

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education Student Achievement Committee met on Tuesday, October 30, 2018 at 6:00 PM in the Library at Coginchaug Regional High School, 135 Pickett Lane, Durham, Connecticut.

Committee members present: Mr. Moore and Mr. Roraback.

Committee members absent: Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Petrella and Dr. Taylor.

Administration present: Dr. Veronesi, Superintendent of Schools and Mrs. DiMaggio, Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment

Faculty present: Mrs. Walsh, Teacher, CRHS

The meeting began at 6:09 PM.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Public Comment

None.

Approval of Agenda

Due to a lack of a quorum, no vote was taken.

Approval of Minutes - September 26, 2018

Due to a lack of a quorum, no vote was taken.

CRHS Performance Tasks/UCONN Joule Fellowship - Diane Walsh

Mrs. DiMaggio introduced Diane Walsh and explained that she is a math teacher at the high school and is also developing the coding and robotics course with the tech teacher. The Merwin funds that were received will go towards running that course this year. In addition, Mrs. Walsh participated in a summer fellowship specializing in engineering. Diane was asked to share both the authentic performance based instructional practices and assessments that she uses in her classrooms and the work that she participated in at UCONN.

Mrs. Walsh explained that she had done a performance task in her pre-calculus class last year relating to the opioid crisis, but she didn't feel she had total buy-in. She stepped that up this year to include more states. She took the data from the CDC, including the number of opioid deaths from 1999 to 2016, and each group had a different state to work with. When the students looked at the data, they saw a linear curve that increased in the later years. She also asked the students if they felt there was a problem in Connecticut and in Durham and Middlefield. The students generally felt protected in Durham and Middlefield. The students ultimately had to predict what the number of deaths in Durham and Middlefield would be if they followed the state that they were working on. This year, Mrs. Walsh set an alarm for every 12 minutes (which is how often an opioid death occurs) and either gave the students a fact or asked them a question. She gave examples of some of the student feedback.

Mrs. Walsh reviewed some of the data from Durham and Middlefield as well as surrounding towns. She felt that the subject was definitely relevant and the students enjoyed it. The students shared more stories this year and seemed to really understand.

Mr. Roraback commented that he was impressed because there never seemed to be a reason why his calculus class seemed relevant.

Mrs. Walsh then explained that she participated in the Joule Fellowship program at UCONN for six weeks this past summer and played a video for the committee members. She explained that part of the work was to bring engineering back into science and math classrooms and went through a brief description of the program. She also explained that she was paid \$4,000 for the six-week program and will receive another \$4,000 if she shows that she has brought the lesson into the classroom. She reviewed some pictures with the committee and explained what students have been doing. Mrs. Walsh also explained that the students were graded on their participation, not on the correctness of the math.

Dr. Veronesi asked Mrs. Walsh to comment on the classroom space and furniture in terms of supporting the type of learning the students were engaged in. Mrs. Walsh stated that space definitely was an issue. She also explained that the students watched some short movies and were also directed to some scholarly articles. Mrs. Walsh commented that she was a little nervous with all of the activity happening in such a small space and how difficult it was for students to complete some of the projects because the desks slant forward.

Mrs. DiMaggio complimented Mrs. Walsh on the excellent work and explained that she wanted to show the committee that this is the direction that the district is moving in. Mr. Moore suggested getting some of the students into the labs at UCONN. Dr. Veronesi suggested that Mrs. Walsh talk to Mr. Falcone about setting up a field trip, but Mrs. Walsh felt that would be better for an honors level class or a physics class.

Mrs. Walsh also reviewed the performance task that they did for the final exam last year which was around skiing. She did explain that she doesn't teach trigonometry this year, but would be willing to help Ms. Kavanaugh with an activity for this year. There may be a problem with space, but that can be worked out.

STEAM Programming K-12 - Brenda Parness

Mrs. DiMaggio explained that Mrs. Parness was unable to attend tonight, but she did want to come back to the committee to do a presentation on the STEAM programming.

Mrs. DiMaggio reported that the district purchased a Wii engineering curriculum for preschool and maker spaces continue in the elementary school. They have found that maker carts are more convenient as they can go directly into the classrooms. Maker carts may appear in the budget at about \$1200 each.

After-school STEAM camps continue to be very popular on early-release days. They are also working on starting up an after-school Legos/robotics club at the middle school. They do hope to encourage students to become more involved in after-school activities. They have also noticed that only 30 percent of female students at the high school are in tech classes and they also hope to encourage more female students to get involved. They are looking at Project Lead The Way for the high school, Introduction to Engineering and Computer Science classes. Mrs. DiMaggio felt that that would add the "E" to STEAM that doesn't really exist at the high school right now. There are a lot of science and math courses at the high school, some technology courses but not really any engineering at all.

Mrs. DiMaggio explained that she went to Haddam-Killingworth High School and saw Project Lead The Way, which is programming for future engineers and includes some very high-level classes. There is a biomedical engineering class as well. HK has an entire wing with classrooms that house very impressive equipment. She also commented that the two classes she observed had only one girl, but the teacher explained that that was because it was electrical engineering and they do have girls in the intro to engineering and biomedical engineering classes. Mr. Moore also noted that there are several female engineers around town that could be called upon.

Dr. Veronesi also stated that when we first began coding, the third grade girls demonstrated a serious interest in coding, but it needs to be sustained over time. Mrs. DiMaggio did write a Title IV grant application for this type of programming that included money for professional learning and supplies, but the total amount is only \$10,000. She noted that decisions will have to be made about restructuring spaces, obtaining equipment and investments will have to be made. She will also continue to search out more grants. Dr. Veronesi felt it would be helpful to lay out a multi-year implementation and the rationale behind it; this would be included in the existing STEAM Improvement Plan.

Mrs. DiMaggio also reported that a team of teachers will be going to Greenwich to look at their Innovation Lab.

Mrs. DiMaggio shared that a strategic STEAM plan exists and that Brenda will share at a later date.

Student Achievement Goals 2018-2019

Mrs. DiMaggio stated that she and Dr. Veronesi have spoken with Renee Savoie, NAEP State Coordinator at the State of Connecticut's Performance Office regarding the district's overall student achievement goals. Formative assessments and summative assessments are now included in a K-8 assessment calendar and a high school calendar is being created as well. They have also put procedures in place for PLC and data teams to help teachers truly look at their data and how to improve instruction based on that data. That data is for individual students, classes of students, individual schools and the entire district.

Renee Savoie stated that the state is looking purely at growth and accountability. Accountability measures include many factors, including growth, but mostly at the percentage of target achieved. It looks at items such as student absences, assessment participation rate, graduation rates, physical fitness scores and arts access, etc. Mrs. DiMaggio reviewed that the state has set a 100 percent of target achieved goal for 2030. That would mean that the district should be increasing by 3 percent each year according to the RSD 13 data.

Looking at where the district is ranked within the DRG, Ms. Savoie tried to discourage them from using the DRG as a metric by which to measure the district's success. Dr. Veronesi also reviewed some of the factors used to determine what DRG the district is in and explained that the DRGs have not been reassessed for 12 years which means that DRG assignments could be different based on changes in demographics and other qualifying variables. Ms. Savoie felt that the groupings are outdated. Comparing the district to other DRG members may give a false elevation or a false depression. Mrs. DiMaggio reported that Ms. Savoie explained that the state has no intention to update DRG assignments.

Dr. Veronesi reviewed that when they talk about the goals, they are talking about percentage of target achieved and very specific outcomes for SAT and PSAT. She also gave some examples of lagging and leading indicators.

Both Dr. Veronesi and Mrs. DiMaggio are excited to have Ajit Gopalakrishnan, the Chief Performance Officer from the Connecticut State Department of Education come to the next meeting.

Public Comment

None.

Adjournment

Due to a lack of a quorum, no motion was needed to adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Debi Waz
Alwaz First