**Reading Annual Review Minutes**

**January 12, 2015**

The GCMS Reading Annual Review Meeting took place on Monday, January 12, 2015 in the GCMS Elementary School Library. Committee members reported on their reading programs at each grade level or course. The teachers discussed their curriculum, the pacing, and also any concerns or ideas that they had in the area of reading. Those in attendance were: Jenny Acree, Kathy Brown, Keely Burks, Cathy Cope, Jeremy Darnell, Teri Eichelberger, Sara Frankie, Evon Fredrickson, Deanna Freehill, Mary Giroux, Lauren Heap, Deb Hohulin, Justin Kean, Deanna Lietz, Staci Lindelof, KiLee Lidwell McFerren, Nicole McNary, Erin Nuss, Sharon Pool, and April Warren.

**Kindergarten- Mary Giroux:**

Kindergarten is introducing a letter and a site word each week. All 5 sections are using Michael Heggerty and implementing Daily 5. Daily Five is conducted each week on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.  To this point, we have introduced and practiced two choices thoroughly across all five sections: “Read to Self” and “Listen to Reading”. Most days we have two to three rounds depending on stamina.  Students are introduced to word work activities as a whole group currently, but will transfer into the Daily Five “Word Work” component.   Third quarter will bring “Word Work” and fourth quarter “Work on Writing.” We are using a standard based report card and universal assessments to ensure all standards are being covered. Time to discuss the program with the first grade would be beneficial.

**First Grade- Keely Burks:**

First grade has been very successful implementing the Daily 5/Cafe into our reading curriculum this year.  We do Daily 5 three days per week and introduce new concepts for the week on Monday, and have a test on Friday.  We have found it easier to introduce one focus lesson each day during 2 rounds of Daily 5.  We are still using our basal for a whole group read aloud every week.  This was a recommendation from the Cafe book.  Our science and social studies is cross curricular, and we use the concepts in our basal stories to cover this each week.  We test on Fridays using the basal story and just started using Trick Word assessments from our new Fundations/Phonics book for another assessment in reading.  This assessment is given every two or three weeks.  We are looking to change our assessments and begin using some of the rubrics from the Daily 5/Cafe in the future.  We will begin using our whole group read aloud with the majority of our first graders for two weeks.  Many of the stories are above grade level.  Due to the diversity of the learners in our classrooms, we will also challenge some of our better readers with an additional book that week in a Guided Reading group.   We have always done this with some of our lower readers and will continue to do so in Tier and Guided Reading groups.

We love, love, love our new phonics program.  All four of us were trained this summer to use the program, and have found it to be very beneficial to student learning.  We use the phonics patterns and trick words each week for our spelling words.  We still give a spelling test each Friday.  There is a phonics assessment every two or three weeks at the end of each unit.  It assesses our kids on vowel and

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*Burks, continued*

consonant sounds, digraphs, glued sounds, suffixes, and blends.  We have only covered the short vowel sounds so far this year.  Long vowels will be introduced soon.

The Fundations program also covers basic handwriting instruction.  The kids are taught letter formation, shape, size, and usage of the lines.

It is beneficial that the first grade teachers are all doing the same format. Discussion with both the kindergarten and second grade teachers would be beneficial.

**Second Grade- Nicole McNary:**

        At the 2nd grade level, we are progressing nicely through the CCSS thus far!  During our planning time this summer and fall, we were able to determine which standards would be appropriate to teach throughout the school year and divided them into anywhere from 4-6 standards per quarter. We began the 1st quarter with fewer standards as much time was devoted to getting the students "trained" in Daily 5 expectations. We have noticed that adjustments are necessary throughout this inaugural year of using the Daily 5 framework and we do not have a grade-level "cookie-cutter" method/schedule as of now.

We do implement "Read to Self" Daily (typically ~15 minutes per day). Mini-lessons (on using the Cafe strategies earlier in the year and now on implementing those strategies WITH the CCSS) are taught each morning and each class has ~2-3 "rounds" of Daily 5 time each day in which students are actively engaged with reading to a classmate, listening to reading on an iPad/CD player, working on writing, or completing various "word work" activities. We have not given the students total freedom on choosing what they would like to do during each "round," but several options are typically presented during "word work" and "work on writing," which offers an element of choice for the students.

Each classroom has a different set-up for meeting with students, but through various adjustments and flexibility, we are learning how to effectively and efficiently meet with our students on a regular basis to be sure that they are reading and comprehending to the best of their ability. Rubrics are being developed at grade-level meetings as we progress throughout the school year and we have found many nice "starting points" on Pinterest and "Teachers Pay Teachers" to guide us through this process. We use similar passages for many of our assessments as well, but depending on the ability of students within each classroom, unique assessment passages/stories are administered as well.

Concerns have just been the typical "growing pains" of trying something new this year with the Daily 5 framework - we do LOVE the freedom of the Daily 5 and our students are demonstrating a huge increase in interest of reading now that they can choose books and understand what type of books are "just right" for them. However, with the freedom of Daily 5, we have concerns of making time to meet with the students "enough" and making sure that our assessments and rubrics are appropriate - but these are

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*McNary, continued*

concerns that will eventually diminish as we grow in confidence and practice of the Daily 5 framework. Overall, this has been a wonderful change in the way that we are presenting

our Reading curriculum to our 2nd grade students and we are looking forward to a group of students next year that will have been "trained" in the basics of Daily 5 as well!

Nicole reported the implementations of the rounds vary, and the teachers are finding that communication is the key. They are so pleased with Fundations, and are finding that even the low achievers are doing well, and are carrying those patterns over into their spelling. Currently, there is no formal spelling list, but there is an assessment at the end of each unit. This might occur after one to three weeks, depending on the

length of the unit. Mrs. McNary said that this could be revisited in the future, as parents have requested a regular weekly spelling list.

**Third Grade- Kathy Brown:**

Third grade is using the Daily5 five choices, but not every one every day. We have a mini-lesson and three rotations. We strive for 15 minutes each (60 minutes total). They do read to self every day, word work with Zaner-Bloser spelling lists two to three times per week, fill in EEKK, and work on writing one or two times. We also meet with strategy groups every day, depending on need.

Mrs. Natywa listens to reading with lowest achievers on CD players, and to everyone with iPads once a week on Friday. Ms. Kerber, Mrs. Ladage, and Mrs. Brown read aloud to their classes. Now that iPads are available, that will also be added into the schedule.

Our curriculum pace is about one standard per week, with a common assessment on Friday. Some standards require more than one week.

There are some positives that have come from implementing the Daily5. We feel like we know our kids better as readers. We are better able to meet the needs of our students at their level. We also have more time to focus on nonfiction text, which has helped improve grades on science and social studies homework. We are utilizing National Geographic magazine each week.

Our major concern is the issue of time. We have a hard time fitting in a mini lesson and all the rotations. We also have a lot of standards to cover in a short period of time. Balancing teaching standards and the CAFÉ strategies at the same time is tough as well. We are working through finding materials to use in tiers, small groups, and mini lessons and making sure these do not overlap.

**Fourth Grade- Sara Frankie:**

We are in our second year of Daily 5/Reading workshop. We are continuing to enjoy the individual time the students get, and how much we learn about them as readers. Our weekly curriculum involved breaking up the standards into manageable chunks for

mini lessons. During our mini lessons, students practice the same skill all week long then are tested over that skill. We also have daily read to self-time and daily word work.

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*Frankie, continued*

We are very excited to see how the future classes respond to the Fundations phonics program the younger grades are using. Also, having classes already know the basics of Daily 5 will be a real advantage. This will allow us to get into our curriculum quicker than in previous years.

We are still working on building our word work program. Currently, we are using the Wordly Wise vocabulary program, but are looking for a more effective program such

as Words Their Way. Wordly Wise does not teach spelling patterns effectively. We are also working toward a consensus about reassessing students and what grade they should receive.

**Fifth Grade- Jenny Acree**

Our 5th grade reading continues to go well. We have covered a little over half of the standards for 5th grade. The remainder of the school year is mapped out with time for another novel study to end the year. (We were able to do a novel study for the month of December as well.) The schedule continues to work well for the students. The "choice" part of our Daily Reading continues to evolve as we are always looking for a "better way”. We struggle with the vocabulary section and are in the process of trying some new ideas. Even with that, we all still believe that Daily Five as we use it in 5th grade is much better than what we were doing previously in Reading. “Word Work” vocabulary continues to be a struggle, since it is based on the Illinois Frameworks list.

**Elementary Special Education- Staci Lindelof**

I feel with Daily 5 there is consistency between grade levels.  I am anxious to see how the year starts off next year with K introducing Daily 5 this year.

I am also excited about the Fundations program in first grade this year.  I feel as though the students are getting much more instruction of the rules/core of phonics.  I am looking forward to how this unfolds in years to come.

Moving from kindergarten to first grade, the cohesive part is great and will translate into first grade. Some Fundations activities have been taken back to kindergarten teachers for them to utilize.

Also, the stories after Christmas get difficult, so those stories will last for two weeks and they still get the reading practice at their levels.

**Elementary Special Education- Cathy Cope**

This year in reading, I work in both second and third grade.   I feel the progress that my students are making with the Daily 5 is more than I would have seen if we were still using the basal.  With the students picking their own books to read, they are able to pick books that interest them and also that they can actually read on their own.  I have noticed they are more confident in their reading ability and are more excited about reading with this method.

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*Cope, continued*

The transition from second to third grade reading should be a very easy one for most of the students, as the classrooms are run very similarly.  Expectations are the same, the terminology is the same, and the Cafe strategies carry over to each grade level.  I didn't mention this at our meeting, but I also feel the assessments we are using really show what the students know and understand about each standard that we are teaching during our mini-lessons and strategy groups.

**Elementary Reading Specialist- Karen Fairley (**Report sent in**)**

I think the Daily 5/Cafe is working great. I have seen a lot of improvement in the students reading levels, expression, and willingness to read. I think the AimWeb scores might give a better idea how it is going. I co-teach with Tammy Zehr and with Kathy Brown. I think in 2B it is progressing very well. Standards are being addressed in each

classroom. I really like the Phonics program that is use in second grade. I think it gives them a lot better way of decoding words. I do work with small groups in second and third grade. Both of my groups were working on fluency. They seem to be improving with decoding being a large part of the reason. I also with on sight words a lot. They are also learning to read with expression in their voices.

**Elementary Reading Specialist- Tammy Seneca**

Mrs. Seneca stated at the meeting that she was impressed with both student growth and improvement.

**Elementary Reading Specialist- Deb Hohulin**

Mrs. Hohulin was impressed with the “flow” from class to class.

**Elementary Reading Specialist- Evon Fredrickson**

Mrs. Fredrickson stated that Tier groups are done differently and is a balanced literacy program. The teachers get to meet with smaller groups more often, and the students get more attention than in the past. The nonreaders are even engaged, and have a love for books.

**Sixth Grade- Deanna Leitz:**

We are continuing to revise the way we teach in order to specifically address the standards, while using the materials we have available. Currently, we are in the process of looking through new materials for literature and are finding that most textbooks companies are going to online versions of the text. While online texts are nice in some aspects, we realize that our current technology situation would not allow for us to use these versions in class. Therefore, we are at a bit of a standstill. There are a few consumables that we are looking at as well. I am working on test revisions, continually, and will be creating a new pre/ posttest for use, next school year. Of course PARCC

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*Lietz, continued*

scheduling, implementation, etc., etc. is a continual question and will consume considerable teacher time for the next quarter.

Deanna discussed that CARS assessments can be used as a basis for other assignments. The sixth grade continues their focus on independent reading. Author Trent reedy came and the kids were very excited Second semester, they will read the next book, and more silent reading will be incorporated with self-selected materials. Some enrichment classes are reading novels that go with their curriculum and sometimes they are done as a read aloud.

**Seventh Grade- Deanna Freehill:**

In seventh grade literature class, I have focused and built the school year around the CCSS 19 Reading Standards for Literature and Informational Text.  The first two quarters we worked on ten of the standards, and have nine more to work on for remainder of the school year.  I believe that I will have time to teach the remaining standards, but I

feel like I’ve had to rush through some of the material to complete all of the standards by the end of the year.  Writing assessments and finding text to meet the grade level and standard has been a challenge and time consuming.

In an effort to work towards changes with Common Core and PARCC testing, I have been changing the way that I ask questions, making them multiple steps on both homework and tests.  For example, the students are expected to answer the question and then provide text to support their answer.

The middle school reading teachers have also met to explore and discuss materials available by publishers to provide additional resources for our classrooms.

**Middle School Special Education- April Warren:**

Now that Mrs. Warren is departmentalized and works only with the subject of reading, she is able to see what the achievement expectations there are for grades 6 though 8. She is finding that a lot of the IEP students are struggling with the Common Core Standards. The self-contained students are better served in this area.

**Eighth Grade Literature- Deanna Lietz:**

Mrs. Lietz reported that it is necessary for her to select the standards that are top priority, according to what couldn’t be covered in depth in grades six and seven. The Socratic Seminar is utilized, and the students really seem to enjoy it. The work well, building on each other’s ideas.

**High School- Erin Nuss:**

The 11th and 12th grade English courses continue to offer rigorous production and consumption of high-quality literature. We have expanded the number and breadth of non-narrative and non-fiction texts in all upper level courses. Assessments have been integral to our reflection on curricular change. Semester exams offered several surprises

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*Nuss, continued*

in terms of student ability. We have had to make changes to our second semester sequencing and will continue to analyze the exams themselves. One of the concerns we have begun discussing as a department is student preparation for advanced English coursework. The scaffolding of analytical and critical thinking skills could perhaps be better reinforced with tracking in earlier courses.  There is valuable data from the pre and posttests. Finally, discussion needs to occur as to how to differentiate with scaffolded tracks.

**High School- Erica Kostoff:**

Concerning pacing, we are making an effort to slow down and dig deeper into the content.  We are being more selective about what we read and not how much we read.

\*Issues in content/assessments: The exams were much more difficult for the students since they are strictly application rather than memorizing.  There will be continued and increased emphasis on modifying exams and re-framing/giving more practice at

application in class.  We continue to modify and align all rubrics, not just writing assignments, toward common core. Concerning student initiative, we are trying to focus more on students leading the class and teaching one another.

**Lauren Heap-**

As an English department, we have begun to work on pre-tests and post-tests to measure student growth over the course of a semester or an entire year (as applicable).  We have run theses for the first time last semester and have tweaked them again this semester based on what we saw with students when they interacted with the test.  For example: Comp II writes a short argumentative response to an article, while Speech gave response speech to a quote, and both activities were repeated grading the same skill with different content at the end of the semester.  We have also revamped our semester exams completely.  They are no longer limited to simply content retention and regurgitation, but rather they are completely skill based.  This was a struggle for both the students and us as teachers.  They were very time consuming to create, and they are time consuming for the students as well, as now they are skill based.  The exams contain a larger amount of passages to read and then work with to answer questions, rather than asking how Julius Caesar died or who the narrator of *To Kill a Mockingbird* is.  The results were much lower in terms of test scores than in the past.  As a department, we plan to work further on these, looking at the results and the question diagnostics from Mrs. Sullins based not only on scores in general from each class, but the specific percentages that each individual answer for a specific question got in terms of student response.  I feel like that is my next step; working on adapting and editing those new final exams to where they are a valid representation of students' knowledge.

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**Special Education- Teri Eichelberger:**

Mrs. Eichelberger discussed that students have struggled for years and years in English courses. This year, a self-contained junior class is in place. The students are more comfortable with asking questions, an are not embarrassed to ask them. Not all of the CCSS will be covered, and the students will receive accommodations. For example, the Scarlet Letter discussions will take more time, and will not cover as much material.Also, the semester exam readings were shortened, and fewer questions were administered. This year, there are four students in the all-girl class, and it looks as if next year, the enrollment will be seven boys.

As for the EIP students who attend the regular English courses, all English classes are now changed to Common Core State Standards, and the assessments have all been rewritten to reflect those standards. The semester exam assessment averages were low, and the tests took a lot longer to complete than the one-hour and a half exam periods. The lower level students experienced frustration with exam length, and even with listening to the test being read to them. Retaining the lengthy paragraphs is difficult, and then when a student is asked to go back and find information, the student often just quits. Hopefully over time the students’ stamina will be increased as theyexperience this type of test in

additional classes at earlier grade levels. Also, the semester exams included critical analysis and higher level thinking skills. The students had practiced these types of test questions during the semester, but they still seemed to struggle. They knew that ahead of time but weren’t quite ready for it.

Finally, the Senior Skills class is composed of all boys one girl. Students in this coarse seem to be more disciplined with the workload, and have motivation get improve on their weaknesses in order to get the most out of the class.