

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education Student Achievement Committee met in regular session on Wednesday, September 18, 2019 at 4:00 PM in the Library at Coginchaug Regional High School, 135 Pickett Lane, Durham, Connecticut.

Committee members present: Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich (via phone), Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback and Dr. Taylor (via phone)

Community members present: Ms. Commins

Student members present: Thomas Peters

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

Mrs. Petrella called the meeting to order at 4:05 PM.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Public Comment

None.

Approval of Agenda

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

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

Approval of Minutes - June 13, 2019

Mr. Moore made a motion, seconded by Mr. Roraback, to approve the minutes of the June 13, 2019 meeting, as presented.

In favor of approving the minutes of June 13, 2019, as presented: Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback and Dr. Taylor.

Mrs. Petrella introduced Bronwyn Commins, the committee's new community representative, and Thomas Peters, the new student representative.

Review of District SBAC Performance

Mrs. DiMaggio explained that the information she will be presenting today is a culmination of years of work by teachers, coaches, students and administrators.

Mrs. DiMaggio began with achievement scores and showed a history of the data from 2015-2016 up to 2018-2019. She explained that she will primarily be highlighting the bright spots. She pointed out that there was a dip in the number of students who scored at or above from fourth to fifth grade. The coaches looked at this information and noticed that although the highest claim is concepts and procedures, we have not made as much growth in that area. All of the assessments have been aligned to the curriculum

and each item is also aligned to a standard. The coaches also looked at the SBAC blueprint which looks at the standards within the test and points out the priority standard that need to be addressed. As a result of those reviews, there are plans in place to address the issues.

Mrs. DiMaggio then showed the distribution of students at every level and pointed out that the number of students exceeding goal has grown over time. She went on to review by grade and reminded everyone that they will receive the presentation via email. She summarized that the trajectory is going in the right direction and noted that the district has made growth.

Dr. Veronesi asked everyone to keep in mind the cumulative effect on the students that a strong and viable curriculum has. The students in seventh and eighth grade have had the benefit of the Common Core curriculum for several years.

Mrs. DiMaggio reviewed that the district ranked 13th out of 29 in the DRG this year which is an increase from 17th last year. The DRGs are not recommended as a reference point by the state as they have not been updated since 2006.

Smarter Balance is broken down into claims. ELA includes reading, listening, writing and research and, in math, it's concepts and procedures, problem solving, modeling, data analysis and communicating reasoning. All cohorts and grade levels made increases from 2015-2016 to 2018-2019. All grades 3, 5, 6, 7 and 8 increased achievement scores from 2017-2018 to 2018-2019, from 2 percent to 13 percent. Sixty-five percent of students performed at goal in grades 3 through 8.

The highest math performance scores were at Lyman at 71 percent. Highest achievement increases from 2015-2016 to 2018-2019 were at Strong, where they went from 48 to 66 percent. Highest percentage increase from 2017-2018 to 2018-2019 was at Strong, from 57 to 66 percent and 18.47 percent of the students tested received special education services.

The highest district above-standard claim area was concepts and procedures at 48 percent. This area is about 50 percent of the test. The highest above-standard increase in concepts and procedures score was at Lyman at 55 percent. Highest percentage increase from 2017-2018 to 2018-2019 was at Strong, going from 30 to 47 percent. The lowest district above-standard claim area was in problem solving and modeling and data analysis, at 37 percent.

The highest district claim performance in concepts and procedures was in grades 4 and 7. The highest district claim performance in problem-solving, modeling and data analysis was in grade 8 and the highest district claim performance in communicating reasoning was in grade 7. Again, the district was 13th out of 29 in the DRG compared to last year at 17th out of 29.

Moving to ELA achievement scores, there was a decrease from fifth to sixth grade and a slight decrease from sixth to seventh. It was the first year that both reading and writing workshop was taught in sixth grade. Looking at the sixth to seventh change, there was one classroom that was lower than others. The coaches will determine what needs to be focused on.

In this area, 71 percent of the district's students met goal. In grade 3, there was a decrease, grade 4 had an increase, grade 5 was consistent, grade 6 had a bit of a decrease and grades 7 and 8 had increases. The district is still climbing and is above the DRG average (13th out of 29 this year and 14th out of 29 last year) and well above the state average.

Grades 4 to 5 increased by 14 percent and 7 and 8 increased by 12 percent. Seventy-one percent of students performed at goal in grades 3 through 8, with the highest literacy performance scores at Lyman at 77 percent. The highest achievement increase from 2015-2016 to 2018-2019 was at Strong, 62 percent to 71 percent. The highest percentage increase from 2017-2018 to 2018-2019 was at Lyman, from 66 to 77 percent and the highest above-standard claim area is reading.

The highest percentage increase in reading from 2017-2018 to 2018-2019 was at Lyman, 37 percent to 54 percent. The lowest district above-standard claim was listening. The highest district claim performance in both reading and listening was in grade 5. The highest district claim performance in writing and research inquiry was also in grade 5. Of the students tested, 18.47 percent received special education services.

Mrs. Petrella asked Mrs. DiMaggio to explain what a cohort was and she stated that a cohort is a group such as a class or grade level that we watch over time. The members of the group can change over time so this is called a rough cohort.

Mrs. DiMaggio then went on to show the special education data, broken down by grade level. Mrs. Petrella asked if the special ed students were expected to score the same and Mrs. DiMaggio explained that there is an adjustment. The CTAA is a different test given to students who are truly cognitively impaired (approximately 2 percent of students), but students with an IEP take the Smarter Balanced test and are expected to perform the same. Students in special education performed better in literacy than in math.

Mr. Roraback asked if Mrs. DiMaggio looks at the new grade level configuration recommendation as a positive change and Mrs. DiMaggio felt that it will be a very positive change.

Moving on to growth, Mrs. DiMaggio explained that it is measured in two ways. One is the growth rate which looks at the percentage of students meeting their respective growth target and the other is the percentage of target achieved and she explained the difference between those two scores.

The annual growth target table shows the achievement levels in eight categories. Mrs. DiMaggio gave an example of a student's vertical scale score and growth target as well as how growth is made. She also explained how students reach the percentage of target achieved.

Mrs. DiMaggio then reported the percentage of students who met their growth targets in math has shown nice growth as has the percentage of target achieved. The state is pretty impressed with the district and said that it is hard to make that kind of growth in middle school.

In grades 4 through 8, the growth rate is 54 percent, an increase of 8 percent from last year. The district had a target of a 3 percent increase. The state would like everyone at 100 percent in the year 2030. Grade 7 exhibited the most growth from 2017-2018 to 2018-2019 with an increase of 30 percent. The growth rate in grade 7 was 57 percent and was ranked 30 out of 172 districts in the state. In grade 8, the growth rate is 63 percent which is ranked 17 out of 172 districts in the state. Grade 6 to 7, there was a 14 percent increase and a 36 percent increase from grade 7 to 8.

In grades 4 through 8, the average percent of target achieved is 75 percent, an increase of 8 percent. In grade 7, the average percent of target achieved is 76 percent, which is ranked 29 out of 172 in the state. In grade 8, the average percent of target achieved is 82 percent, which is ranked 6th in the state. Grade 5 to 6 showed a 5 percent increase, grade 6 to 7 showed a 13 percent increase and grade 7 to 8 showed a 35 percent increase.

Mrs. DiMaggio then moved on to the “High Needs” group, which is English language learners, free and reduced lunch and students who receive special education services. The district has only two ELL students which is not enough to make a subgroup. The group showed growth from 2017-2018 to 2018-2019 in both the growth rate and average percentage of target achieved. She then showed a comparison between the high needs group and the non-high needs group.

In grades 4 through 8, the high needs growth rate is 40 percent, an increase of 3 percent from last year. The average percent of target achieved is 60 percent, an increase of 2 percent. In grades 4 through 8 special education, the growth rate is 37 percent, an increase of 3 percent, and their average percent of target achieved was 56 percent, an increase of 3 percent.

Mrs. DiMaggio then reviewed the next steps in math, including data chats, professional learning, teacher groups, revising the SRBI process, implementing revised K to 5 report cards, developing collective teacher efficacy and an instructional online library for teachers and parents, continuing the summer program, continuing to develop performance tasks, revising the math workshop stations, implementing the new assessment calendar and increasing usage of i-Ready lessons and teacher toolbox.

Mrs. DiMaggio then showed the ELA growth rate and percentage of target achieved. In grades 4 through 8, the growth rate is 52 percent, an increase of 8 percent from last year. Grade 5 had a 12 percent increase and an 18 percent increase in grade 8. In grade 5, the growth rate is 61 percent, ranked 7th out of 172 districts, which is a 12 percent increase. In grade 8, the growth rate is 60 percent, ranked 4th out of 172. Grades 7 to 8 showed a 31 percent increase in growth rate.

In grades 4 through 8, the average percent of target achieved is 69 percent, an increase of 6 percent. In grade 5, the average percentage of target achieved is 84 percent, which is ranked 3rd out of 172 in the state, a 12 percent increase. In grade 8, the average percentage of target achieved is 76 percent, which is ranked 5th in the state, a 19 percent increase from 2017-2018.

Looking at the high needs group, the gap is a little closer with literacy. In grades 4 through 8, the growth rate is 37 percent, an increase of 3 percent from last year. The average percentage of target achieved is 59 percent, an increase of 3 percent. In grades 4 through 8 special education, the growth rate is 37 percent, an increase of 5 percent, and their average percent of target achieved was 60 percent, an increase of 4 percent.

Looking at the next step in ELA, Mrs. DiMaggio reviewed that it is pretty much the same as what they will do in math. They will also continue to develop the Word Study curriculum, expand Foundations program to grade 3, provide intensive training for interventionists, continue to develop performance tasks and implement the new assessment calendar.

Mrs. DiMaggio explained that there is more training available for reading interventionists than math interventionists, but a math specialist will be coming in to work with them.

Reviewing the state trends, in 2018-2019 ELA and mathematics achievement increased to their highest levels. The High Needs category is showing highest achievement in both subject areas and in all grades and improving at a rate that is faster than the state as a whole. ELA achievement improved slightly for the second year in a row, with grades 6 and 7 gaining the highest achievement ever. Math achievement showed strong improvement in all grades, reaching their highest achievement levels and growth data revealed that students, on average, are only reaching 60 percent of their annual growth targets.

Mrs. Caramanello wondered if this trend started when the district began Readers' Workshop and Mrs. DiMaggio felt that it was and thought there would be significant gains once Writers' Workshop is fully implemented as well. Dr. Veronesi asked what Mrs. DiMaggio's hypothesis would be with the workshop method and what is it about that particular method that you would think would influence an increase in scores. Mrs. DiMaggio thought that the workshop model lends a consistency throughout the district and the materials and the resources are rich and rigorous. The teachers also pay very close attention to the strategic groups. She also mentioned that the professional learning in those areas has been intensive for both the teachers and coaches. Dr. Veronesi also noted that this allows the teachers to work with small groups of students on a particular skill. Mrs. Caramanello added that she has seen huge growth in the attention on non-fiction reading.

Mrs. DiMaggio explained that the math station will revolve around the curriculum, but targeted performance will play a role as well. She gave examples of specific items in each grade.

Mrs. DiMaggio reviewed that the quantile and Lexile levels on the student reports is something new that the state has put on the reports. In reading, a Lexile level is used which represents the student's reading ability on a Lexile scale. The quantile is a measure for math and is a framework that evaluates a student's mathematical ability and the difficulty of specific skills and concepts. She then reviewed a sample student report and explained that parents can use it to provide more resources for the students.

Mrs. Petrella asked about the state's goal in 2030 and Mrs. DiMaggio explained that the state is looking to have 100 percent of students achieve their growth targets by 2030. Dr. Veronesi commented that, in the past, targets set by the district were arbitrary and unrealistic in some cases. She feels they are now better able to set targets. She also noted that they need to analyze why they do so well in areas that are higher. Mrs. DiMaggio added that she will be meeting with the coaches on Friday and will talk with them about the bright spots.

At this point, Mrs. Petrella asked everyone to introduce themselves since there are new members at the meeting tonight.

Public Comment

None.

Adjournment

Mrs. Petrella made a motion, seconded by Mr. Roraback, to adjourn the meeting.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Debi Waz
Alwaz First