

**WALLINGFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONAL COMMITTEE MEETING
Monday – December 8, 2014
Vo-Ag Community Room
Lyman Hall High School**

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Cei called the meeting to order at 6:55 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

M. Brooder, K. Castelli, J. Cei, K. Hlavac , R. McKay, C. Miller, C. Shortell, M. Votto

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

D. Bryant, G. Dirkson, R. Duthie, J. Foss, S. Govin, C. Lavalette, R. Mancusi, B. McCully, S. Menzo, J. Piacentini, S. Parkhurst, T. Snyder

II. PRESENTATION

A. Middle School and High School Improvement Plans

Shawn Parkhurst, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction, informed the Board the Middle School and High School Improvement Plans they received are condensed versions of each buildings School Improvement Plan. Sashi Govin, Principal at **Dag Hammarskjold Middle School**, stated in Reading the goal is for 100% of students to show growth in their ability to read for information. Strategies implemented to achieve this goal include providing time for teachers to work in data teams analyzing data, time for teachers to share BEST practices, provide current research in reading to staff and to provide support to teachers to explore professional development opportunities related to reading. Measurement tools include data provided by teachers showing growth in their reading SLO's (Student Learning Objectives) and the monitoring of data teams.

The Mathematics goal is for 100% of students to show growth in ratios, number system, equations, Geometry and statistics. Strategies implemented to achieve this goal include providing time for teachers to work in data teams analyzing data, provide time for teachers to share BEST practices, provide current research in math to staff and to provide support to teachers to explore professional development opportunities related to math. Measurement tools include data provided by teachers showing growth in their math SLO's (Student Learning Objectives) and the monitoring of data teams.

The Community Outreach/Partnerships goal is for students, parents, families and the community to have access to pertinent information about our schools 24/7 and for students & parents to be able to access information about their student's progress on a regular basis. Strategies implemented to achieve these goals include maintaining and updating the school website so it is user-friendly and provides information about school programs and events. In addition, maintain and update Daily Bulletin feature and student grades in PowerSchool to provide information on student progress and school events. Measurement tools include periodic check of school website and data gathered from PowerSchool.

The Climate goal is to have students feel they are in a safe, healthy environment that respects individual differences (social, emotional and cultural). Strategies implemented to achieve this goal include guidance lessons through Naviance (software program) on bullying, empathy & conflict resolution, addressing bullying in health education classes, a State trooper presentation on safety/cyber bullying, a parent night presentation on internet safety/cyber bullying and a Wallingford Police Department officer to conduct lessons about the law and justice system pertaining to rights and responsibilities pertaining to cyber bullying. Measurement tool is reduced instances of verified acts of bullying.

The Professional Development goals are to address the diverse needs of teachers by providing opportunities for self-directed learning, develop technology skills, review & reflect on instructional practices and assessment practices, develop a better understanding of the teacher evaluation process, work to revise the school EIP process and improve staff morale. Strategies implemented to achieve these goals include teachers developing and proposing their own areas of growth, attend Google classroom training & Smartboard training, review assessment rubrics and ensure vertical alignment through Powerpoint presentations, provide school-wide professional development for all staff and offer team-building activities for all staff. Measurement tools include survey results/self-reflection, use of performance task assessment rubrics, completion of SLO's (Student Learning Objectives) and individual teacher reflective reports on climate professional development.

The Technology goal is to improve student academic achievement through the use of technology in elementary and secondary curriculum and to develop a plan of current and future financing requirements to ensure that K-12 resources are available for all students, faculty members, and staff; so all can become technologically literate and proficient. Strategies implemented to achieve these goals are the use of universal screening applications, Use of Track My Progress, STAR and Smartboard presentations. Measurement tools include use of universal screening application for data collection to inform instruction in data teams and teacher use of computers for lessons/projects as seen through increased use of computer labs and logins to digital databases.

Joseph Piacentini, Principal at **James H. Moran Middle School**, stated in Writing the goal is to have 100% of students show growth or maintain the highest level of performance in their ability to use evidence & elaboration to support a claim or statement of purpose as measured by ELA district performance task. Strategies implemented to achieve this goal include teachers working collaboratively in data teams, administrators working with data teams as needed and teachers meeting with an administrator at midpoint of the school year to discuss all student progress in achieving this goal and adjust as needed. Measurement tools are statement of purpose & evidence and elaboration bands of ELA rubric.

The Mathematics goal is to have 100% of students show growth or maintain the highest level of performance in their ability to use algebraic reasoning, both abstract & quantitative, as measured by Track My Progress screens. Strategies implemented to achieve this goal include teachers working collaboratively in data teams, administrators working with data teams as needed and teachers meeting with an administrator at midpoint of the school year to discuss all student progress in achieving this goal and adjust as needed. Measurement tool is use of Track My Progress.

The Community Outreach/Partnerships goal is to have the school and parents engage in regular communication about school programs, student progress and student needs, in a language & format that provides equal access for all participants. The school will support parents/community as advocates for their own child's education and the school's performance & community issues that affect outcomes for all students. Strategies implemented to achieve these goals include continuing to highlight parent engagement resources which promote communication between parents/community and the school. The administration will conduct "parent coffee time" and PTAC meetings to keep parents informed of current trends in education and expand the use of Powerschool on all levels to provide timely and useful information for parents. Measurement tool is the school climate survey.

The Climate goal is to create a climate where students feel safe from verbal abuse, teasing & exclusion and to increase overall building morale. Strategies implemented to achieve this goal include conducting grade level meetings to allow opportunities to discuss expectations and provide an opportunity for student voice, presentations by outside presenters to teach students about the benefits & hazards of social media use & abuse and to look for and act on areas of the curriculum that offer the opportunity to solicit parent volunteers in the classroom. Measurement tool is the school climate survey.

The Professional Development goals are to ensure that all faculty members & staff are proficient in the use and integration of existing technology and ongoing professional development activities in emerging technologies, to better understand the needs of our current learners and match our teaching to their needs and to partner with families and the community to broaden the exposure & learning opportunities for our students. Strategies implemented to achieve these goals include offering differentiated professional development to match learner needs with instructional strategies, investigate available community resources and parent expertise, explore partnerships with area businesses & community members and to hold forums to facilitate communication between outside organizations and the staff. Measurement tools are the staff professional development survey and the student engagement survey.

The Technology goals are to graduate students who are ready to meet the challenges that await them after they leave the school system, to improve student academic achievement through the use of technology, to ensure that faculty and staff members are proficient in the use and integration of existing technology, to offer professional development activities in emerging technologies and to develop a continuous process of evaluation & accountability for the use of technology as a teaching & learning tool. Strategies implemented to achieve these goals include the creation of a forum for continued input from staff regarding technology needs of students & staff and leveraging internal expertise to grow student & staff capacity with technology. Measurement tool is the reported increase of technology integrated into classroom instruction and student engagement survey.

David Bryant, **Principal at Lyman Hall High School**, stated in Reading the goal is for students in grades 9-11 to improve their reading comprehension as determined through IRLA assessments. The strategy implemented to achieve this goal is English teachers will work with the building interventionist to provide direct instruction aimed at improving reading comprehension. Measurement tool used will be IRLA (Independent Reading Level Assessment).

The Mathematics goal is for students in Algebra 1 & 2 to show growth in their ability to solve a variety of equations. The strategy implemented to achieve this goal is teachers will utilize district performance tasks to monitor student performance and utilize data team processes to focus on instruction on determined needs. Measurement tool is the district performance tasks.

The Writing goal is for students in grades 9 & 10 to improve their performance in writing as measured on district writing assessments. The strategy implemented to achieve this goal is teachers will utilize district performance tasks to monitor student performance and utilize data team processes to focus on instruction on determined needs. Measurement tool is the district performance tasks.

The Community Outreach/Partnerships goals are to improve communication with parents of Hispanic students and provide greater opportunities for parental input/feedback. Strategies implemented to achieve these goals include meeting with Hispanic parents through the ELL program at Adult Education and SCOW (Spanish Community of Wallingford) to ascertain their needs, respond to questions regarding their children's progress, to poll parents regarding their opinions immediately after meetings with school counselors and to increase attendance at school events. Measurement tools are parent participation rates and to increase parent responses on surveys.

The Climate goals are to have a decreased number of office referrals for disciplinary infractions and to explore options to pilot a student review board. Strategies used to implement these goals are to implement PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports) strategies through refinements in the Advisory program and to research communities with a similar process. Measurement tools will be use of SWIS (School-Wide Information Systems) data and adoption of student review board.

The Professional Development goal is to expand the use of Google Docs by students and staff. The strategies implemented to achieve this goal include utilizing the school's technology team to work with teachers to expand their use of Google Docs and to provide Google certification training for four staff members. Measurement tool is increased use of Google Classroom.

The Technology goals are to expand the use of Google Docs by students and staff and to provide document cameras for teacher & student use. Strategies implemented to achieve these goals include utilizing the school's technology team to work with teachers to expand their use of Google Docs, provide Google Certification training for four staff members and to utilize Open Choice funds to purchase document cameras for 40 classrooms. Measurement tool is increased use of Google Classrooms and increased access to technology through the use of documents cameras.

Rosemary Duthie, principal at **Mark T. Sheehan High School**, stated in Writing the goal is for selected students to demonstrate improvement in the area of informative/argumentative writing. Strategies implemented to achieve this goal include providing time for data teams through scheduling of common time, ensuring adherence to data team protocols through quarterly review and feedback and discussing progress on goals at school cabinet meetings. Measurement tool: assignments administered periodically by teachers to students during the school year which will be assessed using a common rubric.

The Mathematics goal is selected students will improve their ability to problem solve. Strategies implemented to achieve this goal include providing time for data teams through scheduling of common time, ensuring adherence to data team protocols through quarterly review & feedback and discussing progress on goals at school cabinet meetings. Measurement tool is assignments will be administered periodically by teachers to students during the school year which will be assessed using a common rubric.

The Community Outreach/Partnerships goal is for parents, teachers and administrators to work collaboratively on matters related to the operation of the school and school improvement efforts. The strategy implemented to achieve this goal is to conduct monthly meetings. Measurement tool will be the meeting minutes.

The Climate goals are to institute PBIS support, which is a school-wide systems based approach that supports appropriate behavior and positive school environments. Furthermore, these systems help to diminish mean and cruel behavior and maximize academic achievement for all students. Also, provide grade level lesson plans that address bullying prevention. (These plans are designed to enhance the positive climate of the school through positive messages). Strategies implemented to achieve these goals include providing a series of school-based planned activities which will increase student awareness and responsibility relative to bullying & student interactions. Grade level lesson plans, which are designed to increase students' self-awareness of how one's words and actions can be hurtful to others, will be implemented during the school year. Measurement tools are PBIS surveys and an advisory schedule along with planned events.

The Professional Development goal is the NEASC (New England Association of Schools & Colleges) school review and improvement plan to conduct an analysis of present conditions with a specific emphasis on teaching & learning and the support of teaching & learning. The strategy implemented to achieve this goal is members of the faculty will work collaboratively to address the NEASC Standards of Accreditation. Measurement tool will be monitoring indicators for each standard.

The Technology goal is to provide professional development on the Google platform. The strategy implemented to achieve this goal is to provide workshops conducted by the library media specialist throughout the school year. Measurement tool will be surveys.

B. Presentation, Discussion and Possible Action on Early Childhood Exploratory Committee Recommendations

Shawn Parkhurst, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction, informed the Board this report highlights the important aspects of studying the early childhood program(s) in Wallingford. This has been a collaborative effort over the last year and a half between school administrators and the members of the Early Childhood Exploratory Committee. In the fall of 2013, the Early Childhood Exploratory Committee was formed and charged with the task to study the early childhood program(s) in Wallingford, CT, the USA and globally. The committee was further charged with developing a recommendation for future planning for early childhood education in Wallingford. The committee examined current research, current data, and prepared a proposal for the Board of Education which was presented in November of 2013. This proposal included a phase in plan that would support full-day kindergarten and an expansion of the current PreK program.

In the spring of 2014 and into the fall, the committee studied the kindergarten program in the district currently along with PreK programs both in the schools and in the town. Additionally, the K-2 administrators attended an Early Childhood Symposium in the spring of 2014 and were supplied with a document entitled, *Leading PreK-3 Learning Communities; Competencies for Effective Principal Practices*. Another reference that impacted the committee's work was *Initiatives from Preschool to Third Grade; A Policymaker's Guide* by Education Commission of the United States, October 2014. The group determined the need to identify some guiding questions to assist with the fact finding process in order to make a recommendation to the Board of Education.

A Powerpoint presentation on the findings commenced at this meeting and addressed the following questions – What does Kindergarten look like at the current time? – What are the benefits of PreK/Preschool, ½ day Kindergarten and full-day kindergarten? – What are the curricular expectations in kindergarten and what are the short-term & long-term academic and social outcomes of full-day kindergarten? – What data does the district have regarding PreK and kindergarten service? – What does our DRG offer in terms of full-day or half-day kindergarten and what districts in the state offer full-day or ½ kindergartens? – Is there enough space in our schools? – What are the recommendations of the Early Childhood Exploratory Committee?

Mr. Parkhurst reviewed the benefits of preschool with the Board and stated Wallingford's preschool program is currently available for up to 64 students who are located at Moses Y. Beach Elementary School, E.C. Stevens Elementary School and at Cook Hill Elementary School. The Integrated Day Program is available for students only at Cook Hill – there is no Integrated Day Program currently at Highland Elementary School. The preschool program is a ½ day program where transportation is provided by parents and is only available to students with the greatest academic & social/emotional needs based on screening data.

Shawn continued to review what districts in Connecticut have full-day kindergarten and PreK and the current enrollment statistics of ½ day kindergarten in the Wallingford Public Schools. A discussion centered around the benefits of full-day kindergarten as follows: - Students in full-day kindergarten programs exhibit more independent learning, increased classroom involvement, reflectiveness which improves when working with peers - Common Core State Standards require all students to meet the same levels of proficiency at the end of kindergarten regardless of their participation in full-day or in a ½ day program or no kindergarten program at all - Full-day kindergarten allows for a more consistent schedule for children and reduces the ratio of transition time to classroom time, also reducing stress – There are reductions in retention, remediation and referrals to special education - Teachers have more time for elaboration as skills develop and allow for more flexibility to personalize the learning experience – Second language learners and students from low income families show increased gains in literacy and language skills than similar students in ½ day programs – Full-day kindergarten provides increased opportunities for young children to develop and strengthen foundational skills necessary for long term success in school and lifelong learning – Full-day kindergarten programs promote children's success in reading and mathematics regardless of race or income – In order for a student to sustain the academic and developmental gains made in preschool, a young child needs the continued support of a high-quality full-day kindergarten program.

– A full-day program allows the district to include play-based learning in instruction and allows for a better transition to first grade – With more time, teachers are able to pull students into small work groups more frequently and there is a greater emphasis on self-regulation and executive functioning during a full-day program – Full-day kindergarten provides for a schedule that allows a learning environment to not be rushed and full-day kindergarten provides 900 hours of actual schoolwork.

With the implementation of Common Core Standards in Connecticut, students in kindergarten are expected to write a narrative text with details, use information learned from text to write an informative piece that is supported with evidence from the text, integrate information learned in class and through various media sources to form an opinion and support it with evidence and are expected to read non-fiction text by the end of kindergarten that contains multiple lines of text, quotations and make sense of text in varied formats. In addition, students in kindergarten are expected to read non-fiction text by the end of kindergarten that contains multiple lines of text, bold-faced words and make sense of text in varied formats and are expected to read non-fiction by the end of kindergarten that contains multiple lines of text and increasingly more difficult vocabulary. Students are also expected to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them, reason abstractly and quantitatively, construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others, model with mathematics, use appropriate tools strategically, look for and make use of structure and look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.

Students in kindergarten also have curricular instruction in art, music, physical education, library, science, social studies, computer time and health. Based on Wallingford's projected enrollment, there will be enough space to adequately house full-day kindergarten at all four of our K-2 schools. After much research, meetings, discussion, reflection and thought, the Early Childhood Exploratory Committee recommends the following to the Board: 1.) Implement a full-day kindergarten program for all students in the 2015-2016 school year. Anticipated outcomes are less students will qualify for intervention services during first grade and beyond and student writing skills will increase by providing opportunities for writing workshops on the three types of writing expected by CT Common Core Standards. Measurement tools include intervention data for all subgroups of students and analysis of writing skills and growth during the year; measured three times formally and ongoing at the school & classroom level. 2.) Continue to provide PreK experiences for students that qualify based on the district screening (academic/social/emotional needs). Anticipated outcome is social & emotional needs of all students will be increasingly met. Measurement tool is monitoring social & emotional data as measured by discipline referrals as well as DESSA (Devereux Student Strengths Assessment). 3.) Continue partnership with preschool providers in the community through ongoing meetings and collaboration with the school(s). Anticipated outcome is ELL (English Language Learners) and economically disadvantaged students will increase performance and result in the closing of the achievement gap in reading, writing and mathematics. Measurement tool is monitoring the performance level of ELL and economically disadvantaged students in the areas of reading, writing and mathematics. – 4.) Expand to provide two PreK classrooms for an additional 36 seats (**Smart Start grant available through CSDE Office of Early Childhood*). Anticipated outcome is significantly more students will enter kindergarten with a preschool experience and a readiness to learn the expected outcomes. Measurement tool is monitoring kindergarten readiness skills upon entrance into kindergarten.

Projected enrollment for 2015-2016 in the PreK program at E.C. Stevens Elementary is 31 students, at Moses Y. Beach Elementary it is 16 students and at Cook Hill Elementary it is 16 students. Projected enrollment in kindergarten at the four K-2 schools is 413 students. (Kindergarten numbers take into account data from preschools, enrollment projections and potential unidentified age-appropriate students). Several scenarios were presented to the Board which all factored in class size, teacher costs, paraeducator costs and program costs.

Following a lengthy discussion, the Board agreed to accept the following: Projected 2015-2016 enrollment of 21 students in grades K, 1 & 2 classes and 23 students in grades 3, 4 & 5 classes. Staff at E.C. Stevens will increase by two, at Moses Y. Beach staff will be reduced by a half-time position, at Highland Elementary staff will increase by two and at Cook Hill Elementary staff will increase by two. At Parker Farms Elementary staff will decrease by two, at Rock Hill Elementary staff will increase by two, at Yalesville Elementary staff will decrease by two and at Pond Hill Elementary staff will decrease by two. Total staff increase at the elementary level will be 1.5 positions.

Mrs. McKay and the Board thanked Mr. Parkhurst and Dr. Menzo for all the time and effort devoted to this presentation.

The consensus was to send the proposed Implementation of Full-Day Kindergarten Starting in School Year 2015-2016 and Two Additional Pre-K Classes for approval to the Board of Education for action at its next meeting.

V. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairperson Cei adjourned the meeting at 10:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Betsy McCully
Assistant Superintendent's Secretary