

**BRISTOL WARREN REGIONAL
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2013**

The bi-monthly meeting of the Bristol Warren Regional School Committee was held on Tuesday, October 15, 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 7:05 PM.

Present: Paul Silva, Chair; Karen Lynch, Secretary; William O'Dell, John Saviano and Lynn Wainwright; Melinda Thies, Superintendent; Mario Andrade, Assistant Superintendent; Mary Almeida, Director of Literacy and Title 1, Leslie Anderson, Director of Pupil Personnel; and Pauline Silva, Director of Finance and Administration

Absent: Diana Campbell, Marjorie McBride and Susan Rancourt

Deployed: John Bento, Vice-Chairman

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

There was no need for an Executive Session related to Personnel Recommendations.

Chairman Silva stated that he had requested the District Bussing Policy Discussion be added to the Executive Session due to emails that were received. He continued that those items were already addressed through the Superintendent's School Committee Report and conversations conducted electronically. As a result, Chairman Silva stated that no further discussion in Executive Session was necessary.

SUPERINTENDENT RECOMMENDATIONS AND ISSUES:

RECOMMENDATION #S2013-57 – PERSONNEL

That the School Committee, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the personnel recommendation.

MOTION: Mr. Saviano made a motion to approve the Superintendent's personnel recommendation; seconded by Mrs. Lynch.

The motion passed unanimously.

S2013-57 A: PERSONNEL

A. APPOINTMENT: That the School Committee confirm the recommendation of the Superintendent to appoint the following applicant to the position of Middle School Science Teacher as listed below:

1. Stephen M. Buonfiglio Science Teacher – Kickemuit Middle

Effective: October 21, 2013, for the remainder of the 2013-14 school year only

**Reason: To fill a leave of absence
Vacancy (K. Marshall)**

**Funding: Operational Budget
(2nd Step)**

AGENDA FOCUS

Hugh Cole School Presentation

Mrs. Thies stated that each month a District school will be spotlighted during the School Committee Workshop meeting giving them an opportunity to share their best practices. She then introduced Cindy Sadler, Principal and Christine Mandese, Assistant Principal of Hugh Cole School.

Mrs. Sadler introduced Debbie Kearns, Hugh Cole's Literacy

Administrator. Mrs. Sadler introduced the video to be presented stating it gives a snapshot of different settings and different student age groups at Hugh Cole School. She said that after the video, several students would come forward to speak.

Mrs. Sadler called Alice Lian (5th Grade); Haleigh Hunt (5th Grade); Hannah Daniello, and Michelle Heimann (8th Grade mentor) to the podium. The 5th graders shared their experiences participating in the Book Club. Alice Lan talked about the different roles within the Book Club which are the questioner, predictor and Discussion Director and the benefits of those roles. She continued that through this club, students are developing their speech, language, and how to analyze questions. Hannah came forward and spoke on the Writing Club. She explained that through this club she has learned how to edit and revise on the computer. Hannah also commented that she spends time after school writing stories and enjoys this. Michelle came forward to speak on the benefits of being a peer mentor. She stated that she has participated in this program for three years and mentors at Hugh Cole School on Mondays and Wednesdays. She explained the importance of keeping her own studies and grades up so that she can be most effective at helping the younger children. Michelle continued that she has learned responsibility and has been greatly encouraged personally by those students she has helped. Michelle closed by stating what a wonderful program peer mentoring is and would recommend it to anyone who loves children.

Mrs. Sadler spoke about Hugh Cole Productions which has been at the school for years now. She stated that Sue Beck is the videographer. Mrs. Sadler continued that one of the events recently videotaped was the Recognition Assembly where each month a character quality is highlighted. She said the video being presented shows highlights of students who were recognized for the character trait of respect. Mrs. Sadler introduced Matthew Heimann from the audience stating that he was the child recognized in the video for his essay.

Mrs. Sadler closed by stating that this year more than any other year, the administrators and faculty at Hugh Cole School are trying to dig deeply into student data looking at what students need through progress monitoring. She added that they are working diligently to be sure that the SLO matches the students need and is individualized for each student.

Mrs. Wainwright asked how many students are enrolled at Hugh Cole School. Mrs. Sadler responded there are 661. Mr. Silva thanked everyone for the presentation. Mrs. Thies thanked the faculty, administration and students. She commented that this presentation provided a window into Hugh Cole's world. Mrs. Thies commented that the film production program was an initiative that began four years ago which was the idea of a parent. Mrs. Sadler added that it teaches the students how to produce, edit and use background music. She said the videos are always well received by the student

population. Mrs. Thies closed by stating that Hugh Cole was the first school to present to the School Committee in this series.

Common Core State Standards Presentation

Dr. Andrade introduced the Common Core State Standards Presentation which will focus on the math component for this evening. By way of review, Dr. Andrade stated that in each of his monthly reports there has been a focus on a curriculum report having to do with the DANA Center. He continued that approximately 20 District teachers as well as teachers from Newport and Tiverton have worked with the DANA Center at the University of Texas to revise the Math curriculum. Dr. Andrade stated he wanted to put some faces to the people in the reports mentioned above. Dr. Andrade then introduced Christine Hughes, Elementary Math Specialist; Michelle DaSilva, KMS Teacher Leader; and Wayne Lima, MHHS STEM Department teacher. He added that these are some of the finest educators in the District. Dr. Andrade stated that each of them will give a fresh perspective of the work they are doing and how they are moving forward within the Common Core. He said that they will be happy to answer questions on the spot.

Mr. O'Dell had a question about terminology related to this being referred to as "state" standards and asked whether the Common Core is state specific or National. Dr. Andrade responded that 48 states have adopted the Common Core. As part of this initiative, Dr. Andrade continued, states must adhere to 85% of the Common Core

which is standard throughout the 48 states. Dr. Andrade added that the other 15% gives the states local control in how Districts teach and what resources will be used. He said that as a nation, there is an expectation of what the student needs to know.

Dr. Andrade began the presentation with a slide that presented the Common Core State Standards which highlight that the standards must be aligned with college and workforce expectations; be clear, understandable and consistent; include rigorous content and application of knowledge through high-order skills; build upon strengths and lessons of current state standards; informed by standards in other top performing countries; all students are prepared to succeed in our global economy and society, be evidenced based. Mr. O'Dell asked who mandates the curriculum standards. Dr. Andrade responded that there are representatives from higher education, professors, superintendents as well as 32 organizations involved in the writing of the curriculum who are experts in Math, and English and Language Arts. Dr. Andrade said the curriculum is a living document and is always in the revision process. Dr. Andrade stated that at Bristol Warren, a curriculum was just written and is now being implemented. He added that he is meeting with teachers next month who have written the curriculum to see if anything needs to be tweaked. Dr. Andrade said they are always looking toward continuous improvement, but that the standards are set.

Dr. Andrade presented a slide on the state standards for mathematics. He stated that the new standard for math practice will be to see students engaged in the math process more; thinking like a math expert. Dr. Andrade said the real shift is in how an educator teaches.

Dr. Andrade explained the breakdown of the Standards for Mathematical Content for grades K-5, 6-8 and High School. He said that before the Common Core, a spiraling curriculum was used which would touch on all concepts. The new curriculum will go deeper into focused areas to build a strong foundation before moving on to other areas. Dr. Andrade stated that the standards for math practice will stay the same through the grade levels. Mrs. Thies added that the shift has been to building a strong foundation that masters a concept. She gave the example of fractions which would need to be mastered by a certain grade level. She continued that prior to this, every grade level touched on fractions.

Dr. Andrade explained the eight points of the Standards for Mathematical Practice. He stated that it was important to know what this would look like in a classroom from a teacher's perspective. He added that seeing the students engaged in these practices and demonstrating them in the classroom would be the outcome to mastering the thinking behind a concept.

Dr. Andrade discussed the Curriculum Collaboration slide explaining

that the focus will now be narrower and deeper. An audience member asked how a student will be transitioned to the standard based curriculum who was formally taught under the spiral based curriculum. Dr. Andrade responded that through this transition, as the curriculum was written, it was based on 130 instructional days. He said this was done so that the remaining instructional days could accommodate those students who have gaps and to spend time working on mastery of concepts. Dr. Andrade said it will be important to know the standards; where the gaps are and to teach to those areas. The audience member commented additionally that younger students would probably recover easier than students who are older and more set in their learning. Mrs. Lynch stated that since the educator knows where they are starting in the curriculum and what needs to be mastered by the end of the school year, what happens if they do not finish everything by the end of the school year or they finish too early. She commented that the spiral curriculum would give an opportunity to continue moving. Dr. Andrade responded that a survey goes out four times a year to assess how long a curriculum course took to complete which gives a better picture from the teacher's perspective on whether it was a good unit study.

Dr. Andrade closed by stating that he wanted to have a presentation which would give background to the Common Core and how the District got to this place. He continued that he wanted opportunity for the public to hear from teachers to help eliminate some of the politics and jargon that has been circulating. He said that the Common Core

is going back to concentrating on what the students should know and how to measure it.

Dr. Andrade then introduced Christine Hughes and asked her to come to the podium. Ms. Hughes stated that her focus is in K-5 and that she has worked on the Common Core Curriculum with Bristol Warren teachers as well as Tiverton and Newport teachers. She stated that the Common Core is nothing new with math. Ms. Hughes added that the Common Core is the best practices in math, and a way to build great foundations.

Ms. Hughes stated that teachers create habits of mind to further the engagement of learning through collaborating, communicating, critical thinking and creativity. She then went through the Common Core Major Elementary Topics in Math. Ms. Hughes gave the example of the main focus in Kindergarten being counting. She then gave a demonstration on how this would be done through a visual math problem. Ms. Hughes continued by highlighting the Common Core Major Topics stating that fluency is needed in these areas. She said as grades increase, there will be more supporting standards.

Mr. O'Dell commented that some children will do well with different models, but asked how an educator can tell which model will work the best for each child. Ms. Hughes responded that the model is individualized to the student's strength and what model works best for them. Dr. Andrade added that in the Common Core State

Standards, there is not a prescribed model that must be used.

Mrs. Wainwright asked if there are new math books and workbooks that coincide with the Common Core. Dr. Andrade responded that new resources were researched. He commented that many publishers said they were aligned with the Common Core, but upon further inspection, they were not. Dr. Andrade said they then used a rubric to conduct more research and came up with a few resources for the elementary level. He stated that teachers and students are currently well positioned with curriculum.

Dr. Andrade introduced Michelle DaSilva stating that she is a high quality math instructor. He stated that she will speak about the shifts in middle school practices.

Ms. DaSilva stated that the benefit of the Common Core State Standards is the narrower and deeper teaching which will insure mastery in the students. She continued that the students will then have a better understanding in the long run for each topic covered. From a teacher's perspective, Ms. DaSilva said the spiraling curriculum felt rushed. Ms. DaSilva said through the Common Core Standards for math practices, it is making math more meaningful for the students. She also stated that the classrooms are louder which is good because students are talking about math which means they can do it.

Ms. DaSilva then gave a demonstration of a sample math unit problem which showcased how a student is provided the opportunity to write expressions and equations from verbal expressions, and to reinforce and practice by performing computations; using facts about finding area of rectangles to find missing length or width and to make drawing of a plan. She also passed out flash card problem solving examples. Ms. DaSilva stated that the classroom Math Station Activities give students opportunities to practice skill building on previously learned content. She added these are differentiated for varying levels. Ms. DaSilva gave a Grade 7 PARCC example question explaining that the problem is posed and then presented by showing two different ways to solve. She continued that the student needs to determine which problem solving example is correct. Ms. DaSilva said this adds another layer for the student to learn a concept.

Ms. DaSilva stated that through this new curriculum students are more active in their own learning and there is not always full group instruction which gives teachers more opportunities to address kids who might have gaps entering into 7th grade. She explained that as students are going about their problem solving tasks, the teacher will be able to assemble small groups to address any student issues in learning a concept. Dr. Andrade added that Kickemuit Middle School put in a math booster block to help with this. He also stated that there are math acceleration groups within classrooms as well. Ms. Hughes added that last year 95% of the students who left the elementary level were fluent.

Mrs. Lynch asked if all teachers use the flashcard packets. Ms. DaSilva responded that it is important all 7th grade teachers work together and use them. Ms. DaSilva stated that from a global perspective of the Common Core, it won't necessarily be identical, but the concepts will be the same.

Mr. Saviano thanked Ms. DaSilva for coming. He commented that most parents don't have an understanding of some of these math concepts and whether a class will be offered for parents. Ms. DaSilva responded that there wasn't anything planned, but that it is her hope that because of the in-depth teaching, the student will be able to teach their parents. Dr. Andrade added that the goal is to have the student work independently. He said that every student receives quality education in every classroom so there are no gaps and that no student is unchallenged or left behind.

Dr. Andrade then introduced Wayne Lima and invited him to the podium. Mr. Lima pointed everyone's attention to the algebra one unit study that was provided with the packets. He explained that in writing the curriculum it was important to go back to the prior grade level to see when a student began learning a concept to make a connection through the grades. He said it was important to know what when on in grades K-8. Mr. Lima stated that during the training for the Common Core it was stressed to read, teach and do what the standard says. Mr. Lima then presented a slide showcasing the major

shift in how a sample Algebra 2 question would now be solved and demonstrated.

Mrs. Wainwright said that she liked hearing the enthusiasm in the teachers voices who presented this evening and believes this will translate to the students. She thanked the teachers for their hard work.

Mr. Lima stated that he is setting up STEM Common Core Planning Teams adding that yes, it is about math, but that they are really looking at STEM.

Mr. O'Dell asked Mr. Lima about the 15% flexibility in adding something to the curriculum. Mr. Lima stated that enrichment to the curriculum can be done once the baseline understanding is established. He clarified that the teacher must do the basics of what the standards say first and once the student understands, then additions can be made.

Dr. Andrade asked the question on every parent's mind, will my child suffer in the classroom as a result of the transition to Common Core. Mr. Lima responded that the stance that has been taken at the high school is to do a lot of pre-assessments so there is a clear understanding of what the student ultimately needs to know by the end of the unit. He added that these pre-assessments aren't graded, but are purely used to assess the student's level for certain topics

and then to build the instruction based on that formative assessment. Mr. Lima said they are looking for gaps through this process.

Dr. Andrade said that some of the best conversations among administrators and teachers have taken place while learning about the Common Core Standards. He commented that teachers are talking about how well their students are doing. Dr. Andrade said that teachers are “nervous” and that it is a “burden” as change is hard, but that he has full confidence in the teachers of Bristol Warren who are second to none. Dr. Andrade stated that the students will benefit from the teachers dedication. He then thanked all of them.

Mr. O’Dell asked whether the placement testing is a standard test. Dr. Andrade responded that there is a comprehensive assessment system which utilizes a battery of tests for K-12. He added that this does not rest on one set of data points.

Mr. O’Dell asked if Common Core is in full implementation. Dr. Andrade responded that this year is the first year the District is implementing the curriculum which was developed last year.

Mr. Silva thanked Dr. Andrade, the teachers and staff that presented stating it was very informative and well presented.

Mr. Saviano commented how proud he is to be associated with Mr. Lima and his staff and wanted to thank him personally.

Mrs. Thies commended the math educators who spoke this evening for the real passion for their work.

Mrs. Wainwright asked if tonight's session would be considered Professional Development for the School Committee as listed on the new School Committee Goals. Chairman Silva responded that it wasn't set up or designed for that. He said that other goals were accomplished this evening as Mrs. Thies sent out a ConnectEd inviting everyone to this evening's Common Core presentation as well as the upcoming Common Core presentation next Thursday, October 24th.

Mrs. Wainwright asked how next Thursday's Common Core Presentation will be different from this evening's presentation. Mrs. Thies, responded that there will be Board of Education members present to explain in more detail the national piece of it. She added it will be a broader perspective.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Mrs. Wainwright would like an update on seniors who were involved in support classes to increase their basic math skills for graduation requirements. Mrs. Thies responded that she submitted a report for the District to Chairperson Mancuso in regard to the programs that have been implemented to date for the strategies for success of students who need additional support in math. She added that within

that report she included student outcomes. Mrs. Thies said she will share that information in her School Committee report.

ADJOURNMENT – 9:09 p.m.

MOTION: At 9:09 PM Mrs. Lynch made a motion to adjourn; Mr. Saviano seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen A. Lynch, Secretary

/kd