

The Board of Education, Downers Grove Grade School District 58, DuPage County, Illinois met for a curriculum workshop on Monday, October 25, 2021, at O’Neill Middle School. The meeting was live streamed to the public on the District 58 YouTube channel.

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The President called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and announced that it was a curriculum workshop of the District 58 Board of Education. Members present: President Darren Hughes; Vice President Gregory Harris; and Members Kirat Doshi, Emily Hanus, Steve Olczyk, and Tracy Weiner. Member Melissa Ellis arrived at 7:02 p.m. Members absent: none. Also in attendance were Kevin Russell, Superintendent; Jayne Yudzentis, Assistant Superintendent for Personnel; Justin Sisul, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; James Eichmiller, Assistant Superintendent for Technology and Learning; Jessica Stewart, Assistant Superintendent for Special Services; Todd Drafall, Assistant Superintendent for Business/CSBO; Sonali Patil, Manager of Business Services; Kevin Barto, Director of Buildings and Grounds; Megan Hewitt, Coordinator of Community Relations; and Melissa Jerves, Board Secretary.

2. CURRICULUM WORKSHOP

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Justin Sisul began the presentation with an overview of District committee work for the 2021-2022 year. Brief reports from each subcommittee were presented:

- Writing: Curriculum Coordinator Christine Priester
- Grades 6-8 Social Studies: Teacher Ashley Herald
- Grades K-5 Social Studies: Curriculum Coordinator Eleni Gajewsi
- STEM/Science: Teacher Kelly DeMarco
- SEL Curricular Audit: Justin Sisul
- Math: Interventionist Katie Hurckes
- Dual Language: Curriculum Coordinator Matthew Jewell
- Gifted: Justin Sisul
- Differentiation and Assessment: Assistant Superintendent for Special Services Jessica Stewart
- Innovative Learning and Technology: Assistant Superintendent for Technology and Learning Dr. James Eichmiller

Mr. Sisul reviewed the school improvement planning process for the year, which includes two District-identified goals, the implementation of math curricular resources and positive psychology initiative, and one building-based goal. The measurement of goals this year is not directly tied to growth or achievement, but to the fidelity of implementation. In the future, measurement will include both implementation and outcomes. Fairmount Principal Lisa Niforatos then explained

how Fairmount staff are implementing the school improvement process.

Instructional Coach Jenny Lehotsky reported on the instructional coaching program, now in its ninth year. Each of the four coaches is assigned to three school buildings and two grades of math. They provide teachers with universal coaching in many forms, such as Professional Learning Mondays, on demand training, modeling lessons, planning and implementing curriculum, and technology integration. Teacher Molly McDanel also shared with the Board her experience of coaching from a teacher's perspective and noted that she has shared strategies she has learned with her colleagues.

Mr. Sisul then reported that the key performance indicators (KPI) defined in the current strategic plan expired in spring of 2021. The District is working with John Gatta from ECRA to define potential measures of student success. In its work on the Portrait of a Graduate, the Curriculum Council has drafted six descriptors that will be the foundation used to generate KPIs in conjunction with the strategic plan:

- Academics (achievement and growth)
- Social-Emotional Competency
- Critical Thinking
- Citizenship and Collaboration
- Resilience/perseverance/lifelong learning
- Communication

These draft descriptors and potential measurements will be discussed with the Board, the District Leadership Team, administrators, and the Curriculum Council, with a goal of formal implementation of KPIs in April or May 2022.

A further review of fall assessment data was presented, with a focus on Grade 1, which was most discrepant from historical data. Aimsweb literacy data in fall 2021 identified 42% of first graders at high risk for not meeting their grade level reading goals for the year. In comparison, in 2018-19 (the most recent full school year unaffected by the pandemic), fall data identified 32% of first graders at high risk. At that time, District 58 supplemented core reading instruction with a variety of supports and interventions. By spring 2019, only 8% of students remained at high risk. This year, in addition to these typical supports and interventions, schools have added multiple elements to the first grade core reading instruction, including foundational skills groups; incorporation of additional resources such as Jolly Phonics, Michael Heggerty or sight word instruction; and increased focus on phonemic awareness instruction.

Similar data review and strategies are being applied at every grade level to address unfinished learning. Winter benchmarking in January 2022 will provide data on which to base potential adjustments to instruction. While there is not an exact timeline to know when learning gaps have closed, winter and spring data will be reviewed at every level for overall growth and increased achievement. The adoption of new KPIs will also help assess progress. If gaps are not closing quickly enough, implementation of further supports will be considered.

The Illinois School Report Card's initial release on October 29 will only contain data on enrollment, demographics, attendance and finance. Because District 58 postponed its spring 2021 assessments to fall 2021, that data will not be released until April. ACCESS assessments completed by District 58 English learner students will be released on December 2, 2021.

Mr. Sisul completed the workshop with an explanation of equity ratings from GreatSchools.org. GreatSchools bases its ratings exclusively on data from the Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR). As a result of the pandemic, the most recent achievement data is from Spring 2019 and growth data compares Spring 2018 to Spring 2019. To calculate a school's equity rating, GreatSchools compares the achievement and growth of a group they identify as "disadvantaged" (5% of students in the school population who share a demographic) to the achievement and growth of all student groups in a particular school. In contrast, ISBE defines a group as 10% of students assessed. The IAR is only administered in grades 3-8. District 58 has small schools, which means that if a few students from a smaller demographic group score higher or lower than the school as a whole on the IAR, it can have an outsize effect on the ratings that GreatSchools assigns.

The District's IAR results have steadily improved since 2018. District 58 focuses on addressing achievement and growth gaps for all students by using student assessment and informal data to equitably identify individualized interventions. The District will conduct an equity audit this year to ensure that all students have equitable access to all educational opportunities. In November and December, the District will conduct surveys and in-person focus groups on equity in District 58.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ami Johanson, Pierce Downer attendance area, asked whether class size increases in first grade classrooms are being addressed, and whether the District has looked at the students enrolling in advanced math from an equity standpoint. Dr. Russell responded that these kinds of concerns are the reason for the equity audit.

Brian Sewell, Whittier attendance area, commented that math and science outcomes in 2018-2019 were very poor. He asked when scores will improve and what would be an acceptable target. Mr. Sisul responded that, due to the suspension of testing during the pandemic, the District does not yet have data to assess current progress. However, since the 2018-2019 assessments, the District has implemented new math and science curricular resources and has changed its approach to standardized testing to familiarize students with the format of the IAR and encourage a positive attitude. Targets for improvement will likely be new key performance indicators, as the previous ones have expired. Mr. Sewell also asked what the impediments are to expanding instructional hours. Dr. Russell responded that current collective bargaining agreements prevent expanding the instructional day, and noted that District 58 has a longer day than the state requires.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS

President Hughes announced the following dates:

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 3:45 p.m.	Legislative Committee Meeting Longfellow
Friday, Nov. 5, 7 a.m.	Financial Advisory Committee Meeting Longfellow
Monday, Nov. 8, 7 p.m.	Regular Board Meeting Village Hall

5. ADJOURNMENT

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

ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES: Members Doshi, Ellis, Hanus, Harris, Hughes,
Olczyk, and Weiner
NAYS: None Motion carried

The meeting was adjourned at 9:59 p.m.

Darren Hughes, President

Melissa Jerves, Secretary