

Southington Board of Education
Southington, Connecticut
Regular Meeting
November 14, 2013

The regular meeting of the Southington Board of Education was held on Thursday, November 14, 2013 at 7:30 p.m. in the Municipal Center Public Assembly Room, 200 North Main Street, Southington, Connecticut.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Joseph V. Erardi, Jr. Board members present were Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mrs. Colleen Clark, Mr. Brian Goralski, Mrs. Patricia Johnson, Mrs. Terry Lombardi, Mrs. Jill Notar-Francesco, Mr. Zaya Oshana, and Mrs. Patricia Queen. Absent: Mr. David Derynoski.

Present from the administration were Dr. Joseph V. Erardi, Jr., Superintendent of Schools; Mrs. Karen Smith, Assistant Superintendent of Schools; Mrs. Sherri DiNello, Director of Business and Finance; Mr. Frederick Cox, Director of Operations; and Dr. Perri Murdica, Director of Pupil Services.

Student Representatives present were Abigail Harris and Stephanie Krar.

There were approximately 50 individuals in the audience.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Student representatives led the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. SWEARING IN OF BOARD MEMBERS BY DEPUTY TOWN CLERK

Dr. Erardi turned the meeting over to Ms. Kathy Larkin, Deputy Town Clerk. Board members stood with their right hands raised while Ms. Larkin swore them in: *“Do you solemnly swear you will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Connecticut and will faithfully discharge according to law your duties as Board of Education Members for the Town of Southington to the best of your abilities so help you God?”* Board Members replied, “I do.” Congratulations and good luck were wished upon all.

4. ELECTION OF BOARD OFFICERS

Dr. Erardi congratulated all the Board Members and explained that, for a brief moment, he presides as the Chairperson of the Board of Education. He stated that they will be following Board Policy #8020. He then solicited nominations for the Chairperson of the Southington Board of Education.

Mrs. Carmody stated that it was her great pleasure to nominate Mr. Brian Goralski as the Chairperson of the Board of Education. For the last six years, he has demonstrated the ability to lead the board with integrity, and he has promoted cooperation within the community. It is for these reasons that she is very proud to nominate Mr. Goralski.

Dr. Erardi asked if there were any other nominations for the position of Board of Education Chairperson, and there were not any other nominees.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YES – Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mrs. Colleen Clark, Mrs. Patricia Johnson, Mrs. Terry Lombardi, Mrs. Jill Notar-Francesco, Mr. Zaya Oshana, Mrs. Patricia Queen, and Mr. Brian Goralski. **Mr. Goralski was unanimously elected Chairperson of the Board.**

Dr. Erardi congratulated Mr. Goralski who then took the seat of Board of Education Chairperson. Mr. Goralski expressed that one of the greatest honors was to speak for a Board that he believes in and trusts. He shared that he could not be happier than to serve with the eight other members of the Board of Education. As a group, he's proud of what they do. Aside from being a father, a son, and a husband, speaking for the Board of Education is one of his greatest highlights of life. Mr. Goralski thanked the group for their trust in him, and stated that he will always represent the members, as a group, when he speaks publicly.

Mr. Goralski asked for nominations for the position of Vice Chairperson. Mrs. Notar-Francesco nominated Mrs. Terri Carmody. She stated that it was with great pleasure and privilege to nominate Mrs. Carmody. She's an individual who clearly makes a difference. She works many hours for the benefit of the board. She is a persistent and highly effective advocate for the children and schools. Mrs. Carmody is strongly dedicated to higher achievement and opportunities for all students. Mrs. Notar-Francesco stated that she takes great pride in nominating Mrs. Carmody for Vice Chairperson of the Board of Education.

Mr. Goralski asked if there were any other nominations for the position of Board of Education Vice Chairperson, and there were no other nominees.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YES – Mrs. Colleen Clark, Mr. Brian Goralski, Mrs. Patricia Johnson, Mrs. Terry Lombardi, Mrs. Jill Notar-Francesco, Mr. Zaya Oshana, Mrs. Patricia Queen, and Mrs. Terri Carmody. **Mrs. Carmody was unanimously elected Vice Chairperson of the Board.**

Mr. Goralski asked for nominations for the position of Secretary. Mrs. Clark stated that for the past six years, it has been her pleasure and privilege to serve with a colleague whose dedication, commitment to excellence, and long hours of work are second-to-none. She is privileged to nominate Mrs. Jill Notar-Francesco as Secretary to the Board of Education.

Mr. Goralski asked if there were any other nominations for the position of Board of Education Secretary, and there were no other nominees.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YES – Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mrs. Colleen Clark, Mr. Brian Goralski, Mrs. Patricia Johnson, Mrs. Terry Lombardi, Mr. Zaya Oshana, Mrs. Patricia Queen, and Mrs. Jill Notar-Francesco. **Mrs. Notar-Francesco was unanimously elected Secretary of the Board.**

Mr. Goralski stated that for the public to elect the same nine representatives to serve on the Board of Education speaks for them as a group. As individuals, they always speak their mind for what they feel is best and, as a group, they are so much better. He feels that it's a great tribute to each of them and their work.

Mr. Goralski explained that Mr. Derynoski was not able to be in attendance because of an out-of-state business trip. Nothing was more disappointing to Mr. Derynoski as not being in attendance for the meeting. Mr. Goralski has had the pleasure of being sworn in with him and Mrs. Johnson on five other occasions. That shows the dedication of the group. In addition, Mr. Goralski stated that he has had the pleasure of serving with Mr. Oshana's father and for the rest of his colleagues, regardless of the number of years, it's been a privilege for them to be a team together. He thanked the community for showing their trust in the nine members by voting them back into their positions and allowing them the opportunity to serve for another two years.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES ~ October 24, 2013

MOTION: by Mrs. Notar-Francesco, seconded by Mrs. Carmody:

“Move to approve the minutes of the Regular Board of Education meeting of October 24, 2013.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

a. Communications from the Audience

Mr. Arthur Cyr, 103 Berlin Avenue. Mr. Cyr welcomed back the nine, re-elected Board members. He requested that the town and Board of Education work together to get a podium that has a longer microphone. Additionally, he would prefer that the podium be clear of any items (laptops) during audience communications. He feels items on the podium are a distraction and make people nervous.

Mr. Cyr stated that, in the months prior to the election, there was discussion pertaining to the renovation of Kelley and Flanders Elementary Schools. He requested that the Board of Education begin reviewing the old plans and looking at renovating those schools. He suggested that, when reviewing any renovation plans for Kelley School, they consider taking the playground and moving it to the back of the building and utilizing the extra acres of land to increase the drop off and parking zones for the school.

Mr. Cyr's final request was that the Board of Education revisits the issue of funding for the turf at Southington High School. He believes that the funding for the turf should be shared between the town and the Board of Education.

Julie O'Reilly, 970 South End Road. Mrs. Reilly shared that she respects the Board and the administration; yet, she has concerns pertaining to a STEPS survey that was given to students in Grades 7, 9, and 11. She explained that a phone message went to all families from Dr. Erardi on October 31, 2013. It mentioned that there would be a survey from the STEPS program given to students. There weren't any details as to what questions would be included in the survey and she went online to see if there was additional information, which there wasn't. She hadn't had the details of the survey and looked online to see if there was something. After doing some research, she found a newspaper article from August 2013 in the Southington Citizen that talked about a survey that included questions pertaining to whether or not the student has had sex. While she thought that this was a bit much, she agreed to allow her daughter to take it; unfortunately, she regrets that decision.

When Mrs. O'Reilly picked up her daughter from school the day the survey was given, she asked her daughter about the questions. Her daughter didn't want to discuss the survey. Her daughter asked why the survey needed to be taken in place of her science class. Mrs. O'Reilly also wondered why class time was taken to participate in the survey. She contacted Dr. Erardi who responded respectfully. She fully supports the STEPS organization, and she requested that she be provided with a copy of the survey. The request was denied due to copyrights. She then continued to research via the search institute website and found a survey. She then asked her daughter if the survey on the computer was the one she took at school, and it was. The questions numbered 21-82 were the ones in question. She wondered why some of the topics were on the survey if they weren't part of the curriculum. She was aware that this was the third time that this same survey was given to students. Mrs. Reilly met with Susan Saucier who represents Youth Services and the STEPS program. Mrs. Saucier allowed her the opportunity to view the survey and write down the questions. The questions surprised her and she was concerned with the way they were framed. She wondered how the topics pertained to the school curriculum because that is what she thought all topics being introduced at school were based upon. It was her belief that some of those questions would actually give the students ideas on things to do that they normally wouldn't do. She understands some topics about suicide, drugs, alcohol, and bulimia; however, asking a student *how many times they used a weapon to get something* was not something she felt was appropriate.

Mrs. Reilly stated that the school district asks permission to have students photographed for a newspaper article; yet, we don't give the same courtesy prior to the district giving this survey to the students.

In conclusion, it was her understanding that we need to obtain this data from our students in order to get federal funding. In her opinion, this translates to, "So, we need the children to get the money." She questions if this is right.

Jean Sigrew, 26 West Ridge Rd.

Mrs. Sigrew started by stated adjectives that were used by her son and his friends to describe the survey: *creepy, weird, very personal*. She asked why the STEPS program was allowed to expose innocent children to *creepy* terms. Her son didn't know the meaning behind many of the questions; therefore, he didn't know how to respond. She questioned how accurate the results will be if the

students don't understand the questions. She doesn't want her child to understand them. She shared some information that she heard from a middle school family and a high school family and questioned those who agreed to this survey. She asked if the survey was supposed to be a training manual. Questions pertaining to suicide or sniffing glue to get high would get students thinking. Schools try to be so politically correct that they don't want to offend anyone. This survey was beyond offensive in her opinion, and she doesn't want her children to be exposed to this information. She stated that Southington is a nice suburban town. She doesn't agree that all students should be introduced to some of those topics at this time. It's her belief that it's the parents who should be introducing their children to some of these topics with their moral, religious teaching. It's the job of the parent to direct their student's moral compass, not the school. She doesn't feel that she should be getting questions about bi-sexual and transgender from her twelve-year old son.

Ms. Sigrew requested that the superintendent not call her house on Halloween night to tell her about a survey that she has no clue of the content. Many parents had no idea what the survey was about. She cannot understand how the district needs permission slips for field trips and PG movies, and after school activities; where was the permission slip for this. Let the parents see the survey to determine if they think it's appropriate for their children. She believes that the parents shouldn't have to call the school to have their child opt out of the survey.

She stated that the Board of Education is elected because the community put their faith in them to make good, responsible decisions about their children. Her final statement was that the Board of Education failed the parents.

Thomas O'Reilly, 970 South End Road. Mr. O'Reilly mentioned that he heard the word *trust* four times that day. He heard it while at the National Junior Honor Society Induction and during the Board of Education meeting. The administration and teachers thank the parents for entrusting them with their children. He feels that the trust has been betrayed on his behalf based on the survey that was given to the students in Grades 7, 9, and 11. His feeling of betrayal is not so much because the survey was given, but because the parents weren't educated about the survey. The only sample of the survey available was not available through the Southington Board of Education. He stated that it was disappointing. If the district cannot provide a representative sampling of questions in a survey that includes sensitive issues (sexual activity, sexual orientation, violence, guns, etc.), then the survey should not be given. Parents trust the Board of Education to make the right decisions. The least they can do is allow parents the ability to understand and be educated about the types of questions the children are going to be answering in that survey.

Mr. Goralski agreed that it's the responsibility of the Board of Education to communicate with the families. He believes that they may not have communicated to the best of their ability regarding the survey. He is not able to guarantee that a phone message won't take place on a holiday, but communication is important. He further explained that all the topics included in the survey are available to our children on primetime television and, sadly, it's a part of everyday life. The statistics they have gathered over the years through STEPS do show that those areas are of grave concern beginning at the middle school grades. He agreed that they will review these items in the future and will follow up with the parents.

Dr. Erardi thanked the families for their words and stated that he was respectful to their concerns. He sent a message to the O'Reilly family the night before and shared that there is always a learning curve. This was the first time in three years that parents have contacted his office. The school board reviewed and endorsed the survey in 2009-2010. The longitudinal data that is collected

through this survey for STEPS is important for their work to focus on what's needed in the community. The survey is administrated in 48 communities in Connecticut. It was requested that parents, who did not want their children to participate, call the school and opt out. There were not any parents who opted out. Moving forward, he requested that both of the middle school administrators include the opportunity at a PTO meeting for parents to discuss their concerns and have conversation surrounding the administration of the survey.

He also shared that one of the most important partnerships they have is with STEPS. Dr. Erardi stated that they do not survey for the sake of funding; they survey to get the information they feel is most important of the community. The message received from parents was heard with great respect. His commitment is to run a better communication chain prior to the survey in the future. Dr. Erardi had copies of the survey available for the School Board.

STEPS representative, Mrs. Susan Saucier, mentioned that there has been extensive research done pertaining to the idea that, by reading a question, it would give a student the idea to do something that they normally wouldn't do. The research has not supported this. She agrees with Mr. Goralski that everything that was included on the survey is currently accessible to students on television, in magazines, and the internet.

Victoria Triano, Belleview Avenue.

Mrs. Triano shared that this conversation gives her a great deal of hope. The survey has been given to students for the past three years and the opinions from the parents are helpful. As they listen and see that there are areas that they can improve, the parents can take confidence that they are researching all of their concerns. She sees this as a positive step. By communicating the information with parents one month prior, that is a big step. Parents can then make an informed decision. Parents need to know that their concerns are being researched. She believes that they need to maintain the integrity of the parents and still look at the overview for the entire town. She ended by stating, "We all learn from each other."

b. Communications from the Board

MOTION: by Mrs. Notar-Francesco, seconded by Mr. Oshana:

"Move to move agenda item 10a, Grade 8 to Grade 9 Transition Pilot Program Update to agenda item 7b."

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

For the benefit of the Board, Mrs. Notar-Francesco noted that CREC has scheduled their annual Legislative Breakfast on February 13, 2013 at 8:00 a.m. The breakfast will be held at the State Capitol and all Board Members are invited to attend as the legislative session gets underway.

As a follow up in the next couple months, Mrs. Notar-Francesco requested that the administration put together a report indicating how the prekindergarten ABA program is doing. She recommended that the information be brought to an upcoming Curriculum and Instruction Committee meeting and that they also coordinate a date for the committee to visit the program.

Mr. Oshana had the privilege the previous evening to speak at the band banquet. Mr. Oshana was at a football game a week ago and shared how exciting it was to see the “wall of blue” in support of Southington. He shared an article that was included in the Observer that day entitled, “Music of the Knights.” The article included the author’s opinion about what the band has been doing recently, and one particular comment read how surprised he was to find that the Band was in attendance at the game. Apparently, the band participates and performs during half time; however, during the game, a disc jockey plays music during the plays. He quoted from this article the following, “The Southington High School marching band is one of the biggest extracurricular groups in the town, but it seems that they’ve been replaced by someone’s iTunes collection during breaks between play.” Another quote read, “I think the band provides the perfect soundtrack and it doesn’t feel like high school football without the sounds of high school football and that, for me, includes the high school band.” The final comment Mr. Oshana shared was, “I’m disappointed in the school officials who boasted about turf creating an opportunity for all students and then replacing the band with a sound system.” Mr. Oshana stated that he’s certain no one on the Board of Education was the town official who voted to replace the band with a sound system. His point to this topic was that he likes having the high school football game with participation from the band. It builds camaraderie and spirit when you hear the fight songs. That’s what a football game should have.

Mr. Oshana continued by sharing that, when you look in the seats, many are filled with band members and parents. It’s a bit disappointing to him that the band doesn’t get to play. If he were a member of the band, he would find it disheartening. Mr. Oshana encouraged everyone to read the article and read one last quote, “If you want to hear the band at this Friday’s home game, make yourself heard. The athletic department can be reached at 860-628-3229, extension 346.” Make your voices heard if you agree.

Mr. Goralski stated that he is very proud of this article and he fully supports that each Board Member make that call. He already made the call in support of the band playing on Friday night. He also believes that the band is an important part of school spirit and DJs are for dances and, possibly, before the game. If others share the opinion, make the call.

As a band student, Miss Krar commented that they have had concerns with the DJ. There was a time that they felt the DJ was rude to the band. She stated that Mr. Shaw and Mr. Swallow have been working together to create a schedule. While it has been a prominent issue with the band, Mr. Shaw is working with the band members to find a solution. She appreciates the Board Members taking notice.

Mr. Goralski acknowledged that they did utilize the DJ services last year when the band did not have a “home.” However, this year, the Blue Knights have a home and he believes that they should be playing throughout the game.

Mrs. Queen stated that she was both humbled and honored to be sitting there. She thanked the Southington community for entrusting the nine of them with membership on the Board, and stated that it’s a great responsibility. She is happy that the entire Board has returned to continue their work together. As described by Mrs. Notar-Francesco at the SEA Forum, the Board of Education exhibits the characteristics of a high-functioning Board, and she’s proud to be part of that.

Mrs. Queen acknowledged that there’s an unprecedented amount of change going through the school system, and she can only imagine how challenging it is for every staff member. As a Board, based on past practice, she knows that the Board will be there to support the staff to meet

those challenges. As Dr. Erardi likes to say, there is heavy lifting to do. Mrs. Queen stated that she is ready to get to work.

Mrs. Lombardi requested that the Board follow up on a meeting that they had with the legislative team regarding state mandates. It was stated that the senator was going to ask one of his aides to review the mandates and report back to the Board of Education. As of today, they hadn't received any feedback. Also, Mrs. Lombardi would like to know what the legislative team sees on the horizon pertaining to additional mandates.

Mrs. Johnson is a liaison between the Board of Education and Derynoski Elementary School. She recently visited a Grade 1 classroom during a parent visitation day and was happy to see what was happening in the class. There were 19 children doing a lesson on the use of reading the letter A and its different pronunciations. The children were attentive and the teacher had a good handle on the happenings within the class. There were multiple parts to the lesson including SmartBoard use and seat work. Mrs. Johnson found it interesting that today's work is the same in the classroom as it was many years ago when she taught first grade. What's different is how dramatically different the delivery is of the lesson. She was pleased to have the opportunity be part of the classroom and see the great work being done.

Mr. Goralski thanked the veterans for their past, present, and future service and making our country great. In Southington, Veterans Day is not a day off from school, but a day to celebrate all veterans. He recognized the veterans in Southington for making their kids understand the value and meaning of the day. There was a ceremony on the Town Green, music from the high school band, and veterans in the classroom. On that day, Mr. Goralski knew that everyone in Southington was aware that there was a reason to reflect. He acknowledged the work of Dr. Erardi and the committee who made the learning real through every day application. It was a great day to celebrate in Southington. A flag was presented to Dr. Erardi and the school district on behalf of the Board that signifies the partnership and connection between the Board of Education, the American Legion, and the veterans. The flag is displayed in the foyer of the Municipal Center and he asked that everyone take a look when they leave the building. The flag signifies the connection between the school district and the veterans.

Mr. Goralski thanked the Board for all their work following the election on Tuesday. He stated that all committees will remain the same. The Town Council also shared that all of their committees will remain intact.

Communications from the Administration

Dr. Erardi began his report by inviting the Board to attend the football game on Friday evening and he assured them that the high school band would be playing long and hard.

On Monday, November 11, the Board of Education was recognized and honored at an extremely high level by the veterans. They presented an honor flag to the district, one of three ever presented in the history of their organization. It will be displayed at the Municipal Center for a week and then it will travel throughout the district begin displayed at each school. Prior to the flag being displayed at each school, there will be a town meeting so the students understand the meaning and the recognition as to why the district received the flag. This was a tremendous tribute to the School Board. Dr. Erardi stated that he would be remiss if he didn't mention that, on that Tuesday evening, approximately 300-400 people were in attendance and the marching band played brilliantly. The

signature of the event is the medley that ends with the service men standing and being recognized. It was a special moment in the community.

1. School Security Grant Program – Second Phase Award - \$16,000,000

Dr. Erardi reminded the Board that in reference to the School Security program, the town fathers' financed \$159,000 of the safety plan. He shared that they were very disappointed with Round 1 of Governor Malloy's awards in regard to reimbursement to local municipalities for safety when the district received only \$3,459. Fortunately, Governor Malloy stood tall and realized that there was a shortfall in giving back to nearly all communities. He then endorsed an additional \$16,000,000. Dr. Erardi was pleased to share with the Board that they would be returning \$90,183 to the town general fund that they will be receiving as Phase 2 of the school security grant program.

2. Celebration of Cultures

This is informational for the Board that the Celebration of Cultures will be held on Tuesday, November 19, 2013 from 5:30 pm – 8:00 pm at the high school.

3. Enrichment Partnership: SBOE/TMSC

On Wednesday evening they had a special night for the aspiring educators and the Grade 5 students who were identified with the State Department of Education as Gifted and Talented students. There are 33 of 36 students who are involved as they launched their partnership with Talcott Mountain Science Center. They had five scientists there, and the follow-up from parents was only positive. He's very pleased that they launched the first module. This is one of two taking place during the school year. All students left feeling very excited about the opportunity.

4. District Administration Leadership Institute

Dr. Erardi thanked the Board of Education for allowing him the opportunity to attend the District Administration Leadership Institute that was held in San Antonio, Texas. There were 50 educators from across the country having fairly detailed conversations about public schools. He shared the Southington 2020 Vision plan and was pleased to be part of two meaningful opportunities to discuss Personalized Learning and offering World Languages at the elementary level.

5. 18th Annual Para Partnership Conference – Keynote: Dr. Perri Murdica

That morning, Dr. Erardi attended the 18th Annual Paraprofessional Partnership Conference. There were approximately 300 paraprofessionals present at the Crowne Plaza. Dr. Erardi was proud to report that their keynote speaker, who stood and delivered beautifully for one hour, was Dr. Perri Murdica.

c. Communications from Student Board Representatives

Miss Harris reported on the following:

- Congratulations to all Board members on being re-elected to the Board of Education.
- Parent-Teacher Conferences were held that day and report cards went home. All students worked hard during the first quarter.
- Yesterday was the National Honor Society Faculty Tea and it was a great success. The students had the opportunity to visit with teachers that they hadn't seen in a long time and they shared some great conversations.
- Pertaining to AP scores, Southington High School ranked 1 of 18 in the state and 1 of 477 in the nation for significant increase of approximately 40% of students who signed up for AP classes from 2011. In addition, there was a 41% increase of students receiving a score of 3 or higher on AP classes since 2011.

Miss Krar reported on the following:

- On November 2, 2013, the Southington High School Marching Band went to Met Life Stadium to participate in the National competition where they took home 5th place in their class. They also took home the Dingle Award which recognizes groups for their school spirit and respect for their instructors and each other. The Dingle is the type of shoe they wear.
- The band attended the Veterans Day event on Tuesday and it was an amazing experience. The band enjoyed doing something for the community. It was a moving experience to see the veterans stand and salute.
- The Girls' Swim Team went to their State meet and they placed in the top 10. Many of the school/individual records were broken.
- The Girls' Soccer and Field Hockey teams played very well.
- Powder Puff Football for senior girls will play on Monday, November 25 in New Britain and on Tuesday, November 26 in Southington.
- There's a meeting scheduled next week at the Aqua Turf that will include representatives from high schools throughout the state where they will discuss keeping sports and sport leadership positive. Southington High School will send six representatives from varsity sports (3 girls and 3 boys). A full report will be presented at the next Board meeting by Gabby Baker who is one of the six representatives from Southington.

Mr. Oshana shared that Miss Krar was selected by her band peers as the outstanding percussionist. The Board recognized and congratulated Miss Krar.

7. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

a. Personnel Report

MOTION: by Mrs. Notar-Francesco, seconded by Mrs. Carmody:

“Move to approve the Personnel Report as submitted.”

Motion was carried unanimously by voice vote.

b. Grade 8 to Grade 9 Transition ~ Pilot Program (Attachment #1)

Mrs. Smith welcomed Mr. Rick Terino, Assistant Principal at Southington High School, to the podium. They have been studying and working on transition plans at all levels with particular emphasis on Grade 8 to Grade 9. As part of the longer-term study, a product of that is how do we make the ninth grade experience more similar to the Grade 8 experience. And likewise, how do they make a Grade 8 experience, after January, a bit more compatible to what Grade 9^h will be like. One of the products of that study is what they are presenting: the academic effort to put together a ninth grade pilot team. Mr. Terino is here to share what that experience has been.

Mr. Terino presented the following:

In the spring of 2010, Assistant Superintendent Howard Theiry presented a report on the status of the Grade 8 to Grade 9 transition, as well as the Ninth Grade Academy. At that time, a standing transition committee was formed. His report closed with the idea that things were good, but could get better. Southington High School took the next logical step and began a team pilot.

- Team Pilot consists of *4 Classes – 80 Students – 4 Teachers* who took flight this past August.
- Teaching Team ~ Dan Hart (Civics), Beth Corbin (Algebra), Susan Henne (Special Education), Catherine Disantis (English), and Chris Conant (Earth Science).
- The teaching team is assigned a daily period to meet/discuss student progress and share learning strategies that work in the classrooms.
- They offer class anecdotes that highlight student likes and interests, personalizing each student.
- They address student and parent/guardian concerns and collaborative and timely interventions.
- Available to meet with the Grade 9 counselors, Mrs. Ingriselli and Mr. Bugnacki. The counselors attend team meetings to discuss academic and behavioral issues.
- Support service staff is funneled into the team meetings. They can meet and deal with the students' teachers collectively.
- Team meeting period affords parents/guardians more times to meet with teachers beyond annual conferences or PPT meetings and it's done in one collaborative session.
- Communication, coordination, consistent. A summer newsletter was sent to parents of randomly selected students. In the newsletter, it asked that they forward their emails. One reason for the request was to create a monthly e-newsletter. Excerpts from October were shared in the attached PowerPoint.
- Team is comprised of two CCP classes and two CP classes.
- One CP class is co-taught in each of those subjects.
- Each teacher is assigned a fifth class outside the team.
- From 315 possible grade averages in the first term, the results are as follows: 12% earned As, 43% earned Bs, 34% Cs, 8% had Ds, and 3% had Fs (37 students at the top earned As; 134 earned Bs, 107 earned Cs, 26 had Ds, and 11 Fs).
- What the team found was that the 11 failures were derived from 9 students and the team will continue to implement classroom strategies through differentiated instruction to improve performance.
- In closing, there was an email from a parent who shared their emotion over placement in the academic team.

Mrs. Carmody thanked Mr. Terino for his presentation. She confirmed that there were only 80 students of the 513 Grade 9 students included in the pilot program. Overall, she asked how the students who are not in the pilot were doing. Mr. Terino stated that he did a quick study and the 9 students were among at least 17, if not more, that were failing at least one, if not two classes.

Mrs. Carmody asked that Mr. Terino get additional information to Mrs. Smith and the Curriculum and Instruction Committee at a later date so they can review how successful the early interventions are at the high school. This is wonderful for the 80 students in the program and, if the team is working well, they have to concern themselves with those who aren't in the pilot program. She wondered if they are finding this transition and rigor that they are trying to improve in the middle school and if it has followed-through in Grade 9.

Mrs. Smith shared that some of this information will be included in the Southington High School Leveling update that will be on the agenda at the next Curriculum and Instruction Committee meeting.

Dr. Erardi shared that the bottom line of the pilot is student outcome. The trick is the control group of 80 students and to determine if it's typical to the other 420 students. They've had that type of conversation and, ideally, what they are doing is to take one of the four teachers and put that person in a separate space. If that person was teaching a CP or CCP class in the pilot, every one of those teachers had one class outside of the pilot. They were hoping that would be the compare and contrast data. This is the beginning stage and part of the goals as a School Board. With the first quarter ending, it was a good checkpoint. The Board will receive a much more in-depth report at the end of school year.

As a point of information, Dr. Erardi visited and watched the team at work. They have a common planning time each day and it's amazing how deep they get into knowing their students. The team would have been in attendance at the Board meeting, but it was Parent-Teacher Conference night at the high school.

Miss Harris questioned what differentiates this program from the team system implemented in the middle school. Mr. Terino stated the rigor of the curriculum, but, otherwise, they have much in common. There are four teachers looking at the group. She then asked if there were still forms of independence for the students who are part of the program, and Mr. Terino confirmed that there was.

Mr. Goralski stated that he would like to see how the information is shared back with the middle schools at the end of the year. That would bring it full circle. At the end of the day, if you compare the two programs and compare what's working, they have the ability through differentiation to better prepare students.

Mrs. Lombardi stated that she believes every time they look at a pilot with a small number of students, they see some type of success. Mr. Terino stated that it depends on the students involved. She thought that being in smaller class sizes and the attention that the students are getting from these teachers would suggest that there is good learning occurring. Mr. Terino stated that it's easy to monitor them with the four teachers in a building of their size.

Mrs. Johnson was surprised and pleased to see the monthly newsletters and asked that the administration forward them electronically to the Board of Education members.

Miss Krar also commented on the independence of the students from Grade 8 to Grade 9 being one of the biggest transitions. With the teachers being so involved with them during Grade 9 pilot, then in Grade 10, the teachers aren't on top of them for their work and it's up to them to get it done. She wondered if the students would be in shock when they move into Grade 10, and they are no longer part of the program.

Mr. Terino stated that the students are still responsible for being independent and getting their work done. The benefit of the team is that there is immediate contact when they notice a pattern of work not being completed.

Mr. Goralski stated that it's a great point about independence, but they need to be sure that the communication is heightened for all students. It's something that needs to be worked on simultaneously. For a student who is failing, those would be areas that we can improve the communication now, even if not in the pilot. Mr. Terino shared that one of the goals with teacher evaluation is for teacher feedback and parent communication.

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Policy and Personnel Committee Meeting ~ October 28, 2013

Mrs. Clark reported that the two school climate coordinators reported to the committee and summarized the bullying instances and trend data. The trend has been on a decrease in Southington. The committee wanted to be sure the schools all had a consistent practice of reporting bullying and investigating claims. They discussed whether or not the present policy and practice pertain to all grade levels and how they can better support and identify youngsters on the receiving end of such action. They were very concerned with those who are the quiet children who might not say anything. The committee thought that a survey of students was a good way to measure whether or not they were successful. The administrators will be asked for feedback to move forward.

The committee reviewed the Grant Funded Guidance position job description. There were some minor clerical revisions to that job description.

Regarding the current attendance policy, the committee will continue the conversation in January. There were questions pertaining to whether or not the district had the ability to delay a student from entering the district. Currently, students need to be 5 years old by January 1 to enter school. The question is whether or not Southington can change their requirements and ask that students be 5 years old by September 1. The administration is checking with legal counsel.

The committee also reviewed the recess policy and discussed changes pertaining to recess being withheld from students. In the past, teachers have asked children to stay in from recess and do homework if it wasn't completed or for poor behavior; however, schools are no longer allowed to do this. The administration is checking with legal counsel to see if they can withhold some of the recess if the teacher receives permission from the parent/guardian.

Mrs. Queen mentioned that she was impressed at the teacher forum when the efforts occurring in each school to create a positive climate were shared. The teachers shared multiple examples of the efforts being made.

b. Finance Committee Meeting ~ October 30, 2013

Mrs. Notar-Francesco reported that, as a result of the Finance Committee meeting, there are four action items.

a. Agriculture Science & Technology Education (ASTE)

As discussed at a previous Board of Education meeting, the ASTE grant increased by \$1,000 per student. The total increase received is \$142,706. The state statute requires that the funds go directly back into the Agricultural Science program. The item at the meeting that received the most detailed discussion as the greatest need was the proposal for an additional teacher. This teacher is essential to the current growth of student enrollment and to satisfy the current class size compliance issue that was cited in the recent program review. The teacher would be funded now and moving forward. The committee agreed to support the list as presented. The Board of Finance approved the appropriation for the \$142,706 to be directed back to the Board for the Agricultural Science and Technology program.

MOTION: by Mrs. Notar-Francesco, seconded by Mrs. Lombardi:

“Move to approve the proposed spending plan for the Agriculture Science and Technology Education Grant.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

b. Bid Approval – Bid #2014-BID-18, Bus for Agricultural Science Technology Department

The committee was presented with bid specifications designed by the state for the bus for the Agricultural Science and Technology program. Funding comes from a VoAg equipment grant. The committee recommended approving this bid, moving it forward to the full Board. While the specifications of the bus came from the state, Mr. Cox was not aware of the requirements being any different from any other school bus. The guidelines and licensing are the same.

MOTION: by Mrs. Notar-Francesco, seconded by Mrs. Lombardi:

“Move to approve Bid #2014-BID-18 for an activity bus funded by the VoAg equipment grant.”

Motion was carried unanimously by voice vote.

c. Xerox Copier 5600 – Southington High School/Central Office

They are currently paying substantial dollars to service the two large, old copiers at Southington High School and central office. The contract expires next month. They are working with Network Imaging who can replace the two old copiers with two leased copiers at an annual cost

savings of almost \$21,000 based on the current copy counts. Network Imaging will remove the old copiers at no charge and will waive the service cost for the first month. The pricing from the copiers is from the NJPA (National Joint Powers Alliance) which is an agency that awards contracts after an extensive bid process. The NJPA creates national cooperative contract purchasing opportunities to education and government agencies. The committee whole-heartedly endorsed moving this item to the full board for approval. Mr. Oshana added that he was very impressed with the savings being offered and that it's a great machine. It was confirmed that the printers will be networked to the computers.

MOTION: by Mrs. Notar-Francesco, seconded by Mrs. Carmody:

“Move to approve leasing two copiers from Network Imaging from bid pricing supplied by NJPA (National Joint Powers Alliance).”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

d. Generation of Electricity

The current contract with Constellation Energy for the generation portion of electricity expires in December 2014. A group of districts that worked together previously to achieve favorable pricing are interested in bidding a new agreement because the pricing of the generation portion is currently at very favorable pricing levels. Mrs. DiNello would like the authority to sign a multi-year contract for generation if the group can secure a favorable price after the contracts are bid. She needs the ability to sign quickly if this favorable price is achieved. The committee endorsed giving her the authority.

Mrs. Johnson asked when the Board would be notified if the district locks into a favorable contract, and Mrs. DiNello shared that they would be notified that same day. Mrs. DiNello explained that the sixteen districts participating have an attorney putting together and seeking contracts from different suppliers. Once they find a favorable contract and a date that they can lock in, it would be required that they sign the contract that day. Mrs. Johnson recalls a few years ago when they dealt with a consultant who took a substantial commission on this type of work, and she wondered if this type of operation was still in place. Mrs. DiNello replied that they were no longer dealing with that specific individual who gathered that information. They are working with an attorney from Shipman and Goodman and working with an individual from Secure Energy. Mrs. DiNello continued that the attorney fees are split among all districts involved, and the supplier gets paid based on the actual generation that's utilized. She will send out the specifics the next day.

MOTION: by Mrs. Notar-Francesco, seconded by Mr. Oshana:

“Move to give the Director of Business and Finance the authority to lock into a multi-year contract for the generation of electricity if pricing comes back favorable after contracts are bid.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

The Board received the report from TAS (Transportation Advisory Services). There is a great deal of information in that report and the Finance Committee will review it again at their next

meeting. TAS believes that NBT has been providing the district with good service and should be given the opportunity to renegotiate the contract with a number of suggested language changes that are in the document. One option is to consider a one-year renewal and work out a modified contract with NBT over the course of the year. TAS suggested setting a deadline for achieving the new contract, so there will be ample time to go out to bid if an agreement cannot be reached.

9. OLD BUSINESS

a. Town Government Communications

Mr. Goralski reported that they are the last group to be sworn in. All committees at the Town Council will remain intact. They are excited to continue the work and do their jobs.

b. Construction Update

Mr. Cox reported that the new gymnasiums opened on November 1 and are back in use by the students. If you drive by, you can see everything is moving along. Interior walls are going up this week. The media center and new administration area is well on its way. They are on schedule for the new administration and classroom areas to open in April.

Mrs. Queen asked for a brief description for anyone who might be interested as to what they might see when they are looking at the building. Mr. Cox reported that the arch roof is over the new media center. Forward and to the left are the new art and instrumental classrooms. This is all happening behind the existing auditorium wall. Interior to the arch moving toward the original building is the administration area. The original front door opening is being pulled out 50 feet, and the new opening into the building will have the controls and requirement for guests who enter the building to enter into a vestibule area. They then have no other choice but to report to the office area for check in. Looking at the original building from the road, to the extreme right are the eight classrooms and team areas.

c. Administrator Evaluation Plan Update

There was nothing to report.

d. Teacher Evaluation Plan Update

Mrs. Smith explained that the plan is moving forward. The committee has monthly meetings and the next meeting is planned for November 25. AT those meetings, they come with questions and feedback. They try to come up with answers to stay ahead of issues before they become larger. This is going to be deserving of a presentation after the new year so the board can understand the enormity of implementing the program. Her belief is that this is going better than expected. They are learning as they move forward and are happy to be working with great teachers.

There is a request that a motion be made, which was mentioned at the last meeting. Since the last meeting, the State contacted her office and stated that they do need a motion from the Board of Education. The reason is because Southington requested a waiver that they are allowed to administer, on a field test basis, the Smarter Balanced Assessment and not participate in CMT or CAPT, other than for science, which will still follow CMT and CAPT requirements.

MOTION: by Mrs. Notar-Francesco, seconded by Mr. Oshana:

“Move that the Board of Education approve that Southington will not require that 22.5% of the teachers’ student learning outcomes component incorporate CMT or CAPT data (exception science), pending the US Department of Education’s approval of Connecticut’s request for flexibility on the use of student test data in 2013-2014. Alternatively, the 45% will be composed of 22.5% of locally available assessments and the other 22.5% will be based on a minimum of one non-standardized assessment and a maximum of one additional standardized assessment. If there are no standardized assessments available and/or appropriate, then for the 2013-2014 school year, the educators’ entire 45% student learning outcomes would be based fully on non-standardized indicators.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Mrs. Carmody wanted all teachers to know that the Board of Education is 100% behind them and will do what they can to help alleviate the angst that they are feeling.

Mrs. Notar-Francesco shared that she’s concerned for all teachers, but especially for the new teachers who might not have yet have a support system developed within their building. Dr. Erardi shared with the Board that they met with the new teacher cohort. While he didn’t want to give them an additional assignment, he did ask where they gage with all the new requirements. He asked that they provide him with less than a paragraph as to how they are doing. He stated that the feedback he received indicated that they are incredibly conscientious, but overwhelmed.

Mrs. Notar-Francesco asked that the administrative team continue to offer leadership and support to staff at this difficult time. Everyone needs a pat on the back or words of encouragement, even though the reality of the workload may not change. Dr. Erardi confirmed that the amount of additional work on the building level is overwhelming. Everyone is working harder than ever, and the goal is to increase morale throughout the district.

Mrs. Smith shared that, in an effort to try to relieve some stress for staff, they offered a work day for staff during the November 5 Professional Development. The theme was teacher evaluation support. The staff work included assessment work, team gathering work, instructional strategy, and rolling out Common Core State Standards. The feedback was universal. All staff was appreciative to get what they needed: time. Time was a priority.

Mrs. Lombardi reiterated that the Board is there to offer additional support where needed. Mr. Goralski stated that he would be putting together a letter for staff on behalf of the Board that will be mailed prior to Thanksgiving.

10. NEW BUSINESS

a. Grade 8 to Grade 9 Transition ~ Pilot Program

This agenda item was moved to 7b.

b. Ratification of Southington Administrator’s Association (SAA) Contract ~ Executive Session

The Board went into executive session at 9:32 pm and returned to public session at 9:38 pm. In attendance were Mr. Brian Goralski, Chairperson, Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mrs. Colleen Clark, Mrs. Patricia Johnson, Mrs. Terry Lombardi, Mrs. Jill Notar-Francesco, Mrs. Zaya Oshana, and Mrs. Patricia Queen.

Present from administration were Dr. Joseph Erardi, Jr., Superintendent of Schools, Mrs. Karen Smith, Assistant Superintendent of Schools, and Mrs. Sherri DiNello, Director of Business and Finance.

The Board returned to public session at 9:38 p.m.

MOTION: By Mrs. Notar-Francesco, seconded by Mrs. Carmody:

“Move to approve the three-year contract with the Southington Administrator’s Association for July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2017.”

ROLL CALL VOTE. YES – Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mrs. Colleen Clark, Mrs. Patricia Johnson, Mrs. Terry Lombardi, Mrs. Jill Notar-Francesco, Mr. Zaya Oshana, Mrs. Patricia Queen, and Mr. Brian Goralski.

MOTION: by Mrs. Notar-Francesco, seconded by Mr. Oshana:

“Move to adjourn.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Passamano

Michelle Passamano
Recording Secretary

ATTACHMENT #1

Agenda Item 7b

Grade 8 to Grade 9 Transition ~ Pilot Program



Team Pilot 2013-2014





4 Classes – 80 Students – 4 Teachers

Took flight August 29, 2013, in the capable hands of their Team Leader, their Team Captain, Beth Corbin.

The Teaching Team (bottom front left to right, counter-clockwise)

Dan Hart
civics

Beth Corbin
algebra

Susan Henne
special education

Catherine Disantis
English

Chris Conant
earth science



Is assigned a daily period to meet and discuss student progress,



(Dan Hart, Beth Corbin)

To share learning strategies that work,



(Susan Henne, Catherine Disantis)

To offer class anecdotes that highlight student likes and interests,



(Chris Conant)

To address student and parent/guardian concerns in collaborative and timely interventions.



Mrs. Ingriselli and Mr. Bugnacki, grade 9 counselors, individually attend a team meeting weekly to discuss student issues and academic/behavioral updates.



Support Service Staff are available to meet with an individual student's teachers collectively.

Social Worker



Psychologist



The Team meeting period affords parents and guardians more times to meet with the student's collective teachers beyond the annual Conference Day or PPT and not piecemeal but in one collaborative session.



Summer Letter

Summer 2013

Dear Students and Families:

Welcome to the 9th Grade Team! We are excited to begin such an exciting school year with you as you enter your first year of high school. Our school is ***piloting*** an academic team in grade 9 and you have been randomly selected to participate. This letter has been formulated to provide you with some information that will help prepare you for your new school year.

Our team provides a student-centered approach to learning, which focuses on a student's individual development. For maximum success we work as a team: the student, parents, and teachers sharing responsibility. This collaborative setting enables the development of self-esteem, mutual respect, responsible citizenship, and learner independence.

Developing each of these qualities will ensure success for each student while in high school and beyond. To facilitate the relationship among parents and teachers, it is important that we have your e-mail address and telephone number.

Please send the following information to each of the e-mails listed below by **Sunday, August 25th**.



Team Pilot (*monthly newsletter*)

October excerpts

Hello! We hope that your child is off to a great start at SHS. The school year seems to be off to a great start & we are excited about the future!

Please remember that Parent-Teacher Conferences will be held on November 14th. More information will be forthcoming.

Quarter 1 closes November 1st & report cards will soon follow. Please contact individual teachers if you have any questions or concerns...

October Excerpts (continued)

Updates for subject areas:

Civics (Mr. Hart): Expect to take a political test soon! Are you more of a Democrat or Republican (or a blend of both)? Your sons/daughters have taken it in class to determine their political beliefs. They will be interviewing you and comparing their beliefs to yours. Have a debate, be open, share your thoughts.

Vote on Tuesday, November 5th! Civic involvement starts at home, so be a role model and vote in the local election (Board of Education, Town Council, Zoning, etc.). Civics class in October will also focus on elections, lobbyists and propaganda (usually found in TV ads that are biased). We'll then start studying the U.S. Constitution, the basis of our laws and rights, in which both government and citizens are limited in their powers and rights. Hope to see you at conferences!



Team Pilot

Learning Specialist (Miss Henne): Students are starting to get into routines and adjust to life at SHS. Students should be completing homework on a daily basis and getting into the habit of using what study skills work best for them.

Organization is key for them to succeed in their classes. Assignment books should be filled out and binders should be organized.

Take a few minutes a night to ask your child about their day, whether it be about their academics or their overall day. Continue to check PowerSchool and see what is happening in your child's classes.

Thank you as always for your support!

Team Class Levels

Competitive College Preparatory or CCP

**Each regular education
teacher is assigned
two CCP classes.**

2 CCP

College and Career Preparatory or CP

**Each regular teacher is
assigned two CP
classes.**

2 CP

One CP class is co-taught in each subject.

Co-Teaching Approaches

- **One Teach, One Observe** – Co-teachers decide in advance what types of specific observational information to gather during instruction and can agree on a system for gathering the data. Afterward, the teachers should analyze the information together. The teachers should take turns teaching and gathering data, rather than assuming that the special educator is the only person who should observe.
- **Station Teaching** – Co-teachers divide content and students. Each teacher then teaches the content to one group and subsequently repeats the instruction for the other group. If appropriate, a third "station" could give students an opportunity to work independently. As co-teachers become comfortable with their partnership, they may add groups or otherwise create variations of this model.
- **Parallel Teaching** – Co-teachers are both teaching the same information, but they do so to a divided class group. Parallel also may be used to vary learning experiences, for example, by providing manipulatives to one group but not the other or by having the groups read about the same topic but at different levels of difficulty.
- **Alternative Teaching** – one teacher takes responsibility to the large group while the other works with a smaller group. These smaller groups could be used for remediation, pre-teaching, to help students who have been absent catch up on key instruction, assessment, and so on.
- **Teaming** – both teachers share delivery of the same instruction to a whole student group. Some teachers refer to this as having "one brain in two bodies." Others call it "tag team teaching." Most co-teachers consider this approach the most complex but satisfying way to co-teach, but it is the approach that is most dependent on teachers' styles.
- **One Teach, One Assist** – one teacher keeps primary responsibility for teaching while the other professional circulated through the room providing unobtrusive assistance to students as needed. This should be the least often employed co-teaching approach.

Each teacher is assigned a fifth class outside of the team.

For example: Chris Conant teaches one section of earth science at the honors level.



Term 1 Comes to a Close...



Chart Resultant from 315 Possible Grade Averages

1st Term – 12% A's, 43% B's, 34% C's

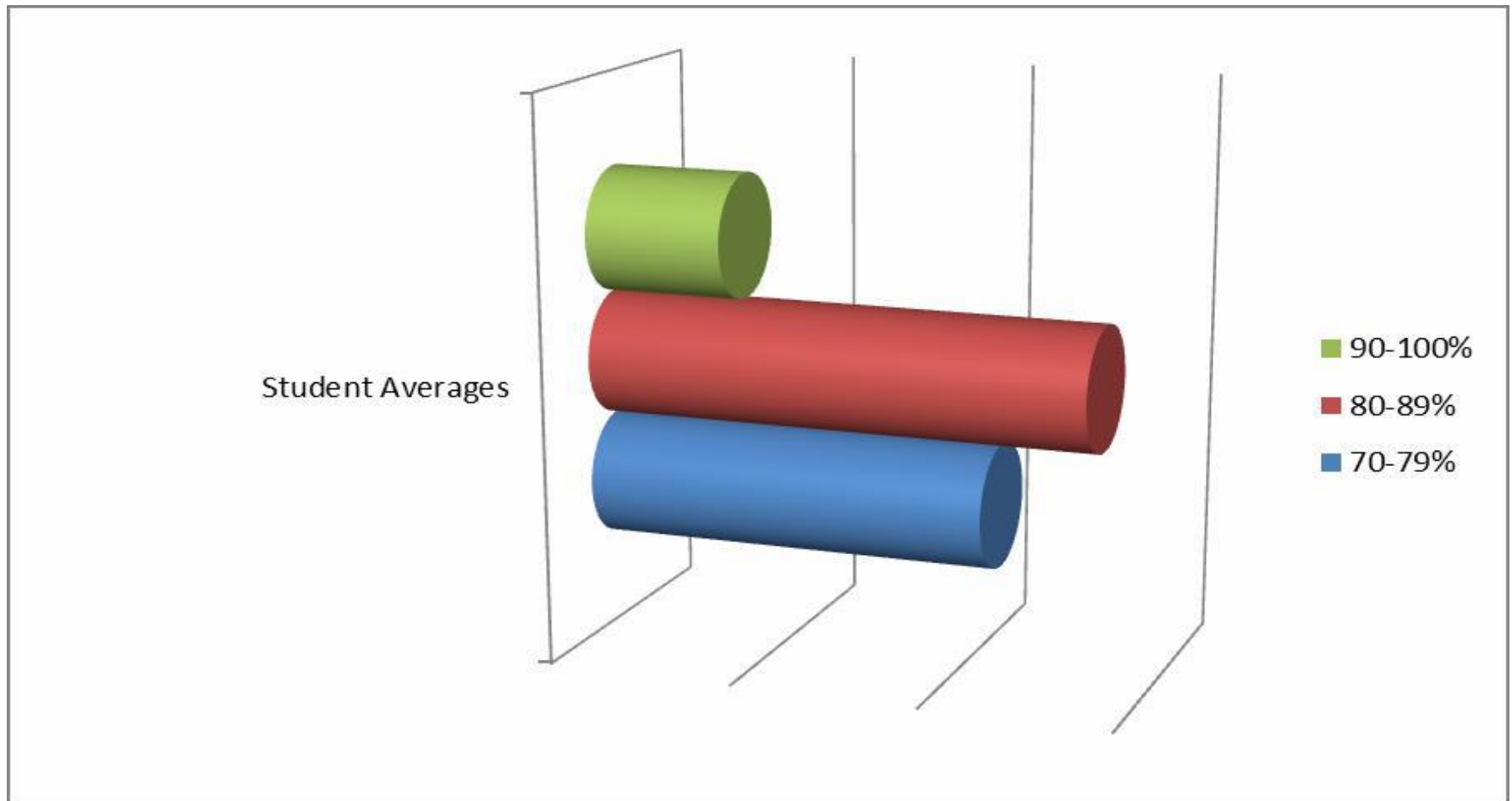
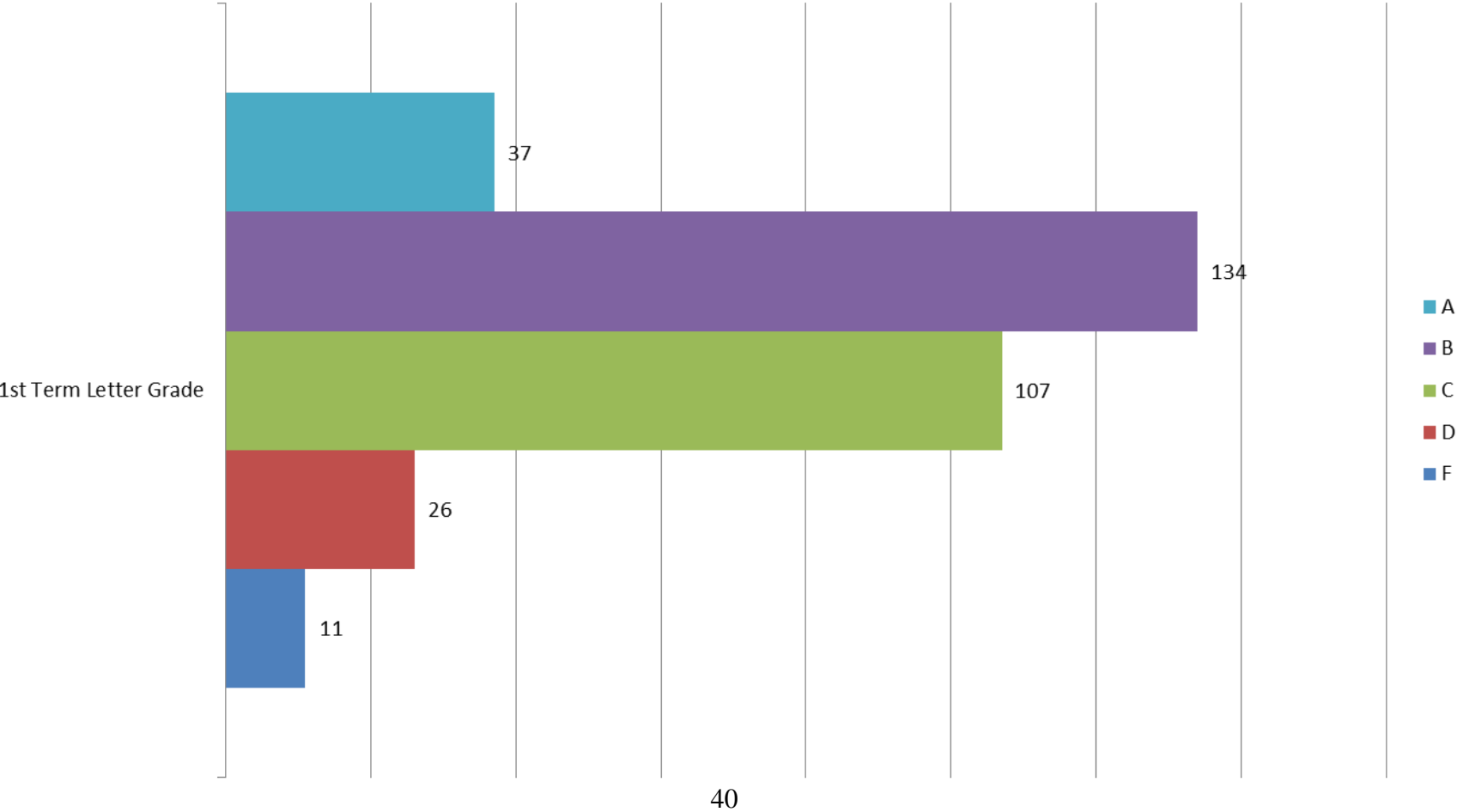


Chart Resultant from 315 Possible Grade Averages

1st Term – grade count shown below.



Grade 9 Teams Working Together

Team Pilot

The 11 failures identified are derived from 9 students.

The Team will continue to implement classroom strategies through differentiated instruction to improve their performance.

Early Intervention Team

This team will review any interventions that can be implemented to assist their learning.

Examples:

- * Learning Academy enrollment*
- * Referral to Special Education*
- * Southington Youth Services*

To facilitate a successful transition...To Grade 9 and beyond!



Email post team conference

From: RICHARD TERINO

Sent: Friday, September 27, 2013 1:00 PM

To: JOSEPH ERARDI

Cc: MARTIN SEMMEL

Subject: Pilot Team

Mrs. A_ _ _ , foster parent of N_ _ _ C_ _ , spoke volumes about the Pilot Team and her son's placement in it. He has adjusted well to SHS and currently is passing science (87), algebra (77), English (68), and civics (62). There have been zero behavioral issues to date. The surrogate parent, T_ _ _ L_ _ _ , was pleased to hear of this transition as JAD utilized TEAM placement and the direction of a prior PPT was moving to outplacement.

N_ _ himself, who did tour ALTA prior to coming here has verbalized his happiness with "trying SHS out."

I had to share this with you as she said you were familiar with one another and her son's situation.