

EARLY COLLEGE SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

**Thursday, April 17, 2014
5:30 PM**

**School Administration Building
417 Rock Street
Fall River, MA 02720**

AGENDA

Discussion: Overview of the current dual enrollment program and expansion opportunities.

MINUTES

At 5:36 PM Mr. Mark Costa, Chair of the Subcommittee, asked for a roll call. The roll call showed Mr. Gabriel Andrade, Mr. Joseph Martins and Mr. Mark Costa were all present. Also present were Superintendent Mayo-Brown, Dr. Fran Roy, Mr. Paul Marshall, Ms. Rebecca Cusick, Dr. Jack Sbrega, Ms. Jessica Mullen, Mr. Ryan Fitzgerald, and Mr. Kevin Bates.

Mr. Costa read the Open Meeting Law.

He then welcomed everyone and gave background information of the subcommittee and why they were there. He then asked for everyone for a brief introduction.

- Ryan Fitzgerald – English teacher at Durfee High School
- Kevin Bates – Special Education teacher at Durfee
- Gabe Andrade – School Committee
- Jessica Mullen – Math teacher at Durfee
- Rebecca Cusick – FREA President
- Paul Marshall – Principal of Durfee
- Kim Napolitano entered the meeting at this time (5:39 PM) – Guidance Department Head at Durfee
- Jack Sbrega – President of Bristol Community College
- Meg Mayo-Brown – Superintendent
- Fran Roy – Chief Academic Officer
- Joe Martins – School Committee
- Mark Costa – School Committee

Mr. Costa explained that in speaking with the Superintendent, one of the first things they needed to establish is an overview of the current dual enrollment program and what opportunities may be available for expansion. He noted that the dual enrollment program has been very successful for many years.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown explained to the group that the School Committee's vote was to consider an Early College high school program that expanded Durfee into the 13th grade so that students could avail themselves to more dual enrollment courses, have a nearly college high school experience, and acquire college credits prior to graduating at the end of their 13th year. They would not graduate Durfee as typical seniors. They would be there for another year for purposes of dual enrollment. She thought it made sense for everyone at the table to know how dual enrollment currently works at the high school.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown added that Bristol Community College (BCC) is committed to maintaining the integrity of the program in terms of requirements and expectations of students. Students also benefit from a no cost program through that and in terms of expansion, they need to know what the possibilities for expansion are, how many students can enroll, and what the committee can expect as they think about moving this into a 13th year of high school. She asked that someone from Durfee start to speak regarding dual enrollment.

Ms. Napolitano said that they had asked their college partner at BCC, Maggie O'Brien, to help them with some numbers and they are as follows:

- Summer 2011- Fall 2011-Spring 2012: 64 courses were taken
- Summer 2012- Fall 2012- Spring 2013: 82 courses were taken
- Summer 2013-Fall 2013-Spring 2014: 103 course were taken

Over the three years, there have been students taking advantage of 249 courses at BCC.

Ms. Napolitano explained the general protocol for a student to participate in dual enrollment is that they have to have a 3.0 GPA at the high school level. They are generous with the freshman students and after the first semester, if they are getting all A's in their classes and looks like they are on track; they let them test the waters a little bit. That is where they see a bulk of their numbers coming from. Once they identify the students that are eligible, they do outreach programs with them such as a video, one-on-one or small group meetings with the students and then one-on-one meetings trying to target the classes they would be interested in taking.

Mr. Marshall said he wanted to bring to their attention to the fact that their lowest enrollment typically is in the fall and the rationale behind that is because they don't have access to the students and the spring tends to be the higher number because the guidance counselors are really recruiting the students and explaining to parents the benefits of the program. He thought they needed to look at what the obstacles are for students and what they need to do to bridge those gaps. Principal Marshall noted that some of the courses are in the afternoon and it puts students in a situation where they have to choose between that or a typical experience. One of the things he would like to take a look at is the availability of the courses. Also, when they think about models moving forward, they need to consider if the student is going to be doing this, will it be a different schedule for those students with the current restraints of the rotating schedule.

Mr. Marshall also explained that they have articulating courses which are vetted through the department chairs or deans at BCC who take a look at the curriculum that they are providing at the college level and then

what Durfee is providing or proposing at the high school. If those match up and they are doing the same things, sometimes they can enter into what is called an articulation agreement.

Ms. Napolitano explained that two of their CVTE programs have articulation agreements with BCC – two courses for the culinary program and two courses for design and visual communications program. After they take it at Durfee High School; when they transfer over to BCC to pursue their education there, they get credit for those courses. They also have a program – the blended class – at BCC in the computer field where the students are working through the curriculum with one of their teachers at Durfee and then they go over to BCC to take their exams and labs. There are all different avenues in which students can access BCC curriculum.

Mr. Marshall felt it is just limited to people's imaginations as to what it will look like and how they will do it. There are logistical issues that they need to work through but he felt it is not anything that they cannot figure out. He noted that the proximity from Durfee to BCC is very inviting and Dr. Sbrega has been very supportive of their efforts. They are very excited about the opportunity to go to scale with the program.

Mr. Costa asked if there were any questions regarding what had been presented so far.

Mr. Martins asked about the articulation courses.

Mr. Marshall responded that when they take a look at their vision at the high school, it is three fold. They want to have every student be able to have the option of going to college, work, or service. Regarding work, he felt there were resources they could be tapping into at BCC such as the health services programs. They are looking into other courses and anticipate there will be more articulation agreements. He also mentioned that UMass Dartmouth is coming out for a listening tour which the chancellor is putting on in a number of communities and she is very open to doing dual enrollment and articulation as well.

Mr. Martins asked what types of courses other than the articulation in the dual enrollment process are currently being accessed.

Ms. Napolitano said it varies by student but most will take Introduction to Psychology and Introduction to Sociology to get their feet wet with those courses. Some will take an English, math, economics, science, etc.

Mr. Martins said when they mentioned the 249 courses that have been taken, do they have a pass/completion rate of the students that take the dual enrollment programs.

Ms. Napolitano said she did not have that number in front of her but she did know that it is very high.

Mr. Marshall said they can get that for them but when he looks at the data and the feedback they have gotten from BCC, the Durfee students do better than the average BCC student.

Dr. Sbrega added that overall – not just Durfee – the dual enrollment students GPA exceeds that of the average BCC student and the underage (sophomores/freshman) students exceed both. He added that there is a great deal of screening that goes on to get into the program.

Mr. Martins said he does not have an issue with underage students participating and his philosophy is as long as they are equipped to take the course and pass it, he doesn't care what their age is. He feels they should go as fast as they possibly can if they are capable of doing freshman college work. He then asked if they knew how many by grade were enrolled.

Ms. Napolitano said she can get that information if she can access her email.

Mr. Martins said the reason he asks these questions is that at some point in time they have to get into a position where they ask questions such as "If you take English 1 at BCC and pass it, how does that relate to taking English at Durfee?"

Mr. Marshall thought that was a great question and thought another question would be if it equates to the English 4 class. The idea is that the students are getting as close to four years of English in preparation to exit on to the next level. If they take that freshman college course, does that mean they have fulfilled the four years of English? He thinks they need to investigate what that means to the student.

Mr. Costa asked what the state's expectation is regarding graduation.

Mr. Marshall said it is four.

Mr. Costa said they need to make sure their local policy coincides.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown asked Mr. Fitzgerald as an English teacher how that sounded.

Mr. Fitzgerald said it is different but when researching true early college high schools, they do modify their high school curriculum to meet the new programs and sometimes that means less course work in high school because they are doing the extra course work.

Mr. Marshall said that they have started that conversation with Dr. Roy, UMass Dartmouth, and BCC because they have students who have really reached the zenith of the high school's ELA curriculum.

Mr. Martins said he would not support having a situation where a student who is capable of passing BCC's English classes each year to also have to take English at Durfee. He would be very supportive of approaching DESE to advocate for this. He felt they could be doing something else with that time. The other concern he had is when they would start allowing students to identify and take the courses.

Mr. Costa noted that Ms. Napolitano had the numbers Mr. Martins asked for earlier and gave her the opportunity to speak.

Ms. Napolitano noted that currently, this spring, they have:

- 11 freshmen
- 18 sophomores
- 18 juniors
- 7 seniors

Mr. Costa asked the high school staff what their thoughts were; if this was something that peaked their interest; or if they think they should keep the dual enrollment as it is.

Ms. Mullen thought it was a big challenge but one worth taking. She has had an opportunity to work with the Gifted and Talented and AP students and though they had some really brilliant students and it would be a great opportunity for them.

Mr. Bates said he is in the special education department and not seeing the AP students, however, he felt there was a lot of human capital at Durfee High School. He would love it if the higher achieving students had these options which would allow for more support for the students who need the extra help at the high school. He would love to see this.

Mr. Fitzgerald said he agrees with this but his only concern would be that with the dual enrollment system, a lot of it is self-selection and they have many of students who already are very motivated to enter college. He would like to prepare kids in the 9th grade that typically are not college bound and widen the opportunity for those students to take the college courses as well.

Mr. Marshall and Mr. Fitzgerald spoke about a student Mr. Fitzgerald had while teaching at the Resiliency Preparatory School and the success that student had after a rough start. Mr. Fitzgerald added that those are the successes that he would like to see come from this.

Mr. Costa said he also sees it from a cost standpoint; getting to those students who can't access college financially. This would put them a little further down the road to a place they may otherwise not have been. He thinks there are a lot of families that fit that mold.

Mr. Andrade said he has been told that a 13th year is something that wouldn't work with a lot of Durfee students because they don't want to stay beyond their 12th year. He asked if the Durfee staff felt a 13th year would work out.

Mr. Fitzgerald said he thought for some students they will have that case but he thinks with the correct cultural shifts, support mechanisms, and college mentality early, it could work. He read some case studies and there is a whole curricula already for 9th grade students to prep them moving forward and it has been very successful in urban areas. He thought it is something that gives a light at the end of the tunnel for many students.

Mr. Costa thought that was a great point. In the past, getting to the 12th grade was the finish line because it could be. Students had many options to leave high school and get a job and were able to support a family ; however, those options are not there anymore. High school does not necessarily mean it is the finish line and he sees it as an opportunity for those students who aren't ready to take the diploma and are still uncertain to stay for another year and continue to work towards an associate's degree. He thought Mr. Andrade made a good point; how do they address students who may be reluctant to stay?

Mr. Costa also was concerned with looking at how it would affect the 4-year graduation rate. They would need to determine how they can maximize students staying in school longer to achieve college credit

without getting a negative affect to the graduation rate. He did not think they should be penalized because students are learning more/staying in school longer.

Mr. Martins said if they choose to enter the early college, they are not getting their diploma until their 13th year, not as a penalization but staying as a way of paying for those courses at BCC. Mr. Martins said he would like to call the whole program dual enrollment/early college so that the dual enrollment works hand in glove with the early college. As dual enrollment, students take whatever courses they feel they can pass. He added that he does not want to see students taking courses for the prestige. He thought that if as student had to repeat a failed course, the student should pay for that course. "The intent is so that students go on and take the courses they are qualified to take and expectations are that they will pass the course and get the credit for it." He added that the way to pay for it is through the grade 13 process.

Mr. Costa asked how the cost is structured now with dual enrollment. He added that it comes at no expense to the students.

Dr. Sbrega said that they receive state funding which each year is being cut and never rises to level funding so something like this would put them just beyond what they can do. He felt the funding would be a problem especially if it is ingrained in the curriculum of an early college. Dr. Sbrega added that he would be glad to accompany the Superintendent to Boston to see if they could advocate for an increase for this particular project.

Mr. Costa asked if there has been any consideration that Dr. Sbrega is aware of statewide for a push for funding specifically for this concept.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said that there was a line item in the governor's budget for early college but was unsure if it carried through.

Mr. Costa said he imagined this was a win for the legislature, too, if the funding is available. He asked why they wouldn't want to access students to college. It seemed to him that the funding mechanism may be a new endeavor.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said it is a concept that has been around the country for the past 20 years but is very new to Massachusetts. She thinks there are just 3 or 4 high schools that are doing it.

Mr. Costa asked if she knew how those schools funded it.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said she did not but could take a look at it.

Mr. Martins said with the dual enrollment issue, the course is running with our without those students. The cost of that program is still there with or without those students. For that scenario, BCC receives declining funds but it still does not close that program. If it is early college; however, with grade 13 basis, then the additional Chapter 70 funds that the school department receives would pay for the enrollment of that student in that program.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said in theory and she likes his thinking but the city does not budget it that way.

Mr. Martins said if they are going to have a program of early college, then they might as well not have a grade 13 if it is going to be taken by the city.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said they are going to have a conversation with the Committee at the May meeting about the Gateway to College (GTC) because it is the same theory of how students are recovered and the Chapter 70 funds come in. She questioned if the School Committee actually sees the increase in funds. She did not think they did.

Mr. Martins said that GTC is for students who have difficulties – potential drop outs or have dropped out.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown the Committee should be seeing the Chapter 70 funds.

Mr. Martins agreed and that when they get the funds they can turn around and pay BCC.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown agreed but added that the city is not budgeting Chapter 70 like that.

Mr. Martins said they would have to argue for that.

Dr. Sbrega said that they could also go for some kind of joint grant proposal as well but that always has an ending to it as well. However, it could be a way to get them off the ground. He added regarding dual enrollment at BCC, they are very excited about it.

Dr. Sbrega continued that someone used the term “self-select” and explained that they are not self-selected and are chosen by their guidance counselor and by the principal and that there are “gates” that need to be crossed over. He said that they can easily handle the 54 students at Durfee doing this currently and the success rate demonstrates the value of the processing that they do for each of the students. As the numbers get larger, the work load on the guidance counselors and BCC staff will increase and there will be union issues. They would want to work any of those issues through the Superintendent and work with that as best they could. He hopes the numbers will sky rocket and it will be a great success but they have to be prepared for all of the implications of it. BCC is very proud of the care that each student receives going through. As the numbers get larger, it is going to be more of BCC’s counselors and advisors taking responsibility for them because they are BCC students in their view. They want to offer them the supports that are available for all BCC students.

Mr. Martins said he sees this as a self-sustaining program. The dual enrollment that they spoke of and the early college. The students that do advance into these programs have to be prepared to take the program with whatever supports that are needed because this will not work if there is an influx of students and then that influx is cut in half because they did not pass.

Mr. Marshall said he agrees and thinks one of the reasons it has been so successful is that they do have very direct and strict entry criteria. He said it is of no benefit to the student or the college if students aren't ready.

Dr. Sbrega said they have no desire to intrude on high school faculty curriculum or workloads and are glad to work it out as best they can. He added that one concern he expressed at the last meeting - and still holds because there is no answer to it until they get there - is that he wouldn't want to foster the impression that once students are in the academy that it is an automatic process. They don't want to throw people into the deep end unprepared. There are also pre- and co-requisites for courses as well. He is just concerned about rising expectations which goes back to the careful nurturing that Durfee already does and they have to be sure that they are working together to prepare the students.

Mr. Costa thought that was critical. His thought process is that wherever its starts, there has got to be a road map for those students. They have to be able to know that if they are going to come in at 9th grade, they have to be screened, accepted, and it has to be clear that in order to continue in the program, they have to meet whatever the threshold is and also include pre-requisites. It shouldn't be any different than if they were walking on campus and will still be held to the same standards. There needs to be some understanding that if they don't succeed, they may end up going back to being a traditional Durfee High School student with the opportunity to take some classes but not stay on that pathway. He added that it should be rigorous and focused and students shouldn't get preferential treatment.

Mr. Marshall said that one of the things they were clear on is that these are BCC courses taught by their professors to Durfee students the same way it would be taught to anyone else.

Mr. Martins said that is the way it should be. He added that he does not see this as students selecting early college when they become a freshman and explained scenarios as to how he viewed it. He felt it should be an ongoing thing and at any point in time, students could select an early college course whenever they feel they are prepared to do that.

Mr. Costa said that the only downside to that is that it becomes very difficult to schedule for the high school because in any given term, they don't know whether students are going to choose to do a college course or if they have to plug the student into a requirement for graduation for high school. He added that it doesn't have to be a track but if students are identified earlier, they can set the schedule. He understands what Mr. Martins is saying but thinks from a scheduling standpoint, it gets difficult and they may end up losing students who get to the finish line and don't have the requirements to graduate high school because they missed the opportunity to take the necessary courses. His fear is trying to keep track of all the students and meeting the requisites for high school graduation.

Mr. Marshall said what Mr. Martins just described is their current program.

Mr. Martins said he wouldn't want to see students being told they didn't enroll in their sophomore year so they cannot go into an early college course.

Mr. Marshall said he thinks Mr. Martins is framing the work of the Committee to figure this all out and maybe they can take a look at the schools that already exist as well as unions.

Mr. Costa said that moves them into the next steps. They have to determine what the cost is and what potential funding mechanisms are available. The other issue is the framework in terms of what it would look like from start to finish. There will be collective bargaining issues as well.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said that Jobs for the Future has a great publication on the financial piece of it and she can send it out to the subcommittee. She said it should be almost self-funded through Chapter 70 as Mr. Martins had said but her worry is that the city is not structured to do it that way.

Mr. Martins said he understands her point but would be very disappointed because if it were not for the program, Chapter 70 funds would not be there. He added that the only drawback would be if BCC charges more than what the Chapter 70 additional funds are.

Mr. Martins shared with the group that he gets daily Department of Labor newsletters and in that day's edition, there was mention of millions of dollars being available for the purpose of community colleges to have programs such as this.

Mr. Andrade said there was another Durfee staff member who was interested in helping out with this and asked if it was too late to have them join.

Mr. Costa said he didn't necessarily think so. They were trying to keep the group to a certain number but if there is another individual who has an interest, he did not mind. He had also told Dr. Sbrega that as this rolls out, there may be some individuals from the college that may want to be a part of the meetings and left it to Dr. Sbrega's discretion.

Dr. Sbrega said he had two already – their CFO and Dean of Access and Transition of students. They are about to name a faculty member.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown suggested that the high school do some thinking about what a Program of Studies might look like. She suggested putting together a draft or skeleton of what they would see as a progression of courses and what it would look like as a pathway for a student.

Mr. Martins asked that Dr. Sbrega provide them with a catalog from BCC and all the required courses that are needed to see how it plays into the courses the students might access as dual enrollment and proceeding on to early college.

Mr. Costa thought that was a great point because as they start to pull it together he felt using the same language in the course studies at Durfee that BCC uses was important so that there would be no confusion in the selection of courses and requirements. He added that he thought the Superintendent's request was a great "next step."

Mr. Martins said he envisioned this as being self-sustaining and that the monies go where they are intended to go. He does not see this as impacting any faculty member at Durfee and would not support that.

Mr. Fitzgerald thought there was an opportunity to get creative with qualified teachers as well.

Dr. Sbrega agreed and thought it was an excellent idea.

Mr. Martins thought they would have to look at the courses being taught, when they are taught, and how they are paid because it could become an employment negotiated issue.

Mr. Marshall said it is something that needs to be looked at but thought they could come up with something that makes sense.

Mr. Costa thanked everyone for their participation and said he looked forward to this being a positive journey. He asked to identify a date in May and it was suggested that Mrs. Caron put together a Doodle Poll to identify a date that would work for the group.

Mr. Costa said he would like to build on the momentum and asked that the administration identify potential funding sources. He asked that the high school come up with course studies and also asked BCC to share their catalog.

Mr. Costa thought it would be important to look at capacity and look to set a number even if it is just to pilot the program and possibly increase enrollment depending on what revenues they are able to attract based on its success.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said she sees this similar to the way they piloted the STEM Scholars program through Project Lead the Way.

Mr. Costa also asked that Dr. Sbrega and Ms. Cusick let them know if they foresee any potential collective bargaining issues and bring them to the next meeting so that they can be discussed and ironed out.

MOTION: Mr. Andrade – Mr. Martins: To adjourn.		
All were in favor	None were opposed	Meeting adjourned at 6:47PM

Respectfully submitted,



Interim Administrative Assistant for
School Committee Services

Please note: A videotape/DVD of this meeting is on file in the School Committee Office and is available for review by contacting the Interim Administrative Assistant for School Committee Services.