

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education Student Achievement Committee met in special session on Thursday, June 13, 2019 at 5:00 PM in the Library at Coginchaug Regional High School, 135 Pickett Lane, Durham, Connecticut.

Committee members present: Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Ms. Guidet, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback

Committee members absent: Dr. Taylor

Administration present: Mrs. DiMaggio, Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment

Mrs. Petrella called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

The presenters, including Gina Lentini, Noelle Durkin, Michelle McClintick, Deb Mariani and Christy Barrett, introduced themselves.

Public Comment

None.

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Roraback made a motion, seconded by Dr. Friedrich, to approve the agenda, as presented.

In favor of approving the agenda as presented: Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Ms. Guidet, Mrs. Petrella and Mr. Roraback.

Approval of Minutes - April 24, 2019

Dr. Friedrich made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Petrella, to approve the minutes of the April 24, 2019 meeting, as presented.

In favor of approving the minutes of April 24, 2019, as presented: Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Ms. Guidet, Mrs. Petrella and Mr. Roraback.

Summer Reading

Mrs. DiMaggio explained that she, along with Mrs. Barrett and Mrs. Durkin, attended a CREC workshop called Preventing the Summer Slide which inspired the summer plans for K-5.

Mrs. DiMaggio started with what is available for the high school. Mrs. McClintick explained that all summer reading assignments are on the district's website. It is a REHUGOS (Reading, Entertainment, History, Universal Concepts/Truths, Government and Current Events, Observations and Personal Experiences, and Sports) assignment and is the same for all grades. REHUGOS helps the students connect with culture and community through reading, but can also interact in other ways. The students will choose three different topics and resources have been provided to help the students with the assignment. At the end, the students will present a two-minute speech, including three Google slides.

Mr. Roraback commented that there is nothing in the rubric that talks about above standard and asked what the incentive would be to try harder. Mrs. McClintick explained that they did think about that and decided that it would not be fair to judge that in this assignment because none of this has been taught to the students. Mrs. McClintick also explained that the rating the students receive on this assignment will end up as part of their grade. She reviewed the category weightings in the English department, with 50 percent for assessments, 30 percent for classwork and homework and 20 percent for core ethical values, habits of mind, participation, punctuality, citizenship and assignment responsibility. Mrs. McClintick did comment that this assignment is more of a habits of mind grade than an assessment grade.

Mr. Roraback asked what percentage of students Mrs. McClintick actually felt would read the rubric and she felt that most would not, but she does include the directions in her rubric. She also explained that this activity was piloted last year with the honor students and is very excited to see how this works out with everyone. Dr. Friedrich asked what types of things the honor students reported on and Mrs. McClintick stated that almost everyone went to a concert or sports events.

Mr. Roraback asked what tools are used to keep the other students engaged during the presentations and Mrs. McClintick felt that everyone was super-interested in hearing about what everyone did all summer.

Mrs. Lentini went on to explain that they will do something similar at Strong School this summer. They will use RECU (Reading, Entertainment, Current Events and Universal Concepts and Truths) and students can choose their own reading and one other topic. The same criteria will be followed except the students will present only two slides. The assignments will be due after Labor Day and the language arts teachers will show the students their summer learning to demo speeches. Mrs. Lentini went into the sixth-grade classes at Memorial to help the students know where to find the assignment and an email will go out to the parents.

Mrs. Mariani explained that she and Mrs. Fazzino went to Brewster to welcome the incoming fourth graders and to Lyman to welcome the incoming fifth graders. They encouraged students in grades 4, 5 and 6 to read over the summer and explained that they will be using Seesaw as the digital platform to share their reading, but the sharing part is optional. A flyer has gone home to parents and it is posted on the website.

The students in grades K-6 received a bag for the summer. At Memorial, they have included sunglasses to take pictures with their Seesaw accounts. Mrs. Mariani showed the summer calendar that they have created, showing some book suggestions. This calendar also includes links to both the Durham and Middlefield public libraries. Both Mrs. Mariani and Mrs. Fazzino will meet with students on a Tuesday night during the summer. Math activities are also included as well as other fun activities.

Mrs. Petrella asked if these programs are mostly generated by the coaches or discussed with the teachers. Mrs. Mariani explained that this came directly out of the CREC workshop, but it was shared with the classroom teachers. She also stressed collaborating with the community. The coaches do all of the work organizing the program.

The real theme for the summer was to try to get students more connected and to realize that learning isn't done in isolation. Mrs. Durkin stated that they were inspired by the workshop at CREC and wanted to emphasize summer learning, not just reading. The only difference at the elementary level (for both Brewster and Lyman) is that they connected it with the school's mascot. At Brewster, Drew the Dragon is the protector of their core ethical values. At Lyman, it is Leo the Lion. Mrs. Barrett added that the

students are very invested in their mascots. The calendar is very similar to Memorial's and encourages the students to post on Seesaw. They will also host open house events at Brewster where Drew the Dragon will appear. Mrs. Barrett explained that Seesaw collects all of the data, including how many students, parents and teachers were involved.

Mrs. DiMaggio thanked all of the coaches and leaders for their commitment and time in developing this as well as all the time over the summer.

Summer School

Mrs. DiMaggio explained that summer school for the general education population (grades K-4) will be staffed by four teachers (two from Lyman and two from Brewster) and Mrs. Durkin and Mrs. Barrett will be the facilitators.

Mrs. Barrett reported that there are currently 45 students enrolled, with class sizes between nine and 12. They are working on the curriculum and every child will get a good amount of attention. The day will include recess and snack time as well. Mrs. Durkin explained that all of the students have received intervention services and need a little bit more direction in a smaller setting. Specific goals will be developed for each student and will hopefully prevent any summer slide.

Mrs. DiMaggio was very excited to have 45 students in the program and noted that it was about 80 percent of the candidates. Summer school runs from July 8th through August 1st and will be from 9:00 AM until 12:00 PM, Monday through Thursday, at Brewster School.

i-Ready Results

Mrs. DiMaggio explained that, overall, 83 percent of students at Brewster met their goal in reading and 81 percent met their goal in math. Diving deeper into those scores, 70 percent of the students had made their goal by winter. In the spring, 94 percent had met their goal. She reviewed the scores in each grade.

Dr. Friedrich asked what she would attribute these increases to and Mrs. DiMaggio felt that it was due to the PLC data cycles starting this year and working with the teachers and coaches. The students were divided into strategy groups and focused in on what students' needs were. She also felt that instructional practices in the classroom are becoming more rigorous as the curriculum changes. Mrs. Barrett agreed that grade 1 did exactly that, including instructional groups and changing morning work and homework. Mrs. DiMaggio also felt that the teachers became far more data literate than ever before. They felt that the information from i-Ready made sense and was very user-friendly. Dr. Friedrich stated that it was really the formative data that was most helpful. Mrs. DiMaggio added that K-2 also started the Foundations program this year which really made a difference.

Dr. Friedrich was excited to see all of the elements come together and see progress.

Mrs. DiMaggio then showed the 5-8 scores and there was improvement there as well. Mr. Moore asked if there was a reason for no change in fourth grade. That was attributed to some test fatigue. Mrs. DiMaggio added that they are aware of the test fatigue and they are continuing to tweak the assessment calendar. They are struggling with where to put the i-Ready testing in the spring. It was also mentioned that two third-grade teachers at Brewster were out on maternity leave and subs were in the classrooms.

Mrs. Petrella mentioned the discussion about achievement scores with regard to how to measure a person's performance and how there are so many variables. Mrs. DiMaggio added that another variable is the fact that some teachers have a larger population of students receiving special services.

Looking at math, Mrs. DiMaggio reported that math scores were pretty flat a few years ago and showed the percentage of students meeting their grade level goal in the spring. Mrs. Petrella noticed that the improvement in the upper grades in both reading and math is not as dramatic as in the younger grades. Mrs. DiMaggio felt that that was because the students have a background.

Mrs. DiMaggio showed the percentage of students making their growth goal and 65 percent of the students at Brewster met their growth target overall and 75 percent met their growth target in math. She then showed the percentages who met their overall growth target by grade level. It was also explained that a lot of other students were very close to meeting their target.

Mrs. DiMaggio explained that i-Ready sets the growth targets based on where the student scores on their first diagnostic. Dr. Friedrich stated that the concern is to what extent the district is attending to and supporting the exceptional students, not only the students who need help. One approach could be to correlate raw score against growth score and to see if the students with high scores also have high growth. Dr. Friedrich did feel that the growth numbers were less than the met-level numbers and that may become a topic of discussion at the full board.

Mrs. DiMaggio also explained that there is a task force working on enrichment and a program was piloted at Strong. She also mentioned that you can click on an individual student in i-Ready and see the next steps. They all generally felt that i-Ready has made all of the teachers' jobs so much easier as all of the data is in one place and well-organized. Dr. Friedrich suggested they ask Data Dashboard to consider giving some priority to installing a blinding option.

Mrs. Petrella thanked everyone for their presentations.

Public Comment

None.

Adjournment

Dr. Friedrich made a motion, seconded by Mr. Roraback, to adjourn the meeting.

In favor of adjourning the meeting: Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Ms. Guidet, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella and Mr. Roraback.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Debi Waz
Alwaz First