

CLCS Education Committee

Wed Mar 19, 2025 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM EDT

Attendance

Members

Remote: Nicole Mack, Andres Barraza, Erika Sanchez, Lisa Wong, Jane Feinberg

Guests

Remote: Danna Mauch

I. Call to Order

With a quorum present, the meeting began at 8:07 am. It should be noted that although Danna Mauch is listed as a guest, she is a trustee and a member of the Education Committee.

II. Approval of November 6, 2024 meeting minutes



Jane Feinberg made a motion to approve the November 6, 2024 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Erika Sanchez. The motion was unanimously approved.

III. Approval of January 17, 2025 meeting minutes



Jane Feinberg made a motion to approve the January 17, 2025 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Lisa Wong. The motion was unanimously approved.

IV. Education update

a. 8th grade capstone project

Nicole Mack discussed the 8th grade capstone process, which includes a civic action project, a visual art piece, and a solo music performance showcase. The music component has been restructured to emphasize independence and planning. The students have been given a piece of music to learn and work with the music teachers during scheduled office hours. The artistic piece will focus on analyzing propaganda, emphasizing how artists can express themselves in service of a cause, and how students can recognize the potential biases in propaganda. The civic action project will be centered around the Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corp, a community institution that the school has partnered with recently. The students will be visiting their facilities and learning about their initiatives. The students will also present their academic work and their progress with their musical pieces in mid-April. The partnership with Dorchester Bay is expected to provide concrete examples and statistics for the students' research.

Lisa and Erika advocated for more opportunities to build independence in music to prepare students for outside musical opportunities. They suggested that students should be given new pieces of music to practice independently before presenting them in class. Lisa, Nicole, Erika, and Jane discussed the importance of building independence in music. They agreed that students should be given new pieces of music to practice independently before presenting them in class. This approach would help students develop self-reflection and self-motivation skills, which would also benefit their academic studies. Nicole mentioned that this would be a focus area for the upcoming year, with a plan to introduce this approach at different grade levels. Erika added that this would make students more excited about learning music. Jane inquired about the pedagogical aspect of this approach, and Nicole stated that the administration would be working with the teachers to help them identify opportunities to build more independence in the classroom. There would be support for teachers who need more assistance in identifying those opportunities in the form of professional development and coaching.

b. February STAR data - Reading & Math

Nicole Mack presented the most recent reading STAR assessment data, including the fall data and the winter data. Nicole noted the number of students moving from the "Not Meeting" level and the need for more students to move out of the level. Board members commented on the declining trends in the "Meeting" level for grades 3, 6, 7 and 8. Nicole addressed the board's comments and informed the trustees of the importance of promoting high expectations and independence for students during assessments. Nicole also shared which grade levels had experienced staffing transitions to provide more context. Nicole also mentioned that there have been staffing transitions and, while the administration works to minimize the disruptions in the classroom, the impact on students is noticeable on the STAR assessment. The board asked how the STAR data compares to other charter schools in the City of Boston, and Nicole explained the STAR data is not taken by all Boston schools, but is a common norm referenced assessment.

Nicole Mack discussed the school's most recent math STAR assessment data, including the fall and the winter data. She noted similar results to the reading STAR assessment. The trustees discussed the results, noting that the "Not Meeting" level was reduced from the fall to the winter assessments in the majority of the classrooms. However, the trustees also voiced their concern about the decline in Grades 7 & 8 in the "Meeting Expectations" level from the fall to the winter. Nicole expressed concern about these levels as well, noting some students may not be applying themselves during these assessments. For example, there are 8th grade students who are taking advanced math, and yet the STAR data shows no students in the "Exceeding" level in the 8th grade. She also mentioned the ways the school is looking to improve these results, particularly the school's after school tutoring program and math instruction efforts, emphasizing the small group support and high-dose after-school tutoring. Nicole also discussed the Math scores showing a concerning number of students struggling in younger grades. In response, teachers are participating in a math course focused on concepts and pedagogy to improve instruction. The school is also using norm-referenced testing in kindergarten to better identify issues from an early age.

V. Adjourn meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 am.

VI. Meeting materials

1. [2024-11-06 Education Committee minutes_DRAFT](#)
2. [2024-01-17 Education Committee minutes_DRAFT](#)
3. [2025-03-19 Education Committee slides](#)