

PARKER MIDDLE SCHOOL: BRIDGE PROGRAM EVALUATION

Carolyn Wilson, Director of Student Services

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Goals for tonight's presentation:

- Provide the background information on the program review
- Provide information on the timeline
- Review of Key Findings– Strengths and areas of on-going support
- Action Plan



BACKGROUND

Why?

Timeline

Choosing the Evaluator

Why Parker Middle School?

- Since 2013 work has been done with the Parker staff
- Participation in training opportunities at Landmark School
- On-site PD and coaching with Landmark School
- Opportunities for special education and general education staff
- Goal was to determine if this work has resulted in positive changes to the program structure.



Timeline

- During the 16-17 school year started contracting different potential evaluators
- Met with SEPAC to discuss the type of evaluator
- Preference of the SEPAC was Landmark– Landmark did not provide this service
- Other potential evaluators: Hill Literacy, Nancy Duggan (Decoding Dyslexia), Nathan Doty (Neuropsychologist)
- December 2017 Identified Dr. Orkin
- January 2018 Began the program evaluation at Parker Middle School
- May 23, 2018 Received the Report from Dr. Orkin

Dr. Melissa Orkin

Melissa Orkin, Ph.D. Melissa Orkin is a Program Director at the Center for Reading and Language Research at Tufts University, where she received her Doctorate in Child Development. Dr. Orkin trained in the assessment and remediation of reading and learning disabilities with Dr. Maryanne Wolf and has served as a reading teacher in the classroom, and in clinical settings. Dr. Orkin has instructed on Reading Disabilities at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, contributed to publications on a variety of educational topics including literacy development and executive function skills, and regularly provides professional development workshops and consults with public and private schools on best literacy practices.

How was the program evaluated?

- Classroom Observations
- Teacher and administrator interviews
- On-line survey for parents in the program
- Program Survey for teachers and administrators
- Inventory of Assessments and Curricula
- Review of professional development



WHAT HAVE WE DONE SINCE WE RECEIVED THE REPORT?

Dates and Meetings

Dates and Times

- 5/23/ 18 Received the Report
- 6/7/18 Met with Allison Wright and Richelle Shankland to review the findings
- 6/13/18 Report emailed to all parents in the Bridge Program at Parker
- 6/14/18 Met with Teachers at Parker Middle School in the Bridge Program
- 6/14/18 Met with parents of students in the Bridge Program at Parker
- 6/15/18 Program Review report posted on the Student Services website
- 9/6/18 Planning meeting with Parker Admin Team
- 9/10/18 Review of Draft Action plan with Parker Teachers
- 9/13/18 SEPAC meeting for parent feedback about the report and the Draft action plan
- 9/20/18 Presentation to school committee

***On-going communication with the SEPAC board about the timing of each step and the goals of the process.*

Parent Feedback

- **Certain topics were discussed on 9/13/18 will not be included in this presentation and action plan, but require future follow up:**
 - Outcome data on groups of students in special education programs
 - Progress Monitoring of students receiving specialized reading who are not in the Bridge Program
 - Early Screening process for reading disabilities
 - Entrance and Exit Criteria- is this the correct terminology?
 - The Referral process that is completed when an IEP Team feels a child needs to change programs
 - Comprehensive plan for program evaluations of all special education programs
- **These are important topics, but are not specifically related to the next steps for the Bridge Program.**

Questions



WHAT ARE THE FINDINGS OF THE PROGRAM EVALUATION



Key Findings...

The Bridge program *contains the structure and essential foundational elements of a language-based program including:*

- The extensive training of the staff in specialized reading intervention programs
- Development of a small, supportive learning environment
- Collaborative nature of grade-level teams
- Professional development history with experienced, knowledgeable professionals with expertise in language-based instruction.
- Established routines for organizing time and materials
- A good range of diagnostic measures for evaluating students' oral and written language abilities,
- Instructional strategies that are multi-sensory, appropriate-paced and scaffolded to support the acquisition of ELA, math, and content area skills.

Key Findings...

In order to *increase the efficacy of the program*, and deepen its commitment to language-based instruction, I would recommend a 3-year plan that prioritizes

- 1) the ongoing assessment of students' ELA skills with valid, reliable, benchmark and progress monitoring measures (e.g. aimsWeb);
- 2) integrating a comprehensive ELA intervention curriculum designed for adolescents reading below grade level (e.g. Language! Live); and
- 3) Increasing the use of instructional strategies that facilitate greater student independence particularly in the areas of ELA and general executive functioning. This would occur through both stand and deliver professional development and ongoing classroom-based consultation.

Educator Feedback (p.8)

- **Strengths:**
 - Cohesive grade level teams
 - Realistic student goals
 - Use of curricular assessments
 - Integration of specialized instruction to remediate weaknesses in reading and writing
 - Administrators are knowledgeable about language-based practices and state standards
 - Previous professional development (specifically Landmark School), in helping to identify cross-content strategies for building executive function skills among students.

Educator Feedback

- Areas for **on-going support**:
 - Development of an instructional plan that aligns across grade levels
 - Benchmark assessments
 - Grade-level planning time
 - On-going professional development and consultation
 - Strategic use of assistive technology to foster independence

Parent Feedback (p. 11-12)

Areas of most positive sentiment:

- Most parents reported witnessing significant or some improvement in their child as a result of attending the middle school Bridge program.
- The majority of families are satisfied with the progress their child is making in content area instruction and perceive the classes are engaging and appropriate for their child.
- Most parents feel the communication from the teachers ranges between excellent and good.

Parent Feedback

Mix of satisfactory and unsatisfactory experiences:

- Study Skills and Academic Support: concerns about being “carried” but not given independent strategies.
- Accommodations and Modifications: Lack of consistency and concerned that accommodations are used in place of instruction.
- Faculty Expertise: Concerned expressed about the transfer of skills and lack of norm referenced data.
- Students’ School refusal: 41% reported that their child is often or somewhat avoidant.

Parent Feedback (cont.)

Mix of satisfactory and unsatisfactory experiences:

- Content Area Performance: Families expressed satisfaction with social studies and science (50 % SOC and 41% SCI). Concerns were about being co-taught.
- Grades: Some parents are concerned that grades are inflated or not representative of the child's ability.
- Mathematical Ability: Those who were satisfied were happy with their child's progress in calculation and conceptual knowledge. Those who were not satisfied were concerned the classes were not challenging.

Parent Feedback

Greatest Level of **Dissatisfaction:**

- Reading Fluency and Comprehension: Not closing the achievement gap.
- Written Expression: Concerned that staff are not trained in structured writing programs.



Observations of Instruction: Specialized Reading and ELA (p. 13)

Strengths:

- Specialized instruction is delivered with a high degree of fidelity, by knowledgeable practitioners.
- Inclusion opportunities
- ELA curriculum in 7th and 8th grade is aligned with social studies content
- Modifications and accommodations provided as needed in that setting
- Word banks utilized
- The pacing of instruction matched the needs of the students.

Observations of Instruction: Specialized Reading and ELA (p. 14)

Recommendations:

- Integrating Specialized remediation with ELA: Identify a remedial literacy program that is more integrative.
- Use of Assistive Technology: Any novel used in ELA be accessible in a speech to text program.
- Reading Comprehension Instruction: Focus on before reading, during reading, after reading.
- Content use of Graphic Organizers for Comprehension: Rotating set of graphic organizers or mind maps should be identified and practiced with extensively.
- Written Expression Instruction: Explore the use of a structured writing program.

Observation of Instruction: Math (p. 16)

Strengths:

- Instruction was explicit, systematic and employed multi-sensory techniques.
- Specialized instruction is delivered with a high degree of fidelity, by knowledgeable practitioners.
- Clearly established routines
- Self-created resources
- Lesson had movement incorporated into them
- Abstract concepts are rooted in real-world applications.
- Comprehension checks

Observation of Instruction: Math (p. 16)

Recommendations:

- Use a warm up routine
- Closure routines
- Foster Self-regulated learning and independent application of strategies
- Support and/or minimize shifting between activities
- Use manipulatives
- Consider a classroom management curriculum that foster self-regulation

Observation of Instruction: Content (p. 19-21)

Some of the strengths:

- Daily and weekly agendas
- Preview of key vocabulary
- Multiple multi-sensory activities integrated into lessons to practice concepts and demonstrate knowledge
- Opportunities for small group work
- Consistent use of organizational schema (table of contents)
- Accommodations and modifications provided during instruction

Observation of Instruction: Content (p. 19-21)

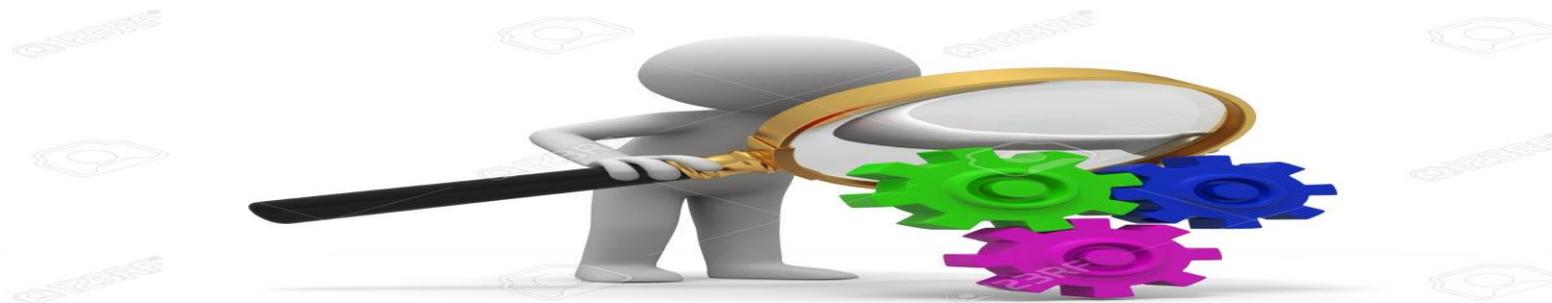
Recommendations:

- Activate prior learning
- Use visual aides and multi-sensory elements frequently
- Offer opportunities for analysis and debate
- Follow gradual release of responsibility model
- Limit independent work to 20 minute segments
- Use note-taking scaffolds to support skill development
- Vertical planning time across grade levels.

Observation of Instruction: Academic Support (p. 22)

Strengths:

- Peer mediated learning
- Consistent use of a table of contents helps for keeping track of notes
- Students advocate for their needs
- Rapport between teachers and students is strengthened during this time



Inventory of Assessment, Curricula and Professional Development History (p.23-25)

Assessment Inventory:

STRENGTHS:

- Wide variety of diagnostic measures for literacy related skills
- Trained practitioners

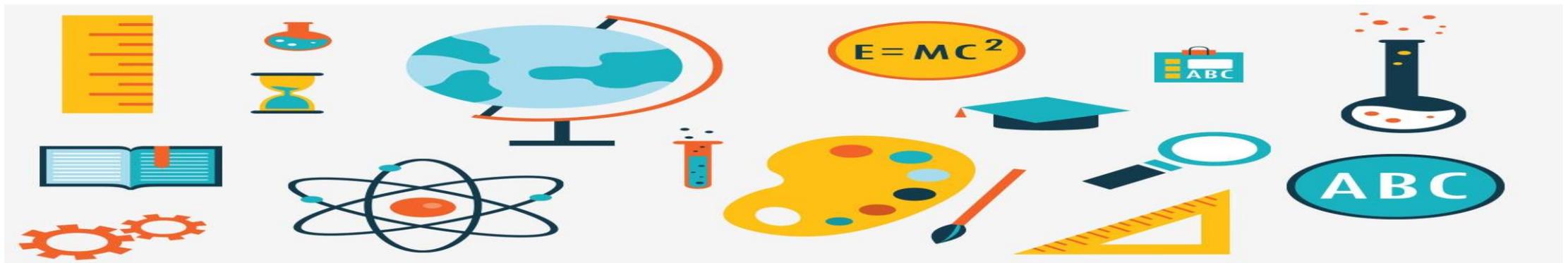
RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Add diagnostic measures on naming speed (RAN/RAS and TOWRE-2)
- Benchmark assessments administered 3 times per year

Inventory of Assessment, Curricula and Professional Development History (p.23-25)

Curricula:

- Wide variety of specialized programs that address the various linguistic language-based weaknesses common among students in the program
- Support certificate level training opportunities in specialized writing programs



Inventory of Assessment, Curricula and Professional Development History (p.23-25)

Professional Development History:

- Work with Landmark School was cited as a highlight for professional development
- Consider having a council of teachers to help guide PD decisions



Questions



AREAS FOR ON-GOING SUPPORT AND/OR MODIFICATION

Action Plan for the Bridge Program

Assessment

The ongoing assessment of students' ELA skills with valid, reliable, benchmark and progress monitoring measures (e.g. aimsWeb);

ACTION:

- During the 2018-2019 school year identify progress monitoring tools and implement at least one tool this school year.
- Review diagnostic tools and identify tools and order any additional tools

ELA Curriculum

Integrating a comprehensive ELA intervention curriculum designed for adolescents reading below grade level (e.g. Language! Live)

ACTION:

- Explore and potentially trial integrated specialized remediation in ELA (Language! Live)

Instructional Strategies

Increasing the use of instructional strategies that facilitate greater student independence particularly in the areas of ELA and general executive functioning. This would occur through both stand and deliver professional development and ongoing classroom-based consultation.

ACTION:

- **Written Expression:** Use vertical time to explore ELA curriculum standards and needs of the students. Identify a specialized writing program that might be appropriate and have staff appropriately trained.

Instructional Strategies

ACTION (Cont.)

- Review Instructional Practices in small group and inclusion settings
 - Parker: Continued work with Landmark for all staff- 3 times this school year
 - Parker and JE: Sending teacher to the IDA conference in Connecticut in October
- Review of Academic Support time at Parker and RMHS to identify vertical skills for executive functioning. Focus on increasing student independence. Use gradual release of responsibility method (see page 28).
- Increase knowledge for all stakeholders around the use of assistive technology. Host 3 parent coffees with the AT consultant to help parents understand the recourses that are available.

Communication with Families

Provide parents with more information on the program and what their child is able to do based on data and other work samples.

ACTION:

- Create a program description that outlines the profile of the students, the methodologies utilized in the program, the goals of the program and the progress monitoring tools. This information will be posted on the district website

Program Staff

- Continue to support the qualified staff in the program:
 - Provide time for planning and vertical alignment
 - Support on-going professional development opportunities
 - Seek their feedback in making decisions



Questions

