

**BRISTOL WARREN REGIONAL
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
MONDAY, APRIL 8, 2013**

The bi-monthly meeting of the Bristol Warren Regional School Committee was held on Monday, April 8, 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 7:06 PM.

Present: Paul Silva, Chair; John Bento, Vice-Chair; Karen Lynch, Secretary; Susan Rancourt, Treasurer; Diana Campbell, William O'Dell, 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.

ACCOLADES

Congratulations to the following DECA students for receiving honors at the Rhode Island DECA Career Development Competition:

Jacob Lebreaux for receiving Highest Test Competency Honors in

Principles of

Finance

Zoe Almeida for receiving Competency Honors in Marketing Management

Austin Daniels for receiving Competency Honors in the Hospitality Services

Team Event

Sabrina Soares for receiving Competency Honors in the Marketing Communication Team Event

Lucy Spence for receiving Competency Honors in the Marketing Communication

Team Event

Marissa Ursini for winning Third Place in Travel and Tourism and receiving

Competency Honors in the Marketing Communication Team Event

Benjamin Ratier for winning Third Place in Travel and Tourism and receiving

Competency Honors in the Marketing Communication Team Event

Devin Costa for winning Third Place and receiving Highest Test Competency

Honors in Principles of Marketing

Benjamin Godfrey for winning Third Place in Principles of Business Management and Administration

Courtney Bragantin for winning Third Place and receiving Competency Honors

in Marketing Management, and for being chosen to compete in the

DECA

International Career Development Conference in Anaheim, California

Meghan Borges for winning Third Place and receiving Competency Honors in

Apparel and Accessories Marketing, and for being chosen to compete in

the DECA International Career Development Conference in Anaheim, California

Daniel Rensenhausen for winning Second Place and receiving Competency

Honors in Principles of Marketing

Melanie Barbary for winning Second Place and receiving Competency Honors in

Marketing Management, and for being chosen to compete in the DECA

International Career Development Conference in Anaheim, California

Justin Ursini for winning First Place in Round One Virtual Business – Retail,

and receiving Competency Honors in the Hospitality Services Team Event

Gabriel Cruz for winning First Place and receiving Competency Honors in

Principles of Hospitality and Tourism

Burke O'Brien for winning First Place and receiving Competency Honors in

Restaurant and Food Service Management, and for being chosen to

**compete in the DECA International Career Development Conference
in**

Anaheim, California

**Kristina Lynch for winning First Place and receiving Highest Test
Competency**

**Honors in Quick Serve Restaurant Management, and for being
chosen to**

**compete in the DECA International Career Development Conference
in Anaheim, California**

**Karen Lynch commented on how amazing Mt. Hope High School did
at the conference and how proud she was of their accomplishments.
Mrs. Thies added what a professional looking group of students were
standing before them.**

PUBLIC COMMENT/PUBLIC FORUM

There was no public comment.

AGENDA FOCUS

NECAP PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION

**Dr. Andrade thanked the school committee and Mrs. Thies. He stated
that for this evening's purposes he was going to focus on what
makes up student achievement explaining that NECAP is a snapshot
in time; just ten months. He went on to say that many pieces are
interconnected and have to be working in order to improve student
achievement. Dr. Andrade stated that grades 3-8 have made**

substantial gains in the last seven years. He continued that they have been analyzing data over the last five years and Bristol Warren Schools are moving in the right direction. Dr. Andrade stated that they actually try to follow cohort data. He then explained the data on the slide for the district NECAP ELA Proficiency by Cohort saying that some red flags have gone up with some decrease in percentages.

He said they also have concerns with areas that are stagnating as well. Dr. Andrade said they are not moving students the way they want with ELA. He then discussed the NECAP Math Proficiency by Cohort slide saying there is stagnation in math as well and even though we are 14 to 15 points above the state, he is not happy with this progress as he would like to see it moving ahead further. Mrs. Almeida discussed the data on the NECAP Writing Proficiency by Cohort slide stating that they instituted a writing initiative and saw results in 5th grade with an uptake from last year to this year of 7 points. She said that they are moving forward and are happy with the gains, but would like to see more of an improvement. She went on to say that the students did move up from level 3 to level 4 and she is very happy with that transition.

Mrs. Almeida then talked about the four questions that should be asked of professional learning communities: What should students know and be able to do as a result of this course, class or grade level; How will we know that the students are learning; How do we respond when students do not learn; How do we respond when students learn more. Dr. Andrade added that Mrs. Almeida, Mrs. Thies and he have

been focusing a lot on curriculum and grants. He stated that we need great instruction for every student every day. Dr. Andrade said that the district has been highlighted throughout Rhode Island where quality instruction based on research, and where every student is highly engaged in their lessons. He added that they want to see a lot more engagement moving forward. Dr. Andrade stated that the assessments need to be richer in providing enough feedback to teachers to drive instruction. He said we need to know what the assessments are telling us on a daily basis and what we are doing with the data from these assessments as well as what are we going to do when a student can't meet that level of proficiency.

Mrs. Almeida introduced Formative Assessments which is a process used by teachers and students during instruction that provides feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students' achievement of intended outcomes. She added that assessments can be formal, but can also be informal on a daily basis such as elementary level students using a white board at their desks to answer group based questions where the teacher can determine at that moment if she needs to adapt how she will continue. Mrs. Almeida said the best way to learn is by doing. She stated that the NECAPs are once a year and is a great support to teachers and are aligned with GLEs. She added that performance based assessments align well with the common core. Mrs. Almeida and Dr. Andrade then went through a series of slides with sample questions in writing and math from Grade 3 to 11. They went on to say that lessons would

look very different from the younger grades to the older grades. Mrs. Almeida stated that not all assessments are text dependent, but may rely on the students own knowledge and background. Mrs. Almeida also gave an example of how a teacher might rephrase a question based on responses from the students if they were to need clarification and also shows how a question could be answered in multiple ways. She said that through this exercise, the student would show their work and how they arrived at the answer. Mrs. Almeida stated that all of these steps would show active engagement which is the best part of formative assessment. Dr. Andrade shared a Grade 11 math sample question and talked about the PollEverywhere website which is a free website that poses questions and you can text your answers in which will show the percentages of responses in real time. He said this is a great tool for engaging students and that it is not about a right or wrong answer. It is a tool for the teacher to assess how many students know the concept already and/or where the weakness might lie and help them formulate how to proceed with teaching according to those results. Mrs. Almeida said that in 3rd grade you would use a white board to accomplish this whereas in the older grades you would use technology to accomplish the same type of engagement. Dr. Andrade added that by being anonymous, the students would be more apt to attempt an answer than “risk” revealing they had the wrong answer to everyone else in the class. Mrs. Thies added that it informs the educator in what they need to do within the class to teach to more; what do students know and how can they redirect their instruction to meet their needs.

Mrs. Almeida then discussed summative assessments by introducing a series of slides on SLO (Student Learning Objectives) K-5 reading and writing data. She said that each trimester on an ongoing basis, they have a way to assess how well students are meeting learning objectives and targets. She said they have been very committed to developing common writing tasks at the elementary level. Mrs. Almeida said that since last year's drop in scores at the fifth grade level, they were called to action and as a result, the levels are coming back up, but not yet where they want them to be. Mrs. Almeida talked about mCLASS stating these types of assessments will help identify students who need interventions and progress monitoring. Mrs. Almeida discussed those assessments that measure dynamic beginning early literacy skills which are how students respond to informational texts and literacy texts. She stated that informational texts tend to be more difficult for the students. Mrs. Almeida stated that mCLASS realigned all of the grades K-5 in terms of reading levels and aligned with common core state standard. She said they are hoping by the end of the year that the score will be much higher. Mrs. Almeida pointed out that the data in the slide shows that with the new realignment of the common core there have been some grades with excellent progress. She added that the longer students are with us, cumulatively they meet proficiency. Mrs. Almeida stated that teachers will look at those below proficiency and monitor their progress weekly or every two weeks. If a student is just nearly proficient, their progress will be monitored every three to four weeks.

Mrs. Campbell asked if parents are made aware that a student is being monitored and are they given support to that end. Mrs. Almeida said there is a Personal Literacy Plan which is required by the Rhode Island Department of Education for all children grade K-5 who are not reading at proficiency. This plan involves interventions, progress monitoring and outcomes of those interventions. She said there is also ongoing communication with the parent who signs off on that literacy plan. Mrs. Almeida said that teachers work collaboratively asking how they can support students who are not meeting proficiency. Mrs. Almeida highlighted several more slides of data stating that it is not a surprise that scores go up through out the year's assessment. She also said that the school principals are confident that students and teachers will be meeting student objectives. Dr. Andrade said in math they are seeing positive trends for K-5.

Mrs. Almeida then discussed the Summer Literacy Institute which is a cohort of grade level teachers K-5 who will be working on model exemplar lessons in reading and writing. She stated that one will support the other and that the common core makes this very clear. Mrs. Almeida said these K-5 teachers will work within their buildings and classrooms to develop more lessons as they transition and change their instruction.

Dr. Andrade introduced PARCC which is Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career and is a program designed to

reward quality instruction aligned to the Standards, so the assessment is worthy of preparation rather than a distraction from good work. Dr. Andrade said that by this we are not teaching to the test, but that the student is going to have a rich and rigorous education opportunity. Mr. Saviano asked if we have the building blocks for PARCC to come in, and Dr. Andrade responded that he is confident we are moving in the right direction. Mrs. Almeida commented on the slide entitled "What are the shifts at the heart of PARCC design" which talks of Complexity, Evidence and Knowledge in reading and writing where she stated there has been a weakness in our writing programs at grades 5, 8 and 11. Mrs. Campbell asked about primary sources. Dr. Andrade replied those are non-fiction documents. Mr. O'Dell asked for further clarification of what those types of documents would look like. Dr. Andrade responded that fiction isn't going totally away, but there will be a shift in percentages, but not a total abandonment. There will basically be a heavier emphasis on non-fiction. Mr. O'Dell said he would not want to see a move too far from fiction as fiction creates interest for a student in reading. Mrs. Thies commented that you can build on non-fiction as well where children will be engaged. Mrs. Almeida added that examples of primary sources could be anything from historical fiction, biographies, brochures, the bill of rights, etc. Mrs. Almeida said that you can find in appendix B of the common core lists examples of primary sources. She also added that you can google common core state standards and see a link to the common core site and then PARCC will be right after that. Mrs. Wainwright asked about

grammar and punctuation emphasis. Dr. Andrade stated it will come back into play with PARCC. Dr. Andrade then went through a series of slides showcasing sample questions for different grade levels that utilize technology in their responses by clicking and dragging an answer. He highlighted that in grade 10, the types of ELA questions show the students will be reading more complex texts and citing evidence. Dr. Andrade introduced the three types of assessments in math which are: tasks assessing concepts, skills and procedures; tasks expressing mathematical reasoning; tasks assessing modeling/applications with the emphasis on how you can apply to real world situations.

Dr. Andrade stated that NECAP is causing us to go back to daily instruction and assessments and asking questions such as what are we doing to push our students forward and do we have supports and structures in place. Dr. Andrade continued by saying that we need to make sure we are working as a Public Learning Center. He added that we need to be action oriented and looking to question status quo. Dr. Andrade said we need to look at best practice. He also said we need to be risk takers. He stated that we need to build assessment systems currently with SLOs and evaluations to align with common core. Dr. Andrade added that we are in that process now so that with full confidence we can say students are meeting end of year benchmarks. Dr. Andrade emphasized that we need to be ready for PARCC and transition. He closed by saying that he is confident that we are moving in the right direction with the support of

the school committee and the strong leadership within this district.

Mrs. Wainwright asked with the minimal amount of computers at Rockwell how that will impact PARCC. Dr. Andrade responded that with the support of the school committee there is a 1 to 1 initiative for computers in the classroom to be provided for all third graders by next year. He added that PARCC has released a window where you have 20 days to take the test. Dr. Andrade also said that there is a formula for how many computers you need. He said that currently the middle and high school levels are more poised for PARCC than the elementary level.

Mrs. Rancourt verified that 22 states are going to PARCC with Massachusetts and Rhode Island being the two in New England. Dr. Andrade commented that with PARCC we will have better data to assess students across the country.

Mr. Silva thanked Dr. Andrade and Mrs. Almeida for their presentation stating it was very informative.

Roosevelt International Academy Exchange Program Discussion

Mrs. Thies opened by saying she has been in contact with the academy and can give an update and/or answer any questions the school committee might have. She began by saying that the MOUs have been reviewed by Mr. Henneous. She said that we are currently on track to host ten students from China's Zhengzhou High School

No. 9. She said they will be our guests and will complete their 12th grade year at Mt. Hope High School this coming September. She added that they will have to meet all graduation requirements both locally and according to the state. Mrs. Thies said that if they do so, the Roosevelt International Academy has an articulation agreement with the University of Rhode Island where those students will move on to their postsecondary experience there. Mrs. Thies said that a vote will be taking place at our next regular business meeting on the 22nd of April.

Mrs. Wainwright asked where students will be staying; what the tuition amount is and how that was determined; and is there any liability on our part if something were to happen to one of the students. Mrs. Thies responded that the piece that attracted us to the program was that these students will be living in a dorm setting in housing that the academy will provide. She said it is in the Tockwotten area of East Providence. Mrs. Thies stated that there will be an RA in the dorm as well as support services, upgrade to language proficiencies as well as academic and language supports. There will also be counseling and other types of wrap-around services. She stated that these supports are in place to help the program to be successful. Mrs. Thies said that the hope and expectation is that these students will enjoy relationships and maybe spend time at a friend's home. Mrs. Thies then addressed the tuition question by stating that the per pupil expenditure which was calculated by Mrs. Silva is the same amount per pupil for our own

students. This amount is included in the MOU. She added that this tuition is paid up front by the families of the students. Mrs. Thies answered Mrs. Wainwright's liability question by stating that they are "holding harmless" the Roosevelt International Academy and that the academy is acting as the "parent" while the students are away from their own. Mrs. Thies said that Mr. Henneous has addressed this in regards to indemnifying both parties. Mrs. Wainwright said that she is very excited about this program and commented that it is such a good opportunity for the town.

Mr. Saviano asked if any other Chinese students are coming into Rhode Island. Mrs. Thies responded that we are the first public high school to partner with Roosevelt International Academy. Mrs. Thies reiterated that she feels this is the best partnership because of the kinds of support services the academy will provide these students. She went on to say that these documents reflect a year's agreement and that we will review after a year and hopefully extend the program for future years. Mr. Saviano also asked if there is any intention that some of our students will go to China. Mrs. Thies said that is the hope. Mrs. Thies also stated that the Zhengzhou High School No. 9 is hoping to develop a relationship with educators as well. She said that by next spring there will be an exchange with educators that will help foster a partnership. Mr. Saviano said that he appreciates the efforts and believes this is a fabulous opportunity.

Mr. Silva commented that the transportation will be provided by the

Roosevelt International Academy and that we are not responsible for paying for any of those services. He added that the academy also provides all the materials the students need for school. Mrs. Thies added that the Roosevelt International Academy has been very forthcoming and are hoping to participate in our athletic programs as well. She said the academy is willing to support students in all areas.

Mr. O'Dell commented that it is different than other exchange programs where students are linked up with host families. Mrs. Thies said the expectation is that there will be an outreach of our students to the exchange students where over time as relationships build, they will spend more and more time with their friend's families in their homes. She added that the Roosevelt International Academy is very much focused on having their students participate in extracurricular activities where they can build relationships with students.

Mr. Saviano asked how students were picked. Mrs. Thies responded that there were certain entry level requirements in terms of language proficiency. Mrs. Thies said that once documents are finalized, the recruitment process will begin. She added that these students are of high academic caliber and that the language proficiency is one we have to develop. Mr. Silva reiterated that once the student receives a diploma from us, they are already approved to go on to the University of Rhode Island. Mrs. Thies stated there are a number of tests they have to go through before even getting here. She added that we are moving forward cautiously. Mrs. Thies said that they will begin in

September 2013 for the 2013-2014 school year and that we will see how the year goes and make adjustments where necessary. She said they do have an expectation to continue in a long-term partnership.

Mr. O'Dell commented that if we have a long term partnership with the Roosevelt International Academy that Chinese should be added to the language program. Mrs. Thies said they would be open to that and the exchange of educators would help to that end.

Mr. Silva said he believes this is a wonderful thing and will be a cultural enhancement to the community.

Mr. Bento stated that he believes this is a great opportunity that will give our kids a competitive edge. He commended our district for taking the lead on this, and thanked the administrators for introducing it.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Silva asked if there are any items that the school committee would like to see on future agendas as he and Mrs. Thies felt this would be a good foundation for them to sit down together and consider input for future agendas.

Mrs. Campbell made the following requests:

- **Accolades for presidents of the PTOs at the end of the school year**
- **Principals to rotate through and give presentation at School Committee Workshops highlighting what is going on at their Schools**
- **End of year self-evaluation by the school committee based on their goals and standards**

Mrs. Lynch commented that she and Mrs. Rancourt believe that having principals come in to present at a workshop to highlight their schools is a fantastic idea.

ADJOURNMENT – 9:-05 PM

MOTION: At 9:05 PM Mrs. Campbell motioned to adjourn; Mrs. Rancourt seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen A. Lynch, Secretary

/kd