

BOT Meeting Thursday February 13, 2025 Minutes

Board Members in Attendance: Jim Sander, Robert Ansbro, Lucas Doe, Thomas Gorrell, Sean Blackwell, Christopher Brignola

Administrators in attendance: Norma Hurwitz, Leena Thomas, Eddie Kubina

Not in Attendance: Ted Francavilla

Meeting Called to Order by Jim Sander 6:36 pm

I. Approval of Minutes

Robert motioned to approve the minutes, Jim seconds, all in favor

II. Education

The K-2 students are performing well overall, we still are looking to make improvements. We want the social studies and science lessons to be more meaningful. For the hands on units we are looking to bring in extra materials. 3-8 we are struggling in 3rd and 4th grade. The students are not at the level we were currently hoping for. We are looking to push writing and the quality of the work and looking to find a balance between teacher modeling and the student engagement. Bob asks if it is the teachers fault or if the students are just slow in learning. Leena answered that the teachers are evaluated for proficiency, to see if they need any help, if the teacher is proficient then we look closer at the student to see the issue, is it the pacing, the seating, the way it is presented. We sometimes see teachers are not well versed in the curriculum, other times it is not as simple because they are participating and they are moving forward, but the

Leena has scheduled times in order to help with specific lessons. She is there to help them and the students in order to work together and offer help.

The 6-8 staff is doing well. Parker has had a lot of success in 8th grade. Moving her there from sixth worked out very well. Most of the middle school teachers are making good progress and getting good numbers. Topal has seen an increase in the 60% category. He is still not where we would like him to be with 70% and above. However, the work that Adam and Leena have been doing with him is helping. With their continued support we do anticipate that his students will get to where they need to be by the state exam. Adam is expecting 70%-80% of his class to pass based on the students' abilities. In the 3-5 grades, the classes are not quite where we hoped they would be, but progress is occurring. In Mazanek's class, the interaction between her and the students has improved. The students in all classrooms are happy and engaged. The issue is how material is presented. We need to work on how the students are able to grasp certain concepts. We also need to analyze the placement of staff. Parker struggled to get results in 6th grade, but is doing very well in 8th grade. Moving Adam to 6th grade was good

also, it tends to be the most difficult grade to teach as the students undergo a lot of changes at that age. Topal would likely be better suited for a different grade level moving forward. Our staff are very hardworking and dedicated. The commitment is there, so we need to create the best opportunities for them to succeed.

Thomas asked how the students are working.

One example is usually modeled for the students and then they work in pairs or small groups. They sometimes work independently, but for the most part they are working in groups.

Thomas added the students might be used to working in groups so it might be a change when they need to work independently on an exam.

It was asked if the state exam scores are on par with our assessment scores.

The state scores usually come in higher since the test is graded on a curve.

Chris made a chart in order to analyze the data for our formative assessment. With the graph a trend line can be seen. We can also create charts in order to measure standards and grade level performance.

65 is the usual curve, but that can change. The classes that are below the trend line, holistically the students who are below, something needs to be done, Iready or another program can be used. Standards can be assigned on iready and those students can do a block on the standard they are struggling with. Tests can be created with standards in order to use the ones that are most frequently used to see where they are. We can use standards to create assessments. Iready has a toolkit and gives everything needed. An intervention block with those students can be done. The students who need intervention can be on iready. We need to measure what they are proficient in. If they practice a lot it will give them a better chance to improve.

We can look into that and have students go on iready in a more structured manner.

When it is an intervention block, those who are struggling, students go to a center in the class and work on what is assigned to them that day. The standards report is looked at and those students are always on it.

Are the students able to use iready during the break?

They are assigned that as part of their break assignment.

Another thing that has been helpful is providing specific student data to the teachers. There is a teacher who is doing a great job but her scores are terrible. She is teaching using the task alignment but the students are not given enough exposure to released questions. They are doing illustrative tasks, which is good, but they are not seeing questions like the ones they will

have on state exams. The core principles need to be there, just because the teacher has the pedagogical knowledge, there is still something missing, which is why the students are not succeeding. If he gets data he can correlate and juxtapose anything. He just completed 40 graphs going by ethnicity, SWD, and other categories, it showed where the holes were. He recommends administering mocks that are high level standards, grade it and look at it by standard instead of overall performance. Find the standards in mocks and then use ai to create similar questions. For the most inexperienced teachers, questions are put into ai and created to focus on misconceptions and students are taught. It can be done for literacy for intervention periods and it works.

AI is only as useful as how much you understand the school's pedagogy. You have to know what type of model you are adapting for it to be useful.

Thomas added, AI is helpful, but you do need to understand who it is being applied to and how to adjust it. It does not always give consistent output.

It is good to hear Chris's presentation. We need to focus on teachers and see what areas they are struggling with. When you mention misconceptions, having questions where two answers could be the answer, one being complete and one having some of the information, we need to find ways to get students to the correct answer instead of the one that is close. We have not been as analytical as Chris suggests. We need to find a way to look at the data the way Chris is talking about in order to help the teacher. Looking at some of the examples we can increase the proficiency level of the teacher. Sometimes we think we are getting the message across, but we do not always have it as well as we think. Sometimes the questions can even be tricky for the adults. Doing this in the next few weeks will be essential. We have a lot of students sitting at the 58%-65% level. Once they get the aha moment, they will get more than just 2 or 3 more questions correct.

There are two things, the thing learned is the teachers do not understand unless they unpack the questions. The teachers are not understanding or using those types of questions and then the students won't understand because it has not been modeled correctly. Modeling thinking aloud helps. It needs to be modeled and explained, why an answer is a distractor, why is this answer not correct, it needs to be done often.

Each student processes information differently so it is difficult.

If something is not effectively modeled, students will not understand what they are missing. High performing schools often model well. However, shifting too much can lead to worse results. The students who are on the cusp should be working with the teacher and have these problems modeled and receive multi tiered support. You want an enrichment/intervention block. The other students can do something more since they do not need intervention.

We have the ability to enrich because we have level four students who do not need as much assistance and then the others have the opportunity.

If the federal government closes the Dept. of Education how will that impact our school? New York would likely hold up funding and we would be okay. We are not looking to have any new grants coming through which were very helpful. Luckily for us we have been able to maintain a solid financial footing. The state is right now looking at the budget for next year. Thus far Hochal is looking to maintain the same amount of funding or increase it slightly. We do not expect any grants during Trump's administration. The Dept. of Education sets forth an agenda to acknowledge schools, they attempt to create an initiative. They come up with plans like no child left behind, but they mostly focus on the funding. Democrats tend to fund that office more. The republicans as a whole believe in charter schools as they believe in a business model. We should not be impacted by any rules or regulations. His attempt with transgender students has been stopped by the courts and most things he tries to put through would get slowed down by the courts. Thankfully most of our money comes through the state. The school lunch program will not likely be stopped. It might impact other states, but it should not have an effect on New York. In general we need to move forward with our agenda. We have a nice cushion and we will try to support our teachers and give them reasonable pay because we have very hard working teachers. They are committed to our mission and need to be compensated.

### III. Update on Student Recruitment

We have had many tabling events for daycares and we have visited middle schools and we have had some success with our events. Many parents are looking at convenience. They look at location and convenience. If they have to go out of their way, they have other options and they will likely choose the ones that are nearby. We try to show them the scores and show our school is better, but a lot of them already have children in another school nearby and they do not seem interested. We advertised at bay plaza and cross county mall. Maybe high school students will be more likely to come to our school.

We have set up a basketball clinic and have seen interest. It would be good to get someone with a name to potentially gain more interest. We have been going to businesses nearby public K-5 schools and they have been very receptive to putting our flyer on display in the storefront window and near the cash register.

We are also doing a family fun day on Feb 27 to have teachers lead different stations. We are inviting all new applicants to attend.

### IV. Committee Reports

Nothing more to report on education.

Not much to discuss with financials. We are good for the year based on the data Paul sent out. We had the discussion last month, so there is nothing new to report.

Not anything new on the building and development. The punch list has been whittled down, but there are still a few items that have been difficult to get done. One item is that the elevators are cold. There must be a blower somewhere on the bottom or top and they say elevators are not meant to be heated. We just want to see the air not blowing into the elevators. It seems that the air coming in through the doors has been addressed. We still have an issue with the closets and hooks. They cannot open past a certain threshold. To ask them not to open it fully is not practical. They will need to install a stopper. The hinges are breaking. They are looking at it, but they have not addressed it yet. They are looking into better hooks and installing them. They are asked to test it on one closet first and then we will see if it works.

Sean adds we can look at the full set of drawings and see if there is a reason why the air is entering the elevators. It can probably be insulated if the cab is connected to a fan.

Bob has been working on the plaques. He thought there were some pretty good templates. He would like to see the gymnasium doors to see how it would fit. He sent thoughts to promote thinking, if anything else needs to be added, it can be adjusted.

The board needs to be acknowledged. Michael Ansboro became the chair and really improved our board. Jim then took over and maintained the success of our board. Two plaques would be appropriate, one for Ted and then the other for the board. Michael's contributions have been tremendous. Our building will be there for 100 years and the board that made it possible should be acknowledged.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:01 pm.