

MONROE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Monroe, Connecticut

Meeting Minutes
October 16, 2017

Present: Chairman Donna Lane
Vice-Chairman George King III
Board Member Christine Cascella
Board Member David Ferris
Board Member James Martinez
Board Member Carlos Reinoso
Board Member Jerry Stevens
Board Member Alan Vaglivelo

Also present: Superintendent John Battista
Assistant Superintendent Jack Zmary
Finance Director Gabriella DiBlasi
Masuk Student Representative Kevin Brown
Masuk Student Representative Will Santee

Absent: Secretary Shannon Reilly-Monaco
Masuk Student Representative Ryan Winkler

Call to Order

Chairman Lane called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Exemplary People-National Merit Students

Principal Kobza said this year's group of National Merit Semi-Finalists and Commended Students is the largest to date. He stated that of the 1.6 million juniors who took the PSATs, the National Merit Scholarship Corporation recognizes the top three percent as Commended Students. The Commended National Merit Students and/or National Hispanic Recognition Students are: *Michael Hayes, Sloane Burling, Sabrina Lemm, Brianna Mulloy, Kaitlyn Infante, Soorya Chenthilnathan, Wen Jay Lim and Matthew Pearson*. The Commended National Merit and Hispanic Recognition Student: *Alexander Massaro*. National Merit Hispanic Recognition Student: *Elias Levy*

Principal Kobza continued that the top one percent of students are recognized as National Merit Scholarship Semi-Finalists. National Merit Semi-Finalists: *Kyle Immel, William Santee, Chloe Shawah, Katerine Lee and Nisha Honnaya*

Chairman Lane and *Superintendent Battista* presented the students with certificates to recognize their performance.

Report of the Chairman

Chairman Lane asked the Board for a moment of silence in memory of *Debbie Walls*, who retired as the District's K-6 Language Arts Coordinator and recently passed away. *Superintendent Battista* added she was instrumental in bringing Teachers' College to the District and was strong advocate for reading.

Consent Agenda

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda

Motion: (C. Cascella)

Second: (D. Ferris)

Discussion: None

Motion passed 8 (Lane, King, Cascella, Ferris, Martinez, Reinoso, Stevens and Vaglivelio)-0

17-073

Reports of the Committees and Liaisons

Masuk Student Representatives - *Masuk Student Representative Santee* said that the Jostens representative is onsite for cap and gown orders. College Planning Nights will take place on October 31, and November 1 for junior students and their parents to familiar themselves with the college process. *Student Representative Santee* said that November 2 is the last day of Quarter 1, and also the Mr. Panther competition. *Masuk Student Representative Brown* said that Wednesday will be early dismissal for Capstone presentations. Spirit Week will take place October 30 through November 3 with different themes for each day. He added that all the Fall sports teams are doing extremely well.

Safety Committee - *Board Member Ferris* said that the Committee met. *Superintendent Battista* stated the Health and Safety Committee, the Security Committee, and the Wellness Committee have merged, and it is now called the Safety Committee. He added that they continue to practice drills each month, and Cirma has asked the District to submit for an award.

CES - *Board Member Reinoso* said that RESC met, and they reviewed enrollment numbers throughout the districts. Norwalk has seen the largest increase. He added that CES had a smooth start to the school year. They also discussed regional sharing and cost saving.

Public Participation

There was none at tonight's meeting.

Report of the Superintendent

Review of the Fund Activity Statement - *Ms. DiBlasi* noted that insurance claims are a little less than what they were at this time last year, and the District has implemented a Wellness Campaign, for employees, which has been well received. She added that the

internal budget process has begun, and meetings are set for administrators the first week of November.

Budget Update - *Superintendent Battista* said that the Governor did present a revised budget which gave a little back to Monroe, but there is nothing definitive at this time.

Board of Education School Visits - *Superintendent Battista* said that members of the Board will visit the schools on Friday, October 20.

MEA Early Retirement Incentive - As of Friday, there were seven teachers who took advantage of the incentive and three additional teachers who will retire at the end of the year.

Policy #5145.122 - Use of Dogs to Search School Property-*Superintendent Battista* said that this was approved last year, and the policy allows for the drug sniffing dogs to enter the parking lot, building, and lockers, and as the school will be in a lock down, there will be no student or adult interaction with the dogs. *Principal Kobza* advised all the students at their class meetings that this could happen, and it is stated in the Student Handbook as well. There will be a team of five to seven dogs to expedite the process. It was also noted that they will send out a SchoolMessenger as a reminder. *Student Representative Brown* asked about those who are allergic to dogs. Since the dogs will not be around the students, there doesn't seem to be an issue.

Discussion of 2018-2019 Professional Development Day - *Superintendent Battista* said that he had a conversation with the Registrar of Voters regarding security during voting. The November Professional Development Day is not an issue, as the schools will not be in session, but the Registrar wanted to see if the April Professional Day could be held on the first Tuesday which is the first referendum vote. The calendar has been determined for the two years, and *Superintendent Battista* said he would be reluctant to change it for this year as people are aware that the Monday after April break is a day off for students, and they may have already made plans. He added that while most schools can block off the voting area, it is difficult at Monroe Elementary due to the building lay-out.

Chairman Lane added that she would like to see voting areas removed from the schools. She continued stating that voting must take place in a public building, and there is no other building in the Monroe Elementary area as the Senior Center is just outside of it. *Superintendent Battista* will have further discussions with the Registrar.

Saturday Morning Conversations - *Superintendent Battista* said that he, *Assistant Superintendent Zamary*, and *First Selectman Vavrek* met at the Edith Wheeler Memorial Library on Saturday.

Presentations

Board of Education Professional Development-Student Data - *Assistant Superintendent Zamary*, *Sheila Casinelli*, Director of Professional Development and Instruction, and *Principal Kobza* gave the Board a presentation on the Student Assessment Results and Improvement Strategies for 2016-2017. *Superintendent Battista*

noted this was the annual review of data and stressed that it is a snapshot in time. The presentation included

- An overview of Standardized Testing including test types, definitions, dates, and uses
- Test Score Data
- Class of 2016 Profile
- District Improvement Strategies

Assistant Superintendent Zamary discussed Formative and Summative Assessments. Formative Assessments are part of the instructional process including quizzes, observations, and homework and Summative Assessments are used to determine what students know at a particular point in time. The SAT is the best example of a Summative Assessment. Both types question strategies that need to be addressed, assist in future lesson planning and can be used to evaluate a student effectively and to provide feedback. *Assistant Superintendent Zamary* provided the data on the Overall SBAC Ranking for Grades 3-8 English/Language Arts:

- 80% of students are at/above goal
- Monroe ranked 4th in DRG B
- Monroe ranked 9th out of 186 districts; last year Monroe was 26th out of 189
- Monroe ranked in the top 4.8% of CT districts; last year Monroe was in the top 13.7%

The Overall SBAC Ranking for Grades 3-8 Math are:

- 69.1% of students are at/above goal
- Monroe ranked 12th in DRG B
- Monroe ranked 26th out of 182 CT districts; last year Monroe was 37th out of 189
- Monroe ranked in the top 14.2% of CT districts; last year Monroe was in the top 19.5%

Assistant Superintendent Zamary said that overall, performance is very strong although seventh grade is a relative weakness in English Language as well as in Mathematics, and they will discuss improvement strategies later in the presentation. *Ms. Casinelli* reviewed the Cohort Comparison which looks at the same students who take the tests over the years. She noted that the ELA scores for 2015 included a Performance Task which was removed from the subsequent years, so it is not possible to compare those scores across all three years. As more data becomes available, the District can expand the chart to help them monitor how the same group of students do over time.

Ms. Casinelli discussed some of the actions the District is taking based on SBAC data. In Math, she said *Cindy Brooker* and *Kevin Welch* are working to enhance collaboration between science and math including:

- Comparing Independent/Dependent Variables
- Real world applications of area and volume
- Probability models

The K-5 Reading Consultants, along with *Ms. Casinelli* and *Mike Crowley*, are expanding Teachers College Readers Workshop through grade levels and enhancing collaboration between ELA and Social Studies on writing and non-fiction texts. She continued that across the schools, they are looking to create additional time for teachers to work with small groups and individual students as well as continue with differentiated strategies.

The CMT & CAPT Tests for Science are administered to students in Grades 5, 8 and 10. Ms. Casinelli said that the State has put in a waiver that districts won't have to take the CMT test to focus on the new science standards. There will be a State pilot for the new test, but there is no definitive if the District will be participating. The data for the CMT/CAPT-Science is as follows:

Grade 5

- 88.8% of students are at or above goal
- 2nd in the DRG
- Tied for 2nd in the state

Grade 8

- 85.7% of students are at or above goal
- 4th in the DRG
- 13th in the state

Grade 10

- 66.4% of students are at or above goal
- 8th in the DRG
- 15th in the state

Roseanne Haughton and *Jim Stoelzel*, District Coordinators, are working with science teachers to incorporate the Next Generation Science Standards engineering practices into classroom lessons.

Ms. Casinelli also reviewed the ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL). All World Language students in grades 7-12 take this each year. Although due to budget constraints, it was only offered last year to students in levels 3-6. She noted there is a speaking test for languages that rates students on a scale of novice to approaching what a native speaker sounds like; scorers listen to the recorded response and rate that sample on a proficiency scale. Students in level 3 or higher have the opportunity to take the other 3 sections of the AAPPL assessment to qualify for the bi-literacy seal on their diploma. The cost for students is \$15, which is similar to the cost of an AP exam.

Principal Kobza reviewed the SAT data. There is a suite of assessments that allows the District to see student performance over the years: PSAT 8/9, PSAT/NMSQT, and SAT. He added that the section scores are aligned and will be placed on an overlapping scale. He continued the District can now track students in a particular cohort; there is information on the Class of 2017-Class of 2020. Principal Kobza continued that the average score in Evidence Based Reading and Writing for the class of 2018 is 570; Monroe is 31st out of 139 districts, which puts the District in the top 22%. The average

score in Mathematics for the Class of 2018 is 563; Monroe is 24th out of 124 districts which puts the district in the top 19%.

Principal Kobza continued that they are seeing growth within the cohort, which they could not previously measure. He added that the goal is continual improvement and growth from cohort to cohort.

The AP results are very strong and the District continues to trend well. There were 338 students who took the AP exam last year, 595 AP exams taken, and 457 scored a 3 or higher. *Principal Kobza* also reviewed the list of colleges Masuk seniors attended. Of the 1091 total acceptances, 43 students were accepted into the most prestigious schools and 219 were accepted by highly competitive schools.

Assistant Superintendent Zamary reviewed College Persistence Rates. The last year data is available is from 2013-2014. 92.6% of students remain in college from their freshman to sophomore year. He noted that it is a reflection of the preparation the students have received from their teachers and leadership team. *Board Member Vaglivello* asked if they ever ask other districts about what they do. *Assistant Superintendent Zamary* stated they did.

Superintendent Battista said that a lot of work and effort was put into the presentation, and he noted that the instructional leaders the Board approved a few years ago have been a valuable resource. He expressed the loss of the District Coordinators may be felt in the years to come.

Old Business

Motion to Close the Stepney Roof Committee and Project and Return All Unexpended Funds to the Town of Monroe

Motion: (A. Vaglivello)

Second: (J. Stevens)

Discussion: Superintendent Battista noted the project came in on time and under budget. \$6,500 of the \$25,000 contingency was expended, and the balance will be returned to the Town of Monroe.

Motion passed 8 (Lane, King, Cascella, Ferris, Martinez, Reinoso, Stevens and Vaglivello)-0

17-074

New Business

Review of School Resource Officer (SRO) Memorandum of Understanding-

Superintendent Battista said it is not a policy but a Memorandum of Understanding with the Police Department. *Vice-Chairman King* said that the SRO officers can wear body cameras at the schools, and the data is not stored on the cloud. If an arrest is made, the data is turned over to the Police Department and the school administration. However, until that time, it is a shared review with the Police Department. It was reiterated that the cameras have the ability to redact to protect identities and privacy. *Superintendent Battista* added that the cameras will only be turned on if there is an incident. *Board Member Ferris* added that he initially had concerns with it but, after meeting with the

Policy Committee, he said that he supports it. *Vice-Chairman King* continued that no vote is needed, since it is an MOU.

Policy-Policy #6146-Graduating Requirements - *Vice-Chairman King* said this policy will be up for a vote at the next meeting as this is a first review. He said that it allows a student who is proficient in more than one language have that stated in their transcript.

Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn at 8:50 p.m.

Motion: (C. Cascella)

Second: (J. Stevens)

Discussion: None

Motion passed 8 (Lane, King, Cascella, Ferris, Martinez, Reinoso, Stevens and Vaglivelo)-0

17-075

Respectfully Submitted,



Shannon Reilly-Monaco
Board Secretary