

Synopsis of Sunday with the Superintendent October 18, 2015

Ms. Pinsak opened the meeting with the discussion of testing data. The district science for 4th grade increased slightly. We are seeing slow but steady progress compared to the state and district factor group. State scores, our scores and district factor group scores are lower in eighth grade than 4th grade. We don't think the answer is that no one teachers science after 4th grade. There is a big disconnect in the testing and it is dependent on reading after the 4th grade. We do not blame our students who are classified but we have to do better with our students with IEPs. There are concerns with in-class support students. They are in the least restrictive environment and we should be doing better. Students with in-class support should be proficient or advanced proficient.

Parents inquired about what is DFG?

Ms. Pinsak responded that it is the District Factor Group which is determined by the wealth in the community. Teaneck is in the GH factor group for New Jersey and compared to other districts in the same factor group.

Ms. Pinsak reported that in Biology our scores have increased and we are closing the gap between the district factor groups so we are ahead of the state. This was reported at the October 14, 2015 Board Meeting.

Ms. Pinsak reported that students and parents are logging into Skyward. The Skyward Log-ins for 2014-15 totaled 207,524 for students and parents combined.

Ms. Pinsak reported that edConnect NJ is the Department of Education's online platform with Pearson Schoolnet. This platform is going to help us disaggregate our data that we wanted to do with Performance Tracker but that didn't work for us. We are now getting demographic data live from edconnectNJ. We trained a group of administrators who will turnkey train other administrators by the end of November. From edconnectNJ we can get student absences which can be chronic due to families who take their students out of the country for long vacations during the school year.

Parents inquired about if the student would be removed from the rolls if absent for a period of time?

Ms. Pinsak responded that we have procedures to follow and there are truancy reports but not a removal from school unless a parent takes a child out of district to homeschool.

Parents inquired about if the absenteeism ties into graduation requirement?

Ms. Pinsak responded that it does affect the requirement for graduation and the student could not graduate. A high school student who missed a number of days for a course could not get a grade for that course. There are 140 course credits required to graduate. The student would have to complete the credits during the summer.

Parents reported that while watching the Board Meeting at home on October 14th, the video streaming lost the feed during the achievement presentation.

Ms. Pinsak responded that she would inform the technology department.

Synopsis of Sunday with the Superintendent October 18, 2015

Parents stated that the presentation about achievement was not on the agenda, not posted. If the community knew the Board would be discussing growth that might encourage people to come to the Public Meeting.

Parents stated that they were pleased with the online scheduling of parent/teacher conferences. The system worked well with the intelligence to tell you if there was an error.

Parents recommended for the fall of 2016 that AP U.S. History of one year to be completed in two years. The volume of information intimidates students to take the Advanced Placement course. This would allow more students to participate in the AP U.S. History class for two years. Next year's juniors could start to take AP U.S. History and complete it in their senior year. Other high schools conduct the class in two years as Part I and Part II.

Parents inquired about the Virtual High School (VHS) courses. There are no AP summer classes but the course guide of the Virtual High School indicated AP Physics 1 and AP Physics C. Could students be allowed to take AP Physics 1 over the summer at the high school? Or could the students take the online class elsewhere for Honors classes or regular classes over the summer?

Ms. Pinsak responded that students could take virtual classes elsewhere from a reputable, reliable place. We have six students taking online courses but she would check with Guidance. We started the online courses as recovery but it didn't work out well as students in course recovery continued the same behaviors that prevented them from completing the course, although some did complete the coursework. Those students that can handle it are taking online AP courses in addition to other courses in the high school.

Parents inquired about the online courses that are not offered at the high school and if enrollment would be open to all students?

Ms. Pinsak responded that the courses would have to be put in policy if they are not offered at the high school. The district pays for online courses that students take during the school year. She didn't know if the district would pay for summer online courses that would depend on the cost. Ms. Pinsak continued that she would look into it. We want students to be successful. We put student supports at the high school but some students wait for the last couple of weeks to complete the course.

Parents inquired about whether teachers would monitor the students over the summer? Parents continued that her child was told that she couldn't take VHS Virtual online course over the summer because there was no one to monitor. Then her child applied for the online course for September. A few days before school started, the student was told that they were sorry but she couldn't take the online course because there was no one at THS to monitor the student. When the student logged on, she found that she was still registered. Three weeks into the course, she was told she could now begin the course. This affected the child due to the extra make-up work to catch up in the Creative Writing course.

Synopsis of Sunday with the Superintendent October 18, 2015

Ms. Pinsak responded that we lost the position in the College and Career Center and we had to assign people to that position and look at all items Ms. Schachter did for students. We are stipending Ms. Witter from the FORUM to do community projects and senior service. A guidance counselor could check in with the student every so often to see if they need support although student is a self-starter.

Parents stated that VHS courses are half year and full year conducted in the fall and spring. She would have a conversation with the high school administration regarding the application process.

Parents reported that the meeting conducted for S.A.T. Prep class was confusing because parents who arrived at the 6pm start time had registered and paid for the program. The meeting did not begin until 6:30 pm because they were waiting for other parents to arrive. The parents found out that their children who were scheduled for the AM session were moved to the PM session but parents had made adjustments to their work schedules for the AM session and had paid by the registration date. Lastly, the students were told to go to the high school between 1pm and 3pm to receive their scores but when the students arrived, they were told to come back at a later time to get their scores and their refund.

Ms. Pinsak responded that she was shocked and that this occurrence is quite unusual.

Update: we spoke to the high school FORUM Director regarding the change of S.A.T. schedule for some students. Mr. Campestre clarified that the S.A.T. Prep teachers asked that the students be grouped by their PSAT scores not at the request of the Superintendent but the additional sessions were funded by the Superintendent's Office.

Parents responded that when the students did receive their scores back they were very excited that they had met the teachers who were wonderful during the program and are in the teacher's English class.

Parents stated that would the district consider class for the ACT over the summer? Parents continued that some students did better on the ACT and some did best on the S.A.T.

Ms. Pinsak responded that the S.A.T. will be modified.

Parents responded that during the PSAT at 10:45 am students were on the bleachers while the PSAT was being administered in the high school.

Student responded that some classes were missing scoring sheets.

Parents reported that in grades 10 & 11, the students were filling out bubble sheets for the PSAT prior to the test.

Parents inquired about when did this start because in the past the bubble sheets were completed right before the PSAT session began. Parents were not happy that this was done during instructional time.

Ms. Pinsak responded that the parents should bring this issue to the Building Quality Management Team (BQMT).

Synopsis of Sunday with the Superintendent October 18, 2015

Parents inquired about the graduation requirements and how are students doing on the PSAT now that we are not using the HSPA?

Ms. Pinsak responded that this is the year to get squeezed for students with IEPs who take the assessments. We have 60 students who have not met the requirements and just took the SAT. We are monitoring very carefully. Next year's seniors will have had two years of SAT and two years of PARCC testing which is an advantage. These 2015-16 students are in a vise.

Parents inquired about what does that mean "2015-16 students are in a vise"?

Ms. Pinsak responded that the year before last year we gave the 11th grade assessment for a graduation diploma. The State Department moved it all to PARCC in Language Arts and Mathematics in various years. We don't have the results of the PARCC. The high school administration called the students at risk and offered to administer the SAT to them again.

Parents inquired about regardless of the results of the PARCC are students scheduled to take the PARCC this year?

Ms. Pinsak responded yes, the students will take it once in two administrations but for the same amount of time. New Jersey starts in September and goes through June.

Parents responded that it is a mandate and we don't have a choice.

Ms. Pinsak responded that we gave our own Algebra 1 exam. The State Department stopped giving the Algebra 1 exam by Measurement, Inc. We had students who opted out of the Algebra 1 test. They didn't come to school and refused to make up the Algebra 1 exam. This is the first time this has happened and opting out didn't help the students at all. It affected the grades of about 20 students.

Parents inquired about when they would receive the Biology individual score reports for parents?

Update: The high school Guidance Office has received the Biology score reports and are in the process of preparing the mailing to parents.

Parents stated that although I am a band parent, it is very sad that the football team is not doing well.

Student stated that they are not motivating themselves. Someone should step in to motivate them.

Parents responded that there is a new coach.

Ms. Pinsak responded that we had new coaches this year and last year's coach is no longer with us. Underclassmen might be showing promise. Some students could think about playing football but they don't want to play. We are not recruiting students to play. I hope that students are getting good grades and are physically fit.

Synopsis of Sunday with the Superintendent October 18, 2015

Parents responded that Teaneck allows everyone who is interested to join the team and play. Parents attended a meeting that the trainer, Dr. Cieslak, gave great information about nutrition and health. We need more team building activities for camaraderie between Jr. Varsity and Varsity to build self confidence.

Ms. Pinsak responded that she would bring the idea to Mr. Sinclair, Athletic Director.

Parents stated that the Teaneck Public Schools Music Department from the very beginning of her daughter's music career has been outstanding.

Student responded that she has studied the flute since 4th grade in the Teaneck Public Schools and is attending Julliard's Advancement Program. The student continued that she has to thank the Teaneck Public Schools Music Department. They have helped her in her music career to get to where she is today.

Parents stated that the Summer College Essay Writing course should take place every year.

Parents reported that she enrolled her son in a summer college course in New York as a freshman in hopes that during his junior year the information he absorbed would be useful and remove that stigma of essay writing. The student should know that it is common to do not only during English class.

Ms. Pinsak responded that summer college essay course is always taught by our best teachers. Students complete at least one or two college essays. Students are juniors who attend.

Parents responded that students need help to get over the fear as freshmen to teach them longevity, rigor and the stick-to-it-ness for a number of years and it is a life skill.

Ms. Pinsak responded that is a good conversation for the BQMT Meeting at THS.

Parents responded that they would definitely bring it to the Building Quality Management Team (BQMT).

Parents inquired about before-school clubs for students who have sports after school.

Ms. Pinsak responded that there have been before-school clubs but it depends on if the teacher is available before school as the advisor.

Parents inquired about why Teaneck doesn't have uniforms?

Ms. Pinsak responded that a lot of districts don't have uniforms. A number of parents were adamantly against uniforms in Teaneck.

Parents inquired about how do we present our request for uniforms?

Ms. Pinsak responded that is a good conversation to have and we could have a forum at the PTO meeting and Ms. Pinsak would attend. The question becomes how do you regulate if parents decide not to send

**Synopsis of Sunday with the Superintendent
October 18, 2015**

their child to school in a uniform? Ms. Pinsak continued that she has been told by parents that they would never send students to school in uniforms and if we enforce uniforms, it has to be an agreement by all parents/guardians.

Parents responded that in some districts the students had color coded dress code. They have spoken to Ms. Abrew, Principal at Bryant School and she was supportive.

Ms. Pinsak responded that you could begin by polling the parents at Bryant School to agree or disagree whether or not to institute uniforms in Teaneck.

Attachments: Testing Information
Skyward Logins
edconnectNJ

Next Meeting – November 15, 2015 at 2pm

Respectfully submitted by Linda Kuhran