

BRISTOL WARREN REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

WORKSHOP

MONDAY, APRIL 9, 2007

The monthly workshop of the Bristol Warren Regional School Committee was held in the Cafeteria of Mt. Hope High School, 199 Chestnut Street, Bristol, RI, on Monday, April 9, 2007. The Chairperson, William A. Estrella, Jr, called the meeting to order at approximately 7:15 PM.

Present: William A. Estrella, Jr., Marjorie J. McBride, William M. Ojide, Paul Silva, Paul E. Brule, Diana B. Campbell, David L. Dugan and John P. Saviano; and Edward P. Mara, Superintendent; Melinda L. Thies, Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction; Mary Cerullo, Executive Director of Literacy, K-12, Elementary Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment; Jane F. Correia, Director of Administration and Finance; and Andrew D. Henneous, District Solicitor

Absent: None

This meeting was preceded by an Executive Session with Administrators.

ACCOLADES

Mt. Hope High School's Actors' Studio's production of EVERYMAN was selected to continue to the State Drama Festival competition. This is the first time Mt. Hope has ever won this competition! The State Festival took place on Saturday, March 31 at Westerly High School. The production won awards for Ensemble Acting and Technical Merit for Production Concept. We would like to recognize the Director and Assistant Director, Carol and Bob Schlink, for their hard work and expert directing.

Congratulations to the Cast Members:

Lynn McCoomb Chad Morin Nikki Metthe Brittany Pacheco *

Frankie DaPonte * Jen Wells Laura DeCastro Rob Burke

Michelle Rodrigues * Marissa Simeone Craig Canario Mandy Dion

M.J. Benevides Kate Sousa Jordan Burns Rob Araujo

Ashley Heady

And to the Production Staff:

Shaelyn Maynard Alyson Cabral * Jim Wilson Steven Pereira

Vinny Morrow Mandy Dion Brett Dupre Devin Medeiros

***Special awards**

Kickemuit Middle School's Odyssey of the Mind Team came in first place in the Odyssey of the Mind Competition. The competition was

held recently at Southern Connecticut State University in New Haven, Connecticut. The student's structure held a total of 77 pounds! Odyssey Coach is Joe Asciola and their teacher is Kim Hicks. They are now qualified to enter the Odyssey of the Mind World Finals in Michigan (providing there is funding). They would be the only team from Rhode Island attending this event. Team members are:

Nicholas Andreadis Thomas Asciola Cheyanne Grimshaw Jameel Sylvia

Nicole Arruda Troy Durand Rachel Lessing

We congratulate the Kickemuit Middle School cheerleaders, who finished third after an impressive performance at the Middle School State Cheerleading Championships. The Wildcats won four trophies this winter and four members of the squad were named All-State. Head coach is Lynn DePasquale.

Squad members:

Alexandra Absi Alexis Durand Gianna Mayuri

Sam Beaulieu Anastasia Edouard Briana McQueeney

Amanda Bernard Carly Ferias Kennedy Oliveira

Caitlin Bisbano Carissa French Nicole Proulx

Michaela Bloomer Kelsey Haggerty (All-State) Kiley Quinn

Jillian Borgia Abbie Harris Marisa Rainey

Katy Camelo Carmen Hogan Krystyna Schinigo

Janelle Canario (All-State) Tara House Allie Threadgill

Amanda DaCosta (All-State) Lauren Manuel Jessica Varrichione

(All-State)

Catelynn DaCosta Avery Maynard

Nineteen Mt. Hope High School students and four Kickemuit Middle School students qualified as All-State Musicians this year. We congratulate them all. The top scorers from across Rhode Island go on to qualify for All-Eastern; Xtwo Mt. Hope vocalists were selected for this honor. With the help of Vicki Boyle, Chorus Director, and Robert Arsenault, Band Director, we would like to congratulate:

All-State Chorus:

Kyle Andree Jillian Hayes Claire Randall

Timothy Boughton Bethany Ingerson Renee Ricci

Samantha Brilhante Jonathan Kmieciak Victoria Thomson

(All-Eastern)

Timothy Cordeiro Nicole Metthe Terence Wright (All-Eastern)

Junior All-State Chorus:

Emma Leary Cordelia Boyle Victoria Carrol

All-State Band:

Garrett Mattson Jamie Souza Carolyn Halaburda Mason Francis

All-State Orchestra:

Bethany Sousa

Junior All-State Band:

Corianna Mascena Erin Oliver

Junior All-State Orchestra:

Nate Gomes

Honors All-State Band:

Madison Cardoso

PRESENTATIONS / DISCUSSIONS

Mt. Hope High School Presentation

Principal, Mrs. Vendituoli-Ferreira, presented some of the highlights of Mt. Hope High School. She stated that, as you can see from all the accolades, our students represent this district with integrity and the utmost respect. Mt. Hope received nine commendations for their mission and expectations for learning – almost impossible to get. It drives everything they do. Their beliefs are shared beliefs. There are twenty-five Proficiency Based Graduation Requirements (PBGRs) that students must demonstrate in order to graduate starting with the class of 2008. PBGRs are posted in every classroom. Courses are aligned with them as well as student tasks. They have a service learning expectation as well as a social expectation in the form of a grade. Social, service, civic and academic expectations are measurable – not many schools can do this. They are getting better at using data. The SIT Team has a data-based decision making process-- identify, collect, analyze and create an action plan then evaluate their annual progress. The focus this year has been on the drop out rate and overall student achievement; they are now in process of creating action plan including offerings of AP classes,

ramp up programs, i§mouse certification,i” certificate through URI from Purple Playschool, and concurrent enrollment with URI. Mr. Almeida and Miss Gauthier have taught strategies for success. Mt. Hope Plus is a program used as an alternative, self-paced program as well as credit recovery program with a school to work component.

The new high school diploma is all about linking the classroom to the real world;Xtherefore they focus on performance based learning and assessment. The Home Building Program is in its thirty-fifth year and has been very productive; it is directed by Mr. Steve Eaton, head of IT Department, who also oversees i§Vex Robotics.i” The Vex Robotics team, headed by Mr. Ryan Garrity, entered their very first challenge and came in first; the students will now participate in the World Class Championship in Atlanta. A new initiative for Mt. Hope, through a Perkins Grant proposal, is to explore ideas of boat building; a partnership has been formed with the International Yacht Restoration School (IYRS) which is based in Newport with a new site in Bristol, to inspire our students to learn the marine trades; funding is sought through Perkins and local businesses. The Early Childhood Education Program is a certificate program coordinated with URI and CCRI; a nursery playschool is run by the students. Also offered are culinary courses. The Performing Arts Program is so excellent they are continually invited to participate in prestigious events nationally. Mt. Hope has internships in local businesses for experiential learning and to give students a chance to apply skills learned in the classroom.

They have been commended by the Commissioner of Education on their new diploma system and are hoping to get full approval in May from the Commissioner rather than waiting for January 2008. The NEASC liaison said, "You should be luxuriating in the commendations." The NEASC Report cites a high degree of cooperation, communication and commitment. Mt. Hope has been a model to other schools; they have been visited by many schools including Ithica, NY and Central Falls.

Mrs. Vendituoli-Ferreira said they appreciate the Committee's continued support for excellence with integrity, and she gave a big thanks to her faculty.

Mr. Steve Eaton joined Mrs. Vendituoli in commending Mr. Garrity and the Vex Robotics Team for the unbelievable number of hours they put into the project; the students gave a demonstration of their award winning robot. Mr. Eaton also thanked Mrs. Vendituoli and Dr. Mara for their support and awarded certificates to the team -- Patrick Gaudreau, Stephen Beebe, Corey Lescault, Cory Sousa and Geoff Hawley. Mr. Estrella mentioned that Mr. Garrity is a graduate of Mt. Hope High School.

"Give Respect to Get Respect" Article

Mr. Estrella said this article by Adam Cote in the East Bay

Newspapers talked about Mt. Hope sports teams and their reputation. Some in our community believe we have a reputation which may or may not be accurate. All sports coaching positions are posted on Schoolspring. Mr. Estrella said he has a great deal of respect for the people who become involved; they represent us in the community and kids learn from example. There are some truisms that need to be worked on, but as a family does. In the interview process for coaches we have to make it clear we expect the coaching staff to live up to the high expectations we have for everyone. Dr. Mara reiterated it is the coaching staff we look to for leadership and it is important we set role models for our students.

Organizational Structure of the District

This is a work in progress by Dr. Mara. In response to questions by the Committee Dr. Mara answered:

„X The Assistant Superintendent works collaboratively with the Executive Director of Literacy.

„X The Assistant Supervisor of Plant & Facilities and Working Supervisor positions could not be combined, the responsibilities are too great and each brings a distinct skill to the District.

„X The Technology Department consists of the Director, a technician, a network person, Frank Fales (who works on student information and scheduling), a technician who works with teachers, and a very part-time person for high school teachers.

„X The Assistant Superintendent and Executive Director of Literacy

coordinate professional development for BWEA and Jane Correia for Council 94.

„X DaPonte Landscaping maintains the high school fields and our maintenance staff does the lining for games; Dr. Mara has tried to hire someone for lining but has been unsuccessful so far.

„X Dr. Mara does public relations; the next letter to the editor is about the Kickemuit Education Foundation.

„X There are 38 SPED teachers, which is considerably less than past years.

„X The Supervisor of Plant and Facilities supervises 32 custodians plus 4 maintenance staff.

„X The five cabinet members (Assistant Superintendent, Executive Director of Literacy, Director of Administration and Finance, Director of Pupil Personnel and Technology Director) report directly to the Superintendent; however, the flow of reporting is between all administrators.

„X Dr. Mara proposes to maintain a principal at all elementary schools.

„X Reading coaches work in the classrooms and provide professional development for teachers.

„X The ESL population now stands at approximately 150 students; we have immersion programs at the middle and high schools.

„X In the absence of the Superintendent and the School Committee Chair, the Assistant Superintendent is the contact person.

School Committee comments:

Mr. Silva mentioned that the District has been criticized for being top heavy; we need a better visual. As a personal comment, he commended Dr. Mara for putting forth for a principal at Byfield.

Mrs. McBride explained that discussions about the administrative structure are all about positions, not individuals; when money is decreased we must lead with our heads rather than our hearts; she has concerns about the Supervisor of Plant and Facilities; she asked that discussion about the closing of Main Street School be brought back to the table.

Mr. Estrella asked the Committee to contact the secretary or him about concerns for the Superintendent to address on the organizational chart. Mr. Estrella established a task force consisting of the four School Committee officers, to meet with the Superintendent to define and clarify the organizational structure and tally the numbers for comparison to past years. Dr. Mara mentioned that some of the administrative positions are paid from grants and we have basically the same administrative structure as every other district. Mr. Silva asked that funding sources be noted.

Instructional Time Issues

In response to concerns raised by Mr. Oj'Dell, Dr. Mara said this issue impacts the high school the most because of exam week and senior week; however, with the new graduation requirements all students, including seniors, must attend class 180 days;Xno exam-only days and senior week activities will take place after hours; this decision

was made by the Commissioner of Education and the Board of Regents. Another concern is video time; this is monitored carefully. Lost instructional time is not logged. Certain out-of-district experiences are acceptable, such as Starbase Atlantis and Nature's Classroom; other field trips have been reduced. At the high school, final exams will be taken up to the last day of school; in the future, graduation will take place after the last day of school. Mrs. Campbell asked about parity of instruction on the elementary level. Mrs. Thies and Mrs. Cerullo reported all elementary students receive 80 minutes of math instruction and 180 minutes of literacy time each day; we are the only district in Rhode Island devoting that much time to literacy.

SUPERINTENDENT'S ISSUES/UPDATES

Dr. Mara wished to commend Mrs. Vendituoli-Ferreira for her presentation and her leadership of the high school.

CHAIRPERSON'S INITIATIVES

Report Out on Authorization for Chair to Sign Adult Education Grant

Mr. Estrella reported that the Adult Education Grant required his signature for the first time this year; at their meeting on March 23rd, the Committee authorized Mr. Estrella to sign.

SUBCOMMITTEE ISSUES AND UPDATES

Budget/Facilities Subcommittee

Mr. O'Dell reported the next Subcommittee meeting is April 16th at 6:00 PM; on the agenda will be discussion on the closing of Main Street School and the forwarding of a recommendation to the full Committee; a letter should be drafted to the Warren Town Council to inform them of our intent. Also, the Joint Finance Committee illogically reduced the District's budget request by another \$400,000.

Personnel/Contract Negotiations Subcommittee

Mr. Silva reminded the Committee that their evaluations of the Superintendent are due back on Friday, April 13th. Mrs. McBride said discussion of the evaluation will take place at the April business meeting in either open or closed session by choice of Dr. Mara.

Policy/Community Affairs Subcommittee

Nothing to report at this time.

OPEN FORUM

Mr. Saviano asked the Superintendent why the SPED population has dropped. Dr. Mara said because of inclusion programs; we are getting the message out that SPED is not the only way students can get assistance in the District.

Marie L. Knapman, a Byfield parent, commended Dr. Mara for recommending a principal in every school; she asked the Committee

to please look at the money, it is important to the Byfield community. She asked how the instruction time issue is managed with the students in the trailer and the sharing of a Reynolds gym teacher when the Byfield one is absent. Dr. Mara said transition time is built into the day for students and the Reynolds PE teachers are fully scheduled at Reynolds and could not cover another class, but if free, they could do it.

Amy Parker, a Byfield parent, again pleaded with the Committee to preserve a principal at Byfield; the kids need a leader; please do what is right for their community.

Mr. Estrella announced that the May workshop will be at Mt. Hope since the bulk of the discussion will be the budget process. The June workshop will be in a facility that is not being worked on. He asked the Committee to forward to him their suggestions for a location.

ADJOURNMENT ;V 9:30 PM

There being no further business to discuss, Mrs. McBride, seconded by Mr. Silva, motioned to adjourn at 9:35 PM. The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Silva, Secretary

/c