

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education Student Achievement Committee met in regular session on Wednesday, March 27, 2024 at 4:30 PM.

Committee members present: Mrs. Dahlheimer, Mrs. Petrella and Mr. Roraback

Committee members absent: Dr. Darcy and Mr. Mennone

Board members present: Mr. Moore

Administration present: Dr. Schuch, Superintendent of Schools; Mrs. Quarato, Associate Director of Learning, Innovation and Development, and Mrs. Siegel, Associate Director of Learning, Innovation and Accountability

Mrs. Petrella called the meeting to order at 4:40 PM.

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

### **Public Comment**

None.

### **Approval of Agenda**

*Mr. Moore made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Dahlheimer, to approve the agenda, as presented.*

*In favor of approving the agenda, as presented: Mrs. Dahlheimer, Mrs. Petrella and Mr. Roraback.*

### **Approval of Minutes - February 28, 2024**

*Mr. Moore made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Dahlheimer, to approve the minutes of the February 28, 2024 meeting, as presented.*

*In favor of approving the minutes of the February 28, 2024, as presented: Mrs. Dahlheimer, Mrs. Petrella and Mr. Roraback.*

### **Evaluation Update**

Mrs. Quarato explained that the entire committee completed the consensus forms and she made last-minute changes today. She will send out all of the information electronically tomorrow. She distributed a hard copy of the document and reviewed it with the committee. Mrs. Quarato noted that the leader growth plan is similar to the educator growth plan.

Mrs. Quarato went on to highlight that both of the plans include the mission, guiding beliefs and core design principles as well as an overview of the plan. A section then covers orientation. Process and timelines come next. Mrs. Quarato pointed out that they worked hard to make sure that both plans were growth support models and not evaluative in nature.

The first part of this is the initiation phase which will be done from September to November. During that time, they will work on self-reflection. They will look at data on student learning and how that can be

incorporated into their goal. Their goal needs to be collaborative and mutually agreed-up between the evaluator and the educator/leader and will be followed by a goal setting meeting. The evaluator will provide written feedback.

The second stage is elaboration which will be done between December and April. During that time, the educator/leader will collect evidence, do professional learning, continue to collect data, and complete another self-reflection. They will meet with their evaluator to have conversations about keeping their goal the same or modifying it.

The third part is the summation phase which will be done from May to June. This is an end-of-year reflection on the entire year and how they progressed. The educator/leader will have a conversation with the evaluator and the evaluator will provide a summative report.

If educators have less than two years of teaching experience, they will have at least two observations per year with one of them lasting the duration of the meeting/lesson. Teachers with two or more years of experience, at least one observation will be done. Leaders will have a very similar schedule. Mrs. Quarato noted that research shows that the number of observations is not really impactful to teaching or learning unless there is a significant amount. The reality is that an evaluator doesn't have time to observe that much. Mr. Moore asked if they can use student performance instead of observation and Mrs. Quarato stated they could, but the PDEC felt that that could be a part of the evidence but should not be mandatory. Mr. Moore asked who the evaluator would be for Mrs. Quarato and she noted it would be Dr. Schuch. Mrs. Quarato would then have about 15 individuals around the district that she will evaluate. The principals would have a larger group within their building.

The group had a lot of conversations about lesson plans and the new state guidelines do not require evaluators to focus on every domain of the standards. They are doing that to be able to focus more on the areas that need attention. The standards that the district selected are the ones that they have been using. For educators, they will continue with Common Core of Teaching for Effective Teaching rubric and Common Core of Teaching for Effective Service Delivery rubric for others. For leaders, it will be the Connecticut Leader Evaluation and Support rubric. The plan for next year will be to do more research on even standards.

Mr. Roraback stated that his experience has been that the district chooses the most important domains and he felt this may be hard to manage as an evaluator. He understood the flexibility part, but felt they need to look at the reality of it. Mrs. Quarato explained that the forms they've created are moving to Google and are very open-ended. The educators that are on the PDEC have been very happy with the forms.

Dr. Schuch added that there is flexibility in the state framework and in this plan so that everyone can focus on the same thing. It is not intended to be directive by the district or the principal as it's trying to recognize everyone's strengths and weaknesses. Mrs. Quarato felt it would be a little easier than what they do now.

Growth goals need to be a collaborative process that are mutually agreed upon and aligned with the selected standards. They will create the goal, action steps including professional learning, and measures of accomplishment. They will also have the ability to do one-, two- or three-year goals. For new teachers, they will be encouraged to use their TEAM goals. Dr. Schuch added that this is a state-

mandated process on top of the evaluations. Mrs. Quarato reviewed this process with the committee. The team process is spread over two-and-a-half years.

Mr. Moore asked what typical goals are that teachers choose and Mrs. Quarato stated that it varies, but starts with that self-reflection. She went on to note that both verbal and written feedback is huge during the entire process. The summative review and summative growth report at the end of the year comes after the final self-reflection. That will provide them feedback on their goal and provide further action steps. Currently, they have to submit a grade of 1, 2, 3 or 4 and next year they will submit that they either met or did not meet their goal. Mrs. Quarato explained that she went to training on this grading process and didn't find it to be too difficult. Mr. Roraback added that his district focuses on students' grades and that can be stressful.

Mrs. Quarato then explained that one of the final two sections of both plans is the corrective action process which happens when an individual is recognized as needing guidance and support. There will be developmental stages of support. Mrs. Quarato encouraged the committee members to look at the details when they receive the document. Mr. Moore asked if any of this will be tied to salaries and Mrs. Quarato stated that it is not. Mr. Moore asked if someone gets a step increase if they good performance and Mrs. Quarato stated that that was just automatic. Dr. Schuch explained that non-renewal of non-tenured teachers and termination of tenured teachers is all outlined in the bargaining agreement. Mr. Moore asked if any one of the steps outlined in this process puts someone into the termination process and Dr. Schuch did not believe it was viewed that way. The standard is much higher for a termination than for a non-renewal. It was agreed that this process was not meant to be punitive.

Mrs. Dahlheimer felt that the board would want to know how long someone sits in corrective action and what that does to the students. Mr. Moore added that he agreed but also felt there was no way to reward for really good performance. Dr. Schuch agreed and noted that the system is not performance-based at all. Pay scales are 100 percent based on years and degrees which does not necessarily translate into performance. Mr. Moore thought that they could negotiate with the union if they have really good data. Mr. Roraback felt that teacher reward is when they realize they are growing. Dr. Schuch added that merit-based bonuses or advancements also cause competition between the teachers and doesn't do a lot for employee morale. The only ways for a teacher to be paid more are to get advanced degrees and teach for more years. Mrs. Dahlheimer felt that parents have a hard time understanding this.

Mr. Roraback felt that parent feedback is a huge piece and his district has meetings with parents regularly. They are also allocated time to call every parent and chat with them. Mrs. Dahlheimer added that the staff at Strong School did a big push to engage with parents more last year and she thought that was wonderful. Dr. Schuch also felt that the teacher shortage contributes to this as well. Mrs. Dahlheimer asked if they felt like teachers will not fall through the cracks and be held accountable. Mrs. Quarato stated that the goals that are set have to be mutually agreed-upon and specifics can be mentioned in the corrective action plan. Dr. Schuch felt this plan is better for the majority of teachers in the district.

Mrs. Quarato went on to note that the final piece is a dispute resolution process which does include the bargaining units and different members of the subcommittee. This process is the same as is in place now other than being able to select members for the committee. Mr. Moore asked if there was student input on anything and Mrs. Quarato explained that that is dependent upon the educator. Dr. Schuch noted that that is common practice in higher ed and Mrs. Dahlheimer felt that the union would have an issue with that. The district cannot mandate it.

Dr. Schuch asked the committee if they would like her to present this information to the full board. Mrs. Quarato stated that their hope is to at least inform the staff of the plan and the process and timeline by the end of the year, with more training on the forms at the beginning of next year. Mrs. Petrella felt that she would like to review this plan with the full board at the April meeting. Mr. Moore felt that it could be a short presentation with a recommendation from this committee.

**Mid-Year Date Update  
EL Update**

Mrs. Dahlheimer and Mrs. Petrella suggested tabling items 6 and 7 and possibly having a remote special meeting next week for those two items.

**Adjournment**

*Mrs. Dahlheimer made a motion, seconded by Mr. Moore, to adjourn the meeting.*

*In favor of adjourning the meeting: Mrs. Dahlheimer, Mrs. Petrella and Mr. Roraback.*

The meeting was adjourned at 5:31 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Debi Waz  
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