

School Committee Meeting
June 13, 2019
6:00 p.m.
BMR High School Media Center

The Blackstone Millville Regional District School Committee met in the media center of the BMR High School at 6:00 p.m. with the following members present:

Jane C. Reggio, Chairperson
Tara L. Larkin, District Secretary
Jack R. Keefe, Member
Wendy L. Greenstein, Member
Sarah E. Williams, Member
Tammy A. Lemieux, Member

Mrs. Vernon was absent from meeting.

Mrs. Vinacco arrived late.

Also in attendance was Dr. Jason DeFalco, EdD. and Matthew J. Ehrenworth, Assistant Superintendent.

Mrs. Reggio stated they will begin the meeting for informational purposes, they need one more person to open the meeting.

Dr. DeFalco introduced John Hopkins University Study Findings. Ashely Burner, Deputy Director of John Hopkins Education Policy Center and Associate Professor in John Hopkins School of Education. Dr. DeFalco discussed that we had decided to partner with John Hopkins for written, taught and learned literacy curriculum. We will now launch into the next phase of work. Dr Burner will discuss this. She will discuss the research John Hopkins did at BMR.

Between January and June 2019, The John Hopkins Institute for Education Policy analyzed the instructional materials and practices in the Blackstone Millville Regional School District through three lenses: an ELA Knowledge Map, Grade K-5; Classroom observations via a representative sample, ELA & Math Grades K-12. Each analysis including key findings and detailed evidence, is presented separately in the report.

The institutes high level findings are as follows:

Blackstone-Millville presents an almost uniformly strong, positive school culture. Across all schools and in all observed classrooms, teachers and staff were friendly. A good rapport exists between students and teachers, and students manifestly get along with one another. Observers also noted that students were generally eager to participate in lessons and attempt their assigned work. This general finding holds across all grade bands. Blackstone Millville team has done an exemplary job of creating a positive social and emotional environment upon which to build.

The instructional materials used in classrooms, whether published or teacher developed, do not present a coherent knowledge build for students. The Knowledge Map shows that, while classroom teachers sometimes select high quality texts, students do not experience sequenced materials that intentionally build knowledge within units, much less across a year or between grades. The teachers survey found that almost all teachers, in both Math and ELA and across all grades, draw from a variety of sources to create and develop their lessons.

In both subjects, students are often unchallenged. The Classrooms Observations show that in both Math and ELA, teachers tend to break assignments into procedural steps and focus on solving assignments, rather than engaging with larger, conceptual, and knowledge based learning. Students do not have an active role in grappling with content, exploring open ended questions, or responding to their classmates ideas. Productive struggle does not occur consistently enough. Observers found a particular weakness in early elementary ELA classrooms.

There needs to be time for teachers to become unified around the curriculum. Collaboration from grade to grade. The more you know about something the more you can know about that subject. Well resourced families have more knowledge open to them about the world. If you want equity provide the same content rich information to everyone.

Mrs. Greenstein - reading and writing used to be a program. What does a program look like in a high quality program?

Rich Chapter books and high quality texts. Beginning with the end in mind in content. Combining a good mix of fiction and non-fiction. They train teachers on the content and use of high quality materials.

The institutes high level recommendations are:

Select high quality curricula for both ELA and Math, Grade K-12, using the RFP process both to build internal capacity and to incentivize the highest rated materials.

Allocate resources and time to substantial professional development on the new curricula, not only for teachers but for principals and central office team members who work on instruction.

What they saw at BMR was quite unique. Feel very good about that. Culture is hard to change and difficult to build a strong culture which is what BMR has. Uniformly strong school culture was found.

Knowledge map showed them there is not a strong curriculum in place. They are sharing curriculum amongst the classrooms. Hard to get a complete list of materials used. What are being used at BMR are high quality materials.

Math and ELA are not presenting something aligned.

In both Math and ELA teachers are under challenging students and is very common. They see it time and again. Teachers may have a great relationship with the students but they are focusing more on procedures and not the larger concepts.

Work with teachers and leadership to provide a strong, high quality curriculum.

Allocate resources that would give professional development to teachers.

In terms of resources and time Mrs. Reggio which is more critical. We don't have a lot of professional learning time for our teachers.

Good for district to adopt new materials. The teachers seem to want something coherent. Unifying experience for the teachers.

Stickiness of knowledge. The more you know about something the more you can know about something.

They were able to officially open the meeting when Mrs. Vinacco arrived.

Mr. Dudek High School Handbook changes

High Honor Roll and Honor Roll - what is fair and trying to raise rigor and weighted GPA. Maintain the high honor and honor roll requirements as they were. Rather than looking at a proposed change he would like to keep it the way it is.

We did look at weighted GPA and had a proposed change there but it may all seem a little confusing.

Final exams - when we look at the data this year we see there needs to be something different to raise student achievement. We can do something differently. We are average in many of the data points. Students are often under achieved. What are we doing today to prepare students for tomorrow? What ways are we allowing all of our learners to show what they know. Written

exams are one way to do it but should not be the only way. Presentations, videos and portfolios should be included.

He asks the Committee to let the high school do various ways of measuring skills. He wants to earn back some of the 10 days given to finals to discovery and exploration outside of the classroom.

Service learning opportunities. Dedicate curriculum days to build teacher capacity.

Mrs. Vinacco - could the teacher have a mid term if they don't want project based?

Mr. Dudek- he can't guarantee all project based. It may be sloppy to start. Some creativity mixed in. He will ask teachers why, if they want to give regular exams. No students will be exempt from the project based piece of it.

Mrs. Vinacco - exempt part goes away. What would this week look like next year?

Mr. Dudek - it could look like 3 days having 25 various workshops and creating a raised garden bed, cleaning up local parks and rec, band to create 2 or 3 songs. Last day of school was a showcase for the community. Could be CPR, first aid, changing a tire, writing lyrics to a song.

He wants to raise attendance and lower discipline rates.

Dr. DeFalco - multiple choice, match specific type of assessment. Feels Mr. Dudek wants to create a different assessment opportunity where kids are showing their skills in a more productive way. Kids should be in school and those that are here this week are gone by 11:00 a.m. He wants to make this last week more relevant and meaningful.

Mr. Dudek is not look to eliminate testing. Looking at the process of what a midterm and final looks like and bring back the days that are focused solely on the same assessment. Some students don't do well on traditional exams.

Mrs. Greenstein sees a bigger concern that we are talking about mid term the end result whereas the teaching and learning throughout the year should be somewhat consistent with the final.

Mr. Dudek wants to bring relevance back in the classroom.

Mrs. Lemieux wants to know how it is measured and how does it become a quality measurement?

Mrs. Vinacco asked what is the weight of the grade?

Mr. Dudek feels that what they are asking warrants more reflection.

The final will be a summative. We are getting more complicated than we need to be.

Mrs. Reggio - systematic change different from what people are used to. He wants to try something different. Mrs. Reggio feels she for one needs to support this.

Mrs. Greenstein feels this piece should be worked into the school improvement plan. She wants to see how it goes along the way.

Mrs. Vinacco asked why do we need to eliminate the exemption piece?

Mr. Dudek found attendance lessened with excused absences when exempt.

Mrs. Vinacco asked why do you want the NHS to move from 90 to 95? She does not agree with this. She watched from home and feels they wanted to lower the honors grade for honor students and doesn't understand why you want to increase the NHS grade. Nationally it is a requirement of 90 or higher. Why will BMR make it 95?

Mr. Dudek stated it is a weighted score and not a pure 95 grade.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Greenstein, seconded by Mrs. Lemieux and unanimously voted to approve the handbook minus the three discussion items.

High honors and honors stayed the same.

Motion: It was moved by Mr. Keefe, seconded by Mrs. Williams and unanimously voted to remove grade attendance standards on exams, exam exemptions, additional information and limited evaluation activity.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Larkin, seconded by Mr. Keefe to move National Honor Society grade to 95, 5 in favor, 2 abstain, Mrs. Vinacco and Mrs. Lemieux.

Elementary Handbook made the suggested changes and they are ready to approve the handbook.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Vinacco, seconded by Mrs. Greenstein and unanimously voted to approve the Elementary handbook with suggested changes.

Science curriculum and development work.

Dr. DeFalco stated we are going to look to give elementary team longer to finalize their development team. All teachers will pilot in September. The official launch will be in December. We are a trimester off from where we thought we would be.

Elementary Level

Science was not a separate subject it was workbook and reading. That is what our program used to be. Started looking at it again.

John Hopkins laid it out for us. Worked with a consultant from Teachers 21. Working as a whole and broke off into grades. Wrote one unit to start. Take time over the summer to finish.

A video was shown for the piloting of new science.

How habitats change. Interactive for kids.

They now start looking at materials and supplies. To support it they need \$4800. About \$24,000 literature, 80 bins total of \$ 1300. They are working on a replenishing system for all of this. They are looking for a central location to store all of the materials. \$400 experimental supplies.

Professional development stretched into the fall.

Mrs. Lemieux wants the opportunity to have teachers watch other classrooms to get ideas.

Dr. DeFalco stated that everyone will pilot a unit which is non-negotiable. Huddle up by grade level and work together. Have discussion about what worked and what didn't. Expect looking for evidence of labs of lessons in action in Math and Science. What are the common assessments. One full unit needs to be taught however they lay it out. They need PLC time for teachers to bring to a discussion with a coach. Recycle and repeat the process. We plan, we teach, we analyze and we assess. If something doesn't work we can make adjustments. Differentiate instruction for some students. We will have guardrails on making changes.

Mrs. Lemieux stated that some learn differently. Teachers can differentiate without leaving the struggling student behind. There is following the curriculum and then there is differentiating. It is a balance with guardrails.

Dr. DeFalco - Blueprint for District Improvement

Get rid of word theory it is our work and eliminate the word if we do these things. We do not have a choice we will do these things.

Our vision - The Blackstone-Millville Regional School District embodies an appreciation of lifelong learning excellence in individual and educational programs and shared accountability among students, staff, parents, and citizens of the community. Everyone works together in an environment founded upon trust, integrity, fairness, open communication, and the belief that all students can learn.

Our purpose: To develop happy, healthy and proficient students who are prepared for college, career and community.

Our work in action: When we focus on the what, the how, the whole child, and the community then we will develop happy healthy and proficient students who are prepared for college, career, and make a positive impact on their lives and the lives of others.

Our District core values: Community, Achievement, Respect and Civility.

The What - We will develop and align curriculum, assessments, and educator professional development to the demands of the MA Curriculum Frameworks.

Mrs. Pilla-Gallerani - the interventions are inconsistent by class, by building. They are working to change this.

The How - Instruction - We will engage students by making learning purposeful and relevant, enhancing their academic self concept, allow for students to show their learning in innovative and new ways, all while improving student personal growth.

Mrs. Brown stated we now have strong connections from Central office down to the classroom. Instructional Leadership teams, PLC's for teachers to meet, strengthen core instruction, progress monitoring piece to assess the impact on student learning. All using vision. Social emotional learning during the school day, implement instructional supports for staff, looking at Professional Development driven by our Instructional Learning Team. Show what you know approach for all learners.

The Whole Child - We will engage the faculty and community in reducing/ eliminating the non academic barriers that prevent students from learning at their optimal level.

The Community - We will work side by side with the Blackstone and Millville communities to assist both towns in gaining a deeper understanding of today's learners and how to support their growth for future positive impact on our towns. '

Identify the instructional focus which will reach all areas of the curriculum.

Engage all in the development of effective planning teaching and learning.
Show what you know approach. Engage all learners to apply what they know.

When you focus on the whole child students are happy, healthy and ready to learn.

SEL's- Social emotional learning. It is embedded into everyday curriculum and done a lot with our group.

Develop a framework tiered to address the SEL and behavioral needs of all students.

The communities know what we do and why we do it. This way they can be engaged in it.
Also let families be educated on what is going on in the schools.

District level action plans for each of these objectives. The work the district and schools will engage next year and future years. Work needs to live and grow as we proceed. Continue to grow the plan out. Monitor the FY20 budget and the spending we have is aligned. Make sure we can sustain all of this work.

At the school level develop individual school improvement plans. Anchored in specific schools instructional focus.

Each plan will have their own nuances based on the students in their schools. What type of growth needs to happen within the P.D.

This is made so that we are accessible to everyone. It is an umbrella.

Consent Agenda A

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Greenstein, seconded by Mrs. Lemieux and unanimously voted to approve the Warrants.

Minutes will be held since we do not have enough members who were at the last meeting to vote on them.

Regional Agreement - Mrs. Williams - amendment committee - met with consultant from M.A.R.S. Had good representation from both Towns and discussed priorities and make sure we are in the parameters of the law. Compliance issue involved elections, special bill passed. Established a goal to have an updated agreement available by May for town meeting . It is a strong group.

The next meeting will be held on June 20 at 6:30 p.m. at the Hartnett Middle School and is open to the public.

The Superintendents End of Year Evaluation

Mrs. Reggio stated they will come together at the meeting on the 26th and as one voice evaluate the Superintendent.

Dr. DeFalco stated it has been an awesome experience so far. They have done a ton of work with a great team. When there is really focused targeted growth we do see improvements. We are here to improve outcomes for students. That is at his core. Says a lot when you are all moving in the same direction.

District Improvement Strategy.

- The District's goal is for 100% of all students to show growth in ELA and Math on state assessments as measured by their scaled scores.
- We will move at least 10% of students not meeting/partially meeting expectations to meeting/exceeding expectations.
- We will move at least 20% of students with special needs to meeting/partially meeting expectations to meeting/exceeding expectations, while the remaining 80% of students will grow within their achievement band.
- Schools will also stretch towards moving at least 10% more students to advanced level.

We don't have MCAS data yet. He does have the internal STARS assessment.

Principals know they need to be able to answer the question is my school moving toward our goal at any point in time. Gave a shout out to kids going through the rounds of testing.

Dr. DeFalco review all of the Stars Results. Did not read through all data. One area he wanted to show grade 7 and 9. They did intentional work in those grade levels to close some of the gaps that were starting. Sitting with teachers at HS and looking at the mid year data and have teachers redevelop lessons to teach those. The cycle continued. The process is starting to be used. Grade 7 increased 10 points in Math and in grade 2 as well.

Wants to be bold and clear. We are nowhere that we need to be. However, our blueprint was under construction, work was new to district, building level leaders and teachers are now working differently and it takes time to gain momentum.

Grade 3 have declined and needs work. Concerning to all of us only 50% of our kids were at grade level. Grade 4 ELA we were flat. The STAR test does adapt. When they struggle level of text decreases and will increase if they are doing well.

We are chasing a moving target. What is expected at the beginning of the year at meeting and exceeding expectations is not the same as it is at the end of the year. It gets higher as the year goes on. It may be 550 in the beginning and 600 at the end of the year.

Progress Monitoring is one way of monitoring. At any time a student can jump on and see how they do. Some kids do this but not all.

Skills Specific Monitoring - teacher can build assessment around making inferences. Teachers are just starting to get comfortable with this.

Over time we will make a trajectory for the kids. You need 3 data points to create a trend line. It will show the good and the bad days.

They looked at the partially meeting and not meeting slides. Grade 4 and Grade 5 are flat in ELA. Highlight without the aligned interventions we will see data like this. Aligned intervention is one of our focus areas.

They also looked at the overall growth.

Mrs. Pilla-Gallerani discussed Special Education and stated we set high expectations in Special Education. If we accommodate too much we will not get a true read.

Professional Practice Goal - To create and apply skills in strategy development, instructional leadership, building leadership capacity within the District, and forging strong partnerships with the School Committee by completing the first year of the New Superintendent Induction Program and earning a high or moderate impact rating on the Engagement Rubric and rubrics associated with each major assignment.

Professional Practice Goal - Evidence

MOY presented evidence

Focused Schools Framework, Principal leadership academy focus and meeting dates
In district leadership team focus
Leadership weekly update and charger weekly instructional newsletter
Leadership team currently participating in the survey
Entry plan findings report
Samples of regular communication with the School Committee

EOY Evidence

Successful engagement and completion of year one of the new superintendent induction programs
Completion of our District Blueprint for Improvement
Year end wrap up of leadership teamwork

District Office - Matthew Ehrenworth - Assistant Superintendent

Salary Spend Down Report - Discussed discrepancies - custodial overtime - 81% of salaries have been spent. Still on target to meet payroll.

Cost center review report - projecting to come in slightly under what we expected to expand through the course of the year.

The overtime costs were lower than the cost of adding additional custodians.

Revenue report - going well.

Outstanding lunch balances - \$13,000 owed to us.

School Committee Forum

Graduation was very moving.

Mrs. Vinacco - asked to revisit NHS conversation - Changing the grade from a 90 to 95. They earned their grades and that is how you are invited to apply. It doesn't mean all are in. We are now putting more stress on our kids. Eliminate a cohort of kids to apply.

Mr. Dudek said Mr. Roe recommended it .

Mrs. Vinacco has more questions.

Mrs. Larkin feels if the rigor will change it will be even harder for the kids to get to the 95 gpa. Mrs. Greenstein agrees with her.

Mrs. Lemieux stated by raising the bar on the quality of assessments now to raise the bar on top of that is that too much?

Mrs. Vinacco wants to hear from Mr. Roe on the application process.

Mrs. Reggio feels it is the top of the class who achieve NHS. When you do raise the bar students will rise to the occasion.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Vinacco, seconded by Mrs. Larkin to rescind the NHS vote and leave the NHS at 90. The vote to leave the NHS at 90 was not approved. The vote to increase NHS to 95 stands.

Mrs. Lemieux wants to go back and talk with Mr. Roe on why he wanted to make the change.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Larkin, seconded by Mrs. Lemieux to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 p.m. and to enter into Executive Session and not to return to the regular meeting. Roll call vote was taken.

Respectfully submitted,



Monique F. Simard
The Recording Secretary

APPROVED: _____



Tara L. Larkin, District Secretary