YOUNGSTOWN CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
ACADEMIC DISTRESS COMMISSION

Members:
Brian Benyo, Chair
Dr. Barbara Brothers
Jennifer Roller
Vincent Shivers
James Miller, Office of the Attorney General

MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JULY 18, 2017

I. Call to Order - 3 p.m.

II. Roll Call

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<td>Brian Benyo, Chair</td>
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III. Approval of July 18, 2017 Agenda

Motion by: Vincent Shivers Seconded by: Jennifer Roller

Roll Call Vote:
- Brian Benyo, Chair: Yes x No
- Dr. Barbara Brothers: Yes No Absent
- Jennifer Roller: Yes x No
- Vincent Shivers: Yes x No

IV. Approval of April 20, 2017 Minutes

Motion by: Jennifer Roller Seconded by: Vincent Shivers

Roll Call Vote:
- Brian Benyo, Chair: Yes x No
- Dr. Barbara Brothers: Yes No Absent
- Jennifer Roller: Yes x No
- Vincent Shivers: Yes x No
V. Overview presentation of progress on the goals of the Strategic Plan for the Youngstown City School District from CEO Krish Mohip.

Brian Benyo, ADC Chair opened the meeting and gave the floor to Krish Mohip, CEO Youngstown City School District. Mr. Mohip expressed his excitement over the work that he and his team commenced over the past year. He began the district progress update, State of the Schools: April 2017 – July 2017, with a power point presentation, which was utilized throughout the update.

Mr. Mohip reported on the 5 primary goals of the Strategic Plan. He highlighted the work that has been done overall in 2016-2017 school year that supported the goals of the Strategic Plan. He furthered explained overall district challenges and efforts to move beyond these challenges.

Choffin/MCCTC

Joe Meranto, Interim Superintendent and Dr. Ron Iarussi, Superintendent of Mahoning County Educational Service Center explained the value and importance of the new partnership between Choffin Career & Technical Center and the Mahoning County Career and Technical Center. Dr. Iarussi reported the ultimate goals of the partnership and that there were no plans to “take over” Choffin. The district is partnering with the MCCTC to provide administrative leadership.

Athletic Update

Mr. Meranto provided insight to the new plan for athletics in Youngstown City Schools. He stated with the hiring of the new athletic administrator, athletics are being restructured. Feeder sports programs were being created from K-8 buildings into high school athletics. Most importantly there will be increased academic and athletic support for student athletes in school and beyond.

Budget Update

Mr. Mohip reported on the district budget update and stressed the fiscal responsibility and sound management of district finances. The district 5 year general fund financial forecast was shared with ADC members. He emphasized that although funds have been spent on personnel and professional development, funds have been spent in a responsible manner. Mr. Mohip mentioned the significance of aligning the district budget, school budgets, and all purchases to the goals/objectives of the strategic plan. The financial staff is creating efficiencies, consolidating district banking process and attending on-going professional development meetings and workshops. He mentioned the challenges and next steps financially of the school district.
Questions/Comments

Ms. Roller, asked a follow-up question from the previous ADC meeting about building leadership teams providing input and participation with the budget, how did this go?

Mr. Mohip answered that it went well with the leadership staff. An understanding had to be built that 100% of their district funds must align with the strategic plan. The funds must be spent appropriately and in a timely manner for the benefit of our students. Title I funds have to spent appropriately by April.

Mr. Bonyo commented on the the 5 year forecast and acknowledged the current trend of funds being spent on the senior leadership staff and professional development. He inquired about, what is being done in the 5-year forecast to show that tapering off in later year and reducing the top heavy nature.

Mr. Mohip responded that in looking at staffing levels expenditures are pretty much the same and that professional services and development expenditures did increase. That should roll back in 3-5 years. In a district that is suffering academically there needs to be a heavy shot of professional development to our teachers for our students. Money has been spent on professional development and we will continue to spend money next year. What we are building are future teacher leaders, so they can lead and become model classrooms in every school building. So other teachers can see high quality instruction in their building and learn and grow from these teachers. In looking at the data, you will see that there is a still on-going need for professional development and in some cases there needs to be extensive attention.

Larry Ellis, asked if the 5 year forecast was available for review?

Mr. Mohip said it can be found online and it has been up since May.

District Data

John LaPlante, Chief Information Officer presented important preliminary district data. The following was highlighted:

District Enrollment - Official ODE Enrollment data revealed a significant increase in preschool enrollment while there was a decline in elementary and high school enrollment while middle school enrollment stayed the same. The district was granted new IRNs, which will help in better data reporting.

High School GPAs - overall there was an increase in GPAs.

Attendance - Slight decrease in attendance. In the upcoming 17-18 school year there will be continued daily attendance in K-5 and classroom period attendance in high schools. Mr. Mohip explained that improvements in bus routes and walk zones will decrease the distance for a child to walk to school, if he or she missed the bus.

Discipline - overall decrease of both in-school and out-of-school suspensions with administrators approaching children differently and a new Student Code of Conduct. In looking at high school suspensions, the data revealed a great disparity between CHaney and East. The data supported the apparent need and reason for reconfiguration of district schools, specifically high schools.
Grades 3-8 Math State AIR Assessments – Grades 3 & 4 revealed existing programs have a better fit and reputation for YCSD with the improvement of test scores. Grades 5-8 revealed a decline and that there needs to be a shift from the current math program to one that is a better suited for these grade levels.

Mr. Benyo responded that assuming that these are state based test and administered through the use of computers, how are we handling the on-going changes in content of test and how prepared are students with interfacing with technological devices? At times you can get a false score because the student struggled with technology.

Mr. Mohip explained the push to 1-1 devices and the use of technology to kids at a younger age. He could not expound on the content of the state test, without reviewing the state data.

Grades 3-8 ELA State AIR Assessments - there was an increase in Grades 3-5, but a decrease in grades 6-8.

YCSD High School AIR Test Analysis (Chaney) – test scores improved in Algebra I, American Government, English Language Arts I & II, but decreased in American history, Biology and Geometry. 30% more students did take geometry.

YCSD High School AIR Test Analysis (East) – Mr. Mohip stressed and with vigor explained the reason for the need for district school reconfiguration. Intensive support is needed in high schools. This is why time and money is being spent on rigorous professional development. He emphasized that we hope to never see East being 90% below level. He stated that all children will be successful and that we must support our children and families.

Data Correlations – Current predators in data analysis did not give the estimates needed to predict the success of AIR Assessments. The district is looking to switch to NWEA Map which will provide better examples that are are similar to AIR testing.

A. Strategic Plan: Goal 1 Update

Amanda McGinnis and Greg Kibler, Deputy Directors of Transformation presented the highlights of high-quality instruction with the use of purpose statements and exit slips. Over 75% of district teachers were monitored and provided feedback through the use of an observation tracker, BAG reports that were implemented. It was discovered that assessments were not all aligned with the Strategic plan. Systems such as NWEA and others are now being purchased to utilize in the district that will highlight the fundamental skill and needs to get a child back on track.

Principals, Assistant Principals and Deputy Chiefs of Transformation developed a system based on a point system similar to that of a 4.0 GPA scale to monitor purpose statements and exit slips. Overall the district average score for Purpose Statement is 2.92 and Exit Slips is 2.97.

Ms. McGinnis reported on professional development for teachers and the various programs being offered to support, encourage and embrace our teachers either through such programs such as Teacher Fellows, etc. Resident educator program will also continue to provide a bridge between ODE mandates with the implementation of the Strategic plan. Mr. Kibler spoke on post-secondary opportunities for students. It is important to identify, monitor, and support student who are not on-track through initiatives such as the 3rd grade reading guarantee and efforts through summer school and after school program to give the child all the support for success that he or she may need. Exposure to postsecondary options through Choffin/MCCTC partnership, credit recovery program and financial aid will afford students and their families' opportunities for a successful future.
McGinnis spoke on eliminating the achievement gap by expanding STEM program to grades K-12. She stated that it is very important to continue the 5 week review process. This process reveals the necessary interventions to improve and change the needs of a student’s learning and achievement.

McGinnis and Kibler shared the challenges and next steps of goal 1, which focused on leaders and teachers finding the time for growth through mentoring and coaching along with providing parent engagement around instruction.

Questions/Comments

Mr. Benyo, in looking at elementary and high school data, where are we focusing our efforts as it relates to assessments?

Mr. Kibler responded that in high school grade levels we are focusing on the 9th grade academies, after school programs at the high schools and credit recovery. Along with double blocking periods for reading and math. McGinnis also responded that in elementary grades the expansion of DIBELS and TRC in grades K-3 will occur with weekly monitoring.

Ms. Roller commented on reimagining the school day.

K. Mohip, yes this is part of that, he stated that he is interested in professional development and increasing instructional time with high quality instruction. It all works together.

Brad Cheatham, commented that there is a communication gap between what is being said here and what is out in the community. Until we fix that problem, low scores, low attendance will continue. The reason is economics. The way kids are being raised. Bring all the factors in.

Mr. Benyo thanked Mr. Cheatham for his comments.

Mr. Mohip furthered discussed that the parent and community must have open lines of communication. Yes, poverty is a factor, but we are building systems to work through these factors. There are other districts that suffer from poverty but have higher student outcomes.

B. Strategic Plan: Goal 2 Update

Linda Yosay, Director of Pupil Services, Early Childhood Education (Mahoning County ESC) reported on Goal 2, supporting the whole child. She presented on ensuring all students have access to appropriate services to support learning through either special education services, English learner services, or support students identified as gifted learners. She reported on the making sure licensures were handled properly and proper job descriptions were given. Continuous work is being address under the corrective action plan. She further discussed the challenges and next steps of Goal 2.
C. Strategic Plan: Goal 3 Update

Linda Hoey, Parent Liaison Coordinator reported on goal 3, parent, family and community engagement. She emphasized the importance of overall customer service in the district to our parents and students. She is currently seeking to identify a company to provide customer service training to district staff members. At the end of the school year, a poll was taken and 213 surveys were collected and the key areas that parents wanted free training on was: 1.) School policies 2.) Understanding their child’s classroom instruction/managing their money 3.) Healthy eating/urban gardening. She expressed that our parents do want to be involved and thanked Mr. Mohip for bring on grassroots community organizations to partner with the district. This is being done to reach out aggressively to parents to engage families with their children’s education. She also explained the YOU Parent University initiative. She expressed that our parents are the best and they want to be involved.

Mr. Mohip shared the launching of the new district logo, new district website, new technology for attendance interventions, and Let’s talk program that will track parents phone calls and feedback. He shared the challenges and next steps of Goal 3.

D. Strategic Plan: Goal 4 Update

Tyrone Olverson, Chief Academic Officer and Cheryl McArthur, Deputy Chief of Human Resources presented Goal 4, World Class Workforce on continuous improvement. Mr. Olverson shared statistics in regards to recruiting teachers and shared that within the district there were 58 resignations, 17 retirees. These numbers are the lowest in the past 4 years. Recruiting is continuous and currently we need 55 teachers, 10 are needed for math and science along with other subject areas. Mrs. McArthur shared that ongoing recruitment is important along with establishing relationship, internships and residency programs. She also shared being more involved with staff, so we can retain high quality staff members and on-going staff training. She reported on the next steps for goal 4 with HR new software. She also explained salaries of recent hires.

E. Strategic Plan: Goal 5 Update

Anthony Deniro, Deputy Chief of Maintenance/operations reported on Goal 5, operating an effective and fiscally responsible school system along with next steps for district facilities. Mr. Deniro provided updates on the upgrade of district building camera systems, Warding renovations, Raptor program and the cleaning and retrofitting buildings for the preK-8 reconfiguration plan for upcoming school year.

Transportation

Colleen-Murphy Penk, Chief of Transportation reported on Goal 5, provide safe, efficient and reliable transportation for students to and from school. Penk also announced the reduction of the walk zone to at least 1 mile to a student’s building. Also there will be a significant reduction of ride time from 2 hours to 45 minutes. She reported on the use and implementation of technology for parents, bus drivers and transportation staff that will increase accountability, efficiently and safety of our students. She concluded with the challenges and next steps of Goal 5 with transportation.
Questions/Comments

Laura Williams shared her concerns of preschoolers riding the bus with older. Is this being done and how will preschoolers be kept safe?

Penk responded that yes, they will ride together by family groups. Students will be seated by grade levels appropriately. For the most part bus aides will be on the bus with the driver. Parents should know that the bus driver will see the same children a.m. and p.m., this is important with the bus driver building a rapport with the children.

Nicole Hardy asked if RCC 7th graders will ride the bus with high school students?

Penk answered that RCC students will ride together.

Ithica Stewart-Brown, bus driver expressed concerns with bidding bus routes and use of notepads.

Penk responded that this can be discussed in the transportation staff meeting in greater detail. All that is being done is for safety.

Mr. Mohamed ended the presentation and thanked his leadership team, school board and unions for working for the benefits of our kids.

VI. Brief Discussion of the ADC.

Mr. Benyo explained the role of the ADC, which is an oversight role. Mr. Benyo read a prepared statement for the closing of this year’s business. The statement reads as follows:

- “As Chairman of the Youngstown City Schools Academic Distress Commission, I would like to acknowledge the tireless and selfless work of CEO Mohamed has put forth over this past year. He has demonstrated a level of commitment and dedication that is beyond what could have been expected. I would also like to acknowledge the sacrifice of his family that has made during this time. To the degree that, I do not totally agree with or condone CEO Mohamed has put job ahead of his family and personally. As a community we are blessed to have him in the leadership role that he is in. I offer a similar acknowledgement to the extra effort and extra hours of dedication put forth this past year by the district’s senior leadership team, building leadership teams and many in the district central office. The extra hours and late nights that many of you have put forth over this past year is making a difference. We would be remiss if we did not acknowledge the work and contributions by many of our district’s employees who tirelessly work to see that students arrive safely, clean schools and provide warm meals. Thank you for stepping forward and embracing the changes, undertaking the efforts to realize improvements in the services that you provided this past year. I am certain we will make further progress this coming school year.

Lastly on behalf of the ADC, I would like to acknowledge the individual teachers who have embraced the call to critically evaluate the performance in the classrooms and adopt new teaching methods and techniques for the sake of the improvement of education here in the city schools. I believe that the majority of our teachers as professional educators have embraced the efforts to improve the educational outcome in the district and we thank you for these efforts. As educators in Youngstown City Schools the work you do to overcome the challenges that many of our students face is a calling and a service to our community. Thank you!
Over the past year there have been many instances where things could have been better planned, more thoughtfully communicated or executed with more input or dialogue. In any organization undergoing the extent of changes that this school system has seen, it is very easy to find talking points to criticize, it is hard to find solutions. Over the past year putting students and educators first has not come easy to some individuals and groups. We can only hope that this will change in the coming school year with that thought in mind, we close with a simple and truthful quote offered by Henry Ford, “If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself.” I hope all of you embrace that idea as you move into this coming year and we have an opportunity to taste success together. Thank you.”

VII. Public Comment Period

Larry Ellis, President of Youngstown Teachers Association questioned, what does the ADC determined as a year under HB70?

Mr. Benyo answered that he would have to refer this question to legal counsel.

Mr. Ellis expressed his concerns with the district budget, schedules and assignments for the next school year for parents to schedule daycare, etc. He further stated concerns with teachers being moved around and/or unassigned and provided an example of a teacher who taught prek-2, has been reassigned to 6th grade classroom, in which she has no experience in and it seems this is being done as punishment because she had a knee replacement. This along with other situations is a concern. Mr. Ellis would like the ADC to have a hands on approach and not give all the power to one person.

Mr. Benyo thanked Mr. Ellis for his comments.

VIII. Adjournment - 5:19 p.m.

Motion by: Jennifer Roller Seconded by: Vincent Shivers

Roll Call Vote:

- Brian Benyo, Chair: Yes ☑️ No
- Dr. Barbara Brothers: Yes ☑️ No - Absent
- Jennifer Roller: Yes ☑️ No
- Vincent Shivers: Yes ☑️ No

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