

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education Student Achievement Committee met on Thursday, February 22, 2018 at 4:00 PM in the Library at Coginchaug Regional High School, 135 Pickett Lane, Durham, Connecticut.

Committee members present: Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella and Dr. Taylor.

Committee members absent: Mr. Roraback

Other board members present: Mrs. Geraci (arrived at 5:00 p.m.)

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

The meeting was called to order at 4:10 PM.

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

### **Public Comment**

None.

### **Approval of Agenda**

*Mrs. Petrella made a motion, seconded by Dr. Friedrich, to approve the agenda as presented.*

*In favor of approving the agenda: Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella and Dr. Taylor. Motion passed unanimously.*

There was discussion about adding an item called "Other" on the agenda from now on.

*Dr. Friedrich made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Petrella, to add the agenda item "Other."*

*In favor of adding the agenda item "Other": Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella and Dr. Taylor. Motion passed unanimously.*

### **Approval of Minutes - January 29, 2017**

*Mrs. Petrella made a motion, seconded by Dr. Friedrich, to approve the minutes of the January 29, 2018 meeting, as presented.*

*In favor of approving the minutes as presented: Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella and Dr. Taylor. Motion passed unanimously.*

### **Next Generation Accountability Report**

Mrs. DiMaggio explained that every district receives an accountability report from the State and explained that it is a broader view of looking at how a district performs. It is a more multifaceted index that includes information on growth, including the percentage of target achieved. It helps school districts identify the areas they need to improve upon. Schools are expected to have a 95 percent participation rate, meaning 95 percent of all students are taking the test. If the District drops below that level, they lose a point. The index includes 12 indicators which she reviewed for the committee members. She explained that if a student misses more than 10 percent of the school year, they are considered chronically absent. There are benchmarks set for test results as well and Mrs. DiMaggio explained that all students take the SAT, whether they are going on to college or not.

Accountability index is the total percentage of possible points on all indicators. Last year, the District's index was 80.8 percent as opposed to this year which is 79.3 percent. The percentage points went down in schools across the state, most likely due to the stringent growth targets that are set. District 13 is actually in higher ranking within the DRG. The weighting of the various indexes influence the total score.

Connecticut divides the schools into different categories, based on scores, with Category 1 being the highest and Category 5 being the lowest. Additionally, schools can receive a designation of "School of Distinction" due to the designation of "Highest Performing," "Highest Growth" or "Greatest Improvers." Both Brewster and Lyman have achieved the designation of "School of Distinction." Achievement gap indicators were reviewed and Mrs. DiMaggio explained that this will cause a one-point drop in category. There was an achievement gap in performance between the high-needs students and the non-high-needs students at Memorial and Strong. The issue was in ELA at Strong and in Science at Memorial. Dr. Taylor asked the percentage of high-needs designation and Mrs. DiMaggio explained that there needs to be at least 20 students in order to have a high-needs population designation. The designation of high needs is a combination of special needs students, EL students and free or reduced lunch students. Mrs. DiMaggio will follow up with the exact numbers for each school. Dr. Veronesi also reported that the District has five students that are EL students.

Mrs. DiMaggio reviewed the areas of improvements and areas that decreased. Brewster and Lyman went from a status level 2 to a status level 1. The District is now eighth out of 29 districts in the DRG. CRHS remained status level 2. Memorial and Strong decreased from the level 2 designation to the level 3 designation. Mrs. DiMaggio highlighted the decrease in on track to high school graduation, the four-year graduation for all students and the decrease in post-secondary entrance and explained that the high school still met those targets.

Mrs. DiMaggio then showed the comparisons to the DRG and explained that we were 11<sup>th</sup> and are now eighth. Dr. Taylor pointed out the large shifts in other school districts and the lack of consistent standards. Mrs. DiMaggio then went on to review the trends across the state of CT and explained that state scores are relatively flat. Focus areas for the District, based upon this and other information, include increasing the percentage of students meeting their individual growth targets, decreasing achievement gaps in science and ELA, improving physical fitness instructional practices and participation rates, addressing the four-year graduation rate for all students and paying attention to how we code our arts access courses. Dr. Friedrich stated that they had discussed a problem with participation in the arts last year too.

Dr. Taylor asked how we are going to address the goal of meeting their growth targets and Mrs. DiMaggio explained that she believed it would be best addressed through really good instructional practices and a rich curriculum. She also mentioned authentic and performance-based learning experiences as part of the curriculum. Mrs. DiMaggio feels that, with the assessment tools that are in place right now, it is difficult to identify where students are not meeting their growth targets. The District is looking at a new diagnostic tool for next year which should help in that area. There is also individual student-level data and it can be tracked to the teacher though a pattern by performance level of student has not been identified. Dr. Friedrich asked if the committee members can have access to the database and Mrs. DiMaggio directed him to [www.edsight.ct.gov/SASPortal/main.do](http://www.edsight.ct.gov/SASPortal/main.do).

### **Budget Presentation: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment**

Mrs. DiMaggio then went on to review curriculum proposed in the next budget year. They will be looking at a Word Study program for grades K-2 which will be a consistent phonics program. The NGSS (next generation science standards) will be fully implemented in grades 3-12 and the science coordinator will help with the instruction in the K-2 grades. There is also money in the budget for software to support the curriculum initiatives and she reviewed some of the software teaching packages.

Curriculum writing will be taking place for specific courses at the high school and across the district. They will continue with a focus on the workshop model in math, reading and writing, instructional strategies in math, NGSS, interdisciplinary courses at the high school and STEAM initiatives. Professional learning will continue in math, science, social studies and ELA, Reading and Writer’s Workshops. In the area of assessment, they are looking at full implementation of iReady, the use of the data dashboard and continued support with a data analyst who is assisting with data analysis at the district level.

**Other**

Mrs. Petrella reported that she has been getting letters about the half-time cut in the music program and wanted to clarify the reasons for that. Dr. Veronesi stated that they would discuss that in greater detail at next week’s full Board meeting, but the concern that the positive impact of the entire music program will be diminished is not the case. She explained that they had intended to cut a full position a year ago and then made the decision to cut .5. With the numbers of students who participate in the music programs, 7.5 staff members is adequate staffing. The current teachers have ample time in their schedules and can move from school to school. Dr. Veronesi reiterated that this will be discussed in at the full Board meeting.

Mrs. Petrella also asked about the communications survey and wondered if parents are able to see their children’s grades online. Dr. Veronesi believes that that is available for middle school and high school. Dr. Taylor did not feel it was a good idea to allow parents to hover over the test scores, etc. Mrs. Petrella also asked about the teachers’ web pages and felt that they were not all updated. Dr. Veronesi explained that there are minimal expectations for teachers’ web pages because there are so many other ways for them to communicate. Dr. Veronesi also felt that the survey that went out may need to have a follow-up.

**Public Comment**

None.

**Adjournment**

*Dr. Friedrich made a motion, seconded by Dr. Taylor, to adjourn the meeting.*

*In favor of adjourning the meeting: Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella and Dr. Taylor. Motion passed unanimously.*

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Debi Waz

Debi Waz  
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