

WINCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Melony M. Brady-Shanley
Superintendent of Schools

Winchester Public Schools currently is home to 667 students that it is responsible for educating; 522 of those students are directly served at our two local elementary schools – Batcheller - Pre-Kindergarten to grade two and Pearson Elementary - Grades three through six.

Since the summer of 2015, Winchester Public Schools has been in “Receivership.” During this time, the State Department of Education led the district financially, operationally and instructional. During this time, financial oversight was provided and afforded the district the opportunity to improve process and management of funds. Additionally, as a Commissioner’s Network District, the schools received professional development, instructional assistance and funding to enhance the academic programming.

The Receivership resulted in all special education audits passing by June 2017, the completion of 50% of curricular units in literacy and mathematics, a two-year agreement with the Gilbert School and the addition of an Assistant Principal for Pearson School.

During the Spring of 2017, the Receiver in partnership with CABE engaged the “standing” Board of Education in a search for a Superintendent of Schools. The search process included several community forums, stakeholder feedback surveys, a three-tiered interview process and site visit. The candidate pool included 13 applicants, I, Melony Brady-Shanley was the successful candidate.

On August 17, 2017, the “Receivership” concluded, and the Board of Education was reinstated to have oversight of the district. The Board of Education developed their Beliefs, Focus Areas, and Assessment Standards; highlights include continued efforts to update curricula, instruction and assessment, increasing student performance, partnership development, climate analysis, public communication of data inclusive of financial data, and an assessment of the physical plant and structures.

In August of 2017, the District Improvement Plan was drafted and continues to drill down on the focus areas noted in the Board of Education Goals. Core elements found in the District Improvement Plan include increasing standardized test scores in reading and mathematics by a minimum of five percent, inquiry-based instructional programming and professional development, Tier 1 Differentiation professional development, reduction of chronic absenteeism, increasing parent engagement opportunities, implementing a Service Excellence Model, and establishing an Annual Winchester Public Schools Educational Recognition Event.

The 2016-2017 assessment scores in both ELA and Math have increased. Reading scores on the SBAC came up 3% while the mathematics increased by 1%. The Fifth Grade Science CMT scores increased by 9%. Chronic absence rates were 4.8% at Pearson Elementary School and 6.4% at Batcheller.

Both the Town of Winchester and the Board of Education are routinely monitoring finances of the district. The Superintendent of Schools, Director of Finance/Operations, Town Manager and Business Manager meet weekly to review finances and ensure that we are transparently sharing budget information and cost-saving strategies.

An Ad Hoc Facilities committee has been developed to investigate the structural and mechanical integrity of all school buildings – Hinsdale, Batcheller, and Pearson. The goal of the committee is to develop a longitudinal facilities plan that will incorporate cost-savings opportunities. As part of the analysis, the district will take part in a comprehensive district restructuring plan to ensure financial viability.

Winchester Public Schools has begun the process of gaining the trust and respect of the local community back. Through continued communication and transparency, those efforts will yield a successful educational system of schools.