

The Board of Education, Downers Grove Grade School District 58, DuPage County, Illinois met for a curriculum workshop/special meeting on Monday, February 26, 2018 at Henry Puffer School; 2220 Haddow 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 and Beth Taylor. Member Jill Samonte was absent. Also in attendance were Kari Cremascoli, Superintendent; Jayne Yudzentis, Assistant Superintendent for Personnel; 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 44 visitors. (Visitors' Roster attached to official minutes.)

2. FLAG SALUTE

Grove Children's Preschool students Grace Hurckes, Marco LaVia, Sara Lopez and Julia Burgette led the Board and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance, and then performed a song. Preschool Coordinator Jackelyn Cadard highlighted several community partnerships that Grove Children's Preschool has developed to provide additional learning experiences: Willowbrook Wildlife Center; the Downers Grove Police Department; the Downers Grove Fire Department "Learn Not to Burn" program; and the Downers Grove Public Library, which hosted Family Fun Night and allowed families to learn about library resources. She reported that the preschool has adopted the ECERS-3, Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, which looks at high quality environmental factors that affect early childhood achievement. Staff have spent 2.5 days in training, and have been focusing on staff interactions and embedding reading skills into activities. Ms. Cadard noted that parent partnerships are fostered through activities such as Family Fun nights, VIP Day, parent volunteering, field trips, library story time, and an end-of-year picnic. Member Harris commented that in his experience as a parent, Grove Children's Preschool is a high-quality program that prepares children for kindergarten.

3. CURRICULUM WORKSHOP

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

1. NWEA-MAP

In response to a question from Member Sigale at the February 12 Board meeting, Mr. Sisul began his presentation by explaining how MAP data is used by the District. MAP data can show how overall programs are serving students at the district level and the building

level. At the classroom level, MAP shows the achievement and growth of students and informs instructional decisions such as interventions and tier grouping. MAP also shows growth over time. Trends and patterns can be followed by grade level, class and school. Finally, MAP is used for individual student goal setting.

Mr. Sisul next defined terms, including RIT score, mean RIT, median RIT, achievement percentile, MAP growth and OPP (ratio of observed growth to total projected growth).

In reading, the achievement percentile shows that, as compared to all other schools with the same interval of instruction between Fall and Winter MAP administration, District 58 scores are at or above the 90th percentile. Considering that the District is in Phase One of its ELA curriculum implementation, the District will follow trends to see what effect that curriculum has on scores. In math, the growth has not been as high as reading, particularly at the intermediate grade levels. The data shows where the District needs to assess the curriculum, resources and instruction at particular grade levels, buildings and classroom levels.

2. PARCC

Mr. Sisul reported that the PARCC is the state-mandated assessment administered once a year to students in grades 3-8. This year the testing window is April 3-20. During the Fall Curriculum Workshop, he presented a study from the NWEA that shows a correlation between MAP and PARCC data. However, in District 58, students have not performed as well on PARCC as would be expected from their MAP scores. Preparation for PARCC this year includes a letter to parents, a video for students, and a website with resources for teachers to help prepare their students. Students will become familiar with the format of PARCC and practice using the digital tools available on sample questions. The District hopes to create a better energy around the assessment and encourage a “can-do” attitude in students and teachers.

3. Illinois Science Assessment

The District recently received the results from the past two years on the Illinois Science Assessment administered to 5th and 8th graders. The assessment is designed for programmatic evaluation, not for supporting teaching decisions regarding individual students.

4. Round Table Discussions

District 58 teachers and administrators led five short presentations on different curricular topics that the Board and community members rotated through in small groups:

- Elementary ELA (Benchmark Advance), led by teachers Amy Freitag, Megan Winnecke and Instructional Coach Nicole Ring
- Middle School ELA (StudySync), led by teacher Nicki Ferroli and

Instructional Coach Megan Ryder

- Primary Math, let by teacher Katie Hurckes and Instructional Coach Tim Frederickson
- Middle School Science/NGSS, led by teacher Jill Henry and instructional coach Lauren Prosser
- Parent Partnerships in Communication and Reporting, led by Assistant Superintendent for Personnel Dr. Jayne Yudzentis, Director of Innovative Technology and Learning James Eichmiller, and teachers Diane Claver, Emma Grisamore and Andy Schmidt

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

Brian Aycock, Fairmount attendance area, asked whether the District is in compliance with county and state regulations on how visitors are let into school buildings. Superintendent Kari Cremascoli responded that the District is in compliance. All schools are locked and visitors must be buzzed into the building and check into the office. Visitors must identify themselves and their purpose for visiting. About five years ago, the District looked into adding secure double-door vestibules, but those would require extensive renovation at a significant investment.

Rich Stachon, Henry Puffer attendance area, advocated for an increase in visual art instruction time to be more in line with neighboring districts.

Mike Webber, former Board member, congratulated the teachers and administrators who demonstrated the various curricula at the Round Table discussions. He commented that interpretations of MAP scores that focus solely on growth are misleading and do not reflect students who are below grade level. Mr. Webber stated that he believes the District is not accomplishing its curricular goal, set out in Board policy, to provide students with a mastery of ELA and math before promoting them to the next grade level. Dr. Cremascoli responded that it is not generally district practice to pursue retention of students who are below grade level, but instead to provide interventions and ongoing support for their growth and learning.

Emily Kao, Kingsley attendance area, noted that there is abundant research showing that smaller class sizes increase student achievement. She commented that Kingsley is challenged with some large class sizes this year and disruptions from the BEST program. She expressed concern that teachers are dealing with large class sizes with an over-reliance on technology, and that students are playing games that do not have an educational purpose. Dr. Cremascoli responded that each year, principals meet with Assistant Superintendent for Personnel Jayne Yudzentis to determine staffing and class sizes based on enrollment projections and other factors. Although the District-wide average class size is 23, that does mean that there is a range of larger and smaller classes. Dr. Yudzentis stated that enrollment discussions for next year have already begun, and will continue all year round. Depending on specific circumstances, sometimes higher enrollment is accommodated through combination classes, and sometimes through larger class

sizes. Dr. Cremascoli also stated that the Technology Committee continues to review the use of technology in the classroom and is planning ongoing professional development with teachers.

Michelle Sleboda, Henry Puffer attendance area, stated her concern that the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) have not gone into effect in the classroom. She asked how students will fill the gaps in their knowledge once those standards are implemented. Mr. Sisul responded that in K-6 classrooms, some NGSS standards have been implemented, but not all. He noted that science curriculum is the “next big thing” for the District. The state changed standards in every curricular area within a five-year period, and in response the District has spent two years implementing the Math Blueprint, and is in Phase I of implementing the new ELA curriculum. Mr. Sisul stated that it is important to give teachers sufficient time and professional development for the significant instructional shift that the NGSS requires.

Tracy Weiner, Henry Puffer attendance area, expressed frustration that the dip in math MAP scores in third-fifth grades is not a new trend and asked what the District’s plans are to address the lower scores. Mr. Sisul responded that the District will be looking to see whether instructional resources are aligned with the Math Blueprint, whether teachers have the correct and necessary resources, and whether those resources are being implemented or whether instructional practices need to be adjusted. He emphasized that neither finding the cause of the dip in scores nor implementing a solution is quickly accomplished.

Kelli Janczewski, Belle Aire attendance area, commented that the Math in Focus textbook ranked poorly among math curricular resources and asked when the District is going to invest in new math resources. Dr. Cremascoli responded that the District identified those weaknesses in Math in Focus a couple of years ago, which led to the development of the Math Blueprint and the addition of resources such as Engage New York. She noted that there is still work to be done by the Math Committee in this area.

Ellen Jorstad-Stein, Highland attendance area, asked how students who show low growth on MAP are identified and how long the process takes. Dr. Cremascoli stated that it starts with the classroom teacher, who works with the student. If a student continues to show low growth, the school’s problem solving team will consider what supports may be needed, and if necessary, whether a special education assessment is warranted. For students whose achievement is not low, but whose MAP growth remains stagnant, Dr. Cremascoli noted that a teacher can initiate small group differentiation and other classroom strategies to support the student.

Carrie Blonigen, Belle Aire attendance area, commented that the high test scores in kindergarten and first grade might correlate with the introduction of OKEEP. She stated that full-day kindergarten could be a good investment for the District.

A Henry Puffer parent asked how the District plans to prioritize topics that arose during the strategic planning focus groups. Member Sigale responded that the consultants are using a combination of the qualitative and quantitative data to

6. ADJOURNMENT

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

VOICE VOTE

Motion carried

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 p.m.

Doug Purcell, President

Melissa Jerves, Secretary