

**MANCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT SAU #37**

**COMMITTEE ON CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION**

**September 26, 2017**

**6:30 p.m.**

**Chair Pro Temp Girard** called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Committee Members Girard, Freeman, Van Houten, Avarad

Absent: Committee Member Langton

Messrs: A. Allen, S. DeVincent, A. Bourassa, K. Pelletier, S. Larochelle, L. Gamache,  
C. Martin, L. MacDonald

**Chair Pro Temp Girard** stated at the request of Committee Member Langton I am chairing this evening's meeting so I am looking forward to getting about the business tonight.

**Chair Pro Temp Girard** advised that the purpose of the public forum is to give the residents of Manchester the opportunity to address the committee on items of concerns affecting the community; that each person will be given only one opportunity to speak; that comments shall be limited to three minutes to allow all participants the opportunity to speak and any comments must be directed to the Chair. Any resident wishing to speak will come forward to the nearest microphone, clearly state their name and address when recognized and give their comments.

**Ms. Patrice Benard**, 31 Aurore Avenue, stated:

What I would like to address today is the obvious. It was 88 degrees outside. My children at Green Acres were running around on a hot asphalt playground. They couldn't go into the shade because the two portables you refuse to get rid of are in the shade. I broke your cupcake policy. I bought popsicles and brought them into the third graders because eight and nine year olds who have been outside for a half hour in the heat came in red faced, sweating and looked dehydrated

and I gave them popsicles. You know what? Turn off your AC. You don't deserve it. They do. You are old enough to handle this and yet this building has air conditioning and my children are asked to learn in this kind of heat. I know you are C&I. I probably should have been here for Building and Sites for that, but this is what I experienced today. Did we learn much? Well, after we started to cool down we closed all the curtains and plugged in a couple of fans we did the best we could, but not a whole lot of learning gets done when you are sweating. I think it is ridiculous. Yes, there is still in curriculum and instruction you have to deal with, but for goodness sakes somebody please come to some common sense. We can't continue the way we are doing it. We have to allow teachers to plug in fans. We have to consider as we are doing all these things, putting in some air conditioning. I think something has to happen. Our children.... I don't consider it safe. I had an 18 year old come home vomiting today. The heat does affect our children and it affects their ability to learn.

*There being no one else present wishing to speak, on motion of **Committee Member Freeman**, duly seconded by **Committee Member Van Houten**, it was voted to take all comments under advisement and further to receive and file any written documentation presented.*

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** addressed item 5 of the agenda:

5. Approval of the minutes from the August 29, 2017 meeting.

**Committee Member Avard** stated I will abstain. I was not able to be here for that meeting due to a family emergency. I did not get a chance to watch it so I can't vote on them.

**Chair Pro Temp Girard** asked everything okay with the family emergency?

**Committee Member Avard** replied it all worked out well, thank you.

*On motion of Committee Member Van Houten, duly seconded by Committee Member Freeman, it was voted to approve the minutes. The motion carried with Committee Member Avard abstaining.*

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** addressed item 6 of the agenda:

6. Hewlett Packard grant update by Amy Allen.  
*(Note: Provided for informational purposes only; no action required.)*

**Ms. Amy Allen**, Principal of Parker Varney Elementary School, stated in early August I was invited out to Stanford University and Hewlett Packard in San Francisco to talk about a potential grant with the Buck Institute Waipahu in Hawaii and Northwest Research Collaborative. The interest was to bring professional development and project based learning to New Hampshire. The proposal was sent in in early September. We will not hear notification for this proposal until December, but I wanted to talk to you about it. This proposal would just bring professional development to our teachers during the scheduled professional development days. The grant would provide the Manchester teachers stipends to participate in any work outside their contract. One of the things that we talked about with the Buck Institute and Hewlett Packard is about project based learning. It has been a great initiative I know at Parker Varney but we would like to see the impact on what it has to literacy and numeracy instruction. That is the partnership with the Northwest Collaborative. This would just be a professional development initiative that could be brought to the entire City of Manchester pre-k to 12. If successful they would look to expand out through New Hampshire and the state of Hawaii. Hewlett Packard had chosen Hawaii, New Hampshire and California as their three priority states for education because they are leading the nation in innovation in terms of instruction and assessment. At this point I wanted to just share this information with you. As soon as we hear anything from Hewlett Packard any information would be brought back to this committee to decide what the next step would be.

**Committee Member Freeman** stated you seem to be on the cutting edge of all this stuff, which is very encouraging. One question I have, if you can give us an overview of what their mission is with this grant.

**Ms. Allen** stated it is called a diffusion and scaling initiative. They are looking at professional development to be able to scale out through bigger districts so that is one of the reasons why they chose Manchester, because we have pockets of innovation. Great schools all around the city are doing great things, but they want to be able to support this district to be able to scale those initiatives districtwide.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated I actually have a follow up to that. Is this professional development that is coming to Parker Varney or to the district as a whole?

**Ms. Allen** replied it will be provided to the district as a whole throughout a three year process. There will be a scaling plan with the superintendent's office to see how they would like to bring that and it would be volunteer based.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated and you said it was for projected based learning.

**Ms. Allen** stated their goal would be that students would get two high quality projects per year within their high school year or elementary year. As we know, the elementary is doing a lot of work with Dean Kamen with the FIRST group with the robotics. That's one high quality project. We are doing that work now. Now we are looking to make sure it has a higher depth of knowledge, making sure it is rigorous and that we could assess that it is impacting learning. For me, I want to make sure that we are impacting our reading, writing and mathematics scores.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated and you said this would be at all grade levels.

**Ms. Allen** stated it would be offered to all grade levels throughout the three years on a volunteer basis. We won't force a teacher to participate in that if they don't want to.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** asked will this be additional professional development or will it be in lieu of professional development that the district would otherwise provide?

**Ms. Allen** replied the district offers those professional development days with different topics. This will be one of the topics offered during one of those days.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated to entice teachers into this professional development they will be offering stipends.

**Ms. Allen** stated exactly. If there is any work that they do outside of that professional development they would be paid at their \$25 an hour rate.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** asked what kind of work would be done outside the professional development?

**Ms. Allen** replied if they were planning big project units and let's say the fourth grade across the elementaries were looking at those robotics units and making sure we are collaborating together so we are looking at what a fourth grade standard looks like and measured at the same level. It is a great opportunity. We were able through our SIG grant four years ago participate with some training of the Buck Institute. It is probably some of the best training for project based learning in the country. It is nationally sought and internationally sought so this opportunity would be a great opportunity for teachers who are interested in putting that information into their toolbox of teaching. What excites me is there is a component that we can look at impact for the reading, writing and numeracy.

**Committee Member Van Houten** stated I just want to double check, is this \$1 million total?

**Ms. Allen** replied they are asking for \$1 million from Hewlett Packard. The Buck Institute has also fundraised additional money. Pearl City Waipahu in Hawaii is bringing in... If you look at our in-kind, that is the money that if the teachers chose to do that professional development on their professional development day the district would be participating. There is no cost to the

district, but we had to say if 80% of the teachers chose to do this on one day that would be what the impact for that professional learning would be. I wanted to be clear that there is no cost to the City, the state or anything like that. There are no strings attached with this money.

**Committee Member Van Houten** stated that's incredible. Thank you.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated I do have a question that is probably best directed toward Ms. DeVincent. It is a question about professional development in general. One of the things that I'm curious about, because Ms. Allen said the professional development would be on a volunteer basis, how you develop consistency in a district where the professional development is largely volunteer? I'm wondering if there is a point at which the district says this is what we are going to do and we are going to train you to do it across the board? I'm trying to figure out how this allows us to be consistent in our delivery of instruction.

**Ms. Sharon DeVincent**, Executive Director of the Innovation Zone, responded it is a little bit of both. There are things that are our top priorities in the district. Dr. Vargas speaks to them a lot, numeracy, literacy. There are certain things that we want everybody to know. Growth mindset was a good example. We said that every school was going to do this. Even the middle schools that couldn't participate will do it another day. Some PD opportunities that are things that we think that everybody needs to have we set and we make sure that the time is there for that to happen. If this turned out that we wanted everyone to have that training then we would set that. Then we had other days that are teacher directed, self-directed, and we give opportunities of the teachers and we give them options. We still build those options around what our priorities are for the district, but it is up to the educator to choose because if I was doing a beginning project based learning, throwing out an example, activity I might not need to include the Parker Varney staff because they might be ready for more intermediate or advanced level workshops, but there might be another school that could benefit from a basic level. That is kind of how we do it. It is a little work, but we make it happen. We are getting better at it each year.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** addressed item 7 of the agenda:

7. Extended Learning Opportunity – High School Aviation Education.

*Committee Member Van Houten moved to approve this item. The motion was duly seconded by Committee Member Avard.*

**Ms. DeVincent** stated this is Angela Bourassa and she is one of our ELO coordinators in the district. She is here to answer questions about the aviation coursework for our extended learning opportunity students. They had a change in their coursework for this program. Angela was very proactive and she remembered that the original coursework for the aviation program was approved by the board so when the changes came up and she became aware of them we wanted to bring them forward. She is here to answer questions about ELOs in general or about the program.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated thank you, Ms. Bourassa, for being here. Would you kindly give the committee and the public watching at home an overview of what this program is and a summary of the changes between the two?

**Ms. Angela Bourassa**, ELO Coordinator, stated ELO stands for extended learning opportunities. It is a program that is within our district in Manchester and throughout the state of New Hampshire. In our district we honor learning that takes place outside the traditional classroom. This is toward academic credit in high school.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated correct. This particular aviation program, when did it come in? It wasn't this board I believe that approved it; it was the prior board.

**Ms. Bourassa** stated right. It is my understanding it came in roughly six years ago. The board at the time had approved what was the curriculum at that time. We had competencies in math and science that these students partook in this program through the New Hampshire Aviation Museum. That happens to be, aside from robotics, one of our first extended learning opportunities that is in our program of studies.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** asked could you give us a summary of exactly how this aviation program works and how it interacts with the schools and then things have changed obviously, so a brief summary of the changes would be helpful.

**Ms. Bourassa** stated when this program first began it first had six modules varying from aviation to weather among others that are stated in the documents you had received. The students are recruited through the ELO coordinators and whatever staff we have available, science, math or otherwise. The students are then asked to transport themselves to the New Hampshire Aviation Museum twice a week starting from the beginning of the school year on a weekly basis and take a recess during our recess with the School District under our calendar and then continue right until the end of the school year. Typically they will do projects at the end of each semester and per the approval of whatever cooperating teacher they are to receive credit. It is usually issued a half credit at a time to total one full credit for their participation in the entire academic year.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated this is in partnership with the Aviation Museum of New Hampshire. I'm just wondering how a museum is able to provide the math and science skills that help the kids develop the competencies to gain the credit.

**Ms. Bourassa** stated this is an elective credit so based on the competencies that were first brought up, the curriculum was reviewed and then looked upon to which math and science competencies were taken into effect at the time. That has now changed. The curriculum has changed where the focus is more on exploration of careers in aviation in the first semester and that is what is before you now. The second semester they go more in depth into what it is individuals do where more of the math and science are applied.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** asked are they still looking to obtain credit in math and science or are they looking to obtain other credits now?

**Ms. Bourassa** replied they are looking to obtain credit in being in the virtual skies program as an elective credit. That is how it is denoted on the transcript.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated it is just an elective. It is not a math elective, it is not a science elective, it is just an extracurricular course.

**Ms. Bourassa** stated correct.

**Committee Member Freeman** stated thank you for coming in front of us. I love this program. My dad is a retired pilot. I grew up right outside of Boston near Logan Airport so nobody knows airplanes better than I do, thank you very much, from seeing them very up close and personal. How many students on average attend this per school year?

**Ms. Bourassa** replied it has varied. I have only been an ELO coordinator for about three and a half years so I haven't been here that long. Since I have begun I can only speak for Central because that's what I represent, but we have between one to five students in the entire district. They are capped at roughly around 20 students. They do get on average about 12 students with surrounding students from other districts as well participating.

**Committee Member Freeman** stated one of the things that I noticed and I absolutely thought was stellar was air frame and power plant mechanics aviation technician and mechanics around airplanes. Just out of curiosity because I'm not familiar with this program, has anyone tried to tie this in with the Manchester School of Technology? This is a very lucrative career at this point. Have we tried to do that, Ms. DeVincent? Is this something we can explore? It is a piggyback idea where you are introducing these children to aviation and if they really become invested in it they could potentially make this a career. There is always a need for mechanics when it comes to aircraft. Could we look into that?

**Ms. DeVincent** replied absolutely.

**Committee Member Freeman** stated thank you. I'm very enthused about this. I didn't even know we had this.

**Committee Member Avard** stated just to piggyback on that, you may want to speak to Committee Member Terrio. He had some ideas about bringing some aviation training into the district and some flight simulators. I know he had talked to previous administrations about that. I recommend that you have that conversation with him.

**Committee Member Freeman** stated one more follow up as well. I know that the NJROTC program at West High also does a module on aviation, wind speeds, how to use a sexton, the whole nine yards so that might be something else. If we can make this a continuum then we could really get some kids jazzed up about it and point them in the right direction. I love this. I'm very excited about this. Thank you for bringing it to me.

*Chairman Pro Temp Girard called for a vote on the motion to approve this item. There being none opposed, the motion carried.*

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** addressed item 8 of the agenda:

**8.** Lesley University Literacy Collaborative Study Presentation.

**Ms. DeVincent** stated while everyone is coming up I will introduce them. We have Kris Pelletier who is our literacy curriculum specialist for the district; Shelly Laroche who is the principal at Northwest; Lynn Gamache who is the reading supervisor at Bakersville; and Beth Shea who is also at Northwest. We do have Liz MacDonald sitting in the back. She is the principal at Weston. Weston, Northwest and Bakersville participate in the literacy collaborative study for k-2. They are beginning year four and are here to provide a presentation and update on the progress of the program.

**Ms. Kris Pelletier**, Literacy Curriculum Specialist, stated I would like to thank you for the opportunity to give you this update on Northwest, Bakersville and Weston's participation in this collaborative study. What we have provided you with is a PowerPoint that I know you received prior to this presentation. We would like to present it to you and we will open up the floor to any questions. Since you received that PowerPoint Sharon DeVincent created a survey for the

teachers that are involved in the training and I have the results so that you can look them over. I have included a couple of slides to go over those results. The study involves three components. It is a five year study and it looked at the outcomes for students in grades k-2 in classrooms that are implementing literacy collaborative level literacy intervention and reading recovery. The study itself offers us the opportunity for an outside provider to look at our literacy instruction and guide us in improving instruction. The first component of it, literacy collaborative, is a comprehensive school design model that really focuses on high quality professional development for teachers. It involves a literacy coordinator at each building, a literacy team that oversees implementation in addition to training to the principal as the instructional leader. The second component, which I guess you could consider tier two, would be leveled literacy intervention, LLI, which we have had currently in our district for quite a few years. It is a small group intervention for students who are performing below grade level in literacy instruction. Then reading recovery being a tier one intervention, which is one on one instruction for first grade students that are performing at the bottom 20% of their class. It is a very comprehensive model. I think the strongest part of it is that all three components are very highly aligned. What I would like to do now is give you an overview of where we are. Currently we just entered year four, but I would like to give you an overview of what has already been completed. Year one and one and a half the literacy coordinator, one person in each building, received nine graduate credits worth of training, which entailed going down to Lesley University over the course of that year and a half for five weeks, some of which was summer training. They pushed into classrooms for that two and a half hour to three hour block and lived and breathed that instructional model so that when they go to do the presenting to the teachers they really understand all the ins and outs of that literacy framework. They videotape themselves. They wrote reflective papers. In year two they began with the training of the teachers where they are providing 40-60 hours of professional development. Each school was creative in how they provided that. Some it was before school, some was after school, some was during the day. Northwest that year trained one cohort of teachers. They have such a large staff that they couldn't train all of those k-2 teachers so year three they trained a second group. Then year three, year four, year five, they are continuing with the professional development hours, but alongside is the coaching piece. The coaching piece involves a pre-conference with the teacher where they are talking about the lesson that they are going to see, the literacy coordinator then observes and then they come together for a debriefing

where they construct the learning and talk about next steps for the class or the group of students. The next piece is leadership team training which involved four days of training. That was the equivalent of \$4,800 per team. The literacy coordinator training was \$22,500 for each coordinator which was covered under the grant. The leadership team oversees implementation. It is six to eight people that went down for training. Principals also received leadership training for four days. It involved upping their ante in terms of what to look for as they are observing classrooms and they participated in all of the ongoing PD and PD for their teachers that the literacy coordinator provides and they are a member of the leadership team. Year one for reading recovery teachers it involved eight graduate credits worth of work where every day for the full school year once a week after school they were provided with three hours of professional development. Again, it was very intense training and they work with students, obviously throughout the five years. The reading recovery training was almost \$13,000 that the grant covered for each teacher and then leveled literacy intervention, four days of training for any LLI teachers that were in the building. That was approximately \$2,000 per teacher. The total of the training that was covered was almost \$150,000. The design is really a responsive literacy teaching design. It really grounds everything in authentic literacy, reading and writing experience and word study. As you can see, there is a well buffed amount of time for each part of the workshop. Sixty minutes for reading workshop where the teacher engages in guided reading while the students are involved with literacy centers and then they come back for a group share where the 60 minutes starts with a mini lesson in the beginning of the year for all students, k-2. They are involved with storytelling where they support oral language development. They have writing conferences after that initial mini lesson where the students are sent off to independently write while the teacher meets one on one or with small guided writing groups. Then there is a group share and evaluation. Then the language and word study block which is half an hour could involve interactive read aloud, shared reading, shared or interactive writing, phonics, word study and spelling, language and word play or handwriting. It is a mix of things that occurs in that block. What I would like to do now is hand it over to each school and they are going to go over the data that they have collected. I think some of the data points that we are going to see are from actual assessments, but what I would also like to talk to you about is the coherence between classrooms in terms of instructional practice and also the increase of collaboration among these teachers. I'm going to turn it over to Lynn.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated I'm going to stop you there because you just threw a lot at us and I want to see if members of the committee have questions before you move on to the results because I won't lie, I had a little trouble following you and I do have some questions, but I'll open it up to the committee first.

**Committee Member Freeman** stated I'm going to ask this question and I'll probably hear some gasps. What's a cohort?

**Ms. Pelletier** replied sorry about that. Cohort is a group of teachers that the literacy coordinator trains. The recommendation is that a cohort be no more than ten teachers. The first year Bakersville and Weston were able to train all of their k-2 staff. Northwest has a larger staff so they trained a group of ten teachers and then the second year they had to train an additional group of teachers. They also had special ed teachers, ELL teachers, and Title I staff that could come to some of the trainings also.

**Committee Member Freeman** asked voluntary? Assigned?

**Ms. Pelletier** replied voluntary.

**Committee Member Freeman** stated I know these questions may seem simplistic, but I will say that Ms. Van Houten is an educator, Dr. Avard has been on the School Board for a while, but I am not an educator so a lot of this language is foreign to me.

**Ms. Pelletier** stated I appreciate the questions.

**Committee Member Freeman** stated I am not ever going to profess to know exactly what is in these documents and some of the language that is used.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated this was voluntary.

**Ms. Pelletier** stated we had 100% participation by k-2 teachers, but it was voluntary for the support staff. A reading recovery teacher obviously received the training, LLI teachers received the training but the training that was going on in the buildings was open for support staff.

**Ms. Shelly Larochelle**, Principal of Northwest Elementary School, stated we had America's choice beforehand. America's choice took us to a certain level.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** asked was is America's choice?

**Ms. Larochelle** replied this was a program that we used in the district that we adopted years back and then nothing from America's choice to where we are now, at least for these three schools, and the teachers were... It was voluntary because they knew that they needed to dig deeper into their reading instruction so it was truly voluntary in regard to teachers wanting more.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated Principal Larochelle, America's choice, this was a literacy program?

**Ms. Larochelle** replied it was that the district adopted. I don't recall the year, but it was years ago. It was a great stepping stone for workshop model, but absolutely needed more.

**Committee Member Avard** stated the district sort of adopted it. The district decided that was the program they wanted to go with, but then decided that they couldn't afford the investment to bring the program in full force throughout the district so the whole thing was put on hold while it was going through the discussion of whether or not they wanted to go through the investment. There were a couple of concerns about how restrictive some parts of the program were and how scripted it was. In the meantime, I believe it was when Mr. Tursi was our curriculum and instruction assistant superintendent, used the reading and writing workshop model from America's choice throughout the district. He implemented that in all of our schools. Prior to that it had been being [piloted in three of our elementaries.

**Ms. Pelletier** stated six of our elementaries.

**Committee Member Avard** stated I think it started as three and then moved up to six.

**Ms. Pelletier** stated and then there was a process where they came down to three different programs and when it was voted on by that committee America's choice one.

**Committee Member Avard** stated it was the successful one at that point, but it never moved on because of a couple of question like I said about the restrictiveness of the program and how scripted it was and then the financials really were the key. From that point on, unfortunately like a lot of things, it got put on a shelf and never fully got adopted as a program, but the concept of reader's writer's workshop had been implemented districtwide by at that time assistant superintendent Tursi.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** asked when do you introduce phonics and word study and spelling?

**Ms. Pelletier** replied it is part of the literacy block so there is a program for kindergarten, a program for first grade and a program for second grade that is part of this literacy collaborative.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated I guess I understand that, but I'm kind of a linear thinker. To me, it is not possible in my mind to learn how to read if you first don't understand what letters are, what sounds they make, how you put them together—phonics, in other words. What I'm trying to get an understanding of, are you trying to build the plane while you are flying it? In other words, you are teaching kids the letter sounds while also trying to teach them to read. I'm trying to get a feel for when phonics is brought in.

**Ms. Pelletier** stated phonological awareness comes first. Children have to become aware of sounds, rhyme, alliteration, the fact that there are words that are separated in sentences. A lot of that comes through teaching that we do as part of the framework. Like interactive writing, they will write something, we teach kids how to say words slowly and record the sounds, which then can translate into I'm going to go from the sound to the symbol to then the symbol to the sound.

There is a precursor to that. What this professional development has done is really provided teachers with more knowledge about reading and writing process. In our district we have a lot of children that do come in that are not phonologically or phonemically aware. We have those materials to provide teachers with specific lessons to build that part. I would call it a category of learning that is essential for phonics instruction because that has to come first. Shared reading is another piece on that instructional puzzle that lends itself to students becoming more aware of the sounds of language.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** asked what is shared reading?

**Ms. Pelletier** replied shared reading is anything that is enlarged print so poetry, for example, on charts, big books that we have. It is where the teacher and the students are engaged together in reading, but what you can do is draw their attention to various aspects of phonics.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated so the teachers are telling stories. They are using books to tell stories.

**Ms. Larochelle** stated they are reading the story.

**Ms. Pelletier** stated they are talking about the story and what the story means, but it is enlarged enough print so that the students can see the text and they can engage in the reading. The reading isn't beyond them. It is a little bit above them and then the teachers can show them aspects of phonics like let's look for words that have a certain sound, a short A sound, or consonant clusters. They can talk about the piece and the meaning of it, but then she can dig down to what we call the bits.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated I wasn't questioning that. I just wanted a definition of shared reading. It sounds to me like reading to the kids and involving them in what's going on.

**Ms. Pelletier** stated that's a piece of the puzzle. The point is, all of this is within an authentic context versus when I grew up and it was all worksheets and we did the worksheets, but we never saw how it was going to help us as a reader and a writer. What they do here is all the phonics and word study activities all coincide with how is this going to help me as a reader and a writer. There is a phonics and a word study program, but it is weaved into other aspects of the framework.

**Ms. Lynn Gamache**, Bakersville, stated we are kind of lucky that we have a smaller school and we were able to train all k-2 teachers and an EL teacher at the same time. We have three kindergarten teachers, three grade one, three grade two and an EL teacher who would come to the training. The first year we met every two weeks after school so every other Thursday we would meet for a two hour block on the different topics that were presented such as interactive read aloud, shared reading, interactive writing for a total of 40 hours that year. The number of training modules that we presented that year were 11 and I named a couple of them for you. The second year the same ten members were able to come back and work as a team. This time we met once a month on Thursdays after school from 3:30 to 5:00 for an additional 20 hours of PD. Six modules were presented that year and that just means that some of the topics that we took we went into more depth so something that we might have been presented the first year in introductory kind of terms was now looked at a little bit deeper so that we were looking at it over a period of maybe two months. A total of 61 hours over two years of PD was presented after school and 19 modules were introduced. Again, with those same ten cohort members every time a new topic was introduced we would meet as individuals. Me, being the coach, would meet with the classroom teacher or the EL teacher and we would talk about the lesson they had planned based on the module we had studied and we talked about what was going to be seen. Then I could come in later on to view the lesson, transcribing what the teacher is saying, what the student is saying so we can see what children are understanding. Then afterwards we would meet as a team again for a post-conference and talk about what new learning the children are exhibiting and showing us and where we could look for next steps. If you look on the first year we met on average seven times, which equals 70 individual coaching cycles and the second year was 50, which equals 120 individual coaching cycles.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** asked why the reduction from one year to the next?

**Ms. Gamache** replied because we are looking at topics more in depth. When we meet for PD we might be meeting for two months on that PD so the coaching cycle will happen after that versus the introductory year when we were meeting much more after each introductory module.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated just so you know, your presentation isn't exactly tracking with what we have in our packets.

**Ms. Pelletier** stated we realized that each slide was by school, but we thought it might be too confusing to go from school to school so we put everything together. I apologize for that. It is actually going to be easier for you.

**Ms. Gamache** stated so you get to see all of Bakersville then all of Northwest and then all of Weston. This is our data after our 2015-2016 school year. This was the year that it was my second year because the first year of the collaborative study was my training. The second year was when we were meeting with the teachers after school. Each month we would have two new topics. When you are looking at kindergarten in the fall I really took the November data. If we had looked back at incoming kindergarten it was closer to 4% so over the course of the year it shows a 10% point growth, but really it was closer to a 39% growth. First grade, an eight point growth; second grade a 20 and then again, the second year, 2016-2017, which was last year, we are seeing that now that people are feeling a little bit more comfortable some of our point growths are going up.

**Committee Member Freeman** stated this is a little confusing. Indulge me please, but are those percentages the overall proficiency of the entire school?

**Ms. Gamache** replied of kindergarten yes.

**Committee Member Freeman** stated every grade that is represented up there.

**Ms. Gamache** stated.

**Committee Member Freeman** stated that's where it was confusing.

**Ms. Pelletier** stated there is something I want to point out too that the rigor of the comprehension rubric has shifted since the study began. We are finding that the ante has been upped in terms of what kids have to understand and talk about books. The other thing is kindergarten, we used to in our district, at the end of kindergarten children were expected to be reading at level C instructionally. It has now shifted to D and then in first grade it used to be level I.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated stop. To toss these acronyms out is not, don't take this the wrong way, it is not helpful to the discussion because we have no frame of reference. You are speaking a foreign language to us.

**Ms. Pelletier** stated the expectations for the end of kindergarten and the end of first grade have shifted.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** asked why have they shifted?

**Ms. Pelletier** replied they shifted because of a white paper that went out, not that I published, but that was published where across the nation they looked at norms and based on standards and based on expectations and looking at assessments, the expectations needed to shift up.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** asked what standards and expectations did this white paper address and need to be moved up?

**Ms. Pelletier** replied in order for kids to be proficient on state tests they were finding that first graders and kindergarteners needed to read at a higher level.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated I'm glad we just exempted kindergarteners from state tests in this district, but what are we testing kindergarteners and first graders on that they were showing lacking and in need of greater rigor?

**Ms. Pelletier** replied this is instructional reading levels. This is just projected trajectory based on where kids are in kindergarten, first grade for when they get to those higher grade when they are being assessed. I can get you this paper.

**Committee Member Avard** stated it is to keep them on track. They have to follow this.

**Ms. Pelletier** stated just to explain some of the proficiency levels as far as kindergarten and first grade, the expectation has gone up so the percentages have somewhat dropped.

**Committee Member Avard** stated so you are saying you can't compare the 2015-2016 to 2016-2017.

**Ms. Pelletier** stated no, these can be compared, but the rigor occurred back in 2014-2015 when it started.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** asked what are you using to determine proficiency level? What benchmark is being used? Is this the Smarter Balanced? What test is being used here?

**Ms. Pelletier** replied these scores right here are benchmark running records data that we had collected.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated this is running records.

**Ms. Pelletier** stated but this is kindergarten through second grade. We don't use Smarter Balanced in these grade levels.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated I understand that. I just threw Smarter Balanced out there as a name because I'm trying to fish for what you are using to determine these proficiency benchmarks. One of the questions I have, if you see the 2015-2016 kindergarten, can I draw a diagonal line to the 2016-2017 first grade?

**Ms. Gamache** replied the next slide will show that, yes.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated what you are showing here is basically the average student improvement in proficiency from the beginning of the school year to the end of the school year.

**Ms. Gamache** stated correct.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated and you are charting that growth. And you are using the running records system.

**Committee Member Van Houten** stated you may have gotten to what I was going to ask. The kindergarten percent growth for 2015-2016 is one group of youngsters and then I go to first grade for the next year to see how they have improved.

**Ms. Pelletier** responded yes.

**Committee Member Avard** stated going back to the benchmark and how you figure this, you had referred to D by the end of kindergarten. Can you explain that system?

**Ms. Pelletier** replied there is a text gradient that runs through level A through Z, D being where a child should be at the end of kindergarten, J being where the child should be at the end of first grade, M second, P third, S, fourth, all the way up through grade eight. We have used this system for years. Many districts around the country, around the world have adopted this text gradient and it looks at various text characteristics that are taken into consideration as these books are leveled. If you walk into many of our schools they have guided reading libraries where the books are leveled accordingly. We utilize benchmark running records to determine

accuracy and comprehension so that we can determine where instructionally we should instruct these students. The text gradient helps support us because there are certain reading behaviors that we would be looking for. Again, these are all in a document called the continuum of literacy learning, which each teacher in the district has. It bullets every behavior that we should be observing as students read so they know the expectations. It is much more defined than our Manchester Academic Standards.

**Committee Member Avard** stated and I recall the system from when my own children were in elementary school. I had no idea what the different breakdowns were. If a child is expected to be at D at the end of kindergarten, would you expect them to come in at the beginning of first grade at a D or what is the bottom of the gradient level for a first grader?

**Ms. Pelletier** replied we would hope that and there is not a lot of summer loss. When they get to the December report card in first grade they are supposed to be at a level F.

**Committee Member Avard** stated the reason I ask this is because, as I think Committee Member Girard was saying, if we see that 43% are proficient, so I'm assuming that 43% at D in the spring of kindergarten, but by first grade only 23% are proficient in the fall does that mean they are no longer at a D or are we expecting them to be at an E and they are not there yet?

**Ms. Pelletier** replied exactly. It could be summer loss for why they have slipped down. That fall data is based on D.

**Committee Member Avard** stated fall is based on D. That is where I was going with that. Fall we are expecting D in first grade, fall of second grade we are expecting J. It is a comparison to say where they were in spring of kindergarten is where they should be in fall of first grade.

**Ms. Gamache** stated some of that can be attributed to summer loss. Some of it can be attributed to the transience.

**Committee Member Avard** stated we do have a lot of children who don't do kindergarten with our district and then come in for first grade.

**Ms. Gamache** stated absolutely. A lot of our students, especially at Bakersville, where one third of our population is an EL population so sometimes they leave Bakersville at the end of June and they go home and they may not speak English the entire summer so coming back into school, getting back into regular routine they have to practice their language acquisition again.

**Committee Member Avard** stated it is a much smaller drop from first grade to second grade. We only went from 38 to 32 as opposed to a 20% drop from kindergarten to first grade. I'm assuming transience is a lot of that.

**Ms. Gamache** stated yes. If we look at our Access scores, it takes three to five years for children to build that language acquisition and five to seven year to be fluent. To see some of the summer loss makes sense.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated Ms. Pelletier, in following the graph I'm curious why in 2016-2017 we don't see a report on third graders. Are we not using running records for the third graders? I would assume that now they would be in the program for the second year at least so why don't we see numbers on the third graders?

**Ms. Pelletier** replied we can get that to you. The other things is too,. The first two years of this study are really considered baseline because their training was a year and a half and the training for the teachers doesn't start until year two or three depending on what school you are at. They are only introducing a lot of this so really for them to get it under their belt, we are expecting to see real shifts this year.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated I'm not terribly familiar and I'm drawing off of some memories, conversations that this committee had with the assessment committee that recommended the iReady. I do have a couple of questions because I'm curious how these are

scored. Are these objectively scored tests? Subjectively scored? What is used to determine proficiency?

**Ms. Pelletier** replied what happens with a running record is a student reads one of the text gradient books, a level A through whatever. The teacher literally takes a shorthand version, records exactly what is said. They are trained in how to score the accuracy and how to score the sources of information that the children have used. They then engage in a comprehension conversation and there is a comprehension score provided.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated a lot of this, and forgive the vernacular, is maybe the teacher's feel for whether or not the kid understands.

**Ms. Pelletier** stated the trainings that we provided, the teachers are scoring them together. There is a comprehension rubric that says specifically this is what a child needs to be doing in order to score a certain point score. The beauty of a running record, and I've said it over and over again, you see behavioral evidence. I have the child sitting next to me. I can hear the fluency. I can see exactly what this child is doing as a reader and then I can look on the continuum and say this is what they have for strengths, but this is where I need to go next. This is what we have utilized in our district to inform our instruction. Based on that score, that accuracy rate. So you get a percentage and then you get a score for comprehension, you determine, there is a table, and it will tell you this is an independent read, this is too easy or this is too hard or this is just right, this is where I should instruct this child.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated it does sound to me that it is largely suggestive. Let me try to put this in a different context. I'm trying to understand this. As many in this room know, I recently took the police exam. A big part of the police exam was reading comprehension. To my horror, about a third of the people failed that test of which I think is an indictment of the school system, not of the people who took the test, but that's another story. What they would do in this exam is they would give definitions of words and then they would have a question, such and such is an example of, or they would give a sentence or two of a situation and they had to pick the definition that represented the situation or there would be a paragraph and they had to

answer questions that showed they understood. That test was objectively scored because there was only going to be one right answer based on the information that was given. I'm looking at an objective scoring system like that versus what sounds to me like an awful lot of figuring to determine what the kid knows based on how they sound or a discussion that takes place to determine whether or not they are getting it.

**Ms. Pelletier** stated I understand what you are saying. With the discussion though they do have points that we want kids to make. That is standard on the running record. Teachers know that students have to give a certain amount of information in order for it to be scored accordingly. The accuracy rate is very standard because you are taking down exactly what the child is saying.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated I'll reserve the rest of my questions.

**Committee Member Freeman** stated Ms. Pelletier, what I think I hear you say, and I do understand that while it is not a formal assessment you do have a standard to assess by. While it is not a true, physical measurement there is a standard. I do understand what you are saying. I can liken it to what I do. People make progress. It doesn't necessarily mean that it is completely, 100% measurable, but it is observable. What you are saying is based on what you have been taught in these workshops you know what to observe to know that a child has hit a certain benchmark and you have points to score for that, correct?

**Ms. Pelletier** replied right and the standards are there. There is guidance.

**Committee Member Freeman** stated I can see where Mr. Girard would think it is more subjective than objective because it is not a formal piece of paper where you are taking a test and scoring it in that capacity.

**Ms. Pelletier** stated it is not like a Smarter Balanced or an iReady where the child is going to get on the computer, but it is the ability for the teacher to sit next to a child and observe what is going on in terms of reading behaviors.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** asked that's not something that is accomplished outside of this reading records thing?

**Ms. Pelletier** replied it is accomplished during guided reading lessons as they observe, but again, I think this training has allotted the teachers the ability to really hone their skills on what to be looking for because there has been an incredible amount of training.

**Ms. Gamache** stated the difference between the guided reading versus the assessment is the assessment is done independently of the teacher or the assessor—what can they do on their own without my support? Guided reading, you are creating an environment where you are scaffolding and supporting the child to become a more proficient reader.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** asked anything further before we move on? Please continue.

**Ms. Gamache** stated this slide here is showing that in year one, or two really, there was a slight dip from kindergarten to first grade. However, if you are looking across three grade levels and we are thinking about language acquisition by the time the children are reaching second grade we are starting to see big jumps. The following two columns on the right are showing across so if you look at the kindergarten to grade one you see 43 to 46, which shows 3 growth and if you look at 48, that's the same first grade that is now in second grade with 61. You are seeing a 23 point growth.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated you are going horizontally, vertically and diagonally all in the same graph. So 43 goes to 46; 38 goes to 61; and 82 goes to no data.

**Ms. Gamache** stated we don't have the third grade there. Really what that is showing is with each year as children are becoming more proficiency in the language we are seeing that they are better able to handle the reading.

**Ms. Pelletier** asked what was the number of students that you had?

**Ms. Gamache** replied one third of our population is EL. We have 20 different languages, or 21 if you include English, spoken at Bakersville and 21 different countries represented.

**Ms. Pelletier** stated performing at the lower levels of WIDA.

**Ms. Gamache** stated at the end of last year when we took our access scores...

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** asked access scores?

**Ms. Gamache** replied that's the EL test that they give them at the end of the year and they look at stages of language proficiency or acquisition. At the end of kindergarten last year 100% of our students were only scoring in stage one or two. You can go all the way up to stage six.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated one other question. The minus five and the plus 44 are based on the vertical alignment.

**Ms. Gamache** stated yes, so they are not looking at apples to apples. It is just looking at as children have more time to guild oral language you are seeing that there is improvement as time goes on.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated but you see that improvement going diagonally from 2015-2016 to 2016-2017 so what is the purpose of the minus five and the plus 44? It seems to me that at that point you are comparing two separate grades rather than comparing the progress of one grade to the next grade.

**Ms. Gamache** stated yes, which is why the last columns are showing the plus three and plus 23.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated I'm sorry. In some of your slides you have columns that you did not put in your presentation.

**Ms. Gamache** stated that was the only thing that we added right there.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated my other question, and you'll forgive me, but I really did mean to take a look at the assessment minutes were we discussed these things. You were talking about the levels, A, B, C, D. Are those standard? One of the things that we have heard in prior presentations about assessments are things like cut scores. I forget one of the discussions we had when the assessment committee came before us, but the ability of either principals in individual buildings or different districts to determine the cut score, the bench score. I think they called it a norm maybe. Is a level D a level D everywhere? Can different school district determine what you say is a level D here could be a level C in Peterborough?

**Ms. Pelletier** replied I think they could determine the expectation. I think a level D is a level D, but our district may say it is D and other district may say at the end of kindergarten instructionally the child should be at a level C. The benchmark you can determine as a district. Overall, those are the recommendations so if you ask, I want to say probably 90% or almost 100% of the districts around use that gradient and are using the benchmarks that we are using.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated but the district could decide to redefine the benchmark for whatever reason. It is not like 93-100 is an A.

**Ms. Pelletier** stated but I think they look at correlation too. Where does a typical child who is proficient on some of these state tests, where do they have to be reading in order to be proficient? I think those standards have been set. The only ones that have changed in a long time was K and one and again, I think they were looking at the trajectory.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated I'll end it here. Accept this as a plea for simplicity to try to understand things. I wasn't all that long ago, I think it was the beginning of August we had a presentation from Parker Varney about how their no grades thing and how they were working with that. It seemed to me, respectfully, that that was a whole lot easier for us to follow to see the changes in proficiency in both English and math and it seemed a little more straightforward. I'm not trying to draw comparisons, but I understood what was happening in that presentation and it has been very difficult for me to grasp what is happening here. I don't remember what

they were using as their benchmark for proficiency, but I also know they showed us Smarter Balanced test scores and how they went from point A to point B and whatever metric they were using to measure proficiency improvements within that building with what they were doing. It was just easier for me to swallow that one, I guess. I'm only putting that out there because I'm really trying to get a handle on what you are doing here. I'm not exactly sure why it is coming out as complicated as it is. It could be that I'm operating on three hours of sleep and I'm not functioning the way I should be.

**Dr. Christine Martin**, Assistant Superintendent, stated I often look at things like benchmark running records and the change in targets for students much like the health industry when we look at what is the ideal weight for a female is x number of feet tall and so forth. That changes as the research in the industry changes. It changes for the numbers of what is an ideal HDL/LDL variable for cholesterol. It changes as the research changes. I think the same thing holds true when we look at data in the area of reading, that as the research changes and people look at the typical as Ms. Pelletier mentioned, these things all change. It helps me understand why I have to change my mindset sometimes when I'm looking at these things to comprehend what is the difference.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated in other words, what you are saying is it is really not normed because there isn't a consistent standard that the performance of the kids is measured against over time.

**Dr. Martin** stated I think what happens is that the research pool of students changes and students change. Kids are very different than they were when you and I were younger.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated let me put it to you this way: I went through the Manchester School District at a time when the grade scale said that 93-100 was an A and 88-92 was a B+ or whatever it was. Now we have a standard that says 90-100 is an A and everything has been moved down. It I get a 69 on a test back in my day I failed. Today a kid gets a 69 and they get a C.

**Dr. Martin** stated it could be a D. I'm not as familiar with secondary education.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated if you were to take my report cards and compare them to my kids' report cards and take a look at the A's, B's, C's and D's are you getting a true measure of who got better grades if the grading scale that my kids are on is weaker than the grading scale that I was on? I'm drawing back to conversations I think we had in this committee back last September a year ago, when the NWEA and the other scores came in from the Title I schools and as I'm sure you recall there was quite a discussion about that and part of that discussion was whether or not each building had its own benchmark to determine their level of proficiency. I don't remember what the answer was or the outcome was, but these are the memories that are starting to surface now. I'm taking a look at this. I'm wondering whether or not there is a fixed standard norm that allows us to really understand how kids are performing against a consistent benchmark over time or whether or not those things are moving, whether it is because of the research or something else is happening within the building so the score is relative. Is my daughter's 90 the same as my 93? She might be getting an A, but if she is five points behind where I was is she really doing as well? I'm not saying that's the case, by the way. They are probably well ahead of where I was.

**Dr. Martin** stated I think we are wondering in the world of what Ms. Allen and her colleagues at Parker Varney are doing. What is most important is what does the learning look like and what evidence of understanding does the student produce and the number, in fact, is many time irrelevant, but that's a much bigger conversation.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** asked do you remember, and maybe Principal Allen can answer, what they were using as their benchmark outside of the Smarter Balanced test which they gave us scores on? When you gave your presentation on proficiency, what were you using as your benchmarks?

**Ms. Allen** replied we used Smarter Balanced and iReady and the Dr. Bob test.

**Ms. Gamache** stated last year we started assessing sight words and putting it into performance tracker as well. Kindergarten is looking at 25 words, first grade 100 and second grade 250. At the beginning of the year you are looking at reading over the course of the year the sight words as well as writing the sight words.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated to members of the committee, we have Weston and Northwest here. Do want individual presentations on their data or now that we understand how the data works are you okay with reviewing it on your own? Do you have specific questions for those principals? I'm happy to have you share whatever you would like to share with the committee. I'm happy if you really want to give your school's individual scores or share your general observations, but for the sake of time I'm going to give you the out of whether you want to present your school or not. I'll leave it up to members of the committee as well to see what they want to see.

**Committee Member Avard** stated I think the aggregate is fine.

**Ms. Larochelle** stated I can present Northwest in a snapshot and I won't refer to the slides at all. Northwest, as you heard earlier, we are a larger school so had to cut the cohorts. We had to have two cohorts. We had one start the first year and then the second cohort the second year. What I wanted to talk about is beyond what you have heard already, in addition to, what is happening in the school. It is a large school, one administrator, one assistant principal as well and we try to get into classrooms. What we need to do when we are in there is to have a focus and have it aligned so we can move forward and make it about instruction. Through the collaborative we have been able to, through our training, in addition to sitting side by side with the teachers, get into classrooms and really know what those look-fors are and what are our expectations when a teacher is working with a small group of students, whole group, whether it is shared reading, shared writing, interactive, whatever the lesson is. There is such deep discussion happening, synthesizing, evaluating, critiquing, well beyond the recall that I have observed prior to the collaborative. Students are talking about, on the kindergarten level, critiquing two characters in a story and why they made the decision that they are making or they are writing stories and they synthesized what they took from the unit that they are working on and writing a story about it.

There is such deep learning happening. The key to all this is the coach. The coach was trained for a year and a half and it was intensive, but it was well worth it because she is able to go in, she is not evaluating, she is meeting with teachers in these cohorts, she is putting a module in front of them, whatever it is that they decide to work on, we decide as a group, and they read about it, discuss it, we see webinars on it, we talk about it and we pick it apart. They go into their classroom and they try it out. They are not left to their own devices. The coach goes in afterwards and will have a preview, a viewing and a post-view. It is not a pre-observation. It is far different. What they are doing is talking together, what are we going to look at. What do you want me, your eyes and ears, to be looking at while you are teaching the lesson and then they talk about it and they go deeper into the things that they have missed or things to enhance. It is amazing going into our classrooms and I invite you to come any day of the week because it is happening every single day to observe such literacy interactions happening within our building. I'm so proud of the work and the hours that they put into their professional development and it sure is showing in the year and a half that we have started in cohorts, not in the coaching piece. It took her a year and a half. My second cohort couldn't start fast enough. Actually, before I could even start the cohort they were stealing the coach at Northwest saying come into my room, come into my room because they were hearing such great things and quality literacy instruction in the classrooms and they were, quite frankly, kind of bummed out that they were missing out on these opportunities, but they couldn't get there on their own. Now I have a full k-2 cohort, all teachers, part of the literacy collaborative and I'm just really eager and excited to see where our students will go with this kind of instruction happening at Northwest. Thank you for letting me share that.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** asked Principal Larochelle, are you still using iReady?

**Ms. Larochelle** replied yes, I am.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** asked is it possible that we get the iReady data from your school to see how that has changed from last year to this year as you have progressed in this program?

**Ms. Larochelle** replied it definitely is possible, just keeping in mind, I know that we talked about it, but because the data is mixed my second cohort started about six months ago or in December and if not December it is January. It is a mix, a cohort of seven who started the year before and then we are compiling that data together. It is a little skewed, but I know this year where they are all full till, I really believe in this and I believe that our data will show that this year. I can absolutely get that to you.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated I do have a couple of other questions, but Principal MacDonald, is there anything that you would like to add to the discussion?

**Ms. Liz MacDonald**, Principal of Weston Elementary School, replied yes, just briefly. Again, we all pretty much followed suit with the program as to how our data looks, our professional development. This year was really just to give you a snapshot. It was so exciting in August that the teachers came into their classrooms and one of the pieces of the collaborative is classroom environment. How do you set your classroom up to have the optimum learning experience? We have a cohort that is k-2 and they are in year four now so they have had a lot of their professional training and are starting to dig even deeper into the training, but we did start an intermediate cohort this year. Last year the coach was trained. This year she is developing and working on PD with grades three through five. Three through five did have an exposure to the Lesley collaborative literacy training as a peripheral while the primary was training so they did have exposure to it. It was really exciting to see three, four and five teachers coming in working with the coach early on to set up their classroom libraries, to make sure their classroom was kind of a blank canvas so as they start doing interactive reading, interactive writing you see the charting going up on the walls, the children's thought process and writing process. They set up classroom libraries so that they were readily accessible for students to access the reading material they really need to do and to rotate reading material. It was really exciting to see intermediate jumping in. I just saw their first PLC, professional learning community, this morning. What we have done, which has been a real nice transition for us, we used to have professional learning communities by grade level. We now have cross grade level groups. We have three, four and five meeting together. We have k, one and two meeting together and we have mixes of those grade levels meeting so they not only understand the expectations of their own grade level, but

they understand the expectations of the grade level before and the grade level after. To answer maybe a little question, the Lesley collaborative is not wishy-washy or ambiguous. It is very clearly delineated even in the reading gradient. What you are looking for for reading behaviors, what you are looking for a child to be able to do in first grade it is very delineated as to the expectations of what a child should be able to do and what you as a teacher, being a real literacy teacher, should be able to work with them on and what track you should follow. Looking at the continuum, if you have a group of children who are really moving along very nicely, they have the phonics, the phonemic awareness under their belt and comprehension is lacking, what behaviors are they missing, what abilities are you looking for to really bump that comprehension? What kind of instruction are you going to do and that's where the benchmark comes in too. The benchmark is an incredible tool to understand the child as a reader. It gives you a real true picture of the reader in front of you and you get to actually see and hear what might be missing in their reading ability so that when you take them in a guided reading group you are addressing that specific child and you are probably grouping them with a group of children who are at a similar level who have similar things missing and similar strengths. I can't say enough about the Lesley collaborative. What I have learned over the years, I thought I had a pretty strong literacy background and it showed me what little I did know as an administrator. It has been phenomenal. I can't say enough about it.

**Committee Member Avard** stated this is listed here with the question of ladies and gentlemen, what is your pleasure? This isn't actually an action item. Is it an FYI? Are we voting on continuing this. I don't understand what is expected. Do we need to act on this tonight?

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated I was eventually going to get there myself.

**Ms. DeVincent** stated it is actually two [piece. The presentation and the discussion of the programs, that was for informational purposes for you all, but we also had a request to draft a letter to send home to parents so that parents are aware that they are going into year four of the student and the students would be doing running records as part of it so we wanted to give that opt out option. The last part of the packet is the letter to parents with the opt out/opt in option on it.

**Committee Member Avard** stated so if we vote on this tonight we are voting on the letter to the parents and the opt in/opt out portion.

**Ms. DeVincent** stated that was my intent.

**Committee Member Avard** stated and that's separate from number nine on our agenda, the Heinemann terms of use?

**Ms. DeVincent** replied yes.

**Committee Member Van Houten** stated I have kind of a generic question. We still do have professional development going on? Professional development continues for our teachers right now. As I recall there was some listed on last night's agenda. Is that correct?

**Ms. Pelletier** replied absolutely.

**Committee Member Van Houten** asked what happens at the end of the five years?

**Ms. Pelletier** replied we could continue the affiliation with the university which provides those literacy coordinators with ongoing professional development each year and the university would still look at our data. It is something that can still continue to grow because with literacy it is very complex, especially with our diverse population in our district. It is something that we would continue to deepen. That is why I say this first year of training for teachers is a little bit of a foundation. They are going to dig deeper and deeper with every year.

**Ms. Larochelle** stated if I could add, there are new teachers every year as we know and the coach is there to take them as they are new to the district and take them and get them going.

**Ms. Pelletier** stated we have had a lot of discussions about that because there has been a lot of turnover in many of our schools. I think we need to have a protocol for training. That is what this has really allotted these three schools. They have a package deal of a highly trained coach that is going to provide an incredible amount of training for new teachers and for veteran teacher for that matter, but for new teachers coming in. Again, that coaching piece because they get feedback. When you look at research around workshops, people tend to take about 10% of what they learned in a workshop setting back to their classroom. I think with literacy collaborative the piece that is icing on the cake is the fact that they are going to get the training, they get to go try it out, but then they get a coach to give them feedback. I think what I'm seeing in these schools is teachers going back to these coaches begging for more. Northwest and Bakersville have set up, and Weston is on their way, toward setting up a Google classroom right now so the coach will pose a question and the teachers are reflecting on what they are doing in their classrooms. I have been connected into it. Just to see how they have progressed in their thinking and their ability to talk about literacy instruction... We tried to give you some figures, again, very beginning stages, but that is what I have really seen an incredible shift in. To walk into these classrooms and see the kids and how they are talking about genre studies and illustrations and writing. In fact, a second grade teacher at Northwest sent an email the other day to all of the first and kindergarten teachers and said I don't know what you are doing, but I have never seen illustrations and writing like I have seen in September of second grade. We are seeing the outcomes. You always have a dip. Michael Fullen talks about the implementation dip. You dip down, but then the trajectory goes double to the dip. I know we are going to go in that direction with these schools. it is the fidelity of implementation with anything. I think you are seeing that in these schools.

**Committee Member Van Houten** stated so at the end of the five year study there is enough self-perpetuation that it is possible, even if the coach who is a key player, for instance, leaves? Are we having some kind of a pipeline to keep the train the trainer model going?

**Ms. Pelletier** replied that is where I could come in as a district trainer and train a cohort, a group of people, even classroom teachers to go through that kind of training and have a backup system. There is a district near Boston that does that same thing, they have back up people and it provides additional training for teachers.

**Committee Member Van Houten** stated perfect. It sounds like a great program and I would hate to see it fade away.

**Ms. Pelletier** stated it builds capacity. I think it is building more experts within our district so we could really provide more to other teachers in other buildings.

**Committee Member Avard** stated I like the component that we are actually going to be voting on tonight, which is parental communication. I think we have been very vocal about that on the board in recent years. We have a letter here that is very informative as well as being an opt out and an out in. You have both components on there. The parents have to check off one or the other. I like the way you approached this and I will move that we accept this letter of communication with the parents and the option of either opting in or opting out of the program.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated before I take any motions, any other comments or questions? I do have some, but I'll open it to the committee first. One of the things that I think is important when evaluating anything is context. I'm going to ask for some pieces of information so I can better understand what these results are telling me about the program. I know Northwest uses iReady. I don't know about Bakersville or Weston. Are there any other assessments being used at Bakersville or Weston that have a history of being used that we might be able to track through a second assessment how scores on those assessments are improving?

**Ms. Pelletier** replied the district will have iReady so we will be able to track it that way.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated I'm talking historically.

**Ms. Pelletier** stated Bakersville started iReady last year.

**Ms. MacDonald** stated up until last year we were non-Title I.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** asked so what were you doing for assessments?

**Ms. MacDonald** replied benchmark for literacy. We have been doing benchmarks forever.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** asked is benchmark and reading records the same thing?

**Ms. MacDonald** replied running records is usually the informal term, but benchmark is a running record, a formal running record.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** asked od you have a history of benchmark before you got into the Lesley collaborative?

**Ms. MacDonald** replied yes.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** asked is it possible to pull some of that historic data to see how the changes you are experiencing under the Lesley model differ, if at all, from the changes you were experiencing prior to the Lesley model?

**Ms. MacDonald** replied yes, we could pull that data prior to the start.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated I would think that if you are showing greater improvement under what you are doing now versus what you were doing before, that that would be empirical data that tells us yes, this is an improvement for what we have put into it.

**Ms. MacDonald** stated like what Ms. Pelletier said, we are starting to see the change and the growth, but this is just has been the first couple of implementation years so we had the coach learning, then we had the teachers learning, we have expanded the teachers learning so now the children this year are benefiting from all that instruction the teachers have gained. We should be

seeing this, as you said, the dip before the growth. It will probably look similar to the last four years I would say. I can provide that for you. That's not a problem.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated some of us will be here next year so we will be looking for that bounce. If I'm not mistake, again, I'm drawing off of memory, there are other schools in the district who aren't in the Lesley program who are also using benchmark or running records or I guess it is all the same thing, right?

**Ms. Pelletier** replied we are utilizing benchmark to inform instruction. The assessment committee has now recommended that everyone does iReady during certain times of the year so that's going to be across the board.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated I'm familiar with that. What I'm looking for because we have been presented at this committee in the past with running records data, like the data we discussed here last September, correct, so what I'm hoping to get from other schools that have historically used running records so I have a control model. If I take a look at what you are showing in this data and you are outpacing other schools who are using the same assessment, but aren't using this program, then, again, I have an objective benchmark that says this program is doing better than what other schools are doing. In order to have this in context, I would like to see how many of our schools have a history, a three to five year history. I don't know how long running records has been used in the district.

**Ms. Pelletier** stated districtwide it would be the last ten years.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated if we can go back three to five years or over the period of time even that you have been using the Lesley model and compare the running records benchmark results, whatever I'm supposed to call them, and those other schools on a school by school basis, I don't want an aggregate that says Lesley schools, other schools. if it is Hallsville, if it is Jewett, whoever, so that we can take a look over the same timeframe, especially if we are going to get additional data out of Weston, which has been using running records for a while.

**Ms. Pelletier** stated all 14 schools have used it for at least the last five years if not more.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated I would want to take a look at that and I would want to see how the students in those schools are progressing versus the students in the Lesley schools so we have a control group. We need a control group in order to understand whether or not we are over performing or under performing or performing at the same rate as the control. I would be interested to see what happens with these third graders who would have been through the program as second graders, first graders and kindergarteners.

**Ms. Pelletier** stated that will be third graders this year. Sorry, it will be next year. The teachers were trained two years ago.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated so you are saying while you were training the teachers you weren't teaching the students.

**Committee Member Avard** stated it has only been impacting the students for two years.

**Ms. Pelletier** stated I'm just saying as far as implementation.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated I think other objective benchmarks like the iReady and the prior running records data from any school in the program that has it and any school that is using running records that isn't in the program so we can really get a sense for the control group.

**Ms. Pelletier** stated okay.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** asked does that make sense to everybody? What I would ask is that you would forward that to the committee for its next meeting so that it is on an agenda and we can have a discussion and questions and all of that other fun stuff. I don't presume to set the agenda for the chair. I'm only sitting in tonight but something tells me she would be okay with it.

**Committee Member Freeman** stated I want to back up just a little bit. This whole presentation was done tonight because of an opt in letter. Is that correct?

**Ms. Pelletier** replied no. We were here to give you an update on the study. We have not had an opportunity to come and share some data and share where we are in the process.

**Committee Member Freeman** stated it really wasn't clear on the agenda what exactly we were supposed to be doing, how we were supposed to vote on this. I just wanted to make sure because your time is as valuable as anybody's so I wanted to be clear on what exactly we were moving on.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated I do want thank you for your time. I will say this, beyond the people in this room, as I'm sure you know, there are a whole lot of people who watch these meetings. As I have said in these meetings and to you folks before, one of my jobs as an elected official is to get you to speak a language that the majority of people watching can understand because I believe that if people can understand what you are saying they can buy into what you are presenting. If they can't, it doesn't work so well. While I needed some of these definitions and stuff on my own to be able to follow what you were saying, I think it is always good when you can speak at people in a language they can understand.

*Committee Member Avard moved to approve the parental consent letter regarding the K-2 Lesley University Literacy Collaborative. The motion was duly seconded by Committee Member Van Houten.*

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated and this notification is consistent with the district's new assessment policy as I understand. We are not assessing kindergarteners, though we are in the Lesley schools but not anywhere else.

**Ms. DeVincent** stated we will have this from the parents.

*Chairman Pro Temp Girard called for a vote on the motion. There being none opposed, the motion carried.*

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** addressed item 9a of the agenda:

**9a.** Discussion regarding changes to the preschool program.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated there was agenda item 9a which was added to the agenda after the fact to discuss preschool. I know I have received several complaints from parents about unexpected changes to the preschool program. In as much as Dr. Martin was not feeling well and Principal Allen who is actually here to speak to some of the preschool issues had to leave, I will hold this item over, after discussion with Ms. DeVincent, for the next meeting of the committee. It will appear on the agenda there. I will say that if the clerk would notify Dr. Martin that in advance of that meeting the information that I requested back at the beginning of September regarding the preschool program and that she did say at our board meeting of September 11<sup>th</sup> would be forwarded to me I would like the answer to those questions added to the agenda with this item so that the information, which I believe is very relevant to the discussion, can be before the committee.

**Ms. Maura Wellington**, Clerk of the Board of School Committee, stated sure. I can follow up with her.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** addressed item 9 of the agenda:

**9.** Heinemann Terms of Use and Privacy Policy.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated I spoke with Sharon before the committee about that. It is not a time sensitive matter. In the absence of the chair I would like to ask that it be tabled so that it can hold over.

**Committee Member Avard** stated I think it would be in our best interest to have legal review this as well. Before we ever agree to anything we should have legal review.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** asked Sharon, could you explain what reviews this contract has gone through? If you could tell us what it is meant to do and what your understanding of how it does it, I guess we will open the discussion with that.

**Ms. DeVincent** responded we will have legal review it. That had not been done to this point. We looked at it in-house and read through it. It is in place because part of the Lesley collaborative, the collaborative study piece, they are collecting data. Lesley University is not collecting that data themselves. Fountas and Pinnell benchmark running records, Heinemann has an online database to collect it. They are collecting that database separately. I guess it is a blind study. When the collaborative study is finished they will get the data, but it won't be attached to schools or districts or anything, it is just data. Heinemann keeps that data so that's what this agreement was. When we were looking at the different guidelines for parent information, FERPA, that sort of stuff and Dr. Vargas still being relatively new to the district he wanted to look at the agreement. We couldn't find a signed one. What I had found out through my conversations with Lesley University and different people involved is that the agreement is that whenever the teacher logs in to input the scores there is an agreement that pops up and that's what's been in place. We wanted to get it printed and approved and go through the process and vet it that way. That is why I'm holding it over. Nobody is entering any data. I informed the individuals at Lesley University as well as the three schools that they are not to input any more data until we have an agreement in place on the data so that is coming.

**Chairman Pro Temp Girard** stated let's hope this agreement is a little better than the one that entered us into this collaborative in the first place.

*On motion of Committee Member Avard, duly seconded by Committee Member Freeman, it was voted to table this item.*

**TABLED ITEMS**

*A motion is in order to remove any item from the table.*

- 10.** Update on the PACE Program.  
*(Note: Additional information is attached. Tabled 2/10/2016.)*

This item remained on the table.

- 11.** Discussion regarding the elementary health curriculum.  
*(Note: Tabled 11/22/2016.)*

This item remained on the table.

*There being no further business, on motion of **Committee Member Avard**, duly seconded by **Committee Member Freeman**, it was voted to adjourn at 8:14 p.m.*

A True Record. Attest.



Clerk of Committee