

**BRISTOL WARREN REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES**

Monday, November 8, 2021

The meeting of the Bristol Warren Regional School Committee was held in-person, on Monday, November 8, 2021,. Chairperson Marjorie McBride, called the meeting to order at approximately 7:09 p.m.

Present: Marjorie McBride, Chairperson; Sheila Ellsworth, Treasurer; Victor Cabral, Secretary; Nicky Piper, Carly Reich, Erin Schofield, and Karen Cabral; Ed Mara, Ph.D., Interim Superintendent of Schools; Diane Sanna, Ph.D., Assistant Superintendent; Thomas Wood, Director of Facilities; Rose Muller, Director of Technology; Mary Ann Carroll, Esq., District Solicitor; Brenna Toland, Director of Student Support Services; Lee Ann Beaupre, Human Resources Manager; Diana Campbell, Recording Secretary.
Guests: Dr. Deb DiBiase, Principal of Mt. Hope High School, Dennis Morrell, Principal of Kickemuit Middle School, Deborah Kearns, Principal of Colt Andrews Elementary School, Christine Hughes, Principal of Guiteras Elementary School, Miranda Carpenter, Principal of Hugh Cole Elementary School, Tara McAuliffe, Principal of Rockwell Elementary School

I. OPENING BUSINESS

Chairperson McBride invited all present to join in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

Edda Petrillo, Mt. Hope Student, spoke about the previous School Committee meeting and the decision that was made regarding the Professional Development candidate that was put forward by Dr. DiBiase. She was concerned that the statements made by some members of the Committee did not support student needs for preparing them for their future in a diverse world. She stated that she believes that the grant is something that is needed at the High School and that the School Committee has dropped the ball too many times, by not acting in the best interests of the students. She stated that the Student Union has no confidence in the School Committee and asked that some members step down and that term limits be put in place. Attorney Carroll noted that Ms. Petrillo's time was up. Chairperson McBride asked for the next speaker.

Sophia Virgadamo, President of the Mt. Hope Student Union, yielded her time to Ms. Petrillo so that she could complete her statement.

Ms. Petrillo continued, asking the School Committee members to reconsider why they're on the Board and their impact on everyone in the District.

III. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Minutes of October 25, 2021 Meeting

MOTION: Mr. Cabral made a motion to approve the Minutes of October 25, 2021; 2nd by Ms. Cabral. Motion passed unanimously.

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IV. PRESENTATION

A. RICAS Scores

Assistant Superintendent Sanna started her presentation by stating that the Principals were present, along with Mary Cabral, and are available to answer questions. She then presented the results of the State and Local (iReady) Assessments.

She started with some of the challenges teachers and students faced in the past year that had an impact of achievement:

- Limited access to in-person instruction, with 20-30% of students participating in full distance learning
- Difficulties for teachers to plan for both in-person and virtual classrooms
- Inconsistent engagement/participation of distance learning students
- Difficulties in teaching reading, especially in K-1, and mathematical concepts without ability to use manipulatives
- High absenteeism due to illness and quarantines
- Limited availability of technology for some students
- Understaffed special services, due to difficulty filling long-term substitute positions
- Family issues: job loss, instability, and access to health care
- Limited participation in Spring 2021 state assessments

She noted that, in spite of these challenges, students, teachers, and principals persevered and focused on learning. The District is extremely proud of the work that was done.

She reviewed some National trends on learning loss, noting that overall, students learned only 67% of grade level content, and experienced a 15% decrease in reading and 30% decrease in math. These results mirror some of what happened in the BW District.

She continued to explain the ELA achievements of the students at each school by grade level and subject. She pointed out where students had increases and decreases. She congratulated the teachers who accepted the challenges of the difficult year, while at the same time piloting a new curriculum, to reach these levels of achievement and to maintain proficiency levels. She summarized the assessment details with a comparison to how BW did compared to other districts in the area. Bristol Warren, ranked 3rd highest for ELA, with 49.4% achievement, higher than East Providence, Middletown, Newport, and Tiverton, but lower than Barrington and Portsmouth.

She concluded with how the District is addressing learning loss:

- Continuing with the new ELA Curriculum, Into Reading
- Prioritizing instructional time for core instruction
- Designating a daily intervention/enrichment block
- Using Evidence-based tools and interventions

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- Summer and After-school intervention programs
- Bringing on additional Reading Interventionists and being fully staffed in Special Services
- At the Middle School, continuing with the new ELA Curriculum, StudySync
- At the High School, piloting the new ELA Curriculum, StudySync
- Reinforcing Reading across content areas - Interdisciplinary Literacy
- Professional Learning with K-8 Literacy Coordinator, 4 Elementary Literacy Leads, District grade-span training, school-based coaching cycles, training for principals, shared classroom practices, and 50 K-2 teachers in 2nd year of LETRS training

Assistant Superintendent Sanna continued her presentation to provide information on Math assessment (RICAS), PSAT and SAT results for Mathematics. She pointed out that there were decreases, with some increases in some grades. She noted that Mathematics was a difficult area to close achievement gaps, especially during this past year.

She is confident that the Mathematics decreases will be addressed in the coming year. In relation to other area districts, she pointed out that BW is still 3rd. To address the learning loss, the District is:

- Doing a review of curriculum implementation
- Focussing on standards for targeted skills
- Designating daily intervention/enrichment blocks
- Using evidence-based tools - iReady, PALS
- After school programs
- Hiring additional Math interventionists, K-8 Math Coach
- Professional Development for the new Math Curriculum for Grades 7-8 and High School
- iReady Assessment and Intervention training
- Prioritizing instructional time for core instruction
- Training Principals in data analysis
- After school tutoring programs are in place or available soon

Assistant Superintendent Sanna concluded her presentation with her next steps and goals for the next year:

- Schools actively analyzing data to identify student needs and update intervention plans
- Principals scheduling small group intervention/enrichment time for Math and Reading interventionists
- After school tutoring programs, and plans for summer programs
- RICAS Student Reports will be sent home to families

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DISCUSSION:

Ms. Schofield asked if the RICAS Student Reports will be sent home at all levels. Assistant Superintendent Sanna answered that they were being sent home and that they are available on ASPEN.

Ms. Ellsworth asked about the Interventionists at the Elementary ELA and Math. She wanted to understand how many were being hired and how many students they would support. Principal McAuliffe answered that at Rockwell, 1 full-time interventionist will support 35 students. Another interventionist, shared with Guiteras, will support 20 students at Rockwell and 20 students at Guiteras.

Ms. Ellsworth asked if the before/after school programs were addressing additional students or the same ones. Ms. McAuliffe answered that the after-school programs are different and are primarily at Title I schools. The program is not yet ready at the High School.

Ms. Reich asked about the mental health issues of students. Ms. Carpenter answered that there was some level of struggle, since there was little opportunity to teach social skills under the circumstances.

Ms. McAuliffe noted that academic stamina is decreased and there is a need to move towards more rigor. Dr. DiBiase added that there is the issue of academic stamina, but there is also a need to address increased mental health issues, behavior issues, social skills, and behavioral issues.

Ms. Piper recognized that this is difficult to hear, but that the take-away is that there is a need for teaching with different approaches and to provide a person and building where students feel safe.

Ms. Cabral asked if there are people who can fill in the interventionist positions. Assistant Superintendent Sanna stated that it isn't easy, but they are finding students who are looking to become teachers who can work as Math/ELA coaches to train them. It's not ideal, but they have been able to fill those roles.

Chairperson McBride asked how long it will take for students to get used to being in the classroom for a full day. Ms. McAuliffe answered that she isn't sure because this is such a unique situation.

Ms. Schofield asked if there is a way to see the benefits of the new curriculum. Assistant Superintendent Sanna replied that it can take up to 3 years to see an impact of a new curriculum. To see progress, the district will look at early indicators: teachers are comfortable using it; assessments at beginning and end of each year, and there are other metrics.

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Chairperson McBride thanked the Assistant Superintendent for the information and the Principals for their feedback and information.

V. DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION

A. 2022 School Committee Meeting Schedule

MOTION: Ms. Cabral made a motion to approve the 2022 School Committee Meeting Schedule; 2nd by Ms. Piper. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Superintendent Search Process

Chairperson McBride pointed out that the Subcommittee added “up to 3” to the 3rd step.

Ms. Schofield explained that she voted against the Process. Chairperson asked for a motion for purposes of discussion.

MOTION: Mr. Cabral made a motion, for purposes of discussion, to accept the Superintendent Search Process; 2nd by Ms. Cabral.

Ms. Schofield continued. She would like to see more community involvement in the process. An example would be a community survey. Ms. Ellsworth pointed out that time is tight. Ms. Schofield asked about the possibility of a survey going out this week. Ms. Ellsworth wanted to know who would create the survey. Ms. Schofield stated that she wanted to make the suggestion. Ms. Piper pointed out that there was community interest in the process and that it is possible to find help in coming up with the questions for a survey.

Ms. Reich stated that she feels it could be difficult to get community support for a new Superintendent if there is no community involvement in the selection process.

Chairperson McBride asked if the Assistant Superintendent could share the draft of the Strategic Plan to the School Committee. Assistant Superintendent Sanna will follow up.

VOTE: The motion passed with a 4-3 vote; Ms. Reich, Ms. Piper, and Ms. Schofield voted in dissent.

C. KMS and MHHS Security Updates

Interim Superintendent Mara shared that he has been working with the Principal at the High School and her team, the 2 Student Resource Officers (SRO), and the Town Managers, on the High School Security Plan. Bristol will be adding one additional SRO at the High School, bringing that person in from the elementary schools. Additionally, provisions are included to set up E-Pass, an electronic hall pass system, where students sign out through the computer, giving teachers more control over students and their destinations. Teachers can limit the number of passes per student and make sure that

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the students are not going out of their classrooms at the same time as other students from other classes.

Chairperson McBride stated that the schools are paying attention and are taking steps to make the schools more safe and secure for students. From the public, there was a question about having substitutes trained on the system.

Mr. Cabral asked why another SRO was needed at the High School. He wants to make sure that students are safe in the buildings. Dr. Mara responded that the students are safe. Teachers are monitoring the bathrooms and there are teachers and staff present in the cafeteria and hallways. Principal DiBiase added that there are three security teachers, the SRO, and Administrators monitoring the cafeteria, the courtyard, and the bathrooms.

Ms. Reich stated that she feels this is necessary as a result of the difficult year and she regrets that there are students who do not feel safe. She asked that non-punitive approaches also be considered. Interim Superintendent Mara noted that the ePass system is not punitive; it's flexible for every student's needs.

Ms. Ellsworth stated that it's not all about safety. It's also about a lack of respect and physically pushing in the classrooms and hallways. She is concerned about students bullying teachers and students. She would like to bring back zero tolerance for bullying.

Ms. Ellsworth asked if the item needed a vote. Attorney Carroll answered that this item was for discussion only. There is no need for a vote.

- VI. **EXECUTIVE SESSION (Closed to the Public)** Executive Session pursuant to RIGL §42-46-5(a) for discussion of the following:
- A. 42-46-5(a) (3) - Matters of Security

MOTION: Chairperson McBride asked for a motion to go into Executive Session. Mr. Cabral made a motion to go into Executive Session; 2nd by Ms. Cabral. All approved the motion.

Chairperson McBride stated that the Committee was going into Executive Session and that there were no other items for the Open Session, except to Adjourn the meeting when the Executive Session is closed.

VII. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned after the Executive Session.

Respectfully submitted,

Victor Cabral, Secretary
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