

The Board of Education, Downers Grove Grade School District 58, DuPage County, Illinois met for a curriculum workshop/special meeting on Monday, October 23, 2017 at Lester School; 236 Indianapolis Avenue; Downers Grove, Illinois.

## 1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The President called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. Members present: President Doug Purcell; Vice President Elizabeth Sigale; and Members Greg Harris, Darren Hughes, John Miller, Jill Samonte and Beth Taylor. Also in attendance were Kari Cremascoli, Superintendent; Jayne Yudzentis, Assistant Superintendent for Personnel; Jessica Stewart, Assistant Superintendent for Special Services; Justin Sisul, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; David Bein, Assistant Superintendent for Business/CSBO; Lorie Pilster, Director of Business Services; Ken Young, Director of Buildings and Grounds; James Eichmiller, Director of Innovative Technology and Learning; and Melissa Jerves, Board Secretary. Attending this meeting were at least six visitors. (Visitors' Roster attached to official minutes.)

## 2. CURRICULUM WORKSHOP

President Purcell introduced Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Justin Sisul.

### A. Standardized Test Data

Mr. Sisul gave an overview of the standardized assessment tools administered by District 58, including AIMSWeb Plus, MAP and PARCC. He noted that fall student assessment data provides a benchmark for the beginning of the school year and can be useful to assess what has been retained over the summer. Fall data is especially valuable when viewed in relation to winter and spring assessments to track growth and pinpoint areas needing intervention.

#### 1. AIMSWeb Plus

AIMSWeb Plus is an update to the previous AIMSWeb assessment platform utilized by District 58 for several years. With this update, students in kindergarten and first grade were introduced to new assessments of early literacy. This data was reviewed with emphasis placed on the fact that it is new data for the district. As students continue to complete these assessments over the coming years, the district will begin to see emerging trends. Students in grades 2-8 are assessed for oral reading fluency through this platform; however, if students in 3rd grade and above demonstrate an established proficiency criteria, they no longer receive this assessment.

2. NWEA-MAP

Fall NWEA-MAP results across District 58 continue to be consistently above the national mean in both reading and math. Both the District 58 report card and MAP are aligned to the Common Core standards. The NWEA-MAP test was administered to all K-8 students this fall. Kindergarten and first grade students were tested in reading and math through an auditory presentation, while students in grades 2-8 were tested in reading, math and language usage. The tests are given three times each year and provide a picture of student performance over time. Student median achievement percentiles are at or above the 69th percentile in grades 1-8 for math and reading across the district; the national median percentile is 50. This fall, in math six of nine grade levels achieved their highest median MAP scores ever, with student grade level scores ranging from the 63rd-77th median percentile. Similarly, strong scores were noted in reading, with three grade levels achieving their highest median scores ever, ranging from the 75th-78th percentile. Several years ago, the math curriculum was realigned to reflect increased rigor and Common Core State Standards. The growth in MAP scores, in part, reflects those changes. The District recently adopted a new English/Language Arts curricular resource; during the first phase of implementation, the resources are being used in many classrooms as the English/Language Arts Committee works to define the curricular blueprint for all students.

3. PARCC

Preliminary results from the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) test administered in spring 2017 were shared. PARCC is a Common Core aligned state-mandated assessment for students in grades 3-8. Only 91.6 percent of District 58 students participated in the test (the state requirement is 95 percent participation). Referencing a 2016 study done by NWEA of over 23,000 Illinois students that showed a strong correlation between MAP and PARCC scores, it was noted that District 58 scores are not correlating at the expected threshold. According to the study, students who perform at about the 62nd-70th percentile or higher on the MAP, depending on their grade level, are likely to meet or exceed standards on the PARCC. This indicates that students in District 58 are underperforming on the PARCC despite strong performances covering similar content areas on the MAP. The Board discussed possible reasons for the disparity, including the perception among some parents and students that the PARCC test doesn't matter, differences in testing platforms, the percentage of students opting out of PARCC, and students' relative unfamiliarity with the format of the test.

Members Miller and Hughes noted that real estate websites that rate schools in the community base their ratings on PARCC scores, so that PARCC results have an impact on how the community perceives the quality of District 58 schools.

Dr. Cremascoli expressed that the district may need a change in its approach to PARCC, recognizing that this particular measure is important as it relates to the community. She acknowledged that the district has not placed great emphasis on PARCC, especially because the delay in score reporting prevents the district from using scores to inform instructional decisions or class placement. In addition, our community has expressed significant concern about the PARCC test. Despite the lack of confidence that some members of our community have expressed in the PARCC, the district is required by the state to administer this assessment and the scores are used to rank schools and districts. Although the district has not pursued PARCC preparation activities in the past, it could explore ways to encourage students to approach PARCC with the same rigor and preparedness as they do other measures that evaluate their academic performance.

The Board further discussed possible approaches to PARCC and standardized testing in general. Member Harris and Vice President Sigale both remarked that the upcoming strategic planning process presents an opportunity to explore the community's opinions on standardized testing. President Purcell summarized the Board's desire to hear suggestions on how PARCC results might be improved. The Board stressed that they are happy with current instruction within the district and with student performance on the MAP, an assessment that is also aligned to the Common Core and includes the same academic content areas of the PARCC. As such, the Board indicated that they do not envision any drastic paradigm shifts regarding standardized testing. However, the Board would like to consider possible opportunities to shift negative attitudes toward PARCC and to help students succeed in all evaluation formats to accurately demonstrate what they have learned.

Mr. Sisul noted that if all standardized tests are aligned to common core standards, the district does not have to do anything different instructionally. However, adjustments in the district's approach to the PARCC assessment, in support for students taking the test, as well as in the community's support for the measure may be helpful. He affirmed that he would like the opportunity to work with teacher groups and administration to craft a unified message after exploring the data more in depth.

#### B. School Improvement Plans

School improvement plans from all District 58 schools were shared with the Board. School improvement plans are developed on an individual building level, based on data review, team discussions, and analysis of accomplishments and relative growth targets. The action-oriented format for school improvement plans is the same across the district, including the three goal areas of literacy, math and SEL.

### C. Curricular Developments

- a. Ongoing curricular work in English/Language Arts includes implementation of new resources through Phase 1 of the recently adopted Benchmark and StudySync curricula. Conversations regarding best practices of balanced literacy instruction are continuing both in district-wide professional development and at the building level.
- b. The Math Committee continues its work in year two of the math blueprint. Assessments are now available on all math topics in grades K through 8. Common assessments will be introduced to all grade levels this year, allowing for comparable data review across the district.
- c. STEM Committee members have been attending Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) training through the Regional Office of Education and have been working to identify resources to align with NGSS.
- d. The Middle School Exploratory Committee met for the first time in October to review current offerings, research offerings of other districts, and identify areas for refinement or revision of relevant exploratory opportunities for students.

### D. Parent Partnerships and Communication

Mr. Sisul outlined the highlights shared with parents at the three report card parent information nights:

- The history of the report card revisions, including the use of standards-based grading in Kindergarten through 8th grade and letter grades in 4th-8th grade.
- The inclusion of learner behavior assessments in all grade levels as well as revised descriptors and progress indicators.
- Online resources available for parents via the district website.
- The anticipated re-opening of the middle school parent portal during second quarter; the portal was deliberately closed for the first quarter to allow teachers time to implement the revised reporting system while ensuring that the online platform accurately reflected student achievement information.

### E. Title I and Title II Grants

Mr. Sisul provided an overview of Title I and Title II grants. Title I grants are distributed based on percentages of low-income children within a school. Four schools in District 58 receive Title I funds, which provide targeted support for students based on academic at-risk factors and needs. Title II grants are designated to provide improvement in teacher and instructional quality. The funds support professional development, committee work and grade level collaboration days across the district, and are shared with local private schools.

**3. RECEPTION OF VISITORS – with extended opportunity for Board of Education and Community Communications**

Addie Pampalone, Whittier parent, asked for guidance in interpreting her student’s contradictory MAP and PARCC scores.

Ellen Jorstad-Stein, Highland parent, commented that the correlation between MAP and PARCC scores is not necessarily a predictive relationship.

Amelia Hyde, Belle Aire parent, inquired about parent notification of standardized testing schedules so that parents can better prepare their children for testing.

Andrew Schmidt, DGEEA, commented that the teachers’ association would like guidance from the Board regarding its philosophy toward standardized testing so that teachers can shape their preparation and approach to testing before the 2018 PARCC is administered.

Tracy Weiner, Henry Puffer parent, commented on news coverage of PARCC and asked how the community could best give its input regarding standardized testing.

**5. ADJOURNMENT**

Member Harris moved and Member Hughes seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.

VOICE VOTE

Motion carried

The meeting was adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

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Doug Purcell, President

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Melissa Jerves, Secretary