

21st Century Advisory Committee Meeting
Tuesday, January 12th, 2010; 8:30 am to 10:00 am
Willmar, MN 56201

Present: Bob Tews, Cedar Mt. School Superintendent
Ed Downey, PACT 4 Evaluator
Lance Bagstad, RCW School Superintendent
Larry Schueler, ECHO Charter School Administrator
Rick Clark, BL/H School Superintendent
Rob Pederson, EV/W School Principal
Sally Belgum-Blad, PACT 4 Grant Coordinator
Sandi Arndt, Canby School Principal
Sherri Broderius, ACGC School Superintendent
Tom Farrell, BOLD School Superintendent

1. Introductions and Site Updates

Cedar Mountain – programming is running well. They are trying to “raise the bar” – the program is accomplishing its purpose, but there’s more that it can do. Staff have done a good job in making connections and are more deliberate in what they’re presenting. They’ve been lucky to have had the same instructors for the last two to three years. Test scores are not where they want them, so 21st Century is one tool to use when working with struggling kids.

Eden Valley/Watkins – just got the elementary on board with programming this fall and it’s going well – they have anywhere from 25-40 kids depending on the day. Two teachers – on a rotating basis – run the program. They have the year planned out, have lots of ideas, Rob has ideas, and Denise “runs with things”. They’re working on putting together a family night, and hopefully hosting one per month for the rest of the year.

Canby – they are trying to get up and going again after the break and having so many snow days and late starts this month.

Renville County West – is going well since the transition to one building. Along with 21st Century, the school is trying to do a lot of K-12 activities to get the school and kids together as a community. Lance has heard a lot of good reports on the coordinator and staff.

ECHO – they have beefed up the secondary program more, and the elementary program is going very strong up through 7th/8th grades. They’ve brought a couple of male teachers on board and have moved it to 6:30 p.m. in the secondary level to help increase participation. They’ve created a sort of coffee-house atmosphere for the older kids: shutting the curtain onstage; bringing in a couch, guitars, and instruments; and lowering the lights; the kids have thoroughly enjoyed it. They have discussed repeating a big summer trip, perhaps following the Oregon Trail out and back, and are working on a budget for that.

Atwater/Cosmos/Grove City – their goal is to bulk up high school involvement, and to that end there are several programs going on now. They are concerned about numbers in the 5-8 grade range, and Sherri wasn’t sure about numbers in the lower grades.

Buffalo Lake/Hector – has an after school program on Tuesdays and Thursdays, with over 240 kids coming per week. With help from another grant, they were able to add on second graders. They don’t have any problem getting numbers in the high school either. Their Free and Reduced number was 43% and are now approaching 56%. They have many volunteers coming to help. A meal is provided and that makes a *big* difference. Rick estimated that doing that is probably keeping 1/4 of them coming, “with this economy in the tank, it’s getting tough out there.” They have a nice volunteer base of teachers, but are running out of bus room and may have to add a 3rd route.

BOLD – is going well, the new coordinator is doing a really nice job. Numbers are high, participation is good, and there is enthusiasm and excitement felt about the teachers and the coordinator. They are also planning summer programming.

A summary of Year 3 First Quarter Progress Reports was distributed. Challenges include: scheduling conflicts with other after school activities including sports and work, and unpredictable/irregular level of attendance at the secondary level. Successes include: positive parent feedback letters being received, older youth assisting younger youth with activities, and consistent staffing. As far as advisory groups at each site, some are going quite well, some are not being utilized as they should be. Each district’s advisory group needs to meet at least two times per year, preferably three. They can be invaluable for brainstorming ideas about what works and what doesn’t. For example, BL/H’s group tackled their transportation issue and came up with great ideas and suggestions.

2. Status of Year Two Extension

On December 13th, President Obama signed a bill for a \$31million increase for 21st Century programs, an increase of \$35 million over Fiscal Year 2009, bringing the total to \$1.166 billion. Sheila Oehrlein, our grants manager, said that in early January she should have the paperwork in hand to complete for a Year 4/5 extension. She said that it was her intention to get the necessary paperwork out in January, but she cannot proceed until they get their official notification from the Department of Education. Once they receive that, they can send out the paperwork. She does feel positive about it, though. As soon as she knows our allocation, she'll let us know. We could be funded at 100% of where we were, less than that, or more – but we should know by March. In our re-application, we will need to get updated Free and Reduced numbers from each district.

3. Quality Matters Update

Colleen and Beth are the two people that have been assigned to do the YPQA (Youth Program Quality Assessment) at sites participating (Canby does not). Beth has completed three of her four site visits, and Colleen has completed seven of her eight site visits. They both said that districts are doing better in some areas than they think they are. They see two common themes: the need to increase homework help effectiveness (how to “beef up” the homework help so that the program is not a glorified study hall). This information is timely, as there is a webinar training coming up on January 19th that addresses this very topic. Sally has sent the information to site coordinators. The fee for it can come out of training dollars housed at PACT 4.

The other theme is youth engagement practices, and they will address this with individual sites. There will also be a programming staff training in June put on by Quality Matters. Individual site summaries are given to the districts and they share aggregate data with us. They do not share data across sites – their past experience is that the first year when you're in a big cohort it works better to give folks individual numbers that pertain to their own district. Rick asked that individual data *be* shared, at least the high points for each school, to help build up other schools and help each other with ideas. Perhaps they could list one or two strengths of each school to share with each other. Colleen and Beth are also willing to come to one of these meetings to share their observations and data. Since most observations have been made, they now are in the “discovery mode” and meeting with staff and advisory groups about what they found, areas for growth based on their research, and to help to create an action plan to make it as site-specific as they want. When Sally met with site coordinators, they said that they would also like Sally to make her own site visits in the spring and plug her observations into the tool to see how her impressions fit with theirs.

Larry asked about Study Island and if it is still being used. Sally said that she's heard that it has, but that we're not committed to it – it's a year-to-year subscription, so we do not have to go with that program if we're funded for Years 4 and 5. It is nice because of the fact that students can use it at home too, and it's all individualized. If there's another program that people are interested in, let Sally know.

4. National Partnership for After School Science Project

Sally found about this project the week before Christmas. This is a training and professional development project to increase the capacity of after school centers to offer extended, hands-on science projects for elementary aged children. It is research based, for children roughly in the 7-14 year age bracket. Sally sent an email to site coordinators with some details. We have to commit to using it two times per month, one hour at a time (so, two hours per month). We have a science component written into the grant but the science assessment was taken out of NWEA at the request of this group, so this could fill that requirement. The cost is \$800 per site and each site gets six kits with a curriculum. Sally is attending a train the trainer tomorrow through Friday. They would like sites to start using the curriculum in February, and also said that it could be used in the summer. It would be a nice fit with the summer science programming we have going on now. Sheila Oehrlein is “thrilled” that some of our local PACT 4 21st CCLC sites are among the 50 MN sites accepted to be a part of this national partnership (which goes further to increase our hopefulness of Year 4 and 5 funding). It's very user-friendly, so sites that struggle to find certified staff can make this work.

5. Request for Extra Funds Applications

Projected carryover spending in Year 3 as of January 11 is \$72,030. If we were to fully fund all requests submitted today, we'd not only max out our carryover fund but would need extra money to fund them. Reminder: we cannot carry over any money at the end of this fiscal year, which ends July 31, 2010. One question is do we want to keep a small cushion for needs that may arise before July 31, or use up all carryover funds? There are pending requests from ACGC, ECHO and one that BOLD submitted at this meeting that aren't included in today's packet. Sally believes that sites will comfortably max out their dollars in this current-year budget. After much discussion of whether we need to decide today, and various options of how to handle them, Rick made a motion to equally divide the \$72,000 among the

districts, let them know that they'll get at least that much to spend out, and to set a deadline of February 1st to get all other requests in. Three requests that were in the packet today (BOLD Math Enhancement, RCW Titanic Request, and Cedar Mountain's Extra Para Support were approved "as is"). All others will need to be resubmitted, but current requests should get priority if there are extra funds left over. Bob seconded the motion. Motion carried.

6. Next Meeting Date

Tuesday, February 9th at 8:30 a.m. and we should plan for the meeting to last longer to discuss the extra funds applications.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Shawna Steffen, PACT 4