

# Minutes of Education Committee Meeting Of October 23, 2013

## The Board of Education Harlem Consolidated School District

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An Education Committee meeting of the Board of Education of Harlem Consolidated School District was held Wednesday, October 23, 2013, beginning at 6:00 PM in the Harlem Administration Center, 8605 North Second Street, Machesney Park, IL 61115.

1. Call to Order by President Heather Kelley at 6:00 p.m.
2. Roll Call  
Heather Kelley, Barb Browning, Chad Dougherty, John Cusimano, Heidi Lange, Julie Morris, Margo Sickele, Lori Macomber, Terrell Yarbrough, Mickie Erb, Evelyn Meeks, George Russell, Kris Arduino
3. Approval of Agenda  
Motion to approve Agenda with no changes  
1<sup>st</sup> Browning 2<sup>nd</sup> Erb  
All aye, motion carried
4. Approve Minutes of August 29, 2013  
1<sup>st</sup> Erb 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeks  
All aye, motion carried
5. Comments from the Community  
none
6. District Improvement Plan  
Presenter: Margo Sickele, Director of Accountability & School Improvement

Mrs. Sickele noted that we are required to write District and School Improvement Plans for each building. We are continually revisiting indicators that are in place for highly functioning schools. Research briefs are also included with these indicators.

District and School Improvement Plans have different indicators. Action plans are created from the indicators.

We follow a manageable system when setting priorities.

There are 12 members on the DIP team, with a continuous improvement cycle with the team meeting regularly. Rising Stars Continuous Improvement Planning has been used for three years now.

AYE is expected to be met with 100% of students meeting or exceeding the

standards by 2014. If not made there are sanctions by the federal (Title I funded buildings) and State. These sanctions differ between the two. Year 5 you must begin a restructuring plan for the federal sanction.

Target for 2013 was 92.5% of students meeting target. If this is not made you have a safe harbor of you make a 10% improvement which some schools did make safe harbor, i.e. Machesney in Reading and Math, Maple in Reading, Marquette and Olson Park, Reading and Rock Cut in Math.

The scores have been embargoed by the State until October 31, 2013. These will be shared at the November 12 board meeting.

We have Maple in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of not making AYP so they are drafting a Corrective Action Plan, to institute new curriculum and providing of professional development, as well as working with the Regional Office for support.

Rock Cut Elementary is the second school and they are in year 5. They did not write a Corrective Action Plan last year due to an NCLB waiver being submitted. As a result of the waiver not being approved, they must write a Restructuring Plan this year aligned with what we have in place for Maple. They are conducting math pilots, Ell Programming and a new assistant principal position put into place.

This will be presented and a voting item for approval on the DIP at the November 12, 2013 Board meeting.

#### Academic Programming Review.

Mrs. Browning noted that we are looking at both Machesney and the Middle school programming. All academy teachers from both met as well as administrators, Amanda Hayes, principal at Marquette with her previous experience with Rockford's gifted academy, Mrs. Edwards, Machesney School, Dr. Adrian from the middle school with Chad Dougherty from the high school. The team met for two days and reviewed what the district is currently doing and the effectiveness of that as well as what expectations are to achieve with the Academy.

#### Findings:

Many students selected for Machesney (6 or 7 out of 27) who qualified and went through the Machesney program did not qualify at the Middle School. So when children were selected at the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade the screening was based on the OSAT to choose the top 25 kids that were passed onto the Academy. Many children in third grade have cognitive abilities that do not necessarily show this on testing. At 6<sup>th</sup> grade the cognitive ability test was given to all 6<sup>th</sup> grade students and we found many that were not chosen but had a lot of ability.

Teachers were questioning the validity and reliability of the current selection process. There was no set curriculum for any grade or class for the Academy.

There was no alignment of programming between Machesney or the Middle School. Many students started struggling at the Middle School due to the higher expectations. Children could not choose what they wanted to take in the Academy.

There are different options for students at the high school level. Students can choose what they want to take.

Goals:

We want the elementary programming to focus on growing the gifted child, not content specific.

At the middle and high school levels, there is a focus on providing opportunities in content specific areas.

Overall goal is for students to experience a more rigorous curriculum that will better prepare them to be successful in AP classes, college and careers.

Subcommittee work included determining how students are selected at the elementary, how we assess and evaluate curricula to be used at Machesney and the Middle School to make sure they are aligned to the AP classes at the high school. We need to develop a plan for communication with parents as to changes in this programming and a plan for curriculum writing as well as implementation. After these items are completed, the committee will then communicate the findings and plan to the Board of Education in February of 2014.

Mrs. Kelley asked when looking at the new Academy will a child that is accepted at third grade go all the way through. Mrs. Browning stated that once the child is at the middle school they can choose what honors classes they want to take and not a selection process.

Mrs. Kelley asked about Mrs. Hayes' experience at Washington. Mrs. Browning noted that we also had a consultant from KIDS from the ROE facilitate a meeting and there was a gifted consultant that gave us a lot of information on how to identify kids, what types of things are best and curriculum suggestions. The feedback from Washington School is just one piece of the things we are doing.

Elana Schelling-Tufte asked if the classes will be called honors classes or academy classes. Mrs. Browning noted that at 9<sup>th</sup> grade many more kids are taking honors classes and we don't want to limit. Teachers decided they do not want a difference so there will not be an Academy, but there will be honors classes. They will no longer take an exam but by teacher recommendation they will be able to select the classes they want to take. There three things performance on planned testing, previous testing performance and teacher recommendation to move from sixth grade to seventh grade.

Mrs. Kelley asked how many students attend the Academy. Mr. Cusimano noted that there are approximately 28 at each grade. We are now one section to be in line with what Machesney was doing, but also the gifted and talented research noted that 5% of the kids that receive a certain cut score on the testing are eligible. Students have always been able to take year-long options in band or choir, but now we have opened up all options, such as fine arts. They don't have to have two electives in the fine arts academy and can now take one elective. Reading and English can now be separate from fine arts. Opportunities will be opened up by doing this for students.

Mrs. Kelley asked when you talk about Academy is this the fine arts. Mrs. Browning noted that we are talking about the academic Academy for now. Dr. Morris noted that these are two goals in our long-range plan.

Mr. Russell asked about assessments at the third grade level and differentiation. He noted he just read "The Smartest Kids in the World" which talks about the PESA test.

Thinking about the concept of gifted children there seems to be a cultural identity. Parents have bought into the cultural theme. In order to do better should we take on the ideology that all students are gifted knowing that we have the financial component and federal and state regulations. Would it be best to take on this theme without differentiation. Finland is doing a superb job with this concept. With regard to the United States wealth has made rigor optional. With these other countries education and learning have become the currency of the times. Rigor and accountability are the essence of education and education is of value on a national scope. What can Harlem be doing better in this regard. South Korea and Finland are consistently in the top three nations. The United States has been 17, 34 and 31. This PESA test is given every three years. Mrs. Browning noted that the Common Core Standards is setting the rigor and expectations across the United States so that children are learning improved and college ready.

#### 7. Academic Programming Review Update

#### 8. 5 Essentials Survey

Ms. Erb reviewed the 5 Essentials Survey that students, staff and parents filled out last spring in February through January. Harlem sent out a letter to parents via email to participate as well as postage mail. The results of all schools show that 10 out of 11 schools had enough information to report on the survey which was 50% from teachers and students and 30% response from parents. There was 0% for Parker Center and Marquette as this was directed at sixth grade students only.

The parent response at Rock Cut and Parker Center was sufficient. Therefore we will not see parent responses because district-wide there was not a large enough response. The high school was insufficient in all areas, so this really is a K – 8 report although known as District-wide. The administrators are working on not having this same issue again at the high school.

The survey has 5 components: ambition instruction, effective leaders, collaborative teachers, involved families and supportive environments.

This survey is for site-based schools and Harlem is a unit district and we make district level decisions to be consistent. Some of these results need to keep this in perspective. The State found out that the survey did not go the way that was intended. Chris Koch, State Superintendent states that the State will work with superintendents to building further acknowledge on the 5 essentials to be used also for school improvement. They will work with administrators on the timeframe. Communication will be improved. They will release the important cards this year insuring that administrators know how to interpret. There were some security issues with responses to the State is working on the security of responses to make sure people are only responding once. Next year they will do a full release of in the information on the school report card which is unknown at this time.

Teachers overall feel that their principals do have confidence in their expertise and place children as a priority over personal and political interest.

We believe that these items will be reflected in the school report card which will link the percentages to the specific questions.

Student responses regarding people in the neighborhood being trusted. This is a community survey so that it is more than just the buildings in our District.

Students were asked if students show each other respect and 97% of the students feel that they are.

One of the issues is a building where teachers feel that they have great relationships with parents; however the parents did not respond to the survey so is this true and how do parents feel. Students also responded as to the rigor of curriculum.

We are hoping for a larger number of responses this coming year so we have more information specifically the parent component.

9. Next Meeting Date: Thursday, January 23, 2014 at 6:00 p.m.

10. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn

1<sup>st</sup> Erb 2<sup>nd</sup> Yarbrough

All aye, Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 6:53 p.m.