

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education Student Achievement Committee met on Wednesday, March 27, 2019 at 5:15 PM in the Library at Coginchaug Regional High School, 135 Pickett Lane, Durham, Connecticut.

Committee members present: Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich (arrived late), Ms. Guidet, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella (arrived late), Mr. Roraback and Dr. Taylor

Committee members absent: None

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

Mr. Moore called the meeting to order at 5:18 PM.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Public Comment

None.

Approval of Agenda

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

In favor of approving the agenda as presented: Ms. Guidet, Mr. Moore, Mr. Roraback and Dr. Taylor.

Approval of Minutes - February 28, 2019

Dr. Taylor made a motion, seconded by Mr. Roraback, to approve the minutes of the February 28, 2019 meeting, as presented.

In favor of approving the minutes of February 28, 2019, as presented: Ms. Guidet, Mr. Moore, Mr. Roraback and Dr. Taylor.

Accountability Report

Mrs. DiMaggio reviewed the RSD 13 Next Generation Accountability Report and went over that this is a broader view of looking at 12 indicators. It looks at more than just tested areas and is really like the district's report card. The first indicator that the state looks at is academic achievement, which includes the Smarter Balanced assessment, the SAT, NGSS (which will not be in this report) and the CTAA (Connecticut Alternate Assessment for special needs students). They also look at academic growth which is the growth rate, but also the percentage of target achieved.

A 95 percent assessment participation rate is required. Chronic absenteeism is rated on percentage of students missing 10 percent or greater in a school year. Preparation for post-secondary and career readiness course work looks at AP and UCONN courses, CTE courses (career technical education) and workplace experience courses as well. This is based on how the district codes their courses and they look at the amount of courses offered and internship experiences provided. They also look at the 11th and 12th graders and how they perform on the SAT, ACT and on the AP class exams. They look at the percentage

of 9th graders earning at least five full-year credits in the year and no more than one F in a semester. There is a graduation four-year adjusted cohort and that is the percentage of first-time 9th graders who graduate in four years. The six-year adjusted cohort is really for the special needs population and ensures that they graduate in six years.

The post-secondary entrance rate is the percentage of the graduating class who enroll in a two- or four-year post-secondary institution any time during the first year after graduation. They look at two different things with regard to physical fitness. They look for 90 percent participation rate, but they also look at the percentage of students meeting or exceeding the high fitness zone standards. Students are not required to have four years of physical education, but the district must have 90 percent participation in the testing. This year, the district missed the participation rate at the high school by one student.

The state looks at the percentage of students in grades 9-12 participating in at least one dance, theater, music or visual arts course in the school year. Extracurricular activities do not count towards this. Dr. Taylor asked if there were opportunities to have some of the course offerings enhanced by extracurricular activities, i.e. receive credit for extracurricular offerings. Mr. Roraback mentioned the time restrictions in a day to be able to offer all of these things. Mrs. DiMaggio will look into this further.

Mrs. DiMaggio then went into the specifics of the accountability report. Looking at the percentage of points earned, the district is at 81.5. She pointed out the targets, points earned and max points and those numbers compared to the state. The district had 94.1 percent participation in physical fitness for the entire district, needing 90 percent. In 2015-2016, the district earned 80.8 points and went down to 79.3 in 2016-2017. In 2017-2018, the district moved back up to 81.5.

Mrs. DiMaggio reviewed the categories, Schools of Distinction and achievement gaps. Dr. Taylor asked why the district's numbers changed so dramatically last year in free and reduced lunch. Mr. Roraback explained that that is a national thing and they want the Department of Agriculture to sell more food and subsidize it a bit more. Mrs. DiMaggio explained that it is very confidential information and the principals aren't even supposed to know who the students are. She has not heard about any definitional change in that, but will check with Mrs. Neubig. Mr. Roraback explained that he teaches in the inner city in a very, very difficult district and in the past, the majority of students received free lunch. This year, everybody in the school receives free breakfast and free lunch. Mrs. DiMaggio also explained that if the gap in performance or graduation rate exceeds the state gap by more than one standard deviation, the gap is determined to be an outlier.

Strong Middle School had an ELA performance index gap and a math performance index gap and that was between the high needs rate and non-high needs rate. Because of that, the school is a category 3 school.

Brewster Elementary School is a School of Distinction for high-performing school and Lyman Elementary School is a School of Distinction for high-performing school and also growth in both ELA and math. Brewster will never be a School of Distinction for growth because they only have third grade. The district is 9th out of 30 districts in the DRG. There was an increase in overall accountability index from 79.3 to 81.5. Memorial Middle School increased their school category to a level 2 from a level 3. They had an outlier gap in 2016-2017 in science, but science was not tested last year.

Taking a look at the individual schools, John Lyman earned 88.6 point, Brewster earned 94.4, Memorial earned 76.9, Strong earned 69.1 and Cuginchaug earned 86. The high school should have been a category

1, but was not due to the participation rate in PE by one child. The high school also had two to four special needs students who did not take the SATs and that detracted from the participation rate as well.

The district had an increase in ELA performance index for all students, an increase in the four-year graduation rate, an increase in the six-year graduation rate and an increase in arts access. Ms. Guidet asked if these numbers were all available to the public and Mrs. DiMaggio explained that they were.

Regarding areas for improvement, the district decreased in the math average percentage of growth target achieved for all students and also for high-needs students. There was a decrease in preparation for CCR percentage-taking courses. The reason for that is that some courses are not offered all the time, with AP chemistry being offered every other year. Some students who took those courses did not do as well in the AP classes as they had in the past. More and more students are taking AP classes, but sometimes students just aren't ready to take the exam. Dr. Friedrich stated that six years ago, students who were not expected to perform well were counseled out of AP classes and a decision was made to encourage any student to take an AP class, understanding that that may make the district's statistics look worse. The students are still challenged, regardless of the exam results. Mrs. DiMaggio also mentioned that the district is offering AP computer science next year and her hope would be that a variety of students take the class.

Mrs. DiMaggio reviewed that there was also a decrease in post-secondary entrance numbers and they are not sure why. Mr. Moore mentioned that students may not be able to afford it and Mrs. DiMaggio also felt it may be students taking a gap year. She explained that the achievement gap at Strong was between high-needs and non-high-needs students. Mrs. DiMaggio added that the group did not include any EL students, so it was really free and reduced lunch and special needs and she took a guess that it was more free and reduced than special needs as far as the number is concerned. It was also discussed that it is a tough age group. Mrs. DiMaggio also explained that this year is the first year of implementing the new math curriculum at Strong. She also mentioned that the teachers that serve students with special needs need more professional learning in the area of math and they have been working on that.

Mrs. DiMaggio also mentioned that the district's math scores have typically been at the lower end and math has been a real focus, particularly at the middle school level and 6-8. A consultant has been working with them and this past year, a push was made to have the teachers get more professional learning.

Mrs. DiMaggio then reviewed the district's numbers and where they stand in the DRG. The district is currently 9th out of 30. Being in the top third of the DRG is certainly something to be proud of, but she cautioned that all schools are not equal. For instance, Andover is only a K-5 school. Hebron is also only an elementary school. Andover, Hebron and Marlborough only come together at the middle and high school. Dr. Taylor summarized that the district is doing well and it wouldn't take much to move up.

Dr. Friedrich also pointed out that there are an awful lot of schools with 80-82 points and except for the top five outliers, those are the best schools. Andover has come in at the top for the last two years, but again is only one school.

Mrs. DiMaggio then went on to review trends across the state, including increases in overall accountability index scores, decreases in chronic absenteeism for all students, increases in participation rates, increases in percentage of 11th and 12th grade students who met the benchmark in a college and career readiness exam, increases in percentage of students who took at least one AP exam, decreases in post-secondary entrance, decreases in physical fitness participation rates and increases in arts access.

The district's focus areas are to increase the percentage of students meeting their individual growth targets and decrease the achievement gaps in math and ELA at Strong through professional learning, data literacy and PLC cycles. The adoption of the new diagnostic tool (i-Ready) this year has been extremely helpful with this. The district hopes to improve physical fitness participation rates in the high school, improve participation percentages at high school and high needs category and increase the percentage of students who enroll in CCR courses. Dr. Taylor felt his own kids were okay with the i-Ready system. Mrs. DiMaggio explained that i-Ready has good predictability as well. Mr. Roraback stated that his daughter felt that Khan Academy allowed the students to go back and practice something and i-Ready does not. Mrs. DiMaggio added that teachers have the ability to go in and target it specifically to the students.

Mrs. DiMaggio explained that the public can go onto EdSight and then to Next Generation accountability results. She reviewed the parts of the website and explained that you can find the specific districts and schools. Mrs. Petrella asked Mrs. DiMaggio to send this information out to all of the board members and she will do that.

SRBI

Mrs. DiMaggio explained that SRBI (Scientific Research-Based Interventions) is a framework for providing intensive support to students. It's a prevention-oriented approach and it minimizes the risk of long-term negative learning outcomes by responding quickly to academic or behavioral problems and ensuring appropriate identification of students with disabilities. These are also referred to as multi-tiered systems of support.

Tier 1 interventions include about 80 to 90 percent of students. Tier 2 includes about 5 to 10 percent of students and tier 3 is the most intensive, 1 to 5 percent of students. Mrs. DiMaggio reviewed this year's data and reported that 90 percent of the district's students are within tier 1 math interventions and 89 percent in reading. In tier 2, there is 8 percent in math and reading. In tier 3, there is 1 percent in math and 3 percent in reading. These numbers are students in grades K-8.

Mrs. DiMaggio reviewed the definitions of the different tiers. She referred the committee members to a website for more information. She explained that she has been working on the SRBI process with a committee of teachers and administrators and really taking a look at the entrance and exit criteria and what types of interventions are being used, what's changed when it gets to the tier 3 level and looking at the SAT process. They are working on revamping the whole process and she feels a very solid system will be in place for the fall.

This process has been in the Special Ed department in the past and Mrs. DiMaggio has now taken this on and works very closely with the interventionists. Right now, it is not consistent across the schools but it will be.

Intervention Data

Mrs. DiMaggio explained that there is the equivalent of one reading interventionist at Brewster, however this year there is someone who is a K-1 coach/interventionist and someone as a 2-3 coach/interventionist. Next year, she has made the decision that one person is going to be intervention and one person will be coach. There is also one math interventionist at Brewster.

At Lyman, there are two reading interventionists and a .5 coach. The reading interventionists also, because of the Foundations implementation, have taken on the grade 2 Foundations and are teaching that to the students. There is one math interventionist at Lyman as well.

At Memorial, there is one reading interventionist and a math interventionist position that is split between three people. That was done because a math coach was really needed at Strong and needed to take some intervention time off the plate of the interventionist/coach at Memorial. She asked Brewster's interventionist to take grade 4 intervention at Memorial and then Strong's math interventionist to take grade 6 at Memorial. The coach for Memorial and Brewster did the grade 5 intervention. Those three interventionists also have SAT meetings every Thursday through the SRBI process. They use PLC data cycles to develop the learner's problem, the teacher's problem and take a look at data to address strategies. Then, the school-wide data teams meet to analyze the data. They have been able to look at data, have conversations about it, develop teachers' data literacy and clearly look at the strategies to see what's working and what's not. With everything finally in place, things are starting to really work and gel. The coaches do a lot of the leg work with the data and the teachers are finding it meaningful and helpful.

The interventionists provide research-based intervention strategies for the students who have been identified and are keeping the data on those students. The data for the regular population of students comes from a variety of sources. This data process looks more at the tier 1 students and the SRBI and SAT looks at the intervention students (tier 1 and tier 2).

Mrs. DiMaggio did feel that splitting the duties between three people like they have been is probably not the most effective model which is why they have asked for an interventionist at Memorial. She explained that she tries to maximize resources as much as possible, but it is very difficult with schedules. She felt that if they get an interventionist at Memorial, they can split a coach between Memorial and Strong for two years.

Dr. Taylor asked if all of the teachers work on the data process and Mrs. DiMaggio explained that that happens when the coaches can get to them. Some coaches work with some grade levels in reading and some in math in terms of paperwork, but all coaches see all grade levels. Mrs. Caramanello stated that they always had to be accountable when she was teaching in the district.

Dr. Taylor asked how the communication from those meetings is funneled to the school-based data teams and Mrs. DiMaggio explained that there is a form and each team brings their forms to the table to say what is being worked on and what has been accomplished. Mrs. Caramanello commented that she came from Brewster who has been doing this for six or seven years and everybody had a role. Mrs. DiMaggio explained that they are working to get that process throughout the district. She personally attends the PLC data cycles with the coaches and also schedules time with each principal to observe their data team.

Strong has one reading interventionist and a .8 math interventionist because the woman is .2 at Memorial.

Mrs. DiMaggio then reviewed the interventionists' caseloads. She explained that the interventionists pull students out of the classrooms, but they also push into the classroom and work with the tier 1 students which is not reflected in the caseload numbers. She and Dr. Veronesi have also talked about using the interventionists for enrichment as well. Mrs. DiMaggio also reminded everyone that students flow in and out of intervention and it is really a moving target.

Dr. Taylor felt that Chris Davis at Lyman is a good example as she has to help with Foundations and that has worked well.

Mrs. DiMaggio went on to review the data from intervention students going back to 2015-2016 but grade 3 at Brewster is not reflected here as it was impossible to gather the information. She looked at each Smarter Balance level in ELA and math and showed the percentage of students who have not had intervention, percentage of students who had intervention at each grade level and at each level. She will forward this information to the committee members. Students who receive special services were not culled out of this data.

Mrs. DiMaggio offered to meet with any committee members should they have any questions.

Dr. Friedrich mentioned that the state chose growth target because it was simply measurable, but it is really not based on any educational standard at all. He would like to see the data from other districts. Mrs. DiMaggio pointed out the math and ELA data in seventh grade and that they seem to recover very well in eighth grade. She also mentioned the implementation of the curriculum and that grades 7 and 8 were literally just implemented in math this year and grade 6 last year. The reading workshop is finally reaching the middle school this year. All K-8 ELA curriculum will be written by the end of the summer and it will be presented to the Student Achievement committee next year.

Mrs. DiMaggio gave kudos to the interventionists for providing the information in such a timely manner. Dr. Taylor felt that they now know that interventions are being done across all achievement levels and there is a pretty significant need. This will help to make decisions around interventionists and coaches.

Public Comment

None.

Adjournment

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 6:26 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Debi Waz
Alwaz First