

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education Student Achievement Committee met in regular session on Wednesday, September 23, 2020 at 5:30 PM remotely. Committee members present: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella and Mr. Roraback
Committee members absent: Dr. Taylor
Community members present: Ms. Commins
Administration present: Dr. Serino, Superintendent of Schools and Mrs. DiMaggio, Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment
Guests present: Mrs. Anderson, Mrs. Aronson, Mrs. Schaefer and Mrs. Sorenson

Mrs. Petrella called the meeting to order at 5:35 PM.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Public Comment

None.

Approval of Agenda

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

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

Approval of Minutes - July 20, 2020

Dr. Friedrich made a motion, seconded by Mr. Roraback, to approve the minutes of the July 20, 2020 meeting, as presented.

In favor of approving the minutes of July 20, 2020, as presented: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella and Mr. Roraback.

Review of Hybrid Model (Cohorts A & B), Remote Teaching Model (Cohort C), Distance Learning Model

Mrs. DiMaggio reviewed that the hybrid model is a combination of in-person and at-home learning and there is also cohort C who are students learning at home.

Mrs. Anderson felt that the teachers have done a great job managing the new schedule at the high school and everyone is so happy to be back in school. The kids are happy to be back in the classroom again. She did feel that there is not a lot of evidence that everyone is watching the videos that they create and it is difficult to tell what accountability the students at home have. The teachers receive constant emails with questions and it's difficult for them to answer quickly since they are also teaching in-person. Mrs. Anderson does feel that cohort C is the most challenging at the high school because there is very little accountability for them to see the teachers in-person. She noted that there are several cohort C students that she has never seen since they are not required to meet with the teachers. Those students are doing

their work, but they aren't getting the teacher or student interaction. Mrs. Anderson also noted that she has set up Google Meets with students during labs and everyone was able to interact.

Mrs. Aronson, who does strictly remote teaching, felt that students attending school would be the ideal, however there has been strong success with cohort C. There is a dedicated team for K-8 and a specific schedule. They do have a morning meeting every day which has helped to build a connection. Mrs. Aronson felt that it was easy to make modifications if a student is struggling because she meets with students in small groups. It does require some intense collaboration with the content teams to provide as close to the same experience for the students as home as they would get in school. She is a little worried what will happen once they go back to full in-person and felt it would be tough to manage if the cohort C numbers increase a lot. Mrs. Aronson has also seen kids who are not successful in the classroom really thrive at home.

Mrs. Petrella asked what grade level Mrs. Aronson works with and she explained that she works with 6-8, including all math courses. Mrs. Caramanello asked if cohort C is as successful at the high school or the younger grades. Mrs. Aronson explained that the younger grades are collaborating really strongly and meet in grade level teams. Kindergarten and first grade are a challenge, but they are working hard. Mrs. DiMaggio explained that the elementary and middle school programs have been designed differently than the high school. For K-8, it was easier to design the cohort C because they have coaches and specialists. At the high school, there are multiple courses and many more students. Mrs. DiMaggio felt that the high school teachers are doing a fantastic job with their recordings though there does seem to be some apprehension on the students' parts to participate.

Mrs. Schaefer felt that the hybrid model is doing what it was intended to do which was to protect the students, staff and community. She felt that the challenges are more about teaching during a pandemic than about the hybrid model. As unsustainable as the hybrid model is, it's keeping everyone safe and healthy. She appreciates the 30-minute advisory time that allows the kids to get settled and provides a connection. The collaboration that has been going on since March has been amazing. One of her fellow teachers felt that this was teaching the kids to be independent and take charge of their own education. Some of the challenges include the fact that there are so many things that they could do wrong, but no measure of what's being done right. She also mentioned the difficulty of trying to keep up with all of the emails during the day as well as connect with the kids in the room. She gave an example of a sixth grader who was so happy to go for a walk with a teacher. Mr. Roraback commented that his daughter loved her class.

Mrs. Sorenson loves getting to see the kids in-person and connect with them, but also remembering that the hybrid model keeps teachers and students safe. The smaller class sizes allow for proper social distancing and help with managing the technology for the younger kids. One-on-one time with students is also easier. They have two live check-ins a day with the students at home. Other teachers feel that the planning across buildings has really helped strengthen the teams. Some of the challenges include that most of the lessons come through video and there is a lot of screen time. With that, it's a challenge for the teachers to provide feedback. Mrs. Sorenson felt that it's a little more difficult at Lyman because of the two-grade system. She also felt it was tricky to have the kids in school for two days and then off for five.

Mrs. DiMaggio reviewed that she had sent a curriculum update to the committee members which include distance learning schedules if that were to become necessary.

Mrs. Booth asked how a child would participate in full in-person learning if they had to quarantine due to a family member being sick or exposed. Mrs. DiMaggio noted that there have already been a couple of cases like that and they linked into the class and participated. She would not want to put that child in cohort C as it would only be two weeks and she feels that the cohort is already overloaded. Mrs. Schaefer added that she has two special education students who do not follow the cohort C model and come to Google Meets with her.

Mrs. Petrella thanked all of the teachers for their hard work.

Full In-Person Learning Considerations

Dr. Serino reviewed that the district opened in the hybrid model to ease people back in and help them meet the protocols. Other school districts have opened fully in-person and there is no statistically significant difference. They continue to look at leading and secondary indicators and the district's ability to maintain mitigating strategies. They also get feedback from teachers who have said that this is unsustainable. She noted that they believe that it is time to go back to in-person learning and to continue to monitor it carefully. Dr. Serino felt that the benefit is greater than the risk at this point.

One of the biggest concerns is social distancing. They are looking at how to arrange furniture, how to change schedules and have smaller classes in smaller rooms with bigger classes in bigger rooms. They are using the auxiliary gym in the basement of the high school and the cafeteria. They are looking at how kids will move through the hallways and what mask breaks will look like. Dr. Serino also knows that teachers will need to be reassured as well and administrators will meet with everyone. She is holding a focus group on Monday and Tuesday to hear from parents. Dr. Serino explained that she feels this is the right decision, but they will adjust it as necessary.

Mrs. DiMaggio explained that nothing can take the place of in-person learning and emphasized the importance of students' socially connecting with their peers and teachers. The opportunity to get students into school is so important at this point.

Dr. Serino has received feedback from the union and teachers asking to have time on Wednesdays to catch their breath and has also heard from parents that some will be sending their students to school and others will not. She will be talking with her team about having the kids remain home on Wednesdays for the month of October to give teachers the time to make curriculum adjustments and allow for cleaning and disinfecting strategies. Dr. Serino cannot stress enough that the teachers need time to assess, analyze and review curriculum. Mrs. DiMaggio added that the collaboration across the district needs to continue, especially if the district needs to go to full distance learning.

Mrs. Booth had received many communications about how the district saying a student is present when they're not in school and how that would work on Wednesdays. Mrs. DiMaggio explained that teachers are putting Wednesday schedules together for students and check in with them. The district is working on the Wednesday schedule and attendance is determined not only by the child showing up, but by them completing their classwork as well.

Mrs. Caramanello asked when the deep cleaning would be happening once the students come back and also asked if they considered having all the students in for half a day every day, with online learning at

home for the rest of the day. This would make it so that kids are not physically eating in school and taking off their masks. She also asked if cohort C would still be offered if the district goes back to full in-person.

Mrs. DiMaggio explained that cohort C has to be offered, but wasn't sure how it would be managed if the number of students increased. Dr. Serino Student suggested another Student Achievement meeting or a full board meeting be scheduled for next Wednesday. She explained that the term "deep cleaning" is misleading and DPH has asked them to stop calling it that. It is actually additional cleaning and is not the primary mitigation strategy that is keeping people healthy. Wearing masks and social distancing are what really matters. They also have high-quality ventilation, follow the approved cleaning, disinfecting and sanitizing procedures, cohort to the greatest extent possible and wearing masks. Social distancing is being followed in the classrooms, but not always in the hallways. Partitions have been ordered for the elementary schools and furniture is being ordered to address specific needs.

Dr. Serino felt it was important for the committee to take public comment today as this news hit the streets today. Mr. Moore suggested a full board meeting with just the one topic.

Public Comment

Dr. Serino wanted to be sure that everyone understood that the district is fully committed to working together and that they want to hear from parents. She suggested parents call their child's principal with any questions. Dr. Serino explained that she has held firm on no more than 25 kids in a lunch area and it has proven to be quite challenging for scheduling purposes. She added that some of her colleagues have had to shut down their schools because of 150 students in a lunchroom because they could not contact trace.

Dr. Friedrich gave instructions on how the public could speak to the committee. Dr. Serino left the meeting to move on to the Policy Committee meeting.

There was no public comment.

Review Curriculum Update

Dr. Serino suggested pausing the meeting at this point and Mrs. DiMaggio added that they would like the board to approve a new accounting textbook. Mr. Donecker has asked to use Century 21 Accounting and is \$92.25 per book, with an online feature as well. There is money in the high school budget for this. Mr. Roraback reminded Mrs. DiMaggio that the students need a PDF version of the textbook to use with the Chromebooks.

Mrs. Petrella suggested that Mrs. DiMaggio put this on the agenda for next week's board meeting.

Mrs. Caramanello felt that the kids at the high school are getting a lot of homework in addition to being home or working all day. Mrs. DiMaggio stated that Mr. Falcone has asked his staff to cut back on homework and she will address this with the principals. Mrs. Petrella added that she has also heard there was a lot of homework for the high school students. Mrs. DiMaggio asked for anyone to let her know if it is subject-specific. Dr. Friedrich reminded everyone that homework that is instructional is worth doing

and homework that is just time consuming is not. Mr. Roraback suggested that homework be meaningful and relevant.

Adjournment

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

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

The meeting was adjourned at 6:49 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Debi Waz
Alwaz First