

Superintendent Parent Council October 22, 2013 Meeting

The meeting began at 6:30 p.m.

The following parents were in attendance: Adnan Aljiboury, Fowler; Tonia Anderson, Meachem; Syeisha Byrd, LeMoyne (ELMS); Priscilla Domenech, Blodgett (Seymour); Mary Ellen Edwards, ELMS; Charles Edwards, ELMS; Sara Gilbert, Roberts; Kelly Grier, Roberts; Mary Beth Irving, Henninger; Shannon Jaquay, Hughes; Tanika Jones Cole, Nottingham (Ed Smith); Jennifer Kelley, Ed Smith; Christopher Kelly, Hughes; David Kent, ITC; Diane Lloyd (Corcoran); Lisa Neville, Nottingham (Ed Smith); Hilda Ramos, Delaware (ELMS); Eliza Sampson, Clary (Van Duyn); Kay Scott, Ed Smith; Frank Schultz, Porter; Kathleen Snyder, Delaware (Danforth); Kristy St Louis, Van Duyn (ELMS); Leslie Bailey Streissguth, Corcoran (Roberts); Heidi Teska, HW Smith; Meghan Vitale, Huntington

The following SCSD staff were in attendance: Superintendent Sharon Contreras; Parent Liaison Mary Lisa Wade; Parent Liaison Nina Vergara; Chief Academic Officer Laura Kelley; Chief of Staff Kim Bradley; Executive Director of Parent University Monique Wright-Williams; Director of Pupil Personnel Services Patty Clark; Principal Amanda Williams, McKinley Brighton.

The following guests were in attendance: Lekia Hill, Citizens Action/Alliance for Quality Action

Parent Liaison Mary Lisa Wade opened the meeting by welcoming parents to the first meeting of the year. She discussed the ground rules for meetings and then introduced Superintendent Contreras.

Superintendent Contreras provided introductory remarks and facilitated introductions. She then opened the floor for comments and questions.

The first question addressed the APPR situation at Henninger High School, where the teachers scored a zero on their local growth measure. Superintendent Contreras responded by first explaining the three components of a teacher evaluation: Professional Practice (multiple classroom observations) – 60%; Local Measure (negotiated with union) – 20%; State Growth Measure (calculated by state) – 20%

She further explained that the local measure score was based on a three percentage point increase in the performance on the five Regents exams this year as compared to the performance last year. The calculation used was the total cohort comparison, one of the two methodologies that are reported on the New York State report card for all high schools. Superintendent Contreras stated that this has been a very difficult situation and that the district is looking into another option—one not reported on the NYS report card. A June to June calculation would result in Henninger showing growth.

The next question addressed parent involvement and whether the state factors in parent involvement in the teacher evaluation system. Superintendent Contreras confirmed that the state does not consider parent engagement in the teacher evaluation process.

Superintendent Contreras reported that there have been significant changes incorporated into the 2013-2014 teacher evaluation system that was recently negotiated with the STA. We will not be using standardized tests to measure student learning unless required by the state. Instead we will be using

performance tasks. Chief Academic Officer provided an overview on performance tasks and provided an example of what one looks like (see attached). Discussion ensued about performance tasks, including the timing of the performance tasks (at the beginning and end of year) and the fact that they are not a separate test but rather part of the curriculum.

The parents then asked about the tests that had been recently administered in the lower grades and whether they were part of APPR. Superintendent Contreras and CAO Kelley confirmed that the tests were AIMSweb assessments and that they are not part of APPR. AIMSweb is a diagnostic assessment and progress monitoring tool for literacy and numeracy and the assessments are given several times a year to gauge students' performance.

The next question asked whether time to make adjustments to curriculum modules is factored into the process. Teachers are pressured to get it all in and do not have adequate time when needed. CAO Kelley responded that teachers are provided with guidance for pacing during professional development sessions. Our teachers have far more support resources than they did last year. Teachers will feel more comfortable about making choices about exercises, activities and performance tasks that are best for their students as they become more comfortable with the curriculum.

Superintendent Contreras reported that the district will be offering more parent workshops to support the Common Core, both through Parent University and the schools. One parent suggested the resource, *Math for Moms and Dads: A Dictionary of Terms and Concepts* by Kaplan that had been distributed at the ELMS open house.

Discussion then ensued about Parent University and the great resource it is to parents in understanding curriculum and to better help their children learn. Suggestions to strengthen the program included: making courses grade specific; offering courses on different nights and at different times; offering quadrant wide courses.

The next issue discussed was related to the issue that occurred with ESL students earning Regents Diplomas and ensuring that all staff understand the process. Superintendent Contreras and CAO Kelley indicated that all guidance counselors have received comprehensive information regarding the process and are equipped to appropriately guide students.

The next issue raised was the number of students in some of the ESL classes. Superintendent Contreras indicated that the situation that the parent was referring to was the result of one high school not scheduling properly, resulting in one class having more than 30 ESL students. The school in question has been directed to immediately correct the problem.

The discussion then went back to APPR and the need to communicate the information to parents. The question was also asked as to why we did not use performance tasks last year. Superintendent Contreras responded that the district and STA are continually working to improve the system. We had limited options when developing APPR this past year. We were forced to negotiate with less than ideal options. We used standardized tests in the absence of benchmark tests for the local measure. This school year we have performance tasks that are aligned to the Common Core Standards available to us.

Parents then indicated that it will be useful to get a list of the assessments that will be given, when they will be administered and for what purpose.

The next question dealt specifically with the physical condition of Westside Academy at Blodgett and whether or not it will be renovated. Superintendent Contreras reported that the bill to enable the next phase of school construction is sitting on the Governor's desk waiting to be signed. There will be up to 20 projects renovated for a total of \$300 million.

The next concern expressed was the importance of standardizing middle school curriculum to make sure students are ready for high school. Superintendent Contreras discussed the changes that were implemented last year to standardize the middle school academic program.

The next question pertained to the iZone, asking for a better explanation of what it is. Superintendent Contreras explained that the state identified the seven schools in the iZone as priority schools, thereby requiring one of four federal turnaround models to be implemented. The seven schools are Bellevue, Danforth, Frazer, Porter, Seymour, Van Duyn and Westside at Blodgett. The district, in collaboration with the STA, chose to create the Innovation Zone, or iZone, as the comprehensive reform strategy to turnaround the seven schools. Despite rumors, the iZone was created as a viable means to transform these schools rather than closing or charterizing them. The iZone schools will operate under a different governance model. The Schools will have flexibility from Board policy and certain provisions of collective bargaining agreements with agreement from the staff(s). The schools have extended learning days and teachers receive additional professional development. The district received a \$31.5 million competitive grant to support the iZone schools. The next round of priority schools includes Dr. Weeks, Dr. King, HW Smith, Franklin and Lincoln.

Lekia Hill from Citizens Action then discussed the Education Action Summit that is taking place in Albany on November 20th. She invited any parent wishing to attend. See attached flyer for more information on the event and Lekia's contact information.

CHOCOLATE BAR FRACTIONS

Part 1

John is giving out chocolate to his friends. If he wants to give each friend $\frac{2}{3}$ of a chocolate bar and he has 13 friends, how many chocolate bars will he need to buy?
Use words, a model, or an equation to justify your answer.

Part 2

William buys 4 chocolate bars and each bar weighs $\frac{1}{4}$ pound. Mary buys 2 chocolate bars and each one weighs $\frac{1}{2}$ pound. William claims that the chocolate weighs the same amount. Mary disagrees. Who is correct? *Use a model and words to justify your answer.*

NO MORE EXCUSES : EDUCATE EVERY STUDENT!

JOIN US!

FOR AN OPPORTUNITY
TO LEARN ACTION
SUMMIT TO KICK-
OFF THE "NO MORE
EXCUSES" CAMPAIGN

TRAININGS

11 am to 3 pm - NYS Museum

1. *Recruiting Legislative Champions*
2. *Organizing for the Biggest Impact*
3. *What Smart Investment in Education Looks Like*

ACTION

3 to 4:30 pm - New York State Capitol

*March with us to the Capitol to
demand "NO MORE EXCUSES!"
Speak out for our schools and students!*

WEDNESDAY
NOVEMBER 20TH

NYS MUSEUM
260 MADISON AVE., ALBANY

SIGN UP:

<http://bit.ly/1acDIHU>

QUESTIONS? Contact Lekia at
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