

**Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Board of Education
Curriculum Committee
Minutes
August 20, 2019
4:00 p.m.
Education Building Room 223**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Barbara Burke, Committee Chair
Lori Goins Clark, Vice Chair
Leah Crowley
Deanna Kaplan

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Dana Caudill Jones
Elisabeth Motsinger

EXECUTIVE CABINET MEMBERS: Benjamin Hall
Alexandra Hoskins
Dionne Jenkins
Lionel Kato
Sam Mills
Karen Roseboro
Kenneth Simington

I. Call to Order

Committee Chair, Barbara Burke called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.

II. Discussion Items

a. Signs of Suicide

Dr. Corliss Thompson-Drew, Director of Psychological Services discussed Signs of Suicide (SOS) Prevention Program and Training. SOS is designed for 6th – 12th graders with developmentally appropriate videos for each grade middle and high school. SOS is implemented in **one class period**, and combines two suicide prevention strategies; peer-focused and depression screening.

The main teaching tool is an educational video that teaches students to identify signs of depression and suicide in themselves or others while encouraging help-seeking. She noted help-seeking behaviors – **ACT** (**A**cknowledge, **C**are, **T**rust). This year the program will be delivered to 7th graders and next year to 10th graders. The SOS program will be delivered this year November 4, 2019 to December 6, 2019 to small groups of 30-35 students in Health & P. E. classes facilitated by student services personnel and Health & P. E. teacher.

Dr. Thompson-Drew emphasized the importance of removing the stigma of discussing suicide. She also described the half-day “SOS Implementer Training,” which prepares key school staff to provide suicide prevention education and mental

health screening for students using SOC Program and engage trusted adults in these efforts.

Topics include:

- Facilitating a classroom discussion about depression and suicide with 6th-12th graders
- Administering universal depression screening and follow up with identified students
- Considering scheduling and logistics for large scale suicide prevention education and screening
- Providing basic youth suicide prevention training for teachers and school staff
- Coordinating with school administration and community partners for support
- Reaching out to parents as partners in prevention

Dr. Thompson-Drew reported that suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among North Carolina youth ages 10-17, and that the rate of youth suicide has doubled in the previous decade in our state. WS/FCS has six confirmed deaths by suicide, 33 attempted suicides, 7 hospitalized since 2016. SOS prevention program has Shown 64% reduction in self-reported suicide attempts.

The Curriculum Committee of the Board of Education expressed appreciation for the positive offering of the SOS prevention program, including the educational component, students at risk identification, and establishing the trusted adult component to help keep teens safe.

b. K-12 Literacy Plan

Dr. Sam Mills, Interim Instructional Services Instructional Superintendent introduced Melissa Agee, Director-Secondary English Language Arts and Dr. Kathryn Kear, Director-Elementary English Language Arts, who worked together on the K-12 Literacy Plan.

Ms. Agee defined the WS/FCS vision as; all students are readers, writers, and communicators. She explained that literacy is more than reading; but also includes writing, speaking, and listening. She restated the **“Mission Statement”**: **WS/FCS will build capacity to deliver effective literacy instruction ensuring that students: master foundational reading skills that support grade-level comprehension; apply appropriate strategies when reading for different purposes; read, write, and communicate analytically and critically; demonstrate digital literacy.**

Ms. Agee reviewed what was already in place for literacy in elementary and secondary as **consistent balanced literacy** including a variety of reading and writing programs. Then she shared the missing elements; namely, (1) shared understanding of the literacy plan (2) consistent screeners across grade levels and schools (3) focused intervention strategies for each grade level, (4) a plan to increase teacher capacity to build strong reading, (5) monitoring of the implementation of the plan.

Ms. Agee and Dr. Kear shared the **five essential components** of literacy development:

- Comprehensive Literacy Framework
- Systematic Use of Data
- Differentiated System of Literacy Instruction and Intervention
- Equitable Opportunities
- Family and Community Involvement

Ms. Agee stated that the first priority is to get the “message out” through training District personnel, principals, assistant principals, instructional facilitators, teachers, and paraprofessionals on the comprehensive literacy framework. She referred to the Essential Training that is scheduled on Thursday, August 22. Essentials I and II foundational reading class focusing on reading and comprehension based on a three-year trend, not just one score, as part of monitoring implementation.

Ms. Burke recalled problems for 9th graders reading on 3rd or 4th grade level when she taught English Language Arts in high school.

Dr. Simington remarked that it will take time for layering support.

Ms. Agee announced that Reynolds High School will pilot screeners for literacy.

Ms. Burke added “Go back to reading to learn” focusing on K-3.

Dr. Kear explained that using data collection resources: EOG, Istation, check-ins, benchmarks, progress monitoring, screenings and standards-based grading data, evaluate the trends in K-12 data.

Dr. Kear addressed differentiated system of literacy instruction and interventions by Expanding the role of Reading Interventionist Coordinator to K-10. She also discussed the layering of support to differentiated support to all students; supplemental support to struggling students to intensive support for struggling students to 45 minutes.

Dr. Kear noted “the meat of our plan” is equitable opportunities by providing developmentally- appropriate, grade-level, standards-based literacy instruction K-12 English Language Arts classes. The goal is to ensure that students have access to diversity and authenticity in books, resources, and instructional activities geared to culturally responsive teaching.

Ms. Agee responded to appropriate, standards-based instruction to teach standards first, then choose books aligned with the standards. She said students should see themselves in the texts implementing the culturally responsive resources and instruction.

Both Ms. Agee and Dr. Kear discussed the importance of “family and community involvement” by administering a beginning and end-of-year survey of parents

regarding their needs in helping their children to read, write, and speak. The plan includes continuing and expanding community partnerships on literacy through regular meetings with parents and community partners as a collaborative.

III. Adjournment

On a motion by Ms. Kaplan and second by Ms. Crowley, Chair Barbara Burke adjourned the meeting at 5:07 p.m.