

MANCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT SAU #37

COMMITTEE ON CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION

March 28, 2017

6:30 p.m.

Chair Pro Temp Girard called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Committee Members Girard, Freeman, Van Houten, Avard

Absent: Committee Member Langton

Messrs: K. Pelletier, M. McHugh, J. Gagnon, M. Macropol, B. Vargas, S. DeVincent,
C. Martin, D. Ryan

Chair Pro Temp Girard stated for the record, at the request of Chair Langton I will serve as chairman pro temp for tonight's meeting.

Chair Pro Temp Girard advised that the purpose of the public forum is to give the residents of Manchester the opportunity to address the committee on items of concerns affecting the community; that each person will be given only one opportunity to speak; that comments shall be limited to three minutes to allow all participants the opportunity to speak and any comments must be directed to the Chair. Any resident wishing to speak will come forward to the nearest microphone, clearly state their name and address when recognized and give their comments.

Ms. Patrice Benard, 31 Aurore Avenue, stated:

I will tell you about third grade curriculum that I have witnessed this past month. I was privileged to be able to go in on Saint Patrick's Day. In the morning I have taken my son through the book fair and then I came back and I stayed because I'm generally in the classroom in the afternoon. I got to witness something that I have never seen before and it was a section

called the reader's/writer's workshop. I'm going to not get angry, but let me tell you it is garbage, just simply garbage. What I witness was the teacher works with a small number of students and the other students are supposed to choose activities. One of the activities is buddy reading so two children get together. They either each pick a book that they want to read silently and then they talk about their book with the other child or they share a book and they read out loud with each other and discuss the book. I sat down with two little boys and the fluency level was distinct between the two of them. One of them was much more fluent than the others, but what I noticed about both, and I have told the teacher this so I am not telling you anything I haven't spoken with her about, our children are reading like automatons. I think it is because the teacher doesn't have enough time to work with them because we only have 20 minutes for this section and we have 20 minutes for that. They are so pressured by your pacing guides and all these requirements that she simply can't teach them to read. They don't know to stop when there is a period and to drop their voice. They don't know when it is a question to raise their voice. When they come to quotation marks they don't use a different voice. They are reading words on a page and they are not understanding it at all. You cannot learn to love reading if you do not understand what you are reading. You can't sink into the story and become a part of the story if you don't understand what all these marks on the paper mean. I don't see this reader's/writer's workshop as being anything worthwhile. That is one thing. That is my part on reader's/writer's workshop. Now I would like to talk to you about math. This month's pacing guide for third graders is perimeter and area because every eight year old needs to know how to do perimeter and area, don't they? No, they don't. What they need to know is to add, subtract, multiply and divide and not be counting on their fingers. We are doing this because it is in the pacing guide. We have the pacing guide because of the Smarter Balanced test, which we are taking right now, but we won't get the results back until November and it is just a colossal waste of time and you are doing things to our children... When I taught sixth grade math for the six weeks that we were doing area and perimeter then. Why don't we just wait and do it when it is appropriate. Please review your math. It is inappropriate for our children.

*There being no one else present wishing to speak, on motion of **Committee Member Freeman**, duly seconded by **Committee Member Van Houten**, it was voted to take all comments under advisement and further to receive and file any written documentation presented.*

TABLED ITEMS

A motion is in order to remove any items from the table.

8. Additional Close Reading Resource.
(Note: Tabled 3/13/2017.)

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated Chair Langton did ask me to take the tabled item off the agenda so it could be addressed first regarding the close reading resource, item 8.

*On motion of **Committee Member Freeman**, duly seconded by **Committee Member Van Houten**, it was voted to remove this item from the table.*

Ms. Kristine Pelletier, Reading Supervisor, stated we are here to discuss the manuals that accompany the close reading system. The teachers in all the elementary schools have completed the professional book called closer reading and it enabled them to come together to talk about the power of interactive read aloud as a tool to support understanding. It allows students to engage in strategic thinking, meaning critiquing, analyzing, inferring, connecting. The teacher is reading award winning read alouds so she controls the reading while the students can engage in intentional conversation. This interactive read aloud has been part of our literacy framework for a long time, but a quality interactive read aloud requires careful planning and often times teachers will say, Kris, I know the type of thinking that I want our students to have and the type of discussion that I want them to engage in, but I often times don't know the language to facilitate this kind of thinking. The teachers at Northwest, two of whom I have brought with me, Jenn Gagnon and Melissa McHugh, and I have also brought Michelle Macropol, the reading supervisor at Northwest, they have utilized this research to support them in this facilitative language. It doesn't just sit in interactive read aloud. It has affected what they have done in terms of instruction for guided reading where they are working with smaller groups of children at

their instructional level, but they are also thinking much more carefully and being more cognizant of how they are eliciting this talk. Also, responding to what they have read so responding in writing. That is another piece of our framework that has been affected by this. In addition to shared reading where they are reading in large texts such as poetry and big books. What I would like to do is hand it over to them to talk about the shifts that they have seen in their teaching and also in the work of their students and then if you have any additional questions we welcome them.

Ms. Melissa McHugh, Northwest Elementary School, stated I teach fifth grade at Northwest Elementary School. I'm here this evening to share with you what a great resource I think this book is. Given that all the teachers in the city have now completed the book study, the professional learning and also have the book resources available to them, I think it would be a real disservice to our teachers if we do not complete this set and give us these lessons and unit books. I use this book every day to guide many teaching and to better support my students. I do that through the different activities that are available to me through this text. It provides me with many, many resources including students analyzing images, students analyzing texts, students collaborating and reading and writing activities. I do think it is just a tremendous resource that teachers will value. I have seen growth in my own students over the past year in a couple of the different assessments that we partake in this year as well as just within my daily guided reading groups and writing. We are asking our students to shift their thinking. That will take a little bit of time, but over this past year it has been amazing to watch my students grow as readers, writers and general community members.

Ms. Jennifer Gagnon, Northwest Elementary School, stated I teach third grade at Northwest Elementary. I used to think that I was a good reading teacher and it wasn't until I had gone to several of the workshop and conferences Nancy Boyles puts on and I realized my gosh, she is right, we often miss talking about the author's craft and the structure along with those students. The impact of knowing that, but not knowing how to get there as Ms. Pelletier had said, this book helps me figure out how I'm going to ask those questions appropriately to those students so that I'm asking them well rounded questions about the book as a whole. One particular student comes to mind. He came into my class as a mid-second grade student reading, level L they call

it. I had to do a running record on him. Unfortunately, I miss him, but he left our district last week, but I did a running record on him. He is in one of my reading groups. I used the actual questions, they call it during reading, right in one of the lessons. What is the author telling me? Are there any hard of important words? What does the author want me to understand? I don't think I have ever heard, and I went through UNH and did my internship here at Northwest Elementary and I had gone in many classrooms and that is a question I don't think we ask often enough, what does the author want me to understand, not what is out here, not what I can kind of think the pictures are telling me, but what are the author's words telling me. I didn't do that until I started using this resource to start asking those types of questions. What is interesting is about this student is he is one that would tell me things over here. He now would go right into it. He left us at the beginning of fourth grade, level P. We are nowhere near the end of the year yet. He would answer questions that would happen within the text. His i-ready scores show that his comprehension level went from a level one, which is first grade, all the way up to an early three. I don't think I could have gotten that student there without the actual questions of bringing them back into the text to talk about it and the appropriate language to get them there. I couldn't have done that if I didn't have this, those type of questions that really get me in there. I said I never thought about asking that? What a great way to ask. What I also like about it is as the third, fourth and fifth we all got together. There are definitely lessons in here that benefit fifth grade compared to third grade. We spaced it out so that we all did what was age appropriate for our students. I think that is a huge benefit. The third grade team is going to be getting together and using what is in here as a resource for the author study and working toward making our own author study. This book also gives you how to do that on your own. We are not going to sit there blindly trying to figure it out. We are actually getting the help now that we need in order to make them so they can think higher level and analyze text. I'm going to leave it there because I don't want to take up all the time. It also goes into writing. The unit that we did was about home, why is it so special. We read the book by Cynthia Rylant, *Let's go Home*. The figurative language, the descriptive language in here is just phenomenal, especially for third grade students. I had asked them to write. One of the things you know in Smarter Balanced that they ask you do to is read two articles and now you have to talk about the two articles and write something on your own about it. They had to read an article. We all read it together and we worked through it just as closer reading would about a student who wrote about herself as a narrative, a third

grader. She was a foster kid and ended up being adopted and what her home life was like. What they asked you do to, this book is very much about descriptives, what a bedroom looks like, they asked them to take that and write about what Sierra's room would be like. The student that I'm going to read from was working toward being proficient in writing: "Sierra's bedroom is like no other because she has soft and warm blankets to snuggle in when it is the weekend and you are away from your school. Your bedroom is the warmest place in the house. The room might have a toy box, some playful toys. Her bedroom has some windows to watch the snow. Sierra loves sharing her room with her sister." Then I have one that is written by an ELL student. What I like about this program is I'm the one reading it. They don't have to read the hard words. They just have to talk to me and ask me questions and we go over what are the hard and important words. It is asked right there. My students who are identified or who are ELL or are struggling readers can have this conversation with me. It is not a you raise your hand and you talk to me. We all talk with each other about it. To see them actually interacting and wanting to participate in this and then writing... Here is my student who is ELL who receives services: "Sierra looks out her window and smells the oak tree from yards away. Fun with love and nature. She treats her sister with her heart. She treats her dolls the same way as her family. When she sleeps she feels so comfy in her bed that is softer than a puppy's fur." I would not have gotten that from that student if I didn't have the text and the resource to tell me how do I get him there. How do I get him to look at those hard and important words and understand them? How do I get him to understand what the author's message is and what they mean? For me, it is not just a resource for me. It is a resource for me to help them succeed. I use it in my writing as well for them. That whole section is going to be great from when we talked about that, using that during our narrative. How wonderful would that be using authors as your mentor, knowing how to dive into that book and being able to use some of what you learned about that author's craft, which we never touched on much before, and bring it into our writing.

Ms. Pelletier stated from what Jenn just said, it levels the playing field so it allows all students to engage in rich conversation and deeper thinking, which is what we need. The other thing is, this is generative so this resource is a scaffold. What many of the teachers at Northwest have shared with me is they feel comfortable enough now because they are more familiar with this kind of language, this kind of teaching that now they are creating text sets of their own and this

has only been in place at that school since last January so it really has not been at Northwest for that long. For them to see these types of shifts in a short amount of time is impressive. Like I said, with a few months of working with it, now they are feeling comfortable to create their own and that's what we want, that embedded teaching. It has been powerful.

Ms. Michelle Macropol, Reading Supervisor, stated I was lucky enough last school year when we first implemented to go into several classroom to listen and just listen to the dialogue back and forth with the teacher and the student speaking. It really was amazing. We knew right away this is great. We need to get Kris in here. We were happy to share out a couple of times with you all so that we could get it into all the Manchester schools because we saw right away the power of the conversation and what that was leading to. I think it is great. I think it is a great resource.

Ms. Pelletier stated and it permeates throughout the literacy framework. Comprehension, that's what reading is. Students can sound fluent and not understand. We want children who really can talk at these higher levels. What is wonderful is these books offer that. Classroom libraries can look very different depending on the schools you go to. At least now we have purchased a set of quality texts. Like I said, I was at a school the other day and they said they were looking at a unit, but we know we have other books that we know are going to feed right into this. We really would like you to consider this. As I said, we have been pleased, but we are seeing results.

Committee Member Van Houten stated welcome. I'm glad that you are back given that we sent you away the last time. I apologize for that. One quick question. In deference to our previous speaker, the parent who spoke, given that the teacher is reading, is this program capable of modeling for the youngster how to read with inflection, how to stop at appropriate marks of punctuation? Does that address the needs that she sees in the classroom that she was referring to?

Ms. Pelletier replied that is exactly what it does. It serves as a model of fluent reading between phrasing, pausing, stressing, intonation, all of those parts of fluency, in addition to rate. When you take that, but then the teacher segues into guided reading where it is smaller groups at their instructional level that's an expectation. When we look on the continuum of literacy learning, which is a resource that every teacher has, there is a fluency section at every level. There are fluency requirements. We also have the prompting guide that every teacher has that has teaching, prompting and reinforcing language to support that. It is definitely a priority. It is an expectation and it is a standard. This serves as the model. If I can hear this, this is the way reading is supposed to sound, I'm supposed to listen to it and I can think about it and I can talk about it that is what we want. Children who struggle with reading think that reading is just reading words. What this shows them is that reading is about reading language. There is something to be thinking about. That's not only in the books that I listen to, but it is in the books I read. I think that's what this promotes. It is foundational. We talk about parents reading aloud to their children at home. That is what this is doing, but it is bringing it into the classroom context and we have to be intentional as teachers to support that higher level thinking. We have to have resources that do it. Again, this is just a scaffold. It is not a day by day planning guide. It is a resource of facilitative language. Again, what we are trying to train the teachers is not about having a list of questions, it is really about having that strategic thinking that I was talking about. As an independent reader I want children to be able to do that all by themselves. We are trying to put ourselves out of a job. I need to teach them and all for those situations whole group.

Committee Member Freeman stated thank you all for coming tonight. I do have a couple of question. Melissa, you had said that you had seen improvements based on assessments. Which assessments were you using?

Ms. McHugh replied so far this year I have seen growth in our i-ready assessment. That's an intervention tool that we utilize. My students at my grade level are expecting to make 19 points growth in that assessment and most of my students exceeded that at the mid-year. I attribute that, in partnership with other resources, I do attribute that to this resource. Also, we have completed NWEA data at the fall and winter intervals and I have seen growth there for most of my students. I would be glad to gather data, give you some numbers, whatever you need.

Committee Member Freeman stated no. Thank you, I appreciate that. This is a general question for all of you. Could this technique be used with any book? Does it have to be the books that are assigned?

Ms. Pelletier replied that's why I said it was generative in nature. What it does is it trains teachers to see how could I put three or four books together in a text set, that's what we call it, around maybe some kind of theme or whatnot. It is really more about looking at what these books have to offer for strategic thinking. I think what often happens is some teachers will look at books that they read aloud before and say it is not offering what I really thought it did whereas these are really quality literature that raises the level of understanding. It can be with any book. That is where we want to go. We don't want each teacher to have to rely on one set of books. Again, like I said, it is a quality interactive read aloud where you are really choosing intentional places for children to turn and talk with their partner. For our student population that has a lot of ELL students it allows them to engage in conversation where typically when you do a read aloud you pose a question and then a few children answer. This levels it and gives everyone a comfort area for sharing their thoughts and also building on one another. I think what I have seen too in some of these classrooms is it is not about getting the right answer, it is about providing a thought or opinion and it might be different than yours, but I'm going to provide evidence. That is what I have seen a lot of. It is debating. They did a whole series on leadership and they were debating which leader they thought was the best and why. It is a lot of open ended questioning. Then if the teacher isn't finding the quality responses then we have said that you need to do some teaching. It is not just prompting with lots of questions. It is really adjusting their teaching when necessary.

Ms. Gagnon stated the lesson book actually gives you... She has made lessons up to go along. This is where I learn from myself as well, what is a quality book. Right on page 15, it tells you how to identify your learning focus and to make your own lessons. That is the best part about the scaffolding with this book, how to study a concept. The concept we worked on was leadership, but I can take how to study a concept from here and I can build my own from many of the other great mentor texts that we do have that we would be able to use, but I need to learn

how to do it first and I need these quality texts to realize that that one that I used to read that I thought was really great for those kids has nothing compared to the quality in this book and the richness that I need. It gives you how you can do that. We very much enjoy in third grade, at least at Northwest, I can speak for Allen Say is our author. We want to take that author and make our own using the tools here that it provides us on doing our own study of an author using Allen Say who we find to be an amazing author. After reading these I feel we can get a lot out of that. That is what we are going to try this year and then obviously we will need to work at it and tweak it a little bit to say what worked and what didn't, but that's where we are bounding off. This comes with how to do it.

Committee Member Freeman stated I did have an opportunity to go through both of them. I just have one more question. On average, how much time per day do you spend on this?

Ms. McHugh replied within my classroom day I have a half hour dedicated to closer reading. I spend an additional hour doing guided reading and reading center rotations. So I have an hour and a half per day.

Ms. Pelletier stated I think this brings the value of interactive read aloud. Often times I know as teachers' time is of the essence, but this is something that has to happen in every k-5 classroom. I feel like providing these resources makes that a priority. Again, it is across out district finally because often that doesn't happen. It is foundational. It is bringing kids to the understanding that they have to be thinking while they are reading with any text. That is probably what they struggle with the most, some of them.

Committee Member Van Houten stated I understand that Northwest is a little further along because you had begun this as a pilot earlier than the other schools. You have progressed beyond the use of the standard library and to being able to choose integrate these concepts into many different situations for your students. My question is this: is that the state that we find the other schools in or are they still pretty reliant on the library that we purchased for you?

Ms. Pelletier replied Northwest is the only school that has had this resource. The other schools had the professional book.

Committee Member Van Houten asked didn't they have a library with it, a library of books?

Ms. Pelletier replied they had the library of books so they have utilized those, but I don't see them utilizing them to the degree that these teachers have had because they haven't had that resource to support them.

Ms. McHugh stated I'm a second year teacher myself. My other teammates, I work with three other fifth grade teachers. They are much more experienced than I am. Regardless, right now our team has decided to utilize the library that was provided for us. I think it is empowering. It is a tool that we will use in the future as professionals to develop other lessons that are poignant to what is happening in our classroom. However, we use and find the value in the libraries that were purchased every day.

Committee Member Avard stated I'm going to refer this to Dr. Vargas. Dr. Vargas, we have been having conversations at the full board level and off line about reading skills in our district and getting children up to grade level. What is your position on this program, on these resources?

Dr. Bolgen Vargas, Superintendent of Schools, stated all my conversations with teachers have been very positive around how they receive them and I think what you heard in here is what I'm hearing. However, my work with the board and I think on our level that we need to pay attention to the urgent need for this district to have an evaluative tool or an assessment that you can evaluate programs so across the district, because sometimes the program could be excellent, but it could be that you don't have the professional development or you don't have the teaching workforce if you are not supporting them. Page 191, which I sent to you I think last week, I asked the board to please read it very carefully, what the curriculum audit says and that is that we don't have the capacity to evaluate our reading programs. In other words, I couldn't tell, other than the narrative of what teachers are telling me, which are extremely important, but I think we all,

as educators, would agree that they are not sufficient. All our work should be subject to a third party review, like parents. That is why we need such a tool because then I could tell that parent according to this non-reference assessment your child is reading on grade level by third grade or is behind or is making progress. I don't know if that answered your question. This is very new as your heard. What I'm hearing is very positive. However, I would like to, a year from now, say to the teacher that at the end of the day you are going to assess all our students to see where they are at. Granted, it is not for every child, but we ought to be able to have an assessment that is for group comparison, which is different than running records. It is child by child. It is very effective for the day to day work that teachers are supposed to do in the classroom, but you could not use the running record to make comparisons or evaluate a program because what you get from the running record for the most part you get it from paying the person who is doing the assessment. It is a like a rubric. We have all been in a situation where we are being asked to evaluate something and give a rank. I would rank something number five. You would rank it three. Perhaps you would do four and there is a lot of subjectivity in that kind of assessment. By the way, teaching has subjectivity. I'm not afraid of saying that. Anytime you are dealing with children it has some element of that. At the end of the day, what I think this board needs and I would like to work with you and I know you have been a part of the conversation for us as a district to select an instrument that could allow up to evaluate our programs, whether they are new or whether they have been here for quite some time.

Committee Member Avard stated I'm not sure I got quite the answer that I'm looking for. I do understand that we need to have a proper assessment of all of our programs. I think several of us have been talking about doing programmatic audits for years and that we need to look through the whole district at all of our programs, beginning to end to see what is successful and what's not. I was looking for your opinion of this particular resource, this program. Is it something that you feel is going to push us further along on the goal of literacy with our children or is this not something that you support in your vision of getting all children to reading on grade level?

Dr. Vargas replied I support anytime that a teacher, and notice that they said if you use it appropriately and if you use it right, which every way that they describe it is congruent with the appropriate usage of material. It is not the end all. That is what I hear you saying, but it is a very important tool to ask essential questions in that process. Any material that advances that... As you know, they also will tell you that there are other elements in the realm of teaching and you have to be careful when you choose a program. Sometimes the vendor would like us to believe that one size fits all. That is where you see my reluctance. Everything that I'm hearing is congruent with what I believe, to answer your question, that teachers ought to have materials and resources that allow them to meet the needs of every child.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated Dr. Vargas, if I could follow up, are you saying that while you don't discount what the teachers before us are saying, you have no way of actually determining whether or not it is delivering the results. Are you suggesting that the resources spent on expanding this program would be better spent toward developing an assessment tool that would allow the district to independently assess the efficacy of this program versus others that we are using in the district versus others that might be available for us to use in the district?

Dr. Vargas replied given the investment that they are asking, which is \$8,000 from school improvement of Title I money...

Ms. Sharon DeVincent, Director of Federal Projects and Professional Development, stated last year when we had our Title I reallocation grant this close reading was part of that so the funds are specific to close reading materials. Instead of buying additional books like this to hand out or additional mentor texts we wanted to go to the next left. We had enough left over for that.

Dr. Vargas stated thank you. My understanding is that this was embedded in a grant.

Ms. DeVincent stated yes, and we can't spend it on anything else.

Dr. Vargas stated to answer your question more specifically, if you stop doing that, you are hearing your teachers that this is supporting them. What the district needs and the board needs is to work with our teachers and say for this many years, at least four, they told us that we don't have a metric that we can evaluate programs. No superintendent, whether it is me or anyone else, could give you the answer to what is the most effective program that we have as measured by, we don't have that. In the absence of that, I will say that for the time being, whatever is in progress, including this grant that was written for this material is quite appropriate to continue. However, what I would tell our teachers and to our principals and to you that there is a sense of urgency for us to come to a joint resolution, if you will, in which we can say that we have an instrument that from now on when we invest we want to make sure that we evaluate our programs to see if it is yielding the result that we are looking for.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated I have several questions and concerns. As you might see, I did a fair amount of reading so I hope you will bear with me. There are several things that you said here tonight that concern me. Did I understand you, Ms. Pelletier, to say that Northwest Elementary School has been working with these books in addition to everything else from the time it started the pilot program?

Ms. Pelletier replied they utilized their Title I funding.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated it is a simple yes or no question.

Ms. Pelletier stated it was a year ago January, yes. They purchased it prior to us writing the grant for the district.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated the reason why I'm asking is I know this program was piloted at Northwest and I know because of the enthusiasm of Northwest you basically came forward and recommended that it be sent to the whole district. At the time it was under consideration I asked very specifically what was the data that showed that it was worth doing and you said it was too early to have data and you were waiting on your test scores. When those i-ready test scores came out Northwest, which had been using this program in its entirety from the

beginning finished sixth of the eight schools in the i-ready testing program so it seemed to me that the data would indicate that since Parker Varney, McDonough, Wilson, Hallsville, and Gossler Park all got better i-ready scores than Northwest which piloted this program that we might proceed cautiously here.

Ms. Pelletier stated I don't consider starting in January of last year enough time to really see results. The other thing to think about, the kindergarten through second grade version has just come out. The literacy collaborative work that they have done there has focused more on that part of it too, the interactive read aloud. The third grade students last year at Northwest started to receive this type of instruction in January. I don't think we are going to see immediate results. They are seeing results through the discussion that they are having within their classroom and the response to writing. I think we are going to see results, but I think it is early on. Often times with children who are started in kindergarten have this, we will see results all the way through to third grade, fourth grade, fifth grade. It is too early right now. They have only worked on this... Your i-ready results that you are looking at are from what date?

Chairman Pro Temp Girard replied they were the results that were presented to this committee in September.

Ms. Gagnon stated I have my i-ready results if you would like. The average growth for a full year would be 30 points. My average score for mid-year was plus 33 points.

Ms. Pelletier stated and that's exactly what Melissa said too.

Ms. McHugh stated in fifth grade the average target growth for one year is 19 points from September through June. At the mid-year testing my students on average had a plus 23 point growth so they have exceeded one year's growth at a mid-year assessment.

Ms. Pelletier stated and that's growth versus the percentage overall.

Dr. Vargas stated once again, for the board, my humble suggestion would be that we need to work to come to a joint resolution. What is the standard that we are going to use for evaluation? I think your question is very important. For example, when you pilot a program ideally you have a couple of things in mind. You are experimenting a little bit. You hope that the experimentation will pay off and then you might want to expand it throughout the system. If you go and pilot a program and you don't have the standards or are at least in agreement of what are the evaluative tools and assessments for this board, how do you evaluate a program for example. It should not be just that it was a one test score. There are other things that you will take into consideration. That's why I wrote to you last week. Again, not something that I invented here, something that I found that I was a little concerned about because if you don't have an agreement in how you evaluate your initiatives, how you evaluate your programs then we are in the situation that we are in, which I do understand the discomfort around the fact that you don't know whether it is working or it isn't working. What I'm trying to say to us here is that that has been taking place for quite some time. It is my hope that we as a board and as a school community have a conversation to say how do we move forward in this area so we put an end to it. To be quite frank, what the curriculum called 22 silos and that means that every school is doing their own thing, evaluating their own results, but there is a not a cross system evaluation mechanisms of process for this board to determine whether something is working or not.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated I'm glad you brought up the curriculum audit because I had planned to ask about this. In quoting from the curriculum audit it says when asked about the process for program adoption respondents consistently indicated that it is driven more by intuition than by program data. The following comments are representatives: "it is word of mouth mostly. We find someone who is using it and watch it in action. If we like it we buy it or copy it." That came from an administrator. Someone has an idea and they discuss it as a group and rely on the teams' experience. It is mostly trial and error, we buy it and then we keep data and the team decides if we need to go further, also from an administrator. I'll be honest, this is kind of what this feels like to me.

Ms. Pelletier stated this is not what I would consider a program. This is a resource to support interactive read alouds. It really is not a reading program.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated you say it is not a reading program, but if I take a look at the way this is laid out, how to study a person, how to study a place, how to study a theme and it continues like that and then the mentor texts that we spent \$90,000 to buy that you said were purely voluntary and some teachers may use them and some teachers may not and I see every single one of those mentor texts embedded in each one of these units as part of a how-to. I'll be honest with you, Ms. Pelletier, I don't think that you folks have been fully upfront with this committee or the board about what this is and how it works. That is a concern to me, especially when I hear you say that to not obtain these books would be a disservice to the teachers in the district. I would think that if it were that big a deal that when you originally came forward you would have included this necessary resource as part of your buy and not come back to us after the fact and say if you don't do it now you are screwing the teachers because they can't actually do the program.

Ms. Pelletier stated when we came to you in the spring of last year we did have all three resources. To be honest with you, when I left the meeting I thought we were getting all three. After the fact, I found out that only what was approved was the text and the professional text.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated that's all that was ever given to the committee. These were never given to the committee as something that was part of the program.

Ms. Pelletier stated I remember bringing them to that committee meeting. Michelle was there too.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated I don't remember seeing them. I remember seeing the book that you just showed me and the mentor text. I at no time remember seeing this. Now, that doesn't mean my memory is absolute, but to come back after the fact and say it is necessary when it wasn't part of the original package I have a problem with that.

Ms. Pelletier stated I agree. Like I said, my understanding was that all three were being purchased at the same time. Again, it is a resource that provides that language. Teachers have to make decisions and I talked about the planning part of it. This serves as a support in their planning. They have utilized the books. They are requesting that they have this resource to support them in utilizing the text now.

Dr. Christine Martin, Assistant Superintendent, stated I just wanted to provide some feedback provided to me by some of our principals. Regardless of which book was brought forward or what the understanding was initially, after the professional development was completed there was a strong desire, some principals actually called me on several occasions wanting to know when these resources would be available to teachers. I see this resource as being significant to reinforce the work of our experienced teachers and in particular our inexperienced teachers that need to hone their craft. My final thought on this would be nothing pleases me more, I have to tell you, ladies than to see the passion that you have for teaching reading, that you come forward with the great work of your students and read the work that your students have presented and use research based techniques to support it. I'm very proud of the work that you presented this evening and the work of your students.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated I too have actually spoken to some principals about this and I would say there is not uniformity of opinion on the usefulness of this program.

Committee Member Freeman stated some of the things that concern me about this, number one, when this was first presented to us last year, there really was no data to support the effectiveness of this program on a national level. My concern is, are we subjecting our children to what I call the flavor of the month? It seems that over the past ten years we have tried many different programs, and I do understand, Ms. Pelletier, that you don't think this is a program, but when we spend \$90,000 on the books that accompany this particular unit then it is a program. It is a program. When I was going through the lesson and unit plans for this, every single lesson plan referenced those books that we purchased. It is a program of sorts. Again, my concern is the whole flavor of the month and what seems to be fashionable. I understand that you are

having some great results with this, but not every child is going to. I never saw any national statistics on this.

Ms. Pelletier stated this is best practice. Best practice is every elementary student should be read to every day with quality texts and with facilitative language that is going to allow for deeper discussion. That is what this offers. It is not packaged as a program. As far as statistics and data, Nancy Boyles has shared scores from districts that she has worked in around this to show that students have progressed. Again, I know you are thinking it is a program, this to me is a part of our framework that has to happen every day. We need to offer the teachers of Manchester a scaffold and support. The mentor texts that go with them are gorgeous. Every school that I have gone into, the teachers can't say enough about them because they offer so much thinking. You heard it from these two, but go to all of the schools. They are using them, but they really want the support of this so that they can grow to create additional texts. That's with the books that they currently have in their libraries.

Committee Member Freeman stated I understand that. I really do. You and I have known each other for quite some time. My son attended the Wilson Street School when you were the Title I teacher there. I do remember asking you, at the time I didn't understand what Title I was. I thought my son should be in it. You said absolutely not because my son was reading when he was four. We have known each other a long time. If you can go on an intuition there is something about this particular reference guide that just doesn't feel correct to me. I went through this entire text and a few of the things that I pulled out just did not sit right with me. I will let you address each and every one of them. Again, you and I have known each other for quite some time.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated Dr. Avard has said that he has to leave right about now.

Committee Member Avard stated I don't want to rush the debate on this particular topic. I do have an obligation that I have to leave for. I would like to hear at some of what Ms. Freeman has to say. I would move the item right now and I'll go into a discussion of that because I believe I am in your queue of speaking, but I would ask Ms. Freeman to at least continue.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated if you needed to leave I wanted to give you the opportunity to say what you wanted to say in advance.

Committee Member Avard stated I appreciate that. Thank you.

Committee Member Freeman stated I just picked out a few things. One of the things that I picked out, and this was the k-2 guide, the book lists 26 negative character traits, but only 17 positive traits. That was disturbing to me. The last time I brought up concerns about books I was accused of wanting to ban books, which was never the case. I'm not cherry picking things. I went through this and the things that were glaring to me I made a list of. That was one of the things that was really concerning to me, 26 negative character traits, but only 17 positive traits. What does that say to a child who is in kindergarten? These are some of the things that I came up with and I'm not an educator. I'm just a layperson.

Ms. Pelletier asked can you reference the page you are talking about?

Committee Member Freeman replied page 42.

Ms. Pelletier stated it is talking about active reading word chart, identifying character traits and feelings. A character trait is something you notice over and over throughout a text and a character feeling is something you notice one time or a couple of times in a text and they list some. AS they are reading they are thinking about various character traits.

Committee Member Freeman asked how do you explain a character trait to a kindergartener?

Ms. Pelletier replied I think that is part of what you have to understand with this. This resource is a great span. It is k-2 and the other one is 3-5. As grade level teams they have met and they have looked at the resource to say this is how we are going to approach character trait and these are the types of questions that are appropriate for our grade level or these are appropriate books for that grade level. In a program I think it is specific to each grade level. This is a span and it is

offering some string examples, but they have to consider the children that are in front of them to make the appropriate decisions about what questions to ask and what traits to support and whatnot. Yes, some of them are negative. It depends on the character that they are reading about.

Ms. Gagnon stated being a third grade teacher and then with a fifth grade teacher studying a person is great, but I'm not going to do Abraham Lincoln with my children in third grade. I think just looking at the books it is more appropriate for fifth grade than third grade to learn about Abraham Lincoln or the history of slavery. That is not third grade. I can take what they do so studying time and history and person, if we are going to add that in, because we should learn how to read and all the different concepts, different genres, things like that with our children. That is one of the big things we should be doing. I can take this and ask how did they talk about him? How did they say that? How did they word it? In the beginning of this book I can use the resource to actually make my own about a different person, about a different time in history that I would be able to use with third graders. Would I use the books in here that are about slavery with third grade? Absolutely not. Since that is k-2 I'm assuming that most kindergarteners that I know too wouldn't probably pick that one to read.

Committee Member Freeman stated and I understand that. What you just said is my concern, that you can use those types of books. You can use those books that you just cited with a kindergartener. That is my concern. That is one of my biggest concern.

Ms. Pelletier stated no. They are two separate sets.

Committee Member Freeman stated if they choose to use those books, it is entirely too subjective in some areas. That is what concerns me. We are not using this in k-2 right now, correct?

Ms. Pelletier replied no. Northwest hadn't purchased it either. When you look at the texts themselves, even Goldilocks at a very simplistic level, her character trait is she was a little selfish. There are going to be negatives and positives depending on the books, but the books that they are reading that are part of those text sets are award winning. They are quality literature. Not all characters in books are going to have positive traits.

Committee Member Freeman stated absolutely not. Hansel and Gretel is one of the most morbid fairy tales ever written.

Ms. Pelletier stated that's what I'm trying to talk about. I think what it is doing is exposing them. Kids have to think about what characters are like and get them to think about that and look at things that they say and things that they do, tell them about themselves, tell them about the person that they are. That is appropriate for kindergarten to be talking about. Now with those texts that are chosen for k-2, not the 3-5.

Committee Member Avard stated I do have to leave. I apologize. I have a family commitment so I do have to leave in a moment. I see a program, non-program, I don't care what you want to call it. We approved this months ago. We invested in this months ago. This seems like a glitch to me that it was written into the original grant and it wasn't considered part of what we approved when we approved this. The teachers are thrilled with what they have. They are telling us that this is making them better teachers and we are constantly talking about increasing our professional development, improving what we are doing with our educators. Giving them tools and resources to get the students where they need to be, the administration seems to be in favor of this. I don't see why this has been a 40 minute, 50 minute discussion at this point in time, almost an hour discussion at this point in time when we are not debating the merits of the program/non-program. We already did that. WE already invested in it. This is just a tool that should have been part of the original purchase. I won't be here for the vote. I apologize. I would support this whole heartedly. I don't know if it is going to be successful. I don't know if every teacher is going to sit before us and say this made me a better teacher, but we have two here that said this made me a better teacher. That is worth \$8,000 in my book. I would like to bear 1,100 teachers come in and tell us the same kind of story. That would be amazing. For the

record, I am in favor of this. If it failed tonight, perhaps I will bring forward a minority report to the full board. I apologize. I must leave.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated just on that point, whether or not it was a glitch, I don't know. I can only tell you that in reviewing the documents from the past meetings these were not included and this here basically with our agenda says the Title I reallocation grant has remaining funds available for close reading resources and therefore the recommendation is to buy this. I don't know if this is... Sharon, can you clarify, is this a glitch? Is this an add on? What is this?

Ms. DeVincent replied I have to think way back in time. When this originally came forward, we wanted to focus on the professional development piece of it. When we were originally running the numbers, which is why we ended up with some extra funds, the numbers that we had, we had enough to purchase the professional book which we knew we wanted to start with that and the main professional development before we gave the teachers anything else they need to read, right? We wanted to give them the mentor text so while they were reading they had some kind of reference tool to what they were reading.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated so this was never part of the original request?

Ms. DeVincent replied this was part of it, but it wasn't part of that original grant at the time. Ms. Pelletier and I have talked and she did intend for it to be all three pieces together. I can't say what happened by the time it got me and you guys at the board, it was missing that piece. That was way back when and I'll take the blame for that one. I dropped the ball. Yes, the intent was if this went well and we were able to we would try to get these materials. I would say at this point and based on the feedback I have gotten from principals and teachers and reading specialists throughout the district that even if we didn't have the money in the grant and we had money somewhere else I would still want to bring it forward. We are not just bringing it because we have extra money. We are bringing it because, just like Dr. Martin said, I have had numerous phone calls, emails from principals, from teachers, from reading specialists saying my teachers read the book, they have bought into this, they want to have more strategies in their toolbox so when they are working with students they are asking the right questions and they are raising the

level of expectation and learning. We want this tool. We have seen Northwest use it. There are a few teachers who went out and bought it on their own. People have seen it throughout the district and they have said that would really help me up my game and hone my craft. That's kind of what happened. When we did the first initial big order for the closer reading book and the mentor text, there are always stragglers so I kept saying no, I don't think we have the money and I had to wait until all the schools said yes, I have all the materials I need and then went back and looked and we have the money. I do plan on still going to back and buying a few more copies of this just so we have it for new teachers that come into the district, that sort of thing, but we do have enough money here to support our current staff.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated I would think it would be helpful, for future reference, if there are part of a program that you don't think we can afford, but are something that should be on the radar, I respectfully suggest that that be part of the presentation. Frankly, to be told that not to buy this would be a disservice to the teachers and act as if we didn't do as we originally intended and provide the teachers with the told that we were told were necessary at the time I don't think is fair to the board.

Ms. DeVincent stated absolutely. It has been a big learning curve for me this last year. I think if I had it in hindsight to go back, this would have come forward too. Like I said, I'll take onus. It was a big learning curve. It is something the teachers really want. It is something the principals, at least the ones I have talked to, want.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated I have several more things that I could ask here, but I won't belabor the point. I do have one thing though that concerns me and I would like a response to this, especially because it appears that the Smarter Balanced test will be going away.

Commissioner Edelblut, Governor Sununu, the Trump Administration have all pretty much made it clear that the Common Core standards and the tests that are aligned to them are headed for the ash heap of history, which pleases me anyway. In the fore word of both these books, it is written something in assessments, a focal point of the k-12 book, in part because I realized the tremendous pressure on teachers to get students ready for the high stake assessment that begin in the third grade. This is in the fore word from the author in the k-2 book. My question is, are we

using this to teach to the Smarter Balanced test, which is going away? If not, why would she say basically here, this is going to help your kids pass the test when they hit the third grade?

Ms. Pelletier replied this is to support us creating a culture of children that can think deeply about anything that they read. That's what this is about. It is not about Smarter Balanced testing. Whatever testing is out there right now is requiring students to think at a higher level. It is not as literal as it was probably when I went to school. You didn't really have to understand what you read to sometimes get the answers. This is getting kids to think and teachers to teach intentionally and support them in affective read alouds. My biggest, the most positive piece about this is it is not only affecting read alouds, it is going to affect guided reading, responding to reading, writing. Now teachers are reading these books and they are noticing authors' craft. So many of them have come up to me and said Kris, I never really thought about pointing why the writer did that. Again, we have been doing a lot of professional development over the years, but we don't often give everyone across this district the tools to utilize. I think it has gotten teachers to think differently about what books offer and really directing their attention and children's attention to certain aspects of books that again, it is going to help them as literate readers regardless of what happens with Smarter Balanced. That's what we are here for.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated based on what you just said, which dovetails with some other comments that you made, I want to ask about this because I'm concerned when I hear that we want to necessarily teach kids what the author meant. Frequently in literature what the author wrote is subject to the interpretation of the person doing the reading and I would be concerned that someone says to a kid in this paradigm that that is nice, but really, this is what it means and this is how you are supposed to understand it. Multiple references have been made to this author's craft and what the author meant and making sure kids understand what the author intended or what the author meant. That, to me, sounds like you are imposing a point of view.

Ms. Pelletier stated no. What we are supporting and what this type of questing supports is open ended. What we also talked about is children forming opinions. It is considering author's purpose and why they might have written something or why they used figurative language or with non-fiction texts, gee they put in this feature, this caption, why did they do that. It is not

necessarily saying there is one message that each book carries because what we found is some books can have several different themes, several different big ideas, but it is getting kids to think about it like that. I don't think we have had a tool or a resource for instruction that supports that. I apologize if that's the message that I have sent in some of those comments because it is really not about that. I have seen it firsthand where they are debating and they are forming opinions.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated the other thing that you said along that line that I want to get some clarity on, earlier in your presentation you said that this was helping teachers teach the type of thinking I want my students to have. That doesn't necessarily tell me that they are going to use the books to help students foster their own opinion about things, by saying the type of thinking I want my kids to have and especially I disagree with you on these books. I'm not going to rehash my opposition to the books, but I think they introduce very emotionally charged topics on race, the environment, and a whole host of other things, poverty, that are way too much for young children to handle intellectually and are emotionally very powerful in how they are presented. I, frankly, think it is a form of indoctrination. I worry when I have someone sit before me and say teachers want this so they can cultivate in their students the type of thinking they want them to have. What does that mean?

Ms. Pelletier stated I prefaced that by saying interactive read aloud supports strategic thinking. In my initial presentation I showed you the circle, which is 12 strategic actions that all readers do. There is within the text thinking, beyond the text thinking and about the text thinking. The bottom the circle dealt with predicting, inferring, synthesizing, connecting, analyzing, and making connections. That is the type of thinking that teachers want to support. They don't always have the language in order to facilitate that kind of thinking. That is what I was talking about, the strategic thinking. When you read, when all of us read we utilize those strategic actions.

Committee Member Freeman stated a question for Dr. Vargas and a comment. As an occupational therapist you know anytime we write a treatment plan all of our goals are based on or any progress that is made is based on something that is observable and measurable. Dr. Vargas, is there any way that we can come up with assessment that would be able to measure the

progress that is made with this program in a short amount of time as passed to a lengthy amount of time? I think sometimes what happens when we introduce something new on the horizon we don't see the effects until far beyond the program and sometimes they become obsolete before we do. Do you think there is an assessment that we could compose in order to address this?

Dr. Vargas replied they could, but I would like to do it for the whole district because what you hear here could be a group of teachers who might say that we are using this set of materials and it works for us and it is great. If you go back to the curriculum audit, which I keep referring to and I think every educator in this district ought to be concerned so that we don't have this kind of situation. My wish, Ms. Freeman, is to tell you that a year from now here are the assessments and the standards and procedures that this board and this district have adopted to evaluate anything that we introduce. We can say that at Northwest and their investment of Title I and you have heard me talk about Title I and I understand Title I a little bit because it seems like every three years we change. I heard that from teachers in this district, that we buy a lot of stuff and we pick a lot of stuff and we drop a lot of stuff. My apologies for putting that frankly to you, but I remember hearing from teachers after being here for two weeks and they said stick to something after you introduce something. The problem that I have to answer that, right now you have as many instruments in place and to answer your question I don't know which one of the current ones I would pick. I do know that we couldn't use running record because it is an instructional strategies that teachers should use any time you wish. It shouldn't be the district telling you that you should look at all your students. It means that some teacher, at any given time, you know where your kids are at and sometimes you have some doubt. You might run an instrument like the running record. Back to your question again, the board desperately needs this to have for, let's say, k-6. The state, for example, is moving, for the first time we are going to have at least an instrument that we can screen children for dyslexia and things like that. I was surprised that we didn't have such an instrument. Normally what happens is in fifth grade a great teacher would detect that the kid has a problem and we tried pretty much everything and we have to be more careful. I apologize for the long answer, but the answer to your question is we don't have one. I have pointed that out to this board that you have an urgent need. You are on the committee that is struggling with this question, what is the right assessment to evaluate our practice and also share with our families and teachers. It is quite possible that a student

when they leave you in fifth grade and they go into sixth grade you wish you could write a letter to the receiving teacher. That is the wish of every teacher. We need a system in place and how we also use assessments because they could be of use. For example, if you evaluate a program that is in place for only six months you are not evaluating much other than that people don't have the skillset yet to deliver on that program. I welcome a robust conversation with the board and with the school community about coming with such an instrument to answer your question. It is my hope that by next year, no later than September, that it is commonly understood that we are at least going to give it a try to evaluate our practice because we can just say it is best practice. How do you know if it is best practice? For example, I read an article on Saturday about Central High School about a kid who was a struggling reader. I don't know if any of you read it. The kid couldn't. The world is very perplexing and confusing if you don't know how to read in this society. You can see how the student feels around that. The student came across a teacher that used sensory reading. According to the student and according to the teacher, measured by her success in terms of grating and moving on, who would argue that that is not an effective program. People will tell you that that program is not necessarily for everyone. However, elements of that program could be utilized in any school to serve the needs to our students. I don't subscribe to the whole notion that there is a program or material or approach that will address the needs of every child. I'm always reluctant, and I know what happened in this nation when, particularly poor children are the ones who truly stay behind because as I tell my middleclass and upper income class they will detect a reading issue because they will go to a clinician who can find out what the problems are at an early age. With poor parents, sadly, not because they don't want to, they care as much about their children as the rich parents, we have to be very careful in our practice. We have to make sure that we are monitoring all the components of reading from fluency to comprehension to, you name it, so that we can assume to ourselves that we are doing what is best for kids. Again, I apologize for the long answer, but this is a complex challenge that we are facing here.

Committee Member Van Houten stated let me just ask you some very quick questions if I may. I am a teacher of English as you know. Michelle, you certainly know that. I have been trained in reading. I have done some work in the field with the Nancy Boyles' techniques. From that perspective let me ask you these questions. Are we dealing primarily with strategies and techniques and questioning abilities for the teacher as opposed to an actual programmatic study?

Ms. Pelletier replied yes.

Committee Member Van Houten asked should we not include as a factor the expertise of our teachers that is involved in the teachers that we hire as well as the quality professional development that we give them and treat them as experts in the selection of materials?

Ms. Pelletier replied absolutely.

Committee Member Van Houten stated I absolutely agree with that as well. In the absence of an assessment tool, is it not possible to look at the soft means of assessment as opposed to an actual test instrument to look at the expertise of the teacher who has spent quality time with the youngsters who has dealt with the youngsters on a daily basis, seen the most incremental pieces of progress as opposed to the miles of progress that are just unique to that one youngster or to a pile of youngsters? Have we not seen an improvement in i-ready scores in the teachers that are sitting before us? My final question is, why don't we just pass this? It is an ancillary text to a program that we have already passed. What Dr. Avard said is definitely relevant here. I don't see any reason to hold this up. Yes, perhaps we need an assessment tool. I don't deny that at all, but this is not helping these people right now and the kids that they are going to face tomorrow morning.

Committee Member Freeman stated I'll just make a quick comment. I'm sorry if it appears that we are grilling you or making you feel uncomfortable. As with anything new, it is our responsibility as a board to question it. I am not an educator so I do not know the nuances or the technology or the terminology that goes with it. Thank you for indulging me and thank you for your service to the district.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated I will echo that. I will also say, frankly, that I think had prior committees and board, I'll put it this way, not do delicately done their job then this district might not have made some of the serious mistakes it made in adopting some of the curriculum and approaches that this committee has tread upon such as Everyday Math among others. We now would not be dealing with some of the dysfunction we have, particularly at the elementary levels with respect to what is taught and how it is taught. I will not apologize for asking my questions or the questions of educators or parents or others who are following this material so that if nothing else there is a dialogue. I remain intense distrustful of this approach. However, that said, Dr. Avar's point is well taken and on the recommendation of Ms. DeVincent and the superintendent I will vote in favor of buying this text noting that I will be looking to see how what data assessments we have reflect the progress of this program.

Ms. Pelletier stated absolutely.

On motion of Committee Member Van Houten, duly seconded by Committee Member Freeman, it was voted to approve this item.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard addressed item 5 of the agenda:

5. Approval of the minutes from the March 13, 2017 meeting.

On motion of Committee Member Freeman, duly seconded by Committee Member Van Houten, it was voted to approve the minutes.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard addressed item 6 of the agenda:

6. SBAC 2017 Update.
(Note: Provided for informational purposes only; no action required.)

Chairman Pro Temp Girard asked is anyone planning to speak to the materials in our agenda? If not, I know I have questions and I don't know if other members of the board do.

Dr. Vargas stated this is just an informational item to show you when the testing is scheduled.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated the question I have, when were the letters actually mailed home to parents? The reason I'm asking that, I received one for the SAT that is coming at West I believe over the weekend. I think it was postdated the 27th of March. I heard from several parents, including several that posted on social media whose kids were in various elementary schools that they received the notice in the mail, which, by the way proved the point that we were trying to make at our meeting two weeks ago, it might have been given to the kid, the parent didn't get it, didn't get or didn't see an email, found what came in the mail only to find out that it came after the testing had started in their kid's school. I would like to know when those envelopes were mailed home and why it was so far after our last committee meeting and so close to the actual testing date.

Mr. David Ryan, Assistant Superintendent, responded we notified the principals the day after you took a motion to direct us to send via US Mail. All of the schools began assembling their envelopes, packaging their envelopes, bringing them to central office so they could be post marked and put into the mail.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard asked were they given a deadline by when they needed to be at the district office?

Mr. Ryan replied they were told right away.

Committee Member Freeman stated I received a half a dozen complaints about this. Six families out of a district this size is not huge, but that's a concern. That is most definitely a concern. Is there any way that we can put something in place for quality control on this? Those parents were irate.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated made for fun on social media too. My original question was when were the actual mail pieces mailed home to parents?

Dr. Vargas replied we should be able to get you that answer.

Mr. Ryan stated I have the email responses from all of the principals. Again, we asked the principals to send them via US Mail when we were directed to do so not before. They were sent home with students and via email. However, we were asked to also send them US Mail, which was done.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard asked weren't they sent US Mail last year as well?

Mr. Ryan replied no.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated I thought that needed to be asked because it struck me as odd that some parents got it after the test started.

Mr. Ryan stated we weren't asked until after whatever our last meeting was with C&I.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard asked will the committee need to ask that it be sent home by mail again or will it be part of the district's standard operating procedure to notify parents by all three methods initially? Of course there were a few fun comments about the February 27th date that it was on the letter given that it wasn't mailed home.

Dr. Vargas stated what I would recommend to the board since I see a lot of situations like this that this summer we sit down here, perhaps in this room and you have a list of concerns. I mentioned this before. There was an issue before this committee where this committee expects to receive the course of studies and in order to do that and I'm working to see if I can get some pro bono help for project management so if you want to get something orderly you are going to have to help me and help the administration do that. That should be part of our own planning process. We can't make things as we go every month. I could be here for as many years and I

still would learn what you used to do or how you did it. It is a suggestion that I have because I think it is serious what you are saying. The other thing is that an organization has what is called an operational calendar. Right now we just don't have that kind of capacity to put together an operational calendar. The best I can do is to know what the board expects month by month. This is one that is not new to us. It is something that we do annually, we send this letter. We ought to have this way ahead of time and we should know when the board needs to vote when we need to send things and those kinds of logistics need to be put in place. I will need your help because I will not be able to help you deliver for you if every month I come here and I'm not clear what's the expectation. My understanding is that the US Mail was sent only this year. It sounded like it was a new practice, that's my understanding. Therefore, you will have some glitches in situations.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated maybe we can get some of that accomplished on Friday, Doctor. We will see.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard addressed item 7 of the agenda:

7. Comparison of surrounding school districts course offerings as compared to the Manchester School District.

(Note: Provided for informational purposes only; no action required.)

Dr. Vargas stated Dr. Martin got data for you on page seven. As you can see in there it is self-explanatory. Our district offers 187 high school courses.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard asked would we be able to offer more high school courses to our students if we didn't have three dramatically under used high school facilities?

Dr. Vargas replied it is quite possible.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard asked would you simply have a center of students big enough to have additional course offerings?

Dr. Vargas replied again, I'm one who never gives an answer, when you move one part... Not necessarily. It all depends on the other aspects and budgetary issues. Take for example your pension. If your pension is not addressed I'm not surprised that one day you would not get a 20-25% increase. If in a good economy you are getting an increase in your pension, 17%, one day I could get a letter that says...

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated respectfully, Doctor, I'm not looking for a hypothetical answer based on factors that we don't control. I'm just simply asking if you had two high schools that had full enrollment versus three that had nowhere near it, would it be more likely you could collect 20 kids to go into a particular class at those two high schools versus not getting 20 kids as they are structured now?

Dr. Vargas replied all things being equal you could provide more under that scenario.

TABLED ITEMS

A motion is in order to remove any items from the table.

9. Update on the PACE Program.
(Note: Additional information is attached. Tabled 2/10/2016.)

This item remained on the table.

10. Discussion regarding the elementary health curriculum.
(Note: Tabled 11/22/2016.)

This item remained on the table.

*There being no further business, on motion of **Committee Member Freeman**, duly seconded by **Committee Member Van Houten**, it was voted to adjourn at 8:12 p.m.*

A True Record. Attest.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Man J. Leary". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Clerk of Committee