

**Canton School Committee
ELA Workshop
Thursday, February 2, 2023**

- A. **Call to Order:** Chair Merenda called for a motion to convene the Thursday, February 2, 2023 Canton School Committee Meeting at 5: 06 pm. Laura Arboleda made the motion; Maureen Moran seconded. Roll Call vote was unanimous at 4-0 and recorded as:

Kristian Merenda	yea
Kendall O'Halloran	yea
Maureen Moran	yea
Laura Arboleda	yea

School Committee members went directly into an ELA workshop to review the elementary literacy curriculum.

Present: Kristian Merenda

Kendall O'Halloran (via Zoom video)
Laura Arboleda
Maureen Moran
Superintendent Derek Folan
Stephen Marshall, Director of Finance and Operations

Absent: Nichola Gallagher

Guests: Deborah Rooney, Director, Teaching and Learning PreK-8
Jacklyn Abrams, Humanities Coordinator, PreK-5

Ms. Deborah Rooney, Director of Teaching and Learning PreK-8, described the history of Canton's Elementary Literacy program, student MCAS performance beginning 2017, and Canton's professional learning history. Ms. Abrams explained evidence based practices and compared instruction based programs against the Workshop model, concluding that instruction based programs do not yield deeper understanding, and that the Workshop model better meets the needs of students.

Discussion ensued. Chair Merenda wanted to better understand how the goals of DESE relate to Canton's success in student reading and wondered how to uncover and remediate chronic underperformance in older students. Ms. Merenda asked for future discussion on an investment in students with reading concerns. Ms. Abrams acknowledged that request. She noted there is a student opportunity grant that she could apply for and employ to convene educators for deliberating on what is working with reading programs and what is not.

Ms. Arboleda wondered why the District would continue with a curriculum that has not received favorable reviews from DESE. Ms. Abrams stated that the current program does have some merits and is not a low quality product. Consideration and replacement of the current program brings its own challenges including teachers' learning bandwidth. She did acknowledge that every publisher is thinking

about how to improve their product. Ms. Rebecca Ashley added that there is no District reading specialist staff beyond elementary school and there are no good tools for assessing reading skills. Ms. Moran asked how the District intends to capture “gap” students who have not had the benefit of backfilling instruction post COVID. Ms. Abrams responded that tiered Intervention training for middle school students is in progress. Both GMS and CHS are trying to fill in the gaps of “growing readers” by employing “volumes of reading,” independent reading of books a student enjoys. Ms. Abrams also agreed to work on the morphology of reading structure.

With no time left for further discussion, Chair Merenda called for a motion to adjourn the 2.2.23 ELA Workshop at 6:11 pm. Laura Arboleda made the motion and Maureen Moran seconded. Roll Call vote was unanimous at 4-0 and recorded as:

Kristian Merenda	yea
Kendall O’Halloran	yea
Maureen Moran	yea
Laura Arboleda	yea

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Ms. Merenda asked for future discussion on an investment in older students with reading concerns.
2. Ms. Abrams agreed to work on the morphology of reading structure.