

Minutes of Education Committee Meeting Of July 18, 2013

The Board of Education Harlem Consolidated School District

An Education Committee meeting of the Board of Education of Harlem Consolidated School District was held Thursday, July 18, 2013, beginning at 6:00 PM in the Harlem Administration Center, 8605 North Second Street, Machesney Park, IL 61115.

1. Call to Order by Heather Kelley at 6:00 p.m.
2. Roll Call
Heather Kelley, Barb Browning, Evelyn Meeks, Travis Turner, Julie Morris, Margo Sickele, Chad Dougherty, Mickie Erb, Heidi Lange, John Cusimano, Kris Arduino
Terrell Yarbrough joined at 6:02 p.m.
3. Approval of Agenda
1st Erb 2nd Meeks
All voted aye, motion carried
4. Approve Minutes of April 23, 2013
1st Erb 2nd Browning
All voted aye, motion carried
5. Comments from the Community
none
6. Recommendation for ELL Administrator Coordinator stipend and ELL secretarial position – Dr. Morris reviewed her recommendation for the ELL Administrator Coordinator and ELL Secretarial positions at a \$15,000 cost for the Coordinator and additional .5 FTE Secretary position. Dr. Morris noted that the Vazquez Consulting Report is attached to the agenda for further detail. Dr. Morris noted that she would like to take this to the August 12 Board meeting for approval and would look to hire someone no later than January of 2014.

Unanimous Consensus by the Committee to recommend these two positions to the August 12, 2013 board meeting.
7. Grade Retention and Promotion Procedures
Dr. Browning noted that the administration has been reviewing the procedure over the past school year. Procedures were not being consistently followed and we want to be sure that they are clearly defined for the next school year.

Margo Sickele presented a Powerpoint on the research that has been conducted. Dr. Browning noted that teachers from every grade level met except for 5th grade, K – 6, Middle schools representation and an assortment of principals were included as well

as herself, Margo Sিকে and Mickie Erb. She went on to say that they reviewed the current policies and procedures, the law and conducted an extensive review of research. She noted they then researched students at Harlem and presented data for those students as well as having looked at surrounding district procedures and used some of these as well as Harlem current procedures to develop a new procedure for the next school year.

Margo noted that definition of retention is where the committee started. In 1989 a researcher indicated that retention is one of the most detrimental negative things that can be done to a child. These students are younger than classmates, tend to be male, and lower socio-economic. There is a large correlation between retention and drop outs, with the statistics showing five times the risk for drop out and if retained twice it greatly increases.

Retention does show positive effects in the first year due to repeating the grade over again but it fades out over time and the students do not continue and it becomes ineffective and harmful to the student. The overall effectiveness is shown at zero for retention. Children have indicated that going blind or losing a parent are the only two things that they consider to be more stressful so that they do not look at retention positively. There is low self-esteem, increase drug and alcohol use, suicidal intentions and negative behavior. Adults who were retained are more likely to be in prison, unemployed or on welfare assistance.

Harlem local data shows lower numbers than the national data but there is some correlation to the national data. The number of students in their current grade level retained was reflected on a chart showing that the high school students spike at 10th grade of students that have been retained and are not on pace for graduation. We have currently 114 students in 10th grade this past year that have been retained at any point in their academic years while at Harlem School District. Grades 11 and 12 grades are lower because these students have dropped out of school or gone to alternative school by these grades. Math Scores for ISAT and Explore grades, as well as Prairie State exams reflect that 4th grade students exceed or meet but they continually drop in the higher grades. In grade 12 89% of students are not meeting standards. Reading scores are much lower and these retained students typically do very poorly in reading.

The number of students that exited or dropped out reflect a spike in 2007 due to the age change from 16 to 17 for drop out.

Action steps to consider for retention:

1. Observe the child's progress and document from September – October
2. Develop and implement appropriate classroom interventions and document via RtI – October – January
3. Consult with RtI team to determine additional school interventions – October – January
4. Discuss results and interventions with parents honestly and specifically and

on a regular basis. Use problem-solving process.

5. Continue to monitor in the second semester and if no improvement refer to the diagnostic team and complete the Retention/Promotion Checklist from January – March
6. Review all information on the child's performance, complete the checklist and Light's Retention Scale which is research based from March – April
7. Make recommendations about promotion or retention by DRRT (District Retention Review Team) SRRT (School Retention Review Team).
8. District Retention Review Team make a decision – final in May
9. If retention request is denied then School Team completes the Promotion Intervention Plan
10. Parent is informed about decision in May.
11. There is an appeals process that the parent can use to appeal any decision.

Travis Turner asked if a child is on the line and is not retained, what exactly occurs specifically to try to get the child up to date. Dr. Browning noted elementary specialists would be used to target and give extra attention for targeted instruction. If these don't make a difference we look at whether the child has need of an Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Dr. Browning noted that some of the intervention occurs in the classroom especially small group work. Sometimes special education teachers will serve struggling students that are in a general education classroom that do not have an IEP. We do not pull them out of reading and math instruction but at the lower levels science and social studies.

Terrell Yarbrough asked if all retention is detrimental. He gave an example where a student may be suffering because of a younger age and a parent notices this and asks to retain. Is this still a negative? Dr. Browning noted that at the primary schools this often occurs. Children that are not ready to start school at an early age due to immaturity should not be started when it there is a small difference in age but it is detrimental to start students when their peers are all very much older than they are and have repeat a grade because they are just not mature enough to start. Margo noted that there is a 2% success rate with retention and there are no common characteristics that tell how a child can be successful.

8. Textbook Pilot Presentation

Mickie Erb addressed the committee on the Elementary Math Textbook pilot noting the reason the District has used Harcourt Math and the copyright for Grades 1-5 is 2006 and 2007 for grades 6. State assessments have changed since adopted. This year 20% of the ISAT came from Common Core and next year it will be aligned 100%.

This past school year our Kindergarten started "Go Math" implementation and have been studying math in more depth with. "Go Math" is aligned to the Common Core. Throughout the 2012-2013 school year teachers attended Singapore Math workshops

and samples were evaluated by the 1st and 2nd grade teachers. Two texts were selected for the pilot. “Go Math” and “Math in Focus” were both chosen.

The process for 2013-2014 is that all first grade students’ start using these two which will be aligned to the Common Core rather than introduce them to the Harcourt which is not aligned. Some teachers from grades 2-6 at elementary schools will pilot these two texts. Quarterly meetings will be held with piloting teachers and math coach, Jen Shackett getting feedback on these two pilots. The District will also monitor the evaluation progression of these students on assessments.

Dr. Browning noted that “Math in Focus” and “Go Math” will be used at every school to help us make a decision on which text to use.

The next steps are the pilot teachers need to meet and make a decision;
1st and second grade adoption will occur in 2014-2015;
One grade level will be added per year, until fully implemented due to cost constraints and the fact that there is a gap at the higher levels which will occur; and Professional development will be provided to staff throughout the adoption process

Cost will increase for grades 1 and 2 at \$24 per student which workbooks are purchased every year. For “Math in Focus” we would purchase a hardback textbook which is the reason for the \$24.00 increase over the workbook. We will not be buying a new book every year. The initial cost for grades 3-5 is \$65 per year which is an increase of \$14 per student. This \$65 is the cost to provide the hard books and \$14 is for the workbooks. Grade 6 the initial cost for the hard book is \$55 and a decrease of \$15 per student.

“Go Math” is the cheaper of the two series. At this point people are more likely to choose “Math in Focus” and the teachers that have attended the Singapore workshops are really supportive of this. Dr. Browning noted that she has observed 4th grade students using this text and it is really exciting to see that the teacher using the Singapore strategies have made a huge difference.

Dr. Browning noted that the entire cost is large but Josh Aurand is developing a long term financial plan to pay for this math text change. Dr. Browning noted that she will obtain a financial plan from Josh and make sure that the committee reviews that.

9. Next Meeting Date: Thursday, August 29, 2013 at 6:00 p.m.

Motion to adjourn

1st Chad 2nd Barb

All voted aye, the meeting adjourned at 6:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kris Arduino