

# Whole Child Advisory Group

## MEETING MINUTES DECEMBER 15, 2023

### WELCOME AND ICEBREAKER:

Jessica Horowitz-Moore opened the meeting with an overview of the day's agenda and some announcements.

- She reminded all that Hilary Stoll left the department to return to a position with the Ohio Department of Health. Jared Cole is taking over her work with the Whole Child Advisory Group. Jared was previously a school counselor from Michigan.
- Valerie Kunze has been officially appointed to the position of Director of the Office of Whole Child Supports for the Department of Education and Workforce.
- Acknowledged student members in attendance, Landon Fulkerson, a junior at Westerville Central High School and Lara Teri, a senior at New Albany High School.

Ice Breaker: Attendees were asked to share at their small group tables a favorite book they recall reading when young and what experiences they associate with that. Some shared out after.

### WHOLE CHILD KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS: LITERACY DISCUSSION

Melissa Weber-Mayrer, Chief of Literacy and LM Clinton, Policy Lead for the Office of Literacy Achievement and Reading Success in the department were introduced as presenters. They are working on pushing forward the literacy and policy work and another team is working on the implementation. How do we take what is put in legislation and implement it so it can be effective with our students.

Overview: the data shows the facts – the “why” this is important and there is a statewide call to action. The governor increased the budget for literacy by 7,000% (\$170 million). Historically the budget for literacy is \$1 million. Most of the money goes to districts to increase student outcomes, increase knowledge and implementation. (Melissa made mention that they are trying to get students onto the Literacy team.) The slide show for the Literacy presentation is available for members that wish to read the data information shared.

**ELA Achievement and Mathematics** – graphic shows literacy achievement across the state by demographic group for all grade levels (uses last year's data but will be updated with recent report card data). Usually, literacy and math scores coincide with each other. The higher the literacy scores, the higher the mathematic scores. Note the scores are higher in K-3 grades as the teachers have the skills and are focused on building the initial foundation of these

subjects. Graph shows those proficient in reading – taken from the Governor’s report which will be updated at the end of January. Shows 300,000 children are not reading at grade level.

What are we doing to improve the reading scores? Melissa showed the Governor’s video on the **Science of Reading**. The Governor visited many schools and districts – the video has interviews with children as well as adults. The video focuses on recognition but also takes comprehension into account.

- Based on 50 years of research
- Identifies why some kids have difficulty reading
- Addresses 5 key skills: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension
- Forty percent (40%) of Ohio’s 3<sup>rd</sup> grade readers are not proficient
- Testaments by educators of the importance of the methods related to the Science of Reading and interviews with students whose reading proficiency has improved due to the Science of Reading.
- Children come to school with various experiences and need to address that/teachable moments. (Reading wars – **not what** are the components we need to teach literacy **but how** do we do this, i.e. teach by breaking out the words into letter/sound relationships, spelling patterns so it not only transfers into reading but also writing later or teaching to recognize whole words.)
- Boy interviewed in the video who moved to Riverside Local. Started at a reading level of 6 words/minute and by end of year, was reading more than 105 words/minute by April or May. Thought he might have a learning disability but didn’t have the foundation needed. Principal, Bryce Hodge, recognized this and supported the Science of Reading concept – need leadership support as well as parent and teacher. You are struggling to figure out the word, not comprehension at 6 words/minute.

**Suggest all read Section 4 of Ohio’s Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement** – no other state’s plan contained a vision such as this. Contains implementation guides at grade levels for principals, questions for staff to discuss at team meetings (could involve community members also).

Equation (1987): simple view of reading. Word Recognition x Language Comprehension = Reading Comprehension (need both to be a proficient reader). Attendance plays a part – if not in school, don’t get the skills needed. Shows the Literacy Development Continuum:

- **Emergent** literacy skills. Some children don’t have the foundation needed (oral language)
- **Early Literacy**
- **Conventional Literacy** – a shift – more language strategy
- **Adolescent Literacy** – kids are on both sides – some still don’t know how to decode words which affects other subjects such as math – not able to understand the words associated with the subject.

Whole Child Framework- literacy proficiency fits with all components of the framework.

Components of School and Health Systems – slide showing the aspects of the whole child and how they relate to literacy. Questions to ponder were listed. For instance, community organizations try to address the barrier of children going to school hungry (child cannot be engaged if hungry).

Impact of Literacy – statistics from the Barbara Bush foundation (can go to that to find Ohio’s data). Data shows correlation of literacy proficiency in adults and poor health, receiving public assistance and income of less than \$20,000. Adults with insufficient literacy skills have difficulty completing forms to request public assistance.

Third Grade Reading Guarantee - LM Clinton provided a slide that showed the current legislation/policy for students that are not reading at the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade level. The parent must be notified, and they have a choice of whether to have their child advance to the next grade. If child is advanced, they must receive 90 minutes of daily reading instruction and intensive intervention. Students will also have a Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plan which will follow them throughout their academic career until they are reading at grade level.

Information regarding support and resources specific to children with dyslexia was also shared. The literacy office team relies heavily on Barbara Boone (Ohio State University’s Family Engagement Center) on effective communications for families.

## **WHOLE CHILD IMPLEMENTATION:**

Riverside Local Schools: Margo Shipp, Literacy Specialist; Bryce Hodge, Elementary Principal, Erin Krisher, Intervention Specialist

Riverside Elementary was highlighted in the Science of Reading video for their students improved scores (up by 50%).

Located in De Graff, Ohio in Logan county-12 miles west of Bellefontaine (Bryce Hodge and Erin Krisher are both graduates of Riverside Elementary). Approximately 1200 residents.

Riverside is a PreK through 12 building (under 600 in the whole building; 301 in Pre-6).

Riverside addresses the whole child through health, safety, and education. They accomplish this through Teacher Based Teams, Community Health and Wellness and Bridge to Learning. Erin spoke about their **TBT/Teacher Based Teams**. The TBTs meet 2-3 times a month on Wednesday. They review diagnostic scores and discuss student progress, changes in student behavior and possible circumstances (changes in home life, attendance, new medication, are they hungry). If their basic needs aren’t met, how are they going to learn.

Bryce Hodge gave a little more background on the demographics of De Graff, very small town with a high Amish population. Bellefontaine or Sidney closest towns for medical care. In January 2022 Bryce and Dr. Mann, Superintendent met with the health and wellness organization in Logan county to discuss having a **community health and wellness clinic**.

- Run by nurse practitioner – can call in prescription

- Addresses mental health
- Open for 2 months/broke ground November of 2022; completed August of 2023; opening was October 13 of 2023. This clinic is open to the community, not just the students and staff. In 2 months, the clinic has had 422 visits and served 307 patients. The majority of patients were medical, but some were behavioral care. Of those 307 patients, 131 are ages 5 – 17 (43% are students). They can get a prescription and get back to class sooner. The #1 reason for a visit was anxiety followed by depression. Can refer a student with behavior problems to the clinic (example provided of student with known home life issues who threatened a teacher -was referred to the clinic and had an appointment in 20 minutes).

Fridays, churches provide food to students that need it for the weekend. Can be for multiple children in one family. Community partners are a game changer for the school.

Bridge to Learning – initiative aimed at birth to 5 years. District has a lot of young parents, low-income parents and grandparents that don't know what free resources are available to them outside De Graff. With Dr. Mann's approval, a group was formed with community partners from the Bellefontaine area (United Way, the hospital, Early Intervention, WIC, Logan County Health Department, Job and Family Services, community and wellness, United Methodist Church foodbank, the library, Logan County Sheriff's department, New Haven Pregnancy Center-has prenatal care). There was an open house in April that wasn't successful due to some youth event. All were still enthused to continue so another open house is planned for March 7-all schedules were checked to ensure there is no event that would conflict. **Target group is anyone caring for young children.** Want kids to come to school ready to learn.

**Resources** (not released yet) will be available on-line: health & wellness, safety, education (oral language-parents aren't talking to their children at home)-a video clip that is currently being shown on tv about a father talking with his toddler son while watching tv). These resources won't be shared with the parents and community until after the first of the year. Stop complaining about the problem – what do we do to help.

## **WHOLE CHILD COLLABORATION: REGION 8 COMPREHENSIVE CENTER**

Tara Donahue of Region 8 led an activity with the idea of tying together all that was presented during this meeting, what questions are still out there and how we can tie these resources together. Attendees were asked to address one of four questions (assigned by table) about whole child needs that relate to literacy development. They were to add their thoughts on sticky notes to be placed on the chart paper with the corresponding question. Once completed, they were to read through all the thoughts and categorize them or put off to the side any that didn't seem to fit. After was a time for sharing out.

Question 1: Indicators of literacy development that fit the framework. Many indicators fit well but family and community are key. Wellness overall and how it fits into early literacy development. Brain and body wellness are connected.

Question 2: Resources, Support Services and Practices  
Students working with younger students, family as resources, mental health

Question 3: Gaps  
Funding – try to meet needs of all. Sometimes right hand doesn't know what left hand is doing. Should take from those that don't need and give to those that do.

Question 4: Help/Support  
Connection needed – time for people to share stories of what works. People want human interaction/want a real person to talk with, connect with, work with. For example, the meetings presenters were very enthusiastic but if you weren't here in person, you wouldn't see that and how could I share that as well. Lots of great things are going on but how do we get to everyone? How do we get people engaged? Possibly having someone on your level that went through similar to relate with. Having an advocate (someone to talk to – get resources from).

## **WRAP UP AND NEXT STEPS:**

Jessica thanked all for attending and noted, if you haven't, to be sure and meet Melissa Weber-Mayrer and discuss connections. Thank you to Jared for getting this meeting together.

Jared brought attention to the **QR code for a meeting survey**. This will be used for future planning. Attendees were reminded that if they want a **certificate of attendance**, they needed to be sure to sign-in on the available sheet and include their time in and out for the meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for February 23, 2024, at the State Library.