hump. For Tier 2, we have Time Teachers to provide additional intervention in all schools (but Savoie). If that still isn't working, resource teacher can step in on Tier 3 even without a contract. Resource teachers can take up to 5 students under RTI. If this still isn't working, child may be referred to the evaluation team. The ET will determine whether or not to test the child. Testing may be done and child may be determined to be LD. The IEP will then be written. RTI is a regular education initiative therefore referral to special education is the last step in the process to assist students. Most kids needing RTI are typically performing below 10% of the student population of their grade. A parent asked how a parent will model at this level. Teacher should be in contact with the parent to advise that child is not performing at same level as someone else and what the plan is and the progress or lack thereof. Forms will need to be developed to keep parents advised on all of this. The law is unclear but it appears obvious that parents will want to be informed about this. Parents need to ask, once they see child's DRA, how close child is to grade level and how they are performing in comparison to the entire class. The team will run through the summer.

ESY 2007-2008

Elaine Hazzard provided a chart of the breakdown of classes and teachers. Two teachers are still needed: a 6:1 at the high school and a preschool teacher but she knows people in the community that she will call to ask to take these positions. The most restrictive classrooms at the high school and Globe Park, all with 6:1 ratios, will meet from June 21 to June 30 and July 9 to August 17 (excluding August 13), from 7:30AM to 1PM (high school) and 8:30AM to 2PM (Globe). These are the neediest children in the district. Two classes – one for students on the Autism Spectrum (ASD) and one for students from Feinstein Learning Academy (FLA) will meet for full days – 8:30AM to 2PM – on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday only from July 17, 2007 through August 2, 2007, at Globe Park. This was done at the suggestion of Annette Levasseur, the ASD teacher, who feels a full day will be more productive for the ASD kids. All other ESY classes (preschool, primary and intermediate) will be at Pothier from July 9, 2007, through August 7, 2007, on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9AM to 11:30 AM. The program will run Monday and Tuesday on the last week. A new

class will start termed "Young Primary". Students who are entering kindergarten and have been in pre-school for two years will enter this program. The Pothier ESY on-site coordinator will be Holly Gray.

A grant obtained by Linda Filomeno has allowed the Woonsocket Education Department to develop a summer school program called "Castle Summer Academy" running from July 9, 2007, to August 10, 2007 at Colemena, Bernon, Pothier, and Harris from 9 AM to noon.

These classes will have 10-14 students. Two resource teachers will be assigned to the Castle Summer program. It will be run as a total regular education, inclusion/intensive resource model. Students with IEPs will get 1 hour per day of intensive resource.

At present, however, there are no SLP or OT staff for the summer. We are still waiting for people to apply. The department has called in other people and is making other arrangements as backup for ESY. Unfortunately, 4 out of the 5 regular staff want their summers off. The focus will be on providing pre-school and walk-in services – SLP in particular. Ms. Betty Lacroix (PT) is working as she always does. SLP makeup services for Ms. Baker can be made up at any time with the Rehab Hospital. Call the secretary (Nancy Abato – 767-4645) to clear it and set it up with Landmark Rehab. If there is a shortage again next year, there will be a similar arrangement made and letters will be sent to involved parents.

February and March minutes are still not on the website. Ms. Lerner indicated that she is aware of this but now their focus is placing all incoming and existing students for ESY and the 2007-08 school year. They will complete it probably once school is out.

Changes for Woonsocket Middle School Special Education programs for 2007-08

It was recommended that anyone with children at Woonsocket Middle School pick up the May minutes from the table as they contain detailed notes describing the special education reorganization at the middle school. A presentation was given at the May SELAC meeting by Dr. McGee, principal of WMS. Ms. Lerner also presented another handout to supplement the previous flow chart. A discussion ensued about how a lot of this is necessitated by the "highly qualified" teacher requirements of the NCLB. There will be a case managers for each grade at the middle school who will also do all the testing. A handout of the high school programs available was also provided and available to anyone who wanted it.

Changes for Elementary School Special Education Programs for 2007-08

Elaine Hazard has provided us with a flow chart showing the classes at each school. As a supplement to the handout:

Percentage next to each school = percentage of children in school who have IEPs P/SC = primary self-contained (K,1,2) – 10 children, all with IEPs, 1 teacher and 1 TA I/SC = intermediate self-contained (3,4,5) – 10 children, all with IEPs, 1 teacher and 1 TA INC = inclusion (3,4,5) – 2 teachers (1 reg ed and 1 sp ed) who bid as a team – 25 children, 10 with IEPs PK = preschool IntR = intensive resource (K,1,2) – resource T in classroom for ½ day; TA for other ½ -25 children, 6-8 with IEPs SP/PK = special ed pre k – 6:1 ratio SP/P = special ed primary – 6:1 ratio MF = medically fragile FLA = Feinstein Learning Academy Note that some teachers have changed since the Job Fair.

Bernon Hts. has 1 P/SC, 2 I/SC, 2 INC and 1 Resource.

Globe has 2 P/SC, 2 I/SC, 1 SP/PK, 1 SP/P, 1 MF and 1 Resource.

Fifth has ½ Resource

Coleman has 2 I/SC, 1 INC and 1 Resource

Citizens has 2 I/SC, 1 INC, 1 INC/Multicultural and 2 Resource.

Harris has 1 P/SC, 1 I/SC, 1 INC, 1 Resource and 2 FLA.

Pother has 3 PK, 2 P/SC, 3 Int.R (one for each grade) and 1 Resource.

Savoie has 2 P/SC, 1 I/SC, 1 INC, 3 IntR (one for each grade) and 1 Resource.

Social will have 1 P/SC, 1 INC and 1 Resource.

New Business

Changes to bussing schedule – will be tied to new start times – there will be a letter going out to students regarding this in the coming days and, likely, again during the summer break

New “school-start” times. A chart of the time changes is available on the table. This is motivated by studies showing that high school students function better with a later start time. There is also a financial component in that approximately \$400,000 can be saved on bussing with these time changes.

Middle school placement policy – provided to us and available on the table for those interested.

School Calendar for 2007-2008. It is on the table as well as the website. Please take one.

Preschool Placement Issues. The age old issue of shortage of slots was addressed. There are 3 classrooms with 6 classes (3 in AM and 3 in PM) at Pothier. It is always a gamble because kids come in once they turn three. There is no option of increasing it to by one classroom, even if the classrooms are not completely full in September despite the fact that we always need it come February. The reason is financial constraints.

SELAC Survey. All were reminded that it was on the table and asked to complete and return it. It will also be emailed to all. This is how next year’s meetings are determined.

All are reminded to vote on the middle school bond issue, if it ever makes it to a bond issue.

It was requested that a copy of the SELAC flyer be placed in all correspondence going out to parents of children with IEPs.

Next Meeting

The next SELAC meeting is schedule for September 13, 2007 (to avoid meeting on second day of school) – by unanimous vote of those present.

Meetings will return to first Thursday of each month in October of 2007

Summary of RTI Video

RTI - Response to Intervention -comes from the 2004 reenactment of IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) as the best way to determine whether a struggling student has a learning disability (LD) -replaces the discrepancy model of testing and observation – a “wait to fail” model -the proposed new IDEA proscribes this discrepancy model and encourages the RTI process -to determine if a child has an LD, the LEA (local education agency) may use a process to determine if a child responds to scientific, research-based intervention as a part of the evaluation procedures - discrepancy model assumes the failure to achieve lies in the child -RTI looks beyond the child and examines the curriculum and the instruction that the child is receiving -to avoid children being labeled as LD when they are not because the fault lies here (lack of intervention) -lack of proper instruction in reading can lead to many kids being mislabeled as LD

What works? -RTI serves all students better, especially low achievers -a more systematic approach to use of strategies to aid struggling learners -by using teaching methods and materials called intervention that has been show to work because they are research-based -tracking progress of students receiving intervention and using the information about progress to make educational decisions, including providing the student with a more intensive intervention when progress is inadequate and considering special education resources when the student does not respond to

interventions of increasing intensity

-RTI matches student need with high quality education and interventions and measuring student progress and performance to make the best educational decision for the student

Framework for RTI -built on tiered process for service delivery that increases the intensity of services when a student fails to respond to an intervention -the intensity of intervention should depend on individual need as determined by a designated team -most common: three tiered model

- core curriculum
- more intensive supplemental services
- very intensive interventions

-if the child fails to show progress at one level, the child is moved to the next level of intervention intensity -4 critical core principles to RTI approach:

- universal screening
- intervention
- progress monitoring
- intervention efficacy and fidelity

The Three Tiers -Tier 1 – Core Curriculum

-tier 1 interventions involve all or most of the class as a routine part of the core or basic curriculum – may also include supplemental activities you routinely use here and there to help students who need a little boost

-all students are typically spending 90 min./day on the curriculum with some intervention and benchmark screenings at the beginning, middle and end of year – called “universal screening” (first core RTI principle)

Universal Screening (core principle of RTI)

-universal screening is tied to state academic standards, aligned to the curriculum, designed to measure basic academic skills like reading and math – typically administered school wide – reliable and valid and administered to groups or individuals

-most common form and the curriculum based measurement (CBM) – ex: words read correctly per minute

- universal screening can:
 - providing benchmark norms for each classroom, grade, school, district
 - effectiveness of curriculum for most students, subgroups
 - which students are lacking well behind their peers and may need tier 2 interventions

-you know you have an effective tier 1 process when screening shows an overwhelming majority of students are successful at this level (75-80% of students are successful)

-if a number of students, or some specific subgroups, are not successful, then you need to consider changing how or what instruction is delivered (ie the problem may be in the classroom rather than the student)

-if screening shows a handful of students are struggling and not responding to basic tier 1 interventions, time for tier 2

-Tier 2

-intervention targeted to small groups of students with academic deficits who lag behind their peers at tier 1

- kicks intervention up a notch – supplement, enhance and support tier 1 instruction
- includes differentiated instruction and deploying an efficient support team that responds rapidly to these students

- 30 min/day – 2-3x/week -in small group
- in addition to 90 min. of core instruction from tier 1
- progress monitoring at least 2x/month
- if these do not work, move to tier 3

-What is an intervention? (core principle of RTI)

- nothing new to education
- must be scientifically and research based
- independent research shows the intervention works
- help students learn differently and get back on track
- tell you what you need to know about your curriculum, your instruction and which low achieving students are lacking access to high quality instruction and which ones truly have a disability

- interventions used depend on the RTI model chosen by district
- interventions should match curriculum materials and instructional levels
- modify the modes of presentation
- cue work habits and organizational skills -modify direct instruction time
- modify guided and independent practice
- modify instruction time
- ensure optimal pacing
- increase structure
- checks for understanding
- feedback
- increase opportunities to engage in active academic response such as writing, reading aloud, or answering questions in class
- decreased group size
- increase amount and type of cues and prompts -measure and monitor their effectiveness to determine how well the student is responding

-Progress monitoring/formative evaluation (core principle of RTI)

- crucial component of RTI
- tracking and evaluating student progress during intervention
- information helps determine if student is responding to intervention
- particularly crucial in tiers 2 and 3 where intervention is more systematic
- key elements:
 - brief assessments done frequently
 - assessments occur throughout the intervention
 - results are evaluated to determine whether student's response to intervention is adequate or not -most frequently, CBM is used for progress monitoring -created data used to determine type and form of targeted assistance that you provide to students and how well it's working

-Tier 3 -even more intensive individualized intervention specifically targeted to the needs of the student who has not responded to tier 1 or 2 interventions -if tier 3 fails, then we look to special ed involvement -instruction in tier 3 is typically conducted 1 on 1 and no more than 3 to 1 -increase in frequency and duration -sustained intensive intervention of at least two 30 min/daily in small group or 1 on 1 with progress monitoring for target skill ideally 2x/week -length and intensity depends on student response and/or state guidelines -may require specialized teach or outside source for

intervention

-Intervention efficacy and fidelity (core principal of RTI)

-efficacy = intervention or strategy actually does what it purports to accomplish – designed to address the problem area and has been determined to be a reliable and valid intervention – up to someone in district to determine efficacy

-fidelity = staff applies the intervention in the manner it was intended – intervention implemented as planned based on how it was researched and validated – that is, cannot cut back on time that was allotted in research (ex: if research used three 30 min. sessions, so must you)