

Tuesday, June 19, 2018

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE OF THE BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION, held June 19, 2018, at Bridgeport City Hall, 45 Lyon Terrace, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. Present were members Chair Ben Walker, Maria Pereira and Joseph Sokolovic.

Mr. Sokolovic moved approval of the committee's minutes of May 15, 2018. Ms. Pereira seconded the motion. Corrections were noted. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Sokolovic moved approval of the committee's minutes of May 23, 2018. The motion was seconded by Ms. Pereira. The motion was approved by a 2-0 vote. Voting in favor were members Walker and Sokolovic. Ms. Pereira abstained.

John DiDonato, chief of specialized instructional reform, reported on special education.

Mr. DiDonato said a complaint at New Beginnings School continues to be active. The school has offered a planned resolution to the Department of Education to provide compensatory services over the summer to the students who did not receive services as a result of a teacher vacancy. A teacher would be hired to provide the services. He said the state's response remains uncertain. He estimated the number of students at less than twenty.

Mr. DiDonato said he could look into the bus transportation issue for the students and whether the district must provide it. He said the district is responsible for the implementation of the IEP even though the children are in a charter school. He said it is possible the district would be required to provide transportation under the students' IEPs.

Ms. Pereira said we're responsible for paying special education services under state statute. Mr. DiDonato said under both federal and state law the local educational authority(LEA) is responsible for the implementation of IEPs. He said he did not know the statutory authorization for that off the top of his head. He said the legislation around charter schools and special education is very fuzzy.

Ms. Pereira said she believed the charter schools were their own LEAs. Mr. DiDonato said the state is holding the district responsible for implementing the IEP.

Ms Pereira noted we pay a million dollars a year for social workers in Bridgeport charter schools.

In response to a question, Dementred Young, director of social work, says he writes the evaluations of social workers, those providing speech services and psychologists in the charter schools.

Mr. DiDonato said in order for a student's IEP to be implemented there may be a requirement for specialized transportation and that is a related service, which are standard requirements of federal and state law under IDEA.

Ms. Pereira said we lose \$5 million a year to six charter schools and for the most part they're pretty disgraceful.

Mr. DiDonato said the services this summer are going to be based upon the hours calculated that they missed.

Ms. Pereira asked Mr. DiDonato to provide the chair with the amount of students it impacts, the total hours of service that they're owed, the cost for the teacher and paras, and bus transportation. She said she wanted to see federal or state language that says we're responsible for the bus transportation.

Mr. DiDonato said if the transportation is on the IEP it is a mandated service. He said it is similar to speech or language services.

Mr. DiDonato said there was a recent complaint filed on behalf of a student at Barnum School regarding an individual allegation of lack of compliance with implementing an IEP. He said the state is considering the complaint.

Mr. DiDonato said as we begin to improve our practice in developing and implementing IEPs his suspicion is we're going to have more complaints and more mediations because there has been the development of advocates and consultants who work with parents to challenge the IEP determinations of our team. He said the case in question has an outside consultant and an advocate involved.

Mr. DiDonato said he feels confident that the team has engaged in good practice. He said in another case a Classical Studies parent requested the district pay for a summer program at the YMCA and provide transportation. The team denied that because they didn't feel it was necessary to implement the IEP. The parent requested mediation.

Mr. DiDonato said in the past the district lost cases based on procedural errors in IEPs. He said as practice improves we might see more complaints and more mediations because of our efforts to improve the IEP process.

Mr. DiDonato said a parent of the Batalla School student believed the student needed special education services. He said the team reviewed the situation and the student had no disabilities. The parent is asking for mediation. He said the team's work would be supported because of his confidence in their work.

Mr. DiDonato said he could send data to Mr. Walker on the results of mediations.

Mr. Sokolovic summarized the situation as there was the possibility of more complaints because we are tightening up on procedures and sticking with what is in the best educational interests of students rather than the parents' wants, which might have been easier to go along with in the past. Mr. DiDonato agreed with that summary.

Mr. Sokolovic said sometimes parents want what they think is best for their child; not always the least restrictive environment, but the most protected environment.

Mr. DiDonato said he wanted to give the committee the opportunity to ask him questions about The University School's program. He said he heard from the city attorney that a contract would be ready sometime tomorrow.

Mr. Walker noted The University School's contracts were on the agenda for the next regular meeting.

Mr. Walker said he received documents on The University School.

Mr. DiDonato said there are two proposed contracts: one for a self-contained special education program for students placed by the PPT process for 40 slots and a more recent program where The University School provides the district's expulsion program.

Mr. DiDonato said he is dealing with the special education programs and Dr. Otuwa will address the expulsion program because she administers expulsion.

Mr. Walker noted there were cost benefits to sending students to The University School. Mr. DiDonato said the agreed-upon tuition rate is \$25,000, while CES or a similar program would cost between \$60,000 and \$80,000.

Ms. Pereira said Chris Taylor, in his infinite wisdom, decided it was only worth \$18,000 per student.

Mr. DiDonato said the students get the mandated school day. There are eleven teachers, ten of which are certified. One is a math teacher who is pending certification. He said there are clinical services that students need. The school is visited three or four times a month by a district administrator, which include classroom conferences and IEP conferences.

Mr. DiDonato said the school was not on a campus like CES.

Mr. DiDonato said he felt he needed to share that The University School used to be called an approved private school, with tuition paid on a per-student basis. At some point, the school came into an agreement with the Department of Education that allowed it to report attendance

to meet compensatory attendance requirements, which organized the school with a facilities code.

Mr. DiDonato said, in response to Mr. Illingworth's question at another meeting, that The University School is not an approved school, but that category of schools is currently under review by the Department of Education.

Mr. DiDonato said eight students graduated this year and two are going on to college. He said the students recommended to the school have a long history of failure and one reason the school is identified for them is because it's a small setting.

Mr. Walker said some kids are more suited to small schools.

Mr. DiDonato said he could get information on the amount of dropouts from The University School. He said if they begin to fail it triggers a PPT and the placement is questioned. He said he hoped those procedures have been implemented appropriately.

Mr. DiDonato said the average class sizes are between three and seven students. Ms. Pereira noted that the board is spending \$14,296 per student for a regular student and said she did not understand how the school would survive at \$18,000 per student as suggested by Mr. Taylor.

Mr. Sokolovic asked if the school had excess capacity because just ten more students will give us a \$350,000 savings compared to out-of-district placements. Mr. DiDonato said based on his conversations with the director the longevity of the school does not seem to go beyond this school year.

Mr. Walker said that makes it more even more urgent the district establishes its own program.

Assistant Superintendent Dr. Christiana Otuwa said the contract with The University School was for thirty students to attend the school during expulsion. She said during the year a different number of students are attending the school, depending on the Code 3 or Code 4 violation they committed.

In response to a question, Dr. Otuwa said the cost is \$180,000 per year, for ten months.

Ms. Pereira said it was hard for her to swallow that they get the money every month whether we have thirty students there or not. She said probably the school was not full in September and October.

Dr. Otuwa said this year at times the school was run with ten extra students due to the volume. She said students who commit a violation at the end of the year may begin the next year in the program. She said she did not believe we've ever had less than ten students there, even at the beginning of the year.

Ms. Pereira said she would support the two contracts.

Dr. Otuwa said she monitors what's going on at the school. Ms. Pereira said it was important that the board is protected.

Dr. Otuwa said a lot of teachers in the program are certified. She said the contract needed to be signed so the teachers know they have a contract for next year.

In response to a question, Dr. Otuwa said she was not aware of the possibility the school may not exist next year. She said she would contact Ms. Zowine about that.

Ms. Pereira said Ms. Zowine indicated the contract needed to be signed quickly due to the need to keep the teachers.

Mr. Walker said Dr. Johnson told him they were looking for approval of the contracts from the state Department of Education. Dr. Otuwa said the contract should be available from the lawyer tomorrow.

The next agenda item was the district's profile and performance.

Assistant Superintendent Deborah Santacapita noted the presentation would be on 2016-17, which is the most current data.

Dr. Santacapita said for many years there was a state mandate for a strategic profile to be presented to the state. It is now called a district profile and uploaded for anybody to see.

Dr. Santacapita said the data has already been sent to the state.

Ms. Pereira said she believed the board had to vote on it according to state statute.

Dr. Santacapita said the data was available to compare the 2015-16 and 2016-17 data.

Herminio Planas, director of mathematics, presented on mathematics. He said the data looks at performance index



and academic growth. The growth is the percentage of students that grow from one year to the other.

Mr. Planas said for 2016-17 Bridgeport is at the top of its DRG in math. Dr. Santacapita said the DRG consisted of New Haven, New London, Windham, Hartford, Waterbury, Bridgeport and New Britain.

Ms. Pereira noted there was a big improvement in math performance index and growth.

Mr. Planas said out of a possible hundred points we have 44.8 percent of our students who met the performance index.

Mr. Walker said what he would rather see is a column comparing the district to the DRG, not the entire state. He said that is important information. He said almost all our data we share with board members should be shown in relation to the DRG.

Mr. Walker said he hears Connecticut is one of the top states in the country in education. He said if the state helped out our DRG we might be even higher. He said he was proud the district was number one in the DRG.

Mr. Planas noted the information was prepared for a November meeting. He said the district is still waiting for the new SBAC results from this year. He noted the second-ranked district, Windham, is a very small district, with only nine schools and an instructional coach in each school, while Bridgeport only has 20 coaches in 28 different buildings.

Mr. Walker said even as an educator he can't make heads or tails of some of the numbers. He urged Mr. Planas be

prepared to answer questions from the board about the formulas.

Ms. Pereira said we have a lot of board members who like Donald Trump can only do pretty pictures and graphs. Mr. Planas said the presentation in November was tabled due to a lengthy agenda.

Dr. Santacapita said there are now twelve indicators that give a report card on the district. She said in 2013-14 it went from a profile of three indicators to twelve.

Ms. Pereira noted the twelfth indicator was arts access.

Dr. Melissa Jenkins, director of literacy, reported on literacy. She said from 2015-16 to 2016-17 ELA performance remained flat. She noted the state average index basically remained the same.

Dr. Jenkins said the ELA performance index for high needs showed a decrease. She said she believed the decrease is attributed to how we calculate high needs now. She said she is not familiar with the calculation. Dr. Santacapita said the calculation is affected because all schools in the district are no longer considered high needs.

Dr. Jenkins said the high-needs index also decreased statewide.

Dr. Jenkins said the performance index is the level of students who have reached Levels 3 or 4(or exceeding proficiency) on SBAC. The ELA academic growth was not as great in 2016-17 as in 2015-16 for the district. She noted growth decreased across the state.

Dr. Jenkins said growth was an area of concern and was addressed during the school year.

Dr. Santacapita said the board members had the school district improvement and outreach activities. She said the data is uploaded by data management.

Mr. Walker said this was not his agenda item. Dr. Johnson asked him to put the report on the district profile and performance on the committee agenda and on the board agenda for June 25th.

Mr. Walker suggested Dr. Santacapita confer with Dr. Johnson about exactly what should be on the June 25th agenda.

Mr. Sokolovic said he viewed the board's role as a flow-through to review the information that's part of the state process. The board does not have to approve or disapprove; it is just the seeing the information and accepting it.

The next agenda item was on the Harding High early learning center.

Dementred Young, director of social work, said he was the administrator for the teen pregnancy program. He said he believed the responses to the bid from Creative Me and ABCD were handed out at the Facilities Committee meeting.

Ms. Pereira said she didn't understand why the matter was on the agenda of the Facilities Committee.

Mr. Young said there was a committee to evaluate the bids consisting of the superintendent, two assistant superintendents, the principal of Harding, the director of

speech and language, the director of early childhood, the director of social work and the teen pregnancy social worker that will work directly with the center.

Mr. Young said there was a rubric for the two RFPs. On May 30th, the committee met with the responding bidders, and then rated both RFPs. ABCD received a 97 percent favorability score; and Creative Me was scored at 61.75 percent.

Mr. Young said the responders were rated on qualifications and experience, organization structure, work plan and references.

Mr. Young said he believed the matter was in the Facilities Committee because it came up when the building was being built. Ms. Pereira said the only matters that should have been in Facilities were the construction of the building and the name.

Mr. Young said he provided the bids to the Facilities Committee. Ms. Pereira said it appeared Mr. Taylor did not forward them to the other board members.

Mr. Young said he would send more detail on the categories that were rated to Mr. Walker.

In response to a question, Mr. Young said he was requesting that the item be sent to the full board at the June 25th meeting.

Mr. Walker asked that Mr. Young provide the bid responses electronically and that he create a summary of each bid listing the four areas. He said he didn't think the board needed the entire package because of its size. He said it

needs to be made available, though, because some people may read the entire bids.

Ms. Pereira said she reads everything from beginning to end. She said she wanted to see the score sheets. She said was especially interested in the director of early childhood's scoring sheet. Mr. Young noted some of the score sheets are anonymous.

Mr. Young said he was looking for a motion to approve the ABCD bid.

Ms. Pereira said Dr. Johnson told her that ABCD has a requirement that their name be part of the naming of the facility. Mr. Young said that was the case, but the name does not have to be cemented into the building. He noted it is a year-to-year contract.

Ms. Pereira moved *"to approve the early education provider for the new Warren Harding High School as ABCD for one year with the possible renewal or extension for two additional years."* The motion was seconded by Mr. Sokolovic and unanimously approved.

The next item was a report on library/media center curriculum.

Dr. Jenkins said she was asked to collect data from the media specialists. She said she also met with them in a small group to gather information. She noted she does not supervise the specialists; they are supervised by their building principals.

Ms. Pereira said she was stunned to see there were 18 media specialists in the whole district. Dr. Jenkins said that

number applies to certified employees because this is a shortage area.

Dr. Jenkins displayed the American Association of School Libraries' six core beliefs.

Dr. Jenkins said in K to 6 most students attend the library once per week for 35 minutes. In Grades 7 and 8, they have media once a week for an average of 42 minutes. In high schools, they do not have formal media specialist time.

Dr. Jenkins said only two of the seven high schools have a media specialist. She said Fairchild Wheeler has never been allocated a media specialist, however, they have collaborated with the Bridgeport Public Library for access to their databases. Harding and Bassick have media specialists. She said each principal has the right to determine their allocations for positions.

Dr. Jenkins said the majority of library/media services are provided in official library areas. In two schools, it occurs in the classroom.

Dr. Jenkins said there are 32 people in the role of library/media specialists; 19 are certified and 11 are certified teachers, with two long-term subs.

Dr. Jenkins said some of the common responses from the specialists is they support the digital age, helping know what's fake news versus real news, helping with coding and computer languages, and exposing students to a variety of literary genres.

Dr. Jenkins said the library/media specialists do not have a budget; the principal provides resources for repairing books.

The book fair is the primary way of generating funding for school libraries right now.

Dr. Jenkins said the focus group of media specialists indicated they use the proceeds from the book fairs to buy mostly paperback versions of the most popular books students are reading. Ms. Pereira said she hoped they were also purchasing Caldecott winners and other award-winning books. Dr. Jenkins said that was the case with some librarians.

Dr. Jenkins said most of the students' time is spent on research skills, information technology and Internet skills.. By middle school they are taught to determine if sources are credible.

Mr. Sokolovic said the specialists could be valuable for young students in teaching them how to conduct yourself online and how to use the Internet safely. He said it should be built into some formalized curriculum.

Dr. Jenkins said the district would have to decide on next steps beyond the state generation of standards.

Dr. Jenkins said she wrote a grant to support professional development for media specialists, continuing myON and other databases and supporting children with transportation to public libraries. She said the grant aimed at Grades 3 to 6 as a bridge to middle school.

Ms. Pereira said she saw a presentation at the City Council where the public library reported their physical usage was down 50 percent, but a great deal of material is now available online.

Ms. Pereira and Mr. Sokolovic said Dr. Jenkins gave us some very good information. Mr. Sokolovic said he would like to see formalized curriculum. Mr. Walker said he would like to see standards across the district like we do on every other subject.

Dr. Jenkins said the state is updating standards for library/media studies, which will revolve around research, digital citizenship, and Internet safety.

Mr. Walker said in the interim we could adopt the national standards to begin our curriculum development.

Mr. Sokolovic said he would contact Dr. Johnson on this issue.

Mr. Walker asked Dr. Jenkins to send him a copy of PowerPoint slides for his report.

The next item was the biannual academic snapshot.

Mr. Walker said he knew sometimes when the board asks the administrators to prepare a report it's drudgery and takes time out of their real job to do it. He said his goal is to have someone step back and see what you do because oftentimes you don't take the measure of where you really are. He said it often is a pat on the back that we often we need to give ourselves.

Patricia Wood, the district assessment coordinator, said under the strategic plan there were three parent engagement forums to stress the new board-approved strategic plan and how the pillars were driving everything we do.



Ms. Wood said there is a parent survey administered once a year; two staff surveys, one in the fall and the spring; and then a department staff survey. There is also a school climate survey.

Ms. Wood said 97 percent of parents said they agreed they felt welcome in their child's school; 93 percent of parents agreed their child's needs are being met in the school; 97 percent agreed the school communicates well with them in their language. The school makes it easy for me to attend meetings was agreed with by 87 percent. And 86 percent said they would recommend to the school to other families.

Ms. Wood said the staff survey received 1,050 responses. Staff morale is high at the school was agreed to by 59 percent; 86 percent like working in their school. 77 percent of respondents feel safe at school; 80 percent feel school leaders encourage communication.

In response to a question, Ms. Wood said typically the staff survey shows growth from the fall to the spring.

Mr. Walker said he would like to see the comparative data and asked that it be included in the future

Ms. Pereira said she was concerned that staff morale was at 59 percent. Ms. Wood noted the number was higher for the question about whether they liked working in the school.

Mr. Walker said the leadership in a school has a lot to do with the morale in the school. He said Dr Johnson has talked about this in evaluating leaders in the buildings. He said he was skeptical of using test data to determine a lot of things.

Ms. Wood said the surveys were done via Survey Monkey.

Dr. Santacapita noted as a principal that once she saw survey results that indicated students did not feel safe in the bathrooms and cafeteria it drove her safety and security approach.

Mr. Sokolovic thanked everyone for their work in presenting this and noted he had to leave the meeting.

Mr. Sokolovic left the meeting.

In response to a question, Dr. Santacapita said only certified staff took the survey. Ms. Wood said for social-emotional learning all staff took that survey.

Dr. Santacapita said principals meet with and evaluate staff members, including custodial personnel who are not issued e-mail addresses. Ms. Pereira said she would like every employee's input into the question of safety in the building.

Dr. Santacapita noted principals do not evaluate security guards and custodians.

Mr. Walker said he would like to see a survey of the support staff as well. He said friendly staff is very important in school climate and an integral part of a student's education.

Ms. Wood said she delivers school-based professional development and webinars focused on the testing environment. It is important to make students familiar with tools and accommodations when they take a test.

There was a discussion of webinars. Ms. Wood said many small schools have only one administrator and it can be disruptive for them to leave their buildings.

Ms. Wood said SBAC participation was 99.4 percent. Science/NGSS testing participation was 97.6 percent and the alternative to science was 95.1.

Mr. Walker said these were good numbers. Dr. Santacapita said the district always had excellent participation rates.

Mr. Walker and Ms. Pereira noted they were anti-SBAC. Mr. Walker said it was a discriminatory test, but we have to give it. Ms. Pereira said students should be not measured on one test for a year's work.

Ms. Wood said the results are provided to the district, the school administrators, and teachers. Teachers speak to students and parent about the results.

Ms. Wood said iReady is used for the diagnostic in K to 8. She said in some areas iReady has been very good and in other areas we've struggled.

Ms. Pereira said a principal told her that students that just arrived from the Congo had to take a state-mandated test.

In response to a question, Dr. Jenkins said students in kindergarten and 1st grade need a tremendous amount of support to take the assessment. She said they are tested in groups of about three students.

Dr. Santacapita said we're supposed to be testing knowledge, not computer skills. She noted the testing windows last for weeks to accommodate the small groups.

Dr. Jenkins said she believed a portion of the iReady assessment is not as beneficial for Grades K and I because

of the component of hearing sounds and engaging in auditory discrimination.

Mr. Walker said he was concerned that testing results are part of the teachers' evaluations.

Ms. Wood said the data will be created over the summer that will give a snapshot of each child in their class, which will include demographic information, previous SBAC and previous iReady scores. This will allow the teacher to show the student where they are and get them involved in their education. The sheet will also be used at parent conferences.

Mr. Walker said that was excellent.

Dr. Jenkins presented iReady data on literacy. She noted the number of students performing on or above grade levels is lower across Grades 4 to 8, but there has been growth over time.

Dr. Jenkins said the data indicates student reading levels decline once they get to Grade 4. She said this is a challenge for all schools, including the top-performing ones. She added the myOn usage goes down as students get older.

Dr. Jenkins said the greatest growth has occurred in Grades 4 and up this year. She noted the state's accountability index gives double points for growth over achievement, which is a provision of the Every Child Succeeds Act.

Dr. Jenkins said students in Tier 2 were reduced by 8 percent and by 10 percent in Tier 3.

Dr. Jenkins said the Grade 3 cohort in 2016-17 was at 42 percent on phonics, but by 2017-18 they were at 61 percent. Mr. Walker said he found it amazing that all the numbers are higher even if they're not in the same cohort.

Dr. Jenkins said there were literacy coaches with Grades K to 8, but great focus was given to Grades 3-5. Ms. Pereira noted we will not have the literacy coaches next year.

Dr. Jenkins said in regards to family engagement there was a vocabulary bowl for 3rd graders and a spelling bee for Grades 3 to 8. They were held at night to encourage parent engagement.

Dr. Jenkins said this was the second annual vocabulary bowl with six schools participating. She said it is a team of four students who read passages and identify vocabulary words that will complete the context.

Dr. Jenkins said in the literacy staff survey data for grades 7 to 12, 74 percent of the staff said morale was high. Both teachers and literacy coaches participated. 85 percent thought their contributions were important; 92 percent liked working in the department; 86 percent said the director communicates a clear vision; and 92 percent said the director encourages communication.

Mr. Planas presented on mathematics. He said the focus was basically on curriculum. He said we know scores are extremely low. He said one way to strengthen them is by developing teacher and principal knowledge.

Mr. Planas said there was professional development in progressions, led by Greg Tang, who was paid through a grant. Additionally, the grant covered the costs of subs to

cover classes for the professional development. There were four sessions in the year. He said he loved what Lone Pine has given the district. Ms. Pereira said she did not support anyone who supports the privatization of public schools.

Mr. Planas said there was targeted professional development where each coach sat down with a team of teachers in their cohort. Four coaches worked in K to 2, four in Grades 3 to 5, and two coaches in Grades 6 to 8. They went through each curriculum unit. He said it was an amazing endeavor by the coaches. Lone Pine paid for the subs that covered the classes.

Ms. Pereira asked if the low math scores were attributable to the introduction of Common Core. Mr. Planas said he supports high expectations for students. He said the way Common Core was rolled did create a difficult situation and noted it had only been in the district for three years. Dr. Santacapita said the testing began at the same time it was introduced.

Mr. Planas said we're behind on Common Core. He noted the algebra he used to teach in high school is now the 8th grade curriculum. He said sometimes concepts have been advanced by two grade levels.

Mr. Planas noted to move ahead in math you need the skills from the prior grade. He said if teachers know that progression they can expedite the instruction.

Mr. Planas said similar to reading the growth rate in math is above 100 percent. One hundred percent means you're on grade level. Students who are below grade level need to make above 100 percent. He said there were schools that

had 200 percent growth this year, which equates to two grade levels.

Dr. Santacapita said we need to do that three years in a row to close the gap.

Mr. Planas said an issue with curriculum in first grade is being looked at in response some disappointing results.

Mr. Walker said it looked we're having greater successes in Grades K to 4 and more focus might be needed on 5 to 8.

Mr. Planas said the coaching hours were studied, without reference to professional development. There were about 2,700 hours logged. He said 11 percent of the hours were devoted to Barnum School. Last year, Barnum had 9 percent of students on level. He said ten percent of the content hours were devoted to Batalla, where the SBAC was at four percent on level.

Ms. Pereira said Waltersville and Barnum Schools have similar student populations. She noted Waltersville had significantly less hours than Barnum. Mr. Planas said there was a focus because of the new teachers in Barnum and new teachers to their grade level.

Mr. Planas said the coaches do amazing work. He said we're looking to Lone Pine for assistance in purchasing materials and paying for subs while training the teachers in the building. He said he will have to do some of the work himself.

Alicia Robinson, director of performing and visual arts, said there are three components which she oversees: performing arts, visual arts and turnaround arts.

Ms. Robinson said there are 44 certified teachers, plus three long-term subs, teaching everything from general music, musical theater, band, orchestra and others. They follow the national core art standards which the district and the state has adopted.

Ms. Robinson said there are five schools in turnaround arts, which will be expanded to Bryant as well as next year.

Ms. Robinson said the only open positions are as a result of some internal transfers and two retirements. To date, no teachers have asked to leave the district.

Ms. Robinson said she looked at spring 2017 to spring survey 2018 data because she assumed her position in 2017. She said there was growth in every single question surveyed, some by more than twenty percentage points. She said 81 percent said staff morale is high in the department. More than 95 percent of respondents indicated they like working in the department.

Ms. Robinson noted the spring 2018 data is higher than the district data.

Ms. Robinson said in addition to school-based events, there have been district events just about every single month since she has taken her position. She said she was proud of the 5th annual Battle of the Bands, which now consists of 16 ensembles.

Ms. Robinson said the first all-magnet district concert was held in collaboration with Sacred Heart University at no cost to the district. She said this will be held again next year.



Ms. Robinson said there will be a summer arts camp that will feature electives and ensembles for about 75 students.

Ms. Robinson said the Harding drum line was in the Juneteenth Parade.

Ms. Robinson said the arts access index measures the percentage of high school students participating in at least one arts course. Bridgeport has the lowest participation in arts access in our DRG over the past three years. She said in BMA there is only one visual arts teacher and in Bassick there is only one music teacher. She said there were equity concerns.

Ms. Robinson said there were ten musicals at the middle schools, but zero musical theater programs at the high school.

Ms. Pereira said when she was in Harding High she had an amazing theater arts program; there was a drama in the fall and a musical in the spring. She said she appeared in *South Pacific*, *Gigi*, *Flower Drum Song*, and *Bye Bye Birdie*. She said she would have been a high-school dropout if it wasn't for theater.

Ms. Robinson said we're collecting the same stories from students now that cannot be measured on the SBAC.

Ms. Robinson said theater productions need to be seen as a priority for high school principals to convert allocations to the arts. She said Harding brought on an additional musical teacher this year and the band has been very active for the first time in a long time.

Ms. Pereira said she could feel the fever and excitement about what Ms. Robinson is doing. She said she was sure it trickles to students and staff.

Angela Bhushan, director of science, said she had been director for the last eight years with no budget and no assistance. Then the state decided to change everything to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). She said to do this and change this way of thinking with teachers and students is a stupendous task.

Ms. Bhushan noted Grades K to 5 received new textbooks this year. She said she put together a NGSS-aligned draft for the district.

Ms. Bhushan said her approach was to get parents involved this year to tell them about the NGSS. There have been two parent forums.

Ms. Bhushan said an NGSS field test was given this year. She said it was almost like taking the pulse of everyone in the state in Grades 5, 8 and 11. She said the district had 97 percent participation, but we are not getting any results or feedback from the state.

Ms. Bhushan said until 2016 we didn't even know what the assessments would look like. She said the process has not been rolled out well by the state.

Mr. Walker said his guess is the state sees the results and they're not what they thought they would be, so the negative results are being held back.

Ms. Bhushan noted science is part of the state accountability index. In 2018-19, the assessments are going to count, so all the districts will be at the same start line.

Ms. Bhushan said the science fair had been very successful, particularly since the state introduced the urban challenge category.

Ms. Bhushan said her focus this year was on professional development. She noted Grades K-5 have a thousand teachers, which presented a logistical challenge.

Ms. Bhushan said last summer she and the textbook company, HMH, put together a calendar for professional development for the year. K to 5 teachers started in August 2017 and the last one was just held in April 2018.

In response to a question, Dr. Santacapita said it was common for textbook companies to provide professional development for new books.

Ms. Bhushan said she also ran professional development for administrators in September, December and April.

Ms. Bhushan said the state testing next year will be in Grade 5. She said unlike math and ELA, science does not participate in iReady so she has no data to go by.

In response to a question, Ms. Bhushan said she could develop her own data if she had formative assessments. She said she is going to a state course next month on how to develop formative assessments that are NGSS-aligned. She said she has contacted California, which is also using NGSS, for information on assessments.

Ms. Bhushan said the Grade 6 to 12 teachers are mostly departmentalized in science.

Ms. Bhushan said responses to staff surveys showed growth from the fall to the spring.

In response to a question, Mr. Bhushan said she had no assistants for the last eight years. Mr. Planas said he did not have assistants, but had coaches. Dr. Santacapita said nobody has assistants. She said eight years ago there was a curriculum specialist in science and an assistant science director.

Ms. Pereira said this is crazy. Mr. Walker said it's insane.

Ana Sousa-Martins, director of bilingual education and world languages, said the district is at an all-time high of 3,700 English language learners. She said approximately 211 students displaced from Puerto Rico were accommodated this year.

Ms. Sousa-Martins said all students are required to take the LAS Links assessment, the state assessment, whether they are in a bilingual class, ELA classroom or a mainstream classroom. She said it is a K-12 assessment and assesses four domains: speaking, listening, reading and writing. This online assessment takes about 2.5 hours.

The assessments are all in English and on grade level. Grades K and 1 takes the same test, Grade 2 and 3 the same test, Grade 4 and 5 the same test, Grades 6-8 the same test, and Grades 9-12 the same test. It determines when the students are ready to exit the English learner programs offered.

In response to a question, Ms. Sousa-Martins said students who receive bilingual education are assigned to Harding. Bassick and Central offer ESL. A tutor is available at BMA and Fairchild Wheeler.

Ms. Pereira asked if Harding has 300 ESL students concentrated in their school how is it going to lift the results.

Ms. Sousa-Martins said ELL is the classification for the student: English language learner. ESL is a program: English as a second language.

Ms. Sousa-Martins said she agrees with having a school offering bilingual education. She said those students are expected to learn content that's on grade level. She said she did not agree with the assessment and having to take the SBAC as soon as they enter the school. Students who were here less than ten months used to be exempt from CMT.

Ms. Sousa-Martins said she sees frustration on the part of students and lack of motivation. She said a lot of students are dropping out because they find they're more successful working than attending school. She said many are working under the table, which is more motivating than to going to school if they are struggling because they don't know the language.

Ms. Sousa-Martins said professional development is being provided, including an English learners summit for mainstream teachers to teach them strategies to accelerate the English proficiency development of students. She said the summits have picked up so much notoriety publishers have called asking to sponsor them.

Ms. Sousa-Martins said a cohort analysis of LAS Links scores showed the most learning growth was in reading. She said research shows students can transfer their skills from native language to English once they acquire some vocabulary.

In response to a question, Ms. Sousa-Martins said a lot of students arrive in 9th grade with a lack of English skills, while by 11th grade they've had a year of bilingual education.

Dr. Santacapita said historically a lot of students don't stay with us and go to high school due to moving or going to a private or charter school.

Ms. Sousa-Martins said if an 11th grader comes in without grades from their country or are academically behind, they are put in 9th grade.

Ms. Sousa-Martins said approximately 74 languages were spoken in Bridgeport at the last count.

Ms. Sousa-Martins said the world language department is trying to entice students to take AP classes. All high schools except BMA are offering Spanish AP.

Ms. Sousa-Martins said the staff survey from fall to spring showed an increase in staff morale, staff feeling comfortable in approaching her with a problem, the atmosphere of respect in the department, and clear-cut policies and procedures in the departments and other metrics.

Tina Peloso-Ulreich, director of early childhood, said the preschools are accredited by National Association for the Education of Young Children. She said 22 of the elementary

schools have at least one preschool classroom; 16 so far are NAEYC-accredited; four more completed their initial accreditation and are awaiting a decision; two schools will undergo the process next year.

Ms. Peloso-Ulreich said Discovery Magnet, which has six classes, would undergo the process next year.

Ms. Peloso-Ulreich said the preschool assessment framework tests were administered. In cognitive 9 529 four-year olds were assessed and 500 children moved up at least one or more benchmarks. In another area: 499 of the 529 moved at least one more benchmarks. Another assessment indicated a hundred percent of four-year-olds made gains of more than ten percent.

Ms. Peloso-Ulreich said there was a lot of social-emotional and trauma-based professional development for teachers this year. There was also professional development on NAEYC accreditation.

Ms. Peloso-Ulreich noted the survey results indicated from fall to spring morale improved, staff liked working in the department and the teachers support each other. There were also favorable survey results for professional development.

Ms. Peloso-Ulreich said since 2010 under her leadership preschools have been added at Black Rock, Classical Studies, Claytor, Cross, Dunbar and Winthrop. She noted Dunbar has expanded to four classrooms.

Ms. Peloso-Ulreich said most of the programs are funded by grants. NAEYC accreditation is needed to obtain the grants.

Ms. Pereira said she had heard a lot of teachers complain about the RULER program because it can be disruptive to classes. Ms. Peloso-Ulreich said the children often are coming in with problems from home.

There was a discussion of some violent incidents involving teachers. Ms. Peloso-Ulreich said one teacher could not teach summer school this year because she received a concussion.

Chris Johnson said he oversees physical education, health and athletics.

Mr. Johnson said the fitness scores went up from 2015-16 to 2016-17 and then up again this year. He said the participation rate is monitored.

Mr. Johnson said the teachers received professional development by TRI Federation, which features an inclusive, multi-skilled game focused on a cardiovascular endurance, incorporating teamwork, and communication. He said he would send the committee a video of the game being played.

Mr. Johnson said he was approached by the developer of the game and Bridgeport was the first city in the nation to host an interscholastic game. He said it was pitched to football coaches for off-season training. He said it is now being played across the nation.

Mr. Johnson said health education has to be embedded into physical education classes because the district doesn't have certified health teachers in K-12 that can deliver the content as required by federal mandates. He said the mandates allow the content to be delivered by any teacher. He said



health lessons were developed that could be implemented through physical education classes.

Mr. Johnson said one struggle is that physical education classes only get about 70 minutes per week at the elementary level, while the state recommends 200 minutes. He said creative ways were needed to find a way to give the health education as well the physical education.

Mr. Johnson said there was a partnership with Sacred Heart and Green Village Initiative with a community farm on Reservoir Avenue. The plant cycle of plants and photosynthesis was incorporated into the partnership. The school garden curriculum was aligned to the district's curriculum, with the idea of getting the students outside, working in the gardens and understanding healthy eating habits.

Mr. Johnson said a lot of his job is figuring out ways to decrease the opportunity gap, where Bridgeport students don't have access or don't play sports until high school. A grant enabled beginning a unified sports program at Park City Magnet. Middle school track and field was funded by the Bridgeport Field of Dreams Foundation with Fairfield Dermatology at seven schools; 46 students were sent to the state championship meet.

Mr. Johnson said there was an eight-week flag football league in the spring at Kennedy Stadium funded by the Wakeman Boys and Girls Club and the Field of Dreams Foundation. The participants got free memberships to the Wakeman club as well.

Mr. Johnson said a grant from Good Sports, Inc., provided over \$90,000 of equipment this year. The shipping fees,

which were not included, were covered by corporate donations.

Mr. Johnson said there will be summer sports clinics for cheerleading, basketball and soccer. Some academic components are tied into the soccer camps. During the year there were free soccer clinics at Roosevelt School where all the children received free soccer gear.

Mr. Johnson said he was proud he was able to bring more to the district than his salary covers.

Mr. Johnson said the Bassick, Central and Harding boys soccer teams qualified for the state playoffs; Bassick girls' basketball won their first state playoff game in over thirty years; the Central, Bassick and Harding boys' basketball teams all qualified for the state playoffs, with Bassick finishing number 4 in the state. Bassick was the number one public school in the state, behind three Catholic schools.

Mr. Johnson said the Harding baseball team qualified for the state playoffs for the second consecutive year. Forty-eight high school track athletes qualified for the state tournament.

Mr. Johnson said the Curiale boys' basketball team finished at 48-0 under Coach Larry Menta, who raised all private funding. The JFK Campus won the middle school track and field championship. The girls' team at Read School won the middle school girls' basketball championship. Bridge Academy won the flag football championship.

Carrie Ramasnaukas, social-emotional learning coordinator for the district, said she was a teacher on special assignment. She said does not evaluate employees.

Ms. Ramasnaukas said her position was funded by a grant and is driven through the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence. She said the program was piloted at Cross School under Supt. Vallas; then Supt. Rabinowitz, who had previous experience with RULER at Hamden, expanded it to all schools.

Ms. Ramasnaukas said she was brought on in November of 2017 and before that used social-emotional learning in her classroom as an English teacher.

Ms. Ramasnaukas said the goal is to increase social-emotional learning across the board for all stakeholders, including staff. She said restorative practices shift a mindset from a punitive approach to discipline to a more community-building, relationship-building approach. She said the code of conduct was reworked into new behavioral expectations.

Ms. Ramasnaukas said people with higher emotional intelligence are better leaders, achieve more, have less depression and anxiety, and are better future employees and civil advocates. She said all learning is social-emotional.

Ms. Ramasnaukas said the three approaches are RULER restorative practices and cultural competency, which are done through training and integration. She said once you learn social-emotional skills they can't be taken away. She added it changed her life as a mother at home.

Ms. Ramasnaukas said educators' training does not provide them with this approach.

Mr. Walker said teachers don't leave the profession because they don't want to teach their content, it's because they can't handle the kids in the classroom. Ms. Ramasnaukas said

another reason is they feel like they're not making a difference and can't provide what that child needs.

Ms. Ramasnaukas said she made 58 social-emotional learning visits and held 22 student workshops and model lessons. She said during a discussion of Martin Luther King content she said people confronted by injustice should be angry, but it's how you manage and regulate the emotions and whether it's helping you in changing a policy.

Ms. Ramasnaukas said it is a misconception of social-emotional learning that it is meant to calm children down. She said that is one piece, but another part is to psyche themselves up for something like a debate. She gave an example of how she learned that music could be used to help shift emotions.

Ms. Ramasnaukas said the mood meter is split into four quadrants, reading from left to right in increasing unpleasantness. From the Y axis, it displays the lowest energy to highest energy. She said there is also vocabulary development with the feeling words curriculum that is connected with the mood meter.

Ms. Ramasnaukas said Edison School has done an excellent job with social-emotional learning, with experts on RULER and restorative practice on site.

Ms. Ramasnaukas described the professional development activities that were offered, including trainings by Jo Ann Freiberg from the state. She said the Tauck Family Foundation covered more than half of the substitute coverage.

Ms. Ramasnaukas said BCAC is now running the social-emotional learning and the next school year is being planned. A grant was just awarded on Friday.

Ms. Pereira asked if the behavioral grades, particularly in the elementary schools, had improved across the district. Ms. Ramasnaukas said we do not use that data. She said suspensions and chronic absenteeism have decreased over the last three years. She added staff surveys have shown an improvement in emotional regulation and student-teacher trust.

Ms. Ramasnaukas said the International Institute of Restorative Practices provided training to two separate cohorts of educators.

Mr. Walker said he will do his best to report to the board what was presented tonight.

Ms. Pereira said tonight was an amazing presentation, but the *Connecticut Post*, which writes negative things, is not here, nor are the board members who think we have too many administrators. She said the six other board members really had to be here. Mr. Walker noted Mr. Illingworth had a conflict tonight.

Ms. Pereira moved that item 9 be postponed. The motion as seconded by Mr. Walker and unanimously approved.

Ms. Pereira moved to table item 8. The motion was seconded by Mr. Walker and unanimously approved.

Ms. Pereira moved the meeting be adjourned. The motion was seconded by Mr. Walker and unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John McLeod

*Approved by the committee on September 18, 2018*