

Teaneck Public Schools District Advisory Team

District Advisory Team Meeting Minutes for March 3, 2014

Present:

Bryant School	Brenda Avery
Hawthorne School	Rebecca Alston, Florence Mitchell Brown
Lowell School	No attendee
Whittier School	Vanessa Bing
Ben Franklin Middle School	Tamika Francis
Thomas Jefferson Middle School	Flo Mitchell Brown for Chondra Young
Teaneck High School	Denise Sanders

Ms. Pinsak began the meeting at 7:05 pm with an update regarding the Solar Panel situation.

Solar Panels

Ms. Pinsak stated that the District doesn't own the solar. They lease our property and the district receives a reduction in energy costs. We were very specific and very concerned about getting the solar panels removed. We had to get a court order to ask the Judge to help us with the subcontractors to remove the solar panels and structure that fell at Bryant and Benjamin Franklin Middle School. A forensic engineer is investigating but hasn't determined if the fault was in the structure or design. We installed fencing around the solar at Bryant and BFMS and posted a security person to insure that students and staff are safe in the surrounding area. A solar update went to parents and posted on the website. As we move through the process, I am going to continue to post updates on the website. Parents inquired if the solar was still live electrically? Ms. Pinsak responded that the solar electricity has been turned off. The Teaneck Police have continued to work with the district facilities manager to secure the area. We have roped off Hawthorne and Thomas Jefferson solar areas because we are not taking any chances for safety of our students or staff. The panels are being removed at Bryant and BFMS and stored in a safe place.

Negotiations

Ms. Pinsak reported that on February 6, 2014, a meeting with TTEA negotiating team, Board negotiations committee and Super Conciliator was scheduled. The TTEA Negotiations Committee and the Board Negotiations Committee waited until 8:30 pm for the Super Conciliator to arrive at the Board Office. We tried to contact the super conciliator by telephone and email. He responded the following day indicating that he forgot to place the meeting on his calendar. The super conciliation has been rescheduled for March 13, 2014.

Teacher and Principal Evaluation

Ms. Pinsak reported that the evaluation of the teachers and principals has begun in-district. Highlights for the principal and teacher evaluation are on the State Department website. The Teacher evaluation corresponds to teachers in tested grades 4-8 and teachers in non-tested grades K-3. Although, third grade is a tested grade but no data available so grade 3 teachers are not part of the tested group. A PowerPoint Presentation is available on the State Department website: AchieveNJ Educator Evaluation.

Teacher Evaluation

Ms. Pinsak continued, for example, if a teacher gets a score in literacy and math and not necessarily averaged together then there is a range for student growth. The Department of Education grades 30 percent of the evaluation for the final score. Parents inquired if the Special Education teachers are evaluated the same way? Ms. Pinsak responded that yes they are evaluated the same as general education teachers. Ms. Pinsak continued that non-tested grades have to create two student growth objectives with DIBELS, DRA (District Reading Assessment) or other assessments. Teachers of non-tested grades and subjects are required to set at least two SGO's (Student Growth Objectives); a teacher's ability to meet or exceed his or her SGOs counts for 15 percent of the overall evaluation. Teachers of tested grades and subjects are required to set at least one SGO (Student Growth Objective); a teacher's ability to meet or exceed his or her SGO (s) counts for 15 percent of the overall evaluation. Observations counts for 55 percent of teacher practice. Non-tested teacher observations are weightier at 85%.

Principal Evaluation

The Principal Evaluation is much more dependent on achievement of the students. Teachers in tested grades get student growth percentile and so do principals. There are three configurations.

1. Multi-grade to middle school principals who have two or more Student Growth Percentile (SGP) grades or subjects. Multi-grade score of fifty percent for student achievement and 30 percent on Student Growth Percentile of the teachers. Ten percent of the Student Growth Objectives that the teachers make in the school. Ten percent on the achievement of the administrative goals. Thirty percent for summative observation meeting or walk-through. Twenty percent leadership they show in evaluating the show in evaluating and professional development opportunities provided for staff.
2. Single-grade to elementary principals no benchmark before third grade.
3. Non-SGP (Student Growth Percentile) principals are at Bryant School and the high school. The HSPA doesn't count at the high school. There is no benchmark for the HSPA test. Scoring is 40 percent Goals, 10 percent Student Growth Objective (SGO), 30 percent Observation and 20 percent educational leadership.

Our understanding from the State Department is that this is the last year that we will be administering the HSPA. Ms. Francis inquired if the testing would go the way of the New York Regents exams?

Ms. Pinsak responded that yes but the State Department isn't sure what they will do or whether they will use the PSAT or SAT scores.

Website

Ms. Pinsak reported that E-Alerts have been setup with instructions on the District Website for parents or community members (E-Alert directions **attached**) to become effective on March 17, 2014.

Reports from each building representative summarizing the key points of the latest BQMT meeting, including questions, comments and/or concerns for the district team.

Ms. Sanders reported the Minutes of the Teaneck High School BQMT (attached). Mr. Heck gave an update of the school target goals for proficiency. The high school met their target goals. Ms. Sanders continued that the BQMT Committee want to help the school reach their yearly goals. Ms. Pinsak inquired if Mr. Heck shared with the BQMT the document that replaced the school report card and how they are doing in the Student Growth Percentile. There is movement in the right direction at the high school. Some colleges and universities don't use the S.A.Ts that is why we have started giving the PSATs in two grade levels. Ms. Sanders continued that Math increased to 83% proficiency and the BQMT Committee asked how we could increase the proficiency to 90%. Ms. Sanders continued that the counselors were meeting with students who need assistance. Ms. Pinsak stated that the high school has increased the number of students who are graduating without the alternative assessment. Ms. Sanders concluded that the high school Ambassadors visited the middle school and there was a miscommunication about their role at Thomas Jefferson Middle School. However, plan is in place to invite the Ambassadors to speak to middle school parents and students. Ms. Mitchell-Brown, TJMS Representative, will report this information to the TJMS BQMT Committee.

Ms. Flo Mitchell-Brown reported the Minutes of the Thomas Jefferson Middle School BQMT (attached). The BQMT Committee wanted to know if changes could be made at the buildings to engage students when they don't have recess during inclement weather. When there isn't enough supervision, students are not engaged get into mischief. Ms. Pinsak responded that all schools have goals about the climate and input is part of the observation and evaluation. Ms. Pinsak had a meeting with the middle school principals to look at recess and time schedule. She researched other districts who do not have recess and we are currently looking at what we may change to guarantee all students have art 7/8, get a certain amount of chorus, public speaking. TJMS is interested in revisited their system. BFMS is not interested, the administration agreed that they have a good system in place. Ms. Francis stated that she would speak to the BFMS administration and the choices students have when indoors for recess during inclement weather. The parents are not aware that the students have choices, their understanding is that the students go to the auditorium. Ms. Mitchell-Brown stated that the BQMT Committee would try to come up with some remedies across the district to keep students engaged and safe.

Ms. Pinsak concluded that she would work with TJMS administration as a pilot. Ms. Mitchell-Brown responded that something could be built into the curriculum for the students. Ms. Mitchell-Brown continued that professionals could be brought into the schools during the winter months to speak to the students about their success. Dr. Bing stated that many of the local colleges have professors who have expertise and could be invited into the schools. Ms. Sanders stated that Sororities are a good source for mentoring groups and offer scholarships. Ms. Pinsak responded that our students were interviewed on ESPN on the subject of the "N" word in athletics. She attended the debriefing with our students and they learned a lot about filming. Ms. Mitchell-Brown concluded that she appreciated this forum with the Superintendent. Ms. Pinsak responded that the District Advisory Team as a group is very diligent.

Ms. Alston reported the Minutes of the Hawthorne BQMT (attached). The elementary school has the same issues with outdoor recess during cold weather. The gym is available for students to play games with supervision. Dr. Spollen-LaRaia reviewed the performance report with the BQMT Committee. She discussed with faculty and identified areas of strength in Language Arts and Math. She met with third and fourth grade teachers to identify students in need of support. Ms. Alston continued that Hawthorne students received approval to have a talent show. The show would be organized by students, staff and parents. The Working Parents Association will have structured activities in the cafeteria for students who can't go outside during inclement weather. Dr. Spollen-LaRaia addressed the pickup and drop-off issue due to the snow making the roads narrow. She reminded parents not to double park because they would be ticketed by the police. Ms. Alston continued that they suggested a homework club, spelling bee, math bee similar to the continental math. Go Math is working very well. The Hawthorne Book Fair funds would be used to purchase Mimio Software and a review of the budget to purchase ELMOs.

Ms. Alston concluded that they will reach out to Ms. Miller-Porter to request a Terpsichorean performance to benefit the elementary students in our schools.

Ms. Brady reported the Minutes of the Whittier BQMT (attached). Attendance is a problem, parents are unhappy about receiving letters about their children's numbers of recorded tardies. Ms. Pinsak responded that College and Career Readiness is based on one factor, the attendance of percentage of X number of days absent. Ms. Brady continued that some parents travel for a month at a time. Ms. Pinsak responded that excused or unexcused in N.J. SMART reporting is picked up as absent. College visits, death in family these absences determines your score for college and career readiness. Ms. Pinsak continued that the principals, after X number of days absent, they have to come up with a plan for students with a report to the agency, truant to include cumulative unexcused absences of 10 or more. Ms. Brady inquired about the number of days that prohibits a student from moving up to the next grade. Ms. Pinsak responded that they are strict with graduation. Nine (9) absences from one course no credit received. The elementary level is after 18 days absent; the principal determines if that student goes into the next grade. Ms. Mitchell- Brown asked if suspensions count towards absences? Ms. Pinsak responded that she will find out if suspensions count. The schools have a code of conduct that they follow regarding suspensions.

Ms. Brady reported that the Whittier BQMT Committee inquired about the upcoming testing online rather than pencil and paper test. Are the students getting the typing experience they will need for testing? Are we getting more technology in the school? We need more communication between the school and the parents. We need phone blasts or emails and we have to encourage parents to sign up in Skyward and for the website alerts. Ms. Brady continued that there is a concern that they have only 3 classes of 4th grade with 24-25 students in a class. The 3rd grades are distributed in four classes with 22-23 students. Ms. Brady concluded that to improve Literacy, they are encouraging more reading buddies. High School students and athletes could read to the elementary students. Ms. Pinsak suggested reaching out to the middle school Junior Honor Society.

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In conclusion, Ms. Brenda Avery joined the District Advisory Team representing Bryant School and as a new member she will report at the next meeting. Ms. Alston, Hawthorne School representative officiated her first WebEx/webcast meeting with PTA parents who could not meet face to face but joined the meeting virtually.

Next Meeting: March 25, 2014

Respectfully submitted by Linda Kuhran