



Board of Education Meeting
November 10, 2015

2015-2016 Board of Education
Katy Keohane Glassberg, President · Chris Repetto, Vice President
Karen Belanger·Blake Jines·Storey·Nancy Pasquale· Kelly Smith Powers·Nicole Weber

A Summary of the 11/10/15 Rye City School District Board of Education Meeting

Welcome to the Public

Board of Education President Katy Keohane Glassberg welcomed members of the public and stated there were three presentations on the agenda for the evening's meeting: the English 11 Honors and Regents Curricula, an update on Enrollment, and the status of the new elementary school report cards.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Dr. Frank Alvarez reported Superintendent's Conference Day on November 3rd was highly successful. Jim Sill, an international consultant from Australia, was the keynote speaker and presented on using creative technology in the classroom. There were 27 well-attended workshops all dealing with technology. He thanked Dr. Wyks, Kaitlyn Sassone, and Gabriella O'Connor for all their work in arranging the day.

Dr. Alvarez said that Dr. Wyks recently completed presentations to elementary school parents and staff on the new standards-based report cards. He stated that he believes there will still be some revisions to those report cards based on the input the District has received in the last few weeks.

Dr. Alvarez offered congratulations to the Rye Free Reading Room for their jointly-hosted, sold-out event: an appearance by Anthony Doerr, author of All the Light We Cannot See. During the day, students from the High School were able to have a dialogue with Doerr prior to his public appearance. The evening event, held at the MS/HS Performing Arts Center on November 5th, was sold out and drew over 700 people. He said the District looks forward to partnering with the RFRR on future events and thanked Pat Taylor for helping host the event.

Dr. Alvarez reported that at the last Board Meeting, the Board came back with additional questions about standardized testing. He said that the District would be addressing those questions. He reported the District would do a series of presentations throughout the course of the year to address some of the concerns raised by the Board.

Presentations/Discussions

English 11 Honors and Regents Curriculum Enhancement

Dr. Betty Ann Wyks introduced High School English Department Chair Christen Klewicki and High School AP English teacher Kelly Finn. Ms. Klewicki and Ms. Finn came before the Board to present on the revised English 11 Honors and Regents Curriculum. Please link to their presentation [here](#).

Ms. Klewicki stated the English Department met over the summer to look at the English 11 curriculum that has been in place for 10 years, albeit with some changes made over time. The Department realized it needed to revise and enhance the curriculum to reflect the instructional shifts based on the Common Core Learning Standards which reflect the six shifts in ELA and literacy.

Ms. Klewicki noted this is the first year students from Rye High School will take the challenging new ELA NY State Regents Exam. She said there is no need to teach to the test, but it is a graduation requirement and the Department wants to make sure students are successful, can meet the standards and are college- and career-ready.

Ms. Finn said there are six fundamental shifts and that she and Ms. Klewicki will go through them. The first shift is "Balancing Informational and Literary Text." For the most part, the Department has always taught a core, literature text. The shift is to ask students to read a balance of informational and literary texts. Informational texts include speeches, essays, political cartoons and articles.

The second shift is in "Knowledge in the Disciplines," which applies more to content areas, but also in the classroom. The shift means students are building knowledge by uncovering meaning through different kind of texts, rather than through the teacher-driven activities.

The third shift is the "Staircase of Complexity." The Department is confident it has always done this well. There is a central, grade-appropriate text the entire class reads, and instruction is centered around the text. This provides opportunity to encourage the close reading that is important for students as readers in general but also for the Common Core English Regents exams. Ms. Klewicki noted these shifts, reflective of the Common Core, are things that teachers have been doing, but they might shift the focus as a result. For example, the Department has always had students pull evidence from texts to support their claims. Now they are pulling from informational texts and non-fiction, which gets them used to evaluating a viewpoint, recognizing a *persona* and point of view, writing from sources, and incorporating more non-fiction sources.

Ms. Klewicki noted the Department has always used Academic Vocabulary in English classes, but is using it more intentionally with things such as rhetorical appeal. She said that when students write an appeal, they write emotional appeals, appealing to *pathos* or take a more rational approach appealing to *logos*, but now teachers are giving them the language so they that can identify it explicitly and with intention.

Ms. Finn noted two primary goals for the revised curriculum. The first was to incorporate additional informational texts linked by topic or a theme and challenge students to synthesize information from a variety of sources to develop more informed and complex viewpoints. Ms. Klewicki stated the second was to increase class time in a couple of areas: critically analyzing informational sources and interpreting and utilizing rhetorical strategies to compose augmentative essays. She noted students have always written persuasive essays or literary analysis essays, but teachers are now trying to build students' strategies for arguing effectively and persuasively using evidence.

Ms. Klewicki offered the core text The Crucible as an example of how they revised the unit. In the past, the Department might ask students to take a reading quiz to check reading comprehension, to keep a Character Journal to track character development and to write a Literary Analysis Essay. She noted these are all important assessments, but over the summer, the Department decided that, while keeping The Crucible as the core text, they would bring in other sources, too. Students are now asked to rely upon those other sources to back up and synthesize their analysis of the core text. Examples included the Declaration of Independence and "Why I Wrote The Crucible," by Arthur Miller. She said students still do assessments, like passage analysis paragraphs, which get them to write thoughtfully and look at various techniques, but the two main assessments are different now. One is now more like a Closing Argument where students utilize rhetorical strategies and evidence from the play to compose a persuasive argument to defend one of the accused witches. Students must be completely clear on the facts of the play and must bring in strategies to persuade their peers. Ms. Finn noted this requires awareness of audience and for students to adjust a presentation accordingly. Ms. Klewicki noted that although this was a written assignment, many of the students chose to recite their pieces as well.

Ms. Klewicki said the other new assessment is an Argumentative Synthesis Essay. This year, students were asked to incorporate evidence from a variety of informational sources and from the play, to address the question, "why does *The Crucible* remain so popular?" decades after its creation. Students had numerous sources and articles to draw from to discuss what it is about the conflict and history that makes this play speak to us in a contemporary world.

Ms. Finn noted the Department moved many years ago from a tracked model to a Regents and Honors (RH) model. She noted this is a point of

differentiation between the English Department and other disciplines. Regents and Honors students are integrated in the same classroom, and teachers are called upon to seamlessly and subtly integrate various levels during class time. She noted that it is a model the Department feels comfortable with because it has been in place for so long, and the primary focus is to make sure all students are being appropriately challenged.

Ms. Klewecki noted that regardless of whether students are on the Regents or Honors track, they all take the same New York State Common Core exam. The Department has seen that with the integrated model, students learn from one another, it raises the achievement of all and it creates a positive, inclusive environment. For example, students might be grouped together in heterogeneous groups for close study. The teachers vary reading and writing assignments and assessments. The Google Drive is another tool teachers use with the Honors students to push them. For example, there was an editorial that Arthur Miller wrote comparing the Salem Witch Trials to the Clinton Scandal. Honors students were assigned to read that on the Google Drive and respond, and the teacher could comment back just to them and they could complete some revisions. She noted it was a nice way to dialogue with and challenge the Honors students.

Ms. Klewicki stated that another example of differentiation can be found in the final assessment, the Closing Argument. In this assignment, students were asked to use rhetorical strategies and evidence from the play to compose a persuasive argument to defend one of the accused "witches." Honors students incorporated appeals to *logos*, *ethos* and *pathos*, whereas Regents students incorporated at least two types of appeals. Honors students refuted opposing arguments and were responsible for verbally reciting their closing arguments, whereas for Regents students reciting their closing arguments is an option for additional credit. Classes are fairly evenly split, 13 and 13. She noted that the students were asked to fill out reflection sheets about the Honors students' presentations and what they learned from their peers in a positive way.

Ms. Finn said the Argumentative Synthesis essay is another example of differentiation. The assignment is to incorporate evidence from a variety of informational sources and from the play to address the following "Why does *The Crucible* remain so popular decades after its creation?" To differentiate this assignment, Honors students incorporate evidence from at least two of the four informational articles, whereas Regents students incorporate evidence from at least one of the informational articles. Honors students read one additional outside reading text, independent of class instruction, and there are Google Classroom assignments that encourage them read critically and have a dialogue with the instructor. She said that had proved to be very successful.

The presentation's last slide showed the structure of the NY State English Regents Exam. Ms. Klewicki noted it's very much a skill-based test, so

everything teachers do will help with the test. There is a multiple choice section with critical reading and multiple choice questions include distractors, similar to the SAT and AP exams. She said this does not require teachers to do anything different from what they are already doing: read high quality, authentic texts and get students engaged in using close reading. She said part two of the test is writing from sources, writing an evidence-based argument using a collection of authentic texts that relate to a specific event, topic or issue. The five authentic texts will most likely be informational non-fiction sources, so the Department is incorporating more non-fiction.

She noted the third part of the new exam is the text analysis, and it either will be fiction or non-fiction, usually non-fiction. Students are asked to analyze the technique being used. She noted these are not novel things; these are very authentic, skill-based assessments. Teachers just need to encourage as much reading and writing in the classroom as possible.

Ms. Klewicki concluded, saying the Department is excited to make these changes and feels this is an enhancement.

Ms. Pasquale asked about differentiation between the two curricula, that it was not explicit in the curriculum documents themselves, and that it would be helpful to see it captured within the documents.

Dr. Wyks responded that all the curriculum work is done on Rubicon Atlas, a software program, which allows a curriculum to be a fluid document. So as the year progresses, teachers have the ability to change the document. The document the Board received was created in August when it was submitted for initial approval. Dr. Wyks noted this happens with all our curriculum; pacing changes, information we get back from testing analysis, all result in tweaking to curriculum. Dr. Wyks noted that a lot of the discussion tonight from the High School teachers are things that she hears around our literacy efforts in the lower grades, so her hope is that the students will come to English 11 better prepared as the years go by.

Ms. Glassberg noted that curricula did not used to be living documents. She liked hearing about what the differentiation looks like. At the elementary level, parents are used to having lots of access to classroom, but that naturally declines with time. Including differentiation information in the curricula documents could be helpful for parents who are interested in how integrated models work, particularly when they are helping their students making choices about classes. She stated she liked the graphic representing the changes made to reflect Common Core.

Mr. Repetto stated that the shifts are important to people's understanding of the Common Core. He asked, "What, in your opinion, is the greatest shift?" Ms. Klewicki replied she believed the biggest change was bringing in more non-fiction. She said there are other things that come into play when you are examining non-fiction, but you must evaluate the source more critically, i.e.,

are they online or in print? She noted that they have been doing a lot of this. A lot of emphasis is now placed on the structure used and how that supports the argument. Dr. Wyks noted the Board would see some of the same things emerge in the next presentation on standards-based report cards, where teachers are looking for those higher level critical thinking skills and exposing students to a wider variety of genre and comparing and contrasting and synthesizing all the information.

Ms. Finn noted that she is teaching the AP Language and Composition course this year and she is finding things that are relevant in that course are relevant in the English 11 R H class - an awareness of audience, what is the author's purpose? So she noted they are looking at fiction in a different way in that class as well.

Ms. Belanger said she noted that a fair number of juniors did take AP language or AP literature, and it didn't used to matter in terms of prepping for the Regents because they always took it after 10th grade. It struck her that that AP Language and Composition was more focused on non-fiction. She asked, "what about AP literature? Is there enough non-fiction in that class?"

Ms. Klewicki said she used to teach AP language, and she has taught AP Literature for about four years, and the Department has always incorporated non-fiction. She stated the class is currently finishing up Joseph Conrad's A Heart of Darkness, and after that she has taught an "Image of Africa," by Chinua Achebe, which is a famous critical essay, shortly thereafter the class will watch a Ted Talk by a Nigerian writer called, "The Danger of a Single Story." She noted seniors will leave for their internships in the Spring, so teachers will then have very concentrated time with the Junior class, and while it's a different level of the class, they we will continue to bring in non-fiction sources.

Enrollment Report

Gabriella O'Connor then presented a report on current enrollment. Link to her presentation by clicking [here](#). Ms. O'Connor noted enrollment is measured by looking at BEDS day, which is a state-mandated day, set in early October, to determine the number of students enrolled. She said this is the number the District uses as a base for its enrollment reports to the State. Ms. Connor noted that enrollment always seems to be increasing in Rye. Looking at the BEDs day from last year to this, the District went from 3,379 to 3,374. She noted that during the end part of the budget discussion this year, we talked about including the District's Out of District students in our enrollment numbers, so that is a new number the District has included this year in the enrollment forecasts and figures.

Ms. O'Connor pointed to the "noodle slide" (slide 3) which indicates enrollment remains steady this year. She noted that she needs to update

the slide with '15-16 school year. She noted the next slide (slide 4) indicates that the District regularly exceeds its enrollment projections, despite using a demographer to try to predict enrollment. Ms. O'Connor noted we use predictions as a source document to have educated discussions during budget time. She noted the graph for grades K-5 shows the District enrollment numbers oftentimes exceed projections. Ms. O'Connor showed slides for K-12, 9-12, 6-8 and K-5. She noted the District seeing a dip K-5. Ms. Glassberg noted that the K-5 slide shows the greatest difference between prediction and actual numbers, reflecting the fact that District demographers typically struggle to accurately predict the number of incoming Kindergartners.

Ms. O'Connor noted her final slide gives a preliminary look at the 2016-2017 school year. She noted that Dr. Alvarez suggested taking the actual enrollment of 2014-15, and rolling every class forward, and then using the information from the demographer only to fill in the Kindergarten number to add a new metric. She noted that using this metric gives the District a greater number than what the demographer is saying is likely for next year. The District thinks Dr. Alvarez' suggested method may be a practical and helpful tool and might give us the most accurate predictions we have seen thus far.

Ms. Belanger said she noted that the demographer seems to be expecting increasing enrollment at the elementary level and declines in the Middle and High School and she finds that confounding. Ms. Glassberg stated that Bishop uses a formula for inward and outward migrations over the years. She noted those estimates became less and less stable after the financial crisis of 2008 when those inward and outward patterns changed, and she questioned whether the demography kept up. Karen Belanger said that recently the District has had inward migrations into the High School, which historically it didn't used to see.

Ms. Glassberg said the other thing to note is that it is possible that the District may currently enjoy a small period of stability in student enrollment numbers, but the Board will watch and see because the District has come through 10 years of extraordinary growth. Ms. O'Connor stated Bishop predicts a few years of stability, but then the numbers start to climb once more. Ms. Glassberg said this is a serious trend to watch for. She noted this may be similar to the time a few years ago when the District found itself in desperate need for more space at the MS/HS campus and that resulted in the addition and the new classrooms. She noted the District is currently very full in the elementary schools. She stated physical space is pretty close to being maxed out, and if it does continue to grow, the District is going to be in a position where the Board and Administration need to figure out some method of dealing with it, given the space constraints. She stated the administration took the Board on a tour of the three elementary schools two weeks ago, and it was obvious that every room is used to capacity. Karen Belanger noted that at current enrollment, some of the common spaces, particularly at

Midland, are already being used over capacity -- the common spaces are rated for much lower capacity than what they currently have. Ms. Glassberg noted it's important to have those conversations around how we adequately and appropriately provide space for all those students.

Ms. Weber and Ms. Glassberg thanked Ms. O'Connor for including out of district students in the enrollment. Ms. Glassberg said those are Rye City School District students who perhaps for purposes of educational needs are placed in another setting because as a relatively small school district we sometimes cannot meet student's unique needs. Small school districts can't provide the perfect environment for every student, but there are other school districts who do, so some students are educated out of district as a result. She noted historically, BEDs was driven on a building-by-building enrollment count. She said the reason it is important to count every student that we educate is that we need to budget for all students. She said those are regular Rye City School District students who are just not educated in one for the RCSD's five buildings. Ms. Pasquale noted that that population does sometimes move back and forth, so it's important to capture them as part of our population.

Elementary School Report Cards

Dr. Betty Ann Wyks next gave a presentation on revisions to Elementary Report Cards. Click [here](#) to link to the presentation. Dr. Wyks said she met the previous night with parents of students grades 3-5 and, earlier that day, with parents of students grades K-2, to explain the changes. She noted that night's presentation is a synthesis of the two presentations and provides an overview as to why the changes were made, the process the report card committee went about, some samples of report cards, and an update on the process.

Dr. Wyks asked, "why was the report card changed?" Since Dr. Wyks has been at the District, she has heard concerns from parents, faculty and staff that they felt the drop-down comments in the report card were rather impersonal and the grading wasn't necessarily aligned with standards. Benchmarks were made at individual grade levels at certain times of the year and then one particular score at one point in time was translated to a grade on the report card, and she said that's not necessarily the whole picture about a youngster. She noted during the presentation on Monday evening, one of the teachers who was on the committee, Amy Carman, likened it to comparing a snapshot versus a montage. She said you get a more holistic perspective when you have more information that feeds into it, so the District wants to provide a more holistic view of each child. She said it's important to understand where each child is in their educational career with respect to the standards. She noted the New York State standards are comprised of the Common Core standards – New York has done their own iteration of standards, so that became the District's basis.

Dr. Wyks stated that the District wants the report cards in a format more readily understood by parents, where the language is clear and concise and parents can interpret what the report card means with reduced educational jargon. She believes the report card will give parents an easier format to understand, and will address each child's performance relative to the standards of expectation in both the discipline and the grade level that they are at.

She asked, "What was the process for developing the report cards?" Dr. Wyks said the District began to develop the new report card with a committee of teachers and administrators. The committee contacted surrounding districts, the ones we typically compare ourselves to – the Scarsdales, Bronxvilles and Chappaquas, asked them for copies of their report cards across the grade levels to see if they were standards based, of if they were traditionally based, what their grading keys looked like, and what standards they extracted. She stated the Common Core standards at any grade level they are exhaustive, so we tried to pull out the ones that embodied a number of standards and embodied the prime things in each grade level.

Dr. Wyks said the Committee reviewed the report cards and worked to identify key standards in each grade to craft the new report cards. The committee was comprised of a lead teacher, Michelle Ring, and had grade level representatives from Grades K-5. They met, did some internal work, then went back to their colleagues in the buildings and to the District to see if to see if the report card made sense with regards to teaching and reflected the new literacy effort. The committee and administration assembled the report cards and invited parents to assess them, review the language and to see if they were comfortable with them. Dr. Wyks said the committee made changes if parents said verbiage was incomprehensible. She said the committee presented them in late May and early June.

Dr. Wyks stated she wanted to discuss how learning is defined and how that has changed. Expectations for students and schools have changed and the traditional grading paradigm has changed. Educators have come to a new understanding based on research. Traditionally, report cards reflected the ability to recall knowledge and facts. The emphasis now is on higher-order thinking and the transfer of skills to new situations, which Dr. Wyks said she thinks is the key difference. Learning used to be defined as what students know; now educators ask, "do they take the skills that they need to have at a grade level or that are established for a grade level and can they apply them?" She stated the goal is for children to be self-sufficient learners; to be successful when teachers are not standing over them. Rigor is no longer coverage, it's complexity.

Dr. Wyks noted the committee chose descriptors that it considered most significant for learning in each grades level. She noted that the audience will hear her say consistently that, "we are not going to go back" and "I urge you

not to try to translate our new key to an old key.” She said that “if we use numbers 1,2,3,4, two does not equal 75 percent or a C, a 3 doesn’t equate to an 80 or a B.” She emphasized that we must throw out old conventions – that she believes that to be really critical and that we owe it to our students. She said each student learns at a different rate, and it is our job as a school to make sure they are all successful.

The District has chosen to develop six distinct report card models, one for each elementary grade. The report cards for grades 4 and 5 are more similar in terms of how they look. Dr. Wyks stated that if you look at the sequence of the report cards, you will get a good idea of what we expect our children to do as they move along the continuum of learning in our schools.

Dr. Wyks showed a slide with the grading key (slide 6). She stated a 4 means students “independently exceed expectations and standards.” What that translates to is that students have reached the expectation for that grade level with consistency, accuracy, and independence. She noted a 4 does not mean that learning ends, because the District must continue to challenge those students. She cautioned the audience not to turn a 4 into a 92, a 98 or a V+++ or any of those other iterations from the past.

She said a 3 equates to “independently meeting expectations and standards,” which is a level of understanding that is expected and is typically appropriate for a student at that grade level. A 2 is “approaching expectations and standards with support,” so the student is progressing towards the standards. She noted that “with support” is the key differentiation. The student who receives a 2 is progressing towards the standards, but they still require pretty regular support, assistance and monitoring. She noted that it’s a stage that students go through and it is normal. A 1 is “not meeting standards and expectations”– a student is still acquiring the pre-requisite skills in order to understand the content being presented. They require more intensive adult assistance, and perhaps they require additional support external to or within the classroom. She noted that the District must carefully tailor learning for those children at that particular point in time.

Dr. Wyks stated she wished to point out that these numbers may look to people as if they coincide with the levels on the State tests but they are not synonymous. The use of numbers this way is fairly common in other districts.

She asked, “What does the report card look like.” She said she would touch upon grades K-2 and grades 3-5 as she reviewed the various disciplines. She then showed a sample of the ELA indicator for 1st Grade and described the various standards. She discussed how expectations may change during the course of the school year, so it is possible for a student to receive a 3 at the beginning of the school year, and then a 2 the second marking period, or to receive a 3 all three periods – it depends on how a student is doing along the

continuum of the school year. She then displayed the third grade ELA indicator as a point of comparison.

Dr. Wyks reviewed writing indicators for Grade 2 and Grade 3. She then outlined Mathematics Indicators for K and grades 4-5, the latter two of which are very similar. She noted that the K report card does look different than the previous report card, but that this is not due to the fact that we have now moved to a full day model.

Dr. Wyks asked, "How do you arrive at a grade?" She stated that educators formerly used singular benchmarks, but now seek a broader picture over time. She gave examples of new types of assessments, including classroom activities or projects, work in a lab, a quiz, or a compare and contrast piece in Social Studies, or anecdotal experience within the class.

She stated that teachers now carry iPads and notecards and other kinds of tools for keeping notes on how children are doing. She stated teachers also grade based on children's reader response notebooks, and journals for writing the Continuum for Literacy Learning by Fountas and Pinnell. The result is a more comprehensive picture: a montage, versus a snapshot.

Dr. Wyks noted the new report card has a section on behaviors and work habits that promote community and learning. She stated we are teaching children to be a part of a community in a school setting. The key for the section of this report card "Consistently," "Occasionally," and "Rarely." She said the committee looked hard at this key, and determined that "Consistently" means students demonstrate consistent behavior over time, "Occasionally" means it comes and goes and "Rarely" means students still haven't grasped the skill. She showed examples from a K and a 3rd Grade report card.

Dr. Wyks noted in the content areas, Science and Social Studies are put together into one section. She provided an example of the 5th grade Science indicator and noted that by the 4th and 5th grades, reporting falls into two areas: concepts and practices. She noted Social Studies is similar.

She provided an example of the art indicator and noted that music is similar, although in 4th in 5th, there are additions related to instruments. She noted specials are a different environment for students, so it's important to relate how students do in those cases. She provided a sample from Grade 4 Physical Education.

She said that under each of these general categories, and under the specials, there is a comment section for teachers to provide more information about what they may be focusing on in the classroom.

In addition, Dr. Wyks noted the District made a change to holding fall conferences earlier in the year to establish stronger home-school

collaboration. She said the earlier conferences help teachers and parents set goals specific to each student. She noted there is a conference in the Spring which will give parents and teachers an opportunity to discuss progress in between the second and third trimesters. She said if parents need to fill in the blanks between the report cards and conferences they can do so by a phone call, an email, a meeting in the hallway, or a scheduled meeting.

She stated she is working to develop a FAQ sheet for those parents who haven't been able to attend the presentations. She noted it should go out to parents a week before report cards are due to be released. She said that Monday's presentation is on the website, last night's will be available shortly, or parents could watch tonight's meeting online. She said December 2nd is the end of the first marking period, and report cards should go out on December 11th.

Dr. Wyks said the District had hoped to have the report cards be electronic. A project coordinator at Pearson is working to operationalize our report cards, but these first report cards will likely be in pdf (Adobe) format. She said the District will also likely continue with that format for the remainder of the school year so teachers don't have to switch methodology mid-school year.

She said that once the District releases the new report cards, it will likely hold another information session with parents. The District assumes there will be some growing pains with the new report cards.

Ms. Glassberg commented that there was a lot of information in the report cards. She asked if the report cards will be printed and mailed or if they would be emailed to parents.

Dr. Wyks replied that they would be in a paper version throughout this year, and hopefully by the end of the year, the District would try piloting both online and paper versions in at least one class per school.

Ms. Belanger said that she agreed that one test does not a child make, and asked about criteria used to determine progress towards standards, she said she recognized some of the assessment on the literacy side. She asked if there were common assessments for math.

Dr. Wyks replied that there are some common assessments. She stated that one example is the Science 21 program. Teachers do share assessments, and that process will continue. She noted there aren't as many independent, researched based ones.

Ms. Pasquale asked if the District is hoping the result of this exercise would be teachers looking at students in a more analytical way. Would this help teachers in their practice?

Dr. Wyks responded that teachers will tend to do whatever they can to help a

student “get” a concept. She believes the report cards will help teachers with looking at functioning and processing. If something breaks down for a youngster, it will help teachers see where the breakdown might be to perhaps schedule a mini-lesson. She noted it allows teachers flexibility if they know of a particular situation with a student at test-taking time, for example, a situation at home or seasonal allergies. It allows you a chance to assess students in a different way. She noted the committee had a really good chance to unpack the standards during the process.

Dr. Wyks stated she expects the report cards will encourage teachers to trust themselves again. The State evaluation of teachers and tying to student growth models and tests has caused teachers to second-guess themselves, and this should help alleviate that.

Ms. Pasquale queried what work has been done with teachers not involved with the process. She asked what kind of work has been done with them to make sure they understand and agree on “how do you know it when you see it?”

D. Wyks replied that this will be an ongoing process through professional development. She noted the difficulty for some teachers will be the fact that individual teachers were very invested in individual benchmarks they had created.

Ms. Glassberg stated that to clarify, the benchmarks are not gone.

Dr. Wyks stated that what’s gone is not the assessments, but that specific dates for assessments are gone.

Ms. Glassberg said they are happening in a variety of ways on a variety of dates?

Ms. Glassberg commented that she liked the grading key; that the one suggests a growth mindset. It suggests the key to helping everyone perform better, no matter where you are. The idea is that you are just not there yet. Prior versions said, “Not Meeting Standards.”

Some discussion followed regarding the fact that, in elementary school, kids meet standards at vastly different times.

Ms. Glassberg asked if the fully digital model would be ready next year.

Dr. Wyks said that it would be ready this year, but that she would roll it out for next year.

Dr. Wyks stated she would a complete provide report card drafts to the Board of Education.

Mr. Repetto stated that he liked the content, and that touching all the standards is a huge leap forward. He stated he thought from a parent point of view, the grading key was confusing, particularly the difference between a 1 and a 2.

Dr. Wyks explained that a 1 reflects and a 2 reflects the difference in the amount of support a student needs along the continuum. She noted that a letter will be sent home to parents explaining in detail the grading keys, with a FAQ sheet that should respond to that question and will hopefully anticipate the questions that parents will ask.

Some discussion followed about what "needing support" means.

Ms. Belanger said that most parents will want to know how their child is doing versus other students. Dr Wyks said the comment portion should provide space for teachers to inform what students do well at and what they need help with.

Mr. Repetto stated that he thought the report card content was better, and that it explained the difference between expectations as being along the path and a standard which is reached at the end of the year.

Dr. Wyks said that the standards are at the end of the year. The report cards are a means of looking at your child vs. a standard, not vs. other children.

Ms. Pasquale inquired if there was a plan in place should parents reach out to teachers via email or phone call is there is now not a conference after report cards come out. Dr. Wyks said she hopes the comment piece will really alleviate that need, but that if the District needs to make adjustments to the process, we will.

Ms. Glassberg said that her experience has shown that if parents reach out to a teacher, teachers are usually very responsive. Culturally, the community of our faculty has been be very responsive and she hopes that will continue.

Board Actions

The Board passed the consent agenda.

Ms. Glassberg noted that when passing the Consent Agenda, much Board business takes place, but that it happens so quickly, members of the public often do not know what the items were. She noted that on tonight's consent agenda, there were a few sets of minutes approved; the Board adopted the Dress Code policy as revised and extensively discussed last week; the Board entered into a number of contracts, some of which were work change orders, some of which were special education services; they accepted monthly financial reports for July, August and September; there were some teacher

appointments made, for example a Committee on Preschool special education chair, extra pay for extra work appointments – those are professionals who already work for the district, but are being appointed to do other jobs for us coaching fall and winter sports, other extra-curricular activities, musicals and plays; some substitutes teacher assistants and teacher aids were appointed; and we approved recommendations of the committee on Special Education services for various students.

Communications to the Board

There were no new communications to the Board to report.

Ms. Glassberg noted that the Board will be touring the Middle and High School before the next Board meeting, and that the next meeting will be an Open Topics Forum.

Ms. Belanger requested that the Open Topics Forum be moved to another date next year, as it is difficult for members of the public to attend so close to Thanksgiving.

Next Regular Meeting
November 24, 2015
7:30 p.m.
Rye Middle School
Multipurpose Room

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