

**BRISTOL WARREN REGIONAL  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
MONDAY, MARCH 11, 2013**

**The bi-monthly meeting of the Bristol Warren Regional School Committee was held on Monday, March 11, 2013, in the cafeteria of Mt. Hope High School, 199 Chestnut Street in Bristol, RI. The Chairperson, Paul Silva, called the meeting to order at approximately 7:03 PM.**

**Present: Paul Silva, Chair; John Bento, Vice-Chair; Karen Lynch, Secretary; Susan Rancourt, Treasurer; Diana Campbell, Marjorie McBride, William O'Dell (left at 8:50 p.m./returned 8:52 p.m.), John P. Saviano and Lynn Wainwright; Melinda Thies, Superintendent; Mario Andrade, Assistant Superintendent; Mary Almeida, Director of Literacy; Leslie Anderson, Director of Pupil Personnel; and Pauline Silva, Director of Administration**

**OPENING BUSINESS**

**All present were invited to recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT/PUBLIC FORUM**

**There was no public comment.**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION – 7:04 PM**

**Mr. Silva stated for the record that an executive session is being called pursuant to Open Meeting Laws 42-46-5(a)(1) for the following: First year administrator contract discussion; superintendent's goals review discussion. All parties to be discussed were notified prior to this evening. No action will be taken during this meeting.**

**MOTION: Mrs. Rancourt made a motion to go into executive session; seconded by Mrs. Campbell. The motion passed unanimously.**

**MOTION: At 8:16 p.m., Mrs. McBride made a motion to adjourn the executive session; seconded by Mr. Bento. The motion passed unanimously.**

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATIONS AND ISSUES**

**Recommendation #S2013-10: That the School Committee upon the recommendation of the superintendent approve First Year Administrator's Contract Renewal.**

**Mr. Silva stated, for the record, that the above motion will be broken down into four votes for each individual administrator.**

**MOTION: Mrs. Rancourt made a motion to approve Superintendent's Recommendation #S2013-10 in four separate votes; seconded by Mr. Bento. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Colt Andrews Principal – There being no further discussion, the vote passed by an 8-0 vote.**

**Hugh Cole Principal – There being no further discussion, the vote passed by an 7-1 vote; Mrs. McBride dissenting.**

**KMS Assistant Principal – There being no further discussion, the vote passed by a 6-2 vote; Mrs. Campbell and Mrs. McBride dissenting.**

**KMS Principal –**

**Discussion: Mrs. Lynch stated that she does not feel this administrator has enough experience for this role to bring the school together. She believes a person with more experience in this area would be better suited for the position. Mrs. Campbell stated that she is concerned that members of the school committee seemed to be putting more weight on the strength/weaknesses of one administrator over another in making a decision about the future for each of those administrators. She felt that the rationale for making decisions for administrator contracts should be applied equally. Mr. Saviano made the following statement for the record, “Public demands for more effective schools have placed a lot of attention on the role of school leaders and to my point, school principals. Successful school leaders influence student achievement through their rapport with other staff below them. School leadership and great classroom instruction are two very important influences on student learning. Therefore, until I feel that all leadership in our schools meets and**

**beats other comparable districts, I will not vote in favor of all first year principals receiving the same contract! Superior performing principals should receive superior contracts and superior pay. We must hold all of our District employees to the highest standards and have them accountable at all times. Our goal should be simple and achievable. OUR STUDENTS DESERVE THE BEST THAT WE CAN AFFORD TO INSURE THEIR FUTURES FOR THE SAKE OF THEIR FAMILIES AND OUR TOWNS!!”**

**There being no further discussion, the vote passed by a 5-3 vote; Mrs.Lynch, Mr. Saviano and Mrs. Wainwright dissenting.**

## **AGENDA FOCUS**

### **Superintendent’s Goals Review/Discussion**

**Mrs. Thies began her presentation of the Superintendent’s Action Plan for Continuous Professional Growth by stating that the four professional goals she has outlined are aligned to RIDE. She stated that some of these goals are ongoing. Mrs. Thies said that within many of these goals the language of the strategic plans will be evident. Mrs. Thies stated she is providing evidence to date as we are midway through the academic year and has also indicated a start and end date. Mrs. Thies explained that the column headed “balanced score card” is her evaluation of where the district is and where we all are as professionals in meeting these goals. The column header “rubric score” is where the school committee members will include their scores. The state’s goals that Mrs. Thies**

goals are aligned to have been provided to the school committee members.

The following highlights of the Superintendent's Action Plan for Continuous Professional Growth were presented by Mrs. Thies:

The first goal discussed is that the central mission of the Bristol Warren Regional School District is to establish a culture of continuous improvement in student achievement by meeting annual measurable objectives established by RIDE for 2014 and to align reading, writing, arithmetic and language arts to the common core state standards by 2014. Mrs. Thies stated that a literacy task force will begin work in several days in June for English Language Arts. There will be some shifts in focus in this area which will be very exciting work.

Mr. O'Dell brought up a procedural question related to leadership standards references that it appears 4 & 5 were missing from the hardcopy. Mrs. Thies said that she will provide the missing pieces. Mrs. Campbell stated that those pieces were successfully transmitted electronically, but just seem to be missing from the hardcopy.

Mrs. Thies continued highlighting the assessments in the core curriculum by stating that the district has worked very hard to align these objectives. She said that all school improvement plans as well as administrators and educators SLOs are aligned to AMO targets.

**Mrs. Thies added that there is currently an extended day program at the high school and at the middle level as well. Mrs. Thies said that an NCII Grant was awarded to this district. We are one of 12 districts across the country involved in this. Mrs. Anderson expanded saying that the focus of the NCII intervention grant is to have an intervention center to work with staff to deliver interventions with students who have had difficulty meeting goals such as students with IEPs or students who have not yet been identified. These interventions will have major focus on academic and behavioral issues to be carried out by staff in an efficient outcome. Mrs. Anderson said that there will be no money exchanged in providing these interventions, but that coaching staff will come to the school to address needs within the district. Mrs. Anderson said the interviews for this were quite a rigorous process where Dr. Andrade, Mrs. Thies and I worked together. Mrs. Anderson stated that this will be a three year grant, primarily focused at the elementary level, but with the option to move up to the middle and high school levels in the second and third year. Mrs. Thies commended Mrs. Anderson in regard to her initiative in this and her follow through in determining grant availability and her work in determining the needs of the district.**

**Mrs. Thies stated that there have been three professional days built into the collective bargaining agreement. These Professional Development Days do not cost the district any additional dollars. Next year the district is looking to provide a data use professional**

development day that will be coming from the Department of Education.

Mrs. Thies said as part of a five year plan that will be delivered in the next three years, technology will be integrated into instruction. The district is looking to restructure the Technology Department. As part of this process, there will be site visits from three vendors for wireless technology. Mrs. Campbell asked if there were monies in FY13 for this. Mrs. Thies responded, yes. She stated the district is moving forward cautiously in the purchase of these technologies. Mrs. Campbell stated that during a past discussion there was mention of assembling a subcommittee to put together this technology piece. Mrs. Thies said they are waiting to see what the state is going to do in regard to this and also to find out what our needs are. Mrs. Thies said this will be a team effort, but we need a stronger foundation in order to move forward. Mrs. Campbell said that she sees this as a strength of our district and would like to see a copy of the technology plan so the school committee can comment on it.

Mrs. Thies commented on the Mt. Hope High School SAT scores stating that our performance to date has not been acceptable and that the district needs to focus on students who will be judged on the quality of their SAT scores. For the next several years, the district has set a target goal of a 5 point increase in SAT scores. Mrs. Thies believes in English Language Arts, the district will exceed the goal of 5 points and will probably be on target with math which is quite good

**news.**

**Concerning the STEM initiative, Dr. Andrade commented that they are committed to expanding this initiative through the Perkins Grant. He stated that a focus group had taken place that day which was a preliminary meeting involving community members asking them to define what STEM means to them. Dr. Andrade said they will be putting out more invitations to continue the conversation so that STEM can move forward. He stated that there are four site visits planned. Currently, there are three administrators in North Carolina.**

**In May, there will be a site visit in Ohio. Another team will be visiting three schools in Massachusetts; one of which is in Boston that is an arts magnet school and another that is a traditional tech ed program which re-innovated themselves into a STEM Academy. They will also be visiting a site in Warren, Massachusetts. Dr. Andrade commented that interestingly, the different locations all define STEM differently.**

**Mrs. Thies continued by stating that they have established a CTE Visual Communication and Design Program utilizing a community liaison, Nina Murphy, who is a local business member that will be reaching out to local businesses looking for opportunities for internships for our students related to this.**

**Mrs. Thies stated that this is the first year of full implementation of the Rhode Island Educator Evaluation System. She said that our implementation is going well with an active district evaluation**

**committee. Mrs. Campbell is part of this committee as well as other school committee members, educators, and administrators. They have developed an appeals policy and are building a strong evaluator system.**

**The second goal Mrs. Thies went over is to develop and sustain a Professional Learning Community that is efficient and fiscally responsible. Mrs. Thies stated that this portion highlights the budget that was presented at last month's meeting. She reiterated that no student programs were cut or affected by the fiscal plan. She commended both unions for stepping up to the plate to support students in the district. Mrs. Thies said she is proud of the long range plan which will protect the district in years to come. During this years budget process we have reached out to the community as well as meeting with entry level town council members. Mrs. Thies thanked Mrs. Rancourt for her leadership on the Budget Subcommittee.**

**Mrs. Thies stated that an educational audit has been conducted which resulted in the redesign of instructional support positions and part-time supervisory positions within Council 94. The district has recently moved forward with the hiring of security technicians pending their background checks. They will be beginning work this week. The official appointments will occur at this month's business meeting.**

**Safety audits have been conducted of buildings in the district. Today, the focus was on the high school where the report was reviewed of their recommendations and many of those are ones that can be implemented. Mrs. Thies stated she will be sharing the recommendations with the school committee at an upcoming meeting.**

**Mrs. Thies stated that the School Improvement Team (SIT) meetings have been active at all schools. Mrs. Campbell suggested that the SIT Teams set up goals at the beginning of the year to help them to be more effective at their meetings. Mrs. Thies responded that the goals are written into the School Improvement Team plan. Mrs. Thies said that she will convey that suggestion to the SIT teams to keep those goals before them during the meetings to help them maintain focus.**

**The third goal Mrs. Thies expanded upon was effectively communicate vision, mission and goals of the Bristol Warren Regional School District to create a climate of trust and collaboration with the district and community, to respond to community needs, and to leverage resources to support the needs of the district. The following highlights were mentioned.**

**Mrs. Thies believes the website needs to be worked on to be more user friendly. Mrs. Thies said she is still looking into the idea of a “Superintendent’s blog”. She stated that Kimberly Aguiar is the district’s communication officer. The district has been better at**

posting items of communication to Facebook, and we are continuing to work on that piece. Mrs. Thies said that communication is always challenging, but they are all working together to improve this. Mrs. Thies thanked Mrs. Rancourt for taking the lead with Mount Hope High School to make the connection with local media.

The district is moving forward with a Chinese Student Exchange program.

The fourth goal Mrs. Thies spoke about was on acting ethically and with integrity while following all school, district and state policies. Mrs. Thies stated that she models her behavior as an example for everyone else. She asked the school committee to review the evidences she has listed.

Mrs. Thies closed by asking if there were any questions. Mr. Bento commented that with the recent news out of Sandy Hook he was made aware of a story where a school had space in their building and offered to the police that if they had paperwork to do related to their jobs, they could utilize that office space so that while completing their own work, there would be a police presence within that school building.

Mr. Silva thanked Mrs. Thies for her presentation.

**Graduation Requirements for NECAP Partial Proficiency Discussion**

The request for this discussion came from Mrs. Wainwright. Mrs. Thies began by saying that the administrative team has been working with the high school administration team to identify students at risk so that they will be successful to graduate. She went on to say that the district's area of concern was math. At the high school, there were 55 students substantially below proficient scoring 1 on the NECAP. The graduation requirement is aligned across the state with 23 Carnegie units, proficiency based graduation that occurs in their end of year assessment, their digital portfolio and to develop an individual learning plan. NECAP is one of those pieces. As stated, 55 did not meet the NECAP criteria. Mrs. Thies said as they analyzed their data, three students did not meet partial proficiency in reading. Mrs. Thies said that she sent out a letter explaining required pieces to those families and the district's responsibility of providing support in those areas. The students would have an opportunity in the fall of their senior year and another opportunity in the spring of their senior year. The students would have to show significant growth with an 18 point increase. Mrs. Thies said they might not meet proficiencies, but could satisfy the "significant growth". Several days after the initial generic letter from me went out, the administrative team sent out a more detailed letter to those families. Mrs. Thies said that on Tuesday evening they will be having an informational session for parents to let them know what those supports will look like. She also said that on March 18th they will be having a class called "success in Mathematics". Mrs. Thies is hoping that every single child will be enrolled. She said that these classes have been offered in the past,

but not everyone attended. This year, however, it will be mandated to attend. Mrs. Thies said that additionally, in the fall semester, they can take an additional math class. Mrs. Lynch asked about those students who don't test well. Mrs. Thies said their goal is to build the students content knowledge and that they are also working with a virtual learning piece that has been designed by RIDE and aligned to NECAP assessments. The district wants to ensure that the students have the best foundation. Mrs. Wainwright commented that she sees this as a "glass half full" opportunity as students who graduate need to be prepared after school so that they don't need to take remedial classes just to enter college. Mrs. Thies said that the students take the NECAP in 8th grade initially and as a result there is a gap between then and when they take it again. She stated that the district is utilizing an intensified algebra block, and the outcomes have increased substantially. Mrs. Thies said they are going to increase that to a double block in 10th grade for geometry. She said that by the time they are in 11th grade, they will have a complete year of algebra and geometry. Mrs. Wainwright asked if individual gaps are worked with. Mrs. Thies said yes, that it is a very prescriptive plan that looks at the individual items the student needs help with. She said there will also be a progress plan that creates a very personalized profile. Mr. O'Dell asked if the graduation requirements are for proficiency or partial. Mrs. Thies answered that it is assessed via NECAP which is partial proficiency.

Mr. Silva thanked Mrs. Thies for her explanation stating that it is nice

**to know we have safeguards to help struggling kids.**

## **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

**Mr. Silva asked that if the school committee members had agenda items they would like to see on a future agenda to contact himself or Mrs. Thies.**

**Mrs. Campbell asked the status of the Joint Finance Committee. Mr. Silva responded that dates have been posted on the Secretary of State website, but no one has contacted him after numerous attempts to find out meeting dates. Mrs. Thies was contacted by the interim chair of JFC in regard to the Joint Finance Committee meeting. Mrs. Thies will be discussing at the next Budget Subcommittee meeting. Mr. Silva stated that once we have a confirmed date, everyone will get an email. Mr. Silva stated that he has made a request of the JFC to have our secretary do the minutes for the JFC meeting and that the meeting be videotaped to ensure accuracy. Initially the JFC Task Force suggested three to four meetings and the enabling legislation requires them to approve the budget within 30 days which would be the 27th of March. Mr. O'Dell expressed concern that it looks like there will only be one meeting again. Mr. Silva responded that it is not our meeting or our call since we are a presenter at the meeting. The agenda posted on the Secretary of State website indicates a meeting will be held by the Joint Finance Committee on Thursday, March 14th, but there is no mention of Bristol Warren's budget on that agenda. Mrs. Thies is making efforts to get everything squared**

away.

**Mr. Silva stated that on Wednesday night the All Bands Concert will be held. Bob Arsenault has offered to save seats for school committee members. Mr. Silva asked school committee members to let Kim know if they will be attending. Mr. Silva said this is the 25th anniversary of this concert and that it is a truly entertaining event to see.**

**ADJOURNMENT – 9:48 PM**

**MOTION: At 9:48 PM Mrs. Campbell motioned to adjourn; Mrs. Rancourt seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Karen A. Lynch, Secretary**

**/kd**