

**Meeting of the
Instructional/SPED Subcommittee**

**Thursday, November 7, 2013
6:00 PM**

**Henry Lord Middle School
151 Amity Street
Fall River, MA 02721**

AGENDA

Discussion:

1. Career/Vocational Technical Education
2. Bristol Community College/Resiliency Preparatory School Partnership
3. Clarification of Grade 10 Geometry Curriculum

MINUTES

At 6:01 PM, Chairman Costa called to order the Instructional/SPED Subcommittee Meeting. A roll call showed that Mr. Costa, Mr. Martins and Mr. Pavao were present.

Also in attendance: Superintendent Mayo-Brown, Dr. Fran Roy, Paul Marshall, Jessica Vinacco, Michelle Sylvaria, and Michael Procaccini.

Mr. Costa said if there were no objections, he would like to take the BCC/RPS Partnership item first because Principal Vinacco had an event scheduled at her school to get to.

There were no objections.

1. Bristol Community College/Resiliency Preparatory School Partnership

Principal Vinacco said she was there to give a description of what the partnership looks like presently. She explained that they are trying to transition their students to post-secondary life and a strategy they are incorporating is building a relationship with BCC so that students are more familiar with the staff there, the dynamics of the school, and what they have to offer. Their partnership currently consists of a College Success Seminar (CSS) where the students go to BCC every Friday and attend the class and earn credits. It is free of charge. They are seeing if it will catch on and if other students will want to be part of that and grow from there. They also intend to offer a Serve Safe class, which is around sanitation, for semester two for their Credit Recovery program.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said they wanted to make sure the Committee was aware of the emerging partnership and she hopes the partnership will grow to service even more students from the alternative school.

Principal Vinacco said their plan is to grow it beyond that capacity and offer other courses including possibly a CNA scholarship in the future.

Mr. Pavao asked how many students are involved.

Principal Vinacco said currently there are twelve.

Mr. Pavao asked if there would be a second part of the course for the spring semester.

Principal Vinacco said they hope to see the second half of it. They start with CSS and then the BCC students go into a careers pathway which wasn't in the design at the time when they planned it but they are hoping to get that. BCC is offering some services around writing grants for them.

Mr. Pavao asked what grade level the students were.

Principal Vinacco said they were seniors.

Mr. Martins asked if she could expand her explanation on the career development.

Principal Vinacco said it is their intention to foster the relationship and let the students see that they can be successful at the college level and for them to get used to the faculty and be more comfortable there and also to be exposed to career pathways and a two-year or certificate program.

Mr. Martins asked if they were working on their follow-up study for the Class of 2012.

Principal Vinacco said that they were.

Mr. Martins asked if Durfee was working on their study as well.

Mr. Marshall said they were.

Mr. Martins said it is an important study to see what kids are doing one year after graduation. He is very pleased to have a program with BCC. At some point he would like to know what is being done with BCC to have a program where they can expand the courses for credits along with Durfee, like an Innovation Academy at Durfee, so that students can continue on and get credits. He is not speaking about dual enrollment but a regular program where credits are received while in school and go on to grade 13. He is happy about the program and feels that the students Ms. Vinacco has need a heavy dose of relevance to the core courses while also receiving skills in the process so that they can get a job.

Mr. Costa said that Ms. Vinacco mentioned the CSS was free but one time money. He asked if there was any work being done currently with the college around identifying students who may need financial assistance or scholarships in order to continue on with their education at BCC. "It is a daunting task for any student and if they have students with limited support systems or backgrounds where families are not familiar with the college process it becomes even a bigger barrier for them."

Principal Vinacco stated that that work has started. The staff at RPS has done a nice job of stepping up their exit portfolio criteria and having all the seniors do FSFA forms, personality tests, etc. A lot of work is happening at RPS and in addition to that they have done a college tour and BCC representatives are going in to do financial aid forums with parents as well.

Mr. Costa asked about uAspire and if it was possible to use them as a resource.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said they talked to uAspire and they will be able to assist RPS students as well.

Mr. Costa said he just wants to make sure that they are closing the loop.

Mr. Pavao congratulated Principal Vinacco on fostering a good relationship with BCC. He is sure when they start discussing what programming courses are going to be offered to the students at RPS, they can take some of the advice they are receiving from his colleagues.

Principal Vinacco said she thought these twelve were an important cohort. They were not sure how it would go but it has been going very well and the instructor has emailed the teachers to say how well they are doing in class. They have had a lot of good communication from them.

Mr. Pavao asked if they were integrated with other students at BCC.

Principal Vinacco said they were.

Mr. Costa thanked Principal Vinacco and wished her luck.

2. Career/Vocational Technical Education

Mr. Costa continued that they would move on to the next agenda item which was career vocational/technical education. He explained that Mr. Martins had brought this topic up at a regularly scheduled School Committee meeting and it was agreed to send to the Subcommittee for further discussion.

Mr. Martins handed out a packet and said this is something he very strongly believes in. Having career pathways and career awareness programs in middle schools where professionals go in to speak to small groups of students to explain their career and the education needed to be successful in that career. The students will quickly understand what you are telling them is to stay in school. Some kids are going to say they don't like particular careers but the object is that students see what they don't like as well as what they may like.

Mr. Martins continued that he sees the young man behind the camera filming the meeting and he is developing a skill to operate that camera. It is not vocational education like Diman or the vocational programs that are at Durfee. Those particular programs for vocational education require a minimum of 40% of the student's time in a shop setting with a maximum of 50%. Diman has 50% and Durfee's programs are 40% or three periods a day. Career technical education is two periods a day or 25% of the student's time. He said this has been going on for 40 years. He noted an article from the National Career Academy which goes into having career pathways or career academies as a means of keeping kids in school and going on to graduate at a higher rate.

In the packet Mr. Martins passed out, he pointed out that the very last page shows the one-year follow-up studies that were conducted from 2007 to 2011. Looking at the graduation rate of those students that are CVTE who take one or two career vocational/technical classes and then the non-CVTE which are the regular students who take standard liberal art classes; the graduation rate for the CVTE students is a

good deal higher than those that are non-CVTE. Those going on to post-secondary education, the liberal arts students, are a little bit higher. He noted that he was not pitting liberal arts against a career technical program and acknowledged that a career technical program is not for every student.

Mr. Martins explained that the second page of the packet (appendix A) was taken from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. He said they have to meet all of the requirements. The second box down indicates that a sequence of courses includes at least two technical courses in the same occupational field and has academic courses. A technical course is a course that provides individuals with technical occupational knowledge and skills. Mr. Martins said that is two periods a day. He noted that the student filming is in one period. They would need to have another period a day for him. When looking at the course catalog, those courses already exist with a teacher.

Mr. Martins then noted that there was a page in the packet that has data regarding 2014 Chapter 70 preliminary monies.

- The foundation budget was \$124 million.
- For a regular student, the Chapter 70 aid to education is \$5,976 with the City cost of \$1,370 totaling \$7,346.
- For a CVTE student who would be eligible for Chapter 74 funding and included in Chapter 70 money, it is \$10,489 that comes in per student. The City cost is \$2,400 for a total of \$12,894 to educate that student.
- The difference between Chapter 70 money and what the City has to pay is \$4,606 above the City cost.
- For the vocational student, subtracting the City cost from Chapter 70 is \$8,084.
- Doing the math, for every student in the FRED-TV program for one period a day and does not have an allied program associated directly with it, is a loss of \$3,478 per student. He is told that there are approximately 150 students in that program which by multiplying would be a loss of \$521,752 for that one program alone.

He stated again that not all students are going to want to be in the program but those that want to have a career and technical education can and some of the classes are already there. If there is a “defined” curriculum it can be a career-tech program, the graduation rate will increase, and there will be a considerable amount of money coming in. He added that there are other programs that could be combined as well.

Mr. Martins continued that in the course catalog, there are the 16 icons from the United States Department of Education with a description. Unfortunately, none of them are an active program. The only one that comes close to an active program is STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math). He feels the data is proving that the students who take one or more CVTE program or classes graduate at a higher rate and that the number going on to post-secondary education does go up. Mr. Martins explained that CVTE is intended not to be an end or exit but to promote going on to post-secondary education.

Mr. Costa thanked Mr. Martins for his presentation and continued efforts with the program. They have spoken about it as well as he and the Superintendent. He explained he was going to turn it over to the Superintendent so they could hear from the administration’s standpoint as to barriers, if any, and see if it is something they can do at the high school and what it would take to do that.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown thanked Mr. Martins for putting the information together and said it launches a certain conversation around what some of the barriers are. Theoretically it would be great to say they can get a lot more money from Chapter 74, but it reimburses at a higher rate because it cost more to educate the vocational student which Mr. Martins acknowledged. She said as they prepare to enter into the conversation, they do have three programs in the pipeline which take time to certify and are in that process. She noted that as Mr. Martins pointed to the data in terms of the graduation rate, CVTE students are graduating at a higher rate but are enrolling at lower rates to post-secondary education. They have a district vision of getting all students into post-secondary education and want to see those CVTE students enrolling at a higher rate as well.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown then asked Principal Marshall to outline the three programs that they do have in the pipeline. She noted that this is been a topic of conversation for a number of years on how they can provide critical career pathway opportunities for students and what the high school has done to that but also how they can expand Chapter 74 programs.

Mr. Marshall said that when looking at the Program of Studies, they adopted the career pathway idea because they understand that their job at the high school is part exposure and making sure that students understand what their exit points are and giving them experiences but also, in some cases being very targeted. If the student wants to do a particular thing, they have the opportunity to expand on that and if the students are not quite sure, they get an opportunity to try on a bunch of different things. "As Mr. Martins said, it is good to know what they do not want to do just as much is what they do want to do."

He continued that with that in mind they are looking at three potential programs that could be considered for Chapter 74 status but they feel there many things that need to be considered and they need some guidance from the Committee and counsel to see what they need to do to move them forward. The three potential programs are:

- TV and Communications
- Engineering
- Construction Craft Laborer.

Their overall concerns are:

- Although they were able to address concerns in the past CPR review, they are coming up on the review again in the fall and have concerns. They want to make sure their focus is on the current program so they have to make sure that they are certified and able to move forward. They did address a number of safety concerns but the building is two years older now and, like the results from the NEASC report, they are focusing on the shops to make sure they are up-to-date. Currently they are not because they were built back when the building was built and through budget cuts and restraints, they have not been able to bring the shops up-to-date. They have been focusing on the existing programs as well to make sure they maximize the enrollment in those programs. The sophomore numbers look very good for current programs which are at max or starting to build which will bring in additional money as well.
- In relation to the TV and Communications Program, currently they have 60 students, sophomore through senior. Not 150 as Mr. Martins stated earlier. They do have 140 students going through the Durfee Discovery Program as their freshman exploratory and they are going through their clusters as well. The program has been in existence for 20+ years and is highly subscribed and is a highly functioning program as is. The thing they are concerned about and need legal counsel on is that the program is what he calls a "zero cost" to the school department

because it is 100% funded through cable dollars. Mr. Marshall is concerned that if it is certified, will the cable company say it is being funded elsewhere and their money needs to shift. If so, they would end up with no gain/increased dollars. He would not want to certify a program thinking they are getting additional money and then get less money to spend and more of a liability.

Mr. Costa asked if his concern was that if it becomes a certified program and receives Chapter 74 reimbursement, they may not be able to receive that reimbursement in addition to funding they get from the cable company.

Mr. Marshall said that was correct because it was his understanding that the dollars that come in to the City pays 100% of the program including the salary of the instructors, the students' pay, maintenance of the facility, etc. He wants to make sure they are not going to put themselves in a position where somebody is going to turn around and say because they are receiving Chapter 74 funding; the money now needs to shift.

- His additional concerns regarding the TV and communication program is its current location. The current site is not the optimal location because it is right in the middle of the building. It is okay for a teaching station, but it also dubs as a TV studio for the community and access from the outside is not ideal. They would like to have the TV studio moved to the old industrial arts area. They feel it would be better suited there and give them the opportunity to expand the program. If they did that right now, it would be at a cost to the district and is not sure what that cost would be. If they renovated the current space that would be a cost as well because it would be dictated by Chapter 74 standards and code. He is hoping they move forward with the school renovation through MSBA and that the costs may be able to be included in that renovation.
- Final concerns for this program is that there are requirements of Chapter 74 programs regarding square footage, equipment, materials, percentage of time spent in the program, and teacher-student ratios which would impact their ability to provide a broader number of students the opportunity to take part in the program. He added that the program is functioning in the way Mr. Martins spoke of in relation to a career pathway as many of their students have left the program to go on to the industry or gone on to communication programs. They have a number of students who take it as an elective class because there is a commitment they would have to make after the discovery period of going into the program sophomore, junior and senior year. If there is some way they can do it in a parallel world where it would be Chapter 74 and an elective, that is fine but his concern is staffing. Some of the resources that were at the high school have been shifting to other parts of the district that are in need and his concern is just that they maintain the current programs as well as being able to build what they need to support them.

Mr. Marshall continued that engineering is another program.

- It is in the second year of a four-year roll out and is being done through Project Lead the Way (PLTW) and is supported by the Academy Planning Grant.
- They are in the process of submitting their year two proposal.
- They had a favorable review of last year's activities and anticipate being strongly considered for year two in that planning grant which would be a maximum of \$40,000 to be able to take a look at what it is they need to do to go to scale with these programs.
- They are hoping that at the end of the second year, it will be a larger chunk of money coming from the State which would be an implementation grant. It would really help them in relation

to the cost of the programs because there is a significant startup cost for years one through four for training the staff, materials, supplies, and making sure they are in line with the curriculum they have chosen. They were lucky because they had a significant bump in the materials by receiving the Life Science Grant which was close to \$100K. Without that, they would be at a significant disadvantage with the startup costs for those programs.

- The concern is the renovation of the space. If they are going to be doing the engineering program, they are working on their current spaces. That would have to be looked at if they move forward with the process of the renovation and it could be captured there instead of being a cost to the district.

Mr. Marshall said that the last program is Construction Craft Laborer:

- It is in its second year of operation and is a Perkins approved program. He noted that all of these are Perkins approved programs. They do get collected and are a part of the \$80K number that Mr. Martins talked about.
- It is currently an elective with a certified teacher.
- Their model is for students to exit the program with standard certifications which would be to exit the program with industry-standard certification through Chapter 74 designation. Another option is through a nationally established certified program which would also provide students with the industry certification.

He explained what a construction craft laborer was and explained that they were approached from the local laborers union because there was a lag in certified laborers and the union encouraged them to start the program. He noted that it is not a pipefitters or masonry program, but basically a laborer who can assist with all these different jobs. They felt it was a great opportunity for students because it wasn't a specified program and was more of a general contractor program. Looking at the enrollment, it is something that students are really enjoying. They are engaged and the teacher is doing a tremendous job. The question is whether or not they go Chapter 74 or to the other national designation.

Mr. Marshall said their recommendations are:

- To focus on the review to make sure the existing programs are where they need to be.
- Attempt to absorb as many of the costs of the programs into the renovation either as an elective or Chapter 74 program.
- Investigate with counsel any liabilities coming from cable or state aid.
- Provide the Committee with the best cost analysis for the start-up of these programs including renovations, equipment, materials, staffing costs, etc.

He concluded by saying that his last concern is that a part of what they are trying to do is provide as many exit points for students to be able to be college and career ready. Chapter 74 programs will provide the opportunity to do both of those things but he is concerned and wants to make sure he has the teachers and that the ratios in the core courses are as low as possible.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown introduced the Committee to Michelle Sylvaria, the new CVTE director at the high school.

Mr. Costa welcomed Ms. Sylvaria and asked if there was anything she would like to add.

Ms. Sylvaria said she thought Mr. Marshall summarized their conversations really well. They are aware of all of the issues and as a new director she is really evaluating all of the programs and will continue to look at it.

Mr. Costa, Mr. Marshall, and Mr. Martins discussed the success of the FRED-TV program attributing the hard work of Mr. Kochman and Ms. McGrath.

Mr. Martins said he is glad there are three programs but questioned if more could be created.

Mr. Marshall said there is potential for an unlimited number but right now their focus is on making sure that the ones that exist are supported and up to code. However, he thinks the things they discussed are worth investigating.

Mr. Costa asked when the review would be taking place.

Ms. Sylvaria said the last Coordinating Program Review was in 2009 and it is every 6 years; so next fall.

Mr. Costa said it is a ways off but it is worth continuing the conversation because if the Committee and administration feel they are going to expand, they have to start talking about renovations of the school and have a concrete plan prepared.

Mr. Procaccini asked to make a clarification. He doesn't think anyone can argue that the graduation rate is higher for the CVTE students but as the Superintendent was stating, the college enrollment for the CVTE kids was lower than the regular kids. When you look at the programs, it does make sense. He always felt one of the biggest values was retention in high school because a lot of students stay in high school for these programs. There are some programs that naturally send kids to school such as the health assisting program. Most of those college enrollments come from a couple of programs in which in order to pursue a career in those programs, they have to go on for more schooling. He noted that the engineering program is an outcropping of a partnership between him and the science department. Because Durfee has such a great science department, it was just a natural thing to try to roll into that and utilize those programs and leverage them in a different way. He thinks everything is heading in the right direction but there is a lot of work and expense to get those programs where the State really wants them. He added that the program review is the barometer of that. When the data changed in 2008, it was a result of them going through that process and the State's feedback.

Mr. Costa said students are graduating which is what they want but the question becomes are they college and career ready, If they are not enrolling, then it seems they are going out and working, whether it is in the program they were in when they were in high school or something else. It speaks to Mr. Martin's points that they are being productive and doing something when they leave. If they are not going to college, they have some skills to go out and provide for themselves or family and that they are doing a service for these students by giving them an option or exit point.

Mr. Costa asked if there were any further questions.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown asked Mr. Procaccini to clarify the Perkins Grant.

Mr. Procaccini explained that the Perkins Grant is for Career and Tech. Ed. "It is for career – what we call Chapter 74 – and tech. ed. which are programs that are technical in nature and there is a very specific list of programs and classes that fall under those categories." He said a good example would be Mr. Gagnon's programs at the high school where vocationally he teaches graphic communications and then he teaches some graphics classes that are non-Chapter 74 and are electives. Those electives are technical and the vocational programs are career. "So out of that CTE, some of them are Chapter 74

designated by the State and some are Chapter 70; but the federal government looks at them as one in the same.”

Superintendent Mayo-Brown asked if they can get more money.

Mr. Procaccini responded only for the Perkins Grant which is federal. The Perkins Grant is looking at career and tech. ed. students together. Chapter 74 from the State only looks at career kids which is very specified programs meeting certain requirements. He noted that some programs move very easily from column to column if they are willing to make the investment in the program. The increase in students versus the dollars from the federal program is not going to be near the impact they would get from the State. He said he did a lot of research his last year as vocational director and the State would not even give him the formula as far as the Perkins Grant. When the money comes to the State, they disperse it to the communities. There is a Fall River allocation that is divided between FRPS and Diman and it depends on the percentage of vocational students in each school. As they go up in enrollment, the allocation will change but the amount of money that comes to Fall River doesn't change. Like Title I, it is based on free and reduced lunch and other factors.

Mr. Martins explained that if they had a student that was in FRED-TV and graphic communications and they were married together as a program, that would be a CVTE program. If some other student was in either of those classes alone as a single period class/as an elective, they wouldn't count.

Mr. Procaccini said they wouldn't count under Chapter 74 but would count under the Perkins Grant. The students are reported as technical ed. students. There are two pools of money. One is a grant from the federal government which is subject to change. They are talking about making it a competitive grant versus an allocation grant. It is not a steady source of money and has dropped \$60K since his first year. He thinks Mr. Martins did a great job of demonstrating from the State end that Chapter 74 is really where the constant funding can come from.

Mr. Pavao thought it is a topic that needs to be continuously communicated between the Committee and the administration. If, in fact, there is an agreement that they increase Chapter 74 programs, they be incorporated into the renovation application and if they receive that, he is sure there are specific regulations that come along with Chapter 70 programs. He thinks they need to put this in a position in which the dialogue continues and agreed the FRED-TV/cable money needed to be clarified.

Mr. Costa suggested a follow-up subcommittee meeting to look at the questions that have been posed. He added that if they can make it work – it may be an investment up front – but it would give another track for their students to participate in and puts them in a better position when they leave high school.

2. Clarification of the Grade 10 Curriculum

Dr. Roy said when they look at the Grade 10 MCAS and what is being assessed in mathematics; it is not assessing a particular course but a combination of standards. She noted that is going to be the case for a few years even though PARC is coming on board. They understood there was a mismatch so there was discussion as to whether it would be more appropriate to go into algebra II versus a geometry sophomore year. What was decided when they looked at the amount of geometry standards that require algebra skills, is we are still going to teach geometry in the 10th grade and have filtered out appropriate content from the geometry book, the one that is more algebra based because that is what is being assessed, and we are pulling in four chapters from the algebra two text. They are not changing

the course but just taking some resources and adding them and filtering some out at the same time. She added that she knows there was some discussion taking place with parents and teachers.

Mr. Costa said did receive a couple of phone calls as to whether or not they were eliminating geometry at the high school. He thought that although it might not be a focus of the testing, it is a valuable course for them to take because when they go off to college, they may need those skills when they get there.

He appreciates them looking at the test to see where the focus is but also feels they should not be limiting the exposure the students need to master geometry. He asked that the message get out to parents with a reassurance that that is not happening from the administration.

Dr. Roy said they considered the vertical piece of it as well and it was not just MCAS. They are ensuring that students are prepared for the 10th grade but also prepared for their next level of mathematics.

Mr. Costa noted that he thought that the set-up of taking algebra in eight grade and then taking geometry freshman year and going back to revisit algebra II their sophomore year was difficult for a lot of students. He thinks that break from the algebra is an area of concern.

Dr. Roy said doing this to geometry actually helps because they are going to be seeing the geometry applications that are algebra based and they will keep that going.

NEW BUSINESS

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said that something came to their attention in regards to the Project Lead the Way courses in the Durfee Program of Studies. Two of the courses are listed as electives and are intended to be honors courses. They need to retroactively go back and amend the Program of Studies to make those to PLTW courses honors.

Mr. Costa asked if it was a matter of the way they were graded.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said it was.

MOTION: Mr. Pavao – Mr. Martins: To refer this item as presented by the Superintendent regarding the PLTW courses to the full Committee for consideration at the next scheduled School Committee meeting.

All in favor

None Opposed

Motion Passed

MOTION: Mr. Pavao – Mr. Martins: To adjourn.

All in favor

None Opposed

Meeting adjourned at approximately 7:23 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca L. Caron
Interim Administrative Assistant for
School Committee Services