

Monadnock Regional School District (MRSD)
Meeting Minutes
Presentation from the International Center
for Leadership in Education
January 22, 2014
Monadnock Regional MS/HS Annex, Swanzey, NH

Members Present: Ed Jacod, James Carnie, Mike Blair, Mike Morrison, Pat Bauries, Dan Coffman, Eric Stanley, Phyllis Peterson and Barry Faulkner. **Absent:** Richard Thackston, Robert Smith, Winston Wright, Lisa Steadman and unassigned from Sullivan and Roxbury.

Also present: L. Corriveau, Superintendent, K. Craig, Assistant Superintendent, T. Kennett, Director of Student Services, J. Fortson, Business Manager and L. Aivaliotis recording secretary.

Guest Speakers: Dr. Sue Szachowicz and Ray McNulty

Ray McNulty and Dr. Sue Szachowicz presented to the Board with a power point on how the Brockton HS turned around for the better and explained how it could work at Monadnock. Ray explained to the Board do what you are already doing but better. There is no reason why 85%-90% of the students cannot be proficient. You need to invent a different future for the students. Fixing the past being discipline focused. You need to fix the past without the need for someone to be in the seat. We know what to do but it needs to be implemented. How do you get good at what you do? The great seem to have the ability to work through their weakness. Being a slight bit different makes all the difference in the world. The school has to work as one school. When you do you elevate the performance of all the students. Everybody cannot be their own cowboy. The whole system and what is good for our kids. Transformation is all adults working as a team, success by design not by chance.

There are 4300 students in Brockton High School. Brockton was considered one of the worst schools. Due to the new way of teaching the students started showing magnificent results. Because of the tremendous results the State thought Brockton was fixing the books. A professor from Harvard spent time and dug into the school. He collected work and monitored the level of planning that you do not see. As a result he stated Brockton could be a model for schools in the country. He said there is leadership that combines passion with competence.

Dr. Sue Szachowicz commented if we can do this turn around in Brockton anyone can. She said it is hard work with the focus on literacy. She explained they have sustained this improvement for 10 years with the last 5 years still improving. She explained it was a culture of low expectations. We the adults need to know how to teach the kids. There were very negative comments. We were in denial. It had to be someone else's fault. It was success by design. In 1998 Brockton failed the MACS test. The principal at that time commented the students have the right to fail. It was not only about the scores but the culture of the school. Now there are no assemblies during class time. We don't have an intercom system. We do not want to take away

from the student learning time. We honor students that make the honor roll. Sports should not be the only celebration of the school.

Dr. Sue Szachowicz asked what are we teaching our students, how we know our students are learning. You focus on standards across the school. There are four steps. Empower a team. The administration and staff need to focus on literacy with no exceptions. Implement with fidelity according to a plan. We all need to do it and monitor like crazy. Empower a leadership team that would meet on Saturdays. Dr. Sue Szachowicz explained their goal was to improve student achievement. The group asked what the students need to be successful. Literacy for all was the answer. The literacy skills were drafted. Literacy is much more than reading. The next step was how they going to teach the teachers to teach. Start writing is the key to everything. They wanted something that linked all the departments and it was writing. Writing is measurable. The administration assigned certain departments a time when they would assign a writing assignment pertaining to their class subject. It was monitored and it was implemented to all the grades. When the teachers met they would bring the student's work to share. They did not have any outside help. Brockton School had unified groups that worked together. You can make change fast. Empower a team, focusing on literacy, implementing with fidelity according to plan and monitor. Ninety percent of the class of 2014 will be going to college.

Comments to Dr. Sue Szachowicz and Ray McNulty: It was asked about the elementary schools feeding into the high school. How do they prepare the students? Dr. Sue Szachowicz explained the Brockton high school students go to Hunnington Elementary and help with writing.

Dr. Sue Szachowicz explained it is difficult to hold all accountable. It is a culture change. It is about collaboration. It is critical. She said we needed to stop the phrase it is okay to fail. We need a plan. We told the faculty what to do and it should be delivered by the principal. Dr. Sue Szachowicz explained there is a calendar which marks when staff literacy lessons need to be completed and the students work needs to be collected. The literacy lessons are across the board from English to art and every other subject in the school. She has direct observation, everything they do is rubrics. There are follow up faculty meetings and instruction work. She explained there were no teachers that were exempt. You have to fight the battle.

Ray McNulty explained this is not something you cannot achieve.

L. Corriveau thanked Sue and Ray for their great energy. He would hope to continue this dialogue. We need help and vow to be the best.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis
Recording secretary