

JOINT SCHOOL COMMITTEE / CITY COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE

MAY 26, 2022

TIME: 5:30 PM

FIFIELD ROOM, DEAN & ONLINE VIA ZOOM

Meeting called to order at 5:39 PM.

Present: Erin Brunelle (Chair), Juan C. Anderson- Burgos (Chair), John Whelihan, Rebecca Birks, Tessa Murphy Rombelti, Jenny Rivera

Also Present: Anthony Soto, Superintendent, William Collamore, School Committee member, Joe McGivern, City Councilor, Valerie Annear, Chief Instructional Officer for the Holyoke Public Schools, Dr. Stephen Mahoney, Assistant Superintendent.

**Order Number 1: 3rd Grade Literacy data for the past 5 years and steps taken to address the issue**

- Ms. Valerie Annear provided an update on the 3rd grade literacy population percentages across the district from SY 2017-2018 to present on students who are scoring at a equivalency of 3.0.
  - **In SY 17-18**, 17% ELL, 11% of students who are dual identified, 13% of students on an IEP, and 59% of General Education students.
  - **In SY 18-19**, 15% ELL, 9% of students who are dual identified, 20% of students on an IEP, and 56% of General Education students.
  - **In SY 19-20**, 13% ELL, 9% of students who are dual identified, 18% of students on an IEP, and 60% of General Education students.
  - **In SY 20-21**, 7% ELL, 5% of students who are dual identified, 22% of students on an IEP, and 66% of General Education students.
  - **In SY 21-22**, 9% ELL, 6% of students who are dual identified, 20% of students on an IEP, and 65% of General Education students.
- Ms. Annear also shared the comparison of the national average with the students in grade 3 at the beginning of each school year and at the end of each school year based on the Star Assessment that is taken. The star assessment is norm referenced and based on the students answer which will adjust based on students answer.
  - The data shows that the grade 3 students are significantly lower than the nation average.
    - In SY18, BOY had a deficit of 27%, and EOY was 15%
    - In SY19, BOY had a deficit of 32%, and EOY was 24%
    - In SY20, BOY had a deficit of 28%, and MOY was 19%- this year was not completed due to school closure.
    - In SY21, BOY has a deficit of 32%, and EOY was 27%
    - In SY22, BOY had a deficit of 36%, and EOY was 26%
- Ms. Annear also shared our MCAS performance for 3rd graders in ELA from 2017 to present. The MCAS is a criterion referenced which is not based on the students' answers.

- In SY17, 33% of students were not meeting expectations, 48% were partially meeting expectations, 17% were meeting expectations, and 2% were exceeding expectations.
- In SY18, 24% of students were not meeting expectations, 56% were partially meeting expectations, 19% were meeting expectations, and 1% were exceeding expectations.
- In SY19, 21% of students were not meeting expectations, 56% were partially meeting expectations, 120% were meeting expectations, and 3% were exceeding expectations.
- In SY20, No MCAS due to school closure
- In SY21, 30% of students were not meeting expectations, 55% were partially meeting expectations, 15% were meeting expectations, and 0% were exceeding expectations.
- Ms. Annear also shared that our top priority and action steps in improving structured literacy are improving small group instruction so we can meet students where they are in order to accelerate learning.
  - Complete and implement the Early Literacy Plan
  - Select a partner to support Literacy Plan development and leader support in conjunction with Relay
  - Plan and provide Professional Development for K-2 teachers in structured literacy and strengthening small group instruction
  - CIO, EDSLs and ET/Directors to observe and provide feedback on core instruction(all grades) and provide in time adjustments/supports
  - Continue to grow HELI, Holyokes Early Learning Initiative. The vision for this initiative is that every child in Holyoke is healthy and on track for early learning success from birth to grade 3.
- Mr. Soto added throughout his entry planning process, which has now transitioned into a strategic plan process over the past 6 months . The plan was cohesive and inclusive of the community, with a steering committee and an advisory committee to gather feedback and assist with the development of the plan. One of the five major focuses is early literacy. In the past the district did not have funding to support this and now we do it as a priority and the district has the resources or the focus to support this. Some of the concerns are the vacancies at the current time are concerning but the supports in the earlier grades is going to have an impact.
  - Mr. Soto explains the district's goals for the next 3 years is to see at least a 1.5 year of growth through accelerated learning in a year.
  - Actual percentages will be shared in June once the strategic plan is complete.
- Mr. Anderson-Burgos- sought clarification on whether the district has reviewed other cities numbers in comparison to Holyoke. And does the district currently have the funding to support the implementation of the strategies.
  - Ms. Annear explained that the performance data has been reviewed, and is significantly lower than other districts. Some End of the year data will be released soon. The district is addressing this by the intentional professional development for early literacy teachers, and providing teachers with the right resources for students to become literate.
  - Mr. Soto explained that there have been limited resources in the past, but redistricting and rezoning will assist. We have spent over 1 million on resources in the last few years. The issue is staffing, and if there is an issue with this, it will be a human capital issue, and

right now after the pandemic many are leaving the profession. Surrounding districts are facing the same challenges.

- Mr. McGivern: Impressed with the partnerships that HELI is a part of. They are doing a book giveaway at the merry go round. There are also connections at the YMCA and the students that come to her are accessing these needs of the students. As well as, with the Holyoke Library.

**Motion:**

Motion set by Mr. Whelihan seconded by Mr. Anderson-Burgos that the order has been complied with.

**Roll Call:** Erin Brunelle (Chair), YES, Juan C. Anderson- Burgos, YES, John Whelihan, YES, Rebecca Birks, YES, Tessa Murphy Rombelti, YES, Jenny Rivera, YES.

**Order Number 2:** Develop financial literacy curriculum for schools

- Mr. Soto and Councilor Jourdain met to discuss the curriculum that is currently in place. The district is offering the financial literacy course for 4 years, at both North and Dean Campus. Students are learning about finance, taxes, checking and balancing a checkbook, credit, and investing and more. Since 2007, we offered the Credit for Life field trip. Area schools attend and are offered a fun and educational experience that teaches them valuable lessons about money management. Holyoke High North typically offers this field trip to the entire senior class in April (pre-pandemic).
  - For SY21-22, there are 146 students enrolled in Financial Literacy courses at HPS:
    - Dean - 47 students enrolled (all in grade 12)
    - North - 99 students enrolled (1 in grade 10; 23 in grade 11; 75 in grade 12)
  - Financial Literacy is offered as a math elective option for upperclassmen. It is promoted during the course selection process with all other offerings. It is counted as a math course towards HHS graduation requirements, but is not recognized as a math course for many four-year college admission requirements.

**Motion:**

Motion set by Juan Anderson Burgos seconded by Mr. Whelihan that the second order has been complied with.

**Roll Call:** Erin Brunelle (Chair), YES, Juan C. Anderson- Burgos, YES, John Whelihan, YES, Rebecca Birks, YES, Tessa Murphy Rombelti, YES, Jenny Rivera, YES.

**Order number 3:** Superintendent Soto, and President Royal discuss adult trade offerings and certifications to residents.

- Mr. Soto explained through research the city would have to appropriate funding for this since adult education is not net school spending, and if the city wants to fund a program, and the district is open to entertaining a partnership there with the dean campus. There are two options:
  - If evening programs are developed and are not Chapter 74 we are able to provide them without oversight and to our specifications. There are no specific DESE regulations around how we use our facilities outside Ch 74 funding. Typically schools charge tuition to cover teacher salary and materials.
  - If the programs are to be Postsecondary Chapter 74 programs we will have to apply for each program as though they were new programs. This means: intent to apply early October, Part A application by Friday before Thanksgiving, and Part B mid-March.

**Motion:**

Motion set by Mr. Anderson-Burgos seconded by Mr. Whelihan to table the order for further discussion.

**Roll Call:** Erin Brunelle (Chair), YES, Juan C. Anderson- Burgos, YES, John Whelihan, YES, Rebecca Birks, YES, Tessa Murphy Rombelti, YES, Jenny Rivera, YES.

**Motion:**

Motion set by Mr. Anderson Burgos, seconded by Mr. Whelihan, to remove item number 4 from the agenda.

**Order number 4:** Anthony Soto provides an update to the Joint committee on the building project

- Mr. Soto shared that the city has been invited into the feasibility study. An updated ed plan- provided yesterday (5/25/22). Through that process, the MSBA has asked for commitments from the city council which include:
  - Based on the 2018 feasibility student seek new construction for Peck
  - Formally ask the city of Holyoke to be invited into the model school program- only if it saves the city money.
- If the model school program does not work out the MSBA wants to continue using the same OPM designer that was used in the past.
- We previously asked the council to appropriate \$475,000 for a feasibility study that was under the condition that we could use the same consultants, if not it would be over 1 million dollars.
  - The MSBA is seeking, in writing from the Council, that this is the desire of the body.
- Hopes this can take place at the next full council meeting is on June 7, 2022. and then refer to the finance sub-committee on June 1, 2022.
  - Vote by June 21st at the next full City Council meeting.
- Mr. McGivern shared his congratulations to the school committee and Mr. Soto on getting the approval from the MSBA. He also shared the importance of getting into the designs and the schematic phase, then the affordability, and suggested reaching out to the councilor Bartley to inform him about the neighborhood and set a neighborhood meeting.
- Mr. Soto encourages any member of the council to go to Peck to tour the building
- Ms. Murphy Rombelt Sought clarification on whether the MSBA vote was to pass unanimously or just pass.

- Mr. Soto shared that MSBA is looking for a unanimous vote as it looks good but passing is sufficient.
- Ms. Brunelle echoed that the MSBA wants to sense the support of the committee. The next meeting is on June 9th and is accessible by zoom.

**Order number 5-** Approval of November Meeting minutes

**Motion**

Motion set by Mr. Whelihan, seconded by Mr. Anderson-Burgos to approve the November 5, 2021 meeting minutes.

**Roll Call:** Erin Brunelle (Chair), YES, Juan C. Anderson- Burgos, YES, John Whelihan, YES, Rebecca Birks, YES, Tessa Murphy Rombelti, YES, Jenny Rivera, YES.

**Adjournment**

Motion set by Mr. Anderson Burgos seconded by Mr. Whelihan to adjourn the meeting.

**Roll Call:** Erin Brunelle (Chair), YES, Juan C. Anderson- Burgos, YES, John Whelihan, YES, Rebecca Birks, YES, Tessa Murphy Rombelti, YES, Jenny Rivera, YES.

Meeting adjourned at 6:32 PM.